THE WAR COMES TO SOUTH BEND: A HISTORY OF THE ANTI-WAR AND ANTI-DRAFT MOVEMENT AT IUSB 1968-1969

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The subject of the Vietnam War, along with the Selective Service System that drafted young men into the American military, is just as controversial today as they were during the 1960's and 1970's when the United States became involved in the Vietnamese civil war as a way to prevent the spread of communism.[1] However, it was not until 1964 after the Gulf of Tonkin incident that the United States escalated its role in what would become one of, if not the, most unpopular war in American history. By 1965, an anti-war movement had erupted throughout the country. Activists primarily tended to be "upper-middle-class students and professionals," but this group was not alone in opposing the war in Vietnam. [2] They were, however, the ones whose voices were heard the most. Students involved in the anti-war movement had another concern: the Selective Service System [the draft]. Because of the war in Vietnam, the Selective Service System was a major concern amongst male students and those of college age because it directly affected them. While those who opposed the Selective Service System were concerned about their own lives, they also voiced their opinion that the system went against their morals, and how it was classist and racist.

Many students across the nation felt it was their duty to express their right to free speech and to hold demonstrations and protests that would bring the wrongdoings of the Vietnam War and the Selective Service System to the public's attention. The most famous campuses involved with these movements were the University of California at Berkeley, San Francisco State University, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the University of Michigan, and Kent State University, but the anti-war and anti-draft movements within local communities are often overlooked. The protests and demonstrations that occurred in South Bend were as important as those held elsewhere, and the students at Indiana University-South Bend expressed the outrage that they and others in South Bend felt towards the war and the draft.

It is important to note that the students who were involved in the anti-war and anti-draft movements tended to be a part of organizations that supported these causes at a national level. At the forefront of the anti-war and anti-draft movements was the Students for a Democratic Society, a radical, leftist group that not only spoke out against the Vietnam War and the draft, but also against classism and racism. By the end of the 1960's, the SDS had become one of the country's largest student organizations, having four hundred campus chapters and about 100,000 members.[3] One of these chapters resided at Indiana University South Bend, and

1 Charles DeBenedetti and Charles Chatfeild, *An American Ordeal: The Antiwar Movement of the Vietnam Era* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1990), 143.

2 Mitchell K. Hall, "CALCAV and Religious Opposition," in *Give Peace A Chance: Exploring the Vietnam Antiwar Movement: Essays from the Charles DeBenedetti Memorial Conference, ed. Melvin Small and William D. Hoover* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 49.

3 Clara Bingham, *Witness to the Revolution: Radicals, Resisters, Vets, Hippies, and the Year America Lost Its Mind and Found Its Soul* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2016), 51.

became an important voice for students. The SDS chapter at IU South Bend was effective in teaching the importance of democracy, but it was also effective in letting the students be aware of their rights and liberties as American citizens. The SDS fully believed that the youth of America made the movement powerful, saying that students were "the first line of resistance against the encroachment of the 'establishment' upon [their] democracy."[4] Seeing as the youth were the core of the movement and most affected by the draft, it makes sense that the SDS was involved in opposing the draft. SDS described the draft as "an alien institution" that was undemocratic, and an institution in which "through controlling men's lives, allows the governing elite of this country to pursue military adventures abroad without the consent of the people."[5] SDS believed it was undemocratic not to allow men to have control of their own fate, relinquishing it to the government instead. At IU South Bend, the SDS provided about the Selective Service system and offered draft counseling as a way to help the young men know their rights. It also provided ways to help them avoid the draft--from becoming Canadian citizens to helping them argue that war went against the person's religious beliefs. Male students during this time were able to obtain deferments because they attended a college or university, but this status depended on an individual's ability to remain in school. As the war progressed and the military was in need of more manpower, a student who left school for any reason was subject to the draft.

SDS viewed the Vietnam War as "a momentary failure in American wisdom, fairness, and good sense," and students believed that injustice was the problem.[6] To express their ideas and voice their outrage, students at IU South Bend relied on the power of print. By circulating its newsletters, IU South Bend's SDS kept students informed about issues going on at the time, but it also reached out to students who may have been unsure of the war or neutral towards it. There were two SDS newsletters, *SDS Notes* and *The Recourse*, and one independent newsletter, *The Preface*, being printed during this time on the IUSB campus. When reading through these newsletters, it seems as though the students of IU South Bend became more radical as time went on. This is shown through the text of these newsletters and their discussions of local activities.

SDS Notes was the first newsletter, followed by *The Recourse*. While both of these newsletters took a radical standpoint in regards to America's political climate at the time, they had slightly different approaches as to how they discussed issues. *SDS Notes* started as a way to "promote interest in the activities (or lack of them) of SDS."[7] It discussed the anti-war and anti-draft movements on more of a national scale than local, focusing rather on major events that took place in areas such as Chicago or Madison, but events in other cities helped the chapter and IUSB students be aware of what was going on elsewhere so they could focus on those issues in their own cities. *SDS Notes* also seemed a little less radical in the terms of how they wrote, at least compared to that of *The Recourse*. The language used in the *SDS Notes* was powerful, and brought political issues to the forefront of IUSB's anti-war and anti-draft movements and pushed students to become more and more radical as time went on.

While *SDS Notes* discussed the SDS nationally, *The Recourse* focused on the local movement. Instead of relying on information from other SDS chapters, writers for *The Recourse* discussed

4 SDS Official Office, "A Minority Viewpoint," *The Recourse* (May 19, 1969): 10.

5 "The Draft –An Historical Study," *The Recourse* (April 28, 1969): 3, 9.

6 *SDS Notes* (April 16, 1968); George Haynes, "The Only Way To Support Revolutions Is To Start Your Own," *The Recourse* 1, no. 3. (March 30, 1969): 7.

7 *SDS Notes* (March 4, 1968).

problems on their own campus and in their own city. Some of these problems included, though not limited to, racism, classism, corruption within the school, other political groups at the school, and, of course, the anti-war and anti-draft movements. In the first part of their series "Some Thoughts On The Draft," Jim Engel wrote:

> It is an oppressive institution. The rich and the privileged (read students) are deferred, while the poorer segments of society fight America's wars remaining subjugated when they return home. That black men should have to fight for "freedom" in Vietnam, and remain oppressed in their own country is absurd.[8]

This statement shows that the students believed that the war was not only immoral, but classist and racist as well. By showing their concern for the "poorer segments of society," the students of IUSB recognized their privilege, and decided to use that privilege as a way to let society know about these injustices.[9] "Young people see through the bullshit," Engel argued, "and that ain't hard when America's colonial empire is as obvious as the ghettos of her major cities."[10]

The students felt that a person's social class should not determine whether or not they were to fight in the war or not, so many of them took the bold choice of burning their deferments or sending them back to draft offices.[11] Engel also spoke out about the immorality of the war itself, stating that "politics and morality are not mutually exclusive, and I think that if we are going to bring about meaningful change, we must develop forms of political morality."[12] By stating this, Engel is pointing out not only how the war was immoral in regards to the Vietnamese, but also how the politics of the war were also immoral for the American men fighting there.

Another series in *The Recourse*, "The Student as Nigger," provided insight into an African-American's experience as a student compared to that of a white student. By recognizing white privilege, students also helped give voice to the Black Power Movement, which was also prevalent in South Bend at this time. While the words of *SDS Notes* and *The Recourse* were powerful, *The Preface* represented a turning point in the radical movement on the Indiana University South Bend campus.

The Preface, which remains in circulation today, began at IUSB in March 1969 with its mission to simply provide information for the student body.[13] And because the newsletter was not the product of a particular organization, it gave the average student a voice. At the start of its publication, *The Preface* did not take a particular standpoint on the American political climate, likely out of caution so they could reach out to more students. But *The Preface* did not remain neutral and reached out to students who may not have had a particular standpoint on the draft or the war in Vietnam. In a speech given on November 3, 1969, President Richard Nixon argued that the American public, the silent majority, supported his efforts to win in Vietnam, and he claimed that anti-war demonstrators would not affect his policies regarding the war.[14] *The Preface* responded with a powerful statement:

8 Jim Engel, "Some Thoughts On The Draft," *The Recourse* (April 21, 1969): 1, 3.

9 *Ibid.*

10 *Ibid.*, 4.

11 Bingham, *Witness to the Revolution*, 13.

12 Engel, "Some Thoughts On The Draft," 4.

13 *The Preface* (March 27, 1969).

14 "Why the Silent Majority," *The Preface* (November 20, 1969).

> The belief that "common" citizens are not capable of making rational judgments is a very pessimistic one implying that our government is not "by the people" but "over the people." Further evidence that citizens are ruled by rather than represented by the government, is President Nixon's statement concerning the peace demonstrations. We believe that the American public is capable of making rational decisions about important issues. The public is not only capable, but the public has a moral responsibility to influence the actions of our government.[15]

This statement was a perfect testament to the belief of students across the country at this time, and reflected the popular saying "power to the people." The students at Indiana University South Bend harnessed this spirit and became more radical with their demonstrations.

On March 14, 1968, the IU South Bend chapter of the SDS held an anti-war demonstration in Northside Hall to address "the issues of patriotism and the Vietnam war."[16] Their theme was the "Spirit of '76" intended to point out the similarities of revolutions taking place in South America and Vietnam with those of the American Revolution.[17] The demonstration began with faculty member Kenneth Lux reading from Bertrand Russell's "Appeal to the American Conscience," which proceeded to gain the attention of Commission members who were at the time leaving their meeting.[18] The demonstration went smoothly until one of the commission's legislators, Burnett C. Bauer, confronted SDS member Randy Fasnacht about the photo of Ernesto "Che" Guevara, an Argentinian revolutionary leader, attached to the American flag that Fasnacht was holding. Bauer allegedly shouted that the SDS was "desecrating the flag" which caused Lux to state: "The United States Government is desecrating the flag."[19] After more words with Lux, Bauer turned back to Fasnacht and attempted to grab the flag, but after a struggle, he took the glasses off Fasnacht's face instead. This confrontation caused Fasnacht to stand on a table and state his opposition of the 2-S academic draft deferment to Bauer, who was walking away in search of a university official. In an article for *The River City Review*, "War Comes To I.U." Lux stated, "Indiana University in South Bend has now been brought face to face with the question of the War and the University relationship to the War."[20] After this demonstration, others were less confrontational, and instead of creating division, unified the students of IU South Bend.

On May 1, 1969, at Potawatomi Park in South Bend, the SDS chapter at Indiana University South Bend held a Mayday celebration with guest speaker, Sister Joanne Malone of the "DC Nine," an anti-war group, primarily priests and nuns, arrested for breaking into Dow Chemical Company's Washington, D.C., offices on March 22. DOW was the leading supplier of chemicals, such as napalm, used during the war. The protesters had broken windows and destroyed company's documents before being arrested for their actions. Along with the appearance of Sister Malone, five bands played. The SDS estimated nearly 305,000 people attended the event, but they believed most people were there for the music. Unlike the Northside Hall demonstration, there were no fights or disturbances that took place.

Later that year, another significant event took place, only this one brought together not

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15 *Ibid.*

16 Kenneth Lux, "The War Comes To I.U.," *The River City Review* [n.d.], 1.

17 *Ibid.*

18 *Ibid.*

19 *Ibid.*, 4.

20 *Ibid.*

just the students of Indiana University South Bend, but students from the University of Notre Dame and other community members as well. This event was the "Moratorium to End the War in Vietnam," and called for peace. The Moratorium consisted of marches, speeches, peaceful protests, and sit-ins at multiple locations in downtown South Bend. *The Preface* stated that the Moratorium's purpose was "to unite those who desire peace and to bring popular pressure to bear on the Nixon Administration to end the war."[21] Organized on October 15th, the event itself took place in November, and would "continue until there is American withdrawal or a negotiated settlement" as stated by the National Moratorium Committee.[22] Photos of the event show that it drew a large number of people, and in one issue of *The Preface* there is a photo of Marshall D'Arcy, a veteran and IUSB student, addressing the Moratorium crowd in front of the St. Joseph County Courthouse. To support the Moratorium, courthouse officials had the American flag lowered to half-mast. One of the main arguments made by *The Preface* was that the American government was not giving a full effort to end the war. It stated:

> Reduced draft calls, token withdrawal of troops, phony peace overtures, all of these mean nothing as long as the present intensity of the war continues. Our planes are dropping more bombs than ever before, our armies continue to support military directors, who neither represent nor support the Vietnamese people.[23]

By making this statement, the Moratorium Committee is calling out the immorality of the war and the injustices that were being committed towards the Vietnamese people, and that the only way to put a stop to the war was to stop it as a whole. Another statement that was made by *The Preface* was in regards to the classism that many of the men fighting in Vietnam had faced as a result of the draft:

> Young American men are drafted into, and die in, a war they did not create. Students are deferred, while the sons of the poor and working classes become cannon fodder. The problems of the poor, both black and white, are ignored, as funds are diverted to the war profiteers.[24]

As a result of recognizing their economic privilege, many students of IUSB took part in a leafleting that took place in front of Northside Hall on October 11.

The demonstrations and actions performed by American students in the late 1960's brought the war home and made known the immorality and injustices being committed. The tragedies that took place at the Kent State and Jackson State campuses in 1970 are burned into our minds, and the riots that took place in Chicago inspire modern activists to hold their ground. While these events are important to the nation's history, the events that took place in places like South Bend are just as equally as important. By sending out newsletters, going up against state legislators, and marching, the students of Indiana University South Bend made their own platform to give voice to the wrongdoings of the war, and to the problems that surrounded the Selective Service System. In doing this, the students were able to make their mark on the history of the city of South Bend, and the spirit of justice and equality that still flows through the city to this day.

21 "Vietnam Moratorium Pushes For Peace," *The Preface* (October 9, 1969): 1.

22 *Ibid.*

23 *Ibid.*

24 *Ibid.*