



Voices of Conscience
Workshop Panels
May 23, 2018

First Round, 8:30-10:30 AM

A. The GI Press: The Voice of Military Dissent

Moderator: Peter Wiley

Presenters: Skip Delano, Harry Haines, James Lewes, Lauren Mottle

Antiwar newspapers were published at virtually every major military base and aboard many ships during the Vietnam era. Through the GI Press Project, James Lewes discovered dozens of additional newspapers that were not known at the time of the publication of *Soldiers in Revolt*. How important were these papers for building the GI movement? How did they link GI resisters to the broader counterculture and civilian resistance movements? What was the pattern of military repression against GI papers? Did it ease over time or vary by locality and branch of service?

B. GI Coffeehouses and the Civilian Antiwar Movement

Moderator: David Zeiger

Presenters: David Parsons, Fred Gardner, Robert Zevin, Carolyn Mugar

The coffeehouse movement was an important expression of reservist and civilian support for active duty GI resistance. Some coffeehouses were established through civilian support and others by GIs on their own. How did coffeehouses help to build the movement? Were there differences in approach between coffeehouses? Were these differences shaped by political differences within the larger antiwar movement? How did GIs and civilians relate and work together? How did coffeehouses respond to the military and community repression they faced? Why were coffeehouses such as "Different Drummer" at Ft. Drum less successful during the Iraq War than coffeehouses were during the Vietnam War?

C. Winter Soldiers: The Role and Impact of VVAW

Moderator: Susan Schnall

Presenters: Richard Moser, Richard Stacewicz, Michael Uhl

Founded in 1967, VVAW grew to prominence in 1970-71, playing an important role in turning American public opinion against the war in Southeast Asia and giving legitimacy to the antiwar movement. The Nixon administration feared their influence. Attorney General Mitchell described VVAW as the most dangerous group in America. The 1971 Dewey Canyon II action and John Kerry's testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee had a significant impact. FBI infiltration, the "Gainesville Eight" trial, internal



political divisions and change of focus from Vietnam toward social and economic conditions in the US and US military intervention in other countries--weakened the organization. Why has the story of VVAW attracted relatively little attention among scholars and activists? What can we learn from this history about the potential role of veterans in countering war and militarism?

Second Round, 11 AM-1 PM

A. IVAW and new military movements

Moderator: Jose Vasquez

Presenters: Nan Levinson, Maggie Martin, Rory Fanning

War planners created the all-volunteer force in 1971 hoping to prevent internal resistance within the ranks, but many members of the military spoke out against the invasion and occupation of Iraq. Antiwar resistance took different forms during the Iraq War, but there were some parallels with Vietnam. Veterans for Peace helped to establish IVAW, and the Appeal for Redress group organized a statement against the war signed by 2,000 active duty and reserve members. New developments included the significant mobilization of military family members, and the writing of blogs instead of GI papers. What was the impact of military antiwar action during the Iraq War? How has the nature of resistance changed in the context of an all-volunteer military?

B. "Open the Archives," a working session on efforts to archive and share the history of GI and veteran antiwar resistance

Moderators: Bill Short and Willa Seidenberg

Presenters: Steve Rees, James Lewes, Matt Blessing, Huub Sanders, Ron Carver

The GI Press Collection and the Waging Peace exhibit are significant developments for preserving the history and lessons of the GI movement. What further steps can be taken to collect and digitize records from the movement, including photographic collections and videos? Can we establish and maintain a website to serve as a dynamic and interactive hub with links to all relevant collections? What support is necessary to take the Waging Peace exhibit on the road and use it as a tool for educating people about the importance of antiwar resistance in the military? How do we link with other museums and historical centers in presenting the Waging Peace exhibit and GI Press Collection?

C. Issues of Race, Class, and Gender in Military Resistance Movements

Moderator: Jonathan Hutto

Presenters: Najia Hichmine, John Catalinotto, Angela Hines

The struggle for racial and gender equality has been and remains a challenge for military resistance movements and for progressive movements generally. The working class composition of the GI movement is significant for understanding that antiwar activists were not just middle-class students. How have race, gender and class issues influenced the impact of military antiwar movements? What steps have been successful or not, for developing

cooperation and mutual support among movements for social justice and peace? How do these issues shape the agenda for justice and peace today?

Third Round, 3:30-5:30 PM

A. Legal Rights, Conscientious Objection and Whistleblowing

Moderator: Bill Galvin

Presenters: Kim Compoc, Jim Klimaski

Legal struggles and courageous acts by individual whistleblowers and persons of conscience have been and remain an essential part of military antiwar movements. What is the relation between individual acts of conscience and legal actions associated with particular groups and the building of a broader social movement? How did the antiwar movement defend and create space for dissent within the military? In earlier periods of history, especially World War I, conscientious objectors and antiwar protesters were severely repressed. During the Vietnam War, charges and sentences against military dissidents were harsh in the early years of the movement, but eased by 1968-69 and afterwards. To what extent were prosecutors and military commanders constrained by the pressures of public opinion?

B. Resistance, Restitution and Moral Injury

Moderator: Laura Miller-Graf

Presenters: Anjel Stough-Hunter, Lisa Leitz

Social and political activism has proven to be an effective “therapeutic modality” for traumatic stress and moral injury. This does not mean, however, that activism is uniformly an asset for “healing.” Stress and emotional pain can result from antiwar activism that involves accepting moral responsibility for illegal and unjust acts, or being perceived as renouncing and abandoning fellow soldiers who do not oppose war, or facing the criticisms of those who consider war resistance unpatriotic or treasonous. How do we understand the balance of these pressures in explaining the relationship between activism and addressing the psychological, emotional and moral injuries of war?

C. Antiwar POWs

Moderator: Tom Wilber

Presenters: Bob Chenoweth, Jerry Lembcke, Craig Howes

Active-duty US service members’ resistance to the war in Vietnam is an important chapter of the history of the antiwar movement and the war itself. The place of U.S. POWs in that story is less often recounted. This workshop will explore the fundamental issues regarding in-service dissent by POWs, including its suppression and denial by military authorities, and the role of government, the press, and popular culture in creating the public amnesia about its place in our history. The workshop will give particular attention to the competing narratives of the Vietnam POWs, and how they fit into the larger picture of uniformed rebellion during the war.



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D. Can We Measure the “Combat Impact” of the GI Resistance Movement?

Moderators and presenters: Michael Uhl, Steve Rees, David Cortright

The revisionist argument about Vietnam claims that the military was “winning” the war in 1968-69 and could have achieved victory if not for the “stab in the back” of politicians, the media and antiwar activists. This claim assumes that the US military would have continued to function as an effective fighting force. Military discipline and effectiveness were already crumbling by 1968-69, however, especially in the ground forces. Can we assemble convincing quantitative and qualitative evidence to make a definitive judgment that resistance in the military undermined the war effort and made it impossible for the US to win the war militarily?