

viewpoint variations

After Vietnam

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The War in Vietnam provided the focus for much of the student activism from 1966-1972. On the UNC Campus, activism grew slowly, but during 1969-1970, there were massive demonstrations precipitated by the Cambodian invasion.

The Vietnam War officially ended in January 1973, marking a major milestone in American history. What effect did the end of the war have on students in the University? In this year without protest, how much of that resulted from the end of the draft and the winding down of the war?

A great deal of the Vietnam protest was generated by the draft. Students (male students, especially), were concerned that the escalation and continuation of the war would disrupt their own lives, an unnecessary interruption.

The 1970, 1971, and 1972 draft lotteries brought hordes of people to the Daily Tar Heel office to check the UPI wire machines as they brought in the official lists from Washington. The 1973 lottery had only token interest on campus. The wild parties that the 1970 lotteries brought for those students with numbers above 270 were conspicuously absent.

Nixon re-escalated the bombing in December of 1972, but this time chose a period when most schools were in Christmas recess. The 1970 Cambodia invasion had brought 5,000 students to march, and 500 to go to Congress from Chapel Hill.

By the time students returned in January of this year, however, the largest bombing raids in the history of the world were over, and we were "back on the road to peace."

There were scattered efforts to raise money for Bach Mai hospital and other civilian targets hit during the Christmas bombing, but these never ignited large student interest.

A number of UNC students have participated in the continuing controversy over MOTSU (Military Ocean Terminal at Sunny Point, N.C.), which ships war goods to Indo-China. A few were arrested in April. But the majority of UNC students ignored the controversy.

From the beginnings of the Student Peace Union in 1966, through SDS and SSOC, the Moratorium, Cambodia, and Hatfield-McGovern, UNC students were in the forefront of massive and bitter anti-war controversies.

But the end of the war in 1973 has brought an end to these efforts and a return to the tranquility on campus. A unique form of apathy has spread over the campus, yet there is no doubt that in the lives and minds of the students, attitudes toward politics, government, and the university have changed both dramatically and profoundly.

Many people voted against the war in last spring by voting for Howard Lee, and again in the fall by voting for George McGovern, but political activism has not ended the aftermath of the war.

1972-1973 was a quiet year, as the War in Vietnam, that "selfless crusade" that Hubert Humphrey praised, finally came to an end.

Yet, for those with a conscience, the war continues. For others, it may be just below the surface.



The War is "over"...
... but the Chapel Hill Peace Vigil continues.



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