The Vietnam War and Ball State University, 1964-1970

A Social History

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by

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The Vietnam War was a topic capable of igniting violent emotions in the people of the United States in the 1960's and early 1970's. Even Ball State University, sheltered in Muncie, Indiana, was not immune to the effects of this conflict, which polarized the country more than any other issue since the Civil War. As the nation and its university campuses became more aware of the conflict in Southeast Asia, so did Ball State. This middle sized midwestern university experienced the same emotions and conflicts that plagued the nation as it became embroiled in the complex issues of the Vietnam War.

The purpose of this study is to delve into the psyche of Ball State's student body to discover its attitudes toward the Vietnam War. This paper will also explore the events and issues that sparked campus reactions to the war. The major source for this study is the Ball State student newspaper, known first as the Ball State News and after 1968 as the Ball State Daily News. This student paper contained great diversity of opinion, including the opinions of the editorial staff, faculty, Vietnam soldiers, administration, and most importantly, the student body. With the help of this newspaper a chronological study of the events surrounding the Vietnam War at Ball State University can be detailed.

Ball State has been chosen for this study for several reasons. First is the ready availability of resources concerning Ball State when
conducting research in Muncie, Indiana. But, more importantly, Ball State can be used as a test case for the reactions to Vietnam by students who attended typical state universities. Countless essays and papers have been done on student activities at Berkeley, Columbia, Cornell, the University of Wisconsin, or other prestigious institutions, but very few have been done on non-elite schools. Godfrey Hodgson, in his book *America in Our Time*, presents evidence that the lesser known state universities were much more entrenched in conservatism than their larger, more prestigious counterparts, and that the students at lesser known universities often presented more hard-line support of the war than the non-college population of the same age.¹ This implies that the state universities' views were considerably closer to the support the government stance of the majority of mainstream Americans, than the vehement anti-war stance of the more prestigious universities. Consequently, the study of Ball State can provide valuable insights into American attitudes about the Vietnam War.

This paper focuses on the period, 1964-1970. As the baby boom generation began to go to college the enrollment at Ball State correspondingly increased. In 1966 approximately 9,000 students attended Ball State. In seven short years that number would increase to over 16,000. As more students entered the school, with them came
a large spectrum of diversity of thought concerning the war in Vietnam, but this diversity was severely limited. Campus opinion at Ball State was fairly united throughout the Vietnam War. This unity was consistent even though the attitude toward the war underwent a severe reversal. Basically, there are three periods, or stages of belief, that the majority of the Ball State student body experienced. In the first stage, the majority supported American military involvement. During the second stage, confused students moved away from support. Finally, the third stage found a majority of students supporting a withdrawal from Vietnam. Throughout these periods national and international events surfaced to motivate students into creating prodigious activity concerning issues of the war. These events gave the students topics to debate, and issues to which they could react. Significantly, although the pro-goverment students did not make the most headlines, the evidence shows that the majority of the student body at Ball State consistently supported the government in its policy objectives concerning the Vietnam war.

**STAGE ONE: 1964-1966**

The first stage at Ball State began in 1964 and lasted through 1966. This period is best characterized by student support of military involvement in Vietnam. The conflict was relatively new, and little was known about Vietnam and its situation. So, just as most peoples
of the world would have done, the people of the United States rallied around its leaders' decisions when initially faced with conflict and diversity. Hodgson poignantly portrays this when he denotes that up until Tet in 1968, the majority of Americans supported military involvement in the war.² Ball State's students followed basically the same pattern.

Not only did the majority of Ball State students support the war, but also most were very critical of any anti-war attitudes or protest. On October 19, 1965 The Ball State News stated unequivocally, "The Ball State News backs the stand that the Johnson administration has taken. The United States must stop Communism not only on this continent but elsewhere in the world. The United States must fight in Viet Nam." Of course this student newspaper is not indicative of all students' views, but because it is student operated and is the Ball State students' official voice it does have a certain validity in reference to the opinions of Ball State students. Later in August, in an editorial, editor-in-chief, Jan York, vividly supported the administration's war policies.

Now is not the time to complain about our sad state in Viet Nam, but rather the time to find a way or means of getting our men out of there as soon as possible. Now more than ever we must have faith in ourselves and our leaders. We are in Viet Nam now and there will be no fast getting out so we must endure what has to be endured.³
It is obvious from this statement that war was found to be distasteful, but the prevailing sentiment was that the only way to get out was to support the administration's action, not by protest. This statement provides an excellent example of campus attitudes.

This editorial stance had the support of most students. During this stage of the war most students believed in the monolithic theory of Communism that the government was promoting. They also felt that this Communism had to be stopped in Vietnam before it spread to the United States. One disgruntled student gave three reasons for supporting the Vietnam War.

"First of all, the United States has committed itself to help the Vietnamese people to protect themselves against Communist aggression. . . Secondly, the United States, the symbol of free democracy in the world must take a stand against Communism . . . Finally, the United States must stay in Vietnam until we finish the job of defeating the Communists."4

The Young Republican club soon became active, and sent a telegram to President Johnson supporting, "a strong American foreign policy in Viet Nam with the goal of defeating communist aggression."5 Valuable student opinion can also be found by reactions to a Students for a Democratic Society chapter that was founded at Ball State in 1965.6 Daniel C. Webster wrote,

"Can there be any doubt in anyone's mind that the Students for a Democratic Society is a socialistic subversive organization when it openly declares that their intentions are to undermine popular
support for the government's policy in foreign affairs."7

Webster was almost ruthless in his opposition of SDS. Jane Stevens was also very critical of SDS and supported the News article that lambasted the organization for undermining the governments Vietnam policy.8

Significantly, the majority opinion at Ball State mirrored the opinion of the nation. The best example of this was letter sent to the News in 1965 by the bipartisan National Student Committee for the Defense of Vietnam. This committee was formed by Young Republicans, Young Democrats, and Independents to, "mobilize college students in a concerted program of responsible action in support of American resistance to Communist aggression in Southeast Asia." This letter outlined campus activities and asked for Ball State students to support its program.9

During this period, Ball State students were becoming educated about Vietnam. The Ball State News ran many Associated Press stories about the war; many of the paper's syndicated columnists were very interested in the war; and it was during this period that the paper ran the largest number of Associated Press photographs relative to the war for the entire 1964-1970 period.10 On October 13, 1965 a panel
discussion on Vietnam was held in Emens Auditorium. The importance of this occasion is evident by the members of the panel: Senator John Sherman Cooper, Senator Gale W. McGee, former acting ambassador from Vietnam Tran van Dihn, and NBC News' State Department correspondent Robert Goralski. The panelists discussed the war issue in terms of, “Vietnam: Challenge to U.S. Foreign Policy.” Also, the News ran a poll by Playboy in December of 1965 on the subject of the Vietnam War. The poll, which surveyed 200 campuses nationwide, conveyed that 82% of the students polled supported the war. A surprising 56% even wished to push the war into North Vietnam. Even the faculty polled responded in the affirmative to U.S. action in Vietnam, with a resounding 72% in support.11 Leslie Tihany from the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, U.S. State Department, spoke at Emens Auditorium in March of 1966. Tihany had recently returned from a tour of Vietnam. He defended the Johnson administration's policies on the war during his speech.12 Obviously, Ball State was taking the subject of Vietnam very seriously at this time. To have such important individuals and policy makers speak at the campus reveals a desire by the student body to become informed on the situation in Southeast Asia.

Although the majority of people in the nation, as well as at Ball State, supported the war effort, an underlying current of doubt and
anxiety manifested itself in the anti-war views of the often vocal minority. As has already been stated, a SDS chapter was formed at Ball State, and they did oppose the war in Vietnam. But as one Ball State SDS member wrote, "the Viet Nam crisis is not the main reason for SDS." He considered the main thrust of the organization to strengthen student rights at Ball State. Aside from SDS, only two students during this time period stand out as being vehemently against the war. The first was Gerald Miller, who, in his letter to the editor in August of 1965, appeared totally disgusted at Ball State's, "already too illogical, irrational, and conservative (the three seem synonymous to me) campus." His denouncing of the "war-mongers in Washington" clearly stated his anti-war views. The other outspoken supporter of the anti-war camp was Nile Shields. His August 16, 1965 letter to the editor was eloquent, and if one did not know better, it looks as if he wrote it with full knowledge of the upcoming events in Vietnam. The logical flow of his arguments, as well as his factual information, are very convincing. Ultimately, this editorial closes with his views that, "we have no valid justification for our presence in Vietnam . . . we are not supporting freedom in South Vietnam at the present time . . . ." Even though some of these anti-war arguments were very well written, it is doubtful that they had a very large effect on the pro-war masses during this period.
This anti-war activity is very significant, even if it did not have a
great effect at the time. These activities were happening at the same
time as the national peace movement was coalescing. Nationally, the
movement was beginning to become an organized minority that was,
"ready to pursue a series of actions that would match, step by step,
the government's own policies of escalation in Vietnam."16 Slowly,
almost hesitantly, anti-war views began to be aired. Senator J.
William Fulbright led the Senate Foreign Relations Committee into
investigating de-escalation and a finish to the war. During the
investigation George Kenan, former ambassador to the Soviet Union
and adviser to President Kennedy, suggested to the committee that
the United States, "liquidate this involvement just as soon as it can be
done without inordinate damage to our own prestige . . . ." Fulbright
opposed the war saying that it was, "a kind of self-generating
commitment."17 These activities suggest that in the future a
stronger, more organized resistance to the war could come into being.

All of this evidence suggests that during this first period, 1964-
1966, the student body at Ball State, supported military involvement
in the Vietnam War. As more and more information made its way into
the Ball State News about Vietnam, students became increasingly
aware of the facts about the conflict. Also, it is plainly evident that
the campus was developing along the same lines as the nation. Ball
State and the nation both possessed a majority supporting the war and a growing minority in opposition to it. The *Playboy* poll clearly shows national support for the war, just as the growth of SDS shows the growing anti-war movement. Both of these views were represented at Ball State. Syndicated columnist Walter Lippmann described it best when he said that the majority of the people support the President, but underneath this support is a current of deep doubt and anxiety.18

**STAGE TWO: 1967-1968**

The second period, 1967 through 1968, is characterized by a growing dissatisfaction in the United States, and hence at Ball State, with the government’s policy in Vietnam. By the end of this period, the majority of Americans had changed their views on Vietnam. Suddenly, America supported a withdrawal policy. What happened to create such a clear shift in opinion? At Ball State it was a growing phenomena that started with the anti-Vietnam marches, creating awareness that culminated in a shift of opinion caused by the Tet Offensive. The nation as a whole reacted similarly, with the Tet Offensive as the watershed for opinion on the Vietnam War.

In May of 1967 the National Spring Mobilization to End the War in Vietnam planned and executed a march on Washington D.C.
in which over 200,000 people attended. The purpose of the march was to attempt to persuade the government to end the draft, and to bring an immediate cessation to the hostilities in Vietnam.\textsuperscript{19} Once again, in October of 1967 the National Mobilization to End the War in Vietnam held another protest in Washington D.C., making the same demands. Only this time, the protest, which before seemed so detached, was quite different. Numbering among the estimated 200,000 people at this protest were twenty-three Ball State Students who were sponsored by Ball States’ Student Liberal Action Movement.\textsuperscript{20} Seemingly, twenty-three people attending a protest of 200,000 people does not appear significant. But, this is a very significant moment for Ball State, because it clearly marks a turning point for the campus. Previously, no definitive action by Ball State students had been taken concerning the Vietnam War. Yes, numerous articles had been written, but no serious action had been taken up until this point. Suddenly, a small part of Ball State had become involved in a national movement to end the war. Never again would the campus reside apart and alone concerning activity surrounding the war, separate from the events of the nation. This October protest in Washington D.C. profoundly affected the campus by prompting action and raising awareness about the war.
The protest stimulated action on the Ball State campus. This anti-war activity was spear-headed by the organization known as SLAM, or the Student Liberal Action Movement. Although the organization was formed and given temporary status by the university before the October protest in Washington D.C., its activities at Ball State were stimulated by that event. The organization held no campus activities before the protest, and SLAM began its activities but four short days after the protest. SLAM considered itself a liberal thinking group and listed among its goals peace in Vietnam, and university reform concentrating upon social as well as academic problems. The group totally rejected the United States' military policy, and called for an immediate withdrawal from Vietnam.\textsuperscript{21}

Concrete action at Ball State began on October 25, 1965 when over 100 people participated in anti-Vietnam demonstrations in response to Marine Corps recruiters setting up a table in the Student Center. This marked the first anti-Vietnam demonstration at Ball State. Previously, the extent of SLAM's activity had been to distribute anti-war literature.\textsuperscript{22} The protest was not even an organized affair, but began when a group of five or six students approached the recruiters and started to question them about the war. Soon, a large crowd gathered. Although not organized by SLAM, its members played a leading role in the questioning of the recruiters.\textsuperscript{23}
It would be a misnomer to label all of the activity at Ball State, stimulated by the October protest in Washington D.C., anti-war. The national protest stimulated SLAM, which in turn stimulated pro-war factions into activity, and it prompted discussion on the war in general. For example, Williams Hall sponsored a debate in Noyer Complex in December of 1967. The topic of discussion was "the war viewed by a Hawk--The war viewed by a dove", and it was debated by two political science professors. The ROTC personnel sergeant was also present, and he showed slides taken on the battle front in Vietnam. Various speakers came to Ball State at this time, and delivered their opinions on the war. General Mark Wayne Clark spoke at Emens Auditorium in January of 1967, on the continuing challenge of Communism. During his speech, Clark gave his support to, "Victory rather than pull out" of Vietnam, and he received a standing ovation at the end of his presentation. Folk singers Peter, Paul, and Mary, while performing to a sell-out crowd at Emens Auditorium in April of 1967, delivered their anti-war views. Mary stated, "I don't believe that the United States has the right to say to a people-we are going to destroy you totally, so that you won't become Communists." Unfortunately, direct student reactions to these statements are impossible to gauge from the materials at hand, but from all appearances these entertainers exerted little influence.
During this period, student arguments about America's policies in Vietnam increased. The Ball State News had a marked increase in articles and editorials concerning the Vietnam War between October and December. This time period contained twenty-nine, a considerable increase over the previous three months, which had only one. The issue of the war came to be hotly debated during this period by the students of Ball State, mainly through either support or opposition to SLAM. During this time frame five anti-slam letters to the editor appeared, written by Ball State students who supported the war. Only three of the letters to the editor were presented in the defense of SLAM, thereby, supporting the organizations anti-war stance.27

The Ball State News' staff varied in its support or opposition to dissent during this time period. Editor-in-Chief Dick Powell never varied in his opposition to the anti-war movement.

"Listen as they undermine our effort in Southeast Asia . . . With all due apologies to SLAM, our campus hippies, and the supporters that have rallied to their side; I cannot fully understand nor approve to any degree the things these misfits are doing, nor see any tangible results."28

Obviously, the pro-war sentiment of this individual has made him very critical of the anti-war movement. Mr. Powell apparently despised any activity outside of the normal political process, because he later
states, "I do not regard dissent as evil. I regard it as futile . . .
Restless, incoherent babbling will, I hope, never replace the intricate
system our society has produced to obtain change."²⁹ Contrary to
this opinion was an anonymous editorial written by the News. The
body of this editorial questioned the war, and wished for a peaceful
resolution. It questioned the "light at the end of the tunnel"
mentality when it stated, "Engaged in war we have been 'winning' for
the last three years and still have not won, we have a tiger by the
tail."³⁰ Later, in October, managing editor Phil Witherow gave his
support to the students going to Washington D.C. for the national
protest. He even encouraged these students to attempt something of
the same nature at Ball State. It was his opinion that, "If students at
Ball State really want to see and end to the war in Vietnam they
should organize at the campus level."³¹ Julia Watt, managing editor,
gave her support to "proper demonstrations", and hoped that Student
Senate could find a place to set aside for discussion and debate
concerning Vietnam as well as other pertinent issues.³² It is obvious
that the staff of the News was divided over the issues of Vietnam,
but the majority of staff members, expressing an opinion, supported
either protest or a withdrawal of troops. This is a precursor of the
change in attitude soon to come.
Suddenly, in January of 1968, the country was taken totally off-guard. The North Vietnamese, in conjunction with the Viet Cong, launched an all-out offensive during the Vietnamese lunar new year, known as Tet. This surprise attack quickly rolled back the American and South Vietnamese forces. The Johnson administration had been announcing that the North Vietnamese were almost beaten, and yet they managed to launch a major offensive. This is the second, and most important, event of this period of transition for both Ball State and the nation. Historian Godfrey Hodgson wrote that this was the turning point in public opinion.

"Between February and March 1968 the doves jumped from around dwindle from 60 percent to 40 percent. After three years of war, roughly one American out of every five changed his or her mind about it in a single month . . . Before Tet, a majority of the American people supported the war, now, suddenly, a majority opposed it."\(^\text{33}\)

A turning point had been reached. No longer would the majority support a sustained war in Southeast Asia, but now that opinion transposed to the majority supporting withdrawal.

Ball State responded to Tet with a flurry of activity. In February of 1968 a mock Senate was held at Ball State to debate national issues. During the "session" a bill was proposed supporting withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam. The vote on the bill was a tie, but it was eventually defeated when the Chair cast his
deciding vote. The very fact that the vote was this close suggests that some change of opinion at Ball State, concerning the war, had taken place.

SLAM continued after Tet with a variety of activities to finish out the academic year. In February of 1968 SLAM members attempted to push through Student Senate a bill to ban military recruiters at Ball State, in response to a statement by General Hershey, national director of Selective Service. Hershey said that students who protest should have their deferments taken away, be reclassified, and drafted. The bill failed to pass. Next, SLAM co-sponsored with the Religious Council a move to bring to campus, author and lecturer, Sydney Lens. Lens spoke on “Dissent, Nonviolence, and Vietnam”, and his entire speech was basically a diatribe on the government and its handling of the war. By the beginning of May, SLAM’s draft counseling, which had been founded a couple of months earlier, was just starting to become organized to the point of effectiveness. Dave Auble, a member of SLAM and draft counselor, claimed, “We don’t encourage turning in or burning your draft card . . . The purpose of the counseling is to explain military service laws to those people interested in them.” The main thrust of this service was to explain the military service laws, and offer assistance to young men in an area which was very confusing and potentially very important.
These activities show that SLAM's actions were really not very radical relative to the larger universities, but at Ball State they represented the most radical of the anti-war students.

By far the most enlightening event at Ball State during this period was the Choice 68 mock presidential primary. This was a nationally organized event, sponsored by Time-Life, to discover which presidential candidate the college population supported. At Ball State the winner was Robert Kennedy with 1,129 votes, and Richard Nixon came in second with 879 votes. It is fairly significant that a majority of the students who voted supported a pro-peace candidate. But, the most important aspect of this primary was a referendum added to it at Ball State: What course of action should the U.S. pursue in Vietnam? In response to this question 3,555 students participated in the poll. Of the students polled 11.4 percent supported immediate withdrawal and 41.83 percent supported a phased reduction. Therefore, a total of 53.23 percent of the respondents were in favor of some form of withdrawal. On the other side of the spectrum, 8.5 percent voted to maintain current levels, 12.35 wished to increase American efforts, and 25.85 percent supported and all out American offensive. The pro-war forces totaled only 46.70 percent. These figures clearly bear out the statement by Godfrey Hodgson that after the Tet Offensive the nation turned against the war. Even at Ball
State, a traditionally conservative university, the majority of the students polled opted for withdrawal from Vietnam. Note that 41.83 percent of the responding supported a phased reduction in American forces. Because Ball State behaved the same as the nation, this then suggests that the nature of the majorities' conservatism had changed. The accepted position became support of the President's withdrawal plan, and those advocating escalation become the ultra conservative fringe minority. As should have been expected, Ball State selected the moderate, conservative response against the war by showing their support of the government's policies, and in this action they followed most of the nation.

Student letters to the editor were increasingly turning against the war after the Tet Offensive. There was of course still vociferous support of the war, but more and more people began to opt for a withdrawal of American troops. During this period fifty-five percent of the student letters to the editor written were in support of withdrawal from Vietnam. The most stirring of these was a letter to the editor written by Michael Verplank. He was an ex-Ball State student who was currently serving in his ninth month of his tour of Vietnam. His version of the war was a very different one, than was usually heard.

"I should relay my opinion of this God-forsaken conflict in Southeast Asia . . . I have unwillingly and most unhappily
completed nine of my twelve months' tour in Vietnam. During these nine months I have served with armored cavalry and infantry combat units ... We ... are very confused on our purpose here. We do know, however, that we were sentenced to one year hard labor and our main goal is to ... come home alive ... there is an extreme lack of 'esprit de corps' and willingness to fight for our country. This is why most of our time is spent getting high ... For those of you graduating soon ... my best advice is beat the draft!"40

To receive a letter to the editor such as this, with its highly critical and negative connotations against the Vietnam War, probably made quite an impact on the students at Ball State, since this was not a version of the war that was commonly heard at this time.

Associated Press articles added to the mounting public pressure for withdrawal. The staff of the News wrote the headlines for these stories, and for the first time these headlines took on decidedly negative tones. To give just a few examples: "US Involvement maybe a long term affair", "Cong continue Saigon shelling", "Enemy lull foretells war storm", and "LBJ warns of over optimism."41 Reading headlines such as these day after day would soon make one wonder about the success of the United States in the war. The headlines imply American forces do not even have Saigon secure, and that the fighting could go on for some time to come. These headlines, in all probability, were at least a small factor in helping the majority of students to come to the conclusion that the reality of the war was quite different
than what they were previously being told.

Even though most people at Ball State were moving toward support of withdrawal, there was still hardline support for military victory in Vietnam. In March of 1968 a local chapter of Young Americans for Freedom was formed at Ball State. Conservative columnist William F. Buckley Jr. formed the organization nationally in 1960. This organization supported military victory in Vietnam. The support of the military becomes perfectly clear when local member Gary Heathcoate stated, "While I agree that the Vietnam war is immoral and unjust as it is being fought, I could be considered a hawk because I believe in peace through victory." In September the group sponsored its first campus wide debate on the Vietnam War. Robert Turner, National Chairman of Victory in Vietnam, and Dr. James Bogle, Former state Chairman of those for McCarthy, were the debaters. Finally, in October of 1968 the group began its first membership drive, passing out pamphlets on victory in Vietnam in the Tally. The formation of YAF could be viewed as an expected reaction, to the fervor caused by Tet, by the more conservative students at Ball State.

This second period contained within it the seeds of change for the nation, and correspondingly Ball State. The war was causing great anxiety for Americans. Just when was final victory to come? Where
was the light and the end of the tunnel? Dramatically, this illusion of imminent victory was dispelled by the Tet Offensive. Suddenly, most people realized that victory was not just out of our grasp, and that the war could drag on indefinitely. Opinions about the war changed almost overnight. Americans no longer gave their total support to the war, with most turning toward a more moderate policy of withdrawal. This trend can even be seen at Ball State. The mock Senate debate, the Choice 68 results, and the growing number of anti-war letters to the editor all exemplify the growing trend at Ball State to not support the Vietnam War. Growing numbers of students were becoming disaffected with the conflict, and began to promote withdrawal. This period firmly set the stones of change, cementing the withdrawal policy firmly in the minds of the majority of Americans, and permanently changing the concept of the war in Vietnam.

**STAGE THREE: 1969-1970**

By stage three the majority of America, most college students, and the bulk of Ball State students supported a withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam. A December 1969 Gallup poll found that pro-withdrawal forces outnumbered the pro-war forces three to one.\(^45\) It was later in this time period that the very definition of a hawk and a dove changed. Due to the massive majority of people supporting withdrawal, it ceased to be a question of pro or anti-war.
By 1970 most of the previous hawks and doves supported withdrawal from Vietnam. It was the means used for that withdrawal that separated them. The hawks supported an honorable withdrawal; the use of military force to gain a peaceful settlement that would initiate withdrawal of American troops. The doves found this untenable and supported an immediate withdrawal of all American combat personnel. The hawks were, because the new definition placing them in support of withdrawal, the majority of Americans. This majority came to support President Nixon's withdrawal plans. His Vietnamization plan came to be the cornerstone of this policy. Basically, this entailed phasing out American troops and replacing them with South Vietnamese troops that were American trained and supplied. And, true to form, Ball State followed the majority hawks in their support of the Nixon Administration.

There is a common misconception, today, that those who supported President Nixon, supported the continuation of the war in Vietnam until military victory was achieved. However, this is simply not true. This misconception exists mainly because most of the Nixon supporters disliked the protests and protesters, thereby, giving them a pro-war appearance. Godfrey Hodgson points out that most who disliked the war, disliked the peace movement even more.46 The pro-Nixon people did support a military means to end the war, but not its
continuance until victory. However, many of the protesters adopted the attitude that if you are not with us, then you are against us. So, the misconception was born.

Contrary to this misconception, when President Nixon delivered his famous Silent Majority speech on November 3, 1969, he promised the American public that he planned to remove all American ground forces from Vietnam. He appealed to the silent majority for their support. Even during this age of cynicism toward the President, most people believed the President when he claimed to be winding down the war. Most Americans supported Vietnamization. Then in late April of 1970 the United States and South Vietnamese forces invaded Cambodia. After this, although the administrations credibility was being fiercely questioned, many Americans still supported Nixon and believed him when he said that the incursion had been "indispensable" for the continuing success of the withdrawal plan.47 Unfortunately, the American public did not know, and could not have known, about Nixon's secret plans to escalate the war. No one imagined that Nixon would order a sustained air bombardment of North Vietnam; in 1971 the United States dropped 800,000 tons of bombs on the North. It would not be until the revelation of the Pentagon Papers in 1972 that the American public would know the truth. So, when the American public supported President Nixon, they
felt that they were supporting a withdrawal policy through a military avenue, but not an escalation in hostilities.

This third stage at Ball State is dominated by three periods: the events before and leading up to the Vietnam Moratorium Committee, the Kent State tragedy, and the apparent apathy of late 1970. But, throughout each period the strains of conservatism are readily apparent. Even during the height of the protests, the majority of students remained firm supporters of President Nixon.

Ball State had significant activity concerning Vietnam before the first main incident. This activity shows the considerable amount of concern permeating the campus about the conflict. A poll in January of 1969 by the Daily News revealed that eighty percent of the people interviewed felt that war and disunity were the biggest problems facing the United States. Awareness about Vietnam continued in February when an anti-war play was performed at Studio Theater. The play, entitled Viet Rock, was written by Megan Terry and presented five showings. The play was meant to be a "parodic" and "satiric" exercise in condemnation of war in general. David Lewellan, graduate assistant of history, issued a condemnation of the United States' actions in the Vietnam War later that same month. He had spent four years teaching English in South Vietnam for the United States' State Department. He claimed that the American government
was to blame for the revolutions in Vietnam, and he proposed that the United States withdraw.\textsuperscript{49} Also, during this period, and throughout the rest of stage, the Associated Press headlines grew increasingly negative as stories on the My Lai Massacre surfaced and the war continued.\textsuperscript{50}

In April of 1969 YAF began to publish its own newspaper, \textit{Right Guard}, in opposition to the liberal paper, \textit{The Only Alternative}. YAF claimed that \textit{Right Guard} was to express the voice of Young Americans for Freedom and provide a forum for the airing of conservative views.\textsuperscript{51} \textit{The Only Alternative} was a liberal paper started the previous year. It was spearheaded in 1969-1970 by Carl Van Buskirk and Dave Johnson. The paper was not politically affiliated, but was concerned with issues such as the Middle East, world hunger, and Vietnam.\textsuperscript{52} This publication was the forum for the liberal students. These papers represented the extremes of opinion about Vietnam at Ball State; one calling for victory and the other calling for immediate withdrawal.

By October of 1969 the Young Democrats at Ball State had become involved, and they sponsored a forum about the necessity to end the war in Vietnam and reorder national priorities. They were able to obtain Allen Deeter, Manchester College director of its Peace Studies Institute, as the main speaker. Deeter stated that, "America
has had its days of moralizing.” He claimed that the United States had intervened in Vietnam to protect its own interests and not for the moral reason it put forward. In his closing statement he said, “The most important job facing America is getting out of Vietnam . . . .”53 This event was the last one before the emergence of the Vietnam Moratorium Committee.

From January of 1969 through April of 1970 the activities of the Vietnam Moratorium Committee dominated the stage of Ball State in regards to Vietnam. Most of the activities at the campus during this period were either connected, stimulated by, or in opposition to this organization. The Vietnam Moratorium Committee, or VMC, at Ball State was an outgrowth of the National Moratorium to End the War on October 15, 1969. Over two million people nationwide participated in its activities to convey to President Nixon that they wanted an immediate end to the war in Vietnam.54 The fifty member VMC at Ball State was officially recognized as a campus organization in early October. This local VMC planned activities at Ball State to coincide with the national movement on October 15. They staged a midnight to midnight vigil at the Student Center with a reading of the war dead; asked for classes to be canceled; set-up information centers at Emens Auditorium, the Tally, and the Dugout where they handed out leaflets, black armbands, and peace buttons; and showed a film and held a
memorial service on the Arts Terrace. The day was organized as a
time to remember and mourn for those who had died in Vietnam.
President Pruis issued a statement supporting the students "freedom
of inquiry", and was "pleased to recognize the work and the interest
of the committee to promote responsible expression." But, President
Pruis refused to close classes out of respect for those who wished to
attend. There is little evidence to show any broad support of the
class boycott. The entire event went off as planned and over 1,000
students attended.

Student reaction to the VMC was varied, and an almost even
amount of editorials were submitted supporting each of the three
main positions. The supporters of the VMC, the first group,
unabashedly championed the protest. In addition the newly formed
organization Vietnam Veterans for Peace gave their support to the
moratorium. Alan Charles Tannenbaum was fairly representative of
the pro-VMC faction when he claimed that, "We are honoring these
great men who went into the Vietnam conflict and have died . . . ." The second faction of student opinion formed around the concept
that the VMC should not have read the names of the deceased
soldiers. It was their contention that many of the soldiers died
believing the war was just, and that they would not have wished to
have their names read at what was essentially a protest. This was their main objection to the protest, and it was the one most people felt was fundamentally wrong. University Veterans took this stand saying, "We are not protesting the war either on a pro or con basis. What we are against is the use of men's names to protest an issue which some of them would not have agreed to . . . ."60 This statement sums up the attitude of most of the people who opposed the reading of the names. They felt that the VMC had no right to use the Veteran's names.

The third and final group centered on an opinion that opposed the VMC and supported President Nixon's policies. Larry Crump's letter to the editor best represents the whole faction's attitude. Larry stated, "They were trying to stress the fact of peace, but at any cost which can't be done. They really haven't given Nixon enough time to accomplish his programs."61 Most of these people felt that protest was not the best way to get out of Vietnam and that it only hurt the United State. Support of the President and his withdrawal plan was the most effective method of getting out of Vietnam. The evidence suggests that this was the largest group since this attitude was consistent with the majority of Ball State students' opinion, and Project Faith [which will be further explained later] generated massive support.
The *Daily News* was at first very critical of the VMC's vagueness, and supported the Student Senate's refusal to pass the Vietnam Moratorium proposal. But, with the peaceful conclusion of the October 15 protest, they came to support the move. The *Daily News* stated, "October 15 was a day in which all Americans thought about the Vietnam War. This is certainly an asset to the country." 

After this initial protest the VMC became better organized and focused. In late October the VMC met and elected junior Mary Munchel as director, and adopted a constitution. The group planned and executed another moratorium in November, lengthening it to two days. They eliminated the reading of the names of the war dead to diffuse the opposition to them. The two days of activity consisted of lighting a memorial flame behind the Administration building to last forty-eight hours, accompanied by a memorial service and folk singing; 250 Ball State students participated in the protest march to the Delaware County Courthouse; dove and peace buttons, black armbands, and books were sold at the information center; and films were shown throughout the week followed by discussions.

On November 18 an undetermined number of Ball State students attended the national protest in Washington D.C., sponsored by the New Mobilization and Vietnam Moratorium committees, as part of a 520 member contingent from Indiana. It was estimated that 250,000
people attended the weekend protest. "If Muncie, Indiana is for peace, we'll get it," said one protester upon seeing a Muncie, Indiana for Peace sign at the rally.66

Due to the inclement weather of the Muncie winter most outside activities were canceled for the VMC from January until the beginning of March, except for one rally in December. Canvassing the residence Halls of the Lafollette was the only other activity during this period except for the Nixon protest.67 The December protest was held on the thirteenth of the month, and sixty to eighty protesters participated despite the cold temperatures. The activity occurred at the Courthouse plaza. The main events were walking by a coffin and dropping the names of war dead into it, and following this, speeches against the war were scheduled. As the protesters began their speeches a contingent of Muncie veterans that were present began to fire twenty-one gun salutes, thereby, making the speeches very difficult to hear. A brief shouting match erupted at one point, but the protest finished without violence.68

President Nixon gave a speech in Indianapolis in February, and the VMC turned out with forty-one students to protest. Carrying posters saying "buy books not bombs", the protesters were virtually cut-off from the President. Anyone who looked like a protester was directed by the police across the street, where they were blocked
from the view of the President by a large semi-trailer. A Daily News reporter was arrested for breaking a barricade even though he was carrying press credentials. He was fined twenty-five dollars for the offense.

March, 1970, rolled in and the New Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam called for a national Anti-Draft Week. Ball State's VMC followed suit, sponsoring a week of activities from March 16 through the 22. The week was started by a speech from Finlay Campbell, Wabash English teacher, entitled "Swords of Fire: the Domestic Results of the Vietnam War." A table was set up in the Tally for any male to sign a petition stating, "If ordered for induction, we, the undersigned, will refuse. We will not serve in the military as long as the war in Vietnam continues." Mary Munchel stated that signing the petition was not illegal, and over the period of the week over 140 men signed the petition.

The last month of activity for the VMC was April. They once again sponsored a moratorium set for April 13 through the 15. Approximately 200 students attended the opening of the moratorium at the Peace and Unity Celebration on the Arts Terrace on April 13. Phil Orth sang The Crucifixion while a fourteen foot cross was erected in front of the the terrace to symbolize the suffering of humanity. Reverend Bob Williams gave the main address. However, the three
day fast for peace was the main thrust of the moratorium. Those who participated were to donate the money they did not spend on food to victims of the Vietnam War. Participants found out first-hand the difficulty in maintaining a fast, and the Daily News reported in an unofficial poll that half of the participants had given up after two days. The VMC ended its moratorium with the Taxpayer's Rally which was attended by 500 students at the Delaware County Building Plaza. At the plaza Sam Brown, national VMC coordinator, spoke denouncing the war and stressed the fact that the war should be examined in terms of the loss of human life that it had caused.

This April moratorium turned out to be the last effort by the VMC. The national VMC disbanded in late April, and by May 1 Ball State's VMC dissolved. Mary Munchel announced that the VMC had been absorbed into a New Left Coalition due to the lack of liberal support at Ball State. But, for all practical purposes the VMC ceased to be a factor in the anti-Vietnam protests.

Did Ball State students change their opinion to the VMC over this period of time? Basically, the students' views varied very little. The amount of letters to the editor was really not enough to indicate a change one way or another. Therefore, it is probable that opinions in regard to the VMC changed very little.

Faculty members had very little documented opinion. But, Ray
White, assistant professor of history, supported at least the VMC's October moratorium, and he stated that it had a good effect because it made students aware of the war. Morton Rosenberg, associate professor of history, felt that the October moratorium suffered from a lack of grassroots organization. He was opposed to the November moratorium because he thought it a waste of energy. He felt that, "No official position should be taken by faculty or administration." Instead, he thought that faculty should encourage individual decisions within the students, faculty, and administration. In December, a Public Statement of Disagreement appeared in the Daily News taking up all of page twelve. The statement was signed by seventy-three concerned citizens, faculty, and student senators. It stemmed from an aggressive article in the Muncie Evening Press by a Mr. Edward Dixon. Mr. Dixon wrote about using rifles against the VMC protesters, thereby, "proclaiming injury and death to them." In addition to this it was alleged that the faculty sponsor of the VMC had been told to "watch his step" and his car had already been burned. Basically, it appears that the VMC did have at least some support from the faculty, even though there was undoubtedly hostility present, too.

The Daily News continued in its open support of the VMC. In April it stated, "Ball State's VMC continues to offer a voice of dissent, a voice that cannot and should not be silenced, right or wrong."
One of the results of the VMC was increased activity at Ball State in regards to the government's Vietnam policy. The most important outgrowth was what became known as Project Faith. The movement was started locally by Mary Lynn Whitcomb. Basically, the movement supported President Nixon's Vietnam policy. A letter was written in support of the President and distributed to thirty-two residence halls. The gist of the letter is obvious from the following excerpt.

"Although we don't understand all of the implications of the Vietnam conflict we do not consider war to be the solution to the problems facing humanity, we do earnestly feel that we must exercise an intelligent degree of faith and trust in our national leader. We urge you to continue every effort to end this most frustrating war . . . ."^79

By December of 1969 this local movement had become associated with the national drive to support the policies of President Nixon, called Project Faith. The content of the letter remained the same, and over 4,000 signatures were collected in support of it. The letter was then forwarded to the White House.^80 Such massive support, much more than any of the VMC activities, strongly bolsters the idea that the majority of students on Ball State's campus advocated the withdrawal policies of President Nixon.

Other, less dramatic, aspects of this increased involvement soon surfaced. In November 1969 the Ball State Religious Council
sponsored an open forum in which all were invited to discuss the Vietnam issue. The basic question to be examined was, "How can the Nixon administration most justly pursue the Vietnam issue." The most vocal debater turned out to be Doug Jarret, YAF Chairman. His opinions blatantly showed that the hard line view still existed at Ball State. He advocated, after a suitable period to see if the North would really begin to negotiate in earnest, the continuance of all military operations and a resumption of the bombing.\(^{81}\) Later, in February the Philosophy club set up a panel to discuss the morality of war in general.\(^{82}\) This action is obviously motivated by the circumstances of the war, since debates on war's morality is not an everyday occurrence.

Student Senate took some important steps relative to the conflict during this period, too. In the end of January, Student Senate organized under its authority the Draft Counseling Services. This organization was designed to help young men interpret the complex selective service laws. It was open from 3:00-5:00 and float hours during the week. Based on the amount of articles in the \textit{Daily News} (seven from January to April) and the claims of draft counselors, the Draft Counseling Service apparently received quite a large amount of business.\(^{83}\) Student Senate also took a more radical approach in dealing with the Vietnam issue when they sent three selected
students to the Student Mobilization Conference in Cleveland, Ohio in February. The conference was admittedly anti-war, and the purpose of it was to attempt to give the participants some idea of how to respond to the needs of the students in regards to the war. Appropriately, Mary Munchel was selected as one of the representatives of Ball State.84

The Greek community came alive to the issues of Vietnam and first took definitive action under the leadership of Sigma Kappa Sorority. This social sorority started the Appeal to Hanoi campaign, which consisted of the sorority circulating a petition for student signatures. The petition asked the North Vietnamese government to honor the 1949 Geneva Conventions by releasing a list of all prisoners of war, releasing sick prisoners, permitting mail flow between the prisoners and their families, and by allowing inspection of prison camps by impartial groups. The goal of Sigma Kappa was to procure as many signatures as they could for the petition, then send it to the government of North Vietnam. Upon last count in the Daily News they had received 1,239 signatures, although it is likely that they acquired more signatures.85 The efficacy of such a drive is in doubt for many reasons. Chief among them would be the United States’ blatant disregard of the Geneva Conventions relative to elections in Vietnam; however, the effort by these women and the physical attempt they
made at making a difference in the struggle of Vietnam is very commendable. If only everyone had become as involved as these women in a united effort in support of or opposition to the war, the outcome may have been very different.

So, what is the significance to all of this activity; VMC, anti-VMC, pro-Nixon, as well as all the rest? Although, the VMC was the most visual of the activities concerning the war, it never had a broad base of support among Ball State's student population. The conservative campaigns of Project Faith and Appeal to Hanoi both garnered more support, with less effort than the VMC. Support of these two projects was easier since it only required a signature, but similar petition campaigns, such as the one against the draft, by the VMC did not achieve the degree of success that they did. Of the the VMC movement Dr. Anthony Edmonds, self-styled unofficial adviser, discussser, and hanger-on of the VMC, stated that, "in terms of affecting any kind of action, I don't think it really did. Muncie is , and Ball State are just not the kinds of places that would respond very positively to something they saw as unjust or unnecessary criticism of the government." In fact, Edmonds vividly points out the lack of a liberal support base when he related the small size of the group of vehement anti-war protesters, "essentially it was a cadre, a hard core of 30 or 40 people, mainly students, some faculty members."
Therefore, because the conservative events had more support than the VMC's, coupled with the fact that the evidence shows the attitude of the campus as a whole tended toward moderation, the view of the majority of students on campus was dominated by support of the position espoused by Nixon's silent majority. This was namely, the withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam through a military means.

Then it happened. On May 4, 1970 National Guardsmen opened fire on students at Kent State University. It was an event that shook the nation to its very core, and sent shivers through the hearts of many students nationwide. On April 30 President Nixon announced the joint United States and South Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia; protest was immediate and vocal. At Kent State, a small university in Ohio much like Ball State, a small group of students protested by rioting downtown and firebombing the ROTC building. Overreacting, Governor James Rhodes called out the National Guard and declared martial law on the campus. He claimed the students were "worse than the brown shirts and the Communist elements." The events of that fateful day are very confusing, but the following is a paraphrasing of the events as witnessed by Martha Pressler, Muncie resident and Kent State student. Hundreds of students gathered to protest and were peacefully chanting as the National Guard began its
maneuvers. After telling the students to disperse and getting no reaction, the guardsmen began using tear gas. In response angry students began to grab rocks. Suddenly, the guardsmen wheeled and fired into the crowd of students. Pressler described the following situation best in her own words.

"I was behind them and didn't believe it was gunfire. I walked up to see what happened and saw blood all over . . . One girl, who was shot in the neck had just come from class and was walking by. One of the dead boys was in ROTC . . . Those students were murdered . . ."88

When the carnage ended, eleven students were wounded and four were dead. This was an event very immediate for the students of Ball State, due to the close proximity and similarity of Kent State to Ball State. Ball State responded with considerable activity, culminating in the largest student action at the university for the entire 1964-1970 period.

The initial reaction at Ball State could be best described as one of empathy. Very few of the students felt that the deaths were justifiable. But, consistent with its past actions, the university reacted with a cautious conservatism. On May 5 Dave Weller, Steve Allen, Bob Baker, and Ed Allen organized what they called a "silent protest." Dave Weller explained the action: "Rather than to be radical and giving our school a bad name, we will plan a silent protest by wearing black armbands with the number 4 on it."89 After the
shooting of four students, these Ball State students are deeply touched and wish to make their sympathy known, but the thought of outright protest was still abhorrent to them.

However, the main reaction came on May 6 when the Student Senate passed a resolution for a university wide strike on the very next day. The bill was introduced by Bill Britton, Ron Miller, and Mark Sharfman at the meeting, and 350 spectators were on hand to debate the issue. The resolution read, "This action is being called as a result of our concern for 1. President Nixon's policy in Southeast Asia and 2. the invasion of Kent State University campus and the killings of six Kent State students." When it came time for a vote, a resounding 47-10-3 tally was recorded in the resolution's favor. The group did not attempt to call off classes and was supported by Tim Mains, Student Association President, when he said, "If classes were called off it wouldn't be a strike ... We can't take away the students' right to attend classes." Over 6,000 armbands were handed out for the occasion. The Daily News went so far as to claim, "The 47-10-3 passage by Student Senate to endorse the strike protesting the Kent State deaths and US activities in Southeast Asia can be said to be indicative of the attitudes of Ball State."

On May 7 Ball State joined the growing number of striking universities that would eventually total 448. Almost 4,000 students
came to the Arts Terrace sometime during the day to hear or participate in the discussion. Microphones had been placed there for this very purpose as one of the main events of the strike. Various people took turns at the microphones presenting their opinions. Harry Taylor, associate professor of English, took his turn at the podium and read a petition with 650 signatures, asking for the Senate to censure Richard Nixon. Obviously, not too many of the students present were too enthusiastic about the project if only 650 signed. Ballots of all kinds circulated during the day at the terrace, some urging an end to the draft and others supporting the policies of Nixon. The anti-war people were numerous during the day, and obviously dominated the discussion. One unnamed young man burned his draft card on the platform and received a standing ovation from the crowd. Another man, whose name was also not available, was a Vietnam combat soldier home on emergency leave. He spoke on the platform and said, "We need your help. It's up to you to stop it right here. We want to come home just like anybody else. We don't want to be there." The pro-Nixon forces had a rough day at the microphone. Mary Barefoot, editor-in-chief of the Daily News, went to the microphone defending President Nixon's policies saying, "In my opinion, Cambodia may well be the answer to peace not just in the United States but in the world." Later in the afternoon Dave Grindstaff and John Beeman also
supported the administration on the podium, but amidst jeers and
hecklers. When Grindstaff intimated that the shootings at Kent State
were the students' fault, the harassment became so intense that
Mark Sharfman, one of the organizers of the event, had to ask the
crowd to let Grindstaff air his views. This day of remembrance, at
least at the Arts Terrace, clearly leaned toward sympathy to the dead
Kent State students.

Another event of the strike took place also at the Arts Terrace,
but earlier at 11:00 a.m. Approximately 2,000 students turned out for
this event—the Cambodian Information Hour. Associate professor Tony
Edmonds led the event. Edmonds cited the absence of information
and the complexity of the situation as being the main difficulties in
examining the Cambodian incursion. What information was known
about the situation was passed out to the students on fact sheets
during the presentation. Edmonds delivered a speech very critical of
the President and the American presence in Vietnam. He advocated
the withdrawal of American forces, and declined to speculate on the
future actions of President Nixon because he feared to look in the
"caverns of Nixon's mind" in fear he would "get lost or die of
pollution." He apologized for not delivering an impartial speech but
said, "The reason I didn't state facts is because I don't know any
facts you don't know. On an issue like this I cannot keep silent."
Edmonds closed praising the 2000 odd students who turned out, but said, "Four Americans had to die to get this many out here. I wish you had been here sooner."

Students also gathered in a sit-in protest in front of the Administration building in an attempt to get the flag lowered to half mast for the 4:00 Memorial Service. The protest started at 1:30 and was over in only twenty minutes when President Pruis agreed that the flag should be lowered for the service. Calling this action a protest is almost a misnomer, since their was no real stand against its objective by anyone. But, it did show the lengths that Ball State students were willing to go to in order to insure that the proper respect be paid the dead students.

A Memorial Ceremony was held also at the Arts Terrace at 4:00, and 3,000 students attended. Opening remarks were given by President Pruis. Pruis was saddened by the four deaths and said, "I am especially hurt by loss of life when it is senseless." Following, were three local ministers who all gave rousing epitaphs. J.C. Williams, pastor of the Trinity Methodist Church, roused the crowd when he said, "Thousands of people in Vietnam and Cambodia are dying and I don't know why. But I don't think it's for freedom!" The second speaker summed up the event by saying that the Kent State students were killed exercising their right to dissent. He exclaimed,
"Those kids didn't go to the rally to die. Just like Martin Luther King
didn't go to Memphis to die, just like Robert Kennedy didn't go to Los
Angeles to die . . . ."96

Students replied heavily to this protest with twenty-nine letters
to the editor in the remaining month of May. The opinions on whether
the protest was positive or negative were almost evenly split; forty-
six percent of those with an opinion on the efficacy of the protest felt
it was positive and fifty-four percent felt it was negative. Of the
number who responded with an a view about whose fault the Kent
State killings were, forty-four percent felt it was the students' fault,
sixteen percent felt it was both of the parties' fault, and thirty-eight
percent felt it was totally the guardsmen's fault. Some of the
students were sure that the guardsmen were justified, and others
called the action cold blooded murder. Conclusive evidence is lacking
about student opinion when examining only these editorials due to
the closeness of the statistics.97 However, the pro-government, anti-
protester opinions were slightly higher.

This strike day looks as if it was designed as an attempt to get
all of the students involved. Regardless of opinion, all students were
encouraged to attend and air their views. To the credit of all
involved, the day was conducted with absolutely no violence. Why
were there almost 4,000 students attending this particular protest
when other protests had only 500 or 600 at the most? This particular protest was very much different than any previous, because of the circumstances surrounding the Kent State tragedy. Ball State was attempting to reach out and show that it sympathized with the Kent State. But, it must be duly noted that the reaction once again was fairly moderate. Many of the other striking universities were forced to shut down for the rest of the year, and sporadic violence occurred.\textsuperscript{98} Ball State chose one day to memorialize the dead, without violence or strife. This in itself shows the moderate strain in the majority of the people at Ball State. Even though other activities concerning Kent State were very possible, with roughly three weeks left in the school year, Ball State chose to limit its protest to one day. The campus made its point and then went on with the daily routine of education. Consequently, opinions about the Vietnam War were not changed by Kent State, even though most felt the situation a most unfortunate tragedy.

June through December of 1970 produced at Ball State the third major "event" of the stage: almost absolute inactivity on the part of its students in relation to Vietnam. Virtually, no actions were taken to make a statement for or against the war. The student body seemed to not want to get involved, and looked very apathetic upon first examination. A good example is the complete lack of student
letters to the editor giving any opinion about the Vietnam War. Ric Darrell, a recently discharged Marine, complained caustically about the apathy exhibited on campus. 99 To make matters seem worse, the VMC was dead not to be resurrected, and YAF ceased to exist in October due to a lack of interest. 100 1970 came in like a lion, with almost hyper activity dealing with the war, but it looked as if it would go out like a lamb, bathed in a sea of apathy. The Daily News' response was almost to the point of outright rage over the students' apathy, and it attempted all that it possibly could to keep the issue of Vietnam fresh on Ball States' mind. In October of 1970 the paper ran a story on the anniversary of the VMC, describing in detail the activities of the organization. 101 The paper's next bid to try to instigate student activity was its suggestion that the students boycott homecoming until the Vietnam war ended. 102 The attempt failed miserably. Almost in desperation managing editor, Marie Kingsbury, wrote, "There seems to be no indication of any concern among Ball State students for the daily slaughter of men, women, and children in Southeast Asia." 103 Try as it may the Daily News could not seem to interest Ball State into attempting any activity concerning Vietnam.

However, if one examines the events at Ball State closely, it becomes evident that the students were concerned about the Vietnam
War. The most blatant example of this was a poll conducted by Donald Mikesell, director of the Office of Student Affairs, to find out the most important issue in the eyes of Ball State students. Of the 500 people polled thirty-six percent, the largest amount for any one issue, determined Vietnam to be the biggest issue in America at that time. All of the students surveyed were asked what position they would take in regards to the war. The majority, forty-three percent, answered that they supported President Nixon's withdrawal policy. Thirty percent replied that they wished withdrawal would speed up, and only a combined twenty-nine percent supported the extremes of immediate withdrawal and a fight for total victory. Not only does this show that the students of Ball State were concerned about the war, but also it highlighted the conservatism of the campus. Nixon's proposed withdrawal plan received the most support, and those who wished withdrawal would speed up came in second. Therefore, the majority of students at Ball State, who had no knowledge of Nixon's escalation plans other than Cambodia, still believed in and supported the President's withdrawal plans.

Also, during this time Student Association and the Student Center Governing Board sponsored Rennie Davis, one of the infamous Chicago Seven, to come and speak at Ball State. Student Association President, Jerry Williams, said that this was, "An effort to deal with
the issue of the war which is subsiding." Rennie Davis spoke to the crowd, which filled all of the Emens Auditorium except the balcony, about the escalation of the war. He promoted constant student protest until the government ended the war. Ending the lecture was a heated question and answer session with an angry Ball State student unsatisfied with Davis' response that he was not a Communist. This event supplements the idea that Ball State students were very interested in the outcome of the war.

The final example of Ball State concern was the continued popularity of the Draft Counseling Service. The thought of serving twelve months in Vietnam apparently did not appeal to too many Ball State men, because Al Pate, coordinator for the service, exclaimed, "I am amazed that this early in the year so many people are coming to us for information." Three articles appeared in the Daily News over a two month period, indicating increased interest.

Student apathy is not a good way to describe this period. The poll, the Davis visit, and the popularity of the Draft Service all support the notion that Ball State students were concerned about the Vietnam War. So, why the marked decrease in pro or ant-war activity at the campus? The possible explanations are varied and many in number. Perhaps it was the disintegration of the New Left's leadership on the national level. Factionalism, a turn toward violence, and
disenchantment with American culture all worked to push away many protesters from the national movement. The extremism of the "radical vanguard" was unacceptable to the masses of students and the left crumbled. 106 Maybe, it was the disillusionment that many students were feeling with the political processes. Protest was just not changing anything. Another plausible explanation is that the relative consensus of opinion in support of Nixon by the majority of students at Ball State, left few students to protest. Most people who believe in the status quo will usually not be vocal, and do not wish to "rock the boat." The disappearance of the VMC and YAF shows vividly that the extremes in the spectrum of opinion on Vietnam were very few in number at Ball State. These organizations did not even have enough members to maintain their own existence, let alone accomplish protests of any kind. Yet another plausible reason could be that the campus was just plain worn out by the relatively large amount of activity at Ball State the entire previous academic year, and just needed some time to rest and re-group. Undoubtedly, the real explanation for this decrease in activity is some degree of amalgamation of all of the above, and in all probability a few more interpretations, too.

Throughout this period of history at Ball State certain strains of behavior are visible, and remain consistent in regards to Vietnam. In
the first stage, 1964-1966, the beginnings of the protest movement are evident. But, most of the student population at Ball State-like most Americans-rallied around the government. As befitted its university status, Ball State began to examine the war and search for information about this strange place called Vietnam, in an attempt to learn and become educated.

Stage two, 1967-1968, brought more dissension as the anti-war forces became fully organized. Ball State students became first acquainted with protest during this time as SLAM made its presence known. An integral part of this increasing activity was the nationally directed protest that twenty-three students attended in Washington D.C. A small core of dedicated anti-war students was beginning to emerge at Ball State. Then of course came Tet, and student opinion became galvanized in favor of withdrawal. But, the campus remained stoically supportive of the Johnson administration, and was to be even more supportive of incoming President Richard Nixon. Many Ball State students resented the activities of SLAM, and almost every piece of legislation they put forward in Student Senate was blocked. Students remained stubbornly moderate and supportive of the government. When General Mark Wayne Clark spoke in front of a large crowd at Emens on the evils of communism, he received a standing ovation. In the Choice 68 referendum on Vietnam, Ball State
overwhelmingly chose supported the policy of phased reduction. Even during this second stage, which is dominated by a massive swing in public opinion, Ball State maintained a position consistent with the nation as a whole.

Finally, came stage three, 1969-1970, a period ruled by the emotionally tinged Kent State tragedy. Yes, there was activity by the local VMC, but they rarely would attract a crowd of even 600 students. Project Faith, however, managed to gain the support of over 4,000 Ball State students in clear support of President Nixon's withdrawal plans. Even the Appeal to Hanoi acquired almost 2,000 signatures. This puts the VMC's support in the proper context. The VMC did have support, but that support was by a very small minority of students. Of course all was overshadowed by the May 4, 1970 tragedy at Kent State. Ball State did strike and there were an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 people active during the day. But, relative to other striking universities the actions at Ball State were extremely mild. The large turnout best is explained by Ball State students' feeling an immediacy about the killings that frightened many into action. Most of Ball State regretted the horrible outcome. However, it is totally errorneous to claim that the rally was a clear movement against President Nixon's policies. After the Kent State Strike the majority of students at Ball State still supported the administration's
withdrawal policies.

When all of these occurrences from each stage are studied in light of one another, a clear pattern emerges. The Playboy poll, student response to General Clark, Choice 68, Project Faith, and the response to Kent State all exemplify this conservative support of the administration. The VMC and SLAM simply signify anti-Vietnam action by a dedicated minority that retained a high profile. Negative student response, lack of protest support, and the lack of protest results, all indicate these organization's protests and protesters were not popular at Ball State. The emerging pattern was one of moderation and faith in the political system of the United States, characterized by support of the elected officials of the nation. Consequently, almost unswerving support of the government's policies regarding the Vietnam war was exhibited by the majority of Ball State students for the entire period.

When compared to the larger, prestige universities the activities at Ball State appear almost innocent: no buildings were bombed, no students brutally beaten by police, no shootings, the campus was never shut down, and no buildings were ever taken over. However, many people still have a radical view of students at colleges and universities during these tumultuous times. This concept is not consistent with reality. Common sense tells one that the vast
majority of institutions of higher learning in the United States were not the Berkeleys, but most were like Ball State. Most students in the United States attended the typical, less prestigious universities. Therefore, the radicalism that may have been the norm at the prestige schools, was not the norm for the average university student in the nation. Ball State is a much more representative school regarding its activities relevant to Vietnam than for example, Columbia. Hence, if one wishes to study the response of college and university students to the Vietnam War, Ball State serves as an excellent case study.

Virtually destroying the myth of universal student protest, Ball State hints at a much more moderate and middle of the road student. The average student-based on my perception of the average student at Ball State during this period-may have behaved as follows. During the first stages of the war this student gave it his or her advocacy, rallying in support of the government. As the conflict developed this “average” student began to lean towards withdrawal, until eventually, he or she gave the doctrine of withdrawal whole-hearted support. When President Nixon announced that he would phase out the American presence in Vietnam, the average student rose to back the President. Kent State horrified him or her, but it did not influence a change in opinion on Vietnam. The shootings were tragic, but it was
the violent protest by the students that instigated the horrible event. Definitely, the quickest way out of Vietnam to this student was to support the present administration's policies, not by "radical" protest.

Giving credence to this model based on the "average" student is the simple fact that Ball State followed the dominant opinion in the United States throughout the 1964-1970 period. Where the majority led, so followed Ball State. When the nation turned against Vietnam, Ball State began to doubt the fight for victory. The nation lent its support of Nixon, and Ball State supported the President. So, it would seem that the average student was very close in ideology concerning the war to the average American citizen. The views of the average citizen and the average college or university student had many more similarities than differences. This then could suggest, from Ball State's example, that for this period the vast majority of university students supported the silent majority, and that the vociferous anti-war demonstrators were exceptions rather than the rule.
Endnotes


2 Hodgson, *Our Time*, p. 357.


10 During the 1964-1966 period twenty Associated Press photographs were run in *The News* and there were 136 associated press articles on Vietnam.


33Hodgson, Our Time, p. 357.


*After September 12, 1968 the name of the paper changed to The Ball State Daily News. Hereafter issues under this name will be referred to as Daily News.


46 Hodgson, *Our Time*, p. 393.
47 Grantham, Recent America, p. 319.


54 Grantham, Recent America, p. 405.


"Indiana students join march", *Daily News*, Nov. 18, 1969, p. 5.


69Marie Kingsbury, "Nixon never knew we were there", Daily News, Feb. 6, 1970, p. 1.


98 Grantham, Recent America, p. 320.
106 Grantham, Recent America, p. 408.
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