

John Lanier

Red Cross inspection not the answer

Editor's note: This is the fourth in a series of articles specially commissioned by the Emerald editors on the other side of the POW question.

Previously this series has shown that there is no evidence to indicate mistreatment of American POWs in North Vietnam, that the DRV has been open and honest in its dealings on this matter and has allowed a free flow of information to and from the POWs, and that there is no evidence to indicate mistreatment or foul play in the fact that there are 1,000 GIs missing in Southeast Asia.

Let us now examine a few more contentions voiced by our government and the "Tell It to Hanoi" Committee.

• **Contention No. 3:** A third contention of the POW campaigners is that U.S. POWs in the North are subject to the Geneva Convention of 1949, including the provision for international inspection and regulation of camp conditions.

• **The Facts:** Again this contention is quite false, although it should be added that the North Vietnamese by all reports have lived up to the high standards of the Geneva Convention as far as POW treatment is concerned, despite American and South Vietnamese violations.

There are two main reasons why the 339 Americans held in the North are not subject to the Geneva agreements.

Firstly, the Geneva Convention articles on prisoners deal only with formally "declared" wars between nations. Once a war is declared, the Geneva Convention immediately goes into effect. However, since neither side in Vietnam has officially declared war, the conflict and parties involved in it clearly do not fall under the regulations, according to the basic rules under which they were established.

U.S. violations

But a second reason, and a much more important one, for North Vietnam's not being subject to the Geneva Convention in its dealings with American POWs is discussed here by I.F. Stone:

"North Vietnam's ratification of the Geneva Convention in the 50's was qualified, as was that of the other Soviet states, by the proviso that it would not be applied to war criminals. Our indiscriminate bombing raids North and South—including the use of napalm and 'anti-personnel' bombs—have for years violated international conventions designed to protect civilian populations. Our own Army's handbook, 'The Law of Land Warfare,' says that belligerents are

required to refrain 'from employing any kind or degree of violence which is not actually necessary for military purposes and that they conduct hostilities with regard for the principles of humanity and chivalry.' This reads like a cruel satire after what we have done in Vietnam. The truth is that U.S. forces have been as indifferent to international law in handling prisoners as in dealing with the civilian population generally. 'The only good gook is a dead gook' has been the rule of thumb."

• **Contention No. 4:** A fourth contention of the "Tell It to Hanoi" people is that North Vietnam is obligated to (or at least should) allow the International Red Cross to inspect its POW camps.

• **The Facts:** The facts relating to Contention No. 3 show beyond a doubt that the North Vietnamese are not obligated to allow inspection of their camps by the Red Cross, since they are not subject to the Geneva Convention.

No carte blanche

But voluntary permission for such inspections is of course another story, and one to which many POW campaigners have latched on. Their attitudes and outlook were recently expressed by the Eugene Register-Guard, which claimed that the DRV has not "convincingly" demonstrated its humanitarian treatment of American POWs and concluded: "All that would be necessary would be an invitation for International Red Cross inspection teams to travel through North Vietnam on carte blanche credentials."

This argument sounds convincing and foolproof on the surface, but if one digs a little deeper than the surface, he realizes that it is patently absurd no matter what your point of view.

First of all, the North Vietnamese are under no obligation to do so. They are being bombed, battered, attacked and pushed by the largest military power in the world, and are not obligated to respond to its every suggestion as if an American pawn on an imperial chess board.

More POW raids

Second, if the North Vietnamese were to submit to International Red Cross inspection in a "carte blanche" fashion, as the POW campaigners suggest such an action would involve revelation of the locations of each and every POW camp in the North. With a complete map and outline of POW camp locations supplied by the Red Cross, the Pentagon could then conduct any number of Sontay raids deep into North Vietnam, endangering that

nation's defenses, creating another escalation of the war and a direct threat to the North Vietnamese people, and guaranteeing U.S. success in at least one of the raids, as has been promised.

As Peter Weiss explains: "If (the North Vietnamese) have reason to believe that every time the Green Berets learn of the existence of a new camp they're going to send in a raiding party (as at Sontay), (they) are going to be reluctant to admit anybody who may bring information out about where the camps are located."

Third, it is now clear that any information supplied by the International Red Cross, no matter what light it might place North Vietnam in as far as treatment of the prisoners is concerned, would certainly be twisted around by the Pentagon and Nixon administration and used for anti-DRV propaganda. We have seen numerous examples of such tactics. The release of the names of 17 American military men who had died in the North was used, without any basis or justification, as "evidence" of some sort of "mistreatment." Each and every time the DRV either releases names of POWs held or allows interviews with them the Pentagon and the White House label the moves "enemy propaganda" and use them to support the claim that North Vietnam is an international "criminal."

Why should the North Vietnamese go out of their way to supply propaganda opportunities for the U.S. Pentagon? This is obviously not in their interest, as it would not be in anyone's in a similar situation, so it would be absurd for the DRV to go to the trouble of undertaking such a venture.

Finally, a very significant piece of information relative to North Vietnam's not subjecting itself to International Red Cross inspection is that the Red Cross has on occasions been guilty of racism against the people of Asia, a fact which certainly does not endear it to the Vietnamese people.

Red Cross ads

Let us not forget that it is the U.S. offshoot of the Red Cross which is at the top of the list of vocal groups involved in the "Tell It to Hanoi" campaign in which the North Vietnamese are pictured as criminally barbaric and in which Americans are urged to write letters to the President of the DRV. The Red Cross is the largest sponsor of ads of all sorts for the POW campaign.

Perhaps if the American Red Cross was reprimanded by its International group for involvement in such a hate campaign, the International might be in a

more morally consistent position with its self-righteous desire to check the standards of DRV prisoner facilities.

Liberation News Service reporter Hugo Hill got right to the heart of the Red Cross racism question early last year. Hill was investigating some reasons "why the North Vietnamese government doesn't permit the International Red Cross to inspect its prison camps." His conclusion: In addition to Hanoi's view that the Red Cross has no jurisdiction over DRV prison camps, the fact is that "The International Red Cross is not the neutral body it claims to be but rather a stronghold of white racism."

Hill's conclusion was based on an interview with the chief of the International Red Cross delegation in South Vietnam, Christian Hauser. Hill began by asking Hauser about the Red Cross' position on "the torture routinely inflicted on captured NLF soldiers in the South." Despite widespread press coverage of such atrocities (even on the streets of Saigon and even in the Establishment press), Hill reported that Hauser denied of their existence stating "I have never heard a reliable report of torture." He later qualified his statement: "Well, let's say it's very rare," according to Hill.

Hill then asked: "In general, how would you characterize the treatment of POWs by the Saigon government?"

"I think it is as good as you can expect from Asiatics," Hauser was quoted as having replied.

"Does it meet the standards of the 1949 Geneva Convention?" Hill asked.

Written by whites

"You have to remember," Hauser reportedly replied, "that the Geneva Convention was written by white people—white people who had little experience with Negroes and yellows. Rules for white people are one thing; we're civilized. But in these countries things are different. Asiatics have a different attitude toward suffering and death."

Hill then reminds the reader that "Hauser speaks for the International Red Cross. If he says everything is all right, then, officially, everything is all right."

Contention No. 4 was that Hanoi should allow the International Red Cross to inspect its POW camps. Clearly this contention is also false. It would be politically and militarily unwise for North Vietnam to do so; by doing so it would be endangering the security of its people; by doing so it would be providing potential propaganda for the U.S.; and it would be subjecting itself to inspection by an organization guilty of racist statements and pursuits.

Letters

Rude Crowd

It is a testament to Neil Young that he was able to come through with such a beautiful and moving performance Sunday despite his mauling at the hands of one of the rudest audiences ever seen south of Corvallis. There was an ugly odor of incipient violence about McArthur Court, fed by the rumor that there had been a pre-show threat on Young's life, and repeated clashes between police and gate-crashers. Various sectors of the crowd bitched loudly about the lighting and the assembly in general continued to applaud mechanically throughout the opening of each song despite Mr. Young's obvious displeasure. In fact the people, albeit unbelievably, remained in a state of mindless unawareness throughout, despite the performer's incisive comments. Their receptiveness was summarized by Young's comment addressed with a level stare to one of the front rows, "Why didn't someone bring them something to read?"

A complete transcript of the comedy Page 4

would be impossible (one had to be there), but a bit will suffice:

Neil Young leaves his chair and goes to the piano, followed by applause.

Young: "What are you clapping for, exactly?"

Laughter and applause from audience. (To show that they're hip to the people who were clapping).

Young addresses the piano stool: "Who's been screwing with my seat?"

Laughter from audience

Young: "Maybe that's the level." (you're at)

He winces as he regards the list of songs taped to the side of his guitar to see how many are remaining.

Young: "See these papers? . . . One is for Carnegie Hall, the other for Eugene."

Laughter and applause from the audience. Young sighs heavily and begins almost mechanically to strum the first chords of the next song.

Finally, much of the mob laughed through "Every Man Needs a Maid," a

song which was not meant to be funny.

Joking aside, even the glamorous Youth Culture and Youth Revolution can have a bad night. Maybe the ASUO can bring us a really groovy band next time. Someone more, well, dynamic. Like Led Zepellin or Grand Funk perhaps? Are you hip, brothers?

Russell Norris
Sophomore, English

Segal's Abortion

Having yet to see the book, I will admit to having read the movie. I do not think Mr. Smith's monologue somehow connecting New Left ideology and Eric Segal's abortion, *Love Story*, is the least bit relevant. Segal's volume (not book) seeks to exploit the reader's least intelligent perceptions. It is a pollyanna view of a world much too complex to be seen with such moronic simplicity. The protagonists, Jenny & Oliver Barrett, are non-persons. They are literary silhouettes,

with nothing inside. And have no fear, Mr. Smith, Segal is not conspiring with the lefties to take away everyone's sugar plums. More likely he was inspired by the good old almighty buck.

Joshua K. Marquis
Political Science

Danger

"Eachus concluded, 'The President has obviously perceived that Leggett would be a danger to the University. A decision made on this basis is not in the best interests of the University.'" (Quote, Ron Eachus in the Jan. 15 Emerald.)

While one might question whether or not Clark's decision was valid, I haven't yet been able to convince myself that what is dangerous to the University is in the best interests of the University, or vice-versa.

You didn't mean that, did you Ron?
Allan Walton
Senior, Liberal Arts

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