

The my lai massacre: a crime of obedience ?



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My Lai 4 Massacre-March 16, 1968

-crime of obedience

-rapes, tortures, killings of innocents Crimes of Obedience-begin with orders:

vague, rarely survive with clarity from transition down Charlie Company's

Unusual Characteristics-commander Medina, Mexican, upwardly mobile,

wanted army career; eager; " Mad Dog Medina"

-William L Calley; admired Medina; claimed " i'm the boys" ; platoon

leader Charlie Company: basics-under Lt Col Frank Barke's command Barker's

orders-unclear that he ordered the killing of civilians

-definitely didn't specify what do do with civilians Substantial amount of

killing was organized and traceable to.. Calley

-originally charged with 109 killings, convicted for 22; only one convicted for

My Lai Crimes Justification for Killing For a Soldier 1. warfare, subjecto to limits

and rescissions including the inadmissibility of killing unarmed

noncombatants or disarmed prisoners

2. Orders; subordinate is included to follow orders unless act is beyond the

scope of authority or a person of ordinary understanding would know act is

illegal or carries out act in a wanton manner Why did Calley get convicted?-

other ordinary men thought it was unreasonable to kill innocents and those

who kept going anyways showed great stress Odd Twists-after massacre My

Lai people had lunch with soldiers Pinkvillenick name reflecting the villagers'

reputed communist sympathies Sanctioned Massacres-indiscriminate,

ruthless, systematic mass violence carried out by military or paramilitary

personnel while engaged in officially sanctioned campaigns, the victims of

which are defenseless and unresisting civilian, s including old men, women

and children Shared features of sanctioned massacres context

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targetContext of Sanctioned Massacres-explicitly or implicitly genocidal:

designed to destroy all or part of a category of people defined in ethnic, national, racial, religious or other terms

-extermination, pacificationWhy is the US genocide in Vietnam unproven? no

evidence of specific genocidal intentTarget of Sanctioned Massacres-targets

have not themselves threatened or engaged in hostile actions toward

perpetrators of violence ; often defenseless civiliansWhy do sanctioned

massacres occur?-cannot be explained by psychological forcesProcesses to

Create Conditions for Sanctioned Massacreauthorization

routinization

dehumanizationAuthorization-situation becomes so defined that the

individual is absolved of the responsibility to make personal moral choices

-acts of violence explicitly ordered, implicitly encouraged, tacitly approved, permitted by legitimate authorities

-people respond to role obligations rather than personal preferences; can

openly disobey only by challenging the legitimacy of authorityRoutinization-

acts become so organized there is no opportunity for raising moral questions

-reduces necessity of making decisions, minimizes the occasions in which moral questions may arise

-makes easier to avoid the implications of the action since the actor focuses on detail of job and not meaning

-use of euphemisms avoids true meaning of killingDehumanization-actors'

attitudes toward the target and themselves become so structures that it is

neither necessary nor possible for them to view the relationship in moral

terms

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-victims are deprived of identity (standing as independent, distinctive individuals capable of making choices and entitled to live their own lives) and community (fellow membership in an interconnected network of individuals who care for each other) ON THE MY LAI MASSACRE: A CRIME OF OBEDIENCE ? SPECIFICALLY FOR YOU FOR ONLY \$13.90/PAGE Order Now