

Ft. Jackson Leaflet

GIs United Against the War in Vietnam

1969

Related: see “GIs Demand Rights” in this issue.

Fellow GIs:

For the past half decade our country has been involved in a long, drawn out, costly and tragic war in Vietnam. Most Americans do not support this war—increasing numbers are demonstrating their opposition, including active duty GIs. It is the most unpopular war in our history. Yet the government's policy threatens to continue this tragedy for many years to come.

Meanwhile, our country suffers while the slaughter goes on. The vast resources and sums of money the government squanders in support of a corrupt dictatorship in Saigon belong to the American people. It should be used to improve America, to make our country the shining example all of us want it to be—a free society—free of poverty and hunger, free of racial oppression, free of slums and illiteracy, and the misery they produce.

In addition, the rights and dignity of the black man in America have been trampled upon for the past 400 years. While being called upon to fight and die for so-called freedom, he has been forced to suffer racial oppression, discrimination, and social degradation within as well as outside of the armed forces. Many black GIs are becoming increasingly aware of the hypocrisy of fighting against other people of color who are struggling for the same rights of self-determination as they are. Afro-Americans and all oppressed national minorities have the unconditional right to control their lives and determine their destinies as they see fit.

We, as GIs, are forced to suffer most of all in the Vietnam fiasco. Many of us were drafted into the Army against our will—nearly all of us are kept in its grasp against our will—all in order to carry out this illegal, immoral and unjust war. We are forced to fight and die in a war we did not create and in which we don't believe.

This is not to mention the tens of thousands of innocent Vietnamese who are dying at our hands, many of them killed only because we can no longer tell the difference between them and our “enemies.”

While all of this goes on, the Army continues to trample on our rights as well as our lives. All the crap, the harassment, dehumanization and contempt for the enlisted man that make “F.T.A.” the three most popular letters in the Army goes on full swing in the Nam, just like it does here. Inspections, haircuts, saluting the brass, etc., are all part of the grind. And there's a reason for it: the Army has to crush our spirit; it has to stamp the humanity and individuality out of us so we won't be able to fight back. This is an undemocratic war—the only way it can be fought is with an undemocratic army, where GIs can not be allowed to think, to discuss the war and speak out against it, to influence and control policy.

But it is our right to be human. No one can take that from us—no one has the right to rob us of our dignity, like the Army tries to do every day. It is our right to think, and to speak out against an unjust war, to demonstrate our opposition if that is necessary. We are citizens of America even if the Army would like to forget it, and these rights are guaranteed to us by the Constitution of the U.S.

The Army wants to take away our rights, to keep us from exercising them so they can make us fight a war we don't want any part of. But the Constitution says they can't do that. If we stand up for our rights and use them the Army cannot stop us. If we speak out and demonstrate our opposition to the dirty war in Vietnam, no one can stop

us. If we get together, and if we go out and get the support of civilians, who are also against the war, we can defend our rights and make our grievances known effectively. If we get together, we can win.

Some of us have already begun to do this. We have come together as "GIs United Against the War in Vietnam" in order to organize ourselves to defend our rights and help bring all the troops home from Vietnam now! If you agree with us, join with us. Together we can tell the truth about the Army and war, and use that truth to make us free!

This is your thing, so help spread the good word!

GIs United Against the War in Vietnam

P.O. Box 543, Columbia, South Carolina, 29202

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Update: At Ft. Jackson: More Repression, FE #76, April 3-16, 1969

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