

Anti-war movement



**ASSIGN
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The United States participation in the Vietnam War was a subject of much debate among the American public. While many Americans supported the United States involvement in the War, in agreement with the Government that American assistance was needed in order to stop the spread of Communism, other people felt that it was immoral for the United States to involve itself in another country's internal matters. (Chambers) 2000. The antiwar movement against Vietnam in the US from 1965-1971 was the most significant movement of its kind in the nation's history.

After evaluating different social theories such as: Functionalism, Conflict and Interactionism, I have decided to classify the Anti-War movement during the Vietnam War as a Conflict Theory. I feel the Anti-War Movement's has characteristics of Neo-Marxism. Though the first American protests against U. S. intervention in Vietnam took place in 1963, the antiwar movement did not begin in diligence until two years later, when President Lyndon B. Johnson ordered massive U. S. military intervention and the sustained bombing of North Vietnam. Chambers) 2000.

In the spring of 1965, " teach? ins" against the war were held on many college campuses. The Anti-War Movement was centered on America's higher-educationsystem, the students, playing leading roles. Teach-ins were extreme, massive public protests. By 1968 Protesters numbered close to seven million and over half of them were Caucasian college students. The teach-ins were primarily peaceful, but effective. They were successful in capturing the attention of the public as well as those in government.

The motivation behind teach-ins were just that, with the hopes of further escalation in Vietnam to slow down or come to a halt. In April 1965, President Johnson gave a major Vietnam address at John Hopkins University, in response to the growing campus protest activity. This speech marked the political impact of campus demonstrations. (Electric Library) This is an example of Neo-Marxism. The protestors were getting a partial system change. They had the attention of the public, and most importantly the government.

However, by 1967 a lot of anti-war activists began to think peaceful protests were not going to be enough to influence war policy, so they began using civil disobediences, strikes, public disruption, shouting at government speakers and guerilla theatre to get their message heard loud and clear. In March 1967, a national organization of draft resisters was formed. In April 1967, more than 300, 000 people demonstrated against the war in New York. Six months later, 50, 000 surrounded the Pentagon, sparking nearly 700 arrests.

By this time it became typical for, senior Johnson administration officials to encounter demonstrators when speaking in public, forcing them to restrict their outside appearances. Many also had sons, daughters, or wives who opposed the war, fueling the sense of attack. Prominent participants in the antiwar movement included Dr. Benjamin Spock, Robert Lowell, Harry Belafonte, and Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. With prominent leaders extending their support in the movement it gave the activist a great deal of motivation and validation.

The social theory of Neo-Marxism was in full effect. By 1968, the Johnson administration realized the impact of widespread public opposition to the war and the troubling prospects in Vietnam, causing them to put a halt on the bombing of North Vietnam and to stabilize the ground war. This policy reversal was the major turning point. U. S. troop strength in Vietnam would climax at 543, 000 (Chambers) 2000. The antiwar movement reached its peak under President Richard M. Nixon. In October 1969, more than 2 million people participated in Vietnam Moratorium protests across the country.

The following month, over 500, 000 demonstrated in Washington and 150, 000 in San Francisco. Militant protest, continued to spread, leading many Americans to wonder whether the war was worth a split society. And other forms of antiwar activity lingered on. The Nixon administration took a host of measures to dull the movement, mainly mobilizing supporters, smearing the movement, tracking it, withdrawing U. S. troops from Vietnam, instituting a draft lottery, and eventually ending draft calls. Once U. S. troops began coming home, the antiwar movement gradually declined between 1971 and 1975 (Chambers) 2000.

The American movement against the Vietnam War was the most successful antiwar movement in U. S. history. The Neo-Marxism social theory is easily applied to the Anti-War Movement. The characteristics of the conflict were disorder, boycotts, intense conflict, commitment, and emotional involvement all of which resulted in system change. The activists involved in the Anti-War movement of this time were passionate and dedicated to seek change. They sought out peace and love for our Country and did not lose sight of their

objective. They went to great lengths to achieve what seemed like the impossible.

References

<http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O126-VietnamAntiwarMovement.html>