

EDITORIAL

The United States Of America vs. William L. Calley

by Terry K. Wimmer

The court-martial, conviction and sentencing of First Lieutenant William L. Calley, Jr. will be noted in the annals of the United States of America as a tragic illustration of the blemishes that warfare inflicts on a nation. Never before has the armed forces of this country been so viciously attacked by its citizenry. Not only has the military suffered, but likewise, so have the people of this nation. The agonies of war are not particular when it spreads its disease. It affects us all.

During the past weeks, we have been subjected to cries of "murderer," "scapegoat," "premeditation," etc. Before one hurriedly denounces the Army for convicting Lieut. Calley, one must know why he was brought to trial. On the morning of March 16, 1968, the men of Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry of the 11th Infantry Brigade, Americal Division moved into Songmy-Mylai 4 (Pinkville). Their mission was to search for and destroy the 48th Vietcong Battalion that Army intelligence had reported had infiltrated the village. Army intelligence had also reported that the women and children of Mylai 4 would be in the marketplace of a nearby village. As history has sadly recorded though, neither report was accurate for on that fateful morning, the VC weren't in Pinkville, but women and children were.

According to the sentence brought forth at the court-martial against Lieut. Calley, he committed, with premeditation, the murder of 22 non-combatant Vietnamese civilians. Initially, Calley had been charged with 102 counts of murder. Because of the contradictions in the testimony of the prosecution and defense witnesses, the six-man, all-military jury found Calley guilty of the 22 murders. The important factor to remember is that throughout the trial, the Army attempted to establish and justify its conception of "right and wrong" in a combat zone. This perhaps is the most troublesome aspect for us to recognize, let alone comprehend. The involvement of the United States in Indochina has never been popular with the citizenry of this nation. Our activities in the countries of Indochina have been labeled everything from "immoral" to "unconstitutional." Therefore, the "deck was stacked" against the Army before it ever brought Calley to trial. How could the Army justify the conviction of one of its own on charges of murder in a war that a majority of the people it defends is vehemently opposed to? As is seen now by the outpouring of sympathy for Calley, it is having a hard time doing so.

Is Lieut. Calley guilty? The Army has rendered that decision and based on the evidence presented at the court-martial, I concur, in part, with the verdict. There is no justification in a non-combat situation (which Mylai 4 was since there was no evidence of enemy presence) for the cold-blooded murder of innocent women and children. To condone such an action would be like providing sanctuary to an individual who has entered your home and murdered your family. This nation must never allow its emotions to guide our conception of justice. Likewise, the people of this nation must demand that the full account as to the high-level responsibility of the massacre at Mylai 4 be brought to light.

Was Lieut. Calley a "scapegoat" by following the orders of a higher authority? As a result of the initial inquiries made by the Army into the massacre, 25 officers and enlisted men were accused on various charges stemming from murder to failing to report a felony. Since that time, charges against 19 men were dropped, 2 were acquitted, 3 are still awaiting court-martial and of course, Calley was convicted. The most prominent of those accused were two Generals—Maj. Gen. Samuel Koster and Brig. Gen. George Young. Both men were charged with a various amount of violations. The amazing and highly questionable factor involved is that the charges against these two men were dropped, but, the Army Chief of Staff, William C. Westmoreland has recommended to the Pentagon that they be demoted in rank. Why? If their charges have been dropped, why are they being punished? Could it be that the Army is attempting to avoid the embarrassment that the court-martialing of two Generals would bring? Gen. Westmoreland's actions tend to feed fire to, rather than cool off an already hotly debated question.

There is though another factor that could of sealed Lieut. Calley's fate. Throughout the trial, Calley claimed that he was acting on orders from his Company Commander, Capt. Ernest Medina, to destroy "everyone and everything" in Mylai 4. If this is the case, Calley was still guilty of murder for the U.S. Manual of Court-Martial states that a soldier must disobey an order that "a man of ordinary sense and understanding would know to be illegal." If Capt. Medina is convicted of murder at his upcoming court-martial, it could conceivably be that either Medina alone gave Calley the massacre orders or that Medina himself was given orders by a

higher authority to destroy Mylai 4. If the latter is the case, Calley has had his day in court and we must demand that those equally as guilty must have theirs.

Lieut. William Calley is the victim of a war machine that has become corroded by its tragic blunders in Indochina. But yet we have made Calley a strange kind of hero. We have consistently protested the usage of napalm on suspected enemy villages, the pattern bombing of non-military targets in North Vietnam between 1965 and 1968, the policy of "free fire" zones in South Vietnam in which every living thing is to be killed, etc. But yet we call the court-martial of a man who was convicted of throwing an innocent, frail baby into a ditch and unemotionally firing flesh-burning tracer bullets into its body a "miscarriage of justice." We must not permit our emotions to separate our conception of decency.

The green abyss of Vietnam will haunt this nation and its people for decades to come. My only hope is that we are not haunted by our sympathy for Lieut. Calley and that those who are equally as guilty are brought to trial. For this nation and its people to survive, justice must prevail and U.S. involvement in Indochina must irrevocably and mercifully come to an end.

Letters To The Editor:

Dear Editor:

A few of the items of business carried on at the regular meetings of the Resident Student Council during the first two terms were: a priority list of Resident Hall improvements (some of which have already been accomplished) others such as cable TV we hope will be installed this term, a Senior Award, a jukebox for the dining hall, a refrigerator, Resident student complaints, and the success of having Mr. Herpel and Dean South and wife stay overnight in the dorm to meet students, answer questions and hear problems of residence life.

On-going responsibilities of the Council include governance of the residence halls area and participation in the selection of Resident Assistants.

For the Spring Term, Resident Student Council will increase its membership from 6 to 12 members and all other resident students are welcome to their meetings. (Ask your representative for time and place).

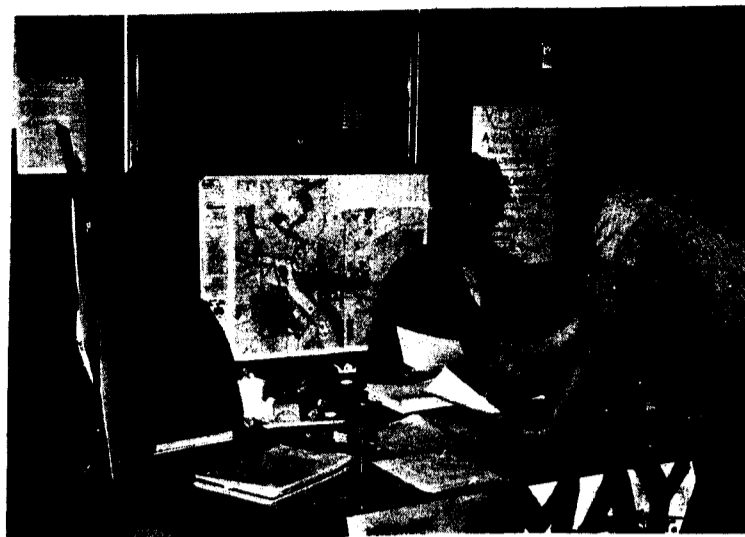
Although the Resident Student Council has been at work, we hope through increased membership to be more effective in the future in achieving resident student goals through greater participation and involvement in the Residence Halls setting.

For the Spring Term, the Resident Student Council has planned a meeting of resident students with Mr. Hefkin and also plan to have Dean Grimm stay overnight in the residence hall.

Doug Megla
Former Chairman, R.S.C.

Dear Penn State:

As I start my sixth and last term attending you, because I am a senior, I wanted to take the time to write you a letter concerning my education here. Before I go any further,



PEACE TABLE—Located near the Round Table, is the place to find out the information about Mayday activities. Here, Lee Levan and Michael Blank distribute information. Sign-up sheets for buses are available here.

The final call—Mayday—Everyone out for the first seven days in May to Stop the War—Bring the men, the money, and the priorities back home!

May 1 through 7 will be the hardest hitting action of our campaign in bringing the government around to the concept of serving the people's interests. In alignment with organizations and campuses throughout the country, Capitol Campus is preparing its contingent for the non-violent civil disobedience of the May actions.

We will be going to Washington D.C. to end the war, to demand a minimum annual income of \$6,500, to free all political prisoners, and poor people.

The time is now!
IF THE GOVERNMENT
WON'T STOP THE WAR, THE
PEOPLE WILL STOP THE
GOVERNMENT!

Help bring peace to the world...

Let's go to WASHINGTON!
Buses leaving from Capitol
for the April 24 and May rallies.
Sign up at the Peace Table,
Main Lobby.

however, I just want to tell you that the education you gave me was a good one, for which I am very grateful.

Knowing that you are a large school, it is expected that you should have some hang-ups, as all large schools do. You, however, seem to have more than your fair share. Although I do not know how things are at University Park, I do know how your Capitol Campus is, because that is where I go, and that is the campus that I am going to talk about.

When I was ready to transfer from Community College, to you Penn State, I was as happy and thrilled as can be. For I had always considered you as one of the best schools in the country, and I still do. I was also happy to experience the new living ideas found in Meade Heights. I was really fortunate to room with guys that I got along with. And I found that in general everybody out here is great.

I soon found out, however, that your Capitol Campus wasn't all the paradise that it looked like. Don't get me wrong, I do think that this place is great. The only problems here, Penn State, are some of the people who work for you.

Now I realize that all schools have good and bad working for them, but your Capitol Campus has some real doozies. I wouldn't dream of mentioning names, but I can tell you that they run from the administration down through the faculty and staff.

I think the main problem is that these people don't really care about students, or student development. Some of the Professors, for instance, are only trying to make a name for themselves. These Professors are in all curriculums, not confined to just one. I honestly think some of them have a contest to see who can give the most "ridiculously" hardest test. Some of them try to make

passing a course as hard as walking to the moon. Still others, on the other hand, don't teach a damn thing, but are first in line on pay day.

The administration is almost as good as some of the faculty. It seems as though everytime a good administrator or staff member comes along that's all for the students—they're fired or an attempt is made to fire them!

Tell me, Penn State, why is it that it's always the good ones that are fired, and the "self-ambitious" ones are the ones who stay? Why is it that the ones who stay care only about themselves and their future, and the hell with us?

A few weeks ago, some of us students didn't get paid. Some of our wonderful administrators acted like, "so what!" I wish there was some way you could hold up their pay—then we students could say, "so what!"

Not everyone down here is like this though. Some of the people that work for you are tremendous, and they should be justly rewarded. Some of the Professors are the greatest (not too many, though), and I wish you could reward them too. It's just unfortunate that the bad is out doing the good.

In closing, I just want to tell you that I still think you're one of the best schools a person could pick. Sure, you've got your hang-ups, but doesn't everyone.

And when it comes time for my kids to go to college, I'm going to send them to you, Penn State. Hopefully, by then, all those persons who take the fun out of going to you will be long gone. And I am sure that my children will be as proud to go to you as I have been.

Sincerely,
Samuel Jay Korson
Senior Class 1971

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