

VVA WSO NATIONAL OFFICE

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January 9, 1974

TO: Communist Party of the U.S.A.
23 West 26th Street
New York, New York 10010
Attn: Ms. Charlene Mitchell

Mr. James F. Forest
American Secretary
World Peace Council
Lonnrotink. 25 A. 6. kra
00180 Helsinki 18
Finland

RE: LETTER OF CENSURE

The following is a formal letter of censure ordered by the National Steering Committee of Vietnam Veterans Against the War/Winter Soldier Organization at a national meeting recently held in Yellow Springs, Ohio.

On November 8, 1973, the National Office of VVAW/WSO sent you a letter regarding an incident that occurred during the recent World Congress of Peace Forces held in Moscow, October 25-31. As was stated in that letter, a member of the VVAW/WSO delegation to the Peace Congress was asleep in her room at the hotel where delegates to the Congress were staying when an unknown intruder entered her room and most viciously assaulted and raped her. As disgusting as this incident was, in and of itself, the treatment our delegate received at the hands of the Soviet police officials was even harder to understand. In our letter of November 8th, we wrote:

Due to the extremely sensitive nature of this assault and the implications it held for the Congress, we did our best to assure that the incident was not publicly disclosed. We did of course notify the proper Soviet police officials and medical personnel. We must point out that the doctors and medical personnel that examined... (her)... were most compassionate and concerned about her physical and psychological well being, and for this we are extremely grateful. On the other hand, the treatment she received from the police was insensitive and cold-blooded, to say the least. The questions asked... (her)... read like a Chicago police blotter: "Did you like it? Did you lead him on? Did you really try to resist?" The point being that... (she)... was treated in the same manner as a rape victim would be treated by a police officer in the U.S.A. We cannot understand this in the context of a socialist state.

Feeling that this treatment was inexcusable a letter was sent to you: the CPUSA and the American Secretary of the World Peace Council, who were the organizers and responsible bodies for the U.S. delegation, demanding an apology for this and that the matter be brought to the attention of the proper Soviet authorities. A reply was never received at all from the U.S. based organizing body, the CPUSA -- our letter was totally ignored. While Mr. Forest of the World Peace Council did send us a letter, it did not even mention the specific criticisms we had raised. It was simply not an honest attempt to deal with the problem. VVAW/WSO realizes that the CPUSA, the WPC and the Soviet authorities cannot be held responsible for the acts of an individual rapist, but we cannot understand the total disrespect shown by the CPUSA and the WPC by your acts of ignoring our letter.

For this disrespectful nonaction, VVAW/WSO publicly censures the CPUSA, the actions of the Soviet police officials, as well as the office of the American Secretary of the World Peace Council. As the responsible organizing bodies of the U.S. delegation to the Moscow World Congress of Peace Forces, your failure to respond to our original letter of concern is inexcusable. We censure you for failing to respond in any real manner to our criticism of the chauvinistic and insensitive treatment afforded our delegate by Soviet police officials after the assault occurred. VVAW/WSO will not tolerate your non-action. You have shown both disrespect to the individual delegate and to our organization as a whole.

For the National Steering Committee
VVAW/WSO

The VVAW/WSO National Office