

In DEBATE

And, in Belgium, the Catholic paper *Gazet van Antwerpen* wondered aloud:

Why this condemnation at the level of platoon commander? Sgt. Mitchell and Captain Medina have blood on their hands as well. But Mitchell is a Negro, Medina a Chicano. And the racial question is already so explosive . . .

As the reaction set in, there were thoughtful defenses of the trial and even a few second thoughts; from Scandinavia, where Western opposition to the war has been strongest, this item from Oslo's *Morgenbladet*:

Although a country at war for a very long time, and which has lost so many precious lives on the altar of war, [the U.S.] persists in living by basic principles of human conduct even on the battlefield.

Vienna's moderate *Kurier* said:

Even in its worst hour, American democracy has proved its strength. Americans exposed the massacre, Americans put the perpetrators on trial and Americans published all the details of its national disgrace.

In far-off Kuala Lumpur, the *Malay Mail* stated:

My Lai could have been a mere memo in the chronicles of the Vietnam War. It could have been hushed up. It wasn't. . . . America deserves a salute.

And, in Colombia, the conservative daily *El Tiempo* of Bogotá wrote:

The trial reveals how justice operates in a democratic nation. Could you conceive of this sentence in a Communist state? The fact that justice was done against war is spiritual compensation for those of us who have—despite everything—remained on the side of the United States in this ugly, dirty, senseless war.

But then President Nixon stepped in and released Calley from the stockade; much of the world's sympathy turned suddenly sour. Correspondent Henry Brandon, of London's *Sunday Times*, wrote: **Calley, on a wave of emotion, has been promoted from murderer to martyr to hero.**

From the Philippines' *Manila Chronicle*:

[Nixon's action] has made things worse. He has created a climate in which gratuitous crime is not only condoned but encouraged.

Some papers played the news as if Calley had been set free. In Algiers, *El-Moudjahid* declared:

Nixon has freed the executioner of My Lai.

And Paris's Communist daily, *L'Humanité*, headlined:

INCREDIBLE! Nixon Releases Calley, Sentenced to Life Only the Day Before.

The conservative London *Sunday Telegraph* summed it up:

We are right to shudder. Democracy in action is not always a pretty sight.



The Buck Stops Here
From NEW STATESMAN, London

. . . And the world weighed in with its own verdict . . .

Have To Say ? and Ossie Brown

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