

## Summing Up Advanced Experience

# The High Road In Vets' Work

Ed. Note: The following article was submitted by Party members active in building the struggle of veterans in California. At the time of the formation of the RCP, many activists from the Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) joined the Party. Since that time the leadership of the Party has attached importance to building the struggle of veterans and VVAW as a mass veterans organization fighting in unity with the working class against the imperialist system. As the article points out, this line has met resistance from the revisionist headquarters that developed within the Party, which held that VVAW should, for all practical purposes, be liquidated and only a shell retained to be trotted out on occasion to bolster some political gimmick. Despite this line, work among veterans developed in several places—most notably California where work began with VVAW having one small chapter in one city and now three vigorous chapters exist with regular regional coordination of activities. The work in California is a good, if only beginning, example of the revolutionary potential that exists among veterans and which can be unleashed by persistent work under the guidance of a correct line.

In the California area over the last two years and more, significant advances have been achieved and important lessons learned in the Party's work among veterans, especially in helping to build the Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) as a key mass organization to tap the revolutionary reservoir of veterans. The key to advancing the Party's work has been deepening our grasp of the Party's line—particularly sticking to the hard, high road of revolutionary work in today's non-revolutionary situation. This has involved struggling with both Party and non-Party comrades against pragmatism and rightism, a tendency that arises spontaneously from the work but which was increasingly championed by the revisionist headquarters in the Party.

As we have more and more developed our work to organize veterans, going deep into the day-to-day struggles of veterans and attempting to lead them in waging the economic and political battles against the capitalists, there has been a lot of struggle among comrades to come to an understanding of how to correctly apply the Party's line in our work.

The Programme of the Revolutionary Communist Party states: "As the working class and its Party increasingly takes up and leads the struggle of veterans and this struggle becomes more consciously aimed against the imperialist system, veterans become a spark for the entire working class movement."

Implementing this, more than anything, has been a battle against pragmatism and rightism, and a battle to carry out the three objectives laid out in the Party Programme: "... to win as much as can be won in the immediate battle and weaken the enemy; to raise the general level of consciousness and sense of organization of the struggling masses and instill in them the revolutionary outlook of the proletariat; and to develop

the most active and advanced in these struggles into communists, recruit them into the Party and train them as revolutionary leaders." (p. 102)

Our understanding of the importance of work among veterans, and the correct line which must lead this work, has been continually deepened and developed through the course of our work and the struggle to apply our Party's line. Though this has been no straight line forward, the gains made in this way serve as proof that, as Mao Tsetung says, "The correctness or incorrectness of the ideological and political line decides everything."

### Taking Up July 4th

In early 1976, in one of the California chapters, and on through that summer, we began building for the Battle of the Bicentennial. It was during this period, as we struggled politically within the Party and in VVAW, that we began to gain a better understanding of the "use once and throw away" reality of vets' lives. Before this period we led the chapter to concentrate almost exclusively and very narrowly on the "throw away" aspect—in particular doing work only to extend and expand the GI Bill. The chapter went out to a number of colleges, including one where every single vet had been cut off the GI Bill, while the Veterans Administration (VA) and the college blamed each other, and the vets, for the cuts. In the course of this work, through struggle within the Party we started to understand that while it was correct to build fights like this it was incorrect to take up only those kinds of battles and to take them up divorced from other things affecting vets. We saw more clearly the need to link battles around vets being "thrown away" with the way imperialism had "used" us, and continues to try to use vets as a reactionary political force.

As VVAW got more involved in the July 4th campaign against the bourgeoisie's Bicentennial celebration in Philadelphia, the chapter began to consciously speak about why "We Won't Fight Another Rich Man's War"—why we won't be used as the imperialists' cannon fodder in their wars of plunder—and to better understand the special ability of veterans to speak on this question. This helped us better link up the Philly campaign with the fight against the Memorial Day cutoffs—3.7 million vets cut off the GI Bill—to put forward how these cutoffs represented yet another abuse from the rule of the bourgeoisie.

On Memorial Day itself, in 1976, there was a large demonstration at the VA in Los Angeles with many new vets coming to confront the politicians and hacks who cried crocodile tears and spewed warmongering tripe over our partners' graves, all the while stabbing us in the back with these cutbacks. Exposing this, VVAW was also able to bring out the real nature of the capitalists' Bicentennial celebration, and put forward the slogan—"We've Carried the Rich for 200 Years, Let's Get Them Off Our Backs!"

These struggles, combined with sharp discussion within the Party around veterans work, helped us bet-

ter understand how the "use once" and "throw away" aspects of veterans' experience interact and interpenetrate with each other. We could not just build battles around the "throw away" aspect (say, the GI Bill cuts, or jobs) and divorce this from the way vets have been used. To divorce them would lead to falling into a more militant form of the bourgeois line that veterans deserve special privileges because they "served their country." In addition, we saw much more sharply the need for veterans to speak from their experience around the question of war.

### Ashby Leach Campaign

Our understanding about doing revolutionary work deepened again in the period after the July 4th demonstration, and especially as VVAW began to take up the campaign to Free Ashby Leach. (See *Revolution*, particularly Vol. 2, Nos. 1, 6 & 7) Key to this was struggle to better grasp the mass line campaign being waged by the Party. Particularly our work with the advanced moved forward as we struggled to go deeply into political questions, release their initiative, and rely on them to help build VVAW and the Leach campaign. By this time, active work was going on in three major cities in the state. The work included fighting the attacks on the GI Bill, battling campus administrators who tried to suspend one chapter, and extensive work around the Ashby Leach campaign. Leach became a big social question as a concentrated example of the conditions many veterans face and the fighting anger they feel. Many speaking engagements were set up on campuses and in working class neighborhoods, with as many as 100 people attending. In one city, on the weekend before Leach's trial began, over 50 vets participated in an action on the VA's front lawn, demanding his freedom and an end to the attacks on all veterans.

### Building the Revolutionary Movement among Veterans

During this period we began consciously struggling to center the meetings and the life of VVAW generally, around political discussions concerning questions coming up in the work and in society overall. We began to more consciously integrate discussion about where we saw the struggle heading and the goal of revolution with VVAW's daily activities. For the first time in the largest chapter, we made sure there was at least one comrade who openly spoke as a Party member. This same chapter developed a real life of its own, with many members participating in debate and struggle around our activities, and chapter members developed an active social life with each other. We were able to bring a large number of members to May Day celebrations that year, and soon developed a Party-led Marxist-Leninist study group of veterans.

This was an important step in the struggle to overcome rightist and pragmatic errors, and develop the "class consciousness and revolutionary unity" of both comrades and the veterans involved in the struggle with us. In one of the chapters in the region, a sharp example of rightism surfaced, with some comrades saying they were "too busy" to do independent communist work with the advanced. This line essentially made the task of developing the most active and advanced into communists a question of "icing on the cake"—a nice extra for "spare time" instead of an inseparable part of approaching our work as communists, with the final goal of communism always in mind. Again, these rightist tendencies were overcome, through struggling to apply the Party's line in general and in particular the mass line in the course of our work.

Another sharp area of struggle within the Party and VVAW was around the question of taking up national oppression particularly as it came out in the Pendleton 14 case during 1977. (See *Revolution*, Vol. 2, No. 4) As VVAW began to build the fight to Free the 14, our initial tendency was to forget the question of national oppression in society as a whole and just talk about the KKK, why the military would support the KKK, and what this shows about the nature of the military.

It was important to bring out the nature of U.S. imperialism, the military and their puppets in the Klan, but the Pendleton 14 case was much more than that. It offered the raw material to bring out in a graphic way how capitalism breeds discrimination and racism and in fact depends on national oppression for its survival. Capitalism reaps superprofits off keeping minorities and whole nations in oppressive conditions where they can work them harder, pay them less, charge them higher prices and exorbitant rents and much more. The military in turn takes advantage of the divisions created by capitalism to maintain control over the troops.

As comrades deepened their understanding of these questions we were able to unite VVAW to help build the Pendleton 14 case into a large social issue in southern California. Members of VVAW also saw that to deal with discrimination we couldn't just wish it away but had to take it up and get at its roots.

In the past we had brought forward a lot of new people around particular events, but we were always beset by what we called "the revolving door"—having forces in and around VVAW, but also regularly losing old forces as new ones came forward. While it's true



The West Coast Regional Veterans Day '77 demonstration in San Francisco was the product of constant struggle to do revolutionary work in a non-revolutionary situation. It showed the powerful potential of an organized and politically conscious veterans movement.

## RCYB...

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willingness to bend his "principles" when the question of a few more dues-paying warm bodies are at stake.)

But more serious and exposing is the overall unity on line concerning the question of youth (and other things) between the self-styled former RCYB careerists and the CP(ML). For instance, they both "reverse correct verdicts" on the gains of the mass student struggles of the '60s. *The Call*, reprinting a page from Klonsky's social pacifism in SDS days, criticizes the observation made in the RCP's recently published youth polemic on the formation of the RCYB that advanced ideas and actions, like carrying NLF and red flags in the anti-war marches, had a positive "shock" effect—and in much the same way, so would open use of the name "communist." In fact, experience has shown that this "shock" sometimes angered some people, but also spurred many others—especially youth who were already questioning what the hell was going on—to check out further *why* someone was willing to risk heckling and opposition for such a controversial question.

Of course, this is not (and was not portrayed as) the main way to bring out communism among the masses of youth—but the opportunists' stand on this question clearly betrays their right-wing essence. Bringing communism and working class ideology to the masses is a *concrete task* of the RCYB, not a "frill" to be added in "stages" or just "drawn out of their experiences" in struggle. Putting it in a name alone, and negating the propagation of the ideology of communism

in fact, is not enough (as can be seen by the CP(ML)'s example).

### Idealist Notion?

The *Call* article, in a similar rightist vein, goes on to attack as an "idealist notion" the line in the RCP *Programme* that while youth face many problems, "the most basic problem the masses of young people face is the fact that imperialism is unable to offer them a life with a purpose." (p. 157) This attack is in fundamental unity with the outlook of the former NO clique. Particular attacks must of course be fought, but underlying all this is the basic fact that imperialism can offer youth no purpose. All it can offer is a lifetime of exploitation and oppression because of its very nature. This is perceived by youth to a certain degree, but it is a truth that must be brought home to them and raised to a rational level in their understanding.

In the *Call's* Menshevik search for something palpable and concrete, these rightists narrow down and underplay the great potential for the proletariat to rally and guide youth's "enthusiasm, its innovativeness, its daring and its determination to change the world" (*Programme*, p. 158) for the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist system by proletarian revolution. Such a line can in no way grasp why and how Mao Tsetung could have stated in "Orientation of the Youth Movement" that *in a way* youth play a *vanguard* role in the revolutionary struggle—a struggle whose main force and leadership in this country is the working class.

One other way the CP(ML) tries to snuggle up to the defeated faction is by worshipping bourgeois democracy to defeat democratic centralism. They quote the RCP document which says that the line put forward there is not for "free debate" as evidence that dictatorship exists within the RCP. This is ironic, because in

fact this question *had been* discussed and debated among comrades doing youth work for many months—the "Appeal" that was written was part of that process, and the RCP document was the summation of the *line*, as deepened through that process, which was soon to be implemented at the convention. It was precisely because some of the opportunist clique's factional machinations during this period had been uncovered that it was necessary for this document to clearly spell out that comrades must firmly unite to carry out the line, which is merely a restatement of a Leninist principle of democratic centralism.

The working class and its vanguard Party, the RCP, see the gains of the recent Cincinnati conference as a real victory—not only for the youth in the RCYB, but for our class as a whole. Defeating the attempt at an opportunist coup within the Brigade, deepening the criticism of the clique's revisionist line, and grasping and further developing the correct line of the RCP will ensure that the RCYB will continue on the revolutionary path charted at its founding convention.

This is the type of organization that can really serve the interests of our class, the type of organization that sons and daughters of the working class and other youth dedicated to fighting for its revolutionary cause in the neighborhoods and campuses can join with pride. Not only will it fight for better conditions for young people, more than that it will provide a real alternative to the decadence and dog-eat-dog system and outlook the ruling class tries to train and coerce youth, along with the masses of people, to accept as "the only way" and the "natural order of things." The Revolutionary Communist Party has complete confidence that the RCYB will continue to be the place where youth will truly find a life with a purpose, in helping to accomplish the historic task of the working class—making proletarian revolution, and freeing all of mankind. ■

## Vets Work...

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that relatively more people will come forward around particular battles, and that, as these battles ebb or subside, many will fall away again, we now began to understand more clearly that in order to consolidate our gains and to take advantage of the new conditions we'd helped to create, we had to struggle with people politically to sum up what gains had been made and what was the road forward.

We feel this "revolving door" question is important. If we don't understand how to consolidate active and advanced forces, politically, it leads to a lot of gimmicky and rightism.

One line we've had to fight goes something like this: "Since people come forward around particular struggles, the way to keep them around is to keep taking up new struggles in order to keep them active." What this line means in the real world is that people come forward out of struggles they're involved in, but they're too stupid or brainwashed to be able to understand much about how their problems relate to other people's problems and society as a whole, so let's keep them active so they don't have time to think about anything.

In fact, everything about Marxism teaches us that the masses can and will become the conscious makers of history (as opposed to pawns of a few "organizers"), and our experience in the recent period of veterans work bears this out. When vets become active, they start to raise their heads, and instead of seeing a smooth road to revolution, they see a lot of contradictory phenomena. Naturally questions come up. How come people who say they agree with us don't get involved? Why do we raise the questions of revolution or communism when that turns people off? How can we say the U.S. is as bad as Russia, they've got a dictatorship over there? Why can't the races get together? etc. We've seen that our ability to keep these people active in VVAW related directly to how well we answered these questions. The more we have brought "light into the struggles," and along with this done all-around exposure of the imperialist system and developed political discussion and struggle, the more we brought activists into VVAW and moved them forward politically. When we let up on this, the masses would get demoralized and drop away from the struggle.

In some areas of the country within the Party and VVAW the incorrect line on this question of struggle and consciousness was not struggled against and in fact was even encouraged. This line reduced the question of building VVAW with a life of its own to a question of "results" in the narrowest sense, liquidating the tasks of raising the general level of consciousness of the masses and training the advanced in Marxism-Leninism, and only paying attention to how many people we can get to a demonstration or how much news coverage we can get. The people spouting this line push "organize, organize" and "fight, fight, fight." Organizing VVAW chapters becomes an end in itself, "activity" becomes everything, and the consciousness of the masses, and consolidating the advanced into Marxists, is reduced to nothing. This incorrect line forgets that

for us, in everything we do, we are building a revolution and not just a veterans organization. And, in fact, such a line makes it very difficult to sustain any type of activity for long, for the reasons gone into earlier.

### Veterans as a Powerful Social Force

Another incorrect line promoted in some areas, which is the mirror opposite image of the "fight, fight, fight" incorrect line, negates that it is possible or necessary for the working class and its Party to do work among veterans at all.

This line says that since most veterans are workers, they face the sharpest contradictions as workers, and therefore it is not "realistic" to try and organize a powerful veterans movement as a distinct component of the revolutionary movement generally.

To bolster this argument, some people try to use Marx to oppose Marxism, incorrectly asserting that Marx said, "social position determines consciousness." In fact, what Marx said (in "Preface to a Critique of Political Economy") is that "social being determines consciousness." Marx's point was that consciousness derives from the material world, and that man's activity in production is his fundamental social activity. But to listen to those who promote the line that a veterans movement is not possible or necessary, you'd have to think that aside from work, people are not affected in any way by anything else going on in the world.

In the first place, veterans face some particular contradictions as veterans—cuts in disability benefits, the GI Bill, the Veterans Administration, etc. These are all real contradictions, and there is just as real struggle around them, against the capitalist attacks. Secondly, and more importantly, there is the *whole experience* of veterans in the broadest sense, of being used to fight an unjust, imperialist war for the profits and empire of the bourgeoisie, only to be discarded on their return back home. We constantly see veterans' burning hatred, having seen their partners killed or maimed in the process of suppressing foreign peoples and protecting the capitalists' oil fields or Bank of America buildings, their

disgust at racial discrimination, harassment, the unsafe and unhealthy conditions and much more in the military. This hatred can only get intensified as they return home to no disability pay, no jobs, more discrimination, benefit cuts and the rest. And beyond that, vets, along with the masses of people, have the experience of living in a society and in a world where exploiting bandits try to rob and crush millions of people and where people in turn continually rise up against them.

All this is part of veterans' social being, and deeply affects how veterans look at society, their position in it and their participation in the overall class struggle. This, in turn, and the role of veterans as a group, has a big influence on society as a whole. For both positive and negative reasons, veterans have a certain "right to speak" in the eyes of the masses on the nature of the military and the country's foreign policy, even on overall questions of the nature of the country.

To sum this up: the incorrect line on this question has led, in some places around the country, to liquidating the work of VVAW entirely, while others with this incorrect line have argued that VVAW should be little more than a shell organization, whose name is preserved for "heavies" to speak at events and rallies.

On the other hand, building the movement among veterans in a revolutionary way and recognizing their potential as a powerful social force against imperialism, has been increasingly based on and deepened our grasp of what Mao Tsetung said in *On Practice*, "Man's social practice is not confined to activity in production, but takes many other forms—class struggle, political life, scientific and artistic pursuits; in short, as a social being, man participates in all spheres of the practical life of society. Thus man, in varying degrees, comes to know the different relations between man and man, not only through his material life, but also through his political and cultural life." We cannot afford to throw away an organization which enables us to reach and influence veterans, mobilize and organize them in struggle against the capitalists, and through them influence broader sections of the masses.

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Southern California veterans confronted the Marine Corps at Camp Pendleton's front gate in the Fall of 1977, shouting, "Brass, Nazis, Ku Klux Klan; Tools of the Rich, Scum of the Land."

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## Veterans Day

With much of this struggle as background, the California chapters of VVAW built struggle around Veterans Day this year. All three chapters marched together in the official San Francisco Veterans Day parade. (see article in *Revolution*, Vol. 3, No. 3). This struggle had a deep effect on many people in San Francisco generally, on the members of VVAW, and in turn had a deep effect on the comrades doing the work. This campaign, and the whole struggle against rightism, has resulted in an even deeper and fuller understanding of how to conduct revolutionary work in today's non-revolutionary situation. VVAW regionally saw a clear need to answer the ruling class which used the festivities to glorify imperialist aggression and pave the way for more in the future, and we felt that by gathering our forces together from all over the state, we'd be able to make the most impact both on the ruling class as well as among the masses.

VVAW entered the political battle around Veterans Day to "create favorable new conditions through struggle," and the results were even more positive than expected. Many veterans left at the opportunity to tell the ruling class and their reactionary friends on the reviewing stand to "sit on it." The slogan "To Hell With Your National Honor, We Won't Be Used Again!" summed up their anger at being lied to and used, and aimed it at the enemy.

Frankly, none of us were quite expecting the thunderous response we got from the crowds watching the parade. They cheered us and chanted with us, and when the embarrassed politicians and military brass tried to chase us from the reviewing stand, they were booed down. Even the reactionary San Francisco *Chronicle* had to admit, in the next day's issue, that VVAW stole the show, and was received better than any other group in the parade.

This action brought home in a powerful way the potentially explosive contradiction that exists between vets, who have gotten a first-hand taste of what imperialist "freedom and democracy" is all about, and the bourgeoisie. It also showed how deeply the masses of people hate the slaughter and destruction of imperialist war.

When comrades summed up the weekend, we knew we had to build off the advances that had been made, but we also knew that we had been caught a bit off guard in some areas. This pointed to some weaknesses in our understanding that would block the road forward if we didn't get down on them. Specifically, we had been weak in understanding the objective necessity to carry out independent work as communists from the start, and this hurt our ability to make the most out of the action, because we had left politics to simply doing VVAW work and didn't really use the opportunity to also put out independently a Marxist-Leninist analysis.

The Veterans Day weekend events in the Bay Area had been an extremely intense period of political struggle with many people participating. It was exactly this intensity, and the relatively high level of political discussions that resulted from it, combined with struggle within the Party around the question of revolutionary work and the tasks of communists, that allowed us to see our weaknesses.

We had lots of freedom to get at what is the answer to these problems (imperialist war, veterans being "used once and thrown away," etc.), where does the working class come in, what is the role of the Party, and where does it get its ideas from. We could have used *Revolution*, *The Worker*, the pamphlet *War and Revolution* and other Party literature in a pretty up front way. Basically it was an excellent situation to do a lot of good political work as tribunes of the people, and while we did a pretty good job, we didn't make the most of it.

In discussing this, we deepened our understanding of the fact that, as the Central Committee Report of 1976 states: "Never forget the revolutionary goal. If we do it will also affect the smaller battles, because they are also dialectically related—whether we understand it or not, whether anyone wants it to be true or not—it's true that what you can achieve in changing the conditions of the masses for example is related to the big question of how society is going to be organized. There's no way to get around that." (Excerpted in the July 1977 issue of *Revolution*)

By not integrating with our work the question of our overall goal and revolution we would fall into the incorrect line of making the question simply building VVAW as an end in itself. The Veterans Day action confronted us sharply with the fact that we were still too cautious of red-baiting and struggling over the need for revolution. As we discussed this problem, another example of it surfaced.

In one chapter, comrades had actually struggled with a vet who was beginning to see the need for revolution to quit talking about it in meetings because it was jacking up the level of unity! Although we have to help new activists understand the mass line and bring them into all-round political life beyond VVAW, the position we took turned our priorities upside down, and was fundamentally in opposition to the line of our Party. We were walling off the struggles we were taking



Vets picket Senator Cranston's office in San Francisco, March 1977. Demanding freedom for Ashby Leach who represented the fighting anger many veterans feel at having been used and thrown away.

up along with other vets from the final goal of socialism and communism.

In the past we had frequently raised an example from our practice to justify this erroneous position. A Vietnam veteran who had been active on and off for quite awhile told us that if he had known we were reds at the start, he would never have worked with us. One way to sum this up is that when you're up front with your politics, you'll turn people away. The correct line, however, recognizes that this system propels people into struggle against it, and this will be stronger than initial anti-communism—if not today, then tomorrow—provided the communists carry out a correct political line and style of work. In fact the guy who raised this objection is now in VVAW, and is checking out Marxism and the Party exactly because of communist politics, not because we hid them and didn't wage struggle to win him to an understanding of how things are set up, how society is organized and so forth.

It is crucial to grasp the relationship between unity and struggle. Things develop through contradiction, through struggle of opposing forces. And the surest way to make things stagnate is to smother the political struggle that's bound to develop as controversial ideas get tossed around.

## Regional Meeting

The first meeting of the regional steering committee of VVAW for the California region, called to plan the upcoming regional conference, was the most political and lively meeting VVAW had held up to that time. Party members and other VVAW activists had vigorous discussion and struggle which both deepened everyone's understanding of key questions and also served to firm up our grasp on how we were going to take up these subjects at the conference, and unite others around them. There was much discussion on war and revolution, where does war come from, what are the economic and political laws in operation, whether and why revolution is the only solution. Here we referred people to and were able to discuss parts of the Party's pamphlet *War and Revolution*, Lenin's *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, and the Banner Press study course, *Political Economy*. Heated debate took place about how and why we should bring out the danger of world war between the U.S. and USSR. The steering committee united around having a full presentation of VVAW's position followed by discussion. This was a big advance in terms of dealing with this question. (VVAW's position is that there is a big danger of such an imperialist war and that VVAW should oppose both superpowers, especially fighting the war preparations by the U.S.)

The meeting got into how VVAW has been battling the day-to-day economic attacks on veterans and others, and united that this should be a large discussion at the conference, including specific discussion on our GI Bill work as well as on the upcoming State of the Union demonstrations around unemployment (called jointly by the National United Workers Organization and the Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee, but which was cancelled on the East Coast because of bad weather, while around 350 attended out West). There was also an in-depth discussion around why and how the Party should play a role at the Conference.

The conference itself was dynamite. A number of advanced forces played key roles, including giving presentations and leading discussions. A little over 40 veterans attended, which wasn't quantitatively larger than the last conference, but quality wise, there was much more political unity and understanding. Those present were much more active members of VVAW than in the past, when the majority of people were "just checking it out."

The Party and the revolutionary goal came out as in-

tegral parts of the life of VVAW, not that people had to agree with them, but that they were a part of the struggle over the road forward. It also created a lot of controversy, and that too was a good thing.

As we said in the beginning, our struggle to keep to the high, hard road to revolution has been marked by much sharp struggle, mostly against rightism. It has been exactly this struggle that has propelled our work forward. Without it, as has become clear in some other parts of the country where this rightism has been encouraged, we would be doomed to the low road towards opportunism and revisionism. As the article in the September issue of *Revolution* on the "Tasks of Party Branches" put it, "The point is that without the leadership of the Party, without the guidance of its ideological and political line representing the revolutionary outlook and interests of the working class, there is no way that mass struggle can continue to advance through ups and downs, no way the struggling masses can thoroughly distinguish real friends from real enemies and build the broadest unity against the enemy, and certainly no way the struggle can be carried forward to achieve the historic mission of the working class, the abolition of class society."

The revisionist line, the low road, reaps what it sows. It says the masses can't understand all this political stuff, so "leave it to us hot shots." It hides the political goals and outlook of the working class in the name of turning out numbers to gimmick events, and it can't even turn out numbers on a long-term basis as our "revolving door" experience showed. In its substitution of quantity for quality, it negates both, and leads people into a dead end. It would inevitably lead to a VVAW consisting of a small handful of officers and no troops.

Our overall experience, which became so sharply focused around Veterans Day, really showed us something. The masses of people hate the misery this system heaps on them, and we can tap this hatred and turn it on the system itself. We can do *revolutionary* work in a non-revolutionary situation and prepare our own ranks and the masses for revolution—and our work among veterans is one important part of this. ■

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