

At Ft. Jackson: More Repression

Fifth Estate Collective

FT. JACKSON, S.C.—Four GIs are in the stockade as a result of an on-base meeting to discuss the war in Vietnam.

All are leaders of GIs United Against the War in Vietnam and are charged with “inciting to riot,” “disturbing the peace,” and “disrespect to an officer.”

The GI organization has been actively involved in opposing the war and demanding that GIs be allowed the same rights as civilians.

One of their recent activities has been the circulating of an anti-war poster on the base. (See Fifth Estate #74, March 5 1969)

The four soldiers charged are Pvt. Joseph Cole, Pvt. Andrew Pulley, Pvt. Jose Rudder, and Pvt. Edilberto Charro

The charges apparently stem from a meeting on March 20th.

About a hundred GIs responded to a call by GIs United to come out on the barracks lawn for a “rap session” on the war. During the meeting some officer came by and tried to harass the speakers.

One sergeant told Pvt. Pulley that his shirt was not tucked in; Pulley continue (talking about the war as he tucked in his shirt. Another officer told Jose Rudder he didn’t like his mustache or his hair. (Jose has no mustache.)

The officers never ordered the GIs to disperse or stop speaking and made no attempt to break up the meeting although the next day they pressed charges of “inciting to riot” and “disturbing the peace.” That evening seven GIs were restricted to the barracks and some of the leaders of GIs United were restricted to their rooms.

At noon the next day, the Ft. Jackson Four were told to pack up all their equipment and turn it in. At two o’clock in the afternoon they were given an armed escort to the stockade.

The three charges against them were read to Company B-14-4 in their evening formation. Several other GIs active in GIs United have been threatened with “conspiracy” charges.

This threat to the civil liberties of GIs has not gone unanswered.

GIs United have issued a “Communique” to the press around the country and to the GIs on their base. The statement demands the immediate release of the four prisoners and pledges a continued drive for full constitutional liberties for all GIs.

On the legal front noted civil liberties attorney Leonard Boudin, announced that he and several other lawyers are filing suit against the Secretary of the Army and the Commanding General of Ft. Jackson.

Boudin has previously handled a number of civil liberties cases including that of Dr. Benjamin Spock.

The suit asks for a declaratory judgment that men in the army have a constitutional right to hold public meetings to discuss the war and their own rights. They also contend that GIs have a right to file petitions of grievances against the army and do so without opposition from the brass.

Both these rights are currently being flagrantly violated at Ft. Jackson and at all service installations across the world.

GIs United ask that letters of support for the Ft. Jackson Four be sent to them at Box 543, Columbia, South Carolina. Also, send messages to the Ft. Jackson Commanding General demanding the release of the four men and to allow freedom of speech and assembly at his base. Letters from fellow GIs are especially welcome.

Related

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