AMERICAN MUSIC AND AMERICAN PROTEST LITERATURE

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
San Diego State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
History

by
Laurent M. Quenaud
Summer 2010
SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

The Undersigned Faculty Committee Approves the

Thesis of Laurent M. Quenaud:

American Protest Music and American Protest Literature

__________________________
John Putman, Chair
Department of History

__________________________
Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman
Department of History

__________________________
Eric Smigel
School of Music and Dance

6/16/10
Approval Date
Copyright © 2010

by

Laurent M. Quenaud

All Rights Reserved
DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my family, particularly my Mother, whose love of music and singing in the car inspired this thesis. I would not have completed my work without the love and support of my girlfriend Sarah, this thesis is very much for her as well.
ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

American Music and American Protest Literature
by
Laurent M. Quenaud
Master of Arts in History
San Diego State University, 2010

In the 1960s and 1970s, a significant antiwar movement rose in the United States in protest of the Vietnam War. Like all protest movements in American history, the antiwar movement of this era had its own protest literature. Protest literature is essential for protest movements to get their message to potential followers of their movement. This paper argues that the most effective type of protest literature was antiwar music. Musical protest reached huge numbers of people, particularly those young Americans who were eligible for the draft and had a personal stake in protesting the Vietnam War.

Based on the popularity of songs with clear antiwar messages, it can be ascertained that the music reached huge numbers of people. Many written records of the time also state the importance of the music to the antiwar movement. Some of those writers included members of the antiwar movement, critics of the same movement, journalists, governmental leaders, and others. The conclusion reached is that it was the music of the era that led to the expansion and increased influence of the antiwar movement.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

ABSTRACT ...........................................................................................................................................v

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....................................................................................................................viii

CHAPTERS

1 INTRODUCTION .............................................................................................................................1

2 1963 TO 1966 – EARLY WAR PERIOD .....................................................................................11

Anttiwar Movement 1963 to 1966 – Evolution from the Larger Peace

Movement ...........................................................................................................................................11

American Music Industry From 1963 To 1966 ...........................................................................24

Case Studies of “Blowin’ In The Wind” by Peter Paul & Mary and “Eve of Destruction” by Barry McGuire ..........................................................................................................................32

3 1967 TO 1969 – A VIOLENT CRESCENDO .............................................................................42

The Antiwar Movement 1967 to 1969 – Ready for a Fight...........................................................42

American Music Industry From 1967 To 1969 ...........................................................................53

Case Studies of “I-feel-like-I’m-fixin-to-die-rag” by Country Joe and the Fish

and “Unknown Soldier” by The Doors .........................................................................................68

4 1970 TO 1972 – PEACE WITH HONOR ..................................................................................86

The Antiwar Movement 1970 to 1972 – New Ways to Protest.....................................................86

American music industry from 1970 to 1972 ...........................................................................95
Case Studies of “War” by Edwin Starr and “Ohio” by Crosby Stills Nash and Young.................................115

5 CONCLUSION.........................................................................................................................129

REFERENCES.........................................................................................................................133
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge and thank the wonderful professors at both San Diego State University and Valparaiso University who supported me and my interests during my years in school. Special acknowledgement and thanks must also go out to John Putman, my committee chair, whose guidance and encouragement were essential to my work. Finally, I would like to thank those brave men and women who found many ways to fight for what they believed in. Without them, I would not have had the chance to write about the topic I chose.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

From the earliest days of the United States, freedom of speech and expression was first among the freedoms Americans posses, and it has allowed for some extremely influential pieces of literature. That freedom allowed Harriet Beecher Stowe to write *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852), John Steinbeck to write *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), Martin Luther King Jr. to pen his “Letter from Birmingham Jail” (1963), and the many others to add their voices to American protest literature.¹ Drawing from concepts explained by Zoe Trodd’s book *American Protest Literature*; this thesis argues that antiwar music was protest literature for the anti-Vietnam War movement. Protest literature was defined broadly by John Stauffer:

…to mean the uses of language to transform the self and change society. By language I refer not only to words, but to visual art, music, and film. Protest literature functions as a catalyst, guide, or mirror of social change. It not only critiques some aspects of society, but suggests, either implicitly or explicitly, a solution to society’s ills.²

Stauffer’s definition can be applied to many different artists of the 1960’s music scene. Some were overtly antiwar, Joan Baez and Phil Ochs for example. Some were less so, such as the Grateful Dead and The Doors. However, determining whether the work done by these artists should be qualified as protest literature is not the only goal of this thesis. More importantly, this study also intends to show that the music of the antiwar movement was the primary method in which the antiwar message was distributed among potential activists, and

¹ All four of these examples, along with dozens of other can be found in Zoe Trodd’s book *American Protest Literature*.
that the music inspired their participation in the movement. Musical protest, in short is an effective avenue for understanding the antiwar movement of the Vietnam era.

There are a number of ways to understand the Vietnam War and the consequent antiwar protests of the 1960s and 1970s in the United States. One method utilized by historians and other academic disciplines has been studies of popular culture. Serious study of popular culture is something of a new phenomenon, especially among historians. There is no doubt that the antiwar songs of the 1960s belonged to popular culture and have been studied as such. Some academics have studied popular music specifically in terms of social protest. Since the Vietnam era is not far in the past the direction of the scholarship is still being shaped. There are some trends which have some bearing on the topic at hand, particularly the analysis of antiwar music as popular culture.

R. Serge Denisoff analyzed music as a part of popular culture and as part of the antiwar movement in his study entitled *Sing A Song Of Social Significance*. Denisoff’s book clarified and expanded the definition of an antiwar song. In this book, he argued, analyzes: “the dilemma of what properly constitutes a protest song in a given time and historical place. Equally, who are the singers of songs of persuasion? Here we will be directly concerned with the social milieu of musical statements of dissent.” Protest music, or as Denisoff often referred to them “songs of persuasion,” were not always written with a specific issue in mind. This did not make the song any less of a protest song, “persuasion refers to the purposes of opinion and behavior formation that the songs were put to rather than to the intent of the composer.”

---


4 Denisoff, *Sing a Song of Social Significance*, 138-139.
the composers, but at other times the composers would insist that this was not the meaning he or she wanted to express. Bob Dylan, for example, claimed that his music was not about protest, but about himself. However, according to Denisoff, it only mattered what the consuming public thought Dylan’s songs were about, not what he intended.

If Denisoff’s book helped define antiwar songs, then Jerome L. Rodnitzky’s 1976 book, *Minstrels of the Dawn: The Folk-Protest Singer as a Cultural Hero* helped define the artists as models and heroes. Rodnitzky examined how protest singers were able to reach out to the young radicals and mold them into the activists that they became. His examination of the extent to which popular music has been an influence on radical movements is most relevant to the study of antiwar music as protest literature. Rodnitzky portrayed folk music as a hip fad that hit college campuses in the 1960s, he compared it to other long term trends like Zen Buddhism and organic foods. The author noted this regarding the fusion of folk and rock:

> One quickly recalls the media vogue for the thoughtful songs like ‘Universal Soldier’ and idiotic songs like ‘Eve of Destruction’ which contaminated popular disc-jockey shows. The so-called teenyboppers were now dancing the newest frantic steps to pacifist and internationalist topical songs, electronically amplified by equally new and frantic rock groups. Message songs had arrived, and they seemed to be everywhere triumphant.

Rdnitzky wrote that these singers’ popularity and message, combined with their time and place, allowed them to become an important part of the culture of the 1960s: “Young radicals and youth in general consistently stressed the desirability of personal choice and diversity. The goal was to renounce doctrine and exhibit a personal moral commitment. Inevitably,

idealistic folk writer-performers became models for activist youth.”7 Both Rodnitzky and Denisoff helped create the set of assumptions that can be found in other studies of antiwar music.

In *The Sociology of Rock*, Sociologist Simon Frith’s studied many types of music, including antiwar music. He argued that music was a key to rebellion for youth because: “…they saw themselves as ‘rebelling against unreasonable ideas and conventional ways of doing things’.”8 He cited statistics to show that there was a close connection between popular music and youth.9 It had once been the job of the record producer to make the public like what was being made, but in the post World War Two era, the task was now to have the artist make music that the public will like. This shift had an enormous impact on the future of popular music. Frith expressed that, by the 1960s, music was a money making industry, and a successful one. It was this success that gives the music industry its power, especially over the rebellious youth.

In “The Vietnam War and American Music,” David James built on the conclusions reached by Rodnitzky, Denisoff and Frith. James submitted that music of the Vietnam era needed to be considered era via a literary analysis:

Any approach to music through lyrics has the obvious limitations of excluding purely instrumental music and nonverbal musical meaning which may over determine words when they are present. Despite the spate of late sixties apologists for rock-as-poetry (e.g., Goldstein, 1969; see also Pschaske, 1981), the social power of rock and roll has often been understood as a function of the polysemy of its lyrics, their availability for investment with individual or group significance.10

---

7 Ibid, 38.
9 Frith recorded the numbers in his book: “The bulk of record buyers (over 80%) are under 30 and more than 75% of pop sales are to 12- to 20-year-olds.” Ibid, 12.
10 David James, ”The Vietnam War and American Music.” *Social Text*, no. 23 (1989): 126.
In James’ estimation, lyrics were what bound a group of people’s understanding of music together. He analyzed folk music and relevant positions taken on issues related to the Vietnam War. While he focused on the lyrics, he was not arguing that they should be considered without some understanding of the song musically. He stated that lyrics could show how the song was used, from what perspective, and how the song might have affected the listener. In addition to his study of folk music, he also considered rock music and what the Vietnam War meant to the counterculture: “The war is of course objectionable, but it is engaged directly only in respect to the threat it entails to the countercultures’ disaffiliation—a threat which only became severe as the late sixties troop build-ups made the draft a reality for the middle-class.” James saw the changes in the war and what was required of the American people to fight it as a significant influence on how the war was utilized and portrayed in American music, particularly rock music. This study works within the assumption that antiwar music and the artists who produced it were very influential.

Archie Loss’ *Pop Dreams; Music, Movies, and the Media in the 1960s*, published in 1999 was a study of the popular culture of the 1960s. Loss attempted, “to show the relationship between the most important social and political events of the American 1960s and the popular arts and media…This approach is particularly useful because of the close connection in this period between historical trends and events and the arts and media.” Not unlike James, Loss studied popular culture of the 1960s because it indicated much about the society. Much of his book was focused on youth culture, and he asserted that rock music was

---

11 James, “The Vietnam War and American Music,” *Social Text*, 133.
irrevocably tied to youth culture.\textsuperscript{13} In regards to the Vietnam War and music, Loss argued that:

In 1968, The Doors introduced “Unknown Soldier,” an antiwar song which, in concert, left lead singer Jim Morrison lying in mock death on the stage. In the same year, the Byrds’ “Draft Morning” and “Wasn’t born to follow” (both from their album \textit{The Notorious Byrd Brothers}) supported the growing number of young men who refused to serve.”\textsuperscript{14}

He also noted the difficulty of separating antiwar music with music that was a general call to rebellion.\textsuperscript{15}

Simon Frith published a collection of his essays under the title \textit{Taking Popular Music Seriously} thirty years after \textit{The Sociology of Rock} that also considered the events surrounding the Vietnam War protest movement. He concentrated specifically on folk music and the myth of the rock community: “There were two components to the rock-folk argument: firstly, the music was an authentic ‘reflection of experience’; secondly, the music reflected the experience of a community – there was no distinction of social experience between performers and audiences.”\textsuperscript{16} What was truly happening was not an expression of one community but a shared experience for the community.\textsuperscript{17} The rock community was, like any large community, a diverse one. Even a community of fans of one particular group is made up of many individuals. Each person will take their own meaning away from a song or a concert experience. He concluded that musicians shape the community they play for more than the community shapes them.

\textsuperscript{13} Loss, \textit{Pop Dreams}, 7.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid, 84.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid, 85.
\textsuperscript{17} Frith, \textit{Taking Popular Music Seriously}, 36.
Radio and television brought the music of 1960s reach an ever expanding audience, and this was a key reason for protest music becoming the most pervasive and influential form of protest literature during the Vietnam era. This was especially true in bringing people into the antiwar movement. This does not mean that other forms, books, newspapers, magazines, movies, and television shows, were not important. Music was routinely found in those types of media as well.

An interesting example of this occurred when The Doors were asked to perform on The Ed Sullivan Show. In his study of musicians who performed on The Ed Sullivan Show, Ian Inglis related this story of The Doors’ first major television appearance: “On September 17, 1967, The Doors were asked to amend the lyrics of “Light My Fire”: they ignored the request and performed the song unchanged.”

“Light My Fire,” is not an antiwar song in and of itself, but the performance on the Ed Sullivan Show helped to increase the popularity of The Doors, even though it cost them a number of concerts and any chance at playing that show again. They were not a well known and well established group at the time of their appearance on the Ed Sullivan Show. The Doors had only one album and two singles released at that point. Inglis noted, “The Doors’ dismissive response to Ed Sullivan’s request that they change their lyrics helped cement their prestige within the counter-culture, who praised the group’s decision to distance itself from any sort of negotiation with the establishment.” In this case The Doors were able to gain exposure and credibility with their target audience even though they alienated a mainstream television show. Once they were

---

20 Ibid, 572.
recognized they were able to push their own agenda further, and this agenda included, among other things, an antiwar stance. Getting people to listen is to the ideas of a movement was an essential part of getting people to join and support that movement. As Jerry Rubin wrote, “Once they got attracted by the action, they discovered the issues.” Musicians were skilled at creating action and getting attention, and then they helped their listeners discover the issues.

Evidence that antiwar music was the primary protest literature of the antiwar movement can be found in the writings of many antiwar leaders and activists, as well as musicians. Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, an important feminist and antiwar leader of the era, for example, mentioned some of the music she remembered being popular in her book, Outlaw Woman: “At night on Sunset Boulevard, cars were always cruising bumper-to-bumper, blasting Dylan, The Beatles, the Stones, or The Doors…young freaks clogged the sidewalks, a mass of hair, painted bodies jingling Tibetan bells. They were gentle people, but the cops hated the anarchy of the music and the freedom.” Dunbar-Ortiz’s mere mention of the music implies that it had some effect on her, and surely the police reaction to the gentle people must not have sat well with the future radical. At times, those leaders also acknowledged friendships with the musicians, or instances where they discussed the goals of the movement with the musicians that inspired their followers. Many of the Vietnam era’s most famous musicians wrote of their experiences, and those stories connect them to the movement. Even those artists that died at a young age still left a record of their feelings about the war. This was not limited only to their music, but also their statements in

underground newspapers, magazines like *Rolling Stone*, statements in between songs that were recorded during concerts, and similar places can be used to show their attempts to inspire their fans to join the movement which they believed in. The songs themselves also have antiwar messages in them, some overtly so, some more subtly. If it is possible to establish a song’s antiwar message, and then show that the song itself was successfully disseminated among the public, then a conclusion can be drawn about the influence it had. Not all evidence is anecdotal, and it is that evidence which can establish the success and popularity of a song. Joel Whitburn collected data on the top records and songs of the late forties, fifties, sixties, early seventies and beyond in his books, *Joel Whitburn’s Top LP’s 1945-1972* and *Joel Whitburn’s Top Pop Singles 1955-1996*. Whitburn’s books, along with some authors who collected data in somewhat different ways, can give a good idea of what songs were popular and commercially successful. These numbers show that political music was commercially viable and widely available. Numbers from the Billboard charts do not only show commercial success, but they show popularity. In the case of “message songs” popularity implies the wide spread disbursement of their message. The songs considered here attempted to spread a message of peace and the importance of the antiwar movement. It was necessary to take songs that were very specific in their message of peace. Additionally, each of the songs chosen had some commercial success. This pointed to the wide distribution and popularity of the songs. Thus, the songs would have reached more people had a greater influence.

Few would doubt the importance of antiwar music as an expression of antiwar feelings in the United States during the Vietnam Era. This study moves us beyond this basic idea and considers how the music shaped the movement, as well as how the music was
shaped by the movement. If the music inspired people to join the movement, then it stands to reason that the musicians had a significant influence on what was considered important in the antiwar movement. This effect can be seen with some basic understanding of the context from which the music emerged, and the more successful and influential songs. These elements, considered together, express that the primary protest literature of the antiwar movement was indeed the popular music. The music was what reached many people, inspired them, and helped shape their efforts.
Protesting the Vietnam War was not strictly an American phenomenon, in fact some of the most radical and polarizing protests came from Vietnam itself. President Ngo Diem’s anti-Buddhist policies led to protests in Vietnam. For more than a month in 1963 there were protests on the streets of South Vietnam. Those protestors gained strength from May to June. Eventually, one of the protests provided an image that Americans would carry with them for many years. On June 11, 1963 a monk immolated himself in front of a large crowd and an American photographer.\(^1\) The monk’s name was the venerable (Thich)\(^2\) Quang Duc and the photographer Malcolm Browne expressed what he witnessed that day:

> A wail of horror rose from the monks and nuns, many of whom prostrated themselves in the direction of the flames. From time to time, a light breeze pulled the flames away from Quang Duc’s face. His eyes were closed but his features were twisted in apparent pain. He remained upright, his hands folded in his lap, for nearly ten minutes as the flesh burned from his head and body. The reek of gasoline smoke and burning flesh hung over the intersection like a pall. Finally Quang Duc fell backwards, his blackened legs kicking convulsively for a minute or so. Then he was still, and the flames gradually subsided.\(^3\)

Thich Quang Duc’s sacrifice resonated throughout the Buddhist community in Vietnam, and Browne’s photograph resonated around the world.

---


\(^2\) Thich is the Vietnamese word for venerable, a title among Buddhist monks.

This Buddhist unrest indicated that Ngo Diem’s days as the leader of Vietnam would soon come to an end. Diem had been part of the upper echelon of South Vietnamese leadership since the days of French occupation, and he was first named Prime Minister of the State of Vietnam in June of 1954. President John F. Kennedy’s representative in Vietnam, Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., was informed that there would be an attempted coup of Diem by a group of dissatisfied generals. Kennedy decided that the United States would not take action to support or prevent the coup of their ally. Historian Ray Bonds wrote that: “Lodge told the generals that the United States would support any government that could both attract the allegiance of the people and fight the communists effectively.” The generals put their plan into action. George C. Herring asserted that the United States was fully aware of the details due to the presence of a CIA agent at the planning meetings, including the planned assassination of Diem. The United States did not save Diem’s life; he was killed on November 2, 1963. The Vietnamese Buddhists’ used their protests to inspire a coup that changed their government in a dramatic way.

Protestors in the United States also hoped to change the minds of those in government, particularly as the nation deepened its involvement in the Vietnam conflict. The signing of the test-ban treaty, which ended the open air testing of nuclear weapons, in 1963 was a victory for these two movements, but it also took momentum from them by negating a key rallying point. Both the peace movement and the anti-nuclear movement found a need for a new cause to prevent their followers from feeling that they had done all they needed to
do and moving on to other endeavors. As the United States became more involved in the Vietnam War, the peace movement and anti-nuclear movement began to coalesce around this as their new cause. As Charles DeBenedetti and Charles Chatfeld wrote, “With the test-ban treaty ratified, many rank-and-file peace workers concluded that ‘peace has been declared’ and scattered into related reform enterprises or into the Democratic Party.”8 One possible reason that the Vietnam conflict was the new cause was the continued support of South Vietnamese leader Ngo Diem by the United States government. The corruption, unpopularity, and general failings of the Diem regime was widely reported by the American press, causing American’s to wonder why he was considered an ally worth fighting for.9 Diem was educated in the United States, and he had attended graduate school at Michigan State University.10 This may have helped curry favor with those in power in the United States, however those who knew the Vietnamese leader at Michigan State were not universally impressed. In 1961, one of Diem’s former professors at the University observed, “What Vietnam needs right now is an efficient dictator instead of a stupid one.”11 However, Diem’s death did not end opposition to the war.

Antiwar demonstrations began as a part of other peace demonstrations. According to author Melvin Small: “At an Easter Peace Walk in New York on April 1963, called to sympathize with the anti-nuclear weapons Alderston marchers in Great Britain, several demonstrators carried signs referring to Vietnam and WRL’s [War Resister’s League] David

---

Dellinger referred to the conflict in his speech.12 These marchers were among the first to directly mention the Vietnam conflict in a peace rally or march. Throughout 1963 Vietnam became an issue in the eyes of the peace movement. President Diem’s sister-in-law, Madam Nu, faced protestors during her visit to the United States and the peace issue was part of Hiroshima Day in New York City.13 Gradually the Vietnam conflict gained importance for followers of the peace movement.

In 1963 Vietnam was simply one of many issues that captured the consciousness of the American people. Along with the peace and anti-nuclear movements, American liberals were focusing on the civil rights movement, educational issues, and women’s rights. In fact, less than one hundred American’s had died in Vietnam at the start of 1964, which made the conflict less of an issue for many Americans. The overthrow of Ngo Diem in November of 1963 also led some to believe that Vietnam had placed itself on the path to stability.14 Though the civil rights movement would take center stage for many liberals during 1964, the Vietnam conflict was not completely forgotten.15

Two key moments in the Vietnam conflict and the antiwar movement occurred in 1964. One was the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, what many of the President’s detractors considered a “blank check,” which allowed him to take what steps he felt were necessary against the North Vietnamese. In August of 1964 the American destroyer, USS Maddox, was in the Gulf of Tonkin, a body of water just off the North Vietnamese coast.16 The ship was conducting electronic espionage and encountered a group of North Vietnamese torpedo

---

12 Small, Antiwarriors, 12.
13 Ibid, 12.
14 Bonds, The Vietnam War, 70.
15 In July 1964, singer and pacifist Joan Baez, along with folk singer A.J. Muste and two Catholic Priests Daniel and Philip Berrigan, related the Vietnam conflict to the brutal French war in Algeria, one of the earliest instances of musicians taking a stance on the specific topic of Vietnam. Small, Antiwarriors, 13.
16 This is sometimes referred to as the Tonkin Gulf.
boats. The North Vietnamese boats may have thought the Maddox was involved in the South Vietnamese commando raids that were taking place in the area. Whatever their reason, few doubt that the Maddox was attacked on August 2, 1964, though it did escape safely. Covert operations continued the night of August 3rd and 4th. On August 4th, the Maddox and another destroyer, USS C. Turner Joy, were again in the Gulf of Tonkin. That night both ships reported being under attack, though these reports were based on radar and sonar contacts and not direct observation. The reality of the attack has been disputed. Herring wrote: “North Vietnamese gunboats were probably operating in the area, but no evidence has ever been produced to demonstrate that they committed hostile acts.” In fact, the commander of the two-destroyer group reported that it was “doubtful” that the U.S. ships were fired upon. The American response was twofold. First, American fighter bombers attacked North Vietnamese naval bases, destroying oil storage facilities and North Vietnamese naval vessels. The Americans lost two fighters along with two damaged. Second was the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, an act of Congress that allowed President Johnson to expand the conflict into a war.

In the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, Congress authorized the President to take “all necessary measures to repel any armed attacks against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression.” The resolution was opposed by only two U.S. Senators. President Johnson signed the resolution on August 11, 1964, Ray Bonds noted: “Although this fell short of declaring outright war against North Vietnam, it nevertheless gave the

---

17 Herring, America’s Longest War, 119.
18 Joe Allen, Vietnam the (last) war the U.S. lost (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2008), 37.
19 Herring, America’s Longest War, 120.
20 Allen, Vietnam the (last) war the U.S. lost, 37.
21 Bonds, The Vietnam War, 76.
22 Herring, America’s Longest War, 122.
23 Hall, The Vietnam War, 18.
President power to take any action he deemed necessary.” 24 The resolution contained the rationale behind its passing. After mentioning the attacks on the two American ships, the document continued with what Johnson believed was the motivation for the North Vietnamese: “Whereas these attacks are part of a deliberate and systematic campaign of aggression that the Communist regime in North Vietnam has been waging against its neighbors and the nations join with them in a collective defense of their freedom.” 25

Johnson’s retaliatory with bombing raids led to protests from the antiwar movement. Melvin small wrote: “Only one thousand people joined Norma Thomas and Bayard Rustin in New York at Hiroshima Day ceremonies on August 6, 1964, to denounce the bombing of North Vietnam and only 400 pacifists held a peace vigil at the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City later that month.” 26 Polls showed that, “one in four citizens did not even know the United States was involved in fighting in Vietnam, and two of three paid little or no attention.” 27 Despite the limitless powers of the President and his willingness to use them in the form of bombing raids, most Americans supported the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. This would affect another key moment for the antiwar movement and the Vietnam conflict, a conflict that was rapidly becoming a war for the United States.

The other important event in 1964 was the presidential election. That year Americans chose between incumbent President Lyndon B. Johnson of the Democratic Party and Barry Goldwater of the Republican Party. A hardcore conservative, Goldwater called for escalation in Vietnam. According to DeBenedetti: “The Republican nominee was Barry Goldwater, a man of heavy handed rhetoric…Leading Republicans singled out Vietnam as a test of the

---

24 Bonds, The Vietnam War, 76.
25 Hall, The Vietnam War, 95.
26 Small, Antiwarriors, 14.
27 DeBenedetti, An American Ordeal, 93.
will to resist communism: Goldwater talked about using atomic weapons to defoliate the South Vietnamese (ally of the United States) country side..."\(^{28}\) This hard-line stance was countered by the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution and Johnson’s aggressive response to the attacks on United States warships. Goldwater had some difficulty attacking Johnson as weak on communism when he had shown willingness to use force. At the same time Johnson was able to appear more moderate than his opponent. The President was found support from both sides on the Vietnam issues, those who wanted peace and those who wanted to fight. The Johnson-Humphrey ticket had the support of the antiwar leader, Dr. Benjamin Spock, who founded the committee of Scientists and Engineers for Johnson-Humphrey. Even the ultraliberal Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), a group that would later strongly oppose President Johnson, proclaimed they would go “part of the way with LBJ.”\(^{29}\)

Fresh from his electoral victory, President Johnson decided to widen the Vietnam conflict in 1965. Attacks on American bases caused the President respond with bombings.\(^{30}\) Early in February, 1965 two American bombing operations were launched. They were code named “Flaming Dart I” and “Flaming Dart II.” The first of the missions, “Flaming Dart I,” was carried out on February 7, 1965 after the Vietcong attacked an American base in Pleiku. The second, “Flaming Dart II,” was on February 10, 1965 in response to the Qui Nhon attack.\(^{31}\) These attacks were targeted at the North Vietnamese military installations north of the 17\(^{\text{th}}\) parallel near the border between the two Vietnams.\(^{32}\) These reprisal attacks would not be the end of the air war but a sign of things to come. Herring wrote, “Spokesmen from

---

\(^{28}\) Debenedetti, *An American Ordeal*, 92-93. Parenthesis mine

\(^{29}\) Small, *Antiwarriors*, 15.

\(^{30}\) Ibid, 19.


\(^{32}\) Herring, *America’s Longest War*, 128
the President down justified the air strikes as a response to the Pleiku attack and emphatically denied implementing any basic change of policy. It is abundantly clear, however, that Pleiku was the pretext rather than the cause of the February decision."33 The “Flaming Dart” attacks were the precursors to the sustained bombing campaign of North Vietnam that was known as “Operation Rolling Thunder.”34

On March 2, 1965, less than a month after “Flaming Dart II,” President Johnson launched “Operation Rolling Thunder.” The first attacks did little, Army Chief of Staff General Earle Wheeler stated, “Outwardly, the North Vietnamese government appears to be uninfluenced by our air strikes.”35 These failures soon put the President under pressure to expand the bombing efforts. Fears of the Vietnamese manpower advantage forced Johnson’s hand and he approved more targets for destruction. These attacks would include the first use of napalm in Vietnam.36 Robert A. Pape, Jr., a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Michigan, wrote about the ultimate goal of “Operation Rolling Thunder” in his article “Coercive Air Power in the Vietnam War.” In his article he explained that the mission of “Operation Rolling Thunder” was to “coerce the North into stopping infiltration of men and supplies into the South and into negotiating a peace settlement.”37 For much of 1965, U.S. air planners hoped to show the North that their industry was in danger of destruction. Targets moved steadily north, closer to the industrial areas around Hanoi. By May of 1965 some targets were above the 20th parallel, miles north of the border between North and South

33 Ibid, 129.
35 Allen, Vietnam the (last) war the U.S. lost, 73.
36 Herring, America’s Longest War, 130.
Vietnam. Despite the threat to North Vietnamese industry, the leaders were not forced to the negotiating table. Not only did “Operation Rolling Thunder” fail to achieve its objectives, it also forced the United States to bring ground troops in significant numbers to protect the air bases that the attacks were launched from. Until 1965 American troops on the ground had been intentionally limited. Once the United States introduced ground troops into Vietnam it would be, as one general put it, “very difficult to hold the line.” The bombings and increased number of ground troops would prompt larger and larger responses from the antiwar movement.

The antiwar movement staged a rally in opposition to the war in April 17, 1965, to take place in Washington D.C. Melvin Small wrote of the protest: “At the time, SDS hoped to draws as many as 3,000 people to listen to antiwar speeches and music.” This rally was the largest antiwar demonstration to date. Musical acts included Phil Ochs, Judy Collins, and Joan Baez. Showing the antiwar movement’s ties with the civil rights movement, protestors sang songs like “We Shall Overcome” along with “The times they are a-changin.” Though SDS was primarily a college student group, they did not rally alone. Student activists participated in demonstrations side by side with other protest groups whose base was not students but women, African Americans, Chicanos and others. This fact helped the early on the antiwar movement organizers realize the power of the music, which could bring out a crowd along with spreading the antiwar message.

---

38 Ibid, 118.
39 Herring, America’s Longest War, 130.
40 Small, Antiwarriors, 16.
41 DeBenedetti, An American Ordeal, 112.
In 1965 the antiwar movement held its first teach-ins in response to Johnson’s continued bombing of North Vietnam. The University of Michigan’s Ann Arbor campus was one of the first campuses to engage in successful teach-ins, holding all night sessions on March 24 and 25 that drew 3,000 students.43 This would be followed by more teach-ins, many larger than those of the University of Michigan. Over the next few months, teach-ins were held on over 100 campuses. At Penn State University, many of the leaders of the teach-ins were told to “behave more respectfully and patriotically” or they could face termination.44 The teach-in at Berkeley was extraordinarily successful as described by organizer and future Yippie Party cofounder Jerry Rubin:

…a nonstop thirty-six hour marathon teach-in which drew twenty thousand students to listen to Senator Ernest Gruening, Dick Gregory, Phil Ochs, Norman Mailer, Isaac Deutscher, and I. F. Stone. It was an incredible event with songs, speeches, debates, and an empty chair signifying the State Department’s refusal to attend. After the teach-in everybody asked: ‘What next?’45

Rubin knew that the antiwar movement could not compete with the money or the power of the “war-makers.” Instead it used communication of their message through bold action, it did what they could to attract whatever attention they could.46 There was also a teach-in at the Sheraton Hotel in Washington, D.C., which was broadcast nationwide.47 Although teach-ins would be held from time to time after 1965, this imaginative tactic made the news primarily during that pivotal year when the war in Vietnam was becoming an American war and citizens were first learning about Southeast Asia.48

43 Small, Antiwarriors, 23.
44 Heineman, Campus Wars, 55.
45 Rubin, Growing (UP) at 37, 76.
46 Ibid, 96.
47 Jeffreys-Jones, Peace Now!, 61.
48 Small, Antiwarriors, 23.
Again the organizers of a major antiwar event recognized the power of sympathetic musicians and included the always active Phil Ochs. He helped bring the Berkeley teach-ins into the public eye, and the teach-ins rapid spread was significant, according to DeBenedetti and Chatfield, because it legitimized antiwar sentiment. This was especially true among college students who saw their professors and famous people, including musicians, opposed to the war. If it was acceptable for these people, who held significant influence over the minds of young people, to protest then they could too.49 Even Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara legitimized some of the antiwar sentiment. He met with nine member delegation from a protest group, who picketed the Pentagon that day. Secretary McNamara and delegation met for over an hour and even expressed sympathy with their aims. He ordered that the protestors be allowed into the building to use the restrooms, water fountains, and restaurants.50 These statements and actions by McNamara did not placate the antiwar movement, and the President’s next action inflamed them more.

In 1965 President Johnson instituted a draft of young American men to fight in Vietnam. This was not the first draft in American history, Americans had been drafted to fight in the Civil War, World War Two, and the Korean War. Despite the previous drafts, the Vietnam War draft produced a significant backlash against the administration. Professor James Burk, a professor of sociology at Texas A&M University, proposed a number of reasons for this in his article “Debating the Draft In America.” He wrote, “Public opinion never perceived the Vietnam conflict as a threat sufficient to justify compulsory military service. Such a perception of threat would have required closer geographic proximity and

ecological interdependence and probably also a greater cultural and ethnic identity with those we had to defend.\textsuperscript{51} During the 1960s many of the threats faced by America were internal. Americans saw minorities and students protesting and calling for change before the draft. These groups were, in the view of many adults, were threatening the status quo.\textsuperscript{52} Students fresh from the Penn State University teach-ins joined the Spring Mobilization march in New York City were seen burning their draft cards.\textsuperscript{53} The Johnson administration was concerned specifically with draft resistance; if too many young people resisted the draft then it would impede the war effort, as no war can be fought without soldiers.\textsuperscript{54} Draft resistance was one way that the protestors could be sure that those in power were going to listen to them.

Efforts to further the movement led to some new tactics and groups. A key element of the antiwar movement was the soldiers who had come home disillusioned and joined in the protests. In 1966 there was an early example of their support when one hundred soldiers went to Washington D.C. and turned in their medals.\textsuperscript{55} Another group of soldiers, who would become known as “The Fort Hood Three,” refused to go to Vietnam. One of the soldiers was Mexican and another black, something that showed the antiwar movement that they could both penetrate the army and work with ethnic groups they had not engaged before.\textsuperscript{56} These soldiers also took their complaints to court, where they raised the question of the constitutionality of the Vietnam War. They sought an injunction against the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Army to prevent them from being sent to Vietnam on the basis of the unconstitutionality of the war. They were unable to get the necessary votes for

\begin{footnotes}
\item[52] Burk, “Debating the Draft in America,” \textit{Armed Forces & Society}, 438.
\item[53] Heineman, \textit{Campus Wars}, 158.
\item[54] Small, \textit{Antiwarriors}, 33.
\item[55] Ibid, 42.
\item[56] DeBenedetti, \textit{An American Ordeal}, 155.
\end{footnotes}
the Supreme Court to hear their case. 57 Some Americans, including Joan Baez, refused to pay the portions of their taxes that they determined went to support the war in Vietnam. This tactic continued throughout the war with and thousands taking part. 58 In late 1966 protestors began to follow administration officials wherever they made stops. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara was surrounded by protestors in Harvard Square where he was nearly assaulted. 59 He was asked the provocative question of how many civilians had been killed in Vietnam. His answer was a simple, “We don’t know.” At that point he was rushed off by police. 60 Experiences such as these showed President Johnson and his cabinet that there was opposition to the war in Vietnam.

Despite some positive signs in 1965, the antiwar movement did not have an especially successful year in 1966. Though they held a large demonstration in March, 100,000 people participated throughout the country; their efforts were largely ignored by the media. 61 Though the increased bombings in 1966 became a focal point for the antiwar movement, this failed to energize the American public to support the protestors. 62 The lack of a major protest in the fall of 1966 implies an unimportant year for the antiwar movement. However, Melvin Small argues that 1966 did not signify failure for the movement: “…during 1966 activists continued to mobilize in ever greater numbers, testing tactics and forming organizations that would soon attract considerable attention especially as Vietnam continued to swallow up more and more of the nation’s human and financial resources.” 63 The work

58 Small, Antiwarriors, 43.
59 Ibid, 49.
60 Zaroulis, Who Spoke Up?, 95.
61 Small, Antiwarriors, 46
62 Herring, America’s Longest War, 150.
63 Small, Antiwarriors, 52
done from 1963 to 1966 would begin to truly come together in a power national movement in 1967 and beyond. This could not have been accomplished without these beginnings.

**AMERICAN MUSIC INDUSTRY FROM 1963 TO 1966**

Nineteen sixty-three, author William Rhulmann claimed, was “…a turning-point year in the decade, forever associated with the assassination of President Kennedy and inevitably thought of in America as The Year Before The Beatles, marked on those periodic sidesteps in popular music history.”

The longest lasting number one hit in 1963 was “Sugar Shack” by Jimmy Glimer & The Fireballs, the song was number one for five weeks in beginning in October. Japanese artist Kyu Sakamoto’s “Sukiyaki” was one of the top ten biggest hits of the year according to Fred Bronson’s *Billboard’s Hottest Hot 100 Hits*. “Sukiyaki” reached number one for three weeks. The list of number one hits in 1963 lacks any songs with an anti-war message, however, the same cannot be said of the top albums from that same year.

The top album, or LP, in 1963 was Andy Williams’ *Days of Wine and Roses*. This was the top LP for a total of sixteen weeks. Folk music was represented by Peter Paul and Mary’s *In The Wind*. That album that contained the song “Blowin’ in the Wind,” an antiwar ballad. It is important to note the difference between the calculations of top LPs versus top singles. LP charts were calculated simply by comparing the number of albums sold in the week being considered. Singles charts were an integration of the number of singles sold and

---

68 Joel Whitburn, *Joel Whitburn’s Top LP’s 1945 – 1972* (Menomonee Falls: Record Research, 1973), 178. LP stands for “long play” album, this means that they contain more than one song per side of the record, while singles consisted of two songs, one song on each side of the record.
how much radio play they received. There are, of course, a number of factors that could affect a song or album’s spot on the charts.

According to Joel Whitburn: “An essential qualification of a song’s placement on the Hot 100 (singles) is its commercial availability in America as a single. Over the years, several songs hot on the radio airwaves were never released as singles, and, therefore, never hit the Hot 100." Whitburn understood the necessity of using multiple measurements to understand the popularity and success of a particular piece of music. His books, Joel Whitburn’s Top LP’s 1945 – 1972 and Top Pop Singles 1955 – 1996, relied primarily on “Billboard Magazine’s” charts. Fred Bronson’s Billboard’s Hottest Hot 100 Hits also relied on these same charts. However, Bronson took each songs entire span on the charts by awarding points based on the length of time a song was at a particular spot on the chart. He did this for every week a song found itself at any place on the chart, and the number of points changed based on the placement. Bronson stated that his measure is as objective as he could make it: “The songs are not ranked in order of how many copies each title has sold, how critically acclaimed they are, or how much I like them personally. It is a totally objective ranking, based on highest position reached and length of stay on the Hot 100” While Bronson’s statement might be extreme, creating any ranking system of this type that is totally objective may well be impossible, it does express the goal he was attempting to achieve.

Finally, David Lonergan’s Hit Records, 1950 – 1975 used twelve different sources, including Joel Whitburn’s books, to create a ranking of the songs and including the actual song writers.

---

70 Bronson, Billboard’s Hottest Hot 100 Hits, 283
no matter who was given the credit on the album jacket.\textsuperscript{71} Taken together, these books provide some sense of the popularity of a song or album.

Perhaps their primary weakness is that all four of these sources relied, at least to some extent, on \textit{Billboard} charts. The simple fact is that those charts were the primary method of measuring a song or record’s commercial success and its mass distribution. While not perfect, these numbers are as close to unbiased data on the American music scene in the 1960s and early 1970s as there is available. The charts were not politically motivated themselves, but some of their data was affected by politics. Radio play for singles, for example, was influenced by the politics of DJs and the radio stations that employed them. However, this makes the success of politically motivated songs on the \textit{Billboard} charts even more impressive.

In 1964 the British band, The Beatles took over the American music scene. That year six of these songs reached number one on \textit{Billboard’s} singles chart. “I Want To Hold Your Hand” lasted the longest, sitting at number one for seven weeks before another Beatles’ song replaced it.\textsuperscript{72} Additionally, they had four top ten albums in 1964, two of which reached number one.\textsuperscript{73} There could be no denying the success and popularity of the young Englishmen, and their influence helped develop a music industry that targeted young people. Though commercially huge in the United States, The Beatles did not involve themselves in the peace movement in this early stage of their career.

Despite the popularity of the apolitical Beatles and the commercially weak performance of antiwar songs and artists in 1964 in general, music was used for protesting

\textsuperscript{72} Whitburn, \textit{Top Pop Singles 1955-1996}, 881.
\textsuperscript{73} Whitburn, \textit{Joel Whitburn’s Top LP’s 1945 – 1972}, 16.
purposes. Bill Ayers, antiwar leader and future member of the “Weathermen” splinter group of SDS, noted that songs were part of the protests that he was involved in during his early days in the movement:

I linked hands with people I barely knew, people who would become intimate friends and lifelong comrades, and people I would never see again, but all of us, for this moment at least, filled with a contagious righteousness and a single purpose: END THE WAR. We sang, we chanted, and when we became a little rowdy, a leader of the American Friends would gently remind us of the importance of being dignified in our witness.

Even after they were reminded, soon after one of the protestors would bring out a guitar, and the singing would begin again. Singing “freedom songs and antiwar anthems” Ayers and his comrades were beaten and arrested, but they used their music to keep up their spirits and make their point.74 The antiwar movement learned this tactic from the civil rights movement, which still used songs as an important part of their actions.

A small underground newspaper in Berkeley called “Despite Everything” published a letter from a participant in a civil rights protest in San Francisco which contained a number of references to some musical aspects of the sit-in. Hours into the protest and after some negotiations had taken place with hotel management, the letter’s author wrote:

Then, a flurry (it was now between two and three in the morning). Tracy appeared, climbed on a table, and announced in tones of fury that the hotel had, for the third time, broken off negotiations...All hell broke loose, where before everyone had been quiet. For maybe 45 minutes we marched around the lobby singing, shouting slogans, stamping, and clapping. A circus, a collective binge? Oh sure, no doubt about it. Still, when you march around the lobby of a large San Francisco hotel singing ‘We Shall Overcome’ at the top of your voice at 3 in the morning, it is something you are likely to remember.75

74 Ayers, Fugitive Days (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001), 67.
This letter shows that other protest groups used music to further their aims, in small as well as large protests. In this case the music energized exhausted protestors, buoyed their spirits, and created an unforgettable scene. The author of the letter points out that it was a something they were going to remember, and it stands to reason that those that were at the hotel. They would long remember that particular protest.

In 1965 the antiwar movement experienced a resurgence that was related to the inauguration of President Johnson and his decision to escalate the war in Vietnam. Important peace songs were also released that same year. Two songs by the Byrds reached number one, “Mr. Tambourine Man” for one week in June and “Turn! Turn! Turn! (To Everything There Is A Season)” for three weeks in December.\(^76\) Also, Barry McGuire’s “Eve Of Destruction” reached number one for a week in September.\(^77\) It is also worth noting that all three of these songs were not written by the artist who released them. Bob Dylan was the author of “Mr. Tambourine Man,”\(^78\) noted antiwar artist Pete Seeger wrote “Turn! Turn! Turn!,”\(^79\) and P.F. Sloan and Steve Barri wrote “Eve of Destruction.”\(^80\) Despite the fact that these artists did not write their own material, the music they sang, the music they promoted was not less powerful. Some might argue, in the case of “Mr. Tambourine Man” and “Turn! Turn! Turn!,” that the famous composers added some credibility to the songs and their messages.

Perhaps one of the most well known antiwar artists was Bob Dylan. Though message artists performed poorly commercially in 1964, Bob Dylan produced two albums that were

\(^{77}\) Ibid, 882.
\(^{79}\) Ibid, 234.
\(^{80}\) Ibid, 56.
exceptions, both reaching the top fifty during 1964.\textsuperscript{81} Joan Baez was also successful that year, with an album reaching number twelve.\textsuperscript{82} The numbers for message artists were, on the whole, simply less in 1964 than in 1963 and 1965. The peace movement, not coincidentally, also had a less than dynamic year in 1964. However, Dylan’s influence on the music world continued on beyond 1964. His influence on the American protest movement was and is a controversial subject. William Rhulmann believed in Dylan’s influence:

By 1964 Dylan had become the premier figure in folk music thanks to his songwriting, as, with songs like ‘Blowin’ in the Wind’ and its successors, he commented trenchantly on political and social issues that were stirring action nationally... Dylan turned his back on simple political messages, and at the start of 1965 he strapped on an electric guitar and invented folk-rock on his fifth album, \textit{Bringing It All Back Home}. The result was not only top-ten albums and singles for him (notably the number-two hit ‘Like a Rolling Stone’), but a stream of mostly West Coast artists who either covered his songs (electrified folkies the Byrds ‘Mr. Tambourine Man,’ former surf band the Turtle’s ‘It Ain’t Me Babe’ on \textit{White Whale}) or imitated his sound and/or attitude (Phil Spector protégés Sonny and Cher’s ‘I Got You Babe,’ written by Bono; ex-New Christy Minstrels member Barry McGuire’s ‘Eve of Destruction’ on Dunhill).\textsuperscript{83}

Rhulmann argued that Bob Dylan was incredibly important to the direction of the music industry, inspiring many other protest artists even after he turned away from “message songs.” Author Tim Riley likewise believed that Dylan’s music, specifically the song “The Times They Are A-Changin’” was more than a “call to action: it defined a generation’s values simply by articulating its potential. If its listeners deserved songs as good as this, and performers as good as Dylan, then the society they might shape together deserved the same ideological heights.”\textsuperscript{84} Riley also believe that Dylan was one of the early voices for change in the sixties generation. Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, a leading feminist and antiwar radical, used

\textsuperscript{81} In the case of this study, unless otherwise noted, “message artists” are musicians with an antiwar message.
\textsuperscript{82} Whitburn, \textit{Joel Whitburn’s Top LP’s 1945 – 1972}, 47, 14.
\textsuperscript{83} Rhulmann, \textit{Breaking Records}, 140.
\textsuperscript{84} Tim Riley, \textit{Hard Rain: A Dylan Commentary} (New York: Da Capo Press, 1999), 73.
a Bob Dylan quote in the beginning of her autobiography, *Outlaw Woman*. She recognized that she was influenced by Dylan, in particular the song “Absolutely Sweet Marie.” In her book Dunbar-Ortiz quoted a line from the song: “But to live outside the law, you must be honest.”85 Dunbar lived much of her life outside the law, or hounded by the government. Their inclusion indicated that she was inspired by these words. Those are just three examples of the many who saw Dylan as a leader and pioneer in protest movement.

Bob Dylan himself was the strongest voice challenging the view that he was an antiwar leader. In his autobiography, *Chronicles*, Dylan wrote about his dislike of being seen as a spokesman. No matter how often he denied being a spokesman of the political movements of the 1960s, he would consistently face questions about being the leader: “Musicians have always known that my songs were about more than just words, but most people are not musicians…Whatever the counterculture was, I’d seen enough of it. I was sick of the way my lyrics had been extrapolated, their meanings subverted into polemics and that I had been anointed as the Big Bubba of Rebellion, High Priest of Protest, the Czar of Dissent…”86 Dylan may not have wanted these titles, but they were bestowed on him nonetheless. He did not want to be considered a spokesman or a leader in the protest movement but he was. Even if Dylan did not want to exert influence over the antiwar movement, he and his contemporaries had an influence. Even though Dylan wrote fewer political songs in and after 1965, he helped cement musical artists’ place as leaders of the antiwar movement.

Simon & Garfunkel’s “The Sounds of Silence” reached number one on January 1, 1966. It would remain there for two weeks and was popular enough to draw attention from

85 Dunbar-Ortiz, *Outlaw Woman*, xvii.
The Paper of East Lansing, Michigan, an underground newspaper associated with students from the Michigan State University, though was not sanctioned by the University.\textsuperscript{87} This attention was not necessarily good, as reporter David Freedman wrote for the January, 20 issue: “The Sounds of Silence’ by Simon and Garfunkel, presently number one in many parts of the country, is a perfect example of the phony intellectual style created when the anti-war-etc. message is distilled to a few jumbled images.”\textsuperscript{88} Freedman’s article was critical of the folk-rock movement, which he described as “folk message with a rock beat in the background.”\textsuperscript{89} He criticized “The Sounds of Silence” because of its “pseudo-intellectual background,” as he felt that it was a poor attempt at the use of Zen principles.\textsuperscript{90} Yet for all his criticisms, and they were many, he does acknowledge that the popularity of the new music helped spread “The Word,” which Freedman describes as “anti-war, anti-hate, anti-adult, and (ostensibly) anti-commercial.”\textsuperscript{91} The author of this 1966 article did not approve of how the message was delivered, but he acknowledged that it was successfully distributed.

A song that Freedman did not mention, but one that would have helped him make his point, reached number one in November of 1966, The Monkees “Last Train To Clarksville.”\textsuperscript{92} The song was a single from the album The Monkees, was also the year’s longest running number-one album.\textsuperscript{93} The Monkees were a band manufactured for mass consumption: they were made for television appearances as much as music. They did not play their own instruments, they did not write their own songs, yet their most popular song was “Last Train To Clarksville,” and it was an antiwar song. The members of The Monkees were not

\begin{footnotes}
\item[90] Ibid, 6.
\item[91] Ibid, 6.
\item[93] Rhulmann, \textit{Breaking Records}, 142.
\end{footnotes}
selected because of their musical talent, but for their ability to appeal to a mass audience. One way that the creators of The Monkees thought that they could further reach that mass audience was to put out a song with an antiwar message. Thus they created a successful antiwar song, and a song that was successful in 1966 was reaching more people than any before it, as revenues of the music industry indicated. The revenues approached one billion dollars in 1966, and music became easier to obtain and listen to. This came about with the introduction of eight-track tape cartridges and cassette tapes. The music industry was growing in the early and mid 1960s. With that growth came the increasing ability for music with a message to reach a larger number of people, and those songs with a message were able to penetrate further into society.

CASE STUDIES OF “BLOWIN’ IN THE WIND” BY PETER PAUL & MARY AND “EVE OF DESTRUCTION” BY BARRY McGUIRE

One method of understanding protest literature is to consider some individual examples. The two songs that follow contain a message of peace and were also successful commercially. Their commercial success is a measure of just how many people the two songs reached. Both songs had incredible numbers of sales and radio play as can be seen in their *Billboard* numbers. These specific songs reached large numbers of people, and some of the artists contemporaries saw just how influential the songs were. As the success of songs with a peace message expanded, so did the antiwar movement.

“Blowin’ In The Wind,” written by Bob Dylan and performed by Peter Paul & Mary, was released as a single and on Peter Paul & Mary’s LP album *In The Wind*. The single

94 Ibid, 142-143.
95 *Peter Paul and Mary*, [http://www.peterpaulandmary.com/music/f-03.htm](http://www.peterpaulandmary.com/music/f-03.htm), accessed 3/18/09.
debuted on the Billboard Singles Chart on July 19, 1963, and eventually reached number two. The album *In The Wind* debuted on the Billboard LP chart on October 26, 1963, reached number one, and was on the chart for eighty weeks. The song was popular and expressed a message of peace.

“Blowin’ in the Wind”

How many roads must a man walk down
Before they call him a man?
How many seas must a white dove sail
Before she sleeps in the sand?
How many times must the cannon balls fly
Before they're forever banned?

*The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind*
*The answer is blowin' in the wind.*

How many years must a mountain exist
Before it is washed to the sea?
How many years can some people exist
Before they're allowed to be free?
How many times can a man turn his head
And pretend that he just doesn't see?

*The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind*
*The answer is blowin' in the wind.*

How many times must a man look up
Before he can see the sky?
How many ears must one man have
Before he can hear people cry?
How many deaths will it take till he knows
That too many people have died?

*The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind*
*The answer is blowin' in the wind.*

Peter Paul & Mary’s version of “Blowin’ in the Wind” was more successful than the version released by Bob Dylan. This had to do with the numerous differences between the two versions. Dylan used a lone voice, sticking primarily to the melody. He also made extensive use of a harmonica, an instrument he would later become well known for utilizing. Peter Paul & Mary made use of all three of their voices, allowing the female voice to focus on the melody, while the male voices sang the harmony in many parts of the song, although they do sing melody as well. Perhaps the public found the Peter Paul & Mary arrangement more pleasing. Another reason for the relative success of the Peter Paul & Mary version as could the fact that they were more established group in 1963, as *The Freewheelin’ Bob Dylan* was only Dylan’s second studio album.99 *In The Wind* was the third LP that reached number one or number two in the Billboard charts for Peter Paul & Mary.100

Despite the fact that Dylan’s version was less successful commercially in 1963, few mention the song without noting that Dylan was the composer.101 “Blowin’ In The Wind” is frequently acknowledged as an important song because it was one of the first popular and widely disseminated protest songs. Tim Riley’s book on Bob Dylan’s music notes that the music was, “among the first in a new tradition of folk peace songs.”102 Riley believed that Dylan and “Blowin In The Wind” were important because the song helped introduce the message song as important part of music of the 1960s. The two authors were not alone in their assessment, as some of Dylan’s contemporaries felt the same.

---

99 *The Freewheelin’ Bob Dylan* did reach number twenty-two and was on the top LP chart for thirty-two weeks. Whitburn, *Joel Whitburn’s Top LP’s 1945-1972*, 47.
100 Ibid, 115.
101 Dylan mentions the song in his autobiography in reference to a conversation he had with Frank Sinatra Jr., who mentioned that the song was one of his favorites from Dylan’s catalog. Dylan, *Chronicles*, 126.
In 1966 underground newspaper writer Martin Grossman commented on Dylan’s importance as a trendsetter: “Bob Dylan is primarily responsible for popularizing the current trend toward song on the contemporary music scene.” Grossman was expressing that Dylan’s music was one of the reasons that so many artists were taking a political stance in their music. They saw Dylan do it first and do so successfully. This particular author was critical of the message song’s place in the music of the 1960s, claiming that the majority of protest songs were about money. He was slightly less critical of Dylan: “It must be noted, however, in any criticism of Dylan that his songs remain far more interesting lyrically than anything else being written for popular consumption today.” In 1969 a more positive article in the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* by Robert A. Rosenstone also mentions Dylan, and more specifically “Blowin’ In The Wind,” claiming that it was one reason for the change the direction American music. These two contemporaries clearly believe that the song and Bob Dylan were significant because of the shift that he and his work helped introduce to the music of the era.

Fans of the Dylan version were critical of the Peter Paul and Mary version. Dylan critic Tim Riley wrote,

Dylan’s stock as a song writer bolts, even though Peter, Paul, and Mary do to ‘Blowin’ in the Wind’ what Pat Boone does to Little Richard’s ‘Tutti Frutti.’ They not only sanitize it, they gloss over its dust-bowl echoes, the tired-but-wise understatement in Dylan’s delivery…With the overripe sincerity of Peter, Paul, and Mary in your head, it’s easy to forget how persuasively the song sidesteps its own question.”

---

Whoever sang the song was able to find power in the lyrics.  Riley saw the power in the questions that were not answered: “Dylan sings the song knowingly—he means these questions to be larger than any answers.” The song had no direct, obvious references to the Vietnam War. In 1963 the Vietnam War had not yet captured the attention of the American people. “Blowin’ In The Wind” does have peace imagery. The dove facing the cannon ball, a sky that cannot be seen due to a mushroom cloud, large numbers of deaths, this was the language of the peace movement. Peter Yarrow, of Peter Paul & Mary, believed that they were bringing about a new protest movement. He said in a 1964 that, “we could mobilize the youth of America today in a way that nobody else could.” Yarrow was speaking of his band’s ability to get America’s youth talking about peace and war and music’s relationship to the message of peace, as was reflected in the articles by Grossman and Rosenstone.

A more obscure artist by the name of Barry McGuire came out with a song called “Eve of Destruction” that also helped mobilized the youth of America. P.F. Sloan and Steve Barri composed the song, which debuted on the Billboard singles chart on August 8, 1965 and eventually reaching number one. The song was also released on the album *Eve of Destruction*. The album debuted on the LP chart on September 25, 1965, reached number thirty-seven, and stayed on the charts for twenty-one weeks. Despite the unknown artist singing the song, “Eve of Destruction” was successful, and was clearly an antiwar song.

**“Eve of Destruction”**


108 Ibid, 56.


The Eastern world, it is explodin'
Violence flarin', bullets loadin'
You're old enough to kill, but not for votin'
You don't believe in war, but what's that gun you're totin'?
And even the Jordan River has bodies floatin'

But you tell me
Over and over and over again, my friend
Ah, you don't believe
We're on the eve of destruction

Don't you understand what I'm tryin' to say?
And can't you feel the fears I'm feelin' today?
If the button is pushed, there's no running away
There'll be no one to save with the world in a grave
Take a look around you, boy, it's bound to scare you, boy, and you

And you tell me
Over and over and over again, my friend
Ah, you don't believe
We're on the eve of destruction

Yeah, my blood's so mad, feels like coagulatin'
I'm sittin' here, just contemplatin'
I can't twist the truth, it knows no regulation
Handful of senators don't pass legislation
And marches alone can't bring integration
When human respect is disintegratin'
This whole crazy world is just too frustratin'

And you tell me
Over and over and over again, my friend
Ah, you don't believe
We're on the eve of destruction

Think of all the hate there is in Red China!
Then take a look around to Selma, Alabama!
Ah, you may leave here, for four days in space
But when you return, it's the same old place
The poundin' of the drums, the pride and disgrace
You can bury your dead, but don't leave a trace
Hate your next-door neighbor, but don't forget to say grace

And tell me
In the two years between “Blowin’ in the Wind” and “Eve of Destruction” there were few antiwar songs on the charts. Barry McGuire’s success would change that. Though some might call the artist a Dylan imitator the song was unambiguous about its message.\textsuperscript{112} The first line of the song makes a clear reference to the Vietnam War, or the “Eastern World,” and the violence that was occurring there. The first four lines of the song relate to the Vietnam War, and there are references to fears about nuclear war and the civil rights movement. These were all important issues for Americans in 1965. This message song was popular, not only was it ranked number one on the Billboard Singles chart, Fred Bronson’s rankings put the song as the fifteenth most popular song of 1965.\textsuperscript{113}

There have been those who doubt the influence of popular antiwar songs. Serge Denisoff acknowledged that “Eve of Destruction” helped bring about the idea of music as a weapon, but he also questioned how effective a song can be in getting a message to the public.\textsuperscript{114} To discover the answer to this question he considered a survey administered at the height of the songs popularity in 1965. The survey was administered to freshman and sophomores at a San Francisco junior college. Denisoff did not design or administer the survey himself, but was using the research of a different sociologist. It was designed to test the exposure, intelligibility of the lyrics, and how the listeners responded.\textsuperscript{115} Of course the

\begin{flushleft}
\hspace{1cm} Over and over and over again, my friend
\hspace{1cm} You don’t believe
\hspace{1cm} We’re on the eve of destruction

\hspace{1cm} Mmmm, no, no, you don’t believe
\hspace{1cm} We’re on the eve of destruction
\end{flushleft}

\textsuperscript{112} Ruhlman, \textit{Breaking Records}, 140.
\textsuperscript{113} Bronson, \textit{Billboard’s Hottest Hot 100 Hits}, 289.
\textsuperscript{114} Denisoff, “Protest Songs,” \textit{American Quarterly}, 809.
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid, 811-812.
results are not conclusive, as the sample size is both numerically and geographically small. It could be used to get a view of the mindset of college-aged students in San Francisco. Of the one hundred and twenty students surveyed, forty-four percent approved of the message in the song, thirty-nine percent disapproved, two percent responded “other,” and fourteen percent had no opinion. Nearly half, forty-four percent, of the students surveyed had no opinion on “Eve of Destruction’s” ability to have an effect on those who listened to it. Interestingly, twenty-eight percent thought it would have a negative impact and twenty-four percent felt it would have a positive impact. Thus fifty-two percent believed that the song would have an impact of some kind. How positive or negative would depend on the respondents political point of view, but all those students felt it would have some sort of impact. Denisoff also believed that “Eve of Destruction” did not lend itself to singing along, specifically in the sense that songs like “We Shall Overcome” did. While this is true, it did not necessarily affect the songs usefulness in bringing young people into the peace movement, or encouraging them to think about the issues the song raises. A group of protestors may not march around the lobby of a hotel singing “Eve of Destruction,” but if it brings people to the protest than it has had a significant impact on the antiwar movement. Additionally, at least some of Barry McGuire’s critics did not agree with Denisoff’s skepticism, even those who would critical of the song itself.

Martin Grossman of *The Paper*, was critical of “Eve of Destruction.” In fact, he was critical of all protest music that reached the top forty:

> Popular songs, in this country at least, have traditionally avoided commenting on issues that are in the least bit controversial. The topical

---

116 Ibid, 813.
117 Ibid, 814.
118 Ibid, 820.
song was for long anathema to producers who are now madly scrambling to record ‘message songs’ that range in political comment from F.F. Sloan’s poorly written anti-war song ‘Eve of Destruction’:

Can’t hear what I’m tryin’ to say,  
If the button is pushed there’s no runnin’ away,

To the even more poorly written and morbidly conceived pro-war song offered by Jan Berry (of Jan and Dean)…119

He also believed that these songs were not released because of the political beliefs of the artist, writers, or producers, but was being pushed because of their ability to make money.120 At the end of his article, he did state that those songs have some value: “Like the peddlers who hawked broadside ballads on the streets of our cities in colonial times, the airwaves will offer songs of commentary and satire to an audience ever increasing in awareness and interest.”121 For all the weaknesses of the songs that Grossman saw, the public was learning from them. They would become more interested and they would become more aware. This is exactly what protest movements have required: awareness and interest.122

Robert Rosenstone’s 1969 article examined Barry McGuire’s song as well. He noted that antiwar songs were a significant part of the music scene in the 1960s. This was especially true considering the United States’ involvement in Vietnam and the ensuing draft: “Most popular of the antiwar songs was P.F. Sloan’s ‘Eve of Destruction,’ which, for a time in 1965, was the best-selling record in the country (and which was banned by some patriotic radio-station directors).”123 Rosenstone went on to comment that the song was unabashed

120 Ibid, 5.
121 Ibid, 8.
122 Grossman is not alone in his grudging acknowledgement of the importance of the popular protest song. David Freedman had a similar take on the same songs, criticism for the music, but acknowledgement that it spreads the word of the protest movements. Freedman, “The Eve of Disruption,” The Paper, 6.
about its antiwar message and the composer’s view of the world’s situation. This was one of the many songs Rosenstone author recognized as an antiwar song, though he did note that the popularity of “Eve of Destruction” was a reason to give it special consideration. Taking into account the various protest movements and their accompanying songs, he came to an interesting conclusion. Rosenstone believed that the underground press and popular music took over as the sources of information for the young of the 1960s, replacing more traditional institutions such as a school and the mainstream press. He asserted that music and lyrics play a “functional role in the world of youth.” That role is the dissemination of information about important subjects, and one of those was the realities of the Vietnam War.

In the early period of the Vietnam War it was clear that a protest movement was coalescing around opposition to the war. Though the United States involvement in the war was just beginning and was limited, a significant number of Americans were protesting. Ordinary Americans were led by some who would be part of the antiwar movement in the coming years. At the same time that this new movement was gaining strength, antiwar music was becoming part of the American music industry. Some of the antiwar music focused more on peace in general than on peace in a specific place, while others reminded their listeners of the problems of the war in Vietnam. Whatever the focus on the individual songs, the growth of the antiwar movement corresponded with a rise in popularity with antiwar music.

---

125 Ibid, 142.
CHAPTER 3

1967 TO 1969 – A VIOLENT CRESCENDO

THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT 1967 TO 1969 – READY FOR A FIGHT

After 1966, the antiwar movement came back with vigor. A large rally, some estimates put the number as high as 75,000, took place in Washington D.C. on October 21st and 22nd. President Johnson’s Attorney General said it was “the moment that the fever broke in the white antiwar movement.”¹ The crowd chanted “Hell No, We Won’t Go” at the Lincoln Memorial, Dr. Benjamin Spock called President Johnson “the enemy,” while David Dellinger said that the current march would be an end to peaceful protest, and instead he called for “confrontation.”² In addition to these inflammatory speeches, Phil Ochs and Peter Paul and Mary also performed for the crowd.³ The next day, the marchers moved their protest on to the Pentagon.⁴ A small number of the protestors, calling themselves the “Revolutionary Contingent,” attempted to break into the Pentagon itself but were held back by military troops. Other protestors tried to win over the troops with peaceful talk, as seen in Bernie Boston’s famous photograph of a young person putting flowers into the guns held by the soldiers, others sang, and some threw rocks at the soldiers. Many were arrested peacefully, including leaders Jerry Rubin and David Dellinger.⁵

¹ Small, Antiwarriors, 75.
² Zaroulis, Who Spoke Up?, 137.
³ Small, Antiwarriors, 77.
⁴ Jeffreys-Jones, Peace Now!, 72.
The protest made news worldwide, including in North Vietnam. The United States military was worried about the morale boost the protests might give to the North Vietnamese. So great was their concern that they dropped leaflets on North Vietnam warning them that they should not be mislead by the protests, they should not think the U.S. was not willing to fight.\(^\text{6}\) The large and impressive protest was not the only one in 1967, but its sheer numbers were a shock to the Johnson Administration and the rest of the world. It caused President Johnson to push for peace.

On February 8, 1967 President Johnson personally wrote to Ho Chi Minh to propose that the two nations attempt to negotiate a peaceful resolution to the Vietnam conflict. Ho wrote back citing U.S. failures to follow though in its promises at the 1954 Geneva Convention, the unjust war of aggression, and the turning of South Vietnam into a colony and military base. Ho was not afraid to use language Johnson would understand: “The Vietnamese people deeply love independence, freedom and peace…they are determined to carry on their Resistance until they have won genuine independence and freedom and true peace.”\(^\text{7}\) Ho called upon three deeply held American beliefs, independence, freedom, and peace. He also laid out his requirements for a peaceful settlement. The North Vietnamese leader demanded that” “The US Government must stop definitively and unconditionally its bombing raids and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, withdraw from South Vietnam all US and satellite troops, recognize the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation, and let the Vietnamese people settle themselves their own affairs…”\(^\text{8}\) These words and demands that Ho Chi Minh sent to Johnson seem to imply that

\(^6\) Allen, *Vietnam the (last) war the U.S. lost*, 119.
\(^7\) Hall, *The Vietnam War*, 100-101.
\(^8\) Ibid, 101.
the Vietnamese people were prepared to fight and die as long as it took to achieve their goals.

The letter ends with two additional points:

The Vietnamese people will never submit to force; they will never accept talks under the threat of bombs. Our cause is absolutely just. It is to be hoped that the US Government will act in accordance with reason.9

Ho shows a belief in his cause and a sense of righteousness that it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for the leaders of the United States to match. This was the war America was fighting in 1967. The demands made by the Vietnamese leadership and its resolve to continue to fight caused American leadership to move toward a more aggressive persecution of the war.

Also in February, 1967, a strong voice was added to the antiwar movement. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who had occasionally expressed his displeasure with the Vietnam War previously, called on “creative dissenters” to “combine the fervor of the civil rights movement with the peace movement…until the very foundations of our nation are shaken.”10

In the coming months, King would come out consistently against the war and take part in a number of rallies supporting the antiwar movement. His most famous antiwar speech took place at Riverside Church in New York City on April 4, 1967. Nancy Zaroulis and Gerald Sullivan’s book *Who Spoke Up?* contained their analysis of Dr. King’s speech:

King’s concern was for both Americans and Vietnamese; for young black Americans who, with whites, ‘kill and die together for a nation that has been unable to seat them together in the same schools’; and for Vietnamese peasants who ‘watch as we poison their water, as we kill a million acres of their crops. They must weep as the bulldozers destroy their precious trees. They wander into hospitals, with at least twenty casualties from American firepower for each Viet Cong-inflicted injury…They must see Americans as strange liberators…’11

---

The voice of Dr. King, someone older and more powerful leftists and liberals would be willing to listen to, was essential.\textsuperscript{12} Dr. King was able to give some legitimacy to the antiwar movement, and the North Vietnamese would create a situation that would cause the antiwar movement to further increase its efforts.

In 1968 “the turning point” of the Vietnam War occurred in the Tet Offensive. The generally acknowledged date for the start of the Tet Offensive was January 30, 1968. However, author Joe Allen, disagreed: “The offensive itself actually began in late 1967--during the dry season in Vietnam—when the North Vietnamese and the NLF launched military feints to draw American military forces away from the major cities.”\textsuperscript{13} One of the major feints, and a battle Americans followed closely at home, was the siege of Khe Sanh. Khe Sanh was a Marine base near the border between North and South Vietnam. The fighting began in earnest on January 21, 1968 with an attack by North Vietnamese ground troops, followed by an artillery bombardment.\textsuperscript{14} The siege lasted for seventy-seven days, ending on April 5th.\textsuperscript{15} President Johnson and General Westmorland believed that the fight was an attempt by the North Vietnamese to repeat their infamous defeat of the French at Dien Bien Fu.\textsuperscript{16} Thus the base, with little real strategic view, was heavily defended by the United States for the entire siege. President Johnson was said to have exclaimed at his general’s, “I don’t want any damn Dinbeinphoo!”\textsuperscript{17} To prevent this from happening, the United States dropped over 100,000 tons of explosives in a five-square-mile area.\textsuperscript{18} Eventually a 15,000

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid, 109.
\textsuperscript{13} Allen, \textit{Vietnam the (last) war the U.S. lost}, 55.
\textsuperscript{14} Bonds, \textit{The Vietnam War}, 156.
\textsuperscript{16} Fifteen years earlier, the Vietnamese rebels defeated a large number of French troops at the fortress of Dien Bien Fu. This is generally acknowledged as the final defeat of the French military in Vietnam. Herring, \textit{America’s Longest War}, 28.
\textsuperscript{17} Allen, \textit{Vietnam the (last) war the U.S. lost}, 55.
\textsuperscript{18} Hall, \textit{The Vietnam War}, 50.
man relief column would end the siege of Khe Sanh.\footnote{Esper, \textit{The Eyewitness History of the Vietnam War 1961-1975}, 112.} Though the American’s considered the holding of the base a great victory, in June of 1968, about two months after the base was saved, it was abandoned for a more mobile and safer base.\footnote{Hall, \textit{The Vietnam War}, 52.} For all the lives lost, ordinance expended, and soldiers diverted, the base ended up in North Vietnamese hands.

Khe Sanh was just one of battles that were used as cover for the Tet Offensive. Attacks at places like Thien, Loc Ninh, Song Be, Dak To, and others drew American and South Vietnamese soldiers away from the cities that would be targeted.\footnote{Herring, \textit{America’s Longest War}, 188.} On January 30, 1968 the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong attacked, “34 of 44 provincial capitals, 64 district capitals, and many military installations. More than one hundred targets were hit all over South Vietnam, including the American embassy in Saigon, the citadel of American power.”\footnote{Allen, \textit{Vietnam the (last) war the U.S. lost}, 56.} Of all the targets attacked, the most shocking was the American embassy. At 3:00 AM Viet Cong troops blew a hole in the wall of the embassy and attempted to take the building inside. Eventually, the 101st Airborne Division would land paratroopers inside the embassy compound and the guerrilla soldiers were all killed or captured. By 8:55 AM, the embassy had been retaken.\footnote{Esper, \textit{The Eyewitness History of the Vietnam War 1961-1975}, 102-103.} Though this brief battle over the embassy was only a small part of the Tet Offensive, it was one the most memorable moments for Americans.

The communist forces also managed a number of other attacks in Saigon, including one on the presidential palace, by small groups of guerrillas.\footnote{Bonds, \textit{The Vietnam War}, 152.} There were also attacks on Hue, the ancient capital of Vietnam which included the old emperor’s palace, the combat base in Bien Hoa, and a base near Saigon known as Tan Son Nhut. Over the course of the
fighting, one author puts the United States killed at 1,536, with 7,764 wounded, and eleven missing, and South Vietnamese losses at 2,788 killed, 8,299 wounded, and 587 missing, North Vietnamese and Viet Cong losses at approximately 45,000 killed and 6,991 captured, and civilian casualties at 14,000 killed and 24,000 wounded. The Tet Offensive, based on numbers alone, appeared an overwhelming defeat of the communist forces.

The attack was also a failure in that it was unable to achieve the goals the North Vietnamese had set for it. In a message to local communists groups in South Vietnam, it was stated that the offensive should bring the whole populace of the South into a general uprising: “No matter how violently the enemy may react, he cannot avoid collapse. This is not only a golden opportunity to liberate hamlets and villages but also an opportunity to liberate district seats, province capitals and South Vietnam as a whole.” The nation did not rise up, the United States did not leave, and those in power remained in power, yet it is difficult to call the Tet Offensive a failure. Joe Allen recognized the heavy losses of the South Vietnamese yet does not view the Tet Offensive as a defeat: “Despite the huge military cost to the National Liberation Front (NLF), it was clear from the Tet Offensive had destroyed the ability of the United States to effectively prosecute its war in Vietnam.”

President Johnson addressed the nation shortly after end of the battles. He claimed that the war was not over but that he would seek peace. Additionally, he made a statement about his own future, “I shall not seek, and I will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as your president.” The American people saw that the communist fighters were not on the verge of

---

26 Hall, The Vietnam War, 103.
27 Allen, Vietnam the (last) war the U.S. lost, 157.
collapse, they saw a war that was not about to end, and a president who no longer wanted to carry on the fight.

On April 4, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was shot and killed, and America’s black ghettos erupted in 125 cities nationwide, with Washington D.C. being arguably the worst of the riots.29 The riots shattered the fragile alliance between Jewish liberals and African Americans as Jewish owned businesses were the hardest hit in the riots.30 Chicago Mayor Richard Daley, an important figure in the United States in 1968, ordered his police to “shoot to kill arsonists and shoot to maim looters.” in his attempt to end the riots in his city.31 Even African American soldiers were concerned, as one African American veteran put it: “If they kill a preacher, what are they going to do to us, even though we’re over here fighting for them.”32 King’s assassination left deep scars on the country, from the people in the ghettos to the soldiers fighting, there was less unity in the United States than there was previously. Nor, were the assassinations of 1968 over.

On June 5, 1968, Robert Kennedy was shot and killed in California after winning the Democratic Primary. Kennedy had been the most viable antiwar candidate; Senator Eugene McCarthy was also running as an antiwar candidate but had won no primaries going into the Democratic Convention. The other presidential candidate for the Democratic Party was Hubert Humphrey, President Johnson’s Vice President.33 Now the Democratic Nominee would come from either McCarthy or Humphrey. Kennedy had previously promised that, if elected president, he would de-escalate the war and bring the country together. He was

30 Jeffreys-Jones, Peace Now!, 126.
31 Small, Antiwarriors, 95-96.
32 Allen, Vietnam the (last) war the U.S. lost, 180.
33 Small, Antiwarriors, 96.
clearly a threat to Johnson’s handpicked candidate, Humphrey.\textsuperscript{34} In light of the primaries won by Kennedy, neither candidate had enough delegates to claim the nomination, so the choice would be made in Richard Daley’s Chicago, at the Democratic National Convention.

As early as February, 1968 Tom Hayden, David Dillinger, Rennie Davis, and other veteran antiwar leaders had opened an office in Chicago to prepare for the Democratic National Convention. Their efforts would be joined by a group known as “Yippies.” The Yippies were led by Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin, and had ties to musicians Phil Ochs and Country Joe and the Fish. All of them were veteran antiwar leaders who had split from the more mainstream antiwar movement. During the convention they planned to nominate a pig named “Pigasus” for President. There were also rumors that they planned to spike Chicago’s water supply with LSD.\textsuperscript{35} During their protest they would hold a mock nomination ceremony for “Pigasus” but they would not put LSD in the water supply. Only 10,000 protestors showed up the convention thanks to the threats from Mayor Daley and the refusal of protest groups like the Mobilization Committee, who sponsored and led many of the largest antiwar protests, to endorse the plan. The makeup was approximately 5,000 from outside Chicago, and the other 5,000 were Chicagoans.\textsuperscript{36} To counter the demonstrators, Daley had his 12,000-man police force on twelve-hour shifts along with 6,000 national guardsmen.\textsuperscript{37} The stage was set for the 1968 Democratic National Convention.

What has been called the “battle for Chicago” began on August 25, 1968 in Lincoln Park, when police attempted to break up a camp of demonstrators. The next night the battle took to the streets, with protestors hitting police with taunts and thrown missiles, and the

\textsuperscript{34} DeBenedetti, \textit{An American Ordeal}, 212.
\textsuperscript{35} Small, \textit{Antiwarriors}, 97.
\textsuperscript{36} Allen, \textit{Vietnam the (last) war the U.S. lost}, 128.
\textsuperscript{37} DeBenedetti, \textit{An American Ordeal}, 226.
police fought back. The third night saw police officers wade into the crowd, without their identifying badges, swinging billy clubs and using mace.\(^{38}\) With this as the back drop, the Democratic Party nominated Hubert Humphrey as their candidate for President. The battle intensified that night, with fierce hand to hand fighting.\(^{39}\) DeBenedetti laid out the aftermath of the convention: “Daley had won the streets, but the cost was great. Over 1,000 people, including 192 policemen, were injured during the four days of street fighting, and 662 were arrested. The Democratic Party faced the election campaign in disarray, and for many observers the future seemed to offer further street skirmishes and official brutality.”\(^{40}\) Not surprisingly, in November of 1968, Hubert Humphrey was defeated by the new President of the United States, Richard M. Nixon.

A battered and drained antiwar movement emerged from the 1968 election. They had lost the election, the war continued, and they had been fighting for years. Antiwar leaders were experiencing what one of their own, Carl Oglesby, called “burnout.”\(^{41}\) Oglesby went to live on a Vermont commune, something a number of movement members did as they became disillusioned with the lack of progress of the antiwar movement. Oglesby explained his decision:

I’d had it with mass politics dominated on the one side by would-be terrorists who were acting out a temper-tantrum politics, just as though they were still back in their upper-middle-class nurseries...and on the other side by a group of old fogies, some of whom I adored and loved, but who were increasingly concentrated on Vietnam as a single issue.\(^{42}\)

He was not the only antiwar leader who faced burnout in 1969. Dr. Benjamin Spock had to be hospitalized and his marriage fell apart. Only emergency marital therapy saved the

---

\(^{38}\) Ibid, 227.
\(^{39}\) Allen, *Vietnam the (last) war the U.S. lost*, 129.
\(^{40}\) DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal*, 228.
\(^{41}\) Zaroulis, *Who Spoke Up?*, 211.
\(^{42}\) Ibid, 213.
relationship of Sidney and Louise Peck, two long time activists. Though faced with difficulties, the antiwar movement did not give up, and in 1969 made some remarkable strides, even as the war in Vietnam changed again.

The War in Vietnam shifted in 1969, due primarily to a new person directing it, President Richard M. Nixon. Part of the reason that this election result came about was because Nixon claimed to have a “secret” plan to quickly and effectively end the war. Nixon did indeed believe that he needed to end the war: “I’m not going to end up like LBJ holed up in the White House afraid to show my face on the street. I’m going to stop that war. Fast.” He was not going to simply halt the war, Nixon demanded “peace with honor.” This meant that the United States would only leave Vietnam when they could do so without admitting defeat and had a stable, long lasting government installed in South Vietnam. Once Nixon had come to power, the stalled peace talks in Paris that had began in 1968 took on a new importance. In fact, it was not until January 25, 1969 that all four of the major the United States, the South Vietnamese, the North Vietnamese, and the Viet Cong, players met at the same time for negotiations. The stances of the various groups remained far apart. Even pressure from the Soviet Union could not convince the North Vietnamese to change their negotiating position. The stalled peace talks prompted President Nixon to begin his Vietnamization strategy.

Vietnamization meant that Nixon planned to turn over the primary military responsibilities to the South Vietnamese government. When he informed the President of Vietnam, Nguyen Van Thieu of this idea at a meeting on Midway Island on June 8, 1969,

43 Small, Antiwarriors, 103.
44 Allen, Vietnam the (last) war the U.S. lost, 159.
45 Herring, America’s Longest War, 223.
46 Hall, The Vietnam War, 58.
Thieu was not confident that this plan would be successful. He asked for more time and more material to strengthen his armed forces.\textsuperscript{48} Yet that same month, Nixon withdrew 25,000 troops.\textsuperscript{49} In July 1969 President Nixon had his secretary of defense, Melvin Laird lay out what he called the Nixon Doctrine, “indigenous manpower [would be] organized into properly equipped and well-trained armed forces with the help of materiel, training, technology, and specialized military skills furnished by the United States.”\textsuperscript{50} Soon after, in September of 1969, another withdrawal of 35,000 troops was announced.\textsuperscript{51} In an effort to shore up his domestic support in the face of failing peace negotiations, Nixon delivered his famous “silent majority” speech. In it, he defended the U.S. commitment in Vietnam, he explained how Vietnamization would work to get American’s home, and he called on the support of those he called “the great silent majority” against those who would protest the war.\textsuperscript{52} By the end of the year, the United States was divided and at odds, while the War in Vietnam dragged on.

Easter weekend, April 5 and 6, of 1969 saw a large number of protests in various cities. Over 150,000 protestors took part in over forty U.S. cities.\textsuperscript{53} DeBenedetti described the diversity of protest:

\begin{quote}
Virtually all of the actions were led by adults and, depending on local constituencies, included leafleting, guerrilla theater, teach-ins, parades, and festivals. Interfaith teams of pacifists conducted a seventeen-hour good Friday vigil at Philadelphia draft boards, reading the names of the thirty-three thousand Americans killed in Vietnam. A seventy-two-hour vigil was held in downtown Akron, Ohio…\textsuperscript{54}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid, 59.
\textsuperscript{49} Allen, \textit{Vietnam the (last) war the U.S. lost}, 162.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid, 163.
\textsuperscript{51} Herring, \textit{America’s Longest War}, 226.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid, 229.
\textsuperscript{53} Small, \textit{Antiwarriors}, 105.
\textsuperscript{54} DeBenedetti, \textit{An American Ordeal}, 245.
The list of participating cities and various protests continues on, expressing the high number of participants from all parts of the country. A similar but larger nationwide event was held on October 15, 1969. It was known as the Moratorium.\textsuperscript{55} The idea was that those who opposed the war would strike on the appointed day, many of them going to peaceful rallies or festivals to hear speeches and music.\textsuperscript{56} Like the Easter protests of that year, the ideas were decentralized, each city having their own events, or each individual taking time off from work to do whatever they choose. The media coverage was favorable, if limited, and the leaders of the moratorium promised to hold another if the war was not ended.\textsuperscript{57} In November a two-day moratorium was held, and it received less coverage than the previous attempts.\textsuperscript{58} The previous month, Nixon ordered Vice-President Spiro Agnew to give speeches that were an attempt to frighten the networks into not covering the demonstrations, and in November, it worked.\textsuperscript{59} Nixon had declared war on the antiwar movement, and he would do whatever it took to win in 1969 and beyond.

\textbf{American Music Industry from 1967 to 1969}

The August 24, 1968 issue of a new, upstart music magazine contained a small article entitled “Record Sales Over One Billion in 1967.” According to the article, the sales were up thirteen percent over 1966’s total of 960 million dollars.\textsuperscript{60} It also predicted that those sales of LPs alone would top one billion in 1968. In fact, singles record sales only amounted to one sixth of the total record sales in 1967.\textsuperscript{61} The short article revealed just how important the

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid, 253.
\textsuperscript{56} Allen, \textit{Vietnam the (last) war the U.S. lost}, 162.
\textsuperscript{57} Small, \textit{Antiwarriors}, 107.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid, 113.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid, 108.
\textsuperscript{60} William Ruhlman put the number at $1.173 billion with an increase of twenty-two percent. Ruhlman, \textit{Breaking Records}, 144.
\textsuperscript{61} The data in the article was obtained from market research done by CBS/Columbia Group. \textit{Rolling Stone}, “Record Sales Over One Billion in 1967” no. 16, August 24, 1968, 6.
Music industry had become economically. This was particularly true about the LP, which was becoming more and more important to the public, though singles were still the dominant way for a song to get on the radio. The new, upstart music magazine that published the article was the *Rolling Stone*.

Some bands and artists from earlier years again found themselves at the top of the singles chart in 1967 and had helped to drive up the number of sales in 1967. The Beatles had three songs reach number one, “Penny Lane,” “All You Need Is Love,” and “Hello Goodbye.” The Monkees also reached number one with their song “Daydream Believer.” In fact, the Monkees sold more records than any other band in 1967, even more than The Beatles. A song that was important to the counterculture reached number one, “Incense And Peppermints” by Strawberry Alarm Clock. Two new artists would also find success in 1967 and beyond.

Arlo Guthrie was one of the new artists who would become known for his protest music. He was the son of famed 1930s folk singer, Woody Guthrie. His album *Alice’s Restaurant* reached number seventeen and was on the LP chart for ninety-nine weeks. An article in *Underground Digest* commented on Guthrie’s song: “A straight talking blues, ‘Alice’ touches upon all the needles in a young, growing-into-peace-of-mind spine-draft, fuzz, psychology, imprisonment, Vietnam and Thanksgiving…all tied up in a pretty grass-roots bow reminiscent of Woody, Seeger and early Dylan.” The song cannot be interpreted

---

63 Ruhlman, *Breaking Records*, 144.
64 Arlo Guthrie claimed that his father had more influence on Bob Dylan than he had on Arlo himself in terms of their musical styles. He said that Woody had been “more of an influence on me as a father and not as a writer.” Bob Garcia, “The New Guthrie: Arlo,” *Underground Digest*, March 1967, 20-21. Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz also mentions Woody Guthrie as someone who was well known by those in the folk music revival in San Francisco in 1960. Dunbar-Ortiz, *Outlaw Woman*, 3.
as anything but an antiwar song. In a spoken word portion of the song Guthrie gave advice to his listeners on how to get out of being drafted:

And the only reason I'm singing you this song now is cause you may know somebody in a similar situation, or you may be in a similar situation, and if you're in a situation like that there's only one thing you can do and that's walk into the shrink wherever you are just walk in say "Shrink, You can get anything you want, at Alice's restaurant." And walk out. You know, if one person, just one person does it they may think he's really sick and they won't take him. And if two people, two people do it, in harmony, they may think they're both faggots and they won't take either of them. And three people do it, three, can you imagine, three people walking in singin’ a bar of Alice's Restaurant and walking out. They may think it's an organization. And can you, can you imagine fifty people a day, I said fifty people a day walking in singin’ a bar of Alice's Restaurant and walking out. And friends they may thinks it's a movement.67

Guthrie’s call for potential draftees to sing some of his song when they met the psychologist was his attempt to show people that there was a large antiwar movement. It is not known how many people followed his advice, but many people heard Guthrie’s song.

The Doors were another new band in 1967, and though their style was different from Guthrie’s, they would also take an explicit stand against the Vietnam War. In that year they were able to reach number one for three weeks with a song called “Light My Fire.”68 The Doors would also have two albums reach the top five in the LP charts, their self titled debut album *The Doors* and their follow up, *Strange Days.*69 *Underground Digest* out of New York City wrote an article about The Doors, generally praising them, calling them “carnivores in a land of musical

---

vegetarians…Their talons, fangs and folded wings are seldom out of view, but if they leave us crotch-raw and exhausted, at least they leave us aware of our aliveness.”

Author Tim Robbins’ article emphasized the power of The Doors and the effect they had on their audience.

The Doors’ next number one hit, “Hello, I Love You” which was at number one for two weeks in 1968. The song was similar to their previously successful songs in that it had a perceived darker, more psychedelic edge. The song would also usher in the success of one of The Doors most important antiwar songs, “Unknown Soldier.” The group even made a music video of the song, which was used to entertain a crowd before a show when The Doors were hours late. It went over so well, the audience asked to see it a second time. The Doors’ ability to reach their audience went beyond their albums and their concerts.

One of the well known activist/artists was reaching her audience by making news for more than just her musical success. In 1967 Joan Baez had only one album on the top LP charts that year, but Joan reached thirty-eight and was on the charts for twenty weeks. Baez also went to jail on October 16, 1967 with 123 other demonstrators when they attempted to block the Armed Forces Induction Center in Oakland, CA. She was sentenced to ten days in jail, and she made a statement to the media: “Something is disastrously wrong when our nation pursues an unjust war. Young boys are being asked to fight and die. We are repeating the errors of yesterday when we try to solve our problems by killing. This will lead to the Third World War.” Baez remained as committed to ending the Vietnam War.

---

72 AVATAR, “Please Keep Hands Off The Doors,” no. 22, March 29, 1968, 7. For more on The Doors in 1968, please see the case study that takes a close look at The Doors and their song, “Unknown Soldier.”
Commercially, Joan Baez had a more successful year in 1968 than she did in 1967. She had two albums in the top one hundred LP chart. *Any Day Now* reached number thirty and was on the charts for twenty weeks, and *David’s Album* reached number thirty-six and remained on the charts for fourteen weeks. Baez was also toured and performed a show in Los Angeles that was reviewed in the *L.A. Free Press*. In the months leading up to her show in L.A. she had been accused of becoming a moderate, something she refuted during her show, even dedicating a song, “She’s a Troublemaker” to herself to contradict those reports. She talked to her audience about the way she thought the revolution should be handled, which reviewer Michele Willens wrote about:

> Her non-violent nature prevents her from believing that student demonstrations, black demonstrations, or police (or anti-police) brutality can be of any major significance. To Joan Baez, revolution is when men realize that they have no right to take another man’s life. (loudest applause). She beautifully executed her feelings as to why the only decent, meaningful approach is for young men to stand up and refuse to participate in mass murder: i.e. warfare.76

Baez admitted to using her music to get her non-violent message out to the public in an article in *Rolling Stone*.77 She also wrote that there are two ways to approach music: one that says, “I’m a musician and I got nuthin’ to do with politics” and the other is that “music is going to save the world.”78 Baez, there was no doubt, took the second approach.

Bob Dylan was still considered an important political force, even though he continued to claim that his music was not. In this way he was different than Joan Baez, but his fans continued to find inspiration in his work. He did not release a new studio album that year, but he did come out with *Bob Dylan’s Greatest Hits*, which reached number ten and was on

---

the top LP charts for eighty-six weeks. A newspaper out of Montreal, Canada called Pop-See-Cul gave the album a positive review:

All his great ‘hits’ are here: the prophecies of ‘The Times They Are A Changin’”, the irony and bitterness of ‘Positively Forth Street’, the lovely warmth and joy of ‘I Want You,’ the shrill realities of ‘Like A Rolling Stone.’…Now Dylan has not had an album of new songs out in a year. There are rumours (sic) going around that he’s gone crazy and has been placed in a asylum, or that he’s cut off all his hair and will speak only to his dog, if he has one…But after listening to this record, you don’t care about these things…You don’t care if he doesn’t put out another disc-You just want to thank him and hope he’s living the best he can, wherever he is.

Rolling Stone also wrote about Bob Dylan in 1967, inspired by Clive Davis, Vice President of CBS calling Dylan, “the leading cultural force among young people today.” The article also noted a group called Truth About Civil Turmoil (TACT), a rightist reactionary group, who claimed that the man behind Dylan’s signing with Columbia records was known to consort with the Communist Party. Thus he would have had a reason to want to give a negative influence like Bob Dylan the power to corrupt America’s youth. To do so, he gave him a record deal. While the validity of such a claim was doubtful, but it did show that Dylan’s influence was important enough that groups who did not share his point of view would take steps to discredit him.

Dylan’s powerful influence reached across the globe, even to South Vietnam. Many citizens of South Vietnam who were seen as opponents of the government simply disappeared, put into jail without trial or charges. One of those who disappeared in 1968 was named Trinh Cong Son. Before his disappearance, he was known as the “Bob Dylan of Vietnam” because of his protest singing. He said that he wanted to “describe the absurdity of

---

79 Whitburn, Joel Whitburn's Top LP's 1945 – 1972, 46.
death in my country; I want to describe the war…” Tinh Cong Son also said that he was influenced by Boy Dylan and Joan Baez, saying that Dylan’s voice was a “cry, a lament” and Baez’s voice was “melancholy and beautiful.” Tran Van Dinh’s article about the “Bob Dylan of Vietnam” spoke to the importance of music to the Vietnamese people, and shows the influence American protest singers had abroad. Apparently, at least one Vietnamese singer was inspired by them, and he inspired enough Vietnamese people that he was thrown in jail as a threat to the state, something American authorities were also known to do. 1968 was nothing, if not a tumultuous year politically and musically.

Bob Dylan continued to fight the idea that he was political, despite perceptions, in 1968. In that year, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz lived in Boston building a women’s group. During that time, she was incredibly focused on her work, saving time for little else. At one point she was visiting some friends and listening to music:

I wondered why I had lived without music for so long, for I regarded music as a predictor and reflection of revolutionary possibilities. I relied on Bob Dylan as a seer who literally channeled the mood of the revolution. His Jon Wesley Harding album, named for a famous outlaw, had thrilled me the year before, especially ‘All Along the Watchtower,’” which seemed to me a coda for revolution.

It was Dylan and musicians like him that she turned to when she wanted to know where the revolution was heading. The album that Dunbar-Ortiz mentions, John Wesley Harding, was released in January, 1968 and reached number two on the LP chart, and was on the chart for fifty-two weeks. The LP was very successful commercially, and had a message behind it. Dylan’s songs continued inspire antiwar groups, including some very radical factions.

---

83 Dunbar-Ortiz, Outlaw Woman, 148.
84 Whitburn, Joel Whitburn’s Top LP’s 1945 – 1972, 47.
The next year, a faction of the Students for a Democratic Society broke off from the main body and called themselves the “weathermen.” One of their leaders, William Ayers, explained that the “weathermen” faction of SDS found their inspiration for their name and their actions from a Dylan song, “Subterranean Homesick Blues.” Specifically they were inspired by the line, “You don’t need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows.” They did not need a weatherman to tell them the “world was in flames” and they would do whatever they needed to do.\(^{85}\) Though the song was first released in 1965 on the album *Bringing It All Back Home*, it had an effect on the dissatisfied revolutionaries.\(^{86}\) Their inspirational leader was Bob Dylan; even if he was never a “weatherman,” they took their cue from him. Ralph J. Gleason also mentioned that song as well in a 1969 opinion piece “Perspective: Song Would Do More Than Books”:

> When a young rock fan bought the Dylan album containing ‘Subterranean Homesick Blues’ or the one containing ‘Mr. Tambourine Man’ or ‘Like a Rolling Stone,’ something then transpired which adults generally do not consider. Not only did the album contain the hit song for which it was purchased but it contained a lot of other songs as well and these songs were audited and absorbed by the listener.\(^{87}\)

In Gleason’s mind, even when a hit song did not have an overtly political message it caused people to buy the LP that it was on, and the messages still got through. This was true about the older works of Bob Dylan, which clearly still had relevance in 1969. Indeed, the concept could be extended beyond Bob Dylan to the many other artists whose singles were not antiwar songs, or the most popular song from an LP was not an antiwar song, but the LPs or older works contained that message. Those young people that bought their LPs based on the more popular tracks still listened to and heard the message song, which demonstrates that a

\(^{85}\) Ayers, *Fugitive Days*, 140.


song can have an influence without being released as a single or getting significant radio play. Dylan continued to produce music and his popularity continued in 1969.

*Nashville Skyline* was one of Bob Dylan’s most successful LPs to date. It reached number three and was on the chart for forty-six weeks.88 The *Spokane Natural’s* review of the album was positive: “Bob Dylan has again proven himself to be contemporary music’s outstanding musician, composer, and arranger. *Nashville Skyline* is the most recent proof of Dylan’s genius.”89 The *Walrus* of Champaign-Urbana, IL, home of the University of Illinois, also reviewed the LP: “Here Dylan has gone further back to the roots than ever before. Not only can everyone understand, but Dylan can understand everyone…When you first listen you think ‘This isn’t the Bob Dylan I know.’ But after listening for awhile and after thinking for awhile you understand that maybe for the first time you are really hearing who Bob Dylan is.”90 The *Walrus* reviewer felt that Dylan was going back to his roots, and the *Spokane Natural* reviewer agreed when writing about the first song on the album “Girl From The North Country”, a duet with Johnny Cash: “This song was first recorded on *The Freewheelin’ Bob Dylan* album. This marks the first time Dylan has ever re-released a record…One could probably conclude that he is going back to his musical beginnings.”91 Both agree that Bob Dylan was starting to sound more like he did previously, and, to take Gleason’s idea a bit further, when new Dylan fans heard the new album, it was possible that they went out and listened to earlier, more political Dylan.

Thanks to artists like Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, and others, music in 1967 and beyond became more influential, as did the musicians who perfected it. From the emergence of new

---

protest singers to the continued success of the old ones, message songs were gaining in popularity. It is not coincidental that antiwar based message songs increased as the Vietnam War become more and more prevalent in the American mind. Music was a part of the youth culture, particularly that of the dissatisfied section of that culture. In her article “Rock and Revolt; State of the Movement,” Robin Hunter wrote:

In spite – and I emphasize in spite – of all the all-pervasive and corrupting influence of the hypocrites who run religion, business, and education, the must and castrated academics, the television, advertising, in fact the whole boatload of sensitive bullshit, some kids actually made it. The Beatles, the Stones, Dylan, flower children, hippies, and leftist organizers in hundreds of personal bust-outs attest to this fact.92

According to Hunter, 1967 saw some people overcome the corrupting influence of the many negatives in American society. David Crosby of the Byrds also mentions the corruption of youth in an interview he did for The Oracle: “Most children are being fed undistilled pure hatred and fear and degradation and pain and retribution and all of the negative concepts that Western ‘civilization’ has been able to develop.”93 Hunter was not the first or the only leftist to come to this conclusion. The first three people that she listed as overcoming these negative influences were musicians, all of which found a way to express their dissatisfaction.94 She believed that any movement that wanted to change the world, its followers must not simply, “drop out.” Instead they must take part in it, and change it, “if its substantive meaning is to be realized; it can only be in relation of the whole society, not part from it. This is the bind the hippie, and to a lesser extent we in the new left are in.”95

95 Ibid, 11.
brought even more power to the antiwar artist, and the left was ready to hear them and embrace their message.

In 1968, the always popular Beatles were ready to release their message song. They did so on the B side of their number one hit, “Hey Jude.” Written by John Lennon and Paul McCartney, “Hey Jude” was the A side; while a song titled “Revolution 1” was the B side. The single was released August 26, 1968. “Revolution 1” was the political song that many antiwar activists had been waiting for from The Beatles. An underground newspaper out of San Diego called *Teaspoon Door* presented two views of The Beatles’ most revolutionary song to date. The first point of view was critical of the new song: “If the words were groovy the music might be called funky if shitty piano is your bag. Sounding similar to their ‘old sound,’ the new Beatles’ record is a clear unmistakable call for counter-revolution.” The unnamed author complained that The Beatles warned about Chairman Mao of China, but failed to mention U.S. or British leaders attacking their own people. The song was also criticized for rallying against black liberals, due to the generalization that their point of view was angry, which, according to the song, means that they get no money from The Beatles. Ralph Gleason, author of the opposing point of view criticized the song, although not to the extent the other writer did. He believed that the song did not go far enough. He found the first few lines acceptable, but when The Beatles sang, “But when you talk about destruction, don’t you know that you can count me out.” Gleason felt that there would be no revolution without “breaking a few eggs.” Even with this short coming Gleason does state, “Their

---

99 Ralph Gleason, “‘Revolution’ Beatles two views,” *Teaspoon Door*, vol. 1 no. 4, November 22 – December 5, 1968, 8.
100 Interestingly, Gleason is also the opinion writer for *Rolling Stone* magazine, a number of his pieces are relevant to the topic of this writing and his work is utilized frequently.
attitude…is much healthier than the patriotic crap peddled by James Brown and Martha Raye and Sammy Davis, and it faces up to the problem.”

While not the most revolutionary song of the 1960s, number one hit “Hey Jude’s” B side did call for change, even if it is not as strong as some might like. Indeed, the song was successful on its own, as Fred Bronson ranks “Hey Jude” as the number one song of 1968, with “Revolution” at a respectable number sixty-six.

“Revolution” and the politics of The Beatles remained a source of controversy in 1969. As a band they had continued success, releasing two number one hits. Singing with Billy Preston, the song “Get Back” reached number one and stayed there for five weeks, while “Come Together” also reached number one for one week. Their LPs in 1969 were also successful: *Yellow Submarine* was number two on the LP charts and *Abbey Road* was number one, each was on the chart for twenty-four weeks and eighty-three weeks respectively.

The continued controversy of the song “Revolution” could be seen in the Seattle based newspaper *Helix*. Three letters between John Lennon and a British revolutionary named John Hoyland were published in the paper under the title “So You Want A Revolution, Well.” Hoyland’s original letter brought up some of the criticisms of the song “Revolution” that others had leveled at The Beatles: “In order to change the world we’ve got to understand what’s wrong with the world. And then—destroy it. Ruthlessly. This is not cruelty or madness. It is one of the most passionate forms of love…Any ‘love’ which does not pit itself against these things (oppression, suffering, and capitalism) is sloppy and

---

102 Bronson, *Billboard’s Hottest Hot 100 Hits*, 298-299.
irrelevant." John Lennon responded to the criticism with a letter of his own, expressing his own feelings on what the revolution meant:

You’re obviously on a destruction kick. I’ll tell you what’s wrong with it (destruction)-People-so do you want to destroy them? Ruthlessly? Until you/we change your/our heads there’s no chance. Tell me of one successful revolution. Who fucked up communism-Christianity-capitalism-Buddhism, etc.? Sick heads and nothing else. Do you think that all the enemy wear capitalist badges so that you can shoot them?...Look man, I was/am not against you...look at the world we’re living in, John, and ask yourself: why? And then--come and join us.

Lennon and The Beatles would continue to fight the image that they were more conservative than they appeared. The fact that some continued to ask or even demand that they become more political, to do more for the revolutionary movements, speaks to the influence that they had. “Revolution” might not have been as radical as their critics would have hoped, but the song kept people discussing the antiwar movement over year after the song’s release. Those who demanded that The Beatles use their influence realized just how powerful music could be for the antiwar movement.

In April of 1968, Ralph Gleason, writing for *Rolling Stone*, included a quote from Plato in an opinion piece he wrote: “Forms and rhythm in music are never changed without producing changes in the most important political forms and ways. The new style quietly insinuates a greater force...goes on to attack laws and constitutions, displaying the utmost impudence, until it ends by overthrowing everything, both in public and in private.” In that same article he explains why he used that quote: “Music, if Plato was right, may save us yet. Certainly no hippie, no folk singer, no long-haired guitar playing rock musician is going to fry us with napalm or blow us all up with the bomb.” Gleason felt that music might do

---

107 Ralph J. Gleason, “Perspectives: The Final Paroxysm of Fear,” *Rolling Stone*, vol. 1 no. 8, April 6, 1968, 10.
some good, or at least those who listen to the music he wrote about might not be inclined to hurt people. He noted that many of the leaders of the antiwar movement recognized the usefulness of music to their cause, even if they were not into the music: “Most of them, from the SDS on through the Yippie [sic] fragments, are square when it comes to music itself, but the strength of music remains.” These leaders of American youth hoped to change the world, and to utilize the strength of that youth: “At no time in American history has youth possessed the strength it possesses now. Trained by music and linked by music, it has the power for good to change the world.” Gleason implied that the key link between all those who wanted to change the world for the better was music. In 1968, that changing the world for the better was exactly what many musicians were trying to do. Some musicians would get the chance to play for the largest audience in their careers in 1969.

From August 15 to August 18, 1969, half a million people descended on the town of Bethel, New York. There, on Max Yasgur’s dairy farm, those half a million people listened to many bands play at what was called the Woodstock Music and Arts Fair, “Three Days of peace, love, and music.” Rolling Stone’s writer sent to cover the event, Greil Marcus, was inspired by the event to the point that he wrote “All over the nation and the world kids are moving to rock and roll. It’s the most important thing in their lives.” Other Scenes, an underground newspaper out of New York City, asked Reverend Thomas Forcade to write an article titled “To Think About at Woodstock.” In it he wrote, “The potential of the situation is enormous-more people can be turned on together, more people can have a

109 In the Rolling Stone article on the festival the police estimate for people on the road near the festival was put at one million, although the article also states that “perhaps a quarter of a million never made it.” Greil Marcus, The Woodstock Festival,” Rolling Stone, no. 42, September 20, 1969, 17.
111 Ibid, 18.
good time together, more people can be reached with the liberation message of rock and roll music than ever before.”

Rev. Forcade clearly saw that Woodstock had the potential to touch the lives of a large number of people, and that those people would hear the message of rock and roll. He also quoted poet John Sinclair to further emphasize how important he felt the festival would be:

“We are free mother country madmen in charge of our own lives and we are taking this freedom to the peoples of America…for the first time in America there are a generation of visionary manic white mother country dope fiend rock and roll freaks who are ready to get down and kick out the jams—ALL THE JAMS—break everything loose and free everybody from their very real and imaginary prisons…We demand total freedom for everybody! We are totally committed to carrying out our program. We breathe revolution.”

The passage implied that Woodstock would be a part of that revolution, particularly because the revolutionary Americans were “rock and roll freaks” who “kick out the jams.”

Woodstock would mean something to those who attended, as well as to those who did not. Not all agreed that Woodstock was an important antiwar event. There were those who would complain that Woodstock was little more than a successful money making venture and was not about peace. Even today, debates about the importance of Woodstock continue. For many, however, Woodstock would not be tainted by ideas about money. Max Lerner, a liberal pundit, was asked about Woodstock by the New York Post, “What is an ‘event’ in social and generational history?” His reply expressed much about the feelings behind the Woodstock Music and Arts Festival: “If it is something that marks a turning point in the consciousness generations have of each other and of themselves, then the weekend festival at

---

113 Forcade, “To Think About at Woodstock,” Other Scenes, 19.
114 Ibid, 19.
Max Yasgur’s vast meadow at Bethel, N.Y., was an important event...the historians will have to reckon with it...these young revolutionaries are on their way...”117 Even in 1969, some already knew Woodstock would have historical significance. Though there were many musical styles at Woodstock, they all brought a similar message of peace to the festival, just as they brought a message of peace to the nation.

CASE STUDIES OF “I-FEEL-LIKE-I’M-FIXIN-TO-DIE-RAG” BY COUNTRY JOE AND THE FISH AND “UNKNOWN SOLDIER” BY THE DOORS

The two songs chosen as case studies for this chapter were selected for slightly different reasons than those from the first chapter. It should be noted that, commercially, these songs were somewhat less successful than either “Blowin’ in the Wind” or “Eve of Destruction.” Both were successful in their own right, but neither was a number one hit. The success of the albums they were released on, however, is noteworthy, and both are overtly antiwar songs. There was no attempt to disguise the artist’s political leanings, and the audience could not fail to get the message of the songs.

Country Joe and the Fish were generally considered a psychedelic band and had its roots in San Francisco. To a lesser extent, The Doors were also considered a psychedelic band, but also identified with rock. Both “Blowin’ in the Wind” and “Eve of Destruction” were part of the folk music tradition. Though folk music had been considered the primary style of protest musicians, that idea changed as folk music’s popularity waned somewhat in the late 1960s. This necessitates the consideration of bands that were not considered part of the folk scene. Two of the most important and influential of those were Country Joe and the Fish and The Doors.

117 Rolling Stone, “’It was like Balling for the First Time,’” no. 42, September 20, 1969, 1.
Country Joe and the Fish’s psychedelic protest music began to find success in late 1967. Their first successful album, *Country Joe & the Fish* was released June 10, 1967 and reached number thirty-nine, while staying on the top LP chart for thirty-eight weeks. Their second album, *I-Feel-Like-I’m-Fixin’-To-Die*, reached number sixty-seven and stayed on the charts for twenty-eight weeks. Vietnam Veteran Tim O’Brien believed that the song was: “the melody underneath all the protest.” Zoe Trodd also wrote that the song “reached a wide audience in 1967 (on the album *I Feel Like I’m Fixin’ To Die*) and a mass audience in 1970 (through the film and recordings of the Woodstock festival). Both the studio version and the live version need to be considered to fully understand the power of the song. Even after their somewhat modest success in album sales, as a writer for the Seattle based newspaper *Helix* wrote, “…they remain one of the few bands that ‘packs them in’ everywhere they play.” Country Joe and the Fish’s influence includes both their record sales along with their success as live performers. Their influence includes their message, something which their manager, Ed Denson, also recognized. In an article he wrote in 1969 about managing rock bands, Denson explained how to tell if their music was good enough to be successful: “Are the songs good? Do they make sense? Do they mean anything to you? Would you be impressed if someone walked up to you and said what these songs are saying?” Denson must have seen a message from Country Joe and the Fish, their message must have impressed

him, and he went on to successfully manage them. Like many message songs, the “I-Feel-Like-I’m-Fixin’-To-Die-Rag,” contained much of its message in their lyrics.

"Fish Cheer & I-Feel-Like-I’m-Fixin’-To-Die-Rag."

Gimme an F!
F!
Gimme an I!
I!
Gimme an S!
S!
Gimme an H!
H!
What's that spell?
FISH!
What's that spell?
FISH!
What's that spell?
FISH!

Yeah, come on all of you, big strong men,
Uncle Sam needs your help again.
He's got himself in a terrible jam
Way down yonder in Vietnam
So put down your books and pick up a gun,
We're gonna have a whole lotta fun.

And it's one, two, three,
What are we fighting for?
Don't ask me, I don't give a damn,
Next stop is Vietnam;
And it's five, six, seven,
Open up the pearly gates,
Well there ain't no time to wonder why,
Whoopie! we're all gonna die.

Well, come on generals, let's move fast;
Your big chance has come at last.
Gotta go out and get those reds —
The only good commie is the one who's dead
And you know that peace can only be won
When we've blown 'em all to kingdom come.

And it's one, two, three,
What are we fighting for?
Don't ask me, I don't give a damn,
Next stop is Vietnam;
And it's five, six, seven,
Open up the pearly gates,
Well there ain't no time to wonder why
Whoopee! we're all gonna die.

Huh!

Well, come on Wall Street, don't move slow,
Why man, this is war au-go-go.
There's plenty good money to be made
By supplying the Army with the tools of the trade,
Just hope and pray that if they drop the bomb,
They drop it on the Viet Cong.

And it's one, two, three,
What are we fighting for?
Don't ask me, I don't give a damn,
Next stop is Vietnam.
And it's five, six, seven,
Open up the pearly gates,
Well there ain't no time to wonder why
Whoopee! we're all gonna die.

Well, come on mothers throughout the land,
Pack your boys off to Vietnam.
Come on fathers, don't hesitate,
Send 'em off before it's too late.
Be the first one on your block
To have your boy come home in a box.

And it's one, two, three
What are we fighting for?
Don't ask me, I don't give a damn,
Next stop is Vietnam.
And it's five, six, seven,
Open up the pearly gates,
Well there ain't no time to wonder why,
Whoopee! we're all gonna die.\textsuperscript{123}

The studio version of "Fish Cheer & I-Feel-Like-I’m-Fixin’-To-Die-Rag" had a
comical quality to it. The cheer at the beginning was well received by the \textit{Rolling Stone}

reviewer: “the CJ&TF (Country Joe and the Fish) cheer that opens the record is very funny and from it one can very well intuit the whole funky Berkeley bag that CJ&FT come from.” The review did not mention the song “I-Feel-Like-I’m-Fixin’-To-Die-Rag,” but in response to another antiwar song on the album, “Bomb Song,” that reviewer wrote: “They are better at being political than at trying to be hip.”

Once the record moved past the cheer and the song began, it included bells and whistles that were reminiscent of a carnival or circus. The ridiculousness of the music stands in contrast to the serious lyrics. In fact, if the listener did not hear the ridiculousness of the music but only the lyrics, there are portions that could have been interpreted as prowar. However, the chorus ends with the line, “Whoopee! We’re all gonna die.” Some of the lines that could have been construed as prowar are so ridiculous that they should be interpreted as antiwar lyrics. In the song, Country Joe sang to the mothers and fathers of American boys to “Be the first one on your block/To have your boy come home in a box.” During the song there were moments where the word “waka” was chanted in the background and at other times the word “psychedelic” was chanted; each the time where this occurred, it was during the chorus. Finally, at the end of the song, the sounds of machine guns can be heard, followed by jet engines. As a former soldier himself, Joe MacDonald (Country Joe’s real name) would have understood the power of these sounds to Vietnam veterans. He stated that: “I felt a comradeship with the soldiers and tried to write from their point of view. I have never felt that I was apart from those I wrote about.”

Country Joe and the Fish were in high demand for antiwar activities. At the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, it was rumored that a number of bands were going to join the Yippie Party’s protest. It was important to those leading the protest,

125 Trodd, American Protest Literature, 481.
including prominent leader Jerry Rubin, that they get some of the most popular musical acts for their event to be successful. Jerry Rubin estimated that: “100,000 to one million people would attend. *Rolling Stone’s* writer Jan Wenner, commented: “The Yip Party is using two approaches to lure people to Chicago: media gamesmanship and grasping to itself the potent charm of the music of the young.”

It was rumored that Country Joe and the Fish were one of the bands that would play at the Yippie Event, something that they denied early on. Though they did not play any of the events (though others like Phil Ochs and the Fugs did), Country Joe and the Fish were in Chicago during the convention to play a separate engagement. During their stay at a Chicago hotel, three members of the band were assaulted by three American GIs. None of the band members were seriously hurt, though Joe MacDonald did have a bloody nose at the end of the encounter.

Even though they were not involved in the protest they still drew attention to the events in Chicago. Wenner explained why the Yippie Party would claim to have commitments from bands that were not true: “Rock and roll is the *only* way in which the vast but formless power of youth is structured, the only way in which it can be defined or inspected. The style and meaning of it has caught the imagination, the financial power and the spiritual interest of young Americans.”

Rubin and the other Yippie leaders’ decision to lie was a ploy to capture the youth of America with message singers. Country Joe was one of those artists that antiwar leaders hoped to use to bring in new young people, specifically because they had a message that the youth understood and responded to. They responded to

---

the "Fish Cheer & I-Feel-Like-I’m-Fixin’-To-Die-Rag” even more strongly when it was performed live.

The most famous live rendition of the song was performed at Woodstock. Lyrically, the song is nearly exactly the same, with two exceptions. The “Fish Cheer” was replaced with the spelling of the word “fuck,” and then exclaiming the word “fuck” instead of “fish” when asking the audience “what’s that spell?” Also, in between verses, Country Joe spoke to the crowd, “Listen people, I don’t know how you expect to ever stop the war if you can’t sing any better than that! There’s about three hundred thousand of you fuckers out there, I want you to start singin’!” The music was also simpler, mostly a guitar. The bells and whistles were taken out and the song sounded more serious. The words Country Joe spoke to the crowd also express what his goal was in writing and performing the song. He hoped to use his music to stop the war. Even today Joe MacDonald sometimes claims that his music ended the Vietnam War, albeit tongue-in-cheek. Even the website for the band has a banner that says, “Welcome to the official World Wide Web home of the 60s band that stopped the war in Vietnam.” While that claim was not precisely true, it does express what the goal of the band was.

For their performance, and attempt to help end the war, at the Woodstock Festival Country Joe and the Fish were paid $2,500, according to the New York underground newspaper Other Scenes. This was significantly less than some of the other bands. The Jimi Hendrix Experience was paid $18,000, Creedence Clearwater Revival and Joan Baez got $10,000 each, and a number of other bands made similar amounts. The Grateful Dead,

---

131 Trodd, American Protest Literature, 481.
another San Francisco based psychedelic band made the same as Country Joe and the Fish.\textsuperscript{133}

For that $2,500 dollars, Country Joe and the Fish actually went on stage twice. At one point the music had to be stopped due to the rain that was wetting the electrical equipment on the stage and risking the performer’s safety. \textit{Rolling Stone}’s Greil Marcus recorded what happened next:

The Fish played. In pouring down rain, good old never-say-die-and-never-down Country Joe and the Fish got up and pantomimed their music for the crowd that had turned them on. Barry grabbed a mike with no cord and Mark Kapner hoisted his little ukulele and Joe handled the footballs that kept bouncing onto the stage. Greg Dwewy, their new drummer, brought out his kit and sat down and pounded out a loud, fast, dancing drum solo that kept the audience moving and grooving. It was certainly the only drum solo I’ve ever dug.\textsuperscript{134}

In the spirit of the festival, Country Joe and the Fish kept the crowd happy and entertained even while the weather was against them. Eventually they played their real set, and at the end, Country Joe played ”Fish Cheer & I-Feel-Like-I’m-Fixin’-To-Die-Rag” as described previously, “at the end eliciting a happy-savages roar when he yelled out to the crowd:

‘Gimmie an F’ they answered—‘Gimmie a U’—they answered—‘Gimmie a C’—they answered—‘Gimmie a K’—and they yelled. ‘Now what’s that spell?’ The shout rang out for at least ten miles.”\textsuperscript{135} At Woodstock, Country Joe and the Fish truly made a mark, but this was not their first foray into live music. In fact, much of the popularity and power in their work came from their live performances.

Country Joe and the Fish were center stage for the Newport Pop Festival in Orange County, CA. This festival was in 1968, well over a year before Woodstock, but it was much smaller. Saturday night county officials threatened to turn off the power. There would only

\textsuperscript{135} \textit{Rolling Stone}, “‘It was like Balling for the First Time,’” 24.
be time for two songs, and one of those chosen by the band was the "I-Feel-Like-I’m-Fixin’-To-Die-Rag." A *Rolling Stone* reporter was present at the festival, “As they began their first, “1,2,3,4, What Are We Fighting For,’ [the writer got the name of the song wrong but from the context is clearly meaning "I-Feel-Like-I’m-Fixin’-To-Die-Rag"] the approximately 40,000 young people still on hand rose as if one, cheering hands held aloft in the ‘peace sign.’” Even after playing only two songs, the other was a long blues that they dragged out as long as was possible, Country Joe and the Fish were a memorable part of the festival, as the crowd responded to their song, and their call for peace that was expressed back to them with thousands of peace signs. San Diego’s underground newspaper *Teaspoon Door* reviewed a concert that was headlined by Country Joe and the Fish that was held in the Gym of Cal Western. One of the songs the author felt needed to be mentioned was the "I-Feel-Like-I’m-Fixin’-To-Die-Rag.” It was the song that they closed with and the author of the review described the scene for their last song:

> The finale, the Fish Cheer [earlier in the piece the author explains that he is using the title ‘Fish Cheer’ interchangeably with ‘I-Feel-Like-I’m-Fixin’-To-Die-Rag’], not only emancipated Cal Western but Golden Gym lost its virginity in the process. It was hard to believe the Fish scene was happening at CWU and it would be most unfortunate if the campus elders decided against future use of their facility as a rock podium.”

In the view of this writer, the concert and the song was a good experience for the crowd, but it was a concern if the radical views of the band might not allow another such performance to occur at the University. Yet again, Country Joe and the Fish brought along controversy with them, particularly with they played the "I-Feel-Like-I’m-Fixin’-To-Die-Rag.”

Country Joe and the Fish appear numerous times in the underground media during the late 1960s, very often for their live performances. At the end of 1968, *Rolling Stone*

---

136 *Rolling Stone*, “Newport Festival Drags on in Dust and Heat,” no. 17, September 14, 1968, 8.
published an article about the Miami Pop Festival. The story led off with the reporter listening to Country Joe and the Fish and realizing that: “San Francisco soul had arrived. It was the first of hundreds of turn-ons.”\textsuperscript{138} “I-Feel-Like-I’m-Fixin’-To-Die-Rag” had a memorable impact on people in the 1960s. Joe MacDonald believed that his music was successful for a reason: “Good protest music must be entertaining or else it is just propaganda.”\textsuperscript{139} The band knew how to entertain, and they were at their best when performing their antiwar music. They were skilled at getting a crowd into their music, for them to hear and take in their message to end the war. Their method of getting their message out, particularly in their live performances, was not very different from one of their contemporaries, The Doors. This is true despite the differences between the lead singers of the two groups, articulated by \textit{Helix} writer Paul Dorpat:

> While directly involved in the games of publicity imagery he (Joe MacDonald) willfully protects and protracts his enigma, not that (of) Jim Morrison, savage hurt child sex pot enigma which is sweetness in the lips of all media men, those that feed off the popular images they create but the enigma that is born of either an honest gathering or dispersal of whatever’s on his mind, Joe is too honest for the media men.\textsuperscript{140}

Whatever their differences, MacDonald and Morrison both had a message to deliver, a message that was not all that different. Each had his own brand of protest literature, delivered in different styles and successful in different ways, but their message was delivered to their fans and to the public at large. Country Joe and the Fish relied heavily on their live performances to get out their message to the public, in contrast, The Doors used their LPs and singles.

\textsuperscript{139} Trodd, \textit{American Protest Literature}, 481.
From 1967 to 1971, The Doors had seven top ten albums, with only one failing to crack the top ten. Each album stayed on the charts for at least twenty weeks, with *The Doors* remaining on the charts for one hundred and four. The Doors had three songs that had an anti-war message. “The Unknown Soldier” is the most easily identifiable antiwar song by The Doors. It was first released on the *Waiting for the Sun* LP, which reached number one on the billboard charts. “Love Me Two Times” came from the *Strange Days* LP, an album which reached number three. The third was “When the Music’s Over,” also from the *Strange Days* LP. *Strange Days* was reviewed by *Rolling Stone* soon after its release, and both antiwar songs were mentioned positively in the review: “‘My Eyes Have Seen You,’ ‘Strange Days,’ and ‘Love Me Two Times,’ all have the same commercial potential of ‘Light My Fire.’ They are heavy, evocative and dramatic pieces.” The reviewer believed that those three songs, one of which was an antiwar song, could be as successful as The Doors previous number one hit, “Light My Fire.” The same reviewer also noted that the whole album was structured like a “Greek Drama.” It was noted that “When The Music’s Over,” was a logical end to the album, “as The Doors suggest in their closing song, ‘When the Music’s Over,’ you ‘turn out the light.’” The album that was equated to a Greek drama contained two of The Doors antiwar songs.

All three Doors antiwar songs were successful, two of which were even released as singles. “Love Me Two Times” reached number twenty-five, was on the charts for seven weeks, and was the second single off of The Doors second album, *Strange Days*. It might have risen higher and been on the charts for longer if not for the behavior of Doors’ lead

---

143 Ibid, 18.
singer Jim Morrison. In his book, Doors drummer John Densmore related the story of a concert in New Haven, Connecticut. Just before the concert, Jim Morrison was accidentally sprayed with mace by a police officer who thought he was a fan who snuck backstage. During the show, Morrison dared the crowd to hassle, even attack, the police assigned to the concert. Consequently, he was arrested and spent the night in jail. Jail was not, however, the only result from Morrison’s actions: “Our second single off the second album, “Love Me Two Times,” was racing up the charts when it got banned because of New Haven. We were too controversial. Shit.” Morrison’s actions on stage had an effect on the public perception of the band, and were certainly part of the banning of “Love Me Two Times.” Perhaps in part due to Morrison’s display in New Haven, “Love Me Two Times” was not as successful another antiwar song, “The Unknown Soldier.”

“The Unknown Soldier”

Wait until the war is over
And we're both a little older
The unknown soldier

Breakfast where the news is read
Television children fed
Unborn living, living, dead
Bullet strikes the helmet's head

And it's all over
For the unknown soldier
It's all over
For the unknown soldier

Hut
Hut

147 There is also the infamous Miami incident where Morrison was again arrested, this time for allegedly exposing his private parts and simulating oral sex on one of his band mates. Though he would be acquitted of all charges, this incident would lead to many tour date cancelations, raising The Doors’ profile but in a less than positive way.
Hut ho hee up
Hut
Hut
Hut ho hee up
Hut
Hut
Hut ho hee up
Comp'nee
Halt

Preeee-zent!
Arms!

Make a grave for the unknown soldier
Nestled in your hollow shoulder
The unknown soldier

Breakfast where the news is read
Television children fed
Bullet strikes the helmet's head

And, it's all over
The war is over
It's all over
The war is over
Well, all over, baby
All over, baby
Oh, over, yeah
All over, baby
Wooooo, hah-hah
All over
All over, baby
Oh, woa-yeah
All over
All over
Heeeeyy

“The Unknown Soldier” was a successful song for The Doors, both as part of their LP and as a single. The song reached number thirty-nine, and remained on the chart for eight weeks. It was the first single off The Doors third album, *Waiting for the Sun*. Choosing an anti-war song as the first single off of the LP was a risky move, particularly considering

---

the trouble they had when “Love Me Two Times” was released as a single. *Waiting For The Sun* was successful as an LP as well, reached number one, and remained on the LP chart for forty-one weeks. The single data, along with the LP data, expresses just how commercially successful The Doors were, even in their politically motivated endeavors.

In the case of “The Unknown Soldier” the lyrics left little doubt that it was an anti-war song, even if Vietnam was not specifically mentioned in the song. The lyrics present many military inspired moments. There was an unknown soldier mentioned repeatedly, most likely kept vague so that the image can be open to the listeners interpretation. Later in the song the unknown soldier appeared to die, as a grave was needed. That grave is in the hollow of a shoulder, meant to bring about the image of someone aiming a gun from the hollow of their shoulder. The most obvious military reference, however, are the marching orders yelled out in the middle of the song. Marching and drilling conjures up a military image, young soldier marching along the parade ground, a sight that would have been familiar to most Americans.

The image of marching soldiers would not have been a pleasant one for most antiwar activists. As a piece of protest literature, “The Unknown Soldier” did not shy away from what The Doors saw as one of society’s worst ills. They felt that the killing of young people in a faraway place for a nation that did not seem to care about them was something worth singing about. The horror of war was on full display in this song. Jim Morrison mimed his own death on stage when performing this song. The implication was that, if people cared

---

149 The screamed orders and military drill may have had a personal meaning to Jim Morrison. John Densmore mentioned Morrison’s childhood in his book and the effect he believed it had on Morrison’s adult life. “With a navy admiral for a father, Jim was sensitive to receiving criticism and interpreted any suggestions as order from an archetypal father figure.” Densmore, *Riders on the Storm*, 68.
about the soldiers, they would be brought home and released from military service. The solution to an unjust war was to end the violence.

The concern in the song, it should be noted, was the American boy and the American soldier. There was no mention of the large number of Vietnamese who died. This was probably done for a specific reason. Densmore commented, “The lyrics weren’t talking specifically about the Vietnam War, but I thought it was more powerful with its universal imagery. That was Jim’s gift.” The song was not about United States as an imperial power, it was not about communism and the validity (or lack thereof) of that particular movement, it was not about the racism that can be found in the government’s willingness to slaughter Asian men and women; it was about the evils of war. The fact that it was written and was successful during the Vietnam War era suggested that it was written with that war in mind.

The criticism of the war was not confined to military and deathly images. At two different points in the song Morrison sang: “breakfast where the news is read/television children fed.” These lines seemed to directly contrast most of the other images found in the song. They were an indictment of those who were aware of what was happening, those who calmly read the news and sat their children in front of the television, and did nothing. While the unknown soldier fought and died, others stayed home, were aware of his suffering, and did nothing. The song was The Doors attempt to be different from those they criticized; they were aware of the suffering and wanted to do something about it.

One of the most powerful, drawn out parts of the song was at the end. At that point the unknown soldier had been shot, had a grave dug, and those back home were aware but did not seem to care about it. The word “over” was repeated in the final verse, and spoke to

150 Ibid, 165.
the fact that, for the soldier at least, the war was over. No longer did he have to suffer, take
bullets to his helmeted head, march, take orders, and be taken for granted by the people back
home. He had been killed but he had found peace. The peace for him was death, the end of
his suffering was found when he died. Yet no one attempted to save him, the average
American accepted his sacrifice as a necessary one. This was a message found in all the
renditions of the song.

In addition to their success as a recording act, The Doors were a popular live act. Their live performances were a large part of their success. One early reviewer wrote that they were: “…the only rock group in America that can match the excitement on stage of The Beatles and the Rolling Stones. They are more musically profound than the Stones and present a more powerful presence than The Beatles. The Doors have the feel for drama, the sense of theatre, for which rock music has been impatiently waiting.”¹⁵¹ “The Unknown Soldier” was one they performed frequently and it provided their audience with what John Densmore referred to as a “miniplay.”¹⁵² The song was one of the most powerful parts of their live performances. Jerry Hopkins of *Rolling Stone* wrote a scathing review of a Doors show, claiming that much of the show was contrived and obvious. The sole positive comment the reviewer had about the concert was about the performance of “Unknown Soldier:” “The Door did offer some ‘new’ material…they closed the set not with ‘The End’ or ‘The Music’s Over,’ but with a relatively new piece about the horror and futility of war, ‘Unknown Soldier.’ (The last is a brief, dramatic piece that has Morrison pantomiming being put in front of a firing squad, blindfolded, then shot…”¹⁵³

Doors Drummer John Densmore captures much of what made the performance so powerful. Once the band reached the drilling section of the song, the miniplay truly began:

‘COMPANNYYY HALT!! Preessenntt ARMS.’
Robby would aim his guitar at Jim like it was a gun; Ray would hold a fist in the air with one hand and pick up the top of his amplifier with the other, dropping it on cue. The sound blasted out like a gun shot.\(^{154}\)

Morrison would then throw himself to the floor, laying as if dead, until he began to sing again, from the floor, about the grave for the unknown soldier. Morrison’s “death” on stage was a powerful image, showing the violence and pain that came with war. Robby Kreiger’s part in the act, aiming his guitar, along with Ray Manczarek’s raised fist and gunshot sound gave extra realism and added to the dramatic scene. To any who saw this performed could not have mistaken the message implicit in the miniplay. Morrison’s fake death was meant to appear horrifying and painful. Densmore wrote that Morrison’s role in the “miniplay” was to end the war lyrically.\(^{155}\) Morrison’s emphasis of the ending during his live performance of the song was an anti-war statement along with the song itself. A similar statement was made in the music video the group made for the song. In the video, after the “gunshot,” Jim Morrison again “dies.” In their video version, however, blood falls from his mouth on to flowers he carried in the video. This is followed by ABC newsreel footage of the Vietnam War.\(^{156}\) The video takes their on stage performance further, even including a direct reference to the Vietnam War.

Jim Morrison believed in the intelligence and depth of his audience, at least according to an interview he did for the *Los Angeles Free Press*. In it, his road manager told the interviewer that Morrison was the leader of a “mindless crowd.” Morrison responded by

---

\(^{154}\) Densmore, *Riders on the Storm*, 193.
\(^{155}\) Ibid, 194.
\(^{156}\) *Rolling Stone*, “Doors Crucify Jim Morrison,” vol. 1 no. 9, April 27, 1968, 6.
discussing what he thought of his fans and the crowds they were a part of: “Maybe collectively...a crowd together really has no mind. Individually, everybody does. They all have bitchin’ minds. Like, I bet there is more philosophy in some sixteen-year-old chicks mind than you ever dreamed of...”

Morrison respected the intelligence of those he sang for, he believed that they could understand his lyrics and his poetry. Jerry Hopkins wrote, “The Doors have a lot to say. The rage may be too polished sometimes, but it is, I believe, sincere.”

What The Doors had to say, along with their rage, was on display when they recorded “Unknown Soldier,” and even more so when they performed it. It was up to their audience to truly understand what the song was about, something Morrison believed they could do.

The end of the 1960s brought with it a new kind of protest music. No longer was antiwar music confined to folk singers, now it was becoming part of the rock and roll scene. The music became more edgy and psychedelic. A new audience was found, beyond the original peace activists. More and more Americans were listening to the words of their musical heroes. Those artists brought with them a sense of urgency and, for some, anger. Country Joe was one musician who combined anger, urgency, and a psychedelic experience to his music, but he was not alone. The country’s most popular band, The Beatles, released an explicitly antiwar song. The antiwar movement continued to grow, and so did the music that supported the movement and protested the Vietnam War.

---

CHAPTER 4

1970 TO 1972 – PEACE WITH HONOR

THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT 1970 TO 1972 – NEW WAYS TO PROTEST

Historians have written that the antiwar movement was at its most powerful in 1969 and lost some of its strength in the 1970s. Melvin Small argued that: “The antiwar movement peaked in the fall of 1969. From that point on, despite an impressive series of demonstrations in May 1970 and in April 1971, it became less cohesive and more fragmented than it had ever been before.”¹ Nancy Zaroulis and Gerald Sullivan, in Who Spoke Up?, ended their chapter on 1969 with this statement: “And so both the ‘moderate’ (Moratorium and ‘radical’ (Mobilization) elements of the antiwar movement entered 1970 at a moment of triumph, poised to grow and yet fated-almost-to die.”² Likewise, Charles DeBenedetti and Charles Chatfield wrote, “The decline of organized antiwar opposition was illustrated by the fact that the initial, official expansion of the war into Cambodia was not seriously challenged.”³ None of the scholars argued that the antiwar movement was powerless or eliminated as an important part of American society, but it was no longer as strong as it had been. As DeBenedetti noted, the response to the initial invasion of Cambodia was minimal. That was true until President Nixon announced that American troops would be joining the South Vietnamese troops in the invasion.

In March of 1970, Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia was deposed in a coup by his General, Lon Nol. Prince Sihanouk had spent much of the war attempting to remain neutral.

¹ Small, *Antiwarriors*, 119.
in the Vietnam War. His careful negotiations ended while he was on vacation in France and Lon Nol took power.\textsuperscript{4} In that same month, President Nixon announced the withdrawal of 150,000 troops over the next year. It was something he hoped would, “drop a bomb on the gathering spring storm of anti-war protest.”\textsuperscript{5} The protests would be over an expansion of the Vietnam War in support of the new Lon Nol government of Cambodia. After his coup, communist troops from North Vietnam, South Vietnam, and from inside Cambodia itself attempted to oust the new leader, who was known to be pro-American and in favor of the Thieu government in South Vietnam.\textsuperscript{6} In a month it was clear that Lon Nol and his small army would not last long against the assault without significant assistance, and by the end of April his troops were trapped in the large cities and towns; they were on the brink of collapse.\textsuperscript{7} In response, on April 29, 1970, 20,000 South Vietnamese and United States soldiers invaded Cambodia. Most of the combat was handled by South Vietnamese troops, and the majority of those in Cambodia were not American. At its height, the invasion would involve 63,000 soldiers, but only 23,000 of those were American.\textsuperscript{8} The invasion led to some five hundred college campuses were closed due to protests, one of those was Kent State University in Ohio, where four American students were killed by national guardsmen.\textsuperscript{9}

The reaction to the President’s April 30, 1970 announcement of American ground involvement in Cambodia was swift and angry. Nixon’s announcements of troop withdrawals did not prevent the protests he had feared. Instead, the invasion of Cambodia set off protests as widespread and violent as any antiwar protest seen in the 1960s. Within

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{4} Hall, \textit{The Vietnam War}, 165.
\item \textsuperscript{5} Herring, \textit{America’s Longest War}, 233.
\item \textsuperscript{6} Ibid, 234.
\item \textsuperscript{7} Bonds, \textit{The Vietnam War}, 184.
\item \textsuperscript{8} Esper, \textit{The Eyewitness History of the Vietnam War 1961-1975}, 142-123.
\item \textsuperscript{9} Hall, \textit{The Vietnam War}, 64.
\end{itemize}
minutes of the announcement, antiwar people took to the streets of major American cities, especially New York and Philadelphia.\textsuperscript{10} The day after the Senate Foreign Relations Committee accused the President of “usurping the war-making powers of Congress” and called for repeal of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution.\textsuperscript{11} Within four days of the announcement, over one hundred college campuses were on strike.\textsuperscript{12} Many of the strikes turned violent. One of the most frequent targets for the antiwar protestors was ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) buildings. That included the ROTC building at Kent State University.\textsuperscript{13}

The first protests at Kent State University were relatively small, only five hundred students on May 1, 1970. That rally, however, turned into a riot and there was some looting in the town of Kent, causing Mayor LeRoy Satrom to declare a state of emergency and call for the assistance of the Ohio National Guard.\textsuperscript{14} On May 3\textsuperscript{rd}, the ROTC building was burned and students were forced into their dorms by national guardsman, sixty-nine students were arrested that night with one injured by a bayonet. The next day, May 4\textsuperscript{th} the Ohio National Guardsman at Kent State University were ordered to prepare their weapons to fire, and used tear gas on the students. The student hurled back the canisters of tear gas, along with bricks and bottles.\textsuperscript{15} In the confusion, sixty-one shots were fired, four students were dead and nine more wounded and the students dispersed.\textsuperscript{16} No officer of the guardsman claimed to have given the order to fire and none of the guardsman claimed to have heard an order to fire. The press release from the White House on the deaths at Kent State did little to placate those who were upset over the shootings. That press release stated, “This should remind us all once

\textsuperscript{10} DeBenedetti, \textit{An American Ordeal}, 279.
\textsuperscript{11} The Senate would repeal the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution on June 26, 1970, followed by the House of Representatives on December 31\textsuperscript{st} of the same year. Zaroulis, \textit{Who Spoke Up?}, 318.
\textsuperscript{12} Allen, \textit{Vietnam the (last) war the U.S. lost}, 165.
\textsuperscript{13} Heineman, \textit{Campus Wars}, 245.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid. 245-246.
\textsuperscript{15} Zaroulis, \textit{Who Spoke Up?}, 319-320.
\textsuperscript{16} Jeffreys-Jones, \textit{Peace Now!}, 87.
again that when dissent turns to violence, it invites tragedy.”17 Activists all over the country responded with strikes, marches, and protests. Nixon and the rest of the White House had to respond.

The killings at Kent State University, along with those at Jackson State College in Mississippi where more students were killed in a protest unrelated to the Vietnam War, led to the formation of The President’s Commission on Campus Unrest.18 The commission found that students had successfully politicized the universities and that the students were lining up against the administration. The commission expressed what they believed was the root of the problem: “…nothing is more important than an end to the war in Indo-China. Disaffected students see the war as a symbol of moral crisis in the nation which…deprives even law of it legitimacy.”19 Before the commission’s report came out, antiwar protestors came to Washington D.C. to express their anger of Cambodia and the Kent State killings. For May 9th and 10th, over 100,000 demonstrators showed up in Washington D.C., as well as 50,000 in Minneapolis, 60,000 in Chicago, 20,000 in Austin, and 12,000 in San Diego to protest. There were speakers and music, similar to many of the previous rallies.20 In the face of his opposition, Nixon was forced to back down. At the end of May, he announced that all American troops in Cambodia would be out by the end of June. The bombings in Cambodia would continue, but American troops would leave, though not without President Nixon declaring a great victory over North Vietnam.21

In 1971, due to domestic pressure, Nixon sped up of the withdrawal of U.S. troops, announcing that 100,000 more troops would be brought home by the end of the year than had

17 Small, Antiwarriors, 122-123.
19 Ibid, 339.
20 Small, Antiwarriors, 125-126.
previously been thought. Yet domestic pressures continued to build for President Nixon. On March 29, 1971 Lieutenant William Calley was convicted of twenty-two murders during the 1968 massacre of South Vietnamese villagers in Son Mi, better known as My Lai. It was reported that over three hundred and fifty civilians were killed in the massacre, and that Lt. Calley stated, “he did not feel as if he were killing human beings, rather they were animals with whom one could not speak or reason.” The testimony from Calley’s soldiers horrified Americans. There were tales of murder, molestation, and rape of Vietnamese people. Calley was sentenced to life in prison, which was later reduced to twenty years by President Nixon. In the end, William Calley served only three years under house arrest at Fort Benning.

Soon after the conviction of Calley, the government’s credibility on the Vietnam War suffered even further in June of 1971, when the New York Times began to publish parts of what became known as the “Pentagon Papers.” Leaked by Daniel Ellsburg, the documents showed U.S. leaders manipulating the South Vietnamese, lying to the public and Congress, and ignoring international agreements. Though the “Pentagon Papers” detailed the actions of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, not Nixon’s, the President felt that he needed to stop the leaking of the information to protect the office of the President. His injunction against the publishing of the documents was struck down by the Supreme Court, the attempts to discredit Ellsburg failed, and the American people did indeed lose faith in their

---

22 Herring, America’s Longest War, 240.
23 Hall, The Vietnam War, 66.
24 Allen, Vietnam the (last) war the U.S. lost, 48.
26 Hall, The Vietnam War, 66.
During all of the turmoil, the war in Vietnam and Cambodia had expanded again, this time into Laos.

In January, 1971 the U.S. air force and artillery units supported a South Vietnamese invasion of Laos. The stated goal of the invasion was to disrupt communist supply lines and capture stockpiled materials that could be used to invade South Vietnam. Eventually the United States would fly eight thousand missions in support of South Vietnamese soldiers, but U.S. troops did not participate. This meant that there was less of a reaction domestically to the fighting in Laos. In South Vietnam, however, the mission was a failure. When the South Vietnamese retreated into their own territory, they had lost fifty percent of the over 20,000 troops that were sent in.

In 1971, the Laos operation involved no United States ground troops. Melvin Small argued that this was due to the power of the antiwar movement and Nixon’s fear of their reaction. Though there were some small protests against the bombings of Laos, it was largely ignored by the media. Only one protest was truly covered, it was undertaken by the Weathermen. A bomb was set off in a restroom in the Senate building, which the Weathermen claimed responsibility for and said it was in response to Nixon’s expanding the war into Laos. Bombings were one of the few ways the antiwar movement could still get national media attention. One of the peaceful ways to get media coverage, however, was the participation of Vietnam Vets participation. This was used extensively in a demonstration called Operation Dewey Canyon III which lasted from April 19 to April 23. Two thousand

---

29 Allen, *Vietnam the (last) war the U.S. lost*, 195.
32 Ibid, 135.
veterans and mothers who had lost sons in the war laid a wreath at Arlington National Cemetery, protested the legality of the war outside the Supreme Court, and gave their demands for the treatment of war veterans to congress.\textsuperscript{33} Future Senator from Massachusetts and Presidential Candidate Lt. John F. Kerry spoke on behalf of the Vietnam Veterans to the United States Senate. His speech was eloquent, he looked respectable, and his speech was well received by the American people. Part of Kerry’s speech included: “We are asking Americans to think about that [Vietnam as a mistake] because how do you ask a man to be the last man to die in Vietnam? How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?”\textsuperscript{34}

John Kerry’s mass appeal was able to attract positive attention from more conservative Americans, but the antiwar movement did not stop attracting a more radical element. On April 24, 1970 somewhere between 200,000 and 500,000 protestors, estimates vary, took place in a rally in Washington D.C. 125,000 people also attended a rally in San Francisco, the largest ever on the West Coast. DeBenedetti wrote that a third of those who were in Washington were at their first demonstration.\textsuperscript{35} New people were joining the antiwar movement even as the war winding down and the loss of strength in the antiwar movement, new people still joined the movement. The peaceful and civil nature of those protests helped bring in some of those new recruits. In May of 1971, a new method was tried by some of the more radical antiwar groups.

Civil disobedience was used to attract media attention in 1971. Those who used this method tended to be antiwar veterans, and they planned to shut down Washington D.C. in early May of 1971. Though there were only 30,000 protestors, they still planned to sit down

\textsuperscript{33} Allen, \textit{Vietnam the (last) war the U.S. lost}, 185.
\textsuperscript{34} Zaroulis, \textit{Who Spoke Up?}, 357.
\textsuperscript{35} DeBenedetti, \textit{An American Ordeal}, 304.
in streets or in front of bridges and get arrested to overwhelm the jails and court system. The demonstrations were meant to start on May 3rd, but the Nixon administration made the first move by arresting, without charges, hundreds of demonstrators who came to D.C. on May 2nd. Seven thousand more were arrested on the first official day of demonstrations, again without charges and held at the Washington Redskins football team’s practice field. Many of those arrested without charges were released by May 4th, but leaders of the movement were arrested and held with high bonds that they could not pay. By Thursday May 6th, the demonstrations were over. The Nixon administration was prepared for the civil disobedience, and they were able to force the demonstrators to give up before they had planned. The Vietnam War continued into 1972.

In July, 1972 George McGovern, presidential hopeful in 1968, was selected as the Democratic Party’s representative to go up against the incumbent president. McGovern was selected based on a platform of peace. It called for, “immediate and complete withdrawal” of all U.S. forces in Vietnam. McGovern promised to stop the bombing as soon as he was elected and bring home all troops in 90 days. Nixon called his platform “surrender” and privately, North Vietnamese negotiators offered to prevent Nixon from making any gains in the peace process to help get McGovern elected. The Democratic candidate held the support of the movement and very few antiwar demonstrations were held during the campaign because so many of those who were part of the movement worked to get

36 Small, Antiwarriors, 145.
38 Jeffreys-Jones, Peace Now!, 203.
40 Small, Antiwarriors, 154.
McGovern elected.\textsuperscript{41} Their efforts, however, failed them. Richard Nixon won in a landslide, with McGovern taking only the electoral votes from Massachusetts and Washington D.C.\textsuperscript{42}

After the election and to the horror of the antiwar movement, Nixon bombed the North Vietnamese in his “Christmas Bombings” in an attempt to force them to negotiate with the United States.\textsuperscript{43} This plan, along with pressures from its allies China and the Soviet Union, did indeed bring the North Vietnamese back to the negotiating table. Three bombing campaigns were used by the United States to turn back the Easter invasion and then to force concessions from the North Vietnamese negotiators. “Freedom Train” took place in April, “Linebacker I” went from May to October, and “Linebacker II,” also known as the Christmas bombings, occurred in December.\textsuperscript{44} “Freedom Train” involved bombing of attacking North Vietnamese forces and moving slowly north. This was designed to let their enemy know that if they continued to fight, the bombs would begin to destroy parts of North Vietnam.\textsuperscript{45} When “Freedom Train” failed to force more productive negotiations, the United States took three drastic steps. One was the increased bombing of North Vietnam with “Linebacker I,” mining of Haiphong harbor, and a naval blockade of the coast. Only the increased strength of the United States relationship with China and the Soviet Union allowed Nixon to take these steps and avoid World War Three.\textsuperscript{46} “Linebacker I” attacked North Vietnamese military targets across the demilitarized zone, the defacto boarder between the two Vietnams. The hope was to destroy the North’s ability to wage war and compel them to come back to peace talks at a disadvantage.\textsuperscript{47} During “Linebacker I” the American and

\begin{footnotes}
\item Zaroulis, \textit{Who Spoke Up?}, 395.
\item Small, \textit{Antiwarriors}, 156.
\item Allen, \textit{Vietnam the (last) war the U.S. lost}, 200.
\item Ibid, 134.
\item Hall, \textit{The Vietnam War}, 69.
\end{footnotes}
South Vietnamese military dropped 112,000 tons of bombs and forced the North Vietnamese to retreat from the gains they made in the “Easter Offensive.”48 “Linebacker II” had similar targets as “Linebacker I” and was meant to force the negotiations between the powers involved in the Vietnam War. The strategy was successful, to some extent, in that it was able to help reinvigorate negotiations. It was never meant to win the war, but to help give the United States the ability to obtain Nixon’s “Peace with Honor.”49

In January 23, 1973 the United States and North Vietnam signed a peace treaty, known as the “Paris Peace Accords.”50 In it, the United States won some concessions: “It permitted American extrication from the war and secured the return of the POWs, while leaving the Thieu government intact, at least for the moment.”51 However, North Vietnamese troops remained in parts of South Vietnam and the Viet Cong were part of the government. Finally, the reason the war had been fought, the political future of South Vietnam remained unstated. The treaty allowed for the question to be determined in the future by political means.52 For Americans, however, the war was over. Now it was a problem for the people of Indo-China to deal with themselves. In April, 1975, the remainder of the government in Saigon surrendered to North Vietnamese forces.53 No American troops remained in South Vietnam in 1975, the Vietnam War was over.

**AMERICAN MUSIC INDUSTRY FROM 1970 TO 1972**

The music industry in 1970 both influenced, and was influenced by, the events of that year. Perhaps nothing affected the industry, as it did the whole country, as much as the

---

48 Herring, *America’s Longest War*, 249.
50 Allen, *Vietnam the (last) war the U.S. lost*, 200.
51 Herring, *America’s Longest War*, 255.
52 Ibid. 255-256.
53 Hall, *The Vietnam War*, 201.
shootings at Kent State University and Jackson State College. *Rolling Stone* contained two long articles about the deaths. The first was published on June 11, 1970 and sketched out the details of the incident. While newspapers like *The Daily Planet* wrote about the motivations behind the protests and the strategies of the protestors, *Rolling Stone* added some extra information. One of the students killed at Kent State was Sandy Scheuer, and the magazine interviewed her former roommate Suzanne Lloyd: “On one of the few times she’d [Suzanne] gone out recently, she and her boyfriend had visited her old room-mate Sandy Scheuer at her apartment on Summit Street. Sandy had been playing the new Paul McCartney album. She was cheerful.” Scheuer’s interest in the Paul McCartney album and the fact that she was happy and cheerful shortly before her death made it seem all the more tragic. The facts provided in the article humanized the slain college student and made her loss one that an average reader would sympathize with.

The second article about the Kent State killings focused on the effect it had on music: “The events since Cambodia and Kent State have had a profound effect on the rock scene. Antiwar sentiment is high, not just among bands, or the audiences, or record store clerks, but also among bookers, promoters, and store executives.” Author John Morthland pointed out that many bands were playing benefits instead of paying gigs to prove his point. The bands lost paying jobs but responded by playing antiwar benefits for free. Perhaps that loss of money motivated the bands to fight against the war, as Country Joe and Fish’s manager Ed Denson pointed out: “We’re getting hit from both sides. Our big audiences were on the colleges, which have been shut down, and the reactionaries are closing down festivals. For bigger bands it’s been utter disaster since Cambodia because nobody will let groups of young

---

people gather anymore.” 57 While the motivations of the musicians may not have been completely selfless, American youth identified with the sentiment more than ever, at least according to one record store clear and conscientious objector interviewed by Mothland:

'It’s the music today,' he says as David Crosby’s ‘Long Time Comin’’ plays of the store speakers. ‘Everybody’s really down—I came as close as I’ll ever come to going insane two weeks ago—but what does everybody do when they’re really on a downer? Music. It makes them feel better, and it’s so relevant to them. People really do identify with Country Joe singing ‘Fixin’ to Die’ on the Woodstock album, and Gracie Slick screaming out ‘Tear down the walls, motherfucker.’’ That identification, he says, extends into his reserve unit, overwhelmingly. 58

According to Rolling Stone, young people turned to music when their world seemed to spin out of control in the days after Cambodia, Kent State, and Jackson State. The musicians, even if was done reluctantly, obliged their young followers by playing their music at benefit concerts and the like.

Other than Kent State, there was another shock to the music scene of 1970. On September 18th of that year Jimi Hendrix died, followed on October 4th by Janis Joplin.59 Hendrix had done some antiwar songs in his career. Perhaps his most famous was his take on the national anthem, which he performed at the Woodstock Music Festival. Additionally, the song “Machine Gun” was played live and released on his 1970 album Band of Gypsies. 60 The album reached number five on the LP chart.61 They were not the only losses to the music community in the early 1970s.

The Doors announced that, in April of 1971, they would no longer be touring and would split up later in the year. Jim Morrison claimed that he hoped to work more in film,

58 Ibid, 8.
59 Rhulman, Breaking Records, 151.
61 Whitburn, Joel Whitburn’s Top LP’s 1945 – 1972, 67.
something he said he always wanted to do. He was also facing a sixty day jail sentence for his conviction in the Miami incident, which he was in the process of appealing. On July 3, 1971 Jim Morrison died in Paris, France at the age of twenty-seven years old. The public was not informed of his death until July 9, two days after his burial. This was rumored to be in accordance with Morrison’s wishes to avoid a spectacle. In a memorial to Morrison, The Daily Planet wrote “The city of Miami really got fucked over this week. Jim Morrison died before Judge Murray Goldman or any other city official got a chance to put Jim behind bars.” The author goes on to write that the investigation and trial of Morrison cost the city over eighteen thousand dollars. In another different tribute, Rolling Stone wrote of Morrison’s many accomplishments in his short life. This included the fact that Morrison created and directed the promotional video for the “Unknown Soldier.” A reviewer for a Doors show wrote of a viewing of the “Unknown Soldier” video: “When the film played at the Fillmore East, a young audience brimming with anti-war frustration broke into pandemonium, ‘The war is over’ cried teenyboppers in the aisles. ‘The Doors ended the fucking war!’” At the time of Morrison’s death, the war was not over, despite the efforts of the Doors. However, they were able to produce music and videos that were beneficial to the antiwar movement. Their influence was such that Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz notes the date of Morrison’s death in her book. As with the deaths of Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin, another musical voice against the war was silenced. It was not forgotten. Additionally, other voices, however, began to get stronger.

---

66 Ibid. 37.
67 Dunbar-Ortiz, Outlaw Woman, 330.
The Beatles remained among the most popular and important bands in 1970. Their album *Let it Be* reached number one and was on the chart for fifty-five weeks.\(^68\) The title track of the album reached number one as a single for two weeks as well.\(^69\) Fred Bronson ranked the song as number six for the year.\(^70\) They also made a music video for the song, which Dotty LeMieux reviewed for the Boston based paper *The Old Mole*. In it, after expressing her disappointment in the Beatles song “Revolution,” she criticized the “Let it Be” song and video: “They had in fact turned quite piggy when I wasn’t looking. Their music is no longer innocent or loving; John and Paul virtually grunted and oinked…’Bang Bang, Maxwell’s Silver Hammer’ which I had taken in good clean fun seemed sinister. Who were they talking about anyway? I felt attacked.”\(^71\) LeMieux was disillusioned by the Beatles new release, even the inclusion of Yoko Ono in the video. Perhaps that disillusionment was carried over from her disappointment with “Revolution.” Though the Beatles, John Lennon and Yoko Ono in particular, faced significant criticism in 1970, Lennon was named the man of the year by *Rolling Stone* for his efforts, along with his wife, to bring about world peace: “One wonders if any of this will work? Do John and Yoko really have a chance of helping to bring peace in our time, and the social and natural justice which is part of any peace?”\(^72\)

If Lennon and Ono were going to bring about peace, they would have to do so without the rest of The Beatles. According to their manager, in 1970 band turned a profit of more than ten million dollars. That number came to public light because of Paul

\(^{70}\) Bronson, *Billboard’s Hottest Hot 100 Hits*, 304  
McCartney’s attempt to “divest himself from the partnership” that was “The Beatles Co.” The action by McCartney effectively ended the band that was, as one writer put it, “the most influential phenomenon of that whole unlikely decade (the 1960s).” The Weathermen still found the Beatles inspirational, Bill Ayers wrote that they codenamed their planned breakout of LSD guru Timothy Leary “Juju Eyeballs” in reference to the Beatles’ song “Come Together.” Though their influence remained, the Beatles as a band was over. For the first year since 1964, the Beatles had no number one hits, though Paul and Linda McCartney did reach number one with “Uncle Albert/Admiral Halsey.” Paul McCartney was not the only ex-Beatle who found success.

The most actively antiwar ex-Beatles John Lennon saw his solo album *Imagine* reach number one on the LP chart. Yippie leader Jerry Rubin believed that Lennon was influential and could help the movement. In 1971 he began ‘hanging out” with John and Yoko: “Immediately, the three of us began fantasizing. We would launch a musical-political caravan, tour the United States, raise money to feed the poor and free prisoners from jail. The shows would combine music and fun with political education and consciousness-raising, and all the money would go to the people!” Jerry Rubin actually played back-up on the album *Imagine* and joined John Lennon on tour where they were able to fill a stadium with fifteen thousand people in Ann Arbor, Michigan with a combination of music and politics. The Rubin and Lennon partnership ended in late 1971 when John Lennon was deported, ostensibly because of an old marijuana bust in England, but Rubin believed that it was really

---

74 Andrew Coleman, “In Discussing the Beatles,” *The Daily Planet*, vol. 1 no. 25, January 5, 1971, 1.  
75 Ayers, *Fugitive Days*, 247.  
78 Rubin, *Growing (Up) at 37*, 10-11.  
79 Ibid, 12.
a result of the effect the Attorney General believed that their tour might have on Nixon’s re-
election. Lennon told an interviewer that “When I started, rock and roll itself was the basic
revolution to people of my age and situation. We needed something loud and clear to break
through all the unfeeling and repression that had been coming down on us kids.” Lennon
had used his music to cement his place as a loud and clear force against repression in the
United States to the point that the repression was turned against him and he was unable to
stay in the country. He would, along with other antiwar artists, continue to fight and use their
music and influence in working toward peace in the United States and all over the world.
They would make their biggest attempt to bring about work peace primarily though their
peace festival in Toronto, a festival and an idea that would not come to pass.

Late in 1969 John Lennon and Yoko Ono held a press conference in Toronto
announcing: “plans for a big peace and musical festival to be held at Mosport Park near
Toronto on July 3rd, 4th, and 5th next year. We aim to make it the biggest music festival in
history, and we’re going to be asking everybody who’s anybody to play.” Lennon and Ono
planned to use their celebrity to bring in large numbers of performers and people to a huge
peace festival in Canada. They believed that if people realized that they had the power to
bring about peace, it would happen. In an interview, the couple were asked if they felt
more confident after a February visit to Canada about the possible success of the festival.
They responded: “Oh sure, and we were pretty full of hope before we came. So you can

———
83 Yorke, “John, Yoko, & Year One,” Rolling Stone, 21.
imagine how much hope we have now. ‘Cos every now and then you get a glimpse of what it could be, and that keeps you going. And this gave us another glimpse.” 84

By April of 1970, the Toronto festival had fallen apart. John Lennon wrote an article for Rolling Stone expressing his regret that the event was not happening. He admitted that the pressure of the event caused him to want to quit, only to have his wife remind him of the importance of what they were doing, keeping him on track. 85 In the end, he wrote that he and Yoko believe that a festival like the one that was planned is still necessary: “not just to show that we can gather peacefully and groove to rock bands, but to change the balance of energy power.” 86 Lennon expressed that it was not he and his wife who lost the desire to have a festival to promote peace. They still wanted one and would be a part of it if it could be arranged. What he does not do, however, is explain why the festival was canceled.

One of the organizers, Barry Ballister, did so in an article he wrote in December of 1970 for Rolling Stone. Ballister acknowledges that “‘Peace’ seemed to be everyone’s motivation,” not something less noble, particularly not money. 87 Money was a question however, John Lennon wanted to make the three day festival free, and it was something the organizers felt could not work. This caused something of a rift between the organizers and their star attraction. 88 Some concerns were logistical, particularly the large number of Americans crossing the border, and any of them with drugs would be arrested. Additionally, the American Border Patrol could make life very difficult for the concert goers. Fears about shortages of food and water were expressed, the Woodstock festival had less than a half million people and faced shortages. The Toronto Festival was expecting two to three

---

85 John Lennon, “‘Have We All Forgotten What Vibes Are?,’” Rolling Stone, no. 56, April 16, 1970, 1.
86 Lennon, “‘Have We All Forgotten What Vibes Are?,’” Rolling Stone, 8.
88 Ballister, “Who Killed the Toronto Peace Festival?,” Rolling Stone, 40.
In the end, it was not a lack of commitment to the peace ideal, it was not a lack of performers, and it was not a lack of interested patrons that brought down the festival. Instead it was the sheer magnitude of the proposed peace festival and the number of people hoped to be a part of it.

In 1970 the Weathermen delivered their own message via a number of bombings throughout the United States. Many of the code words they used were drawn from the music of the time. Their name, of course, referenced a Dylan song, but they used a Creedence Clearwater Revival\(^90\) song called “Bad Moon” as the code word for a statue they bombed.\(^91\) C.C.R. released two successful albums in 1970, *Cosmo’s Factory*, which reached number one and was on the chart for sixty nine weeks and *Pendulum* which reached number five and was on the chart for forty-two weeks.\(^92\) Late in 1969 C.C.R.’s antiwar song “Fortunate Son” reached number fifteen on the singles chart, and their successful albums in 1970 contained antiwar songs as well; *Cosmo’s Factory* had both “Run Through the Jungle” and “Who’ll Stop the Rain.”\(^93\) One reviewer of *Pendulum* wrote that the album was the best album C.C.R. had yet come out with, and was particularly fond of the antiwar song “Sailor’s Lament.”\(^94\) The inspiration for the antiwar songs can be seen in a John Fogerty interview.

Fogerty was the lead singer, guitarist, and songwriter for Creedence, and he gave an interview in which he discussed his feelings on what he believed would be a revolution in the United States. He even expressed his admiration for those who used bombs and violence:

> “The people who do burn down buildings or cause, you know, more than just apathetic

---

\(^89\) Ibid, 43.  
\(^90\) Also known as C.C.R. or simply Creedence.  
\(^91\) Ayers, *Fugitive Days*, 223.  
trouble—people that really cause violence—I’m in favor of. I won’t do it myself. But I’m sure glad somebody did.” Fogerty went on to say that he believed that the people would rebel and that there would be chaos. The band whose lead singer believed in such radical ideas was also commercially successful and had a concert broadcast on television and over two thousand FM radio stations. Antiwar activist Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz spoke to a group of young white men who had migrated to Oregon from the poor Southwest. They too identified with C.C.R., particularly the song “Fortunate Son,” which played continually on their stereo. The audience for Creedence was varied and their message inspired a large number of people, including people outside of the United States. In 1971 Creedence Clearwater Revival completed a successful tour of Europe. Though they had lost lead singer John Fogerty’s older brother Tom, C.C.R.’s rhythm guitarist, they remained one of the most successful American bands of the early 1970s. In fact, they had sold over thirty million dollars worth of records from 1969 to early 1971.

Jefferson Airplane was another band the Weathermen drew from, specifically they referenced their song “Volunteers of Amerika” as a code word. The Daily Planet writer identified only as “Martin” wrote about Jefferson Airplane: “The basis for every super-group is good music…and the three guitarists for Jefferson Airplane are so good they have passed out of the home cooking stage, out the window, out into the clouds, out among the space people, out among the stars.” This strong praise coincided with the commercial success of Jefferson Airplane in 1970. Their antiwar album Volunteers reached number thirteen and

97 Dunbar-Ortiz, Outlaw Woman, 255.
100 Ayers, Fugitive Days, 224.
remained on the LP chart for forty-four weeks. *Volunteers* received a number of positive reviews. In *The Fifth Estate* the reviewer wrote, “The Jefferson Airplane has created an album that is so rich in conception and so perfect in its implementation that little can be said in the way of ‘critical analysis,’ only: dig it!” The reviewer did not appreciate the album in spite of the politics; he appreciated it because of the politics. *Rolling Stone* reviewer Ed Ward was less positive, but he did assert that Jefferson Airplane’s *Volunteers* was musically and politically a pioneering album. He was not sure if the mixture of music and politics would be successful, but the numbers show that the album was. Jefferson Airplane expressed their political views in a very overt way in *Volunteers*, and the album sold well.

The success of Jefferson Airplane helped make them the focus of a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) ruling which ordered radio stations to not play records which “promote or glorify the use of illegal drugs such as marijuana, LSD, ‘speed’, etc.” A newspaper out of Eugene, Oregon called *The Augur*, published an article which claimed that there had been signs preceding the FCC’s decision: “Agnew [Vice-President Spiro Agnew] warned that the attack was coming months ago; yet, most of us dismissed his prophecy, feeling assured that no such blatant censorship could happen.” The article also cited the one dissenting FCC commissioner, Nicholas Johnson. The author of the article reproduced some of Commissioner Johnson’s report: “The exclusive concern with song lyrics is in reality an effort to harass the youth culture, a crude attempt to suppress the anti-establishment music of the counterculture and the ‘movement.’” One of the top men in the

---

FCC saw the censorship for what it was. The Augur article believed that the ruling was specifically aimed at groups like Jefferson Airplane, and not just for their pro drug stance, but their antiwar stance as well:

\[
\ldots \text{we realize that, with good reason, Uncle Sam is afraid. The Jefferson Airplane, perhaps the one super group affected most by the FCC ruling has said it for us, put it all together, foretold, like they have all along, the future.} \\
\text{Look what’s happening in the streets,} \\
\text{Got a revolution, got to revolution,} \\
\ldots \text{We’re the Volunteers of America, Volunteers of America, Volunteers of America, Volunteers of America…} \\
\text{('Volunteers’ by Jefferson Airplane)}^{107}
\]

If the author of the article and FCC Commissioner Johnson were correct and the United States was afraid of bands like Jefferson Airplane, they had a reason to be. According to a Rolling Stone review of a Jefferson Airplane concert, the most popular part of their show was the point was when they played “Volunteers”: “From the first row to the last bodies are moving and gyrating on the last breaths of their second wind, fists waving in the air to the beat of Joey Covington’s machine gun. People mount each others’ shoulders to wave fists higher. ‘GOT A REVOLUTION. GOT TO REVOLUTION.’”\(^{108}\) In a slightly less revolutionary action than what Jefferson Airplane called for, several radio stations and disc jockeys sued the FCC calling their ruling censorship and unconstitutional.\(^{109}\) The FCC ruling was not allowed to stand unchallenged. Jefferson Airplane also remained popular and controversial. Their 1972 album Long John Silver reached number twenty on the LP chart, and took on another aspect of Western civilization, Christianity.\(^{110}\) Two songs, “Sons of

---

\(^{107}\) Ibid, 7.

\(^{108}\) Stuart Werbin, “Jefferson Airplane Hangs Ten on the Wave of the Future,” Rolling Stone, no. 74, January 21 1971, 20. Jefferson Airplane was also successful selling records in 1971. Their record Bark was on the chart for twenty-one weeks and peaked at number eleven. Whitburn, Joel Whitburn’s Top LP’s 1945 – 1972, 74.


\(^{110}\) Whitburn, Joel Whitburn’s Top LP’s 1945 – 1972, 74.
Jesus” and “Easter?,” attack some Christian beliefs. In the songs, Airplane refers to the Holy Spirit as a “mess,” Jesus as an “idol,” and called the Pope a “money grubbing con man.”

This message was not very different from those that other message artists, like Bob Dylan, had put forth.

In 1970 Bob Dylan had two successful albums, *Self-Portrait* which reached number four and *New Morning* which reached number seven. Country Joe and the Fish also put out two albums in 1970, with *Greatest Hits* reaching number seventy-four and *C J Fish* reaching number one hundred and eleven on the LP chart. Dylan was, as he had been for years, an important figure in the music scene. Ralph Gleason’s analysis of Bob Dylan in 1970 maintained that, “Dylan seems to me to be more important than the Weathermen. They blow buildings in New York. He blew minds all over the world.” The artist remained at the forefront of music, and of the movement he claimed to not represent. He did so through more than his new album and his association, via their name, with the Weathermen. He was also rumored to be planning a television special and a tour in 1970. Even the possibility of a Dylan tour was important news, as he continued to be more influential than the Weathermen according to Gleason. His influence led to an intense curiosity about the artist, and that curiosity was, to some extent, satisfied in 1972.

Anthony Scaduto released a biography of Bob Dylan in 1972 titled *Bob Dylan: An Intimate Biography* and published two lengthy excerpts in *Rolling Stone*. Those portions printed in *Rolling Stone* included some important insights into the artist: “During one of our
talks, Dylan conceded that I was ‘right on target’ in discussing the inner Self that he could not repress, that brought him so much pain he had to make himself invisible, and provided him with the strength to reach for higher levels of consciousness.”\(^{117}\) Dylan’s career progressed away from overt political statements to an attempt to deal with what Scaduto called his “Self.” As Dylan, his critics, and his fans had all admitted and acknowledged, Dylan had at one time been obviously political and had moved into a more introspective style. Dylan’s desire to move in that particular direction had begun by 1964 according to a conversation recorded in the book between Dylan and a writer for an underground newspaper named Pete Karman:

> He [Karman] asked: ‘You moving away from social protest stuff?’ His voice sounded disapproving and disappointed. ‘You becoming a critic?’ Dylan snapped. ‘Hell, I only know your protest songs mean something to a lot of people…’ ‘Hell with ‘em,’ Dylan said. He went to the typewriter and banged out a few lines, then turned to Karman. ‘Even the birds are chained to the sky.’\(^{118}\)

The interaction between the two showed that, while Dylan wanted to go in his new introspective direction, the music he was producing meant a lot to people. Pete Karman was concerned that if Dylan moved away from overt political messages his songs were not going to be as relevant as they were at the time. Protest singer Phil Ochs’ younger brother Michael Ochs, who reviewed the book for the *Los Angeles Free Press*, believed that Dylan’s career did not lose its power to shape his listeners: “Dylan may have been the voice of you and me, but, more importantly, he was you and me.”\(^{119}\) Michael Ochs maintained that, even if Dylan


did not intend to be the voice of a generation, particularly the part of the generation with a liberal point of view, he was. The younger Ochs believed that Dylan’s experiences in life were similar to those he sang to, and this made him as much a part of the younger generation as anyone else who was not as famous. Though Dylan stopped writing specifically antiwar music in the early 1960s, he remained an important and powerful part of a group of people who wanted to end the war. He called on them to embrace peace, love, and the Self. They followed.

Country Joe also believed that Dylan was important to the movement. On his *C J Fish* LP, the last song on the A side of the album was named “Hey Bobby.”¹²⁰ The song was written for Bob Dylan, and “Joe had written the song challenging what he considers to be Dylan’s abdication of responsibility to his movement-oriented audience.”¹²¹ The song acknowledges the importance of Dylan, but Country Joe was also making news on his own. He was arrested in Worcester, Massachusetts for “being a lewd person in speech and behavior” in reference to the fish/fuck cheer that he lead at most concerts.¹²² His antiwar cheer led to a politically motivated arrest, somewhat similar to the arrest of Jim Morrison in Miami. Perhaps part of the reason that Country Joe was arrested was because he was not afraid to take shots at the leadership of the United States, all the way up to the President. A live show in Denver in August of 1970 saw McDonald do a “Fuck Nixon” cheer which led to his audiences “enthusiasm verges over into hysteria.”¹²³ Country Joe’s problems and victories in his live performances showed that the power of live shows was still important.

In an interview with *Rolling Stone* in 1971 Country Joe McDonald commented on his role in politics: “See, there’s a mistake made a lot of time—people think I’m an activist. I’m not. I’m a musician who plays for the left wing because they have a lot of things I dig.” Country Joe acknowledged that he identified with the left wing politics, even if he did not call himself an activist. Instead of calling himself an activist, Country Joe said he was part of the “underground,” in which he included the “left wing, hippies, artists, poet, musicians.”

The same year that those comments were made to *Rolling Stone*, Country Joe and his band had two moderately successful albums, *The Life & Times of Country Joe & The Fish* and *War, War, War*. Even though the albums’ success was only moderate, the artist was invited by Jane Fonda to join her tour of army bases in an attempt to turn the soldiers to the antiwar movement. A dispute between Fonda and McDonald led to Country Joe and the Fish pulling out of the tour, but they were invited initially as a band that could accomplish the goals of the tour. Joe’s refusal to join the tour, and instances like the failure of the Toronto Peace Festival, did not signify the end of the influence of music festivals. They continued to be an important part of leftist movements, including the antiwar movement.

In 1971 a long time voice against the war had her most successful album since 1965. Joan Baez’s *Blessed Are*, was on the LP chart for twenty-three weeks and reached number eleven. The album was successful and Joan Baez, along with her husband David Harris, continued to tour and speaks out against the war. Some of Joan Baez’s songs were also included in Judy Collins’ successful 1971 release, *Whales and Nightingales*. The album,

---

which reached number seventeen on the LP chart and was on for thirty-five weeks, also included songs by Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger, and Collins herself.\textsuperscript{130} A \textit{The Daily Planet} review had generally positive things to say about the album, and noted that: “…a singer has a responsibility to his or her material, I think, which ought to involve either fidelity to the spirit of the song or legitimate translation of song to another, equally appropriate spirit.”\textsuperscript{131} Judy Collins sang the songs of other peace singers, and brought them to a large audience with her successful album. Many of those musicians were going to be part of one of the defining events of 1972.

The efforts of musical artists to help McGovern began in 1971: “There will be 23,000,000 Americans between the ages of 18 and 21 eligible to vote in 1972…The faster these new voters can be registered, the sooner their sheer numbers will begin to exert stop-the-war pressure on the Administration.”\textsuperscript{132} Many believed by some that the majority of those young voters would be hostile to the Nixon administration. “I think young people today see the Presidency in an entirely different light…They never felt any empathy for them [Presidents], no sense of common purpose, only a vague conviction that they could not be trusted.”\textsuperscript{133} Those new voters would have few, if any, real memories of John Kennedy. Instead much of their lives were lived under Presidents Johnson and Nixon, especially the portion of their lives when they were politically aware. Those would be voters against Nixon. \textsuperscript{134} Blood, Sweat, and Tears brought along mobile voter registration booths to their concerts. The band Chicago also committed themselves to voter registration at their

\textsuperscript{130} Whitburn, \textit{Joel Whitburn’s Top LP’s 1945 – 1972} , 34.
\textsuperscript{131} Andrews, “Records,” \textit{The Daily Planet} , 8.
\textsuperscript{132} Timothy Crouse, “Johnson Down, Nixon To Go,” \textit{Rolling Stone} , no. 88, August 5, 1971, 16.
\textsuperscript{134} Crouse, “Johnson Down, Nixon To Go,” \textit{Rolling Stone} , 16
concerts. The Beach Boys were also involved in voter registration, setting the goal of registering at least one million new voters.135 These musicians were making appeals for action via the ballot box. Their efforts were different than John Fogerty’s call for revolution or the bloody picture painted by the late Jim Morrison, but their efforts were at least as effective as the more radical groups. Some garnered support for the antiwar movement through shock and extremism, others preferred to work though the system. In the end though, both were able to bring more people to the movement than there had been before and brought in much needed help the McGovern campaign.

The idea of music being used to protest the war was a significant part of the political scene of 1972. George McGovern, the Democratic Candidate for President was, as a letter to the Los Angeles Free Press put it, going to “need all the help he can get.”136 McGovern was getting help from musical artists; some of whom were veterans of the political scene and others that were new.137 James Taylor, whose first album on the LP chart was in 1970, supported McGovern campaign with benefit concerts.138 In 1972, James Taylor was a very popular musician. He had albums reach number three and two in 1970 and 1971 respectively. In 1972 his album One Man Dog would reach number four and stay on the LP chart for twenty-five weeks.139 Barbra Streisand and Quincy Jones also supported McGovern with benefit concerts.140 McGovern’s campaign understood that music could be a useful weapon in the election with Nixon. Even at small rallies musical acts were sent. The lead

137 McGovern was not alone in using music for his campaign. Spiro Agnew was given a benefit concert that included Frank Sinatra. However, Nixon and Agnew use of music to help them campaign and raise money was less than that of the McGovern campaign. Tim Cahill, “Beatty’s Benefits For McGovern,” Rolling Stone, no. 109, May 25, 1972, 8.
139 Whitburn, Joel Whitburn’s Top LP’s 1945 – 1972, 142.
singer from Three Dog Night, Hoyt Axton, performed to a crowd of eight thousand people in Eugene, Oregon. A writer for the local underground newspaper, *Iconoclast*, noted that even though Axton’s performance was poor, the crowd enjoyed his work.141 These artists believed that it was important to support McGovern in whatever way they could. As a politician he had little to offer besides his antiwar position, which was not always as strong as it was in 1972. He was the best hope to end the war, whatever his past beliefs had been. Ralph Gleason wrote, “I cannot see McGovern as anything but what he says he is and that is a very great asset. I believe him in his anti-war position.”142 Gleason, Taylor, Streisand, Jones, and Axton were not alone in believing in McGovern, and they were not alone in the music world campaigning for him.

In the summer of 1972 over thirty artists banded together to give McGovern a series of twelve benefit concerts. The first three concerts, in Los Angeles, Cleveland, and San Francisco, raised over four hundred thousand dollars. Judy Collins performed for McGovern, it was the first time she had taken part in a political campaign. Her initial reaction was to say no, but she changed her mind: “And then the bombing buildups in Vietnam stated. That woke me up.”143 Collins, in addition to working with McGovern, was also popular in 1972, her album *Colors of the Day/The Best of Judy Collins* reached number thirty-seven on the LP chart.144 The concerts, organized by Hollywood actor Warren Beatty, included a show by Joni Mitchell and Paul Simon which raised sixty-two thousand dollars. It was also Simon’s first solo performance in three years.145 Joni Mitchell had an LP reach

---

141 Harold Epstein, “McGovern Wows ‘Em in Oregon,” *Iconoclast*, vol. 4 no. 12, June 2-9, 1972, 8.
143 Robin Green, “McGovern? He’s a Baaaad Mother,” *Rolling Stone*, no. 110, June 8, 1972, 18.
144 Whitburn, *Joel Whitburn’s Top LP’s 1945 – 1972*, 34.
number eleven in 1972, and Paul Simon’s LP reached number four.\(^{146}\) The ever political
Country Joe also played for McGovern,\(^ {147}\) and also released his last album with his band that
year, an album that made it onto the top LP chart.\(^ {148}\) McGovern was able to bring the support
of a few even more popular and commercially successful artists.

Both Three Dog Night and Neil Diamond performed concerts in support of George
McGovern.\(^ {149}\) Two of the most popular artists in 1972, Diamond and Three Dog Night were
huge draws generally that year.\(^ {150}\) Three Dog Night’s civil rights song “Black & White”
would reach number one, as would Neil Diamond’s “Song Sung Blue.”\(^ {151}\) Both used their
influence to help what was, ultimately, an unsuccessful bid for the presidency. In fact,
McGovern was buried in what could only be termed a landslide. The contrast between the
two candidates could be summed up in their concession and victory speeches:
“McGovern’s) concession was as hopeful and generous and Nixon’s acceptance speech was
mean, stingy and winking.”\(^ {152}\) Perhaps some of that reaction was the bitterness of defeat.
The election of Richard Nixon also showed liberals that the fight was not over:

So what we have to do is to face reality. And the reality is that the values
of the Bill of Rights and the Constitution have now got to be defended in
every instance and with everyone’s maximum effort. The reaction on the
part of the outright conservatives and the crypto conservatives to the literal
interpretation of the Constitution’s freedoms has been in terms of personal
vested interest ad reinterpretation. It will take a might effort by the ACLU

\(^{146}\) Whitburn, Joel Whitburn’s Top LP’s 1945 – 1972, 102, 133. Joni Mitchell’s LP received a somewhat
negative review in Oregon’s Iconoclast, but the writer had some positives, including, “Compared to most of the
crap that comes out these days, FOR THE ROSES is a godsend. Filth, Iconoclast, “’Rose’ is a Godsend,” 40.
\(^ {147}\) Green, “McGovern? He’s a Baaaad Mother,” Rolling Stone, 18.
\(^ {148}\) Whitburn, Joel Whitburn’s Top LP’s 1945 – 1972, 37.
\(^ {149}\) Green, “McGovern? He’s a Baaaad Mother,” Rolling Stone, 18.
\(^ {150}\) Bronson, Billboard Hottest Hot 100 Hits, 310.
\(^ {152}\) Timothy Crouse, “Reliable Sources: The Last Days of McGovern’s Campaign,” Rolling Stone, no. 121,
December 7, 1972, 24.
[American Civil Liberties Union] and everyone else to keep this from totally changing the climate of existence here.153

Gleason’s point was that, even in defeat, liberals and the left could not sit back and accept Nixon’s way of thinking and acting. If anything they would now need to fight even harder to maintain their beliefs. The fight was far from over, and leftists and musicians alike would continue to fight against the war in various ways.

**CASE STUDIES OF “WAR” BY EDWIN STARR AND “OHIO” BY CROSBY STILLS NASH AND YOUNG**

In 1970 two important and popular antiwar songs were released. Motown artist Edwin Starr’s “War” reached a different audience than many of the antiwar songs that came before it. The subject matter of “Ohio,” by Crosby Stills Nash and Young was about a specific event that occurred in 1970, the shootings at Kent State University. The protestors at Kent State protested the war, the song’s support for the protestors also contained an antiwar message. Some of the members of Crosby Stills Nash and Young had also been associated with the antiwar movement for a number of years. David Crosby was a member of Byrds whose songs “Draft Morning” and “Turn Turn Turn” were popular antiwar songs.

The Motown style of music was one of the most successful genres of the 1960s and 1970s. Gordy Records was an independent record label founded by Barry Gordy, Jr., and that label was what founded, recorded, and distributed the Motown sound. While most other small or independent record labels had either gone out of business or had been taken over by the bigger companies, Motown remained alive and independent. In 1970 there remained, “a Motown look to the album covers, a Motown touch to the song-writing, a Motown style of

---

singing, and above all, a Motown sound.”154 Edwin Starr was part of that sound, a sound that was quite different from that of Crosby Stills Nash and Young, who had a folk-rock style. They sounded more like a traditional antiwar group.

The members of Crosby Stills Nash and Young were quite different from Edwin Starr. Starr was born Charles Edwin Hatcher on January 21, 1942 in Nashville, Tennessee. He was raised in Cleveland, Ohio and served two years in the United States Army from 1960 to 1962. He then moved to Detroit, Michigan to begin his musical career. He was eventually signed by Gordy records where he changed his name to Edwin Starr and was eventually asked to sing a song entitled “War.”155 The song was released as a single on June 10, 1970 by Edwin Starr on the Gordy label. Starr sang vocals on the song, but it was written by Barrett Strong and Norman Whitfield.156 The successful single began its three week run at number one on August 29, 1970.157 Fred Bronson ranked “War” as the ninth most popular song of 1970 and the sixtieth most popular of the entire decade.158 The “B” side of the single was “Stop the War Now,” another antiwar song, written by Curtis Mayfield.159 That “B” side song separately reached number twenty-six on the singles charts.160 Edwin Starr had three successful LPs, 25 Miles in 1969 reached number thirteen and Involved reached number seven in 1971.161 “War” was released on Starr’s 1970 LP War & Peace.162 The album containing Starr’s number one hit reached number thirteen and remained on the LP chart for

158 Bronson, Billboard’s Hottest Hot 100 Hits, 304, 405.
161 Whitburn, Joel Whitburn’s Top LP’s 1945 – 1972, 138.
fifty-two weeks. The song was extraordinarily successful and one of Motown’s first forays into antiwar music, something they had avoided until late in the 1960s. Motown record producers realized that there was a significant appetite for antiwar music. “War” was an antiwar song, and the lyrics left no ambiguity on the meaning behind the song.

**“War”**

War, huh, yeah

What is it good for?

Absolutely (nothing), ah, ha, ha, ha

War, huh, yeah
What is it good for?
Absolutely (nothing)
Say it again, y'all

War, huh, look out!
What is it good for?
Absolutely (nothing)
Listen to me

War I despise
'cause it means destruction of innocent lives
War means tears to thousands of mother's eyes
When their sons go out to fight and lose their lives

I said, war, huh, good God y'all
What is it good for
Absolutely (nothing)
Huh, say it again

War (Huh)
Woh, woh, woh, woh
What is it good for?
Absolutely (nothing)
Listen to me

War, it ain't nothin' but a heartbreaker
War, friend only to the undertaker

---

Ah, war is an enemy of all mankind
The thought of war blows my mind
War has caused unrest within the younger generation
Induction then destruction
Who wants to die? Ah....

War, good God, y'all
What is it good for?
Absolutely (nothing)
Say it, say it, say it

War, ah ha yeah, huh,
What is it good for?
Absolutely (nothing)
Listen to me

War, it ain't nothin' but a heartbreaker
War, got one friend that's the undertaker

Ah, war has shattered many a young man's dreams
Made him disabled, bitter and mean

Life is much too short and precious
To spend fighting wars each day
War can't give life
It can only take it away

Ahh ,war, (Huh)
Good God y'all
What is it good for?
Absolutely nothing
Say it again

(War, huh)
Woh, woh woh, Lord,
What is it good for?
Absolutely nothing
Listen to me

War, it ain't nothin' but a heartbreaker
War, friend only to the undertaker, oh

Peace, love and understanding, tell me
Is there no place for them today?
They say we must fight to keep our own freedom
But Lord knows there's gotta be a better way
Ahh, war, (Huh)
Good God y'all
What is it good for?......

Edwin Starr’s song “War” was an antiwar song, one with a question that was relevant in 1970 and remained so for years. In 2003 Newsweek referenced the song in an article entitling “What war is good for,” based on a survey they administered to study Americans feelings about war, “Survey of surveys during the war, pollsters were busy asking the same question singer Edwin Starr asked in 1970: War! (Huh-yeah) What is it good for? Starr’s answer? Absolutely nothing.” The articles introduction captured an important point in the song, Starr’s biggest question. Starr wanted to know what war is good for, a question he asked nine times in the song. Starr noted, as many antiwar songs did, that war brought death and destruction, often times to innocent people. Additionally he points out that the unrest among the young people in the United States. Interestingly, perhaps in part because he was a military veteran himself, Starr brings up the plight of veterans in his song. Starr also invoked religion a number of times, which could be explained by the fact that he was a Motown singer. The Motown sound was described by Rolling Stone’s Jon Landau as a mixture of gospel, soul, and rock and roll. The lyrics of the song were uncomplicated, simply looked at some of the issues that came from fighting a war, death, destruction, wounded veterans, and public unrest. Musically, “War” was similar to other Motown songs of its era. The song centered on a strong drum beat and a strong lead singer, a common aspect of Motown music. There are background singers who accentuate some parts of the song, particularly when the song comes to its central question, what war is good for. At the end of the song the

---

168 Ibid, 42-43.
sound of marching boots can be heard, something frequently used in antiwar songs. The lyrics and music are easy to understand, making it a song that could be sung along with, and helped inspire an album cover that expressed the same message as the song.

The album cover of *War & Peace* featured two pictures of Edwin Starr inside a peace symbol. On the left side was a picture of Starr in a dark colored military uniform, holding a sword and shield. He was frowning, and together with his dark uniform, the image had a negative feel. Underneath this picture the word “War” was written. On the right side of the cover, Starr’s picture had him in a white suit with a large smile. His suit had brightly colored peace symbols on it and yellow flowers. Underneath this picture was the word “Peace.”

The contrast on the cover of the popular album indicates which side of the issue Starr landed on. Starr’s message, both in the song and on the album cover, remained important and potent for many years to come.

“War” and the message of Edwin Starr were seen as influential by a number of authors. Stewart O’Nan’s *The Vietnam Reader* included the song and mentions that “War” and Motown were especially powerful at influencing African Americans in the 1960s and 1970s. O’Nan, who teaches history at Trinity College, stated that he chose his material to give a “deep understanding of how America has seen its time in Vietnam over the past thirty years.”

David James’ article “The Vietnam War and American Music,” noted that the song dealt very directly with the Vietnam War, typical of antiwar music put out by African American antiwar musicians.

---

172 James, ”The Vietnam War and American Music,” *Social Texts*, 141.
Perhaps one of the best ways to understand the importance and influence of Edwin Starr’s “War” is to consider some of the obituaries of the singer. Gary Burns’s obituary in Popular Music and Society commemorated the April 2, 2003 death of Starr:

Nobody was ever as pissed off about war as Edwin Starr when he sang his masterpiece. Such a performance could only have been given by a virtuoso singer, but what comes across on ‘War’ is not only immense talent but true, over-the-top emotion. If Lyndon Johnson lost his Vietnam War when Walter Cronkite gave up, Richard Nixon lost his when the mostly apolitical, assimilationist Motown labels started to crank out song like ‘War.’…AM radio played ‘War’ incessantly. They played it because it was a hit, but, more significantly, it was a hit because they played it. In my own hometown, Chicago, WLS played ‘War’ relentlessly after having refused to play ‘Eve of Destruction’ in 1965.173

Burns’ was aware of the power of the music, particularly that of “War.” He remembered hearing “War” on radio stations that had refused to play other antiwar songs, and helped make the song a hit. He even equated Motown’s rejection of the war to Walter Cronkite’s, a significant statement on the power of the song “War” and others like it.174 Rolling Stone’s obituary also mentioned “War” as Starr’s “Vietnam-era protest-soul classic.”175 Jet magazine also ran an obituary of Starr, and mentioned his number one hit protest song.176 Time’s announcement of Starr’s death noted that he won a Grammy award for “War.”177 A death notice in Billboard noted the “pacifist track ‘War’” and it’s status as a number one hit.178 The show business newspaper Variety compared Starr to James Brown and noted that he was best known for the song “War.”179 Each of the obituaries placed “War” at the top of

174 Walter Cronkite famously denounced the Vietnam War after the Tet Offensive caused President Lyndon Johnson to believe that if he had lost Cronkite’s support he had lost the support of the American people. Allen, Vietnam the (last) war the U.S. lost, 59.
Starr’s accomplishments. The song was significant, spreading an antiwar message via its popularity on the radio, as a single, and as part of a larger album. Even thirty years after the songs release, it remained prominent and relevant in the minds of Americans. Part of that longevity was that Starr sang about war in general terms: it could be applied to future wars. Crosby Stills Nash and Young’s “Ohio” was different from “War” in that way, as the song “Ohio” was about a very specific event.

Crosby Stills Nash and Young, made up of David Crosby, Stephen Stills, Graham Nash, and Neil Young, was a complicated entity as a band. William Ruhlman noted that they formed as a group in 1969, and would split up by 1971, though they would reform in different configurations at various times.\(^\text{180}\) Graham Nash once told a reporter, “We were never a group in the accepted sense of the word. We’re just four lads who go together from time to time to make records and stage shows. And there will still come a time when we’ll call each other and say ‘I’ve got a neat song we could do on stage,’ or ‘Hey man, I’ve written something for our next album.’”\(^\text{181}\) In fact, all four members played with other bands, Stills and Young were part of Buffalo Springfield before their break up and David Crosby had previously played with the Byrds, they released solo albums, and at times Crosby Stills and Nash played without Neil Young. Young also had a successful solo career.\(^\text{182}\) As a band they released only small number of albums. Some critics found that together the four of them were at their best. In a review of their album *Déjà vu* a reviewer wrote:

> Along with many other people, I had hoped that the addition of Neil Young to Crosby, Stills, and Nash would give their music the guts and substance which the first album lacked. Live performances of the group suggested that this has happened. Young’s voice, guitar, compositions

\(^\text{180}\) Ruhlman, *Breaking Records*, 150
and stage presence added elements of darkness and mystery to songs which had previously dripped a kind of saccharine sweetness.\textsuperscript{183}

The album was the first successful album by the group, reaching number eighty-eight on the LP chart, but it was not their only successful album.\textsuperscript{184} In 1971, the released the album \textit{4 Way Street}, the album was a collection of their songs live, and it included “Ohio.”\textsuperscript{185} \textit{4Way Street} was more successful than \textit{Déjà Vu}, it reached number forty-two on the LP chart.\textsuperscript{186} A \textit{Rolling Stone} reviewer considering the 1971 album \textit{4 Way Street} made a similar comment as the \textit{Déjà vu} reviewer: “The album does clearly point up [sic] their limitations as a group, but Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young are all performers of unquestionable talent and – mostly because they stay out of each others’ way – \textit{4 Way Street} must sure be their best album to date.”\textsuperscript{187} Though neither gave the group a rave review, both Winner and Kimball find that there is something to admire and enjoy about the on-again-off-again group. Kimball admired the song “Ohio,” which he believed was as good as any other song from \textit{4 Way Street}.\textsuperscript{188} “Ohio” was a successful song as a single and as part of the album. The song reached number fourteen as a single in July of 1970.\textsuperscript{189} The success is notable for the antiwar song, and expresses the popularity and wide distribution of “Ohio.”

\textbf{“Ohio”}

Tin soldiers and Nixon’s comin’
We’re finally on our own
This summer I hear the drummin’
Four dead in Ohio

Gotta get down to it

\textsuperscript{184} Whitburn, \textit{Joel Whitburn’s Top LP’s 1945 – 1972}, 39.
\textsuperscript{186} Whitburn, \textit{Joel Whitburn’s Top LP’s 1945 – 1972}, 39.
\textsuperscript{188} Kimball, “Records,” \textit{Rolling Stone}, 46.
Soldiers are cutting us down
Shoulda been done long ago

What if you knew her
And found her dead on the ground
How can you run when you know?

La la la la la la la
La la la la la la
La la la la la la
La la la la la

Gotta get down to it
Soldiers are cutting us down
Shoulda been done long ago

What if you knew her
And found her dead on the ground
How can you run when you know?

Tin soldiers and Nixon’s comin’
We’re finally on our own
This summer I hear the drummin’
Four dead in Ohio

Four dead in Ohio
(Four)
Four dead in Ohio
(Four)
Four dead in Ohio
(How many more?)
Four dead in Ohio
(How many more?)
Four Dead in Ohio
(Why?)
Four dead in Ohio
(Ohh)
Four dead in Ohio
(Ohhhh)
Four dead in Ohio
(Why?)
Four dead in Ohio
(Why?)
The lyrics to the song were not complex. The focus of the song was immediately clear, the shootings at Kent State University. Though Kent State itself was not mentioned, the song contained the state that Kent State was in and the number of people that were killed there. In fact, the line “Four Dead in Ohio” was repeated eleven times in the song. The final nine times are punctuated by a background voice expressing questions about why it happened, how many more had to die, and what could be interpreted as either pain or anger from that background voice. The first use of the line has a second voice emphasize the word “four.” Additionally, the direct usage of Nixon’s name was a defiant choice. In his interview with Rolling Stone, Stephen Stills mentions that the group was not popular with the administration: “Spiro Agnew took out after us, actually attacked us personally, the songwriters, when he said, ‘Those guys damaging the minds of our kids blah blah blah,’ ‘Insidious forces and on and on.’” 190 Twice the group used the name of the President of the United States in a negative way, even after being attacked previously by his Vice President. Musically the song had a strong repetitive drum beat that sounds like a march. The song moved slowly and methodically to the climax at the end where the emotion comes through in the background voice and the fade of the music through the end of the song.

Though Neil Young was given writing credit for the song, it is possible that all four members contributed to the song musically. 191 According to one article, Young went off to Pescadero, California to write songs, and with him was David Crosby. On May 20, 1970 he presented the song to his band mates. 192 The shootings at Kent State happened on May 4, 1970. 193 The song was completed less than sixteen days after the event, it was recorded the

next day, along with Stephen Stills’ song “Freedom.” The band then sent the song to Atlantic Records and were informed that the single would be released within a week. The single was released in June of 1970, less than a month after it was written. The speedy release by Atlantic Records may have been because they hoped to take advantage of the anger Americans felt over the deaths at Kent State. Whatever their reason, Neil Young’s song quickly hit the radio airwaves, and was exceptionally powerful, popular, and successful.

As the composer of “Ohio,” Neil Young was a generally successful musician. His work with Buffalo Springfield and as a solo artist, in addition to the music he made with Crosby Stills Nash and Young found a wide audience. Young was a musician and song writer of considerable skill, as The Daily Planet’s writer Coleman Andrews wrote:

> The first, and perhaps most obvious, constituent of Neil Young’s extraordinary talent is his ability to write capital-S Songs. A Song is not, contrary to popular opinion, merely a poem set to music. (‘What is too silly to be spoken,’ Voltaire said, ‘Can always be sung.’) A proper Song (that is, one which is successful in itself), is an inseparable union of words and music. The two are a part of one another, and each is greatly diminished by the absence of the other.

Young turned that “Song” writing prowess to the protest circuit. Longtime protest artist and band mate of Neil Young, David Crosby said, “Neil surprised everybody. It wasn’t like he set out as a project to write a protest song…I mean we’ve all stopped even watching the TV news, but you read headlines on the papers going by on the streets.” Though it was not his goal, Neil Young wrote a popular song that found its way into the rotation for Crosby Stills Nash and Young concerts. The song was on their live album *4 Way Street*, and it was used

---

during a reunion concert after one of many times the band split up.198 Young commented on the success of their shows in an interview with Rolling Stone: “I think, uh, the tours we’ve done have been pretty successful, I don’t know, it’s blowing my mind—a lot of applause, a lot of the reaction and everything. I don’t know how it got so big—I knew it was gonna be big and everything because when I joined them they had a lot of hype and everything.”199 The band’s success in the live arena, in record sales, and in radio airplay distributed their message to a large number of people and all over the country.

The message of “Ohio,” an antiwar and anti-Nixon message, was not disguised in the song. Such an important message, one that captured the essence of what the country was feeling, was believed by some to be Young’s specialty. One contemporary commented that Neil Young had a:

frightening capacity for opening up the most carefully-guarded, most vulnerable parts of his heart, of his own spirits, and, by extension, of our own hearts and spirits as well. He approaches the sorest, most difficult problems of human interdependence, and, not content with nearly approaching them, calls out to them, brings them forth and introduces them on stage, forces us to acknowledge them. He bares the dull but agonizing wounds we must all incur by simply dealing with people, dealing with the world.200

Another writer commented,

Neil Young’s approach to music has become so highly personalized that when he performs, he seems at first to be oblivious of his audience. That impression is a superficial one, though, for his music demands rapt attention, and he quickly establishes such an intimate relationship to the audience that even a college gym seems like a cozy little club.201

The work that Neil Young performed required his audience to think and feel what he was presenting to them. In the song “Ohio,” those listening to his work meant to feel what he was

---

198 Tim Cahill, “Crosby, Nash---Stills? Young?,” Rolling Stone, no. 95, November 11, 1971, 12.
feeling about the war, about the Nixon Administration, and the shootings at Kent State University. His work inspired them, made them cheer, made them buy his records and those of the bands he was in, but most of all, his music made them think. Young, like the older and more experienced antiwar leader John Lennon, was just one of those who inspired antiwar activists in the Vietnam era.

In the early 1970s the antiwar movement turned to one of the most popular musicians as an important leader, John Lennon. Lennon was both an inspirations leader, though his music as a solo artist as well as his work with the Beatles, and an organizer, as could be seen through his efforts to make the Toronto Peace Festival happen. More conventional leaders, those who led via demonstrations and speeches, such as presidential candidate George McGovern, called upon musicians to assist his presidential campaign. Although it failed, McGovern recognized that he needed the assistance of musicians to have a chance at victory. He could not deny the successes of those musicians had in bringing recognition, not the mention fund raising power, to his presidential bid. While McGovern needed the help of musicians and the legions of followers, he had to give them a reason to back him as much as they could. That reason was, primarily, his antiwar stance. It was this that rallied them to his banner, it was the reason that they supported him.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Some musicians were more successful than others, some were embraced, some were banned from radio stations. All had a message that it was able to get out to the many fans of the artists. These artists had diverse messages, some advocated drug use, some had antiestablishment leanings, some sang of Civil Rights, or protested nuclear weapons. There were those artists who were sympathetic to communism, others who worried about the youth of the United States, some from England, Canada, or India.\(^1\) Some had one hit, some had dozens, some made it out of the Vietnam era as part of the same band they started with, most did not. Some lived for many years, others died young. The musicians in this writing had many differences, but they maintained one similarity, they all stood up and protested the Vietnam War with the best means at their disposal, their music.

Classic folk singers like Joan Baez, Phil Ochs, Arlo Guthrie, and many others gave their time, money, and talents to support the antiwar cause. Baez and Ochs, in particular, were in on the protest from the very beginning. Bob Dylan was another folk singer who was associated with the peace movement before it coalesced around the Vietnam War. Despite his assertions that he was not part of the movement, he continued to be associated with peace songs. The folk singers were not alone in protesting the war. Rock musicians like The Beatles, Creedence Clearwater Revival, and the Doors brought their own unique perspectives to the antiwar movement. Even if many believed that they did not go far enough, a

\(^1\) One example of an artist who was sympathetic to communist ideas was Phil Ochs. In 1971 he took a trip with Jerry Rubin to Chile to observe the recently elected Marxist president who was implementing a socialist government. Rubin, *Growing (Up) at 37*, 204.
complaint often heard by The Beatles, those rock musicians got more people think and talk about the Vietnam War and those fighting against it. They used their talents to create some powerful protest literature.

As protest literature, the music of the Doors was some of the most interesting. Very different than Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense*, the Doors used their fame, their lead singer, and their music to get a message out that they knew many people would hear. As commercially successful as nearly any band of the 1960s, the Doors were successful at spreading their message. The message was not simply “peace and love” that one might find in the work of Phil Ochs or Joan Baez. John Desmore quoted Jerry Garcia’s take on the Doors. “Everybody says the Dead are so dark. Well, what about the Doors? They were the dark band of the sixties.”

As their records sales showed, the Doors were able to reach a large number of people, and the near hero worship of Jim Morrison suggests that whatever they wanted to get across to their fans, they would be able to do so. At the very least “The Unknown Soldier” pointed out that the Vietnam War, and violence in general, was a problem and gave a simple solution, stop fighting. The Doors style could be compared to other rock groups, and in a number of the psychedelic bands that protested the war as well.

Country Joe and the Fish and Jefferson Airplane were some of the psychedelic musicians who found their own ways to protest the war. Indeed, their songs were some of the most overtly antiwar, unafraid of expressing their explicit message. However, the psychedelic bands were not the only ones who were unabashed about their message. Edwin Starr’s Motown sound expressed a powerful antiwar message. Neil Young’s feelings on the war were also on display when he wrote and performed “Ohio” with Crosby Stills Nash and

---

2 Densmore, *Riders on the Storm*, 98.
Young. Neil Young felt strongly enough about the song that he included it on his individual greatest hits album.\(^3\)

In fact, Neil Young continued to use his music to protest war, releasing an antiwar album \textit{Living with War} in 2006. He did so because he believed that younger stars were not speaking up enough about the wars being fought by the United States even today.\(^4\) Young is not the only musician protesting the current wars. Eddie Vedder, lead singer of the popular band Pearl Jam, has thrown himself into the antiwar cause, writing a song entitled “No More” and producing a video about the life of a paralyzed Iraq Veteran.\(^5\) Though antiwar music may be less prevalent, perhaps even less influential than it had been in the past, it still exists. Clearly Neil Young believes that the music had an impact on the Vietnam War, so much so that he has made an attempt to invigorate current musicians to follow what he and other did during Vietnam. Neil Young and a few others are making even more protest literature.

Zoe Trodd’s book \textit{American Protest Literature} included Country Joe and the Fish’s song \textit{I’m-Fixin’-To-Die-Rag} as a piece of Vietnam era protest literature. This song, along with many others, were indeed pieces of protest literature. Their lyrics and musical composition express their antiwar stance. This stance cannot be missed in most cases, even when the artist did not expressly mention the Vietnam War. Musical protest literature, as expressed by the high sales numbers and popularity, reached huge numbers of people. Some of those people became leaders of the antiwar movement; others became followers and

---

participants of that same movement. They were inspired by the music that they heard every
day to become active, and the leaders of the movement recognized this. They called upon
antiwar artists to join their cause, to participate in their rallies, and to join them as leaders.
Those artists inspired Americans to come to the only complete solution there was to the
problem being addressed, and that solution was to the end the fighting in Vietnam.

American protest movements have grown and changed as the nations changes with them. They must do so to continue to be relevant. Those who take part in these protests are aware that they must be ever vigilant, and so must those who follow after them. At the end of the Vietnam war, many veterans of the antiwar movement believed that they would soon be back, protesting another conflict they believed to be immoral. DeBenedetti and Chatfield recorded a telling story that occurred just after the signing of the peace treaty: “About forty middle-aged men and women had among them maintained a silent vigil for 369 consecutive Saturdays in front of the Stevens building at the often windswept corner of State Street and Michigan Avenue in Chicago. Deciding to ‘give peace a chance,’ they put down their placards on the last Saturday of January 1973. They were not sanguine. ‘We expect to be back,’ said one.”6 Inspired by the protest literature of their time and place, those protestors maintained their faith that their actions would, someday, help end the Vietnam War. So strong was their belief in what they were doing, that they were prepared to come back and protest again if necessary. Such is the power of protest literature, and the antiwar music of the 1960s and 70s can be called nothing else.

---

6 DeBenedetti, An American Ordeal, 348.
REFERENCES


*Amazon Online Store*,


Creedence Online. http://www.creedence-online.net/all_in_one/.


Gleason, Ralph J. “‘Revolution’ Beatles two views.” *Teaspoon Door,* vol. 1 no. 4, November 22 – December 5, 1968: 8-10.


*Peter Paul and Mary*, http://www.peterpaulandmary.com/music/f-03.htm.


Rolling Stone. “‘It was like Balling for the First Time.’” no. 42, September 20, 1969. 1-4,10-20.


*The Daily Planet.* “Jim Morrison In Memorial.” vol. 1 no. 35, August 10, 1971, 11-17.


*The Official Jimi Hendrix Website.*


Walter, Tom. *Country Joe & The Fish: The Website.*
http://www.well.com/~cjfish/game.htm#cheer.


Willens, Michelle. “Baez Concert.” *Los Angeles Free Press*, vol. 5 no. 47, November 22-