

We hail from all corners of the country and have joined together for a common revolutionary objective....Our cadres must show concern for every soldier, and all people in the revolutionary ranks must care for each other, must love and help each other.

--- "serve the People", Mao

A brief description of Fort Bragg, North Carolina:

Ft. Bragg, NC, "home of the Airborne", is the home base of the 18th Airborne Corps which is the S.S.'s ground strike force used for instant deployment anywhere in the world where the dollar is threatened. Units making up the 18th Abn Corps include the 82d Abn Div, Corps Staff, Corps Artillery and the 12th Support Brigade. The 101st Airborne Div., located now in Vietnam and usually quartered at Ft. Campbell is also a part of the Corps.

The 82d Abn Div, "America's Honor Guard", is the major unit on post and shares notoriety with the JFK Center for Military Assistance (Green Berets). The Division is the only unit other than those in Vietnam that is kept up to full strength and always has at least one third of it on ready alert constantly. Examples of its mobility is the 3rd Brigade, 82d Airborne Division, which was deployed to the Dominican Republic in 1965 to prevent its liberation and it was also used as a part of Westmoreland's reinforcements after the Tet 1968 Offensive. The Division is always kept on alert for any Movement action while constantly being trained in riot control tactics and was used during the D.C. May Day activities. Other alerts were the Jordan Crisis, Pakistan, and New Haven. The Division is constantly sending parts of itself to Panama, Korea, and Turkey on training missions to impress upon the local peoples in that area the capabilities of American Imperialism. Another function of the units on Ft Bragg is the "selling of the Pentagon", where massive and expensive displays of military hardware and firepower are given to high military, government and business leaders.

The JFK Center is used to train Special Forces and officers of puppet armies throughout the world in counter-insurgency techniques.

Both units are ultra macho and anti-communist in their propaganda to the enlisted men. For instance, on training operations the opposition is always labeled the Aggressor, which is a satellite of the USSR or People's Republic of China. Also the glorious histories, traditions and accomplishments of both units are stressed.

The collective feels that the Corps is the best area on which to concentrate organizing since it is the most well used and blatant tool of the U.S. aggression in the Third World.

The average trooper at Ft Bragg is usually quite young (17-20), a volunteer for parachute duty and very impressionable. Perhaps these points make the Airborne soldier both challenging and gratifying to work with.

Working on base is quite difficult because of its size, the large distance from Fayetteville (10 mi) and the Brass's harassment of anyone distributing any literature on post.

VOLAR's image appears to be in for a tarnishing soon because the word is around post is the haircut policy is going to be changed to a shorter length, and that mandatory formations are also coming back. Both of these changes and other "tightening up" actions will further destroy its credibility about modernizing its image.

Army policy seems to be directed into a post-Vietnam mode and new troops are reminded that the war is over for them and thus depriving the movement of the opportunity to show GI's a personal and blater contradiction of American involvement overseas. Other contradictions will have to be sought and exploited in order to keep the GI movement going while still keeping in mind that the war still effects GIs like all Americans, but in a less personalized sense. The collective feels that the problems and solutions of oppression, capitalism and imperialism should be explained to the people on how they apply both in the military and in civilian life.

Another tact that can be used is to encourage the continued study and involvement of GIs after they get out of the service and to get a referral service started for GIs out of the service to get in touch with movement groups in their hometowns. Once out they can build up more class consciousness and to struggle.

Racism and sexism can be attacked by emphasizing solidarity with all oppressed peoples and by humanizing people that the military and society have dehumanized.

Heavy drufs and alcohol use is wide spread among all units, especially the 82d Abn, called the "Jumping Junkies",. The Army is attempting to deal with alcohol in no way, and with drugs in two ways. An all out crackdown on users/dealers is one of the methods, but alienates the hip-culturalists favored by the brass and the second is called "Project Awareness", a plastered propagandized rehabilitation program. The program is opposed by the Brass, underfunded and refuses to deal with the social/political reasons for drug useage. We think that the collective can provide the alternatives needed.

The Haymarket Square Coffee House

The coffeehouse is located in an old warehouse on the edge of the downtown area in Fayetteville. It is about 10 miles form base -- on the same street which comes in from Ft Bragg. There is a strip of bars, pawn shops, etc -- "rip-off alley" -- which runs from the coffeehouse to the shopping district of downtown Fayetteville. Across the street from the coffee house is an abandoned gas station and garage, which a local church has taken over. They have a small stage, chairs and tables in the old garage, and an office for counseling drug users. Occasionally they have evangelists come to speak to the crowd of pushers, junkies, and street people who hang out in the parking lot. That corner has been the center of the white, high school (primarily) street crowd, heroine pushers, junkies and bad acid/grass dealers.

The inside of the coffee house is long and narrow, with a bookstore at one end, a food counter, meeting room and store room at the other end. The bookstore has basically political books on the struggles of GIs, Blacks, Women, Third world countries and peoples, and a small culture and fiction section. (It's a relatively big bookstore with about 1,000 titles) In between the bookstore and food counter is a big area with a reading area (newspapers), a stage and tables with chairs for about 150-250 people. The decor of the place, and the barn-like building, create an atmosphere which many people can't relate to. The walls are decorated with posters of the Russian revolution, women's struggle, and US revolutionaries. These factors, plus others, add up to an atmosphere which is intimidating to women, non-radicals, and often to woking class GIs. (although more working class GIs have been coming in lately.)

Programs presently going on in the coffee house include a Friday night folk jam which sometimes includes poetry reading, a Wednesday night film program when we show Newsreel films, as well as films on China and Cuba, and periodic bands (folk-rock usually). The film program has been growing this fall, and is becoming a better tool, however there are several drawbacks.

Little rapping is done by collective members with people who see the films. Often the sound tracks get lost in the rafters (due to coffee house design problems, as well as poor sound tracks), and noise from people who are not watching the films often distracting. We have had a history of people leaving the coffee house when we start to show films, or people not coming in during films, which means that there is usually only 10 or 15 people watching at most. (This history was not born true last Saturday when a crowd of people watched "People's Park" and "High School Rising".) Our regular crowd of street people and a few GIs usually attend the folk jam, with varying size crowds for the bands (a big source of money-making.)

In terms of entertainment at the coffee house, we have also had the FTA show (in April), The San Francisco Mime Troupe (Which was a huge success and a good stimulant for other political activities for about a week), and Barbara Dane (which was only a partial success, for a variety of reasons.) We also have had a program of political speakers including, most recently Fi, a brother from the Young Lords Party in New York who was in Attica during the massacre. We had a group of people meeting about the county jail after our demonstration and rally in response to the Attica murders and the murder of George Jackson. The GI Union also meets regularly with 15-20 GIs now.

Changes in people coming into the coffeehouse: Basically there are more street people and fewer GUs coming into the coffeehouse. However, of those GIs who come into the place, more are working class, and fewer are middle class. The regulars used to be mainly middle class GIs; now the regulars are working class GIs. When good publicity is done about a big event, a good number of GIs come into the place. And there are more Vietnam Veterans coming in who have the potential for being a strong base fo Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

Major events and speakers:

1. FTA or USSF show: since there was a whole analysys of this in the March USSF Bulletin, we'll only briefly mention it here. It obviously brought in a huge crowd that thoroughly enjoyed the show. It did raise some consciousness, but there seemed to be little long-range political value, because there was no follow-up. This has been the biggest problem with this event and all others mentioned below: a good number of people are brought into the coffeehouse at that time and afterwards, but since there is little to bet involved in, subsequently, they usually cease coming. The Ussf show also demanded an incredible amount of time, energy and cost. Who can really measure if it's worth it?

2. Barbara Dane and her son came down to do a joint show -- her singing and his showing slides and rapping about Cuba (in Spetmber) The problem is that she was very late, which we considered very bad since people had to wait for hours -- since people were restless when she finally ariived, we felt she spent too much time talking instead of singing. So a number of people left. Her son did not show the slides until real late, so that only a few people saw them. Again, there was the same problem with lack of follow-through.

3. San Francisco Mime Troupe -- This theater group performed The Dragon Lady's Revenge, which was just fantastic. It was so relevant to the heavy drug problems at the coffeehouse. There was a huge crowd. We fell the show definitely raised politicl consciousness about the political corruption around drug selling in Vietnam. However, it did not have much impact on drug usage, but one could hardly expect one performance to accomplish this. For a short while after the performance, more people came in. It was unfortunate, the Mime Troupe could not spend more tiem here, talking to people.

Work with high school students:

We have worked with high school students for a number of reasons. First of all, they are a part of the military community in that most are sons or daughters of military people. Also a good number come into the coffee house. The schools here are run like the military, super-oppressive, so a number of students have been radicalized. The overall problem with work with high school students has been the lack of follow-through, continuous efforts to work with them. There has been a group of students that has focused most on writing a high school newspaper. There was a paper at the beginning of the year, but neither staff nor students really made an effort to keep this up. Some key high school students have become more involved in drugs which has created a big problem. Also there was a high school study group for a number of weeks. But there was no continuous core, and people failed to do the reading. Fewer and fewer people came for a number of reasons, and the key staff member responsible went to work, so the group stopped. Students did not seem that enthusiastic in continuing it.

STRUCTURE---

One of the bigger changes at the coffee house lately has been our efforts to change the nature of how decisions about the coffee house are made. In the past, the collective has made every decision about the coffee house. We have changed to have decisions made by two groups. We have expanded the collective into a "policy making group" made of collective members and GI's (other people in Fayetteville may be included later.) This group meets every week to talk about political direction in the coffee house and to make general policy decisions, ie, what kinds of books we will buy for the bookstore, etc. This working collective (as opposed to the living collective which is those of us who live together) also meet once a week for political study.

Once a week we have a community meeting which decides programs for the coffee house. There are sub groups of the community meeting which work on entertainment, films, arts and crafts (developing a craft center and doing publicity). So far, this group has only met three or four times, and hasn't worked out real well. Part of this is due to inconsistency in attendance at meetings, people not following through on commitments (and the collective not taking initiative to encourage people to follow through and fulfill responsibilities); and general constituency problems. Though these problems do exist, the whole idea has worked out better than we thought; there is more interest than we expected.

BRAGG BRIEFS

Bragg Briefs is at the present time recovering from the recent loss of almost all the people who had been active on the paper in the past year. Losses have been almost all due to people leaving the service, usually on early outs. This followed the collapse of GI's United, by about two months, during which time the paper was not published.

Now there is a group of 6-8 GI's, and two members of the Haymarket Collective (Vets) who are meeting around the next issue. Interest from GI's on post and in the coffee house has been good and we have been getting more information than usual about happenings and hassles around post. Many people have been offering pictures and stories.

Surprising has been the numbers of GI's who have never heard or seen of Bragg Briefs despite its presence around post for over two years. Many are new to post, both Nam Vets and GI's in the service only a short time, usually just out of jump school.

This has brought up a serious problem of distribution. The largest of GI's who need and would relate to Bragg Briefs, are in the isolated "crack" units like the 82nd Airborne. Getting the paper to them has always been a problem, but with the current shortage of people, it has become a bigger hassle. Up to this summer, relatively open distribution on post was common. But the new General (Hay) is uptight about papers and coffee houses, and has cracked down on distribution.

Distribution has been on Hay Street (rip-off alley) on busy nights and weekends, through the coffee house, and people bringing copies back to their units, and general dumping in places where people will find them. Encouraging has been the number of GI's who come in to pick up a load for their units. But it's still one of the major problems we have to work on.

News of local actions, including the GI Union, will probably be one of the main focuses in the next few months, as well as trying to tie together news from the GI struggle around the world. Hopefully we will be able to do some analysis of the reasons behind the new tough Army policies, and relate them to the GI's daily hassles. Also, analysis of the role of units like the 82nd Airborne Division, "Amerikas Honor Guard" in crushing the struggle for freedom all over the world (Dominican Republic, Panama, Vietnam, Lebanon, Jordan, Washington D.C.). We also have been getting more info on the struggles of WAC's and GI wives locally.

Making the paper into a vehicle to relate to the large numbers of younger GI's currently arriving at Bragg, will be one of the major projects of the near future. These GI's are in great majority not Nam Vets, and are the core of the Armys hopes for the next few years. Once here, just out of jump school, they realize all the shit is still here, that Volar is a hoax, etc.

THE PRISON GROUP

As you probably know, we held a rally and march through downtown Fayetteville in anger at the murders in Attica and San Quenton, and to try to link the conditions in the county jail with the whole prison system and issues coming out after the murders. Although there were only about 125 people participating (Fayetteville has seen anti-war marches of several thousand), we felt that was a pretty good showing since we only had about three days to organize it in. ** At the time of the rally, we decided to try to get an on-going group together to work on prison issues. The group came together, and decided to focus on the local county jail (as opposed to the state or federal prisons). Most of the people initially involved were high school students and street people. The collective came up with several ideas for possible directions the group could go in, but in the end, people were concerned, but not really into doing anything. Part of the problem may have been that we didn't recommend that we walk into the county court house and freeing everybody in there, but instead, other more typical organizing ideas (visiting the jail -- which was done by four people--leafleting, study group, other kindd of prison reform things, information and complaint gathering and subsequent action). Another part of the problem wasn lack of great enthusiasm on the part of the collective, and therefore an inability to make the issue relate directly to the people who come in to the coffee house. Good things which did happen around the prison acion were a radio program broadcast on the station many GIs listen to, newspots and radio ads we initiated, leafleting, and rapping at the coffee house.

In rapping with GIs we have also been tying the GI struggle and stockade struggle with the whole prison issue, repression, etc. A lot of other kinds of educational things have happened around the prison concern, such as increased sales of George Jackson's book and other prison literature on the book store. Although there is no group going now, we still tie prison issues into our raps and one liberal minister in town is still working on reforms (books and TVs into the cells, etc.)

** In response to the rally and march, we received a letter from several women who were in the county jail. We also heard reports from the jail that response to the march was good. During the march a lot of leafleting was done among people on the sidewalk. The response from these people was very favorable, and many GIs joined the march.

Several weeks after the Attica massacre, Brother Fi from the Young Lord's Party in New York, came to the coffee house and spoke about what had happened at Attica and the repercussions. At that time we also gave a report on the prison visitation to the county jail. Again the crowd was small, despite good deal of advertizing (leaflets and radio ads). However several people go together after his talk, and rapped for a long time about what had come down. None of those people showed up two days later for the prison meeting. Two major problems we felt about this program were, one that we didn't get Fi down here soon enough after the Attica rebellion, so a lot of momentum was lost. The other problem was that although Fi is a good speaker, he is not very dynamic.

See leaflet on last page for most recent activity, which included lawyers actions and press activity .

DRUGS: (three comments)

1) Drugs have been a constant hassle in our work at Haymarket. The corner across from the coffee house is the center of a lot of skag pushing and acid sales and a lot of the people inside the coffee house relate to drug culture in a positive way. The dope scene repels many GIs from the coffee house because they are likely to get hustled by pushers as they enter the place. GIs that do heavy dope don't frequent Haymarket as the corner pushers make a practice of ripping-off soldiers. The more we have seen the corner people the more we have been impressed with their hardness, their manipulation of each other, their insincerity, their isolation from each other. It is very painful to watch their decomposition and disintegration knowing that there is little we can do to reach them. To become involved in patching up the casualties that end up on skag is a seemingly hopeless task and one that would totally divert us from our primary goal of political work with active duty GIs. Work with people in the drug scene here in any case, will assume an expanded staff.

2) In an analysis of drugs it is important to remember that the relationship of GIs to dope is a special one in the dope culture. It is contradictory to be moralistic about street people and dope, and then to have a sympathetic perspective regarding GIs and dope.

3) Each individual in the collective has different views and perceptions of the dope problem. Therefore we have had a difficult time figuring out how to present this in the report. So it's very important for people to talk with us about it.

STREET PEOPLE -- 2 views and 1 comment

1) There has been some differences of opinion in the collective as regards to street people, some members seeing work on the street bang part of what we are about and others thinking that we ought not to overextend ourselves, and should concentrate all our resources on working with GIs. Relating to too many constituencies undoubtedly disperses our efforts quite thin. A big question is whether to relate just to active duty GIs or more broadly to the whole military community of Fayetteville.

Most of the street people here are lifers' kids around 16 or 17 who hang around the Haymarket afternoons and evenings before making their curfews at home. Their only means of support other than parental subsidies seems to be dope sales and rip-offs. Many of the street people look on workers with contempt and are blatantly sexist in their attitudes. The scene is permeated by dope culture values and practices. Those from working class

families seem to have lost their class consciousness, looking with scorn on working people. Their identity rather seems to be sought in generational or non-class terms. Of course as people they are as valuable humanly as any other human beings; they are unique and irreplaceable people, and they are alienated from many societal values. Even though they have no relation to the means of production and tend to live off the working class. The major objection to devoting time to raising their consciousness relates to its being a drain on our primary goals of working with GIs. Given the extent of drug use and sexism in this group, such work would involve an enormous investment of time and patience.

2) Without getting into an analysis of who will fight the revolution the following points would be made about street people: 1) the anti-authoritarianism is a handel for productive political discussion. Their knowledge of pig action and harrassment makes them valuable friends with important information if a non-judgemental relationship can be maintained between the street people and the collective. 2) Many street people around Haymarket are strong capable people who are helpful and interested in the coffeehouse, but who are anti-study in a way that is interpreted as anti-political by some collective members. #3) The difference between ripping off the people and ripping off pigs and pig establishments is one that is important and dear to street people. Finally, this statement is not meant as a justification for dividing energy between street people and GIs but as a recognition that whatever is politically correct, there is a relationship that we have to be responsible to. We are mistaken if we see street people as the enemy rather than as victims of the larger enemies

3) Obviously we are far from resolution on our relationship with street people. Therefore, keep your cards and letters coming folks, and share your thoughts.

COLLECTIVE HASSELS (amen)

Sexism:

As any collective with both men and women livign together, there are many discussions around issues of sexism. There have been many confrontations over issues of men exploiting women, and men being oppressive to women in the collective. Some of the confrontations have been serious session of struggle, others more superficial. The hardest problem is the fact that most of the men in the collective have a good handle on the blatant kinds of sexism. However, it is the more subtle, sophisticated, middle class, kinds of oppression towards women which the men need to work on. At times there has been little willingness on the part of the men in the

collective to work on their sexism, and it has always been very difficult for the men to deal with their own sexism. Often, discussions of sexism tend to be more centered around the sexism which comes out at the coffee house (usually from the people who frequent the place, not from the collective) and therefore never really reaches the crux of the issues in the collective. At the moment there is only one woman working with the collective, and there are no women living in the collective house.

Classism:

Almost all of us are middle class. We recognize that there are a lot of problems to be worked out in terms of dealing with classism. We have not done this to date.

Political orientation and theory:

We have all joined the project with varying degrees of consciousness, and with varying perspectives on socialism and socialist theory. To combat this we have weekly political study meetings during which time we try to answer each others' questions, and to deal with some of our differences. Often these discussions have pointed up major areas of disagreement which must be worked through.

Dope and Alcohol:

Dope has never been much of a problem because it isn't around (the house). However, because of this, people have from time to time really gotten into drinking -- especially during times of internal crisis. This has been a problem in the past, to the point of affecting the work of the collective, however, it doesn't seem to be a growing problem.

Personalities and collectivity:

I'm not really sure what I was thinking when I put this subtitle down, but I guess it's basically two things. One is that some people are questioning whether or not they as individuals, or we as a group, should be living ~~XX~~ together. Collective living does tend to cut us off from working people, by being such an oddity. There is also disagreement amongst individuals as to whether we are just living together for convenience or if we want to work on living together. The second thing is the whole struggle against individualism as opposed to collectivism. We have had many struggles with each other about making decisions individually, but are much better about it, and continue to work on it.

Frustrations of work:

I don't think we have to point out the frustrations of work around military bases. The constant turnover, the never ending work of building a group, and then starting all over, etc. etc. is hard to work with. Despite the fact that we basically view ourselves as doing political education and consciousness raising, and we are not hoping to make the revolution tomorrow there are many moments of despair. This usually manifests itself in poor work, no enthusiasm, or collective spirit, or people leaving the project. The major frustration for us now, which we hope you will help us work on, is not having a good sense that the tools we are now using are correct. (coffeehouse - barn, bookstore, etc.) One of the other frustrations, which is often very depressing, is the maintenance operations of the coffee house. Every day we are open there is at least 1 1/2 hours or more of maintenance to do, as well as at least two afternoons a week are spent doing merchandise errands for the coffee house. These things are necessary for the operation of the coffee house, but we aren't convinced that it is worth this effort to accomplish our political work.

Scheduling:

A one sentence explanation to so that we each have house duty once a week to cook, clean house, and have a few hours to ourselves. The rest of the week we work at least five hours a day at the coffee house, and spend many hours a day working on other projects and studying at home.

FINANCES (a bumper discussion)

One last gasp about the ramifications of the present situation at the coffee house, and thereby a significant factor in the future of the place, That is that at one time the coffee house was self-sufficient, and even making some money. However, in the last few months we have had to come to rely on USSF, one \$100 a month donation, and \$100 a month from legal work to keep us going. (The project has a turn over -- money spent and earned -- of about \$2,500 to \$3,00 every month.)

CONCLUSIONS:

If you've made it through all this, we deeply appreciate it, if you didn't, well, that's kind of understandable. Doing this report, although a huge hassel, has been one of the best ways for us to prepare for this conference. Hopefully, we are coming with a good perspective on what the collective is thinkign and feeling, and with some specific questions for us to work on together.