

The Press of Peace

Nation, City Plan Vietnam Summer

Ben Habeebe

1967

Hey! Hey! LBJ—Look What's happenin' in America today:

Vietnam Summer, 1967. From coast-to-coast 4,000 people in 48 states have stepped forward to work on Vietnam Summer projects to end the war...and that number is on the rise.

Here in Detroit a hard core of 75 peace activists ranging from Democrats to Socialists have forged a nucleus for a summer of draft counseling, community and political organizing, rallies and demonstrations.

They are now working to expand their base to present the widest front against the war ever seen in the Motor City.

Detroit's Vietnam Summer project has set up offices in the McKerchy building. The national project is centered in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Senator George McGovern, D-S.D., recently said a Vietnam unified under Ho Chi Minh represents no threat to the United States. McGovern reasoned that there is a historic opposition to China in Southeast Asia and a unified Vietnam under Ho "might well have established a buffer zone between Communist China and the West."

McGovern also called for an end to the bombings in the North and a de—escalation of the war in the South to spark peace talks.

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A 12-year-old boy in Amherst, Mass., has been suspended from school as a behavior problem. It seems he wears a black armband as "a symbol of mourning for the dead in the Vietnam war."

The school board contends a 12-year-old boy can't understand "the seriousness of the situation."

The Army brass at Fort Sill, Okla., may have finished the railroading court-martial of Pvt. Andrew Stapp, but it hasn't squelched the growing antiwar sentiment there.

Nine members of the 2nd Battalion there attended the Staff Court Martial then turned around and fired off a pair of telegrams in favor of two other men facing courts—martial Capt. Howard Levy and Pfc. Paul R. Ilg.

Stapp was sentenced to 45 days at hard labor for refusing to surrender antiwar literature to a superior officer; Levy is appealing a court-martial conviction for refusing to train Green Berets. Ilg faces an Army court for accusing a superior officer of lying at Stapp's trial.

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The number of Americans who think it was a mistake to enter the Vietnam War is on the rise. A recent Gallup Poll showed that 37 per cent of those participating in the national survey feel that U.S. involvement in Vietnam was a mistake. This compares with 32 per cent in January.

One quarter of those interviewed answered a resounding “no” to the question, “Do you think our part in the war is morally justified.”

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Storefront draft counseling centers are springing up in ghettos around the country. They are already functioning here as well as in Milwaukee, Chicago, New York and L.A.

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Returning Peace Corps volunteers are circulating a position paper on Vietnam. It accuses the Johnson Administration of undermining in Vietnam the very things they worked so hard to build up in other countries.

The former Peace Corpsmen argue that the only way to rectify our “tragic mistake” is to withdraw American troops from Vietnam.

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Here are a few events that were lost on their way to the mass media:

- * Seventy Vietnamese student and faculty leaders stuck their necks out to make an ardent plea to 100 American student leaders for negotiations and peace.

- * The illegal printing and circulation in Vietnam of Thich Nhat Hanh’s *Vietnam: Lotus In A Sea Of Fire*.

- * Recent peace demonstrations by hundreds of Buddhist students followed by their arrest and harassment by the fascist government of South Vietnam.

- * During the court martial of Pvt. Andrew Stapp, the private was applauded and his conviction was denounced in speeches and chants from the audience.

That was probably the first anti-war demonstration conducted during a court martial.

John de J. Pemberton of the ACLU, Arlo Tatum of Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors and Dean Kelley of the National Council of Churches have disclosed that 750 applications for conscientious objection discharges have been denied in the last 18 months. In 1964 80 per cent of such applications were honored.

But the Army’s credibility department says there has been an increase of soldier CO’s because of the Vietnam War.

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Hiroshima Day will be marked this year by an interfaith pilgrimage to Expo ’67 in Montreal the week of August 4–6. Participants will carry money and medical supplies to Canadian Quakers for distribution to civilians throughout Vietnam.

The ad hoc interfaith group sponsoring the Hiroshima Day Pilgrimage is sponsored by the same people who sparked the Easter Pilgrimage across the Buffalo Peace Bridge. They carried \$5,000 to Canadian Quakers despite U. S. government threats of possible jail sentences.

As war panic spreads across the country, strange things are happening in the state of Washington. Floyd W. Turner, an unemployed dishwasher has been convicted of **violating the state’s flag desecration law** by burning a small American flag.

He was convicted despite the fact that another man, Stanley Iverson, testified that he had ignited the flag himself and that Turner was not even present at the time. Iverson told the court that he was an anarchist and that he regarded the flag as symbolic of tyranny and militarism.

Four other witnesses also testified that Turner had not burned the flag. But Judge Evans D. Manolides ruled that all defense testimony except Iverson's was irrelevant. Then he threw out Iverson's on the grounds that he was an admitted anarchist, therefore by definition having no respect for and not bound by perjury.

Manolides then accepted the testimony of seven police officers who said they heard Turner brag that he had burned the American flag at another time and place than the one he was tried for. The verdict: Guilty; six months in jail and a \$500 fine.

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Here's a peace proposal geared to auto-maker turned Secretary of Defense Mr. R. Strange McNamara. A group known as PLEDGE OF PEACE asks people who oppose the war to sign the following pledge:

"I hereby pledge not to buy a new car until there is peace in Vietnam."

Sign the agreement with your name, address and occupation and send to PLEDGE, 3237 Brenda St., Hollywood, Calif. 90028

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As of mid-June the G.I. casualty toll in Vietnam stood at about 79,596. It breaks down like this. Killed in action: 10,596; killed as a result of "non-hostile causes" 1,966; wounded 66,130 and missing or captured: 544.

What I want to know is what's the meaning of "killed as a result of non-hostile causes," and why have almost 20 per cent of U.S. dead met their deaths that way?

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And while we're asking questions: Could it be that LBJ chose an obscure, quiet New Jersey community for his much heralded summit conference with Russian Premier Kosygin because he was afraid of embarrassment by the tens of thousands of peace demonstrators who seem to appear wherever the President goes?

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