

Equality Is Not Selective:
An Examination of Inequities Within the Selective Service System During the
Vietnam War

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Conscription was one of the single most debated issues throughout America in the twentieth century. During the first two World Wars, nearly thirteen million men were inducted into the United States Armed Forces through the Selective Service System¹, the government agency that enforces the draft. During American involvement in the Vietnam conflict, under two million men were drafted; by comparison, over three million were drafted in 1943 alone², yet America saw more draft resistance and protest in the 1960s than any prior time period. This paper's primary goal is to shed light on some of the inequities found within the draft system throughout the 1960s, and analyze how those inequities, along with other flaws found within the Selective Service System, helped lead to unprecedented levels of protest and resistance by Americans.

Supporters of the draft insisted conscription was necessary to keep the armed forces supplied. In response, protestors used inequities within the draft system to attack America's involvement in the war: if the draft was necessary to the war effort, but the system was neither fair nor equal, then the Vietnam War's very foundation must be called into question. As the anti-war and anti-draft movements grew larger, they intersected with other social movements of the 1960s, especially the civil rights movement. The Vietnam War, the Selective Service System, and the resistance movements that stemmed from the war all heavily contributed to a fundamental shift in the way many Americans thought about their government that occurred in the 1960s; the Vietnam War and draft made a significant portion of Americans question whether or not the government truly exists to protect their unalienable rights. For others, especially

¹ Selective Service System. "Induction Statistics." Selective Service System. Accessed November 1, 2019. <https://www.sss.gov/About/History-And-Records/Induction-Statistics>.

² Ibid.

members of marginalized communities, it only reinforced pre-existing ideas that the government had no interest in pursuing liberty and justice for all; only for some.

During the War of 1812, America encountered difficulties in securing a sufficient amount of volunteer soldiers to fight in the war. Secretary of War James Monroe was urged by the chairman of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, William B. Giles, to propose possible solutions to this problem. In response, Monroe wrote his 1814 essay “Recommendations for a Federal Draft,” in which he proposed a federal draft of male citizens between the ages of 18 and 45. In the essay, Secretary Monroe argues that the implementation of a federal draft is consistent with the writings of the Constitution because the Constitution grants Congress the power to raise armies, and that therefore implies Congress has the right to put that power into effect³. Secretary Monroe proposed several different plans to the Senate Committee: in the first of his four plans, Monroe suggested that all free American men between 18 and 45 years old be formed into classes of one hundred men each. Under Monroe’s proposal, these different classes would each supply four men during wartime, and replace those men in the event of casualty. Monroe’s first proposed plan became the basis of one of America’s first proposed draft laws, the Conscription Bill of 1814. The Bill was not passed however, primarily due to the amount of resistance the bill received from both politicians and constituents. Although Monroe’s recommendations were not put into effect through the Conscription Bill of 1814, many of the principles he recommended were present in the Selective Service System that the United States enacted more than a century later⁴.

³ Anderson, Martin, and Barbara Honegger, eds. *The Military Draft*. Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1982, pp. 503.

⁴ Ibid.

In a draft system such as the one the United States implemented throughout the Vietnam War, there is an inevitable tension inherent in the system. Generally, conscription is selective or universal: in a universal system, every person in the eligible age group (in the case of the Vietnam War, men between 18 and 26) runs an equal risk of being drafted. In a selective system, deferments are introduced to allow certain individuals the opportunity to escape military service. Along these lines, two schools of thought seemed to form; on one side were those who might be labelled “pure egalitarianists,” who were supporters of the universal system and believed every man in the liable age cohort should have an equal risk of military service⁵. Contrary to these people were the supporters of the selective system, who argued that a person with great value to society, science, education, or industry should be able to defer from service⁶. A selective draft system, therefore, can be thought of as a sort of merit-based military draft. America, as evidenced by the name of the agency that enforces the draft, uses a selective system.

As of 1969, the Selective Service System consisted of 4092 local draft boards, an appeal board in each federal judicial district, a National Selective Service Appeal Board, a State Director for each state, district, and territory of the United States, and a national Director⁷. In addition, the System utilized clerks, government appeal agents, medical advisors, and various advisory committees at the state and national levels. Members of the draft and appeal boards, who were volunteers that were “appointed by

⁵ Flynn, George Q. *The Draft, 1940-1973*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1993, pp. 176.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Tigar, Michael E, and Robert J Zweben. “Selective Service: Some Certain Problems and Some Tentative Answers.” *The George Washington Law Review* Vol. 37, no. 2 (March 1969). https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5875&context=faculty_scholarship, pp. 2.

the President on recommendation of the appropriate governor or comparable official⁸,” were the people primarily in charge of deciding whether a draft registrant was inducted, deferred, or exempted. Throughout most of the Vietnam War, the Selective Service System used the following sequence, in descending order of priority, to supply the armed forces with men: delinquents (oldest first;) volunteers up to age 26; single men and men who have been married since August 26th 1965⁹ between ages 19-26 with the oldest being called first; men over 26, youngest called first; lastly, men between 18.5 and 19, oldest called first¹⁰.

One reason why the draft was so much more accepted prior to Vietnam was simply because few young men were being drafted. From 1955 to 1964 draft inductions averaged about 100,000 per year. During that same time, the population of people between the ages of 15-24 had grown from 21,641,000 to 29,519,000. The Baby Boom after World War II led to more Americans being eligible for the draft than ever before, yet draft induction numbers remained fairly consistent, and low. This consistency came to an end in 1965 when General William Westmoreland insisted the United States would need to send more troops to South Vietnam to prevent Saigon from falling¹¹. When President Lyndon B. Johnson contemplated the question of sending reinforcements to Vietnam in 1965, he asked former President Dwight D. Eisenhower for his opinion. Eisenhower approved of the idea of sending reinforcements to Vietnam, but warned that

⁸ Tigar, Michael E, and Robert J Zweben. “Selective Service: Some Certain Problems and Some Tentative Answers.” *The George Washington Law Review* Vol. 37, no. 2 (March 1969). https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5875&context=faculty_scholarship, pp. 3.

⁹ This cutoff date of August 26th, 1965 is due to President Lyndon B. Johnson repealing John F. Kennedy’s marriage deferment law, which is discussed later.

¹⁰ Flynn, George Q. *The Draft, 1940-1973*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1993, pp. 172.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 170.

“sending conscripted troops to Vietnam would cause a major public relations problem,” and thus urged Johnson to use only volunteers and regulars¹². In July 1965, President Johnson approved sending 50,000 American soldiers to Vietnam. Johnson was reluctant to tap into the Army Reserves, remembering the political turmoil similar actions caused during the Korean War, and instead decided to supply these troops through the draft. The amount of people inducted into the army in 1965, 230,991, was more than double the 112,386 men inducted in 1964¹³. Between 1965 and 1968, approximately 900,000 men were inducted into the armed forces, tripling the previous induction rate of 100,000 per year¹⁴.

Inequities Within the Draft

There was great concern in the 1960s surrounding equity of military service, especially as it pertained to draftees and the draft. The system that was in place was not universal, and this was especially apparent to those who were being drafted. There was the obvious fact that only men were being drafted into service; slightly less obvious was the fact that only men between the ages of 18 and 26 risked induction¹⁵. Even within this demographic, there was still inequity: in some cases, students were given deferments. These deferments could be temporary class I-S deferments, in which students were deferred from service "until graduation from high school or attainment of age of 20, or until the end of his academic year at a college or university," or class II-S

¹² Flynn, George Q. *The Draft, 1940-1973*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1993, pp. 165

¹³ Selective Service System. "Induction Statistics." Selective Service System. Accessed November 1, 2019. <https://www.sss.gov/About/History-And-Records/Induction-Statistics>.

¹⁴ Flynn, George Q. *The Draft, 1940-1973*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1993, pp. 171.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 167.

deferments, which were indefinite student deferments¹⁶. Students were not the only people to receive deferments: the Selective Service also allowed deferments for those working in agriculture, deferments for sole surviving sons, deferments for men with children, “extreme hardship deferments,” and deferments for people who were enrolled in ministerial/divinity schools or otherwise working in a religious capacity¹⁷. For more information on the Selective Service System’s draft classifications in the 1960s, see Figure 1.

The fact that some people were forced to serve and some were given deferments created a great deal of political tension throughout the 1960s. The most common way people escaped being drafted was by applying for conscientious objector status. As more Americans were informed on what exactly conscientious objection was, applications for conscientious objector status became more frequent throughout the late 1960s. The number of civilian conscientious objectors grew from 17,900 in 1964 to 61,000 by 1971¹⁸. Perhaps the most innocuous way men avoided service was to simply use the elaborate appeal process the draft system had in place¹⁹. With the right legal advice, it was possible to drag out the appeal process for quite some time, not unlike a white-collar criminal in the court system²⁰. Once a draftee had exhausted appeals within the draft system itself, they could then appeal to the courts to lengthen the process even

¹⁶ Marshall, Burke, chairman, “In Pursuit of Equity: Who Serves When Not All Serve? Report of the National Advisory Commission on Selective Service.” Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967. <https://www.nixonfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/In-Pursuit-of-Equity-.pdf>

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Flynn, George Q. *The Draft, 1940-1973*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1993, pp. 179.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 180

²⁰ Ibid.

more. The men who used this tactic hoped that, as time went on, the war might end, or they might marry and have children, or they might even become too old to serve²¹.

Just as applications for conscientious objector status became more common when men realized it could help them avoid service, so did draft status appeals; at the end of World War II, there were 3 appeals for every 1,000 draftees inducted into the army. At the end of the Korean War, there were 47 appeals per 1,000 draftees inducted; by mid-1969, there were 98 appeals per 1,000 Class 1-A (see figure 1) registrants, more than double the rate during the Korean War²². In many cases, even if their appeals were rejected, men did not submit easily to the draft. Throughout the Vietnam War, thousands of draft-registered men and their families fled to Canada to evade the draft. Others stayed in America but refused to report for service; some tried to hide from the government, while some fought. When faced with legal troubles, resisters of the draft repeatedly drew upon the international legal precedent set during the Nuremberg Trials: an individual cannot violate their conscience and commit an immoral action even when instructed to do so by their government²³.

In 1967, approximately 48 percent of the army and 16 percent of the entire armed forces was comprised of draftees. Of the 6 million Americans who served in Vietnam, 25 percent of them were draftees. During the height of the Korean War, approximately 52 percent of those fighting in the war were draftees; during World War II, 15 million Americans served, and 66 percent of them had been drafted²⁴. In the twenty years between the end of World War II and the beginning of the Vietnam War, the

²¹ Flynn, George Q. *The Draft, 1940-1973*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1993, pp. 180

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 179.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 171.

amount of the men drafted and the percentage of draftees in the armed forces decreased. However, the amount of draftees who saw live combat increased dramatically: in 1965, 28 percent of Army veterans who died in combat were draftees; in 1966, that number rose to 34 percent, and by 1967 it had risen again to 57 percent²⁵. In 1969, draftees accounted for only 16 percent of the entire armed forces, yet they accounted for 88 percent of the infantry serving in Vietnam and between 50 and 70 percent of combat deaths.

As draft quotas rose, the amount of people volunteering for military service rose as well, due in part to the threat of being drafted. A survey conducted in 1964 indicated that 40 percent of all volunteers in the armed forces were motivated by the draft to volunteer; that number would rise above 50 percent a year later in a similar survey²⁶. During John F. Kennedy's tenure, the president implemented a deferment system for married men to avoid being drafted, with particular emphasis placed on protecting married men that had "bona-fide relationships at home with their children."²⁷ However, in August of 1965, President Johnson revoked the system, putting an end to the so-called "Kennedy deferments." Draft expansion throughout the 1960s led to many different deferment laws being challenged; laws which were originally put in place to protect citizens from military service.

As previously mentioned, the number of conscientious objectors tripled between 1964 and 1971. One difficulty in obtaining conscientious objector status came from the fact that those who applied for conscientious objector status had to claim opposition to

²⁵ Flynn, George Q. *The Draft, 1940-1973*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1993, pp. 171.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Selective Service System. "Effects of Marriage and Fatherhood on Draft Eligibility." Accessed November 1, 2019. <https://www.sss.gov/About/History-And-Records/Effects>.

all wars rather than solely objecting to the war in Vietnam. A case appeared before the Supreme Court with this very issue; in 1971, Guy Porter Gillette applied for conscientious objector status on the grounds that Vietnam was an “unjust” war and he wanted no part of it. Gillette started his views as follows:

“I object to any assignment in the United States Armed Forces while this unnecessary and unjust war is being waged, on the grounds of religious belief specifically Humanism; This essentially means respect and love for man, faith in his inherent goodness and perfectability, and confidence in his capability to improve some of the pains of the human condition²⁸.”

Gillette’s application for deferment was denied, however he still refused to report for induction, and thus charges were brought against him.

Gillette’s defense cited paragraph 6(j) of the Military Selective Service Act of 1967 which states that no individual can be subjected to “service in the armed forces of the United States who, by reason of religious training and belief, is conscientiously opposed to participation in war in any form.” The citation of this paragraph was used against Gillette in court; he stated he was specifically opposed to the Vietnam war, calling it unjust, but made no mention of being opposed to “war in any form.” The exact text from the court documents reads:

The denial of exemption was upheld, and Gillette's defense to the criminal charge rejected, not because of doubt about the sincerity or the religious character of petitioner's objection to military service but because his objection ran to a particular war. In affirming the conviction, the Court of Appeals concluded that Gillette's conscientious beliefs 'were specifically directed against the war in Vietnam,' while the relevant exemption provision of the Military Selective Service Act of 1967, 50 U.S.C. App. § 456(j) (1964 ed., Supp. V), 'requires opposition 'to participation in war in any form.'²⁹

²⁸ United States Supreme Court. “401 U.S. 437 - Gillette v. United States a Negre.” OpenJurist. Accessed September 29, 2019. <https://openjurist.org/401/us/437/gillette-v-united-states-a-negre>.

²⁹ United States Supreme Court. “401 U.S. 437 - Gillette v. United States a Negre.” OpenJurist. Accessed September 29, 2019. <https://openjurist.org/401/us/437/gillette-v-united-states-a-negre>.

The Supreme Court's decision in this case set an important precedent: a conscientious objector cannot only object to a specific war, but rather one must object to all wars in order to receive conscientious objector status. When Justice Thurgood Marshall delivered the opinion of the court, he stated "Apart from the Government's need for manpower, perhaps the central interest involved in the administration of conscription laws is the interest in maintaining a fair system for determining 'who serves when not all serve³⁰.'"

In the above statement, Justice Marshall is quoting the title of the 1967 report of the National Advisory Commission on Selective Service³¹, "In Pursuit of Equity: Who Serves When Not All Serve?" In their report, the Commission highlighted many of the flaws they found in the draft system in the mid-1960s. One flaw they found concerned draft boards; draft boards were the primary source of inductions and deferments and ultimately, these boards decided who would be drafted and who would be deferred. The Commission found that draft boards throughout the United States lacked consistency and uniformity when it came to making decisions: this was primarily due to the amount of variation in the opinions of individual board members. When members of one local draft board were surveyed, 25 percent of them believed whether or not a student is self-supporting should be an important factor in determining student deferments, while an

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ The National Advisory Commission on Selective Service was made up of twenty different influential Americans with very different professions and included, amongst others: the president of Yale University, the vice president of American Airlines, the editor and chairman of the board of The Houston Post, a retired judge, a professor of Theology at Woodstock College, the president of Johnson Publishing Company, a professor of surgery at Western Reserve University Medical School, the director of President Lyndon B. Johnson's Office of Economic Opportunity, and a retired U. S. Marine Corps General.

equal number of members thought it did not matter at all³². In the same survey, draft board members also differed greatly in opinion over the amount of weight that should be assigned to a student's course of study, and whether or not graduate school students should be prioritized. A separate survey found that 55 percent of one local draft board's members believed conscientious objectors should not be deferred under any circumstance³³. This statistic is extremely troubling: one of a draft board's main functions was to ensure deferments are equitable, and yet more than half of this particular board's members believed one of the most common deferment classifications should not exist. Additionally, it is important for the reader to understand that prior to 1971, a draftee was not guaranteed the right to have a personal appearance before his local draft board if he wanted to appeal his draft classification, and as a result, some decisions about whether a person would be deferred or drafted were based entirely on paperwork³⁴.

The Commission on Selective Service also found that there was a pronounced disparity in the workloads of appeal boards across the country: in one state, four boards handled an average of more than 3,000 cases each in 1966. During that same period, a draft board in another state processed 25 cases³⁵. The geographical locations of draft boards accounted for some of this disparity: some states had three separate appeal boards to cover the needs of 250,000 registrants, while another state had only one

³² Marshall, Burke, chairman, "In Pursuit of Equity: Who Serves When Not All Serve? Report of the National Advisory Commission on Selective Service." Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967. <https://www.nixonfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/In-Pursuit-of-Equity-.pdf>, pp. 39.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Selective Service System. "How The Draft Has Changed Since Vietnam." Accessed November 1, 2019. <https://www.sss.gov/About/History-And-Records/How-The-Draft-Has-Changed-Since-Vietnam>.

³⁵ Marshall, Burke, chairman, "In Pursuit of Equity: Who Serves When Not All Serve? Report of the National Advisory Commission on Selective Service." Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967. <https://www.nixonfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/In-Pursuit-of-Equity-.pdf>, pp. 38.

appeal board for 450,000 registrants³⁶. The Commission found not only were the draft and appeal boards overworked and divided, but in some cases, they were not operating equitably either. The Commission found there was a direct relationship between the amount of student deferments a draft board gives and the amount of people that were deemed "unfit for service." According to one of the studies the Commission conducted,, high incomes areas often had a higher proportion of student deferments³⁷. When they studied this phenomenon further, they found that draft boards in high-income areas had the lowest proportion of draft registrants serving (or having previously served) in the armed forces. Low-income areas, meanwhile, had the greatest number of men rejected for service. The Commission believed there was a direct correlation between these two statistics: when one state's draft boards were subjected to intensive study, the Commission found that the draft board with the highest percentage of people deemed "unfit for service" also had the lowest number of student deferments³⁸, confirming the Commission's suspicions. Some of those who protested student deferments believed the system was only in place to keep the rich out of the draft while those who could not afford school were left without deferments, and the Commission's findings on this topic seem to support that idea.

Another inequity the Commission writes about concerns the representation of minorities, especially African Americans, in America's draft system. The Commission produced a questionnaire in October 1966 that was sent to local draft boards throughout

³⁶ Marshall, Burke, chairman, "In Pursuit of Equity: Who Serves When Not All Serve? Report of the National Advisory Commission on Selective Service." Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967. <https://www.nixonfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/In-Pursuit-of-Equity-.pdf>, pp. 38.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

the country and received a 96.3 percent response: the questionnaire indicated that of the 16,632 local draft board members who responded, only 1.3 percent of them were African American, despite the fact that the total American population was composed of 11 percent African Americans³⁹. Adding to this disparity, 0.8 percent of draft board members were Puerto Rican, 0.7 percent were "Spanish American," 0.2 percent were "Oriental," and 0.1 percent were "American Indian," thus indicating that 96.9 percent of the surveyed draft board members were white⁴⁰ despite whites only making up roughly 86 percent of the 1966 American population⁴¹.

Nearly 50 percent of African Americans registered for the draft were deemed "unfit for service," while only 25 percent of whites were given the same classification. Studies conducted by the Commission also indicated that proportionally more African Americans who qualified for service were actually drafted: 30 percent of draft-eligible African Americans were inducted into the Armed Forces, compared to only 18 percent of whites. This statistical discrepancy exists partially because fewer African Americans were admitted into the Reserves or officer training programs to which they applied: a 1964 study showed 5.4 percent of non-whites who applied were given Reserve duty, compared to 20.6 percent of white Reservists⁴². In a similar disparity, less than 0.4 percent of non-white applicants qualified for officer training school, while 4.3 percent of

³⁹ United States Census Bureau. "U.S Population – 1940 to 2010." Accessed November 11, 2019. https://www.census.gov/newsroom/cspan/1940census/CSPAN_1940slides.pdf.

⁴⁰ Marshall, Burke, chairman, "In Pursuit of Equity: Who Serves When Not All Serve? Report of the National Advisory Commission on Selective Service." Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967. <https://www.nixonfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/In-Pursuit-of-Equity-.pdf>, pp. 19.

⁴¹ United States Census Bureau. "U.S Population – 1940 to 2010." Accessed November 11, 2019. https://www.census.gov/newsroom/cspan/1940census/CSPAN_1940slides.pdf.

⁴² Marshall, Burke, chairman, "In Pursuit of Equity: Who Serves When Not All Serve? Report of the National Advisory Commission on Selective Service." Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967. <https://www.nixonfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/In-Pursuit-of-Equity-.pdf>, pp. 19.

whites qualified. Most troubling, perhaps, were the inequities the Commission found when studying the racial makeup of American soldiers in Vietnam. The Commission found that while African Americans were being underrepresented by draft boards at home, they were overrepresented in combat: African Americans made up 11 percent of the men serving in Vietnam, yet as of late 1965, 22.8 percent of the enlisted men in combat units in Vietnam were African American. The casualty figures reflect this inequity as well: during the first 11 months of 1966, African American soldiers comprised 22.4 percent of all Army troops killed in action.

Vietnam Draft Resistance

Much of the criticism of the draft system's equity did not come from the lower-middle class, who provided the bulk of the draftees, nor from the lower class, but rather from the upper classes⁴³. Few of the protestors in the Vietnam Era came from blue-collar lower class households; rather, many were college students from upper-middle class homes⁴⁴. It is important to bear in mind that there was no single coherent and unified ideology behind draft resistance: people protested for various reasons including but not limited to draft inequities, objection to the Vietnam War itself, objection to the constitutionality and legality of the war (which primarily stemmed from the fact that the American government never declared war on Vietnam), objection to the United States' foreign policy of containment, self-preservation, and many other reasons. Many of the people who protested the draft were not solely protesting the draft. Rather, they viewed the draft as a symptom of much deeper social problems. Dagmar Wilson, the leader of Women Strike For Peace, which was a peace activist group founded in 1961, told

⁴³ Flynn, George Q. *The Draft, 1940-1973*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1993, pp. 167.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 176.

congressmen that her group was not only concerned with the unfairness of the Selective Service system, but with the “impact of the draft on the fabric of society⁴⁵.” In an interview with student draft protestors in 1964, 88 percent of them said they were protesting the war in Vietnam, while only a little over half of them said they were protesting the nature of the draft system itself⁴⁶.

In 1964, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) began planning an anti-War demonstration to be held on April 17th, 1965. SDS created and circulated a flyer (see figure 2) that was published in the school newspapers of higher education institutions all over the country. In the flyer, SDS gave a comprehensive list of their objections to the Vietnam War, and urged students across the country to join them in a march on Washington. The "SDS March on Washington to End the War in Vietnam" turned out to be the largest peace protest up to that point in American history, drawing between 15,000 and 25,000 college students and others to the nation's capital⁴⁷. Other organizations that supported the march included the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and Women Strike for Peace, demonstrating the intersection between the peace and civil rights movements that became more common throughout the 1960s.

Intersection between social and civil movements was further demonstrated by the Chicano movement in Los Angeles. Rosalio Muñoz, a former UCLA student-body president, received orders in December of 1968 to report for induction on September 16 of the following year. Over the next few months, Muñoz and his friend Ramsés Noriega

⁴⁵ Flynn, George Q. *The Draft, 1940-1973*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1993, pp. 177.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ University of Michigan. “The March on Washington.” *Resistance and Revolution: The Anti-Vietnam War Movement at the University of Michigan, 1965-1972*. Accessed November 14, 2019. http://michiganintheworld.history.lsa.umich.edu/antivietnamwar/exhibits/show/exhibit/the_teach_ins/national_teach_in_1965.

toured California to survey Mexican-American attitudes toward the war. Their tour culminated in the creation of a new activist group, Chale con el Draft (To Hell with the Draft), which aimed to help individual Chicanos in their deliberations about whether to seek deferment or resist being drafted. On September 16, 1969, the day he was directed to report for induction, Muñoz marched to the Armed Forces Induction and Examination Center in Los Angeles with more than a hundred supporters, and read the following prepared statement:

Today the sixteenth of September, the day of independence for all Mexican peoples, I declare my independence of the Selective Service System. I accuse the government of the United States of America of genocide against the Mexican people. Specifically, I accuse the draft, the entire social, political, and economic system of the United States of America, of creating a funnel which shoots Mexican youth into Vietnam to be killed and to kill innocent men, women, and children. I accuse the law enforcement agencies of the United States of instilling greater fear and insecurity in the Mexican youth than the Viet Cong ever could, which is genocide. I accuse the American welfare system of taking the self respect from our Mexican families, forcing our youth to the Army as a better alternative to living in our community with their families, which is genocide. I accuse the education system of the United States of breaking down the family structure of the Mexican people. Robbing us of our language and culture has torn the youth away from our fathers, mothers and grandparents. Thus it is that I accuse the educational system of undereducating Chicano youth⁴⁸.

Muñoz quickly realized that opposition to the draft system alone was not enough for him or his movement; they quickly realized that protesting the draft would not change the problems of the war itself, namely, the disproportionate number of Chicanos dying in the war. Studies conducted between January 1961 and February 1967 were brought to Muñoz's attention: these studies revealed despite Chicano's constituting roughly 11

⁴⁸ Chávez Ernesto. *"Mi Raza Primero!" (My People First!): Nationalism, Identity, and Insurgency in the Chicano Movement in Los Angeles, 1966-1978*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002, pp. 62-63.

percent of the population in the Southwest, they compromised 19.4 percent of those killed in Vietnam⁴⁹.

These studies were the work of Ralph C. Guzmán, a founder of the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA) and the only Mexican American on the staff of UCLA. Guzmán offered three possible reasons for the disproportionately high casualty rate amongst Mexican Americans. Guzmán suggested Mexican Americans joined the military in largest numbers in order to gain social status and to provide financial assistance to their families. Guzmán also believed these enlistees were driven by a strong desire to prove their "Americaness" to society. Lastly, the number of Mexican Americans who could circumvent the draft system by going to college was miniscule; at University of California, for example, only 1 percent of the 97,000 enrolled students were Chicanos in 1969⁵⁰. East Los Angeles had the greatest concentration of Mexicans living in the United States. The median income of Mexican-American families was more than \$3,000 lower than the median income of all California families; of the 23,752 families in East Los Angeles, some 17 percent lived below the poverty line. Furthermore, in 1968 the Los Angeles County Department of Urban Affairs reported that only 28.67 percent of the houses in East Los Angeles were in "livable condition"⁵¹. Compounded onto all of this was the discrimination Chicanos felt by county sheriffs, city police, and their every day societal peers. Muñoz and his fellow Chicano protestors were outraged that the American government wanted to draft them to fight in a war

⁴⁹ Chávez Ernesto. *"Mi Raza Primero!" (My People First!): Nationalism, Identity, and Insurgency in the Chicano Movement in Los Angeles, 1966-1978*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002, pp. 63.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Chávez Ernesto. *"Mi Raza Primero!" (My People First!): Nationalism, Identity, and Insurgency in the Chicano Movement in Los Angeles, 1966-1978*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002, pp. 63.

abroad when such appalling living conditions existed for them at home. Ultimately, Muñoz sought for his movement to be viewed as more than just a peace movement. Muñoz perhaps wouldn't even agree with someone labelling his movement as an intersection between peace and civil movements: to Muñoz, the inequities in the Vietnam draft and war were civil rights issues first and foremost⁵², and therefore his was primarily a civil rights movement. Muñoz's "Chicano Moratorium Committee" would eventually organize twenty thousand Chicanos, the largest protest organized by Chicanos in the nation's history, to demonstrate against the Vietnam War.

Ironically, the draft system was cited by both supporters of the Vietnam War and protestors as a means to an end⁵³. Defenders of the draft used it to supply troops for the war effort and threaten dissenters, while opponents of the war used the draft system as a target to unite radical groups⁵⁴. When draft calls expanded, so too did the size of the anti-war movement. The grievances of anti-war and anti-imperialism protestors were not always supported by the public because these grievances threatened the patriotic ethos that had been so ingrained in American society since World War II⁵⁵. By targeting the draft, however, protestors appealed to a wider group of people; by pointing out the inequities and other weaknesses within the draft system, protestors were able to recruit students and political leaders alike to their cause. By protesting the draft in particular, protest of the Vietnam War as a whole was made more legitimate: if the draft was necessary to the war effort and yet the system was fatally flawed, then surely something must be wrong with the war.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Flynn, George Q. *The Draft, 1940-1973*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1993, pp. 181.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

The Government's Reaction to Protest

When faced with draft protest in November 1951, the director of the Selective Service System Lewis B. Hershey⁵⁶ instructed his state directors not to overreact because it would be a waste of energy and “give the delinquents a martyr complex⁵⁷.” As protests of the Vietnam War began in 1965, Hershey maintained this philosophy; Hershey viewed the protestors as a small minority, and blamed their behavior on the teachings of misguided professors⁵⁸. In general, Hershey and the Selective Service national headquarters were not nearly as concerned by protestors as Hershey's state directors and the local draft boards were. Often times, local boards were staffed by middle-class figures who seemingly resented the entire youth culture arising around them. The state directors of Delaware and Illinois both threatened in late 1965 to revoke deferments for protestors. By the summer of 1968, violent protests began to arise. In public appearances, Selective Service employees were pelted with eggs and booed off stages, while the operators of the system faced bomb threats⁵⁹. Local draft board members suffered harassment at home, and some board members resigned under the pressure they were facing. In San Francisco alone, over 100 attorneys offered free legal services to men seeking to beat the draft⁶⁰. In response, one state director suggested that the American Bar Association try to disbar attorneys who gave counsel to draft evaders⁶¹. The Selective Service System continued to face lawsuits, and yet in a

⁵⁶ Hershey was appointed director of the Selective Service by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1941 and served in that capacity until he reached the mandatory retirement age in 1973.

⁵⁷ Flynn, George Q. *The Draft, 1940-1973*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1993, pp. 182.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Flynn, George Q. *The Draft, 1940-1973*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1993, pp. 182.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

conference with his state directors in 1968, Hershey insisted “if we only have one [lawsuit] for every ten [men] we get in we will be doing well⁶².”

The Joint Army Navy Selective Service Committee of the 1930s stated emphatically that enforcement of the law was “not in the least a function of the Selective Service Administration⁶³.” During World War II, the Selective Service national headquarters informed a local board in Louisiana that attempting to catch draft dodgers was “not authorized,” and that the Selective Service System “is not a law enforcement or criminal investigating agency.” And yet, by the 1960s the Selective Service had an array of powers that were used to induce behaviors they found to be desirable. Regulations made it clear that if a registrant failed to perform any duty required of him by the law, the local draft board should declare him a delinquent⁶⁴. According to criminal defense attorney and professor of law Michael E. Tigar, these delinquency regulations were specifically designed to force registrants to comply with “duties owed [to] the Selective Service System relating to his classification, such as furnishing required information concerning his whereabouts and status⁶⁵.” If registrants failed to fulfill these duties, their draft classification was changed to “delinquent” and they could be ordered to report for induction ahead of all other registrants as a result.

Originally, draft boards were instructed only to consider positive actions in evaluating a man’s eligibility for deferment, but by 1965, Selective Service headquarters

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 183.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Tigar, Michael E, and Robert J Zweben. “Selective Service: Some Certain Problems and Some Tentative Answers.” *The George Washington Law Review* Vol. 37, no. 2, March 1969. https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5875&context=faculty_scholarship.

had adopted a new philosophy in defining delinquency⁶⁶. Draft boards were directed to take into account “certain negative acts” that could be considered harmful to national interest: these negative traits were used to justify the termination of deferments and creation of delinquencies. According to the regulations promulgated under the Military Selective Service Act of 1967, a local draft board could declare a registrant a delinquent for “failure to perform duties required by the Selective Service Law⁶⁷.” This highlights a glaring inconsistency: the Selective Service System made it clear throughout the 1930s and 1940s that it was not a law enforcement agency, and yet as of the mid-1960s, draft boards not only possessed powers to punish individuals who did not follow the law, but were encouraged to utilize these powers regularly. Furthermore, the regulations on delinquency did not specify exactly what “duties” registrants needed to fulfill in order to avoid being classified as delinquents, nor did the regulations explicitly provide removal from delinquency status in the event a registrant brings himself into compliance with Selective Service regulations⁶⁸. Because of this, serious concerns were raised by Tigar and his colleagues over the constitutionality of the delinquency regulations.

President Johnson’s response to the protestors was no more tactful than that of the Selective Service. The day after the Students for a Democratic Society’s March on Washington, President Johnson responded to the antiwar demonstration with a pledge that “there is no human power capable of forcing us from Vietnam. We will remain as long as necessary, with the might that is required, whatever the risk and whatever the

⁶⁶ Flynn, George Q. *The Draft, 1940-1973*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1993, pp. 182.

⁶⁷ United States Supreme Court. “GUTKNECHT v. UNITED STATES(1970).” FindLaw. Thomson Reuters. Accessed November 29, 2019. <https://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/396/295.html>.

⁶⁸ Tigar, Michael E, and Robert J Zweben. “Selective Service: Some Certain Problems and Some Tentative Answers.” *The George Washington Law Review* Vol. 37, no. 2, March 1969. https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5875&context=faculty_scholarship.

cost.⁶⁹ Meanwhile, in response to the racially motivated violent uprisings in cities throughout America that occurred in the summer of 1967, Johnson demanded the FBI search for possible conspiracies⁷⁰. According to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover's notes, Johnson was "of the opinion that there was a pattern about all of these riots." The President instructed Hoover to keep his "men busy to find a central character to it, to watch and see and we will find some central theme⁷¹." Soon after, Hoover submitted a report that summarized "major riot situations" in twenty-nine cities and included a section on the linkage between the anti-Vietnam War movement and the civil rights movement⁷², again demonstrating intersection between social and civil movements in the 1960s. The FBI linked the moderates with the radicals and blamed the uprisings on the civil rights movement as a whole; Hoover held accountable the "hypocritical individuals who have openly professed abhorrence for violence" and yet "set the stage" for the violent uprisings.

In a televised speech given on March 31, 1968, President Johnson shocked the country by announcing he "shall not seek, and will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as President." President Johnson's announcement splintered the Democratic Party into factions. Less than three months later, the party was further divided when Robert F. Kennedy, one of the most popular candidates in the presidential race, was murdered. President Johnson's Vice President, Hubert Humphrey, who was

⁶⁹ University of Michigan. "The March on Washington." Resistance and Revolution: The Anti-Vietnam War Movement at the University of Michigan, 1965-1972. Accessed November 14, 2019. http://michiganintheworld.history.lsa.umich.edu/antivietnamwar/exhibits/show/exhibit/the_teach_ins/national_teach_in_1965.

⁷⁰ O'Reilly, Kenneth. "The FBI and the Politics of the Riots, 1964-1968." *The Journal of American History* 75, no. 1, 1988, pp. 103. doi:10.2307/1889656.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid, pp. 103-104.

viewed by many as an inevitable continuation of Johnson's policies, won the Democratic nomination. The 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago was met with widespread protest; during the clash between protestors and law enforcement, part of which was televised, protestors chanted "the whole world is watching" while others were arrested and beaten by police⁷³. Three months later, the Republican Party's nominee, Richard Nixon, who was Dwight D. Eisenhower's Vice President, won the general election by more than a hundred electoral votes.

The All-Volunteer Armed Force

Perhaps the most important speech Nixon gave during his presidential campaign was "The All-Volunteer Armed Force," an address given on the CBS Radio Network on October 17, 1968. In the speech, Nixon first asserts that Americans have lived with the draft for so long that "too many of us now accept it as normal and necessary⁷⁴." Nixon urges the listener to question the existence of permanent conscription in a free society. He states his belief that the United States should move toward an all-volunteer armed force once its involvement in the Vietnam War has ceased, saying "we can't stop the draft while we are in a major war. What we can do - and what we should do now - is to commit ourselves as a nation to the goal of building an all-volunteer armed force."

Nixon asserts that arguments about the draft center first on whether it's right, and second, on whether it's necessary. He cites the words of Senator Robert Taft, son of the former president, who declared in the 1940s that the draft "is absolutely opposed to the principles of individual liberty which have always been considered a part of American

⁷³ *Chicago Convention The Whole World Is Watching 1968*. YouTube, 2011. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_9OJnRnZjU.

⁷⁴ Anderson, Martin, and Barbara Honegger, eds. *The Military Draft*. Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1982, pp. 604.

democracy.” Nixon echoes Taft’s points, saying “a system of compulsory service that arbitrarily selects some and not others simply cannot be squared with our whole concept of liberty, justice and equality under the law.” Therefore, he says, the justification for the draft must be necessity. Nixon next speaks on the inequality of the draft, questioning “Why should your son be forced to sacrifice two of the most important years of his life so that a neighbor’s son can go right along pursuing his interests in freedom and safety?” Nixon addresses the necessity of fixing the draft’s inequalities in the short-term, “but in the long run, the only way to stop the inequities is to stop the system.”⁷⁵ Nixon argues the armed forces does not need a conscription system, it needs better housing, better living conditions, higher pay, and increased benefits. Nixon acknowledges that these things would cost a great deal, but the alternative is “never-ending compulsion” in a society that has dedicated itself to freedom. Furthermore, he argues that a volunteer armed force would undoubtedly be a better armed force in terms of morale, efficiency, and effectiveness. A volunteer force would be more motivated and more skilled, and thus suffer less casualties.

In proposing that America end the draft, Nixon offers two cautions: first, Nixon insists the structure of the draft be kept on stand-by “in case some all-out emergency requires its reactivation.” Second, Nixon warns that the draft cannot be ended all at once, but rather should be ended in phases. The important thing, Nixon insists, is that the country make the decision to end the draft now, and act on that decision at the very first opportunity. In closing, Nixon says

“Our young people recognize the draft as an infringement on their liberty - which it is. To them, it represents a government insensitive to their rights - a government callous to their status as free men. They ask for justice, and they deserve it. So I say, it’s time we

⁷⁵ Ibid, pp. 607.

looked at our consciences. Let's show our commitment to freedom by preparing to assure our young people theirs⁷⁶."

A month after giving his speech, Nixon won the presidential election. Nixon stayed true to his campaign promise: the amount of men conscripted through the Selective Service System decreased every year between 1968 and 1973⁷⁷, and in 1973, a year after winning reelection by one of the widest margins in American history, President Nixon instituted the all-volunteer force. He thus, for the first time in America's history, made it official national policy for the armed forces to rely exclusively on volunteers for its personnel⁷⁸. The last man inducted through the Selective Service System entered the Army on June 30, 1973⁷⁹.

Conclusion

In her 1967 essay "The Wreckage of the Consensus" from *Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal*, novelist and philosopher Ayn Rand argues that the existence of a military draft negates man's most fundamental right - the right to life. Rand contends that a draft instead establishes the fundamental principle of statism: "that a man's life belongs to the state, and the state may claim it by compelling him to sacrifice it in battle." Once that principle is established, she says, "the rest is only a matter of time." If a man's country can force him to "risk death or hideous maiming and crippling" in a war declared (or in the case of Vietnam, undeclared⁸⁰) at the state's discretion, for a cause

⁷⁶ Anderson, Martin, and Barbara Honegger, eds. *The Military Draft*. Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1982, pp. 608.

⁷⁷ Selective Service System. "Induction Statistics." Selective Service System. Accessed November 1, 2019. <https://www.sss.gov/About/History-And-Records/Induction-Statistics>.

⁷⁸ Anderson, Martin, and Barbara Honegger, eds. *The Military Draft*. Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1982, pp. 608.

⁷⁹ Selective Service System. "Induction Statistics." Selective Service System. Accessed November 1, 2019. <https://www.sss.gov/About/History-And-Records/Induction-Statistics>.

⁸⁰ The American government did not declare war on the North Vietnamese government at any point throughout the conflict.

he may neither approve of nor even understand, then in principle, “*all* rights are negated in that state, and its government is not man’s protector any longer. What else is there left to protect⁸¹?” Furthermore, Rand condemns “so-called ‘conservatives’ who posture as defenders of individual rights, particularly property rights, but uphold and advocate the draft.” She questions how someone can “justify the proposition that creatures who have no right to life, have the right to a bank account?” Rand similarly condemns ‘liberals’ who support the draft, saying a “slightly higher rung of hell should be reserved for those who claim that man has a right to *livelihood* (e.g. public housing, medical care, education, economic security) but not to *life* itself.

Rand addresses a popular argument made by draft supporters: the idea that “rights impose obligations.” She questions to whom these obligations are owed, and who imposes these obligations? According to Rand, this argument is flawed because it implies that rights are a gift from the state, and a man has to buy them by offering something (such as his life) in return. Rand points out the logical fallacy within the argument; since the only proper function of a government is to protect man’s rights, the government cannot lay claim to his life in exchange for that protection. Even if one were to ignore the logical and ethical flaws behind a military draft, Rand claims the draft is politically flawed as well: she maintains that the draft represents “involuntary service” and is thus unconstitutional regardless of what the Supreme Court says⁸². Rand asserts that without a draft, not many men would volunteer for wars such as Korea and Vietnam, and therefore without the power to draft, “the makers of our foreign policy

⁸¹ Anderson, Martin, and Barbara Honegger, eds. *The Military Draft*. Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1982, pp. 172.

⁸² Anderson, Martin, and Barbara Honegger, eds. *The Military Draft*. Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1982, pp. 172.

would not be able to embark on adventures of that kind.” This, she says, is one of the best practical reasons for the abolition of the draft.

According to historian and philosopher Michel Foucault, power does not operate from above through a single agency (such as the government) but works diffusely, locally; resistance occurs similarly, in a series of local disruptive struggles rather than in a might dialectical engagement⁸³. In the case of Vietnam era conscription, much of the power was in the hands of the local draft board volunteers rather than high ranking Selective Service officials. Similarly, resistance to the draft began on the local level with marches, sit-ins and teach-ins, draft card burnings, and more. These events were not organized by politicians or other high-ranking officials, but rather they were often started by students or members of marginalized communities who were most affected by the inequities within the Vietnam War and its draft system. Foucault also asserted that knowledge can be used as power, and I believe these theories can also be linked to Vietnam Resistance: in the case of the Chicano Moratorium, the movement’s size grew rapidly as studies, conducted by Mexican Americans, revealed that Mexican Americans were serving and dying disproportionately in Vietnam. As knowledge about inequities (both within the draft system and the war itself) began to disseminate throughout the East Los Angeles community, outrage spread, and protests grew. In other words, as this marginalized community gained knowledge, they transformed that knowledge into power through protest, demonstration, and civil disobedience.

Throughout this paper, multiple arguments both in favor of and against the draft have been examined. Regardless of one’s stance on these arguments, the inequities

⁸³ Green, Anna, and Kathleen Troup. *The Houses of History: a Critical Reader in History and Theory*. 3rd ed. Manchester, 2016.

that existed within America's draft system throughout the Vietnam War cannot be denied. In addition to these inequities, the Selective Service System lacked consistency on both the local and national levels, as evidenced by its lack of a set standard for what behaviors could classify someone as a delinquent, or what earns a person deferment. Supporters insisted the draft was necessary in order for America to win the war, and yet the system upon which this war was built was fundamentally flawed in countless ways. The constitutionality of both the draft and the Vietnam War itself repeatedly came into question, yet both things persisted for years despite widespread condemnation from an extensive variety of intersected social and civil movements. Although a military draft is not currently in effect in America, the draft's return is more feasible than some may think. According to the Selective Service System's official website, the all-volunteer force was "not intended to stand alone in time of national emergency." The government, by law, is able to determine that a return to the draft is required, in which case the Selective Service System would once again begin supplying the Armed Forces through the induction process. If such an event were to occur, it is my hope that the government will learn from the flaws that existed in the Selective Service System and, if a draft must be enacted, that they enact one free of racial biases, deferments, inconsistencies, and other flaws that plagued the Selective Service System for too long. If the youth of this country must again someday suffer a military draft, let it be one that is universal. Let it be a system that demonstrates the same principles upon which this nation was founded: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Figure List

Figure 1

CHART 4.—*Selective Service classifications*¹

Class	Definition
I-A.....	Registrant available for military service.
I-A-O.....	Conscientious objector registrant available for noncombatant military service only.
I-C.....	Member of the Armed Forces of the United States, the Coast and Geodetic Survey, or the Public Health Service.
I-D.....	Qualified member of reserve component, or student taking military training, including ROTC and accepted aviation cadet applicant.
I-O.....	Conscientious objector available for civilian work contributing to the maintenance of the national health, safety, or interest.
I-S.....	Student deferred by law until graduation from high school or attainment of age of 20, or until end of his academic year at a college or university.
I-W.....	Conscientious objector performing civilian work contributing to the maintenance of the national health, safety, or interest, or who has completed such work.
I-Y.....	Registrant qualified for military service only in time of war or national emergency.
II-A.....	Occupational deferment (other than agricultural and student).
II-C.....	Agricultural deferment.
II-S.....	Student deferment.
III-A.....	Extreme hardship deferment, or registrant with a child or children.
IV-A.....	Registrant with sufficient prior active service or who is a sole surviving son.
IV-B.....	Official deferred by law.
IV-C.....	Alien not currently liable for military service.
IV-D.....	Minister of religion or divinity student.
IV-F.....	Registrant not qualified for any military service.
V-A.....	Registrant over the age of liability for military service.

¹ Source: Selective Service System.

Figure 2

A CALL TO ALL STUDENTS TO

March on Washington to end the war in Vietnam

April 17, 1965

The current war in Vietnam is being waged in behalf of a succession of unpopular South Vietnamese dictatorships, not in behalf of freedom. No American-supported South Vietnamese regime in the past few years has gained the support of its people, for the simple reason that the people overwhelmingly want peace, self-determination, and the opportunity for development. American prosecution of the war has deprived them of all three.

- The war is fundamentally a *civil war*, waged by South Vietnamese against their government; it is not a "war of aggression." Military assistance from North Vietnam and China has been minimal; most guerrilla weapons are home-made or are captured American arms. The areas of strongest guerrilla control are not the areas adjacent to North Vietnam. And the people could not and cannot be isolated from the guerrillas by forced settlement in "strategic hamlets"; again and again Government military attacks fail because the people tip off the guerrillas; the people and the guerrillas are inseparable. Each repressive Government policy, each napalm bomb, each instance of torture, creates more guerrillas. Further, what foreign weapons the guerrillas have obtained are small arms, and are no match for the bombers and helicopters operated by the Americans. The U.S. government is the only foreign government that has sent major weapons to Vietnam.

- It is a *losing war*. Well over half of the area of South Vietnam is already governed by the National Liberation Front—the political arm of the "Viet Cong." In the guerrillas the peasants see relief from dictatorial Government agents; from the United States they get napalm, the jellied gasoline that burns into the flesh. The highly touted "counter-insurgency" the U.S. is applying in its "pilot project war" is only new weap-

ony, which cannot substitute for popular government. Thousands of Government troops have defected—the traditional signal of a losing counter-guerrilla war. *How many more lives must be lost before the Johnson Administration accepts the foregone conclusion?*

- It is a *self-defeating war*. If the U.S. objective is to guarantee self-determination in South Vietnam, that objective is far better served by allowing the South Vietnamese to choose their own government—something provided for by the 1954 Geneva Agreement but sabotaged in 1956 by the American-supported dictator Ngo Dinh Diem and never allowed since. The Diem government that invited U.S. intervention was thus illegitimate, having violated the agreement that established it. The Vietnamese, North and South, have no taste for Chinese domination—these two countries have fought one another for over a thousand years. Moreover, South Vietnam is not a "domino"—the "threat" to it is internal, not Chinese, and the greater threat to stability in other Southeast Asian countries is U.S.-inspired provocation of China, not China's own plans.

- It is a *dangerous war*. Every passing month of hostilities increases the risk of America escalating and widening the war. Since the '50s U.S.-trained South Vietnamese commando teams have been penetrating North Vietnam, considerably provoking the North Vietnamese. We all know of the presence of American destroyers in the Tonkin Gulf, a body of water surrounded on three sides by North Vietnamese and Chinese territory. How calm would the United States be if Cuban commandos were being sent into Florida, and Chinese ships were "guarding" Cape Cod Bay?

- It is a war never declared by Congress, although it costs almost two million dollars a day and has cost billions of dollars since the U.S. began its involvement. The facts of the war have

been systematically concealed by the U.S. government for years, making it appear as if those expenditures have been helping the Vietnamese people. These factors erode the honesty and decency of American political life, and make democracy at home impossible. We are outraged that two million dollars a day is expended for a war on the poor in Vietnam, while government financing is so desperately needed to abolish poverty at home. *What kind of America is it whose response to poverty and oppression in South Vietnam is napalm and defoliation, whose response to poverty and oppression in Mississippi is . . . silence?*

- It is a hideously *immoral war*. America is committing pointless murder.

But the signs are plain that Americans are increasingly disaffected by this state of affairs. To draw together, express, and enlarge the number of these voices of protest, and to make this sentiment visible, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) is calling for a

MARCH ON WASHINGTON TO END THE WAR IN VIETNAM

We urge the participation of all students who agree with us that the war in Vietnam injures both Vietnamese and Americans, and should be stopped.

The March, to be held on Saturday, April 17, 1965, will include a picketing of the White House, a march down the Mall to the Capitol Building to present a statement to Congress, and a meeting with both student and adult speakers. Senator Ernest Gruening of Alaska and journalist I. F. Stone have already agreed to address the body.

Thousands of us can be heard.

We dare not remain silent

For more information, contact:

STUDENTS FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY, 119 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. A1 4-2176

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