

G.I. VOICE

Number 1



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Special Edition for Inductees

BASIC TRAINING

Two to three years are about to be gouged out of your life as you join the service of your choice. You will begin basic training separated by distance, barbed wire fences, M. P. s and barracks life from home, your family, friends, women, from your civilian job and habits. The first regulations they read you concern AWOL and desertion. The punishment for AWOL is the stockade (a prison within a prison) and the punishment for desertion is, in wartime (in regard to desertion, the Vietnam War is considered a "WAR"), the firing squad. Boot camp may not be called concentration camp and soldiery may not be called slavery, just don't try to run away.

What will you be trained for? Your Basic Training Handbook will tell you this if little else: "You will be taught how to fight and defeat the enemy. Your training has one combat objective--WIN." In Basic you will be "taught" many useless skills such as polishing brass and saluting, i. e. you will be "drilled" into an obedient, efficient, clean, well-polished machine part. You will be taught two useful skills, how to shoot and how to move. You will spend almost as much time crawling and climbing as you do on your feet. The machine is trained to do one thing well--to kill.

ARMY LIFE

The cleavage between civilian life and basic is abrupt and wide. But you will find that army life and what you were used to on the outside are in many ways similar. Reveille replaces the alarm clock, marching replaces commuting, and you have a job where NCOs supervise, and officers "supervise" the supervisors. If you refuse to work or any other legal order you are thrown into the stockade without the "privilege" of being fired, becoming unemployed, and arrested for vagrancy. The work you do is an endless treadmill, petty, dull, and tiresome, not in a different way but only more so, than what you experienced on your civilian job or at school. Army life sharpens and aggravates the oppression that can be found on the outside.

However, some men enlist because their life on the outside was worse than what they hope to find in the Army. They are the sons of the most oppressed workers, the unskilled and unemployed. The Army means for them their first access to a regular job, meals, medical care. The Army also offers them the irony of a career "defending the American way of life", when that way of life has meant for them misery and poverty, and presented no better future than the infantry.

FIGHTING THE ENEMY: THE COLD WAR

The wretched conditions of Army Life exist to keep a massive, standing army at combat readiness. This Army, maintained at your expense and with your body, was created under the pretext of the "Cold War". Un-

declared, unsanctioned, unending, the Cold War billed as "U. S. defending Freedom from Communism" or as inscribed in induction stations: "The Security of World Peace Starts Here", pits the U. S. against half the world. In reality, the Cold War has meant the intervention of the World's largest, most advanced and expensive military power against small, backward countries weakened by years of anti-imperialist and anti-colonial struggle (e. g. Vietnam and Korea) in order to defend such representatives of "freedom" as Sygman Rhee and Diem.

The U. S. Cold War intervention is not mere bullying though it has chosen targets thought to be weak and quick push-overs. Nor is it a "tragic mistake" as liberals would have us believe, though the Cold War has not gone well for the U. S. To see how the Cold War works, compare it to W. W. II in the Pacific. The Japanese, at first victorious, pushed out the Allied Powers (France and England) from their Asian colonies. The Allied Powers left behind puppet governments, recruited from the native landlords and bourgeois, which did the actual dirty work of robbing the colony (e. g., collecting taxes and rents). Victory meant that the Japanese replaced England and France as puppet-master. U. S. entrance into the war and Allied victory pushed out the Japanese in order to restore Asian colonial spoils to their original plunderers. The war was not between "freedom and imperialism" but between Japanese imperialism and Allied imperialism, both representing Big Business, over the division of colonies for markets, raw materials, and other plunder.

Ambitions to restore Allied imperialism in Asia were interrupted by the colonial liberation struggles of peasants and workers against both the foreign imperialists and the "national" landlord-bourgeois puppet-whore class, and the European working class struggles against the imperialism of their governments. Imperialism, which had pitted the European workers against their Asian counterparts as enemies during the war, by revealing all of its horrors in that war united European and Asian workers against their common foe, imperialism. The U. S., World Banker-broker for imperialism, under the banner of the Cold War, attempted to bail its European customers out and where unsuccessful, intervened directly, in "police actions" as the World cop for imperialism. The U. S. attempted to hide its naked imperialism under the threadbare cloak of supporting the "nationalist" puppet-whores. The Cold War should be billed as "imperialism vs. freedom" and inscribed over induction stations as "The Securing Of A Piece Of The World For Big Business Starts Here".

G. I. S AND THE ELECTIONS

G. I. s must be over 21 to vote (i. e., a lifer or a college grad who used up his deferment). The age limit excludes most G. I. s who are under 21. They are old enough to die for "their" country, but like prisoners, cannot choose their executioners. G. I. s who can vote, may choose "their" commander-in-chief, but unlike civilians, cannot choose their local government, the NCOs and officers who make the day to day

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decisions that affect well-being and lives of every G. I. The dumb-ox drill-sergeant who doesn't give a damn about your well-being in basic is no joke when he is leading you in combat.

G. I. s who could vote found the two candidates already "pledged" to continuing the Vietnam War, already pledged to higher taxes, inflation and "belt-tightening" strangulation for workers at home, for their sons, higher draft calls and higher death tolls in Vietnam. Both candidates offered one program and one choice with regard to the war, living and working conditions, i. e., continuation of the war against workers and peasants in Vietnam, and continuation of the war against workers and youth at home. Both parties offered workers and G. I. s one choice that was no choice. For Big Business, both parties offered the only choice it would accept, more wars, more business, more profits. In the U. S., G. I. s and workers cannot speak of their "own" political party or their "own" government, since both parties and the government are already "owned", though they were purchased with plunder from the pay-checks of workers and defended with the bodies of their sons.

OUR POSITION

Almost every G. I. hates the Army and the war but many G. I. s do not know what they can do about it. Our position is that while we are in the Army we must obey all legal orders. At the same time, we are citizens and do not give up our Constitutional rights because we put on a uniform. Even in the Army G. I. s have many political rights of which they are unaware (such as the right to run for political office). We have the right to vote, and the right to be informed of political alternatives to the bosses' war and bosses' political parties. G. I. s need their own forum to discuss the questions which so closely concern their well-being and life. G. I. Voice, written for and by G. I. s, hopes to provide such a forum. We urge you to subscribe and distribute G. I. Voice. Letters and articles by you will be welcomed and published without your name unless you request otherwise.

G. I. Voice will be sent first class mail and free to all G. I. s. If you are asked by the brass to give up your copy, don't hassle, just write us for another. Future issues will discuss the Vietnam War, "unionizing" the Army, and the nature of imperialism. If you are interested in receiving G. I. Voice, write to us at the following address:

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THE TROUBLE WITH "PEACE NOW"

The dangerous and crippling cleavage in the U. S. between the agents of revolutionary change, the workers, and the agents of revolutionary consciousness, the students and intelligentsia, has been widened and deepened by the liberal-peacenik-Left "Peace Now" sloganeering of the antiwar movement. This cleavage between workers and students is paralleled by a growing cleavage between G. I. s and students in the antiwar movement itself

The slogan "Peace Now" is the chant of the liberal-pacifists. Everyone wants "Peace." Johnson and Nixon desire social peace at home so that they can be left in "Peace" to continue their imperialist wars abroad. Big business owners like Rockefeller want "Peace" in the labor movement so they can continue their exploitation of labor. The liberal politicians all want "Peace." "Peace" in Vietnam means disarming and defeat of the Vietnam Revolution, and "Peace" at home means disarming and defeating the workers through gun-control and anti-strike legislation for these people.

By calling for "Peace Now" the Left only sows confusion in the ranks of the already disorganized G. I. anti-war movement. We have scattered protests against riot duty in Chicago, some of which receive a great deal of attention and defence (Ft. Hood) and some of which receive almost no attention or defense at all (Ft. Carson). We have short-lived, crudely produced base originated newspapers which receive more attention in their suppression than when in publication. We have G. I. -Civilian teach-ins, conferences, demonstrations, etc., at which only a handful of G. I. s show up.

The political confusion of G. I. s at a time of heightened discontent with the war and the military is paralleled outside the Armed Forces by the spontaneous upsurge of militant strikes by the workers at the same time that the workers move politically to the right. The parallel is not surprising since most G. I. s are members of the working class. The workers, whose day to day struggle for existence against capitalist oppression is a state of war, will turn to Wallace who sounds tough, radical and independent. Workers will waste their militancy, and vent their anger and express their frustration in racism and national jingoism rather than class struggle and internationalism unless the Left presents them a fighting working class program. The slogans of such a program should be No Peace but War Against Big Business Profiteers and their political and Military lackeys; No Peace, but Victory for the Vietnamese Revolution; No Peace but Class Struggle for the American Workers!

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