

1 DAY, DECEMBER 25, 1970

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DEC 25 1970 *Letter*

### Tragedy and Guilt at Mylai

To the Editor:

I feel that the real significance of Mylai is being lost amid the sensationalism of the Lieutenant Calley's trial.

It is obvious that the military desperately needs a scapegoat for this atrocity which was somehow leaked to civilization; but does the Pentagon honestly believe that the court's decision will make the slightest difference to anyone who examines the situation?

When you train a man to lose his perspective on the value of a human life—i.e., to kill—you cannot then turn around and hold him responsible for doing what you have trained, nay, ordered, him to do. A human being is a human being, and the ones who were killed at Hue are no different from the ones mutilated by American napalm or machine-gunned at Mylai; so that to punish Calley and honor the Green Berets is a grossly misguided act.

The real defendant in this trial is not Lieutenant Calley, but militarism and its doctrines, not only of the United States but of the entire world. And the question is not of Calley's guilt or innocence, but whether or not the responsibility for one of the countless horrors of a horrible age can be sloughed off on an individual.

Lieutenant Calley's pawn-like situation is tragic. Mylai is tragic. Vietnam is tragic. But until we, who are the truly guilty ones, realize the meaning of war, and begin to place a value on all life, there will be no end to the tragedies.

DAVID L. DECOURCY  
New Haven, Dec. 7, 1970

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