

VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR
GAINESVILLE CONSPIRACY DEFENSE COMMITTEE
PO BOX 13179
GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA 32601

October, 1972

Dear Friend:

People dying needlessly is a serious thing. All of us have a premonition of our own death. And that disturbs us. Death is a future we all have in common, therefore it makes no sense to treat the deaths of others lightly. They are our future.

The members of Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) realize this fact more so than most people. We were the human instruments this government used to carry out its insane policy of death and destruction on the people of Vietnam. It took a long time for many of us to realize that U. S. policies in Indo-China are criminal. It took a long time for many of us to realize that Nixon's plan of "Vietnamization" is nothing but the most contemptible, racist arrogance possible. But realize we did, and now we are dedicated to ending this genocidal conflict and attempting to atone, by our actions, the harm we personally did.

We number among our members sailors and marines, privates and generals, nurses, grunts, pilots and doctors. We are what Vice President Agnew is fond of calling, "our best men who fight in Asian rice paddies to preserve freedom". The "best men" are back now, with the realization that we were not fighting to preserve freedom in Vietnam, but to prevent freedom for the Vietnamese people. We are back; many of us whole, many without eyes, arms, legs, or a combination of all; we have the same cry: "Stop the senseless slaughter now!" This administration realizes the credibility we have with the American people and they must suppress our dissenting voices - especially in this election year. The administration has stated on many occasions that the war is a "non-issue"; we wonder if they can convince the Vietnamese people as to the validity of that statement?

In order to silence us, the government has charged six leaders of VVAW with "conspiring to promote a riot at the Republican Convention by use of cherry bombs, smoke bombs, slingshots, crossbows, "fried" marbles, explosives and automatic weapons". Probably the biggest question in everyone's mind is whether we are, in fact, guilty of these charges. WE ARE NOT GUILTY! The whole existence of VVAW is based on the fact that we who were once the pawns in the systematic destruction of the people and lands of Indo-China feel a much greater value for human life than our own government does. Now the government is trying to charge us with the very crime of which we have been accusing them for five years

- the total disregard of human life in order to achieve its illegal objectives.

No one knows better than the torturer himself what torture means. No one understands bombing better than the bomber, guns better than the gunner, death than he who kills. Since we once participated in its deadly games, the government thinks it will be easy to convince people that we would be willing to adopt its violent methods for our own ends.

If we were not protesting - if we were not resisting a criminal war policy - we would be considered heroes on the basis of our war records. Look at the VVAW record of non-violence and judge for yourself. In the past five years, VVAW has organized hundreds of demonstrations in every state of the Union; none has resulted in violence. The only thing of which we are guilty is telling the truth. The only danger to the government is our presence, because we expose its hypocracies, lies and criminality better than anyone else; and we will not be silenced.

To provide an adequate defense to these ridiculous charges requires much money. The costs of travel, legal and communication expenses will be enormous. We estimate that \$175,000 will be needed to adequately defend ourselves and to educate the American people to the fact that this administration will go to any lengths to suppress legal political dissent. To raise this amount we depend entirely on donations. We have no professional fund-raisers and we do all the work ourselves.

In the final analysis, our defense is up to you. If you believe in us, if you believe in what we are doing and in what we will continue to do, please support us. Collectively, we face prison terms of 45 years and fines up to \$80,000, simply for exercising the Constitutional rights which we were supposedly defending in Vietnam. We are not violent. We no longer fight with weapons, but with words; and we fight only for peace. You have supported the peace movement in the past; by supporting the Gainesville Conspiracy Defense you are supporting the entire anti-war movement.

For Peace and Justice

THE GAINESVILLE SIX

Scott Camil

Alton Foss

John Kniffin

Pete Mahoney

Bill Patterson

Don Perdue

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: GAINESVILLE CONSPIRACY DEFENSE COMMITTEE
P O BOX 13179
GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA 32601

FOR TAX DEDUCTION, TO: "SOCIETY OF FRIENDS" C/O VVAW
PO BOX 13179
GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA 32601