Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) launched in 1967 with six veterans marching for peace in New York City. Their mission: give voice to the returning service members who opposed the ongoing war in Southeast Asia. During this time, the Federal Bureau of Investigation maintained surveillance of the VVAW through 1975, when the United States ended its presence in Vietnam.

More than four decades later VVAW – 30,000 strong – still exists, making this Archives Unbound collection highly relevant for scholars interested in today’s antiwar movement and its history during the Vietnam War era.

From six soldiers in 1967, the ranks of Vietnam Veterans Against the War grew 30,000 strong

Date Range: 1967-1975
Content: 20,117 pages
Source Library: Federal Bureau of Investigation Library

America in Protest: Records of Anti-Vietnam War Organizations – Vietnam Veterans Against the War

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America in Protest: Records of Anti-Vietnam War Organizations – Vietnam Veterans Against the War offers FBI reports dealing with every aspect of antiwar work carried out by the VVAW. Researchers will also find reports on surveillance of other antiwar groups and individuals, with an emphasis on campus groups like Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and Communist organizations.

The collection’s wide range of activist-written position papers supports research in political science, American history and radical studies. In many instances these papers were open letters to the broad antiwar movement, incorporating topics such as sexism and racism in the movement, the struggle for amnesty, and the debate on pacifism as a strategic tactic. The anti-imperialism controversy, an ever-present debate in the movement, pervades numerous position papers.

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This collection opens with numerous reports, newsletters and position papers, as well as an FBI overview on the leading antiwar organizations during the Vietnam War era. In-depth reports include surveillance of national and steering committee meetings where decisions and elections took place.

America in Protest also includes legal cases revolving around constitutional rights, wiretapping and civil rights. Plaintiffs included students, veterans and activists who sued on the grounds that their civil liberties were infringed upon.

Specific documents of historical importance include:

- Winter Soldier Investigations of alleged atrocities in Vietnam by American soldiers
- Activities of John Kerry as congressman and VVAW national steering committee member
- Implementation of Dewey Canyon III Protest and Reactions
- Statue of Liberty Occupation and local police response
- FBI accusations of a conspiracy to riot during the 1972 Republican National Convention
- The arrest of a Connecticut VVAW member with an explosive device en route to a speech given by Vice President Spiro Agnew
- Informant reports on protests in California, Florida, New York and other states

Possible research topics include:

- Students for a Democratic Society-VVAW factionalism/infighting
- Campus activities by various VVAW chapters
- Communist influence in the antiwar movement and the Fourth International
- Gainesville 8 trial
- Support for the Impeachment of President Nixon
- Activities during the National Republican Convention, 1972
- Role of Jane Fonda in the Antiwar movement and pro-war backlash