

**The abolitionists  
pushed Lincoln.**

**The labor  
movement  
pushed Roosevelt.**

**The civil rights  
movement  
pushed Johnson.**

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## Letters

### Colorblind?

NEW YORK CITY

Your lead editorial, "The First 100 Days" [Dec. 1], issues a welcome list of ambitious initiatives that would "get a real start on repairing our nation," including a renewed war on poverty. No mention, however, of race and racism, despite the fact that a mobilized black community provided the margin between victory and defeat. A colorblind approach will not address the distinct problems African-Americans confront: occupational apartheid that leaves almost half of black men in cities like Chicago and Washington without jobs; the evisceration of affirmative action by all branches of government; mass incarceration that exceeds 2 million, two-thirds of them black or Latino, often for violation of drug laws; rampant discrimination in housing; a scurrilous lack of enforcement of civil rights laws, especially Title VIII. Can we "repair our nation" without confronting the legacy of slavery? Is the colorblind left going to participate in the charade of using Obama to sidestep racial issues? And is the Democratic Party willing to risk a backlash from blacks who feel betrayed by the election of "the first black President"?

STEPHEN STEINBERG

### What We Did in Vietnam

LAGUNA WOODS, CALIF.

Nick Turse's "A My Lai a Month" [Dec. 1] is the best I've ever read regarding the truth of what we did in Vietnam. I served as an Army medic in Vietnam at a place called Bearcat from February to October 1969. I was attached to a unit that supported one of the main assault helicopter companies that did so much of the murder in the Delta for the 9th Infantry operations during the time of Operation Speedy Express. That unit was the 240th Assault Helicopter Company. I recall a door gunner who was known to have killed at least 500, and I recall talk about atrocities committed by the unit. I have many memories.

JIM GIBSON

SHELTER ISLAND, N.Y.

I have never heard of Speedy Express, but I do not doubt this report. I was an officer in the 3/47th of the 9th Infantry

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from December 1967 to June 1968 in the 2nd Brigade under General Ewell. Body count was very important, as was the number of patients we treated as part of the Medical Civil Action Program. The counts were never very accurate, and the numbers were more important than the help we tried to provide to the locals.

PIETER RUIG

GAINESVILLE, FLA.

I sent this article out to my VFP/IVAW list. Robert McNamara, in the film *The Fog of War*, says we killed 3.4 million Vietnamese. They died somewhere, and we were the ones who killed them.

SCOTT CAMIL

OSSINING, N.Y.

In 1993 I published *Then the Americans Came*, a book of interviews with Vietnamese victims of the war. I am so encouraged to see that an American historian is documenting the atrocities we committed there. I hope one day Nick Turse's work will be required reading in schools (mine too, for that matter). His information was not news to me—and shouldn't be news to anyone who had a TV set in the 1960s and '70s. But the specifics (the perps, the cover-up, etc.) are so important, and so horrifying. I visited many "My Lais." Everyone I encountered in Vietnam knew about or survived the slaughter that occurred everywhere the Americans and their allies touched down, and the bombing slaughter everywhere else. This article made me furious all over again. Thank you.

MARTHA HESS

BROCKPORT, N.Y.

I recall my 1968–69 experience with the 196th LIB. As the liaison with the 196th in Hiep Duc, my biggest challenge was stopping the atrocities by US troops in the village. I finally stopped using the crypto device on my radio to call in reports and begging for intervention. When I called these in in the clear, the killing of civilians diminished. Our fire base saw the daily use of a scope to spot movement in the valley and the use of the quad 50 or other weapons to kill whatever moved. A My Lai a month in the Delta? A My Lai a week throughout

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