

67% in Survey on Calley Say Most People Would

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A Harvard survey of public attitudes toward First Lieut. William L. Calley Jr. has found that two-thirds of those questioned said that most people would shoot unarmed civilians if ordered to do so.

Asked "What would most people do if ordered to shoot all inhabitants of a Vietnamese village suspected of aiding the enemy, including old men, women and children," 67 per cent of those questioned answered: "Follow orders and shoot."

In contrast, the answer "refuse to shoot them" was given by only 19 per cent of 989 persons who underwent 40-minute interviews dealing with their attitudes toward the Calley case.

The interviews were conducted two months after Lieutenant Calley was convicted of premeditated murder in the mass slaying of South Vietnamese civilians at My Lai in 1968.

Half Would Shoot

Half of those interviewed said they would themselves "follow orders and shoot." A third said they would not pull the trigger.

The survey was conducted by Dr. Herbert C. Kelman, Richard Clarke Cabot, Professor of Social Ethics at Harvard, and Mrs. Lee H. Lawrence, a research assistant in social psychology.

In presenting the preliminary results of the survey to the American Association for the Advancement of Science convention in the Sheraton Hotel today, Mrs. Lawrence explained that the persons interviewed by the Roper organization were intended to be a cross-section of the American public.

Among the points discussed by Mrs. Lawrence, who presented the paper because Dr. Kelman was ill, were the following:

¶Five times as many persons said that Lieutenant Calley's

original sentence of life imprisonment was too harsh as said it was fair.

¶Persons of low income and education tended to associate with and support Lieutenant Calley, although stereotypes were hard to draw.

¶Two-thirds of those questioned favored pulling American troops out of Vietnam.

'Broad Implications'

Mrs. Lawrence Commented: "The fact that large numbers of people are saying that what Calley and his men did was 'normal' has broad implications for studying violence in the United States."

"It indicates that if the situation is properly structured, large numbers of people will do amazing things," she said.

The circumstances would include, she continued, the closeness of authority, the degree of supervision and the proximity of the victims.

One of the most provocative elements of the survey, she said, was an apparent division among the respondents over "how responsibility for My Lai should be allocated."

"More than half of those who gave a reason for approving of the trial did so because they believe a soldier must bear individual responsibility for killing defenseless civilians, she said.

In contrast, almost two-thirds of those who disapproved of trying Lieutenant Calley did so because they felt that "it was unfair to hold Calley responsible for what occurred in the course of performance of his duty," she reported.

Mrs. Lawrence said those who strongly disapproved of the trial "are considerably more likely to say that most soldiers would shoot unarmed civilians under orders, that they themselves would do so, that Calley did what he should have done under the circumstances and that the nature of Calley's victims justified his action."

The members of this group,

she said, "perceive no personal choice about obedience to authoritative orders."

"In relinquishing control to the authorities, however, they also relinquish responsibility," he said. "The public out-

against the Calley trial reflects

their dismay at the violation of a basic understanding. They had supported the war, despite serious misgivings, because the authorities told them to do so—and now these authorities are holding them personally responsible for consequences of

Shoot Civilians if Ordered

the war."

Mrs. Lawrence added that those who disapproved of the trial felt a "sense of betrayal, a damned-if-we-do-and-damned-if-we-don't attitude."

The personal interviews were conducted in all sections of the

country over a two-week period two months after Lieutenant Calley was convicted last March 29. The officer's life sentence was commuted in August to 20 years. The sentence is being appealed and may eventually be reviewed by President Nixon.