

The Big March

Cover story

Fifth Estate Collective

1966

On Saturday, March 26, demonstrations protesting the war in Vietnam were held in Detroit as this city's effort in the Second International Days of Protest. In preparation for this event, sponsored by the Detroit Committee to End the War in Vietnam, Women for Peace, Detroit Citizens for Peace and Trade Unionists for Peace, more than 20,000 leaflets were distributed and advertisements appeared in the Detroit News and various campus and community newspapers.

Ten students from the University of Michigan walked from Ann Arbor to Detroit.

Students from Oakland, Lansing, Kalamazoo and other Michigan cities made a point of being in Detroit for what the Detroit News called this city's "largest peace demonstration."

The activities for the days of protest were highlighted by a march from Central Methodist to Campus Martius. More than 2,000 people joined in the walk that was led by women in black carrying garlands of flowers mourning those killed in the Vietnamese conflict. The parade was also led by six grotesque puppets that were later used in a play depicting the plight of the Vietnamese people.

Immediately after the puppet play at Campus Martius, the demonstrators continued to march to Cobo Hall where more than 1,500 people picketed the Michigan Democratic Party's annual Jefferson Jackson Day Dinner. Leaflets were then passed out saying that Detroiters should not support those candidates who support the war.

After the picket line broke up, the demonstrators listened to Tom Hayden, former president of SDS and who recently returned from North Vietnam. Hayden said to understand revolutions in under-developed areas, we had to become revolutionaries ourselves and begin to change America.

The program concluded with James Lafferty announcing his candidacy for Congress.

Fifth Estate photos by Magdalene Sinclair

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