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The Anti-War Movements in the USA During the Vietnam War

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V Kroměříži, dne.....

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Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to describe the public resistance to the Vietnam War in the USA and to find its representation in art. I have decided to focus on art because I believe that art is, and has always been a major source of public opinion during the restless times in nation's history. Vietnam War was one of the most controversial conflicts in modern history, intensified by Cold War. The United States' involvement divided the country into two sides, I have decided to focus on the perspective of the side of the opposition.

In this work I will focus on the involvement of the United States in the Vietnam War, which escalated during the 1960s. Primarily on the responses of the American society and with related anti-war movements and protests that took place all over the United States.

At the beginning of the thesis I will provide a brief description of a social background in the USA in the 1960s. The summary of the Vietnam War will follow, with an emphasis on the main events that led to the escalation of the war such as the incident in the Gulf of Tonkin. In this chapter the US policies in Vietnam will be discussed as well.

The two following chapters will deal with the role of the media and with related cause of agitation of the American public. Also, the two issues of Massacre in My Lai and the release of Pentagon Papers will be discussed. Next, a list with descriptions of the most significant anti-war movements and organizations will be provided.

In the second part I will focus on how the opposition to the war was related to art and how the public opinion of the American society was reflected in different forms of art, such as literature, music and film. Regarding literature, I will mention the role of poetry and focus on works of Norman Mailer and Robert Bly. As to music, I will analyze the anti-war themes in lyrics of the most popular songs of that time. At the end I will describe the influence of the war on film with two examples.

1 1960's in the USA

The decade before the sixties is often referred to as the happy days and many Americans believed that the beginning of the sixties marked the dawn of the golden age. The golden age however never happened as at the end of the sixties the nation was divided and the country was shaking under the wave of protests.¹

The era started with President Kennedy being elected and starting the office in 1961. At the age of 42 he was the youngest president ever elected in the history of the USA. Days in the office of this charismatic, Catholic President were affected by the then ongoing Civil Rights Movement but more importantly by the Cold War. During his presidency, the tension between the USA and the USSR reached its peak in 1962 during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Kennedy was determined to defeat communism, end racial segregation, abolish poverty and land the man on the Moon before the end of the decade. His charisma and public performance gained him a wide popularity and many Americans had faith in him. Kennedy however didn't get the chance to fulfill these visions as he was assassinated during his third year in the office in November 1963.

Another shock for the American public came 5 years later when Martin Luther King, the leader of the Civil Rights Movement was assassinated as well. His death again caused a lot of riots as his life meant a huge change in life of Afro-Americans in the US.²

After Kennedy's assassination his vice-president Lyndon B. Johnson took over the Oval Office until the end of Kennedy's period and then was elected in 1964. It was during his presidency that the Vietnam conflict broke out fully.

Civil Rights Act which prohibited racial segregation and discrimination at public places and promised equal opportunities at work place to all, no matter their race or gender was passed in 1964. One year later, the Voting Rights Act was signed into law and prohibited racial discrimination in voting.³

The nation turned young during the sixties as the generation of baby boomers born after the world war two came of age. Between 1960 and 1972, 45 million of people turned 18. This led to overcrowding of college campuses and resulted in that the young people and their opinions were heard.⁴

¹ "The 1960s", History.com, www.history.com/topics/1960s (accessed August 18, 2017).

² Michael Eric Dyson, *April 4, 1968: Martin Luther King Jr.'s death and transformation of America*, (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 48.

³ History.com. "The 1960s." History.com, A&E Television Networks, 2010, www.history.com/topics/1960s. Accessed 18 Aug. 2017.

⁴ Terry H. Anderson, *The Sixties*, 4th ed. (Texas: Pearson, 2011), 49-50.

The young took over the style. The subculture of hippies has emerged in the mid-sixties and called for peace. They grew long hair, used drugs, practiced free love and some of them moved to live in communes.⁵

2 The War

The 'Resistance War against America' by the Vietnamese and the 'Vietnam War' by Americans, was an armed conflict that took place on the territory of Southeast Asian countries and lasted for over nineteen years. The most accurate name for the historical event however is The Second Indochina War which indicates that besides Vietnam, fighting took place in Laos and Cambodia as well.

2.1 Introduction to the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War

The United States' involvement began in the 1950s in then French Indochina and was based on the Mutual Defense Assistance Act signed by President Truman in 1949.⁶

After President Truman left office in 1953, the Vietnam War was not an American war, France fought to regain prestige and imperial power after the humiliation of the German occupation during the World War II and the Vietnamese fought a war for liberation from French colonial claims. The United States found the French colonialism undesirable as well, however the threat of a communist success in Vietnam was inconceivable. For such reason as well as in order to keep good relations with NATO, the Truman administration was willing to aid France in Indochina.⁷

The United States after the Second World War was a victorious country, supposedly the strongest nation in the world. According to the Geneva Accords of 1954, French colonial presence in Vietnam was ended and the country was split into two states communist North and capitalist South. In the era of the Cold War the conflict turned into one also between the United States and Soviet Union, with each country and its allies supporting one side.

Also, South Vietnam had a treaty of alliance with the USA, therefore the USA was obliged to send troops to Vietnam in 1963, after North Vietnamese aggression against South Vietnam.⁸

⁵ "The 1960s," History.com, www.history.com/topics/1960s (accessed August 18, 2017).

⁶ Jürgen Heideking and Christof Mauch. *Dějiny USA* (Prague: Grada, 2012), 318.

⁷ David L. Anderson. *The Vietnam War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 19-21.

⁸ Jaroslav Peprník, *Británie a USA: ilustrované reálie* (Olomouc: Nakladatelství Olomouc, 2004), 223.

2.2 Americanization of the War, 1960s

In the first half of 1965 the deployment of entire US combat divisions to South Vietnam along with gradually increasing US air bombardment began. At the end of 1965, 184 000 American troops were stationed in Vietnam; three years later, in 1968 it was over 500 000. This process of the boost in the US involvement went down in history under the term of Americanization.⁹

2.2.1 Lyndon B. Johnson's Policy

Lyndon B. Johnson took over the presidential chair after Kennedy's assassination in 1963 and was re-elected in 1964. As a democrat, he was considered a member of 'a peaceful political party'¹⁰ however it was during his presidency when the war escalated dramatically. "The fresh President did not rush to implement a more aggressive policy regarding the war. It would have been politically unwise to renege immediately on promises he gave during the election campaign, namely restraint in Vietnam."¹¹ However, after a confrontation with Barry Goldwater¹², he didn't want to appear as being 'soft on communism.'¹³ Nevertheless he managed to maintain a moderate policy only until August 1964.

2.2.2 Gulf of Tonkin

The main cause of an US troops increase in Vietnam were two incidents which occurred in the waters of the Gulf of Tonkin, happening in August of 1964. On August 2, the Destroyer USS Maddox was attacked by a North Vietnamese torpedo. Two days later, a second attack on Maddox supposedly happened which resulted in retaliatory bombing raids on North Vietnam, notwithstanding that the attack was never confirmed.¹⁴

The outcome was the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution passed by the Congress and signed into law by President Johnson. The resolution gave the President an authorization to conduct military operations in Vietnam without a formal declaration of war which actually legally justified the upcoming escalation of the conflict.¹⁵

⁹ Heideking and Mauch, 326.

¹⁰ Heideking and Mauch, 325.

¹¹ Anderson, 45.

¹² Barry Goldwater, American conservative politician, Republican Party's nominee for President of the USA in elections of 1964

¹³ Heideking and Mauch, 325.

¹⁴ Robert D. Schulzinger, *A time for war: the United States and Vietnam, 1941-1975* (Oxford: Oxford U Press, 1999), 151.

¹⁵ "U.S. Involvement in the Vietnam War: the Gulf of Tonkin and Escalation, 1964," Department of State, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/gulf-of-tonkin> (accessed April 6, 2017).

In just three years the number of American troops in Vietnam increased from 23 000 to over 500 000. Despite such a costly and loss-making escalation, neither the stop of supply from North Vietnam nor the stabilization of regimes in Saigon was achieved.

2.3 Tet Offensive, 1968

In January 1968, the Viet Cong launched one of its largest surprise military operations that later turned out to be the turning point in the war. Viet Cong occupied most of the capitals and administrative centers and suicidal squad attacked American embassy in Saigon. Despite the fact that the offensive terminated in American victory, the faith in the US government was irretrievably shaken.¹⁶

“The Tet Offensive, launched by the Viet Cong on January 31, 1968, was not a Viet Cong military victory; in fact, it probably did not even achieve its minimum goals. But it turned the direction of the war in Washington; it turned large numbers of Americans against the war, and finally, it brought down Lyndon Johnson’s administration.”¹⁷

2.4 Vietnamization of the War, 1970s

After promising to ‘reach peace with honor’, Richard Nixon became the President in 1969. His foreign policy included a program of Vietnamization which consisted in training the Vietnamese soldiers, so that they could take over the war. Also the aim was to end the US involvement in the war by slowly reducing US troops in Vietnam. “The defense of freedom is everybody’s business, not just America’s business. And it is particularly the responsibility of the people whose freedom is threatened,” Nixon explained. “In the previous administration, we Americanized the war in Vietnam. In this administration, we are Vietnamizing the search for peace.”¹⁸

The main idea was to ‘let the Vietnamese fight their own war’. 300 000 American soldiers serving in Vietnam in 1970 were reduced to 24 000 in just two years. Simultaneously with the reduction of troops a massive armaments of South Vietnamese forces took place so they

¹⁶ Chris Bishop, *Vietnamský válečný deník: 1964-1975: zkušenosti, zážitky a pocity vojáků v jihovýchodní Asii měsíc po měsíci*. (Prague: NV, 2005), 100.

¹⁷ Gary A. Donaldson, *America at war since 1945: politics and diplomacy in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and the Gulf War* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1996), 114.

¹⁸ James H. Willbanks, *Vietnam War: The Essential Reference Guide* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2013), 258.

could take over the main burden of the war again. Also, in order to boost the morale of the Southern soldiers, Nixon intensified bombing of the North.¹⁹

2.5 End of the War

The process of Vietnamization ended with Paris Peace Accords signed on January 27, 1973. The ceasefire agreement was negotiated by Henry Kissinger²⁰ and Lê Đức Thọ²¹ in October 1972. A part of the agreement was a regulation that let North Vietnamese soldiers stay in the South which resulted in the communists enlarging the area under their control by the end of 1973 and the war resulted in North Vietnamese victory. Therefore the Accords were basically the US surrender.

The last Americans left Vietnam in April 1975. After all, the USA found a seemingly lucky way out of the conflict they got themselves into in Vietnam. It cost them 58 000 lives, 300 000 wounded and its financial cost was counted to almost 150 billion dollars.²²

3 Role of the Media

The rise of new technologies such as television, audio and videotape recorders, small handheld film cameras etc. helped reporters to bring the war straight into the living rooms of the US citizens.

“In 1950s, only 9% of American home owned a television, but this figure rose dramatically to 93% in 1961. In a survey conducted in 1964, 58% of US respondents said that they ‘got most of their news’ from television. Television, therefore, became the most important source of news for American people during the Vietnam era.”²³

Due to the fact that television brought the American public scenes of death and destruction on daily basis thanks to no military censorship (Vietnam was the first war in which

¹⁹ Heideking and Mauch, 340.

²⁰ Henry Kissinger was a US Secretary of State in the administration of President Nixon, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973

²¹ Lê Đức Thọ was a Vietnamese diplomat and politician, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize jointly with Henry Kissinger in 1973, however he declined

²² Heideking and Mauch, 342.

²³ “*Media Role in The Vietnam War*,” The Vietnam War, <http://thevietnamwar.info/media-role-vietnam-war/> (accessed April 5, 2017).

journalists were routinely accredited to accompany military forces, they were free to go and report whatever they wished), the conflict is often referred to as ‘The first television war.’²⁴ The initial TV coverage was of a patriotic tone. The early news supported the war, referred to the conflict euphemistically as a President Johnson’s peace campaign and focused on portrayal of ‘American boys in action’ – the good guys in contrast to the Vietnamese. The picture of war on TV however underwent a dramatic change after the Tet Offensive. “Based on news reports from Vietnam, many Americans concluded that Tet was a defeat or at least a reality check. Having heard the administration’s assurances of progress in November, citizens interpreted the stunning magnitude of the offensive as evidence that the end was not near. Journalists and others expressed doubts that government claims about success could be trusted.”²⁵ Some people of the public then concluded that they had been deliberately misled into supporting the war where the basic interests of the United States were not at stake.²⁶ “Before Tet, journalists described 62 percent of their stories as victories for the United States, 28 percent as defeats, and 2 percent as inconclusive. After Tet, 44 percent of the battles were deemed victories, 32 percent defeats, and 24 percent inconclusive.”²⁷ The television audience, the largest audience at the time played a significant role in influencing public opinion. The visual element of television allowed viewers to empathize and get drawn into the action. Therefore a massive wave of indignation arose among the US citizens after pictures of Vietnamese villages being destroyed and children burning to death were aired.²⁸ By the fall of 1967, 90 percent of the evening news was devoted to the war and roughly 50 million people watched television news each night.²⁹

4 Cause of agitation

1960’s in the USA were times of various protests. Dissatisfaction of American people led to protests against racism, segregation, women’s inequality, nuclear armaments and wars in

²⁴ Daniel C. Hallin, *The "Uncensored war": the media and Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 6.

²⁵ Anderson D., 67.

²⁶ Schulzinger, 217.

²⁷ Hallin, 161-162.

²⁸ Daniel Ford, “*The Media and the Vietnam War*,” <https://www.warbirdforum.com/media.htm> (accessed April 5, 2017).

²⁹ David E Bonior, Steven M. Champlin and Timothy S. Kolly. *The Vietnam veteran: a history of neglect* (New York: Praeger, 1984), 4-5.

general, which gave rise to many social movements. The most influential movement of the time was the Civil Rights Movement with Martin Luther King being the leading figure. He managed to connect the civil rights movement with the peace movement by claiming that the Great Society is one of the casualties of Vietnam:

“This confused war has played havoc with our domestic destinies. Despite feeble protestations to the contrary, the promises of the Great Society have been shot down on the battlefield of Vietnam. The pursuit of this widened war has narrowed domestic welfare programs, making the poor, white and Negro, bear the heaviest burdens both at the front and at home.”³⁰ He also encouraged people to protest: “We are at the moment when our lives must be placed on the line if our nation is to survive its own folly. Every man of humane convictions must decide on the protest that best suits his convictions, but we must all protest.”³¹

The resistance to the war from public grew with the growth of American involvement in Vietnam. It was a spontaneous reaction to what people saw on TV and heard from witnesses. There was no single organization as a source, random groups of students, pacifists, veterans and ideological anti-imperialists started a movement of enormous dimensions that the world until then did not know. The movement might have started at college campuses but spread from students to random people who then engaged in various activities including political campaigns, petitions, demonstrations and even draft resistance, when young men would burn their draft notice letters.³²

“The desire for a speedy end to the fighting crossed all lines as the public grew disgusted with the war. The largest political demonstrations since the 1930s took place as opponents of the war demanded the end of U.S. participation. Some of the most dramatic demonstrations against the war took place on college and university campuses. Many protesters challenged the basic assumptions of U.S. foreign policy in the Cold War. By 1968 opposition to the war forced Lyndon Johnson to withdraw from the presidential race, while the Democratic Party nearly tore itself apart over the Johnson administration policy in Vietnam. For a generation most Democratic members of Congress had advocated the containment of communism as the proper foreign policy for the United States, but a group

³⁰ “*Speeches and Sounds - Martin Luther King, Jr.-The Casualties of the War in Vietnam,*” http://www.aavw.org/special_features/speeches_speech_king02.html (accessed April 5, 2017).

³¹ “*Martin Luther King, Jr. Beyond Vietnam - A Time to Break Silence,*” <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkatimetobreaksilence.htm> (accessed April 12, 2017).

³² Anderson, 67.

of Democratic senators and representatives opposed the Johnson administration's policy in Vietnam."³³

4.1 My Lai Massacre

At the command of Lieutenant William L. Calley, between 200 and 500 unarmed civilians were mass killed by American soldiers in a village called My Lai located on the northern coast of South Vietnam. The victims were mostly women, children and elders, some of the women bodies were reported raped and even mutilated.³⁴ The massacre happened in March 1968, however the horrific truth came out more than a year later due to a cover up of the US Army officers. The original report stated that 128 Viet Cong were killed during the mission while only 3 weapons were captured. Later it turned out that during the 'search and destroy' mission at My Lai, where the troops were to look for Viet Cong, not a single bullet had been fired at the US soldiers and only one American was injured - a GI who had shot himself in the foot while clearing his pistol.³⁵ My Lai became an international scandal appearing on cover pages of various newspapers and led to a national disillusionment.

"The trial and investigations that followed seemed to show that My Lai was not an isolated incident, that American soldiers had committed atrocities in Vietnam. News reports at home began to follow up on reports of additional U.S. atrocities, and CBS ran a story about U.S. soldiers' fondness for taking the ears of dead enemy soldiers as souvenirs. Of course, the Viet Cong also committed atrocities, but to the American way of thinking the enemy always committed atrocities—American soldiers did not. To add to the disillusionment, Calley was exonerated for his acts. His life-in-prison term was reduced to twenty years; the secretary of defense reduced it further to ten years. He was then placed under house arrest and finally pardoned by President Nixon."³⁶

4.2 Pentagon Papers

In the summer of 1971 the New York Times published leaked documents of Defense Department that revealed the truth behind the decisions that were made by the government and led to the US involvement in the Vietnam War. Most importantly it also showed that the

³³ Schulzinger, 216.

³⁴ "Murder in the name of war - My Lai," BBC News, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/64344.stm> (accessed April 29, 2017).

³⁵ "Murder in the name of war - My Lai," BBC News, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/64344.stm> (accessed April 29, 2017).

³⁶ Donaldson, 126.

American people were during the Kennedy's and Johnson's years consistently lied to and misled about the US involvement in Vietnam. The papers for example showed that the plans for introducing troops into Vietnam were being made at the same time when the president Johnson was assuring American people that the USA will not fight in Vietnam. President Nixon tried to have the papers censored, however the injunction was turned down by the Supreme Court. In addition, there were numerous attempts by Washington to manipulate the press, and thus manipulate the mind of the American public.³⁷

5 Anti-war Movements and Organizations

Reasons discussed in previous chapters led people to form various movements and organize protests all around the country. Major cities such as Atlanta, Boston, San Francisco, Chicago, Philadelphia and Los Angeles witnessed anti-war protests during the sixties. The most intense marches were held in Washington D.C. in 1967, 1968 and 1971, however the anti-war parades were held even in local communities.³⁸ The protesters brought posters and shouted popular anti-Vietnam phrases such as 'Hell No, We Won't Go', 'Draft Beer, Not Boys', 'Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?' or 'Eighteen Today, Dead Tomorrow'.³⁹

In the following section I will focus on the most significant movements and organizations that took action in opposing the war.

5.1 Students' Movement

Involvement of the USA in Vietnam along with racial problems and segregation caused unrest and agitation on campuses all over the country. Students brought the idea of anti-war to the public by standing up for their contemporaries who got drafted. The average age of American soldiers serving in Vietnam was just 19 years. Students were irritated by the fact that at such age they weren't permitted to drink alcohol or vote but they were legally old

³⁷ Donaldson, 111.

³⁸ Steven Laurence Danver, *Revolts, protests, demonstrations, and rebellions in American history: an encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2010), 931.

³⁹ Terry H. Anderson, "Vietnam War" (Palacký University, Olomouc, March 22, 2016).

enough to fight and die for their country.⁴⁰ “The majority of the anti-war movement began on college campuses with organizations such as Students for a Democratic Society.”⁴¹

5.2 SDS

Students for a Democratic Society was a rebellious and radical political organization. One of the most important organizations of 1960’s called for changes in social structure of the USA and saw the vehicle of such changes in the US universities. From 1965 to 1970, SDS activists were involved in some 2,000. The organization was highly decentralized, with each local chapter having their own programs. The first big demonstration against the US involvement in the Vietnam War happening in April 1965 was sponsored by SDS.⁴²

5.3 Women’s Movement

Women were a large part of the Vietnam War opposition. During the Women Liberation movement which was going on during the 1960’s, women were on the uptrend and wanted to participate on politics and social events. That gave a rise to many organizations led by women.

5.4 WSP

Women Strike for Peace was women’s activist group of thousands women which originated in the US during the Cold War and focused on fight against nuclear weapons.⁴³ “By 1964, the emphasis of Women Strike for Peace had shifted to focus as much on the Vietnam War as on disarmament, protesting against the draft and the war’s effects on Vietnamese children.”⁴⁴

⁴⁰ “*The Antiwar Movement*,” Ushistory.org, <http://www.ushistory.org/us/55d.asp> (accessed April 22, 2017).

⁴¹ “*Vietnam: The Antiwar Movement*,” History.com, <http://www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war/vietnam-war-history/pictures/vietnam-anti-war-protests/womens-march-against-vietnam-war> (accessed April 23, 2017).

⁴² Danver. 943.

⁴³ Amy Swerdlow, *Women Strike for Peace: Traditional Motherhood and Radical Politics in the 1960s* (Chicago: The University of Chicago press, 1993), 70.

⁴⁴ “Women strike for peace,” Jewish Women's Archive, <https://jwa.org/thisweek/nov/01/1961/wsfp> (accessed April 23, 2017).

5.5 WILPF

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom is an international non-profit organization established in 1915. During the Vietnam War, WILPF sent delegations to both South and North Vietnam and cooperated with the United Nations to arrange women's peace and security.⁴⁵

5.6 MOBE

The National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam (MOBE) was an anti-war organization that opposed the US military presence in Vietnam with its motto 'What are we waiting for?' The MOBE organized various actions against the war, including a massive protests in New York City and San Francisco in April 1967 which were followed by protests in Washington D.C. and Pentagon in October that year.⁴⁶

5.7 SANE

The National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy grew out of a meeting of pacifists and anti-nuclear activists in April 1957.⁴⁷ With Hollywood stars such as Marlon Brando or Anthony Quinn among the members the organization was the first group to publicly oppose President Johnson's reelection.⁴⁸

5.8 VVAW

Vietnam Veterans Against the War was an organization consisting of former US soldiers campaigning for peace and against US participation in Vietnam. VVAW participated in many protests, the most significant one happening on April 23, 1971 in Washington where over 800 soldiers ceremoniously tossed away their medals, ribbons and combat badges in front of the Capitol to show their resistance and anger at the war.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ "History." WILPF, <http://wilpf.org/wilpf/history/> (accessed April 23, 2017).

⁴⁶ Danver, 1010.

⁴⁷ "SANE," Stanford University, http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_national_committee_for_a_sane_nuclear_policy_sane/ (accessed April 19, 2017.)

⁴⁸ Lawrence S. Wittner and Glen H. Stassen, *Peace Action: Past, Present, and Future*, 1st ed. (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2006), 5.

⁴⁹ Danver, 932.

5.9 Artists' Movement

The opposition to the war was reflected in many different fields, including art. Artists' movement against the war wasn't one of the biggest, however it definitely was one of the most influential ones. Artists of various professions stood out in press or concerts and instigated the public. One of the most significant events where artists of that time publicly showed their attitude towards the war was Woodstock Music & Art Festival held in August 1969. "Woodstock was basically an anti-war event more than anything else. I'm sure people came along for the ride for other reasons, but mainly it was a way of showing that a lot of people did not want the war to go on. People have sort of ran out of ideas about how to make a statement" said one of the attendees, Isabel Stein.⁵⁰

5.9.1 Angry Arts Week

Angry Arts Week took place in January 1967 in New York City. With roughly 500 artists involved it became the most significant anti-war event held by artists.⁵¹

6 Opposition to the war in art

To claim that art had an impact on American society during the Vietnam War one must believe that art can actually influence people. To me, the fact that art can influence people's opinions is expressed in fear of government of totalitarian states. For example, a strict censure of western art during the communist regime in Czechoslovakia. Or prescribed socialist realism as an art style in the Soviet Union. That came from an assumption that art – posters, literature, music, films etc. have a high influence on masses. Similarly, in capitalistic states, art is used to manipulate people in commerce – usage of music in advertisements etc.⁵²

During the Vietnam War, many artists including writers, poets and musicians found an inspiration in it and expressed their attitude towards the war in their works and by that they significantly helped to shape the public opinion. Their works mainly captured tragic events of the war as well as homecoming of soldiers who witnessed horrors of the war and thrown

⁵⁰ Mike Evans and Paul Kingsbury, *Woodstock: Three Days that Rocked the World* (New York: Sterling, 2010), 20.

⁵¹ Matthew Israel, *Kill for peace: American artists against the Vietnam War* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013), 70.

⁵² Arnold Foster, and Judith R. Blau, *Art and society: readings in the sociology of the arts* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 343.

back to a normal life had to fight the flashbacks of the war and their own consciousness. In this thesis I will mention some of the most significant works of literature, music and film.

6.1 Literature

Anti-war poetry is not a new phenomenon as it can be observed over the course of history. An example of early modern anti-war poetry is Robert Southey's poem 'The Battle of Blenheim'. Perhaps the most famous generation of anti-war poets came out during the World War I. Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen remain the most significant authors of such poetry.

Therefore it is no wonder that shortly after the Vietnam War broke out, many American writers stood in opposition. Probably the most famous American poet of the time, Allen Ginsberg was taking parts in many marches and public protests. "He was known to newspaper readers and watchers of television-the first American poet ever to be a celebrity."⁵³ Also, in June of 1965 Robert Lowell refused President Johnson's invitation to a White House Festival of Arts as a protest against the war.⁵⁴

Poetry was the main source of the anti-war propaganda at universities and colleges all around the states. "Every other college campus had its poetry reading against the war in Vietnam."⁵⁵ In 1966 David Ray and Robert Bly founded an umbrella organization called 'The American Writers Against the Vietnam War' and organized public readings of poems with anti-war themes.

6.1.1 Armies of the Night – Norman Mailer

'Armies of the Night' is a non-fictional novel which was published in 1968 by an American writer, journalist and political activist Norman Mailer. The novel deals with an incident of March on Pentagon of October 21, 1967 of which the author was an active participant. Over 70 000 demonstrators including war veterans, women's groups, students, liberals, radicals, hippies and professors gathered in Washington that day in order to join one of the largest protests against the Vietnam War. The purpose was to confront the 'war makers'. The event was a high tide of Stop the draft week, a nationwide initiative to stop the draft. Many of the protesters were young men recently drafted and many of them publicly burnt their draft cards

⁵³ Louis Simpson. *Studies of Dylan Thomas, Allen Ginsberg, Sylvia Plath and Robert Lowell* (London: Macmillan, 1979), 79.

⁵⁴ Simpson, 158.

⁵⁵ Simpson, 158.

which was against the law. Such disobedience which was originally meant to be peaceful and non-violent led to many conflicts between protesters and police.

Mailer divides his work into two parts: 'History as a Novel' and 'the Novel as History'. In the first part he uses third person narration and creates a character of Norman Mailer to depict his personal experience which gives the novel a new dimension, away from autobiographical style. He chronologically describes the event as he experienced it, his involvement from the very beginning when he was unwilling to participate, his arrival to Washington and his speech at the Ambassador Theatre, the march itself, Mailer's arrest and imprisonment, trial and release. While creating such framework Mailer leaves himself a space to discuss his own political history, the current political scene and his position towards it. "The first section of the book (History as a Novel) is, in his own words, 'nothing but a personal history which while written as a novel was to the best of the author's memory scrupulous to facts'."⁵⁶

In the second, shorter part of the book Mailer deals with the incident at large, he explains the march from the perspective of an unbiased observer in historical and social backgrounds. He covers the genesis of the event, its reasons, organizers and participants.

The book in whole was a huge contribution to the social perception of US foreign policy even though that Mailer himself did not contribute to the march too much, considering that he was one of the first arrested during the event. His witness in combination with unashamed egoism and choice to use himself as a protagonist of a real event supporting opinion of many Americans has won him the Pulitzer Prize for General Nonfiction in 1969.

6.1.2 The Teeth Mother Naked at Last – Robert Bly

'The Teeth Mother Naked at Last' is one of Bly's poems attacking US involvement in Vietnam appearing in his second book 'The Light Around The Body', published in 1967 and winning him the National Book Award. "The book showed Bly attempting to unite public and private realms in poetry, a project that would continue to influence both his own work and his role as a public poet. In 1966, Bly cofounded American Writers against the Vietnam War, led much of the opposition among writers to that war, and even contributed his National Book Award prize money to the anti-war effort."⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Jean Radford, *Norman Mailer: A Critical Study* (London: Macmillan, 1975), 116.

⁵⁷ "Robert Bly," Poetry Foundation, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/robert-bly> (accessed August 18, 2017).

The poem is divided into seven numbered parts which consist of different numbers of stanzas of various length lines. From the very beginning Bly uses deep imagery to make the reader feel he is right in the middle of the action in Vietnam:

*Massive engines lift beautifully from the deck.
Wings appear over the trees, wings with eight
hundred rivets.*

*Engines burning a thousand gallons of gasoline a minute
sweep over the huts with dirt floors.⁵⁸*

The poet convincingly depicts the horrors of the war, the rampage of American Army and suffering of the innocent Vietnamese including children to affect the reader's emotions:

*Artillery shells explode. Napalm canisters roll end
over end.
800 steel pellets fly through the vegetable walls.
The six-hour infant puts his fists instinctively
to his eyes to keep out the light.
But the room explodes,
the children explode.
Blood leaps on the vegetable walls.*

The poem is strongly political. In the second section Bly does not only oppose the war, he also criticizes the American government as well as accuses the President of lying:

*Now the Chief Executive enters; the press
conference begins:
First the President lies about the date the Appalachian
Mountains rose.
Then he lies about the population of Chicago, then he lies
about the weight of the adult eagle, then about the
acreage of the Everglades

He lies about the number of fish taken every year in the
Arctic, he has private information about which city is
the capital of Wyoming, he lies about the birthplace of
Attila the Hun.

He lies about the composition of the amniotic fluid, and
he insists that Luther was never a German, and that
only the Protestants sold indulgences,

That Pope Leo X wanted to reform the church, but the
"liberal elements" prevented him,
that the Peasants' War was fomented by Italians
from the North.

And the Attorney General lies about the time the
sun sets.*

⁵⁸ "The Teeth Mother Naked at Last," <http://warpoetry.tumblr.com/post/63681133717/the-teeth-mother-naked-at-last-by-robert-bly> (accessed August 18, 2017)

In the third part the poet portrays the senselessness of the war. I think that the following stanzas show that the author doesn't understand why the war is waged and he can't find a reason for such a rich country to fight the war since it's not going to help the country in any way.

*This is what it's like for a rich country to make war
this is what it's like to bomb huts*

*This is what it's like to have a gross national product.
It's because the aluminum window shade business is
doing so well in the United States that we roll fire
over entire villages*

*It's because a hospital room in the average American city
now costs \$90 a day that we bomb hospitals in
the North*

*It's because the milk trains coming into New Jersey hit
the right switches every day that the best Vietnamese
men are cut in two by American bullets that follow
each other like freight cars.*

The fifth section is the shortest and reflects Bly's conviction that the soldiers fight under a misconception of their mission and they justify their actions.

*The Marines think that unless they die the rivers will
not move.
They are dying so that the mountain shadows will
continue to fall east in the afternoon,
so that the beetle can move along the ground near the
fallen twigs.*

The sixth part of the poem is rather controversial and appeals on the reader to try to imagine what it's like to actually witness the Vietnamese children suffering while burned alive. The whole poem seems to be written in a provoking way, to make the reader act.

*But if one of those children came near that we have set
on fire,
came toward you like a gray barn, walking,
you would howl like a wind tunnel in a hurricane,
you would tear at your shirt with blue hands,
you would drive over your own child's wagon trying to
back up.*

The last section ends the poem with Bly's Bible-like prophetic vision. The very last two stanzas show the disappointment in humanity which came such a long way but in the end people burn others just like they used to in middle ages:

*Now the whole nation starts to whirl,
the end of the Republic breaks off,*

*Europe comes to take revenge,
the mad beast covered with European hair rushes
through the mesa bushes in Mendocino County,
pigs rush toward the cliff,
the waters underneath part: in one ocean luminous
globes float up (in them hairy and ecstatic men—)
in the other, the teeth mother, naked at last.*

*Let us drive cars
up
the light beams
to the stars ...*

*And return to earth crouched inside the drop of sweat
that falls
from the chin of the Protestant tied in the fire.*

6.2 Music

It is obvious that preferences for art in society are determined by demographic factors, such as the average age of the society. “A population with a disproportionate number of older people would support certain art forms – for example, crafts and traditional arts – whereas a population with relatively many younger people would probably support other art forms – for example, live music.”⁵⁹ By 1960 the median age in the US had decreased to 29.5 during the first decline since 1900.⁶⁰ That might be one of the reasons why music and musical festivals were so popular in the 1960s.

Music of various genres in the sixties was influenced by the unrest in America. When Mick Jagger, the front man of the British rock band the Rolling Stones was asked whether his 1969 album ‘Let It Bleed’ was heavily influenced by the Vietnam War his answer was positive: “Even though I was living in America only part time, I was influenced. All those images were on television. Plus, the spill out onto campuses.”⁶¹

Vietnam War, Civil Rights Movement, Cold War and many other conflicts and ideologies such as feminism or Black Power influenced popular songs of that time. Sixties are also considered as a starting point of modern rock music.⁶² “Outgrowing its childhood of simple four chord progressions and inane lyrics, rock evolved into a complex art form that affected

⁵⁹ Foster and Blau, 344.

⁶⁰ United States Department of Labour, Bureau of Labour Statistics, “1960-61” <https://www.bls.gov/opub/uscs/1960-61.pdf> (accessed August 17, 2017).

⁶¹ Jann Wenner, “Mick Jagger Remembers,” Rolling Stone, www.rollingstone.com/music/news/mick-jagger-remembers-19951214 (accessed August 18, 2017).

⁶² Timothy E. Scheurer, *American Popular Music: Readings from the Popular Press* (Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1989), 179.

the lives of millions simultaneously reflecting and shaping their political and social attitudes.”⁶³ The connection of music and political opinions in the sixties was also indicated by the hippie movement.

In addition, it is important to note that this form of art was directly introduced to soldiers serving in Vietnam through Armed Forces Vietnam Network (AFVN) Radio.

In the following section I will analyze some of the most famous protest songs of Vietnam War period. The whole texts of all the songs are included in the appendix.

6.2.1 Talking Vietnam Blues – Phil Ochs

The American protest singer Phil Ochs was probably the first musician to compose a protest song that aimed directly against Vietnam conflict with the country’s name in the title. The song was released in April 1964, only four months before the Gulf of Tonkin incident and before the major escalation of the conflict.⁶⁴ Similar lyrics to Ochs’ which show his political prediction would later appear in many popular songs throughout the sixties.

Ochs sings about the training as in the 1964 the American army personnel was sent to Vietnam as ‘advisors’ only, in order to train the South Vietnamese soldiers:

*Sailing over to Vietnam
Southeast Asian Birmingham
Well training is the word we use
Nice word to have in case we lose
Training a million Vietnamese
To fight for the wrong government and the American Way⁶⁵*

6.2.2 The Unknown Soldier – The Doors

Recorded and released in 1968, ‘The Unknown Soldier’ was the first single from The Doors’ album ‘Waiting for the Sun’. This anti-war anthem was a reaction to what people saw daily on TV – soldiers dying. Morrison in the song describes an ordinary morning of a family watching the news on TV and their experience with seeing the violence and the death of an unknown soldier:⁶⁶

⁶³ Scheurer, 179.

⁶⁴ Scheurer, 180.

⁶⁵ “Talking Vietnam Blues,” <https://www.lyrics.com/lyric/2134508> (accessed August 13, 2017).

⁶⁶ Stephen Davis, *Jim Morrison: Life, Death, Legend* (New York: Gotham Books, 2005), 211.

*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 soldier⁶⁷*

The lyrics of this psychedelic rock song prove how common it was to see the violence on TV, people were so used to such pictures that they were able to eat their breakfast while watching the horrors of the war. Also, the number of dead soldiers was so high that there wasn't space to even mention each name.

6.2.3 Give Peace a Chance – John Lennon

The first solo single of a pacifist John Lennon recorded while he was still a member of the Beatles later became one of the most famous anti-war songs ever recorded. It was released in July 1969 in both UK and the US as a single by Plastic Ono Band which was a collaboration project of Lennon and Yoko Ono.

The simple statement of the chorus carries the message whereas the rest of the song is a humorous reduction of initially seriously sounding terms into less important and even nonsense easing the theme of war.⁶⁸

*C'mon, ev'rybody's talking about
Ministers, sinisters, banisters and canisters
Bishops and Fishops and Rabbis and Popeyes and bye-bye, bye-byes
All we are saying is give peace a chance
All we are saying is give peace a chance⁶⁹*

“The song ‘Give Peace a Chance’ – written and first performed on the last night of his Montreal bed-in in 1969 – was sung days later in Washington by Pete Seeger along with more than a half a million protesters and immediately became the anthem of the peace movement.”⁷⁰

⁶⁷ “The Unknown Soldier,” <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/doors/theunknownsoldier.html> (accessed August 15, 2017)

⁶⁸ Ken Bielen and Ben Urish, *The Words and Music of John Lennon* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007), 10.

⁶⁹ “Give Peace a Chance,” <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/johnlennon/givepeaceachance.html> (accessed August 18, 2017).

⁷⁰ Yoko Ono, *Memories of John Lennon* (New York: HarperEntertainment, 2005), 89.

6.2.4 Machine Gun – Jimi Hendrix

The American musician and former Jimi Hendrix publicly opposed the war. He was a former soldier himself however never deployed because he managed to escape the army before the conflict in Vietnam fully emerged. Hendrix was discharged in 1962 after he claimed he was having a homosexual tendencies and considered unfit for the military service.⁷¹

‘Machine Gun’ is a song written by Hendrix and performed and recorded in 1970 for his live album ‘Band of Gypsies’. Hendrix used his skills and guitar effects to imitate the sound of an actual machine gun. Together with the drummer’s vocals which sound like a scream of a battlefield, the song creates an outstanding imitation of combat. At most of the concerts Hendrix dedicated the song to soldiers overseas.⁷² The lyrics don’t refer to the Vietnam War directly, the song is rather a general anti-war protest song claiming that in war evil is in charge on both sides:

*Machine gun
Tearing my body all apart
Evil man make me kill ya
Evil man make you kill me⁷³*

In the song Hendrix compares himself as a musician to a bomber. The song seems to be Hendrix own battle with the war. By picking up his axe he refers to picking up his guitar as an axe is a common rock’n’roll slang for a guitar.:

*Hey I pick up my axe and fight like a bomber now
Yeah but you still blast me down to the ground*

6.2.5 The Star Spangled Banner performed by Jimi Hendrix

The song written by Francis Scott Key and John Stafford Smith ‘The Star Spangled Banner’ became the US anthem in 1931. Key wrote the poem which was later used as the US anthem lyrics after witnessing the victory of the US army at the Fort McHenry during the War of 1812. Therefore the lyrics of the anthem basically describe the war triumph of the United States. In 1969 Jimi Hendrix performed one of the most controversial versions of the song as an instrumental solo in front of hundreds of thousands people in Woodstock, and turned

⁷¹ Edward Willett, *Jimi Hendrix: "Kiss the sky"*, (Berkeley Heights, NJ: Enslow Publishers, 2006), 32.

⁷² “The 10 Best Hendrix Songs,” Rolling Stone, <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/pictures/readers-poll-the-10-best-jimi-hendrix-songs-20130320> (accessed August 18, 2017).

⁷³ “Machine Gun,” <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/jimihendrix/machinegun.html> (accessed July 24, 2017).

the originally patriotic anthem into a protest song against the US involvement in Vietnam War. Hendrix used his skills combined with various guitar effects pedals to imitate the sound of gunfire, and blasting bombs.⁷⁴

6.2.6 War – Edwin Starr

Written in 1969 by Norman Whitfield and Barrett Strong for the Motown label, originally recorded by The Temptations, the song ‘War’ gained its huge success after re-recorded by Edwin Starr a year later. Starr used the song to ventilate his anger while screaming that war doesn’t help or solve anything. The simple lyrics together with repetition and typical black music create the impression of a dissatisfied crowd.

*War, what is it good for?
Absolutely nothing!*⁷⁵

Besides the simple intro the song also has more powerful verse to offer to the listeners. In the fourth verse Starr sings about post-traumatic stress syndrome many returning soldiers had to deal with. He also emphasizes the fact that nothing good can emerge from war since it only takes lives away:

*(War), Its only friend is the undertaker
War has shattered many young men's dreams
Made them disabled, bitter and mean
Life is much too short and precious to be fighting wars these days
War can't give life it can only take it away*

Among the other, mostly rock and punk anti-war songs of the 70s, the soul song War stand out with its genre and straightforwardness.

6.2.7 Running Gun Blues – David Bowie

Running Gun Blues from Bowie’s third studio album ‘The Man Who Sold The World’ released in 1970 describes soldier who refuses to give up his gun even after the end of the war:

*It seems the peacefuls stopped the war
Left generals squashed and stifled*

⁷⁴ Doyle Greene, *The rock cover song: culture, history, politics* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2014), 16-20.

⁷⁵ “War,” http://www.oldielyrics.com/lyrics/edwin_starr/war.html (accessed July 24, 2017).

*But I'll slip out again tonight
Because they haven't taken back my rifle⁷⁶*

The anti-war song suggests madness of the soldier as Bowie tries to show what war has done to men: ⁷⁷

*For I promote oblivion
And I'll plug a few civilians*

6.2.8 Child in Time – Deep Purple

Over ten minutes long song was one of the protests against the war that came into existence outside of the US. It was recorded by an English band Deep Purple in 1969 and released one year later on their fourth studio album 'Deep Purple in Rock'. The song is not strictly about the Vietnam War but rather about wars in general, however its birth is related to the Vietnam War which influenced the band during their work on the album.

*See the blind man
Shooting at the world⁷⁸*

The blind man in the lyrics refers either to a soldier unaware of the background and the real motifs behind the war and is blindly following the orders or the whole mankind, all the countries who wage wars or have ever waged wars and contributed to a destruction of the world.

“Child in Time would go on to become one of the most potent and poignant of all British rock commentaries on the then ongoing Vietnam War — and survive, too, to become a private anthem for many of the underground opposition groups forged within the political turmoil of 1980s-90s Eastern Europe”⁷⁹

6.2.9 Born in the U.S.A. – Bruce Springsteen

One of the most misunderstood political songs was recorded in 1982 and came out in 1984 as a reverberation of the war. The fact that this song is often misinterpreted by public is proven by the fact that Ronald Reagan praised the song in his campaign in 1984, stating that

⁷⁶ “Running Gun Blues,” <http://www.alivelyrics.com/d/davidbowie/runninggunblues.html> (accessed July 24, 2017).

⁷⁷ James E. Perone, *The words and music of David Bowie* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2007), 18.

⁷⁸ “Child in Time,” <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/deeppurple/childintime.html> (accessed July 28, 2017).

⁷⁹ Dave Thompson, *Smoke on the Water: the Deep Purple Story* (Toronto: ECW Press, 2004), 77.

the song carries a message of hope.⁸⁰ The song in fact deals with traumas of American soldiers who served in Vietnam and hardship of their homecoming and reintegration into society:

*Got in a little hometown jam
So they put a rifle in my hand
Sent me off to a foreign land
To go and kill the yellow man⁸¹*

After the second stanza, there is no doubt about the song's theme. *Got into a little hometown jam* suggests the protagonist probably got into a street fight, possibly into a jail later. *They put a rifle in my hand* and *sent me off to a foreign land* proposes that the protagonist hasn't been given a choice and was sent by a higher power *to go and kill the yellow man* – Asians.

*Come back home to the refinery
Hiring man says "Son if it was up to me"
Went down to see my V.A. man
He said "Son, don't you understand"*

The third stanza deals with homecoming from the war into the low economy of 1970's and hardship of getting a job as a veteran from Vietnam.

*I had a brother at Khe Sahn fighting off the Viet Cong
They're still there, he's all gone*

In this particular part of the song Springsteen refers to an American base of Khe Sahn as he reflects his own experience. He sings about one of his friends: "He came over one day and said, 'Well, I enlisted. I'm goin' to Vietnam.' I remember he said he didn't know where it was. And that was it. He left and he didn't come back. And the guys that did come back were not the same."⁸²

The song Bruce Springsteen wrote differs a lot from the song people heard. He wrote it seven years after the fall of Saigon, therefore the song wasn't a direct protest against the war but rather a memorial.

⁸⁰ "Born in the USA: Misunderstood songs," BBC News, <http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20140603-misunderstood-songs> (accessed April 28, 2017).

⁸¹ "*Born in the USA*," <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/bruce-springsteen/bornintheusa.html> (accessed April 28, 2017).

⁸² Kurt Loder: "*Bruce Springsteen on 'Born in the U.S.A.'*," Rolling Stone, <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/the-rolling-stone-interview-bruce-springsteen-on-born-in-the-u-s-a-19841206>, (accessed April 25, 2017).

6.2.10 Bob Dylan

Bob Dylan, one of the most influential folk musicians ever was among the first artists to reflect his disapproval of the ongoing war into his songs in the early 1960's. "Bob Dylan's music opened up a path where music was used as a weapon to oppose the war in Vietnam and fight injustice and racism. That was the big thing that he has done for music."⁸³

His third album 'The Times They Are a-Changin'' released in 1964 contains songs that call for social change. The album's title track of the same name was written a year before the album was released, just before the public began to disapprove of America's involvement in Vietnam.

The song's lyrics contain a reference to the war. Dylan address politicians, reminds them of the threat of Vietnam and tells them not to be blind to the conflict which is likely to expand and people are in danger:

*Come senators, congressmen
Please heed the call
Don't stand in the doorway
Don't block up the hall
For he that gets hurt
Will be he who has stalled
There's a battle outside and it is ragin'
It'll soon shake your windows and rattle your walls
For the times they are a-changin'⁸⁴*

The refrain actually reflects the mood of the sixties as the times for American people were really changing. In another stanza Dylan reflects the change in the society and calls to the previous generation that the new one is here and it brings changes:

*Come mothers and fathers
Throughout the land
And don't criticize
What you can't understand
Your sons and your daughters*

⁸³ "Bob Dylan plays his first gig in Vietnam," BBC News, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13029109> (accessed August 18, 2017).

⁸⁴ "Times They Are A-Changin'," <https://bobdylan.com/songs/times-they-are-changin/> (accessed August 18, 2017).

*Are beyond your command
Your old road is rapidly agin'
Please get out of the new one if you can't lend your hand
For the times they are a-changin'*

“While at first glance Dylan could be pleading with the public to stop trying to understand the war, Dylan is in fact trying to tell us something else. In poetic terms, he shows the mass confusion, frustration, and anger at how many parents’ sons and daughters were sent off to war.”⁸⁵

Another song from the same album called *With God on Our Side* contains a lot of historical references to various conflicts USA was involved in. It points out how people justify waging wars claiming it is for a good cause and believing that God is always on their side. Even though they don’t really understand the reasons to fight, they go to the war with pride and ignore that people are dying:

*Oh the First World War, boys
It closed out its fate
The reason for fighting
I never got straight
But I learned to accept it
Accept it with pride
For you don't count the dead
When God's on your side⁸⁶*

At the end of the song Dylan expresses his fear regarding the current situation, realizing the threat of weapons of mass destruction and its power:

*But now we got weapons
Of the chemical dust
If fire them we're forced to
Then fire them we must*

⁸⁵ Alexander E. Hopkins, “*Protest and Rock n' Roll During the Vietnam War*,” *Inquiries Journal*, www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/713/protest-and-rock-n-roll-during-the-vietnam-war (accessed August 18, 2017).

⁸⁶ “*With God on Our Side*,” <https://bobdylan.com/songs/god-our-side/> (accessed August 18, 2017).

*One push of the button
And a shot the world wide
And you never ask questions
When God's on your side*

6.3 Film

With spread of modern technologies and television boom between 1950s and 1960s, the anti-war themes found their way to movie screens as well. In this thesis will analyze two very different types of anti-war films that were made during the Vietnam War.

6.3.1 Hearts and Minds (1974)

Winning hearts and minds is a war strategy which consists of emotional and intellectual appeal instead of violence. "In relation to the Vietnam War it stands as a metaphor for the divisiveness, duplicity and moral ambiguities of U.S. policy in Vietnam. On its face 'winning hearts and minds' appeals to a vision to moral victories and righteous intents. The hypocrisy of this was apparent to soldiers and anti-war activists who understood that, as military jargon, 'winning hearts and minds' actually spoke less about victories over abstract, disembodied loyalties and more about the violent production of body counts."⁸⁷

Peter Davis' documentary critically examines the war through archival war footage, interviews with people who played a significant role in the development of the conflict as well as ordinary soldiers and Vietnamese civilians who witnessed the war.

The film caused a lot of controversy in the USA, because it unprecedentedly and courageously shows the impact of war on its victims - ordinary Vietnamese. Even though its premiere in the US was delayed by the government, Hearts and Minds won the Academy Award in 1975 for the best documentary feature.⁸⁸

Beside the scenes where American soldiers are asked whether they think the war is worth it and answering they don't know, I list among the documentary's most controversial scenes the scene with Daniel Ellsberg who enumerates the lies of the previous five US presidents

⁸⁷ Michael Bibby, *Hearts and minds: bodies, poetry, and resistance in the Vietnam era* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1996), 2.

⁸⁸ "Hearts and Minds (1974)," IMDb, www.imdb.com/title/tt0071604/ (accessed August 18, 2017).

and tells how the American public was lied to month by month by each of these five administrations. Also, American soldiers who speak about the pleasure of hitting the target with bombs while just doing their jobs with no personal thoughts is shocking as followed by an interview with a Vietnamese who shows his burned house and speaks about his losses. In one of the scenes George Thomas Coker, an American soldier gives a speech to children at American school and one child asks him what Vietnam looks like. He answers that if it wasn't for the people it was very pretty, but the people there were very backward, primitive and they just "make a mess out of everything." This belief is confirmed by Edward Sowders, an army deserter at Congressional Hearing on Amnesty in the following scene: "Instead of helping the Vietnamese people, I saw that we were party to their deliberate and systematic destruction. The Vietnamese were considered less than human, inferiors. We called them 'gooks,' 'slopes.' Their lives weren't worth anything to us because we'd been taught to believe that they were all fanatical and that they were all V.C. or V.C. sympathizers, even the children." This particular testimony shows the psychological aspect behind the action of the soldiers who were influenced by the pro-war propaganda.

Very touching scene is the one with a Vietnamese coffin maker in Saigon who is making a child coffin while he speaks about the countless kills in his area caused by American bombs and poison which killed seven of his own children. He however adds that he cannot talk about it because of fear of the government.

What makes this documentary so valuable and influential are the actual testimonies of witnesses combined with carefully planned cuts. For example showing the General Westmoreland coldly state that the price of life for the Westerner is higher than for the Oriental while we still hear a Vietnamese woman crying over her dead husband from the previous scene.

The documentary is not anti-war because it is intended to be. As the director Peter Davis confirms: "I decided I wanted to make a film that was not explanatory but experiential. I didn't want to instruct or even inform in the usual way; I hoped instead to convey something of the experience of war."⁸⁹ It is anti-war because it shows the truth from various angles.

⁸⁹ Megan O'Grady, "Director Peter Davis on *Hearts and Minds*," Vogue, www.vogue.com/article/hearts-and-minds-vietnam-documentary-peter-davis (accessed August 18, 2017).

6.3.2 Mickey Mouse in Vietnam (1968)

Mickey Mouse in Vietnam is a short animated anti-war clip, directed by Lee Savage and produced by Milton Glaser in 1968. The video is slightly over one minute long and was created without Walt Disney's knowledge.⁹⁰

It features Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse joining the US army and leaving to Vietnam after reading a drafting poster that says 'Join the Army and See the World'. He arrives in Vietnam, proceeds to the war zone and gets shot in the head just a few seconds after. During the clip, Mickey is wearing his typical smile, as we know it from Walt Disney cartoons, until the last scene. The video ends with Mickey Mouse lying on the ground with blood coming from a hole in his head as his smile slowly changes into a sad grimace.

This simple but apt animation carries a strong political message. Mickey Mouse was an innocent and idealistic American national symbol since as early as the 1940s.⁹¹ The authors have decided to get him killed in Vietnam after he was lured by a poster creating a false expectations. Just like many American men who signed up, not really knowing for what.

⁹⁰ John Grant, *Encyclopedia of Walt Disney's animated characters*, 3rd ed. (New York: Hyperion Books, 1998), 31.

⁹¹ Christopher Finch, *The art of Walt Disney: from Mickey Mouse to the Magic Kingdoms* (New York: Portland House, 1988), 42.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to describe the public resistance to the Vietnam War in the USA and its reflection in art.

The thesis begins with a brief description of a social background in the USA in the 1960s, mentions President Kennedy's administration, the Civil Rights Movement as well as the influence of Martin Luther King.

The following chapters deal with the Vietnam War and chronologically describe its development, the incident of Gulf of Tonkin and Tet Offensive, explain terms of Americanization and Vietnamization of the war, as well as describe the US policies.

The War's summary is followed by the information on the influential role of the media and the cause of the agitation of the American public associated with it. Regarding the chapter of the cause of the agitation, incidents of the Massacre of My Lai and leakage of Pentagon Papers are described.

Next, a list and description of the most significant movements and organizations is provided. The second part of the thesis copes with the opposition to the war as captured in art with commentary on significant literary, musical and film works. In the section dealing with literature I focus on Norman Mailer's 'Armies of the Night' and Robert Bly's 'The Teeth Mother Naked at Last'. Regarding music – the most influential form of art among the young generation – the focus is put on the most popular songs of the time. At the end of the thesis I have included two examples of films with anti-war themes that helped to raise the awareness about the negative impacts of the war.

Resumé

Záměrem bakalářské práce bylo popsat odpor proti válce ve Vietnamu ve Spojených státech amerických a jeho promítnutí v umění.

Práce začíná shrnutím sociálního pozadí spojených států během šedesátých let dvacátého století, zmiňuje období prezidenta Kennedyho, Afroamerické hnutí za občanská práva a vliv Martina Luthera Kinga.

Následující kapitola se zabývá vietnamskou válkou a chronologicky popisuje její vývoj, incident v Tonkinském zálivu a Ofenzívu Tet. Zároveň vysvětluje termíny Amerikanizace a Vietnamizace války spolu s politikou spojených států.

Následuje popis role, kterou ve válce sehrála média a s tím souvisejícími důvody k agitaci ze strany americké veřejnosti. V rámci kapitoly o důvodech k agitaci jsou vysvětleny incidenty masakru v My Lai a únik tzv. Pentagon Papers. Dále je poskytnut výčet nejvýznamnějších protiválečných hnutí a organizací doby.

Druhá část práce se zabývá analýzou významných literárních, hudebních a filmových děl vzniklých během války ve Vietnamu, ve kterých se vyskytuje protiválečná tematika. V části zabývající se literaturou je pozornost kladena na díla Normana Mailera a Roberta Blye. Co se týče hudby, jakožto nejvlivnějšího odvětví umění mezi mladou generací, je důraz kladen na nejpoblárnější písně doby. Na konci práce jsou zahrnuty dva filmy s protiválečnou tematikou, které pomohly zvednout povědomí o negativních dopadech války.

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Abstract

Author: Kateřina Marková
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Supervisor: PhDr. Matthew Sweney, Ph.D.
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Key words: Vietnam War, American culture, anti-war movements, art

The aim of this thesis is to describe the anti-war movements in the United States during the Vietnam War and its reflection in art.

Firstly a theoretical background of the Vietnam War and the political and social background of the 1960's in the USA will be described. Secondly the role of the media in the war and a list of the most significant movements of the time will be provided.

In the second part of the thesis the focus is put on the role of art and art as a way to express the opposition to war. The most significant pieces of art of various art fields will be analyzed.

Anotace

Autor:	Kateřina Markov
Katedra:	Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky
Nzev prce:	Protivlen hnutí v USA bhem vietnamsk vlky
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Rok obhajoby:	2017
Kliov slova:	Vlka ve Vietnamu, americk kultura, protivlen hnutí

Clem bakalrsk prce je popsat protivlen hnutí ve spojench sttech bhem vlky ve Vietnamu a jejich odraz v umn.

Nejprve bude poskytnuto teoretick pozad vlky ve Vietnamu spolen s politickm a spoleenskm pozadm spojench stt v šedestch letech dvactho stolet. Nsledn bude popsna role mdi a budou popsny nejvznamnj protivlen hnutí doby.

Ve druhé asti prce bude pozornost soustředna na roli umn jako monosti vyjdřen nesouhlasu s vlkou. Nejvznamnj dla z rznch odvtv umn budou analyzovny.

Appendix

Talking Vietnam Blues

Sailing over to Vietnam

Southeast Asian Birmingham

Well training is the word we use

Nice word to have in case we lose

Training a million Vietnamese

To fight for the wrong government and the American Way

Well they put me in a barracks house

Just across the way from Laos

They said you're pretty safe when the troops deploy

But don't turn your back on your house boy

When they ring the gong, watch out for the Viet-Cong

Well the sergeant said it's time to train

So I climbed aboard my helicopter plane

We flew above the battle ground

A sniper tried to shoot us down

He must have forgotten, we're only trainees

Them Commies never fight fair

Friends the very next day we trained some more

We burned some villages down to the floor

Yes we burned out the jungles far and wide

Made sure those red apes had no place left to hide

Threw all the people in relocation camps

Under lock and key, made damn sure they're free

Well I walked through the jungle and around the bend

Who should I meet but President Diem

Said you're fighting to keep Vietnam free

For good old de-em-moc-ra-cy (Diem-ocracy)

That means rule by one family
And 15,000 American troops, give or take a few
Thousand
American
Troops

He said, I was a fine old Christian man
Ruling this backward Buddhist land
Well it ain't much but what the heck
It sure beats hell out of Chiang Kai-shek
I'm the power elite
Me and the 7th fleet

He said, Meet my sister, Madam Nhu
The sweetheart of Dien Bien Phu
He said, Meet my brothers, meet my aunts
With the government that doesn't take a chance
Families that slay together, stay together

If you want to stay you'll have to pay
Over a million dollars a day
But it's worth it all, don't you see?
If you loose the country you'll still have me
Me and Syngman Rhee, Chiang Kai-shek, Madam Nhu
Like I said on _Meet the Press_
'I regret that I have but one country to give for my life

Well now old Dien is gone and dead
All the new leaders are anti-Red.
Yes they're pro-American, freedom sensations
Against Red China, the United Nations.
Now all the news commentators and the CIA
are saying, Thank God for coincidence

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

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
Give Peace a Chance

Everybody's talkin' 'bout
Bagism, Shagism, Dragism, Madism, Ragism, Tagism
This-ism, that-ism, ism ism ism

Give Peace a Chance

All we are saying is give peace a chance
All we are saying is give peace a chance

Ev'rybody's talkin' 'bout
Minister, Sinister, Banisters and Canisters,
Bishops, Fishops, Rabbis, and Pop Eyes, Bye bye, Bye byes

All we are saying is give peace a chance
All we are saying is give peace a chance

(Let me tell you now)

Ev'rybody's talkin' 'bout
Revolution, Evolution, Masturbation, Flagellation, Regulation,
Integrations, mediations, United Nations, congratulations

All we are saying is give peace a chance
All we are saying is give peace a chance

Ev'rybody's talkin' 'bout
John and Yoko, Timmy Leary, Rosemary,
Tommy Smothers, Bobby Dylan, Tommy Cooper,
Derek Taylor, Norman Mailer, Alan Ginsberg, Hare Krishna
Hare Hare Krishna

All we are saying is give peace a chance
All we are saying is give peace a chance

Machine Gun

MACHINE GUN
TEARING MY BODY ALL APART

EVIL MAN MAKE ME KILL YA
EVIL MAN MAKE YOU KILL ME
EVIL MAN MAKE ME KILL YOU
EVEN THOUGH WE'RE ONLY FAMILIES APART

WELL I PICK UP MY AXE AND FIGHT LIK A BOMBER
(YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN)
HEY AND YOUR BULLETS KEEP KNOCKING ME DOWN

HEY I PICK UP MY AXE AND FIGHT LIKE A BOMBER NOW
YEAH BUT YOU STILL BLAST ME DOWN TO THE GROUND

THE SAME WAY YOU SHOOT ME DOWN BABY
YOU'LL BE GOING JUST THE SAME
THREE TIMES THE PAIN
AND YOUR OWN SELF TO BLAME
HEY MACHINE GUN

I AIN'T AFRAID OF YOUR MESS NO MORE, BABE
I AIN'T AFRAID NO MORE
AFTER A WHILE YOUR YOUR CHEAP TALK DON'T EVERN CAUSE ME PAIN
SO LET YOUR BULLETS FLY LIKE RAIN

'CAUSE I KNOW ALL THE TIME YOU'RE WRONG BABY
AND YOU'LL BE GOIN' JUST THE SAME
YEAH MACHINE GUN
TEARING MY FAMILY APART
YEAH YEAH ALRIGHT
TEARING MY FAMILY APART

DON'T YOU SHOOT HIM DOWN
HE'S ABOUT TO LEAVE HERE
DON'T YOU SHOOT HIM DOWN
HE'S GOT TO STAY HERE
HE AIN'T GOING NOWHERE
HE'S BEEN SHOT DOWN TO THE GROUND
OH WHERE HE CAN'T SURVIVE NO NO

YEAH THAT'S WHAT WE DON'T WANNA HEAR ANY MORE, ALRIGHT
NO BULLETS
AT LEAST HERE, HUH HUH
NO GUNS, NO BOMBS
HUH HUH
NO NOTHIN', JUST LET'S ALL LIVE AND LIVE
YOU KNOW INSTEAD OF KILLIN'

War

War, huh, yeah
What is it good for
Absolutely nothing
War, huh, yeah
What is it good for
Absolutely nothing
Say it again, why'all
War, huh, good god
What is it good for
Absolutely nothing, listen to me

Oh, war, I despise
'Cause it means destruction of innocent lives
War means tears to thousands of mothers eyes
When their sons go to fight
And lose their lives
I said, war, huh good god, why'all

What is it good for
Absolutely nothing say it again
War, whoa, lord
What is it good for
Absolutely nothing, listen to me

it ain't nothing but a heart-breaker
(War) friend only to the undertaker
Oh, war it's an enemy to all mankind
The point of war blows my mind
War has caused unrest
Within the younger generation
Induction then destruction
Who wants to die, ah, war-huh, good god why'all

What is it good for
Absolutely nothing
Say it, say it, say it
War, huh
What is it good for
Absolutely nothing listen to me

it ain't nothing but a heart breaker
(War) it's got one friend that's the undertaker
Oh, war, has shattered many a young mans dreams
Made him disabled, bitter and mean
Life is much to short and precious
To spend fighting wars these days
War can't give life
It can only take it away
Oh, war, huh good god why'all

What is it good for
Absolutely nothing say it again
whoa, lord
What is it good for
Absolutely nothing listen to me

it ain't nothing but a heart breaker
(War) friend only to the undertaker
Peace, love and understanding
Tell me, is there no place for them today
They say we must fight to keep our freedom
But lord knows there's got to be a better way
Oh, war, huh good god why'all

What is it good for you tell me
Say it, say it, say it, say it
huh good god why'all
What is it good for
Stand up and shout it nothing

Running Gun Blues

I count the corpses on my left, I find I'm not so tidy
So I better get away, better make it today
I've cut twenty-three down since Friday
But I can't control it, my face is drawn
My instinct still emotes it
I slash them cold, I kill them dead
I broke the gooks, I cracked their heads
I'll bomb them out from under the beds
But now I've got the running gun blues
It seems the peacefuls stopped the war
Left generals squashed and stifled
But I'll slip out again tonight

Cause they haven't taken back my rifle
For I promote oblivion
And I'll plug a few civilians
I'll slash them cold, I'll kill them dead
I'll break them gooks, I'll crack their heads
I'll slice them till they're running red
But now I've got the running gun blues
I'll slash them cold, I'll kill them dead
I'll break them gooks, I'll crack their heads
I'll slice them till they're running red
But now I've got the running gun blues

Child in Time

Sweet child in time, you'll see the line
Line, that's drawn
between the Good and the Bad
See the blind man,
he's shooting at the world
Bullets flying, ooh, taking toll
If you've been bad
Oh, Lord I bet you have
And you've not been hit
Oh, by flying lead
You'd better close your eyes
You'd better bow your head
Wait for the ricochet

Ooo-ooo-ooo-ooo...

Ooo-ooo-ooo-ooo...

Aaa-aaa-aaa...

Oh, I wanna hear you sing...

Aaa-aaa-aaa...

Oaoh...

Aaa-aaa-aaa...

Aaa-aaa-aaa...

Sweet child in time, you'll see the line
Line, that's drawn
between the Good and the Bad
See the blind man,
he's shooting at the world
Bullets flying, mmm, taking toll
If you've been bad
Lord I bet you have
And you've not been hit
Oh, not been hit by flying lead
You'd better close your eyes
You'd better bow your head
Wait for the ricochet

Born in the USA

Born down in a dead man's town
The first kick I took was when I hit the ground
You end up like a dog that's been beat too much
Till you spend half your life just covering up

Born in the U.S.A.

I was born in the U.S.A.

I was born in the U.S.A.

Born in the U.S.A.

Got in a little hometown jam so they put a
rifle in my hand
Sent me off to a foreign land to go and kill
the yellow man

Born in the U.S.A.

I was born in the U.S.A.

I was born in the U.S.A.

I was born in the U.S.A.

Born in the U.S.A.

Come back home to the refinery

Hiring man says son if it was up to me

Went down to see my V.A. man

He said son don't you understand now

Had a brother at Khe Sahn fighting off the

Viet Cong

They're still there he's all gone

He had a woman he loved in Saigon

I got a picture of him in her arms now

Down in the shadow of the penitentiary

Out by the gas fire of the refinery

I'm ten years burning down the road

Nowhere to run ain't got nowhere to go

Times They are A-Changin'

Come gather 'round people

Wherever you roam

And admit that the waters

Around you have grown

And accept it that soon

You'll be drenched to the bone

If your time to you is worth savin'

Then you better start swimmin' or you'll sink like a stone

For the times they are a-changin'

Come writers and critics

Who prophesize with your pen

And keep your eyes wide

The chance won't come again
And don't speak too soon
For the wheel's still in spin
And there's no tellin' who that it's namin'
For the loser now will be later to win
For the times they are a-changin'

Come senators, congressmen
Please heed the call
Don't stand in the doorway
Don't block up the hall
For he that gets hurt
Will be he who has stalled
There's a battle outside and it is ragin'
It'll soon shake your windows and rattle your walls
For the times they are a-changin'

Come mothers and fathers
Throughout the land
And don't criticize
What you can't understand
Your sons and your daughters
Are beyond your command
Your old road is rapidly agin'
Please get out of the new one if you can't lend your hand
For the times they are a-changin'

The line it is drawn
The curse it is cast
The slow one now
Will later be fast
As the present now
Will later be past
The order is rapidly fadin'

And the first one now will later be last
For the times they are a-changin’

With God on Our Side

Oh my name it is nothin’
My age it means less
The country I come from
Is called the Midwest
I’s taught and brought up there
The laws to abide
And that the land that I live in
Has God on its side

Oh the history books tell it
They tell it so well
The cavalries charged
The Indians fell
The cavalries charged
The Indians died
Oh the country was young
With God on its side

Oh the Spanish-American
War had its day
And the Civil War too
Was soon laid away
And the names of the heroes
I’s made to memorize
With guns in their hands
And God on their side

Oh the First World War, boys
It closed out its fate

The reason for fighting
I never got straight
But I learned to accept it
Accept it with pride
For you don't count the dead
When God's on your side

When the Second World War
Came to an end
We forgave the Germans
And we were friends
Though they murdered six million
In the ovens they fried
The Germans now too
Have God on their side

I've learned to hate Russians
All through my whole life
If another war starts
It's them we must fight
To hate them and fear them
To run and to hide
And accept it all bravely
With God on my side

But now we got weapons
Of the chemical dust
If fire them we're forced to
Then fire them we must
One push of the button
And a shot the world wide
And you never ask questions
When God's on your side

Through many dark hour
I've been thinkin' about this
That Jesus Christ
Was betrayed by a kiss
But I can't think for you
You'll have to decide
Whether Judas Iscariot
Had God on his side

So now as I'm leavin'
I'm weary as Hell
The confusion I'm feelin'
Ain't no tongue can tell
The words fill my head
And fall to the floor
If God's on our side
He'll stop the next war