

# The War Continues...

## Systematic Murder

by Ed Murphy

In recent months much has been written about an "Operation Phoenix" which is directed by the Central Intelligence Agency in Vietnam. Americans have been told about the terrorist tactics of the Viet Cong and especially of the North Vietnamese soldiers in the city of Hue during the Tet offensive. Now we are told about the systematic neutralization of the Viet Cong Infrastructure (VCI). Who are these VCI though?

We are familiar with the stories of Dachau and the Bataan death march and now we are told of a small village called My Lai or some call it Song My and some say Pinkville. We are shocked! But a scapegoat has been found and the responsibility is again abdicated to an individual.

If Calley is convicted the consciences of many Americans will be quieted. But what about these VCI? Who will accept the responsibility for their neutralization? Will you? Should I? Or shall we blame the huge bureaucracy known as the CIA and say that we have nothing to say about their secret budget and their secret operations. What shall we accept as necessary in the defense of our national security?

We are told that there are political cadre, communications cadre and that an entire underground government exists. Is the Phoenix program directed at the neutralization of this underground government? If so, what does it mean to neutralize an individual? Does it mean to capture and detain him till the end of the war? Or does it mean ambush and assassination? If so, who does the ambushing and assassinating? Americans or Vietnamese?

If there are American military personnel involved in the Phoenix program, do they operate under the 1949 Geneva Convention governing land warfare or the Hague conventions? Do they operate as military units or singly, in direct

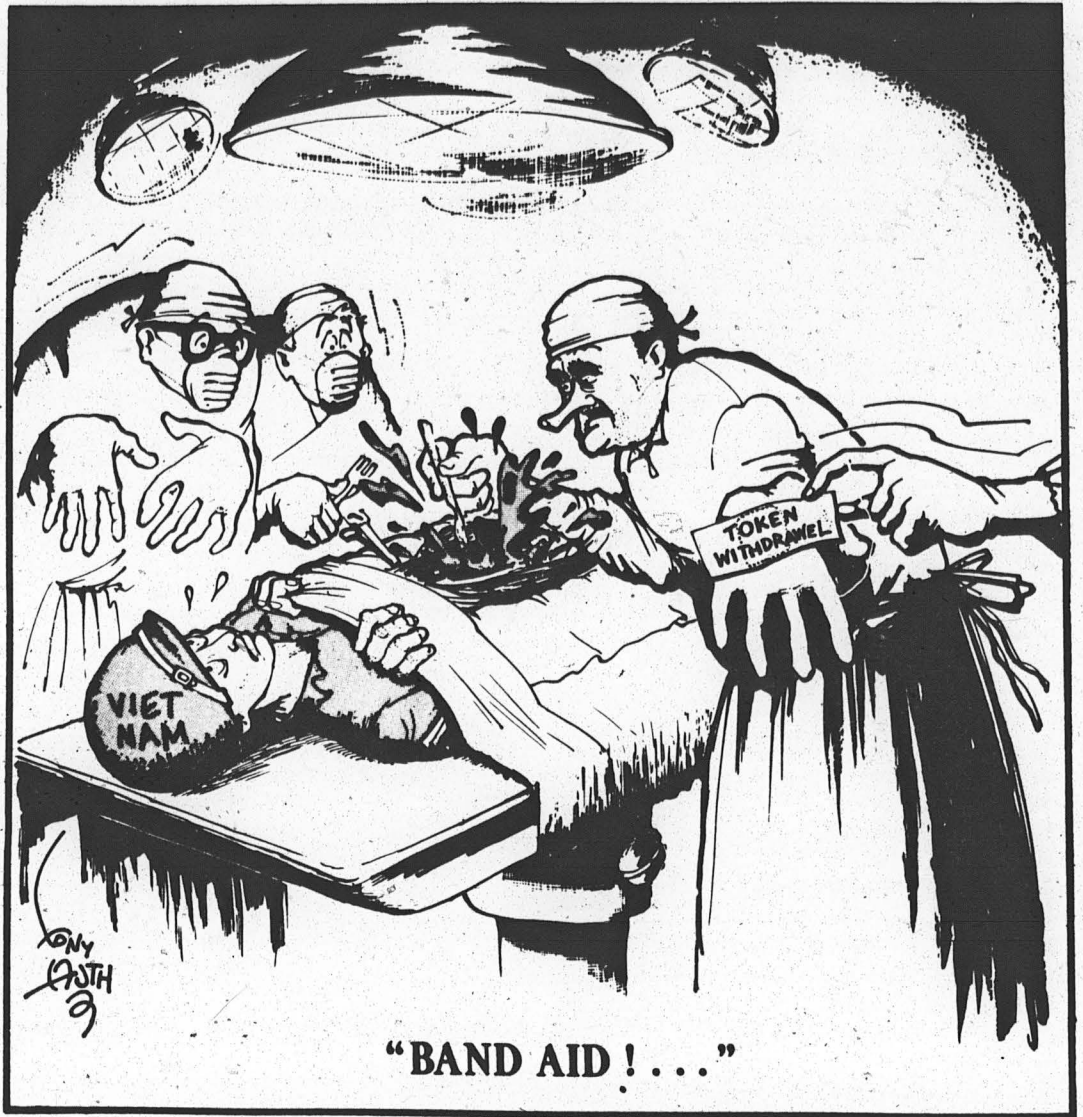
contravention of the Vietnamese laws stating that only the National Police of Viet Nam may operate in areas designated as "Controlled Areas?" And then, who are the Phoenix co-ordinators? CIA agents or U.S. army junior officers and enlisted men with no intelligence training? Do the co-ordinators speak Vietnamese and do they have any knowledge of Communist ideology?

How are the co-ordinators chosen? Do they volunteer for the Phoenix program or are they drafted into it the way most military people are assigned a job? Who decides whether a man is qualified to decide that a Vietnamese is working for the VC and who decides what action should be taken against that individual?

There is so much inefficiency in the military that one can hardly believe that the Phoenix program is any different. People might say: "There is efficiency all over." Well, if you have efficiency in a cost overrun we lose money. But if you have incompetent personnel running a program which decides who should live and who should die, that is a much more obscene subject.

This year, the members of the House of Representatives will return to their homes and ask permission to continue their work in Washington. Many will be re-elected. There will be many issues on which these men will harp and they will try to put the responsibility for mistakes onto others. But responsibility must be laid on the congressmen's shoulders. He is elected by a small group to represent them in the Federal government. It is expected that these people will make conscientious decisions concerning matters affecting their constituents.

Viet Nam does affect the American constituents. So far 68 Staten Island men have died in Viet Nam. The war is not thousands of miles from here. It is in the graveyards of Staten Island and in the sad-



ness of survivors of dead men. It is also in the fearful hearts of those who have friends and relatives in Viet Nam. It is particularly in the memories of Viet Nam.

One can no longer be satisfied that his congressman has gotten federal money to be spent in his congressional district. He must demand that the congressman be informed of Viet Nam and that he speak conscientiously on more subjects than sex and religion.

When it comes time to vote on a budget for defense and for the CIA, he should ask questions. He should want to know about the Phoenix program. He should want to know why Army Intelligence agents are asking questions of Americans about their neighbors.

In a recent issue of the *Washington Monthly*, an ex-Army Intelligence Captain wrote an article warning of the danger of CONUS (Continental United States) Intelligence. The captain questioned the need for Army agents to collect information about domestic political groups. He also questioned the need to have a nation wide teletype system by which information concerning persons and groups could be instantly transmitted to a large number of agencies, which may or may not have need for such information. The rationale behind the army collecting information, we are told, is that they may be called in to quell a riot. This, however, is the job of the civil authorities and if they are unable, then the responsibility falls on to the National Guard. Only if the National Guard is unable, would the regular army troops be called for. Even if the regular army were called in,

is it not the work of the FBI to collect information concerning potential threats to the internal security of the U.S. and not the army's?

The issues of the Phoenix program and Army Intelligence's role in domestic politics are two which affect the people of New York, and Richmond College in particular. If the military is involved in the Phoenix program, then New Yorkers and Richmond College graduates who enter the military could be called on to participate in the neutralization of the Viet Cong infrastructure. If army intelligence is performing an illegal or unnecessary function in New York in asking questions about our neighbors, then we have the right and responsibility to ask our elected officials why. Jefferson told us that we could not have democracy without an informed electorate.

### A letter of Protest

If Nixon, the Congress, and the Paris negotiators were in the lower one-third of the draft call-ups, and if they were graduating this June, you could be damn sure that the war would be over before commencement exercises began.

The new lottery system is supposed to take the suspense out of the future for the young. That they might be able to direct their lives accordingly. Does this mean that the "unfortunates" such as myself are not able to look to the future with any kind of security?

What Nixon is saying, is that since you were born male and on August 5, you cannot

### Making the world safe for Democracy

Viet Nam! Where is it? What is it? One country? Two? Is that where the COMMUNISTS are trying to take over? Or is that where the people have risen up against an American supported oligarchy? What are the facts? Politicians have their versions of the Viet Nam story and each one has facts (?) to support his point of view. Different facts for different folks. Sometimes my mind boggles.

Fortunately, here is one fact we can look at and call it true. A graduate of Richmond College will die in Viet Nam. Maybe he is a senior this year. Perhaps he is sitting in one of our classrooms now reading *L'Étranger* by Albert Camus. "The Nam" is not a reality for him now. But, imagine him next year in Cam Ranh Bay filling sandbags while a 19 year old High School drop-out from Natchez, Mississippi, a Sergeant, sits in the shade and directs him. Just like the "Boss Man" in "Cool Hand Luke." Maybe our hero will think twice, back to *L'Étranger* and how Meursault killed with the aid and direction of the Algerian Desert sun. He may want to take that 19 year old sergeant, or 40 year old lifer, and make him eat the sandbags he has just finished filling.

But we were talking about death. Do you remember how Meursault died? He thought he

(Continued on Page 11)

(Continued on Page 11)



Ed. Murphy speaking about Staten Island hypocrisy at the faculty meeting last month. Ed Murphy, a student at Richmond College, is a Viet Nam Veteran.