

The Winter Soldier Investigation 'Serious charges which require immediate and intensive review'

MICHAEL MCCARTHY

The Winter Soldier Investigation into war crimes committed by the US Government in Vietnam began on schedule on January 31 in Detroit, Michigan. The three days of hearings was a project of over 2,000 veterans of the Indo-China War, calling themselves *Vietnam Veterans Against the War*. The only immediate drawback was the last minute refusal of the Canadian government to permit the entry of Vietnamese witnesses into Canada. The Vietnamese were to come to Windsor, Canada (just across the Detroit River), and to participate in the hearings via closed-circuit television. On the third and final day of the hearings it was planned to have the veterans who testified go across the river and meet with the Vietnamese. There a "peace treaty" would be signed by both sides. However, due to the last minute refusal of the Canadian government to permit the Vietnamese entry, the Vietnamese, from both the North and South, were forced to remain at the Moscow Airport.

Testimony opened Sunday, the 31st, with veterans from the 1st Air Cavalry, 1st Marine Division, and the 3rd Marine Division giving personal accounts of what they witnessed while serving in Vietnam. A special weapons panel reported on the tactical weapons used in normal combat and on the ecological damage done to Vietnam by the use of gases, "defoliants" and other numerous "biological weaponry." Testimony from this panel

came from Dick Hofstatter, Dick Ward, Dr. E.D. Pfeiffer, and Richard Falk, NARMIC.

Later that evening another special panel was held: *What Are We Doing To Ourselves*, with Ken Clarke, John Geymann, Dr. David Glactano, Peter Borne, Dr. John Bjorson, Dr. Robt. Litton, and Dr. Sid Beck. The panel members discussed the tragic effects the war was having on civilians in this country and the psychological and physiological damage it had done to thousands of vets.

In the early afternoon Monday a seven-man panel on *Racism in the Military* was held. It was composed of all nonwhite vets and was moderated by Don William, SP/5, (serial no. 16698001.) 95th EVAC Division, resident of Chicago, Ill. Co-moderator was Allen Akers, PFC, (Serial no. 2079315) 4th Marines, also of Chicago.

The panel raised numerous examples of racism throughout the military on bases within the US, and especially in units fighting in Vietnam. Throughout the discussion the vets discussed in detail the kind of racist discrimination they face, before, during and after their return from Vietnam. An example was the disclosure that combat units used in the field were always disproportionately filled with blacks, whereas units, which were not engaged in actual combat were always disproportionately filled with whites.

An example of this was offered by

Murphy Lloyd of Detroit, E-5, (serial no. RA 55706804) 173 Airborne Brigade, Lloyd, who served in Vietnam from February of 1967 to February of 1968 said that "B" Company of the 327th Infantry, 101 Airborne Division, was made up of 280 men out of which only four or five were white. These five whites, Lloyd stated, were considered either addicts or troublemakers. This unit, Lloyd testified, was a front-line combat unit, composed of 246 blacks, yet all the officers with the unit were white.

Williams said that the panel was to bring out the way in which blacks are always first in combat assignments, but never included in the Pacification Program assignments, which are regarded in Vietnam as good duty. This is because duty with the Pacification Programs usually entails passing out candy and food to children in the villages, establishing schools, and other noncombat duties.

The panel also included Charles Stephens, (serial no. 12729782), of Newark, New Jersey; Orville Carey (serial no. RA 16874660), of Chicago, Ill.; William Light (serial no. US 54974524), of Detroit, Mich.; and Larry Brooks, (serial no. 2519703), of Detroit, Mich. The panel further provided evidence to show that the war Americans are involved in is as ironic for blacks as if it were one being waged in Africa. "Our fight," stated one panelist, "is right here in America."

The most impressive evidence which

came from the panel discussion was that which showed that the roots of the racist activities being committed in South East Asia lay right here in America. That the criminal behavior directed against the Vietnamese people is no more than an extension of the treatment given to nonwhite people within the USA.

After the initial testimony given by the vets on the panel an hour of dialogue with members of the capacity audience ensued (over 600 attended the hearing.)

On Monday, February 1, the testimony included statements from veterans of the 5th Special Forces, the 101st, 82nd, and 173rd Airborne Divisions. The day's hearing opened with a POW panel, which included ex-POW Special Forces Sgt. George Smith, ex-POW Dr. Marjorie Nelson, both held by the Viet Cong and then voluntarily released. Mrs. Virginia Warner, the mother of a POW presently held in North Vietnam, and other witnesses.

That evening, another special panel was held: *What Are We Doing to Vietnam*, with Wilbur Forster, John Spellman and Dr. Sid Peck, who discussed the cultural and vast ecological destruction to South East Asia as a result of American bombing and the use of "life-destroying" weaponry.

It was during this panel that an announcement from the offices of Democratic Senator George McGovern (South Dakota) and Democratic

Representative John Conyers (Michigan) was read to the audience and press.

"United States Senator George McGovern and Representative John Conyers called for immediate investigation by the US Senate and the House of Representatives of allegations arising from the testimony given by a group of honorably discharged US Veterans of Vietnam at the three-day Winter Soldier Investigation being conducted in Detroit.

Senator McGovern charged that the Winter Soldier Investigation testimony provides evidence of the administration's growing credibility gap in Indo-China military affairs. "Last week," Senator McGovern said, "we were told by Defense Secretary Melvin Laird that our combat troops have not operated outside Vietnam. A few days ago we learned that some of our service men were on the ground in Cambodia. Now there are reports of invasions into Laos as long ago as early 1969."

"These are serious charges which require immediate and intensive review. The American people must know all the facts about our military policy in Indo-China."

Congressman Conyers recalled similar reports he received during his 1969 tour of Vietnam.

"The charges that our command officers sanctioned interrogation by torture and other brutal acts, the oc-

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OVER

RADIO FREE AMERICA



LAWRENCE LIPTON

TIM LEARY: THE YOGI AND THE COMMISSAR

It was in the cards from the beginning. It took no special gift of prophecy to hint (as I did several times in this column) that it would come to a showdown between the Black Panther Government in Exile and the Psychedelic Revolution symbolized in Tim Leary, and for a third party to the showdown, cloaked and waiting in the wings, the government of Algeria. And it has come—in fact it came weeks ago—and has only now been made public. The tape-recorded position paper on Leary made public by Eldridge Cleaver is dated Jan. 12, nearly a month before it was published in the underground press (was it en route for nearly a month in the mail?)

The dates are important because they show that the "confusion" in radical circles which Cleaver refers to in his tape was the same "confusion" which I referred to early in the affair in this column when I asked everybody concerned, including Leary, to come up with certain imperative clarifications in order to clear the air. The first news of the escape came over the radio, as did the first news of the Learys surfacing in Algiers. The Weatherman Communique, signed by Bernardine Dohrn was briefly noted in the Establishment press and reported verbatim in the counter-media press early in January. What followed was a confused and puzzled silence in all but a few of the undergrounds. They were caught off base and didn't know what to make of it. As it turns out, the Leary-Cleaver affair was a brief honeymoon.

THE HIGH PRIEST DECLARES A HOLY WAR

Not since the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, that friend and ally of Adolf Hitler, has there been anything resembling a holy war led by a man of God in the grand old tradition of Mohammed—a pale and anemic 1940's imitation, rhetoric and tinsel instead of high prophecy and imperial genocide, but a holy war nonetheless. When the Fourth Communication of the Weatherman Underground was published here (*Freeop* Oct. 16, 1970) with Tim Leary's call to arms for a worldwide mobilization of the Children of Light against the Children of Darkness, of Life against Death, it took on the character of a holy war.

Brothers and Sisters, at this time let us have no more talk of peace. The conflict which we have sought to avoid is upon us.

years for racial equality and peace in Vietnam—we understood and dug it. They came from our ranks and their actions expressed our collective desperation and rage—and directed it against our common enemy—PIG AMERICA.

Initially the Weathermen had arrogantly offered criticism and isolated themselves from the rest of the movement (even before they went underground) in the delusion that they were the only revolutionaries . . . (now) we must start relying on one another . . . We would like to open up a dialogue that would lead to coordinated effort between those above ground, doing the crucial job of organizing and those underground—a partnership which recognizes the necessity and value of both kinds of work to build a revolution.

Weathermen have been showing complete contempt for anyone not on the "front lines" who isn't out there throwing bombs or battling pigs in the streets. This macho, arrogant, elitist attitude of "more revolutionary than thou" (italics mine, L.L.) is totally destructive and divisive to the movement as it negates the work that others are engaged in . . .

Another major fault of Weathermen has been failure of communication. They have come out loudly but not clearly. They haven't attempted to convince by the power of political analysis or a clear argument. They don't attempt to get beyond mindless rhetoric and sloganeering . . . They have attempted to push people into action by bullying . . .

It is a mistake to think that bombings alone are going to make a revolution . . . WE NEED TO EDUCATE CONTINUALLY TO COUNTERACT THE PIG PRESS . . . These sort of acts don't rule out bombings. It simply means bombing is one tactic among many others . . .

MORE PROPHECIES AND MANIFESTOES

While these Weatherman re-evaluations were going on, Tim Leary was busy writing a book, making political journeys in the Near East (which he later called "hissos" and blamed them on the Black Panthers), and issuing interviews, proclamations and prophesies. On Dec. 30, his Open Letter to Allen Ginsberg on the Seventh Liberation appeared in the *Berkeley Tribe* (see my comment thereon in the Jan. 15 RFA) and on Jan. 5th his interview (it reads to me like a long distance interview) appeared. An interview with Alex Bennet and Jankov in the *East Village Other* with the editorial comment: "If nothing else, the reaction of the audiences (*what* "audiences," where, when) should prove once and forever that no matter where he might be, Tim Leary is still a potent factor on the American scene." It contained the comment, Leary's, that "unless we read EVO, we can't keep up with what's happening. Because as you well know, the overground press and *TIME* magazine give you an incredibly disor-

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currance of atrocities without investigation or punishment, and that racism still pervades our armed forces require complete disclosure. I shall ask for the full transcript of the Winter Soldier Investigation hearings and I will propose that these veterans be brought to Washington to deliver their testimony before the appropriate congressional authorities," Conyers said.

On Tuesday, the last day of the investigation, testimony was presented by veterans from the 25th, the 4th, and the 1st Infantry Divisions, the 9th, and the 11th Air Cavalry Regiment, and from the Americal Division. The day closed with a special panel on Medical Treatment.

Following the testimony given on the Medical Panel approximately 68 Vets left Detroit by car and traveled over to Windsor, Canada. There they met with and shared dinner with three Vietnamese college students. At the close of the dinner the group signed a symbolic "peace treaty."

For more coverage of Winter Soldier see additional articles this week's and next week's issue.

