UNIVERSITY of WORCESTER

‘Provocative People’: The *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, GI Social and Political Consciousness During the Vietnam War

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy by Published Work

2025

University of Worcester

Abstract

This thesis analyses the contents of one anti-war newspaper, the *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, published by active-duty servicemen in the Pacific Northwest during the Vietnam War. It also employs new oral testimony of the men and women who published the paper. This publication was the main conduit for discontented GIs – a term which referred to members of all branches of the military, not just the Army – to voice their upset and outrage at the US' presence and conduct in Vietnam. This they characterised as oppressive and aggressive, and flouted military regulations to publish the *Free Press*, organise events, and attend anti-war demonstrations in order to espouse this opinion. Primarily, these GIs conceptualised the war in Vietnam as an imperialist endeavour, one which was pursued for capital gain rather than a benevolent intervention to aid the sovereignty of the Republic of Vietnam, as successive administrations had claimed. With an eye on the wider GI Movement, this thesis contends that this particular publication was widely illustrative of the arguments which young men on military bases across the US made about the Vietnam War. This work also highlights the everyday issues which young men, antithetical to the purposes of the military, encountered on Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base, such as their conflict with military law.

This thesis contends that whilst the anti-war critiques of servicemen are of paramount importance, these historical actors' positions were much broader than this. Instead, as young people in the "Sixties", they engaged in many of the progressive endeavours which are usually associated with the civilian "movement" of the period. As active proponents of social justice, opponents of racism, and supporters of women, publishers of the *Free Press* undermine stereotypes that soldiers are inherently conservative and highlight the need to include servicemen in progressive narratives of this period. Hugely important to these endeavours was the increasing radicalisation of the publishers of the *Free Press*, catalysed by their understanding of the Vietnam War as an imperialistic conflict, which pushed them increasingly to the Left. Oral testimony has revealed that some of the GIs of the *Free Press* were also members of a revolutionary Maoist organisation during this period, and this has necessarily impacted understandings of the paper itself. An increasing commentary on class, especially the working-class, and an attempt to reach out to other oppressed groups can therefore be viewed as an effort to pull the US Leftward, sometimes culminating in the desire for a Marxist-Leninist revolution.

Acknowledgements

Over the course of the four years it has taken me to author this piece of work I have become greatly indebted to countless individuals who have benefitted my life in a myriad of ways. I would like to take just a moment to thank some of those people.

Firstly, I would like to commend my family for being able to withstand the tempests which were the accompaniment of the stress and anxiety caused by this thesis. I would like to especially thank my mom, Tracey, and my dad, Mark, for providing me with shelter, sustenance, support, love, and comfort during this period. I am particularly grateful to my mom for her unyielding belief in me, and for conveying this so readily, and to my dad for his constant encouragement and help with my career choices. To my siblings, Kristie, Jordan, and Rebecca, I am eternally grateful for you all as the best friends I could ever wish for, and for laying a path of academic, creative, and professional achievement which I can only hope to follow. I would finally like to thank the two beings who have spent the most time with me in the long days I have spent typing this work in the living room, my dogs, Casper and Ziggy.

I am hugely grateful for the support network that I have had which has kept me sane and alive during the struggles of completing this mammoth task. In no particular order I am grateful to all of my closest friends. For Liam-Jack, I am thankful for his constant friendship and support as somebody I know I can always rely on. I am grateful for his attempts to remove me from my house by enticing me to go and watch Shrewsbury with him, even though we undoubtedly always lost. I am also hugely indebted to Xav, whose house was a constant refuge for me away from the nightmare which this thesis often posed. His humour, quick wit, and intelligence have helped me overcome even the most difficult of periods throughout this process, I do not believe that I would have come out of it half as well if it were not for him. I would also like to express my thanks to my onetime co-worker and friend Max, whose never-failing humour and determination to get me to exercise has kept my healthy, both physically and mentally. Finally, I am grateful to my newest friend, but someone who is no less worthy of my thanks because of this, Maddie. As the only other member of the American History cohort at Worcester I am beholden to you for removing the loneliness and isolation which accompanies shutting yourself in a room on your own for hours at a time with only the light of a laptop screen for company. At least, for the last two years, we have been able to do this together. I am further appreciative of Maddie for her attempts to ensure that this work is the highest quality possible through keen suggestions and helpful proofreading. I hope that I can one day repay the favour.

I perhaps owe no greater thanks than to my Director of Studies, tutor on both History and life, and friend, Dr Wendy Toon. Under her tutelage, I have experienced the wonderful feeling of having somebody truly care for your work and the belief that I have something to offer the history of the United States of America. I am grateful for the generous amounts of time that she has offered to me so that I could grow, both as a historian and as a person. When she reads this, I hope that she feels that her unyielding belief in me has been vindicated. Perhaps greatest of all – and I am sure Wendy would happily be subordinated to her – I owe my gratitude to Wendy's dog, and supreme being in her own right, Frankie. Unfortunately, Frankie did not get to see me finish the piece of work which she peacefully watched me toil over for many years. I would like to offer her much thanks for everything that she brought to my life when I knew her.

I am grateful also to the servicemen who agreed to be interviewed for this study: Randy, Dave, Jim, Henry, Terry, Bob, and Michael. Whilst willing participants and excellent storytellers, I am most thankful for their good humour, their willing hospitality, and the cordiality and respect that they showed a young twenty-three-year-old British boy who was overly excited to hear them talk.

Finally, I would like to thank the attendees, the organising committee, Professor Andrew Preston, and my fellow panel members of the Postgraduate Workshop at the HOTCUS annual conference 2025. The feedback that I received at this event was gratefully received and has benefited my resulting work.

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List of Abbreviations

AFB – Air Force Base

ASU – American Servicemen's Union

AVF – All-Volunteer Force

BWC – Black Workers Congress

COM – Concerned Officers Movement

CO – Conscientious Objector

CPUSA – Communist Party, USA

DRV – Democratic Republic of Vietnam

EM – Enlisted Man/Men

GIA – GI Alliance

GI-CAP – GI-Civilian Alliance for Peace

IWD – International Women's Day

MDM – Movement for a Democratic Military

ML – Marxist-Leninist

MP – Military Police

MVA – Modern Volunteer Army

NCM – New Communist Movement

NLF – National Liberation Front

NVA – North Vietnamese Army

PCS – Pacific Counselling Service

PL – Progressive Labor Party

PX – Post Exchange

RAC – Research Analysis Corps

RVN – Republic of Vietnam

RU – Revolutionary Union

SDS – Students for a Democratic Society

SNCC – Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

SWP – Socialist Workers Party

UCMJ – Uniform Code of Military Justice

UFW – United Farm Workers

USSF – United States Servicemen's Fund

VOLAR – Volunteer Army

VVAW – Vietnam Veterans Against the War

WAC – Women's Army Corps

WAF – Women's Air Force

YAWF – Youth Against War and Fascism

YSA – Young Socialist Alliance

Introduction

The words of the Roman poet, Horace – *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori* – are inscribed on the west portico of the US' largest military graveyard, Arlington National Cemetery.[1] Roughly translating to 'it is sweet and proper to die for one's country', this phrase demonstrates the US state and military's continued belief that to die for the US during combat is an honour.[2] During the Vietnam War, however, there existed a significant contingent of servicemen for whom dying in Vietnam was not glorious, and serving their country was not honourable. This thesis focuses on this minority, collectively referred to as the GI Movement, and investigates how American servicemen actively protested the "glory" of service in Vietnam, urged their country's withdrawal from the war, and rebelled against their duty to serve. To do so, the study focuses specifically on "underground" newspapers published by GIs, a term used to refer to servicemen of all military branches in this thesis. Particularly, it centres on the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* and utilises the oral testimony of those involved in this publication. For these men, who were largely compelled to serve in the military and still faced the possibility of death for their country, they were more likely to agree with the British World War I poet, Wilfred Owen, on the issue of glory in service to one's country, who famously brandished Horace's adage a lie.[3]

The "Sixties" in the United States have remained strong in the popular consciousness of the West. An international phenomenon, in which the social, sexual, and racial mores of the West radically shifted, in no other country is this more renowned than in America. It was an era of profound change. In no other period in the US, nor in another country, has the wearing of jeans and the growing of hair taken on such historical significance as they did during the "Sixties". As a result, it is a time which has continued to fascinate historians and the general

[1] "West Portico Inscriptions" via: Arlington National Cemetery, https://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/Memorial-Amphitheater-100/West-Portico-Inscriptions [accessed: 27/01/25]. Horace, 'The Odes', trans. by David Ferry (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1997), p. 160.

[2] As the phrase is taken from Latin, there are a number of translations, however, this is the most popularly attributed rendition.

[3] For Owen's poem, please see: Wilfred Owen, *Dulce Et Decorum Est*, via: Poetry Foundation, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46560/dulce-et-decorum-est [accessed: 27/01/25].

Whilst it was only males who were subject to the Selective Service System and who faced combat in Vietnam, there were also a small minority of women involved in the GI Movement. Other than those who staffed GI coffeehouses and supported their anti-war husbands, there was one contingent of women of the Women's Army Corps at Fort McClellan, Alabama, who published an anti-war paper called *Whack!* (of which there are no accessible copies). Likewise, one of the more famous acts of the GI Movement was committed by Navy nurse Susan Schnall who dropped leaflets advertising the first march of the GI Movement in 1968. An act for which she was later court-martialled.

public alike, only compounded by the fact that some of the world's most famous and influential musicians, including Bob Dylan, The Beatles, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, and Joni Mitchell to name just a few, released their most famous music during the period. In essence, distinct changes in music, culture, dress, attitudes, and some of the most important political changes, have marked the "Sixties" as one worthy of much historical scrutiny. It is, however, the Vietnam War, the first conflict which the US had ever lost, which casts the largest shadow over this era and has been remembered and reassessed long after the "Sixties" finished. This thesis emphasises that these dramatic changes, including the spectre of the Vietnam War, extended into the first half of the 1970s, creating the need for a conceptual rather than chronological "Sixties".[4]

Whilst the "Sixties", the Vietnam War, and the anti-war movement have inspired mountains of interest and intense scholarship, the opposition of those who lived in the military, pulled the triggers, dropped the bombs, and otherwise aided the mechanisms of war have scarcely been investigated.[5] In contrast, the historiography of the civilian anti-war movement is dense with discussions of the White, middle-class students and privileged intellectuals who opposed the conflict. The erasure of particular "Sixties" activists in favour of these men (and they are most often men) has been highlighted by Andrew E. Hunt, who has argued that, for a long time, there have existed '"neglected constituencies"' within this historiography.[6] In contrast to the largely White, male, and middle-class activists of organisations such as Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), these constituencies were 'feminists, Chicano [Mexican American] power activists, gay militants, American Indian Movement organizers, and antiwar veterans'.[7] Importantly, however, even this list excludes active-duty GIs, and historians' attempts to reclaim the narrative of "Sixties" activism for neglected demographics has overlooked those men who served in the military. In essence, those who have been excluded were those who represented the obverse to the dominant gender, race, sexual orientation, and class; they were women, non-Whites, gay men and women, and working-class people. In scholarly illustrations of the "Sixties", and particularly of the anti-war movement, these activists have been

[4] For a discussion of the concept of the "Sixties" and the importance of elongating it into the 1970s, please see Chapter 1.
[5] For a discussion of both the Vietnam War and the anti-Vietnam War movement historiography, please see Chapter 1.
[6] Andrew E. Hunt, *The Turning: A History of Vietnam Veterans Against the War* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), p. 1.
[7] Ibid., p. 1.

undervalued. Adding to Hunt's list, therefore, is the elimination of anti-war GIs from proper historical study and with the effect of reducing their legitimacy as anti-war actors.

It is uncertain why GI activists have been absented from this historiography when their study offers much to understandings of the anti-war movement, the "Sixties", and the Left during this period. Accordingly, there are three main reasons that study of the GI Movement is important, and they broadly correlate to these different, but overlapping, historiographies, contributing to all of them. Firstly, focus on the GI Movement is significant because it is the grassroots study of those who the war most directly impacted. At its least dangerous, this resulted in the removal of young men from their families and loved ones, their de-individualisation as a part of the military, and the gruelling experiences of Basic Training. In the most extreme cases, the war resulted in their wounding or deaths. As Hunt has discussed, too much of the anti-war movement historiography has centred on the biggest organisations and best-known figures, leaving scholarly study of anti-war servicemen largely absent. This thesis is therefore important to the anti-war historiography by re-focusing the common narrative of anti-war activism away from students in the streets and towards one "neglected constituency", those who protested the Vietnam War from the very bases which intended to inculcate pro-war, anti-Vietnamese, and anti-communist sentiment in them. This separation is not simply a presentist evaluation and some groups within the GI Movement, namely the GI Alliance (GIA) – one of the organisations who published the *Free Press* – deliberately sought to distinguish their critiques from their civilian peers, even though they purported the same or similar arguments. For them, and for this thesis too, the provenance of GI activism mattered. Servicemen were a more authoritative and significant voice on the war because of their figurative, and sometimes literal, closeness to the combat theatre. The military too were aware of this, inhibiting GIs' ability to demonstrate and publicise their feelings against the war, attempting to leave them isolated and unheard. The story of GI anti-war protest is thus also a tale of military oppression. In addition, study of the GI Movement undermines attempts from post-war conservative figures and popular culture to portray servicemen as inherently pro-war, or at least anti-anti-war.[8]

[8] For a discussion of how conservative thought has sought to demarcate between pro-war soldiers and anti-war civilians, please see Chapter 2.

Secondly, anti-war GIs prove to be important as counters to the general stereotype that servicemen were inherently politically and socially conservative. Perhaps surprisingly, a majority of anti-war GIs took a broad approach to activism which engaged servicemen in fights beyond the war itself including those against racism, sexism, and imperialism, and support for labour struggles, and tenants' rights. This was not uncommon, however, and occurred in the general milieu of "Sixties" society, particularly among youth. Taken collectively, these individual strands of single issues combined and collaborated in what was referred to as "the Movement". However, GIs participated in this milieu by relating these broader subjects to specific experiences in the armed forces, demonstrating that young men did not allow their position in the military to inhibit the youthful zeal for progressive activism which this period encapsulated, and instead they actively wedded their circumstances in the military to broader social trends of discrimination and oppression. As such, the repression which GIs faced as a result of trying to communicate their anti-war position was likened to the subjugation of traditionally discriminated against groups such as African Americans, Mexican Americans, women, and even young people, who are not conventionally conceived of as oppressed. Traditionally, like historians of the anti-war movement, scholars have excluded servicemen from narratives about the "Sixties" and, in doing so, have omitted them as an important part of this significant historical era. Consequently, this study emphasises that not only have GIs not been recognised for their role in opposing the war, but they have also been omitted from narratives of "Sixties" activism, limiting conceptions of social activism during this period.

Finally, the third importance of studying the GI Movement is that it reveals another of the most understudied aspects of this era: the changing dynamics on the political Left. Although the anti-war movement was a primarily left-wing undertaking, especially among young people, it has sometimes been portrayed as more of a moral endeavour, rather than a political one. However, following the demise of SDS in 1969 and the splintering of the Left which accompanied this, there was an incipient rise in interest in Marxism-Leninism within the United States, which replaced the earlier ultra-democracy of the student Left and changed much grassroots protest and politicking. As a vogue among "Sixties" activists, GIs were necessarily impacted by the mounting anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, and pro-socialist rhetoric of this period and, in turn, this affected the contents of their newspapers. Indeed, Chairman of the House Committee on Internal Security, Richard H. Ichord, said of the GI Movement in October 1971:

> one aspect of this morale situation which has not been widely revealed or understood is the matter of attempted subversion of the men in uniform by militant

> extremists of the far left. These include, of course, those with Marxist-Leninist leanings who actually seek a Communist victory in Asia and hope to promote an American defeat or, at least, a humiliation of this country and its military forces.[9]

This passage emphasises not only the lack of understanding about the involvement of Marxist-Leninist organisations in the military, something which this thesis reveals, but also exemplifies the declining morale of the US military, something which the GI Movement deliberately fed into, and GI activists fed on. Aside from studying the importance of anti-war GIs, this thesis incorporates a discussion of the changing Left of the "Sixties" through the lens of grassroots GI activists. This further disassociates this thesis from the "top-down" histories which have dominated writing on this era. Instead of viewing communist/Marxist involvement in the GI Movement as a negative phenomenon, as many are apt to do when communism is involved, this thesis contends that it positively expanded the social activism of GIs.

The GI Movement's key importance remains as an example of an understudied and undervalued aspect of anti-war protest. Still, its study also reveals much about the dynamics of grassroots anti-war and progressive activism in general. In this sense, it provides a microcosm of how the components which collectively made up "the Movement" interacted, as well as how the Vietnam War catalysed changes in the Left during this period. These three main importances are linked by a throughline of opposition to both oppression and repression and these themes run throughout this thesis. In this way, the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* and other GI publications tied their broad agenda together through discussion of the oppression of different groups including themselves, the Vietnamese (both North and South), African Americans, Mexican Americans, Amerindians, women, and the working-class. These were the main emphases of GI activism, and they shall be consistently returned to throughout this study. Principally, however, this is not a study of the Left in the US in the late '60s and early '70s, although much of this ground is covered. Instead, it is an analysis of GI anti-war activism which discusses how the anti-war position of these young men caused them to interact with other progressive and left-wing organisations.

Whilst the GI Movement was thus a microcosm of broader paradigm shifts in the United States in the early 1970s, this thesis also takes a case study approach to argue that one GI

[9] "Executive Session 1", 'Investigation of Attempts to Subvert the United States Armed Services, Part 1', *Hearings Before the Committee on Internal Security, House of Representatives, Ninety-Second Congress First Session* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972), p. 6382, via: HathiTrust, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.aa0007576192&seq=157 [accessed: 30/01/25].

newspaper can be seen as a miniature of the broader Movement. As such, it focuses on the entire run of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* – or simply *Free Press* – a monthly "underground" GI newspaper published for audiences on Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base (AFB), near Tacoma, Washington, rather than a sample of many different GI newspapers. This approach allows for a more in-depth study of one GI newspaper, leading to an intimate analysis of the developing positions of the *Free Press*, whilst acknowledging that it was broadly representative of GI activism during this period. This is especially the case as, although their activism was not co-ordinated on a national level, anti-war GIs on bases across the US communicated with each other, if only indirectly. Anti-war servicemen were frequently relocated to other posts, taking their dissident views and knowledge of making GI publications with them. Likewise, the publishers of GI newspapers sent other anti-war collectives copies of their papers and localised GIs wrote to the limited number of national GI newspapers telling of their latest actions and thus providing others with ideas and encouragement.[10] This thesis argues, therefore, that the activism of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* was distinct and is especially worthy of study in its own right, whilst maintaining that anti-war GIs constituted a loose community and their newspapers were largely similar in their contents, arguments, and styles.

VanWynsberghe and Khan have acknowledged that there are over twenty-five different definitions of the term case study, and these span across disciplines.[11] Perhaps most relevant to this study, however, is John Gerring's simple definition: '*an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units*'.[12] That is, a micro-history of the *Free Press* (the single unit) aids understanding of the movement of servicepeople against the Vietnam War (the larger class of (similar) units). Indeed, this thesis conforms to the seven main features of a 'prototypical case study': in-depth focus on one specific unit; a high degree of contextual detail; the use of a natural, complex setting; 'detailed description of a specific

[10] For some of the national newspapers of the GI Movement, please see: *GI Press Service*, "GI Press", Independent Voices Archive, JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/site/reveal-digital/independent-voices/gipressservice-27953540/?so=old; *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin*, "GI Press", Independent Voices Archive, JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/site/reveal-digital/independent-voices/ginewsanddiscussionbulletin-27953538/?so=item_title_str_asc; and *About Face! The U.S. Servicemen's Fund Newsletter*, "GI Press", Independent Voices Archive, JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/site/reveal-digital/independent-voices/aboutfacetheusservicemensfundnewsletter-27953287/?so=item_title_str_asc

[11] Rob VanWynsberghe and Samia Khan, 'Redefining Case Study', *International Journal of Qualitative* Methods [IJQM], 6.2 (June 2007), pp. 80-94 (p. 81).

[12] John Gerring, 'What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good for?', *American Political Science Review*, 98.2 (May 2004), pp. 341-354 (p. 342). Italicised in original.

temporal and spatial boundary'; utilisation of a working hypothesis; use of multiple data sources; and 'extendability' [sic], i.e., the ability to extrapolate one's findings.[13] Case studies are extremely useful ways of studying broad topics, for example social movements. Their use allows for research which is at once extremely in-depth and specific but simultaneously general, covering a large phenomenon.

It is important to note at the outset of this thesis that the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* is viewed as especially worthy of specific study, whilst simultaneously generally representative of the GI press as a whole. It was deliberately chosen over other GI newspapers because of its readability and legibility and the fact that it published for a long period of time, becoming one of the most consistently produced papers. Whilst many GI papers were illegible, amateurish, and regurgitative of other GI and underground publications, resulting from their lack of funds and consistent staffing, the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* is more readable, coherent, and original. Likewise, the longevity and regularity of the paper, rare due to the restrictions on creating such publications on base, led to a greater quantity of articles, cartoons, and issues. It is thus possible to gain a more accurate assessment of the publishers' views and arguments and chart how these transitioned over time. Likewise, its status as a military-only publication, not aided by civilians or published out of a civilian coffeehouse, marked the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* as worthy of special attention. In addition, as the paper had two different publishing bodies over the course of its lifetime – one which embodied the liberal-Left position of the New Left and the second which exemplified the increasing radicalness of the late-"Sixties" – it has great importance as a window into the interactions of servicemen with the different left-wing trends of the era. Nonetheless, it is argued that the *Free Press* was still generally characteristic of other GI newspapers, and other publications have been sporadically used to validate this.

Much of the GI Press has survived, thanks to the work of Dr James Lewes, and the storage of these newspapers in the GI Press Project in the Independent Voices database on JSTOR.[14] However, traditionally, newspapers have proved to be a challenging source for many historians and have been criticised for being 'unreliable, inaccurate, and sensational'.[15] Arnold-Forster,

[13] VanWynsberghe and Khan, 'Redefining Case Study', *IJQM* (June 2007), pp. 83-84.
[14] "GI Press", Independent Voices Archive, JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/site/reveal-digital/independent-voices/gi-press/?so=item_title_str_asc&searchkey=1752589222988 [accessed: 15/07/25]
[15] Lucy Maynard Salmon, *The Newspaper and the Historian* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1923), p. xxxix, via: Hathi Trust: https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015020687862&view=1up&seq=11&skin=2021.

for example, has pointed out the negative effect of commercial influence on newspapers. As profit-driven enterprises rather than vehicles for societal education, he emphasises that, historically, American newspapers have become so dependent on adverts, that businessmen were able to determine the content of newspapers by having stories dropped or editorials changed.[16] Commercial newspapers, therefore, have not always been conveyors of an objective "truth" and have instead deliberately distorted their reporting to suit the economic interests of their donors. The pre-eminent defender of newspapers as a historical source, however, is Lucy Maynard Salmon. In her 1923 book *The Newspaper and the Historian* she argued that, whilst some view them to be 'unreliable, inaccurate, and sensational', the content of newspapers should be split into two parts: the authoritative and the unauthoritative.[17] She states that the authoritative parts can be used to give an account of past events, but that the unauthoritative sections are just as useful 'in determining ideals and standards, in gauging collective ignorance and intelligence, and interpreting the spirit of a time of locality'.[18] In this sense, the unauthoritative sections of a newspaper, which may contain false accounts of historical events and are therefore not traditionally helpful, need to be interpreted to uncover the contemporary beliefs, opinions, and values of a time and place. Knudson, too, has argued that historians do not use this source enough in their work and has claimed that as sources of mass communication, newspapers may have actually transformed the 'historical outcome'.[19]

Whilst it is important to assess historians' methodological discussions surrounding newspapers, what scholars have pointed to as flaws in their use are some of the biggest strengths of studying the "underground press". For example, although historians have denigrated their use to find out "what actually happened" in the past, McMillian has commented that the "underground press" lacked the 'pretense of objectivity' which accompanied professional publications.[20] "Underground" publications were not intended to be objective. In this sense, they were made up solely of, what Salmon has called, the unauthoritative aspects of newspapers. Instead of providing a window into what happened during this period, they demonstrate what anti-war servicemen thought about what was

[16] Tom Arnold-Forster, 'New Histories of American Newspapers', *The Historical Journal,* 63.5 (December 2020), pp. 1390-1400 (p. 1390).
[17] Salmon, *The Newspaper and the Historian* (1923), p. xxxix.
[18] Ibid., p. xli.
[19] Jerry W. Knudson, 'Late to the Feast: Newspapers as Historical Sources', *Perspectives on History,* 31.7 (October 1993), via: https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/october-1993/late-to-the-feast.
[20] John McMillian, *Smoking Typewriters: The Sixties Underground Press and the Rise of Alternative Media in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 4.

happening based on their specific understandings of the circumstances. In this way, the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* is not necessarily useful or trustworthy as an organ which reported on the Vietnam War or US society in the early 1970s, but it is a very valuable source for uncovering how GIs viewed the Vietnam War, the military, and US society in the early 1970s. Importantly, as "underground" newspapers were not published for profit, they were also largely free from the commercial interference which Arnold-Forster has identified as a weakness of professional publications. Although traditionally newspapers have been doubted for their reliability, it is exactly the partisanship of the "underground" GI press which is useful for this social history of GI anti-war activism.

Still, other issues exist with the study of the GI press. Publications can be difficult to read, poorly formatted, undated or misdated, and most problematic, anonymously authored and published. Due especially to the need to be "underground", papers' editors did not discuss themselves or important facets such as their class, race, and gender composition in their papers. This knowledge would have provided some useful context on the types of people involved in GI activism. It has thus been necessary to find a way to navigate this significant knowledge gap by employing oral history – defined as 'the interviewing of eye-witness participants in the events of the past for the purposes of historical reconstruction'.[21] As a result, the oral testimony of seven ex-GIs involved in anti-war activism on Fort Lewis and McChord AFB were recorded for this thesis, combined with similar testimony from conferences which occurred around the same time. In addition, discussions with two women who were involved in GI Movement activism around Lewis and McChord during this period were gathered at the same time by Dr Wendy Toon and have been used in this thesis with her friendly support, collaboration, and permission. The majority of participants interviewed for this thesis were members of the organisations GI-Airmen-Sailor Coalition and GI Alliance, the two groups which published the *Lewis-McChord Free Press.*

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[21] R.J. Grele, 'Directions for Oral History in the United States', in *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology,* ed. by D. K. Dunaway and W. K. Baum, 2nd edn. (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira, 1996), p. 63, cited in 'Introduction to the Third Edition', in *The Oral History Reader*, ed. by Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, 3rd edn. (London: Routledge, 2016), p. xiii.
For examples of oral histories of US soldiers of the Vietnam era see: Christian G. Appy, *Vietnam: The Definitive Oral History Told from All Sides* (London: Ebury Press, 2008); Christian G. Appy, *Working-Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993); Wallace Terry, *Bloods: An Oral History of the Vietnam War by Black Veterans* (New York: Ballentine Books, 1985); and Gerald R. Gioglio, *Days of Decision: An Oral History of Conscientious Objectors in the Military During the Vietnam War* (Trenton: Broken Rifle Press, 1989).

Leopold von Ranke's codification of the historical methodology relying on textual primary sources has led to much scepticism towards oral history and the methodology has been largely denigrated by historians.[22] Whilst oral testimony had featured as a source in many ancient histories, for example in the works of Herodotus, the creation of a scientific methodology eliminated this practice and it was not until after World War II that oral history began to make a resurgence. In 1948, Alan Nevins created the first organised oral history project at Columbia University, followed by the work of Paul Thompson who initiated the formation of the British Oral History Society in the early 1970s.[23] Despite this, and the growth in popularity of oral history, a dedication to documentary sources and a scepticism towards the practice has remained amongst professional historians. One of the key criticisms of oral history is its reliance on memory. Unlike textual sources which are concrete and unchanged from their original authorship, memory is loose, adaptable over time, and subject to loss. Arguments in opposition to oral history have therefore long highlighted the lack of immediacy of oral sources as well as the prominence of memory in testimony to emphasise its unreliability. A major flaw of memory is that it is necessarily selective and therefore incomplete; people remember what they think is important, rather than what the interviewer perceives to be important, and these memories tend to be of their new experiences and exciting adventures much more than mundane aspects of life.[24] Equally, critics have highlighted the effects of nostalgia on oral testimony, claiming that people do not want to remember the negative aspects of the past, especially if they have had a deleterious or undesirable role in this, and instead only recall the best aspects of a period and themselves, creating distorted memories.[25]

Rebuttals of this have involved a more positive celebration of oral history as a subjective source and have urged for the memory process to be seen as 'an active process of construction of

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[22] This denigration has been evidenced not by the number of works which oppose oral history, but by those who defend it. Their need to endorse the use of oral history implies that within the discipline of History, this methodology has been institutionally disregarded. For books which detail the major criticisms of oral history, please see: Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (eds.), *The Oral History Reader*, 3rd edn. (London: Routledge, 2016) and Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide,* 3rd edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 10-13.
For a discussion of the importance of Leopold von Ranke in creating the historical methodology which is still largely employed today, please see: Georg G. Iggers, Q. Edward Wang, and Supriya Mukherjee, *A Global History of Modern Historiography,* 2nd edn. (London: Routledge, 2017), pp. 95-104; Marnie Hughes-Warrington, *Fifty Key Thinkers on History,* 3rd edn. (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 258-264; J.D. Braw, 'Vision As Revision: Ranke and the Beginning of Modern History', *History and Theory*, 46.6 (December 2007), pp. 45-60; and Michael Bentley, *Modern Historiography: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 35-41.
[23] Alistair Thomson, 'Four Paradigm Transformations in Oral History', *The Oral History Review,* 34.1 (Winter-Spring 2007), pp. 51-53.
[24] Ritchie, *Doing Oral History* (2014), pp. 15-16.
[25] Ibid., pp. 16-21.

meanings'.[26] These counterarguments have evolved from simply defending oral history from its critics to embracing the role of memory in oral testimony and using it to historians' advantage. In his book *Hard Times,* one of the most prevalent works of oral history, Studs Terkel remarked: '[i]n their rememberings are their truths. The precise fact or the precise date is of small consequence' and acutely referred to his work as a book of memory, rather than a book of fact.[27] Terkel's remarks denoted a departure from the idea that the use of oral history was to unearth facts about the past. Instead, he emphasised the importance of experience and personal recollection of events, recognising that history can be written from several perspectives and, in this way, the past is multi-faceted rather than singular. Likewise, he recognised that these testimonies still maintained intrinsic value as first-hand accounts of an era which the historian and their audience did not experience. Equally, Portelli points out that issues of memory also exist within written documents, particularly in memoirs, where the opinions and recollections of key figures, such as politicians, are conceptualised as factual insights yet are still constructed from memory, therefore equally lacking immediacy.[28] Oral historians have therefore responded to critics by identifying that some written documents, which are not so heavily scrutinised, suffer from many of the same issues as oral sources, and historians must maintain the same standards of rigorous cross-referencing with other sources to counteract issues of nostalgia and memory distortion.

The use of oral history in this thesis counters the facelessness of the GIs protesting the war. It allows for analysis of the class, racial, and gender composition of those interviewed, as well as their views on others who participated in the paper. It also provides useful information on the logistics of publishing an "underground" newspaper as well as access to insights which are unavailable in written sources, e.g. motivations, and links between how GIs felt that aspects of race, class, and childhood effected participation in anti-war activities. The use of oral history only enhances the textual analysis of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, creating a richer, more complete history of GI anti-Vietnam War protest. Throughout the thesis, therefore, the insights of those involved in the *Free Press* will be included alongside discussion of the contents of the newspaper to analyse how GIs conceived and conceptualised their actions. Most importantly,

[26] Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, 'Interpreting Memories: Introduction', in *The Oral History Reader* (2016), p. 297.
[27] Studs Terkel, *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), p. 3.
[28] Alessandro Portelli, 'What Makes Oral History Different', in *The Oral History Reader* (2016), p. 53.

it overcomes the issues of anonymity and provides this thesis with information and insight from the humans which it analyses.

As the former editors of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, oral history participants were a self-selecting group. One, the most prominent member of the GIA, Randy Rowland, was contacted in the research process and invited me to attend a fifty-year reunion of anti-war GIs in Seattle, Washington, in October 2022. All ex-servicemen and their wives who wanted to participate in this project were then contacted by email, with Rowland's aid, and it was decided that seven former GIs would be interviewed, six of whom were directly involved in the *Free Press*. The interviews were carried out in a variety of contexts which undoubtedly affected the conversations in different ways, altering the comfort of both myself and the participants.[29] Interviews took place at Rowland's home, my own hotel room, as well as the lobby of a Holiday Inn. The interview length was decided by the participants and they were allowed to talk as much or as little as they wished. Some were somewhat reserved and others very open. All, however, expressed gratitude for being interviewed and although this was something new to most of them, excluding Rowland who had done several previous interviews, all were largely candid and eager to share their stories.

Likely due to the illegality of their actions and a general antipathy towards written records, some GIs had an aversion to being identified in the thesis, with two potential participants declining interviews because of their fear of "paper trails". Indeed, some openly discussed and joked that they felt that this project was the result of a Federal Bureau of Investigation inquiry. As a result, it has been necessary to adhere to the best practices of oral history which require the interviewer to respect the privacy and wishes of their participants. It is for this reason, for example, that one participant has been pseudonymised.

To conform with ethical expectations, an interview guide was created and provided to participants beforehand so that they were able to view and object to questions should they wish to. The guide contained some closed questions concerning the background of the GIs, such as their class, race, rank, and background. This was done to allow for better comparison between interviewees and to understand whether such identifiers impacted a young man's likelihood of

[29] For a discussion of the practical considerations surrounding an oral history project, please see: Ritchie, *Doing Oral History* (2014).

conducting anti-war activity. As it was understood that the interview is shaped not only by the interviewer, but the interviewee also, it was also decided that it was pertinent to not enter the conversations with pre-conceived notions about GIs' experience.[30] The guide therefore also utilised open-ended questions and then a general discussion of overriding topics in order to open the conversation and allow the participant to tell their own story. The University's ethical procedures prescribed that an interview guide, provided in advance, be adhered to and whilst this satisfied several ethical considerations, it somewhat inhibited the creation of a free discussion as it was difficult to explore different avenues of conversation with individual ex-servicemen. Nonetheless, before interviews began, GIs were urged to expand on the questions asked so that the conversation did not become prescriptive and the participants were able to emphasise what they felt were the most important aspects of their activism.

Activism of GIs on Lewis and McChord existed in several wider contexts, and this thesis is structured to reflect that. It gradually scales down from the broadest aspects of studying this period to the smallest, whilst acknowledging how these different contexts affected GIs and vice versa. Firstly, therefore, the thesis interrogates the historiography of the period. Once again, due to the inter-connected nature of the "Sixties", this involves discussing scholars' arguments on a variety of different subjects. Whilst commenting on the overall historiography of the Vietnam War, establishing the conventional camps which scholars have occupied, this thesis assesses how historians have viewed the anti-war movement, how they have defined the "Sixties", their uneven focus on the left-wing movements of the era, and eventually the limited amount of scholarly work on the GI Movement itself. Chapter One identifies where the historiography is weakest and demonstrates how this thesis fills those gaps. It also establishes some of the most foundational aspects of this era, such as the New Left, which provide vital context to the work of the *Free Press*.

Scaling down from these arguments, Chapter Two shall focus particularly on the GI Movement, discussing the immediate context of that movement. This section establishes the tumultuous relationship between GIs and anti-war civilians during the Vietnam War. It also analyses the connection between the GI Movement and the Left, acknowledging that the Movement had as much involvement with the Old Left as it did the New, and how eventually it was won over to the growing idea of Third World Marxism. In doing so, this chapter argues that the GI

[30] Ibid., pp. 55-57.

Movement was not just an anti-war movement but was also a left-wing movement, perhaps an obvious, yet often unsaid, aspect.

As the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* was published on Fort Lewis and McChord AFB, located in Washington and was targeted at the bases' populations, Chapter Three provides an important study of military activism in the Pacific Northwest. This highlights the significance of Lewis and McChord to the military during the Vietnam War and discusses the activism which evolved from this. Whilst the *Free Press* originated out of previous protest on Lewis and McChord, this section demonstrates that this publication's activism and approach, especially under the GIA, were somewhat distinct from the politicking which came before it.

Continuing the discussion of the *Free Press*, Chapter Four examines the reasons for, and the consequences of, publishing this newspaper. First establishing the importance of the draft in drawing young men into the military who did not want to participate in the war, this section examines how GIs found the military's expectations confronting. In their opposition, GIs flouted the rules of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), the codified set of laws which every member of the military is subject to, and did so on the basis that the military was denying GIs their legal Constitutional rights. This chapter exposes the complex relationship between young men who largely did not want to be called to fight and who wanted to protest the Vietnam War, and the military, who continued to expect these men to behave as "good" soldiers. This manifested in GIs criticising the military justice system and this section proposes that the *Free Press* sought to act as a watchdog for the Enlisted Men (EMs) against the arbitrary power of the military justice system and high-ranking officers of the military. Such military higher-ups were colloquially referred to as "the Brass" and this thesis utilises the term deliberately in double inverted commas to emphasise that military officers represented one, de-humanised, monolithic enemy to anti-war GIs. This deliberately obscured the reality that officers were humans and did not always accord with the oppressive reputation that servicemen assigned them. In this way, this chapter argues that GI newspapers not only provide a window into young men's anti-war critiques but also show how young men, forced to move away from their homes and loved ones, responded to their immediate circumstances. As a result, they also become useful sources in providing a grassroots view of the changes in the US Army during the early 1970s, namely how GIs responded to the move to an all-volunteer force.

The substance of the *Free Press*' anti-war critiques is assessed in Chapter Five. These were largely consistent throughout the three years when the paper was published and the GIs who wrote, printed, and distributed it conceptualised the Vietnam War as resulting from imperialism. This involved acknowledging that the war was not just a bad policy decision but was the result of deliberate oppression and aggression by the United States. This position established the newspaper as oppositional to the US, eventually resulting in GIs astoundingly sympathising with the Vietnamese, including members of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) and the North Vietnamese Army (NVA), their state-sanctioned enemies. This also ensured their commitment to becoming more than just an anti-war publication, transitioning to an anti-imperialist one, in which they identified and opposed other acts of US imperialism around the globe, as well as imperialism as a practice. This critique set them on a trajectory of radicalism, the culmination of which is assessed in Chapter Six.

Chapter Six analyses how GI publications were sometimes much more than just anti-war newspapers. Whilst always particularising wider social issues to GIs, the *Free Press* was more broadly progressive than is perhaps expected. The publication was committed to anti-racism, opposing discrimination against African and Mexican Americans, and Amerindians also, both in and out of the military. They were also dedicated to celebrating women, and the *Free Press* under the GI Alliance became a place where women related to the military were offered a voice. This progressive platform was catalysed by the radical transition of the editors of the newspaper. Following from their anti-imperialist position, the GIA became increasingly anti-capitalist and class focused. The Alliance celebrated instances of working-class solidarity, supported workers' strikes, and urged GIs to ally with the broader working-class. These commitments are re-contextualised with the knowledge that members of the Alliance were also members of the revolutionary Maoist organisation, the Revolutionary Union. The *Free Press* is thus an example of the intersectionality of protest during the "Sixties" and how critiques of race, gender, class, and even foreign policy combined. Whilst this was the case, issues of race and gender were eventually subordinated to the Alliance's focus on class. This chapter therefore demonstrates that anti-war GIs were much more than just anti-war, they were also progressive, left-wing activists and they married their position in the military with the need to support other oppressed groups.

Whilst the study of the GI Movement offers much, there are limits to what can be covered within this thesis. The avenues for research on the GI Movement are multifarious and to appropriately cover them all would require countless words and unlimited time. In this case, as this thesis focuses on anti-war protest within the military, discussion or analysis of the civilian anti-war movement is not included. Whilst there was sure to be a strong anti-war movement within the population of the Pacific Northwest, especially at the sizeable universities, University of Washington and University of Puget Sound, and the large cities of Seattle and Tacoma, this is outside of the remit of this study. This is especially the case as this thesis argues that the research of civilians has so far overshadowed focus on their military counterparts.

Likewise, the GI Movement was not solely confined to the United States, and military personnel protested the war in Europe, the Pacific, and even Vietnam. However, as this movement focuses on just one GI newspaper, based in the US, it would be wrong to extrapolate its findings to areas of the world which had very different contexts than bases in the US. Stateside, for example, whilst GIs were isolated on military bases, they were still close to the progressive, left-wing, and anti-war atmosphere created by civilian activists and it would be wrong to claim that GIs in the Philippines had the same experience as those in Tacoma. This difference is even more pronounced when focusing on GIs who were opposing the war and the military in Vietnam. For example, Fred Gardner has labelled the approach of GIs in Vietnam as "survival politics", i.e. whilst discontented with the conflict, instead of ostentatious acts of protest, GIs' pre-eminent wish was to survive the war zone.[31]

Similarly, as this thesis is a social history, it will not comprehensively consider the historiography concerning the Vietnam War itself. Discussions of the war, its origins, and an in-depth focus of historians' arguments concerning this have largely been excluded for lack of relevance to the GI Movement. Instead, Chapter One provides a cursory explanation of the historiography of the war and considers only the most relevant overriding parameters which this thesis broadly falls within. Likewise, throughout this research, cartoons and images taken from the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* and other papers, which were used to reinforce and

[31] Fred Gardner, unattributed, in David Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt: GI Resistance During the Vietnam War* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2005), p. 28. For a discussion of the dissent within the Army in the combat zone, please see: Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), pp. 28-49. Perhaps the most shocking indicator of GI dissatisfaction in the combat zone was murder, anachronistically referred to as 'fragging', after the fragmentation grenade, often the weapon of choice for such acts. Richard Moser, *The New Winter Soldiers: GI and Veteran Dissent During the Vietnam War* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996), pp. 41-68.

visualise their points and positions, are included. However, there is little attempt at a full image analysis of these as they were often complex and would require such detailed explanation that they are deserving of a study of their own.

In summation, this thesis explores the complexity of the GI Movement and GI protest during the "Sixties". Although servicemen have often been popularly portrayed as such, they were not inherently pro-war and conservative, nor were they simply young Americans who were upset with the Vietnam War. The *Lewis-McChord Free Press* demonstrates that anti-war GIs were activists: they defended and supported their fellow GIs, not only those who were anti-war; sought to educate the GI population on wider social issues; and attempted to inculcate class consciousness among servicepeople in order to stimulate a broader left-wing position.

Chapter 1

Charting the "Sixties": An Assessment of the Historiography

The historiography of the Vietnam era is a dense thicket. Before understanding the history of military anti-war protest, it is important to grasp the scholarly debates, agreements, and trends surrounding the numerous contexts which the GI Movement occupied. This is made more immediate as the study of GI anti-war activism has much to contribute to these various historiographies. The debates most relevant to this thesis, whilst seemingly diverse, all centre around the Vietnam War in some way. The first deals with the conflict directly, establishing the main historiographical arguments concerning the war and dealing with the revisionist notion of a "stab-in-the-back" myth, which promotes the notion that victory in Vietnam was undermined by anti-war activists. Related to this is an inquiry into the anti-war movement itself which, whilst not a varied debate, has produced some of the most important investigations into protest in the 1960s and '70s. A discussion of how anti-war scholars and historians of this period have conceptualised the era referred to as the "Sixties" is necessary and explores how, traditionally, there has existed a "rise and fall thesis" within the historiography which discounts important protest and activism after 1968. Study of the GI Movement which did not begin to coalesce into a movement until 1968 obviously disproves this assessment. The nebulousness of what the "Sixties" was, or what it constituted, has been replicated in discussions of the Left during the 1960s and early '70s. It has been necessary, therefore, to examine how historians have defined movements such as the Old and New Left and provide an appropriate definition of these for this thesis. Importantly, this chapter recognises that there has been a meagre amount of writing on changes to the Left in the late-"Sixties" and highlights how this thesis remedies that. Finally, it assesses the scholarly work on the GI Movement. Although a relatively understudied movement, especially compared to its civilian counterpart, it is nonetheless important to recognise the important scholarly work which has already been carried out on the subject. This is especially significant as this study contributes much to the existing historiography and is unique in its approach, investigating just one GI newspaper to create a more in-depth study of the Movement. The examination of multiple historiographies is therefore not just a facile investigation into what scholars have already said about a subject but instead a demonstration of how this thesis diverts from or contributes to these established arguments and trends.

The war in Vietnam was a cataclysmic event that has inspired countless books, monographs, and journal articles, which have attempted to come to terms with the conflict in the years after its conclusion. Contemporaneous debate was demarcated between the "doves", who were opposed to the conflict, and the "hawks", who supported it, with both sides taking to the streets to voice their opinions through demonstrations and rallies.[1] The doves particularly propounded the idea that the war in Vietnam was an "immoral", or "unjust", war. Indeed, the GIs of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* adopted such conceptualisations which, as will be demonstrated, developed from the idea that the war was simply "unjust" but towards more sophisticated political arguments. These camps had their origins in a more elite debate conducted by former and active members of government, journalists, and scholars who both critiqued and supported the war. Scholarly doves emphasised the mistaken nature of the conflict, expounded beliefs that the war was unwinnable, illustrated the arrogance of the US, and stressed a wider view of the conflict which considered the effect of Vietnamese history and culture.[2] The hawkish position was not nearly as extensive or varied as its rivals', however, a contemporary elite argument did emerge in opposition to those advocating peace and withdrawal. The hawks proclaimed that the pursuance of the war in Vietnam was in line with US national security interests and defended the idea that the creation of a free (non-communist) South Vietnamese state was achievable.[3]

The post-war historiography surrounding the war in Vietnam is almost as awkward, complex, and dense as the conflict itself. If the war in Vietnam was a "quagmire", so too is the literature surrounding it.[4] DeGroot has regarded the debate as a 'morass of contradictory assertions', extremely intricate and often intimidating and confusing.[5] However, unlike the borderless

[1] Gary R. Hess, *Vietnam: Explaining America's Lost War,* 2nd edn. (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), p. 13.
[2] For an overview of these contemporary debates, please see: Ibid., pp. 18-19. For examples of the contemporary dovish perspective, please see: William Fulbright, *The Arrogance of Power* (New York: Random House, 1966); David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest* (New York: Random House, 1972); David Halberstam, *The Making of a Quagmire: American and Vietnam in the Kennedy Era,* revised edn. (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2008); George McT. Kahin and John W. Lewis, *The United States in Vietnam* (New York: Dial, 1967); Hans J. Morgenthau, *Vietnam and the United States* (Washington D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1965); and J. Arthur Schlesinger Jr., *The Bitter Heritage: Vietnam and American Democracy, 1941-1966* (Boston: Andre Deutsch, 1967).
[3] Hess, *Vietnam* (2015), p. 20. These arguments were mostly made by university professors who were in some way affiliated with official US policy. For examples of the contemporary hawkish perspective, please see: Chester Bain, *Vietnam: The Roots of Conflict* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1967); Frank Trager, *Why Vietnam?* (New York: Praeger, 1966); and Robert Scigliano, *South Vietnam: Nation Under Stress* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1964).
[4] Clark M. Clifford, letter to President Johnson, 17 May 1965, via: Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v02/d307 [accessed: 06/07/24].
[5] Gerard J. DeGroot, *Noble Cause? America and the Vietnam War* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2000), p. 17.

nature of the war itself, there are relatively clear demarcations between those participating in the debate. Evolving from the contemporary debate on the Vietnam War (both elite and not), two clear schools of thought have emerged in the post-Vietnam historiography. Firstly, orthodox historiography adopts the overriding position that the Vietnam War was "unwinnable". These scholars stick to the contention that the conflict was a mistake and that American defeat in Vietnam was inevitable. Developing in opposition to the orthodox school came the revisionists who, like the hawks, argued that the conflict was militarily winnable but was either improperly implemented or hindered by civilian actors.[6]

Within the orthodox camp, the origins of the Vietnam War remain contentious. Without a formal declaration of war, there is no specific event that scholars have agreed on as the beginning of the conflict. As all historians of the orthodox school agree that the US "went wrong" in Vietnam, debate has occurred on just when and where this happened. Inevitably, this has taken the form of laying blame for the conflict at the feet of specific Presidents.[7] In the orthodox historiography, therefore, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson have all been apportioned blame for the conflict.[8] Some, however, borrowing the notion that Vietnam was a quagmire from Halberstam's 1965 assessment, have emphasised that whilst Vietnam was certainly a mistake, there was no easy exit from the conflict, proffering sympathy to the often berated Johnson.[9]

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[6] Hess, *Vietnam* (2015), p. 20.

[7] For an overview of the historiography surrounding the origins of the Vietnam War, please see: DeGroot, *Noble Cause?* (2000), pp. 2-5.

[8] For an argument which emphasises the US entanglement in Vietnam began under Truman, please see: George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950*-1975, 5th edn. (Boston: McGraw-Hill Education, 2014)

For historians who argue that involvement began under Eisenhower, please see: David L. Anderson, *Trapped by Success: The Eisenhower Administration and Vietnam, 1953-1961* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991) and Townsend Hoopes, *The Devil and John Foster Dulles* (Canada: Little, Brown & Company Limited, 1973).

Under John F. Kennedy, US involvement in South Vietnam greatly expanded under "Project Beefup" which sent armoured personnel carriers, more than 300 military aircraft, and American military "advisers" flooding into the country. As a result of this build-up, and undeniable growth in involvement in the country, more historians of the orthodox school have pointed to the Kennedy administration as the cause of the war than they have his two predecessors. Please see: Halberstam, *The Making of a Quagmire* (2008) and David Milne, *America's Rasputin: Walt Rostow and the Vietnam War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2008). Most scholarship, likely because American combat troops were first introduced into the Republic of Vietnam in 1965, has placed responsibility for the war on Johnson. Please see: Larry Berman, *Lyndon Johnson's War: The Road to Stalemate in Vietnam* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991); Larry Berman, *Planning a Tragedy: the Americanization of the War in Vietnam* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982); George Herring, *LBJ and Vietnam: A Different Kind of War* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994); and H.R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies that Led to Vietnam* (New York: Harper Collins, 1997).

[9] Please see: David M. Barrett, *Uncertain Warriors: Lyndon Johnson and His Military Advisers* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993); Brian VanDeMark, *Into the Quagmire: Lyndon Johnson and the Escalation of the Vietnam War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

One presidency which those historians who contend that the Vietnam War was an erroneous policy decision have not focused on, however, is that of Richard Nixon. As the war had been escalating for four years prior to Nixon's ascendancy, it is clear to see why, in a debate which was so focused on understanding the war's origins, he has received such little attention.[10] However, as DeGroot has pointed out, this has allowed contemporary political figures to fill this gap.[11] For example, Nixon and his Secretary of State Henry Kissinger both authored books arguing that the peace negotiated in 1973 was a success and fulfilled American geo-political goals in Southeast Asia but that an independent South Vietnamese state was let down by a lack of funding from Congress.[12] As a result, this is a common argument in the revisionist school and purports the notion that the war was winnable, but success was squandered.[13] This position coincided with the growing conservatism of the 1970s and '80s and was legitimised in 1980 by the Republican presidential candidate Ronald Reagan. In a speech during his campaign, Reagan reconceived the Vietnam War as a 'noble cause' and claimed that future American troops would not be denied the resources from Congress and the support from American civilians that they would need to succeed, as had supposedly occurred in Vietnam.[14] Reagan therefore weaponised the Vietnam War by emphasising the possibility of victory and the failure of reluctant civilian actors to support the war.

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[10] One book which does provide an orthodox analysis of the Nixon years is: Jeffrey Kimball, *Nixon's Vietnam War* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998).

[11] DeGroot, *Noble Cause?* (2000), p. 4.

[12] Please see: Richard Nixon, *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978) and Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979).

[13] For a comprehensive example of the revisionist argument, please see: C. Dale Walton, *The Myth of Inevitable US Defeat in Vietnam* (London: Frank Cass, 2002).

The notion that the war in Vietnam was winnable has especially flourished among revisionist histories of US strategy in Vietnam. For historians who argue that the war was winnable but was let down by the misapplication of strategy, please see: Larry Cable, *Unholy Grail: The U.S. and the Wars in Vietnam* (New York: Routledge, 1991); Richard Hunt, *Pacification: The American Struggle for Vietnam's Hearts and Minds* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995); Andrew Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); Günter Lewy, *America in Vietnam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978); Bruce Palmer, *The 25 Year War: America's Military Role in Vietnam* (University Press of Kentucky, 1984); Lewis Sorely, *Westmoreland: The General Who Lost Vietnam* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011); and Harry G. Summers, *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War* (California: Presidio Press, 1982).

Orthodox scholars have also weighed in on this debate, arguing that this was an unwinnable conflict. For this, please see: Gregory Daddis, *No Sure Victory: Measuring U.S. Army Effectiveness and Progress in the Vietnam War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011) and Gregory Daddis, *Westmoreland's War*: *Reassessing American Strategy in Vietnam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[14] Hess, *Vietnam* (2015), p. 21.

This analysis fits into one of the main tendencies of revisionist writing known as the "stab-in-the-back" myth.[15] This is the notion that the war was winnable yet was undermined by anti-war activists such as students, professors, movie stars, the liberal press, as well as the doves in Congress.[16] Jeffrey Kimball, whilst keen not to conflate the differences of the two groups, has noted that the reaction of conservatives following the defeat in Vietnam was not dissimilar to the response of similar groups in Germany following their loss in World War I.[17] Likewise, Hess has noted that the shifting of blame and the elevation of a defeat as a 'noble cause' is common in history which seeks 'retrospective "victory"' and was a key aspect of Southern re-conceptualisation of the defeat of the Confederacy in the American Civil War.[18] This argument is especially relevant to this thesis. Whilst a "stab-in-the-back" emphasises the betrayal of civilians, it importantly excludes the "un-patriotic" dissent of GIs. In this conceptualisation, it is "the troops" who were let down by anti-war civilians. GIs cannot be blamed for perfidy, lest their accusers undermine their message of loyalty to "the troops" and opposition to outside agitation. In this sense, the anti-war GI is oppositional to the arguments of "stab-in-the-back" purveyors and undermines their notion that the US military was let down by anti-war civilians. As a result, they have been excluded from this revisionist narrative.

Whilst it is not directly relevant to this social history of the GI Movement, the complex, rigorous, and occasionally partisan historiography that has documented the Vietnam War is the basis of any attempt to understand even the most particular aspect of that conflict. More so than for most conflicts, the contemporary debate on the Vietnam War has shaped the subsequent historiography. Many of the arguments about the unwinnable nature of the conflict derive from the arguments that dovish actors, similar to the anti-war GIs of this thesis, made during the 1960s and '70s. Whilst such debates have adapted, and the "illegal", "immoral", and "unjust" of the 1960s have become the "unwinnable" of the orthodox position, the main distinctions remain. The revisionist camp has seen the most change. Counter-factual history has been employed to contest the notion that defeat in Vietnam was inevitable, often, although not

[15] For examples of the Stab-in-the-Back myth, please see: Nixon, *RN* (1978); Kissinger, *White House Years* (1979); Peter Braestrup, *Big Story: How the American Press and Television Reported and Interpreted the Crisis of Tet 1968 in Vietnam and Washington* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1973); and William Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports* (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1980).
[16] Jeffrey P. Kimball, 'The Stab-in-the-Back Legend and the Vietnam War', *Armed Forces and Society* [*AF&S*], 14.3 (Spring 1988), pp. 433-458 (pp. 437-439).
[17] Ibid., pp. 434-435.
[18] Hess, *Vietnam* (2015), p. 21.

exclusively, with hawkish intent.[19] It is therefore the arguments of the revisionists which have the most relevance to this study, and by emphasising that GIs had agency and did not simply subscribe to the position of pro-war, this thesis undermines revisionist arguments, particularly those which emphasise the "stab-in-the-back".

The movement against the Vietnam War became the 'biggest anti-war movement in American history' and a touchstone of America in the 1960s.[20] There is, therefore, little wonder as to why the anti-war movement has received a great deal of focus from historians. DeGroot, however, claims that this subject has received 'too much sentimentality' from those who have analysed it.[21] Whilst the historiography on the Vietnam War is demarcated by the belief that the war was either a "mistake" or a "noble cause" undermined, the scholarly work on the anti-war movement is more singular. There are no overriding historiographical arguments, with scholarly work being divided into books on the general anti-war movement, those on the student movement, and those on other important anti-war actors.[22] DeGroot decries this one-sided view of the anti-war movement, claiming that all scholarly treatments of the subject

[19] For some examples of counter-factual histories of the Vietnam War, please see: Walton, *The Myth of Inevitable US Defeat in Vietnam* (2002); Mark Moyar, *Triumph Forsaken: The Vietnam War, 1954-1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and Sorley, *Westmoreland* (2011).
[20] DeGroot, *Noble Cause?* (2000), p. 9.
[21] Ibid., p. 9.
[22] For broad overviews of the anti-war movement, please see: Charles DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal: The Antiwar Movement of the Vietnam Era,* with Charles Chatfield, assisting author (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990); Melvin Small, *Johnson, Nixon, and the Doves* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1988); Melvin Small, *Antiwarriors: The Vietnam War and the Battle for America's Hearts and Minds* (Lanham: SR Books, 2004); Simon Hall, *Rethinking the American Anti-War Movement* (New York and London: Routledge, 2012); Fred Halstead, *Out Now!: A Participant's Account of the Movement in the U.S. Against the Vietnam War* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1991); and Rhodri Jefferys-Jones, *Peace Now: American Society and the Ending of the Vietnam War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).
For works which discuss the anti-war movement in relation to the student Left, please see: Joseph A. Fry, 'Unpopular Messengers: Student Opposition to the Vietnam War', in *The War That Never Ends: New Perspectives on the Vietnam War*, ed. by David L. Anderson and John Ernst (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2014), pp. 219-243; Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1993); Paul Lyons, *The People of this Generation: The Rise and Fall of the New Left in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003); and James Miller, "*Democracy is in the Streets": From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987).
For histories which discuss the anti-war movement in relation to other groups, please see: Alice Echols, '"Women Power" and Women's Liberation: Exploring the Relationship Between the Antiwar Movement and Women's Liberation' in *Give Peace a Chance: Exploring the Vietnam Antiwar Movement*, ed. by Melvin Small and William D. Hoover (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1992), pp. 171-181; David Farber, *Chicago '68* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988); Michael S. Foley, *Confronting the War Machine: Draft Resistance During the Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Andrew E. Hunt, *The Turning: A History of Vietnam Veterans Against the War* (New York: New York University Press, 1999); David McReynolds, 'Pacifists and the Vietnam Antiwar Movement', in *Give Peace a Chance* (1992), pp. 53-70; and Amy Swerdlow, '"Not My Son, Not Your Son, Not Their Sons": Mothers Against the Vietnam Draft', in *Give Peace a Chance* (1992), pp. 159-170. For works which discuss the GI Movement, please see later in this chapter.

praise it for being virtuous rather than thoroughly acknowledging its limitations and providing a balanced assessment of the movement. Instead, he celebrates the one major work which criticises anti-war protesters, Adam Garfinkle's *Telltale Hearts*.[23] This book, however, is a speculative work which argues that instead of stopping the war, anti-war protest helped to prolong it.[24] Garfinkle acknowledges that there existed three different stages of the anti-war movement and during only one of these, the period before 1966, did it restrain the government's ability to wage war in Vietnam.[25] It is the third phase (1969-1975) which the GIs of this thesis occupied. Although Garfinkle emphasises that this period saw a return to the largely liberal character of the earliest stage of the anti-war movement, GIs of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, and the GI Movement more broadly, highlight that there were still radical currents within the anti-war movement. These were just isolated at the grassroots level, rather than proliferating in large visible organisations. In all of these phases, however, he concludes that the anti-war movement's influence over Congress was 'beyond doubt'.[26] Interestingly, therefore, the scholar who argues that the anti-war movement had the largest influence is also the one who concludes that such influence was counterproductive to its goal of concluding the war.

Certainly, there is merit to some of DeGroot's aspersions about a myopic treatment of the anti-war movement which refuses to accept its failures. However, DeGroot's own discussion of the anti-war movement, which he claims reveals 'more clowns than heroes, more ignominy than virtue', is reactionary to this tendency, whether accurate or not.[27] The issue with his work and assessment of the historiography is that he supposes that the anti-war movement should be solely assessed on whether it ended the war in Vietnam. DeGroot is not the only anti-war movement historian who equates effectiveness to success. Melvin Small, in his book *Johnson, Nixon, and the Doves,* provides a mixed conclusion about the ability of the movement to affect change in the White House whilst acknowledging its important role in the 'war at home'.[28] It is, of course, imperative that social movements be measured against their goals and achievements, however, for this to be the sole focus of historical enquiry seems reductionist and empirical. Simon Hall claims that the effects of the anti-war movement are 'unclear (and,

[23] DeGroot, *Noble Cause?* (2000), p. 9 and Adam Garfinkle, *Telltale Hearts: The Origins and Impact of the Vietnam Antiwar Movement* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995).
[24] Hall, *Rethinking the American Anti-War Movement* (2012), p. 150 and Garfinkle, *Telltale Hearts* (1995), p. 1.
[25] Garfinkle, *Telltale Hearts* (1995), pp. 1-2.
[26] Ibid., p. 2.
[27] DeGroot, *Noble Cause?* (2000), p. 299.
[28] Small, *Johnson, Nixon, and the Doves* (1988), pp. 227-234.

perhaps, unknowable)'.[29] But does this ambiguity exclude anti-war activists from further historical enquiry? By limiting argument to discussion of success, DeGroot has ignored the attempts of movement scholars to assess what the anti-war movement was and meant, rather than what it achieved.

As a result, whilst a veritable mountain of scholarship exists on the anti-war movement, there are few arguments and debates within the historiography. This has disgruntled positivist scholars who have sought to qualify the importance, or lack thereof, of the movement by analysing its effect. Instead, historians of the anti-war movement have focused on what the movement did do rather than what it did not. This has led to countless books and journal articles which have covered the different facets of the movement, as it was a sprawling social movement which affected the lives of millions of Americans in different ways. In this way, it is better to analyse the anti-war movement's significance rather than its impact. This is important as this thesis focuses on the anti-war activism of military personnel, in no way arguing that the movement affected the end of the war. Nonetheless, it is still an important aspect of the movement and is deserving of detailed study. The most important aspect of the anti-war historiography for this thesis, however, is not what scholars have written, but what they have not. Besides limited sentences or footnotes, GIs have largely remained outside of the anti-war narrative and have been inadequately focused on by scholars (discussed in greater depth later in this chapter).

Importantly, the historiography on the anti-war movement overlaps with other scholarly discussions and constitutes just one element of what is referred to as the "Sixties". Whilst easily recognisable as a distinct era, the periodisation of when the "Sixties" actually occurred is less concrete than it first appears.[30] Historians recognise that the period of social, cultural, and political change that denotes the "Sixties" does not necessarily conform to the decade of the 1960s. By removing these chronological parameters, it has left scholars with the task of defining what the "Sixties" was, and what it meant. Arthur Marwick has viewed it as an international phenomenon rather than simply an American affair. He postulates that this was a period of cultural transformation, distinguished from previous decades by changes in popular music, youth culture, sexual attitudes, social hierarchy and the arrival of second-wave

[29] Hall, *Rethinking the American Anti-War Movement* (2012), p. 150.
[30] For a comprehensive analysis of the periodisation this era, please see: M. J. Heale, 'The Sixties as History: A Review of the Political Historiography', *Reviews in American History* [*RAH*], 33.1 (March 2005), pp. 133-152.

feminism, gay liberation, the "underground" and the "counterculture". In locating when these shifts occurred, he has posited the notion of a 'long sixties', ranging from 1958-1974.[31]

Not all historians, however, agree with Marwick. Instead, some have argued for a "short Sixties", which stunts the era, claiming that it had reached its peak and began its denouement by 1968. This has been particularly popular in studies of the New Left and the anti-war movement, which have charted a "rise and fall" narrative in "Sixties" popular protest, arguing that this precipitously swelled before vanishing in 1969, after the implosion of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS).[32] At face value, this is a convincing argument; politics during the early 1960s appeared to be steeped in progressive potential. Idealistic figures such as John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. emerged as respectable, liberal voices willing to change America. The civil rights movement utilised non-violent tactics to overthrow the oppression of Jim Crow in the South, best exemplified by the Mississippi Freedom Summer. Likewise, as the Berkeley Free Speech Movement showed, young intellectuals were willing to shrug off the apathy of the 1950s and peaceably challenge authority figures, such as university administrations. This combination of positivity and an exuberance for social change were reflected in the pop culture of the time. In 1963, The Beatles "invaded" the United States for the first time, starting what would be dubbed "Beatlemania", and the following year the renowned folk singer Bob Dylan (already a household name within the sphere of protest having performed at the 1963 March on Washington) released his prescient anthem *The Times They are a-Changin'*. However, within the "rise and fall" analysis, this hopefulness was replaced by a pervasive negative atmosphere which proliferated after 1968. The assassinations of JFK's brother, and presidential hopeful, Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King himself just two months apart in 1968 seemed to demonstrate the inauspiciousness of peaceful progressive politics during this period. Equally, rioting at the 1968 Democratic Convention and the ascent of militant protest, represented by the Black Panthers and the Weathermen, only compounded the notion that social movements of the time were frustrated and politically ineffective. Culturally, Max Elbaum has noted that this conventional conception of "rise and fall" is

[31] Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c.1958-c.1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 3-7.
[32] For examples of the "rise and fall" analysis, please see: Greg Calvert, *A Disrupted History: The New Left and New Capitalism* (New York: Random House, 1971); Gitlin, *The Sixties* (1993); Tom Hayden, *Reunion: A Memoir* (New York: Random House, 1988); Maurice Isserman, *If I Had a Hammer: The Death of the Old Left and the Birth of the New Left* (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1987); Allen J. Matusow, *The Unravelling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 60s* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984); Miller, "*Democracy is in the Streets"* (1987); and Bruce J. Schulman, *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Da Capo, 2002).

surmised by the transition from *We Shall Overcome,* a popular peaceful protest song, to *Street Fighting Man* by the Rolling Stones and *Helter Skelter* by The Beatles which detailed the longing for violent street protest and portrayed a sense of circus madness respectively.[33] Therefore, whilst all scholars agree that the "Sixties" happened and provide similar definitions of what constituted it, still open for debate is when this era actually occurred.

Books which perpetuate the "rise and fall" thesis offer some of the best insights into the formation of the most pre-eminent protest organisations of the 1960s. However, as Simon Hall has acknowledged, such works are limited and problematic. This is because they have subordinated the continued activism of grassroots organisations after 1968, to extoll the virtues of national organisations such as SDS and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).[34] In this respect, value is conflated with visibility on the national level, despite the proliferation of local organising after 1968. Likewise, this delineation implies that social movements after this year were somehow less valid. This creates a "good sixties"/ "bad sixties" dichotomy which suggests early 1970s social movements were not as influential, successful, or deserving of scholarly attention as their predecessors, and thus were "bad".[35] Therefore, the way in which one conceptualises the "Sixties" has important ramifications for the way protest during that era is framed. Including or excluding the period up until 1974 can drastically alter one's analysis of the period, either by extending the legacy of that period, or curtailing it.

In response, there have been attempts to re-evaluate this linear narrative.[36] This has mostly been accomplished by studying social movements of the 1970s in order to demonstrate that the legacy of the 1960s was advanced by a wide variety of protesting demographics, from conservative opposition to the desegregation of school buses, to the proliferation of a gay rights movement.[37] Conceptualising these acts of protest as descending from the political activism

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[33] Max Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao and Che* (London: Verso, 2018), p. 15.
[34] Simon Hall, *American Patriotism, American Protest: Social Movements since the Sixties* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2011), p. 5.
[35] Simon Hall, 'Protest Movements in the 1970s: The Long 1960s', *Journal of Contemporary History* [*JCH*], 43.4 (October 2008), pp. 655-672 (p. 655).
[36] For examples of those who contest the "rise and fall" thesis, please see: Andrew Hunt, '"When did the Sixties Happen?" Searching for New Directions', *Journal of Social History,* 33.1 (Autumn 1999) pp. 147-161; Hall, 'Protest Movements in the 1970s: The Long 1960s' (October 2008); and Hall, *American Patriotism, American Protest* (2011).
[37] For information on these protest movements, please see: Beth Bailey and David Farber (eds.), *America in the Seventies* (Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2004); Alexander Bloom (ed.), *Long Time Gone: Sixties America Then and Now* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970,* 2nd edn. (Chicago: The

which distinguished the "Sixties", Hall, like Marwick, advocates for the idea of a 'Long 1960s'.[38] Whist Marwick locates the continuation of the "Sixties" primarily in culture, Hall views it socio-politically, a conceptualisation which is useful for this thesis as it too sights GI activism as an extension of the "Sixties", rather than a new, separate phenomenon.

In assessing the reasons for the existence of this perpetuated "rise and fall" narrative, Winifred Breines has commented that this has been the direct result of former participants writing histories of their experiences.[39] She argues that in both 'numbers and demonstrations' the period 1968-1970, in which protesters were electrified by the invasion of Cambodia and the killing of four White students at Kent State University, was the most successful era of anti-Vietnam War protest.[40] Importantly, even Todd Gitlin, former SDS President and "rise and fall" perpetrator, notes that it was this period which saw an upsurge in protest from marginalised groups such as African Americans, Hispanics, other people of colour, and, importantly, GIs.[41] As the movement expanded during this period, Breines argues that the first generation of 1960s activists, who had led the early charge against the war through organisations such as SDS and SNCC, began to be pushed out. It is from these White, male participant-scholars that many of the main works on the era are either authored by or written about.[42] Therefore, when commenting on the anti-war movement, these scholars include their 'early goals, college achievements, [and] elite status in the movements' into their 'retrospective interpretations'.[43] As dissent became normalised in US society, national organisations declined, and the student vanguard became less important, the role of those who would proceed to write the influential treatments of the anti-war movement also waned. Therefore, discontented with their own role, or lack thereof, in the period after 1968, as well as repelled by the rise of Marxism during this period, these scholars have, whilst perhaps not maliciously, deliberately obscured perceptions of the "Sixties". It is from these anti-war "veterans" that some of the most frequently distributed books on university courses about the "Sixties" have originated. This suggests that the "rise and fall" narrative has been perpetuated by a reciprocal

University of Chicago Press, 1998); Hall, 'Protests Movements in the 1970s', *JCH* (October 2008); Nancy A. Hewitt (ed.), *No Permanent Waves: Recasting Histories of U.S. Feminism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010); and Schulman, *The Seventies* (2002).

[38] Hall, 'Protest Movements in the 1970s', *JCH* (October 2008).

[39] Winifred Breines, 'Whose New Left?", *Journal of American History* [*JAM*], 75.2 (September 1988), pp. 528-545.

[40] Ibid., p. 531.

[41] Gitlin, *The Sixties* (1993), p. 343.

[42] The concept of a participant-scholar will be discussed later in this chapter.

[43] Breines, 'Whose New Left?", *JAM* (September 1988), p. 531.

relationship between participant-scholars and modern students who are exposed to their ideas, and frame their own views of the "Sixties" along these lines.[44]

The disregard for seventies activism inherent in "rise and fall" historiography has particular ramifications for this thesis focusing on the GI Movement which did not begin to find cohesion until 1968.[45] The *Lewis-McChord Free Press* in particular did not even begin publication until 1970, defying the perception that meaningful social protest ended earlier. Over the course of its publication the *Free Press* would go on to demonstrate the radicalness and Marxist rhetoric which authors like Gitlin so despised and thus eliminated from narratives of the "Sixties". However, this does not mean that activists publishing the *Free Press* were any less committed or important than those members of SDS that have been so celebrated. Therefore, this thesis importantly focuses the historical lens onto the grassroots activists of the GI Movement evidencing that young servicemen continued the legacy of protest beyond 1968, undermining notions that political protest dissipated after the fall of SDS and other national protest organisations. As a result, this thesis utilises the term "Sixties" in order to demonstrate that this era, associated with progressive political activism, was not confined to the 1960s and included GI anti-war activism.

An oft-forgotten aspect of the anti-war movement, and of the "Sixties", is that left-wing activism featured heavily in both, especially among young people. As a result, it is necessary to understand how scholars have discussed the Left during this period, as well as provide some much-needed context. Much like locating the "Sixties", defining the difference between the left-wing movements of the '60s, and '70s is fraught with difficulties, complications, and nuance. Most treatments of the "Sixties" do not adequately define terms such New Left, and instead treat them in an offhanded, self-explanatory manner. As the anti-war movement was largely a left-wing movement, it is important to assess the New Left in terms of its ideas and constituents and understand how these cycled between the two movements (Left and anti-war). Likewise, as the transition from the New Left into newer, more Marxist, approaches has so far been inadequately detailed by historians, it is also necessary to establish this movement in the late 1960s and '70s.

[44] Heale, 'The Sixties as History', *RAH* (March 2005), p. 139.
[45] David Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt: GI Resistance During the Vietnam War* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2005), pp. 50-58.

As the name suggests, the New Left was born out of the death of what is referred to as the Old Left. This movement was made up of the large national Marxist organisations, such as the Communist Party (CPUSA), the Socialist Party, the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and other Marxist organisations, and focused especially on activism within the labour movement.[46] However, following the "Second Red Scare" after World War II, due to both popular pressure and legislation, participation in these organisations was strictly limited and their memberships dwindled.[47] Likewise, the Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" at the Twentieth Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956 exposed the world to the abuses of former Premier Joseph Stalin's reign, further discrediting communism around the globe.[48]As a result, by the 1960s, the Old Left had essentially "died", and a strong Left no longer existed in the US.

The demise of the Left in the 1950s, therefore, made it necessary to establish a new Left in the 1960s. The Left which was created was literally new, both in the sense that it was a new left-wing movement, but also because it was a deliberate departure from past forms of organising. The name, New Left, was originally co-opted from a British social movement but was codified in America by the sociologist C. Wright Mills in his 1960 "Letter to the New Left".[49] However, the lack of an official starting point or definition of the New Left has led to as much ambiguity on what this left-wing movement was than it has clarity. Many, for example, have portrayed it as the reserve of White, middle-class student intellectuals.[50] It was, after all, the intelligentsia who Mills addressed his letter to in 1960, identifying them as the only major group in societies

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[46] Andrew Hunt, 'How New Was the New Left?', in *New Left Revisited,* ed. by John McMillian and Paul Buhle (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003), pp. 139-155 (pp. 141-142).

[47] Whilst this period has often been associated with the enigmatic figure of Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy, and the resulting buzzword "McCarthyism", Robert Griffith has argued that a scepticism of the Left was inculcated by conventional political institutions and interest groups rather than a mass political movement of the Right. Please see: Robert Griffith, *The Politics of Fear: Joseph R. McCarthy and the Senate,* 2nd edn. (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1987). For the legal limitations placed on participation in Marxist organisations see: *The McCarran Internal Security Act* (1950) via: San Diego State University, https://loveman.sdsu.edu/docs/1950InternalSecurityAct.pdf [accessed: 24/08/23]
In the two years that followed Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" the CPUSA lost approximately three quarters of its membership. Isserman, *If I Had a Hammer* (1987)*,* p. 31.

[48] See: Nikita Khrushchev, *On the Cult of Personality and Its Consequences* (Moscow: Grand Kremlin Palace, 25 February 1956), via: the Wilson Center, https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/khrushchevs-secret-speech-cult-personality-and-its-consequences-delivered-twentieth-party
[accessed: 21/11/23]. For a discussion of the importance of this speech and its role in diminishing the Old Left, please see: Isserman, *If I Had a Hammer* (1987), pp. 14-18.

[49] C. Wright Mills, 'Letter to the New Left', *New Left Review* [*NLR*]*,* 1.5 (September-October 1960), pp. 18-23.

[50] Please see: Miller, *"Democracy is in the Streets"* (1987); Isserman, *If I Had a Hammer* (1987); and Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

around the world that had started 'breaking out of apathy' in order to inspire social and political change.[51]

As a result, the term New Left is largely used to refer specifically to a political approach associated with the growing student movement in the 1960s. During this period, students became more politically active and took issue with the notion of democracy in the US. Tom Hayden, eminent leader of the student movement, professed a critical view of the meaning of democracy in America. He argued that the grounding for true democracy in America did not exist as a result of the Founding Fathers' 'dim view of human nature and the potential for participation' which created a republic – rather than a true democracy.[52] The lack of ability for the individual to have a say in the decisions that affected their lives was highlighted by the ongoing civil rights movement. As the Port Huron Statement (the first, and hugely popular, SDS manifesto) stated: 'whole constituencies are divested of the full political power they might have'.[53] In this sense, they opposed 'corporate liberalism', the concessionary, reactionary status quo of the American political system, in favour of what they called participatory democracy.[54] They were therefore concerned with the voice of the individual, particularly those who were poor and not White, in an America mired in 'bureaucracy, large government, international networks and systems.'[55]

Nonetheless, the "Sixties" buzzword, participatory democracy, has remained vague and illusory. In the Port Huron Statement, the term is defined as a 'social system' in which 'the individual share[s] in those social decisions determining the quality and direction of his life'.[56] Participatory democracy was, however, intended to be equivocal. Hayden, Al Haber (founder of SDS), and the other co-creators of the Port Huron Statement desired the term to be open-ended, an invitation to research and debate.[57] Participatory democracy was, therefore, an axiom which, despite its ability to capture an atmosphere of youthful exuberance, was a rhetorical tool

[51] C. Wright Mills, 'Letter to the New Left', *NLR* (September-October 1960), p. 23.
[52] Miller, *"Democracy is in the Streets"* (1987), p. 96.
[53] Students for a Democratic Society, 'The Port Huron Statement' (1962), in Miller, *"Democracy is in the Streets"* (1987), pp. 329-374 (p. 337).
[54] Gitlin, *The Sixties* (1993), p. 130.
[55] Tom Hayden, "Proposed Book of Essays", SDS Microfilm, Series 1, No.11, cited in Miller, *"Democracy is in the Streets"* (1987), p. 77.
[56] SDS, 'The Port Huron Statement' (1962), in Miller, *"Democracy is in the Streets"* (1987), p. 333. The Port Huron Statement is written using male pronouns, reflecting the patriarchal views of the leaders of the student movement which pushed many female activists from the student movement into the women's liberation movement.
[57] Miller, *"Democracy is in the Streets"* (1987), p. 97.

rather than a political praxis. As James Miller has commented: '[p]articipatory democracy was a catchword. It became a cliché. It masked a theoretical muddle. It was a stick of dynamite. It pointed toward daring personal experiments and modest social reforms. It implied political revolution.'[58] This is problematic as, if one was to identify the New Left by its belief in, or use of, participatory democracy, and this approach was only loosely defined by its creators, it would be difficult to ascribe this particular notion to any group. However, the phrase evidently wielded some form of authority for activists and therefore, if only as a guiding philosophy, played a key part in the New Left.

However, historians have queried this limited definition of the New Left, arguing that it was much more than just the protest cultivated on elite college campuses across the US. Gosse, for example, has commented on the problematic nature of identifying the New Left solely with students as it makes 'age, whiteness, and student status the defining characteristics of the New Left'. In opposition, he has embraced a much more pluralistic definition of the movement which conceptualises it as an umbrella term for all progressive protest within this period. In defence of this approach, he insists that in its contemporary use, the New Left, whilst ambiguous, referred to a '"movement of movements"'.[59] This analysis is similar to the assessments of Randy Rowland, a GI anti-war activist in the 1960s and '70s, who expanded on this thought. Rowland indicated that the concept of being against 'the Man' was a uniting force that pulled different protesting groups into one movement. Therefore, movements such as women's liberation, Black Power, the GI Movement, the anti-war movement, and the student movement, were "all the various streams feeding this mighty river".[60] The mighty river that Rowland describes was the "Sixties" anachronism, "the Movement", an amorphous collection of countercultural attitudes, protest against the war, and support for oppressed groups. Whilst Rowland did not explicitly refer to "the Movement" as the New Left, it is evident that both he and Gosse emphasise the connected nature of protest during this period and subscribe to a broad definition of the New Left. Importantly, the GI Movement acted as a tributary to this "mighty river" and can thus be acknowledged as part of the New Left.

Although he has been criticised for conflating the student left with the New Left, and thus perpetuating a limited conception of the movement, former SDS President, Todd Gitlin,

[58] Ibid., p. 152.
[59] Van Gosse, *Rethinking the New Left: An Interpretive History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 5.
[60] Interview of Randy Rowland, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 10 October 2022.

provides some insight into what unified "Movement" activists. Asking himself the hypothetical question of 'how did you "join" the movement?', Gitlin concluded that 'practical moralism' was the idea that tied these young, left-wing activists together. This was the notion that one should stand up for what they believed in, often against ignorant authority, and became an important facet of "the Movement", i.e., the New Left.[61] In this sense, action against unjust authority was the main form of identification with the New Left, rather than a specific political approach. The act of doing therefore came to signify position in "the Movement". As such, within this thesis, the New Left is recognised as a broad array of different movements which had a freewheeling and broadly democratic approach to activism, in which anybody who was opposed to the Vietnam War and supported other social causes could partake.

What complicates matters further when discussing the left-wing character of the anti-war movement is the fact that, despite their temporal indicators, the Old and New Lefts were not necessarily exclusive to one another. Indeed, at times, the two movements overlapped and combined, leading Andrew Hunt to question: 'how new was the New Left?'.[62] In doing so, he has rejected the tendency to celebrate 'New Left exceptionalism' and has instead emphasised continuity between the Old and New Left.[63] Likewise, in his assessment on the development of the American Left, Isserman has concluded that 'the early New Left had emerged from the Old Left in ways that made it difficult to perceive exactly where the one ended and the other began'.[64] Many of the most important New Left figures, for example, began their political lives in the institutions of the Old Left, such as A.J. Muste, I.F. Stone, Barbara Deming, Fred Halstead, Angela Davis, and David Dellinger, suggesting continuity between the two movements.[65] In this sense, association with the New did not preclude inspiration from the Old. Similarly, it was not SDS – the bastion of participatory democracy – who represented 'the main student organisation in the national antiwar coalition', but the Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam. This was a coalition organisation largely under the control of the Trotskyist SWP, and its youth organisation, the Young Socialist Alliance, Old Left in their dedication to Marxist politics.[66] Similarly, the youth groups of Old Left organisations, such as the W.E.B. DuBois Clubs of America and Maoists from the Progressive Labor Movement,

[61] Gitlin, *The Sixties* (1993), p. 84.
[62] Hunt, 'How New Was the New Left?', in *New Left Revisited* (2003).
[63] Ibid., p. 140.
[64] Isserman, *If I Had a Hammer* (1987), p. xiii.
[65] Hunt, 'How New Was the New Left?', in *New Left Revisited* (2003), p. 143.
[66] Ibid., pp. 143-144.

were some of the earliest groups to campaign against the potentiality of a Vietnam War when South Vietnam contained only military advisers.[67] Marxists, such as members of the CPUSA, Maoists, and the aforementioned Trotskyists participated in an attempt by radical anti-war activists to wrest the initiative from the liberals in the anti-war movement and create a 'new radical alignment for peace' with the building of the National Coordinating Committee to End the War in Vietnam.[68] Paradoxically, whilst New Left activism often orbited the anti-war movement and the two movements are often conflated because of their high degree of crossover, the investment of Old Left groups into the anti-war movement refutes the association of anti-war protest solely with the New Left. In doing so, this framework embraces a broader view of the continuity of left-wing movements in the United States, demonstrating that the two movements, despite their New and Old denotations, co-existed.

If viewed in terms of political approaches, the Old Left, with its focus on trade unions, workers, and Marxism, was more left-wing than the New which was more concerned with the buzzword participatory democracy, the liberal civil rights movement, and oppressed minorities. Still, as Hunt has pointed out, the New Left/Old Left paradigm is problematic essentially because it suggests that the two could not co-exist. As an alternative, he advocates that 'we must stop thinking in terms of beginnings, middles, and ends and adopt a more cyclical, less progressive view of history'.[69] Diggins has critically posited that 'although the New Left started out as an open, democratic, and non-ideological movement, by the end of the sixties much of the New Left had reverted to the clichés of economic Marxism.'[70] This change signalled the origins of another form of left-wing activism at the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s.

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[67] DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal* (1990), p. 97 and Phillip Luke Sinitiere, Edward Carson, and Jarvis Turner, '"We never capitulated on our right to dissent, to be Communist, socialist, left, and radical": An Interview with Jarvis Tyner on W.E.B. DuBois, the DuBois Clubs, and Black Liberation', *Socialism and Democracy*, 32.3 (2018), pp. 267-273 (p. 271). The Progressive Labor Movement (later to become the Progressive Labor Party in 1965) was formed in 1962 and therefore not part of the traditional Old Left. Likewise, the group was formed from approximately 50 members and ex-members of the CPUSA who favoured Chinese communism over the Soviet model. Still, their emphasis on Marxism, their opposition to youth and counterculture, and their origins in the CPUSA have led A. Belden Fields to identify it as an Old Left organisation. However, the Party's break from the USSR and its position as the first Maoist group in the United States emphasises a continuity with Third World Marxism (discussed later in this chapter) and the group can be seen as an early precursor to the turn toward Mao among student activists. A. Belden Fields, *Trotskyism and Maoism: Theory and Practice in France and the United States* (New York: Autonomedia, 1988), pp. 185-186

[68] DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal* (1990), p. 125, 134

[69] Hunt, 'How New Was the New Left?', in *New Left Revisited* (2003), p. 151.

[70] John Patrick Diggins, *The Rise and Fall of the American Left* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1992), p. 238.

The return of the New Left to Marxism, which Diggins identified, played an important part in transforming the Left during the late '60s and early '70s with protest transitioning from resistance to revolution.[71] Writing in *Liberation*, former SDS president, Carl Oglesby, aptly described the transmutation of the student movement from 'pro-peace to anti-war, anti-war to pro-NLF, pro-NLF to anti-imperialist to pro-Third World revolution to anti-capitalism to pro-socialism'. This process took place due to the evolving critique of the Vietnam War. As the war began to be viewed by student radicals not simply as a policy mistake, but the result of an inherent imperialistic system, 'all political therapies short of socialist revolution appeared to become senseless'. A conversion from the student movement's reliance on a freewheeling participatory democracy to a Marxist perspective took place simply because, as Oglesby explained: 'there was – and is – no other coherent, integrative, and explicit philosophy of revolution'.[72] As Marxism had had tangible results in bringing about social change in other countries, its appeal to aspiring revolutionaries was apparent. For purposes of clarity, Oglesby identified the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1968 as the point at which student politics underwent this transformation, the point where liberalism demonstrated its lack of power and was humiliated, and when SDS officially adopted a Marxist-Leninist (ML) ideology.[73]

Whilst Oglesby charted the rise of revolutionary and Marxist rhetoric in the student movement, other communities had also begun to adopt such a stance. Non-White groups such as the Black Panther Party, the Young Lords Party, La Raza Unida Party, Detroit's League of Revolutionary Black Workers, and the American Indian Movement all demonstrated a more confrontational, anti-imperialist, Marxist, and 'revolutionary nationalist sentiment'.[74] Therefore, this reversion to Marxism was popular not just among White, middle-class males but also among other marginalised groups during this period. This new surge of politicking also provides yet more evidence to contest the notion that the paradigmatic shifts in culture, protest, and activism that demarcate the "Sixties" culminated in 1968.

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[71] George R. Vickers, *The Formation of the New Left: The Early Years* (Lexington Books, 1975), p. 129.
[72] Carl Oglesby, 'Notes on a Decade Ready for the Dustbin', *Liberation,* 14.5,6 (August-September 1969), pp. 5-19 (p. 6), https://archive.org/details/510.liberation.AugustSeptember1969/page/n5/mode/2up?view=theater [accessed: 01/12/23]. *Liberation* was a popular radical New Left journal which was contributed to by authors as diverse as socialist Michael Harrington and novelist Norman Mailer.
[73] Ibid., p. 6.
[74] Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air* (2018), p. 2.

Despite DeBenedetti's claim that in the anti-war movement 'radicalism [had] virtually evaporated by 1971', this gravitational pull toward Marxism for White males, women, and oppressed minorities suggests that a new form of radicalism, capable of appealing to a wide variety of youth in America, was growing by the late-"Sixties".[75] This approach was referred to as Third World Marxism, a diverse rather than dogmatic set of Marxist ideals which centred on the 'intersection of economic exploitation and racial oppression' and which was explicitly anti-imperialist. In order to achieve their goal of revolution, activists entered the working-class through industrial jobs, lived in working-class neighbourhoods and communities of people of colour, joined anti-racist organisations, and debated revolutionary strategy.[76] Whilst the term Third World Marxism implies a specific approach, political positions are never static and are always transitioning. As Elbaum has commented: 'the process of Marxism gaining influence (and what interpretation of Marxism was embraced) differed based on where individuals happened to be located. And in some cases Marxism gained only rhetorical converts, with previously held notions simply being reformulated using Marxist terms.'[77] Likewise, young activists were not always the most discerning judges of the complicated relationship between nationalism and Marxism. '[D]espite the distinction in theory between working-class internationalism and "ultimately bourgeois" nationalism', writes Elbaum, '– in the concrete it was not easy (especially for newly radicalized youth) to distinguish between a Marxist project in which national liberation for the moment played the pivotal role and a nationalist project that utilized important elements of social theory or rhetoric'.[78] Nonetheless, the Third World Marxism movement highlights a curious historical phenomenon in which previously non-ideological New Left activists reverted to the Marxism of the Old Left and, in doing so, created a new context of late-"Sixties" left-wing activism. It was this context in which the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* operated, and it is therefore crucial that this is established before discussion of the newspaper can begin.[79]

Whether they understood the intricacies of the ideology or not, rejection of the Vietnam War acted as a gateway to Marxism for many "Sixties" activists, including young servicemen. Within this broad milieu, there grew a selection of organisations which championed not only Marxism, but specifically Marxism-Leninism, i.e., the principles of Marxism as adapted by

[75] DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal* (1990), pp. 317-320.
[76] Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air* (2018), pp. 2-3.
[77] Ibid., p. 59.
[78] Ibid., p. 42.
[79] For a discussion of the GI Movement's relationship to Third World Marxism, please see Chapter 2.

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin during the creation of the first communist state, the Soviet Union.[80] As a subset of the Third World Marxists, these groups were referred to as the New Communist Movement (NCM), which consisted of ML organisations such as the Bay Area Revolutionary Union, the October League, the Communist League, the Red Guard Party, I Wor Kuen, the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization, the Black Workers Congress, the Union of Democratic Filipinos, and the Asian Study Group.[81] Ideologically, the NCM was Maoist, disavowing the Soviet Union for being revisionist and championing the Chinese Communist Party as the leader of "Third World" revolution.[82] As Marxist-Leninists, NCM groups championed the notion of a vanguard party. This approach relied on the premise that a small group of activists, or vanguard, could be used to lead the rest of the working-class to revolution, as the Bolsheviks had successfully done in Russia. Whilst seemingly anti-democratic and elitist, Elbaum has noted that this form of organisation appealed to late 1960s activists who had become disenchanted with the lack of results of participatory democracy earlier in the decade.[83] Likewise, a vanguard approach suited this movement because it was disproportionately composed of middle-class youths and intellectuals who had left the decaying national student movement.[84] However, writing in *Theoretical Review*, Paul Costello has taken a dim view of the NCM, arguing that it offered no theoretical development and contributed nothing new to communism, instead relying on foreign theories developed by Marx, Lenin, and Mao, which activists then applied to incompatible situations in America. He also claims that the movement lacked genuine ties to the working-class and was geographically isolated in the large cities of San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York City, and Detroit.[85] It is important to assess the NCM as the GI Alliance, publishers of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press,* belonged to it.

The arrival of Third World Marxism was a significant departure from the New Left which came before it. This was no longer the broad movement of left-wing activists which were largely happy to work within the existing political structure. Whilst the student movement maxim participatory democracy 'implied political revolution', it had not emphasised that such a revolution would be to create a communist state.[86] This was new New Left. Whereas the Old

[80] Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air* (2018), pp. 3-4.
[81] Ibid., pp. 95-105.
[82] Ibid., pp. 53-54.
[83] Ibid., p. 55.
[84] Ibid., p. 5.
[85] Paul Costello, 'A Critical History of the New Communist Movement, 1969-1979', *Theoretical Review* [*TR*], No.13 (November-December 1979), n.p., via: Marxists Internet Archive, https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/periodicals/theoretical-review/19791301.htm
[86] Miller, *"Democracy is in the Streets"* (1987), p. 152.

Left took inspiration from the Soviet model and focused mostly on the trade union movement, these Third World Marxists looked to Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam, Amilcar Cabral in Africa, Che Guevara and Fidel Castro in Cuba, and Mao Zedong in China for their inspiration.[87] For example, in their newspaper *The Call*, the October League, a ML party founded in Los Angeles in 1969, took aim at communist "revisionism", in the CPUSA.[88] The October League blasted the CPUSA as 'a party of middle-class professionals and labor bureaucrats who stand in the way of the workers' fight', and commented that there is a 'great new movement' aiming to tackle capitalism in the United States, that being the NCM.[89] This movement combined the Marxist politics of the Old Left (although not supporting the revisionist Soviet Union) with the emphasis on youth, culture, and a stress on the need for action that helped to distinguish the New Left.

The lack of recognition of this movement betrays an absence of serious historical study on the rise of the far-Left in the late '60s and early '70s. However, there has been some limited attempt to study this movement. A chapter of Julia Lovell's global history of Maoism deals with the importance of Chinese communism and Mao to late-"Sixties" US activists and in this sense deals with the rise in sympathy toward Marxism during this period.[90] Likewise, A. Belden Fields concentrates specifically on the rise of interest in Maoism, as well as Trotskyism, in the US in the 1960s and '70s.[91] However, the main contributor to this historiography is Max Elbaum. Elbaum was a participant, and whilst he explicitly states that his book is not a memoir, he also acknowledges that his view is partisan and that the history he has written serves to stimulate the modern American Left.[92] Despite this, his work is well-referenced and extensive, providing a fair assessment of Third World Marxists' successes and failures between 1968-1992. The value of this work, as one of the few pieces of serious history written on this subject, therefore, far outweighs its partisan and non-academic origins. Likewise, the openly Marxist-Leninist magazine, *Theoretical Review*, has provided useful additions to historical understandings of the NCM. Whilst these are highly partisan, emerging from within the movement that they are studying, they have been adjudged as semi-primary sources and, as such, their analyses have been viewed as useful yet treated with caution. Still, the factual

[87] Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air* (2018), p. 3.
[88] Ibid., p. 102.
[89] "What is the October League", *The Call*, Vol.1, No.3, December 1972, p. 11, via: Marxists Internet Archive, https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/periodicals/call/index.htm [accessed: 19/05/25].
[90] Julia Lovell, *Maoism: A Global History* (London: Vintage, 2020).
[91] Fields, *Trotskyism and Maoism* (1988).
[92] Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air* (2018), pp. 11-12.

information they have provided has been a valuable tool in illuminating this gap in historical knowledge. The sparse nature of the historiography on this subject, combined with the dearth of writing on the GI Movement (discussed later) suggests that there is an imbalance between the writings on radicalism in the early 1960s and the late 1960s and '70s.

The study of Third World Marxists is important to this thesis as the GIs who published the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* were actively involved in this milieu and this is reflected in the newspaper. Whilst always left-wing and anti-war, the *Free Press* transitioned from a New Left, democratic, freewheeling approach, to a more Marxist position, introducing criticisms of capitalism and imperialism and celebrations of the working-class and socialism into the paper. As such, it cannot be divorced from this growing radicalism which certainly impacted the topics discussed and the language that the editors used.

In-depth discussion of the *Free Press* cannot begin before a thorough analysis of the existing scholarly work of the GI Movement has been completed. As discussed, GIs have constituted a "neglected constituency" in anti-war movement historiography.[93] Nonetheless, there have been some limited attempts to focus on anti-war GIs. As with histories of the civilian anti-war movement, it has been those who participated in the GI Movement who have sought to undertake this task. The first wave of Movement histories was particularly authored by former GI resisters and sympathisers.[94] These few books contemporaneously attempted to illuminate the situation within the Vietnam era military.

Waterhouse and Wizard's *Turning the Guns Around*, published in 1971 when the GI Movement was still growing, is the first published large-scale history of the Movement.[95] Importantly, the two recognise the significance of the GI press, claiming that servicemen's "underground" publications represent 'the human voices of the developing GI movement'.[96] As this thesis focuses on one publication, these contemporary observations are useful in comprehending the

[93] Hunt, *The Turning* (1999), p. 1.
[94] Please see: Terry H. Anderson, 'The GI Movement and the Response from the Brass', in *Give Peace a Chance* (1992); Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005)*;* Harry W. Haines, 'Soldiers Against the Vietnam War: *Aboveground* and *The Ally'*, in *Insider Histories of the Vietnam Era Underground Press, Part 2,* ed. by Ken Wachsberger (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2012), pp. 1-45; and Harry W. Haines, 'Hegemony and the GI Resistance: Introductory Notes', *Vietnam Generation* [*VG*], 2.1 (January 1990), pp. 3-7; Halstead, *Out Now!* (1991), originally published in 1978.
[95] Larry G. Waterhouse and Mariann G. Wizard, *Turning the Guns Around: Notes on the GI Movement* (New York: Praeger, 1971).
[96] Ibid., p. 89.

importance of GI newspapers to those who published and read them. One a GI Movement veteran, and the other a women's liberation activist, Waterhouse and Wizard's book remains one of the most important studies of the GI Movement as an assessment of GI activism by those who engaged with it. As such, the work is predictably partisan. The two did not attempt an objective analysis of the Movement or attempt to hide their radical, left-wing political beliefs. Even though the Vietnam War had not yet ended, the authors concluded that the GI Movement was a success, primarily evidenced by the move to an all-volunteer force (AVF) in the early '70s.[97] They also claimed that the differences between civilian life and military life were lessening in 1971, thanks to 'civilian militarism', and that the GI Movement therefore constituted an ideal social movement to take inspiration from. In their own words:

> We have focused on the GI Movement because it has succeeded, through its threat to transform repressive roles into non-repressive ones, in undermining the very possibility of our policy-makers' [sic] continuing to maintain their power at home and abroad through brute force. This success has been brought about despite the openly fascist conditions of life in the military.[98]

However, exactly how soldiers 'transform[ed] repressive roles into non-repressive ones' is not examined, nor is how they undermined the ability of policy-makers to maintain power in America and South Vietnam.

The second group of contemporary books on the GI Movement were much less extensive, focusing on specific organisations and events in the GI Movement. Andy Stapp's *Up Against the Brass* is a memoir of the author's attempt to 'unionize the United States Army'.[99] Rather than a broad study of the GI Movement and an attempt to assess its success and effect like *Turning the Guns Around*, Stapp's book is a personal treatment of the GI Movement, recounting his experience in the Army and his role in the creation of one of the largest GI Movement organisations, the American Servicemen's Union (ASU). Due to the necessity of clandestine organising among anti-war soldiers, there were a lack of national GI Movement organisations and Stapp's account remains an important contemporary account of the creation of one of these organisations. Importantly, as the ASU was a GI group in which Marxist groups were heavily involved, Stapp's book offers insight into the Left's attempts to engage with the GI Movement.

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[97] Ibid., p. 182. The transition to an AVF and the notion that this was impacted by the GI Movement is discussed in Chapter 4.
[98] Waterhouse and Wizard, *Turning the Guns Around* (1971), pp. 181-182.
[99] Andy Stapp, *Up Against the Brass: The Amazing Story of the Fight to Unionize the United States Army* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970).

In 1970, Fred Halstead, leader of the SWP (yet more evidence of the Left's particular engagement with the GI Movement), authored *GIs Speak Out Against the War* which documented the creation of the organisation GIs United Against the War in Vietnam on Fort Jackson (SC).[100] Halstead utilised interviews with participants to detail the events which led to the arrest of eight GIs United members for holding an impromptu meeting of over one hundred soldiers on base. Eventually called the Fort Jackson 8, Halstead commented that the arrest of the group turned the 8 into a *cause célèbre*, embarrassing the military and ultimately giving the soldiers some much-needed support.[101] Although this is a highly partisan account of events, Halstead's book is a useful demonstration of how oral histories have been used to reconstruct episodes of the GI Movement which, because of the limits of literary sources, e.g., a tendency to not clearly detail events as they happened and create arguments about them, reveal much. Similarly, Halstead remains one of the few civilians contemporarily writing about the GI Movement and therefore provides an insight into the importance that Trotskyist parties placed on the Movement during this period.[102]

The final contemporary work focusing on the GI Movement is Fred Gardner's *The Unlawful Concert.*[103] This work focuses specifically on the Presidio Mutiny, an act of resistance by twenty-seven inmates of the Presidio's (a military base in San Francisco) stockade in 1968 where they held a 'sit-down' strike in protest of the Vietnam War and the conditions in the stockade. As with Stapp's book, *The Unlawful Concert* is limited in terms of its analysis of the GI Movement. Nonetheless, the book still has much value as a chronicle of the events which led up to the Presidio Mutiny as well as the severe punishment that the accused received for their actions. This coverage of the Mutiny, which had much importance for the GI Movement and has been viewed as a pivotal moment as it garnered much press and support for GI anti-war activism, provides important first-hand insight into one of the most notable acts of the GI Movement (discussed fully in the next chapter).

Interestingly, the lack of coverage on the national GI Movement within the books published in 1970, and likely authored beforehand, demonstrates an association of the Movement with

[100] Fred Halstead, *GIs Speak Out Against the War in Vietnam: The Case of the Fort Jackson 8* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970).
[101] Halstead, *Out Now!* (1991), p. 530.
[102] The relationship between these parties and the GI Movement is discussed further in Chapter 2.
[103] Fred Gardner, *The Unlawful Concert: An Account of the Presidio Mutiny Case* (New York: Viking Press, 1970).

specific acts of protest. Stapp's work centred on the ASU, Halstead's on the Fort Jackson 8, and Gardner's on the Presidio Mutiny. Published in 1971, *Turning the Guns Around* was therefore the first work in the GI Movement historiography to focus on GI activism as a national movement. The publication of these books, therefore, are a telling indication of the way that the GI Movement was perceived contemporaneously. Originally, books focused on particularly outrageous acts of GI protest or military repression, later giving way to a broader perspective on the Movement. Likewise, as the Vietnam War dragged on and GI protest grew, anti-war soldiers' awareness that they were part of a wider movement also increased, and this historiographical shift is an indication of this recognition.

Two other works focused on the GI Movement, one contemporaneous and the other published a short while after the conclusion of the Vietnam War, have been grouped together as both focused on the laws of the military during the "Sixties". Instead of dealing directly with anti-war sentiment, these works considered the GI Movement tangentially. Soldiers had to conform to the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), a set of laws which every person in the military was subject to and which were significantly stricter and more vague than civilian laws. For the military, the UCMJ codified necessary rules and regulations on bases which enforced standardised expectations in terms of the look and behaviour of a soldier. This was done to instil notions such as collectivism (that no one individual is more important than the military as an organisation); respect for the chain of command; a duty to sacrifice some individual liberties for the good of the United States; and honour and pride in their work. For low-ranking soldiers, who were sometimes but not always anti-war, the UCMJ equated to oppression, deindividualization, the removal of constitutional rights, and needless bullying from superiors.

The first of these works, Robert S. Rivkin's *GI Rights and Army Justice*, is self-described as a 'draftee's guide to military life'.[104] As this suggests, the book was designed as a guidebook for draftees, describing what they would encounter when entering the Army. Whilst it is evidently in response to the GI Movement that this book was authored, as it discusses the drafting of young men into the military with some distaste and deliberately positions itself as an aid to these draftees in the oppressive institution of the military, it made very little direct reference to the Movement itself. Instead, the book highlighted specific Army regulations which would be

[104] Robert S. Rivkin, *GI Rights and Army Justice: The Draftee's Guide to Military Life and Law* (New York: Grove Press, inc., 1970).

important to the GI, either because they would be used as a way for officers to punish them, or as a way for the soldier to ensure that he was within his rights when performing certain actions. As a work that comments on the GI Movement, therefore, *GI Rights and Army Justice* is limited. However, the book provides some expert insight into the Vietnam-era UCMJ and is useful as a guide to understanding the complexities of the rules that soldiers were forced to live their lives by. Perhaps most importantly, this book was advertised in the *Lewis-McChord Free Press,* and it is therefore evident that it contemporaneously had some reach within the GI community. This is useful as it demonstrates that, short of accessing Army Regulations themselves, which were limited to locations such as the base library, *GI Rights and Army Justice* provided the Vietnam-era soldier with the most portable and accessible guide to his rights in the military. This was then used by anti-war GIs to ensure that they conformed to these rights, but also to challenge the seemingly arbitrary power of what they called "the Brass".

The second book, Lawrence Radine's academic study *The Taming of the Troops*, was not targeted at soldiers.[105] Originating from conversations with anti-war soldiers in the Vietnam era, Radine's study analyses the attempts of the military to detect and suppress GI dissent, and later to co-opt it through adaptive techniques, such as improving the conditions of life in the military. This work is therefore unique as an alternative to GI Movement histories written about anti-war troops. Although the analysis of effect, or lack thereof, should not be the sole purpose for conducting histories of the anti-war movement, Radine's book is one of the works which does focus on the lack of the GI Movement's ability to make substantial change. Both Rivkin and Radine's work, whilst neither focused specifically on the GI Movement, are important to the GI Movement historiography as studies which focus on the institution of the military in the Vietnam era and how it used the UCMJ and other techniques to either punish or supress anti-war GIs.

Authoring histories of the GI Movement remained popular with those who participated in the Movement contemporaneously but became scholars after the fact. Former soldier, Harry W. Haines, for example, has recounted his Movement experience in a book chapter and journal article. These works detail his involvement in the GI paper *Aboveground* at Fort Carson (CO); link this to activism in another GI paper, *The Ally*, published in Berkeley, California; comment on perceptions of the anti-war veteran in popular media; and, importantly, compile a list of GI

[105] Lawrence B. Radine, *The Taming of the Troops: Social Control in the United States Army* (Praeger, 1977).

publications.[106] As a personal reflection on the specificities of *Aboveground*, Haines' study has particular relevance and interest to this thesis and provides important insight into the operation of a GI newspaper other than the *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, such as the groups and types of people involved in their publishing.

In a more academic approach, former GI turned academic historian Terry H. Anderson has analysed the response of policy-makers to the GI Movement, utilising more scholarly conventions, such as footnotes, than Haines.[107] Due to his position as a historian, trained in the rigours of History as a discipline, he approaches the GI Movement differently to other former participants. In a considered analysis, Anderson sees the greatest success of the GI Movement in the adoption of an all-volunteer Army in the early 1970s, however, he is at pains to acknowledge that this was also the result of the unpopularity of the anti-war movement more generally.[108] His analysis is, therefore, one of the few attempts where scholars have tried to critically understand the GI Movement by assessing whether it had any long-lasting effect on the military. This more analytical outlook demonstrates that those who participated in the GI Movement are capable of attempting an objective analysis, however, these are rarer.

Whilst writing his book on the Fort Jackson 8 contemporaneously, Halstead has also authored a 'participant's account' of the civilian anti-war movement in 1978 which remains one of the few works on the anti-war movement that covers, albeit in a limited capacity, the GI Movement.[109] Halstead was, therefore, not a veteran writing about the GI Movement, but a civilian activist analysing his experience of the dynamic between the anti-war movement and GIs. The uniqueness of this memoir is therefore characteristic of Halstead's place in the anti-war movement as one of the earliest advocates of civilian aid to the GI Movement.[110] Whilst this is not a book about the GI Movement, it is crucial to understanding the relationship between GIs and civilians which, as discussed in the next chapter, could be turbulent, and is therefore integral to the GI Movement historiography.

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[106] Haines, 'Soldiers Against the Vietnam War' in *Insider Histories of the Vietnam Era Underground Press* (2012) and Haines, 'Hegemony and the GI Resistance', *VG* (January 1990), pp. 3-7.
[107] Anderson, 'The GI Movement and the Response from the Brass', in *Give Peace a Chance* (1992).
[108] Ibid., pp. 112-115. The move to an all-volunteer force and a more in-depth consideration of Anderson's perspective on this is detailed in Chapter 4.
[109] Halstead, *Out Now!* (1991).
[110] Ibid., pp. 206-207. The complex relationship between GIs and civilians will be examined in Chapter 2.

The most cited work on the GI Movement authored by a former GI, or indeed any scholar, is David Cortright's *Soldiers in Revolt*. Originally published in 1975, Cortright used his experience in the Army to provide an overview of the unrest in the Vietnam era military, both in Vietnam itself and stateside, also detailing the spread of the GI Movement from the Army to the Navy and Air Force.[111] The book utilises an array of sources ranging from congressional hearings, government documents, civilian newspaper and magazine articles, and GI "underground" newspapers, including some limited coverage of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, to create the broadest and most comprehensive assessment of the GI Movement available. A helpful guide to the various GI newspapers published is also included in the index.

Scholars such as Cortright, Halstead, Anderson, and Haines occupy an interesting place in the historiography as scholars who have lived the historical experience they are documenting. Demonstrated by the number of "Sixties" scholars who have since authored foundational texts on this period, this form of scholar has particular relevance for historians of this era, especially of the anti-war movement. However, History as a discipline, perhaps because of historians' lax adherence to a strict methodology, has not yet explored or given name to this dynamic. In other qualitative fields, academics use the term participant-observer to describe researchers who enter a specific environment with the intention of observing and researching those within it. In this way, the researcher is cognizant of their own research whilst subsuming themselves in their environment of study.[112] However, it is not often the intention of former participants to author scholarly works on their experience, and they thus do not have the awareness of the present that participant-observers do. It is perhaps better to refer to these men as participant-scholars.[113] This emphasises the author's distinction as somebody who participated in the event that they write histories of, using both their own experience and conventions of scholarship to do so. The term scholar, rather than Historian (capitalised advisedly), is used because, whilst participant-scholars did write histories, their methods may not always subscribe to the rigours and conventions of History as a discipline, and they need not necessarily be trained as a

[111] Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005).
[112] Howard S. Becker, 'Problems of Inference and Proof in Participant Observation', *American Sociological Review,* 23.6 (December 1958), pp. 652-660 (p. 652-653). For an example of the use of participant observation in the military, please see: Mortimer A. Sullivan Jr., Stuart A. Queen, and Ralph C. Patrick Jr., 'Participant Observation as Employed in the Study of a Military Training Program', *American Sociological Review,* 23.6 (December 1958), pp. 660-667.
[113] This term was first used by my Director of Studies, Dr Wendy Toon, and it is with her permission that it is used within this work. Wendy Toon, '"There were only a few women around": Female Anti-war Activists in the GI Movement During the Early 1970s', unpublished paper, delivered at the Institute of Historical Research (London), North American History Seminar, May 2024.

Historian. For these reasons, it is more accurate to refer to this particular approach to history (deliberately lower case) as participant-scholarship and within this thesis the term participant-scholar is preferred. This is complicated by Anderson who was a participant in the GI Movement but is also a trained academic historian. For the purposes of clarity, this thesis will not designate Anderson as a participant-scholar because of his expertise and the fact that his work does not rely on his participation. As highlighted, his chapter on the GI Movement is more analytical as a result of this. In this sense, it is the use of appropriate Historical conventions and methodical research which separate Historians from participant-scholars.

It is important to recognise the works of participant-scholars as a separate group of scholars to Historians because of the inherent problems that former participation can have on their work. Although no historian is truly objective, subjectivity is certainly exacerbated by former participation. Participant-scholars approach a subject with their previous experiences (whether positive or negative) and therefore offer a less critical view than the detached and more objective Historian. The academic conventions of History help to mitigate these blind spots in the case of Anderson. The disadvantages of the participant-scholar are most clearly evidenced in Cortright's *Soldiers in Revolt*. Having originally been released in 1975, just two years after the last American combat troops left Vietnam, the book is part history and part advocacy – evidenced by the author's support from the Institute for Policy Studies, a progressive anti-war thinktank.[114] His partisanship is evident particularly in the book's final chapter, 'Soldiers and Democracy', in which he suggests the need to reform the American military in order to make it a more democratic institution in which soldiers' liberties are respected.[115] This advocacy has certain repercussions for the history which precedes it. For Cortright, the lack of criticalness and analysis, stemming from his participation in the GI Movement and subsequent involvement in the Institute for Policy Studies, limit his work.

The ubiquity of participant-scholars in the GI Movement historiography can, therefore, be problematic due to their inherently partisan view of the topic, as well as their often lack of academic rigour. Nevertheless, as with study of the civilian anti-war movement, it would be foolish to eliminate these texts from use in this thesis due to the authority and unique insight that participant-scholars maintain. Indeed, *Soldiers in Revolt* is one of the most influential and

[114] "Our History", *Institute for Policy Studies,* https://ips-dc.org/about/history/ [accessed: 15/05/24].
[115] Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), pp. 220-243.

comprehensive works on the GI Movement and is a foundational text for all scholars of this topic. Likewise, whilst Cortright does use an array of sources (despite being poorly footnoted), his experience of the military and GI Movement during this era provides an understanding of the situation on military bases which cannot simply be gleaned from reading GI newspapers and other sources. Rejecting participant-scholars' work from this thesis would, therefore, not be apt as it would remove several important contributions to the scholarship on the topic. Still, the partisanship of these scholars must always be contemplated and carefully considered.

As discussed, there is a vast contingent of "Sixties", anti-war, and GI Movement scholars who are also participant-scholars. The high quantity of civilian anti-war participant-scholars can be easily explained due to many activists' involvement in academia during their activism. It is no surprise that these men (and they tend to be men), many of which attended elite American universities, continued their association with higher education, reflecting on their experiences in scholarly texts. It does not seem implausible, therefore, that the high proportion of participant-scholars in the GI Movement historiography is also due to the increase in people going to college in the "Sixties". For example, many soldiers had obtained college degrees prior to their entry into the military, because of the increased availability of higher education during this period. Others obtained degrees after their service thanks to the veteran's benefits provided under the Servicemen's Readjustment Act – more commonly known as the GI Bill.[116] This increased access to education allowed former students and veterans to document their experiences in a more academic setting and proceed to become scholars in their own right. Thus, the proliferation of participant-scholars is evident in work on the "Sixties".

Along with *Soldiers in Revolt* there are a few other important, book-length studies of the GI Movement authored by historians who are more detached from the Movement and academic in their conventions. Richard Moser's *The New Winter Soldiers* blurs the line between history and sociology, arguing that anti-war soldiers and veterans 'reconstructed and transformed the heroic tradition of the American citizen-soldier into a new model of citizen activism for peace, empowerment, and justice'.[117] Moser's work is important for this thesis as it emphasises the Americanness of GI protest, arguing that the 'ideals of freedom and equality', characterised by

[116] Servicemen's Readjustment Act (1944) via: National Archives, https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/servicemens-readjustment-act [accessed: 04/10/24].
[117] Richard Moser, *The New Winter Soldiers: GI and Veteran Dissent During the Vietnam War* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996), p. 1.

the American citizen-soldier of the American Revolution and Civil War, were the foremost inspirations for the GI Movement. Moser's work is significant therefore for its investigation not only into the actions of servicemen but also into the ways that they perceived themselves and the Vietnam War. However, he downplays the GI Movement's association with leftist groups, concluding that the 'political character of military resistance had little to do with any existing leftist organization or strategy', a line of thought which differs significantly from the conclusion of this thesis.[118]

James Lewes' *Protest and Survive* focuses specifically on the phenomenon of the GI press. Importantly, like this thesis, Lewes argues against the notion of reducing the GI Movement to a handful of 'spectacular moments', such as the Presidio Mutiny and the Fort Hood Three, in favour of focusing on its 'institutional substructure'.[119] Whilst these significant events are important, and no doubt had an impact on the movement itself, it is more helpful to study the GI Movement on a micro scale in order to gain a better picture of the actual "day-to-day" (or "month-to-month", as GI papers were often published monthly) resistance of the Movement. Much praise has to be given to Lewes as he was one of the first scholars to systematically digitally scan and compile a list of GI underground publications and it is because of this hard work that this thesis can be carried out.[120] However, one of the main restrictions of *Protest and Survive* is that it only analyses newspapers from between 1968 and 1970 without any justification for doing so – perhaps because of a lack of available sources when Lewes authored the book.[121] Still, the result is that the only book-length study of the GI press is incomplete and thus does not analyse the GI Movement's responses to the de-escalation and "Vietnamization" of the Vietnam War, and the growth in radicalism during this period.

The final book-length study of the GI Movement is David Parsons' *Dangerous Grounds*. Rather than focusing specifically on soldiers of the GI Movement, this book explores the relationships between GIs and anti-war civilians via an analysis of the GI coffeehouse concept (discussed in the following chapter). Parsons argues that the study of GI coffeehouses, as 'some

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[118] Ibid., p. 4.
[119] James Lewes, *Protest and Survive: Underground Newspapers During the Vietnam War* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2003), p. 6. As well as this full book, Lewes also published an article on the subject. Please see: James Lewes, 'Envisioning Resistance: The GI Underground Press During the Vietnam War', *Media History* [*MH*], 7.2 (2001), pp. 137-150.
[120] "About this Collection", GI Press Collection, 1964-1977, Wisconsin Historical Society, https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/p15932coll8 [accessed: 07/10/24].
[121] Lewes, *Protest and Survive* (2003), p. 5.

of the most central sites of this extraordinary resistance', present an opportunity to analyse the GI Movement; its interplay with the military; and, crucially, with anti-war civilians. To do so, the book specifically focuses on 'three of the longest lasting and most active coffeehouse projects': the UFO, Columbia (SC); the Oleo Strut, Killeen (TX); and, most importantly for this thesis, the Shelter Half, Tacoma (WA).[122] Parsons' book is therefore both useful as an investigation into the coffeehouse movement, one of the key facets of the GI Movement, but also as a refutation of a stereotyped relationship between soldiers and anti-war civilians which has conceptualised the two groups as antithetical to one another.[123]

Whilst not a book-length study, another important contribution to the historiography is James R. Hayes' article, 'The Dialectics of Resistance'.[124] In this, Hayes provides one of the first syntheses of the GI Movement, establishing a framework which would become familiar in GI Movement contributions concerning the growth of the Movement from individual acts of resistance, transitioning in 1968 to a more concerted social movement.[125] Similarly, Hayes was one of the first scholars to acknowledge that the US military adapted their approach to GI protest and instead of pursuing court-martial and punishment for anti-war GIs, they encouraged administrative discharge and tolerance so as not to unwittingly create the kind of *cause célèbre* which was documented by Halstead.[126] Whilst Hayes' work is a synthesis of the GI Movement, it has become somewhat limited now due to the number of books, articles, and chapters which have built upon the framework established in his study. Therefore, whilst his article was pioneering and influential for GI Movement scholarship, it has now become cursory, not providing substantial detail for his findings.

Interestingly, there is a significant (relative to the overall quantity of GI Movement literature) rise in interest in the GI Movement from 1990 to the mid 2000s. After the debacle in Vietnam, the late 1970s and 1980s were characterised by a somewhat isolationist spirit, or what neo-conservatives have called "Vietnam syndrome".[127] This "sickness" was seemingly contagious

[122] David L. Parsons, *Dangerous Grounds: Antiwar Coffeehouses and Military Dissent in the Vietnam Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017), p. 7.
[123] Discussed in more detail in the Chapter 2.
[124] James R. Hayes, 'The Dialectics of Resistance: An Analysis of the GI Movement', *Journal of Social Issues*, 31.4 (1975), pp. 125-139
[125] Ibid., pp. 127-133.
[126] Ibid., pp. 133-136.
[127] This is the notion that the US' experience in Vietnam left subsequent Presidents reluctant to involve the country, especially ground troops, in foreign conflicts, lest they create another Vietnam. In the Carter administration this exhibited itself in a reluctance to become heavily involved in any foreign conflicts. Whilst

and was soon caught by the American public. In one poll, as late as 1989, half of all Americans questioned claimed that the US should only go to war to stop an invasion of their own country.[128] This dearth of US military activity seemingly inhibited interest in studying the GI Movement as no studies of military anti-war activism were conducted in the 1980s.

If "Vietnam syndrome" was an illness, it appeared to have been cured in the 1990s. 'By God, we've kicked the Vietnam syndrome once and for all', President George H. W. Bush declared in March 1991 after the successful liberation of Kuwait from Saddam Hussein's Iraq.[129] This overcoming of "Vietnam syndrome" led to the US' growing involvement in the Middle East over the next decade, particularly as a retaliation for the September 11 attacks. As a result, George W. Bush embroiled America in engagements in both Afghanistan and Iraq, with both countries proving difficult to extricate from (the US was unable to leave Afghanistan until recently, when on the 31 August 2021 all remaining US personnel were evacuated from the country, twenty years after they first entered).[130] Whilst the Gulf War seemed to evidence that "Vietnams" were not inevitable, the inability of the US to exit these countries seemed to re-evidence that US power had limits to what it could achieve and the figure of Iraq replaced the spectre of Vietnam.[131]

The "curing" of Vietnam syndrome, with the swift victory of the Gulf War and the subsequent decade and a half of US military involvement in foreign affairs was the context of an increasing interest in the GI Movement by American scholars. In the introduction to the new 2005 edition of David Cortright's *Soldiers in Revolt*, the esteemed leftist historian Howard Zinn explicitly linked the GI Movement to the Iraq War. He hoped that 'as the war in Iraq continues, that a point can be reached where men and women in uniform can no longer tolerate what they begin

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his successor, Ronald Reagan, was much more eager to forget the "lessons" of Vietnam and utilise American military power abroad, the Legislative branch was not, and Congress placed restrictions on US involvement in both El Salvador and Nicaragua. Whilst this led to the heavy use of the Central Intelligence Agency in Central America, circumventing such restrictions, it demonstrates how the Vietnam syndrome had penetrated the US governmental apparatus, limiting US military intervention abroad. Robert D. Schulzinger, *A Time for Peace: The Legacy of the Vietnam War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 186-188.

[128] DeGroot, *Noble Cause?* (2000), p. 267.

[129] E.J. Dionne Jr., 'Kicking the "Vietnam Syndrome": Victory Sweeps Away U.S. Doomed-To-Failure Feeling', *The Washington Post,* March 3, 1991, n.p., via: The Washington Post, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1991/03/04/kicking-the-vietnam-syndrome/b6180288-4b9e-4d5f-b303-befa2275524d/ [accessed: 07/10/24].

[130] White House Press statement, "The U.S. Withdrawal from Afghanistan", 6 April 2023, p. 8. https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/US-Withdrawal-from-Afghanistan.pdf

[131] Schulzinger, *A Time for Peace* (2006), p. 201

to see as an unjust war.'[132] As most GI Movement scholars appear to view the Movement as a positive force, it does not seem an exaggeration to suggest that they hoped, as Zinn proposed, that the GI Movement could be seen as an example of moral courage to oppose US foreign interventions. Concerned by the US' increasing willingness to engage in conflicts, such scholars turned to history as a conduit for criticism.

Evidently, the publishers of *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), Haymarket, felt that this period specifically presented an opportunity to publish a new edition of the foundational GI Movement book.[133] Cortright himself also viewed it as a prosperous period for GI Movement literature, publishing a book chapter on the Movement (1992); a journal article specifically on African American resistance within the military during the Vietnam War (1990); and a co-authored book about resistance movements in modern armies, in which Cortright uses the GI Movement as the starting point for investigating rebellion in the post-Vietnam military (1991).[134] Other works that have already been discussed which were released during this timeframe include: Moser's *The New Winter Soldiers* (1996); Anderson's book chapter 'The GI Movement and the Response from the Brass' (1992); and Lewes' *Protest and Survive* (2003), as well as another article by Lewes which also focused on GI newspapers (2001).[135] Another study authored during this period, which analyses the GI press, is a chapter of Bob Ostertag's *People's Movements, People's Press* (2006).[136] This study, whilst short, has some important observations on the GI Movement**,** arguing that as the Vietnam War continued, prosecutions for anti-war activity declined which 'was due in no small part to the publicity the GI press was bringing to the formerly hidden world of GI resistance'.[137] This observation is especially relevant to this thesis as it highlights that a role of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* was to relay perceived injustices to the rank-and-file and that, in turn, this affected the military higher-ups and their capability to harshly punish dissident GIs.

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[132] Howard Zinn, 'Introduction to the 2005 Edition', in Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), pp. xi-xiii
[133] Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005).
[134] David Cortright, 'Black Resistance During the Vietnam War', *VG* (January 1990), pp. 51-64; David Cortright, 'GI Resistance During the Vietnam War' in *Give Peace a Chance* (1992), pp. 116-128; and David Cortright and Max Watts, *Left Face: Soldier Unions and Resistance Movements in Modern Armies* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991).
[135] Anderson, 'The GI Movement and the Response from the Brass', in *Give Peace a Chance* (1992), pp. 93-115; Lewes, 'Envisioning Resistance' *MH* (2001), pp. 137-150; Lewes, *Protest and Survive* (2003); and Moser, *The New Winter Soldiers* (1996).
[136] Bob Ostertag, *People's Movements, People's Press: The Journalism of Social Justice Movements* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006).
[137] Ibid., p .155.

GI Movement historiography during this period was bolstered not only by historians, but also academics from other disciplines, journalists, and others sympathetic to the GI Movement. In 1990, *Vietnam Generation*, an inter-disciplinary journal based specifically on the study of the Vietnam War era and the eponymous "Vietnam Generation", ran an edition solely dedicated to GI resistance during the war.[138] This contained contributions from a mixture of veterans, academics, poets, and journalists and, therefore, demonstrates the small but growing interest in study of the Movement outside of the discipline of History during this time. Similarly, the literary scholar Michael Bibby sought to analyse the GI Movement through a textual analysis of the poems produced by anti-war GIs and veterans (1996).[139] Bibby argues that poems, often printed in GI newspapers, acted as their own form of resistance in the Vietnam era and GIs used this medium not only to rebel against, but also to cogitate on their situation.[140] Bibby's work is a useful perspective on the GI press which views soldiers' poems as a literary, rather than historical, source and thus much greater attention is paid to the particulars of these sources, rather than simply looking at their overall message as a historian would. Works on the GI Movement published by non-historians provide more specialist perspectives on the Movement than historians and participant-scholars are capable of. However, as they are not subject to the conventions of History, their attempts at providing historical analysis should be treated with caution.

Whilst interest in the GI Movement diminished after the Iraq War, it has more recently been revived by a series of scholars with quite disparate interests. As commented on, Parsons' *Dangerous Grounds* was published in 2017 and focuses on GI coffeehouses.[141] Lauren Mottle (2019) explored the relationship between the GI Movement and the rest of the "Sixties" milieu, arguing that GI protest should be included in conceptions of the New Left.[142] Another important new contribution to the historiography is the chapter titled 'A World Becoming', in Simeon Man's book *Soldiering through Empire* (2018).[143] Interestingly, as opposed to all other works

[138] *Vietnam Generation,* 2.1 (January 1990), via: LaSalle University: https://digitalcommons.lasalle.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1048&context=vietnamgeneration [accessed: 20/05/24].
[139] Michael Bibby, *Hearts and Minds: Bodies, Poetry, and Resistance in the Vietnam War* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1996).
[140] Ibid., pp. 122-172.
[141] Parsons, *Dangerous Grounds* (2017).
[142] Lauren Mottle, 'Striking the Machine from Within: A Case for the Inclusion of the GI Movement in the New Left', *The Sixties*, 12.2 (2019), pp. 147-177. Mottle's work is interrogated and praised in Chapter 2.
[143] Simeon Man, *Soldiering through Empire: Race and the Making of the Decolonizing Pacific* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018), pp. 162-184.

of the GI Movement which focus on GI dissent in the US, Man's chapter concentrates on the Movement in the Pacific. As this region acted as a staging area for operations in Vietnam for the Air Force and Navy, Man focuses on the military bases in Okinawa, Japan, and the Philippines and the attempts of the organisation the Pacific Counseling Service to counsel and agitate among soldiers in these countries.

Likewise, analysis of the GI press has remained a popular field of study due to the subject's overlap with the study of alternative presses. Painter and Ferrucci (2019) have carried out an inter-disciplinary study of twenty-two GI publications, analysing them through a number of different theoretical lenses which emphasise the different dynamics within the GI Movement, for example, the roles assumed by anti-war GIs toward the more ambivalent base population and by anti-war soldiers toward "the Brass".[144] Like most other GI press analyses, Painter and Ferrucci emphasise the community building aspect of soldier newspapers, claiming that this existed at four levels: a community based around the publications, i.e. a local community; a community based on the shared experience of being a GI; a community of enlisted men reaching out to those who avoided the draft; and an attempt to build a community including GIs and civilians who protested the war.[145] Whilst an important list of the community building aspects of the GI Movement, some ideas, such as the notion that GIs created a community between themselves and draft resisters or "draft dodgers" are perhaps overstatements. Likewise, theirs is not a comprehensive list as it does not include the conception of the anti-war soldiers as part of a community of left-wing activists, something which this thesis particularly emphasises.

Importantly, GI Movement historiography does not simply consist of books authored by historians, participant-scholars, and scholars from other disciplines, it also includes two edited collections of useful GI Movement material. The first, *Mutiny Does Not Happen Lightly*, is a self-described 'compilation of literature from groups that opposed the Vietnam War' consisting of 'flyers, leaflets, letters, reports, manuals, and documents' published between 1964 and 1974.[146] The editor of the collection, G. Louis Heath, claims that the work is designed to be an

[144] Chad Painter and Patrick Ferrucci, ''Ask What You Can Do to the Army': A Textual Analysis of the Underground GI Press During the Vietnam', *Media, War & Conflict* [*MW&C*], 12.3 (September 2019), pp. 354-367.
[145] Ibid., pp. 362-363.
[146] G. Louis Heath (ed.), *Mutiny Does Not Happen Lightly: The Literature of the American Resistance to the Vietnam War* (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1976), pp. xi-xiii.

'accurate cross-section of American resistance to the Vietnam War' during these years and thus includes numerous GI Movement sources which are useful for this thesis.[147] More recently, Ron Carver, David Cortright, and Barbara Doherty have edited a series of first-hand accounts, essays by participants, photographs, and sources relating to the GI Movement.[148] Essays are organised thematically and cover a range of topics on the Movement, including the GI Press, coffeehouses, petitions, marches, and rebellions (and includes some limited discussion of the Iraq War). Whilst the book is useful in providing a broad overview of the GI Movement from the perspective of those who actually participated in it, it is limited in the sense that it does not undertake any serious analysis – although this is of course not the purpose of the book.

Although this commentary on GI Movement historiography makes the scholarly work on the subject seem substantial, it should be remembered that this number of studies is miniscule compared with the work on the civilian anti-war movement. For example, just four book-length studies of the Movement exist. Similarly, much of the work that there is was carried out by participant-scholars and GI Movement advocates and thus whilst useful, is often partisan and less academic. Therefore, there remain several "gaps" in the GI Movement historiography or approaches towards the subject that have not yet been attempted. This thesis consequently contributes much to the historiography which has thus far not been attempted, namely through a local, grassroots study of the GI Movement, focusing on one newspaper in detail, and employing new oral testimony of its publishers, as well as linking the Movement to the New Communist Movement of the early 1970s.

To conclude, it is important to recognise the significance of GI protest by situating it within its contexts. Due to the inter-connectedness of political and social protest during this period, these contexts are numerous, each with their own established historiographical arguments. It has therefore been necessary to locate the relevance of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* to scholarly debates on the war itself, the anti-war movement, the idea of the "Sixties", the various left-wing movements during this era, and finally the GI Movement itself. Study of the *Free Press* therefore re-conceptualises, undermines, evidences, and plugs holes in these various scholarly schools and is thus significant. In accordance with this attempt to locate

[147] Ibid., p. xiii.
[148] Ron Carver, David Cortright, and Barabara Doherty (eds.), *Waging Peace in Vietnam: U.S. Soldiers and Veterans Who Opposed the War* (New York: New Village Press, 2019).

activism on Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base, the next chapter shall discuss the history and make-up of the GI Movement in more depth.

Chapter 2

'GIs are, Perhaps, the Most Important People to Have in the Anti-War Movement – They're the Ones Who are Fighting': Understanding the GI Movement[1]

In the 1962 Port Huron Statement, Tom Hayden declared: 'we are people of this generation, bred in at least modest comfort, housed now in universities, looking uncomfortably to the world we inherit'.[2] At the time it was authored, this sentiment succinctly encapsulated the youthful endeavour of students at elite universities who argued for a more democratic form of politics, directly sought to confront racism in America, and urged for nuclear disarmament and the end of the Cold War. The Vietnam War did little to affect the privileged position of these students. Still sheltered in universities, remaining in comfort, looking uncomfortably at the war from afar, students were largely protected from the claws of the draft via their II-S deferment.[3] As demonstrated, however, largely ignored and forgotten in understandings of the anti-war movement are the GIs who fought the war, yet incongruously opposed it. These men were bred in a larger degree of discomfort, obligated to leave their homes and loved ones, housed in military barracks across the United States, and forced to look uncomfortably at a world in which they potentially had no part. Their figurative (and sometimes geographic) proximity to the war zone made their critiques of the conflict and the US military more authoritative. After all, it was not the student, nor the Wall Street banker, the high school teacher, the housewife, not even the President, who felt the effects of the Vietnam War more than the serviceman. Those who opposed the war most vehemently mirrored their civilian counterparts, organising against the conflict from within the military and, in doing so, created the GI Movement.

The study of the GI Movement therefore represents an opportunity to expand historical perspectives on the constituents of the anti-war movement. This chapter provides necessary historical information on the Movement and investigates its constituents to construct a "type" of GI who was likely to participate in anti-war activism. The GI Movement also provides an opportunity to investigate the context of the late-"Sixties" through the lens of a grassroots

[1] "The War Ends When the People Make the Peace", *Lewis-McChord Free Press* [*LMFP*], Vol.2, No.5, May 1971, p. 5.
[2] Students for a Democratic Society, 'The Port Huron Statement' (1962), in James Miller, *"Democracy is in the Streets": From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), pp. 329-374 (p. 329).
[3] The II-S deferment referred to 'registrant deferred because of activity in study'. "Classifications", via: Selective Service System, https://www.sss.gov/about/return-to-draft/#s2 [accessed: 19/09/24].

military movement. Study of the GI Movement brings to light the nuanced relationship between students and GIs which changed and developed throughout the war. This includes the important relationship between radical GIs and the growing number of revolutionary Marxists during this period, and how the Movement engaged with this milieu. This thesis therefore provides anti-war GIs with a voice and a platform which they have not had in previous histories and counters attempts to reduce their experiences into myths and assumption.

Speaking to the severalty of soldier and civilian protest during this period, the GI Movement did not develop in tandem with the civilian anti-war movement. It was approximately seven months after Students for a Democratic Society's (SDS) inaugural anti-war rally on 17 April 1965 when the first publicised case of GI anti-war activity surfaced. In November 1965, Lieutenant Henry Howe Jr. attended an anti-war rally in El Paso, Texas, holding a sign that read 'End Johnson's Fascist Aggression in Vietnam'. Howe was an unlikely anti-war demonstrator having joined the Army through the Reserve Officer Training Corps and was not, in the parlance of the time, radical. As a result of his action, Howe received a court-martial and a sentence of two years in prison, despite being off-duty and in civilian clothes (aspects which ensured that he had not broken the rules of the Uniform Code of Military Justice – UCMJ).[4]

The story of the GI Movement is one of oppression, and the way that Howe was treated was somewhat consonant with how the military dealt with the "problem" of anti-war GIs. Under the UCMJ, GIs were punished severely and often arbitrarily for their anti-war actions. In what Cortright has termed 'the Draconian legal structure of the military', the right to assemble, distribute literature, or even wear political symbols, e.g. the peace sign, were forbidden. In response to such acts, it was common for outspoken anti-war GIs to face court-martial, non-judicial punishment such as fines and demotions, relocation to other military bases, and less-than-honourable discharges for their political acts.[5] Therefore, the history of the GI Movement

[4] Fred Halstead, *Out Now!: A Participant's Account of the Movement in the U.S. Against the Vietnam War* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1991), pp. 209-210. Howe was later freed after 3 months imprisonment due to effective publicity and protest from the American Civil Liberties Union, an organisation dedicated to defending the rights guaranteed to Americans in the US Constitution. For a history of the American Civil Liberties Union please see: "ACLU History", via: American Civil Liberties Union, https://www.aclu.org/about/aclu-history [accessed: 19/01/24]. The Reserve Officer Training Corps is a programme on US university campuses designed to provide college-educated students with opportunities in the officer corps of the military.
[5] David Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt: GI Resistance During the Vietnam War* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2005), pp. 50-51.

is also a history of the military's responses to an oppositional and antithetical current of thinking among servicepeople and this thesis shall analyse this on the local level.

Howe's example represents the existence of GI unrest towards the war at an early stage, at its most sporadic. The first example of soldiers refusing deployment to Vietnam occurred on 30 June 1966, when three privates opposed their placement overseas on the basis that the war was 'immoral, illegal and unjust'.[6] Despite civilian support for their plight, the Fort Hood Three, as they became known, all served two years in prison for their refusal.[7] In a similar incident, in October 1966, the Army doctor Howard Levy refused to train Green Beret medics at Fort Jackson due to his belief that inoculating the Vietnamese population against disease whilst America was also committing war crimes and atrocities against them was hypocritical. He was court-martialled and became an early *cause célèbre* for the GI Movement.[8]

Early opposition to the Vietnam War in the military took the form of individual moral acts of consciousness, similar to those occurring in the civilian anti-war movement. As Howe's sign relating the war to fascism and Levy's defence, which rested on a particular interpretation of the Nuremberg principles, demonstrated, the Holocaust remained a significant spectre for GIs who did not want to passively permit what many "ordinary" Germans had allowed to happen in Nazi Germany.[9] *Lewis-McChord Free Press* editor Randy Rowland claimed that he was cognizant of the Nuremberg principles before he transitioned to an anti-war position. He stated that "if it's [an order] immoral, if it's a war crime, then, you know, you're not supposed to do it. You're supposed to disobey a wrong order. And my generation was raised on that kind of standard; my father talked about that stuff".[10] GIs' concern with complicity and the relevance of these principles was heightened by the 1960 arrest and trial of leading Nazi *Schutzstaffel* (SS) officer, Adolph Eichmann. Eichmann's trial, according to DeBenedetti, troubled early peace advocates by forcing them to question how "sane" individuals are able to perpetrate atrocities simply under the guise of "following orders".[11] As noted in the previous chapter, the

[6] Halstead, *Out Now!* (1991), p. 214.
[7] Ibid., p. 222.
[8] Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), p. 52.
[9] For an example of the discussion of "ordinary" Germans during the Holocaust please see the admittedly controversial book: Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (London: Abacus, 1997).
[10] "G.I. Resistance in the Pacific Northwest", University of Puget Sound, Collins Memorial Hall, 5 October 2022, via: YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E7XscjlqLVw [accessed: 19/01/24].
[11] Charles DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal: The Antiwar Movement of the Vietnam Era,* with Charles Chatfield, assisting author (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990), pp. 72-73.

apathy of bureaucratised America was a main criticism of the New Left and in defiance of this, activists deified action. Opposition to fighting based on the Nuremberg Principles catered to this need, urging GIs in the Movement to not "stand by" and allow perceived war crimes to be perpetrated.

Defiance of complicity became a cornerstone of GI-specific opposition to the war, particularly because of their roles in the military, and a moral stand against the Vietnam War was sometimes viewed as consonant with complete rejection of military service. If one viewed the Vietnam War as immoral, then participating in any form of military service was tantamount to the inaction of "ordinary" Germans during the Holocaust. This conception resulted in a precipitous incline in the number of applications for Conscientious Objector (CO) status during the Vietnam War. In fiscal year 1971, approximately 125,000 GIs applied for CO status, 61,000 of which were granted. In fiscal year 1972, the number of COs outweighed the number of draftees due to the winding down of the war.[12]

Achieving Conscientious Objector status was, however, more difficult than these numbers suggest. In 1969, when Bob Barnes filed for CO status (he claims that he was the first GI to do so at Fort Polk (LA) since World War II), he attributed his decision to a myriad of reasons. Barnes was a college graduate who enlisted only to immediately regret his decision, becoming opposed to the war whilst still in Basic Training. Instead of keeping his discontent with the Army private, he worked diligently to oppose the war in Vietnam, distributing the GI paper *The Ally* at Fort Polk and signing his name to a GI Movement advertisement in the *New York Times* which bore the signatures of 1,365 other active-duty servicemen.[13] Emphasising his Christian background, as well as a recent conversion to the Baptist Church (in order to marry his wife), Barnes attempted to create a convincing religious basis in his application for CO.[14] Whilst CO status had only previously applied to those with sincerely held religious beliefs, in 1965 the Supreme Court case *United States v. Seeger* widened these parameters to include those who held a genuine opposition to war but did not necessarily believe in a Supreme Being. Whilst this case did expand the definition of CO to include pacifists, who would have previously been imprisoned or forced into alternative service for their refusal to fight, it held

[12] Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), p. 5.
[13] Interview of Bob Barnes, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 8 October 2022. For more information on the *New York Times* advertisement, please see: Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), p. 62.
[14] Interview of Bob Barnes, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 8 October 2022.

that such refusal was not legitimate if motivated by 'political, sociological, or philosophical' ideas.[15] The officers at Fort Polk decided that Barnes' professed beliefs were not sincere and were instead politically motivated, denying his application for CO twice.[16] For moral objectors to the Vietnam War attaining CO status was the main tactic for escaping the military. However, this was rarely achieved and the difficulty of attaining this status was an issue that the *Free Press* often documented.[17]

For GIs who were opposed to the war in Vietnam, therefore, there were a limited number of routes out of the military. Randy Rowland exemplified these. Whilst working in a hospital ward on Fort Lewis for GIs returning from the combat zone, Rowland was confronted with the horrors of war first-hand. Determined that he was not going to place Vietnamese people in the same position that his patients were in – and also impacted by his decision to engage in the youth counterculture and the smoking of marijuana – Rowland, despite his conservative and pro-military background, became anti-war and filed for CO.[18] His application was, however, denied and returned with orders to Vietnam. This was not an uncommon occurrence and the submission of a CO application whilst in the military could often lead to expedited orders to Vietnam or an increased chance of being sent.[19] Whilst on his 45-day leave of absence before he was sent to Vietnam, Rowland went to San Francisco where he communicated with people in the civilian anti-war movement, discovered the nascent GI Movement, and on the advice of Terrence Hallinan – a combative and progressive young lawyer who had nearly been denied admission to the bar because of his social activism – went AWOL in 1968.[20]

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[15] *United States v. Seeger,* 380 U.S. 163 (1965), https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/380/163/ [accessed: 22/01/24].
[16] Interview of Bob Barnes, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 8 October 2022.
[17] Indeed, one of the first documents ever released by the GI-Airmen-Sailor Coalition (the *Free Press*' original publishers) was an annotated instructional copy of the application for CO. GI-Airmen-Sailor Coalition, "People's C.O.: How to Get Over", August 1970 (as dated on *JSTOR.* More likely to be circa December 1970 as this was published by the GI-Airmen-Sailor Coalition, an organisation which did not exist until this period). For examples of the paper discussing the difficulty in attaining CO status, see: "SPD Shafts C.O.", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.2, September 1970, p. 3; "Let Me Make One Thing Perfectly Clear", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.2, September 1970, p. 6; "Selective (In)Justice for C.O.", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 3; "Filing for C.O. at ORS: Another Freedom Gone", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.4, November 1970, p. 3; "Death is No Reason", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.4, November 1970, p. 4; "Distribution Rights: FREEP Asks On-Post Circulation", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.1, January 1971, p. 3; "C.O. Applications Increase", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.5, May 1971, p. 7; "Floyd's Back in Town", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.2, February 1972, p. 3; and "WAF Files CO as Brass Freaks Out", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.4, March [April] 1972, p. 6.
[18] Interview with Randy Rowland, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 10 October 2022.
[19] Lawrence M. Baskir and William A. Strauss, *Chance and Circumstance: The Draft, the War, and the Vietnam Generation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), p. 58
[20] Interview with Randy Rowland, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 10 October 2022 and "Remembering Terrence Hallinan '64, 'Outspoken and Fierce' in Pursuing Justice", 18 January 2020 via: UC Law, https://www.uclawsf.edu/2020/01/18/remembering-terence-hallinan-64-outspoken-and-fierce-in-pursuing-

Rowland's story is therefore illustrative of a "type" of GI during the Vietnam War. This was the non-religious conscientious objector who, denied the opportunity to leave the military legally, took matters into their own hands and went AWOL. The stereotypical image of the deserter is often of a soldier who abandons their comrades in the heat of battle and is thus branded a coward.[21] This idea evokes Thomas Paine's notion of the 'sunshine soldier and summer patriot' who abandoned George Washington at Valley Forge, those who were only willing to support the revolution under good, prosperous conditions.[22] Despite this pusillanimous image, Baskir and Strauss have postulated that the Vietnam War produced an alternative "type" of deserter: the 'conscientious war resister'. This was someone whose impetus for absconding was due to their principled opposition to the war, rather than self-interest.[23] In this way, Rowland embodied the 'conscientious war resister'. Despite the military's insistence that he serve in Vietnam, but unable to do so due to his conscience, he resorted to illegal action.

Despite this, Pentagon officials maintained that AWOL rates during the Vietnam War were consistent with previous wars. Baskir and Strauss have claimed that there were approximately 1,500,000 AWOLs and 500,000 cases of desertion – when a GI remains AWOL for over thirty days they become a deserter – and that both of these actions were largely inspired by pragmatic concerns, with short-term AWOL being mostly the result of 'petty misbehaviour'.[24] However, whilst the Pentagon claimed that AWOL rates were consistent with other conflicts, desertion was much more prominent during the Vietnam War than in America's previous wars. For example, in 1972, seventy out of every thousand troops had recorded long-term absences. Throughout the Korean War this ratio was just twenty-five per thousand. Baskir and Strauss speculate that this increased desertion in the 1960s and '70s implies that an issue specific to Vietnam was the cause.[25] Therefore, whilst pragmatic concerns remained the chief impetus for

justice/ [accessed: 13/05/24]. AWOL is an acronym for the term Absent Without Leave, used by the military to refer to GIs who had left their post without authorisation.

[21] Baskir and Strauss, *Chance and Circumstance* (1978), p. 111

[22] Thomas Paine, *The American Crisis,* 19 December 1776 (Boston, 1776), via: Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.03902300/?st=text. This pamphlet would go on to have great significance for anti-war veterans of the Vietnam War who branded themselves the "winter soldiers", those who stuck by their nation in times of great hardship.

[23] Baskir and Strauss, *Chance and Circumstance* (1978), p. 111.

[24] Ibid., p. 113 and pp. 121-122.

[25] Ibid., pp. 121-122.

AWOL and desertion, the increased frequency of this last act underlines the unique opposition to the Vietnam War which saw a rise in principled rejection of the conflict.

Embodying the 'conscientious war resister', Rowland transitioned from CO, to AWOL, and finally to anti-war organiser. Having turned himself in for being AWOL, Rowland was placed in the San Francisco Presidio stockade on the evening of 12 October 1968.[26] The previous day Richard Bunch, a prisoner suffering from mental illness, had been killed trying to escape the stockade and the inmate population had broken out into an atmosphere of anger and fear at the news of his killing. Rowland therefore arrived in the Presidio stockade at a time of turmoil and disruption and, capitalising on this atmosphere of dissent, he helped to stage a 'sit-down' strike at the prison. Inspired in part by the killing of Bunch, on the 14 October, twenty-seven young men broke away from the rest of the prison population and sat on the grass in protest against the Vietnam War, racism in the military, and the poor conditions within the stockade.[27] Due to the concerted nature of this act, all twenty-seven of the GIs were charged with mutiny, a capital crime.[28]

This event was considered monumental in the nascent GI Movement, but not necessarily because of the co-operative nature of the protest. After all, one hundred Black GIs had assembled on Fort Hood (TX) in August 1968 to discuss whether to refuse being sent on riot control duty at the Democratic National Convention.[29] Instead, the act attracted widespread interest due to the harsh sentencing of the mutineers. The first to be tried, Nesrey Sood, received fifteen years hard labour in the United States Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth and Louis Osczepinski and Larry Reidel received fourteen and sixteen years respectively.[30] However, due to the public outrage that accompanied this first trial, the Army reduced their sentences to two years.[31] Rowland, following these original sentences, was given one and half years imprisonment which he served in the stockade at Fort Ord (CA) and at Fort

[26] Gerald Nicosia, 'The Presidio 27', *Vietnam Generation* [*VG*], 2.1 (January 1990), pp. 65-80 (p. 73).
[27] Interview of Randy Rowland, Video 9, interviewed by Jessie Kindig and Steve Beda, 9 September 2008, https://depts.washington.edu/antiwar/interview_rowland.shtml [accessed: 22/01/24].
[28] Ibid.
[29] Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), pp. 56-57. Eventually, forty-three of the GIs were arrested for refusing to follow orders, however, they received only light sentences.
[30] Nicosia, 'The Presidio 27', *VG* (1990), p. 76. The United States Disciplinary Barracks is located on Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and is 'the only maximum-security prison in the Department of Defense'. "Army Corrections Command", via: U.S. Army, https://home.army.mil/leavenworth/units-tenants/army-corrections-command [accessed: 03/02/25].
[31] Nicosia, 'The Presidio 27', *VG* (1990), p. 78.

Leavenworth.[32] Richard Moser has commented that the Presidio Mutiny, as it was referred to, was 'a turning point for the GI Movement' as it 'produced international publicity and proved that effective soldier protest was possible even under the worst conditions'.[33] Citing an unidentified 'analyst' who studied the Presidio Mutiny, Rowland suggested that prior to the conviction of the twenty-seven, the military was consistently more harsh with their sentencing than they were after the backlash they received.[34] The mutiny was therefore important as a landmark event which attracted greater awareness to the plight of GIs and attention to their activism against the war from civilians.[35] One anti-war GI remarked that 'the Presidio 27 was the best thing that ever happened to the GI Movement – it put us on the front page. It made civilians realize that there were antiwar GIs within the military'.[36]

As with most social movements, there is no agreed upon start date for when 'antiwar GIs within the military' became the GI Movement. Thus, when did individual acts of resistance and refusal to fight become a fully-fledged, grassroots movement? Scholars have answered this question, mostly citing 1968 as the watershed year for this transition in the military. They agree that by this year, particularly after the Tet Offensive, the GI Movement transmuted from a collection of disparate acts to a more sustained, ground-level movement.[37] The transition from individual acts of moral consciousness among GIs to the creation of a social movement with increasingly political analyses is aptly demonstrated by Rowland's own journey. He states:

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[32] Interview with Randy Rowland, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 10 October 2022.
[33] Richard Moser, *The New Winter Soldiers: GI and Veteran Dissent During the Vietnam War* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996), p. 74.
[34] Interview of Randy Rowland, Video 10, interviewed by Jessie Kindig and Steve Beda, 9th September 2008, https://depts.washington.edu/antiwar/interview_rowland.shtml [accessed: 22/01/24].
[35] For an in-depth, albeit partisan, account of the Mutiny please see: Fred Gardner, *The Unlawful Concert: An Account of the Presidio Mutiny Case* (New York: Viking Press, 1970).
[36] Hal Muskat, interview with Gerald Nicosia, 21 May 1989, quoted in Nicosia, 'The Presidio 27', *VG* (1990), p. 77.
[37] See: Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005); Moser, *The New Winter Soldiers* (1996); and David L. Parsons, *Dangerous Grounds: Antiwar Coffeehouses and Military Dissent in the Vietnam Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017). One scholar who has taken exception to this portrayal of the GI Movement is the literary academic, Michael Bibby. He claims that historians of the GI Movement have decontextualised the individual acts of protest that typified the early part of the Movement, such as those carried out by Levy and the Fort Hood Three and not placed them within a broader framework of early dissent against the war. Without evidencing his proposal Bibby maintains that 'dissent among troops was widespread, signifying crucial ruptures in the ideological consensus within the military at the earliest stages of the war'. However, in an attempt to evidence his argument, Bibby points to the proliferation of anti-war Vietnam veterans' groups as an example of military protest. Bibby fails to acknowledge that it was much easier for veterans' groups to organise than GIs because they were no longer subject to the laws of the UCMJ. Therefore, whilst there has been limited debate surrounding the beginnings of the GI Movement, 1968 is the year in which scholars largely recognise that GI anti-war activism became a social movement, and this thesis recognises this as such. Michael Bibby, *Hearts and Minds: Bodies, Poetry, and Resistance in the Vietnam War* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1996), p. 139.

> I had started claiming that I was against all wars, but […] in my heart of hearts I was really mostly against the Vietnam War. […] when I realized that the Vietnam War was just typical of American wars, I actually went to being against all American wars, because I was against wars of aggression. […] And so by the time I went into the stockade, I had gone from being against the Vietnam War to being against all American wars […]. So, I went into jail as religious pacifist. […] By the time I got out of prison, I really was a communist.[38]

Whilst not every GI underwent the same transformation as Rowland, especially his identification as a communist, the GI Movement in general developed in a similar way. As GIs began to oppose the war, they did so on moral and religious grounds, however, this soon developed into more sophisticated and political arguments based on opposition to imperialism. Certainly, when analysing the GI press, it is evident that many GIs journeyed along this trajectory. Indeed, this is reflected in the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* whose primary opposition to the Vietnam War was not simply that the conflict was "wrong" or "immoral" or "unjust", but that it was a deliberate act of imperialism.[39]

An empirical indicator of this cohesion into a social movement was the appearance of a GI press. This was patently anti-war, often Left leaning, and necessarily "underground" due to the strict nature of the UCMJ, which persecuted servicemen for creating and distributing their publications.[40] As a result of this, and the transitory nature of military life, which transferred crucial editors, writers, and readers from base to base, newspapers were often momentary, sporadic, and handmade.[41] In 1972, for example, the publishers of *FTA* highlighted the difficulties facing those who published GI newspapers, commenting that there were just three members on the staff who lived in a one bedroom apartment in order to gain an off-post space for publishing, away from the military.[42] Similarly, in 1972 those involved in the popular *Bragg Briefs* claimed that the paper was 'recovering from the recent loss of almost all the people who had been active on the paper in the past year', mostly due to GIs leaving the military.[43] Nevertheless, by 1968, the GI press became the physical representation of anti-war sentiment within the military which was just beginning to coalesce into a movement.

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[38] Interview with Randy Rowland, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 10 October 2022.
[39] This position is analysed in Chapter 5.
[40] The main exception to the idea that the GI press was left-wing was the newspaper *Eyes Right* published at Fort Knox (KY), which, although it maintained that its editors were opposed to the Vietnam War, opposed the GI Movement's involvement with the New and Old Lefts. *Eyes Right*, Vol.1, No.1, 4 July 1969, "GI Press", Independent Voices Archive, JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/site/reveal-digital/independent-voices/eyesright-27953479/?so=item_title_str_asc [accessed: 02/05/25].
[41] Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), pp. 54-55.
[42] "FTA", *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin,* Issue 10, January 1972, p. 9.
[43] "Bragg Briefs", *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin,* Issue 10, January 1972, p. 19.

The concept of an anti-war newspaper targeted specifically at soldiers was first put into practice with the creation of *Vietnam GI*, published in late 1967 by Vietnam veteran Jeff Sharlet and a number of civilian activists.[44] As this paper originated from outside of the military, Cortright speculates that the first GI newspaper to be published on base in the US was *Strikeback* at Fort Bragg (NC) in June 1968, which lasted only a few issues. During the summer of 1968 there was an influx of GI newspapers and two of the longest lasting papers, *FTA* at Fort Knox (KY) and *Fatigue Press* at Fort Hood (TX), appeared. Just four years later, the Department of Defense estimated that there was a total of 245 GI newspapers published on or aimed at military bases. Cortright, however, estimates that by the end of the war, this total was closer to three hundred.[45] When commanders of the seventeen largest Army posts were requested to estimate dissent in response to a questionnaire on dissident behaviour on their base between October 1968 and October 1969, their responses provide interesting insight into the extent of dissent on military posts during this period. Upon being questioned if 'approval [has] been requested to distribute literature on post?', ten of the seventeen commanders reported that they had received such requests, all of which were denied.[46] These responses indicate the spread of the GI press, as well as the seriousness with which base commanders treated this occurrence, feeling the need to repress and ban anti-war publications in order to quash dissent.

Papers were often localised, dealing with their own base/s and surrounding area. However, GI groups did send their newspapers to each other, encouraging some, albeit limited, contact between different bases.[47] Much more crucial in encouraging a sense of community among disaffected GIs were the civilian-led national GI publications such as the Student Mobilization Committee's *GI Press Service* and the United States Servicemen's Fund's (USSF – discussed in detail later in this chapter) *About Face!* and *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin*.[48] By offering

[44] Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), p. 55.
[45] Ibid., p. 55.
[46] Howard C. Olson and R. William Rae, *Determination of the Potential for Dissidence in the US Army: Volume I – Nature of Dissent* (Research Analysis Corporation, March 1971), via: Defense Technical Information Center, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/AD0884031. The laws of the UCMJ required soldiers to apply for permission to distribute newspapers on base from the base commander.
[47] Questionnaire, Randy Rowland, 9 May 2024.
[48] For a full run of the *GI Press* Service, please see: *GI Press Service,* "GI Press", Independent Voices Archive, JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/site/reveal-digital/independent-voices/gipressservice-27953540/?so=old [accessed: 10/07/24]. For a full run of *About Face! The U.S. Servicemen's Fund Newsletter* and the *G.I. News & Discussion* Bulletin, please see: *About Face! The U.S. Servicemen's Fund Newsletter*, "GI Press", Independent Voices Archive, JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/site/reveal-digital/independent-voices/aboutfacetheusservicemensfundnewsletter-27953287/?so=item_title_str_asc and *G.I. News & Discussion*

tangible evidence of the GI Movement at other bases, the GI press helped to provide soldiers with a sense of a national movement, even if their actions were rarely conducted on a national scale, i.e. through marches or demonstrations.

This growth in grassroots dissent, as well as the explosion of the GI press, was aided, and even facilitated, by the introduction of the GI coffeehouse concept. The idea, developed by former *Harvard Crimson* editor and Army Reservist Fred Gardner, sought to incorporate dissatisfied GIs into the anti-war and youth movements. In the civilian movement, Gardner was faced with the unresponsiveness of anti-war civilians to his ideas and became 'frustrated that major New Left organizations did not pay [GIs] more attention'.[49] Emphasising that both student and GI activists shared the commonality of age and interest in the growing counterculture of the late 1960s, he set out to create 'a hip antiwar coffeehouse' to provide an off-base locale where GIs could congregate and have conversations with civilians.[50] Despite this, Gardner did not envision the coffeehouse concept as exclusively anti-war. Instead, he intended for it to serve as an alternative to the bars and strip clubs that normally dominated military towns.[51] Whilst it would attract a demographic who were more likely to be anti-war and countercultural, it was to be an environment in which GIs would not be preached at or proselytised to by anti-war civilians, and would instead nurture GI anti-war sentiment for the benefit of active-duty servicemen by providing them with a safe, anti-war inclined space.[52] In late 1967, with ten thousand dollars, Gardner opened up the first GI coffeehouse called UFO (a satire of the military entertainment organisation United Service Organisation – USO) in Columbia, South Carolina, close to the nearby Fort Jackson, and the idea quickly spread across the US with help from USSF funding.[53]

Whilst Gardner wished that these locales would not become explicitly anti-war, coffeehouses facilitated the growth of the GI Movement. Due to the UCMJ's restrictions on GI freedoms, coffeehouses operated as off-post spaces which often housed the tools necessary to create newspapers, e.g. mimeograph machines, helping to expedite the development of a GI

Bulletin, "GI Press", Independent Voices Archive, JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/site/reveal-digital/independent-voices/ginewsanddiscussionbulletin-27953538/?so=item_title_str_asc

[49] Parsons, *Dangerous Grounds* (2017), pp. 15-16.

[50] Ibid., pp. 16-17.

[51] Fred Gardner, "Down Among the Sheltering Half", *Hard Times* [*HT*], no.63 (2-9 February 1970), GI Press Collection, 1964-1977, *Wisconsin Historical Society,* p. 3.

[52] Parsons, *Dangerous Grounds* (2017), p. 19.

[53] Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), p. 53.

underground press.[54] Despite their off-base locations, the organising which originated from these coffeehouses was sometimes targeted by the military, local police, and right-wing extremists. In the case of the Shelter Half in Tacoma, Washington – which served the local base, Fort Lewis – their role as the publishing house for the GI paper *Fed Up!* and as the meeting place of the local American Servicemen's Union chapter resulted in them being declared 'off-limits' to military personnel by the Sixth Army commander General Stanley R. Larsen.[55] In more extreme acts, the coffeehouse at Fort Dix (NJ) was bombed in February 1970, leaving three injured, and the Green Machine coffeehouse at Fort Pendleton (CA) was shot at by a .45-calibre machine gun, leaving one Private First Class injured.[56] Despite these select examples, GI coffeehouses offered anti-war GIs a relatively safe sanctuary from the pro-war atmosphere and restrictions of the base, and an ideal location to publish anti-war newspapers.

The movement which was inculcated by this press was not static and transformed concomitantly with the changing state of the Vietnam War. On the 3 November 1969, President Nixon made his "Address to the Nation on the War in Vietnam", announcing that his strategy to 'win peace' in Southeast Asia was to "Vietnamize" the war, a significant departure from previous American strategy.[57] Vietnamization, as the approach was dubbed, planned to return responsibility for combatting the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV – North Vietnam) and the National Liberation Front (NLF) to the Republic of Vietnam (RVN - South Vietnam).[58] By doing so, Nixon signalled a desire to withdraw American troops from the front lines. This decision had important ramifications for the way that the war would be fought. With fewer US ground troops in the country, the use of air power became a much more important tool to support RVN forces. According to DeGroot, more than half of the entire tonnage of bombs and shells used throughout the war were dropped in Nixon's first term as President.[59] As a result of Vietnamization, therefore, greater responsibility for fighting the war was placed on the Air Force and the Navy. In 1969, for example, when the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam reported that they had identified the headquarters of the southern insurgents (the Central Office

[54] Parsons, *Dangerous Grounds* (2017), pp. 93-94.
[55] Gardner, "Down Among the Sheltering Half", *HT* (2-9 February 1970), p. 3.
[56] Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), p. 54.
[57] Richard Nixon, *Address to the Nation on the War in Vietnam* (Washington D.C.: The White House, 3 November 1969), via: The American Presidency Project, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-the-nation-the-war-vietnam#docmedia [accessed: 19/02/24]. In this speech Nixon also called on the 'great silent majority' of Americans to support him by not opposing the war.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Gerard J. DeGroot, *Noble Cause? America and the Vietnam War* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2000), p. 214.

for South Vietnam - COSVN) across the Cambodian border, Nixon approved bombing the nominally neutral territory.[60] Indeed, as ground troops were being extricated, Nixon utilised strategic bombing to maintain pressure on the DRV and on 15 April 1972 sent B-52 bombers over North Vietnam for the first time since 1969.[61] Following the North and NLF's co-ordinated offensive in March-April 1972, the Navy's onus only increased and up to four aircraft carriers were stationed in the Tonkin Gulf at any one time and another four were positioned in the area on rotation.[62]

For sailors and airmen, this increased burden of responsibility provoked dissent. Cortright has acknowledged that resistance in the Navy was somewhat shocking as 'it was assumed [sailors] had willing volunteered for their jobs and, sheltered behind radar scopes and in repair shops, would function as obedient professionals'. Anti-war sentiment, however, had been exhibited in the Navy from as early as 1967, when four sailors deserted the *USS Intrepid*, but it failed to gather mass popularity until 1971.[63] Whilst lower than in the Army, desertion rates in the Navy increased as the war dragged on and peaked at 13.6 sailors per thousand by 1973.[64] Interestingly, dissenting sailors featured most heavily in cross-branch organisations such as Movement for a Democratic Military (MDM) where they played a main role. MDM chapters bourgeoned in the naval bases of California publishing the anti-war newspaper *Out Now* at Long Beach Naval Station, *Up Against the Bulkhead* in the Alameda/Bay Area, and *Duck Power* in San Diego.[65] Another cross-branch organisation, the Concerned Officers Movement, was created in 1970 and was designed to unite junior officers across military branches against the war.[66] Attempts from sailors to stop their carriers from being sent to the warzone later emerged among the rank-and-file of three of the Navy's largest warships, the *Constellation*, the *Coral Sea*, and the *Kitty Hawk*, in what was known as the SOS (Stop Our Ships/Support Our Sailors) movement.[67]

Resistance in the Air Force is perhaps most surprising due to its less oppressive training, more 'technical and interesting' day-to-day work, and further removal from the horrors of the

[60] William S. Turley, The *Second Indochina War: A Concise Military and Political History,* 2nd edn. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, inc., 2009), p. 166.
[61] Ibid., p. 187.
[62] Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), p. 114.
[63] Ibid., p. 107.
[64] Moser, *The New Winter Soldiers* (1996), p. 79.
[65] Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), p. 107.
[66] Moser, *The New Winter Soldiers* (1996), p. 89.
[67] Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), pp. 111-114.

battlefield.[68] Once again, however, there was a startling rise in the AWOL rate of airmen – indicating their growing dissent – with the number of AWOLs increasing 34 percent in 1970, 59 percent in 1971, and 83 percent in 1972.[69] Just as the early naval movement against the war was largely centred around California, anti-war Air Force opinion first emerged on bases in the Mid-West, with groups at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base (AFB) (OH), Grissom AFB (IN), and Chanute AFB (IL) all emerging in 1969. Cortright has claimed that airmen were less likely to receive support from the civilian anti-war movement than GIs in the Army were, thus deterring organisation in the Air Force at an early stage.[70] Although he does not expand on why this was, it is perhaps because being in the Air Force required voluntary enlistment, and it was thus assumed that airmen were likely to be more pro-war because of this. In 1971, there were just ten Air Force specific GI newspapers, however, this grew to more than thirty by spring the following year.[71]

Before analysis of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* can begin, activism on Lewis and McChord must be placed in its appropriate context, especially because the GI Movement is such a little-known episode of American history. As with all social movements, the GI Movement did not originate fully formed. If it is measured by the first GI to protest the war, the Movement can be considered as nearly as old as the civilian anti-war movement. A culture among "Sixties" activists which emphasised the need to "put your body on the line", first resulted in several unco-ordinated, individual acts of opposition to the war among those involved in the Army and Marines. As these branches bore the brunt of the fighting in Vietnam, it was among their personnel, who held the most dangerous positions in the military, that dissent first arose. By 1968, however, with the growth of the coffeehouse movement and the explosion of the GI press, these individual acts transmuted into a more concerted grassroots effort to end the war among the military population, including those in the Navy and Air Force. By 1970, when the *Free Press* began publication, therefore, there was a strong precedent of GI anti-war activism, and this newspaper cannot be isolated from its antecedents.

Generally, the GI Movement has been viewed, by the few scholars who have analysed it, as a largely anti-war movement, which of course it was. However, they have neglected to place

[68] Ibid., p. 126.
[69] Moser, *The New Winter Soldiers* (1996), p. 79.
[70] Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), p. 127.
[71] Ibid., p. 131.

GI activism in the broader milieu of this period. One scholar who has attempted this, Lauren Mottle, has made the argument that the Movement should be viewed as a part of the New Left.[72] Arguing for a broader, more inclusive definition of the term New Left, which can then be extended to include GIs, Mottle points to the unifying aspect of youth. A large part of the youth culture during this period involved questioning and critiquing authority and, as students and GIs shared the commonality of age, this was something that manifested itself in both of their protests. In the civilian sphere this was expressed in the tumultuous relationship between students and the administration (both university and government), and for GIs it exhibited itself in the battle between the GI and "the Brass".[73] Similarly, Mottle emphasises the utilisation of national symbols to enforce a dedication to the ideals that the United States was founded on; the utilisation of participatory democracy in the GI press; and even a dedication to direct action to emphasise the similarities between the GI Movement and the New Left. [74]

Importantly, when asked whether their approach and outlook was more influenced by the New or Old Left, both of the GIs questioned responded that they felt that they were more influenced by the New Left.[75] Randy Rowland expanded on this, stating that at the time 'the CP [Communist Party] was preaching anti-war and peace, while the New Left was growing more consciously revolutionary'.[76] Indeed, the GI Alliance (GIA), the publishers of the *Free Press*, were likewise growing more 'consciously revolutionary' during this period. Rowland's assessment conforms to the definition of New Left in the previous chapter and is based on the idea that GIs and civilian activists were literally part of a new left-wing movement, disassociated from the Old Left organisations of the previous generation. In his view, the New Left was formless, not defined by a dedication to a specific praxis but united in its departure from the Old Left's focus on trade unionism and reverence for the Soviet Union. Therefore, for some of those who participated in the GI Movement, the New Left as their inspiration was obvious. Indeed, as demonstrated, the two movements – GI and New Left – interacted with each other on a number of occasions throughout the life of the anti-war movement, for example in the coffeehouse scheme, and Mottle's argument is useful in emphasising that the student politics of the era provided GIs with a political framework from which they drew inspiration.

[72] Lauren Mottle, 'Striking the Machine from Within: A Case for the Inclusion of the GI Movement in the New Left', *The Sixties,* 12.2 (2019), pp. 147-177.
[73] Ibid., p. 156.
[74] Ibid., pp. 158-168.
[75] Questionnaire, Anonymous Participant, 9 May 2024 and Questionnaire, Randy Rowland, 9 May 2024.
[76] Questionnaire, Randy Rowland, 9 May 2024.

Despite this, one set of Americans who consistently sought to encourage anti-war dissent within the military was the Trotskyist organisations, components of the Old Left. Whilst Halstead emphasised that the civilian anti-war movement was reluctant to expend their resources on anti-war servicemen, he claimed that GIs played an important role in the thinking of Trotskyist organisations. He commented that the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), of which he was a leader, and the Young Socialist Alliance adopted a political approach referred to as 'proletarian military policy'. This involved targeting anti-war initiatives at working-class Americans, including GIs, and 'the 99 percent who were not opposed on principle to all military service'. In this way, the Trotskyists thought more in terms of political efficacy than idealism. It was much more effective, in their view, to have their members and supporters enter the military where they could encounter GIs – a largely working-class demographic – and talk to them about opposing the war or encouraging socialist political beliefs.[77] Similarly, the organisation, Youth Against War and Fascism (YAWF) also played an important role in the GI Movement. Founded in 1962, as the youth wing of the Workers World Party – a group of Trotskyists who had split from the SWP in 1959 – YAWF was instrumental, along with Andy Stapp, in the formation of the American Servicemen's Union, one of the largest GI organisations of the Movement and one which they dominated.[78] Therefore, although Mottle has helpfully demonstrated that young activists viewed themselves as a part of the New Left, much of the actual involvement of civilian activists in the GI Movement came from the Old Left, Marxist organisations.

Whilst nominally the two terms suggest a departure from one another, the GI Movement combined a confusing mix of New and Old Left political approaches. However, as the war dragged on, servicepeople became increasingly more radical and inclined towards Marxism. This mix of Old and New approaches combined into GIs' interest in the increasingly popular Third World Marxism.[79] Whilst perhaps not the dominant approach in the GI Movement, particularly prior to 1970, the increase in this kind of thinking can be evidenced by increased frequency of the use of phrases such as 'capitalism', 'the ruling class', 'US imperialism',

[77] Halstead, *Out Now!* (1991), pp. 206-207.
[78] Robert J. Alexander, *International Trotskyism, 1929-1985: A Documented Analysis of the Movement* (London: Duke University Press, 1991), pp. 911-913. For more information on the American Servicemen's Union please see: Andy Stapp, *Up Against the Brass: The Amazing Story of the Fight to Unionize the United States Army* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970).
[79] For more information on the concept of Third World Marxism see Chapter 1.

'revolution'; commentary on the class composition of GIs; emphasis on 'Third World leadership'; and analysis of political approaches being "correct", i.e., in accordance with Marxist principles.[80] Likewise, in the February 1971 edition of *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin*, a group of activists at the Oleo Strut coffeehouse near Fort Hood hinted at the desire to move away from New Left methods and toward a more Marxist approach, stating: 'we are working on developing and maintaining political unity – one that's deep enough to allow us to make political decisions in regards to new people, and to free ourselves from the "ultra-democratic" way we have had of making decisions.'[81] Such phraseology demonstrates that there was a tendency within the GI Movement which engaged with Marxism. If not on a serious level, many at least became more aware of these ideas as the non-ideological period of the New Left diminished.

There was also a new, more ideologically serious current of Marxist politics within the GI Movement during this period. This stemmed from civilian Marxist-Leninist (ML) organisations which were part of the New Communist Movement (NCM) and which, like the Trotskyist groups, especially targeted the discontent within the military.[82] These ML organisations were attracted to the GI Movement because of the revolutionary potential of soldiers. In April 1972, in their newspaper, *Red Papers*, the Revolutionary Union (RU) claimed that to foment the revolution they needed to 'concentrate more work within the imperialist armed forces: develop our propaganda and agitation, and give leadership to G.I. struggles, and build the unity of the soldiers and the masses of people as a whole'.[83] It is, however, difficult to ascertain the degree of influence that NCM groups had within the GI Movement.

If GI Movement organisations are considered furtive, the secretness of the RU is staggering. Due to their revolutionary demands and illegal activities, such as owning large quantities of firearms, the RU remained as clandestine and secretive as possible, operated in cells, and members regularly did not identify themselves as a part of the organisation when organising in other "Movement" groups. In 1971, police officer Terence Mangan testified before the

[80] All of these examples of a turn toward Marxism appear in the national publication, the *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin*.
[81] "Oleo Strut – Ft. Hood", *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin*, Issue 2, February 1971, p. 6.
[82] For discussion of these groups please see Chapter 1.
[83] "Revolutionary Adventurism or Proletarian Revolution", *Red Papers 4: Proletarian Revolution vs. Revolutionary Adventurism: Major Documents from an Ideological Struggle in the Revolutionary Union*, April 1972, n.p., via: Marxists Internet Archive: https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/periodicals/red-papers/red-papers-4/article2.htm

Committee on Internal Security that 'the RU maintains a policy of secrecy regarding the identity of its members and that these members in turn try to direct other organizations within the "movement" without revealing to the members of those organizations that they are in fact affiliated themselves with the Revolutionary Union movement.'[84] Indeed, RU cadre infiltrated the GI Movement organisation Movement for a Democratic Military's ruling body in California without their knowledge.[85] It appears that the RU did not view its role as front and centre of the Movement, instead it wished to manipulate larger, more moderate, and therefore more reputable organisations into their Maoist position which they would then espouse. Indeed, according to the USSF, they were successful in doing so. In their *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin*, the organisation remarked on the efficacy of the RU, claiming that 'evidence would seem to indicate that Marxist civilians who join the military, and GIs who become Marxists while in the military, have done the best continuing organizing. The members of PL [Progressive Labor] and the RU who are presently in the military have had a measure of success'.[86] By 1973, therefore, the year that America's involvement in Vietnam ceased, Marxists had seemingly become the most competent and effective organisers in the military.

The RU were, however, not the only NCM organisation to inspire or become involved in the GI Movement. Again writing in *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin*, two members of the Oleo Strut attempted to give the rest of the GI Movement advice on dealing with racism on base, openly acknowledging that they follow the ML line of the Black Workers Congress. The Oleo Strut members claimed that the Congress believed – as did all NCM groups – that the revolution could be produced through the use of a vanguard and that the GI Movement, as 'the most advanced white working class movement in America' would be essential to this.[87] This demonstrates that NCM groups catering to particular racial groups were not against including other demographics in their conception of the illustrious vanguard, and that the RU was not the only NCM group to consider the GI Movement as an important faction of the potentially revolutionary proletariat. What these analyses overlook, however, is that the GI Movement was not wholly a working-class movement. Contemporaneous studies of the Army reveal that the

[84] Testimony of Terence Mangan, 'Investigation of Attempts to Subvert the United States Armed Services, Part 1', *Hearings Before the Committee on Internal Security, House of Representatives, Ninety-Second Congress*, *First Session,* p. 6376, via: HathiTrust, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.aa0007576192&seq=7
[85] Testimony of B. W. Cooper and Terence (Terry) Mangan, 'Investigation of Attempts to Subvert the United States Armed Services, Part 1', *Hearings Before the Committee on Internal Security, House of Representatives, Ninety-Second Congress*, *First Session*, p. 6482.
[86] "Some Questions on the Current GI Movement", *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin,* Issue 13, January 1973, p. 8.
[87] "On the Racism Workshop", *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin*, Issue 11, March 1972, pp. 19-20.

GI Movement itself was made up largely of middle-class organisers trying to reach out to a broader working-class population. That is not to say that the Movement did not include working-class men, but that their participation was somewhat limited. In this sense, NCM groups' efforts to reach out to the GI Movement were the attempts of a vanguard to control a smaller vanguard to mobilise a working-class population for the revolution.

Much like the absence of scholarship on the rise of Marxist politics in the United States in the early 1970s in general, there has been no attempt by scholars to situate the GI Movement specifically within this Marxist milieu.[88] The Movement itself is viewed as a largely solitary phenomenon. Other than the work of Mottle, there is little attempt to situate it within the broader paradigms of this period. This thesis remedies this absence, arguing that anti-war servicepeople actively engaged in the grassroots politics of the era, particularly in the recurrence of Marxism in the thinking of left-wing activists. Whilst not successful – after all, there was no revolution – Marxism became an important part of GI protest, and this opened up many new avenues of social activism for soldiers.[89]

Before assessment of the *Free Press* can begin, it is also necessary to analyse the provenance of this anti-war and left-wing activism. However, as the anti-war GI tended to be faceless, and their activities clandestine, there are few records which provide understanding of their class, race, and geographical background. As such, it has remained difficult to locate a "type" of GI more inclined to anti-war protest than others, or to identify whether such a "type" existed. Fortunately, a study which attempted to achieve just that was the Research Analysis Corporation's (RAC) analysis of dissident behaviour in the Army between September 1970 and August 1971.[90] The report utilised a survey of 844 military personnel, administered at Forts

[88] Perhaps due to the history of communist and left-wing persecution in the US and a desire to have the GI Movement treated as a serious historical topic, all scholars of the Movement are sheepish about its relationship with socialism and communism. Marxist groups such as the Progressive Labor Party, Young Socialist Alliance, Socialist Workers Party, and Movement for a Democratic Military are mentioned in both Parsons' *Dangerous Grounds* and Cortright's *Soldiers in Revolt*, however, the prominence of these organisations in the GI Movement is not explored. Richard Moser makes repeated reference to GIs' structural view of US society and their critiques of imperialism and capitalism and claims that some papers took on 'working-class' perspectives and sat under posters of Mao Zedong, yet refuses to mention communism. Richard Moser, *The New Winter Soldiers,* pp. 96-101. James Lewes makes the bold, and incorrect, claim that 'few in the GI Movement had heard of Karl Marx' to contradict the contemporary notion that all anti-war GIs were communist. James Lewes, *Protest and Survive: Underground GI Newspapers during the Vietnam War* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2003), p. 109. As a result, no GI Movement historians have thus far seriously considered the relationship between the far-Left and the Movement, until this thesis.

[89] This shall be discussed further in Chapter 6.

[90] The RAC was a civilian research organisation that was contracted by the United States Army to provide operations research and analysis to try and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Army. Charles R.

Bragg (NC), Carson (CO), Dix (NJ), Gordon (GA), and Hood (TX); personal interviews with 126 soldiers; a 'post commander mail survey' distributed at the seventeen largest Army posts in the Continental United States and was viewed by the RAC as representative of dissent within the entire Army.[91] As such, this report remains one of the few contemporary internal studies of dissidence in the US Army in the Vietnam era and thus is hugely important in identifying the types of GIs who participated in anti-war activity.[92]

Firstly, the RAC report provides a helpful analysis of the scope of the GI Movement during the Vietnam War. Six dissident activities were identified by the RAC: on-post demonstrations, off-post demonstrations, contribution to underground newspapers, distribution of protest materials, attendance at protest meetings, and frequenting anti-military coffeehouses. Such activities (other than attendance at a coffeehouse) were rarely associated with any sentiment other than anti-war feeling and it would therefore be fair to assume that the RAC's use of the term dissident was broadly synonymous with the phrase anti-war.[93] Perhaps unsurprisingly, the analysis shows that participation in dissident activities was more prominent among soldiers of the lower ranks and partaking in such activities reduced the higher the rank. The report found that within their sample, sixteen percent of E1-E4s had participated in one of these activities more than once, implying that they were committed 'dissidents'.[94] It was these men who were the activists of the GI Movement, regularly engaging in dissident activities. Combined with the number of E1-E4s who had engaged in one of these activities just once, for reasons which the RAC hesitated to speculate on, twenty-five percent of the sample engaged in anti-war activity at some point. For the ranks E5-E9, eight percent of the sample had engaged in anti-war activity

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Shrader, *History of Operations Research in the United States Army: Volume II: 1961-1973* (Washington D.C.: Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of the Army for Operations Research, US Army, 2008), pp. v-vi.

[91] R. William Rae, Stephen B. Forman, and Howard C. Olson, *Future Impact of Dissident Elements within the Army on the Enforcement of Discipline, Law, and Order* (Research Analysis Corporation, January 1972), pp. 1-2, via: Defense Technical Information Center, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/AD0891558 [accessed:15/07/25]

[92] All of the internal studies of dissidence in the US Army during the Vietnam War were carried out by the RAC. For the other two studies please see: Olson and Rae, *Determination of the Potential for Dissidence in the US Army: Volume I* (March 1971) and Howard C. Olson and R. William Rae, *Determination of the Potential for Dissidence in the US Army: Volume II – Survey of Military Opinion* (Research Analysis Corporation, May 1971), via: Defense Technical Information Center, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/AD0724165 [accessed:15/07/25]

[93] Rae, Forman, and Olson, *Future Impact of Dissident Elements within the Army* (1972), p. 2. 'Disobeying/refusing orders or showing disrespect to a superior', 'drug use', and 'racial discrimination' were also identified as dissident activities by the RAC, however, these activities were analysed separately. This distinction implies that these three acts were more random. It is proposed that the six dissident activities were grouped together because they represented specific anti-war sentiment, whereas the others did not.

[94] Ibid., p. 21. Soldiers of the enlisted ranks were referred to as 'E-' depending on their rank. The higher the number, the higher rank a soldier was.

just once and nine percent had done so more than once.[95] Therefore, active 'dissidents', such as those who published the *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, were a minority within a minority movement. However, combined, those who continuously engaged in dissident activities or simply did so only once encompassed a not insignificant portion of the US military.

These figures, when combined with the explanations for why GIs did not participate in dissident activities, give a better account of the extent of discontent within the Vietnam era military. For example, when asked, nineteen percent of GIs responded that they had not participated in dissident activities purely because they did not have the opportunity. Many other GIs typified the general apathy, and desire for self-preservation, that pervaded the Army during this period. Forty-eight percent responded that they felt that protests would not 'do any good and that they just wanted to get out' of the Army.[96] Combined, this indicates that sixty-seven percent of GIs were not protesting the war, not because they supported it, but instead because they either did not have the opportunity to do so or viewed such actions as futile. This dissent was characteristic of the decline of morale in the US Army which was discussed by Colonel Robert Heinl and was common on base, although it did not manifest itself in organisation or protest. The environment that servicemen inhabited was characterised by poor morale caused by widespread dissatisfaction with the war and the military, and exploiting this was of interest to GI activists. Former *Free Press* editor Terry Irvin claimed that, as an anti-war organiser, he was a minority but that "other people I served with just wanted to get through it, you know? And they would go in and do their duty every day and would be discharged".[97] Irvin worked as a supply clerk, helping to distribute supplies to Army reserve bases around the Pacific Northwest, as well as providing servicemen with amenities such as bedding and uniforms. In this way, he was an "ordinary" GI who worked one of the many jobs which aided the day-to-day functioning of the Army. Of the GIs asked why they had not participated in dissident activities, just twenty-one percent responded with reasons which the RAC felt could be considered pro-war or patriotic. Fourteen percent stated that they had no reason to protest their time in the military and that if they did, complaints could be dealt with internally. But just seven percent responded that they felt dissent was un-patriotic or disloyal.[98] Whilst discontent

[95] Ibid., p. 21.
[96] Ibid., p. 44.
[97] Interview of Terry Irvin, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 5 October 2022.
[98] Rae, Forman, and Olson, *Future Impact of Dissident Elements within the Army* (1972), p. 44.

clearly did not always manifest in active opposition, it is evident that the GI Movement had a receptive, if passive, audience for their anti-war messaging.

The RAC report is also useful in establishing a "type" of GI most likely to engage in anti-war behaviour. In trying to profile dissident GIs, the study concluded that 'dissidents' (classed as those soldiers who had participated in dissident activities more than once) 'tend to be well-educated, from suburban homes, profess no practicing religion, have been active in protest activities and social service groups prior to induction, and use drugs'.[99] The RAC profile of a dissident is consonant with the anti-war GIs of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press*. Of the seven GIs interviewed (one of which was in the Air Force rather than the Army), just two identified themselves as having come from a working-class background, with the others coming from middle or upper-middle-class families. All had attended college before their service, and most had been involved in campus protest activities.[100] Conversely, the report argues 'dissidents' were less prominent in the RAC's analysis of soldiers who 'disobey/refuse orders or show disrespect to a superior'. Instead, the "type" created for this form of dissent was of a soldier who had also previously engaged in prior protest activities but was not as well educated, not from suburban locales, and previously had a criminal record.[101]

Cortright has used this evidence to place rebelling GIs into class-based categories, arguing that 'dissidents' were middle-class activists who had higher educational achievement, whereas 'disobedients' were more working-class, originating from poorer households.[102] The RAC report states that the number of GIs who 'disobeyed/refused orders or [have] shown disrespect' was much larger than any of the six dissident activities combined.[103] Disobedience was, therefore, much more common than dissidence in the Army. This is understandable given the fact that a disobedient act could occur for a multitude of reasons, whereas one only became a dissident (in the eyes of the RAC) through repeated demonstration of acts associated with anti-war opinion. Similarly, minor acts of disobedience, such as not saluting an officer, were likely to be spontaneous responses which were presumably punished less severely than dissident

[99] Ibid., p. 32.
[100] These GIs were Dave Henry and Henry Valenti, please see: Interview of Dave Henry, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 9 October 2022 and Interview of Henry Valenti, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 4 October 2022. Interestingly, Valenti recognised his family's class mobility yet maintained that his origins were working-class.
[101] Rae, Forman, and Olson, *Future Impact of Dissident Elements within the Army* (1972), pp. 34-36.
[102] Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), pp. 270-271.
[103] Rae, Forman, and Olson, *Future Impact of Dissident Elements within the Army* (1972), p. 2.

activity, accounting for the prevalence of disobedience. Whilst the two "types" created by the RAC differed in their class, both profiles shared the commonality of draft status. GIs who were either drafted or classed as 'forced enlistment' were much more likely to both engage in dissident activities and to disobey/refuse orders than those who voluntarily enlisted.[104] Whether a GI consensually or non-consensually (including forced enlistment) joined the Army was evidently a factor in determining their satisfaction within the organisation.

Given their subservient position in the Army, it is perhaps expected that the reason for dissent and disobedience in the lower ranks (draftees were likely to be lower in rank because of their short time in the military) was due to their worse pay, poor assignments, and poor treatment from superiors. In other words: day-to-day issues. However, when asked by the RAC, fifty-eight percent of dissidents claimed that the main reason for their activities was 'the Vietnam War or other Government policies', and thirty-eight percent answered that it was 'the way the Army treats the individual'.[105] Therefore, whilst committed opposition to the war festered among GIs in the E1-E4 bracket, it was not the poor status of their rank which was their main antagonism, but the war itself. Once again, the cultural milieu of the "Sixties", and the Vietnam War in particular, were unique in inspiring a grassroots anti-war movement within the military. Should rank have been the major factor in GI protest, such a movement would have surely blossomed in the Korean War, which also utilised a partially conscripted Army.

Whilst an extremely valuable indication of the types of young men involved in the GI Movement, the RAC report's use is, however, limited. As it focuses solely on the Army, it is impossible to assess whether the growing discontent in the Air Force and Navy during this period also subscribed to these "types". There were not, unfortunately, equivalent assessments carried out by these branches. This is perhaps indicative of the fact that most dissent and protest, at least for the majority of the war in Vietnam, came from the Army and suggests that the other military branches did not feel that dissent was substantial enough to commission such a study. Alternatively, as the Army was transitioning from a partially-drafted to an all-volunteer force during this period, these studies demonstrate a desire to study dissent in order to try and reduce it in the new Modern Volunteer Army.[106] As the Air Force and Navy did not undergo such

[104] Ibid., pp. 36-37.
[105] Ibid., p. 38.
[106] The idea that the RAC's study could be used to provide information for use in the planning of the Modern Volunteer Army is detailed explicitly in the foreword of the *Future Impact of Dissident Elements within the Army on the Enforcement of Discipline, Law, and Order* study. Ibid., p. iii.

drastic changes in acquiring manpower, less self-reflection was needed by these organisations during this period. Still, whilst Dave Henry – the one member of the Air Force interviewed – identified himself as working-class, his profile is largely similar to his Army equivalents. Like the RAC dissident type, Henry went to college where he participated in anti-war activity as the editor of the campus newspaper.[107] Despite such a small sample size, it is reasonable to assume that the RAC "type" was, at the very least, similar across branches.

This report also implicitly establishes the role of GI activists in the milieu of discontent within the Armed Forces. Activists such as those who created and published the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* were a minority within the GI Movement generally and on Lewis and McChord specifically. Just three percent of all E1-E4s surveyed claimed to have contributed to a GI underground newspaper more than once.[108] It was evidently no small task to get a large number of soldiers together to form an openly anti-war organ on base and those who gravitated to the role were those who were familiar with anti-war protest having gone to college prior to their service. Whilst active dissidents were a minority, discontentment and anti-war opinion were not rare in the Vietnam era military. 'Disobedients' and those who were neither pro nor anti-war – usually the more working-class and less educated elements of the Army – paint a staggering image of the potential constituency available to the editors of the *Free Press* and their explicitly anti-war message.[109] It was therefore the role of dissidents and the GI underground press to reach across this class and educational divide and rouse the latent anti-war opinion among the rank-and-file into coherent, moral, and eventually ideological, protest.

Whilst, as discussed, the purpose of social history is not to focus only on the effect of a social movement or "ordinary" people, it is still important to attempt to assess the influence and impact of GI activism. Small claims that the civilian anti-war movement maintained Vietnam as a vital and controversial topic of discussion among Americans due to its large, national visibility, and thus affected popular opinion. Crucial to this were the elite and their institutions, such as the *New York Times* and its educated, influential, liberal readership, as well as intellectuals at Ivy League colleges such as Harvard and Yale.[110] However, due to the uneven conscription of the draft, few students at elite universities, who had important roles in

[107] Interview of Dave Henry, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 9 October 2022.
[108] Rae, Forman, and Olson, *Future Impact of Dissident Elements within the Army* (1972), p. 23.
[109] Ibid., p. 44.
[110] Melvin Small, *Johnson, Nixon, and the Doves* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1988), pp. 225-229.

converting their influential parents to anti-war positions, were part of the GI Movement. Instead, GIs were "ordinary" people who, despite their best efforts, did not have the instruments or connections to influence public opinion, and thus government policy, from their bases. Therefore, whilst GIs had much symbolic significance as anti-war constituents, their small, localised protests failed to garner much popular support for their cause. Whilst Small estimates that elite actors of the civilian anti-war movement helped to sway popular opinion against the war, the same cannot be said for anti-war servicepeople.[111]

Nevertheless, former GI organisers reflect positively on the effect they had, giving the GI Movement at least partial responsibility for ending the war in Vietnam. Bob Barnes was self-aware enough to acknowledge that it was an exaggeration to argue that his activism was the cause of the end of the war, jokingly stating that "I wore this peace medal and the war ended". Yet, he still estimated that anti-war GIs at least contributed to the conclusion of the war, arguing: "we played our little role in bringing the US military to its knees and we played a little role in ending that war in Vietnam".[112] Many former GI organisers have concurred with the idea that their activism was one small component of a milieu of negative opinion against the war which contributed to its conclusion. Particularly, they have emphasised that they added to the anti-war movement and the general destruction of morale in the Armed Forces which they believe brought about the end of the Vietnam War.[113] Dave Henry – a college graduate with a degree in Mathematics who, upon being drafted by the Army, enlisted into the Air Force – also suggested that the GI Movement contributed to the end of the war. However, he also made it abundantly clear that it was the Vietnamese – by which he means those fighting on the side of the DRV, the People's Army of Vietnam, and the NLF – who were responsible for defeating the American military and ending the war.[114]

Henry makes an important point which should always be remembered when assessing the effect of any facet of the anti-Vietnam War movement. Any notion that the anti-war movement was primarily responsible for the US defeat in Vietnam is at best arrogant and at worst a distortion of the historical narrative to heighten the importance of White American actors and diminish

[111] Small, *Johnson, Nixon, and the Doves* (1988), pp. 225-229.
[112] Interview of Bob Barnes, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 8 October 2022.
[113] Please see: Interview of Henry Valenti, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 4 October 2022; Interview of Terry Irvin, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 5 October 2022; and Interview of Bruce MacLean, Video 7, interviewed by Jessie Kindig and Maria Quintana, 13 July 2009, https://depts.washington.edu/antiwar/interview_maclean.shtml [accessed: 03/09/24].
[114] Interview of Dave Henry, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 9 October 2022.

that of non-Whites. Whilst the anti-war movement may have played a role in convincing the American public and successive Administrations that the war should not continue, it should be remembered that the US was forced to withdraw from South Vietnam because of the Vietnamese (consisting of troops from the DRV, popular opposition to the RVN, and the fighting forces and political work of the NLF). The effects of the GI Movement, and the anti-war movement generally, were therefore always subordinate to the resilience and quality of the Vietnamese fighting forces.

Whilst the effects of the GI Movement on the war are immeasurable, its impact on the military itself is easier to gauge. In a statement, oft-quoted by GI Movement scholars, Colonel Robert Heinl controversially declared in 1971 that '[t]he morale, discipline and battleworthiness of the U.S. Armed Forces are, with a few salient exceptions, lower and worse than at anytime in this century and possibly in the history of the United States'.[115] Indeed, in March 1971, the RAC claimed that it was a 'fact' that '[t]he level of dissent in the Army has been a matter of increasing concern for military commanders'. The report, 'actively supported administratively' by the Department of the Army (DA), evidenced this claim by pointing to the necessity for a DA letter on 28 May 1969 and a Department of Defense directive issued on 12 September 1969 which both 'offer[ed] guidance to commanders on dealing with dissent'.[116] Likewise, in January 1972, the RAC published another study titled the *Future Impact of Dissident Elements within the Army on the Enforcement of Discipline, Law, and Order*, which was 'sponsored by the Office of the Provost Marshal General of the United States Army during the period September 1970 to August 1971'.[117]

The existence of such studies of GI dissent, especially the "political", i.e. anti-war dynamic of such acts, does demonstrate that the GI Movement was substantial enough to encourage the Army to investigate this phenomenon. However, the *Future Impact of Dissident Elements within the Army* study concluded that '[p]ost commanders do not consider that the present level of dissidence significantly affects the enforcement of discipline, law, and order.' Indeed, the RAC notes that even "political" acts 'do not represent a serious problem for the Army at the present time in terms of enforcement of discipline, law, and order'.[118] It was felt by base

[115] Col. Robert D. Heinl Jr., "The Collapse of the Armed Forces", *Armed Forces Journal,* 7 June 1971, via: Montclair State University, https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/Vietnam/heinl.html [accessed: 03/09/24].
[116] Olson and Rae, *Determination of the Potential for Dissidence in the US Army: Volume I* (1971), p. vii.
[117] Rae, Forman, and Olson, *Future Impact of Dissident Elements within the Army* (1972), p. 1
[118] Ibid., p. 5.

commanders (admittedly an unreliable source on such matters due to them being unlikely to diminish their own reputations by admitting to dissent on their bases), therefore, that the Movement itself did not cause serious problems on base. Still, such reports demonstrate that the GI Movement had significant enough impact to stimulate debate on the morale and discipline of the US Army during the Vietnam War.

The distinct position of anti-war GIs as the unwilling foot soldiers of the war and the unique obstacles that they faced in trying to oppose this position (i.e., the UCMJ) distinguish the GI Movement as a separate anti-war contingent. Still, the GI Movement interacted and had a complex relationship with their civilian counterparts. Sociologist Jerry Lembcke has argued that in the post-Vietnam era this relationship has been mythologised. He claims that a stereotype has emerged which has portrayed civilian anti-war demonstrators as hippies who spat on GIs returning from the combat zone in disapproval of their participation in the Vietnam War.[119] Lembcke contends that this myth stems from a deliberate reassessment of the Vietnam veteran by the Nixon administration which purposefully created a dichotomous relationship between the "good" veteran and the "bad" anti-war activist and which has been picked up by popular films such as *Coming Home* (1978).[120] This argument is akin to those made by believers in the "stab-in-the-back" myth. In order to argue that US soldiers were betrayed by the dovish elements of the country, conservative politicians popularised the concept that soldiers were pro-war, or "good", but were undermined by the "bad" elements of society, namely anti-war students.[121] Whilst Lembcke focuses his book on veterans, rather than active-duty servicemen, it is logical to assume that these stereotypes existed for anti-war GIs also. For example, in dismissal of the idea that soldiers, both active-duty and veterans, were pro-war, he dedicates a chapter to the GI Movement.[122] Therefore, in refutation of this stereotyped narrative, Lembcke points to the existence of both anti-war GIs and veterans to demonstrate that historical actors did not always occupy stereotypical positions such as pro-war GI and anti-

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[119] Jerry Lembcke, *The Spitting Image: Myth, Memory, and the Legacy of Vietnam* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), pp. 1-3.
[120] Ibid., pp. 53-56, 145-146 and *Coming Home,* dir. by Hal Ashby (United Artists, 1978). For a discussion of *Coming Home* and its portrayal of the Vietnam veteran see: Benjamin De Carvalho, 'War Hurts: Vietnam Movies and the Memory of a Lost War', *Millennium*, 24.3 (August 2006), pp. 951-962; Michael Selig, 'Boys Will Be Men: Oedipal Drama in *Coming Home*', in *From Hanoi to Hollywood: The Vietnam War in American Film*, ed. by Linda Dittmar and Gene Michaud (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press), pp. 189-202; and Fred Turner, *Echoes of Combat: The Vietnam War in American Memory* (New York: Anchor Books, 1996), pp. 58-60.
[121] Jeffrey P. Kimball, 'The Stab-in-the-Back Legend and the Vietnam War', *Armed Forces and Society,* 14.3 (Spring 1988), 437-439.
[122] Lembcke, *The Spitting Image* (1998), pp. 29-44.

GI, anti-war civilian. By identifying this stereotyped version of history Lembcke has highlighted a key importance of this thesis. Taking a "bottom-up" approach to the GI Movement, this study demonstrates the agency of the Vietnam-era GI and thus undercuts the notion that GIs had to be pro-war simply because they were members of the military.

During the publication of the *Free Press*, the relationship between anti-war GIs and civilians was largely positive and this is reflected in the oral testimony of former GI activists. Dispelling the "spitting myth", all of the GIs interviewed for this thesis recalled having positive feelings towards the anti-war movement, viewing them as allies.[123] Addressing the "spitting myth" directly, former anti-war GI and son of a Democratic Representative, Michael Royce stated: "you'll hear […] these urban legends about GIs being spit upon, I think it's bullshit!". Emphasising the ubiquity of this idea, Royce went on to claim that "I have met many people who've told me that story and vets particularly, and […] I've not met one [who] it was a direct thing [for].[124] Similarly, former *Free Press* editor Lieutenant Henry Valenti stated that "[t]hey made a big deal about anti-war students spitting on soldiers. I never saw that. They didn't want to spit on us, you know. They wanted to recruit us into the peace movement."[125] Whilst positive about the civilian anti-war movement, Terry Irvin did highlight the difference in experience of activism for GIs and civilians. When asked if he felt that GIs opposed to the war were more important than civilians, he responded that "[w]e were a little closer to the source than they were. And I mean, they could go back to their beds at night and we would go back to Army cots" but that this difference in experience never separated the two groups.[126] Whilst this testimony demonstrates that, among GI activists, the civilian anti-war movement was very popular, it is not necessarily representative of the feeling of all GIs on base, especially those less inclined towards an anti-war position. It does, however, emphasise that members of the military did not see or hear of any GIs being spat upon by civilian demonstrators.

There were also more widely publicised examples of GI-civilian co-operation, most notably with the proliferation of GI coffeehouses. By 1968, this idea had grabbed civilian attention, specifically that of the National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam (the

[123] Interview of Henry Valenti, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 4 October 2022; Interview of Bob Barnes, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 8 October 2022; Interview of Dave Henry, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 9 October 2022; Interview of Michael Royce, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 7 October 2022; and Interview of Henry Valenti, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 4 October 2022.
[124] Interview of Michael Royce, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 7 October 2022.
[125] Interview of Henry Valenti, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 4 October 2022.
[126] Interview of Terry Irvin, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 5 October 2022.

Mobe) and its leaders David Dellinger, Rennie Davis, and Tom Hayden. In order to encourage the growing GI Movement, the Mobe wanted to export Gardner's coffeehouse concept nationwide and did so by providing publicity, funding, and personnel in the so-called "Summer of Support". Civilian organisations warmed to the prospect of fostering the GI Movement and in the winter of 1968 Fred Gardner, Howard Levy, Dr Benjamin Spock, Noam Chomsky and a number of other prominent anti-war activists started the United States Servicemen's Fund. Over the six years that it operated, the USSF bolstered civilian attempts to nurture anti-war sentiment in the military through the provision of funds, locales, entertainers, typewriters, mimeograph machines, and other useful tools for GI projects.[127]

Nonetheless, the antagonistic relationship between the Vietnam GI and the anti-war protester has been compounded by popular film. The Academy Award Best Picture, *Forrest Gump* (1994) is a prime example of this. In the film, Gump, a Vietnam veteran dressed in his uniform, is introduced to a character identified as the "President of the Berkeley Students for a Democratic Society" who aggressively questions "who's the baby-killer?", referring to Gump.[128] Through the use of the negative epithet "baby killer", which it is argued anti-war civilians hurled at GIs, the film stereotypes the relationship between the Vietnam GI and the civilian anti-war protester.[129] Although *Forrest Gump* commits most of the six 'filmic sins' of mainstream historical film, as described by Robert Rosenstone, the most heinous is the flattening of historical complexity into a cohesive narrative.[130] This means that the focus on the perspective of Gump is the only interpretation of history which is offered by the film, reducing the relationship between soldiers and anti-war citizens to this encounter. As a mainstream popular entertainment film, *Forrest Gump* perpetuates the notion that the

[127] Parsons, *Dangerous Grounds* (2017), pp. 24-28.
[128] *Forrest Gump,* dir. by Robert Zemeckis (Paramount Pictures, 1994). For a discussion of *Forrest Gump* and its historical impact see: Robert Burgoyne, 'Prosthetic Memory/Traumatic memory: *Forrest Gump* (1994), in *The History on Film Reader*, ed. by Marnie Hughes-Warrington (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 137-142; Penny Lewis, *Hardhats, Hippies, and Hawks: The Antiwar Movement as Myth and Memory* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2013), p. 38; and Steven D. Scott, ''Like a Box of Chocolates': "Forrest Gump" and Postmodernism', *Literature Film Quarterly*, 29.1 (2001), 23-31.
[129] Lewis, *Hardhats, Hippies, and Hawks* (2013), p. 38.
[130] The six 'filmic sins' are: the packaging of history as a romance or comedy, in this case between the eponymous character and his childhood sweetheart Jenny; the presentation of history as the story of individuals, here to utilise Gump as a vehicle to illustrate and comment on the "Sixties"; the use of emotion in history, for example, to create a feeling of sympathy toward Gump, even at the expense of stereotyping other historical actors, e.g., the SDS President; the trading of historical substance for contemporary style through the use of costuming, location, and props; the polishing and flattening of historical difficulties and complexities into a cohesive narrative; and that the film does not offer anything new about the past which has not already been gleaned from professional historians in textual sources. Marnie Hughes-Warrington, *History Goes to the Movies: Studying History on Film* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 18-24.

relationship between somebody with anti-war opinions and a soldier would always be hostile, and reduces this relationship to stereotypes for millions of Americans who are unaware of the reality of anti-war GIs and helpful civilian allies.[131] In doing so, Hollywood has removed the agency of the anti-war soldier and contributed to their elimination from the collective American psyche, allowing for stereotypes that all servicemen were pro-war and conservative.

Nonetheless, the reality of the relationship between the anti-war movement and military personnel was far more complex and multi-faceted than conservative politicians, popular culture, or Lembcke have allowed for. Writing contemporaneously, Fred Gardner, former Reservist and creator of the GI coffeehouse scheme, observed that an antagonistic attitude towards military personnel did exist in the early period of the civilian anti-war movement. He claims that as late as 1967 anti-war protesters thought of GIs as 'scum', 'practically spat at them', and yelled 'Eichmann' as they entered the San Mateo induction centre.[132] This testimony exposes one of the contradictions of Lembcke's work: just because there is no empirical evidence of GIs or veterans being spat upon by anti-war civilians, this does not mean that other antagonisms did not exist. Gardner emphasises that whilst civilians did not physically spit on GIs, their hostile behaviour towards soldiers makes this absence of physical provocation redundant.

Accordingly, Fred Halstead has commented that there was little interest in working alongside GIs among civilian anti-war protesters and until approximately 1968 most organisers preferred to work with civilians opposing entry into the military through anti-draft work.[133] Despite this, when the Fort Hood Three publicly refused to be sent to Vietnam in 1966, it was the Fifth Annual Parade Committee (a loose coordinating body of many of the forces of the civilian anti-war movement) who provided publicity and support to the GIs.[134] Whilst demonstrative of the positive role that civilians played in helping anti-war GIs during this early period, such aid

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[131] For a discussion of the erasure of history which takes place in *Forrest Gump* please see: Thomas B. Byers, 'History Re-Membered: *Forrest Gump*, Postfeminist Masculinity, and the Burial of the Counterculture', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 42.2 (Summer 1996), pp. 419-440.

[132] Fred Gardner, 'Case Study in Opportunism' in, 'Committee Exhibit No.64', 'Investigation of Attempts to Subvert the United States Armed Services, Part 3', *Hearings Before the Committee on Internal Security, House of Representatives, Ninety-Second Congress, Second Session,* via: HathiTrust, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.aa0007576192&seq=911&q1=part+3, p. 7522. It is important to note that these comments originate from a polemic that Gardner wrote attacking later civilian co-optation of the GI Movement and therefore were used to discredit the relationship between GIs and civilians. Still, this does not mean that the incident was completely fabricated.

[133] Halstead, *Out Now!* (1991), p. 209.

[134] DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal* (1990), p. 155.

showed that civilian motivations for intervention relied on refusal to serve in the military, rather than encouraging anti-war agitation from within. Halstead notes that this particular viewpoint was often a source of conflict between himself and others within the anti-war movement:

> They looked upon it as some kind of victory every time a GI deserted because he opposed the war. I looked on it as an opportunity lost. […] As far as I was concerned the antiwar movement was in the business of making the antiwar sentiment and activism as pervasive as possible. It was not in the business of accumulating sacrifices or transforming individual souls.[135]

In 1970, the newspaper *Hard Times,* edited by Fred Gardner and the journalist Andrew Kopkind*,* agreed. In their opinion, the early activism of students 'stopped at the point of induction' and when a GI Movement did begin to rise it 'confounded the middle-class radical kids who were devoting all their time and theories to draft resistance'.[136] In this sense, outright refusal to fight conformed to a trend in the anti-war movement which celebrated moral acts of consciousness and had originated from the radical pacifists of the peace movement. In their search for peace, radical pacifists believed that 'individual acts of resistance' were needed in order to say '"No to power"'.[137] Seemingly, therefore, early co-operation with GIs only occurred when they followed civilian expectations that soldiers should refuse combat. Indeed, in 1967, former Kennedy adviser Hans Morgenthau declared that '"the real moral heroes of this war" would be those officers who quit their commands rather than participate in the indiscriminate killing of civilians'.[138] To oppose the war was not enough in the eyes of civilian critics; military personnel must refuse to fight.

Temporal factors are important in explaining the differing interpretations provided by Gardner and Lembcke. Gardner, for example, documents a transition from the early anti-war movement, in which GIs were viewed as the enemies of anti-war civilians, to the latter period, where civilians largely embraced the GI Movement's task.[139] Lembcke, however, focused solely on the period after 1968. Social dynamics are never monolithic and shift throughout time. As scholars have acknowledged, the GI Movement did not begin to coalesce into a social movement until approximately 1968. Thus, it appears that as the Movement germinated and

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[135] Halstead, *Out Now!* (1991)*,* p. 498.
[136] Andrew Kopkind, 'OH, COLUMBIA', *Hard Times,* no.63 (2-9 February 1970), GI Press Collection, 1964-1977, *Wisconsin Historical Society,* p. 1.
[137] DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal* (1990)*,* p. 23.
[138] Ibid., p. 168.
[139] Gardner, 'Case Study in Opportunism' in 'Investigation of Attempts to Subvert the United States Armed Services, Part 3', pp. 7522-7525.

soldiers demonstrated their opposition to the war in more widely publicised events, such as the Presidio Mutiny, as well as working alongside civilians in the coffeehouse projects, these dynamics were altered and relations between the groups improved.

Even then, however, the dynamics between GIs and civilians remained complex, and one collective of GIs on Fort Lewis described the situation as 'a real mindfucker'.[140] It was Gardner, pioneer of the scheme which brought civilians and GIs into the closest contact, who eventually became the GI Movement's biggest critic. He bemoaned the over-involvement of civilian activists in GI affairs, accusing them of co-opting the GI Movement for their own political causes, using the Movement as a means to travel and appear righteous, and disregarding the dangerous position that GIs held as political activists in the military. In Gardner's view, co-optation took the form of introducing a pluralist viewpoint to GIs. He asked: 'how many of us, given the places we work and the conditions of our lives, can combine our politics with our "profession"?'[141] In this sense, he resented the introduction of ideas which he felt did not cater to the immediate needs of the GI. For example, he questioned GI participation in a 'scab' lettuce boycott; flagrantly denounced the participation of gay staff members at GI coffeehouses, 'whose only aim is to seduce soldiers'; and opposed the participation of "women's collectives" at coffeehouses, 'whose only interest is to harangue GIs about their "sexism"'.[142] He went as far as to claim that 'many hundreds – possibly thousands – of men have been set up for bad trouble by organizers trying to build their own quick reputation'.[143] This argument is, however, patronising toward GIs. It implies that they were willingly led to their political stances by civilians, thereby suggesting that soldiers would not support progressive stances on homosexuality, women, and immigrant rights if not urged to do so. As this thesis demonstrates, this was not the case.

Both the "stab-in-the-back" thesis and the "spitting myth" have perpetuated the idea that GIs and anti-war civilians were diametrically opposed. They neatly prescribe the designation of pro-war to GIs and thus place them as oppositional to the civilian anti-war movement. Such conceptions of anti-war movement relations obscure the existence of anti-war GIs and removes them from the historical narrative. In turn, Lembcke and other historians have emphasised that

[140] "The Shelter Half", *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin,* Issue no.5, May 1971, p. 8.
[141] Gardner, 'Case Study in Opportunism' in 'Investigation of Attempts to Subvert the United States Armed Services, Part 3', pp. 7522-7525.
[142] Ibid., p. 7524.
[143] Ibid., p. 7523.

anti-war GIs not only existed but worked with their "enemies" in the civilian anti-war movement. Both tendencies have obscured a complex historical dynamic which cannot be reduced simply to notions of hostility or collaboration. The GI Movement, therefore, occupied an interesting space in the "Sixties".

Focus on the GI Movement, therefore, provides important insight into the thoughts and actions of those who, instead of protesting from the comfort of elite universities, clandestinely demonstrated, rebelled, and published newspapers on military bases across the United States. In order to adequately situate the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* in its most immediate context, it has been first important to understand the broadest aspects of GI anti-war protest. Indeed, this was a movement which had been occurring (as social movements are perpetual rather than static) for at least two years prior to the paper's publishing. Over the course of this period, it had developed from individual instances of rebellion and acts of consciousness to a widespread grassroots' social movement, spreading into the other branches of the military as their roles in the war became more pronounced. In doing this, it has been helpful to establish the provenance of GI protest to understand what sort of young men were attracted to publishing newspapers like the *Free Press*. According to the RAC, the minority of dedicated GI activists tended to be drafted, college educated, had engaged in protest before entering the military, and middle-class. Similarly, hugely important to this thesis is the conceptualisation of the GI Movement as not just an anti-war movement, but a left-wing one too. In its most radical form, the GI Movement engaged with the upsurge in Marxism in US society during the early 1970s and actively Maoist organisations sought to harness the revolutionary potential of servicepeople.

The study of the GI Movement expands not only historians' understandings of anti-war constituents but is also enlightening in uncovering the obscured interaction between GIs and anti-war civilians. This relationship was varied and fluctuated at different times during the Vietnam War, sometimes defined by kinship and at other times difficulty. This defies stereotypes which have tried to generalise GIs as pro-war and students as anti-war. Whilst this chapter has focused on the context of the *Free Press*, it is important to analyse the origins of GI anti-war protest in the Pacific Northwest and, scaling down even further, examine the history of the *Free Press* and the GIA. This is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 3

'Dear Commie-Punk-Agitators': The Origins of Anti-War Opinion on Lewis and McChord and the Creation of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press*[1]

Currently, the GI Movement has solely been studied from a broad, bird's eye view perspective. Those who have focused specifically on the GI press have reinforced this approach, analysing GI publications thematically and assembling articles from various publications in support of their points.[2] This thesis diverts from this established practice and purports that the study of the GI Movement is better approached more intimately. By scaling down the sample size, focusing on just one of the hundreds of GI newspapers, this thesis takes a case study approach to the GI Movement, analysing every article published in the *Lewis-McChord Free Press*.[3] As such, this study argues that whilst the *Free Press* had many distinctive aspects such as its logistics, publishers, and perhaps even approaches, it is still a GI Movement publication and was thus broadly representative of other servicemen's publications.

This thesis has thus far involved a process of scaling down in increments, first focusing on societal context and historiography, then the broader GI Movement, and reaching, within this chapter, activism in the Pacific Northwest and in one specific paper. When one zooms in on the *Free Press*, it becomes evident that the newspaper, whilst published for only a short period, was constantly evolving and changing, both in terms of its personnel, publishers (the groups who controlled the publication), logistics, and in its views, conceptualisations, and messages. This changeable aspect of the paper is one of the most important advantages of an in-depth

[1] Letter, *Lewis-McChord Free Press* [*LMFP*], Vol.3, No.2, August 1971, p. 2.
[2] See: David Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt: GI Resistance During the Vietnam War* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2005); James Lewes, *Protest and Survive: Underground Newspapers During the Vietnam War* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2003); James Lewes, 'Envisioning Resistance: The GI Underground Press During the Vietnam War', *Media History,* 7.2 (2001), pp. 137-150; Lauren Mottle, 'Striking the Machine from Within: A Case for the Inclusion of the GI Movement in the New Left', *The Sixties,* 12.2 (2019), pp. 147-177; Bob Ostertag, *People's Movements, People's Press: The Journalism of Social Justice Movements* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006); Chad Painter and Patrick Ferrucci, ''Ask What You Can Do to the Army': A Textual Analysis of the Underground GI Press During the Vietnam', *Media, War & Conflict,* 12.3 (September 2019), pp. 354-367; and Barbara Tischler, 'Breaking Ranks: GI Antiwar Newspapers and the Culture of Protest', *Vietnam Generation,* 2.1 (January 1990), pp. 20-50.
[3] The only study which likewise focuses on a limited number of GI newspapers is Harry W. Haines who focuses on the publication of *The Ally* and his involvement in the newspaper *Aboveground*. This limited focus is, however, because Haines is a participant-scholar rather than a deliberate methodological choice. Nonetheless, his insights into the logistics of publishing a GI newspaper are unique and helpful. Harry W. Haines, 'Soldiers Against the Vietnam War: *Aboveground* and *The Ally'*, in *Insider Histories of the Vietnam Era Underground Press, Part 2,* ed. by Ken Wachsberger (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2012), pp. 1-46.

study. Whilst a broad analysis may make use of the newspaper by using quotations to support broader thematic points, this could unintentionally obfuscate the reality that the views espoused by the *Free Press* in 1970 were not necessarily the same by 1972. Likewise, removing specific quotations from their context as part of a larger article or edition of the newspaper potentially skews the meaning or intention of these words.

To be able to adequately analyse the views of the *Free Press* it is firstly crucial to provide the historical backdrop for the editors' activism, including an evaluation of the GI Movement in the Pacific Northwest; a consequent small-scale study of the GI publications which pre-dated the *Free Press*; an analysis of the rise of the *Free Press* and its differences to these preceding publications; and an examination of the history of the paper, including its changing names, personnel, publishing bodies, and locations. Helping the understanding of this history, timelines have been provided on GI activism in the Pacific Northwest and the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* in Appendixes A and B.

The GI Movement existed on military bases located in areas as geographically, socially, and environmentally diverse as New York, Texas, Hawaii and Alaska. The 'Pacific' region (identified by the Research Analysis Corporation (RAC) as Washington, Oregon, California, Hawaii, and Alaska), however, had an especially important role in the Movement. According to a study carried out by the RAC between October 1968 and October 1969, using a sample of 153 military dissidents – men who had participated in any of the 19 acts which the RAC viewed as constituting dissent – from across the United States, none were born in Alaska, one was born in Oregon, another was from Hawaii, six were from Washington, and seventeen – the largest number from any one state – were from California.[4] The RAC then compared the total number of dissidents within the Pacific area with its overall population, giving this region the highest proportional representation of dissidents in any area of the US, with one in every million people

[4] Howard C. Olson and C. William Rae, *Determination of the Potential for Dissidence in the US Army: Volume I – Nature of Dissent* (Research Analysis Corporation, March 1971), via: Defense Technical Information Center, [https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/AD0884031, p. 42. The RAC acknowledges that this sample was not necessarily representative of the entire dissident population and that the group of 153 GI dissidents were selected because of their complete Army 201 files (a soldier's personnel record which contains information such as training records, performance evaluations, and duty locations). Likewise, because of incomplete data, the RAC assumed that the state in which a dissident GI was born was the same state that that GI grew up in. Therefore, the Corporation's study is by no means scientific or objective. However, given that the RAC used this information as a way to analyse GI dissent and the lack of any other studies on this matter, this thesis recognises the Corporation's study as a broad framework, not completely accurate but certainly indicative. Ibid., pp. 37-41.

being an anti-war GI.[5] Simply put, according to the RAC study, anti-war dissidence was more prominent among young soldiers originating from the West Coast than any other area in the US.

Whilst the reasons for this were not explored by the Corporation, it does not seem extreme to suggest that anti-war opinion on the West Coast was more permissible, and therefore more popular, among youth.[6] California's prevalent mixture of youth, student protest, and counterculture during this period – particularly in the Bay Area, where the West Coast beacon of student activism, the University of California, Berkeley, resided and where the West Coast variant of the annual national anti-war demonstrations took place – made anti-war opinion and activism less exceptional than in other, more conservative, areas of the US. This backdrop seemingly made young people from the Pacific area both more open to anti-war dissidence and more willing to express this opinion. Accounting for their prominence in the RAC study, young men seemingly took these attitudes into the military with them when drafted. This hypothesis is also supported by the similarly prominent proportion of dissident GIs in the 'East North Central' area (Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan) – where the important anti-war bastion, the University of Michigan, was located – and in the 'Middle Atlantic' region (New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey) where large Ivy League colleges – especially Columbia University – were situated.[7]

The inclination towards anti-war attitudes on the West Coast was specifically compounded in Washington due to the area's general progressive history, reputation, and thus population. This repute has led James Gregory to refer to Seattle as the 'Left Coast City', due to its prominent left-wing past.[8] Similarly, Tacoma, a predominantly working-class city, and the closest city to

[5] Ibid., p. 42.
[6] As the RAC study in the previous chapter detailed, dissent was most likely to occur within those who were drafted and were therefore also young.
[7] Olson and Rae, *Determination of the Potential for Dissidence in the US Army: Volume I* (1971), p. 42.
[8] James N. Gregory, 'Left Coast City: The History of a Political Reputation', *Pacific Northwest Quarterly,* 107.2 (2016), pp. 72-86.
Gregory has argued that Seattle, the largest city in the Pacific Northwest, has garnered a political reputation for progressive politics not necessarily due to an exceptional radicalism within the city, but because of a few well-publicised historical events. The first example which Gregory provides is the decision by the famous trade unionist Eugene Debs and his fellow comrades in the organisation Social Democracy for America (later the Socialist Party of America) to choose Washington as a place for socialists to congregate, win elections, and eventually turn the US towards socialism. Debs eventually dropped out of the project; however, a few socialists did migrate to Washington, creating a series of socialist and anarchist utopian societies around the Puget Sound, establishing this area's reputation for radical political activism. Indeed, left-wing supporters were intrigued by Washington, leading many to migrate to the area and by 1912 only four states had more dues-paying Socialist

Lewis and McChord, was located at the end of a 'corridor of West Coast highways' – which facilitated the easy flow of activists and their ideas and resources up the coast to Washington.[9] Therefore, it is important to note that, via the serendipity of geography, the GIs of Fort Lewis were close to an atmosphere of left-wing protest, existing in a contemporary context of especial anti-war activism along the West Coast, as well as the past context of radical acts and reputation of Washington state. Equally, Fort Lewis held an important position in the US military during this period. The post was the third most populous Army base in the Continental United States (CONUS), with an aggregate population of 41,800 men between October 1968 and October 1969.[10]

In order to cope with the increasing demands for military personnel during the Vietnam War, on 15 March 1966, the US Army Personnel Center was established at Fort Lewis. Designed to take some of the burden off the US Army Personnel Center in Oakland, California, an Overseas Replacement Center, a Returnee-Reassignment Station, and a Transfer Station were established at the base. As a result, until the Center's closure in June 1972, Fort Lewis was a primary military installation, accepting responsibility for deploying troops to Asia, transferring them elsewhere in the United States, and receiving returning troops who had completed their term of service in Vietnam. Upon its closure, 2.5 million troops had been processed through the Center.[11] Likewise, as it had during World War II, Lewis functioned as a training station for troops during the Vietnam War. On 2 May 1966, the United States Army Training Center,

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Party members. Gregory has posited that there is, therefore, a symbiotic relationship between actual radicalism in the area and the reputation this creates, encouraging left-wing supporters to relocate to the area.
Later radicalism in the area only strengthened this equation of Seattle with left-wing politics. The most famous instance of this was the Seattle General Strike, beginning on 6 February 1919 in which over one hundred different unions agreed to strike in solidarity with shipyard workers' demands for better pay. Among the panic and chaos leading up to the Strike, fifteen hundred soldiers were mobilised from Fort Lewis, however, they remained in the National Guard armoury and were not used on the streets. Gregory has emphasised that a host of other historical events have cultivated Seattle and Washington's progressive reputation, including: a movement of unemployed citizens during the Great Depression; the creation of a left-wing interest group within the Democratic Party during this period, the Washington Commonwealth Federation; the activism of students, African Americans, Amerindians, "Chicanos", Asian Americans, and women during the 1960s and '70s; and the "Battle of Seattle" protests against the World Trade Organization in 1999. Therefore, Gregory identifies the history of Seattle as a process of regeneration in which large-scale events of radicalism attract left-wing activists to the city, thereby restarting the cycle of regeneration. It is perhaps no surprise that in the late 1980s and early '90s, it was Washington which was the birthplace of the grunge music sub-genre which incorporated punk's anti-authoritarianism with its own malcontent with the state of the United States during this period.
For a detailed account of the Seattle General Strike see: Robert L. Friedheim, 'The Seattle General Strike of 1919', *Pacific Northwest Quarterly,* 52.3 (July 1961), pp. 81-98.

[9] David L. Parsons, *Dangerous Grounds: Antiwar Coffeehouses and Military Dissent in the Vietnam Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017), pp. 35-36.

[10] Olson and Rae, *Determination of the Potential for Dissidence in the US Army: Volume I* (1971), p. 32.

[11] "Vietnam, 1966-1972", via: Lewis Army Museum, https://lewisarmymuseum.com/history-of-the-army-at-camp-lewis-fort-lewis-and-joint-base-lewis-mcchord/vietnam-1966-1972/ [accessed: 11/12/23].

Infantry, was activated at Fort Lewis and the post became an important area for training troops for the combat theatre. Up to 1,900 men a week graduated from both Basic and Advanced Infantry Training, totalling 302,000 men by the time of the Center's closure.[12] Fort Lewis therefore became one of the most important military posts in the Vietnam era Army, assuming responsibility for training, deploying, and receiving troops from the combat zone. Simply due to the higher number of troops rotating to and from Vietnam and elsewhere across the US, the anti-war activism and publications of groups such as the GI Alliance (GIA) are likely to have come into contact with a higher number of GIs, some more receptive than others. Likewise, it is significant that at a military institution with such an active role during the conflict, anti-war sentiment still festered among the rank-and-file. Lewis' large size and importance ensured that the base played a significant role in the GI Movement. As the *Free Press* began printing in 1970, two years after the recognised conglomeration of GI protest into a movement, there was already a considerable history of anti-war protest in the Pacific Northwest, largely on Fort Lewis. This history highlights the developing aspects of GI protest, picking up on many of the topics discussed in the previous chapter, most importantly, the relationship between GIs and civilians.

Early GI activism in the Pacific Northwest derived from local civilians at the University of Washington (UW). In October 1968, the first signs of GI discontent on Fort Lewis emerged when two hundred GIs and one hundred civilians attended a conference at the Benjamin Franklin Hotel in Seattle to discuss the role of GIs in the Vietnam War.[13] These two groups eventually formed a new coalition to unite middle-class students at UW with the more working-class soldiers of Fort Lewis in opposition to the Vietnam War. A contingent of these students belonged to the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA) which, as discussed, viewed soldiers as a potentially important anti-war contingent.[14] Consequently, the origins of the GI Movement in the Pacific Northwest had more to do with the Old Left than they did the New, and this emphasises how GI activism had a prescient place in the thinking of Marxist groups even at this early stage.

[12] Ibid.
[13] ""GI's & the War" Conference A Big Success!", *Counterpoint*, Vol.1, No.1, 29 October 1968, p. 1.
[14] Parsons, *Dangerous Grounds* (2017), p. 36 and Fred Halstead, *Out Now!: A Participant's Account of the Movement in the U.S. Against the Vietnam War* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1991), pp. 206-207.

The organisation, fittingly dubbed the GI-Civilian Alliance for Peace (GI-CAP), began publishing a newspaper, *Counterpoint*.[15] Whilst carried out in conjunction with civilians, *Counterpoint* represented the first attempt at stimulating anti-war opinion on Fort Lewis, and in the military population of the Pacific Northwest more generally, through a periodical targeted at soldiers. Stephanie Coontz, leader of the YSA, and seemingly de facto leader of GI-CAP, however, recognised the difficult relationship between GIs who crawled through dirt, were subjected to torment from their officers, and were forced to undergo painful physical exercise, and students who read books and studied. She stated that anti-war GIs were unsure who to resent more, "the rich white kids who didn't have to go, who they saw yelling at them? Or, the army brass?" For the privileged GI-CAP students, the first task was to throw off the "press caricature of someone who thinks they're [soldiers] bad guys".[16] Coontz therefore emphasised that the "spitting myth" and the notion that there was an inherently antagonistic relationship between GIs and students were contemporary "caricature[s]" cultivated by the press. This acknowledgment recognises that at this early stage of military anti-war activism it was difficult to create a working relationship with soldiers. Not only did students have to demonstrate that they were not hostile towards GIs, but they had to overcome the privilege of education and the lack of jeopardy which came from the potentiality of being sent to Vietnam. For some soldiers, they succeeded, and GI-CAP represents the important role that civilians had in helping to organise the GI Movement, countering the supposed antagonism between the groups which has been furthered by the "spitting myth".

The embryonic activism of GI-CAP, the closeness of Fort Lewis to the nearby UW, and the proximity of Tacoma to the anti-war activism of the Bay Area led to the creation of a new GI coffeehouse in the city, the Shelter Half, in Autumn 1968. Parsons has claimed that, thanks to this combination, 'Tacoma was, more than any other military town in the country, primed for the creation of an antiwar coffeehouse'.[17] Once again, Fort Lewis was ideally situated as a hive for the growing GI Movement. The relationship between the Shelter Half and GI-CAP became symbiotic with the coffeehouse serving as a locale where GI-CAP members could congregate and organise, and the Shelter Half receiving custom as a result. Nominally too, the coffeehouse

[15] Jessie Kindig, 'Demilitarized Zone: The GI Antiwar Movement and the Reorganization of the Military at Fort Lewis during the Vietnam War' (Master's thesis, University of Washington, 2008), p. 16 and ""GI's and the War" Conference a Big Success!", *Counterpoint,* Vol.1, No.1, p. 1. Estimates of the attendance are provided by GI-CAP and, as such, may be embellished.
[16] Interview of Stephanie Coontz, interviewed by Jessie Kindig, 19 March 2008, quoted in Kindig, 'Demilitarized Zone' (2008), p. 18.
[17] Parsons, *Dangerous Grounds* (2017), pp. 35-36.

promoted GI-civilian cooperation; a shelter half was a piece of military equipment used by GIs whilst bivouacking which consisted of one half of a shelter that was useless unless joined with another, thus creating a complete tent.[18] The Shelter Half quickly became the bastion of the GI Movement in the Pacific Northwest. Due to the stringent restrictions on creating a paper on base, *Fed Up!* contributor Bruce MacLean claimed that if anti-war GIs wanted to create a newspaper or organise events, it always took place at the Shelter Half.[19]

By September 1969, however, the GI-civilian coalition suffered from many of the same issues which would characterise GI Movement activism in the area, namely the degree of autonomy which GIs should have in the anti-war movement. This month, therefore, GI-CAP amicably split and *Counterpoint* ceased to publish, with the soldiers voting to create their own GI-only organisation rather than maintaining this alliance. Resultingly, at both Lewis and McChord, they created a seemingly unsuccessful and short-lived chapter of the wider GI Movement organisation, GI's [sic] United Against the War in Vietnam. Thus, representing the first acknowledgment that there were GIs on McChord who were also attracted to the Movement.[20] Nonetheless, by late summer 1969, it was decided that the civilians of GI-CAP would concentrate on activism within the civilian anti-war movement and GIs would focus on the GI Movement, once again separating the two groups that had worked hard to form an alliance.

Still, civilian organisers at the Shelter Half continued cultivating GI anti-war opinion on Fort Lewis, and in October 1969 the coffeehouse became home to one of the more prevalent and long-lived GI newspapers on base, *Fed Up!* – a derisive play on words of the military term "re-up", meaning re-enlist.[21] This new paper was created with the help of one of the few national GI anti-war organisations, the American Servicemen's Union (ASU).[22] The ASU was created on 25 December 1967 by Private Andrew Stapp of Fort Sill (OK) and fourteen other GIs, each representing a different military base (though the specific bases are not disclosed), in an attempt to create a more equitable military.[23] Whilst the ASU spread quickly, developing chapters at bases across the United States and counting 4,500 card-carrying members by January 1969, its

[18] Ibid., p. 36.
[19] Interview of Bruce MacLean, Video 5, interviewed by Jesse Kindig and Maria Quintana, 13 July 2009, https://depts.washington.edu/antiwar/interview_maclean.shtml [accessed: 16//02/24].
[20] Sp. 4 Cuck Crowley and Sgt. Tom O'Brien, "GIS [sic] United Formed", *Counterpoint,* Vol.2, No.15, Sept. 20, 1969, pp. 1-2.
[21] Parsons, *Dangerous Grounds* (2017), p. 63.
[22] "Join ASU", *Fed Up!,* Vol.1, No.1, October 13, 1969, p. 5.
[23] Andy Stapp, *Up Against the Brass: The Amazing Story of the Fight to Unionize the United States Army* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970), pp. 88-100.

origins at Fort Lewis remain somewhat untraceable.[24] Stapp claims that by July 1968, ASU membership on Fort Lewis had 'mushroomed', leading a Colonel Reberry to issue an edict banning affiliation with the organisation.[25] Indeed, between October 1968 and October 1969, the Army identified at least seven ASU members on Fort Lewis, the third largest concentration of the organisation on any of the twenty largest bases on the CONUS.[26] ASU members were heavily involved in *Fed Up!* from the first edition, and by the second, the organisation had become the publishers of the paper.[27] This denotes a shift in anti-war engagement in the Pacific Northwest. Whilst the newspaper still relied on the Shelter Half for its off-base printing facilities and sympathetic staff who helped with distribution, a GI published paper had not been present in the Pacific Northwest until the arrival of *Fed Up!*.[28]

Dissent during this period evidently mushroomed on Fort Lewis. In 1971, the RAC study recorded nine individuals who had 'prepared material for publication' (the second most at any of the twenty largest bases in CONUS); thirteen 'member[s] [of a] protest group'; and thirty-two who had 'frequented [a] coffee house [sic]', the most of any of the other bases.[29] Evidently, anti-war feeling on Fort Lewis was considerable by the end of 1969; the Shelter Half was helping to stimulate this mood and became increasingly popular with the GI population. As a result, in an overreach of power, the military attempted to place the coffeehouse off-limits to military servicepeople, claiming that they judged the coffeehouse to be an area 'inimical to the good morale, order and discipline within the Armed Services'.[30] In response, the ASU organised a unique piece of guerilla theatre at UW to attract press attention to the coffeehouse's plight dubbed the "Trial of the Army".[31] Due to this publicity, and public pressure, the hearing

[24] Ibid., p. 176.
[25] Ibid., p. 141.
[26] Olson and Rae, *Determination of the Potential for Dissidence in the US Army: Volume I* (1971), p. 30. The actual number of ASU members is likely higher; however, the report only recorded the act considered to be most severe by each individual. In their rankings, membership to the ASU was considered to be the fifteenth most severe dissident activity out of nineteen. In this way, an individual would only be recorded in the study as a member of the ASU if they had not been reported as having committed any of the fourteen more severe acts, such as demonstrating in uniform, being a member of a communist organisation, and desertion. For the ranking of the severity of dissident acts, please see: Ibid, p. 27.
[27] "Join ASU", *Fed Up!,* Vol.1, No.1, October 13, 1969, p. 5 and *Fed Up!,* Vol.1, No.2, November 12, 1969, p. 2.
[28] Parsons, *Dangerous Grounds* (2017), p. 63.
[29] Olson and Rae, *Determination of the Potential for Dissidence in the US Army: Volume I* (1971), p. 30.
[30] Parsons, *Dangerous Grounds* (2017), p. 64.
[31] Taking place on 21 January 1970, the "Trial of the Army" consisted of a jury of eleven active-duty soldiers from Fort Lewis, one airman from McChord AFB, and one member of the Women's Army Corp (WAC) who listened to the testimonies of other GIs about every-day army life, stockade conditions, harassment, racism, and the war. See: "Sentenced to Death", *Fed Up!*, Vol.1, No.4, 26 January 1970, pp. 4-5.

to declare the Shelter Half off-limits was postponed indefinitely.[32] The military's censure and attempted prohibition of attendance at the coffeehouse speaks to the success of activism by the Shelter Half, the ASU, and *Fed Up!* during this period and the importance of continued collaboration of GIs and civilians in and around Fort Lewis.

The publication of *Fed Up!* and the lifetime of the ASU at Fort Lewis is, however, representative of the lack of stability and consistency for GI publications within the GI Movement. Although the ASU organ, *The Bond*, bragged that ninety percent of the GIs participating in the trial, and almost the entirety of the hundred soldiers and airmen in the audience, were members of the organisation, the ASU on Fort Lewis was soon to dissipate.[33] After just four consecutive issues of *Fed Up!*, the group ceased publishing and being included in any content of the newspaper.[34] This lack of a publishing organisation hurt the newspaper's consistency; having been published monthly during the ASU's command, *Fed Up!* became an irregular publication publishing just five times in 1971, once in 1972, and had a brief revival of two issues in 1973. The difficulties of *Fed Up!* are analogous to the wider issues of publishing GI underground newspapers. Despite an off-base support network in the Shelter Half, the newspaper failed to reliably produce issues because of military interference, and discordance about which organisation published the paper.[35]

Nonetheless, 1970 was a year of substantial anti-war feeling among the military population of Fort Lewis and several short-lived unit newsletters appeared on base, such as *B Troop News*

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[32] Parsons, *Dangerous Grounds* (2017), p. 78.
[33] "Seattle—The Verdict is Guilty, the Sentence: Death", *The Bond,* Vol.4, No.2, February 18, 1970, p. 1
[34] For the entire run of *Fed Up!*, please see: *Fed Up!*, "GI Press", Independent Voices Archive, JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/site/reveal-digital/independent-voices/fedup-27953485/?so=item_title_str_asc. The exception to this is *Fed Up!*'s Christmas Supplement which featured an article about Wade Carson, a prominent ASU member who had helped set up the Trial of the Army, a poem by an ASU member, and an advert stating, 'Join ASU'. See: "Two GIs in the Struggle: From Ft. Huachuca", *Fed Up!,* Christmas Supplement, p. 4; "Thoughts of an AWOL GI", *Fed Up!,* Christmas Supplement, p. 3 and Advert, *Fed Up!,* Christmas Supplement, p. 3.
On 9 March 1970, anti-war GIs on Fort Lewis split from the national ASU, replacing the organisation with their own group, the Independent Servicemen's Movement (ISM). This was done 'to remove the local from the narrow confines of one organisation', with ISM instead gravitating towards another national, but largely West Coast, militant organisation, Movement for a Democratic Military (MDM). An alliance between ISM and MDM was thought to be a positive one, with GIs aiming 'to build a strong and united GI Movement up and down the West Coast'. This move away from a well-established organisation with organising roots on base and national contacts was not a wise one. ISM was short-lived and was not mentioned again in *Fed Up!* with publishing of the paper being attributed only to the Shelter Half or *Fed Up!*. Please see: "ISM", *Fed Up!,* Vol.1, No.5, April 15, 1970, p. 1.
[35] For an example of the transfer of GIs involved in *Fed Up!* see the case of Wade Carson: "Two GIs in the Struggle: From Ft. Huachuca", *Fed Up!,* Christmas Supplement, p. 4.

and *1st of the Worst*.[36] These publications demonstrate the acuteness of anti-war opinion by this stage, penetrating not only the base at large, but even particular units. Compared with the large base-targeted papers such as the *Free Press* and *Fed Up!* these papers were less visually appealing, had a very non-professional aesthetic, and favoured news over images. They often utilised humour to mock their superiors and provide levity to their situations. However, because of their small scale, they were guaranteed to only publish for a short amount of time, limiting their effect. The narrow pool of potential publishers that commanders could repress via punishment, troop transfers, and discharges also meant that the publishers and readers of unit newsletters placed themselves at much greater risk than those involved in larger, more anonymous, papers.

Likewise, the GI Movement on Fort Lewis reached specific racial groups. In July 1970, the Amerindian group Hew-Kacaw-Na-Ya (which had formed in February) began publishing a short-lived newspaper, *Yah-Hoh*.[37] This paper meshed the issues of racism and the theft of Amerindian land by White people with documentation of specific instances of their repression in the Army, whilst also emphasising Amerindian pride.[38] By combining these matters, Amerindian GIs on Fort Lewis broadened conceptions within the GI Movement. Whilst perhaps not directly questioning the Movement, their activism ultimately raised questions concerning who the GI Movement was for, whether the GI press had space for non-White voices, and what subjects GI publications could write about. As Amerindians, these GIs felt that they lacked a space in other base newspapers where they could link their racial oppression at home to the subjugation of the Vietnamese abroad. *Yah-Hoh,* however, remained an anomaly and Bob Ostertag has claimed that the GI press was an overwhelmingly White endeavour with minority soldiers turning more to publications that dealt with their specific issues. For example, he claims that African Americans preferred the Black Panther Party publication, *The Black*

[36] Kindig, 'Demilitarized Zone' (2008), p. 16; *1st of the Worst,* Vol.1, No.1, May 1970; *B Troop News,* Vol.1, No.3, May 1970.
[37] The origins of *Yah-Hoh* are somewhat speculative. The GI Movement calendar dates the origins of the paper to July 1970. However, the University of Washington's GI Movement timeline states that the organisation Hew-Kacaw-Na-Ya formed in February 1970. It is therefore assumed that February is the date of origin for the organisation and July is the date of origin for the newspaper. "GI Movement Calendar" (1972), "GI Press", Independent Voices Archive, JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.28037381, p. 7 and "GI Movement Timeline 1965-1973", via: Pacific Northwest Antiwar and Radical History Project, University of Washington, https://depts.washington.edu/antiwar/gi_timeline.shtml [accessed: 23/10/24].
[38] *Yah-Hoh,* Autumn 1970, GI Press Collection, 1964-1977, *Wisconsin Historical Society,* pp. 1-5. https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/p15932coll8/id/53024/rec/1 [accessed: 15 May 2024]. This is the only remaining edition available of *Yah-Hoh* and it is therefore difficult to determine how long the paper published for.

Panther, over the GI press.[39] Nevertheless, *Yah-Hoh* symbolises that there were also a minority of non-White GIs who were involved with the GI press and likely expanded the type and number of subjects covered by GI publications, even if perhaps for only a short-lived period.

By 1971, activism on Fort Lewis had spread into the surrounding military community in the Pacific Northwest. In inland Washington the appearance of two newsletters at Fairchild Air Force Base (AFB), close to the nearby city of Spokane, exemplified this development. The first of these newsletters, *Sacstrated*, emerged in January 1971 whilst the latter, *Co-Ambulation*, arrived in August.[40] In March 1971, Bremerton Naval Yard sailors began publishing *The Puget Sound Sound Off,* a Navy-specific paper.[41] It is crucial to note that by 1971 these publications were evolving from the Air Force and the Navy rather than the Army, as had previously been the case. As discussed in the previous chapter, the growth in responsibility of the Navy and Air Force throughout the war bred greater discontent among the rank-and-file of these branches and these publications are therefore demonstrative of the spread of the GI Movement.[42]

Accompanying activism in non-draftee branches of the military was a not insignificant amount of anti-war sentiment in the officer class. Whilst GIs were the foot soldiers of the war, officers gave the orders. The dissent of these men demonstrates that anti-war sentiment was climbing up the chain of command. Whilst they were still sometimes men who were drafted and had been selected to go to Officer Candidate School, these men outranked non-commissioned officers and thus were free from the trivial repression and petty abuse that piqued low-ranking enlisted men (EM). This made anti-war activism somewhat easier. In June 1971, *Sacstrated* announced the creation of a Concerned Officers Movement (COM) chapter at Fairchild, and *Co-Ambulation*, which proudly announced themselves as the 'newsletter of the Concerned Officer-Airman Movement', originated a month later.[43] The existence of an anti-war officers'

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[39] Ostertag, *People's Movements, People's Press* (2006), pp. 145-146.
[40] *Sacstrated*, Vol.1, No.1, January 1971, "GI Press", Independent Voices Archive, JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/site/reveal-digital/independent-voices/sacstrated-27953784/?so=item_title_str_asc and *Co-Ambulation*, Vol.1, No.1, August 1971, "GI Press", Independent Voices Archive, JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/site/reveal-digital/independent-voices/co-ambulation-27953410/?so=item_title_str_asc
[41] *The Puget Sound Sound Off*, Vol.1, No.1, 23 March 1971. This paper was, however, short-lived and only published between March and July 1971. There is some inconsistency within the *Free Press* whether the Coalition is the GI-*Airman*-Sailor Coalition or GI-*Airmen*-Sailor Coalition. For the purposes of consistency and the fact that the *Free Press* most often used this version, this thesis shall refer to the group as the GI-Airmen-Sailor Coalition.
[42] Richard Moser, *The New Winter Soldiers: GI and Veteran Dissent During the Vietnam Era* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996), p. 86.
[43] "COM Chapter Formed", *Sacstrated*, Vol.1, No.4, June 1971, p. 8 and *Co-Ambulation,* Vol.1, No.1, August 1971, p. 1.

group at these smaller bases demonstrates the penetration of anti-war opinion beyond regular draftees at large military institutions and to those who held prominent positions within the military yet disagreed with the war. Indeed, in December 1970, the *Free Press* reported that COM had 300 members nationwide and the next month announced that a chapter was being set up to service the anti-war opinion of officers on Fort Lewis, McChord AFB, Bremerton Naval Yard, and Fort Lawton.[44] The officer's organisation evidently had a strong support base in the Pacific Northwest due to the high number of military institutions in the area.

Throughout its lifespan, the *Free Press* had two different officers involved in the paper, First Lieutenant Jim Klimaski and First Lieutenant Henry Valenti.[45] Both men were drafted into the Army but were selected to attend Officer Candidate School. Klimaski attended the Special Warfare School at Fort Bragg (NC) working on psychological operations, whilst Valenti served thirteen months as the leader of a reconnaissance platoon in Korea, before returning to Fort Lewis.[46] Although both men were lieutenants, and therefore somewhat protected from harassment, officers, as expected, were held to a higher standard than enlisted men. As Hillman notes, 'an officer who seemed to take advantage of his military rank to challenge American policies was a threat to the political legitimacy of the American armed forces' and therefore likely to receive a court-martial.[47] As high-profile representatives of the armed forces, officers' behaviour was crucial to maintaining an image of a well-functioning, respectable military and by openly protesting the Vietnam War, whilst somewhat easier for them than the regular draftees, Klimaski and Valenti risked much. In Klimaski's case, according to the *Free Press,* he was asked to leave the Army because of his anti-war views, and they moved to 'elimination action' to remove him.[48] This attempt demonstrates the peculiar position that dissenting officers placed the military in. A criminal trial against an officer could quickly turn into an extremely public event – especially to the savvy anti-war protester who could mobilise civilian support for their case – which would undermine the military's image of a unified force and expose the

[44] "Officer Opposition Grows", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.5, December 1970, p. 7 and "COM Chapter Here", *LMFP,* Vol.2, No.1, January 1971, p. 7.
[45] Interview of Jim Klimaski, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 5 October 2022 and Interview of Henry Valenti, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 4 October 2022.
[46] Interview of Jim Klimaski, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 5 October 2022; interview of Henry Valenti, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 4 October 2022; and "Area Candidate: J. Klimaski Runs on People's Party Plank", *The Belleville Times*, 7 September 1972, p. 14.
[47] Elizabeth Lutes Hillman, *Defending America: Military Culture and the Cold War Court-Martial* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 112.
[48] "Officer Opposition Grows", *LMFP,* Vol.2, No.6, June 1971, p. 6.

organisation's troubles to the civilian population.[49] As with their prosecution of delinquent and anti-war GIs, the Army increasingly turned to administrative discharges – often discharges of poor calibre – in order to jettison officers like Klimaski in the most private way possible.[50] Nonetheless, as prominent members of the military, relatively high-up in the chain of command, anti-war officers represented some of the most powerful allies of enlisted men.

Anti-war organising in the Pacific Northwest before the *Free Press* can therefore most aptly be described as turbulent. Despite the considerable amount of activism, the GI Movement was intermittent, with newsletters and small papers disappearing almost as quickly as they arrived, and the largest GI paper in the area, *Fed Up!*, whilst it did not perish the way that these smaller papers did, published only sporadically throughout its existence. Still, there was much activity in the area purely because Fort Lewis and McChord AFB were so aptly situated. Lewis' roles as an Overseas Replacement Station and Basic Training post ensured a constant rotation of new draftees on base which were largely pulled from the youth of the West Coast – more liable to take up an anti-war position according to the RAC study. In turn, this sentiment was nurtured by the connection of the base to the large UW to the north and a hub of pre-made anti-war and progressive activists from the Bay Area to the south. The work of previous anti-war groups in establishing an interest in anti-war activism on Fort Lewis, especially with the creation of the Shelter Half as a designated anti-war space, laid the groundwork for the formation of a new anti-war collective in the area.

Due to the necessary furtiveness of GI activists, establishing a full history of a GI newspaper is difficult. The anonymity of articles; secrecy concerning organizing members' names and ranks; the lack of explanation around the paper's origins, distribution, funding; the assumed reader knowledge of highly specific locations, dates, activities; and military and "Sixties" jargon are all difficulties that the historian of the GI Movement must overcome. Nevertheless, in order to gain an understanding of the origins of the *Free Press*, every effort has been made to create a history of the newspaper.

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[49] Hillman, *Defending America* (2005), pp. 109-114.

[50] There are five different forms of discharge depending on a soldier's quality of service. The type of discharge that a GI receives can severely affect their job prospects and entitlement to military benefits. For example, if they receive a Bad Conduct Discharge, a veteran must disclose this on a job application, and it is likely to go against him in a professional environment. The types of discharge are discussed in Chapter 4. In the end, Klimaski reached his Expiration – Term of Service (ETS) before the Army could discharge him so it appears that he received an Honorable Discharge. Interview of Jim Klimaski, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 5 October 2022.

As discussed, the creation of the *Free Press* was not an aberration and was part of the growing GI Movement in the area. In August 1970, the first copy of what was then called the *Fort Lewis Free Press* emerged on base (renamed as the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* by September), originally published by an organisation called GI's [sic] United.[51] According to *Free Press* contributor, Terry Irvin, the newspaper was set up by First Lieutenant Jim Klimaski.[52] Klimaski had a history of anti-war agitation within the military, having worked on the GI newspaper, *Bragg Briefs*, at Fort Bragg (NC) as a member of the organisation GI's [sic] United (which he seemingly attempted to recreate at Fort Lewis).[53] Due to his outspoken anti-war and anti-military position, which he vocalised in a number of newspaper interviews in "straight" press publications, as well as an eventual unsuccessful application for Conscientious Objector (CO) status, Klimaski was removed from Bragg and sent to Fort Lewis in May 1970.[54] The *Bragg Briefs* article documenting Klimaski's departure placed particular emphasis on his political persuasion as a 'McCarthyite' (a supporter of anti-war Senator Eugene McCarthy in the 1968 Democratic presidential campaign, rather than a follower of the fervent anti-communist Republican senator Joseph McCarthy), stressing his anti-war position was liberal rather than radical.[55] Any publication or organisation headed by Klimaski was therefore likely to approach the war in much the same way, i.e. by focusing on the conflict as a mistake, as "immoral", or even as unwinnable. Although it would be incorrect to assume that Klimaski was the only catalyst for the creation of a new paper on Fort Lewis, Rowland does identify him as "the main force" for this new group of GIs on base.[56] The article closed by saying: 'Jim has already begun anti-war activities at Ft Lewis'.[57]

Indeed, he had, and the first edition of what would become the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* appeared just a month into his tenure at Fort Lewis. Coincidentally, in May 1969, an anti-war collective had congregated in Monterey, California, close to Fort Ord, forming an organisation

[51] *Fort Lewis Free Press,* Vol.1, No.1, August 1970. Whether this was the same chapter of GI's [sic] United that involved the soldiers who left GI-CAP or a new chapter created by Klimaski (who had been a member of the Fort Bragg chapter) is indeterminable.
[52] Interview of Terry Irvin, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 5 October 2022.
[53] Interview of Jim Klimaski, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 5 October 2022 and "Klimaski shipped", *Bragg Briefs*, Vol.3, No.4, June 1970, p. 3.
[54] "Klimaski shipped", *Bragg Briefs*, Vol.3, No.4, June 1970, p. 3 and Interview of Jim Klimaski, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 5 October 2022.
[55] "Klimaski shipped", *Bragg Briefs*, Vol.3, No.4, June 1970, p. 3.
[56] Interview of Randy Rowland, Video 14, interviewed by Jessie Kindig and Steve Beda, 9 September 2008, https://depts.washington.edu/antiwar/interview_rowland.shtml [accessed: 21/02/24].
[57] "Klimaski shipped", *Bragg Briefs*, Vol.3, No.4, June 1970, p. 3.

called the West Coast Counseling Service, later renamed to the Pacific Counseling Service (PCS). This group was designed to provide counselling for anti-war GIs and soldiers fighting legal battles with the military justice system.[58] Coinciding with Klimaski's arrival at Fort Lewis around June 1970, PCS sent a small group consisting of a priest, a teacher, and Randy Rowland (who had just finished serving his year and a half sentence for his role in the Presidio Mutiny) to Tacoma, opening up an office in a retail area called Court C in Spring 1970.[59] It was not long before the two groups collaborated and PCS helped GIs to create the *Free Press.*

By the second edition, editors had abandoned the moniker *Fort Lewis Free Press* in favour of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, a title which had much symbolic significance.[60] The inclusion of McChord AFB in the title of the paper demonstrates the publishers' inclusive conception of the GI Movement as not simply the reserve of Army soldiers (GI traditionally referred to members of the Army), but as a movement of all military personnel. With the continuation of Vietnamization, this cross-branch approach demonstrates the desire of the *Free Press* to harness the growing GI Movement within the Air Force. The name change also derived from the decision by Klimaski and other soldiers of Fort Lewis to ally with the airmen of McChord AFB, forming the GI-Airmen Coalition (expanded to the GI-Airmen-Sailor Coalition by December 1970 when they united with sailors from Bremerton Naval Yard), which published the *Free Press* along with the help and support of PCS.[61] This cross-branch and base aspect distinguishes the *Free Press* among many other GI publications. The largest GI newspapers, such as *Bragg Briefs* (Fort Bragg, NC), *FTA* (Fort Knox, KY), and *Fatigue Press* (Fort Hood, TX), were all published solely on Army bases, therefore lacking this inter-branch dynamic. Whilst this may simply have been a product of geography, with Fort Lewis and McChord AFB

[58] "Fact Sheet On Pacific Counseling Service", n.d., GI Press Collection, 1964-1977, *Wisconsin Historical Society*, p. 1 https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/p15932coll8/id/80886/rec/1 [accessed: 07/10/24]; Pamphlet, "Pacific Counseling Service", n.d., GI Press Collection, 1964-1977, *Wisconsin Historical Society*, p. 5 https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/p15932coll8/id/55051/rec/1 [accessed: 07/10/24]; Interview of Randy Rowland, Video 13, interviewed by Jessie Kindig and Steve Beda, 9 September 2008, https://depts.washington.edu/antiwar/interview_rowland.shtml [accessed: 16/02/24].

[59] Interview of Randy Rowland, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 10 October 2022 and Interview of Randy Rowland, Video 14, interviewed by Jessie Kindig and Steve Beda, 9 September 2008.
The exact opening date of the PCS office in Tacoma is unknown, yet it appears that it was between March-May 1970. "Fact Sheet On Pacific Counseling Service", n.d., p. 1.

[60] *LMFP,* Vol.1, No.2, September 1970.

[61] Ibid.; *LMFP,* Vol.1, No.3, October 1970; *LMFP,* Vol.1, No.4, November 1970; and *LMFP,* Vol.1, No.5, December 1970. Whilst the GIs of the GI-Airmen Coalition allied with the sailors at Bremerton there is not much discussion of Bremerton within the newspaper. This is perhaps because Bremerton Naval Yard is not as close as Lewis and McChord were, and it was therefore difficult to attract sailors into the Coalition. By the time the *Free Press* was taken over by the GI Alliance, Bremerton was not discussed as a post which the paper catered to.

occupying neighbouring territory, the coalition of servicemen between the two bases is distinct. The arrival of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* therefore represents a desire among GI Movement activists to promote cross-branch dissent, and they placed this at the forefront of their messaging.

The title of the paper also borrowed from the burgeoning underground newspapers that circulated among the complicated milieu of youth, radicals, New Leftists, and counterculturalists that arose in the 1960s. In particular, it shared the name of the *Los Angeles Free Press* (often referred to as *Freep* – the same term that the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* used to identify itself), 'widely considered to be the youth movement's first underground newspaper'. This paper, created in opposition to the liberal nature of the popular youth newspaper *Village Voice*, reported on the local "underground" of Los Angeles. According to the paper's creator Art Kunkin, it was designed to be 'not only political, but cultural as well'.[62] Unlike their military counterparts, civilian underground newspapers such as *Freep* were not illegal.[63] Whilst many authors and publishers of the papers were harassed by local and federal authorities, their actions were largely legitimate, although teetering on the obscene. Their subterranean moniker originated from their target audience being those who rejected contemporary society, such as artists, musicians, and dissenters of various kinds, and who were thus "underground".[64] Another publication which utilised the same title was the *Temple Free Press.* Dissatisfied with Temple University's censorship of the campus newspaper, *Temple University Press*, the growing organised Left (both New and Old) at the university created the *Free Press*.[65] The title, in this case, was much more literal. The *Temple Free Press* operated as an organ free from the auspices of the university which were, in the eyes of student protesters, infringing on their First Amendment rights to a free press by censoring what they could write.

Editors of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, therefore borrowed the newspaper's title from other popular cultural and political "underground" publications in the United States. The term "free press" indicated the authors' position outside of the "Establishment", whether that was the military, the university, or contemporary social standards. In this way, they were "free" from

[62] John McMillian, *Smoking Typewriters: The Sixties Underground Press and the Rise of Alternative Media in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 37-40.
[63] The illegality of GI newspapers is discussed in Chapter 4.
[64] McMillian, *Smoking Typewriters* (2011), p. 6.
[65] Paul Lyons, *The People of This Generation: The Rise and Fall of the New Left in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2003), p. 105.

the views and institutions that made up the status quo, primarily identified in this period as those who supported the Vietnam War. Likewise, in the cases of all three (*Los Angeles*, *Temple,* and *Lewis-McChord) Free Presses*, their titles emphasised a localness and sense of community. They were not outside commentators; they occupied, lived, and organised in the communities that they documented. In this sense, free presses were democratic, both in their defence of First Amendment guarantees and in their dedication to covering the marginalised voices of a community. This commitment did, however, result in them being inherently partisan and antithetical to the status quo.

Whilst *Fed Up!* floundered, publishing just three editions throughout 1970, the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* promptly began publishing a paper monthly from August onwards.[66] Indeed, by the end of that year, the *Free Press* had published as many editions as *Fed Up!* despite having functioned for seven months less.[67] In this sense, the *Free Press* originated out of the nadir of activism left by *Fed Up!* and the Shelter Half. However, it was not the case that the *Free Press* simply replaced *Fed Up!*. Rowland, whilst acknowledging that GI publications went through peaks and troughs, claimed that this new contingent of GIs struck out on their own because their "politics were a little different" to those of groups at the coffeehouse.[68] Michael Royce, who worked in supply at Fort Lewis during this period, expanded on this, claiming that whilst *Fed Up!*'s politics were rebellious, harbouring a "Fuck the Army attitude", the approach of the *Free Press* was "trying to build an actual movement of GIs".[69] In this sense, whilst *Fed Up!* focused more on contumacy, the *Free Press* attempted to draw rebellion and countercultural rejection of authority into a movement to make substantive change in the military. In creating the *Free Press*, editors of the newspaper signalled a desire to change anti-war activism on Lewis and McChord. This was also physically represented by the *Free Press*'

[66] The only month that the *Free Press* did not publish in was July 1972. However, this was pre-planned as the paper was in a process of re-organisation and moving into an office. "On Leave", *LMFP,* Vol.4, No.5, May 1972, p. 7. Similarly, there are two editions of the *Free Press* which are dated as March 1972. Instead of having published two full editions in one month (which would be irregular), it appears that the April 1972 edition has been mislabelled as March 1972.

[67] For editions of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* published in 1970, please see: *Fort Lewis Free Press,* Vol.1, No.1, August 1970; *LMFP,* Vol.1, No.2, September 1970; *LMFP,* Vol.1, No.3, October 1970; *LMFP,* Vol.1, No.4, November 1970; *LMFP,* Vol.1, No.5, December 1970. For editions of *Fed Up!* published in 1970, please see: *Fed Up!*, Vol.1, No.3, January 16, 1970; *Fed Up!*, Vol.1, No.4, February 26, 1970; *Fed Up!*, Vol.1, No.5, April 15, 1970; *Fed Up!*, Vol.1, No.6, n.d.; *Fed Up!*, December 1970.

[68] Interview of Randy Rowland, Video 15, interviewed by Jessie Kindig and Steve Beda, 9 September 2008, https://depts.washington.edu/antiwar/interview_rowland.shtml [accessed: 16/02/24].

[69] Interview transcript, interview of Michael Royce, interviewed by Beula Robb, "Winning the Hearts and Minds of Fort Lewis and McChord GIs during the Vietnam War", via: Tacoma Community History Project, pp. 44-46, https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/tacomacomm/id/247 [accessed: 28/02/24].

separation from the Shelter Half, which, as discussed previously, was the main focal point of anti-war activism in the area thus far. Instead, Rowland claims that, with the help of a sympathetic chaplain, *Free Press* staff used the mimeograph machines of the nearby University of Puget Sound to create the paper.[70] The arrival of the *Free Press* therefore marked a break from the typical logistics of local anti-war activism.

Figure 1: Photograph, Publishers of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* and members of the Pacific Counseling Service in March 1971.
From left to right: Lieutenant Jim Klimaski, Paul Clement, Mark Sullivan (a Catholic priest), Terry Irvin, Annie Gelow, Randy Rowland, and Lieutenant Henry Valenti.
Photograph courtesy of Randy Rowland.

As *Free Press* articles were almost always unsigned, there would not normally be an opportunity to study the types of GIs who were involved in this separation from *Fed Up!* and the Shelter Half. Whilst the paper notes that the GI-Airmen Coalition formed from 'a nucleus of conscientious objectors at Ft. Lewis, McChord AFB and Madigan [the Army hospital located on Fort Lewis]' any further detail on the types of soldiers who protested the war is lacking.[71]

[70] Interview of Randy Rowland, Video 15, interviewed by Jessie Kindig and Steve Beda, 9 September 2008.
[71] "GI-Airman Coalition Defines Direction", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 1.

However, just as he had in North Carolina, Klimaski courted the civilian press during his tenure at Fort Lewis, providing some insight into the constituents of the newspaper. In November 1970, he and three unnamed servicemen were interviewed for the *Tacoma News Tribune* and the article provides some important information on those involved in the foundation of the *Free Press*. It noted that whilst 'some [members] are conscientious objectors (COs), others are objectors to many of the things some people consider wrong with the United States and the armed services'. Whilst Klimaski himself was an officer and had entered the military through the Reserve Officer Training Corps, the three others were more representative of the typical GI dissident. All were draftees, two were deeply committed Christians (one Catholic), and the other was a 'former National Science Foundation Scholar' who was infatuated with Zen Buddhism.[72] However, it was not these varying spiritual backgrounds that coalesced this group of individuals. The author of the article, Bob Boxberger, purported that the uniting factor between the GIs was youth: '[a]ll of them are members of a generation brought up on the instant information of world-wide communication, and they're skeptical of leadership so frequently shown to be venal or bungling.'[73]

Whilst youth was one contributing factor to this alliance, it could not be the only cause. If this was the case, much larger participation in GI anti-war groups than 10-15 GIs would be expected. Among the seven anti-war GIs interviewed (six of whom were involved in the publishing of the *Free Press*) only education and class were factors shared by almost all participants. All participants had been to college prior to their service in the military, and most originated from middle or upper-middle-class backgrounds, making them consistent with the "type" of GI dissident created by the RAC. Still, the majority of educated, middle-class GIs did not openly oppose the war, and it is still difficult to deduce one reason why these particular soldiers broke from the majority of GIs on Lewis and McChord to form the GI-Airmen-Sailor Coalition. The reason was seemingly not dedication to one particular political approach. Emphasising the democratic nature of the Coalition, Klimaski said: '[w]e're non-violent, but there are others who may think that there is something in violence, and they have a voice here [in the *Free Press*] too.'[74] The group was designed to be a "united front" of anti-war opinion, favouring a broad approach and political tolerance over dogma and exclusion. At its foundation

[72] Bob Boxberger, "Servicemen's Paper Attacks Wrongs as Editors See Them: They Pay for It", *The Tacoma News Tribune and Sunday Ledger* [*TNT*], 15 November 1970, p. 11, *Newspapers.com,* [accessed: 25 January 2023.]
[73] Ibid., p. 11.
[74] Ibid., p. 11.

then, the *Free Press* reflected the ultra-democracy of the early student Left. It was perhaps exactly this lack of exclusion which brought these men together, as membership in the Coalition clearly did not rely on political affiliation or even perspective on the war (other than being oppositional).

As such, the views of the *Free Press* were not always uniform, something that was not unusual in GI publications. For example, former *Aboveground* editor Harry W. Haines has commented that a combination of different 'factions', including civil libertarians, radicals, a group of United States Servicemen's Fund (USSF) organisers – a number of whom were part of the women's liberation movement – and those more counterculturally orientated, worked on his GI paper. In the spirit of the student Left, modelled on the example of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), participation in *Aboveground* functioned on the premise of democratic participation, governed by group consensus. This meant that these different factions were all involved in the paper, resulting in the printing of articles which purported ideas that the founders of the paper sometimes outright disagreed with.[75]

It is much more difficult to categorise the approach of the *Free Press*. Rowland called the publication of the paper a "group process" and said that "things were pretty informal. There were no elected or titled leaders, not even a named editor of the paper. Hell, most of the time we didn't even sign the articles we wrote".[76] These examples illustrate the disparate approaches to protest at different bases within the GI Movement. Whilst *Aboveground* was a concerted New Left experiment in participatory democracy, the *Free Press* did not operate under one prescriptive process, such as majority rule, but involved freewheeling democratic participation in which ideas were shared, discussed, and later published. This often had the effect of diffusing GI opinion across several different issues. Therefore, as will be demonstrated in the following chapters, there was a wide array of different, and sometimes contradictory, approaches to GI and social protest in the early 1970s within the *Lewis-McChord Free Press.*

Nonetheless, despite this diffusion of ideas, the *Free Press* was a popular publication on base. Writing in February 1971, the paper's editors stated that ten thousand copies of the newspaper

[75] Haines, 'Soldiers Against the Vietnam War', in *Insider Histories of the Vietnam Era Underground Press* (2012), pp. 2-4.
[76] Interview of Randy Rowland, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 10 October 2022 and Questionnaire, Randy Rowland, 9 May 2024.

were distributed in January alone, with seven thousand editions of *Fed Up!* also being published. 'Almost all' of which 'get into the hands of military personnel and get passed around', they boasted.[77] The figure of ten thousand copies is corroborated by *Free Press* editors Michael Royce and Randy Rowland, with Rowland recalling that this was the upper limit of the number of newspapers published each month and it was not exceeded.[78] Due to the clandestine nature of the underground press, newspapers were not always given out in return for money and often GIs would stash them around base, on bunks, or in areas where lots of soldiers congregated for troops to pick up and read.[79] Therefore, the specific number of GIs that read a copy of the *Free Press* is indeterminable. It is possible that bundles of newspapers were confiscated by Military Police and Army officers, or even that one newspaper was passed around a whole unit of GIs. The figure of ten thousand is therefore how many papers the editors published and distributed, the actual readership of the newspaper could have been either significantly lower or higher than this, simply dependent on whether a sympathetic soldier or member of "the Brass" found the stashed newspapers first. Nonetheless, it is evident that a substantial number of *Free Press*' were printed each month, evidencing a high demand for the publication, and by at least January 1971, the paper had eclipsed *Fed Up!* as the dominant GI periodical on Lewis and McChord.

The exact origins of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* therefore remain somewhat confusing and mysterious (for a visual guide to the chronology of the *Free Press* please see Appendix B). Whilst Klimaski viewed the paper and the GI-Airmen-Sailor Coalition as an open forum which attracted all anti-war GIs, Rowland and Royce argue that there were also political differences between this new paper and the groups at the Shelter Half. This indicates a specifically different approach by the *Free Press* which neither former editors elaborated on. Nonetheless, this move away from the coffeehouse denotes one of the most important aspects of the *Free Press*. Whilst other soldiers had previously relied on the Shelter Half for publishing space and resources, the Coalition, with the help of PCS, departed from these norms, forming their own independent GI publication. It is also evident that the publication, at least during this stage, was heavily inspired by the New Left, especially in terms of the paper's name, but also in its freewheeling approach

[77] "Get It On", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.2, February 1971, p. 1.
[78] Interview of Randy Rowland, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 10 October 2022 and Interview of Michael Royce, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 7 October 2022.
[79] Interview of Randy Rowland, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 10 October.

to protest. Much like the New Left's evolution into Marxism, this liberal approach would not last.

Figure 2: Photograph, Publishers of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* and members of the Pacific Counseling Service, March 1971.
(From left to right)
Back Row: Paul Clement, Terry Irvin, unnamed, unnamed, Annie Gelow.
Front Row: Lieutenant Jim Klimaski, unnamed, Lieutenant Henry Valenti, Mark Sullivan (a Catholic Priest) and Randy Rowland.
Photograph courtesy of Randy Rowland.[80]

Having been the lynchpin and creator of the newspaper, Klimaski's departure from the Army catalysed a change for the *Lewis-McChord Free Press.* Upon his discharge he placed responsibility for the paper onto his friend, and fellow editor, Private Terry Irvin. As a white, middle-class Catholic from Illinois, who had previously spent time organising within the civilian anti-war movement at Lincoln College, Irvin conformed exactly to the "type" of dissident created by the RAC. Irvin first met Klimaski and other anti-war GIs when, after struggling to integrate within the military, he contacted PCS and Klimaski and another former

[80] Of those pictured, Clement, Irvin, the gentleman on the back row wearing the hat, Klimaski, and Valenti were all active-duty servicemen. Rowland was a veteran by this point, having served his sentence in Fort Leavenworth for his role in the Presidio Mutiny. All individuals in this image were identified by Rowland himself.

GI, Dale Borgeson, picked him up on his 21st birthday and took him out for drinks.[81] His association with anti-war civilians whilst in the military led him to meeting a new collection of soldiers at the Shelter Half called the GI Alliance, which had formed in February 1971 as an independent collective.[82] This friendship would soon develop into a working relationship, with Irvin's publication and the Alliance merging.

Whilst anti-war GI groups normally functioned to publish an underground newspaper in which they could espouse views they could not voice on base, the GIA did not. Instead, the organisation had been holding 'rap sessions' on Fort Lewis at the Pioneer Service Club to discuss GI problems and stimulate anti-war opinion on base.[83] These meetings proved popular enough that both Fort Lewis Commander General, General Bolling and Provost Marshal Berry attended and tried to disrupt the gatherings.[84] From their inception, the Alliance was interested in a disparate set of progressive issues, supporting the People's Peace Treaty (a grassroots attempt by students, supported by other anti-war organisations, to create a peace settlement in Vietnam by circumventing 'the exclusiveness of government negotiations by generating a popular definition of peace terms'); supporting a strike against 'scab' (non-union) lettuce on base; trying to involve soldiers of the Women's Army Corps (WACs) and personnel of the Women's Air Force (WAFs) more greatly in the GI Movement; and discussing issues such as women's liberation, drugs, and Indian fishing rights.[85]

Despite existing since February, the Alliance only announced its formation in March 1971, in *Fed Up!*. In the style of the Port Huron Statement, they declared: '[w]e are from the community of servicemen and women dedicated to the principles of freedom and resistance to illegitimate authority, thrust not only on us in the military, but on all oppressed people of the world.'[86] Within this small declaration, the GIA set themselves apart from other GI groups on base. They established their pluralistic approach to GI resistance, emphasising female contribution as well as a dedication to broadening their activism to not just GIs but all groups who were being oppressed by imperialism and capitalism, at home and abroad. Indeed, under the influence of

[81] Interview of Terry Irvin, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 5 October 2022.
[82] Ibid. and "Struggle for Freedom", *LMFP,* Vol.3, No.1, July 1971, p. 5.
[83] "Struggle for Freedom", *LMFP,* Vol.3, No.1, July 1971, p. 5. It is assumed that the Pioneer Service Club was the Enlisted Men's club/bar on Fort Lewis.
[84] Ibid., p. 5.
[85] "Shelter Half", *GI News & Discussion Bulletin,* Issue 2, February 1971, pp. 7-8. For more information on the People's Peace Treaty see: Charles DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal,* with Charles Chatfield, assisting author (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990), pp. 295-312. Quotation from p. 312.
[86] "Birth of G.I.A", *Fed Up!,* Vol.2, No.1, March 1971, p. 1.

the Alliance, *Fed Up!* became increasingly more radical, criticising capitalism, celebrating socialism, supporting a revolution, discouraging drug use as a disassociation tool, encouraging the inclusion of women, particularly WACs, WAFs, and dependents (those who rely on members of the military for their income, i.e. GI wives or children), in the GI Movement, and criticising landlords.[87] This announcement would have increased importance for the changing political approach of the *Free Press* under the Alliance's later stewardship.

Hinted at in their *Fed Up!* announcement, the Alliance were somewhat different to other GI Movement groups with regards to their membership. The group were at pains to point out that they were 'from the community of servicemen and women' of Fort Lewis and McChord.[88] In an informative piece in *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin*, the Alliance emphasised that from its inception the group was 'composed of EMs [enlisted men] from Fort Lewis and McChord, WACs and GI wives'.[89] The organisation's composition, therefore, was military-only (as GI wives were considered to be a military group as many depended on the institution for their livelihood). At the Shelter Half during this period, there was discord between GIs (presumably the Alliance) and civilians because of their class differences.[90] The problem which servicemen on Lewis and McChord faced when trying to organise within the anti-war movement, they said, was 'blatantly one of classism' in which the 'middle-upper class people' would dominate, leaving 'the lower class people doing most of the work'. As civilian activists tended to come

[87] For criticisms of capitalism, please see: "U$ Oil", *Fed Up!,* Vol.2, No.4, 18 June 1971, p. 4 and "Democracy?", *Fed Up!,* Vol.2, No.4, 18 June 1971, p. 4 and 11. For a celebration of socialism, please see: "Democracy?", *Fed Up!,* Vol.2, No.4, 18 June, 1971, p. 4. For articles which hint at or suggest support for a revolution, please see: "Jail Break(ers)", *Fed Up!,* Vol.2, No.5, 18 June 1971, p. 11; "The People's Army", *Fed Up!,* Vol.2, No.5, 18 June 1971, p. 6; "Democracy?", *Fed Up!,* Vol.2, No.4, 18 June 1971, p. 4 and 11; Quote by Abraham Lincoln, *Fed Up!,* Vol.2, No.4, 18 June, 1971, p. 1; A Call to Action !!! (Dope or Revolution)", *Fed Up!,* Vol.2, No.1, March 1971, p. 9; Win or Lose", *Fed Up!,* Vol.2, No.1, March 1971, p. 9; "SPD Hassles", *Fed Up!*, Vol.2, No.1, March 1971, p. 10; and "I Am My Brother's Keeper", *Fed Up!*, Vol.2, No.1, March 1971, p. 9. For criticisms of drug use, please see: "A Call to Action !!! (Dope or Revolution)", *Fed Up!,* Vol.2, No.1, March 1971, p. 9; "Win or Lose", *Fed Up!,* Vol.2, No.1, March 1971, p. 9; and "Drug Center…. A Help or A Bust?", *Fed Up!,* Vol.2, No.3, 28 April 1971, p. 6. For articles which focus on women, the issues faced by dependents and GI wives, and urge for the inclusion of women into the GI Movement, please see: "Uncle Sam Wants You, Baby", *Fed Up!,* Vol.2, No.1, March 1971, pp. 7-8; "Women in the Struggle", *Fed Up!,* Vol.2, No.1, March 1971, p. 7; "Hands that Rock Cradles Can Also Cradle Rocks", *Fed Up!,* Vol.2, No.1, March 1971, pp. 6-7; "Fed Up Programme", *Fed Up!,* Vol.2, No.1, March 1971, p. 2; "Women of Vietnam", *Fed Up!,* Vol.2, No.2, 1 April 1971, pp. 6-7; "Abortions", *Fed Up!,* Vol.2, No.2, 1 April, 1971, p. 7; and "Free Day Care If", *Fed Up!,* Vol.2, No.5, 18 June, 1971, p. 9. For articles which criticise landlords, please see: "Basic Necessities of Life", *Fed Up!,* Vol.2, No.3, 28 April 1971, p. 3 and ""Dear Landlord"", *Fed Up!,* Vol.2, No.5, 18 June 1971, p. 8.

[88] "Birth of G.I.A", *Fed Up!,* Vol.2, No.1, March 1971, p. 1. Emphasis added.

[89] "Shelter Half", *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin,* Issue 2, February 1971, p. 7.

[90] The *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin* was a national 'internal discussion bulletin' published by USSF and designed to keep GIs apprised of the anti-war and anti-military work at bases across the US. The purpose of the *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin* is stated in its first issue: "Here it is!", *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin,* Issue no.1, January 1971, p. 1.

from ‘middle-class-educated places’, the letter concluded that they had undue control in GI affairs. However, the author was at pains to point out that this control never exceeded that of ‘the middle-class-educated-organizer GIs’.[91] Whilst civilians had been involved in GI anti-war publications since they began being published on Lewis and McChord, the GIA distanced themselves from this practice. Although they operated out of the Shelter Half and thus did not reject civilian collaboration, the Alliance itself was military-only. The organisation therefore encouraged a form of GI self-determination to organise their own meetings and discussions on base, publish their own newspapers, and even perform their own counselling. In the views of the GIA, the GI Movement was for GIs.

The Alliance, therefore, provides an interesting insight into the soldier’s perspective on GI-civilian relations. Whilst Lembcke has focused on the perspective of anti-war civilians towards GIs, arguing that they were not antagonistic, this thesis focuses on the perspective of GIs towards anti-war civilians.[92] Instead of the co-operation that is evidenced by Lembcke, the Alliance’s desire for GI self-determination was more similar to its contemporary, Fred Gardner, who complained about the over-involvement and co-optation of the GI Movement by civilian activists.[93] This is not a refutation of the idea that relationships between GIs and anti-war civilians were amicable, but it does demonstrate that some soldiers felt that they did not need civilian help to organise a military anti-war movement and sought to create an autonomous GI Movement. By using a micro-historical approach to the GI Movement, this study provides the opportunity to focus on the minutiae of the Movement, thus analysing the views of GIs towards civilians, rather than the reverse, which is the typical way of understanding GI-civilian relations. By flipping the usual lens, this thesis contributes something new to GI Movement scholarship.

The increased influence of civilians in the GI Movement after the USSF’s Summer of Support led some to worry that GIs were becoming less prominent in the Movement.[94] The financial support which this project gave to the GI Movement also led to the increased participation of White, middle-class, civilian activists in the Movement in the form of coffeehouse staffers. In

[91] “The Shelter Half”, *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin,* Issue no.5, May 1971, p. 8.
[92] Jerry Lembcke, *The Spitting Image: Myth, Memory, and the Legacy of Vietnam* (New York: New York University Press, 1998).
[93] Fred Gardner, ‘Case Study in Opportunism’ in, ‘Committee Exhibit No.64’, ‘Investigation of Attempts to Subvert the United States Armed Services, Part 3’, *Hearings Before the Committee on Internal Security, House of Representatives, Ninety-Second Congress, Second Session,* pp. 7522-7525.
[94] For a description of the Summer of Support, please see: Parsons, *Dangerous Grounds* (2017), p. 25.

one way, it was one of the most successful instances of GI-civilian cooperation throughout the war. However, in another it resulted in a high proportion of civilian participation in the GI Movement. At a national GI conference, organised by USSF between 23-28 November 1972, GIs from Fort Devens (MA), Fort Jackson (SC), Travis AFB (CA), and organisers at the Great Lakes discussed the role of civilians in their anti-war papers and all admitted that civilians worked on their publications.[95] Representatives of the GI paper *FTA* – located in Louisville, close to Ft. Knox (KY) – commented that their paper was 'almost entirely done by civilians', and representatives of the GI Movement in Long Beach (CA) claimed that they had no GIs participating in their project at that point.[96] Indeed, as the war was coming to a close in 1973 the *Bulletin* posed a series of questions on the state of the GI Movement: 'can civilians, <u>as civilians</u>, organize GIs? Should civilian organizers enlist in the military? What conditions govern whether civilians or GIs will be able to do better organizing?'[97]

In 1973, retrospectively, the anti-war group CAMP (Chicago Area Military Project) assessed the negatives of having civilians in the GI Movement. These included: a lack of coherent politics; the lack of an agenda other than ending the Vietnam War; focus only on temporary goals such as defence committees and demonstrations; a patronising and intellectually elitist attitude; a perspective of GI work as charity; the inability to link GI work with 'Black liberation struggles'; 'ultra-left' tendencies which manifested themselves in 'paramilitaristic guerrilla-terror'; and 'ultra-right' propensities, which were categorised as single-issue anti-war projects which did not benefit GIs in other ways.[98] The *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, however, was not subject to this civilian over-involvement as it was deliberately controlled by servicepeople themselves.

In one sense, the differences were superficial. Both the USSF and GIA desired the creation of a mass anti-war movement in the US Military; however, in another sense, they were paramount. Unlike civilians, the Alliance's relation to the military was not fabricated. To repeat, as Irvin

[95] "GI Papers and Organizations: Role of Civilians in GI Papers", *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin,* Issue 10, January 1972, p. 54.
[96] "FTA", *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin,* Issue 10, January 1972, p. 9 and "Cadre/Mass", *GI News & Discussion Bulletin,* Issue 10, January 1972, p. 65.
[97] "Some Questions on the Current GI Movement", *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin,* Issue 13, January 1973, p. 9. Underlined in original.
[98] Ibid., p. 9. Whilst a damning indictment of the struggles that civilians had within the GI Movement, this evaluation of previous failures is submerged in Marxist rhetoric and ideology. CAMP was an openly Marxist organisation, and this examination is therefore a retrospective analysis on the lack of class-based work during the heyday of the GI Movement.

acknowledged (although he maintained that he had positive views towards the civilian anti-war movement), "[w]e were a little closer to the source than they [civilians] were. And I mean, they could go back to their beds at night and we would go back to Army cots".[99] These differences in circumstance between anti-war civilians who chose to encourage activism and the soldier who had likely not enlisted (or had done so to avoid the draft) prevented the GI Movement from simply being a continuation of the civilian anti-war movement. The GI Movement was fundamentally different. Even those activists who had joined the military deliberately in order to organise from within, which some members of the Revolutionary Union did, had demonstrated their commitment to the GI Movement specifically via enlisting. In the same way that African Americans were championing self-determination, groups like the Alliance felt that if an anti-war movement was to flourish in the military, it should be directed by GIs themselves, and the Alliance claimed some uniqueness and authenticity from their position within the military. In this way, the GI Alliance are significant as an example of the desire for GI self-determination in the GI Movement.

In its early life, the Alliance worked out of the Shelter Half, however, their expressly military membership eventually led them to seeking alternative arrangements and the group allied with the existing GI-Airmen-Sailor Coalition.[100] Once again, one of the main impetuses for their merger was the desire to create a GI-run newspaper without interference from civilians. On the union, Irvin, previously of the Coalition, said:

> We got to be friends and we started […] talking about these civilians that we gave money to every month, and why the hell shouldn't we just be the ones doing this. And there was no reason why we should keep supporting these guys when we knew more about what was going on in the Army than they did. So, we joined forces and the civilians went back to California, but we kept Randy [Rowland – now a veteran].[101]

Irvin's testimony emphasises that the decision to split from civilians was economic in the sense that GIs' money was being used to support civilian work in the GI Movement, which servicemen were capable of doing themselves. Both the GIA and the GI-Airmen-Sailor Coalition had previously been involved with civilians at coffeehouses, the GIA at the Shelter Half and the Coalition at Court C, however, by August 1971 it became apparent that civilian involvement in GI organisations was unnecessary and, in the opinion of Irvin, a drain on much-

[99] Interview of Terry Irvin, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 5 October 2022.
[100] "Strength in Unity", *LMFP,* Vol.3, No.2, August 1971, p. 2.
[101] Interview of Terry Irvin, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 5 October 2022.

needed resources. The new organisation, formed from this union, kept the name GI Alliance and announced themselves as the new publishers of the *Free Press* in August 1971.[102]

Within GI Movement historiography, there has been little discussion critically analysing the variety of opinions in the Movement and how these conflicting views sometimes broke out in in-fighting. Indeed, the Shelter Half collective did not refrain from criticising the GIA after their split, lambasting them at the national GI Movement conference in Williams Bay, Wisconsin, in November 1971. Their diatribe – also published in the January 1972 edition of the *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin* – claimed that the Alliance had stopped having meetings, consisted of only 8-10 cadre, received little support on Fort Lewis, and was much bigger before they split from the Shelter Half.[103] Such accusations, however, appear to be unfair on the Alliance. Just a month after announcing their merger with the Coalition, the GIA publicised the establishment of their own single-story, off-base office, a locale they referred to as the GIA "shack". Here they held weekly meetings every Tuesday at 7:30pm.[104] By November, the organisation had held an "open house" celebration which was attended by GIs, civilians, and 'local store owners' and offered serious legal advice as well as more frivolous activities such as a free spaghetti dinner.[105] Whilst the criticisms of the Shelter Half cannot be materially disproved, and the number of GIs attending Alliance meetings cannot be verified, it does not appear that the coffeehouse collective's accusations are impartial. If the GIA did not gain much support from troops on Fort Lewis, this was evidently not through a lack of trying. It was not the Alliance who struggled to publish a GI paper during this period, but the Shelter Half which did not issue a full edition of *Fed Up!* from between July – when the GIA departed the Shelter Half – and December 1971. However, this could alternatively have just signalled a change in the coffeehouse's priorities rather than publishing the newspaper.

It seems that the Shelter Half's harangue was inspired, not necessarily by reality, but by political differences. Once again, in June 1972, in the *Bulletin*, the Shelter Half self-consciously exposed this as the reason for the split:

> Our relations with the GI Alliance are not better, as a matter of fact [they] are worse. They would much rather have this whole subject kept behind the covers, but we feel that it is only thru ideological struggle [that] these basic questions [can] be worked

[102] "Strength in Unity", *LMFP,* Vol.3, No.2, August 1971, p. 2.
[103] "GI Organizations and Organizing", *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin,* Issue 10, January 1972, p. 55. It does not appear that the GIA had any representatives attending this conference.
[104] "GIA Has a Shack", *LMFP,* Vol.3, No.3, September 1971, p. 1.
[105] "Open House Serves the People", *LMFP,* Vol.3, No.5, November 1971, p. 1.

> out. Of course, security is important because it is already evident that the pigs and liberals are making much use of this "split". Certain comrades in the gi [sic] movement see that the split, and the paper that we worked on [*Fed Up!*] and sent out […] were "unpolitical". We see it as very political.[106]

Evidently, the Shelter Half had been critiqued by others in the GI Movement for not being political enough in their activism. What was considered to be "political" or "unpolitical" was, however, yet to be defined by either group. In illuminating the differences between the GIA and the organisations which had preceded it, one former GIA member claimed that the Alliance 'was markedly more [L]eft politically in its orientation, both to GI issues and larger social issues'.[107] As a result, as they had done with *Fed Up!*, the GIA pushed the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* further left-wing. In this way, the *Free Press* lived two lifetimes, or embarked on one, increasingly radical, trajectory. There was the newspaper edited by the Left-liberal GI-Airmen-Sailor Coalition which emphasised participatory democracy, and the *Free Press* when published by the Alliance, which featured much more radical criticisms and conceptualisations, even hints at the desire for revolution. These differences between the Alliance and the Shelter Half, however, demonstrate that the GI Movement was not monolithic in its dissent against the war and that a spectrum of politics occupied the Movement.

Not only were the Alliance separated politically from the Shelter Half, the renting of their "shack" meant that they were also separated physically. As with their desire to emphasise their all-military composition, the GIA space was geared directly towards GIs. Importantly, it was not located in the civilian-dominated city of Tacoma, but in what one GI wife described as 'a little GI ghetto' called Tillicum, situated beside Fort Lewis and dominated by military personnel.[108] By bringing their headquarters as close to the bases as possible, the Alliance changed the dynamic of support for anti-war GIs on Fort Lewis and McChord AFB. Instead of a GI having to travel to Tacoma to seek counselling or an anti-war space to be comfortable in, the GIA brought these amenities to them (or, at least as close as they could).

[106] "Shelter Half: April", *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin,* Issue 12, April-June 1972, p. 13.
[107] Questionnaire, Anonymous Participant, 9 May 2024.
[108] Interview of Jane Cantwell, interviewed by Dr Wendy Toon, Seattle, 7 October 2022. Pseudonymised for the purposes of this thesis.

Figure 3: Photograph, GI Alliance member Michael Royce outside of the GIA "shack" (15011 Union Avenue, Tillicum) in October 1971.
Photograph taken not long after the merger of
the GI-Airmen-Sailor Coalition and the Alliance in August 1971.
Photograph courtesy of Randy Rowland.

Figure 4: Photograph, The second GI Alliance "shack" and printing house of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, at 14606 ½ Washington Avenue, Tillicum. They moved to this location after being evicted from the first.
Photograph courtesy of Randy Rowland.

The final months of the *Free Press* demonstrate the Alliance's desire to continue publishing a newspaper even after the conclusion of the war. In August 1973, the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* ceased publication, re-branding themselves as a newspaper called *GI Voice*, accompanied by the phrase 'formerly the Free Press' in large, bold type.[109] In this sense, the *Free Press* and the *GI Voice* were one and the same, and this thesis treats them as so. The reasons for this change are, however, uncertain and not addressed in the paper. Given the conclusion of the war in January, however, it seems apt to assume that this change was to disassociate the programme of the GIA with the specific anti-Vietnam messaging of the *Free Press*. Whilst no longer an anti-war paper, *GI Voice* remained a progressive publication, printing alongside feminist, gay rights, African American, leftist, Amerindian, and even Chicano publications.[110] The name change therefore potentially represents an attempt to shed the locality of Lewis and McChord, bases which were intrinsically linked to the Vietnam War, and appeal to a wider audience of grassroots social movements in the mid-1970s. The adoption of the moniker *GI Voice* therefore represents an attempt to maintain the momentum built by the GIA during the Vietnam War to continue publishing a progressive newspaper.[111] This attempt to continue the legacy of "Sixties" activism was, however, a failure. The December 1973 edition of the *GI Voice* represents the final incarnation of the *Free Press* and the final grassroots GI paper to be published on Fort Lewis and McChord AFB (along with *Fed Up!*'s final issue in the same month).

Before it is possible to analyse the contents of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, it has been first important to provide a history of anti-war activism in the Pacific Northwest prior to the paper's creation. As demonstrated, this was an area of perpetual anti-war activism from 1968 onwards, with successive publications and organisations opposing the war on base. This was likely due to the geographical position of Fort Lewis and McChord AFB as bases on the West Coast, an area known for its predilection for anti-war and countercultural activity amongst the youth, and Fort Lewis' strategic role as both an Overseas Replacement Center and

[109] *LMFP,* Vol.6, No.9, August 1973 and *GI Voice,* Vol.6, No.10, October 1973.
[110] For examples of these different types of newspapers please visit the Independent Voices database located on JSTOR. https://www.jstor.org/site/reveal-digital/independent-voices/ [accessed: 02/09/24].
[111] The nominal switch to *GI Voice* prolonged the life of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* and by December it remained only one of two GI newspapers consistently published on the West Coast. The other was *Up From the Bottom*. One final issue of *Fed Up!* was, however, also distributed in that same month. For a full run of *Up From the Bottom* please see: *Up From the Bottom*, "GI Press", Independent Voices Archive, JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/site/reveal-digital/independent-voices/upfromthebottom-27953994/?so=item_title_str_asc [accessed: 15/07/25]

a Basic Training post. The *Free Press* was the last of the three most successful Fort Lewis publications, after *Counterpoint* and *Fed Up!*, and yet was in many ways different to the ones which came before it. Although aided by a civilian counselling organisation (PCS), the *Free Press* did not arise out of the civilian activism of the Shelter Half. Indeed, it was exactly this removal from civilian involvement in the GI Movement which attracted the attention of the GI Alliance who moved away from the coffeehouse to take over publishing of the *Free Press*. The fact that the paper was published by two different editorial bodies also sets the *Free Press* apart from its predecessors. The differing political persuasions of the Coalition and the Alliance make the *Free Press* an interesting microcosm with which to study anti-war protest of the "Sixties". Like the transition from the New Left to Third World Marxism, the *Free Press* originated as a fairly liberal, non-dogmatic publication, increasingly becoming a radical one. It is this trajectory that will be studied in the following chapters and which considers the paper's military criticisms, their anti-war critiques, and their discussion of domestic issues.

Chapter 4

'The Administration of (In)Justice': Opposing the US Military from Within[1]

A necessary accompaniment of GI anti-war activism was conflict with the military. This was largely because the two groups occupied dichotomous purposes: the military was designed to prosecute war, whereas the anti-war GI was committed to opposing it. The stance that the military would not allow their duties to be undermined through protest and demonstration conflicted with anti-war GIs' belief in the sacrosanctity of the US Constitution. A patent requirement of entering the military, which many anti-war GIs had not wanted to do anyway, was to subordinate some of the rights which young men believed to be inviolable. Study of the GI press exposes the difficulty which committed anti-war GIs, especially those who had been conscribed rather than enlisted, had with the pro-war expectations placed on them by the military. As such, much of the content of GI newspapers involved railing against servicemen's inability to vocalise their opposition to the war, and covered GIs' repeated attempts to see their publications legalised. Servicemen were arrested for distributing "unauthorized literature", a category to which all GI newspapers belonged, and yet continued to publish and distribute their publications anyway. These encounters with the military apparatus led the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* to assume the role of watchdog of the military justice system, linking the oppression of GIs at home to the subjugation of Vietnamese in Vietnam. Discussion of this justice system inevitably led to commentary on its inequity and the discrepancy in treatment of the lowest ranking EMs (Enlisted Men) and the career soldiers, or, as they were contemptuously referred, the lifers. Whilst anti-war servicepeople adopted complex conceptualisations of the Vietnam War and of US foreign policy in general (discussed in the next chapter), GI newspapers also reflected the day-to-day irritations of living in what they considered an oppressive institution, especially when they did not conform to the military's expectations. Whilst the GI press was an obviously anti-war manifestation, perhaps the majority of servicemen's publications were taken up with commentary on abuses; being prohibited from disseminating their views; and the inequity of the organisation young men found themselves in. Perhaps less sophisticated than their commentary on the war, it is nonetheless important to assess the main thrust of GI newspapers and understand how these military outcasts viewed their immediate situation, no less because they often linked this to their other criticisms such as the war and imperialism.

[1] "Coalition Demands", *Lewis-McChord Free Press* [*LMFP*], Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 2.

The *Lewis-McChord Free Press* is also useful as a window into the changes in the military during this period. The most significant alteration being the transition from a partially-drafted Army to an all-volunteer force (AVF). Whilst these alterations are normally studied at the institutional level, the newspapers of military personnel provide insight into the feelings of "ordinary" GIs towards these changes. Perhaps surprising, however, is that anti-war servicemen did not welcome this move away from Selective Service, the system which had called many of them into the military, and instead reproached it. Their conceptualisations of the military as a fundamentally bad institution, which was used to perpetrate aggressive and oppressive wars abroad, meant that they rejected attempts to remodel its appearance. Instead, the paper perpetuated a view that the AVF took advantage of the struggling economy of the early 1970s to recruit poor Americans in need of work. This chapter therefore establishes that the GI Movement was not just an anti-war movement but also provides a window into the confronting situation that young men, who were subject to the draft yet maintained their opposition to the war, faced in the late-"Sixties". The anti-military arguments that these GIs formed establish that, like their commentary on the Vietnam War, the *Free Press* viewed the military as both oppressive and aggressive.[2]

When someone freely enlists into the armed forces, especially during wartime, there is a stereotypical expectation that they are in accordance with the military's position on the war, or at least ambivalent to it.[3] It is then supposed that this enlistee will "fall into line" with everything a "good" soldier should be. They should carry out all orders, salute superior officers, respect military hierarchy, serve with honour, and assume the pro-war attitude of the military. That is, they are to subordinate their own agency for the good of the military and the defence of their country. In other words, for the military and its officers, to this day, there exists a patent expectation that any man entering the armed forces will assume the same patriotic and collectivist feelings which are central to the institution. It is because of such suppositions that the stereotype that all GIs are pro-war exists. This stereotype has then been utilised by proponents of the "stab-in-the-back myth" to perpetuate an inaccurate narrative that GIs of the

[2] The *Free Press*' conceptualisation of the Vietnam War as oppressive and aggressive will be analysed in Chapter 5.
[3] That is not to say that all soldiers enlisted due to patriotism. For a discussion of the multitude of reasons that American soldiers have enlisted into the Army for please see: Richard H. Kohn, 'The Social History of the American Soldier: A Review and Prospectus for Research', *American Historical Review,* 86.3 (June 1981), pp. 553-567 (pp. 558-559).

"Sixties" were always oppositional to their anti-war peers on college campuses.[4] This, as demonstrated, was not the case and the young men who entered the military in the "Sixties" were not always willing to assume this pro-war position.

Key to this phenomenon was that GIs of the Vietnam era were not entirely gathered from a pool of willing Americans who necessarily believed in the righteousness of the US military. The use of draftees in this period complicated the military's typified expectations of how young men should behave when they entered the armed forces. In this sense, many members of the US Army in the Vietnam era, were not in the military of their own volition and were instead forced to participate in the institution because of what is referred to as consent theory. This is the notion that citizens enter into an unwritten agreement that, in exchange for their right to formulate the government, the administration in power has the 'implicit' authority to call upon them to fight on behalf of their nation.[5] It is from this unwritten agreement that many countries still derive the authority to draft their citizens and it is the basis of conscription in the US.[6] Peter Kartsen, however, has argued that this unwritten agreement was enacted sparingly prior to World War I, and when it was finally instituted it faced opposition from draftees and Congressmen alike. In the Civil War and the War of Independence, whilst some citizen-soldiers volunteered for state militias due to their patriotism and political obligation, and in this way were "consenters", others enlisted due to economic and more pragmatic needs.[7] Whilst consent theory supposes that Americans should be willing to serve in the military thanks to their citizenship, this appears to not largely have been a reality, and it certainly was not in the Vietnam era.

Any study of the GI Movement must first situate the Vietnam-era military in the unignorable shadow that the Selective Service System placed on the "Vietnam Generation", the fifty-three

[4] For details of the "stab-in-the-back" myth, please refer to Chapter 1.
[5] Peter Kartsen, 'Consent and the American Soldier: Theory versus Reality', *Parameters,* 12.1 (1982), pp. 42-49 (p. 42).
[6] There has been a long tradition of US opposition to standing armies dating back to the Whigs of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For more information on the US' use of the citizenry to fill the ranks of the military please see: Peter Kartsen, 'The US Citizen-Soldier's Past, Present, and Likely Future', *Parameters,* 31.2 (Summer 2001), pp. 61-73. For an account of the debate concerning standing armies in England see: E. Arnold Miller, 'Some Arguments Used by English Pamphleteers, 1697-1700, Concerning a Standing Army', *Journal of Modern History,* 18.4 (December 1946), pp. 306-313. For an account of how this debate shaped American opinion on standing armies see: Lawrence Delbert Cress, 'Radical Whiggery on the Role of the Military: Ideological Roots of the American Revolutionary Militia', *Journal of the History of Ideas,* 40.1 (January-March 1979), pp. 43-60.
[7] Kartsen, 'The US Citizen-Soldier's Past, Present, and Likely Future', *Parameters* (2001), pp. 62-64.

million people who came of draft age between 4 August 1964 – when the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution was passed – and 28 March 1973 – when the last American troops left South Vietnam. 26.8 million of this generation were men on whom the burden was heaviest, as women were not subject to the draft.[8] Originally, the decision to conscript someone was left to the discretion of local draft boards which had to reach monthly "quotas" of men. This form of conscription was therefore arbitrary, and local boards did not have a standardised way to draft young men. Whilst there were attempts to provide 'due-process safeguards' to ensure that every draft order was safe from legal challenge, Baskir and Strauss claim that this induced local boards to defer, exempt, or ignore registrants who posed administrative problems.[9] However, by 1969, in acknowledgment of the inequity of the Selective Service system, and in an attempt to assuage the outpouring of anti-war opinion across the country, the method of drafting changed to a more equitable lottery.[10] The lottery was therefore designed to be a national, standardised, and therefore more impartial, way of conscripting young American men.

The first draft lottery took place on 1 December 1969, to decide the order of induction for those born between 1944-1950, with the youngest a draftee could be being eighteen. In this process, every date of the year was placed in its own plastic capsule which were then randomly drawn annually on live television. Every date of the year was drawn, and the order in which they were selected determined when men with corresponding birthdays were called for induction. For example, the first capsule drawn was 14 September; any man who was born on this date between 1944-1950 was the first to be called to service.[11] Induction would cease when manpower needs were met for that year. Former GI activist Dave Henry commented that, contemporaneously young people felt that if their birthday was in the first third of all numbers drawn in the lottery, they knew that they were almost certainly going to be called up due to the manpower needs of the war. If it was drawn in the middle third of all numbers, they were aware that there was a chance they would be drafted, and if it was in the final third they were "scot-free" as they knew that it was unlikely that they would be needed.[12] It was, therefore, under this more equitable, and thus less controversial, form of the draft that some of the publishers

[8] Lawrence M. Baskir and William A. Strauss, *Chance and Circumstance: The Draft, the War, and the Vietnam Generation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), pp. 3-5.
[9] Ibid., p. 26.
[10] Michael S. Foley, *Confronting the War Machine: Draft Resistance During the Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), pp. 338-339.
[11] "Vietnam Lotteries", via: Selective Service System, https://www.sss.gov/history-and-records/vietnam-lotteries/ [accessed: 07/02/24].
[12] Interview of Dave Henry, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 9 October 2022.

of the *Free Press* were conscripted. It is, perhaps, for this reason that criticisms of the draft do not appear in the paper. Alternatively, by the time GIs were in the Army, they had already been conscripted and so criticising the war, the military, racism, and other issues gained precedence. Still, whilst outright criticisms of the draft did not occur, the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* were critical of attempts to deny amnesty to men who had deserted to other countries such as Canada and acknowledged that the system broadened opposition to the war.[13]

The idea that, as consent theory supposed, these men had consented to military service simply by being citizens is more contentious when one considers that those being called to fight by the draft were often a disenfranchised group. It was not until the Twenty-Sixth Amendment to the Constitution was passed in 1971 that the federal voting age in the US was lowered from twenty-one to eighteen.[14] If one did not enjoy the right of suffrage in their own country, could they be considered to have entered into the unwritten agreement that consent theory suggested? Indeed, it was this argument that became the basis for a bottom-up movement for the enfranchisement of young people in the United States.[15] In this sense, military service was inherently tied to ideas of suffrage. When the draft age was lowered to eighteen in 1942, the beginnings of this movement were established as both young and old rallied for a concomitant decrease in the voting age. The movement itself was characterised by the phrase '"Old enough to fight, old enough to vote"' and continued from World War II, throughout the war in Korea, peaking during the conflict in Vietnam, where it eventually saw success.[16] The military service of young men therefore became the cornerstone of two movements in the early 1970s: the GI Movement and the campaign to lower the voting age. Nevertheless, young draft-age men were considered by successive administrations to have consented to military service via their citizenship and were drafted nonetheless.

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[13] Please see: "Interview with the Man: Laird on Amnesty", *LMFP,* Vol.4, No.5, May 1972, p. 5; "Army Reforms???", *LMFP,* Vol.4, No.1, January 1972, p. 2. The paper did, however, advertise the Pacific Counseling Service and consequently publicised the organisation's draft counselling and also a local draft board sit-in in Tacoma. Please see: Advert, "Pacific Counseling Service", *LMFP,* Vol.2, No.4, April 1971, p. 6 and "Survival", *LMFP,* Vol.2, No.5, May 1971, p. 8.

[14] Twenty-Sixth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, via: https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/amendment-26/ and Kartsen, 'Consent and the American Soldier', *Parameters* (1982), p. 42.

[15] For a detailed account of this movement see: Jennifer Frost, *"Let Us Vote": Youth Voting Rights and the 26th Amendment* (New York: New York University Press, 2021).

[16] Ibid., p. 4.

Young men had faced the possibility of compulsory service in previous wars. For example, ten million men were drafted during World War II, and one and a half million were conscribed between 1951 and 1953 to serve in the Korean War.[17] Comparatively, the Selective Service System was responsible for a smaller percentage of all men in uniform during the Vietnam War (twenty percent) than it was in Korea (twenty-seven percent).[18] Opposition to the draft in the Vietnam War, therefore, was largely not in response to the Selective Service System itself (other than in the fight for the Twenty-Sixth Amendment) but was a by-product of the resistance to the Vietnam War, although draft card burnings often obscured this.[19] A reluctance to serve and the inequality of the draft were compounded by the general unpopularity of the war amongst the young, which helped to make anti-war activism a common (if still minority) occurrence. Combined, these aspects highlight the unique situation for draftees in the Vietnam era which ensured that many dissatisfied young men entered the military susceptible to anti-war ideas, eventually leading to the formation of the GI Movement. As Dave Henry succinctly put it: "it wasn't like people wanted to get drafted. If they did, they wouldn't have needed a draft".[20]

The Research Analysis Corporation's study emphasises that the way a servicemen entered the military impacted the likelihood that they would protest the war when in it. The report showed that draftees, as well as those considered 'forced enlistment' – those men who enlisted into the military to avoid the draft for varying reasons – were much more likely to engage in dissident activities and disobey orders than those who had chosen to enter the Army.[21] There was, therefore, a correlation between how one entered the military and how one reacted to and behaved within it. In contrast, those who deliberately entered the armed forces were more likely to assimilate better with the institution's expectations of patriotism and collectivism. After all, by deliberately signing up for the military, they indicated a willingness, or even a desire, to participate in the Vietnam War. That is not to say that some GIs did not become anti-war after their induction into the military. The growth of the GI Movement in the enlistee-only branches of the Navy and Air Force, as well as the enlistee-dominated officer corps, shows that this was

[17] Baskir and Strauss, *Chance and Circumstance* (1978), pp. 19-21.
[18] "Historical Timeline", via: Selective Service System, https://www.sss.gov/history-and-records/timeline/ [accessed: 24/05/24].
[19] Beth Bailey, *America's Army: Making the All-Volunteer Force* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009), p. 20.
[20] Interview of Dave Henry, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 9 October 2022.
[21] R. William Rae, Stephen B. Forman, and Howard C. Olson, *Future Impact of Dissident Elements within the Army on the Enforcement of Discipline, Law, and Order* (Research Analysis Corporation, January 1972), pp. 36-37, via: Defense Technical Information Center, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/AD0891558

not the case. Still, those most likely to engage in anti-war activity were GIs who had not voluntarily joined the armed forces; these men were obligated to serve by law rather than a sense of duty and did not necessarily concur with military expectations.

The obligation for civilians to serve in the military heightened the relevance of the concept of the citizen-soldier to the Vietnam-era GI. The significance of which has been emphasised by Moser, who described the idea as 'the most important ideological reference for antiwar soldiers'.[22] After all, in both name and history, the citizen-soldier blurred the line between citizen and soldier. Originating from the citizenry, he fought under obligation to his nation. In the traditional conception, this dual-purpose was positive and involved 'leav[ing] peaceable pursuits behind and depart[ing] on an honourable mission' in order to win 'not simply battles but freedom as well'.[23] However, in the GI Movement, the term more aptly demonstrates the conflict between civilian and soldier which raged within young disaffected GIs. The phrase emphasises their liminal position as neither soldier – by not conforming to the normal expectations of what a soldier should be – nor citizen – having been forcibly removed from civilian life. Whilst the traditional usage of the term citizen-soldier emphasised a man's ability to be at once a soldier and a citizen, during the Vietnam War the term best demonstrated the anti-war GI's inability to be either.

Particularly illogical then for these young men was the notion that individual liberties had to be subordinated when they entered the military in favour of discipline and support for the war. The First Amendment to the Constitution ensured that: 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.'[24] This Amendment is popularly understood as ensuring the protection of all American citizens' rights to religion, free speech, a free press, and the freedom of assembly. In their introduction, the GI-Airmen Coalition refused to forfeit these Constitutional guarantees. They wrote: '[w]e feel that as servicemen, we are not relinquishing our rights as enumerated in the Bill of Rights'.[25] The citizen-soldiers of the

[22] Richard Moser, *The New Winter Soldiers: GI and Veteran Dissent During the Vietnam War* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996), pp. 3-4.
[23] Ibid., p. 19.
[24] Bill of Rights: A Transcription, via: National Archives, https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/bill-of-rights-transcript [accessed: 12/03/24].
[25] "GI-Airman Coalition Defines Direction", *LMFP,* Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 1.

Coalition rejected the notion that they should have to sacrifice some of the codified liberties that they enjoyed in civilian life. This was demonstrated by the *Free Press*' editors' desire to continue demonstrating against the Vietnam War despite such acts being constrained under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). The use of draftees in the Vietnam era therefore exposed a complex relationship. Similarly, it was a reflection of GIs' perceptions of the war in Vietnam, this was not a "Good War" in which service was a noble endeavour.

Figure 5: Cartoon, Bruce Kormmich, "People Die… Ideas Don't. Be Committed!", *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, Vol.2, No.1, January 1971, p. 2.
Source: JSTOR, 2025; available under the CC BY NC license.

One of the confiscated liberties which the military took from their members was the right to publish their discontent with the Vietnam War. The *Lewis-McChord Free Press* consistently documented the attempts of the military to interfere with GIs' distribution of anti-war literature. In April 1971, the paper documented the release of one Fort Lewis GI, Howard Welch, who had been arrested for 'distributing "unauthorized literature"' in March. The paper reported on the immoderate treatment which Welch received for this act, claiming that he was placed

immediately into maximum security in the Fort Lewis stockade for pre-trial confinement.[26] In another instance, the *Free Press* highlighted that GI Alliance (GIA) member, Private Charles E. Hayes, was also caught distributing a GIA leaflet for which he received a special court-martial, the second most severe legal proceeding under the UCMJ (the different levels of the military justice system are discussed later).[27] Former Alliance member, Michael Royce, remembers that in order to still disseminate the *Free Press*, yet avoid being arrested for their actions, GIs "did little commando runs" where they would "run through barracks and toss newspapers around and run". This proved to be an effective tactic as Royce claimed that nobody was caught whilst doing this, and they managed to distribute some of their 10,000 copies this way.[28] Evidently, however, the attempts of GIs to broadcast their anti-war views were actively inhibited by the commands of Lewis and McChord who made distributing the *Free Press* difficult and attempted to utilise the power of the UCMJ to punish those who did so.

Underscoring the sanctity of the First Amendment, anti-war soldiers attempted to defend their creation and distribution of GI newspapers by maintaining that the illegality of distributing GI newspapers on base because of their "political" content remained unconstitutional. In August 1971, the *Free Press* selected a quote from Thomas Jefferson, placing it on the header of the paper, which read: '[o]ur liberty depends on the freedom of the press, and that cannot be limited without being lost'.[29] Indeed, Jefferson was one of the most vocal proponents of a free press as the foremost expression of democracy, claiming, in a quote which was also included in the *Free Press*, that he would prefer 'newspapers without governments' than 'a government without newspapers'.[30] Using Jefferson as their defence, GIs of the *Free Press* argued that servicemen were being denied their 'liberty' at the expense of military discipline, something which the Constitution forbade. Arguments concerning the legality of the *Free Press* became

[26] "Army Releases Howard Welch", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.4, April 1971, p. 1 and 6.
[27] "Another Bust for Distribution", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.2, August 1971, p. 3.
[28] Interview of Michael Royce, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 7 October 2022.
[29] *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, Vol.3, No.2, August 1971, p. 1. The original quote is from a letter that Jefferson sent to James Currie. See: Thomas Jefferson, letter to James Currie, 28 January 1786, via: Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/resource/mtj1.005_0216_0218/?sp=1&st=image [accessed: 24/04/24].
[30] *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, Vol.2, No.5, May 1971, p. 1. The original quote is from a letter that Jefferson sent to Edward Carrington. See: Thomas Jefferson, letter to Edward Carrington, 16 January 1787, via: Monticello Archive, https://tjrs.monticello.org/letter/1289 [accessed: 30/08/24].

a sustained battle between the commanding officers of Lewis and McChord and the anti-war GIs which would continue until the conclusion of the newspaper.[31]

During this battle, the military defended their decision to abridge the Constitutional freedoms of servicepeople. The paper stated that under Army Regulation 200-10, the authority to grant distribution rights rested with the base commander. However, it also explained that, in order for him to deny such rights, he must be able to prove that a publication would have an 'adverse affect [sic] on the morale, discipline and good order of the troops on post'.[32] Anti-war GIs interrogated the Commanding General of Fort Lewis, General Bolling, on this matter in March 1971. Bolling responded to questions on why he had not granted the *Free Press* distribution rights, claiming that it was justified because the publication was 'obscene'.[33] At this, the GIs pointed out that pulp magazines, such as *Man's Adventure, Romance*, and *Police Gazette*, were all sold in the post exchange (PX) despite their obscenity. Likewise, they highlighted that magazines which 'continually degrade our sisters and exploit sex', such as *Playboy*, were also available.[34] By August 1971, the issue was taken up by the GI Alliance, and Henry Valenti (now out of the Army and thus free from possible retribution) gave an interview to the local civilian paper, the *Tacoma News Tribune* (*TNT*). Whilst the *TNT* acknowledged that the *Free Press* had been criticised for 'its liberal use of four-letter words', Valenti reiterated the Alliance's position, stating: 'I don't see how they can justify banning the Free Press [sic] on the basis of obscenity when cheap, lurid pulp magazines are openly sold at the base exchange'.[35] The reality that local base commanders possessed the authority to grant GIs the right to distribute their publications and yet did not do so rankled GIs on base. The explanation that the *Free Press* was lewd did not withstand the scrutiny of anti-war GIs on Fort Lewis who argued that the denial was simply because of their position on the war.

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[31] For articles which campaign for and critique the lack of distribution rights on base please see: "Qualified Victory for GI Press", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 3; "Petition for Dissent", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 4; "Get it On", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.2, February 1971, p. 1; "Distribution Rights: Granted By Default?", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.4, April 1971, p. 3; "Struggle for Freedom", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.1, July 1971, p. 5; "Info Denied the People", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.1, July 1971, p. 5; "Army Censorship", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.3, September 1971, p. 2; "GIA Bust", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.1, August 1972, p. 3; "GIA Offensive: Democratic Rights Now", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.4, October Midmonth 1972, p. 2; "Free Press Fight", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.6, November Midmonth 1972, p. 1; "Busted or Bolstered", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.7, December 1972, p. 1; and "M.I. Agent Desperate", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.7, December 1972, p. 3.
[32] "Get it On", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.2, February 1971, p. 1.
[33] "Distribution Rights: Granted By Default?", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.4, April 1971, p. 3.
[34] "GI Meetings Freak Brass", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.4, April 1971, p. 1 and 4 and "Distribution Rights: Granted By Default?", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.4, April 1971, p. 3.
[35] "Underground GI Sheet Publisher to Sue Army", *Tacoma News Tribune* [*TNT*], 5 August 1971, p. 45, via: Newspapers.com.

Despite the intervention of the Fort Lewis command, the *Free Press* was a successful "underground" organ and did not need the legitimation of the base command to thrive, claiming to have distributed ten thousand copies of the paper during January 1971.[36] Therefore, for the *Free Press*, its legality did not affect its impact on base. This is only further evidenced by the fact that the paper ran for four years without achieving distribution rights. If these numbers were not inflated (and it is unknown whether all ten thousand copies of the *Free Press* got into the hands of GIs on base, as many were likely found and confiscated), why then did the editors of the paper want to secure distribution rights so fervently? Whilst making the paper legal would have perhaps boosted its sales somewhat, editors of the *Free Press* fought a symbolic battle with "the Brass". This clash more broadly concerned the legitimacy of anti-war protest among GIs. If the base command assented to making the paper legal, they would have legitimised anti-war views within the rank-and-file and recognised the Constitutional rights of the GI. The assentation to an authorised anti-war press on base was something the military could not concede to, lest they undermine their entire function as an institution which is used to pursue war, and need for compliance from their servicepeople.

Another reason for this continued fight was because the *Free Press* believed that the majority of GIs on base were only being given one perspective on the war. In their third issue they stated:

> [t]he official publications of the Army and the Air Force give a very one-sided, right-wing interpretation of events. These publications are nothing but house organs that aid the military in its attempt to control the minds and spirits of GI's [sic]. We are asking the military to be fair, to recognize different opinions, and to allow GI's [sic] their right of exposure to views of all kinds.[37]

Officially sanctioned military publications, such as *Stars and Stripes,* and base newspapers, such as the *Ranger* and the *Airlifter* (in the cases of Fort Lewis and McChord respectively), were therefore denigrated as the 'mouthpiece[s] of the Brass' and reproducers of the patriotic tone and pro-war position of the military.[38]

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[36] "Get it On", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.2, February 1971, p. 1.
[37] "Petition for Dissent", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 4.
[38] "Buzzards Booze it", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.2, September 1972, p. 3. For criticisms of military publications within the *Free Press* please see: "S/Sgt. Brady: GIA Draft Choice", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.1, August 1972, p. 7; Letter, *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.1, January 1971, p. 2; "FTA Show: A G.I. Upper", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.3, September 1971, p. 3; Letter, *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.5, May 1971, p. 2.

It was not just military publications which were upbraided by the *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, however, and the need to provide GIs with an alternative view of the war was because civilian publications were also partisan. Conspiratorially, in July 1971, the *Free Press* claimed that the public was being deliberately misinformed and that this was because specific issues 'raise questions and criticisms which embarrass the government and the industries which control the government'.[39] For the editors of the *Free Press*, therefore, the "straight" press – those publications which did not originate from the underground and which were therefore broadly representative of officialdom, both civilian and military – could not be trusted to give GIs and the American public fair reportage on the state of American affairs during the early 1970s. This was only further emphasised by the *Free Press*' perception that local "straight" publications did not fairly cover the GI Movement.

Following the first public protest at McChord in May 1972, the paper criticised regional publications, like the *TNT* and *Suburban Times*, for not providing accurate coverage of anti-war activism on military bases. These "straight" publications had taken a negative view of the demonstration outside McChord. The *TNT*, for example, utilised stereotyped images of anti-war protesters to condemn dissent on base, suggesting that the rally outside McChord was stirred by civilians with long hair. In particular the report quoted a Major James Murphy, who wrote that none of the protesters had been airmen, dissociating the protest from the servicemen on base.[40] As a military organisation, made up of military-related personnel, the GI Alliance took exception to the notion that this demonstration did not originate from the rank-and-file and was instead instigated from the outside. The misrepresentation of this incident in the civilian press directly contradicted the *Free Press*' wishes to publicise the discontent of airmen on McChord, undermining the entire point of the act. In retaliation, the *Free Press* remarked that these papers were 'just as enthusiastic about propagating government lies as the FREE PRESS is at exposing them'.[41]

Interestingly, the paper's contention that the "straight" press was very pro-Administration contradicts many conservatives' later attempts to scapegoat a supposedly anti-war media for failure in Vietnam. The reality of how information was reported in Vietnam, relayed back to

[39] "Info Denied the People", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.1, July 1971, p. 5.
[40] "At McChord: Protest", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.5, May 1972, p. 3 and Unnamed, *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.5, May 1972, p. 3.
[41] "At McChord: Protest", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.5, May 1972, p. 3

the US, and then publicised to the American public was much more confused, complex, and variegated than these binary conceptions have allowed for. Wyatt has commented that the US press in Vietnam both cooperated and conflicted with the US government. Interestingly, he has acknowledged that during the Kennedy and Nixon years, the government's favoured tactic with regard to the press was to 'downplay American involvement', and reporters' access to official information during these periods of the conflict was heavily restricted.[42] As a part of this, and as a result of the increasing Vietnamization of the war, the American press stopped focusing on the day-to-day combat details, as they had under Johnson, and dedicated discussion to the viability of a stable, sovereign South Vietnamese state. Such coverage was, according to Wyatt, pessimistic.[43] Likewise, during the period in which the *Free Press* published, the Nixon Administration and the military's relationship to the press became increasingly antagonistic, depriving reporters the candour and information they had been accustomed to under Johnson.[44] Such relationships were only worsened by the press' role in exposing many military secrets such as the My Lai Massacre, the secret bombing campaign of Cambodia, and the *Pentagon Papers*.[45] Wyatt's argument demonstrates that the press were neither the pro-war, pro-Administration mechanism that the *Free Press* viewed them to be; nor were they the subversive, anti-war media that purveyors of the stab-in-the-back myth have portrayed them as. Study of the *Free Press* therefore demonstrates that whilst the media received much criticism from the Right after the war, they also received much condemnation from the Left during it.

It is likely, however, that this distaste for the "straight" press came not from their reportage on Vietnam necessarily, but their coverage of the anti-war movement. This, according to Melvin Small and Todd Gitlin, was largely negative and focused primarily on the most violent and outrageous fringe elements of the movement.[46] The media, in Small's opinion, deliberately focused on the most controversial aspects of the anti-war movement, such as dress, hair, facial hair, and anti-social behaviour because it was most interesting to its viewers. 'Such images',

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[42] Clarence R. Wyatt, *Paper Soldiers: The American Press and the Vietnam War* (New York: W.W.Norton & Company, 1993), p. 217.
[43] Ibid., p. 198.
[44] Ibid., pp. 199-206. Nixon specifically had a hostile attitude towards the press. Please see: Chester Pach, '"Our Worst Enemy Seems to Be the Press": TV News, the Nixon Administration, and U.S. Troop Withdrawal from Vietnam, 1969-1973', *Diplomatic History*, 34.3 (June 2010), pp. 555-565.
[45] Wyatt, *Paper Soldiers* (1993), pp. 206-210.
[46] See: Melvin Small, *Covering Dissent: The Media and the Anti-War Movement* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994) and Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making & Unmaking of the New Left* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

Small claims, 'were not pleasing to movement leaders who were trying to influence Americans to join them'.[47] Having seen how the media had treated their civilian peers, there is little wonder as to why anti-war GIs viewed the "straight" press as their enemy. For their part, the *TNT*, other than the case quoted by the *Free Press*, were not especially negative towards anti-war GIs in the Pacific Northwest. Their reporting was largely non-partisan, it often interviewed the anti-war GIs and civilians it commented on, and it was principally absent of attempts to demean their activity, such as through the use of quotation marks around terms like anti-war or peace, a common tactic among newspapers reporting on the anti-war movement.[48] Therefore, the *Free Press*' rallying against the "straight" press' coverage of the GI Movement was not necessarily to do with their own treatment, but the reportage on their civilian peers.

This distrust of "the Establishment" and its news led to GI newspapers viewing themselves, and other "underground" publications, both civilian and military, as alternative news sources. Lewes has asserted that whilst 'the brass were able, and did, use mainstream media outlets such as *Newsweek* and *Life*', GIs did not have this luxury and the creation of the GI press was a direct need to fill this reporting gap.[49] The *Free Press* wrote in July 1971, for example, '[w]e must expose the crimes we see in order to educate each other. The Free Press is the voice of the people. By uniting […] we can stand against the disorganizing and confusing lies of the pigs. POWER TO THE PEOPLE!'.[50] In the eyes of the *Free Press*, pre-existing newspapers that GIs had access to were not trusted to provide fair coverage of the war or anti-war activism,

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[47] Small, *Covering Dissent* (1994), pp. 163-164.
[48] For Pacific Northwest newspaper articles which discuss anti-war activity on Lewis and McChord please see: "ACLU Files Suit to 'Open' Fort', *TNT*, 9 November 1971, p. 32; "Coffeehouse to Fight Off-Limits Designation", *TNT*, 18 December 1969, p. 4; "Soldier Expected to Ask Court Martial To Answer Charges", *TNT*, 9 July 1971, p. 10; Win Anderson, "Papers Get 16 Escorted Out in Hassle", *TNT*, 1 July 1971, pp. 1-2; Regon Unsoeld, "In Our Readers' Opinion…: 'Processed by Fort Lewis Military Police for Two Hours'", *TNT*, 5 June 1972, p. 4; Stephen Kent, "Army Fights Bid for GI Union", *TNT*, 3 November 1969, p. 9; Denise Kalette, "Jane Fonda Basked in Low-Watt Limelight", *TNT*, 9 August 1971, p. 2; "Armed Forces, M-16 Days This Weekend", *TNT*, 14 May 1971, p. 7; "Protest Meeting Sunday", *TNT*, 15 December 1973, p. 2; "The Changing Scene at the Shelter Half", *TNT*, 18 November 1973, p. 16; "Military Base Activists Encounter Setbacks but Will Carry On", *The Olympian*, 27 September 1971, p. 36; "Rally to Explore 'Peoples' Reaction", *TNT*, 30 April 1971, p. 53; Edd Jeffords, "Coffeehouse Achieves Goal of Getting People Together", *TNT*, 13 October 1968, p. 11; "Underground GI Sheet Publisher to Sue Army", *TNT*, 5 August 1971, p. 45; Bob Boxberger, "Servicemen's Paper Attacks Wrongs as Editors See Them: They Pay for It", *TNT*, 15 November 1970, p. 11; Frank Woodrow, "Rebels in Uniform", *TNT*, 14 March 1971, p. 123. For articles which have a much more negative and condescending tone please see: Leonard Schmitt, Letter, *TNT*, 3 November 1968, p. 87 and Win Anderson, "Free Press: On the Mark, Or Off Base?", *TNT*, 21 May 1972, p. 139.
For a discussion of attempts to delegitimise anti-war protest through the use of quotation marks please see: Gitlin, *The Whole World Is Watching* (1980), p. 28.
[49] James Lewes, *Protest and Survive: Underground Newspapers During the Vietnam War* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2003), p. 53.
[50] "Info Denied the People", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.1, July 1971, p. 5.

and the newspaper therefore helped to fill this knowledge gap via its own, decidedly anti-war reporting. It was for this reason that anti-war servicemen continued to contravene military regulations in order to distribute their own newspapers which, in their opinion, provided a fairer account of the war and other social issues.

The *Free Press*' own awareness that they were not printing "the truth", but were simply analysing events in Vietnam and around the US from the opposite perspective to military and Establishment papers, altered throughout the course of its publishing. Between May-July 1971 the *Free Press* contained an advert which read: 'They lie. We Don't. Subscribe'.[51] The implication being that the paper was a conveyor of truth about the war and the situation of GIs, whereas 'They', presumably military publications, were not. The *Free Press* would not lie to GIs the way that *Stars and Stripes*, the *Ranger*, or the *Airlifter* did. By August 1971 – coinciding with the GI Alliance's takeover of the paper – they had seemingly dropped this pretence of objectivity, removing this advert from the paper. In his interview with the *TNT*, Henry Valenti, acting as commentator for the GIA, contradictorily commented that '[i]f printing the truth, admittedly subjective, destroys morale, it deserves to be destroyed.'[52] The editors of the paper were therefore seemingly aware, specifically under the GIA's direction, that whilst the media and the military were not objectively reporting on the war, they were not either. By May 1972, the paper was celebrating the subjectivity of the underground press as publications which 'make no pretense about their obvious political and editorial leanings' and therefore not deceiving their readership. On the other hand, they chastised the "straight" press for pretending to be objective when they distorted the actions of anti-war GIs.[53] Therefore, whilst the paper originally viewed itself as an objective reporter, under the Alliance it reversed this position, openly acknowledging itself as partisan. This position coincided with the transfer of the paper into the hands of the GIA and the concomitant slide to the Left. As the paper became more political, therefore, they dropped their pretence of objectivity.

GIs' fight for the right to distribute their paper was most ingeniously dramatised by the Alliance, who decided to distribute not the *Free Press*, but copies of the Declaration of Independence on Fort Lewis in 1971. The idea was attributed to GIA member Michael Royce

[51] Advert, *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.5, May 1971, p. 7; Advert, *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.6, June 1971, p. 7; and Advert, *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.1, July 1971, p. 7
[52] "Underground GI Sheet Publisher to Sue Army", *TNT*, 5 August 1971, p. 45.
[53] Unnamed, *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.5, May 1972, p. 3.

who, realising the radical and revolutionary content of the document, decided that GIs should distribute the Declaration on 4 July, the annual holiday commemorating the ratification of the document.[54] The *Free Press* reported that twenty GIs of the GIA and ten supportive civilians disseminated the document outside the PX, The Four Seasons Store, and the Pioneer Service Club for forty-five minutes before Military Police (MPs) began harassing the group. As distribution continued, more MPs arrived, eventually leading to the arrest of those present. The crime with which the GIs were charged was, according to the *Free Press*, 'distribution of dissident literature'. However, once the MPs realised that this 'dissident literature' was actually the Declaration of Independence, the charges were altered to 'passing out literature without the prior approval of the CG [Commanding General] of Fort Lewis'.[55]

The passing out of the Declaration was perhaps one of the most ingenious examples of protest on Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base (AFB). The *Free Press* explained that the drama was designed to 'break the strangle hold' that military authorities had on what news was allowed on base.[56] One of those involved, Terry Irvin, remarked that the GIs involved knew "good and well what was going to happen" when they handed out this literature, emphasising that the purpose of the act was to create a spectacle.[57] Instead of being disadvantaged, as anti-war GIs often were when they were arrested for distribution of unauthorised literature, the GIA outmanoeuvred the military to engineer a situation that was shocking for outside viewers and embarrassing for the military itself. Making the military designate the Declaration of Independence, perhaps the most sacrosanct document in American history, as dissident literature was evidently part of the Alliance's ploy, and they deliberately enticed MPs into arresting them for distributing it. Michael Royce remarked: "we figured they probably wouldn't prosecute us, and that it would get news, and it would expose kind of […] the hypocrisy of the war. I mean, here we are fighting for freedom [in Vietnam]. But […] GIs can't even speak their

[54] "G.I. Resistance Pacific NW – Meet Four GI Resisters", GI Resistance in the Pacific Northwest Panel, University of Washington, Seattle, 6 October 2022, via: YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPQp6nQU1vE [accessed: 18/02/24]. The act does not appear to have actually occurred on fourth of July as it was reported on in the *Tacoma News Tribune* on the first of that month. The University of Washington's "GI Movement Timeline" places the act on 30 June. However, as this is unattributed, it is difficult to verify this date. Nevertheless, it is evident that the act was supposed to coincide with this date as one arrested GI, Rick Adair, claimed that passing out the Declaration was his way of celebrating Independence Day. Win Anderson, "Papers Get 16 Escorted Out in Hassle", *TNT*, 1 July 1971, p. 1. To see the UW's timeline please visit: "GI Movement Timeline 1965-1973", via: Pacific Northwest Antiwar and Radical History Project, https://depts.washington.edu/antiwar/gi_timeline.shtml [accessed: 04/09/24].
[55] "Fort Lewis Free Speech Movement: GI's Busted for Passing Out Declaration", *LMFP,* Vol.3, No.1, July 1971, p. 1 and 3.
[56] Ibid., p. 1 and 3.
[57] Interview of Terry Irvin, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 5 October 2022.

truths."[58] The document, its planned date of distribution, and the knowledge that they would be arrested were all ways that the GIA cleverly planned to grab headlines and dramatise the GIs' fight for freedom of the press on Fort Lewis. Indeed, Henry Valenti maintains that the Alliance was so successful in this tactic that the event was covered by CBS news anchor, Walter Cronkite, widely regarded as an important gauge of attitudes towards the Vietnam War.[59] As a result, the action was covered locally by the *TNT* and broadcast on CBS, one of the largest three television networks in America, and the protesters achieved their desired result.[60]

A resultant impact of GIs' anti-war opinion and their determination to continue publishing their discontent was their inevitable conflict with the military justice system. The system itself was codified by the creation of the UCMJ in 1951, underwent slight alterations under the Military Justice Act of 1968, and consisted of four different levels of severity.[61] The first, and most arbitrary, stage was non-judicial punishment, mostly called Article 15s, referring to the article of the UCMJ in which the terms of this punishment were logged.[62] This level was described by Terry Irvin as "like a traffic ticket basically. Then you get into the court-martials after that".[63] Article 15s were most irritating to the general GI population and the punishment, which was decided by a commissioned officer, could range from restriction to post, forfeiture of pay, reduction in rank, and even time in the stockade. According to Radine, Article 15s functioned as 'an enormously useful technique of social control' to deter GIs from behaving in specific ways, one of which was anti-war activity, as they were so rarely appealed by unknowledgeable and scared servicemen.[64] As pointed out by Irvin, following non-judicial

[58] Interview of Michael Royce, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 7 October 2022.
[59] Interview of Henry Valenti, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 4 October 2022. According to Melvin Small, Cronkite was so influential that after he came out in opposition to the war in February 1968, President Lyndon Johnson felt that 'if Cronkite, a moderate and a patriot, was turning on his policies, then he [Johnson] must be losing millions of like-minded Americans as well'. Melvin Small, *Johnson, Nixon, and the Doves* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1988), p. 138.
[60] For *Tacoma News Tribune* articles which cover this event please see: Win Anderson, "Papers Get 16 Escorted Out in Hassle", *TNT*, 1 July 1971, pp. 1-2; "Soldier Expected to Ask Court Martial to Answer Charges", *TNT*, 9 July 1971, p. 10; and "ACLU Files Suit to 'Open' Fort", *TNT*, 9 November 1971, p. 32.
[61] For a history of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, including the reasons for why the code was created, please see: Uniform Code of Military Justice (1946-1951), via: Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/collections/military-legal-resources/articles-and-essays/military-law-and-legislative-histories/uniform-code-of-military-justice-1946-to-1951/ [accessed: 10/04/25].
[62] Lawrence B. Radine, *The Taming of the Troops: Social Control in the United States Army* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1977), pp. 185-186.
[63] Interview of Terry Irvin, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 5 October 2022.
[64] Radine, *The Taming of the Troops* (1977), p. 187. The *Free Press* and *GI Voice* often lamented the use of Article 15s as an arbitrary form of punishment in which GIs were encouraged to forfeit their pay and rights in order to avoid more serious punishment. For articles in the *Free Press* and *GI Voice* which bemoan the use of Article 15s please see: "Coalition Demands", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 2; "Bust Book: Article 15", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.6, June 1971, p. 6; "Commanding Creep of Chuckles Co.", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.3, September

punishments were the remaining three levels of the military justice system (in order from least-severe to most-severe): summary courts-martial, special courts-martial, and general courts-martial. The technicalities, the convening authority – that is, the military officer who had the power to convene the court-martial – who attends the trial, and the severity of punishment all changed depending on the type of court-martial.[65]

The system itself was enforced by Military Police, military judges, such as members of the Judge Advocate General Corps, officers of the Criminal Investigation Division and the average officer who had the power to discipline, give out Article 15s, and court-martial GIs. This last group ranged from the Non-Commissioned Officer, who managed EMs, right up to the base commander. When questioned about his relationship to the system, Terry Irvin quipped that the term military justice was an oxymoron, "[l]ike jumbo shrimp", and that "[i]t was all one sided".[66] It was, of course, intended to be one-sided. Radine claims that military law was 'based on protecting the organization from the individual rather than the reverse'.[67] Whilst perhaps a little naïve to think that they would not receive punishment for undermining the explicit purpose of the military, it is understandable that ex-GIs reflected on their relationship to military law somewhat negatively. After all, the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* spent a great deal of time reporting on what GIs viewed as the unlawful incarceration of servicemen, whether anti-war or not.[68] The relationship between GIs and the military justice system was tense during

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1971, p. 5; "Russ Thump Yanks, Nab Title", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.6, December 1971, p. 3; "GI Alliance: What We Want", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.2, February 1972, p. 2; "Newsletters Flourish", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.4, March [April] 1972, p. 2; "B Co Step Backwards", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.4, March [April] 1972, p. 3; "Counseling", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.6, July 1972, p. 2; "Petition to end Art. 15's" Vol.5, No.1, Midmonth August 1972, p. 7; "176th Signal: Fantasyland???", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.3, October 1972, p. 3; "At McChord: Racism Exposed", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, p. 1; "GIA Program", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, p. 2; "Old King Cole", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, p. 3; "3/39th Inf.: MVA Harassment", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.6, April 1973, p. 1; "Fight Back", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.7, May 1973, p. 1; "Stand Up", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.8, June 1973, p. 6; "Know Your Regs", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.11, November 1973, p. 3; "Courtesy Patrol Hits Hard", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.12, December 1973, p. 2; and "Drug Amnesty Program: Military Rip-Off", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.12, December 1973, p. 5.

[65] For more information on the types of court-martial please see: Radine, *The Taming of the Troops* (1977), pp. 185-192.

[66] Interview of Terry Irvin, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 5 October 2022.

[67] Radine, *The Taming of the Troops* (1977), p. 14.

[68] For examples of the *Free Press* reporting on the relationship between anti-war GIs and the military justice system please see: "Lewis 6 Refuse Vietnam Duty", *Fort Lewis Free Press*, Vol.1, No.1, August 1970, p. 1; ""Justice" for Presidio 27 at Last", *Fort Lewis Free Press*, Vol.1, No.1, August 1970, p. 1; "Post Chapel Dedicated to Anti-Draft Saint", *Fort Lewis Free Press*, Vol.1, No.1, August 1970, p. 1; "Stapp Honourably Discharged", *Fort Lewis Free Press*, Vol.1, No.1, August 1970, p. 1; "SPD Shafts C.O.", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.2, September 1970, p. 3; "Stockade Administration Real Criminals", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 3; "Dix and Allen Still in Slam", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.2, September 1970, p. 1; "Ft. Lewis Six: Petitions Denied, Trial Set", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 1; "Green Machine Sentences F L Six", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.4, November 1970, p. 1; "Fort Lewis Six: Three Hustled to Leavenworth", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.5, December 1970, p. 3; "Reflections", *LMFP,* Vol.1, No.4, November 1970, p. 5; "Selective (In)justice for C.O.", *LMFP*, Vol.1,

the Vietnam War. The rate at which servicepeople received Article 15s was rising in the early 1970s, with 137 per thousand GIs receiving one in fiscal year 1968 but 183 per thousand in 1972. Likewise, courts-martial for what the Department of the Army referred to as 'certain acts of insubordination, mutiny and willful disobedience' rose from 252 in 1968 to 382 by 1970.[69]

The influx of young men entering the military and finding its strict rule system confronting prompted the publication of Robert S. Rivkin's *GI Rights and Army Justice: The Draftee's Guide to Military Life* in 1970.[70] The *Free Press* singled out this book for praise due to its intention to create 'barracks lawyers' – EMs who could fight injustices through more adequate knowledge of military law.[71] After all, GIs did not receive a copy of the UCMJ when they entered the military and could only access one by visiting the orderly room on base. This deprived servicemen of proficiency with military law, inhibiting them from contesting the rules and decisions of their officers. After all, how were they to oppose their punishments if they did not know the law? Visiting the orderly room only signalled to members of the higher ranks the

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No.3, October 1970, p. 3; "Cadet Busted", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 7; "Peace Declared Obscene", Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 7; "Death is No Reason", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.4, November 1971, p. 4; "The Military Counselor", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.1, Midmonth August 1972, pp. 7-8; "GIA Bust", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.1, August 1972, p. 3; "On the Fronts", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.2, September 1972, p. 8; "Free Speech Fight", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.3, October 1972, p. 3; "Day in Court", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, p. 3; "Old King Cole", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, p. 3; and "Free Press Fight", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.6, Midmonth November 1972, p. 1.

For examples of the *Free Press* reporting on the relationship between African Americans and the military justice system please see: "Black GI's Beaten", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 7; "Dignity Costs Black 3 Years", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.4, November 1970, p. 1; ""Frag Frame Up", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.1, August 1972, p. 3; "Sept.6: Billy's Trial Begins", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.2, September 1972, p. 4; "Free Billy Smith", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.3, October 1972, p. 3; "Billy Set Free", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.6, Midmonth November 1972, p. 2; and "Calley Smith Trials", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.7, December 1972, p. 8; "Prosecution Foiled", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.4, October Midmonth 1972, p. 4; "At McChord: Racism Exposed", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, p. 1 and 6; "Old King Cole", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, p. 3; "Fight Back", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.7, December 1972, p. 1; "Brother Hubbard: On Racism in the Air Force", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.7, December 1972, p. 4 and 6; and "Take a Look Around", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.7, December 1972, p. 6.

For examples of the *Free Press* commenting on the poor conditions and treatment of GIs in military stockades please see: "Stockade Administration Real Criminals", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 3 and "Bucky Bummer", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.6, Midmonth November 1972, p. 2.

For examples of the petty harassment of EMs by their superiors please see: "176th Signal: Fantasyland???", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.3, October 1972, p. 3; "At McChord: Posters Scare Jones", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.4, October Midmonth 1972, p. 1; and "Fight Back", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.7, December 1972, p. 1.

As demonstrated, there was ubiquitous coverage of these issues in the *Free Press*. It has therefore been decided to only include examples from Volumes 1 and 5. This has been done for the purposes of brevity, but also comparison, to show the extent that the paper continued their practice of highlighting the conflicts between GIs and the military justice system. For more examples of these issues please see the rest of the volumes of the paper.

[69] Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), p. 23.

[70] Robert S. Rivkin, *GI Rights and Army Justice: The Draftee's Guide to Military Life and Law* (New York: Grove Press, inc., 1970).

[71] "Bust Book: Book Review", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.2, February 1971, p. 6.

intention of a GI to fight a legal battle against the military and the placement of the UCMJ in just one place emphasised a deliberate effort to discourage GIs from doing so.[72]

In order to circumvent this, the *Free Press* itself assumed the role of educator for people on base. By the second issue of the paper, the GI-Airmen-Sailor Coalition began a series of articles referred to as the 'Bust Book'.[73] The importance of such a series was explained by the paper itself which claimed that '[o]ne way of organizing and fighting is by knowing what the law says our rights are and using the law whenever we can to help ourselves'.[74] Aware that the military's regulations were designed to protect the institution rather than its members (particularly those of lower ranks, especially draftees), the *Free Press* positioned itself as a defender of what they referred to as 'GI rights' by educating their readership about the laws of the UCMJ.

The paper also viewed itself as a watchdog of the military justice system. In a telling positioning of articles, the *Free Press* demonstrated that the anti-war press could be used to constrain the arbitrariness of the military. In its first edition, the paper published a piece on six Fort Lewis GIs who were arrested for refusing to go to Vietnam. Placed next to this article, on the front page of the newspaper, was another column celebrating the release of all members of the Presidio 27 in June 1970.[75] The campaign by the anti-war movement against the arrest of the Presidio mutineers, and the consequent negative press that this decision received, had been so effective in the past that it had forced military authorities to lower the sentences of the mutineers.[76] The positive effects which the press had in this instance were even more relevant to the *Free Press* than most GI publications because one of the papers' editors was the recently released mutineer, Randy Rowland. From the inception of the newspaper, therefore, the *Free*

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[72] Radine, *The Taming of the Troops* (1977), p. 11.
[73] "Bust Book: What Rights Do You Have?", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.2, September 1970, p. 6. For more examples of the *Free Press*' 'Bust Book' and other articles which sought to educate GIs on their rights please see: "Bust Book: Your Rights When Arrested by Civilian Authorities", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 6; "Bust Book: Your Rights When Arrested by Military Authorities", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.5, December 1970, p. 6; "Bust Book: Article 138: Your Defense Against the Brass", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.1, January 1971, p. 4; "Bust Book: The Last Harass", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.5, May 1971, p. 6; "Bust Book: Article 31", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.2, August 1971, p. 6; "Bust Book: Pretrial Confinement", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.3, September 1971, p. 6; "Bust Book: Sue Your Sergeant", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.5, November 1971, p. 6; "Bust Book: Fight That Eviction", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.6, December 1971, p. 6; and "Bust Book: Burn Your CO", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.2, February 1972, p. 6.
[74] "Bust Book: What Rights Do You Have?", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.2, September 1970, p. 6.
[75] "Lewis 6 Refuse Vietnam Duty", *Fort Lewis Free Press*, Vol.1, No.1, August 1970, p. 1 and ""Justice" for Presidio 27 at Last", *Fort Lewis Free Press*, Vol.1, No.1, August 1970, p. 1.
[76] For a discussion of the Presidio Mutiny and the effect of the anti-war movement in getting the mutineers' sentences reduced, please see Chapter 2.

Press' editors were aware that the press could affect decisions in the military, and it does not seem unapt to say that the paper sought to do something similar on Lewis and McChord. Positioning these two articles next to each other created an implicit link between the success of the anti-war movement in emancipating arrested GIs and this instance on Fort Lewis.

The job of the *Free Press*, therefore, was to broadcast perceived injustices as widely as they possibly could. As early as September 1970 the paper made this intention clear. Whilst they had attempted to brief their readership on their rights, they emphasised that '[w]e have to remember that we can't count on the law to help us out, because we don't have the power to make or enforce the law. We can only rely on ourselves and on our own willingness to organize so we can fight back'.[77] The editors of the *Free Press* highlighted that their publication was necessary as a way to document the oppression of EMs, something which was, of course, not covered in "straight" or military newspapers. In December 1972, the editors claimed that during 'any disagreements or struggles between the Brass and the EM, the Brass […] usually get their side of the story known and it almost always prevails. The EM's side of the story is usually hushed up and put down.'[78] By printing these issues in the ten thousand copies of the *Free Press* which were published each month, the paper's editors desired to hold the military accountable for their actions. In doing so, they exposed abuses against GIs and focused attention on officers on base, making it more difficult for them to persecute servicemen for their indiscretions against the law. Lawrence B. Radine has indicated that this was somewhat successful, and the military became less likely to court-martial and punish anti-war GIs because of the ruckus it usually created.[79]

As part of letting the military know that they were being watched, the *Free Press* reported on the smallest altercations between EMs and "the Brass" which GIs on large military bases would not usually be aware of. In October 1970, for example, they described the harassment of four marines at Camp Pendleton (CA) who were made to lie face down in the dirt and charged with 'making "obscene gestures"' by MPs who they had flashed the two-fingered peace salute at.[80] In a similar vein, the newspaper reported on other forms of harassment, such as allocation to Kitchen Patrol (KP), a duty in which low-ranking soldiers had to perform menial tasks in the

[77] "Bust Book: What Rights Do You Have", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.2, September 1970, p. 6.
[78] "Fight Back", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.7, December 1972, p. 1.
[79] Radine, *The Taming of the Troops* (1977), pp. 17-18.
[80] "Peace Declared Obscene", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 7.

kitchens and canteens of military bases. The paper commented on the particularly cruel instance of Private First Class, Russel D. Sheely, who was made to carry out KP despite having a medical excuse not to, as he was unable to walk, march, or stand on his injured leg for over thirty minutes. The paper reported that Sheely was berated for not fulfilling his KP duty and, after twelve days, his sergeant threatened him with a court-martial.[81] The *Free Press* was filled with similar seemingly innocuous and mundane stories of petty abuse; however, they were included in the paper not as standalone stories but as examples of the broader harassment EMs faced at the hands of their superiors.[82] In this way, such anecdotal specific instances evidenced wider patterns of aggression and oppression that the paper wished to expose.

One such pattern was the uneven treatment which EMs (a term which did not refer to how a GI entered the military – i.e. it did not mean that they were an enlistee – but simply denoted servicemen of the enlisted ranks, those who were not commissioned officers) received in comparison with the officer class. This second group was referred to by the paper as 'lifers', indicating that they were career soldiers, likely to spend their lives in the armed forces, and were thus representative of the oppressive positions of the military.[83] For example, in order to dramatise this inequity, the paper contrasted the treatment of two extremely well-known cases tried in military courts during the Vietnam War: Lieutenant William Calley, court-martialled, and thus given responsibility, for the My Lai Massacre, and Private Second Class, Billy Dean Smith, a Black EM who was accused of fragging (killing with a fragmentation grenade) his superior officers. To begin, the *Free Press* reported on the preferential treatment Calley received following his conviction for 'murdering over a score of South Vietnamese civilians'.[84] This included having his sentenced reduced to twenty years by President Nixon and being

[81] "KP 14 Days", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.3, March 1972, p. 3.
[82] For evidence of these discussions of petty abuse please see: "Air Force in Air About Hair Reg", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.2, September 1970, p. 3; "SPD Shafts C.O.", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.2, September 1970, p. 3; "Reserves Get OJT", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.2, September 1970, p. 3; "Stockade Administration the Real Criminals", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 3; "Hair Reg a Farce", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 3 and 8; "Selective (In)Justice for C.O.", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 3; "No Change for Air Hair", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 4; "Cadet Busted", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 7; "Peace Declared Obscene", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 7; "Payday Ripoffs", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 8; "Death is No Reason", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.4, November 1970, p. 4; "Spengler Beats Rap", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.4, November 1970, p. 4; "Mail Harrassed [sic] at Fort Lewis", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.5, December 1970, p. 2; and "PCS Counselor [sic] Fights Ban", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.5, December 1970, p. 3. Examples provided are limited only to the first edition of the *Free Press* due to the ubiquity of such commentary.
[83] For articles which contrast the treatment of EMs and the officers in the military legal system please see: "Calley Smith Trials", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.7, December 1972, p. 8; "All Men Are Equal", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.2, September 1972, p. 3; "Army Justice", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.3, March 1972, p. 3; and "A Company Double Dealing", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.1, January 1972, p. 3.
[84] "Calley Smith Trials", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.7, December 1972, p. 8.

allowed to reside, not in the stockade or at the United States Disciplinary Barracks (otherwise referred to as Fort Leavenworth), as an EM would be, but under house arrest in an apartment on Fort Benning (GA). For GIs of the *Free Press*, therefore, Calley was the ultimate example of how the 'brass take care of their own'.[85] The paper proceeded to contrast this with commentary on how Smith was held for twenty-one months in solitary confinement whilst he awaited trial for fragging. Although he was found not guilty of this act, Smith was charged with spitting at an MP whilst he was being arrested, for which he received a Bad Conduct discharge and a reduction in rank to E1.[86] The *Free Press*' juxtaposition of the generosity that Calley received for committing war crimes with the iniquitous treatment of Smith for as small an act as spitting at an officer heightened the sense of a partisan approach to the military justice system's punishment of EMs and lifers. These criticisms of the unjust treatment faced by the oppressed, or the "little guy", up against the aggressive, intimidating and bullying military justice system, were similar to the way they conceptualised the Vietnamese up against the behemoth of US imperialism (discussed in the next chapter).

The hierarchical system of the military therefore made it clear to the editors of the *Free Press* that there was an inequity between the treatment of EMs and lifers, leading to the paper sardonically titling one article 'all men are equal'.[87] 'Army justice', the paper declared, 'is only for those who have accepted the Army for what it is, not for those who are only here for a short time.'[88] Those who filled the rank-and-file and did not desire climbing the military hierarchy were deemed to not be as worthy of leniency. From January 1972, the paper increasingly conceptualised the young men who filled the lowest ranks of the military as EMs, and the term became a useful tool to demarcate these GIs from the upper echelons of the military. As Figure 2 exemplifies, the paper felt that officers had such little regard for EMs that they figuratively defecated on them. The cartoon is also demonstrative of how they also believed in the truthfulness of the idiom about hierarchy: "shit rolls downhill".

[85] Ibid., p. 8.
[86] Ibid., p. 8.
[87] "All Men Are Equal", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.2, September 1972, p. 3.
[88] "Justice: 9th S&T Style", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.3, October 1972, p. 7.

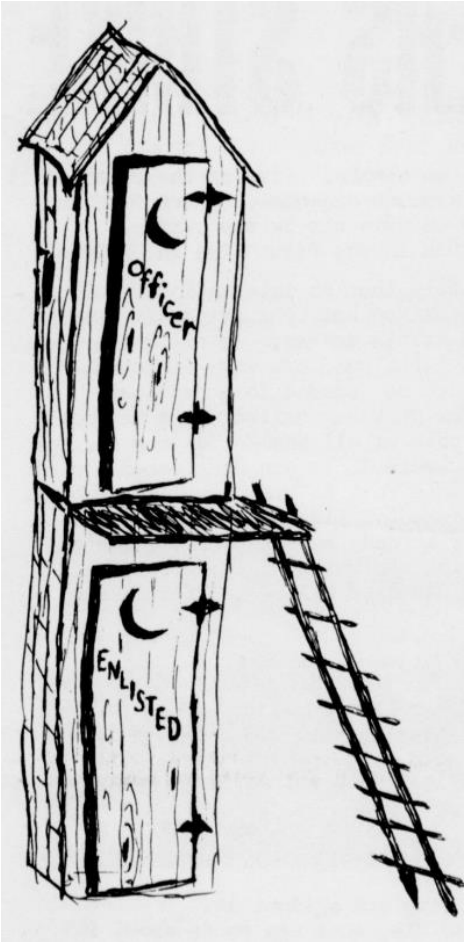

Figure 6: Cartoon, *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, Vol.6, No.6, April 1973, p. 2.

Whilst the paper commented on the day-to-day issues and harassment of GIs, acting as educators and reporters of these problems, they also sought to expose the particularly negative treatment faced by anti-war protesters. These stories were often much larger events than the simple and mundane issues of harassment. The arrest of six Fort Lewis GIs – Carl Dix, Paul Forrest, Manuel Perez, James Allen, Lawrence Galgano, and Jeff Griffith in late June 1970 – immediately provided the *Free Press* with an example of this poor treatment.[89] In August 1970, the paper documented the arrest of these men for refusing to report to the Overseas Replacement Station to be sent on to Vietnam. The Six had all previously submitted two

[89] Carl Dix was later a member of the New Communist Movement group, the Black Workers Congress, and then the Revolutionary Communist Party, for which he was a national spokesperson. This emphasises that the GI Alliance were not the only GIs who had been or would be interested in Marxist politics on Fort Lewis. Bob Avakian, *From Ike to Mao and Beyond: My Journey from Mainstream America to Revolutionary Communist* (Chicago: Insight Press, 2005), p. 277. For a discussion of the GI Alliance's interest in Marxist ideas please see Chapter 6.

applications for Conscientious Objector status which had been denied.[90] Carl Dix physically refused to board an aircraft to Vietnam recalling that he "had heard stories of people being forcibly put on the plane and [he] figured no sense in going any closer than right here", "here" being the place where he sat on his duffle bag and said "I'm not leaving".[91] The paper explicitly emphasised the personal element of the GIs' plight, discussing their talks at different churches and coffeehouses, and making specific note that '[t]hey are personally known to many members of the community', thus making the issues facing the men more relevant to readers.[92] This event was also so significant as it was, according to *Fed Up!*, 'the largest group to refuse shipment to Vietnam at Fort Lewis and possibly the largest such united action at any Army shipment center.'[93]

In documenting the Fort Lewis Six, as they became known, the paper took particular issue with the pre-trial confinement of Dix and Allen.[94] They claimed that Post Regulation 27-2 stated that soldiers could only be held in pre-trial confinement if the military had reason to suspect that 'there is danger that the person may try to physically injure himself or there is substantial evidence indicating they would not remain around for the trial'.[95] The confinement of these men who, according to the *Free Press*, posed no such risks was therefore an extension of punishment 'beyond the maximum allowed' under military regulations. The paper speculated that the reason for placing these two soldiers into pre-trial confinement, was because the time spent under arrest was "bad time", i.e. time which did not count toward a GIs' Expiration Term of Service (ETS) date.[96] This emphasises the paper's belief that the military, as it was with the Vietnamese, was deliberately aggressive towards anti-war soldiers, punishing them, for actions which the paper maintained were just, but doing so in a way which inflicted the maximum amount of oppression. Therefore, whilst the *Free Press* reported on the growing number of altercations between GIs and the military justice system, the paper also sought to comment on

[90] "Lewis 6 Refuse Vietnam Duty", *Fort Lewis Free Press*, Vol.1, No.1, August 1970, p. 1.
[91] Carl Dix, 'I Sat Down on My Duffel Bag and said, "I'm not Leaving Here"', in *Waging Peace in Vietnam: U.S. Soldiers and Veterans Who Opposed the War,* ed. by in Ron Carver, David Cortright, and Barabara Doherty (New York: New Village Press, 2019), pp. 132-134 (p. 134).
[92] "Lewis 6 Refuse Vietnam Duty", *Fort Lewis Free Press*, Vol.1, No.1, August 1970, p. 1.
[93] "Ft. Lewis 6 Refuse Nam", *Fed Up!*, Vol.1, No.6, July 1970, p. 1.
[94] For articles which document the issues faced by the Fort Lewis Six please see: "Dix and Allen Still in Slam", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.2, September 1970, p. 1; "Ft. Lewis Six: Petitions Denied, Trial Set", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 1; "Green Machine Sentences F L Six", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.4, November 1970, p. 1; "Fort Lewis Six: Three Hustled to Leavenworth", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.5, December 1970, p. 3; "Fort Lewis Six Revisited", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.3, March 1971, p. 4; "Dix Documents Brutality at Leavenworth", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.3, March 1971, p. 4; and "Reflections", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.4, November 1970, p. 5.
[95] Quoted in "Dix and Allen Still in Slam", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.2, September 1970, p. 1.
[96] "Dix and Allen Still in Slam", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.2, September 1970, p. 1.

the particular treatment that anti-war servicemen faced. In this instance, the *Free Press* commented not only on the unjustness of the arrest of dissenting GIs but also the malicious treatment they received as a result of their stance.

Anti-war activity, ranging from attending an anti-war demonstration and distributing a GI newspaper to something as seemingly innocuous as making the two-fingered peace gesture, brought servicemen into clashes with military law, the military courts, and even the arbitrary wrath of their superior officers. As part of documenting the difficulties which anti-war GIs had with the military justice system, the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* positioned itself as an unofficial military ombudsman for the interactions between GIs, not always anti-war, and the military justice system. In this way, documentation and reporting on the harassment and oppression of servicemen, namely through Article 15s and other forms of arbitrary authority, helped to broaden the appeal of the newspaper to those young men who, whilst perhaps not openly anti-war, may have been discontented with their treatment in the military. The *Free Press*' commentary on this relationship also demonstrates the attitude of the low-ranking GIs toward military authorities and also the attempts of GI Movement groups to weaponize these instances of harassment into a concerted anti-military movement in the post-Vietnam era.

The *Free Press*' concern with the treatment of GIs on base also translated into a more thorough attempt to improve the life of EMs off base. They consequently took exception to the poverty and poor conditions which low-ranking servicemen often had to live in around Lewis and McChord, and the *Free Press* carried out a campaign advocating for better housing conditions around the bases.[97] This crusade therefore intersected with the GI Alliance's increasing interest in domestic issues.[98] The Alliance had been interested in tenants' rights, as they referred to them, before their acquisition of the *Free Press*. When publishing *Fed Up!*, for example, the group reported on the unjust treatment of tenants by their landlords at both the

[97] For articles which oppose landlords and advocated for tenants' rights in the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* please see: "Survival News", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.5, November 1971, p. 8; "Tenants Win Improvements", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.1, January 1972, p. 3 and 8; "Tenants Questionnaire", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.1, January 1972, p. 8; "Bust Book: Fight That Eviction", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.6, December 1971, p. 6; "Tenants Tell All: A Personal Interview", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.2, February 1972, p. 4; "Tenants Lobby", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.2, February 1972, p. 6; "The Good, Bad, and Ugly", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.2, February 1972, p. 7; "Housing Hoax Uncovered", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.3, March 1972, p. 7; "Tenants Unite: Angry Residents Picket Olson Realty", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.4, March [April] 1972, p. 1; "Newsletters Flourish", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.4, March [April] 1972, p. 2; "GIA vs Olsen: Tactical Redeployment", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.5, May 1972, p. 6; and "G.I. Tenants: "Unity is the Key!"", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.9, August 1973, p. 3.

[98] For a discussion of the GI Alliance's increasing focus on domestic issues, please see Chapter 6.

local Edgewood Park Apartments and Capri Apartments in Tacoma.[99] The goal of this work was simple: '[w]orking together, we can pressure landlords into treating us as we deserve to be treated'.[100] Allying with a pre-existing movement of tenants' rights groups in Washington, the GIA urged its readers to support a bill that this group had submitted to the State Legislature calling for established sanitary and safety standards for rented housing outside of the major cities. The bill also sought to regulate the prices that landlords could charge for their properties, stopping them from "ripping off" GIs and other locals.[101]

Whilst a broader issue, the fight for tenants' rights had specific implications for members of the military. In April 1971, for example, the Alliance declared in the first point of their programme: '[w]e want all GI Families to be provided with food, housing and medical care according to NEED, not RANK'.[102] As the emphasis on rank demonstrates, the problem of housing was a particularly acute one for EMs. In the *Free Press*, the Alliance continued their campaign, beginning with a 'tell all' interview with a local GI named Joe who explained '[b]eing a G.I. you have to take the first house available so you can start to unpack and be ready for work the following day'.[103] This rush meant that servicemen were often susceptible to agreeing to inadequate housing. In Joe's case, this meant animal manure on his carpets, holes in his floor which allowed cold air through, mice, and an infestation of insects which bit his wife and eight-month-old son.[104] The right to safe and sanitary housing, therefore, was tied explicitly to the paper's fight for the improvement of lower ranking GIs' lives. Officers were allowed to live off base and were paid adequately enough that poor quality accommodation was not an issue that they encountered. For the GIA, therefore, the issue of poor housing was an inherent consequence of the subordinate position which EMs held in the military.

To dramatise this, the Alliance submitted a very obviously dilapidated and unfit house to the Fort Lewis Housing Referral Office.[105] As Randy Rowland – who came up with the idea – stated, "you couldn't live in it. It was totally a wreck, just a pile of boards almost".[106] Nevertheless, when he registered the house, disguised as a landlord, Rowland encountered no

[99] "Basic Necessities of Life", *Fed Up!*, 28 April 1971, p. 3 and "Dear Landlord …", *Fed Up!,* 18 June 1971, p. 8.
[100] "Dear Landlord …", *Fed Up!,* 18 June 1971, p. 8.
[101] "Tenants Lobby", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.2, February 1972, p. 6.
[102] "Basic Necessities of Life", *Fed Up!*, 28 April 1971, p. 3.
[103] "Tenants Tell All: A Personal Interview", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.2, February 1972, p. 4.
[104] Ibid., p. 4.
[105] "Housing Hoax Uncovered", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.3, March 1972, p. 7.
[106] Interview with Randy Rowland, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 10 October 2022.

resistance and the paper highlighted that the Referral Office did not even inspect the house.[107] The idea, of course, was to deliberately ensnare and embarrass the military. As the *Free Press* itself acknowledged, the act was to 'show what any unscrupulous landlord could get away with'.[108] The military were seemingly uncaring about the conditions in which EMs lived and were happy to recommend poor accommodation to them. For the GI Alliance, this was because members of the upper echelons of the military and landlords belonged to the same oppressive class. They claimed that the Housing Referral Office 'acts as a free listing service for landlords and big real estate agencies, it gives the illusion of service to the people without actively doing anything'.[109]

As they had done with the lack of access to non-pro-war news on base, the *Free Press* sought to fill the information gap concerning local housing for GIs. In February 1972, therefore, the paper published an article evaluating fourteen landlords and housing rental companies in Tillicum, a small town next to Fort Lewis. Assessments ranged from Mrs Allen's '[d]irty two room shacks that are falling apart' to Mrs Olson who owned 500 units in the local area and had a reputation for calling up GIs' commanders to settle her issues. As well as serving as advice to GIs recently arrived at Fort Lewis, or those wishing to move off base, the paper hoped that 'landlords who do not get favourable mention will get the hint and fix up their houses or apartments'.[110] However, Olson did not, and as the landlord for the GIA "shack", she immediately evicted the group for their review.[111] The Alliance aimed to the use the *Free Press*, therefore, as a reliable information point for GIs, as they felt the military did not care enough about these issues, and also a warden of exploitative landlords. In response to their eviction, the GIA created a campaign of pickets against Olson Realty and formed a group called the Tillicum Tenants Committee which, they explicitly emphasised, was created to act as 'a watchdog for tenants' rights'.[112]

This campaign was celebrated by the GI Alliance when writing into the *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin*. The organisation claimed that they aided specific tenants with their issues by forcing landlords into making repairs, that they led a twenty-five-man protest against one of the

[107] "Housing Hoax Uncovered", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.3, March 1972, p. 7.
[108] Ibid., p. 7.
[109] Ibid., p. 7.
[110] "The Good, Bad, and the Ugly", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.2, February 1972, p. 7.
[111] "Tenants Unite: Angry Residents Picket Olson Realty", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.4, March [April] 1972, p. 1
[112] Ibid., p. 1

landlords, and that their activism was an attempt 'to drive a wedge between the worst landlords (in the majority) and the more decent, smaller ones.' Whilst no attempt is made by the *Free Press* to establish the success of their campaign, the Alliance emphasised that this issue attracted GIs 'who woul[d] not otherwise have been involved' in the organisation and that some ended up joining the GIA. Likewise, they indicated that this was an issue especially related to women and stated that many had become members of the GIA through their organising around this issue.[113] These broader criticisms were therefore successful ways of involving larger numbers of people in GI activism.

Figure 7: Photograph, Members of the GI Alliance Picket Olson Realty After They are Evicted from Their "Shack" in Tillicum, Washington (11 March 1972), *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, Vol.4 No.4, March [April] 1972, p. 1.

As discussed, whilst GIs' activism had little effect on the war itself, there are empirical indicators that it rankled the military, and these battles which the GI activists fought with officers, the military justice system, and the commands of Lewis and McChord had some effect. Former *Free Press* editor, Henry Valenti, commented that being a member of the GI Alliance seemed to act as a deterrent for the military sending a soldier to Vietnam. He claimed that "if

[113] "GI Alliance", *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin*, Issue 12, April-June 1972, pp. 9-10.

GIs just came working with us [the GIA], they were avoiding Vietnam!"[114] The airman Dave Henry, who worked in supply on McChord, including a stint working in the flight line laboratory, accorded with this. He emphasised that as a direct result of his association with the GIA and his role as an organiser, he was "redlined" from the combat zone.[115] Henry suggested that the Air Force no longer trusted him and he was removed from working on aeroplanes because of this, indicating that they felt that, if he was allowed to, he would be involved in some form of sabotage.[116]

The deliberate targeting of members of the GIA to not be sent to Vietnam indicates that the Alliance did indeed have an impact on the commands at Lewis and McChord. Whilst perhaps not the effect they expected or desired, anti-war activism in the 1970s, likely because of the desire to withdraw troops from the combat zone rather than introduce troublesome ones, resulted in the more personally beneficial effect of not having to serve in Vietnam. Whilst military authorities were better able to control these dissidents on bases in the US, discipline was much more difficult to enforce in the combat zone, indicated by the rise in fraggings during the Vietnam era.[117] It is, therefore, not extreme to conclude that the military did not send these GIs to Vietnam because it viewed them as effective organisers, people who would be able to exploit and harness the chaos and outright rebellion which accompanied the front lines.

Associated with this desire to eliminate dissident GIs from the combat zone was also the wish to remove them from the military. By 1972, for example, the *Free Press* had noted this strange situation, claiming that, by this stage, the military was resorting to discharging more troublesome soldiers. As early as January 1972, the paper received a letter from an airman at Fairchild AFB (WA) who stated that receiving and distributing the *Free Press* had inspired his base commander to discharge him in order to get rid of him.[118] Likewise, in September 1972, the newspaper commented that '[i]n the past 6 months several GIs have been discharged for

[114] Interview of Henry Valenti, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 4 October 2022.
[115] Interview of Dave Henry, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 9 October 2022.
[116] Ibid. Sabotage was not an uncommon fear for the military during this period. In September 1972, the *Free Press* reported that a sailor from Puyallup, Washington, had been arrested for throwing a paint scraper into the reduction gears of the *USS Ranger*. "On the Fronts", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.2, September 1972, p. 8. Similarly, at the Marine air base in Thailand, used as a staging area for the bombing campaign in Cambodia, GIs reported frequent acts of fodding (foreign object damage) and Cortright speculates that similar acts occurred towards planes of the Air Force. Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), p. 136.
[117] For a discussion of the rise of fraggings in Vietnam please see: Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), pp. 43-47.
[118] Letter, *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.1, January 1972, p. 2.

FREE PRESS related activities – all honorably, we might add'.[119] The editors of the *Free Press* were correct to point out the importance of anti-war activists achieving honourable discharges. In the past, GIs had received less-than-honourable discharges for their anti-war position and thus lost their veterans benefits and suffered from the stigma of a dishonourable discharge, which employers often checked before hiring someone, for doing so. However, the fact that GIs of the Alliance were receiving honourable discharges for such actions implies that the base commands no longer wanted to engage in battles with well-informed anti-war servicemen who would argue their discharge status.

The *Free Press* also explicitly related these early discharges to attempts to curb the GI Movement. The paper emphasised that Dave Henry still had twenty-nine months left to serve before his ETS when he was honourably discharged, stating that this was an attempt to quell the GI Movement on McChord, something they claimed they would not let happen.[120] Whether discontented GIs and anti-war activists were viewed as genuinely problematic, or simply as needless irritants during a period in which the Army was attempting to reinvent itself, however, is indeterminable. If only by affecting the military to give them an honourable discharge, therefore, anti-war activists of the *Free Press* did have an effect on base.

Whilst a positive for individual young men who were discontented with being in the military, Radine has argued that these discharges represented successful attempts by the military to undercut the GI Movement. Radine contends that military activists since the conclusion of the Vietnam War have been left wondering 'why they were so ineffective as resistance organizers at a time when there seemed to be such strong anti-war and anti-Army feelings among both soldiers and civilians'.[121] He explains this as the result of the Army's ability to socially control the main contingent of GIs on base. He suggests that as the war moved on, the Army moved away from coercive techniques of social control, i.e. strict discipline, to co-optive forms which involved making improvements and being more willing to concede to soldiers.[122] The preparedness to discharge and accept some of the needs of low-ranking GIs were tactics which, along with the conclusion of American involvement in the Vietnam War, took some of the impetus out of GI activism. Former GI activist turned Historian, Terry H. Anderson,

[119] "Freep Flys On!", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.2, September 1972, p. 7.
[120] "GIA Early Outs", *LMFP,* Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, p. 6.
[121] Radine, *The Taming of the Troops* (1977), p. xi.
[122] Ibid., p. 28.

commented that 'some reversion to the old ways occurred' following the end of the GI Movement, which, whilst there is no definitive conclusion, dissipated by the beginning of 1974, making the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* one of the last vestiges of the Movement.[123] Whilst 'reversion to the old ways' is an ambiguous phrase, it is likely that Anderson was referring to a return to the more oppressive and authoritarian standards of the military that the GI Movement had fought against. Therefore, study of the Movement demonstrates not only how young servicemen responded to the military, but how the military responded to them. As the conflict wound down, the military took to removing anti-war GIs from the most dangerous positions and eventually resorted to discharging them. In this sense, they were freed from the confines of the military partially because of their activism against it.

During the Vietnam War the military, unchanged for decades, was in a state of flux and the *Free Press* provides a grassroots window into how the modifications to the Army were perceived by GIs on the ground. As discussed, following the conclusion of World War II, the US had maintained a peacetime draft which remained a major source of manpower for the Vietnam War. However, in the run up to the 1968 Presidential election, Republican candidate Richard Nixon, in what Beth Bailey has described as 'a politically opportunistic and Nixon-esque move', announced his desire to quash this Cold War convention and create 'an all-volunteer armed force'.[124] GI Movement scholars have attributed the creation of the all-volunteer force (AVF) to the Movement and claimed it as its most visible effect.[125] Cortright has stated that '[s]eeing the GI Movement and low morale as primarily caused by draftees and reluctant volunteers, the Pentagon embraced the all-volunteer force as a means of changing the social base of the military and thus eliminating unrest.'[126] Contemporaneously, Waterhouse and Wizard stated that the '[i]ncreased determination of the GI Movement in the face of traditional repression has presented a grave threat to policy-makers. Thus, a major

[123] Terry H. Anderson, 'The GI Movement and the Response from the Brass', in *Give Peace a Chance: Exploring the Vietnam Antiwar Movement,* ed. by Melvin Small and William D. Hoover (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1992), p. 115.
[124] Bailey, *America's Army* (2009), p. 2 and Richard Nixon, *The All-Volunteer Armed Force* (CBS Radio Network, 17 October 1968), via: The American Presidency Project, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-the-cbs-radio-network-the-all-volunteer-armed-force [accessed: 21/06/24].
[125] For a much more detailed and in-depth history of the move to an all-volunteer force please see: Bailey, *America's Army* (2009) and Robert K. Griffith Jr., *The U.S. Army's Transition to the All-Volunteer Force 1968-1974* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1997).
[126] Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), p. 182.

reorganization of the military structure [the AVF] is now under way'.[127] Anderson has taken a broader and more accurate view of the AVF, claiming that its creation was due to the unpopularity of the war in general, rather than the GI Movement specifically. He has, however, acknowledged that '[i]n a sense, the adoption of volunteer service marked the ultimate triumph of the GI Movement'.[128] Thus, in the ending of the draft and the creation of the AVF, GI Movement scholars have tended to see a concrete example of the impact of anti-war GIs.

The view of the GI Movement as the main causative factor in the move to an AVF, however, masks the complex dynamic between the military and the government which occurred during this period. After his public announcement on 17 October 1968, just nine days into his Presidency, Nixon commissioned Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird to create 'a detailed plan of action for ending the draft'.[129] Bailey has highlighted that whilst 'widespread disaffection with the draft made Nixon's proposal politically viable', the real impetus for repealing conscription was not to quieten this contingent of disgruntled Americans or vocal youths, but was in fact motivated by a group of economists within the Nixon Administration. Whilst she makes it clear that such an opportunity could not arise without the high degree of dissatisfaction with the war by 1968, Bailey states that these conservative and libertarian economists argued that the military could be turned into a free market. In doing so, they asserted that service to the nation should not be determined by a "big government" but instead by men and women themselves, based on their 'own economic best interest'.[130] Ironically, the impetus for the AVF stemming from a select group of free market economists, legitimised the GIA's notions that the purpose and the function of the military was determined by capitalists, although they were unaware of this at the time (detailed below). These economists therefore 'meant to replace the logic of citizenship with the logic of the market'.[131] They steered the more pragmatic Nixon, and on 27 March 1969 the President's Commission on an All-Volunteer Force – otherwise known as the Gates Commission – was created.[132] By February 1970, the Commission had come to the decision that an all-volunteer Army could indeed be created and sent their conclusions to Nixon. On 23 April Nixon sent a letter to Congress endorsing the project.[133] GI

[127] Larry G. Waterhouse and Mariann G. Wizard, *Turning the Guns Around: Notes on the GI Movement* (New York: Praeger, 1971), p. 182.
[128] Anderson, 'The GI Movement and the Response from the Brass', in *Give Peace a Chance* (1992), p. 115.
[129] Nixon to Laird, January 29, 1969, AVA-CMH, quoted in Bailey, *America's Army* (2009), p. 24.
[130] Bailey, *America's Army* (2009), p. 4.
[131] Ibid., p. 4.
[132] Ibid., pp. 23-24.
[133] Ibid., pp. 31-32.

Movement scholars have thus overstated the importance of the Movement with regards to the decision to move to an AVF. The official order for its creation came from the Executive branch, spearheaded by a number of free market economists, and endorsed by the President because of its ability to numb the war issue.

Whilst the power to remove the draft and institute an AVF rested with the government, these plans most heavily impacted the Army. Although Nixon announced his plans to move to an AVF on 17 October 1968, after recognising the likelihood of this occurrence, the Chief of Staff of the US Army, William C. Westmoreland, ordered a similar study a month prior.[134] This report, the Career Force Study, suggested that Westmoreland should support the curtailing of the draft and the move toward an AVF after American involvement in Vietnam had ended, and on the condition that the Army was capable of attracting a suitable amount of high quality volunteers. Whilst this study and the Army's second report, Project Volunteer in Defense of the Nation (PROVIDE), were not conceived in direct relation to the GI Movement, Griffith Jr. claims that between the first report and the second, 'much occurred that indirectly linked PROVIDE to broader trends affecting the Army'.[135] This period (late 1968-early 1969), of course saw the germination of the GI Movement proper, and the rise of widespread dissent and indiscipline across the military, particularly the Army. Whilst military leaders ratiocinated that increasing indiscipline, anti-war attitudes, drug usage, and racial unrest were by-products of similar discontent in the civilian sphere, they became increasingly aware that internal issues had exacerbated this. Still, fixated on the idea that such issues were 'imports from society', Westmoreland reasoned that the conversion to an AVF after Vietnam provided the Army with the opportunity to eliminate 'dissidents, malcontents, and misfits' from the service, and rid the military of its undercurrent of subversion.[136]

This does not, however, mean that the transition to an AVF was the favoured course of the Army. Westmoreland had only known a draft-supported Army and was slow to endorse the idea of an AVF, instead placing emphasis on enhancing the attractiveness of the institution to garner more enlistees, rather than purposefully reducing its reliance on the draft.[137] In the end, whilst the Army's PROVIDE report did play a role in the decision making processes, on 23

[134] Nixon, *The All-Volunteer Armed Force* (1968). and Bailey, *America's Army* (2009), p. 36.
[135] Griffith Jr., *The U.S. Army's Transition to the All-Volunteer Force* (1997), p. 24.
[136] Ibid., p. 25.
[137] Ibid., p. 26.

April 1970, Nixon announced his policy to curtail the draft, beginning the official process of transitioning to an AVF based on the recommendations of the Gates Commission.[138] Therefore, whilst the Army were aware of the high level of dissent within their ranks, and this was one of the issues they had to overcome in order to institute a working AVF, the GI Movement played only a small role in this transition. The move to the AVF was dictated by the Executive branch and the Army followed in tow.

Actioning this decision, in January 1971 the Army debuted a series of trials at Forts Benning (GA), Bragg (NC), Carson (CO), and Ord (CA), referred to as VOLAR (VOLunteer ARmy) in which local commanders were given full authority to modernise life at these bases.[139] VOLAR existed as an experiment to improve the life of the regular GI who was already in the Army, thus increasing his likelihood of re-enlistment.[140] Tests at these bases included removing 'needless irritants', such as KP and groundskeeping; reducing the harassment of low-ranking soldiers; creating councils which allowed better communication between EMs and the higher ranks; allowing men to make their barracks semi-private; and famously by making beer available to men in the barracks.[141]

Whilst the decision to move to an AVF came from the Executive branch, the repercussions of this decision were most keenly felt at the grassroots level. The *Lewis-McChord Free Press* was therefore authored during a period of monumental change in which the Army transitioned from using the Selective Service System to bolster its ranks, to utilising solely enlistees. Despite the elimination of universal service, a change which would presumably have been welcomed by young men who were vexed by their obligation to serve in the military, the *Free Press* chided VOLAR at every opportunity. Mockingly, in July 1971, the *Free Press* documented a riot at Fort Ord between GIs and MPs. The disturbance took place at a VOLAR implemented rock concert, at which Canned Heat, who had played at the 1969 Woodstock Festival, were the featured band.[142] An altercation between two GIs at the event devolved into a full-blown riot in which, the paper reported, a 'Greyhound bus was overturned, the PX and snack bar broken

[138] For a more in-depth look at this complicated process in which the Gates Commission, the Department of Defense, and the Army all played a role, please see: Griffith Jr., *The U.S. Army's Transition to the All-Volunteer Force* (1997), pp. 29-42.
[139] Bailey, *America's Army* (2009), pp. 52-53. For a history of the VOLAR programme at Fort Benning please see: Brigadier General Willard Latham, *The Modern Volunteer Army Program: The Benning Experiment, 1970-1972* (Washington D.C.: Department of the Army, 1974).
[140] Griffith Jr., *The U.S. Army's Transition to the All-Volunteer Force* (1997), p. 104.
[141] Bailey, *America's Army* (2009), pp. 52-58.
[142] "Riot Rocks Fort Ord", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.1, July 1971, p. 1 and 8.

into, the education center trashed and the supply room for the DI [Drill Instructor] school set on fire'. Although the riot had seemingly little to do with the concert, the paper lauded the act as the responsibility of GIs who 'let the Brass know just what they thought of the Modern Volunteer Army' (MVA – the name given to the AVF).[143] Still, they maintained no number of concerts by "hip" bands could mask the tensions within the Army during this period. To the editors of the *Free Press*, GI riots were the perfect response to facile attempts to improve morale on base.

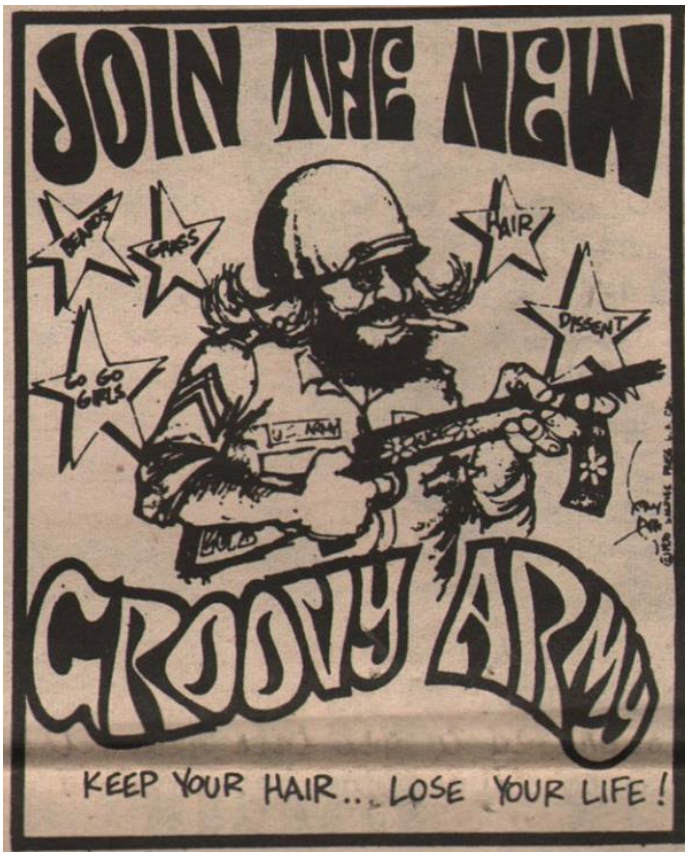

Figure 8: Cartoon, "Join the New Groovy Army",
***Lewis-McChord Free Press*, Vol.2, No.6, June 1971, p. 3.**
Source: JSTOR, 2025; available under the CC BY NC license.

The idea that the Army could simply put "beer in the barracks" or host their own concerts to make their institution more attractive was met with disdain. As Figure 8 exemplifies, the paper lampooned the Army's attempts to appeal to what they perceived young men wanted, such as 'go go girls', 'grass' [marijuana], 'beards', long 'hair', and 'dissent', when they really desired an end to the war. In the paper's view, these reforms masked the Army's true purpose of aggression and oppression and their role as the 'stooges and hatchetmen for the gangsters that

[143] Ibid., p. 1 and 8.

run this country'.[144] In this way, attempts to improve the Army were greeted not with jubilation, as is perhaps expected, but were viewed as concessions to distract anti-war GIs from their discontent. Referencing Bob Dylan, the *Free Press* reminded its readers that '[n]o matter how groovy they make the Army out to be, whether you call yourself a lifer or a career soldier or just "playing the game," you're one thing: their pawn'.[145] As Figure 8 sardonically remarked: 'Keep your hair… lose your life!'

The purpose of VOLAR was to make soldiering an attractive occupation for young men in America to join the MVA. In order to do this, the Army required an improved recruiting system. Griffith Jr. has remarked that '[a]fter a generation of reliance on selective service, recruiters had lost the knack for seeking out potential volunteers and selling the Army to them'.[146] In response, the Army turned to the consumer market to advertise itself as a product to Americans. Bailey notes that, in the hopes of reaching younger demographics, the institution 'was one of the most heavily promoted goods or services on the nation's airwaves' during a thirteen-week test beginning in April 1971.[147] During discussion about the AVF in the Senate, the recruitment practices surrounding Fort Lewis were singled out as being particularly successful. They commented that the 9th Infantry Division, which was activated at Fort Lewis in May 1972, was filled, with the help of 'a force of its own recruiters', solely with enlistees.[148] Recruitment was, therefore, especially poignant around Fort Lewis and the paper responded to this massive enlistment drive in the Tacoma area.[149] In July 1972, alongside a number of images of local Army advertisements for the 9th Infantry Division, the paper satirised recruiters, or, as it referred to them, 'rip-off salesmen'.[150] Through the use of a fabricated 'roving reporter', called Donald Downer, the newspaper staged a fake interview with a local recruiter named Harry to mock Army recruitment. The paper likened Army recruiters to disingenuous car salesmen who got people to buy 'junk cars' by over emphasising their good aspects and downplaying the bad ones. 'In the auto business', Harry said in the interview, 'we always covered up things by

[144] "Nixon Robs GIs", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.3, September 1971, p. 1.
[145] Ibid., p. 1.
[146] Griffith Jr., *The U.S. Army's Transition to the All-Volunteer Force* (1997), p. 63.
[147] Bailey, *America's Army* (2009), p. 82.
[148] Griffith Jr., *The U.S. Army's Transition to the All-Volunteer Force* (1997), p. 230.
[149] For articles which discuss and condemn the Army's recruitment practices please see: "Cav Carnival", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.6, December 1971, p. 3; "Downer Pops Up", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.1, August 1972, p. 8; "Harry Sells the Ninth", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.6, July 1972, p. 6; "MVA B.S.", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.8, June 1973, p. 8; "Letter from a GI Stationed at Fort Lewis", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.6, April 1973, p. 2; and "Recruitment and the MVA", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.1, August 1972, p. 1 and 6.
[150] "Harry Sells the Ninth", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.6, July 1972, p. 6.

playing up any defect as minor. […] If a potential recruit asks about petty jobs like police call, KP, etc., I try to be vague'.[151] The GIs of the *Free Press* therefore portrayed recruiters as deceitful, ensnaring young people into the Army through lies.

After this first appearance, Donald Downer became a recurring figure in the *Free Press*, earning himself his own comic strip drawn by a member of the GI Alliance called Mike (Figure 9).[152] Downer's second appearance sought to underscore how Army recruitment policies, in the view of the *Free Press*, took advantage of the poor state of the economy in the early 1970s and preyed on the unemployed. In this comic, the paper detailed Downer's origin story. A young American from Nebraska (used to represent Middle America), Downer was continually "laid off" from jobs until he met Sergeant Slick who offered him a role in the 9th Inf. Div. at the Playboy Club on Lake Geneva. Having been hungry and poor, Downer quickly signed up for a 'trial period of 6 years' but instead of flying to Geneva, he was taken to 'Fort Screwus, Washington' where he was subjected to the abuses of the military.[153] Whilst hardly subtle, this satire was intended to poke fun at the Army. Overwhelmingly, the strip highlighted the predatory practices of recruiters, which offered young, poor, and lonely men the promise of travelling the world and meeting women at the Playboy Club on Lake Geneva. Similarly, the *Free Press* suggested that Slick got Downer drunk at 'Joseph's Bar' in an attempt to obscure his "better judgement". Mostly, therefore, the paper's editors suggested that recruiters used deceit – emphasised by Slick's fingers crossed behind his back – to entice young men into the Army.

[151] "Harry Sells the Ninth", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.6, July 1972, p. 6.
[152] For the entire Donald Downer comic strip please see: "Downer Pops Up", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.1, August 1972, p. 8 and "The Continuing Exploits of Donald Downer", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.2, September 1972, p. 8.
[153] "Downer Pops Up", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.1, August 1972, p. 8.

Figure 9: Cartoon, Mike, "Downer Pops Up",
***Lewis-McChord Free Press*, Vol.5, No.1, August 1972, p. 8.**
Source: JSTOR, 2025; available under the CC BY NC license.

Whilst Downer represented the entertaining side of the *Free Press* which utilised humour as a way to engage GIs, the paper also printed more obviously critical articles on recruitment. As part of the general Leftward trend within the *Free Press* during its tenure under the GIA, the paper, as it had within the Downer comic, especially emphasised the role of economic issues in motivating people to join the military. This is an idea which, at least since the 1990s, has been referred to as a "poverty draft".[154] Instead of being true enlistees, the *Free Press* claimed

[154] For a modern discussion of the "poverty draft", specifically in relation to African Americans, please see: Rev. Benjamin Chavis, 'Poverty, Racism 'Drafted' Black into Army', *Jet*, Vo.79, No.16, 4 February 1991, p. 8.

that those who joined the Army did so because they had few other options. 'The economic crisis also makes it easier to recruit', they pointed out whilst stressing that the unemployment rate in the Seattle-Tacoma area was approximately fifteen percent.[155] For the editors of the *Free Press*, in an area which suffered so greatly from economic hardship it was not difficult to understand how – as the Senate discussion boasted – so many recruits filled the 9th Infantry Division. Therefore, as the young men that the Army attracted had few other options, the paper emphasised that their enlistment would not make the MVA a volunteer army at all, 'only an army of men who were cleverly and legally shanghaied'.[156]

This economic explanation for the attractiveness of the MVA continued to be reiterated in the paper. 'The really interesting question about the MVA, however,' the paper stated in August 1972, 'is who is going to man it'.[157] The article emphasised that in 'the VOLAR days', the Army made every attempt to recruit the middle-class college kids and to do so they made 'a desperate effort to make the Army look groovy', as demonstrated by the Canned Heat concert. However, according to anti-war GIs, the Army soon realised that 'their best recruiting gimmick was unemployment and their manpower potential lay with unemployed and low-paid working-class youth'.[158] The Army had changed their approach to filling the AVF, therefore. Instead of relying on making the institution a more attractive place of work, they resorted to exploiting the poor economic situation of America in the early 1970s and drawing in the poorest Americans, specifically the working-class, who the paper sought to champion.

GIs of the GI Movement, therefore, were not just critics of the Vietnam War. Their anti-military position, which derived from their anti-war feelings, led to much wider critiques than one might have expected. The monumental changes to the military in the early 1970s inevitably affected GIs on Army bases across the United States and the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* provides an interesting insight to how this move away from the draft was not necessarily celebrated by anti-war GIs, as one may have expected. Terry Anderson has remarked that the ending of the draft 'meant that dissidents went home and that the brass were left alone', after which it became "business as usual".[159] The *Free Press*' pivot to criticising the MVA for its failings therefore

[155] "Cav Carnival", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.6, December 1971, p. 3.
[156] Ibid., p. 3.
[157] "Recruitment and the MVA", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.1, August 1972, p. 1 and 6.
[158] Ibid., p. 1 and 6.
[159] Anderson, 'The GI Movement and the Response from the Brass', in *Give Peace a Chance* (1992), p. 115.

demonstrates an attempt by the GI Movement to maintain the momentum of discontent within the military that Vietnam and the draft had facilitated.

The anti-war position of some GIs during the Vietnam era therefore necessitated conflict with the institution in which they were housed, fed, watered, and served. The very nature of the military conflicted with the desire of this minority of young men to oppose the war in Vietnam. The transition from civilian life, in which young Americans had learnt of and could be assured of their First Amendment rights, to the military, in which such rights often had to be subordinated for the purposes of collectivism and order, was shocking for many. Nonetheless, GIs maintained that they had the right to publicise their discontent with the war and, in doing so, often conflicted with the military justice system, a massive bureaucratic system which could oppress anti-war and troublesome GIs at will. In response, GIs of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* criticised the arbitrariness, vindictiveness, and inequity of this system. These criticisms were also levelled at the military's lack of care for their EMs, both on and off base. Whilst anti-war servicepeople continued to chastise the military due to their persecution of GIs, particularly low-ranking ones, they had also moved past pragmatic criticisms of everyday life. For the GIA, much more radical than previous servicepeople, concessions to make the military appear better only masked its aggressive and oppressive nature. Interestingly, this continued activism, whilst it did not end the war, did rankle the military and as a result activist GIs were kept from the combat zone and eventually discharged in order to remove their irksomeness. Rejection of the military, therefore, combined with GIs' view of the Vietnam War as deliberately oppressive and aggressive, a conceptualisation which will be analysed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

'Slaves to and Implementers of a Policy of Imperialism': GIs Criticise the Vietnam War[1]

As the foot soldiers of the Vietnam War, the anti-war opinions of GIs are at once important and revealing about how servicemen viewed the conflict in which they were involved. As discussed, their relative closeness to the combat zone and intimacy with those who had fought (although none of the GIs interviewed served in Vietnam), and their relationship with the institution which was perpetrating the conflict, mark GIs' criticisms as distinct from their peers in the civilian movement.[2] Whilst the content of such critiques were not always different from the large number of students opposed to the war, the provenance mattered greatly. After all, these were the young men who the war was happening to. Even if they did not serve in Vietnam, they were still trained in the methods used to kill the Vietnamese if they ever did encounter them.

As the GI Movement necessarily entailed an anti-war position, GIs' views on the war were largely manifest. Although they did include some moral critiques and engaged slightly in discussion of the conflict's legality, GIs of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* viewed the war in Vietnam largely as the result of imperialism. In accordance with the main premise of this thesis, the *Free Press*' analysis of the war as imperialist was replicated in other GI Movement publications and thus their conceptualisation of this issue was broadly representative of other anti-war GIs' views. This does not mean that all GI publications espoused these views, nor does it mean that all anti-war servicemen were as radical as the GI Alliance (GIA). It does, however, provide an important insight into how they generally perceived the war.

A major facet of the conceptualisation of the Vietnam War as imperialist was a conception of the conflict as both oppressive and aggressive. Interfering in a conflict which dissenting GIs believed the US should have no part, anti-war servicemen argued that America inhibited the process of self-determination for the Vietnamese people and installed a puppet government in the form of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN). GIs felt that the US sought to dehumanise the Vietnamese people, inculcate violence towards them within young servicemen, and use modern

[1] "Report From Ann Arbor", *Lewis-McChord Free Press* [*LMFP*], Vol.2, No.3, March 1971, p. 6.
[2] As discussed in the previous chapter, some of the GIs who published the *Free Press* believe that they were deliberately not sent to the combat zone because they were viewed as too dangerous.

technology to perpetrate as much destruction against them as possible. Within this specific opposition, servicemen highlighted their own Americanness as a defence for their criticisms and utilised American figures, iconography, and symbols. They emphasised that America was a nation born out of opposition to tyranny and empire but had gone astray to substantiate their disapproval of the imperial US of the "Sixties". In accordance with this opposition to the US under Richard Nixon, and the administrations which preceded him, anti-war GIs rejected the US aggression towards their "enemy" and actively sympathised with the Vietnamese. Therefore, certain sections of the military, which had been commissioned to fight the Vietnamese and support a strong sovereign South Vietnam, championed and celebrated the victories of their "enemy", North Vietnam (Democratic Republic of Vietnam – DRV). Finally, their analysis of the Vietnam War as imperialistic led GIs to engage in structural critiques of the US. If the war was the result of a deliberate attempt to secure profits for US companies in far-off countries, the conflict in Vietnam could not be the only war fought for these reasons. In subsequent oral testimony, GIs of the *Free Press* claim that the war in Vietnam opened their eyes to a new way of perceiving the US and they returned to past conflicts, reassessing them as imperialist. Along with this came the worry that future oppressive and aggressive conflicts, or "Vietnams", could yet occur. This led to the *Free Press*' final position as an anti-imperialist paper, opposed not only to the Vietnam War but imperialism generally.

Radicalising for these young men of the "Vietnam Generation" was the cruelty and brutality of the Vietnam War. Stories, brought back from the combat sphere, alerted adolescents and young adults to the horrors which awaited Americans in Southeast Asia. When discussing the origins of his anti-war beliefs, former *Lewis-McChord Free Press* editor Terry Irvin, whose brother served in Vietnam, claimed that his friends came back from the war horribly scarred, either mentally or bodily. For future anti-war activists, therefore, seeing and talking to veterans proved to be the catalyser for their incipient opposition to the war, which often led to their involvement in the civilian anti-war movement. Most concerning for Irvin was his friend, described as the "nicest guy you ever want to know", who bragged about "cutting off people's testicles, [until] they'd pass out, and then he'd shove them in their mouth and throw them in the Mekong River, and they'd wake up and die gagging on their own balls."[3] Opposition to the war because of its effect on Americans was evidently compounded by the killing and maiming of Vietnamese soldiers and civilians. Before young men even entered the

[3] Interview of Terry Irvin, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 5 October 2022.

military, therefore, and Vietnam became a serious prospect, tales of the conflict made them doubt their support for the war. As Irvin claimed, "[t]here was never a good story that came out of Vietnam. Not one".[4] These stories were of course troubling for young American men who knew that they were likely to get drafted, would be unable to avoid their notice, and would possibly have to experience the same horrors described to them by their friends. Although they were unable to stop this, it did not prevent them from gradually opposing the war which had so severely damaged their loved ones.

If these men had avoided the trauma and the stories brought back to the US via veterans in the civilian sphere, they were sure to encounter them in the military. Bob Barnes claimed that when GIs returned from the combat zone (as they did to Fort Lewis), they "were either shut down completely or maniacs who would brag about carrying pouches made out of women's breasts that they had coins in".[5] Similarly, Randy Rowland stated that training as a medic and working in an Army hospital was the original cause of his anti-war feeling. He stated:

> [t]hey were the guys who were back from the war and they were saying, you know, we are the bad guys. We're the ones doing the killing, we're the invaders, we're the ones that are torturing people. We're doing all these bad things and you know, my sacrifice was not for a good cause. They were very bitter. And some of them begged us to kill them.[6]

Encounters with the horrors of war, often through returning veterans, evidently impacted some GIs who had entered the institution impartial to the war. In the same way that future GI Movement activists in the civilian sphere were perturbed by the changes in their friends and loved ones, young men on Fort Lewis would go on to be converted to the anti-war position by the stories and sights of those returning from the combat sphere. It does not seem exaggerative to argue that young men across the US took up the anti-war position for similar reasons as these GIs. The gateway to anti-war opinion for many in the GI Movement, therefore, centred on moral arguments popular among liberal "doves" during this period, i.e., the war was corrupting and killing innocent young Americans like themselves and should thus be stopped.

Interestingly, whilst it was the suffering of Americans which made some of these young men arrive at their personal convictions about the war, service in the military often led to them developing these initial concerns and rejections of the conflict into more complete critiques. In

[4] Ibid.
[5] Interview of Bob Barnes, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 8 October 2022.
[6] Interview with Randy Rowland, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 10 October 2022.

conversation, GIs formerly involved with the *Free Press*' publishing organ, the GI Alliance, acknowledged that participation in the GI Movement sharpened their understanding of the reasons that the war should be opposed. Lieutenant Henry Valenti, for example, felt that when he joined the military, his motivation for protest "in the beginning […] was just to stop the war." He expanded that he wanted to "get out of there and end the war. […] We were killing too many of them [the Vietnamese], and too many of our soldiers were getting killed too for nothing. Absolutely nothing."[7] Whilst a clear moral argument for ending the war, Valenti's position was somewhat rudimentary. Airman Dave Henry also began opposing the conflict "because it was […] killing people and it was killing us. And that was kind of like the bottom line here".[8] However, for both, it was participation in the military generally, and involvement in the Alliance specifically, which sharpened their critiques. Looking back, Valenti felt that his moral arguments were fairly unsophisticated, and that many GIA members "were more politically advanced than I was at that time [when he first joined the Alliance]. I was anti-war [but] I didn't have a political understanding", and Dave Henry felt similarly.[9] Therefore, moving past their original moral arguments, the "political understanding" that the Alliance and the *Free Press* arrived at was that the Vietnam War was the result of US imperialism.[10] This

[7] Interview of Henry Valenti, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 4 October 2022.
[8] Interview of Dave Henry, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 9 October 2022.
[9] Interview of Henry Valenti, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 4 October 2022 and Interview of Dave Henry, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 9 October 2022.
[10] The term imperialism is not actually defined within the *Free Press*, perhaps because it is somewhat nebulous. When imperialism began, or what can be categorised as imperialism has long been debated by scholars. Patrick Wolfe has referred to the 'definitional space of imperialism' as a 'vague, consensual gestalt'. Despite this, he has acknowledged that in the true Marxist conception, it is 'the use of state power to secure (or, at least, to attempt to secure) economic monopolies for national companies. On this basis, imperialism is not necessarily an extra-national project, which would appear to distinguish it from colonialism.' However, he also admits that this definition's reliance on monopolies 'excludes open-door policies, relegating "U.S. imperialism" and "cultural imperialism" to the realm of rhetoric'. Nonetheless, this has not stopped American activists from using the term and Wolfe states that the usage of imperialism by the Left 'has not been too respectful of Marxist technicalities'. Patrick Wolfe, 'History and Imperialism: A Century of Theory, From Marx to Postcolonialism', *American Historical Review*, 102.2 (April 1997), pp. 388-420 (p. 388). Cumings has argued that, as there is no limit to the US "empire", either territorially or in terms of markets, its actions on the global stage cannot be described as imperialism. Instead, he proposes that American hegemony, meaning the 'productive, commercial and financial pre-eminence of one core power over other core powers' is more apt to describe the 'realm' of American influence. Bruce Cumings, '"Global Realm with No Limit, Global Realm with No Name"', *Radical History Review*, 57 (October 1993), pp. 46-59 (p. 53). Attempts to adequately define imperialism are, therefore, extremely difficult. An academic definition of the term is also unlikely to coincide with how "Sixties" activists used the term. Whilst Cumings' re-definition of imperialism as hegemony is perhaps more apt – particularly when commenting on the use of open-door policies and American soft power around the globe – activists believed in an American empire and used such terminology in their critiques. As a result, this thesis recognises that the importance historical actors placed on such words is greater than any academic attempt to define them. As a result, with acknowledgment that their lack of definition is problematic, this thesis utilises the term imperialism as loosely as it is used within the *Free Press* to describe US involvement, either economically or militarily in any "Third World" country. For other attempts to define the term imperialism, please see: Norman Etherington, 'Reconsidering the Theories of Imperialism', *History and Theory*, 21.1 (February 1982), pp. 1-36; Eric Stokes, 'Late Nineteenth Century Colonial Expansion and the Attack on the Theory of Economic

conception was so crucial to radical GIs' understandings of the war that the point 'we dedicate ourselves to fight US imperialism' was the first, and therefore most important, dictum of the GI Alliance manifesto.[11] Indeed, it was the main criticism and conceptualisation which the *Free Press* had of the war.[12]

Such a supposition contradicted official explanations of the conflict which highlighted the beneficent role of the US in Vietnam. Successive American governments conceptualised the war in Vietnam as a clash between two different nations, the RVN and the DRV, and emphasised that US intervention in this struggle was necessary to stem the spread of communism in Asia.[13] In a speech to the American public on 29 September 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson re-enforced American dedication to freedom and self-determination in Vietnam, but also explained the war in geo-political terms. Reiterating the notion of the "domino theory", first formulated by US policy-makers in the early 1950s and propagated by President Eisenhower in 1954, Johnson emphasised South Vietnam's position as a bulwark against the spread of communism in Southeast Asia.[14] A direct attack on the RVN was considered a direct attack on the security of Asia, American national security, and, thus, the people of the US.[15] The war, therefore, was crucial to national security, but it was also being fought for the sovereignty of the RVN. Emphasising the US' benevolence, the Tonkin Gulf

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Imperialism: A Case of Mistaken Identity?, *The Historical Journal*, 12.2 (1969), pp. 285-301 and Robert Zevin, 'An Interpretation of American Imperialism', *Radical History Review*, 32.1 (March 1972), pp. 316-360.

[11] "GI Alliance: What We Want", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.2, February 1972, p. 2.

[12] For examples of the *Free Press*' criticism and conceptualisation of the Vietnam War as imperialist see: "Why Are We in Vietnam!!!", *Fort Lewis Free Press*, Vol.1, No.1, August 1970, p. 2; "U.S. in Vietnam for Profit", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.1, January 1971, p. 1; "My Lai Trials Cover Out Bloodiest Hands", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.1, January 1971, p. 6; "Report from Ann Arbor", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.3, March 1971, p. 6; "The War Ends in May", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.5, May 1971, p. 1; "Bringing It Home", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.6, June 1971, p. 2; "AMPO: New US-Japan Axis", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.6, December 1971, p. 7; Quote from Mark Twain, *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.6, December 1971, p. 1; "Saturation Bombing: Nixon's New "Peace Offensive", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.1, January 1972, p. 6; "GI Alliance: What We Want", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.2, February 1972, p. 2; "Four More Years? Continuing the War", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.1, January 1973, p. 1; "Vietnam: Turning Point", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, February 1973, p. 1; and "Cease Fire", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, February 1973, p. 6.

[13] Whilst the US conceptualised the conflict in Vietnam in this way, both the DRV and the terms of the 1954 Geneva Agreements viewed Vietnam as one nation divided. For more information on the conceptualisations of Vietnam by different states, please see: William S. Turley, *The Second Indochina War: A Concise Military and Political History,* 2nd edn. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, inc., 2009), pp. 16-18.

[14] Lyndon B. Johnson, *Address on Vietnam Before the National Legislative Conference* (San Antonio, Texas, 29 September 1967, via: The American Presidency Project, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-vietnam-before-the-national-legislative-conference-san-antonio-texas [accessed: 27/02/24].
In reference to the strategic importance of 'Indochina', Eisenhower commented that he believed in the 'falling domino principle', which purported the idea that if one domino falls the others stacked up next to it are sure to follow. In this case, South Vietnam was considered a domino and in order to stop the spread of communism across Asia, the country became a significant part of US Cold War national security. 'The President's News Conference', 7 April 1954, via: The American Presidency Project, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/the-presidents-news-conference-361 [accessed: 22/11/24].

[15] Johnson, *Address on Vietnam,* 29 September 1967.

Resolution, signed on 7 August 1964, explicitly stated that 'the United States is assisting the peoples of southeast Asia to protect their freedom and has no territorial, military or political ambitions in that area'.[16] Officially, therefore, intervention in Vietnam was framed as an attempt to protect the principles of liberty (in this case the self-determination of a sovereign state) and freedom of the RVN from communism, and thus justified the Vietnam War to the US public as an altruistic mission.

A part of the *Free Press*' rejection of the government's munificent explanations for the Vietnam War was their denial that the war between the RVN and the DRV concerned two different nations. Instead, they emphasised the conflict as a civil war. A letter to the paper, printed in November 1970, claimed that Vietnam had been artificially separated after the First Indochina War (1946-1954), in which the Viet Minh overthrew French colonialism, and elections to reunify the country had been unilaterally denied by RVN leader Ngo Dinh Diem. This, the letter claimed, was because President Eisenhower stated that 'had elections been held, possibly 80% of the population would have voted for the Communist Ho Chi Minh as their leader'.[17] This assessment filtered into the newspaper which asserted in January 1971 that 'Eisenhower unilaterally moved to block the free elections' which sought to reunify the northern and southern parts of the country.[18] For anti-war GIs of the *Free Press*, therefore, conflict in Vietnam was a civil war, the business of the Vietnamese . In a series of slogans, the paper wrote 'Yankee go home', 'Viet Nam for the Vietnamese', and finally rhetorically questioned, '[h]ow many Vietnamese fought in our civil war?'.[19] For the editors of the paper, the US had played a role in deliberately obstructing international agreements which would have seen the creation of a unified Vietnam. As a result, the *Free Press* did not recognise the legitimacy of the RVN. Instead, they frequently referred to the state as a 'puppet' for US interests, and members of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) as 'puppet' soldiers.[20]

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[16] *Tonkin Gulf Resolution,* 7 August 1964, *H.J. RES 1145*, via: National Archives, https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/tonkin-gulf-resolution [accessed: 27/02/24]. The Tonkin Gulf Resolution was the legislation passed by Congress giving President Johnson the power to commit US combat troops and weaponry to fight the National Liberation Front and the North Vietnamese on the behalf of the RVN.
[17] Letter, *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.4, November 1970, p. 2.
[18] "U.S. in Vietnam for Profit", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.1, January 1971, p. 1. For more information on the 1954 Geneva Agreements and the history of the RVN and DRV up until Diem's denial to hold reunification elections in 1956, please see: Turley, *The Second Indochina War* (2009), pp. 16-33.
[19] "Easy Riding America", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.2, September 1970, p. 4.
[20] For articles which refer to the RVN and its troops as 'puppets', please see: "U.S. Aid Props Cambodian Dictator", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.2, February 1971, p. 5; "Bringing it Home", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.6, June 1971, p. 2; "The NVA: Striking the Death Blow", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.5, May 1972, p. 2; "4 More Years?: Continuing the War", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.1, January 1973, p. 1; "Ngo Chi Thien to Speak at GI Alliance", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.7,

For the *Free Press*, therefore, the US was an invader and aggressor of what should have been a unified Vietnam, whether communist or not.

GIs of the *Free Press* therefore rejected the idea that a conflict in Vietnam was in the US' national security interests. Whilst they felt that this war was not necessary, nor did they perceive it as a mistake. Instead, it was the result of 'a deliberate oppression and aggression', terms which were used advisedly by the paper to emphasise the domination of US imperialism over Vietnam.[21] This interpretation was compounded by the lack of a declaration of war against the DRV, which would usually justify such aggressive acts. Reflecting on his thinking during this period, and therefore providing an insight into the structural criticisms which radical GIs developed, former GIA leader Michael Royce claimed:

> [t]his was a war that served imperialist geo-political goal concepts. I mean […] they'd say, "oh, we're defending [South Vietnam]". You know, "the communists will be here in our streets if we don't defend them." […] [I]t's not so much that I think the US wanted to occupy Vietnam. They wanted […] like a neo colonial. They wanted to control Vietnam and control Asia.[22]

Assuming the traditional Marxist notion of imperialism, the *Free Press* believed that this 'deliberate oppression and aggression' was motivated by profit. In the very first edition, the editors emphasised the economic appeal of Vietnam to the US. Taking an excerpt from a 1954 article by the *U.S. News & World Report*, the paper emphasised that the importance of Vietnam to the US lay in its bounty of raw materials. The author of the *Report* article argued that, following the "fall" of China to communism in 1949, if communist forces were to take control of Vietnam and Southeast Asia, Japan would also suffer, effectively removing US influence in Asia and limit access to these valuable resources.[23] This information was used by the *Report* to vindicate the growing US interest in Southeast Asia following World War II and to argue that the prevention of such raw materials falling into the hands of the communists justified involvement in the area. However, the *Free Press* inverted this argument to validate the idea that the war was being fought, not for benevolence but for economic profit. By January 1971, the paper made this conceptualisation of the Vietnam War abundantly clear. In an article on the front page, they stated:

May 1973, p. 5; and "The Bombing Continues but… Cambodia is Winning", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.8, June 1973, p. 1.

[21] "'Rain' of Terror", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 4.

[22] Interview of Michael Royce, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 7 October 2022.

[23] "Why Are We in Vietnam!!!", *Fort Lewis Free Press*, Vol.1, No.1, August 1970, p. 2.

> [t]he reason that the government makes guys like us fight against these people is not because the U.S. is defending freedom, but because U.S. businessmen are filling their pockets by exploiting these countries […] and to assure the U.S. capitalist a continued access to cheap raw materials, foreign slave-wage labour and export markets for their goods.[24]

The publication of the *Pentagon Papers* in 1971 only fuelled and vindicated anti-war activists' portrayal of the US as a malevolent force in Southeast Asia. First published in the *New York Times* on 13 June 1971, the *Pentagon Papers* was the name given to the Department of Defense's secret and candid history of the Vietnam War up to that point.[25] DeGroot has stated that the *Papers* demonstrated to the American public that the United States' objectives in South Vietnam were not benevolent, and the only reason that they could not withdraw from the country was because it would undermine their reputation as defenders of the free world and opponents of communism.[26] Similarly, DeBenedetti claims the *Papers* played an important role in undermining the image of the US as a 'reluctant intervener' in Vietnam.[27] Historians' assessments are therefore consonant with the anti-war GI position, and for the publishers of the *Free Press* the *Papers* supported the arguments they had already been making about American imperialism. They exposed that American involvement in Vietnam was not 'a well-meaning blunder, but a cynical, deliberate aggression against an agrarian people' perpetrated by the 'Amerikan Empire'.[28] The spelling of America with a "k", the German spelling, was itself telling about the way anti-war activists perceived their country. 'Amerika' was a "Sixties" anachronism, designed to link the United States to Nazi Germany, another oppressive, aggressive, and, in the eyes of protesters, imperialist and fascist regime.[29] For the anti-war GIs of the GI Movement, therefore, the war should largely not be opposed simply because it was immoral, or because it was not in US national interests, but because it was a deliberate aggressive act in the pursuance of profit, the result of US imperialism.

Closely related to this criticism was the belief that the system which perpetuated the Vietnam War, and other acts of what anti-war GIs viewed as foreign aggression, was a military-industrial complex. This concept was introduced most prominently in the 1961 Presidential

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[24] "U.S. in Vietnam for Profit", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.1, January 1971, p. 1.
[25] Charles DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal: The Antiwar Movement of the Vietnam Era,* with Charles Chatfield, assisting author (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990), p. 314.
[26] Gerard J. DeGroot, *Noble Cause? America and the Vietnam War* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2000), p. 141.
[27] DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal* (1990), p. 314.
[28] "Top Secret?", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.1, July 1971, p. 2.
[29] Melvin Small, *Antiwarriors: The Vietnam War and the Battle for America's Hearts and Minds* (Lanham: SR Books, 2004), p. 24.

farewell address of Dwight D. Eisenhower, which spent a considerable amount of time warning the American public against 'the unwarranted influence' of the military-industrial complex, or, the 'conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry'.[30] Those who believed in the complex championed the idea that there was a power elite in the US consisting of leaders of the military, the government, and industry who all supported an expansionist and militaristic foreign policy.[31] Whilst not explicitly naming the mutually beneficial relationship between the military, the government, and the economy, it is clear that the *Free Press* held some incipient belief in the complex.[32] For example, in just its fourth edition, the paper noted that 'after ten years of conflict, maybe it isn't too difficult to see that our economy since the Thirties has needed a war machine to keep our consumptive economy at its fever pitch.'[33]

Figure 10 demonstrates GIs' increasingly structural view of the Vietnam War. The cartoon illustrates that no matter how much one attacked the war, such criticism was useless unless it encompassed critique of the whole iceberg. In this sense, the Vietnam War was only the visible section of America's issues, and the real problems were less perceptible and more entrenched. For the editors of the *Free Press*, the Vietnam War belied other underlying issues. The cartoon itself neatly categorises the danger of such problems by the size of their text. Most important, and therefore most threatening, were 'corporate capitalism' and imperialism. These subjects were then linked to the second most significant issues, racism and the military-industrial complex, and, finally, the smallest components, profiteering and corruption. Whilst not the largest part of the iceberg, the inclusion of the military-industrial complex does emphasise the *Free Press*' belief in the complex as a child of imperialism and corporate capitalism, and its position at the bottom of the iceberg hints to the idea that it is the root of everything above. The fact that anti-war and peace activists are only attacking the Vietnam War and the fact this 'doesn't seem to be getting any smaller' hints at the paper's belief that these movements have

[30] President Dwight D. Eisenhower's Farewell Address, 17 January 1961, via: National Archives, https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/president-dwight-d-eisenhowers-farewell-address [accessed: 27/02/24].
[31] For a contemporary argument that America had a military-industrial complex, please see: Sidney Lens, *The Military-Industrial Complex* (Philadelphia and Kansas City: Pilgrim Press and the National Catholic Reporter, 1970).
[32] For examples of the *Free Press* stating the existence of a military-industrial complex (although not always in these terms), please see: "U.S. in Vietnam for Profit", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.1, January 1971, p. 1; "Method to Madness", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.4, November 1970, p. 2; "Fort Lewis Gets New Corporate V.P.", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.2, February 1971, p. 3; and Untitled, *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.4, March [April] 1972, p. 8.
[33] "Method to Madness", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.4, November 1970, p. 2.

not done enough to comprehensively oppose all of America's systemic problems, most importantly imperialism and a military-industrial complex.

Figure 10: Cartoon, *Lewis-McChord Free Press,* Vol.4, No.4, March 1972, p. 8.
Source: JSTOR, 2025; available under the CC BY NC license.

The reasoning that the Vietnam War was the product of imperialism had more worrisome implications for GIs than it did any other group in the United States. If the preservation of democracy was not the US' true goal in South Vietnam, the value of American deaths in Southeast Asia plummeted. For civilians this would have been problematic enough, but if the war itself was not justifiable, GIs' induction into the military, the possibility that they may face combat, and even worse death, seemed even more troublesome. In this complex arrangement of economic and geo-political interests, they had the most to lose and the least to gain. The *Free Press* explicitly drew these links for their readership. In August 1971, they claimed that the US

should not be 'sending GIs to far-off lands to die for the Nixon gang and the rest of the leeches who make profit on our blood'.[34] Emphasising the futility of American deaths in Vietnam during their coverage of the lack of democratic elections in the RVN, they remarked: '[f]or this we killed and we got killed'.[35]

For the *Free Press*, however, it was their position, as the foot soldiers of the war, which provided anti-war GIs with unique insights into the conflict, including servicemen's belief that the war was the result of imperialism. They claimed that '[m]uch to our governing elite's bitter chagrin, Nam is the most effective radicalizing experience a young American can have. The experience of slaughtering […] people, deporting the survivors and poisoning the land has confronted us with all the lies and hypocrisy of where we have allowed ourselves to be led.'[36] In this sense, they cultivated a particularly important role for GIs in anti-war criticism. In February 1971, the *Free Press* claimed that GIs had realised the "true" (imperialistic) nature of the war, as soon as they had started 'going over there' and that, by 1971, the student population was "catching up" with this perspective. This was in response to a CBS News poll which revealed that forty-one percent of students now believed that the war was imperialist.[37] The *Free Press*, however, evidently felt that GIs had "political understanding" in a higher proportion than students. When discussing GIs who attended the April 1971 national anti-war march in San Francisco – 'the largest rally in West Coast history' – the paper commented that GIs tended to gather with a section of the march referred to as the anti-imperialist coalition.[38] Once again they privileged service as a radicalising factor, both towards an anti-war opinion and a more radical political position. The editors of the paper stated that it '[s]eems that the kind of war we are fighting in SE Asia is quite evident to the ones who have been there'.[39] According to the *Free Press*, therefore, anti-war GIs gravitated towards more far-Left positions compared with the majority of student activists because of their service.

Whilst it is certainly correct that combat experience converted many to an anti-war position, as demonstrated by the Vietnam Veterans Against the War's (VVAW) Winter Soldier Investigation, a piece of guerilla theatre in which over one hundred veterans testified on war

[34] "Strength In Unity", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.2, August 1971, p. 2.
[35] "Nam Election 71", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.4, October 1971, p. 5.
[36] "Top Secret?", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.1, July 1971, p. 2.
[37] Untitled, *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.2, February 1971, p. 4.
[38] Small, *Antiwarriors* (2004), p. 142.
[39] "The War Ends in May", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.5, May 1971, p. 1.

crimes in Vietnam, it did not necessarily translate into a focus on anti-imperialism.[40] Likewise, it is inaccurate to say that certain sections of the civilian anti-war movement had not contended that the US was imperialist. As an early critic of the war, Senator for Oregon Wayne Morse commented in 1964 that bombing North Vietnam would be nothing more than "stark, ugly imperialism".[41] Radical elements of the movement had also espoused this critique from early in the war's development. In 1966, the radical pacifists of the Committee for Non-Violent Action contended that the Vietnam War 'revealed the thrust of American imperialism'.[42] Likewise, groups such as the Black Panther Party and the Indochina Peace Campaign, co-ordinated by influential individuals such as Jane Fonda and Tom Hayden, also referred to the American presence in Vietnam as imperialistic.[43] The extent to which this conception held sway in the vast milieu of anti-war opinion is, however, debatable. According to the CBS poll quoted in the *Free Press*, just sixteen percent of students in 1970 commented that they believed that the war was imperialist.[44]

However, whether the imperialist conception was popularised by GIs and returning veterans is to some extent unimportant. It is most significant that the editors of the *Free Press* felt the need to distinguish their own critiques from the civilian anti-war movement and take some prestige for themselves. In a society which had been dominated by stories about the war and the civilian anti-war movement, it is unsurprising that the GIs of the *Free Press* wanted to emphasise what they felt was a quality largely unique to servicemen. They felt that it was combat which had bred the imperialist critique among GIs, and claimed that its spread into the civilian sphere was the result of veterans returning to colleges after their service and informing students about the war.[45] Even if such conceptions were not entirely accurate and were perhaps a little exaggerated, these claims emphasise a belief on the behalf of anti-war GIs that their experience in the military bred unique perspectives on the war, different from those in the civilian anti-war movement. Exposure to the horrors of the combat zone demonstrated to GIs that they were not in Vietnam to promote self-determination or aid the Vietnamese, and these soldiers brought

[40] DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal* (1990), p. 307. To see some of the testimony of the Winter Soldier Investigation, please see: *Winter Soldier* (Winterfilm Inc., 1971), online film recording, via: YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e6wvRvXGFRk [accessed: 27/02/24].
[40] Examples of how combat changed the opinions of soldiers on the War in Vietnam are detailed in *Winter Soldier* (1971).
[41] Quoted in DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal* (1990), p. 95.
[42] Ibid., p. 150.
[43] Ibid., p. 281 and 338.
[44] Untitled, *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.2, February 1971, p. 4.
[45] Ibid., p. 4.

these feelings and stories back to bases stateside to share with those who did not visit the combat zone but still served in the military. This view is supported by the ubiquity of critiques of the war as imperialist within the GI press.[46]

As their characterisation of the conflict as a 'deliberate oppression and aggression' demonstrates, an attendant of imperialism for the *Free Press* was aggression. Contesting the government's argument that the US was a reluctant intervener in Vietnam, simply trying to stop the spread of communism, the paper portrayed the US as an aggressive invader. In December 1970, the paper referred to a bombing raid over North Vietnam as an 'incredible act of aggression' and this was consonant with the *Free Press*' general perception of the conflict.[47] By concentrating on the conflict as a 'war of aggression', the editors of the paper focused not on the war's effect on Americans, as they did in their incipient anti-war phase, but on the suffering of the Vietnamese people. Referring to the herbicides being dropped on the country, the paper claimed that the US was carrying out '[a] deliberate and literal rain of terror that makes you want to vomit'.[48] Accompanying the use of herbicides, they also picked up on the excessive violence which attended the conflict. They highlighted the use of 'jellied gasoline that burns all the way through to the bone', otherwise known as napalm; the dangerous chemicals in the US' white phosphorous grenades; and the modern infantry rifles, which acted as a way to circumvent the Geneva Convention's ban on 'dumm-dumm [sic] ammunition'.[49] As servicemen on Lewis and McChord were likely familiar with these weapons, the *Free Press* sought to emphasise the effect which they had on the Vietnamese population. In an especially rousing and emotive declamation, one writer for the paper stated '[d]on't think for one second that my words can come within a million miles of the tooth-tingling, mind-numbing, gut-tearing terror that a Vietnamese peasant must face.'[50]

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[46] For other GI newspaper articles which explain the Vietnam War as a result of imperialism see: "An Introduction to GI's United", *Bragg Briefs*, Vol.3, No.1, April 1970, p. 4; "GIs United[:] End Imperialism[;] US Out of Vietnam[;] End Racism[;] Democracy in the Army[;] Free All Political Prisoners[;] Freedom Now[.] Fort Bragg, NC.", *Bragg Briefs*, Vol.3, No.1, April 1970, p. 4; "Local Women Talk Peace with Vietnamese", *Bragg Briefs*, Vol.4, No.4 May 1971, p. 6; "Capitalism – Imperialism – Vietnam", *Fun Travel Adventure* [*FTA*], Vol.2, No.2, August 1969, pp. 9-10; "The Well-Oiled Green Machine", *FTA*, Vol.4, No.6, January 1972, p. 4 and 12; "Lifer Raps Against the War", *The Ally*, No.36 July 1971, p. 4; and "MDM Program", *Navy Times Are Changin'*, Vol.1, No.4, July 1970, p. 5.
[47] "War Heads North", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.5, December 1970, p. 1.
[48] "'Rain' of Terror", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 4.
[49] Ibid., p. 4.
[50] Ibid., p. 4.

US brutality continued and the paper took particular umbrage with the changing state of the war in the early 1970s. Due to Nixon's Vietnamization policy (discussed in greater depth later in this chapter), American actions in Vietnam increasingly relied on air power, something which did not lessen the aggression of the war for the GIA. In an article, satirically titled 'Nixon's New "Peace Offensive"', the paper detailed some of the horrors of the air war. They criticised tactics such as free-fire zones, where the Air Force marked out a geographical area in which it was considered to be 'open season on anything and everything in that area'. They also lambasted the use of cruel 'anti-personnel weapons' such as the 'cluster bomb unit', which, when exploded, split into large pellets or 'flechettes' ('barbed steel splinters') which would inflict extra pain and death on the Vietnamese population. Aghast at the cruelty of such weapons, the paper condemned Vietnamization as a policy which gave the façade of de-escalation to Americans whilst allowing for 'the peoples of South East Asia [to] be exterminated much more efficiently via air bombardment'.[51] The saturation bombing of Vietnam (both North and South) likely affected many more Vietnamese than ground troops ever had and the editors of the *Free Press* displayed a humanistic concern about this. As an airman, Dave Henry recalled that the *Free Press* deliberately tried to call their readers' attention to the horrors of the air war to show that it must end.[52]

One of the most astounding results of the *Free Press*' conceptualisation of the Vietnam War as the result of imperialism, and the consequent notion that the US was the aggressor in the conflict, was their support and sympathy for the North Vietnamese. The 1971 People's Peace Treaty, supported by the editors of the *Free Press*, began: '[b]e it known that the American and Vietnamese people are not enemies'.[53] Endorsement of this short sentence demonstrates one of the more intriguing aspects of the newspaper's response to the Vietnam War. It was one thing for American civilians to refer to the Vietnamese people as 'not enemies', it was quite another for those who were fighting, and those who could yet be made to, to do so. In accordance with their support for the project, the GI Alliance published and distributed copies of the Treaty, and the paper even included a petition, addressed to Congressmen Ron Dellums, a prominent anti-war activist, for GIs to support it.[54] In actuality, the petition was a way to navigate the strict

[51] "Saturation Bombing: Nixon's New "Peace Offensive"", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.1, January 1972, p. 6.
[52] Interview of Dave Henry, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 9 October 2022.
[53] National Student Association, "The People's Peace Treaty", *The New York Review of Books*, 25 March 1971, via: The New York Review of Books, https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1971/03/25/peoples-peace-treaty/ [accessed: 12/04/25].
[54] "The War Ends When the People Make the Peace", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.5, May 1971, pp. 4-5.

rules of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. The paper claimed that servicepeople were wary of signing the actual Treaty through fear of violating Article 104 (aiding and communicating with the enemy) and that signing the petition was a way of endorsing the Treaty without breaking this regulation.[55] As the *Free Press* acknowledged, it was a crime to communicate with the enemy and the military realised the severity of GIs not behaving hostilely toward their adversaries. After all, the military had spent much of Basic Training attempting to instil anger towards the Vietnamese in these young men. As Michael Royce remarked: "we were taught in Basic and Infantry training to hate the enemy, depersonalise the enemy, feel they should die, you should kill them." Young men were told to repeat the violent military mantra that "the spirit of the bayonet, drill sergeant, is to kill!"[56] Nonetheless, anti-war GIs refused to be indoctrinated into this hatred for the Vietnamese, which was often based on racism, and in some cases openly flouted the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) regulations on contacting the "enemy".

In 1971, Al Ramp, a writer for the *Fatigue Press* at Fort Hood (TX), wrote a letter to the 'North Vietnamese Delegation in Paris' – presumably a reference to ongoing attempts to secure peace between the DRV and the RVN – stating that he was opposed to the war in Vietnam and that he supported the North Vietnamese 'in their fight to get rid of U.S. troops and big business'. After the letter was returned to Fort Hood because of insufficient postage and opened by his Commanding Officer, Ramp was convicted of violating Article 104 and sentenced to two years in military prison. The *Free Press*, however, argued against Ramp's conviction, citing the fact that the letter was his private property and was opened illegally, as well as the fact that it did not even reach the North Vietnamese.[57] He could not therefore be guilty of communicating with the enemy. Most importantly, however, the paper pointed out that 'there is no declaration of war against North Vietnam' and the North Vietnamese, therefore, were not technically GIs' enemies.[58]

The act of writing newspaper articles which encouraged sympathy with the North Vietnamese, however, did not appear to contravene Article 104 and the authors of the *Free Press* consistently portrayed their "enemy" as an oppressed group. In May 1971, the paper discussed

[55] Ibid., p. 4.
[56] Interview of Michael Royce, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 7 October 2022.
[57] "Letter Writer Found Guilty", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.4, April 1971, p. 7.
[58] Ibid., p. 7.

a meeting between American and Canadian women, two North Vietnamese women, two South Vietnamese women, and two women of the Pathet Lao (the name given to the Laotian revolutionary movement) all of whom therefore had ties to nationalist movements in Southeast Asia and, more startlingly, communism.[59] In an article which essentially endorsed this meeting, the paper documented how the women from Southeast Asia urged solidarity with the US anti-war movement. They claimed that these women urged GIs specifically to talk to each other about the war, refuse orders to Vietnam, refuse to fight, and that veterans should tell others about the war. Likewise, the *Free Press* reported, and did not condemn or contest, the notion that GIs in Vietnam walked around with signs which read 'I will not shoot – do not shoot me', and that they also wore red headbands which communicated the same message.[60] The *Free Press*' endorsement of such acts demonstrates that sympathy for the Vietnamese among some anti-war active-duty personnel often strayed into indirect collaboration and GIs were fortunate that their officers did not perceive this to be aiding the enemy, thus flouting Article 104. The Vietnamese and Laotian women claimed that if US soldiers wished to defect, they would be able to do so safely and they would be returned to the US after the war ended.[61] Obviously, considerations of whether the US would willingly allow those who collaborated with their "enemy" back into the country were not interrogated. However, the fact that the *Free Press* published articles which implicitly endorsed not fighting their state-sanctioned enemy and asking the Vietnamese not to shoot them demonstrates that some anti-war GIs sought friendship rather than animosity with their "enemies" and an end to the killing on both sides.

Much like the development of GIs' conceptualisations of the Vietnam War, anti-war servicemen's views of the Vietnamese became increasingly radical until eventually the "enemy" became their ally in halting US imperialistic aggression. This was evidenced by the way that the *Free Press*' discussed their official South Vietnamese allies. In May 1972, the *Free Press* reported on the significant losses of the ARVN against the North Vietnamese Army, claiming, in unsympathetic language, that the RVN's Army, 'the pride and joy of both Nixon and Thieu [President of the RVN] and the main hope for "Vietnamization", has collapsed'.[62] The *Free Press* called the ARVN 'a scab force', 'a rampaging band of hoodlums', and personified them as 'a cowardly bully', and denigrated the fact that 'Thieu and his fellow

[59] "The War Ends When the People Make the Peace", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.5, May 1971, p. 5.
[60] Ibid., p. 5.
[61] Ibid., p. 5.
[62] "ARVN Collapsing", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.5, May 1972, p. 1.

puppets' were allowed to control the lives of Vietnamese people. In barely constrained anticipation, the *Free Press* stated that '[t]he time the Vietnamese people will control their country is drawing near'.[63] However, instead of framing this reportage as anti-American, the paper maintained that the war needed to end for the sake of both Vietnamese and normal Americans. 'Too many of our buddys [sic] have been sacrificed by selfish jerks like Nixon', the paper lamented, '[w]e suppose it comes down to a question of where our loyalty lies – with the crazy men who have started this crazy war, or the men who are dying in it.'[64] For the editors of the *Free Press*, the choice was easy and their loyalty obviously lay with the latter.

As early as June 1971, the paper's editors had begun to celebrate a potential North Vietnamese victory in Southeast Asia. 'Yes the domino theory is correct', they proclaimed, '[s]uccess of the Vietnamese people to throw us out of their country will set an example which the other people of S.E. Asia will follow.'[65] Unlike for the Administrations which had progressively increased US involvement in Vietnam, the capitulation of the RVN to communism was not a travesty to anti-war GIs of the *Free Press*, and likely many other members of the GI Movement. Discussing Southeast Asians, the paper claimed that 'these people are the friends of the American people. Together we share a common enemy AMERIKA'.[66] In contrast to these denigrations of the US and the RVN, the paper gave North Vietnamese people celebratory labels such as 'the heroic people of Vietnam', claimed that '[j]ustice will be the victory of the Vietnamese people', and celebrated the Vietnamese victory over the US.[67] Bob Barnes remembers: "we got our asses kicked and I celebrated. […] I flew a PRG [Provisional Revolutionary Government – the government which represented the communist insurgency in the South] flag proudly around town in the back of my car. And by that point [1973 …] it wasn't just about "Out Now" and "bring the boys home". It was like, let's support our comrades over there."[68] Barnes demonstrates that by 1973, whilst anti-war GIs desired the end of American deaths, they were also actively seeking to support national liberation movements, whether communist or not, across the globe.

[63] "The NVA: Striking the Death Blow", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.5, May 1972, p. 2.
[64] Ibid., p. 2.
[65] "Bringing It Home", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.6, June 1971, p. 2.
[66] Ibid., p. 2.
[67] "No Peace in '72", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.8, Midmonth December 1972, p. 1 and "Nixon/Calley – A Statement on Values", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.5, May 1971, p. 6.
[68] Interview of Bob Barnes, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 8 October 2022.

The GIs of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* were fairly consistent in their explanation for the Vietnam War as the result of US imperialism. Despite these systemic critiques, many anti-war servicemen objected to what they saw as an overly aggressive and dominating US intervention which subjected the Vietnamese people to unnecessary harm, even within the context of war. Unlike World War II, this was not a "Good War" with a clear, identifiable enemy, it was a "Bad War" in which even troops contested the military's designations and goals. The fact that the national liberation movements which they supported, such as the DRV, the PRG, and the Pathet Lao, were all largely communist-inspired movements also demonstrates the path which radical GIs' anti-imperialist position set them on, eventually culminating in their support for Marxist-Leninist groups in the United States.[69]

Active-duty servicemen of the *Free Press* not only formulated their own conceptual criticisms of the Vietnam War as imperialist, but they also responded to more tangible changes in the conflict. The most significant event during the course of the paper's existence was the implementation of President Nixon's policy of Vietnamization. As demonstrated, the bombing that accompanied this policy became one of the major grievances of anti-war GIs as the war began its denouement. The air war, as it was referred to by GIs, became a sticking point for those who desired the end of the conflict, rather than its continuation under a new guise. Criticisms that such actions undermined the President's proclaimed desires in Southeast Asia were aptly surmised by the *Free Press*, who concernedly claimed in March 1972 that '[w]hile Nixon drones on about "winding down the war," the bombs drop at an ever-increasing rate each day'.[70] The paper's documentation of the air war was carried out to keep "the war issue" at the forefront of its readers' minds. This was done to counteract, what Cortright has termed as, the Nixon Administrations' attempt at 'making [the] war less objectionable and thus numbing the populace into acceptance of continuous conflict'.[71] In this way, criticisms of the air war were necessary to oppose this new form of escalation, which was less likely to inspire widespread outrage because of its impersonality. Whilst it was distant from the US populace, the transmutation from a ground war to an air war had much significance for the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* because of its cross-branch nature. As discussed, as the Air Force took over much of the responsibility for conducting the war in Vietnam, protesting the war became

[69] For more information on GIs' relationship to Marxist-Leninist groups and their anti-capitalist critiques, please see Chapter 6.
[70] "Project Air War", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.4, March [April] 1972, p. 7.
[71] David Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt: GI Resistance During the Vietnam War* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2005), p. 106.

more relevant to airmen. As noted previously, Cortright claims that by the first half of 1972 the number of GI anti-war projects in the Navy and Air Force overtook those on Army and Marine bases because of their increased role in the conflict.[72] Therefore, whilst the switch to an air war may have distanced the conflict for the American public, for many within the Air Force, now more confronted with their role in the war, the *Free Press*' coverage spoke to their consternation about the conflict.

Whilst the notion that the war was being fought for the economic profit of a minority of businessmen stripped meaning from the conflict for the *Free Press*, Vietnamization also had more ominous implications. Whilst it generally numbed the war issue, the knowledge that the country was eventually pulling out of Vietnam only angered GIs as time passed and a US presence remained in Southeast Asia. In his speech to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in April 1971, Lieutenant John F. Kerry demonstrated anti-war servicemen's and veterans' belief that the continued death in Vietnam was the personal responsibility of Nixon due to his slow withdrawal from the war. In his powerful oration he stated that veterans are made to watch as 'American lives are lost so that we can exercise the incredible arrogance of Vietnamizing the Vietnamese […] Someone has to die so that Nixon won't be, and these are his words, "the first President to lose a war"'. Kerry went on to question: 'how do you ask a man to be the last man to die in Vietnam? How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?'[73]

For Kerry, and for anti-war GIs and veterans, Vietnamization created questions of expediency. If the US was to withdraw from Vietnam, why not do so immediately? Unlike the Nixon Administration, they were indifferent about the maintenance of a sovereign South Vietnam. As demonstrated, the GIA wished for quite the opposite. In 1972, the paper supported the North's victories over the South, arguing that the DRV was 'striking [attacking the South] for their independence, for their freedom, for the right to determine their own destiny'.[74] Negotiations between the US/RVN and the DRV were evidently not what the editors of the *Free Press* desired. After all, if negotiations continued to prolong the end of the war, it could be a member of the GI Alliance who became 'the last man to die for a mistake', as demonstrated by Figure 11. 'The least we can do now', the *Free Press* stated, 'is withdraw every last American from

[72] Ibid., p. 133.
[73] "Statement of Mr John Kerry, Representing the Vietnam Veterans Against the War", *Congressional Record,* 92nd Congress, Vol.117, Part 9, 23 April 1971, p. 11739. https://www.congress.gov/92/crecb/1971/04/23/GPO-CRECB-1971-pt9-4-1.pdf.
[74] "The NVA: Striking the Death Blow", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.5, May 1972, p. 2.

the battle zone for good. For one more American to die in this worthless, miserable cause is a crime which should carry a sentence of death for those responsible for keeping him there.'[75] Evidently, therefore, the GIs of the *Free Press* disregarded the slow withdrawal of Vietnamization in favour of rapid retraction from Southeast Asia. 'Waiting for Nixon to end the war? don't [sic] hold your breath…', the *Free Press* sardonically remarked in April 1971.[76]

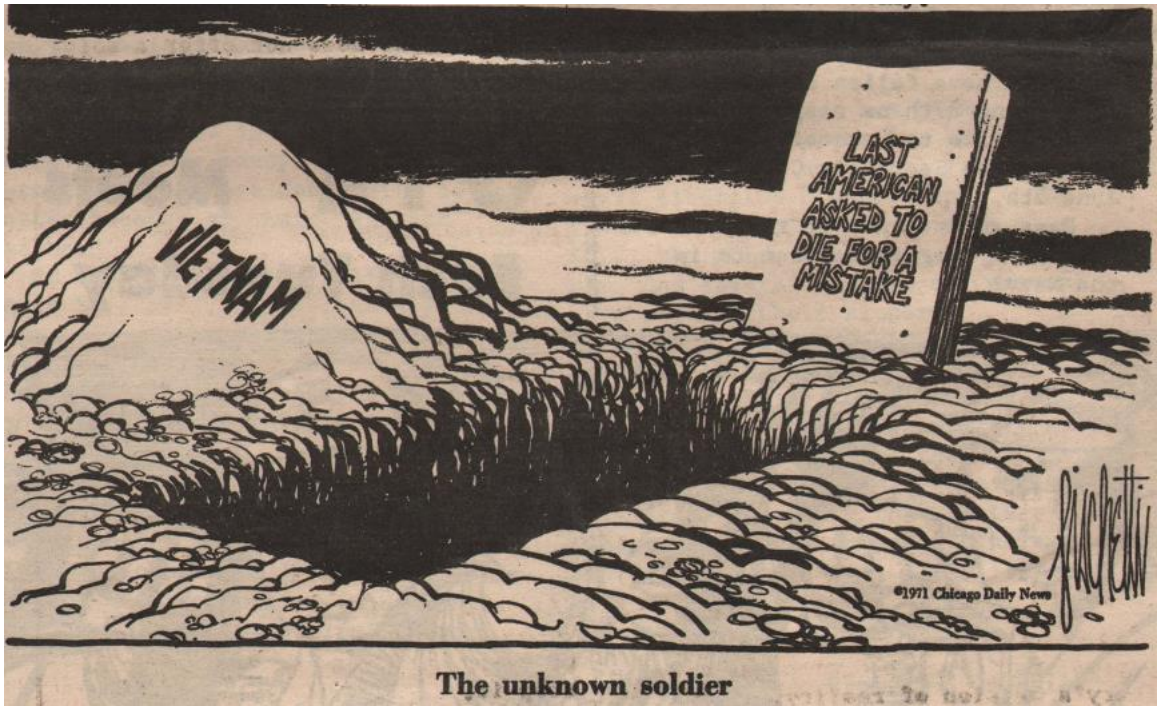

Figure 11: Cartoon, John Fischetti, 'The Unknown Soldier',
***Lewis-McChord Free Press*, Vol.3, No.1, July 1971, p. 4.**
Originally *Chicago Daily News*.
Source: JSTOR, 2025; available under the CC BY NC license.

These questions of expediency were somewhat addressed by the Nixon Administration in what the *Free Press* referred to as 'the POW issue'.[77] As the war dragged on, Nixon claimed that it was not himself but the DRV who were encumbering the achievement of peace by being obstinate in negotiations for the release of American Prisoners of War (POWs).[78] The *Free Press* claimed that the President was utilising the widespread sympathy that civilians had for

[75] Ibid., p. 2.
[76] "Waiting for Nixon to end the war? don't hold your breath…", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.4, April 1971, p. 4.
[77] For the GI Alliance's discussion of the POW-MIA issue, please see: "Nixon Uses POW Issue", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.4, March [April] 1972, p. 5; "Saturation Bombing: Nixon's New "Peace Offensive"", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.1, January 1972, p. 6; "Survival News", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.2, February 1972, p. 8; "At McChord: Protest", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.5, May 1972, p. 3; "Serve Your Country – And Get Shafted", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.4, October 1971, p. 7; and "Vet Blasts Use of POW's [sic]", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.6, April 1973, p. 8. This article was reprinted from a newspaper called *Revolution*.
[78] Small, *Antiwarriors* (2004), p. 134.

POWs as a way to manipulate the American public into supporting the continuation of the war.[79] Indeed, there was much popular support for the POW issue. Bracelets, inscribed with the name, rank, and date of capture of one of the 1,600 known POWs and MIAs (Missing in Action), became a vogue among Americans. Over one million of these were sold by an organisation called Voices in Vital America, previously a pro-war group named the Victory in Vietnam Association. Therefore, whilst support for POWs was a supposedly patriotic, non-partisan issue, it is evident that the campaign had conservative connotations.[80] The *Free Press* acknowledged that similar trends occurred on base. After Nixon had declared the period 26 March-1 April 1972 as 'National Week of Concern for Prisoners of War-Missing in Action', the paper reported that at McChord there were campaigns to sell POW-MIA bracelets and bumper stickers.[81] This was especially relevant to the Air Force as many POWs were pilots who had been shot down over North Vietnam, and it was seemingly supposed that the airmen of McChord would readily support their lost comrades. The editors of the paper took a cynical view of this campaign, stating that its supposed benevolence masked more sinister desires. They wrote: '[w]hile Nixon would have us all praying for peace, he is riding shotgun over Vietnam dropping napalm and herbicides from Heaven'.[82]

Once again, perhaps in its most extreme example, the *Free Press*' coverage of POWs emphasised their commitment to supporting the Vietnamese over those who fought for the US. In a 1972 article, the editors of the *Free Press* agreed not with the US' position on the need to have POWs returned before peace, but with the DRV's. Instead of attempting to justify the actions of captured Americans as a way of emphasising their innocence, the paper categorically stated that '[t]hese men are considered war criminals by the [North] Vietnamese for reasons which should be obvious', presumably because of the death and destruction they caused when dropping their bombs.[83] The *Free Press* assumed the position that captured Americans deserved their imprisonment and rejected any form of blind loyalty to their countrymen. 'So we Americans are caught in a painful contradiction', they elaborated, '[o]ur fathers, brothers,

[79] "Nixon Uses POW Issue", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.4, March [April] 1972, p. 5. Indeed, there was a relatively widespread movement among Americans who believed that the Nixon Administration was not doing enough to secure the return of POW/MIAs. The *Free Press* was evidently a part of this group but argued specifically that this was a deliberate ploy to continue the war. For an account of POW/MIA activism, please see: Michael J. Allen, *Until the Last Man Comes Home: POWs, MIAs, and the Unending Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).
[80] DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal* (1990), pp. 339-340.
[81] "Nixon Uses POW Issue", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.4, March [April] 1972, p. 5.
[82] Ibid., p. 5.
[83] Ibid., p. 5.

and husbands are, in fact, war criminals'.[84] Whilst the paper made a short attempt to argue that it was not POWs but the US who were the real aggressors in Vietnam, it took the position that the DRV was correctly treating US pilots as war criminals. In short, the *Free Press* rejected the use of the POW-MIA problem as an explanation for continued involvement in Vietnam and reasoned that if POWs were to be returned, it would have to be because the US ended the war in Vietnam. They concluded: '[t]here is only one way to secure the release of our countrymen. Respect international agreements! [the 1954 Geneva Agreements] Stop the bombing! Get out of Indochina!'[85]

A conceptualisation of the Vietnam War as the product of US imperialism was not the only criticism that the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* had of the conflict. Study of the paper evidences the interplay between anti-war GIs and the changing conditions of the war. The *Free Press* particularly shows how anti-war servicemen responded to the policy of Vietnamization, which, whilst it signalled the wind down of the war, was overwhelmingly negative. The impending end of the war led to clear frustration within the paper which argued that withdrawal was not being actioned swiftly enough. This was most clearly evidenced by the ramping up of the air war in Southeast Asia, which appeared to contradict Nixon's claims of withdrawal, and the paper's rejection of the use of POWs as an excuse to maintain a presence in Vietnam. Vietnamization also underscored the pointlessness of all these acts. For anti-war GIs, the bombing of Vietnamese civilians, negotiating US withdrawal rather than immediately extricating themselves from the RVN, and the idea that some American men were still dying in the country were especially problematic given US acknowledgment that their interests no longer lay in Southeast Asia.

Especially important to the *Free Press*' commentary on the Vietnam War was an emphasis on their Americanness. Charles DeBenedetti has argued that as GIs 'began to filter into the antiwar movement, they brought a kind of concreteness – an appreciation of warfare and of the power of the military system – and a devotion to American values which countered the abstract, nation-disparaging rhetoric of radical militants.'[86] Whilst this final assertion is dubious given their criticism of US actions and championing of the DRV and PRG, the *Free Press* did make a conscious effort to highlight their own Americanness.

[84] Ibid., p. 5.
[85] Ibid., p. 5.
[86] DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal* (1990), p. 234.

Nonetheless, throughout the war one of the key refutations of anti-war arguments by pro-war supporters was that protest was disloyal, un-American, un-patriotic, or, most concerningly, organised by communists.[87] This allowed supporters of the Vietnam War to attempt to undermine anti-war activism by dismissing it offhandedly, not engaging with anti-war activists in debates surrounding the war, and instead disparaging the people who created such arguments. A poem, published in the *Free Press*, succinctly illustrated the use of such labels toward anti-war activists through the creation of a hypothetical argument between an anti-war paper salesman and a member of 'the Bellevue Birdwatchers Society' – representative of the conservative, middle-class war supporter. After some interplay between the birdwatcher and the salesman, the salesman asks whether they would like to buy a newspaper. The birdwatcher, upon hearing the contents – which included opposing '[r]acism, capitalism, communism, [and] pollution' – proclaims: 'Oh I see. You're one of those freaks that go selling that commie trash. Trying to undermine our country. Hippie trash! Commie faggot!'[88] Evidently, anti-war protest was often met with emotional criticisms which focused, not on the actual issues themselves, but the people who protested them. Whilst this imagined encounter played out in the civilian world, the inclusion of the poem in the *Free Press* hinted that such disparagements were also cast at anti-war soldiers by members of the military.

By the time the third edition of the *Free Press* had been published, the newspaper and the Pacific Counseling Service (PCS) had already been singled out on Fort Lewis. In the 'Commander's Call' – seemingly a directive issued by the base commanders to officers on base

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[87] Ibid., p. 152. For example, Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, L. Mendel Rivers, denounced the burning of draft cards as 'treason'; General Westmoreland referred to protests as 'unpatriotic acts'; and President Johnson called for the need to establish a 'family of patriots' around the war. Terry H. Anderson, 'Vietnam is Here: The Antiwar Movement', in *The War that Never Ends: New Perspectives on the Vietnam War*, ed. by David L. Anderson and John Ernst (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2007), pp. 245-264 (p. 253). Similarly, University of Texas SDS organiser, Jeff Shero, stated that being a part of SDS meant that "you were a bad motherfucker, you couldn't go home for Christmas… In most of those places it meant, '*You Goddamn Communist*'". Joseph A. Fry, 'Unpopular Messengers: Student Opposition to the Vietnam War', in *The War that Never Ends* (2007), pp. 219-244 (pp. 225-226). For articles in the *Free Press* which emphasise the ubiquity of these opinions, please see: "Air Force in Air About Hair Reg", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.2, September 1970, p. 3; "Paper Boy", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.2, February 1971, p. 8; "Get It On", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.2, February 1971, p. 8; "Declaration Called "Commie Junk"", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.1, January 1971, p. 5; "Army Censorship", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.3, September 1971, p. 2; and "Wanted", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.2, September 1972, p. 3. Similarly, in December 1968, the Fort Lewis anti-war paper, *Counterpoint*, also referenced these stereotypes in a comic strip titled 'The Creeping Commies'. "The Creeping Commies", *Counterpoint*, Vol.1, No.5, December 1968, pp. 2-5.

[88] "Paper Boy", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.2, February 1971, p. 8. It is assumed that this poem was authored by a civilian anti-war activist because of its portrayal of soldiers as people who beat up student protesters. It is therefore unlikely to have been authored by a GI.

– the military higher-ups claimed that both the paper and PCS advocated violence and were communist-inspired. Both groups denied these accusations, stating that if "the Brass" 'wish[ed] to label [them] as an "-ist" organization, "humanist" would be more precise.'[89] Likewise, one writer for the paper complained: 'I made the error of disagreeing with the Brass in public. As you know that makes me a dirty, hippy communist. Since I don't take the Brass's word for everything, I must be unpatriotic.'[90] The use of labels such as 'dirty', 'hippy', 'faggot', and 'Commie' and 'communist' emphasise attempts to denigrate the validity of anti-war protest by both military higher-ups and US civilians by portraying it as oppositional to respectable middle-class Americanism and exaggerating its revolutionary characteristics. [91]

If anti-war soldiers wanted their criticisms of the war and the military to be taken seriously, both by military higher-ups and other GIs, who were likely to be reactionary to anti-American sentiment, they had to counteract the defamation of anti-war protest. To do so, anti-war soldiers emphasised their own Americanness to demonstrate that criticism of America and patriotism could co-exist. The abundance of this tendency within GI protest has been highlighted by GI Movement historians who have tended to view the Movement as an American movement, one inspired by distinctly American values, and which harked back to the Founding Fathers and the War of Independence for legitimacy and inspiration.[92] For Mottle, for example, the foremost ideal of being an American is a dedication to democracy, rather than obedience to the state or the military. Therefore, for her, anti-war GIs placed 'dissent at the center of upholding traditional American values', emphasising that to protest was to be patriotic.[93] GIs, therefore, created a movement with an explicitly American character in which they called upon American symbols and past figures for legitimacy to subvert the idea that to protest against one's country was "un-patriotic".

[89] "A Humble Thank You", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.4, November 1970, p. 8.
[90] "Wanted", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.2, September 1972, p. 3.
[91] For examples which refer to the Brass calling anti-war soldiers communists, un-patriotic, or un-American, please see: "Prof Still Banned", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.1, January 1971, p. 5; "ASU Organizer Framed", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.6, June 1971, p. 4; "Gov't Probes GIA", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.3, March 1972, p. 2; "Kiss My Royal Brass", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.4, March [April] 1972, p. 2; and "Wanted", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.2, September 1972, p. 3. For a refutation of patriotism altogether, please see: "Patriotism", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.1, January 1971, p. 6.
[92] See: Richard Moser, *The New Winter Soldiers: GI and Veteran Dissent During the Vietnam War* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996) and Lauren Mottle, 'Striking the Machine from Within: A Case for the Inclusion of the GI Movement in the New Left', *The Sixties*, 12.2 (2019), pp. 147-177.
[93] Mottle, 'Striking the Machine from Within' (2019), p. 159.

After all, the idea that the US had become an imperialist power was particularly disturbing for GIs, not just as servicepeople but as Americans. In the Declaration of Independence, authored in direct opposition to the oppression of empire, Thomas Jefferson stated that men 'are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness', before detailing the unjust actions of the British towards the Thirteen Colonies. 'A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant,' Jefferson added, 'is unfit to be the ruler of a free people'.[94] Indeed, so popular were such emancipating and democratic concepts, particularly that oft-quoted dictum, that they encapsulated the demands of national liberation causes across the globe. Ironically, in 1945, after overthrowing Japanese occupation, the DRV proclaimed itself as an independent, unified nation state, utilising Jefferson's words to do so.[95] In the end, Jefferson and his fellow Founding Fathers coalesced the Thirteen Colonies into a republic, in which power rested with the people rather than a monarch. For many Americans it was unthinkable and disquieting to reason that the United States, founded in opposition to the oppression of an imperial and monarchical power, upon republican rights – among which liberty and democracy were pre-eminent – could itself harbour interests in an empire. For the GIs of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, opposition to tyranny and imperialism was ingrained in Americanness and protesting such acts was patriotic.

The notion that opposing the imperialism in Vietnam represented a "true" patriotism, not subject to conventional concepts of devotion to one's country, abounds in the recollections of former *Free Press* contributors, as evidenced in their oral testimonies. Whilst Dave Henry commented that he felt patriotism was too tied up with militarism, and to be patriotic, in a stereotypical sense, involved being "pro-war, pro-military, [and] anti-thinking", his position was a minority among his GIA companions.[96] In contrast, Henry Valenti claimed that he was "pissed that the right-wing has adopted the flag", and countered that even during his time as an anti-war GI he was "really patriotic" as he felt that he was "doing the right thing for the United States."[97] The sentiment that being anti-war was actually a patriotic position during the Vietnam War was also echoed by Terry Irvin.[98] Indeed, Michael Royce claimed that "it's very

[94] *American Declaration of Independence,* 4 July 1776, via: National Archives, https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript [accessed: 29/02/24]
[95] *Proclamation of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam*, 2 September 1945, via: Asia for Educators, https://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/vietnam/independence.pdf [accessed: 29/02/24].
[96] Interview of Dave Henry, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 9 October 2022.
[97] Interview of Henry Valenti, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 4 October 2022.
[98] Interview of Terry Irvin, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 5 October 2022.

patriotic to say you love your country enough not to go along with its most horrible actions".[99] Bob Barnes took this idea further, claiming that his anti-war activism made him "without being cocky – a little more patriotic" than those who were supporting the US' endeavour in Vietnam.[100] Within the opinions of these anti-war soldiers, therefore, opposing the war did not inhibit their ability to be devoted Americans, as dissent was the most patriotic thing a GI could do. These recollections demonstrate that the editors of the *Free Press* were dedicated to a thoughtful patriotism in which they were loyal to the concept of America and what it meant to them, rather than a blind loyalty to whichever government was in control of the country, or what military engagement was being conducted.

The desire to emphasise this "true" patriotism to pro-war critics led to GIs of the *Free Press* using the American past as legitimising sources of dissent. Originally, the newspaper professed an explicit dedication to 'sharing the views expressed in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States' in their masthead, emphasising their belief in the significance of foundational documents to potential readers.[101] Throughout the *Free Press*, editors quoted and alluded to such vital documents, the Founding Fathers, and conflicts which the citizen-soldier played a main role, such as the War of Independence and the Civil War, wars in which progress triumphed over oppression. This emphasis on important American documents is also visible in the paper's continued reliance on their Constitutional rights to contest the illegality of their publications on base, particularly when they deliberately distributed the Declaration of Independence on 4 July, as discussed in the previous chapter.

The most resourceful use of the American past to emphasise the Americanness of their contemporary protest was through the paper's utilisation of authority figures to make their points for them. This is a common facet of all forms of debate and protest in which one appeals to a more authoritative, better-respected figure than themselves as evidence to support their point. In the case of Americans, there are no figures more highly regarded than the Founding Fathers, shortly followed by former Presidents. Who, for example, would dare question the Americanness of Thomas Jefferson or Abraham Lincoln? Anticipating the quandary that this would place those who wanted to demonise anti-war protesters as un-American in, the *Free*

[99] Interview of Michael Royce, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 7 October 2022.
[100] Interview of Bob Barnes, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 8 October 2022.
[101] *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.2, September 1970, p. 1. This phrase is printed on the following four editions of the newspapers, ceasing to appear in January 1971.

Press quoted Jefferson in his unequivocal support for a free press and Lincoln on the notion that to not protest something unjust was to 'sin by silence'.[102] The paper also quoted less iconic, but nonetheless authoritative, American figures in more obscure passages. For example, they published a long quote from John Quincy Adams (sixth President of the United States and son of the second President and Founding Father, John Adams) on the incompatibility of foreign intervention and freedom and liberty – obviously a prescient issue for anti-war servicemen. As well as Founding Father George Mason at the Virginia Ratification Convention (incorrectly attributed to the Constitutional Convention) on opposing standing armies and favouring local militias – which in this instance appears to be used as an opposition to the Army as well as a promotion of the right for self-defence against tyrannical government.[103] Whilst the military and other war supporters could denigrate anti-war constituents as un-American, they would not deny the Americanness of figures such as Jefferson, Lincoln, Adams, and Mason (the first two of which are immortalised as literal American figureheads on Mount Rushmore). Using the statements and positions of these men to support their points demonstrated that GIs knew their history and possessed the ingenuity to counteract labels which sought to categorise anti-war opinion as American apostasy.

Emphasising how some anti-war GIs originally conceptualised themselves first and foremost as Americans, the *Free Press*, using American iconography and symbols, also "spoke" to their readership in American. Peppered throughout the newspaper are images of important American motifs such as the Great Seal of the United States, the Stars and Stripes flag, the bald eagle, and the Statue of Liberty, in order to emphasise that the paper's editors, like their readers, were Americans.[104] Whilst perhaps an obvious assumption, it is important to remember that anti-war

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[102] Thomas Jefferson quoted in *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.5, May 1971, p. 1 and *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.2, August 1971, p. 1. Lincoln quoted in "Defend Yourself", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.2, February 1971, p. 5.
[103] Letter, *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.2, February 1971, p. 2; Quote from a Virginia Delegate to the Constitutional Convention, *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.5, December 1970, p. 7. As stated, this quote did not originate from the Constitutional Convention but the Virginia Ratification Convention. See: "Journal Notes on the Virginia Ratification Convention Proceedings", 13 June 1788, via: The Constitutional Sources Project, https://www.consource.org/document/journal-notes-of-the-virginia-ratification-convention-proceedings-1788-6-13/ [accessed: 20/01/25].
[104] For cartoons and images which either utilise or distort American iconography, please see: Cartoon, *Fort Lewis Free Press*, Vol.1, No.1, August 1970, p. 1; "Red, White and Blue-Breasted Wiretapper", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.2, September 1970, p. 3; "It was designed as a flag, buddy – not as a blindfold", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.2, September 1970, p. 4; Cartoon, *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.5, December 1970, p. 7; "People Die…Ideas Don't. Be Committed!", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.1, January 1971, p. 2; Cartoon, *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.1, January 1971, p. 4; "Love It and Live It", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.1, January 1971, p. 8; "Don't Burn It.…Wash It!", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.2, February 1971, p. 5; "Quick Spiro! Slug Her While I Grab the Book!!", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.2, February 1971, p. 5; Cartoon, *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.3, March 1972, p. 6; "Armed Farces Day May 16, 1971", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.5, May 1971, p. 1; ""No Cause Justifies" – President Nixon, 9/16/70", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.6, June 1971, p. 3; Cartoon, *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.3, March 1972, p. 4; Cartoon, *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.1, August Midmonth 1972, p. 1;

GIs had to overcome the notion that simply by publishing the *Free Press* they engaged in anti-American behaviour. They did not, however, simply insert American symbols and icons into the columns of the newspaper. Instead, they utilised distorted versions of these images to convey their view that America during this period was distressed and in disarray.

Figure 12, for example, depicts a cartoonishly exaggerated drawing of President Nixon as the Statue of Liberty, shrouded in the American flag and possibly in an Air Force officer's uniform, complete with insignia, with Liberty's usual torch distorted into Nixon's iconic use of the "V" for "Victory" sign. The fat, dishevelled, hoggishness of Nixon is used to emphasise his role as a "pig", a word used to deride any person of authority by anti-war personnel, as well as to emphasise the President's greed as he pursued the war in Vietnam for his own gain. Similarly, disrespect toward the American flag, wrapped around his lower half, emphasises anti-war GIs' belief that Nixon disregarded true American values in favour of selfishness. Finally, this replacement of the torch – used to signify the enlightenment of Liberty and this principle's importance as the guiding light of American democracy – with munitions, and its warping into Nixon's famous "V", which signified peace for young activists, represented the perversion of enlightenment, personified by "Lady Liberty". Accompanied with Nixon's likeness to an Air Force officer, this emphasised that America had been tainted by the President's pursuit of an air war in Vietnam.

Figure 12: Cartoon, Flip, *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, Vol.1, No.5, December 1970, p. 7.

Cartoon, *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.1, August Midmonth 1972, p. *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.1, August Midmonth 1972, p. 6; Cartoon, *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.2, September 1972, p. 3; "Boycott Lettuce", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.2, September 1972, p. 6; and "In God We Trust", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.6, April 1973, p. 4.

In a much less comical expression, from September 1972 onward, the paper's masthead bore the Gadsden flag. This flag (Figure 13), whilst more recently appropriated by the American Right, was originally given to Commodore Esek Hopkins, Commander of the United States Navy during the American War of Independence by its designer, South Carolina Patriot and delegate to the first Continental Congress, Christopher Gadsden. This image was an allusion to the American past, but the flag also took on more symbolic importance due to its sole imagery, a rattlesnake. This reptile, indigenous to the Americas, was a conspicuously American symbol which alluded to Benjamin Franklin's famous 1754 'JOIN, OR DIE' cartoon, featuring a segmented rattlesnake representing the American colonies. Whilst originally drawn to encourage union between the colonies to fight French and Amerindian incursions, the iconography of the rattlesnake became even more popular in the press during the Stamp Act Crisis, the War of Independence, and later the Civil War.[105] This history, therefore, established the rattlesnake as not only a symbol of American unity and tradition, but also of rebellion. The inclusion of this flag, and the rattlesnake particularly, on the *Free Press*' masthead emphasises the editors' continued attempts to accentuate their own Americanness via allusions to the Founding Fathers and America's past. Likewise, it was chosen because it is supposed that the rattlesnake would not attack without provocation, yet when it does it is lethal.[106] This insignia was therefore used to warn that GIs of the *Free Press* were not to be "trodden on", highlighting their willingness to fight back against any attempt to diminish their anti-war position. It is unsurprising, however, that the *Free Press* included this insignia (the symbol used by a military organisation as part of a revolution) as late as September 1972. This considerably more menacing use of American iconography demonstrates the more left-wing, militant, and revolutionary attitudes of the *Free Press* which took hold closer to the end of the war. In this way, the *Free Press* combined the desire to emphasise their Americanness with their growing radicalism, something which was perhaps, or would later become, incongruous.[107]

[105] See: David Copeland, '"JOIN, OR DIE": America's Press During the French and Indian War', *Journalism History*, 24.3 (Autumn 1998), pp. 112-121 and Karen Severud Cook, 'Benjamin Franklin and the Snake that Would Not Die', *British Library Journal*, 22.1 (Spring 1996), pp. 88-111.
[106] "Gadsden Flag, 1775", via: The Charleston Museum, https://www.charlestonmuseum.org/news-events/gadsden-flag-1775-so-called-for-its/ [accessed: 05/11/24].
[107] For a discussion of the *Free Press*' increased radicalism and far-Left attitudes, please see Chapter 6.

Figure 13: The Gadsden Flag (1775), *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, Vol.6, No.3, February Midmonth 1973, p. 1.

The return to America's past only enforced discontented GIs' beliefs that something had changed in the US. Originally created from the noble intentions of their Founding Fathers, opposed to the tyranny of the British, the US had become an imperial power itself. The *Free Press* recognised this hypocrisy and deliberately drew comparisons between US involvement in Vietnam and the British's domination of the Thirteen Colonies. In many protesters' views, the US was no longer fighting for the oppressed but was instead the oppressor. It is because of this rejection of US interference in Vietnam that Richard Moser has cast anti-war GIs in the role of the citizen-soldier. For them, the US' incursion and economic exploitation of a far-flung nation perverted the legacy of the Founding Fathers and citizen-soldiers who fought against imperial tyrannical oppression. In this instance, anti-war GIs' conceptualisations of themselves as dutiful Americans and their view of the US as an imperial power combine. Figure 14 is demonstrative of the parallels that GIs drew between the British Empire of the seventeenth/eighteenth century and the alleged American empire of the twentieth. Utilising cultural symbols, such as Concord Bridge, sight of the first battle and Patriot victory of the War of Independence, the *Free Press* drew attention to the hypocrisy of American actions in Vietnam.

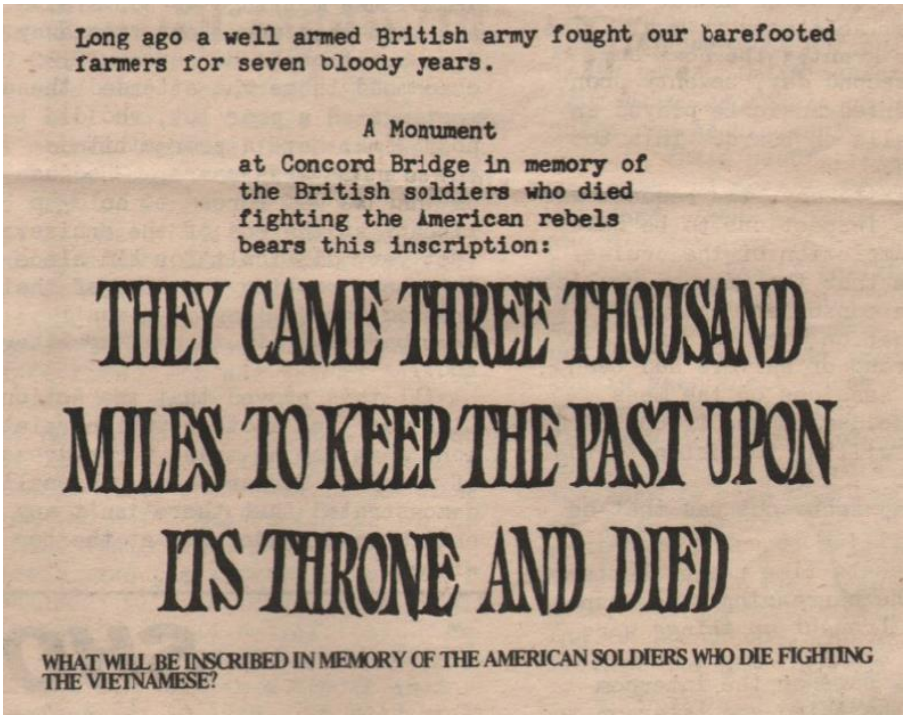

Figure 14: *Lewis-McChord Free Press,* Vol.3, No.1, July 1971, p. 8.
Source: JSTOR, 2025; available under the CC BY NC license.

Once again, this conception subverted the role of the "enemy". It is sympathetic to the Vietnamese – analogous to the freedom-fighting 'barefooted farmers' – and critical of the United States – those who travelled across the globe to oppress a nation. Whilst not necessarily anti-American, it emphasises how some GIs' conceptualisation of themselves as truly patriotic Americans became more radical as they mixed with an increasingly anti-imperialist worldview. The change in perception which now viewed the US as the aggressor and identified sympathetically with the Vietnamese, emphasises the paper's increased opposition to the actions of the US and its support for those oppressed by their nation. To make their conception of the US as imperialist pertinent to their readership, the *Free Press*' editors urged them to question their own role as soldiers in the Vietnam War. Would they be those who are revered for their bravery and patriotism in a just cause? Or would they be those who are remembered for their attempts to oppress the 'barefooted farmers' of Vietnam? The *Free Press* was clear which side they believed troops should want to be on. Therefore, the paper engaged in a form of twisted logic which continued to emphasise their own Americanness whilst increasingly berating the US and supporting its "enemy". GIs' ratiocination, however, was that it was successive administrations which had led the US astray, and dissent encouraged their nation to return to the ideals which America was founded upon.

Drawing parallels between the American and British empires was one of the main ways that the *Free Press* sought to highlight the similarities between the two nations. The newspaper quoted the Supreme Court Justice, William O. Douglas – a strong opponent of the Vietnam War – who claimed that '[w]e must realize that today's Establishment [the Nixon Administration] is the new George III'.[108] In highlighting the similarities between the US and Britain, Douglas pointed out that when the Founding Fathers were discontented with the British they turned to revolution, and he argued that if the 'the New George III' did not seek changes to the state of the US in the late-"Sixties", 'the redress, honored in tradition, is also revolution'.[109] Therefore, drawing parallels between the British during the American War of Independence and the US in the Vietnam War, only confirmed to the *Free Press*' editors that America was indeed an empire. Likewise, the newspaper used these comparisons to persuade GIs to the anti-war position by playing on their patriotism, which was rooted in opposition to tyrannical rule. They said: '[y]our uniform may not be British red – but you represent the same tyranny'.[110]

As discussed, the idea that the Vietnam War was the result of imperialism led to some anti-war servicemen abandoning their view of the conflict as a mistake in favour of a structural view of the United States. In this sense, Vietnam became one instance in a broader pattern of 'oppression and aggression'. This was the "political understanding" Henry Valenti discussed. He expanded that it was when he was a GI that he learnt about American imperialism, claiming that "we had had a Vietnam in the Philippines in the 1920s" and that he was "getting an education about […] maybe we're not the good guys, maybe we do some really bad things".[111] For these radical GIs, therefore, it was Vietnam which alerted them to the possible imperial character of the US. Likewise, Randy Rowland argued that GIs and veterans "had learned through their own personal experience, paid for in blood many times, [the] lesson that it wasn't

[108] "Remember What Happened to George III!", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.2, p. 8. Douglas was a staunch opponent of the Vietnam War, questioning the legality of the conflict, the right for the President to make war without the consent of the Legislative branch, and was a staunch defender of the First Amendment rights of anti-war protesters. For a biography of Justice William O. Douglas, please see: "Justice William O. Douglas", Justia, https://supreme.justia.com/justices/william-o-douglas/ [accessed: 22/11/24]. For a discussion of his anti-war activism, please see: James L. Moses, 'William O. Douglas and the Vietnam War: Civil Liberties, Presidential Authority, and the "Political Question"', *Presidential Studies Quarterly,* 26.4 (Autumn 1996), pp. 1019-1033.
[109] "Remember What Happened to George III!", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.2, p. 8. For the original quote, please see: William O. Douglas, *Points of Rebellion* (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), p. 95. It should be noted that Douglas quantifies that this revolution is not necessarily an armed insurrection like the American Revolution but could simply be 'an explosive political regeneration'. Ibid., p. 97.
[110] "Remember What Happened to George III!", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.2, p. 8.
[111] Interview of Henry Valenti, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 4 October 2022.

"America the Beautiful", that it wasn't just one bad war, or one bad massacre, or one incident, but [it] was in fact a pattern. You know, a bully kind of pattern. You know, an abusive pattern."[112] The idea that this was somewhat typical amplified the need for structural critiques of US imperialism, rather than simple criticisms of the Vietnam War. Michael Royce stated that in the early 1970s he felt that "[w]e [the US] have been […] involved in neo-colonial wars before and will continue to be. And so it's not just [that] we [servicemen] should be pissed off that this war is wrong, and what we had to do is wrong, but [that we should] not let our country continue to do this."[113] If this was a structural element of the US, this undermined the notion that Nixon was solely responsible for the US' endeavour in Vietnam and, for radicals, suggested the idea that perhaps imperialism was also a trait of Americanness. It is perhaps for this reason that the Alliance relied on arguments concerning Americanness less and less.

Stemming from this structural view of US foreign interference, the *Free Press* developed criticisms of not only the Vietnam War but of American foreign policy, past, present, and future. As Royce emphasised, most concerning for the editors of the newspaper was the notion that if the Vietnam War was not aberrant, but was the result of imperialism, similar conflicts would continue to occur in other far-flung nations which had natural resources that the US found desirable. If this was the case, it raised the notion that a draft may once again be used to call young men to serve, as they had in Vietnam. To take this viewpoint to its logical conclusion, which the *Free Press* did, protesting the Vietnam War became somewhat futile. If the United States was not changed structurally, "Vietnams" would become recurring facets of American life, something which was also implied in Figure 10. To invert the words of "Sixties" hero and icon Che Guevara, dissatisfied GIs feared 'two, three or many Vietnams'.[114]

When commenting on American involvement in the Philippines, therefore, the paper paranoically remarked that '[t]here are striking historical similarities between the Philippines

[112] Interview of Randy Rowland, Video 17, interviewed by Jessie Kindig and Steve Beda, 9 September 2008, https://depts.washington.edu/antiwar/interview_rowland.shtml [accessed: 26/11/24].
[113] Interview of Michael Royce, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 7 October 2022.
[114] Ernesto "Che" Guevara, "Message to the Tricontinental", via: Marxists Internet Archive, https://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1967/04/16.htm [accessed: 26/11/24]. In this message, Guevara was referring to the idea of 'two, three or many Vietnams' as a positive thing. He believed that Vietnam was the best example of the fight against US imperialism and therefore its example should be replicated the world over. Michael D. Parazino, '"Two, Three, Many Vietnams": Che Guevara's Tricontinental Revolutionary Vision', in *The Tricontinental Revolution: Third World Radicalism and the Cold War*, ed. by R. Joseph Parrott and Mark Atwood Lawrence (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), pp. 297-298.

and Vietnam'.[115] The *GI Voice* (the *Free Press* renamed in October 1973) was also concerned about the stationing of one thousand troops in the country, as well as the fact that, according to the *New York Times*, groups of forty soldiers had been arriving in the Philippines as early as 1972.[116] Similarities in economic and societal make-up, as well as geographical location, between the two countries inevitably drew comparisons. Similarly, likenesses between the placement of troops in the country and the use of US advisers and slow build-up of combat troops in Vietnam did little to convince the GIA that the Vietnam War was anomalous. By late 1973, the paper warned that '[i]t is especially important that GIs are familiar with the situation in the Philippines because they are the ones who could easily be the second victims of a war based solely on profit for the few'.[117] As the self-designated spokespeople for servicemen, editors of the *Free Press* felt that it was their duty to make GIs aware that Vietnam was not the end of their worries and, of course, they should do something to change this.

Seeing "Vietnams" whenever they looked at US foreign interference, the *Free Press* and its editors broadened their conceptualisations of US imperialism. They criticised not only US hard power – the aggressive use of troops to enforce their influence, such as in Vietnam – but also the use of soft power – financial and political aid – in other countries around the world to further US economic interests. For editors of the *Free Press*, one of the largest examples of US soft power was the country's friendship with Israel.[118] Labelled 'imperialism's watchdog' in the Middle East, the paper criticised Israel's reliance on the US and its subsequent use as a tool to put down Arab nationalism so as not to disturb American oil interests in the area.[119] Criticism of Israel was especially relevant to Americans during the late 1960s and early '70s as the US provided substantial financial and material aid to the nation during successive wars with its Arab neighbours.[120] Shortly after the commencement of the Yom Kippur War in October 1973, the *GI Voice* proclaimed '[w]ell! Here we go again. Barely over with one war, our freedom and peace-loving government intends to jump into the action over in the Mid-East.' 'After all', they

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[115] "Philippines Report", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, p. 4.
[116] "The Philippines", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.11, November 1973, pp. 4-5.
[117] Ibid., p. 5.
[118] For articles in the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* (and *GI Voice*) which criticised Israel as an imperialist state, please see: "Don't Let the Handshake Fool You – II", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.6, July 1972, p. 4; "Israel: Imperialism's Watchdog", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.7, December 1972, p. 5; "Israel: 25 Years of Colonialism", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.8, June 1973, p. 4; and "Middle East Crisis", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.11, November 1973, p. 1 and 6.
[119] "Israel: Imperialism's Watchdog", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.7, December 1972, p. 5 and "Israel: 25 Years of Colonialism", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.8, June 1973, p. 4.
[120] For a detailed narrative of the Arab Israeli Wars and the role of the United States in this, please see: Ritchie Ovendale, *The Origins of the Arab Israeli Wars,* 4th edn. (London: Routledge, 2004) and Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 7th edn. (Boston: St. Martin's, 2010).

continued, 'there is quite a large percentage of the world's oil to be ripped off and several Arabs to enslave or kill in order to get a hold of that precious resource.'[121] This article exemplifies radical disaffected GIs' resignation that intervention in foreign countries, and the oppression and murder of non-White peoples during this process, was, by the early 1970s, a part of the US' desire for economic growth, something which could only be categorised as imperialism.[122] The paper not only criticised Israel's reliance on US imperialism, but also labelled the state as an imperialist power in and of itself due to its colonisation of Palestine; support for the imperialist ambitions of Portugal in Angola and Mozambique; training of 'the feudal and fascist forces' opposing revolution in Ethiopia; and alliance with the apartheid state of South Africa.[123] Therefore, whilst American troops did not occupy the Arab countries of the Middle East, the *Free Press* claimed that the US' support of Israel was a deliberate attempt to maintain their economic interests within this region. Support for regimes which the *Free Press* deemed to be oppressive and aggressive was thus tantamount to US imperialism.

Just as the Philippines posed worries to the *Free Press* as another "Vietnam", they also disavowed the US' support for their former colony because of the oppressive regime in power.[124] This nation, as the home of the large Clark Air Force Base (AFB) and U.S. Naval Base, Subic Bay, had particular military significance for the United States as a staging area for the Vietnam War. Indeed, 18,000 American GIs resided in the country by November 1972, and these installations even felt the effects of the GI Movement.[125] In 1972, the Filipino President, Ferdinand Marcos, declared martial law in the country, suspending the democratic rights of its civilians. Despite this, the US was unwavering in its support for the Marcos regime and the *Free Press* published an article in November 1972 denouncing this. The paper claimed that two hundred American companies had two hundred billion dollars' worth of investment in the country, and, along with its strategic military position for other imperialistic endeavours in Southeast Asia, this was the reason for the US' unflagging support for the suspension of

[121] "Middle East Crisis", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.11, November 1973, p. 1.
[122] The *Free Press* was also concerned that US military involvement in Thailand would also lead to another "Vietnam". See: "Thailand: Another War?", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.4, October Midmonth 1972, p. 3.
[123] "Israel: Imperialism's Watchdog", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.7, December 1972, p. 5 and "Israel: 25 Years of Colonialism", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.8, June 1973, p. 4.
[124] For articles in the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* (and *GI Voice*) which criticised the US imperialist actions towards the Philippines, please see: "Philippines Report", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, pp. 1 and 4-5; "Philippines: People's Revolution", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.3, October 1972, p. 4; and "The Philippines", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.11, November 1973, p. 4.
[125] "Philippines Report", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, p. 4. For a discussion of the GI Movement on bases within the Pacific, please see: Simeon Man, *Soldiering through Empire: Race and the Making of the Decolonizing Pacific* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018).

democratic rights. The *Free Press*, ever sceptical of authority, stated that the institution of martial law in the country was not the result of communist bombings and assassinations, as was claimed, but of a deliberate ploy by Marcos to consolidate power.[126] Whilst this view appears to be an example of partisan reporting, participants in Marcos' regime have vindicated this analysis, and have subsequently acknowledged that they deliberately planted bombs and staged assassination attempts to secure Marcos' control of the country.[127] The US' support for the Philippines, because of its strategic and economic significance – the paper claimed that 'Americans control 70% of the nation's economy' – was therefore another example of America's disregard for liberty and democracy in Southeast Asia in favour of imperial interests.[128]

The aid of non-democratic states through the provision of economic sustenance and political support for the purposes of the US' own selfish interests was therefore seriously critiqued by the *Free Press*. Among the nations receiving such economic aid, yet not as extensively documented as either Israel or the Philippines, was the state of Rhodesia – modern day Zimbabwe.[129] The *Free Press* reported that despite a United Nations Organisation boycott on trade with the nation, American companies continued to purchase chrome from the country. Opposing Rhodesia's rule by a minority of white settlers over the majority black population, the paper argued that the purchase of chrome was simply to 'help out a fellow racist government in crime'.[130] The *Free Press* therefore likened the imperialism of the US to the racist colonial governments of the British Empire, drawing allusions to the inherent links between imperialism and persecution of non-White peoples. Criticisms of US support for these nations demonstrated a developing understanding on the behalf of the *Free Press*' editors surrounding imperialism. By mid-1972, they had begun seeing US imperialism not just in the deployment of troops in Vietnam – and thus the appearance of an occupying army – but also in the domination of the economies of other foreign powers. This was also visible, in the opinion of the *Free Press*' editors, in the US' support for governments which, although they may have had poor human

[126] "Philippines Report", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, p. 4.
[127] Alfred W. McCoy, *Policing America's Empire: The United States, the Philippines, and the Rise of the Surveillance State* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), pp. 395-396.
[128] "Philippines: People's Revolution", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.3, October 1972, p. 4 and "Philippines Report", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, pp. 1 and 4-5.
[129] For the *Free Press*' documentation of the US' economic support for Rhodesia, please see: "Victory Belongs to the Zimbabwean People", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.3, October 1972, p. 5; "Colonialism – Thumbs Down", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.8, December Midmonth 1972, p. 4; and "U.N. Hits U.S., *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, Midmonth January 1973, p. 3.
[130] "Victory Belongs to the Zimbabwean People", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.3, October 1972, p. 5.

rights records, were beneficial to the US economy. This also coincided with a sympathy for subjugated peoples across the world, particularly non-Whites, who were victims of US imperialism.

Thus, the *Free Press* assumed not just an anti-Vietnam War position but also an anti-imperialist one, and, in an effort at consistency and perhaps an attempt to broaden their commentary as the American involvement in Vietnam was ending, began criticising imperialism globally. As a result of this, the paper also engaged their readership in discussions of imperialism in which the US was uninvolved. Following the killing of thirteen protesters, and the injuring of seventeen more, by British forces in Derry, officially Londonderry, Northern Ireland, on 30 January 1972 – an event referred to as Bloody Sunday – the editors of the *Free Press* turned their aim towards the United Kingdom.[131] As opponents of British rule in Ireland, the *Free Press* celebrated the Irish Republican Army as 'the peoples [sic] army' and claimed that local communities had isolated themselves from British rule and began governing themselves, which meant that 'crime […] dwindled to the vanishing point'.[132] Similarly, the *Free Press*, in much less depth, also celebrated the independence of Congo – as well as the declaration of their President to support other liberation struggles such as those in Palestine, Indochina, Guinea Bissau, Angola, and Mozambique – and also the attempts of Panama to gain control of the Panama Canal.[133] Criticisms of other imperialist actions and celebrations of those fighting against them, although limited, demonstrate a developing ideological trajectory which transmuted from anti-war, to anti-US imperialism, to anti-imperialism globally. Radical GIs of the GI Movement therefore allied themselves not only with the Vietnamese, but also with Filipinos, Palestinians, Irish who opposed British rule, and other oppressed peoples across the globe. Instead of a myopic approach to imperialism, in which they only criticised those actions which directly pertained to Americans, they broadened their criticisms.

Whilst this chapter has so far focused on the conceptualisations of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, i.e. what its editors thought of the war, the Vietnamese people, and imperialism, it

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[131] "Give Ireland Back to the Irish", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.3, March 1972, p. 6. For a discussion of Bloody Sunday and the wider context of the period of Irish history referred to as the Troubles, please see: Paul Bew, *Ireland: The Politics of Enmity 1789-2006* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 486-555.
[132] "Give Ireland Back to the Irish", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.3, March 1972, p. 6.
[133] "Congo Celebrates", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.3, p. 5 and "Panama Wants Canal Control", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.4, October Midmonth 1972, p. 3. The October Midmonth edition of the *Free Press* is not accessible in the Independent Voices archive of JSTOR. Instead, this has been accessed via the small selection of anti-war newspapers in the Antiwar and Radical History Project at the University of Washington: https://depts.washington.edu/labpics/zenPhoto/antiwar/gipaper/page/3/ [accessed: 26/11/24].

would be remiss to not acknowledge their actions, rather than just their words. Action, however, was not an easy task in the military, as the UCMJ allowed for GIs to attend anti-war rallies only when they were off-duty and out of uniform.[134] This played into the *Free Press*' emphasis on their Americanness and they argued that as American citizens, they were entitled to the Constitutional rights enumerated in the First Amendment, among which was 'the right of the people peaceably to assemble'.[135] The editors of the paper believed that it was the inherent right of all GIs to congregate on or off base for the purposes of anti-war discussion and demonstration. This right was particularly important to "Sixties" activists who revered action over rhetoric and for whom the act of "doing" was the most important facet of activism. Upon occasion, this desire caused real danger for activists. At the 1968 Democratic National Convention protesters were tear gassed and bludgeoned by the billy clubs of the local police, and civil rights activists in the South faced violence at the hands of local police and right-wing groups and individuals.[136] However, if civilian anti-war protesters remained peaceful, they were generally able to demonstrate uneventfully. In contrast, protest for GIs was much more complicated.

One of the most demonstrative aspects of GI activists' commitment and dedication was that, despite the strict regulations concerning GI anti-war protest, and the possible severe punishments that they could receive, they continued to try and attend and organise anti-war rallies. Indeed, members of the GI-Airmen-Sailor Coalition and the GI Alliance often protested and picketed out of uniform outside of Fort Lewis, between the base and the highway, as this was not on military property (see Figures 15 and 16).[137] The commands of Lewis and McChord, however, were determined to quash GI demonstrations, targeting GIs for minor indiscretions. Although out of uniform, servicepeople remained recognisable to base

[134] Fred Gardner, *Out Now!: A Participant's Account of the Movement in the U.S. Against the Vietnam War,* 2nd edn. (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1991), p. 210.
[135] Bill of Rights: A Transcription, via: National Archives, https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/bill-of-rights-transcript [accessed: 12/03/24].
[136] For an example of the violence at the 1968 Democratic National Convention, please see: David Farber, *Chicago '68* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 178-201. For instances of violence faced by sixties activists working in the South, please see: James Miller, *"Democracy is in the Streets": From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), pp. 60-61 and Interview transcript, interview of Michael Royce, interviewed by Beula Robb, "Winning the Hearts and Minds of Fort Lewis and McChord GIs during the Vietnam War", via: Tacoma Community History Project, pp. 26-27, https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/tacomacomm/id/247 [accessed: 28/02/24].
[137] For examples in the *Free Press* which mention these protests or similar demonstrations, please see: "Defense of 3 Grows", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.4, October 1971, p. 1 and "Pickets Demo Support: Confrontation to Come", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.4, October 1971, p. 1 and 8; "At McChord: Protest", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.5, May 1971, p. 3; and "Demonstrations Mark Wastemoreland Visit", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.4, April 1971, p. 3.

authorities and were harassed when they demonstrated. For example, in an anti-war-adjacent protest, one member of the Coalition, Private Ralph Baker, was arrested for participating in a rally outside of the local Safeway store. Whilst Baker was not in uniform, he was wearing a field jacket and was consequently charged with 'conduct unbecoming a soldier'.[138] Whilst for the publishers of the *Free Press*, protest made them "good" Americans, in the minds of the military's officers it made "bad" soldiers. In a similar instance Klimaski commented that he was accused of attending a protest in uniform as he still had army boots on.[139] Whilst seemingly small indiscretions to GIs, for the military the presence of soldiers, airmen, and sailors at public anti-war demonstrations had wider implications concerning military efficiency and harmony. The charges for both Baker and Klimaski were later dropped, however, these incidents evidence the attempts by the military to disrupt and stop GI anti-war action by charging them for ostensibly petty crimes. Still, the *Free Press* continued to lambast the military for limiting their Constitutional rights.[140]

GIs' frustration with being encumbered whilst trying to attend anti-war rallies was not simply because it infringed on their Constitutional rights, but also because visible protest contained a more tactical element. Attempts to stop their attendance at demonstrations denied GIs an important opportunity to broadcast the anti-war opinions of young men in the military to the public. As Small states when commenting on VVAW, their criticisms were all the more impressive to the American public because of their relationship to the military, 'they were not, after all, hippies or spoiled college students'.[141] Whilst the Armed Forces made it as difficult as possible for GIs to participate in anti-war demonstrations, when they did attend, because of a lack of clear identifiers, such as their uniform, they were difficult to distinguish from civilians. The appearance of military dress at these marches would have had great symbolic significance, clearly evidencing the existence and extent of dissent among "the troops" that pro-war causes rallied behind. Indeed, the military's attempts to inhibit GI attendance, specifically in uniform,

[138] "Harassment", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.3, March 1971, p. 3.
[139] "G.I. Resistance Pacific NW – Meet Four GI Resisters", GI Resistance in the Pacific Northwest Panel, University of Washington, Seattle, 6 October 2022, via: YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPQp6nQU1vE
[140] For examples of the *Free Press* discussing the infringement of GIs' and other anti-war activists First Amendment rights to peaceably assemble, please see: "Portland Parades Bring GIs", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.2, September 1970, p. 1; "PCS Counselor Fights Ban", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.5, December 1970, p. 3; "Farmworkers Banned From Post", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.2, February 1971, p. 1 and 3; Harassment", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.3, March 1971, p. 3; and "Struggle for Freedom", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.1, July 1971, p. 5.
[141] Small, *Antiwarriors* (2004), p. 142.

Figure 15: Photograph, Private Terry Irvin and other GIA members/supporters Picketing Out of Uniform for the GI Alliance Outside of Fort Lewis, October 1971.[142]
Photograph courtesy of Randy Rowland.

Figure 16: Photograph, GIs Protest the Arrest of Three Black GIs by Captain Ahern under the Madigan Hospital Overpass, October 1971.
Photograph courtesy of Randy Rowland.

[142] This particular demonstration was provoked by the arrest of three Black GIs on Fort Lewis in July 1971 and their subsequent trial in October the same year (discussed in greater depth in Chapter 6). The *Free Press* lambasted the commanding officer of Company C, Captain Ahern, for racism and called for his "burning". Whilst this was not an explicitly anti-war rally, it does demonstrate GIs' willingness to oppose the war and other acts of oppression on base. For more information on the three arrested GIs and this demonstration, please see: "Defense of 3 Grows", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.4, October 1971, p. 1 and "Pickets Demo Support: Confrontation to Come", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.4, October 1971, p. 1 and 8.

at demonstrations is testament to the symbolic power that military liveries held in the public consciousness and the institution's desire to not have demonstrations and protests associated with them. Therefore, whilst the *Free Press* framed their criticisms of their inability to demonstrate against the war as a fight for Constitutional rights, this masked a greater annoyance that such restrictions reduced GI protests' tactical efficacy.

Despite the punishments they faced and their most significant contribution to demonstrations (their uniform) being disallowed, the *Free Press* continued to urge GIs to attend anti-war marches. This included playing a role in some of the largest events of the era. In April 1971, the paper ran an advertisement for the anti-war movement's national marches in San Francisco and Washington D.C. with an image of a group of smiling GIs flashing the two fingered peace salute.[143] The next month, the *Free Press* emphasised the prominence of active-duty servicemen at the marches and remarked that 'GIs were quite evident in both' rallies, and even claimed that 10,000 participated in the West Coast march.[144] Clearly, the *Free Press* felt that GI participation in anti-war marches and demonstrations was beneficial for the anti-war movement.

Some of this reported 10,000 were editors of the *Free Press* who had made the trip down the coast. Lieutenant Henry Valenti proudly recalls his experience of the march:

> [t]here was a half a million people there. We could have taken over that city if that was our goal. You know, the policemen were not going to do anything. I remember getting to the top of the hill of the big avenues that we were marching on and just getting on lampposts and looking down the hill. And I couldn't see the end of the line of people, you know, [shoulder] to shoulder from one side of this boulevard to the other. You know, and it just – I'm just so proud of that moment. It almost makes me cry now.[145]

The emotion that this event created in Valenti signifies the importance that large demonstrations had for GIs who were mostly secluded on remote bases. Used to organising in small groups on isolated posts and often confronted with their ineffectualness, marches offered

[143] Advert, "March and Rally Against the War", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.4, April 1971, p. 5.
[144] "The War Ends in May", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.5, May 1971, p. 1 and 8. These events were extremely important to the anti-war movement and though attendances were difficult to gauge, Melvin Small estimates that at least 300,000 and as many as 500,000 protesters marched in Washington and an estimated 150,000 people in San Francisco. This made the 24 April march in Washington the single largest demonstration in American history, with the San Francisco march becoming 'the largest rally in West Coast history'. Small, *Antiwarriors* (2004), p. 142.
[145] Interview of Henry Valenti, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 4 October 2022.

anti-war GIs the opportunity to meet with other dissident servicemen, as well as protesting civilians, and view their own activism not in isolation but within the much broader movement it belonged to. Never was the anti-war movement more tangible than at these events.

As a tactic, "Sixties" activists held demonstration in high regard. This filtered down to the grassroots level and GIs, when they could, liked to demonstrate their anti-war position. For example, in May 1971 the Coalition and the GI Alliance co-organised an anti-war rally at Fort Steilacoom Park, in nearby Lakewood, Washington. This action coincided with the traditional bi-annual, national, civilian anti-war demonstrations in the spring and autumn of every year which had occurred since Students for a Democratic Society's inaugural rally in 1965.[146] Whilst such events were infrequent, it is once again testament to the earnestness of anti-war GIs that they attempted to organise them at all. The rally was designed to 'show the extent of GI opposition to the Indochina war and to demonstrate to the Brass the support of the civilian community for the GI struggle for freedom', and was thus dubbed 'GI Solidarity Day'.[147] This action was also designed to concur with the military's annual celebration of itself, Armed Forces Day, on 16 May. In the opinion of the *Free Press*' editors, this day promoted patriotism, militarism, and the 'glorification of murder'. 'Looking back on previous armed forces day [presumably not capitalised as they rejected this as an official holiday] celebrations', they wrote, 'we can see an attempt by the military to make us think war is as AmeriKan as apple pie. Come to think of it maybe it is, but that has got to stop'.[148] The rally in Fort Steilacoom Park was therefore also a counter to the pro-war, officially sanctioned, actions of the military.[149]

Distaste for this holiday was replicated in the wider GI Movement with activists organising a series of counter-celebrations of Armed Forces Day in 1971. Cortright has referred to these protests as 'the largest united [GI] action of the Vietnam period', with anti-war activities and gatherings occurring at nineteen military bases across the US, and the day was mockingly dubbed 'Armed Farces Day' by dissenting GIs.[150] He also concluded that the success and spread of these protests, compared with the smaller and less co-ordinated actions in 1970,

[146] Small, *Antiwarriors* (2004), pp. 25-26.
[147] "The War Ends in May", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.4, April 1971, p. 3.
[148] Ibid., p. 3.
[149] For a short history of Armed Forces Day, please see: Denise Kovalevich, 'OEM Salutes Our Heroes: Honoring Armed Forces Day", via: US Army, https://www.army.mil/article/276409/oem_salutes_our_heroes_honoring_armed_forces_day [accessed: 10/04/25].
[150] Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), p. 82.

demonstrated that by this stage the GI Movement had become 'stronger and more politically advanced'.[151] Whilst GIs shared newspaper articles and cartoons and read each other's publications, because of the restrictions on base, there were few instances of Movement co-ordination. Armed Farces Day, and the Coalition and Alliance's rally, therefore, represent one of the few instances of loose GI co-ordination across the US.

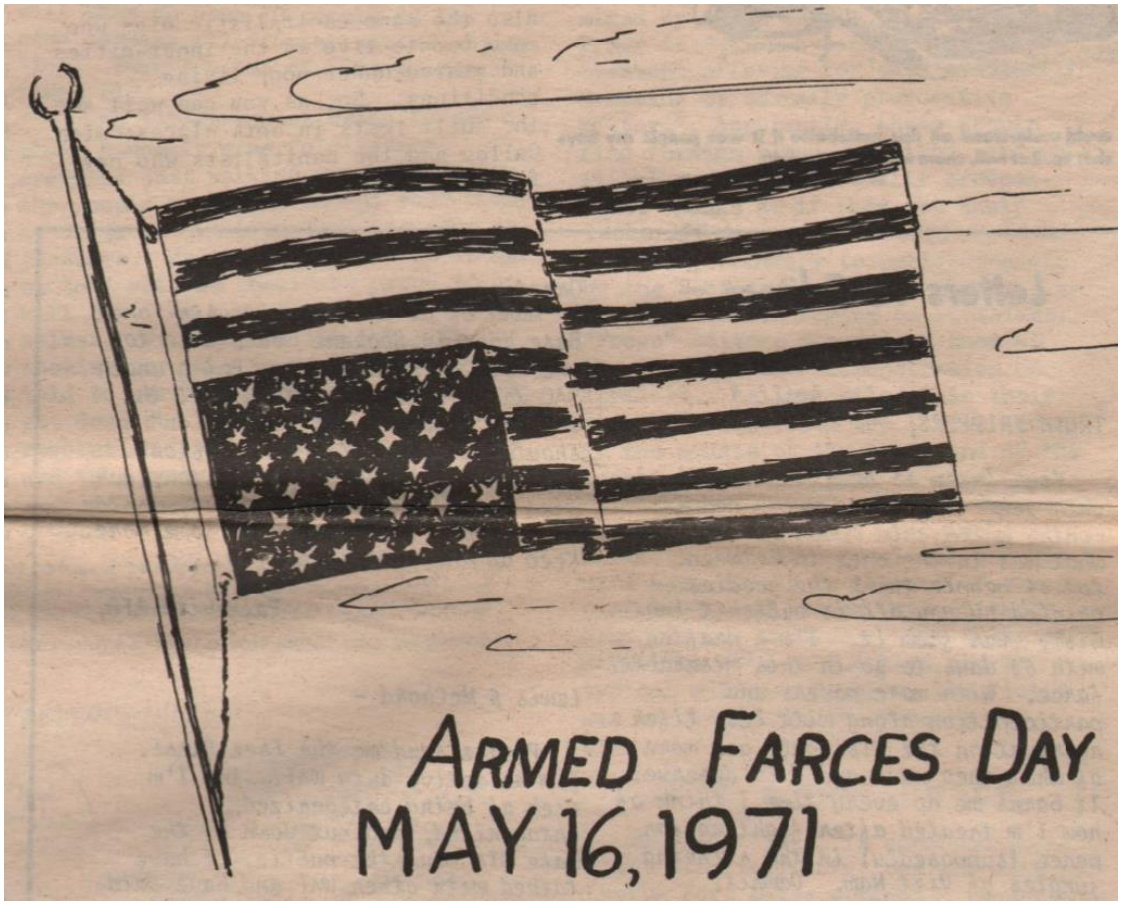

Figure 17: Cartoon, "Armed Farces Day, May 16, 1971",
***Lewis-McChord Free Press,* Vol.2, No.5, May 1971, p. 1.**

The rally at Fort Steilacoom Park was one of the largest of Armed Farces Day, with the *Free Press* reporting that 2,500 'GIs and freaks [evidently the paper appropriated this would-be derogatory label]', seven hundred of which were servicemen according to Cortright, braved the wind and rain to attend the celebration.[152] Indeed, it was a celebration rather than a solemn anti-war march. Films were shown in a nearby barn and attendees could 'stencil their own teeshirts, paint their own posters, and wave their own flag', giving the event a distinctly entertaining

[151] Ibid., p. 82.
[152] "Armed Farces Day: People Come Together", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.6, June 1971, p. 1 and 6 and Ibid., p. 82.

tone. More pointed, yet still ebullient, was the dart board hung up bearing a photograph of President Nixon for attendees to throw darts at. The *Free Press* made particular note that there were 'quite a few middle aged people' who threw darts at the board, emphasising that opposition to the war and to Nixon were not simply the reserve of youth, as detractors had claimed.[153] This also highlights that anti-war GIs urged solidarity not just with people their own age, who were perhaps most likely to accord with their views, mores, and values, but also all ages to ensure the broadest coalition for advocates of change.[154]

Large demonstrations, however, were not the only events at which GIs invoked their right to peaceably assemble, and anti-war opinion still festered in clandestine meetings on Lewis and McChord. Before the GI Alliance had created an off-base space by renting their "shack", they held 'rap' sessions at the Pioneer Service Club on Fort Lewis.[155] Such attempts to congregate on post and convince GIs to an anti-war position were received poorly by the base command. They were viewed as so serious that they warranted investigation by two senior officers: Fort Lewis' Commanding General, General Bolling, and Provost Marshal Berry. In the opinion of the *Free Press*, Bolling's visit was to try to 'co-opt' the assemblage to divert it from its usual anti-war conversation and Berry was sent to order the GIs to dismiss. As the Alliance themselves claimed, these attempts to nullify the congregation of anti-war GIs on base 'make our right to assemble meaningless'.[156] Efforts to gather and discuss the war and other issues on base were rendered somewhat redundant if high-ranking officers attended, as GIs were less free to speak through fear that they may be prosecuted for doing so. A gathering which was monitored by the base authorities was therefore not a free assembly at all and, in the opinions of GIs, such deliberate attempts to encumber discussions abridged their Constitutional rights.

In a more confronting act of demonstration, however, the GI Alliance challenged the commands of Lewis and McChord. At the same time that they co-organised the rally at Fort Steilacoom Park, the GIA co-ordinated, what Cortright has referred to as, 'one of the most

[153] "Armed Farces Day: People Come Together", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.6, June 1971, p. 1 and 6.
[154] The rally itself was not limited to solely discussing the war. Whilst the Veterans of Domestic War and the VVAW conducted guerrilla theatre which mocked the war and had a distinctly anti-war tone, speeches were made by Inside/Out, a prison reform group; The Blossom People, advocates for the legalisation of marijuana; the High School/Grade School Collective, which spoke on sexism; Women's Liberation activists; and the International Socialists. Speakers at the demonstration therefore represented the array of progressive, left-leaning organisations for whom opposition to the war was manifest and who were thus allies to the GI Movement. Ibid., p. 1 and 6.
[155] "Struggle for Freedom", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.1, July 1971, p. 5.
[156] Ibid., p. 5.

extraordinary undertakings of the GI Movement – a mass sick-call strike' on Lewis and McChord.[157] The GIA advertised the strike as a response to the fact that they were 'sick of war and murder', once again emphasising their opposition to the aggressive character of the US presence in Vietnam (see Figure 18). In preparation, the *Free Press* mockingly announced that soldiers across the bases were learning the symptoms of different diseases and illnesses and joked that even the 'vehicles will be sick'.[158] The GIA's plan was to shut the base down in the ultimate demonstration of GI power against "the Brass". However, the attempted 'sick-in' was met with extraordinary countermeasures by the base command to minimalize its effect. Officers arrived for work early to check those going on sick call, medical dispensaries were set up inside barracks, and usual harassments, threats, and extra duty were given out to suspected GIA sympathisers.[159] Indeed, the Alliance claimed that the sick call slips of an entire company were apparently "lost", GIs were threatened with a withdrawal of off-base passes and transfer to remote installations, and married GIs were told they would have to move back on to post if they went on sick call.[160] Still, the strike achieved some success with three times the usual number of GIs on sick call, including a Basic Training unit which reported in sick on their first day of duty, and thirty-five members of an Advanced Infantry Training unit who managed to get their entire day of schooling cancelled.[161]

Cortright argues that whilst the sick call concept was theoretically sound, it would not have succeeded in shutting the bases down unless supported by a network of activists in every barracks and small unit, something that he claims 'Fort Lewis people' acknowledged. This level of organisation was something which Cortright accurately asserts never existed within the GI Movement.[162] The 'sick-in' therefore provides a microcosm for the ultimate limitation of the anti-war activism of the Movement. Without a majority of GIs willing to outwardly oppose the military's power, the Alliance were unable to affect any major change to Lewis and McChord's efficiency for even one day. As a minority movement, GIs were unable to affect the military by, as the Berkeley Free Speech Movement leader Mario Savio put it, throwing their 'bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus' of

[157] Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), p. 82.
[158] "The War Ends in May", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.5, May 1971, p. 1 and 8.
[159] Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), p. 82.
[160] "Ft. Lewis", *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin,* Issue No.5, May 1971, p. 1.
[161] Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), p. 82.
[162] Ibid., p. 82.

the military.[163] If the Movement was unable to do this at just two bases in the Pacific Northwest, they were certainly powerless to bring an end to the war. Whilst protests such as those at Lewis and McChord demonstrated a remarkable zeal in carrying out anti-war action, their ineffectiveness was highlighted by the lack of material impact that GIs had on the military. Therefore, whilst demonstration was a positive act for GIs personally, it had little impact on the military.

Figure 18: GI Alliance, "May 3 … Sick Call Strike",
***G.I. News and Discussion Bulletin,* Issue 5, May 1971, p. 9.**
Source: JSTOR, 2025; available under the CC BY NC license.

By June 1971, the *Free Press* were examining this powerlessness. The slogan that GIs and civilians had rallied around in the build-up to their mass sick call, and the May 1971 anti-war events, had been "the war ends in May". However, in June the paper gloomily reported that 'May is over and the war is still on'.[164] "We got despondent a little bit", Henry Valenti reflected, "about all the work we were doing and all the work the civilians were doing, and still the war went on and on and on. You know, with all of these obvious things happening. Of millions of Vietnamese getting killed and all these soldiers coming back – and some of them not coming

[163] "Mario Savio's Speech Before the FSM Sit-in", via: Free Speech Movement Archives, https://www.fsm-a.org/stacks/mario/mario_speech.html [accessed: 27/08/24].
[164] "Bringing it Home", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.6, June 1971, p. 2.

back – and yet they [the Government] continued to stay in there [Vietnam]."[165] The task of soldiers, sailors, and airmen of the GI Movement was, therefore, a monumental one and, although they clearly realised this, their lack of appreciable effect was evidently discouraging. The futility of marching, demonstrating, and organising mass action against the war seemed to become apparent to the GIs on Fort Lewis and McChord AFB as actions on such a scale were not again replicated.[166]

In conclusion, the main anti-war argument of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* was that the Vietnam War was the result of an oppressive and aggressive imperialism. Whilst this is a study of just one GI publication, it appears that this view of the conflict was not dissimilar to many of the stances reached by other GI Movement publications. Their conclusion that the war was the result of imperialism meant that the US was involved in Vietnam not because of their belief in the self-determination of the RVN but because of their desire for economic expansion through the acquisition of natural resources and new markets. For the *Free Press*, this de-valued the deaths of Americans, and instead of supporting the RVN and the Administration which was perpetuating the war – and lengthening it via Vietnamization – they celebrated the victories of the North over the South. Yet, the *Free Press* went further with their critiques of the US, pointing out that Vietnam was not the first war which America had fought for economic gain nor, they argued, would it be the last. Finally, this journey of criticism concluded with the paper's staunch anti-imperialism, opposed to not only the Vietnam War, but the oppression of and aggression towards non-White peoples across the world. GIs, therefore, did not simply oppose the Vietnam War for selfish reasons, such as the fact that it was they who could die in the conflict, but developed much more sophisticated explanations for US involvement abroad. To action these conceptualisations they turned to the act of demonstration, organising and participating in activities as small as pickets outside of Fort Lewis, attended by fifteen GIs, and as large as the national demonstrations of the civilian anti-war movement. The way that these GIs viewed the war, US foreign policy, and imperialism, shaped the way that they discussed domestic issues in US society in the early 1970s. The radical explanations that the *Free Press*

[165] "G.I. Resistance in the Pacific Northwest", University of Puget Sound, Collins Memorial Hall, 5 October 2022, via: YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E7XscjlqLVw [accessed: 19/01/24].
[166] The only other large anti-war demonstration advertised in the *Free Press* was for the National Peace Action Coalition's 6 November march in Seattle. See: "All the Way Out Now", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.5, November 1971, p. 3. However, the march appears to have been relatively small given its lack of coverage in the paper and in the civilian press. For example, see: "Protest Rallies Lure Thousands", *TNT,* 7 November 1971, p. 12, via: Newspapers.com. Whilst mentioning the five thousand people who attended a co-ordinated rallied in New York City and ten thousand in San Francisco, the article only mentions that an action occurred in nearby Seattle.

used to understand the US' actions abroad led to their increasingly radical perspective on domestic issues, particularly an opposition to capitalism. These conceptualisations shall be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 6

'The GI is temporary. The working class is permanent': The *Lewis-McChord Free Press* and the Transition from Anti-War to Anti-Capitalism[1]

Despite popular perceptions of men, particularly those within the military, during this period as sexist, chauvinistic, and inclined towards racial prejudices, study of the *Free Press* demonstrates the pluralistic and broadly progressive approach that radical GIs across the US, mostly White and overwhelmingly male, took to activism. Accompanying their rejection of the Vietnam War and the oppression of servicemen, was a commitment to opposing oppression in the domestic sphere. Within the newspaper, GIs on Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base (AFB) demonstrated their opposition to racism against both African and Mexican Americans, their support for women and resistance to sexism and chauvinism, as well as an alliance with the working-class. These issues were then particularised to GIs, emphasising how they manifested within the military.

Inspiring this turn to domestic issues was the takeover of the newspaper by the GI Alliance (GIA). This organisation was increasingly interested in economic issues, class, and opposing capitalism. As part of their broader agenda, the paper began to connect the oppression of non-Whites and women with the exploitation of the working-class to urge the creation of a united workers' movement. GIs conceptualised themselves, African Americans, Mexican Americans, and women as working-class and thus called for the need to support each other, particularly in labour disputes (which the paper focused heavily on), as well as the broader working-class in general. Re-contextualised by the oral testimony of those who participated in the GIA, this commentary was influenced by the ideology of the Maoist organisation, the Revolutionary Union (RU), of which many Alliance GIs were also members of. This led to increasingly left-wing analyses and an engagement with Marxism which necessarily impacted the way these servicemen covered these oppressed groups. Ironically, with their increasingly left-wing bent, GIs validated several contemporary conservative criticisms that anti-war protesters were "commies".[2] Therefore, study of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* uncovers much more than just

[1] "Back in the World", *Lewis-McChord Free Press* [*LMFP*], Vol.6, No.4, March 1973, p. 3.

[2] For examples in the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* which reference or satirise anti-war activists being called commies, please see: "Air Force in Air About Hair Reg", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.2, September 1970, p. 3; "Paper Boy", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.2, February 1971, p. 8; "Get It On", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.2, February 1971, p. 8; "Declaration Called "Commie Junk"", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.1, January 1971, p. 5; "Army Censorship", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.3, September 1971, p. 2; and "Wanted", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.2, September 1972, p. 3.

how these GIs, and likely many more radical servicemen across the US, responded to their immediate dangers in the Vietnam War and the military. It also highlights that GIs of the *Free Press*, especially the GI Alliance, during the Vietnam era were committed to a broad agenda of progressive support for oppressed groups around Lewis and McChord, sometimes, but not always, due to an assignation with Marxism.

As discussed, the changing state of the Vietnam War had a concomitant effect on the GI Movement. Whilst this thesis has discussed how this impacted GIs' commentary on the conflict, it also hugely altered the contents of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press*. The ways that the Vietnam War impacted its opposition movement stateside are most aptly highlighted during the implementation of President Richard Nixon's Vietnamization policy. Vietnamization had the effect of undercutting the anti-war movement's major criticisms concerning the number of American casualties in Vietnam.[3] Not only were there less Americans dying in the combat zone by late 1969, the ratio between the number of troops in Vietnam and those killed in action as significantly less and there was a smaller likelihood of a GI dying in Vietnam after Vietnamization began.[4] A "Vietnamized" Vietnam War was thus much safer for American servicepeople. At the same time, the radical wing of the national anti-war movement had largely dissipated, the media was less likely to publicise the war, and, as revealed in a December 1971 poll, only 15 percent of Americans felt that 'Vietnam was the country's foremost problem'. As DeBenedetti has emphasised, '[i]f by "war" one meant vulnerability to death and destruction, then Vietnam seemed to be virtually over for Americans' by 1972.[5]

Nixon's policy had more particular effects on the composition of the military. Whilst the Army had been bloated with draftees in the mid-1960s, by the '70s the number of men being conscripted into the Army was dropping. In 1970, when the *Free Press* first began publishing, 162,746 men were inducted into the Army through the Selective Service System. However, by 1972, the Alliance's first full year of publishing the *Free Press*, this number had plummeted to 49,514.[6] As draftees were most likely to be anti-war, the loss of this important constituent

[3] Scott Sigmund Gartner, 'Differing Evaluations of Vietnamization', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* [*JHI*], 29.1 (Autumn 1998), pp. 243-262 (pp. 247-248).
[4] Ibid., pp. 249-250.
[5] Charles DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal,* with Charles Chatfield, assisting author (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990), pp. 322-323.
[6] "Induction Statistics", via: the Selective Service System, https://www.sss.gov/history-and-records/induction-statistics/ [accessed: 24/01/24].

decreased the potency of the GI Movement.[7] These privations were felt keenly by the GI Alliance, whose February 1972 paper led with a comic strip encouraging GIs to join the group. 'Once upon a time GIA was thriving', the comic began, '[t]hen came the 6-month drop. The old gang has gone on to better things. But the revolution must go on!'[8] Indeed, the lack of need for a continuous supply of troops to the combat theatre led to the closure of Fort Lewis' US Army Personnel Center in June 1972, further distancing the immediacy of the war from GIs on base.[9]

This of course impacted the messaging of the *Free Press*. As Vietnamization took the urgency away from the civilian anti-war movement, and the supply of young men away from the military, the paper began to comment less on the war itself. For example, within the six issues that constitute Volume 4 (January-July 1972) of the paper, articles which focus on the Vietnam War or other military combat operations in Southeast Asia appear roughly half as often as they did in Volume 2 (January-June 1971).[10] Accordingly, as the war diminished in importance and relevance, the GI Alliance diversified their publication's content. Randy Rowland pointed out that during this period "the military was changing and going […] in the direction at least of a volunteer army. And we had to come up with other kinds of issues to kind of keep the paper full of good articles that were relevant to people on base."[11] The downtrend of the war as an important issue and the changing composition of the military due to the all-volunteer force (AVF) therefore created the impetus for the editors of the *Free Press* to look more seriously at issues other than the war.

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[7] In their studies of dissent in the Army, the RAC claimed that the type of GI most likely to commit dissident acts were draftees. Please see Chapter 2

[8] "Join GI Alliance", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.2, February 1972, p. 1.

[9] "Vietnam, 1966-1972", via: Lewis Army Museum, https://lewisarmymuseum.com/history-of-the-army-at-camp-lewis-fort-lewis-and-joint-base-lewis-mcchord/vietnam-1966-1972/ [accessed: 11/12/23].

[10] Through a quantitative study of these volumes of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* it was revealed that of the 115 articles which were printed for Volume 2, 18 were directly related to the Vietnam War or other military combat operations in Southeast Asia. Of the 89 articles printed in Volume 4, this was just 7. That equates to one in every six articles relating to the war or relevant combat operations in Volume 2. However, in Volume 4 this number is one in twelve. For the purposes of comparison, it should be noted that both volumes consist of the same number of editions, however, the paper did not print in June 1972, and this is the reason for the different dates.

Deciding what constitutes an article and which of these articles were explicitly related to the war was, however, difficult. For example, all letters, poems, images, and adverts were excluded from this analysis. In determining what constituted a war-related article, it was decided that the strictest definition was necessary. Therefore, articles which mention anti-war protest or other anti-war related activities are not counted as "war-related". Instead, these were pieces which focused explicitly on the conduct of combat operations in Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, the trial of Lieutenant William Calley – the officer court-martialled and thus given responsibility for the My Lai Massacre – and commentary on POWs. Therefore, whilst this data is far from exhaustive or objective, it is a useful indicator about the *Free Press*' turn away from the war to other issues.

[11] Interview with Randy Rowland, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 10 October 2022.

Chief among these topics was a commitment to anti-racism. During the Vietnam War, African Americans were one of the most rebellious and militant constituents of the US Army. David Cortright has claimed that the Vietnam-era military was 'a military torn by racial rebellion' and that '[t]he strongest and most militant resisters were black GIs'.[12] As a result of the growing racial pride and emphasis on Black Power during this period, African Americans developed their own forms of solidarity and rebellion which antagonised the military. New Black consciousness sought to encourage the celebration of the differences of Black people. The growth of an afro, the carrying round of "power sticks", the wearing of African beads, and the dap – a complicated handshake used by African Americans to demonstrate brotherhood – were additional forms of rebellion for Black GIs.[13] This consciousness, by virtue of its emphasis on distinct styles of hair, dress, demeanour, and speech, conflicted with the military's notions of a "good soldier". An emphasis on Black pride encouraged many African American GIs to contest the racism which they faced on base, as well as the war in general, often in violent rebellions, such as which occurred at the Long Binh Jail in South Vietnam in August-September 1968.[14]

Although he includes this rebellion within the broad category of the GI Movement, David Cortright has been at pains to point out the severalty of Black and White protest. He argues that within the Movement there was a 'parallel but separate development of dissent among blacks and whites'.[15] According to Moser, the emphasis on Black cultural pride during this period led to the unification of African Americans into a distinct and new social group, referred to as the "brothers" or the "bloods". This grouping bonded Black GIs on the basis of race and culture and unified a racial group which faced not only discrimination in the military but also disillusionment with the war.[16] Therefore, emphasising Black self-determination, African

[12] David Cortright, 'Black Resistance During the Vietnam War', *Vietnam Generation* [*VG*], 2.1 (1990), pp. 51-64 (p. 51).
[13] David Cortright, 'GI Resistance During the Vietnam War' in *Give Peace a Chance: Exploring the Vietnam Antiwar Movement*, ed. by Melvin Small and William D. Hoover (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1992), pp. 116-128 (p. 120). For a discussion of growing Black pride and consciousness in the military and the military's response to this, please see: Beth Bailey, *An Army Afire: How the US Army Confronted Its Racial Crisis in the Vietnam Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2023), pp. 153-177 and Cortright, 'Black Resistance During the Vietnam War', *VG* (1990), p. 53.
[14] For a discussion of other violent rebellions which African Americans were involved in during the Vietnam War, please see: Cortright, 'Black Resistance During the Vietnam War', *VG* (1990), pp. 56-62.
[15] David Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt: GI Resistance During the Vietnam War* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2005), p. 56.
[16] Richard Moser, *The New Winter Soldiers: GI and Veteran Dissent During the Vietnam War* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996), pp. 65-66.

Americans formed their own 'solidarity groups and rap clubs' and even larger organisations such as the Black Servicemen's Caucus, the Black Liberation of the Armed Forces, and the Tidewater Africans, and published their own newspapers, such as *A'Bout Face*.[17] Whilst discussing co-ordination between Black and White anti-war groups at Fort Hood, Cortright identifies the action as a rarity. He claims that 'minority troops and whites continued to pursue separate paths, with the burden of resisting racism and repression in most cases falling on blacks alone'.[18]

Activism on Fort Lewis and McChord AFB contests this notion and demonstrates that interracial unity did occur on base as the authors of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* deliberately attempted to take on 'the burden of resisting racism and repression'. Perhaps due to the position of these bases in the Pacific Northwest, an area which, although racism undoubtedly still occurred, was distanced from the discrimination of the post-Jim Crow South – in which several other major military installations were located – Lewis and McChord do not appear to have had their own Black-only organisations. Whilst African American groups likely still congregated in groups of "bloods" on these bases, there was no explicitly Black organisation to fight racism or repression on base. Instead, this role fell to groups such as the GIA and the GI-Airmen-Sailor Coalition. Whilst certainly a White-dominated group, Randy Rowland claims that the Alliance also contained Latino, African American, and Amerindian GIs.[19] Black servicemen wrote and contributed to the *Free Press*, participated in the Alliance's protest, and Michael Royce even remembers being in such solidarity with the African Americans on Fort Lewis that he was permitted to conduct an "abbreviate dap" with them.[20] 'We want an end to

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[17] For some small discussion of the Black Servicemen's Caucus, please see: Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), p. 141. For a discussion of the Black Liberation of the Armed Forces see Ibid., p. 41. For information on the Tidewater Africans see "Being Black and Navy Too", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.10, October 1973, p. 6. For selected editions of *A'Bout Face*, please see: *A'Bout Face,* "GI Press", Independent Voices Archive, JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/site/reveal-digital/independent-voices/aboutfaceunsatisfiedblacksoldiers-27953286/?so=item_title_str_asc [accessed: 02/04/25]. This newspaper was published by a group called the Unsatisfied Black Soldiers in Heidelberg, Germany.

[18] Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), p. 89.

[19] Questionnaire, Randy Rowland, 9 May 2024.

[20] Interview of Michael Royce, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 7 October 2022. For articles which seem to have been authored by Black GIs, please see: "Co. B Holds Political Ed Rap", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.2, August 1971, p. 7; "Three Brothers in Slam", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.3, September 1971, p. 5; "Letter from Prison", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.4, October 1971, p. 3; "Brother Hubbard: On Racism in the Air Force", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.7, December 1972, p. 4 and 6; "Take a Look Around", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.7, December 1972, p. 6; and "Cops or Cooks – A Choice?", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.8, June 1973, p. 6. Whilst this is relatively small number of articles authored by African Americans, this is due to the clandestine nature of GI papers. As articles were not signed, articles which have been attributed to African Americans are only those in which this is explicitly stated within the article. Nonetheless, the inclusion of Black voices in the *Free Press* contests Cortright's notion that there was a separation of Black and White anti-war and anti-racist activism.

all racism in the military' read the second point of the GIA's manifesto and claimed that their plan to do so was to 'oppose racism with interracial unity.'[21] Likewise, in December 1971, the GIA claimed that '[r]acism is a tool that is used to divide GIs. The only way blacks and whites can overcome this is for us to pull together to overcome our oppressor, the brass. There isn't any other way.'[22] Accordingly, the *Free Press* actively defined racism as an ill which needed to be countered and spent much time reporting on acts of discrimination on base and supporting and urging solidarity among White and Black GIs.[23]

A part of this solidarity was the paper's embracement of the cultural aspects of Black Nationalism. Supporting the cultural shifts in the African American community during this period, the *Free Press* highlighted how Black pride often brought troops into conflict with the stagnant and rigid military. In August 1970, the newspaper documented the arrest of one Black marine, Cliff Mansker, at Camp Pendleton (CA) for distributing a newspaper called *Black Unity*. The *Free Press* commented specifically that officers targeted Mansker's black unity wristbands, attempting to rip them off, and explained that black unity bands were 'braided

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For photographs which show that Black GIs were involved with anti-racist protests that the GI Alliance had organised, please see: Photograph, *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.5, November 1971, p. 1 and Photograph, *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.5, November 1971, p. 4.

[21] "GI Alliance: What We Want", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.2, February 1972, p. 2.

[22] ""Black Caucus" Probes Racism", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.6, December 1971, p. 4.

[23] For *Lewis-McChord Free Press*/*GI Voice* articles which comment on racism toward Black people in US society and the military in the early 1970s, please see: "Coalition Demands", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 2; "Black GI's Beaten", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 7; Dale Borgeson, "Dignity Costs Black 3 Years", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.4, November 1970, p. 1 and 6; Carl Dix, "Reflections", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.4, November 1970, p. 5; "Soledad Railroads Justice", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.4, November 1970, p. 7; "WACs Fight Racist Brass", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.3, March 1971, p. 1 and 7; "Hey 'Boy'", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.5, May 1971, p. 6; "Another Bust for Distribution", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.2, August 1971, p. 3; "Co. B Holds Political Ed Rap", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.2, August 1971, p. 7; Untitled, *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.5, November 1971, p. 7; "Trial Exposed As Frame Up", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.5, November 1971, p. 1 and 8; "Brothers to do Big Time", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.5, November 1971, p. 4; Letter, *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.6, December 1971, p. 2; ""Black Caucus" Probes Racism", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.6, December 1971, p. 4; "GI Alliance: What We Want", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.2, February 1972, p. 2; "C Co 3 Released", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.2, February 1972, p. 3; "Wallace: Don't Let the Handshake and the Smile Fool You", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.4, March [April]1972, p. 4; "Petition to End Art. 15's", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.1, August Midmonth 1972, p. 7; "Free Billy Smith", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.3, October 1972, p. 3; "At McChord: Racism Exposed", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, p. 1 and 6; "GIA Program", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, p. 2; "Third World Struggles: Workers Organize", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, p. 7; "Fight Back", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.7, December 1972, p. 1 and 6; "Brother Hubbard: On Racism in the Air Force", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.7, December 1972, p. 4 and 6; "Take a Look Around", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.7, December 1972, p. 6; "SSGT. Cox: Servant of the Brass", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.1, January 1973, p. 3; "Does it Exist? Racial Discrimination", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.1, January 1973, p. 5; "Cease Fire", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, February 1973, p. 6; "Know Who Your Friends Are", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.3, Midmonth February 1973, p. 1; "Racism in the Army", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.3, Midmonth February 1973, p. 3; "-3/39th Inf.: MVA Harassment", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.6, April 1973, p. 1; "Cops or Cooks – A Choice?", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.8, June 1973, p. 6; "At Lowry: Black Airman Brutalized", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.8 June 1973, p. 8; "Workers Close Down Shop", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.10, October 1973, p. 6; "Being Black and Navy Too", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.10, October 1973, p. 6; and "Black Couple Faces Racism", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.11, November 1973, p. 6.

black shoelaces' which 'originated from Vietnam, where black GIs used them as a symbol of black identity'.[24] A part of a shared Black identity was therefore specific styles of dress and it is clear that from the *Free Press*' earliest stages that they supported African Americans' need for this community. The paper went on to point out the hypocrisy of the Camp Pendleton command, which abused African Americans for small gestures such as wearing innocuous pieces of jewellery but did not condemn the commonplace act of flying and wearing the Confederate flag. 'They are waging war against the black unity band and against the black consciousness it represents', the *Free Press* claimed, '[t]hey correctly see it as a threat to their power'.[25]

In the "Sixties", hair became the symbolic issue which young and old, progressive and conservative, and anti-war and pro-war fought over, and this was replicated in Black soldiers' battles with their officers. In November 1970, the paper reported that a Black Fort Lewis GI, Theoda Lester, refused to get his hair cut because he claimed that his Black Nationalism forbade him from doing so. Lester's position, and the paper accorded, was that his pride in being an African American was serious enough to constitute a religious position. The author of the article, Dale Borgeson, pointed out that a Sikh serving in the military was not required to shave his head because of his religion and that Lester should not have to either. 'Black Nationalism', Lester's friend testified at his trial, 'is a totalistic philosophy. It takes in all aspects of human behavior; political, economic, and religious'.[26] For many Black servicemen, therefore, the growth of an afro and other styles of dress were not simply cultural choices, but constituted a sincere mode of living, akin to a religion. The *Free Press* supported this attitude, dedicating an entire page to Lester's trial, which remarked on his 'splendid Afro', the presence of members of the Black Panthers at the event, and the general dismissive and hostile attitude of Judge Colonel John Lee.[27] Study of the *Free Press* therefore demonstrates that the GI Movement was not simply anti-war but was also supportive of African Americans in their fight for Black pride and Black Nationalism. The popularity of this opinion in the GI Movement has also been highlighted by Richard Moser.[28] This fight was induced by the general oppressive nature of the military towards all groups which did not align with their requirements on hair, uniform, and attitudes towards the war.

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[24] "Black GI's Beaten", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.3, October 1970, p. 7.
[25] Ibid., p. 7.
[26] Dale Borgeson, "Dignity Costs Black 3 Years", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.4, November 1970, p. 1 and 6.
[27] Ibid., p. 1 and 6.
[28] Moser, *The New Winter Soldiers* (1996), p. 147.

According with the editors' desire to act as a watchdog of military injustice, the *Free Press* also highlighted the unequal treatment which Black GIs received because of their race. In September 1971, for example, after the recent arrest of three Black GIs, the paper embarked on a campaign to expose racism on Fort Lewis. According to the *Free Press*, these three 'brothers' had witnessed the arrest of another Black GI for the possession of 'dope' and were detained for interrupting his apprehension. The paper urged their readers to demand the release of the three GIs and, contradicting the Army's official claims, stated that they had not committed a crime and were arrested simply because of their race. They argued that this was 'a classic example of how the Army comes down harder on black brothers.'[29] Highlighting the fact that racism was often accompanied by physical abuse, the author of the article, an African American, claimed that '[t]hey beat up a couple of black soldiers, and I mean BEAT; handcuffed with their hands behind their back BEAT'.[30] This instance was therefore not only problematic because the paper believed that these GIs were innocent, but also because it demonstrated the brutality which Black servicepeople faced from their racist superiors. Such aggression coincided with the *Free Press*' criticisms of the military's role in the Vietnam War and the destruction of the lives and property of the Vietnamese. Indeed, explicitly tying this case to the war, the author morosely remarked that '[w]e [Black GIs] fight their [the military's] war and they beat us'.[31]

As they had with Theoda Lester, the *Free Press* continued their coverage of the 'C. Co. 3', as they became known, eventually reporting on their trial. This gave the paper the opportunity to point out their belief that it was impossible for Black people to get a fair trial in the military.[32] The three Black GIs were eventually found guilty of their charges and the paper remarked '[t]he tragedy of the Company C Three courts martial is that this type of frame-up is a daily occurrence'.[33] For the *Free Press*, therefore, this instance was important not only because of the injustices carried out against the three, but also because they represented a broader pattern of racism within the military justice system. So prejudiced was the system, the editors of the paper believed, that it was 'impossible for Blacks, all people of color, and freaks to get a fair hearing'.[34] Opposition to racism against Black GIs therefore constituted a major part of the

[29] "Three Brothers in Slam", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.3, September 1971, p. 5.
[30] Ibid., p. 5.
[31] Ibid., p. 5.
[32] "Trial Exposed as Frame Up", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.5, November 1971, p. 1 and 8.
[33] "Trial Exposed as Frame Up", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.5, November 1971, p. 1 and 8.
[34] "Charged With Contempt: Conspiracy Railroad Derailed", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.1, January 1971, p. 1 and 5.

Lewis-McChord Free Press' progressive platform. In this way, oppression and aggression abroad were linked to racism at home.

Figure 19: Button, "Free Billy Dean Smith",
a Black GI accused of fragging his superior officers,
but whom the GI Press claimed was arrested because of his race.[35]
Access to artefact provided by anonymous ex-GI; photograph taken by author.

Coverage of racism, however, did not always pertain solely to African Americans. The *Lewis-McChord Free Press* also discussed the oppression of other non-White groups, particularly Americans of Latin descent.[36] Of particular interest to the paper, likely because of their large presence down the West Coast, principally in California, was the work of Mexican Americans or, as they contemporaneously referred to themselves, Chicanos. Support for this group was particularly related to the activism of the United Farm Workers union (UFW) and their leader, César Chávez, in California. The work of Mexican American farmworkers in

[35] For articles within the *Free Press* which comment on the situation of Billy Dean Smith, please see: "Fragging Trial at Ft. Ord", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.3, September 1971, p. 6; "Frag Frame Up", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.1, August 1972, p. 3; "Sept.6: Billy's Trial Begins", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.2, September 1972, p. 4; "Free Billy Smith", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.3, October 1972, p. 3; "Prosecution Foiled", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.4, Midmonth October 1972, p. 4; "Billy Set Free", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.6, Midmonth November 1972, p. 2; and "Calley Smith Trials", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.7, December 1972, p. 8.
[35] "Fragging Trial at Ft. Ord", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.3, September 1971, p. 6.
[36] The paper also somewhat discussed issues pertaining to the oppression of Amerindians, please see: "Noticias Del Barrios", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, p. 5; "Native Americans Struggle Against Repression", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.6, April 1973, pp. 4-5; and "Via Puerto Rico Libre: Part II", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.9, August 1973, p. 5.

consecutive strikes against fruit and vegetable growers was, thanks to the Department of Defense and President Nixon, intrinsically tied to the Vietnam War. Opposition to the war had flourished among many Mexican Americans who perceived similarities with the oppressed Vietnamese, including the notion that both groups were victims of imperialism (discussed in depth later in this chapter).[37] This was only fuelled by Nixon's intervention in the UFW's strikes against grape growers when, between 1968 and 1969, the Department of Defense quadrupled its purchase of grapes for the military, from 555,000 to 2,167,000 pounds, in order to undercut the strikes. Despite this, the UFW managed to force grape growers to concede to their demands, coming to an agreement and immediately beginning a fresh campaign against the lettuce growers of California.[38]

Perhaps an unforeseen consequence of this attempt to destabilise the UFW strike was to make the issue relevant to anti-war GIs on bases across the US. As with the grape boycott, the Department of Defense purchased surplus amounts of lettuce and, in doing so, introduced another cause to the progressive, anti-war GI population. This issue was only made more confronting to the GIs of Fort Lewis and McChord AFB thanks to the presence of a UFW office in nearby Tacoma and the dedication of farmworkers to protest on and around Lewis.[39] This led to the *Free Press*' considerable reportage on the strike. Beginning in December 1970, the paper documented a protest outside of Dow Chemical's regional offices in the local area of Bellevue, Washington. The paper stated that Dow had many connections to the 'largest remaining scab lettuce grower' – by which they meant 'one who hasn't signed a contract with the migrant farmworkers' union' – Bud Antle. Dow, they claimed, bought 17,000 acres of lettuce land to sustain Antle's business, because their president was also on Antle's company's board and they were the manufacturers of the cellophane used to wrap Bud Antle lettuce.[40] Relating this issue to the military, in a particularly prescient prediction, the paper noted that fifty percent of the Army's lettuce was grown by Antle and GIs should 'expect to be used as scabs as they were in the grape boycott'.[41] The next month the paper ran an article claiming that the US military was buying sixty percent of its lettuce from Antle, meaning that the lettuce

[37] Lorena Oropeza, *¡Raza Sí! ¡Guerra No!: Chicano Protest and Patriotism During the Viet Nam War Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 96-102.
[38] Ibid., pp. 100-101.
[39] "DOW – D.D Scab Lettuce Boycott", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.5, December 1970, p. 4.
[40] Ibid., p. 4.
[41] Ibid., p. 4.

bought and eaten by GIs in the PX and canteens was scab lettuce and servicepeople were, as predicted, being 'used as scabs'.[42]

The resulting campaign against scab lettuce on Fort Lewis was one of the most active the *Free Press* embarked upon.[43] As with their opposition to the arrest of servicepeople on Fort Lewis, editors of the paper turned to picketing outside of the Fort Lewis entrance in order to disseminate the news that scab lettuce was being purchased by the military. Picketing began between 6:30am and 8am on 12 February 1971 – just as soldiers made their way onto the Fort – by dedicated civilians (presumably UFW workers). These protestors were later bolstered by GIs of the GI-Airmen-Sailor Coalition after they had finished work. The paper was especially celebratory of a picket on 18 February at which, they claimed, 'the picket line contained an even heavier contingent of GIs'.[44] Evidently, there were a number of GIs on base who supported the plight of the farmworkers keenly, although their motivations are never examined in the *Free Press* who instead focused solely on numbers. The picket line therefore appears to have been a successful tactic, attracting sympathetic servicemen to actually participate in the protest and perhaps influencing many more to not eat or buy scab lettuce on Fort Lewis.

Protests were not the only way that the Coalition sought to support the UFW and to stop the military's attempts at undercutting their strikes. In early 1971, the editors of the paper resorted to a common practice among discontented GIs trying to alleviate their situation by appealing to local Congressmen for support.[45] The Coalition sent a petition against the military's practice

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[42] "Don't Eat Mess Hall Lettuce", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.1, January 1971, p. 5.
[43] For articles which discuss the UFW strikes or campaign against eating scab lettuce, please see: "DOW – D.D Scab Lettuce Boycott", *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.5, December 1970, p. 4; "Don't Eat Mess Hall Lettuce", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.1, January 1971, p. 5; "Farmworkers Banned From Post", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.2, February 1971, p. 1 and 3; Letter, *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.3, March 1971, p. 2; "Boycott Petition Reaches Jackson", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.3, March 1971, p. 3; "Picketing Begins Over Lettuce", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.3, March 1971, p. 3; "Organizing Notes", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.3, March 1971, p. 3; "Lettuce Spies", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.3, March 1971, p. 3; "Commissary Shuck", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.3, March 1971, p. 3; "Harassment", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.3, March 1971, p. 3; Cartoon, *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.3, March 1971, p. 5; "Teamsters and UFWOC Settle: Farmworkers Nearing Victory in Lettuce Fields", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.4, April 1971, p. 5; "Organizing Messhall Boycotts", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.4, April 1971, p. 6; "The Farmworkers and Their Fight", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.4, April 1971, p. 6; "Don't Buy Scab Lettuce!!!!!!!", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.5, May 1971, p. 7; "How the Brass Scab: Lettuce Boycott", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.1, August 1972, p. 5; "Govt. Scabs on Workers", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.2, September 1972, p. 6; "Lettuce", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.6, Midmonth November 1972, p. 4; "Farmworker Struggle: Proposition 22", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.1, January 1973, p. 4; "Don't Shop Safeway", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, Midmonth January 1973, p. 3; "Farmworkers Fight", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.9, August 1973, p. 4; "Hospital Wave Stands Up Against the Brass", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.10, October 1973, p. 7; "GIA Supports the Farmworkers", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.11, November 1973, p. 7; and "GIs and Strike Support", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.11, November 1973, p. 7.
[44] "Picketing Begins Over Lettuce", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.3, March 1971, p. 3.
[45] The number of complaints to a Congressman increased every year of the Vietnam War and in 1971 there was nearly 250,000. Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), p. 23.

of buying scab lettuce to Democratic Senator for Washington Henry M. Jackson. According to the *Free Press*, the petition was circulated on the bases of the Pacific Northwest, accumulating five-hundred signatures by February 1971.[46] Although a very small percentage of the total population on these bases, clearly the UFW strike was not an unpopular cause among GIs, especially those who were already inclined toward an anti-war position, given 'scab' lettuce's popularity in GI publications during this period.

The effect of the Coalition's aid to the UFW is incalculable. Their work on bases in the Pacific Northwest was just one small part of a nationwide boycott. Nonetheless, the Coalition's willingness to support this issue is demonstrative of how the GI Movement embraced protest which did not focus exclusively on bettering the immediate lives of GIs.[47] Likewise, the group viewed their contribution to the scab lettuce boycott as a victory. According to the *Free Press*, in 1971 a small number of lettuce growers signed union contracts with the Union and the boycott was eventually called off.[48] The Coalition, therefore, played a small but unexpected role in supporting Mexican American farmworkers achieve their goals of better pay and working conditions.

[46] "Farmworkers Banned From Post", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.2, February 1971, p. 1 and 3.
[47] For examples of GI papers across the US urging support for the UFW strikes, please see: *Bragg Briefs* (North Carolina): "Let Them Eat Lettuce: … Army Attempts to Break UFW A [sic] Again", *Bragg Briefs*, Vol.3, No.11, January 1971, p. 8 and "Military Triples Lettuce Buying", *Bragg Briefs*, Vol.3, No.12, February 1971, p. 1; *The Bond* (the newspaper of the American Servicemen's Union, distributed nationally): "Support Striking Lettuce Workers!", *The Bond*, Vol.5, No.1, 20 January 1971, p. 4 and "Don't Eat Scab Lettuce!", *The Bond*, Vol.5, No.2, 24 February 1971, p. 8; and *Navy Times Are Changin'* (Great Lakes, Illinois): "Lifers Eat Lettuce", *Navy Times Are Changin*', Vol.2, No.3, June 1971, p. 2 and "Union Or Non-Union: Navy Picks Scabs", *Navy Times Are Changin'*, Vol.3, No.5, September 1972, p. 12.
[48] "How the Brass Scab: Lettuce Boycott", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.1, August 1972, p. 5.

Figure 20: Photograph, Lieutenant Henry Valenti Protests the Sale of Bud Antle Lettuce on Fort Lewis (c. February 1971), *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, Vol.2, No.3, March 1971, p. 3.
Source: JSTOR, 2025; available under the CC BY NC license.

Solidarity with non-White groups was therefore encouraged and the editors of the *Free Press* sought to alleviate, what Cortright referred to as, 'the burden of resisting racism and repression' for both Black and Mexican American GIs.[49] However, their activism in support of non-White GIs reached beyond pragmatic opposition to racism, i.e. day-to-day instances of abuse, and they developed more sophisticated examinations of the oppression of non-White peoples. During the Cold War, the world was geo-politically split into three parts: the "First World" which consisted of states aligned to capitalism, the "Second World" of socialist states, and a non-aligned, developing "Third World".[50] During this period, therefore, the term "Third World" people was used to describe the populaces of countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, who may or may not be the subjects of imperialism.

For the *Free Press*, imperialism was not only economic, but it also contained a racial aspect which oppressed groups not of White, European ancestry. As a result, during the "Sixties", the term "Third World" people was broadened to denote not only foreign victims of imperialism,

[49] Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), p. 89.
[50] Alexander C. Cook, 'Introduction: The Spiritual Atom Bomb and its Global Fallout', in *Mao's Little Red Book: A Global History*, ed. by Alexander C. Cook (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 1-22 (pp. 13-15).

but also minority groups within the US itself.[51] To connect the exploitation of peoples in the "Third World" for profit (such as in Vietnam) with similar oppression of minority groups at home, "Sixties" activists and non-White theorists conceptualised communities of colour, particularly African Americans and Mexican Americans, as "internal colonies".[52] Visualising the African American ghettos and Chicano *barrios*, activists steeped in anti-imperialist zeal could not fail to see similarities between these locations and the colonised nations they supported. The racism which non-Whites faced; the removal of money from areas such as Harlem and the *barrios* of Texas and California; a lack of reinvestment which left these areas poverty-stricken; and the consequent dependence of people of colour on White power were all similar to the relationship between coloniser and the colonised.[53] This conceptualisation was in-keeping with the anti-racist work of the New Left and it was therefore no great surprise that activists, as they turned toward anti-imperialism, brought their dedication to helping non-White communities with them. In the minds of activists, therefore, the notion of imperialism as the foreign domination of one country over another, and domestic criticisms of racism and poverty were linked through an imperialistic system which sought to economically oppress racial minorities both abroad and at home.

The concept of internal colonialism also became a significant part of the *Free Press*' ideology.[54] Due to the historical conquest of the southwestern area of the US, the paper

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[51] For contemporary theorists of the internal colony thesis, please see: Rodolfo Acuna, *Occupied America: The Chicano's Struggle Towards Liberation* (San Francisco: Canfield, 1972); Robert L. Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America: An Analytical History* (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1990 – first published in 1969); Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969 – first published in 1967); and Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of a Negro Intellectual: A Historical Analysis of the Failure of Black Leadership* (New York: New York Review Books Classics, 2005 – first published in 1967).

[52] Max Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao and Che* (London: Verso, 2018), p. 46.

[53] Ramón A. Gutiérrez, 'Internal Colonialism: An American Theory of Race", *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* [*DBR*], 1.2 (September 2004), pp. 281-295 (p. 286-290). There have, however, been those who contemporaneously cautioned against the framework of internal colonialism, emphasising that Mexican Americans were not a homogenous group and the challenges faced by Chicanos in California were not the same as those faced in New Mexico or Texas. Please see: Joan Moore, 'Colonialism: The Case of the Mexican Americans', *Social Problems,* 17.4 (Spring 1970), pp. 463-472.

[54] It should be noted, however, that opposition to imperialism and the conceptualisation that non-Whites in the US belonged to the "Third World" was contested by some within the GI Movement. In September 1970, the Shelter Half published a piece in the GI Movement paper, *CAMP NEWS,* which decried activists' radical fixation with the "Third World" and anti-imperialism and celebrated their own activism which focused on the immediate needs of the GI. This position, however, came under-fire from a number of the more ideologically orientated activists of the civilian anti-war movement who disparagingly questioned: '[w]hile imperialism dominates three-fourths of the earth you're talking about grievances like being forced to buy bonds, or being woken up at four in the morning'. In retaliation, the Shelter Half complained that even the National Liberation Front (NLF) were not waging a war simply of ideology and when they managed to take control of a village, they spent important time building schools and ingratiating themselves with the local population. The Shelter Half

especially focused on Mexican Americans, who largely still resided in this location, as victims of domestic imperialism. The paper ran segments which focused on non-military Chicano communities, particularly those who lived in the US' *barrios*. In one edition, the paper ran a depressing segment titled 'Noticias Del Barrio' which kept GIs on Lewis and McChord informed on the struggles of Chicanos. The article commented on the deaths of one Latino GI in California and another two in New Mexico at the hands of law enforcement, or, as the *Free Press* referred to them, '"domestic" armed forces'.[55] Similarly, in May 1972, a Latino GI wrote: 'Chicanos have also been victimized. U.S. Armed Forces in the form of police, immigration agents and legalized Ku Klux Klansmen such as the Texas Rangers have occupied and terrorized our Barrios. This was done first to steal the land and natural resources, then to exploit our labor in the fields and factories'.[56] The Mexican holiday Cinco De Mayo was particularly celebrated by the *Free Press* for its anti-imperialist connotations. The paper conveyed to its readership that the holiday remembered the Mexican Army's successful fight against the invading French and their ability to resist conquest. 'On this Cinco De Mayo', the *Free Press* wrote, 'we must not only commemorate the defeat of the French invaders but also look forward to the defeat of US imperialism'.[57] In doing so, the *Free Press* emphasised that Chicanos and other Latinos, as well as African Americans and Asian Americans, were victims of domestic imperialism.[58] Documentation of civilian "Third World" people was also supplemented with reporting on the military justice system's treatment of, what the paper referred to as, 'Third World GIs' to emphasise the racism received by non-White GIs in the military.[59] Whilst the

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therefore made some salient points about activists' fixation on the "Third World" and imperialism and whether this alienated average GIs from engaging with them. Likewise, they questioned whether this fascination was even valid as they claimed that '[t]he poor countries of this world offer no model for the revolution we want to make'. It is important to acknowledge therefore that the position of the *Free Press* was not the default position of anti-war GIs and activists of the GIA and Shelter Half had divergent political beliefs and differing degrees of radicalism. "Their Revolution or Ours?", *CAMP NEWS,* Vol.1, No.3, September 8, 1970, p. 14.

[55] "Noticias Del Barrio", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.5, May 1972, p. 8.

[56] "Latinos and US Imperialism", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.5, May 1972, p. 8.

[57] "El Cinco De Mayo", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.7, May 1973, p. 4.

[58] For an article which celebrates 'Black, Brown and Asian workers and organizations who are struggling against the racist oppression of Third World people on the job and in the community', please see: "Third World Struggles: Workers Organize", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, p. 7. For articles which reference US minority civilians as "Third World", please see: Ibid., p. 7; "Farmworker Struggle: Proposition 22", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.1, January 1973, p. 4; "Vet Blasts Use of POW's", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.6, April 1973, p. 8; "The Farmworkers and Their Fight", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.4, April 1971, p. 7; and "Army Attacks GIs: GI Faces Court Martial", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.12, December 1973, p. 1.

[59] For *Free Press* and *GI Voice* articles which reference "Third World" GIs, please see: "Petition to End Art. 15's", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.1, Midmonth August 1972, p. 7; "Fight Back", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.7, December 1972, p. 1 and 6; "At Lowry: Black Airman Brutalized", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.6, June 1973, p. 8; "Imperialism ---- The Enemy", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.10, October 1973, p. 3; "Being Black and Navy Too", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.10, October 1973, p. 6; and "Who We Are", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.11, November 1973, p. 2.

GIs never addressed the topic explicitly, it is clear from their references to these groups that the logic of the internal colony thesis was present in much of the output of the *Free Press*.

The use of the internal colony thesis by the paper demonstrates how these theories filtered down from principal theorists and self-determination leaders, such as Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton – who co-wrote the Black Power manifesto *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* – to grassroots activists.[60] In this way, the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* emphasises that such theories were applied at the grassroots level and served as a way for non-White and White GIs to make sense of the position of non-White people in America. They particularly emphasised the similarities between racism in the US and the racism inherent in imperialism. Highlighting this, they questioned their audience: 'Why should we fight across the seas for U.S. Imperialism when our fight is here Against U.S. Imperialism?'[61]

As Carl Oglesby, former President of Students for a Democratic Society, has pointed out, over the course of the "Sixties", activism transitioned from 'pro-peace to anti-war, anti-war to pro-NLF, pro-NLF to anti-imperialist to pro-Third World revolution to anti-capitalism to pro-socialism [sic]'.[62] So far, this interpretative framework has been astute and the *Free Press* transmuted from an anti-war to an anti-imperialist and pro-"Third World" position. In this sense, the paper underwent the logical trajectory of radicalism which Oglesby described, also arriving at the penultimate position: anti-capitalism. Oglesby acknowledges that his trend was pursued 'with much more confusion and uncertainty than this schedule implies' and this is reflected in the life of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press*. The paper began as a decidedly anti-war, yet liberal, organ. In earlier editions of the paper, political affiliation was less important than an anti-war viewpoint. This non-dogmatism was exemplified by a letter printed by the *Free Press* from a 'conservative Republican' from Fort Lewis who praised the paper for upholding the standards of the Constitution when the Army was not.[63] The liberal nature of the paper was evidently appealing to the general GI population no matter their political affiliation. A letter from a Lieutenant at Fort Riley (KS) praised the *Free Press* for its 'relatively little rhetoric' and its dedication to documenting 'service matters' which demonstrated a 'viability'

[60] The notion that Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton were proponents of internal colonialism is taken from Gutiérrez, 'Internal Colonialism', *DBR* (September 2004), p. 287.
[61] "Latinos and US Imperialism", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.5, May 1972, p. 8. As original.
[62] Carl Oglesby, 'Notes on a Decade Ready for the Dustbin', *Liberation,* 14.5,6 (August-September 1969), pp. 5-19 (p. 6), https://archive.org/details/510.liberation.AugustSeptember1969/page/n5/mode/2up?view=theater [accessed: 19/04/24].
[63] Letter, *LMFP*, Vol.1, No.5, December 1970, p. 2.

for the newspaper that would make it feared by G-2s (members of Military Intelligence).[64] There was, however, a distinct shift in the contents of the *Free Press* following the Coalition's merger with the GI Alliance in August 1971.

Whilst earlier editions of the paper focused on base news, specific examples of GI repression and imperialist critiques, the *Free Press* under the GIA underwent subtle but distinct changes, using more radical rhetoric with a greater focus on economics. In their first edition as publishers, the newspaper featured articles on topics not yet covered by the Coalition, including pieces on dependents and child care, the poor economy, the lack of job opportunities, GIs being used as strike-breakers, drugs, radical groups, and the poor recompense servicepeople received for their service.[65] Whilst the *Free Press* had always been somewhat left-wing, the takeover of the paper by the GIA signalled a move further to the Left. Interestingly, these developments mirrored changes within the civilian Left, and the GI Movement also, which saw the rise of Third World Marxism among activists.[66]

Whilst the Vietnam War had served as the catalyst for radicals' move from anti-war to anti-imperialist, it was Vietnam's larger bordering nation, China, which inspired much of the new interest in Marxism during the "Sixties". It may seem strange that Maoism, as an ideology which stressed the agrarian nature of China and the need to adapt orthodox Marxism-Leninism to conditions in the country, was taken up by Western youths in heavily industrialised capitalist nations.[67] However, according to Julia Lovell, the two most important aspects of Maoism to "Sixties" activists in the US were China's opposition to the oppression of non-White people, particularly its role as the global bastion of opposition to US imperialism, and its support for youthful rebellion. The first of these magnetic values appealed specifically to activists of the

[64] Letter, *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.1, July 1971, p. 2.
[65] "Child Care for Dependents", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.2, August 1971, p. 3; "No Jobs for Vets", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.2, August 1971, p. 4; "GI's [sic] Used as Strikebreakers", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.2, August 1971, "Drugs – False Solution to a Real Problem", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.2, August 1971, p. 6; "Co. B Holds Political Ed Rap", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.2, August 1971, p. 7.
[66] For a discussion of the transition from the New Left to Third World Marxism, please see Chapter 1.
[67] Maoism, as an ideological system, stressed peasant inclusion, a concrete military strategy [people's war – which involved the notion of controlling the countryside around large urban areas], a two-stage process for socialist transition, and indigenizing Marxism-Leninism to suit specific historical conditions [i.e., those which Marx had not predicted]'. Whilst Matthew Galway has acknowledged that there were different types of Maoism within the Chinese Communist Party, he refers to this specific political ideology as 'Yan'an Maoism'. This was Mao's adaptation, or 'Sinification', of Marxism-Leninism which was applied specifically to China, but could be adapted to other "Third World" countries to achieve a communist revolution.
For a discussion of the Sinification of Marxism-Leninism and the formation of Ya'nan Maoism, please see: Matthew Galway, *The Emergence of Global Maoism: China's Red Evangelism and the Cambodian Communist Movement, 1949-1979* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2022), pp. 32-38. Quotation from p. 84.

US because of their introduction to activism through the civil rights movement and engagement with Black Power.[68] The second value, which the radicalising New Left identified with, was the worth which Mao, and particularly the Chinese Cultural Revolution, placed on youth.[69] Anti-Vietnam protest, for young people, was inherently tied to youth culture and anti-authoritarianism. Former "Sixties" Maoist Dennis O'Neil claimed that "[t]he attraction for young people who didn't have any connection with communism was the idea of putting dunce hats on your high school teachers". The adoption of Maoism by left-wing youths therefore demonstrates, as Lovell has acknowledged, more about 'the preoccupations of these distant observers of Chinese politics than about Chinese politics itself.'[70]

As discussed, the increasing interest in Third World Marxism led to the creation of an ideologically more serious, Maoist, New Communist Movement (NCM). This movement is especially important to this thesis given the involvement of editors of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* in the NCM group, the Revolutionary Union. In this sense, the growing radicalism of

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[68] Julia Lovell, 'The Cultural Revolution and Its Legacies in International Perspectives', *The China* Quarterly [*TCQ*], 227 (September 2016), pp. 632-652 (pp. 636-638).
[69] Ibid., pp. 638-640.
[70] Ibid., p. 639.
There is an existing body of historiographical research on the West's fascination with and adoption of Maoism during this period. This is split into three major trends: mea culpa Maoism, Multidirectional Maoism, and Third World Maoism. The first of these tendencies is the scholarly material authored by Westerners who had participated in Maoist activities in the "Sixties" and have subsequently reneged on this political affiliation. This form of scholarship is therefore apologist and Slobodian argues that it warns against 'future interracial and transnational political identifications' with the Global South through fear that activists may once again overlook atrocities committed in the name of political affiliations, such as those carried out in the Cultural Revolution. Multidirectional Maoism has tended to be authored by a different demographic: those 'young scholars with greater distance from the past-political engagements' who seek to understand how Maoism was translated and understood outside of China. This school, according to Slobodian, has two variants, the first of which, Anti-Soviet Maoism, focuses on official Maoist groups that split from the Soviet-orientated communist organisations (such as CPUSA). The second variant is the study of Dada Maoism; that is, celebration of Maoism without belonging to a political party and which focused on cultural symbols and ironic spectacle to celebrate the anti-authoritarian aspects of Maoism. The final school of Maoist historiography is Third World Maoism. Whilst mea culpa Maoist historiography has focused almost explicitly on White actors, Third World Maoism is the study of activists of colour who established ties to Maoism, making Chinese Communism a 'transnational' philosophy. These scholars study the friendly views that black nationalist groups such as the Black Panther Party and the Revolutionary Action Movement and militant Asian American groups had towards Mao and Chinese Communism.
Quinn Slobodian, 'The Meanings of Western Maoism in the Global 1960s', in *The Routledge Handbook of the Global Sixties: Between Protest and Nation Building,* ed by Chen Jian and others (Oxon: Routledge, 2018), pp. 67-78.
For *Free Press*/*GI Voice* articles which are positive about the People's Republic of China or Mao Zedong, please see: Quotation from Mao Zedong, *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.6, June 1971, p. 1; "Nixon Goes to China", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.2, February 1972, p. 5; "Women in China", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.1, Midmonth August 1972, p. 4; "Wanted", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.2, September 1972, p. 3; "Philippines: People's Revolution", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.3, October 1972, p. 4; and "Free Flicks", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.2, February 1972, p. 7. In this last article, the *Free Press* comments on the visit of the US-China Friendship Association's visit to the GIA shack to talk about the Chinese People's Liberation Army and compare it to the US Army.

anti-war GIs was exemplified in its most obvious form via their participation in revolutionary communist organisations.

The RU (formerly the Bay Area Revolutionary Union) originally began as a collective of collectives set up by young left-wing activists in the industrial city of Richmond, California, in late 1968.[71] This group quickly expanded in scope and allied with a collective from Stanford University, ex-members from other Marxist organisations such as Progressive Labor (PL), Communist Party, USA (CPUSA), and some from the Peace and Freedom Party, to form RU chapters in Oakland-Berkeley, San Francisco, Richmond, and Palo Alto.[72] By 1970, 20,000 copies of *Red Papers*, the first in a series of RU publications, were in circulation. The Union also engaged in anti-war activism, established a contingent of members in Vietnam Veterans Against the War, supported labour strikes by minorities, such as a strike against the Farah Company, and continued on-campus activism to encourage more young people to a radical, anti-imperialist, and Maoist position.[73]

In *Red Papers 2*, the group highlighted their demand for a 'United Front against Imperialism' as the first step to revolution. The five 'spearheads of struggle', they argued, were: national liberation for Black and Mexican Americans and other minorities; support for colonial liberation; opposition to fascism at home (or, the 'terroristic dictatorship of the bourgeoisie'); objection to the oppression of women; and unifying the working-class in resistance to the attack on living standards by capitalists.[74] Their general position, as laid out by former RU leader Robert Avakian, was that:

> [America] needed a socialist revolution, as part of the worldwide revolutionary struggle whose ultimate goal was communism; that the proletariat would be the backbone force of this revolution, but at the same time it was necessary to build a broad united front, unifying many diverse forces fighting against the injustices and outrages of this system, and that a key force for revolution was the struggle of the various oppressed nationalities; and that, to lead all this to revolution, there

[71] Steve Hamilton, 'On the History of the Revolutionary Union (Part I)', *Theoretical Review* [*TR*], No.13 (November-December 1979), https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/periodicals/theoretical-review/19791302.htm [accessed: 06/12/23] and Bob Avakian, *From Ike to Mao and Beyond: My Journey from Mainstream America to Revolutionary Communist* (Chicago: Insight Press, 2005), p. 191.
[72] Hamilton, 'On the History of the Revolutionary Union (Part I)', *TR* (November-December 1979), and Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air* (2018), p. 95.
[73] Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air* (2018), pp. 99-101.
[74] 'The United Front against U.S. Imperialism: Strategy for Proletarian Revolution', *Red Papers 2* (1969), n.p. via: Marxists Internet Archive, https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/periodicals/red-papers/red-papers-2/index.htm [accessed: 07/12/23].

> was a need for a single, multinational [by which he means multi-racial] revolutionary communist party.[75]

By 1970, a 'primary program' of the organisation, according to the Committee on Internal Security, had become the infiltration and subversion of the Armed Forces, a decision made at 'the highest organisational level'.[76] The GI Movement provided an opportunity for the RU to foment further discontent within the military, and to convert many discontented GIs to their goal of revolution. One RU directive illustrated the appeal of the armed forces to Maoist revolutionaries by emphasising that servicepeople were mostly drawn from the proletariat; the military was multi-racial, so racial oppression could be used to induce a desire for revolution among non-White groups; and, most importantly, it taught young men 'the skills necessary to overthrow the state'.[77] Therefore, by the early 1970s, the military began to play an important role in the RU's tactical approach which identified young men within the armed forces as ideal targets to support and take part in their tentative revolution.

With this goal in mind, the organisation set up a collective in the Salinas-Monterey area, directed specifically at Fort Ord (CA). In order to contact GIs in the area, the RU set up a coffeehouse not far from the fort, held '"booze parties"' for soldiers where they would be introduced to 'Mao Tse-tung ideology', and showed anti-Vietnam War films.[78] "Booze parties" and anti-war films do not necessarily come to mind when one thinks of a disciplined Marxist-Leninist organisation, however, this lack of obvious RU propaganda demonstrates the Union's ability to cater to the immediate needs of discontented servicemen. GIs needed distraction from life on base, rather than to be lectured on the particulars of class conflict and oppression; this came later when these leisure activities were combined with more serious political agitation. RU members sought to counsel GIs into insubordination, urging them to refuse orders and reject work in general.[79] The Committee on Internal Security claimed that the RU 'engineered' a demonstration at Ord on Armed Forces Day, encouraging soldiers 'not to work and to refuse any command given'.[80] This action included sponsoring a march and rally, orchestrated by the

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[75] Avakian, *From Ike to Mao and Beyond* (2005), p. 198.
[76] 'America's Maoists: The Revolutionary Union – The Venceremos Organization', *Committee on Internal Security, U.S. House of Representatives* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972), p. 79. via: U.S. Department of Justice, https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/americas-maoists-revoluntionary-union-venceremos-organization].
[77] Ibid., p. 80. 'Near-lumpen refers to the poorest members of the military. Importantly, unlike traditional Marxism, the RU still viewed this group as revolutionary.
[78] Ibid., p. 80.
[79] Ibid., p. 81.
[80] Ibid., p. 81.

RU-infiltrated organisation, Movement for a Democratic Military, in which over three thousand protesters attended. However, due to the leadership of Fort Ord giving extra work assignments and mobilising GIs for riot duty, only one hundred soldiers were present.[81]

The RU was not happy to simply propagandise their targets from the outside, as civilian members of the anti-war movement had done in GI coffeehouses, and deliberately sent their members into the military to organise. Two FBI informants in the RU, Lawrence and Betty Sue Goff, testified that they knew of three Union members that had joined the military.[82] Lawrence explicitly stated that he knew one member who deliberately allowed himself to be drafted and ended up going to Fort Bragg.[83] Whilst a small number, this is not insubstantial as, because of the cadre system of the Union, members were only aware of colleagues in their own collective. This figure is therefore only indicative of the proportion who were drafted or enlisted within the Goffs' cadre, not the entire organisation, which was likely much higher. This is highlighted by the fact that the RU had a policy regarding cadre joining the military. When a member was drafted, the decision on whether he would be more valuable to the revolution in the military or civilian world would be made among his collective. This decision would then be relayed to higher authorities who would decide if this was "correct" or not. 'The most dedicated and disciplined RU members and those with "a high level of understanding of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung thought" were to enter the Armed Forces'. Once in the military, RU members did not receive strict prescriptive orders and were trusted to initiate activities which would be 'useful or in furtherance of the revolution'.[84] The GI Movement is therefore not only significant as a historical example of non-student anti-Vietnam War and progressive protest, but also takes on added importance as a movement which was imbued with value by the growing far-Left of the early 1970s. This emphasises that military dissent was not an isolated phenomenon and had continued relevance to groups outside of the GI Movement up until the conclusion of the war. Importantly, the RU's military organising appears to have been largely successful. As the USSF had remarked, 'evidence would seem to indicate that Marxist civilians who join the military, and GIs who become Marxists while in the military, have done the best continuing organizing.

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[81] Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (2005), p. 68.
[82] 'America's Maoists' (1972), p. 79.
[83] Testimony of Lawrence L. Goff and Betty Sue Goff, 'Investigation of Attempts to Subvert the United States Armed Services', Part 1, *Hearings Before the Committee on Internal Security, House of Representatives, Ninety-Second Congress First Session*, p. 6445. via: HathiTrust, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.aa0007576192&seq=911&q1=part+3.
[84] 'America's Maoists' (1972), p. 81. The different spelling of Mao Zedong/ Mao Tse-tung is a matter of translation from the Chinese. The first version appears to be preferred in the modern era and thus has been used, when not quoting, throughout this thesis.

The members of PL [Progressive Labor] and the RU who are presently in the military have had a measure of success'.[85]

However, the RU's furtive design makes it difficult to estimate their specific impact at Lewis and McChord. The *Free Press*' documentation of the Revolutionary Union is sparse. Its first mention of the group's work in the Pacific Northwest is in February 1973, when it unassumingly listed the RU as one of the sponsors of the International Women's Day celebrations in Seattle (discussed later).[86] Once again, the RU is mentioned only passingly in the last edition of the *Free Press* (before it became *GI Voice*) as one of the constituents of the Tacoma Strike Support Committee.[87] Therefore, in-keeping with the RU's general secrecy, its involvement in the *Free Press* was characterised by a cloak-and-dagger nature. Indeed, when reading the *Free Press*, one would not suspect the organisation to have played any role in organising on Lewis and McChord at all; the RU was scarcely mentioned and when it was, this was always as a smaller part of a larger demonstration or event. This furtiveness, therefore, makes it difficult to assess the role of the RU in the GI Alliance and their consequent impact on the messaging of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press*.

Whilst it was broader trends, detailed by Ogelsby, which GIs were responding to and intersecting with, Marxism-Leninism was brought from the outside civilian sphere into the military via specific individuals. As discussed, the RU made infiltration of the Armed Forces one of their primary goals and utilised members of their cadre to do so. One member of the GI Alliance had been involved in the changing milieu which Ogelsby described when a student, eventually becoming involved in the RU and working in a glass factory as part of their efforts to reach the working-class.[88] When drafted, this GI was evidently found to possess the "high level of understanding of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung thought" which meant that he was of greater value in the Army than in the civilian sphere. Indeed, when interviewed, former GIA member Henry Valenti commented on the true nature of RU involvement in the GIA. He claimed that the RU "really supported us a lot and actually sent members of their organisation into the Army, specifically to do organising. And we had some of those GIs working with us".[89]

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[85] *G.I. News and Discussion Bulletin,* Issue 13, January 1973, p. 8.
[86] "The Lost Holiday", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, February 1973, p. 1.
[87] "Strike Support", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.9, August 1973, p. 4.
[88] Interview of Jane Cantwell, interviewed by Dr Wendy Toon, Seattle, 7 October 2022. Pseudonymised for the purposes of this thesis.
[89] Interview of Henry Valenti, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 4 October 2022.

Therefore, although the political landscape was changing, particularly the one in which these young men inhabited, it was very real inter-personal connections that brought such radical views to the Alliance.

Other than Valenti, there were at least (likely more) three other GIA members who were a part of the organisation during their tenure publishing the *Free Press*.[90] The RU, therefore, evidently had a foothold in the Alliance and Randy Rowland, a member of both organisations, claimed that the GIA was a 'recruiting ground' for the RU.[91] Once engaged in military agitating, young GIs retained their usefulness as young workers who could enter the civilian work force as RU organisers after their term of service. Rowland and Valenti both went into work at a smelter after their tenure in the GIA, with Valenti remarking that his experience of organising in the military helped inspire this venture.[92] The RU's insertion of Marxist-Leninist radicals into the military should not lead to the conclusion that the GI Movement was controlled by outside political forces, however. After all, these servicemen were not compelled to adopt such stances but instead agreed with and adopted them. Rowland, for example, discussed that the Alliance struggled internally over how much of the RU's political bent they should adopt.[93]

It is certain, therefore, that at the same time they were publishing the *Free Press*, some of the paper's editors also participated in the growing NCM and were members of a genuine revolutionary Maoist organisation. When queried, one GIA member acknowledged that the RU's involvement included 'providing direction and leadership' to the GIA.[94] Rowland claimed that the Union's contribution in particular was to ideology – emphasising that the RU did indeed attempt to convert GIs to communism – as well as a 'general radicalizing effect'.[95] Nevertheless, both Rowland and another former GIA member maintain that the *Free Press* was not an organ of the RU. Evidently, therefore, the Union's effect on the Alliance, which the paper did not broadcast to their audience, was to supply GIs with more ideological views, which they were perhaps otherwise not aware of, and pull the Alliance Leftwards. This information of course re-contextualises the contents of the *Free Press* and comments which support anti-imperialism, anti-capitalism, the "Third World", and the working-class become much more

[90] Questionnaire, Randy Rowland, 9 May 2024 and interview of Jane Cantwell, interviewed by Dr Wendy Toon, Seattle, 7 October 2022. Pseudonymised for the purposes of this thesis.
[91] Questionnaire, Randy Rowland, 9 May 2024.
[92] Ibid., and Interview of Henry Valenti, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 4 October 2022.
[93] Questionnaire, Randy Rowland, 9 May 2024
[94] Questionnaire, Anonymous Participant, 9 May 2024.
[95] Questionnaire, Randy Rowland, 9 May 2024.

significant with the knowledge that some of those who wrote the articles were US Maoists. Commentary on anti-capitalist issues, with this knowledge, transitions from simple gripes about the United States in the early 1970s to the remarks of people who worked within an organisation which sought a revolution in America and celebrated communism over capitalism.

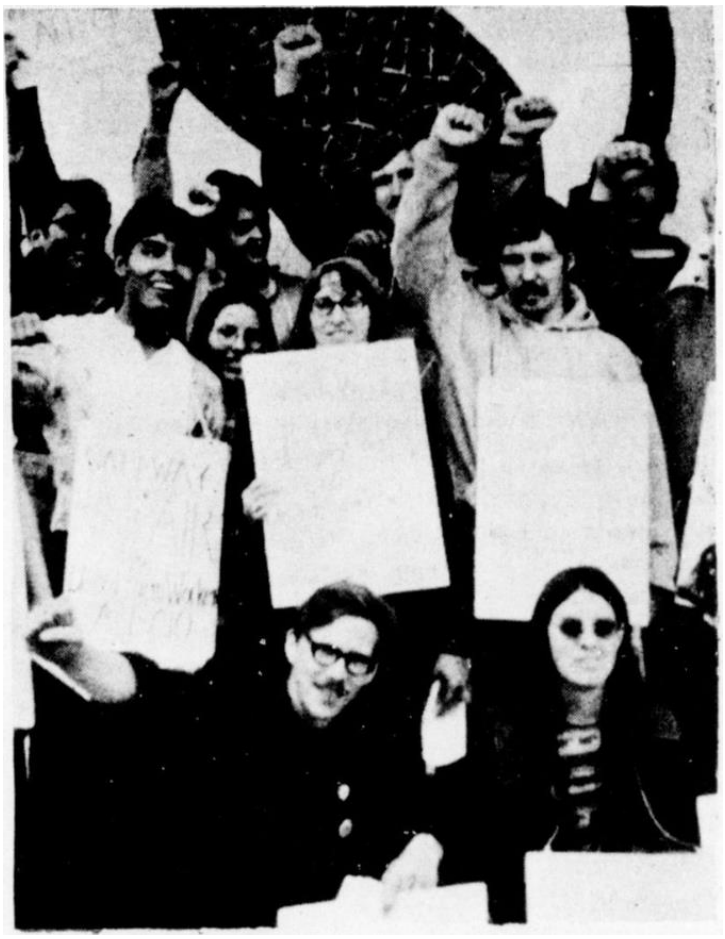

Figure 21: Photograph, The Tacoma Strike Support Committee, including members of both the GI Alliance and the Revolutionary Union (c. June 1973), *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, Vol.6, No.9, August 1973, p. 4.

The most obvious way in which the communism of the RU manifested in a restrained manner in the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* was through their opposition to capitalism.[96] This

[96] For articles criticising capitalism and 'big business', please see: "Phase Two: Big Business Getting Over", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.5, November 1971, p. 5; "Nixon's New Game Plan: The People Won't Play", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.3, September 1971, p. 4; Quote by Abraham Lincoln, *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.3, September 1971, p. 4; Cartoon, *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.4, March [April] 1972, p. 8; "How the Brass Scab: Lettuce Boycott", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.1, August 1972, p. 5; "Don't Let the Handshake and the Smile Fool You", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, p. 8; "Supporting Big Business", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.8, Midmonth December 1972, p. 4; "Meat Prices", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.1, January 1973, p. 7; "Strike Strengthens: Farah Unfair", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, Midmonth January

was particularly evident in their support for workers' rights and focus on class. Whilst these issues were not exclusive to Marxist organisations, the presence of GIs in the Alliance who sympathised with Maoism demonstrates the *Free Press*' conversion to a leftist publication. It was, after all, under the control of the Alliance that the paper underwent the transition from 'anti-imperialist to pro-Third World revolution to anti-capitalism' described by Oglesby.[97] Instead of the liberal-Left attitude embodied by the Coalition, the Alliance began to pursue class-based analyses. This transition inspired a change in the focus of the paper from looking outward, criticising America's foreign policy, to looking inward at the issues within the US. In this way, the life of the *Free Press* was paradigmatic of other grassroots organisations during this era and acted as a microcosm of the transmutation of the New Left from participatory democracy to Third World Marxism.

Under the GIA, the *Free Press* became pre-occupied with economic issues and analyses. This was partly in response to the worsening economic situation in the early 1970s. For example, President Nixon's 1971 "New Economic Policy" instituted drastic measures to combat inflation, including allowing the US dollar to "float" in the international exchange markets, tantamount to devaluing it, and freezing wages, prices, and dividends.[98] In late 1971 the paper responded to this, lambasting the hypocrisy of Nixon's economic policies claiming that they were 'designed to fatten the pockets of big business at the expense of poor and working people'. The paper reported that whilst the Nixon government instituted a wage freeze to tackle economic issues, they did not put a restriction on interest rates or the prices of essentials, such as fruits, vegetables, and eggs, allowing these to rise for the average American.[99] Whilst the New Economic Policy had some initial success, inflation quickly resumed its upward trajectory; the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, the US' largest federation of unions, refused to cooperate with the Nixon Administration in March 1972; and the value of the American public's money continued to diminish for the next ten years.[100] The GIA were therefore not only reacting to the changing political landscape, and

1973, p. 4; "Shell Workers Strike", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.6, April 1973, p. 1; "Passing the Buck", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.6, April 1973, p. 7; "Mexican Border Cities", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.7, May 1973, p. 4; "U.S. Business and Mexican Workers: 1848-1972", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.7, May 1973, p. 4; and "Shell? No Sale!", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.8, June 1973, p. 7.

[97] Oglesby, 'Notes on a Decade Ready for the Dustbin', *Liberation* (August-September 1969), p. 6.

[98] James T. Patterson, *America in the Twentieth Century,* 5th edn. (Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2000), p. 456.

[99] "Phase Two: Big Business Getting Over", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.5, November 1971, p. 5.

[100] Patterson, *America in the Twentieth Century* (2000), p. 456. Whilst there was a disparity between the amount Americans took home from their jobs and the real worth of that money in 1970, when the *Free Press* first originated, the discrepancy when the GIA became the paper's publishers was much greater. In 1970, for

allying with communist groups who fought for better wages for workers, they were also responding to very real material difficulties that they and other poor Americans were experiencing.

Still, the *Free Press* explained this wealth inequality and poor economic situation in the 1970s as the result of capitalism. The *Free Press* stated:

> Now why is Richard Nixon, who is supposed to give everybody an even break as President "of all people," showering big business with riches when they're rich already and robbing workers blind when we're poor already?
>
> The answer is simple. The interests of a small number of people who control the wealth and power in this country—an elite circle of banks, corporations, military men and government officials—are directly opposed to the interests of the workers and poor people of this country and of the world. Nixon serves big business, therefore he cannot serve our interests.[101]

Not only does this emphasise a change in the *Free Press*' contents, but also a shift in its conceptual framework. The GIs had evidently begun to analyse US society in terms of class, demarcating between the 'elite', and the workers and the poor, acknowledging that these groups are antithetical to one another. This analysis, whilst perhaps not the most sophisticated, emphasises that the editors of the paper had begun to assume an anti-capitalist position.

Likewise, an emphasis on class and class-based analyses became an important part of the *Free Press*' messaging from this point. The determination to conceive of American society as class-based, unpopular in a population which largely likes to perceive itself as "classless", manifested in the documentation of practical issues which affected the average American, such as rising inflation and unemployment. Whilst GIs remained the most important target for the *Free Press*' messaging, the paper now encouraged them to look further afield than the bases of the Pacific Northwest and view the difficulties of others. Trying to inculcate this class consciousness in their readership, the paper claimed:

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example, the median family income on paper was $9,867 which had a real value of $8,484. In 1971, the median income had grown to $10,285 but the actual value remained at $8,479. The following year these numbers were $11,116 and $8,872 respectively. The wages of GIs between the ranks E1-E4 were far below this average, however. The pay range for these ranks with less than two years of military service (the common position of the drafted GI) was between $87.90-165.50 per month (excluding an allowance for quarters) when troops were first deployed in 1965. This had risen to between $307.20-369.90 by January 1973 in response to inflation. Patterson, *America in the Twentieth Century* (2000), p. 468. For information on the pay of GIs during this period, please visit "Military Pay Charts – 1949 to 2021", via: Defense Finance and Accounting Service, https://www.dfas.mil/militarymembers/payentitlements/Pay-Tables/PayTableArchives/. [accessed: 23/04/25]

[101] "Phase Two: Big Business Getting Over", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.5, November 1971, p. 5.

> The American working class, black, brown, and white, are the ones who produce all the wealth this country has and ever will have from their own labor. Not corporation executives or senators, or zippies [protesters, formerly of the Youth International Party (Yippies), who demonstrated at the Democratic and Republican National Conventions in 1972] either. And we not only work to create our country's wealth, but we see damn little of it.[102]

Solidarity with working people across the US was explicitly encouraged in the *Free Press* which emphasised that unemployment (and the government's lack of activity to fix it) affected all working Americans and that 'our brothers and sisters in the streets are now organizing to resist this continuing attack on our standard of living'.[103] Such phraseology is indicative of the more radical, pluralistic, and class-based approach that the paper would take under the GIA.

In order to emphasise the need for allyship between workers and GIs, the *Free Press* began to conceptualise servicemen as workers themselves. This analogy utilised orthodox understandings of power and class relations within the workplace to make sense of GIs' own positions in the military. In this conception, the military acted as the business/employer and the enlisted men (EM) – the lowest rung of the military hierarchy – as the average worker. In September 1972, the *Free Press* claimed that 'the difference between military and civilian life is often just a matter of degree and [...] the problems and struggles of workers in the plants and factories of our country are much like those of GIs'.[104] Servicemen's special occupation as the foot soldiers of the Vietnam War mattered less in this conception and instead, they became comparable to every other worker in America.

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[102] "Miami Beach 1972: Don't Let the Handshake and the Smile Fool You", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.1, August 1972, p. 4. For *Free Press*/*GI Voice* articles which talk about the issues which faced the American working-class, please see: "Nixon's New Game Plan: The People Won't Play", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.3, September 1971, p. 4; "GIs & Workers – Martial Law for All", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.6, August 1971, p. 5; "Nixon Attacks Workers", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.2, February 1972, p. 6; "A GIA Editorial: Labor Robbed", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.4, March [April] 1972, p. 2; "Wallace: Don't Let the Handshake and the Smile Fool You", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.4, March [April] 1972, p. 4; "McGovern: Don't Let the Handshake and the Smile Fool You – II", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.6, July 1972, p. 4; "La Prensa Libre: Workers Strike Farah Co.", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.6, July 1972, p. 7; "Miami Beach 1972: Don't Let the Handshake and the Smile Fool You", *LMFP* Vol.5, No.1, August 1972, p. 4; "Old Colonels Never Die", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.2, September 1972, p. 5; "Govt. Scabs on Workers", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.2, September 1972, p. 6; "Rip-Off Salesmen: GI Towns: Prime Target", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.3, October 1972, p. 7; "Third World Struggles: Workers Organize", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, p. 7; "Paulson's Strike", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, p. 7; "Don't Let the Handshake and the Smile Fool You", *LMFP,* Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, p. 8; "Fair Share", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.1, January 1973, p. 8; and "Passing the Buck", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.6, April 1973, p. 7.

[103] "No Jobs for Vets", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.2, August 1971, p. 4.

[104] "Old Colonels Never Die", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.2, September 1972, p. 5.

In July 1972, when discussing the fight for better pay and equal treatment for Mexican American cannery workers, the paper claimed that their struggle was 'also our struggle because cannery workers and GI's [sic] are both working people while the company owners and their military brass puppets are on the other side.' The *Free Press* stressed that 'many of us have fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, friends and other relatives who are cannery workers; should we take the side of the rich against our own people?'[105] Whilst much of the military, particularly the Army, was made up of working-class men during the Vietnam War, the GIA evidently conceived of EMs as generally working-class.[106] This generalisation led to the paper encouraging empathy with striking workers as they sought to stimulate a greater working-class consciousness among the rank-and-file. After the GI Alliance's takeover, therefore, the *Free Press* de-emphasised the unique position of EMs as servicemen and emphasised that instead of being different, they were members of the broader working-class.

This conceptualisation of the GI as a worker was necessary as, according to Vladimir Lenin, the interests of the Army and striking workers were antithetical. In 1916, he wrote that 'the oppressor class is always armed' and that 'in all capitalist countries without exception troops […] are used against strikers'. Finishing this comment, he remarked that '[a] bourgeoisie armed against the proletariat is one of the biggest, fundamental and cardinal facts of modern capitalist society', a fact which was 'such an elementary truth that it is hardly necessary to dwell upon it'.[107] It is possible that the GIs of the GI Alliance had either read this treatise, or were introduced to it in the "teach-ins" of the RU – who also quoted it in *Red Papers 1*.[108] Indeed, members of the Alliance were taught by RU cadre, and Henry Valenti was enthusiastic about the education programme of the RU which used to "have teach-ins where they taught more about Marxist-Leninist stuff, and more history about the United States being in [the] Philippines […] I mean, we were getting educated. I was learning a lot of history."[109] Once again, therefore, the ideology of the RU infiltrated the GI Alliance through direct contact with Maoist activists, either in the civilian or military sphere. Even if they were not aware of Lenin's particular thesis, they were certainly conscious of this traditional Marxist conception. As a

[105] "Cannery Workers", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.6, July 1972, p. 7.
[106] For an extremely detailed argument that the Vietnam era Army and Marines were overwhelmingly working-class, please see: Christian G. Appy, *Working-Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), pp. 11-43.
[107] Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, 'The "Disarmament" Slogan', via: Marxists Internet Archive: https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/oct/01.htm [accessed: 17/12/24].
[108] See: "Statement of Principles", *Red Papers 1*, Spring 1969, n.p., via: Marxists Internet Archive, https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/periodicals/red-papers/red-papers-1/statement.htm [accessed: 17/12/24].
[109] Interview of Henry Valenti, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 4 October 2022.

result, the editors of the paper fought hard to emphasise to the base population that GIs' goals and values aligned with those of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie and this manifested in a high quantity of articles covering labour activism.[110]

For example, in February 1972 the paper ran an article on the industrial action of the Seattle longshoremen who were being ordered back to work under the Taft-Hartley Act.[111] The paper related this to their readership by stating that '[w]hen the necessity for decent wages and working conditions forces us [GIs] into a picket line, then we will fully understand the longshoremen's struggle.'[112] As they had when discussing instances of military injustice, the editors utilised the specific to illustrate the general. In this case they used an example of local industrial action, likely to be known among their GI audience, to underscore the notion that GIs should support workers fighting for better wages and conditions as it may one day be themselves. This can be seen as an attempt to get GIs to think more structurally. Whilst significant on their own, the strikes of the longshoremen were most important as a demonstration of the fact that workers must fight hard for their rights under capitalism.

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[110] For GI Alliance articles which specifically cover labour activism in the US, please see: "GI's [sic] Used as Strike Breakers", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.2, August 1971, p. 5; "GIs & Workers – Martial Law for All", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.6, August 1971, p. 5; "Nixon Attacks Workers", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.2, February 1972, p. 6; "A GIA Editorial: Labor Robbed", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.4, March [April] 1972, p. 2; "La Prensa Libre: Workers Strike Farah Co.", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.6, July 1972, p. 7; "Cannery Workers", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.6, July 1972, p. 7; "How The Brass Scab: Lettuce Boycott", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.1, August 1972, p. 5; "Govt. Scabs on Workers", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.2, September 1972, p. 6; "Farah Workers – "We're Going to Win!"", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, p. 5; "Paulson's Strike", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, p. 7; "Lettuce", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.6, Midmonth November 1972, p. 4; "Support Farah Strikes", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.7, December 1972, p. 8; "Farmworker Struggle: Proposition 22", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.1, January 1973, p. 4; "Viva La Huelga: Victory to the Strike!", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, February 1973, p. 7, "Paulson's: Labor vs. Capital", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, February 1973, p. 8; "Don't Shop Safeway", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, Midmonth January 1973, p. 3, "Boycott Paulson's", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, Midmonth January 1973, p. 4; "Strike Strengthens: Farah Unfair", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, Midmonth January 1973, p. 4; "Shell Workers Strike", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.6, April 1973, p. 1; "Come to May Day: GIs and Workers United with Farah Strike", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.7, May 1973, p. 3; "The Armed Forces in America", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.8, June 1973, p. 5; "Shell? No Sale!", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.8, June 1973, p. 7; "Farmworkers Fight", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.9, August 1973, p. 4; "Strike Support", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.9, August 1973, p. 4; "Viva La Huelga", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.10, October 1973, p. 1 and 4; "El 16 De Septiembre: Tenemos Que Sostener La Lucha", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.10, October 1973, p. 5; "Workers Close Down Shop", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.10, October 1973, p. 6; "Don't Buy Farah Pants", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.11, November 1973, p. 7; "GIA Supports the Farmworkers", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.11, November 1973, p. 7; "GIs and Strike Support", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.11, November 1973, p. 7; "Don't Buy Farah Pants", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.12, December 1973, p. 6; and "Tacoma Strike Support", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.12, December 1973, p. 6.

[111] "Nixon Attacks Workers", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.2, February 1972, p. 6. For a description of the provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act, please see: "1947 Taft-Hartley Substantive Provisions", via: National Labor Relations Board, https://www.nlrb.gov/about-nlrb/who-we-are/our-history/1947-taft-hartley-substantive-provisions [accessed: 12/12/24].

[112] "Nixon Attacks Workers", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.2, February 1972, p. 6.

Supporting Lenin's maxim, the paper acknowledged that an antithetical relationship existed between the military, as an institution (not GIs themselves), and the workers. Continuing to cover the battle between Seattle dock workers and the Nixon Administration, the *Free Press* pointed out that 'if the longshoremen do return to the picket line, Nixon may, as a last resort, call in the military to take over work on the docks'. This was a troublesome concept for the paper who stated that the President 'will sooner or later be calling on us to earn our own pay rise by scabbing on our brothers who are trying to win wage increases they rightfully deserve.'[113]

In their final editions, the *Free Press* also embarked on a history segment which detailed significant strikes throughout US history and the role played by the military in suppressing them. For example, the paper covered a strike at the Carnegie Steel Corporation's plant in Homestead, Pennsylvania, in 1892, in which eight thousand troops were used to supress striking workers.[114] As soldiers themselves, the use of troops against domestic activism was a great worry to the GIA. Whilst the paper did not actively encourage rebellion if these instances arose, they did optimistically claim that '[t]oday [...] GIs realize that there is a great deal of solidarity between them and their working class brothers'.[115] Therefore, aware of the Army's past role as strike-breaker and its perceived position as defender of the bourgeoisie, the Alliance sought to encourage GIs not to 'scab' on their 'brothers'.[116] This was done firstly through conceptualising EMs as workers and persuading a wider proportion of GIs on base to take on this viewpoint, and secondly through making them aware that the military may be used to diminish the rights of those they had much in common with.

This new anti-capitalist lens effected the entirety of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press*' coverage. Specifically, it led to the paper altering their anti-racist work. Whilst previous commentary on African and Mexican Americans had focused on discrimination and injustice, it now largely centred on class. The paper's editors still concentrated on these groups as their own racial groups, as "Third World" constituents, but they felt that they were also inherently working-class because of the systemic racism which kept them in internal colonies. Re-contextualised by the knowledge that members of the Alliance were in the RU, the *Free Press*'

[113] "A GIA Editorial: Labor Robbed", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.4, March [April] 1972, p. 2.
[114] "Soldiers & Strikers: Part II", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.9, August 1973, p. 6.
[115] Ibid., p. 6.
[116] Here the term 'scab' refers to undermining the struggles of union workers by either replacing them in their jobs whilst they strike or forcing them back to work through force.

radical commentary on different oppressed groups was a part of their attempts to build a unified proletariat. After all, the RU itself was created with the intent of 'unifying many diverse forces fighting against the injustices and outrages of this system'.[117]

Once again, however, these changes were subject to the shifting context which they inhabited, and African Americans had their own complicated relationship with anti-imperialism, anti-capitalism, and communism. African Americans had been courted by the world's leading communists such as Fidel Castro and Mao. In 1963, for example, Mao issued a speech on behalf of the Chinese people claiming that they gave their 'resolute support for the American Negroes in their struggle against racial discrimination and for freedom and equal rights'.[118] Tying this into communist thought, he declared that '[i]n the final analysis, national struggle is a matter of class struggle' and that '[t]he evil system of colonialism and imperialism arose and throve with the enslavement of Negroes and the trade in Negroes, and it will surely come to its end with the complete emancipation of the black people'.[119] Support for African Americans and their revolutionary potential had therefore been highlighted by some of the world's most eminent communists long before the *Free Press* began publication.

Mao's support for Black liberation was somewhat reciprocated by revolutionary nationalist groups who became interested, if not entirely sold, on Marxism. The pre-eminent Black revolutionary group during this period, the Black Panther Party, maintained a keen yet uneven interest in the political approach. This derived from Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton's involvement in the Black nationalist organisation, the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM). RAM – based particularly on the ideas of civil rights leader and Black self-defence advocate, Robert F. Williams – introduced Seale and Newton to the notion that African Americans constituted an internal colony, their resulting anti-imperialist stance, and a particular interest in communism.[120] Bloom and Martin Jr. have, however, pointed out that this

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[117] Avakian, *From Ike to Mao and Beyond* (2005), p. 198.
[118] Mao Zedong, 'Statement Supporting the American Negroes in their Just Struggle Against Racial Discrimination by U.S. Imperialism', 8 August 1963, reprinted in *Peking Review*, Vol.9, No.33, 12 August 1966, pp. 12-13, via: Marxists Internet Archive, https://www.marxists.org/subject/china/peking-review/1966/PR1966-33h.htm [accessed: 24/03/25].
[119] Mao, 'Statement Supporting the American Negroes in their Just Struggle Against Racial Discrimination by U.S. Imperialism', 8 August 1963.
[120] Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin Jr., *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), pp. 31-32.
The Panthers' increasing emphasis on class is demonstrated by the change of their famous Ten Point Program in July 1969. In this alteration, point three was changed from '[w]e want an end to the robbery by the white man of

influence did not turn the Panthers into a Marxist organisation. They state that the 'unchanging core of the Black Panther Party's political ideology was black anti-imperialism' and that it was their conceptualisation of themselves as part of a global anti-imperialist movement which often melded with, yet never fully embraced, Marxist thought.[121] Nonetheless, it is evident that Marxism sometimes fed into the thinking of Black Power organisations and an emphasis on class became important within these groups.

By the late-"Sixties", this interest had grown more acute and African Americans participated in the growing New Communist Movement. On 2 May 1968, an organisation of Black workers at the Dodge Main plant in Michigan, named the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement, staged a wildcat strike (a strike without warning or official union permission) in an attempt to close the plant. The popularity of this action was such that a number of Revolutionary Union Movements formed at other nearby plants before consolidating into the League of Revolutionary Black Workers in June 1969. Despite the certain revolutionary inclinations of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, Elbaum has claimed that the group were not a Marxist organisation. Instead, they, much like the Panthers, mixed Marxism with Black nationalism.[122] The League itself eventually split in 1971 and some executive committee members formed the Black Workers Congress (BWC), eventually realigning and becoming an explicitly Marxist-Leninist-Maoist organisation.[123] Whilst Elbuam has doubted the efficacy of the BWC, its formation and the Black Panthers' interest in Mao demonstrate the increasing appeal of Marxism for African American revolutionaries during the 1970s. Young Black activists were increasingly pulled toward Marxism-Leninism, and by 1973 the leadership of the African Liberation Support Committee were even promoting Marxism-Leninism over revolutionary nationalism.[124] Therefore, it is important to note that the editors of the *Free Press* were not the only activists during this period who attempted to highlight the intersection of race and class, and the Black community often made these associations before the newspaper.

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our Black Community' to '[w]e want an end to the robbery by the CAPITALISTS of our Black Community'. Bloom and Martin, Jr., *Black Against Empire* (2016), p. 312.

For a history of RAM, please see Muhammed Ahmed, *We Will Return in the Whirlwind: Black Radical Organizations 1960-1975* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company, 2007). For a discussion of the importance of Robert F. Williams in linking Black nationalism to Marxism, please see: Cynthia A. Young, *Soul Power: Culture, Radicalism, and the Making of a U.S. Third World Left* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), pp. 18-53.

[121] Bloom and Martin Jr., *Black Against Empire* (2016), p. 312.

[122] Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air* (2018), pp. 80-82.

[123] Ibid., pp. 104-105.

[124] Ibid., pp. 114-115.

The Alliance's documentation of race, therefore, became more heavily fixated on class. This demonstrates a tendency within the Alliance-published *Free Press* which privileged class over other social categories such as race and gender (discussed later in this chapter). In January 1973, the paper took an economic approach to answering the rhetorical question: does racial discrimination exist?[125] Evidently the paper felt it necessary to prove that the landmark legislation of the mid-1960s, such as the Civil and Voting Rights Acts, had not ended racism. To do so, the *Free Press* employed statistics from the Bureau of Labor and official Army publications, such as *Army Times*. They pointed out that African Americans were relegated to the lowest paid jobs, they made up a disproportionate number of unemployed people in the US, and they were deliberately exploited by large supermarkets. Linking racial issues to their criticisms of the AVF, the paper argued that this poverty forced African Americans into the military where they made up a disproportionate amount of stockade inmates and had a higher chance of receiving dishonourable discharges than White GIs.[126] The *Free Press*, therefore, focused specifically on the economic issues faced by Black Americans, emphasising their predominant position as working-class. Just '18% of Black men are employed in professional, managerial, technical, clerical, and sales jobs', the paper claimed in January 1973. They also stated that in 1970, Black people made up 15% of all federal employees yet only held 3% of the 'higher-grade jobs'.[127] No longer was the issue that African Americans were segregated, nor that they had their voting rights restricted in the South, now the issue was that systemic racism relegated Black Americans to the working-class and the worst jobs.

This viewpoint encouraged anti-war GIs of the *Free Press* to focus on the intersectionality of Black workers. In November 1972, for example, the newspaper reported on the Black Workers Freedom Convention, held in Cincinnati, Ohio, in September of that year. It celebrated the event for giving a voice to 'Black, Brown and Asian workers and organizations who are struggling against the racist oppression of Third World people on the job and in the community'. Acknowledging the connection between race and class, the paper elaborated that 'Black workers in particular face a two-fold struggle. As Third World people they are confronted by racism on the job and in the community. As workers they have to deal with the

[125] "Does it Exist? Racial Discrimination", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.1, January 1973, p. 5.
[126] Ibid., p. 5.
[127] Ibid., p. 5.

same sellout unions and profit-hungry super-rich businessmen who want to work all workers for as little pay and benefits as possible.'[128]

In February 1973 the Alliance explained to their readers how issues of racism and capitalism were linked:

> [i]n the military as well as throughout U.S. society, racism is used by the rich people and their military brass puppets to divide poor and working people. This is done because the Rockefellers, Duponts etc. do not want their victims to unite and upset their boat (billions of dollars of profit a year.) Their main weapon to divide us is to fool poor whites into thinking that they are better than poor people of color. This is done by giving whites a little more crumbs from the tables of the rich. This in turn causes poor people of color to hate whites. While all this is happening the Rockefellers etc. are up above enjoying the conflict among us and they're glad we won't get together and make changes that will upset their privileged positions. […] Racism must be dealt with.[129]

Interestingly, what the paper did not say here, but implied, was that '[r]acism must be dealt with' not for the sole purpose of ending racial oppression, but because it was being used as a tool to inhibit racial solidarity among workers. In this case, therefore, the creation of a united workers' movement, and eventually a revolution, were the main reasons for opposing racism.

The *Free Press* responded to this growing interest in Marxism within the Black community, rather than stimulating it themselves. The importance of Marxist politics to the activism of non-Whites, not just African Americans, during this period was emphasised by the presence of several NCM organisations at the Black Workers Freedom Convention. Indeed, the attendance of the Revolutionary Union, the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization (previously the Young Lords Party), I Wor Kuen (an Asian American Marxist-Leninist organisation), and the Black Workers Congress represent the important place that revolutionary Marxist politics had for a range of different racial groups during the early 1970s.[130] The interest in Marxism and Maoism among the GI Movement and specific racial groups should therefore be seen as running parallel to each other, and the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* demonstrates the attempts of radical GIs to include these parallel trajectories into a unified and coherent revolutionary movement.

[128] "Third World Struggles: Workers Organize", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, p. 7.
[129] "Racism in the Army", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.3, Midmonth February 1973, p. 3.
[130] "Third World Struggles: Workers Organize", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, p. 7.

African Americans were not the only group who fit within the GI Alliance's developing radical framework. As discussed, Mexican Americans, or Chicanos, were also included in the *Free Press*' conception of "Third World" Americans and were thus targeted as part of the paper's attempts to reach out to the broader working-class.[131] Whilst the *Free Press*' coverage of the UFW strikes had largely not emphasised the racial or class aspects of the farmworkers, when the Union returned to the picket lines in April 1972, the GI Alliance placed these issues at the forefront of their coverage.[132] In doing so, the *Free Press* connected the lettuce boycott to their broader coverage of labour struggles, emphasising that whilst the oppression of Mexican Americans was felt most acutely, it was not dissimilar to that of working-class people in general. In November 1973, for example, the paper referred to the continuing UFW strike as 'one of the most important battles of the working class at this time'.[133] In this sense, in later editions of the newspaper, Mexican Americans were especially celebrated because they were deemed to be a working-class group. In order to build a working-class movement, therefore, the paper encouraged solidarity between GIs, non-White Americans, and the White working-class. 'Latinos and GIs', the paper argued, 'should support workers in their struggles, for most of our fathers, mothers, and relatives are workers themselves.'[134]

Attempts to link the plight of Mexican Americans to the wider working-class were especially prevalent in the paper's coverage of the strikes against the Farah Company, the largest manufacturer of male trousers in the US.[135] In May 1972, 3,000 workers of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union went on strike in nine Farah factories in Texas and New Mexico. The strike was called to protest workers being prevented from being able to unionise, their low pay, and the unfair employment practices of Farah.[136] The *Free Press*' coverage of the strikes was another of their most sustained campaigns for issues not explicitly related to the military and, as with their support for the UFW, the paper's editors led pickets against local stores which

[131] The use of the term Chicano in the newspaper emphasises the growing radicalness of the *Free Press*. This was a term largely not used in the paper's discussion of the UFW as it was one which the farmworkers rejected. The UFW and its leader Cesar Chavez did not consider their work to be solely composed of Mexican Americans and instead viewed the UFW as a multi-racial organisation designed to achieve better working conditions for farmworkers. As a result, their strikes were considered to be labour rather than racial struggles. Chavez therefore did not 'locate the union within the framework of a Chicano nationalist ideology'. The *Free Press*' use of the term therefore demonstrates their attempts to ally with particularly the Chicano Movement, as a radical, revolutionary nationalist movement. Carlos Muñoz, Jr., *Youth, Identity, Power: The Chicano Movement,* 2nd edn. (London: Verso, 2007), p. 17.
[132] "Govt. Scabs on Workers", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.2, September 1972, p. 6.
[133] "GIA Supports the Farmworkers", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.11, November 1973, p. 7.
[134] "La Prensa Libre: Workers Strike Farah Co.", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.6, July 1972, p. 7.
[135] Ibid., p. 7.
[136] "Strike Strengthens: Farah Unfair", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, Midmonth January 1973, p. 4.

stocked Farah clothing, disrupting their business.[137] These strikes are one of the most obvious examples of GIA-RU collaboration and the Union was one of the groups most actively involved in the strikes against the Farah Company, even more so than the official union, setting up Farah Strike Support committees in many cities.[138] For example, one of the few times that the Union was actively mentioned in the *Free Press* is in relation to the Tacoma Strike Support Committee which organised pickets against Farah.[139]

These strikes were the perfect opportunity for the paper to encourage allyship among different oppressed groups, unifying them through the commonality of class. The paper pointed out that 95% of the strikers were Chicanos and 85% were female.[140] Therefore, two of the oppressed groups which the GI Alliance sought to support and champion, Chicanos and women (discussed later), were highly visible in the Farah strikes. Succinctly tying their wishes for cross-racial and cross-gender collaboration together, the *Free Press* stated that the Farah strikers were realising that 'in unity there is strength and that working people really have the power to organise and have set an example to La Raza [the people (in Spanish)], to all Third World people and to all working people, especially working women, to organize and struggle.'[141]

The *Free Press* made a conscious effort to include Chicanos and other Spanish speakers in the newspaper by titling, and sometimes even writing, their pieces in Spanish.[142] Evidently, the

[137] For articles which discuss the protests against the Farah Company, please see: "La Prensa Libre: Workers Strike Farah Co.", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.6, July 1972, p. 7; "Farah Workers – "We're Going to Win!", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, p. 5; "Support Farah Strikers", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.7, December 1972, p. 8; "Support the Farah Strike", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.1, January 1973, p. 1; "Strike Strengthens: Farah Unfair", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, Midmonth January 1973, p. 4; "Cease Fire", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, February 1973, p. 6; "Viva La Huelga: Victory to the Strike!", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, February 1973, p. 7; "GIs and Workers United with Farah Strike", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.7, May 1973, p. 3; "Farmworkers Fight", *LMFP* Vol.6, No.9, August 1973, p. 4; "Interview: Viva La Huelga", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.10, October 1973, p. 1 and 4; "El 16 De Septiembre: "Tenemos Que Sostener La Lucha", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.10, October 1973, p. 5; "Don't Buy Farah Pants", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.11, November 1973, p. 7; "Don't Buy Farah Pants!", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.12, December 1973, p. 6; and "Tacoma Strike Support", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.12, December 1973, p. 6.
[138] Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air* (2018), p. 101.
[139] "Strike Support", *LMFP,* Vol.6, No.9, August 1973, p. 4.
[140] "GIs and Workers Unite with Farah Strike", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.7, May 1973, p. 3.
[141] "Support Farah Strikers", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.7, December 1972, p. 8.
[142] For other articles in the *Free Press*/*GI Voice* which include Spanish, either in their titles or contents, please see: "La Prensa Libre", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.5, May 1972, p. 8; "¿Por Que Una Seccion En Espanol [sic]", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.5, May 1972, p. 8; "Corrido De La Guerra", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.3, Midmonth February 1973, p. 3; "Dia De Gracias", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.6, Midmonth November 1972, p. 3; "Noticias Del Barrio", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.5, November 1972, p. 5; "El Cinco De Mayo", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.7, May 1973, p. 4; "February 2 Genaro Vasquez Rojas Vive", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.7, May 1973, p. 5; "Viva Puerto Rico Libre", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.7, May 1973, p. 5; "Viva Puerto Rico Libre: Part II", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.9, August 1973, p. 5; "Viva La Huelga Victory to the Strike", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, February 1973, p. 7; "La Placa and the Army", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, February

Alliance included Spanish-speaking GIs who, in turn, urged the inclusion of issues relevant to the GIs of Latin descent on Lewis and McChord. In an article written in both English and Spanish, authored by a Latin GI, the newspaper explained '¿Por Que Una Seccion En Espanol', or 'Why a Spanish Section?' Expanding, the GI explained that it was necessary for the paper to 'provide a voice for Latin GI's [sic]' as a way for these servicemen 'to get together and share opinions; since we share a common language, culture and history'. Once again emphasising a broader viewpoint, they claimed that it was important for these GIs to 'organize and unite not only with other Latins but with all GI's [sic] whom are interested in organizing against the brass and the way they treat us; whether we are black, white or brown.'[143] This was a tactic also employed in the newspapers of the Revolutionary Union which utilised Spanish sections to reach out to the Spanish-speaking populations of California.[144]

Oropeza has pointed out that despite the creation of several Chicano Marxist groups in the early 1970s, the Chicano Movement did not wholesale join the new Marxist milieu. She argues that the Movement remained 'predominantly a cultural-nationalist movement' and that many Chicanos displayed a wariness that White Marxists placed precedence on their own ideas, rather than furthering the goals of Chicanos as a racial group.[145] This worry was not entirely without evidence. As demonstrated, for all the support lent to the UFW and Farah strikes, as well as their commentary on the problems of the Chicano and Black communities within the US, the GI Alliance placed great emphasis on the class of these groups. Whilst they certainly supported these groups, the GIA had a tendency to emphasise the working-class aspect of racial minorities and, in doing so, somewhat subordinated particular racial demands to their anti-capitalist/Marxist framework. Still, the *Free Press* was not simply a group of White GIs imposing this view on the non-Whites on base and around the country. The GI Alliance included both Black and Chicano GIs and, as evidenced by the paper, these groups were involved when discussing non-Whites. Dave Henry commented that Black and Latino GIs, who were the main two minority groups on base, "were quicker to come into motion around things because of the […] oppression they had experienced".[146] Therefore, it was not only

1973, p. 7; and "El 16 De Septembre: Tenemos Que Sostener La Lucha", *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.10, October 1973, p. 5.
[143] "¿Por Que Una Seccion En Espanol [sic]", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.5, May 1972, p. 8.
[144] 'America's Maoists' (1972), p. 22.
[145] Oropeza, *¡Raza Sí! ¡Guerra No!* (2005), p. 97.
[146] Interview of Dave Henry, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 9 October 2022.

White GIs who expounded the need for a united workers' movement which cut across race lines; Black and Latino servicepeople did too.

Figure 22: "Support Farah Workers",
***Lewis-McChord Free Press*, Vol.6, No.4, March 1973, p. 5.**

The precedence which economics and class began to take in the *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, and the consequent transmutation of the paper from being an anti-war to an anti-imperialist and leftist publication is perhaps best demonstrated by its documentation of the signing of the Paris Peace Accords, demarcating the end of the Vietnam War for Americans, in January 1973. In its February edition, whilst the front page of the paper featured a poem celebrating the end of the war and a photograph of protesters urging the signing of the peace treaty, substantial coverage of the end of the war was relegated to page six of the paper.[147] So distanced had the publication become from its original messaging, the poem did not celebrate the close of the conflict as the end to danger for American GIs, nor even for the Vietnamese. Instead, it celebrated the Democratic Republic of Vietnam's victory as a 'turning point' in which 'children of the earth inspired today by Vietnam can see the rising sun of revolution'.[148] Evidently, the withdrawal of the US from Vietnam by this point had become more important to radical GIs as a victory for anti-imperialism and revolution globally, rather than the conclusion of what was generally perceived as an unjust war. Similarly, the poem shared the front page with a more detailed article on International Women's Day celebrations, especially emphasising the celebration of working women and men.[149] This aptly demonstrates the

[147] "Cease Fire", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, February 1973, p. 6.
[148] "Vietnam: Turning Point", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, February 1973, p. 1.
[149] "The Lost Holiday", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, February 1973, p. 1.

changing conceptualisation and ideology of those who published the paper over the course of three years and how, by 1973, the paper no longer viewed the war as their foremost issue, replacing it with a critique of imperialism and an emphasis on the working-class. This dedication to a broader array of issues other than opposing the Vietnam War is reflected in Figure 23.

Figure 23: Cartoon, *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, Vol.6, No.7, May 1973, p. 8.

The broadening of focus from the narrow issue of the war and an attention to broader domestic issues led to young anti-war GIs not only discussing the issues of minorities within the US, but the oppression of women too. This occurred not only within the GIA, but, as Richard Moser has pointed out, within the broader GI Movement which engaged with the women's movement, leading to servicemen even questioning their 'macho pretensions'. Once again, therefore, the GIA were broadly representative of the GI Movement's progressive

position towards women, although Moser makes an effort to point out that servicemen could not be classed as feminists.[150]

Stereotypically, men of the "Sixties" are not associated with progressive support for female causes and are viewed as oppressors of women, rather than their allies. Indeed, despite their campaigns for progressive, left-wing politics during this period, even the New Left and the civil rights movement were noted for their sexism and male chauvinism. As Kwame Ture, then Stokley Carmichael, once claimed, "the only position for women in SNCC [Student Nonviolence Coordinating Committee] is prone".[151] However, this was not the case with the publishers of the *Free Press* who discussed women's issues, opposed sexism and misogyny, and urged fellow GIs to celebrate women. This is perhaps more surprising given that the paper was published in the male-dominated sphere of the military, in which hyper-masculinity was prized, and which often involved the subordination of women. Indeed, when it was published, men and women were still forbidden from serving together, hence the existence of the Women's Army Corps (WAC) and Women's Air Force (WAF). Therefore, the *Free Press*' progressive stance on women's liberation and equality, and their opposition to chauvinism and sexism, inverted not only typical expectations of males during the "Sixties", but particularly those of members of the military. Given their attempts to broaden the contents of the *Free Press* in areas such as class and race on the grounds of oppression, it is not a surprise to learn that this vocal support for women's rights occurred under the auspices of the GI Alliance.

Although the arrival of the GIA may have been the catalyst for the paper's focus on women's issues, it certainly was not the sole cause. Although early US feminists and female rights campaigners had achieved the right to vote for women in 1920, by the "Sixties" there was a resurgence in feminist activism. This movement, termed second-wave feminism or women's liberation, was delineated – much like the anti-war movement – into a liberal and a radical wing, and eschewed traditional conceptions of women as mothers and housekeepers and sought to liberate them from their traditional, oppressed positions and ensure their equality with men.[152]

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[150] Moser, *The New Winter Soldiers* (1996), pp. 92-96 and 151. Quotation from p. 151.
[151] Van Gosse, *Rethinking the New Left: An Interpretive History* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), pp. 158-159. Quotation from p. 158.
[152] Women in the US were enfranchised by the 19th Amendment to the Constitution. Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution: Women's Right to Vote (1920), via: National Archives, https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/19th-amendment [accessed: 16/04/25]. For a broad overview of second-wave feminism and women's liberation, as well as the historiography surrounding the women' movement during this period, please

Randy Rowland commented that for GIs and other "Sixties" activists, interest in the "woman question", as they referred to it, was because of the example of the civil rights movement. He claimed: "if black people should be equal and have every opportunity and not get put down or insulted or mistreated […], then it made perfect sense to me that women should have those same kind of rights […]. I mean it wasn't much of a leap."[153] For progressive GIs, therefore, they were aware of the changing political and social landscape of the 1960s and were drawing their own conclusions about what was right and wrong outside of their immediate circumstances. Rowland elaborated: "it's also sort of a natural process where once a movement is going along […], you naturally want to see what the other people's issues are and find sympathy with their issues. You know, whether it's racism, or sexism, or the treatment of immigrants".[154] Participation in one progressive movement, in their case the GI Movement, stimulated young men and they also actively sought to understand not only the issues that affected their lives, but also the lives of women and non-Whites. Terry Irvin highlighted how engagement with the GIA broadened the horizons of those involved. He reflected, "I'm a kid from normal Illinois, okay? And I'm hanging out with Black Panthers and Women's Liberation [activists] and gay activists!"[155] Thus, Irvin acknowledged that it was perhaps unusual for "a kid from normal Illinois", especially a male in the Army, to be associating with Women's Liberation activists. However, the broad context of what is referred to as "the Movement", all of the progressive, left-wing forces of this era, ensured that the servicepeople of the GI Movement became interested in a multitude of other issues.

Whilst the context of the time is important, and GIs intermingled with second-wave feminists, there were more prescient reasons for their coverage of women's issues. Airman Dave Henry agreed that women outside of the military were important in making the editors of the paper realise the significance of issues outside of their immediate purview, and he also highlighted

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see: Gosse, *Rethinking the New Left* (2005), pp. 153-170 and Beth Bailey, 'The Women's Movement: Liberation for Whom?', in *The Columbia Guide to America in the 1960s*, ed. by David Farber and Beth Bailey (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), pp. 125-133. For other books concerning these movements, please see: Kathleen C. Berkeley, *The Women's Liberation Movement in America* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999); Flora Davis, *Moving the Mountain: The Women's Movement in American since 1960* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991); and Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

[153] Interview with Randy Rowland, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 10 October 2022.

[154] Ibid.

[155] Interview of Terry Irvin, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 5 October 2022.

the value of the fact that the Alliance contained female members.[156] The Alliance was a multi-gender organisation and the *Free Press* was consequently geared not only towards GIs but also women who were related to the military. Henry went on to claim that due to the presence of females in the GIA, "women's issues were easy to confront". However, he also acknowledged that they were "not so easy to resolve", perhaps implying the difficulty which the GIA had in drumming up support for these issues among the bases' populations.[157]

Due to their involvement in the Alliance, the *Free Press* dedicated many column inches to discussion of the issues which affected GI wives.[158] In the first edition of the paper published by the Alliance, a dependent lambasted the inadequate childcare facilities of the military. In August 1971, the *Free Press* announced that a 'group of military wives and some sympathetic civilian women' were petitioning the military for a free childcare centre for lower-ranking GIs.[159] The issues of women who were indirectly related to the military via their husbands were thus targeted and discussed by the paper. In April 1971, the *Free Press* published an article authored by another GI wife, in which they detailed the issues which women who were related to the military faced. She complained of the isolation which GI wives experienced, their lack of healthcare, and loneliness caused by separation from their loved ones, all of which were compounded by their inability to pay for a babysitter due to the low wages of their husbands and thus have any recreational time to themselves.[160] The military did not simply inconvenience the men who travelled on to Lewis and McChord, it also negatively impacted the lives of women who were reliant on the military for income. Emphasising this link, the

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[156] Interview of Dave Henry, interviewed by Joseph Rix, Seattle, 9 October 2022.
[157] Ibid.
[158] For articles which discuss the issues faced by GI wives and other military dependents and their involvement in activism, please see: "Farmworkers Banned from Post", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.2, February 1971, p. 1 and 3; "GI Wives Unite!", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.4, April 1971, p. 4; "Lifer Wifer", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.6, June 1971, p. 3; "Strength in Unity", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.2, August 1971, p. 2; "Child Care for Dependents", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.2, August 1971, p. 3; "Tenants Win Improvements", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.1, January 1972, p. 3 and 8; "Medical Runaround", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.1, August 1972, p. 2; "Women in China", *LMFP*,Vol.5, No.1, Midmonth August 1972, p. 4; "GI Dependents", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.6, Midmonth November 1972, p. 4; "Dependents! You're in the Army Now!", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.7, May 1973, pp. 6-7; "Madigan General Hospital", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, February 1973, pp. 4-5; "Records Dept.", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, February 1973, p. 4; "OB-GYN", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, February 1973, p. 4; "Personal Encounters with Madigan", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, February 1973, p. 5; Letter, *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, Midmonth February 1973, p. 2; "Finance: The Time of Your Life", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.3, Midmonth February 1973, p. 1; "Madigan Hospital: Child Care Now!!", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.6, April 1973, p. 6; "GIs and Workers Unite with Farah Strike", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.7, May 1973, p. 3; Letter, *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.8, June 1973, p. 2; "At Madigan Gate: Criminal Activity", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.8, June 1973, p. 3; and Letter, *GI Voice*, Vol.6, No.11, November 1973, p. 2.
For an example of a dependent criticising the *Free Press*, please see: Letter, *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.9, August 1973, p. 2.
[159] "Child Care for Dependents", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.2, August 1971, p. 3.
[160] "GI Wives Unite!", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.4, April 1971, p. 4.

women of the Alliance argued that dependents were not only related to the military but were a part of the military itself. 'Military wives are very definitely in the military', the paper claimed, 'and need to voice their opinions.'[161] The *Free Press* was a way for GI wives to be able to do just that. The introduction of gender issues to the newspaper, therefore, was through a reasoning that dependents were part of the military and thus deserved a voice in the *Free Press*.

As members of the military, GI wives were a group which the Alliance wanted to support. This dedication was placed front and centre at the Alliance's co-organised (along with the Coalition) 1971 rally at Fort Steilacoom Park for 'Armed Farces Day' by the prominent slot given to Joy Bourne, the wife of an active-duty soldier at Fort Lewis. Bourne, guitar in hand, performed a series of songs dedicated to a figurative spouse of an Army officer, 'the Lifer Wifer'. Her speech, which preceded these songs, detailed the issues facing women married to men who were heavily invested in the military in explicitly gendered terms. Bourne created a portrait of the 'Lifer Wifer', somebody who lacked agency, who sat by and watched 'numbly and dumbly' as her husband and sons marched off to war. 'Lifer Wifers' had to endure the intense masculinity of their husbands who 'play[ed] with their toys of destruction, their phallic symbols' and yet their partners received little in return. Instead of returning home to a satisfying and rampant sex life, Bourne claimed that she returned only to the 'starched genitals' of the lifer.[162] In this sense, the military received the best of her husband. The lifer wasted his masculinity, his commitment, and his sexual virility on the Army, giving the 'Lifer Wifer' nothing in return and destroying her independence in the meantime. In a particularly flagrant passage Bourne referred to the lifer as a 'metaphorical fag', implying that he was in love with the military (personified as a man) rather than the woman who waited for him at home. Bourne herself was a victim of this unhappy situation, stating: 'I too have broken my wings beating against starch'.[163]

Not only was her prelude (the song itself was not published in the *Free Press*) about femininity and masculinity but also about sexual liberation and 'virility of men and women, not virility become suppression, but virility become liberation'.[164] In this way, chauvinism and sexual conservativeness were tied to the outdated and traditional positions of the pro-war lifer, linking

[161] "GI Dependents", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.6, Midmonth November 1972, p. 4.
[162] "Lifer Wifer", *LMFP,* Vol.2, No.6, June 1971, p. 3.
[163] Ibid., p. 3.
[164] Ibid., p. 3.

these issues to not only the military, but also one's position on the war. In her view, if a man was pro-war, he was also likely to be sexually conservative and misogynistic. Bourne's prelude demonstrates the increasing awareness among GIs of the GI Movement about the problems faced by women in the "Sixties" (particularly those related to the military). Simply by giving Bourne a platform and publishing her words, the editors of the *Free Press* communicated their willingness to confront women's issues during this period, and the content of her speech emphasises their readiness to discuss ideas concerning femininity and sexual liberation which were popular during this period.

In accordance with their discussion of women's issues when they related to the military, the *Free Press* documented the struggles of not only male GIs, but also female ones.[165] Whilst females were exempt from the claws of Selective Service, and the number of men in the Army far outweighed that of women, there was a recruitment drive during the Vietnam War to get more young women to join the service. This was somewhat successful and by 30 June 1971, the WAC was just shy of 13,000 members.[166] This influx of female soldiers during the Vietnam era and the specific issues they faced were made relevant for GIs on Fort Lewis due to the maintenance of a WAC detachment on base.[167] This ensured that not only were WACs relevant to the *Free Press* but also that the Alliance was accessible for women who began to oppose the war and the military when serving. Whilst the third point of the GIA's manifesto claimed that 'we oppose all sexual discrimination', as the *Free Press* was a military-oriented publication, this related specifically to women of the military.[168] In full, this point read:

> [t]he GI Alliance does not accept the lies the military pushes through Jodies [songs sung whilst marching about a character named Jody, who steals soldiers' girlfriends while they are away] and WAC and WAF [members of the Women's Air Force] jokes about the inferiority of women. We are for full equality and respect for <u>all</u>

[165] For articles which discuss and support WACs and WAFs, please see: "WACs Fight Racist Brass", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.3, March 1971, p. 1 and 7; "WAC Rap: I've Been Duped!", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.6, December 1971, p. 7; "GI Alliance: What We Want", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.2, February 1972, p. 2; "Time is Now .. WACs Unite", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.3, March 1972, p. 4; "WAF Files CO as Brass Freaks Out", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.4, March [April] 1972, p. 6; "Womens Day", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.4, March [April] 1972, p. 6; "Attn. WACs:", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.4, March [April] 1972, p. 7; "FREEP Two Timing", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.1, Midmonth August 1972, p. 1; "More WACs in MVA", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.1, Midmonth August 1972, p. 3; Letter, *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.5, May 1971, p. 2, Letter, *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.6, June 1971, p. 2; "SUU Uprising, Travis Trashed", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.6, June 1971, p. 1 and 8; Letter, *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.2, September 1972, p. 2; "Double Standard", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.7, December 1972, p. 3; "The Lost Holiday", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, February 1973, p. 1; and "Air Force Drugs WAF", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, February 1973, p. 3.

[166] Bettie J. Morden, *The Women's Army Corps, 1945-1978* (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, 1990), p. 228. For a discussion of the role of the WAC in the Vietnam era, including the creation of a WAC detachment in South Vietnam (not for the purposes of combat), please see: Ibid., pp. 217-256.

[167] "GI Alliance", *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin*, Issue 12, April-June 1972, pp. 9-10.

[168] "GI Alliance: What We Want", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.2, February 1972, p. 2.

> women. Most women join the military, like men, for training; they should get it instead of being used as office trimming for the Brass, or being placed in dull, meaningless jobs.

Such comments about the mundanity of female life in the military mirrored the paper's criticisms about similar issues for men. In a December 1971 article, a WAC complained about having been misled into joining the Army and 'sit[ting] behind a typewriter almost eight hours a day getting completely bogged down in something you don't even believe in'.[169] Similarly, in March 1972, a WAC in the Alliance commented on the annoying hassles faced by women in the military. The author complained of the work, 'senseless inspections', doing KP (Kitchen Patrol), 'and [the Brass] just getting down on you for whatever they can'. In familiarly impassioned rhetoric, she concluded: '[t]he time is now, we've put up with it long enough. React to what hassles you.'[170] The GIA even tried to stimulate such reaction. Alliance WACs urged the *Free Press*' readership that it was important that women on Fort Lewis had a newsletter to properly discuss their issues. In March 1972, they claimed that a few WACs had begun working on such a publication and that the Alliance would be the conduit for this.[171] However, this women's pamphlet did not materialise on base. Nonetheless, the GI Alliance actively encouraged the membership and participation of military women in their publication. To them, any members of the Armed Forces who were oppositional to the war, the military, or even the status quo could be counted as allies of the GI Movement.

The difficulties faced by women in the military (both dependents and WACs and WAFs) were tangible problems occurring in GIs' lives, either at home or on base. It is no surprise, therefore, that the *Free Press* sought to discuss such problems. This does not mean, however, that that Alliance retained a commitment to women only when they were in the military. As demonstrated, the GIA focused particularly on the female aspect of the protests against the Farah Company; opposed the sale of pulp magazines at the Post Exchange for 'continually degrad[ing] our sisters and exploit[ing] sex'; criticised the Fort Lewis Commander General, General Bolling, for not knowing enough about Women's Liberation; showed San Francisco Newsreel's film *The Woman's Film* (1971) at their "shack" which documented the struggles of a wide array of American women in the early 1970s; and celebrated the more equitable role

[169] "WAC Rap: I've Been Duped!", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.6, December 1971, p. 7.
[170] "Time is Now .. WACs Unite", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.3, March 1972, p. 4.
[171] "Attn WACs:", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.4, March [April] 1972, p. 7.

that women played in the People's Republic of China compared to in the US.[172] In this regard, the *Free Press* encouraged solidarity with women and sought to educate GIs on the necessity of opposing sexism not only in the military but in society more broadly.

By far the largest endeavour orientated at celebrating women was the *Free Press*' observation of, and education on, International Women's Day (IWD). The paper dubbed this celebration, on the 8 March each year, 'the unknown holiday' because of its erasure from the US public consciousness.[173] The paper's first mention of IWD was in 1972 to advertise a GIA-planned party celebrating the holiday on 10 March.[174] Once again publicising the active role of women in their organisation, the GIA claimed in the national GI publication, *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin*, that between 10-15 women participated in the planning of the event, most of whom were GI wives, with 'several Wacs [sic]' also contributing.[175] The event appears to have been a success with the *Free Press* reporting that the party included skits on being a military wife, discussions of the role of women in the military, and conversations between women about their issues and potential solutions.[176] In testament to their continued support for women, the action was replicated the following year.

As with the Alliance's discussion of race, support for civilian women was somewhat predicated on their class. Whilst the paper did encourage gender equality and solidarity with women during International Women's Day, the holiday also played into their broader Leftward bent. Whilst IWD was a holiday to celebrate women, it was also an undoubtedly left-wing one too. The celebration has somewhat mysterious origins, but it was nonetheless born out of the international socialist movement.[177] Indeed, commemorating a march from the factories and breadlines of the ailing St. Petersburg by Russian women on 8 March 1917 (23 February in the Gregorian calendar), Vladimir Lenin, at the urging of German communist, Clara Zetkin,

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[172] "GI Meetings Freak Brass", *LMFP*, Vol.2, No.4, April 1971, p. 1 and 4; "GIA Deals With Bolling", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.4, March [April] 1972, p. 3; "GI Alliance", *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin*, Issue 12, April-June 1972, pp. 9-10; and "Women in China", *LMFP*, Vol.5, No.1, Midmonth August 1972, p. 4. To view *The Woman's Film*, please see: *The Woman's Film* (San Francisco Newsreel, 1971), via: Internet Archive, https://archive.org/details/cbpf_000129 [accessed: 26/02/25]. For a greater discussion of the role of Newsreel in the "Sixties", please see: Young, *Soul Power* (2006), pp. 100-183.
[173] "Womens Day this Month: The Unknown Holiday", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.3, March 1972, p. 5.
[174] Advertisement, "International Women's Day Celebration", *LMFP*, Vol.3, No.3, March 1972, p. 5.
[175] "GI Alliance", *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin*, Issue 12, April-June 1972, pp. 9-10.
[176] "Womens Day", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.4, March [April] 1972, p. 6.
[177] For a history of International Women's Day, please see: Temma Kaplan, 'On the Socialist Origins of International Women's Day', *Feminist Studies* [*FS*]*,* 11.1 (Spring 1985), pp. 163-171.

established IWD as an official communist holiday in 1922.[178] The Alliance endorsed the holiday as a left-wing celebration and encouraged cross-gender support for the holiday. 'It's important for men to understand that such an event stems from struggles lead [sic] by women for the improvement of all people's living conditions', the paper stated, before adding, '[i]n this sense International Women's Day should be supported by men as their holiday too'.[179] Likewise, the RU were heavily involved in the holiday as a communist celebration, organising in 1970 what Bob Avakian referred to as 'the first International Women's Day rally in San Francisco in many years.'[180] The fact that the Alliance's interest in IWD was derived from their involvement in communist organisations is most clearly evidenced by their promotion of a 1973 IWD event in Seattle which was sponsored by the Union.[181]

Thus, in this sense, women were most important to the messaging of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* when they accorded with the paper's activism. Just as women were supported because of their role in the military, they were also celebrated when conceptualised as part of the proletariat. One GI wife recalled that she did not believe herself to be a feminist during her tenure in the Alliance. Relating this to the influence of the RU (of which she was a member), she claimed that "I think that there was this […] drumbeat in the Revolutionary Union, which was wrong [in] retrospect, that the class war was the dominant fight; that women's rights were important, but they weren't the dominant thing."[182] In this sense, whilst the Alliance clearly supported women and their fight for equality, class evidently took precedence over gender. Going further, the wife claimed that she, and her Alliance comrades viewed feminism as "anti-male" and thus not progressive; that is, progressive towards the revolution. In contrast, she stated that feminism was prevalent at the Fort Lewis coffeehouse, the Shelter Half, and this was one of the reasons she stopped attending the institution. When involved with the RU, therefore, GIs, their wives, and other members of the GI Alliance were seemingly opposed to what the wife referred to as "bra-burning, man-hating" feminism.[183] However, they continued to support the particular issues of working women and women in the military.

[178] Ibid., pp. 169-170.
[179] "The Lost Holiday", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, February 1973, p. 1.
[180] Avakian, *From Ike to Mao and Beyond* (2005), p. 246.
[181] "The Lost Holiday", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.2, February 1973, p. 1.
[182] Interview of Jane Cantwell, interviewed by Dr Wendy Toon, Seattle, 7 October 2022. Pseudonymised for the purposes of this thesis.
[183] Ibid.

Despite the RU's privileging of class over gender, it did not stop the *Free Press* responding to other social changes during the early 1970s, particularly, what they referred to as, the 'abortion controversy'. Explaining why this debate was relevant to GIs, the paper claimed that it was an issue 'which all men and women need to study and consider, if for no other reason than because one out of every four pregnancies end in abortion.'[184] This argument de-emphasised notions that it was a woman's right to decide what she did with her body and instead appealed to the idea that the paper's readership were likely to experience the necessity of abortions. The paper also related the issue to the high number of women at Madigan General Hospital (the hospital located on Fort Lewis) who sought abortions after failed contraceptives or unwanted pregnancies.[185] This issue, printed in January 1973, was especially relevant as the momentous *Roe v. Wade* ruling declaring that any woman in the US had the right to an abortion before the foetus became viable (i.e. could live outside of the womb) was decided on 22 January 1973.[186] Men of the *Free Press*, therefore, were evidently also responding to these conversations and the paper offers important insight into how grassroots activists partook in some of the most important conversations of the era, not simply about the Vietnam War.

Controversially placing the impetus on women, the *Free Press* recommended that they re-evaluate their contraceptive to 'save [them] from an incredible hassle some day!' More helpfully, it provided women with their options for abortions in the local area. The editors informed their readership that any women who had been a resident in Washington for more than six weeks was able to receive a legal abortion. For civilians this would cost $125, but for women related to the military this could be acquired on post for free, or off post for $25 with military insurance.[187] The Alliance's final position on abortion declared:

> [t]he GI Alliance feels that the best birth control is one which prevents pregnancy, rather than interrupts it. But until women <u>really do</u> have a choice as to how many and when their children will be born – until women are <u>safe</u> from unwanted pregnancies – we feel abortion should be freely available to women of all ages, races, and economic positions.[188]

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[184] "Abortion Controversy", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.1, January 1973, p. 2 and 7.
[185] Ibid., p. 2 and 7.
[186] *Roe v. Wade*, 410 U.S. 113 (1973), via: Justia, https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/410/113/ [accessed: 27/02/25]. For a detailed narrative of the *Roe v. Wade* case, please see: David J. Garrow, *Liberty and Sexuality: The Right to Privacy and the Making of Roe v. Wade* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1994).
[187] "Abortion Controversy", *LMFP*, Vol.6, No.1, January 1973, p. 2 and 7.
[188] Ibid., p. 2 and 7.

Nonetheless, once again, the GIA viewed this issue not only in terms of gender but also class. The paper argued that whilst rich women had access to better contraceptives and could afford abortions, legal or otherwise, poorer women 'die as a result of self-attempted abortions with coat hangers, or, at the hands of some unqualified butcher'.[189] Emphasising their dedication to supporting "Third World" constituents, the paper claimed that lack of access to safe, cheap abortions disproportionately affected poor minorities. 'Seven times as many non-white women die as a result of septic abortions as do white women', the paper informed their readership. For the *Free Press*, being poor and non-White compounded women's difficulties gaining an abortion, and the importance of the legalisation of abortion was to reduce their cost so as to make them more 'freely available'. [190]

Figure 24: Cartoon, "Well, If I Were Pregnant, I Certainly Wouldn't Have an Abortion", *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, Vol.6, No.1, January 1973, p. 2.
Source: JSTOR, 2025; available under the CC BY NC license.

The *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, whether feminist or not, was certainly a progressive organisation for this period, especially as a male-dominated, military group. It is evident that the editors of the paper engaged with the broad milieu of progressive politics during this period and their contact with Women's Liberation groups off base facilitated a transfusion of ideas for GIs. Likewise, the deliberate inclusion of military women (GI wives, WACs, and WAFs) in the Alliance consequently altered the messaging of the *Free Press* with the paper placing greater emphasis on the issues faced by women. However, as the RU became increasingly

[189] Ibid., p. 2 and 7.
[190] Ibid., p. 2 and 7.

involved in the Alliance, and the GIA consequently became more focused on Marxism, interaction with feminists seemingly gave way to an emphasis on supporting working women through their class status. Nonetheless, the newspaper was, controversially at the time, in support of the legalisation of abortion and the notion that such procedures should be available cheaply. Whilst their coverage did depend on class-based analyses, the Alliance also declared a much broader support for women, stating that they were 'for full equality and respect for all women'.[191]

Overall, the study of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* contributes much to new understandings of the GI Movement. This thesis demonstrates that GIs were not only anti-war constituents but increasingly became progressive activists, and eventually Marxists. This shift Leftwards, as well as the intersectionality of race, class, and gender in GI protest, has failed to be adequately assessed in any scholarly works of the GI Movement, and this thesis contributes much to understandings of GI anti-war activism. It suggests that the GI Movement is perhaps not best approached as an anti-war struggle, but more as a progressive, left-wing movement. Whilst it perhaps appears outlandish to claim that servicemen during the "Sixties" were propounding the merits of Marxism, the most radical GI Movement activists in newspapers across the United States increasingly pursued class-based analyses of society, criticised capitalism, and certainly indicated a growing sympathy with socialism, Marxism, and even communism (please see Figure 25).[192]

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[191] "GI Alliance: What We Want", *LMFP*, Vol.4, No.2, February 1972, p. 2. For discussion of women in the GI Movement, please see: Wendy Toon, '"There were only a few women around": Female Anti-war Activists in the GI Movement During the Early 1970s', forthcoming.

[192] For a sample of articles in *Bragg Briefs* (NC) – one of the largest and most important GI publications – which discuss communism positively or oppose capitalism, please see: "Letter From the Stockade: Bragg Briefs Replies", *Bragg Briefs* [*BB*], Vol.5, No.1, February 1972, n.p. [8]; "Unpopular War, USA", *BB*, Vol.3, No.1, April 1970, p. 7; and "An Introduction to GI's United: The Five Point Program", *BB*, Vol.3, No.1, April 1970, pp. 4-5. Likewise, in the Fort Bragg coffeehouse, Haymarket Square, books on 'Socialist thought', including books by Ho Chi Minh, Mao Zedong, and Karl Marx, were all sold. See: "Haymarket Square Bookstore", *BB*, Vol.4, No.5, June 1971, p. 2.

For similar articles in *All Hands Abandon Ship*, a large Navy newspaper published in Newport, Rhode Island, please see: Untitled, *All Hands Abandon Ship* [*AHAS*], Vol.3, No.5, October 1972, p. 3; "Master of the Seas: Why the U.S. Navy?", *AHAS*, Vol.3, No.4, September 1972, p. 5; and Letter, *AHAS*, [Vol.1] No.6, April 1971, p. 2.

For evidence of individual projects using Marxism, discussing communism and anti-capitalism, and emphasising class, please see the national GI Movement publication, the *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin*. Particularly: "A Year's Progress at Ft. Bragg", *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin*, Issue 13, January 1973, pp. 2-7; "Some Questions on the Current GI Movement", *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin*, Issue 13, January 1973, pp. 8-11; "Ord: An Analysis", *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin*, Issue 3, March 1971, pp. 27-35 (in this, one activist refers to himself as a 'revolutionary communist'); and "What is Third World Leadership?", *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin*, Issue11, March 1972, pp. 21-26.

Always broad-minded supporters of anti-racism, GIs of the *Free Press* began to increasingly support groups such as African Americans, Chicanos, women, and the working-class because of their oppression by either imperialism or capitalism, and a conception that they were all working-class groups. In this way, racial injustice, labour activism, and support for women were all highlighted as issues of oppression for the working-class and the newspaper encouraged solidarity among men and women, Whites and Blacks, and GIs and workers in order to build a united proletariat. For some members of the GI Alliance, who were involved in the RU, this was likely for the purposes of encouraging a socialist revolution. Although the idea of violent revolution is repellent to many and conformed to conservative stereotypes that anti-war activists were communists, the Alliance's involvement in such ideas broadened the scope of their activism. As a result, the *Free Press* developed from its anti-war approaches to structural anti-war arguments to structural domestic criticisms, and began to urge important social change and the improvement of many oppressed people's lives.

Figure 25: Cartoon, Untitled, *Bragg Briefs*, Vol.3, No.1 [2], April 1970, p. 5. Originally *Daily World*.

Conclusion

This thesis demonstrates the value of broadening the study of the constituents of the anti-war movement. Whilst it has mostly been the privileged White students at elite universities who have dominated the history books, there have been "neglected constituencies' in the historiography of anti-war protest and of the "Sixties". Shockingly, it has been the remonstrations of servicemen, those who were commissioned to fight the war, which have been most overlooked. This study corrects this trend through an intimate case study of one GI newspaper, the *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, and of the groups who published it, via oral testimony, in the flourishing anti-war and progressive atmosphere of the Pacific Northwest.

For men of the GI Movement, Horace's adage, '*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*', had no truth to it. They were young Americans, plucked from their civilian lives to move to military bases across the country, who underwent strict, rigorous, and gruelling military training, and who faced the possibility of fighting and dying in Vietnam. Contemporaneously, this movement of dissenting members of the military undercut arguments about supporting "the troops". After all, it was "the troops" who were gathering in clandestine groups to publish "underground" newspapers which vocalised their discontent with the war. The anti-war GI therefore undermines the notion that the US suffered from a "stab-in-the-back" in Vietnam, and that servicemen and the civilian anti-war movement were always antithetical to one another, ideas which have become popular following the conflict's conclusion.

Whilst their position as servicemen made up an important part of why criticising the war was so immediate for GIs, their critiques did not centre on the very real fact that it was they who could face death in Vietnam. Nonetheless, they developed just as thoughtful critiques as those of the student movement, but argued these from military bases across the US. Indeed, for one of the GI groups who published the *Free Press*, the GI Alliance, it was particularly important for anti-war GIs to remain distinct from the civilian anti-war movement. Whilst GI anti-war protest therefore undermines the myth that anti-war students spat at pro-war GIs, the Alliance, whilst they maintained support for the civilian anti-war movement, desired separation between themselves and their youthful peers on college campuses. After all, GIs were different to students. Instead of picking up pens and paper, they were taught how to fire M16s.

Nonetheless, GIs' criticisms remained no less valid or considered. Instead of protesting the war as simply "immoral" or "unjust", GIs argued that the Vietnam War was "immoral" and "unjust" because it was the product of US imperialism. They purported that the war opened new markets for American companies and allowed for the extraction of precious natural resources from Southeast Asia. As a result, the conflict was, in their opinion, a 'deliberate aggression and oppression' and it should be protested as such. Opposition to the war, however, transmuted into objection to the state of the US in the early 1970s, and eventually sympathy with their state-sanctioned "enemy", the North Vietnamese and the National Liberation Front. This is one of the most shocking yet significant aspects of the GI Movement. A minority of US servicepeople during the Vietnam War not only rejected the idea that it was 'sweet and proper to die for one's country', but they actively opposed the military's mission. This resulted in the contradiction that there were active-duty soldiers, sailors, and airmen who desired Vietnamese, not US, victory in Vietnam.

Beyond these important analyses, much of the GI press, and the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* specifically, offer the historian more than just a window into the anti-war critiques of servicepeople. They also provide a grassroots view of how GIs responded to the Selective Service System, not by protesting the System via draft card burnings as many civilians had done, but instead by reacting to and rebelling against their immediate situation when in the military. The GIs who published "underground" newspapers protested their inability to dissent against the war, the oppression that they faced at the hands of drill sergeants and lifers, and the inequalities of the military justice system. An accompaniment of anti-war protest, therefore, was also anti-military protest, and GIs, with little recourse, railed against their situation in their publications. In the case of the *Free Press*, and likely many other papers, GIs sought to fight back against the oppression they faced in the military, educating fellow servicemen on their rights, and publicising cases of perceived injustice to act as a watchdog of the military. It was no surprise, therefore, that anti-war protest led to anti-military sentiment and eventually the rejection of the move to an all-volunteer force.

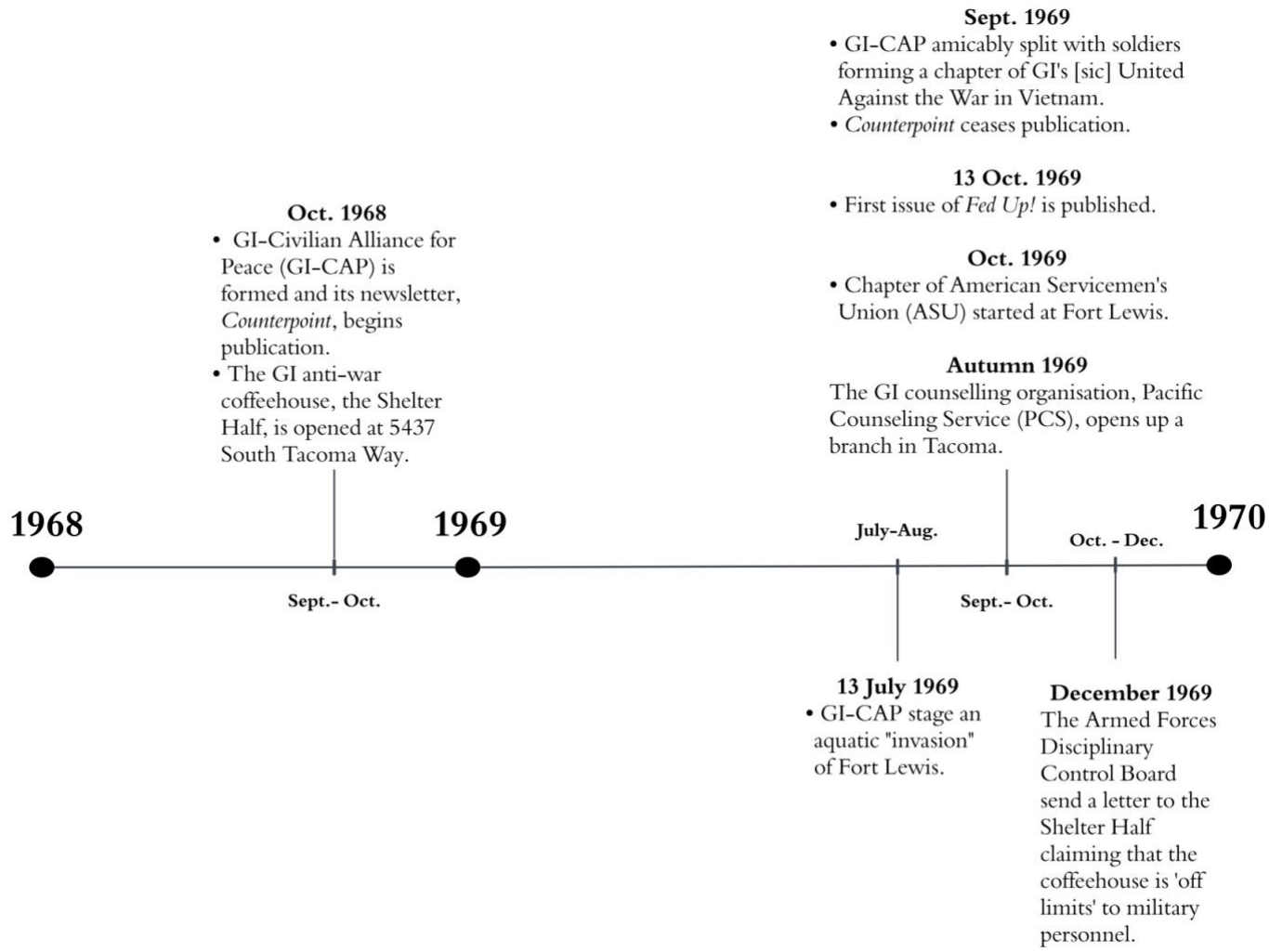
Just as this thesis offers insight into the particularities of a minority of young men's experiences in the military, it also provides much information on the context of the late-"Sixties". For as long as there had been an anti-war movement, there had also been a progressive left-wing movement (the New Left), even if the entirety of the anti-war movement had not adopted this stance. Whilst stereotypes of servicemen as conservative may obscure this, the same can be

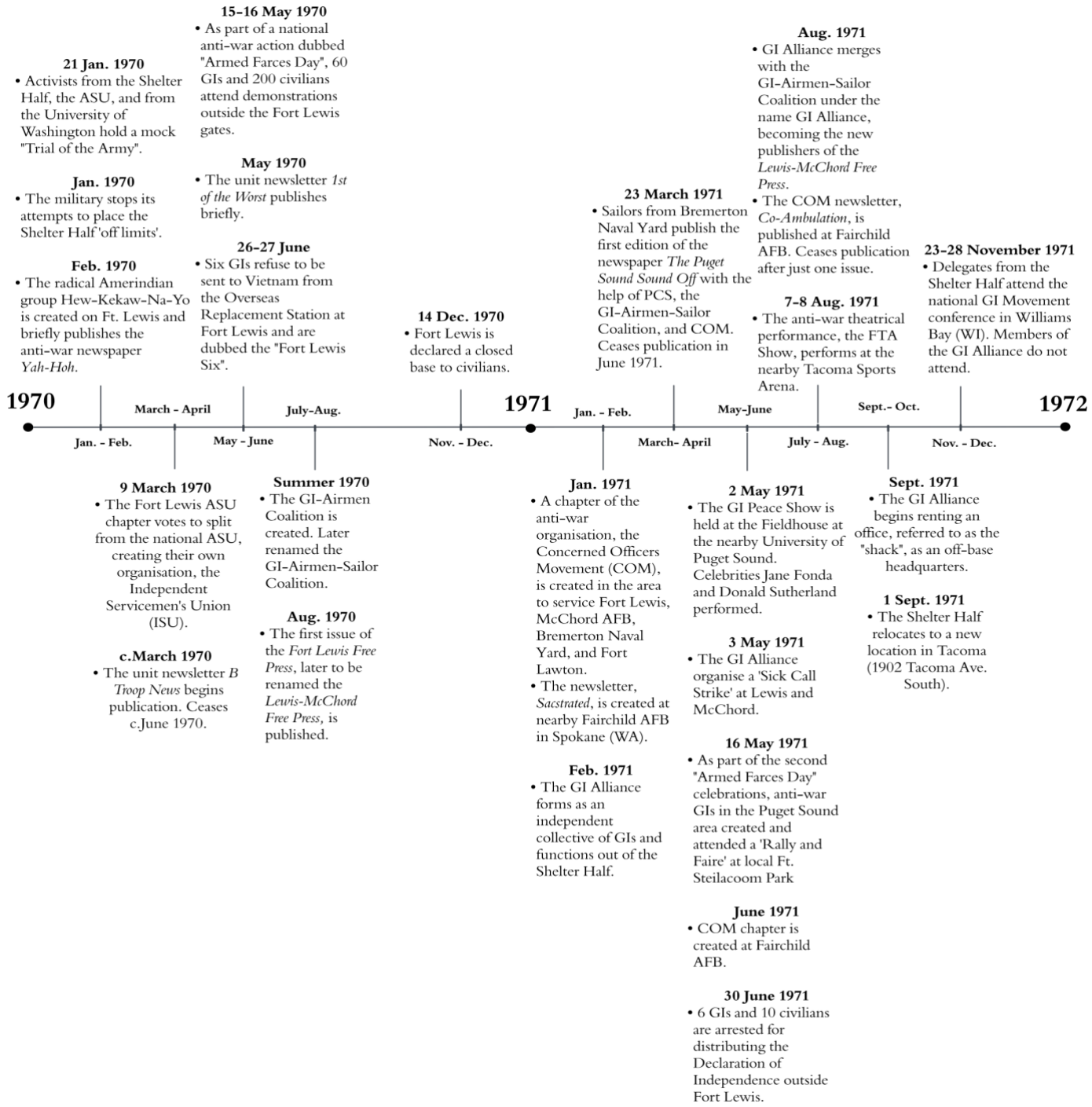
said of the GI Movement. This was not a movement which was solely concerned with opposing the war and the military, it also had a progressive, left-wing aspect to its protest. Racism against African and Mexican Americans, as well as Amerindians, sexism, and the exploitation of the working-class, all became issues which at least a major portion the GI Movement threw its support behind. In this sense, study of the GI Movement is also a case study of the intersection of protest during this period by focusing on just one aspect of, what contemporaries called, "the Movement".

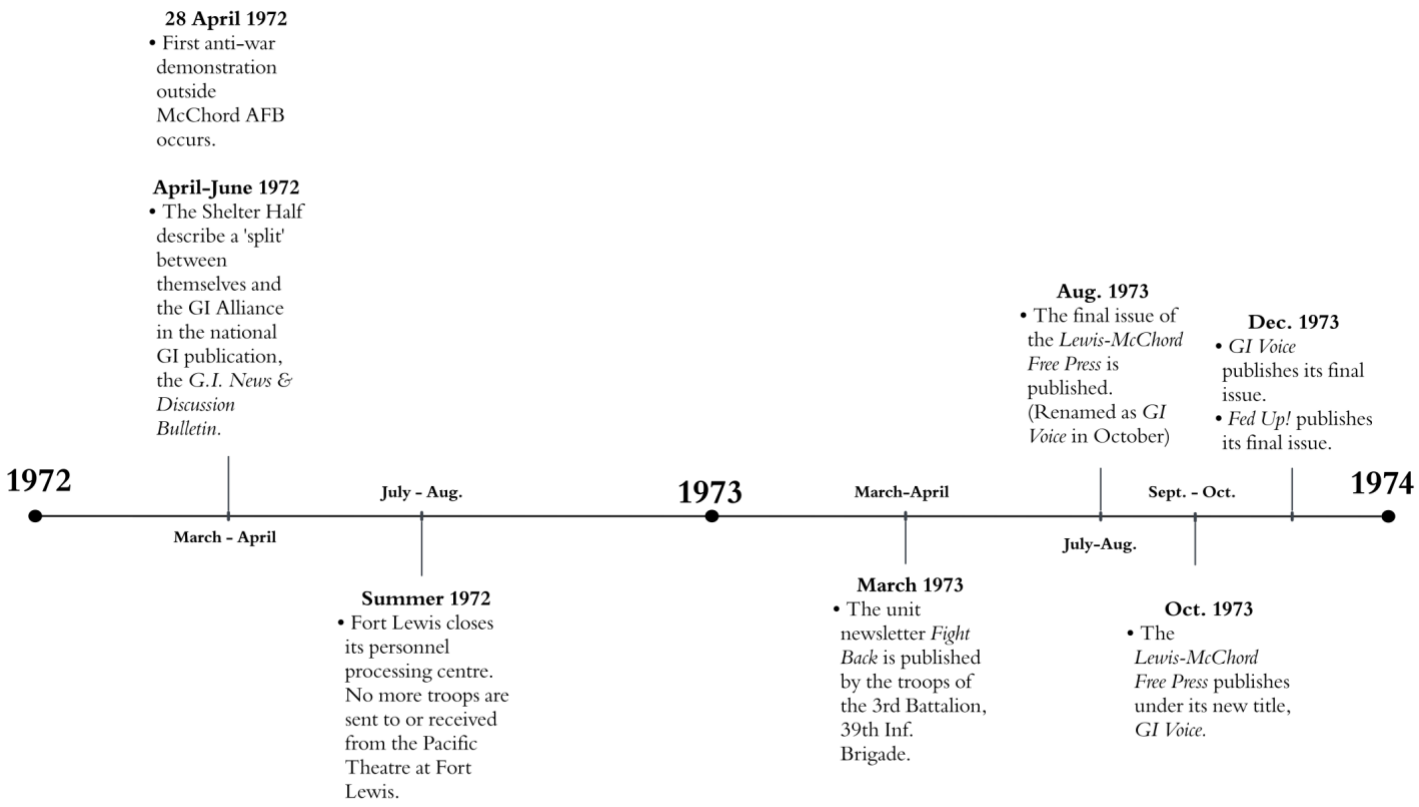
Perhaps surprisingly, study of the GI Movement also broadens our understanding of the grassroots influence of Marxism, particularly a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist vein of Marxism, in the late-"Sixties". It demonstrates how the radicalisation of the New Left affected young people during the early 1970s. Focus on the *Free Press* particularly emphasises how Marxist-Leninists sought to harness the discontent within the military and, in turn, how the most radical GIs, always keen to conduct activism on their own terms, adapted their ideas to create a decidedly left-wing, yet perhaps not explicitly Marxist, commentary on America in the early 1970s. In this way, this thesis helps to not only fill the scholarly gap surrounding the anti-war movement but also illuminates a left-wing movement which has so far been largely ignored by historians.

If judged by its ability to end the war in Vietnam, then, the GI Movement was not a success. However, it remained one of the last vestiges of the "Sixties". Continuing progressive protest into the 1970s, young GIs were flagbearers of what the "Sixties" meant to young people, starting from the beginnings of the civil rights movement. "Sixties" activism, especially in terms of race and gender – and somewhat, but to a lesser degree class – laid many of the foundations, or broadened earlier fights, which have secured the rights and improved conditions of many in the twenty-first century. The legacy of the "Sixties" lived on in these servicemen's lifelong commitment to left-wing social change. Some of the editors of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* continued their activism in organisations such as Veterans for Peace, went into labour organising, became presidents of unions, and retained their commitment to protecting the rights of workers and encouraging positive social change by becoming environmental or employment lawyers. In their lives after the military, therefore, these men brought forth the dedication to activism and desire for social justice which permeated their lives in the Vietnam-era military.

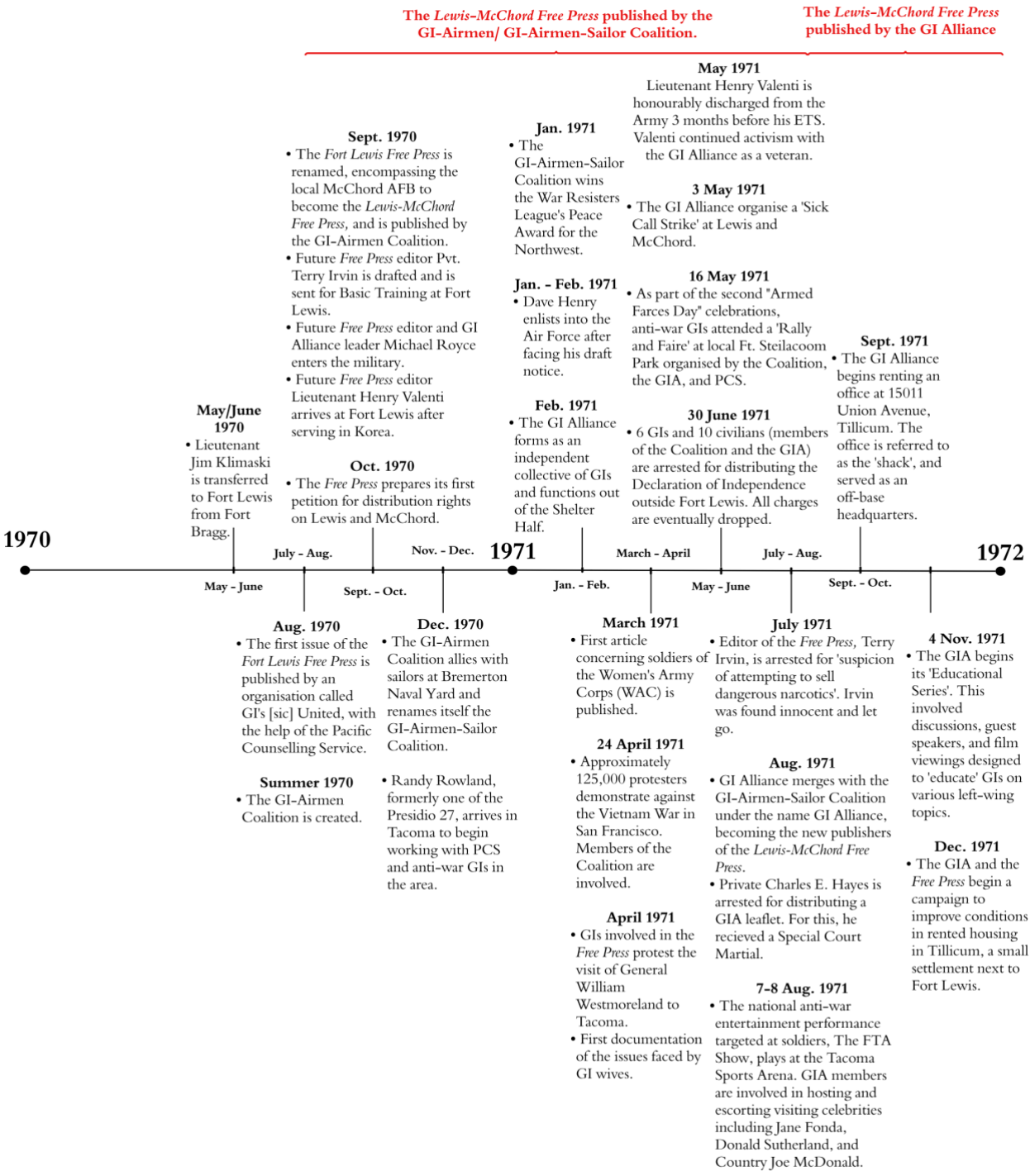
Appendix A: A History of the GI Movement in the Pacific Northwest (1968-1973)




1970
Jan. - Feb.
March - April
May - June
July-Aug.
Nov. - Dec.
1971
Jan. - Feb.
March- April
May-June
July - Aug.
Sept.- Oct.
Nov. - Dec.
1972
21 Jan. 1970
• Activists from the Shelter Half, the ASU, and from the University of Washington hold a mock "Trial of the Army".
Jan. 1970
• The military stops its attempts to place the Shelter Half 'off limits'.
Feb. 1970
• The radical Amerindian group Hew-Kekaw-Na-Yo is created on Ft. Lewis and briefly publishes the anti-war newspaper Yah-Hoh.
15-16 May 1970
• As part of a national anti-war action dubbed "Armed Farces Day", 60 GIs and 200 civilians attend demonstrations outside the Fort Lewis gates.
May 1970
• The unit newsletter 1st of the Worst publishes briefly.
26-27 June
• Six GIs refuse to be sent to Vietnam from the Overseas Replacement Station at Fort Lewis and are dubbed the "Fort Lewis Six".
14 Dec. 1970
• Fort Lewis is declared a closed base to civilians.
23 March 1971
• Sailors from Bremerton Naval Yard publish the first edition of the newspaper The Puget Sound Sound Off with the help of PCS, the GI-Airmen-Sailor Coalition, and COM. Ceases publication in June 1971.
Aug. 1971
• GI Alliance merges with the GI-Airmen-Sailor Coalition under the name GI Alliance, becoming the new publishers of the Lewis-McChord Free Press.
• The COM newsletter, Co-Ambulation, is published at Fairchild AFB. Ceases publication after just one issue.
7-8 Aug. 1971
• The anti-war theatrical performance, the FTA Show, performs at the nearby Tacoma Sports Arena.
23-28 November 1971
• Delegates from the Shelter Half attend the national GI Movement conference in Williams Bay (WI). Members of the GI Alliance do not attend.
9 March 1970
• The Fort Lewis ASU chapter votes to split from the national ASU, creating their own organisation, the Independent Servicemen's Union (ISU).
c.March 1970
• The unit newsletter B Troop News begins publication. Ceases c.June 1970.
Summer 1970
• The GI-Airmen Coalition is created. Later renamed the GI-Airmen-Sailor Coalition.
Aug. 1970
• The first issue of the Fort Lewis Free Press, later to be renamed the Lewis-McChord Free Press, is published.
Jan. 1971
• A chapter of the anti-war organisation, the Concerned Officers Movement (COM), is created in the area to service Fort Lewis, McChord AFB, Bremerton Naval Yard, and Fort Lawton.
• The newsletter, Sacstrated, is created at nearby Fairchild AFB in Spokane (WA).
Feb. 1971
• The GI Alliance forms as an independent collective of GIs and functions out of the Shelter Half.
2 May 1971
• The GI Peace Show is held at the Fieldhouse at the nearby University of Puget Sound. Celebrities Jane Fonda and Donald Sutherland performed.
3 May 1971
• The GI Alliance organise a 'Sick Call Strike' at Lewis and McChord.
16 May 1971
• As part of the second "Armed Farces Day" celebrations, anti-war GIs in the Puget Sound area created and attended a 'Rally and Faire' at local Ft. Steilacoom Park
June 1971
• COM chapter is created at Fairchild AFB.
30 June 1971
• 6 GIs and 10 civilians are arrested for distributing the Declaration of Independence outside Fort Lewis.
Sept. 1971
• The GI Alliance begins renting an office, referred to as the "shack", as an off-base headquarters.
1 Sept. 1971
• The Shelter Half relocates to a new location in Tacoma (1902 Tacoma Ave. South).

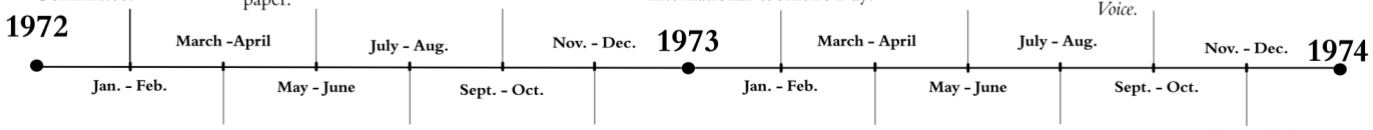

28 April 1972
• First anti-war demonstration outside McChord AFB occurs.
April-June 1972
• The Shelter Half describe a 'split' between themselves and the GI Alliance in the national GI publication, the G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin.
1972
March - April
July - Aug.
Summer 1972
• Fort Lewis closes its personnel processing centre. No more troops are sent to or received from the Pacific Theatre at Fort Lewis.
1973
March-April
March 1973
• The unit newsletter Fight Back is published by the troops of the 3rd Battalion, 39th Inf. Brigade.
Aug. 1973
• The final issue of the Lewis-McChord Free Press is published. (Renamed as GI Voice in October)
July-Aug.
Sept. - Oct.
Oct. 1973
• The Lewis-McChord Free Press publishes under its new title, GI Voice.
Dec. 1973
• GI Voice publishes its final issue.
• Fed Up! publishes its final issue.
1974

Appendix B: A History of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* (1970-1973)



The *Lewis-McChord Free Press* published by the GI Alliance (GIA).

***GI Voice* (still published by the GIA)**



Feb. 1972

- The GIA releases its 6-point manifesto in the *Free Press*.
- The *Free Press* publishes an evaluation of the major landlords in Tillicum. The GIA are immediately evicted from their shack for publishing a negative review of their landlord.
- The House Committee on Internal Security arrives on Fort Lewis to investigate the GIA. At least six soldiers were interviewed by the Committee.

March 1972

- The GIA hold a picket outside their landlord's offices to protest their eviction.
- Michael Royce is honourably discharged from the Army. He continued activism as a veteran.
- Terry Irvin receives a general discharge.

10 March 1972

- The GIA Alliance hold an International Women's Day celebration'.

28 April 1972

- First anti-war demonstration outside McChord AFB occurs.

April-June 1972

- The Shelter Half describe a 'split' between themselves and the GIA in the national GI publication, the *G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin*.

May 1972

- Campaign for tennants rights in Tillicum ends.
- The *Free Press* publishes a spanish language section in the paper for the first time.

June 1972

- The *Free Press* does not publish for the first month since its inception. This was a planned break and was announced in the May edition of the paper.

July 1972

- The GIA advertises its new office (still referred to as the 'shack') located at 14606 1/2 Washington Avenue, Tillicum.
- The Alliance begins a new campaign of showing films in the hallways of McChord AFB.
- The GIA and the *Free Press* start their campaign supporting the strike of Chicano workers against the Farah Company.

July-Aug. 1972

- The Office of Special Investigations interviews GIs about either their own or a friend's suspected involvement with the GIA or the *Free Press*.

Aug. 1972

- The *Free Press* begins publishing semimonthly.

Oct. 1972

- The Alliance participates in a march in Seattle alongside students and workers in the Sea-Tac area in support of a peace proposal suggested by the Provisional Revolutionary Government.
- Dave Henry is discharge from the Air Force twenty-ninth months before his scheduled ETS.

10 Nov. 1973

- 17 people are arrested by the Army for distributing copies of the *Free Press* outside of the NCO's (Non-Commissioned Officer) club. The contingent included 1 dependent and 4 active-duty soldiers.

December 1972

- GIA member Edward Helal reports that Military Intelligence requested that he spy on the Alliance and provide them with the names of people attending their meetings.
- The Alliance expands the number of locations that the *Free Press* can be bought from, creating an agreement with The Seventh House in Tacoma and Heckerman's in Lake City to stock the paper.

Jan. 1973

- The GIA run an article supporting the full legalisation of abortions in the USA.

Feb. 1973

- The *Free Press* publishes its final 'mid-month' issue.
- The *Free Press* celebrates the signing of the Paris Peace Accords and the end of the Vietnam War.
- The Revolutionary Union is mentioned in the paper for the first time.

23 Feb. 1973

- The GI Alliance holds an educational meeting at the GIA office to teach about International Women's Day.

April 1973

- The *Free Press* runs their first article supporting Amerindians and the American Indian Movement.

6 May 1973

- The GIA advertise and attend an International Worker's Day rally in Seattle organised by the Revolutionary Union.

Aug. 1973

- The final issue of the *Lewis-McChord Free Press* is published. (Renamed as *GI Voice* in October).

Oct. 1973

- The *Free Press* is renamed *GI Voice*.

Dec. 1973

- The final issue of *GI Voice* is published.

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