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the \$10,000 to a number of charitable organizations; the Tufts Dental School graduates decided with the money they saved from not renting robes and caps they would sponsor the adoption of a Vietnam orphan.⁵⁰ The student-run portion of the ceremony, taking place on Sunday 31 May, was essentially a Vietnam protests with an audience of 5,000 parents and faculty. Students played protest songs by Joan Baez, Phil Ochs, and Simon & Garfunkel. Instead of the traditional Tufts seal on the stage they instead filled the platform with antiwar signs.

This event was unprecedented in Tufts history. An entirely student-run and organized commencement ceremony had never been attempted by the students nor welcomed by the administration. Unlike much of their Tufts careers, this commencement reflected the students wishes, and its even were dictated by the student's vision. The *Criterion* wrote, "Commencement will probably never be quite the same again at Tufts University. This year's two-day ceremonies broke the mold once and for all."⁵¹

Following the 1970 commencement ceremony, the Vietnam war slowly de-escalated until in 1975 it was considered officially over. Tufts students remained concerned with the issues of the war, and continued to protest, but there was no antiwar activity that had quite the same historical significance. The class of 1970's showing at graduation marked a significant change on the campus - students now officially had a say, whether or not it was explicitly given to them didn't matter anymore. They had proven their collective power and demonstrated their ability to take a stance against the war.

⁵⁰ "Seniors Exit Protesting, With Anti-War Songs, Talks." *The Tufts Criterion*. June 1970, p. 1.

⁵¹ "Seniors Exit Protesting, With Anti-War Songs, Talks." *The Tufts Criterion*. June 1970, p. 1.

Vietnam and for the deceased members of the class of 1970. It was also officially decided that caps and gowns would not be a part of the ceremony. This issue of the *Observer* was the last of the spring, as three days after its release the Kent State shooting occurred, effectively ending the academic year. While Tufts did not officially shut down as many of its counterparts did, most exams were postponed and students focused so intently on protesting and striking that academics fades into the background.⁴⁶ Only about forty percent of students took exams, and campus was kept open in large part to allow the inspired student body to continue protesting.⁴⁷

According to the *Boston Globe*, this ceremony, along with many other in the Greater Boston area, were “marked by innovation and an outpouring of anti-war sentiment”.⁴⁸ The *Criterion* describes the 1970 commencement ceremony in interesting terms for a collegiate graduation ceremony, “*Hair’s* ‘Aquarius’ and ‘Air’ wafted across the grass mall, ushers were decked out in faded denims, lovely mini-skirted girls were handing out chrysanthemums, and the caps and gowns were gone.” Those students who did wear caps and gown chose to adorn them with peace signs, power fists, and doves. In a stunning show of student unity and collective power, only twenty-five of the 1,261 graduating seniors attended Saturday’s convocation ceremony. The *Criterion* seemingly eager to assuage the fears of the more conservative alumni were adamant that students did not boycott the ceremony, even including the sub-headline “Student Did Not Boycott” and calling the phrase ‘student boycott’ misleading and unfair. The *Boston Globe* disagreed, publishing on 31 May the headline: “Graduation is Protest Time, Tufts: Boycotted”. The *Globe* reporter wrote that almost the entire class boycotted the ceremony, instead participating in student activities on the lawn.⁴⁹ Instead of a senior week, the class of 1970 chose to give

⁴⁶ Ibid, see also: “The Report of the President’s Commission on Campus Unrest,” President’s Commission on Campus Unrest, Washington, DC, accessed April 24, 2015.

⁴⁷ Stack, James. "Student Protests Slowing." *Boston Globe (1960-1986)*: 5. May 13 1970. *ProQuest*. Web. 15 Dec. 2017.

⁴⁸ Brody, Judith. "1971 Graduations Return to Tradition." *Boston Globe (1960-1986)*: 9. May 23 1971. *ProQuest*. Web. 15 Dec. 2017.

⁴⁹ "Graduation is Protest Time." *Boston Globe (1960-1986)*: 1. May 31 1970. *ProQuest*. Web. 15 Dec. 2017.

automatic weapons systems, an unknown number of women were raped, and the entire village was burned to the ground. “The grisly story is being told in bits and pieces, as GI’s around the country stand up to tell what they know about an event that was kept secret by the Army for 20 months,” (Boston Globe Mary McGory 12 nov 1969). The incident was covered up for more than a year.

What planning may have gone into the Spring 1970 commencement ceremony is seemingly lost to the infamous drug bust that rocked campus in April of 1970. The *Observer* pages are full of students and faculty discussing the drug busts, and two supplemental issues were published to cover extensive information on drugs at Tufts, policies, and the implications of the historical bust. The bust stole attention from what might have been information on how students planned to conduct their graduation ceremony in May. On Wednesday 22 April and Thursday 23 April 1970 Tufts seniors and graduate students gathered to vote on what their graduation ceremony would look like. Unsurprisingly, in the wake of almost a decade of struggling against the administration to make progress for social issues that seemed stagnant, the senior class overwhelmingly voted against having a traditional ceremony. They voted against the elaborate procession of faculty and students, against assigned seats, against a speaker from the Tufts administration, with a student speaker instead, against caps and gowns (although they remain optional). They voted to have a memorial for the Tufts community members who have been killed or will be killed in the future in Vietnam. voted to have three speakers At this vote there was not yet a plan in place for what would replace the traditional pomp and circumstance of a commencement ceremony, students simply knew it was not appropriate to maintain the tradition in light of their experience in their previous four years Tufts. The graduation would still be a two day event, the first day resigned to the faculty and administration to present honorary degrees and conduct official ceremonies, and the second day for the students to make their own.

On Friday 1 May the *Observer* published the pending graduation format, which was set to include student musical selections, followed by an explanation from the class officers of the purposeful changes made to the ceremony, then three speakers, and finally a memorial service for those killed in

In June of 1969, three Tufts students delivered an unscheduled speech at the commencement ceremony. Tufts students wrote satirically of their commencement: “It was a very nice day. Except for the war, the starvation in America, the repression by Nixon’s henchmen, the draft, and the continuing destruction of the world’s ecology by American industry.”⁴³ *The Tufts Criterion*, the alumni magazine, reported that commencement was otherwise not interrupted, and that the “tradition and pomp survived - except for a few minor brushed with precedent”.⁴⁴ The three seniors were given the opportunity to speak briefly thirty minutes prior to the beginning of graduation. They removed their graduation robes and spoke about the frivolity of having a ceremony when the Tufts community and the United States is so crippled by social and administrative issues. Their speech inspired thirty more graduates to remove their robes before accepting their degrees. Much to the chagrin of parents and faculty, students handed out pamphlets, petitions, and manifestos throughout the day. Jackson College speaker, Susan Mathes, also spoke out against the war, condemning American actions both in Vietnam and at home, stating that the U.S. claims to be “the freest in the world, but what we see and experience every day falls far below the superlative description of ‘most free’.”⁴⁵ One detail the *Criterion* failed to include in its commencement coverage was the bold decision of a graduate to announce on stage, “I am a homosexual” before the Tufts administration quickly turned off the microphone and ushered him off stage.

In the fall of 1969, Vietnam was back in the Tufts paper, now the *Observer* instead of the *Tufts Weekly*. In November of 1969 any remaining American public support for the Vietnam War was dealt a debilitating blow when news of the My Lai massacre broke. It was revealed in an interview with Seymour Hersh and veteran Ron Ridenhour that In March of 1968 a company of American soldiers had, unprovoked, murdered an entire Vietnamese village. More than 500 women, children, and elderly people were rounded up and gunned down by machine guns, grenade launchers, and other semi

⁴³ “In Memoriam: Pax Et Lux.” *Tufts Observer*. 8 Sep. 1969, p. 1.

⁴⁴ *The Tufts Criterion*. Volume 1, Number 5. 5 June 1969, p. 1.

⁴⁵ “Graduation Uncommon - Pomp Only Slightly Ruffled.” *The Tufts Criterion*. Volume 1, Number 5. 5 June 1969, p. 1.

that students associated with the Tufts community, first graduate students then undergraduate, be called on to serve. In the spring semester of 1968, every issue of the *Tufts Weekly* had a story about Vietnam. In some issues there was mention of the Vietnam war on every page. The conflict had permeated so deeply the conscious of Tufts community, there seemed to be a complacency in antiwar action. A large part of the campus was focused on the continuously mounting concern for the draft, rather than protesting or discussing the war itself. The *Weekly* featured advertisements for draft counseling, draft education opportunities like open forums and meetings, and reminders to keep up with the necessary paperwork. In April the student council released the results of the Vietnam referendum. As expected, almost seventy-five percent of the student body thought the U.S. had made a mistake involving itself in Vietnam.

The 1968-1969 school year marked a departure from the previous half a decade. Whether or not students remained outraged by the lack of progress made by antiwar activity was unclear, because the *Weekly* made no mention of the conflict until well into the school year. Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination in April refocused students on issues of race, which were continually discussed at Tufts in the fall of 1968 as students advocated for the administration to adopt less discriminatory policies and for the local community to end discrimination.⁴² The first mention of the Vietnam War in the *Weekly* doesn't occur until the beginning of December, in an article about discrediting ROTC. It seemed as though the lack of progress and the frustration from the previous semester was insurmountable, and the Tufts community was consciously focusing on the other important issues that had been ignored in the heat of antiwar activity. This lull in activity reflects the seeming lull in the war, after the Tet Offensive in January, the Johnson administration made a concerted effort to minimize activity in Vietnam, and at the very least minimize press coverage.

⁴² "Last Spring's Awakening on the Hill." *The Tufts Weekly*. 9 Sep. 1968, p. 1. / "Discrimination Charged in Rental Dispute." *The Tufts Weekly*. 12 Sep. 1968, p. 1.

The Navy ROTC office refused to corroborate this, instead citing MDN Fiorentini's poor performance as the basis for his termination, but Fiorentini was adamant, stating "There is no question that I was thrown out for my stand on Vietnam. It's my opinion that NROTC threw me out to coerce other students in NROTC not to voice their dissent of the Administrative policy."³⁸ The Naval ROTC officers defended their decision to release Fiorentini of his contract but the damage to the program's reputation was done in the eyes of many in the Tufts community.

In January of 1968 the Tet Offensive began, marking the significant collaborative strength of the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese conventional forces. All across South Vietnam cities and military posts were attacked, including the famous attack on the U.S. embassy. The U.S. troops were caught largely by surprise and the Vietnamese forces conducted a purposeful and sustained attack that resulted in thousands of American casualties over the span of a month.³⁹ This attack shocked the American public and marked a shift towards de-escalation of the war as President Johnson's approval ratings fell.

Finally early in the spring of 1968, Tufts student council began the process of collecting student opinions on the war. The referendum was distributed on 7 February 1968 and its explicit goal was to gauge Tufts students' reactions to the situation in Southeast Asia. As the situation in Vietnam continued to escalate military recruitment on campus also comes into serious question.⁴⁰ Students proposed to the student council and to the administration that ties with the military be cut to represent the student's disagreement with the military actions there, but their pleas were unheeded. The faculty discussed the place of military recruiting on campus at length and held votes, with unsuccessful results, to remove recruiting from campus.⁴¹ The remainder of the semester was clouded by further draft concern. Selective Service System regulations continued to change, threatening deferments and increasing the likelihood

³⁸ Opal, Kit. "NROTC Man Dismissed". *The Tufts Weekly*. 8 Dec. 1967. p. 1.

³⁹ "Vietnam War Casualties (1955-1975)." Military Weapons, www.militaryfactory.com/vietnam/casualties.asp.

⁴⁰ Trunzo, Tom. "What Place Does ROTC Have at Tufts?" *The Tufts Weekly*. 29 Mar. 1968, p. 9.

⁴¹ "On-campus Recruiting Considered." *The Tufts Weekly*. 9 Feb. 1968, p. 1.

against the war?”³⁴ Also in the fall of 1967, there is a first attempt to gain an understanding of what the student body as a whole thought of the conflict, through a school-wide referendum conducted by the student council. This is an important step towards creating a coherent campus identity regarding the war, one that students will later use to pressure the administration to make decisions on behalf of the student body.³⁵ Late in the fall of 1967 the *Weekly* reflected a sense of urgency that was spreading across Tufts and across campuses around the country. Students wrote to the *Weekly*'s Campus Commentary and Letter to the Editor sections with increased frequency, encouraging the Tufts community to take a more active stance against the war. “How America Kills For Peace”, “Mobilization Diary”, “Sounds Of Silence At Tufts”, “A Case Of Military Dissent”, “Echo On The Hill” and simply “Mobilization” were titles that dotted the pages of the *Weekly* that fall.³⁶ The possibility of being drafted loomed in the future of many students; it became such a realistic prospect that more than fifty students gathered in Cohen auditorium in December to hear Colonel Paul F. Feeny, director of the Selective Service System in MA, and his colleagues speak what military obligation would mean for a student's future. The Colonel encouraged students to pursue ROTC, “the relatively painless path”, instead of seeking deferment. Students quickly became frustrated with the recruiting pitch coming from the military personnel on the panel and redirected their questions instead to the “‘human being’ of the panel, David Washburn of the American Friends Service Committee.”³⁷ Washburn broke down the three realistic options for skirting military service: conscientious objection, jail, or leaving the country.

One final event of the 1967 fall semester left the Tufts community with an uneasy feeling about the place of ROTC on campus. Naval ROTC midshipman, and Tufts junior James Fiorentini, was dismissed from the ROTC program allegedly for his vocal anti-Vietnam war stance, his presidency of the antiwar Young Democrats, and his active participation in antiwar protests such as at Dow Chemical.

³⁴ “Tufts Citizens Concerned About the War” *The Tufts Weekly*. 29 Sep. 1967, p. 5.

³⁵ “Student Council Approves Viet Referendum” *The Tufts Weekly*. 29 Sep. 1967, p. 8.

³⁶ *The Tufts Weekly*. 20 Oct. 1967. To 15 Dec. 1967.

³⁷ Hewett, Roger. “Forum Reveals Draft Ideas.” *The Tufts Weekly*. 8 Dec. 1967, p. 1.

In the springtime of 1967 restless dissenters finally organized the first large scale protest of the year: the Spring Mobilization for Peace in Vietnam, also called Spring Mobilization to End the War in Vietnam. In San Francisco and New York City people gathered for a week, from 8 to 15 April, to participate in “conferences, rallies, lobbying, signature gatherings, draft card burning and teach-ins”. 125,000 people descended on New York to partake in the events, including 250 Tufts students who came for the culminating Peace Walk. To commemorate the week at Tufts, Crane Theological School hosted a teach-in, featuring Noam Chomsky of the MIT Linguistics Department, for the first time explicitly featuring “strictly dove-oriented” views. Also a part of mobilization week Dr. Herbert Aptheker, a celebrated Marxist scholar and activist, came to speak about Vietnam. The following week the *Weekly* posted a follow-up article summarizing the teach-in with: “Teach-In Speakers Blast Viet War”.³³

‘Vietnam Summer’, initiated by Martin Luther King during a speech in Cambridge, MA in April, kept many Tufts students busy in the summer before the 1967 1968 school year. Tufts students and faculty were involved petitioning, facilitating discussion groups, and participating in demonstrations, and a Tufts graduate student was the editor of the movements newspaper, the *Vietnam Summer News*. After a summer of activism Tufts students returned to campus invigorated and prepared to engage with the conflict more aggressively. Students were again reminded to maintain vigilance about their draft deferment status. Students continued to organize forums featuring popular educators opposed to the war, like Noam Chomsky and Tufts Professors Isles, Rouse, Dallery, and others. In the 29 September issue of the *Weekly* a student group organized and paid for an antiwar petition to be published. Titled “Tufts Citizens Concerned About The War”, it included signatures of more than 250 Tufts students and community members. The petition expressed the anger and disgust they feel towards the war, and they finished it by saying, “Silent disapproval is the same as active support. Will you join us in speaking out

³³ Harlands, Marc. “Teach-In Speakers Blast Viet War.” *The Tufts Weekly*. 12 April 1967, p. 1 and 14.

the bloodthirsty killers needed in Vietnam. The second gripe the students present is that the Commission is proposing to take away certain graduate school deferments unless students are in a field that contributes to the war effort, for example engineering. This, they argue, “leaves many of the traditional advocates of freedom to be slaughtered”.³¹ On the same page, just adjacent to the scathing review of the proposed draft policies, the Tufts Young Democratic Club published their Commentary, titled “Viet Statement”. Their statement, as many before has, again addressed the American public’s growing confusion about the situation in Vietnam due to the “apparent contradictions” in the U.S. communication to the public. The group called for “an immediate unconditional end of the bombing of North Vietnam” and for negotiations for peace.

On 10 March, one week after Kerr and Kyle’s piece was published, another Tufts student responded with a Commentary piece called “Draft Vs. Professional Army”. In his writing Robert Jacques calls out Kerr and Kyle for their exaggerated and cynical explanations for the Commission’s choices, but then goes on to agree that their feelings of frustration with the poorly designed draft system are valid. He finishes with a call for Tufts students to actively stand against these proposed changes, “it is time that students stand as a whole and petition against present proposed revisions”, but also asks them to learn from the mistakes of Kerr and Kyle and bring “positive, equitable and effective arguments” to the fight.³² This written back and forth between Tufts students with different views was very common in the *Weekly*. Each week the Commentary section and the Letter to the Editor section included at least one or two pieces that addressed ideas from previously published articles or challenges the opinions of a speaker, faculty member, or other student activists. Tufts students were vocal about their opinions and they articulated their disagreement well - this skill would eventually lead to Tufts campus becoming a hub for student antiwar activism in the later years of the war and for Tufts students to become leaders in many protests and activities throughout the greater Boston area.

³¹*The Tufts Weekly*. 3 Mar. 1967, p. 5.

³²*The Tufts Weekly*. 10 Mar. 1967, p. 5.

In November of 1966 Fletcher student and Vietnam veteran Capt. John Buchanan was asked to speak at Carmichael Hall. This was the first time during the era that a Vietnam veteran was invited to formally share his opinion with the Tufts community and his thoughts surprised many. Buchanan expressed dutiful support for the U.S. effort in Vietnam. He said, "I feel very sorry for the [Vietnamese] people, but I believe that what we are doing in Vietnam is right". *Weekly* writer Myron Levin reported that Buchanan "feels that the press has been overly critical of the war effort and is more inclined to find and report mistakes than in other wars. He said that the student protests irritate American soldiers in Vietnam, although they do not significantly alter their efficiency. 'The average GI has not gone to college, and he cannot sympathize with card-burners at Berkeley'". Buchanan also offered something of a consolation by explaining to listeners that in fact the South Vietnamese people were more brutal than the U.S. soldiers. The South Vietnamese military, which is currently working under heavy U.S. advisement and is ruled by a U.S. controlled puppet government, frequently executed prisoners in cold blood according to Buchanan.²⁹

In January of 1967 the draft came back into focus with General Lewis B. Hershey's speech at the Ford Hall forum. During his talk about the history of the draft system and its recent use, he refused to refer to the Vietnam war with that name, instead calling it "the thing in which we are now engaged". The General also criticized the choice of many students to 'browse' graduate schools and evaded a question relating to the recent increase in drafted doctoral candidates.³⁰ In March two students published a Campus Commentary piece in the *Weekly* reflecting the concerns of many young Tufts men with the alleged new "Draft inequities". Kerr and Kyle's problem with the revisions to the draft system is mainly about the choice of the President's commission to increase the selection of young men between nineteen and twenty years old, instead of the current policy of men around twenty-five years old. They argue that this is because young men are easier to indoctrinate into the brutal military life and easier to train to be

²⁹*The Tufts Weekly*. 2 Dec. 1966, p. 1 and 12.

³⁰*The Tufts Weekly*. 4 Jan. 1967, p. 1.

of the spring of 1972, more than 100 students listened on as an unnamed discussion leader explained civil disobedience:

It's tough... Civil disobedience means placing yourself in a position of risk or loss when you strongly feel that a moral law or duty transcends a man-made law. If you do something such as sit in a public office illegally or harass officials, you're subject to arrest. When that happens, you will find jobs hard to get later on, professional schools hard to enter, and friends and parents will be down on you. This isn't kid stuff, you really have to be committed.²⁶

Students went on to discuss the implications of civil disobedience, stating “disobedience was entirely a symbolic act designed to directly reach others on a personal level”. Students used the example of the secretaries and draft clerks who, for six months during a Non-Violent Direct Action Group sit-in, faced a rotating door of impassioned students in hopes of them reaching the realization that they were complicit in acts of war.²⁷

All the while the Tufts faculty remained impassioned by the antiwar cause, holding a forum in November to discuss their dissenting opinions. Seventy-five students and faculty listened as eight professors discussed their opinions on the war. Professor Zella Luria of the Psychology Department expressed the opinion: “I feel no victory is possible for anyone in a war of this kind... no matter what we do, we are imperialists in Asia.” Students brought up the frustrating public apathy towards the war “and the need for more Americans to take a deeper, closer look at Vietnam and the consequences involved in terms of world peace and the future of mankind”. One professor noted, “there is something deeply wrong in this country”.²⁸

²⁶ *Tufts Observer (Supplement)*. 25 April 1972, p. 4.

²⁷ *Tufts Observer (Supplement)*. 25 April 1972, p. 4.

²⁸ *The Tufts Weekly*. 10 Nov. 1966, p. 1 and 10.

to see change, the antiwar community had to escalate their tactics, “I think that we are going to have to go beyond protests because its not doing any good,” he said, “We’ve been protesting for three years and the war has gotten bigger.” Jim Copeland shared a similar sentiment in terms of morality, saying, “What about those people who can’t afford college? They’re the ones who will fight the war for me.” After a brief discussion of the ethical quandary of draft participation the interview took a turn for the serious, as both students disclosed their experiences with the FBI. Jim Copeland explained that the FBI went to his family home and interviewed his mother about Jim’s whereabouts and activities. The FBI also came to his Tufts residence and forced him to sign paperwork admitting guilt. O’Neill mentioned that the FBI had also been in contact with his parents but ended on this sobering note: “on Monday, I received notification that I had been classified 1-A.”²³

Draft card turn-ins continued to be planned across the city, to include Tufts students, so faculty and the women of Jackson published a letter of support, saying “We cannot share all the risks that you are taking. But we can, and do, in this letter acknowledge our indebtedness to the brave step you are taking. We pledge our support.”²⁴

Civil disobedience was one of the most universal methods of nonviolent resistance used during the Vietnam War era by college students and other protestors alike. The term civil disobedience was coined by Massachusetts activist Henry David Thoreau in 1866, with the posthumous republishing of *Resistance to Civil Government as Essay on Civil Disobedience*. More than a century later, Massachusetts scholars were still exploring the concept: Professor Robert J Taylor of the Tufts Department of History wrote in a Letter to the *Observer* Editor “One of the foremost theoreticians of civil disobedience, Henry David Thoreau, defined that activity as justified when one is forced to do injustice to another”.²⁵ Tufts students in particular spent extensive time and energy developing their protests and considering civil disobedience as a tool. During a meeting to discuss the escalating protests

²³ “Tufts Draft Resisters Defend their Direct Action Tactics.” *The Tufts Weekly*. 27 Oct. 1967, p. 5.

²⁴ “Resisters Try to ‘Bust’ the Draft Thursday.” *The Tufts Weekly*. 10 Nov. 1967, p. 7.

²⁵ *Tufts Observer*. 12 May 1972.

counseling. The *Weekly* was able to make some light of the situation with their release of the Dean's List in September with the headline "Deans' List - One Way to Avoid the Draft".²⁰ In October, the *Weekly* began re-advertising for the College Qualification Test for the draft, which would take place in November. Scattered throughout the issues were reminders for students to register for the draft, register for the exam, process their paperwork correctly, or risk enlistment. In November the *Weekly* published an ominous article about the Tufts computer system potentially impeding the arrival of the student records to the Selective Service boards. The article included a warning for students who didn't to fill out their 109A forms (declaration of student status), stating that failure to do so could result in a 1-A classification and an induction notices from the U.S. military.²¹

The draft phenomenon altogether defined the Vietnam war era. The conflict never garnered much public support on its own but in 1963 and 1964 the American public was content with letting the Kennedy administration explore policy options and invest U.S. military and financial power into Vietnam. The draft brought the war to the American people. It made the war unignorable for college students, young professionals, and families of college-age males. Thousands of eligible men dodged the draft by disposing of their draft cards in public displays of civil disobedience, fleeing to Canada, or even taking drastic measures to become medically exempt. Tufts students and faculty participated in draft card turn-in rallies, and even publicly burned their draft cards.²² College students rallied around ending the war to end the draft and protect their peers from the threat of induction.

Two Tufts students in particular felt compelled to share their stories of draft resistance with the Tufts community through an interview with the *Weekly*. In October of 1967, junior Jeff Singleton, sat down with Herb O'Neill, sophomore, and Jim Copeland junior, to discuss their convictions about the war and their decisions to turn-in their draft cards. Herb was concerned both with the moral implications of participating in the draft, and also that the work students were doing was not enough, and that in order

²⁰ Deans' List - One Way to Avoid the Draft" *The Tufts Weekly*. 23 sep 66 weekly page 5

²¹ *The Tufts Weekly*. 4 Nov. 1966, p. 1.

²² Gody, Cathy. "Protesters Return Cards." *The Tufts Weekly*. 20 Oct. 1967, p. 3

year olds, followed by college students with unsatisfactory academic performance. Burger wrote, “College seniors who are due to graduate this May or June often are being called for physical examinations now, with induction orders waiting for them as soon as they leave campus.”¹⁷ Burger finished his piece on a rather ominous note, saying “The future remains uncertain in this undeclared war.”¹⁸ Also in February *The Tufts Weekly* published a front page story about ten University of Michigan students who were reclassified to 1-A status after participating in an antiwar sit-in. The 1-A classification denoted eligibility for service, rather than the 2-S status given to students. Draft card burners interviewed by the *Weekly* in March also faced draft reclassification for their antiwar actions.

For the first time in the paper’s history, the *Tufts Weekly* published an edition that focused exclusively and wholly on one issue: the Vietnam War draft. The six page supplementary edition was an experiment in “focusing on a single, important, issue... to examine how Tufts people and related off-campus groups are reacting to [the draft] and how it has affected the life of the community”¹⁹ The articles included explanations of the newly reinstated draft exam, the discriminatory practices of the Selective Service System, and the opportunities available for students who wish to avoid service. *Weekly* writers advised students in the headline to ‘Start to Cram for the Draft Exam’ which was scheduled to be administered in May of 1966. The results of this exam, which would be taken by more than 60,000 Massachusetts college students, would determine draft deferment status for college students who had previously been automatically deferred.

As the 1966, 1967 school year began, concern for the draft was ever present at Tufts, and frustration with the Selective Service System from both students and faculty was growing. By late September, university faculty had organized a seminar for students to learn about conscientious objection. Students struggled to navigate the draft system with its ‘booby-trap’ intricacies and specifications, so local lawyers also volunteered their time to students in the area who needed

¹⁷ Burger, Howard. “Hershey Predicts Fewer Student Deferments.” *The Tufts Weekly*. 4 Feb. 1966, p. 7.

¹⁸ Burger, Howard. “Draft Will Include Students” *The Tufts Weekly*. 4 Feb. 1966, p. 8.

¹⁹ Hornik, John. “Vietnam and the Draft.” *The Tufts Weekly*. 18 Mar. 1966, p. 1.

and by October and November of 1965, the military was reevaluating the blanket deferments for college students and medical deficiencies. On 1 October *The Tufts Weekly* reported that part-time students were now at risk of losing their deferments, as were students whose courses of study were not deemed important to national interests, students who made poor grades, and students previously disqualified for health reasons. General Lewis B. Hershey, head of the Selective Service, described this change in attitude in terms of produce, “When you go shopping for tomatoes and discover that there is a limited supply you have to buy some with spots if you’re going to get as many as you need”.¹⁴

As the requirements for deferment changed, opportunities to resist began to become more accessible to Tufts students. The American Friends Service Committee of New England created a program to educate and counsel students on conscientious objection. This was the process of declaring an inability to serve based on that for religious or spiritual convictions, but as the *Weekly* reported, “the process of claiming conscientious objector status is a complex one” and without proper guidance students risked refusal from the draft board.¹⁵ Mathematics professor H. Ronald Rouse offered his advice on the matter in a Letter to the Editor in the 12 November edition of the *Weekly*,

Every young man who faces the draft and who has any moral reservations about war out to inform himself concerning these provisions of the Selective Service Act... I have several copies of [the *Handbook for Conscientious Objectors*], as well as other material on conscientious objection, and would be happy to discuss the subject with anyone who is interested.¹⁶

The threat of the draft became more imminent in February of 1966. Executive Editor of the *Weekly* Howard Burger wrote in the *Tufts Weekly* that General Hershey estimated that the draft calls would rise to 80,000 men per month, and that the order of draftees moving forward would be nineteen

¹⁴“Draft Boards May Call Part-time Students.” *The Tufts Weekly*. 1 Oct. 1966, p. 5.

¹⁵“Draft Boards May Call Part-time Students.” *The Tufts Weekly*. 1 Oct. 1966, p. 5.

¹⁶ Rouse, Ronald. “Draft Dodgers.” *The Tufts Weekly*. 12 Nov. 1966, Letter to the Editor.

opinion of what the best policy there would be today”.¹⁰ The panel featured five Tufts people from varying political and personal backgrounds and the debate presented the multiple sides of the conflict and the various approaches the U.S. could take.

Oregon Senator Wayne Morse attracted Tufts students to a talk on Vietnam at the local high school. The senator discussed the Johnson administration’s White Paper on Vietnam, a document which offered justification for escalation of the war, in response to the document he said, “The United States is fighting a war for its own self interest”.¹¹

The final event of the spring semester of 1965 was a teach-in at Harvard in early April. Students from schools across the greater Boston area came to hear ten experts in government, Asian studies, and political science speak about the conflict. Despite differences in political leanings and opinions on the preferred U.S. policy, the lecturers shared concern at the misunderstandings and confusion about U.S. policy in Vietnam.¹² With this teach-in the semester was over, classes ended quietly, finals passed, and Tufts students departed campus for the summer with little mention of the war. Jean Cormack, senior writer for the *Tufts Weekly* reflected on her senior year at Tufts in her article “Socio-Political Activity Grew in ‘64-’65”. She wrote about the many Tufts students who participated in various Civil Rights protests, university policy protests, sit-ins, foreign affairs conversations. Her article ended the school year with a reminder of the progress made, and an underlying message of hope that this activism would continue after she and her senior counterparts moved on from campus.

In the fall of 1965 student focus shifted away from seeking education opportunities about the conflict in favor of education about the Selective Service System, popularly known as ‘the draft’. Civil Rights groups waned, replaced by students concerned about their deferment status and about the escalation of the war.¹³ As military strength in Vietnam escalated, draft call numbers steadily climbed

¹⁰ *The Tufts Weekly*. 5 Mar. 1965, p. 1.

¹¹ *The Tufts Weekly*. 19 Mar. 1965, p. 3.

¹² *The Tufts Weekly*. 16 April 1965, p. 1.

¹³ Eisenstadt, Ellen. “Civil Rights Group Wane?” *The Tufts Weekly*. 4 Nov. 1966, p. 9.

Tufts. On 16 February 1965 thirty-one Tufts professors joined more than four hundred other professors from across New England to publish an open letter to President Johnson in the *New York Times*. The letter reads as follows:

Each day we hear fresh news from Vietnam, news both strange and grim... Fear of escalation of this undeclared war against North Vietnam mounts with each sudden report of renewed violence. Unless the situation is very different from what it appears to be, we have lost the political initiative in Vietnam and are attempting to substitute military actions for political ones... All we can see is a seemingly endless series of demonstrations and riots in Saigon and Hue, of military coups, of threats and challenges to the dignity of our Ambassador, and our other representatives by the very men we seek to sustain in power. Would it not be both prudent and just to take the initiative towards peace in Vietnam?⁹

March of 1965 marked the beginning of what became a long standing tradition at Tufts to hold forums, teach-ins, and other events designed to facilitate conversation and information sharing about the war. In a time before cell phones, instant news updates, and google, the Tufts students made a concerted effort to stay informed on the changing policy in Vietnam and thus were keenly in tune to the small but frequent upticks in U.S. activity in Vietnam throughout the war. The *Tufts Weekly* sponsored a panel on 11 March to “inform students of events leading up to United States involvement in South Vietnam and to discuss and criticize present United States policy there.” According to a *Weekly* writer, the panel was set up to address the “growing confusion on campus as to how we got involved in South Vietnam and what our policy there is now... It is hoped that the discussion will clear up some long standing confusion over events leading up to the United States involvement in Vietnam and assist students in forming their

⁹ Fritter, Anne. “31 Profs Protest Vietnam Attacks.” *The Tufts Weekly*. 19 Feb. 1965, p.1 and 4.

month under the Johnson administration, and an estimated 130,000 each month under President Nixon.⁵ As students at universities and colleges around the country saw their counterparts dying abroad, antiwar sentiment grew to fuel a movement.

College students were a group especially apt for antiwar activity because they had access to university resources, to inspiration and guidance from professors and other well educated adult leaders, and to a large community of like-minded people who fed off of each other's energy. Many students, especially at Tufts, took "Incompletes" in classes to focus their time at school solely on antiwar activity. There was a significant transition during this era of the perception of student activism and protesters, articulated well by Dr. Edwin Shur from the sociology department in 1966: "dissent in general is growing and becoming more respectable... student dissenters are not dupes or rebels but rather thoughtful, decent people".⁶

In 1965 student protests spread across the country from Berkeley, California to Boston University. By the end of February 1965, three articles about student protests had graced the cover of *The Tufts Weekly*, two concerning protests at Boston University, and the third about two recent Tufts graduates who were arrested protesting in Selma.⁷ The first Vietnam protest to feature Tufts student participation took place on Saturday 13 February 1965 on the Boston Common. Tufts students were among 250 demonstrators who marched around the Common holding signs with antiwar slogans like, "End the Dirty War" and "Get out of Vietnam". An onlooker's response seemed to reflect the sentiment of the many non-protesters seeking to enjoy the Common on the weekend day: "Get off the Boston Common and give us a little peace!".⁸

Antiwar sentiment escalated as students joined faculty in discussions of the conflict. The well-educated and politically active faculty were essential role models for the budding student activists at

⁵ "Vietnam War Casualties (1955-1975)." Military Weapons, www.militaryfactory.com/vietnam/casualties.asp.

⁶*The Tufts Weekly*. 10 Nov. 1966, p. 1.

⁷*The Tufts Weekly*. 12 Feb. 1965, p. 1.

⁸*The Tufts Weekly*. 19 Feb. 1965, p. 1.

civil rights actions, and freedom to express themselves. As the Vietnam war escalated in the latter half of the decade, it became a unifying cause for students, faculty, and at times even the administration when it was called upon to represent the interests of the Tufts community. The conflict in Vietnam quietly inserted itself into the community's worldview in 1964, and as the conflict grew increasingly relevant its presence on campus and in the minds of Tufts co-eds grew accordingly. The 1970 commencement ceremony marked a culminating moment for the Tufts community, as students organized something of an antiwar protest in place of the traditional pomp and circumstance of graduation. After almost six years of discussion, education, and action, the student voice was the loudest that day.

The Vietnam war so problematic for so many Americans because of its unconstitutional escalation and because of the astronomical casualty rate of both American soldiers and Vietnamese civilians. The number of troops in Vietnam increased at a rate that concerned most Americans. In 1959 U.S. involvement was limited to around 800 military advisors and some additional intelligence support. While this number was not encouraging for those who disagreed wholly with U.S. involvement, most of 1950's America was supportive of this seemingly small gesture against the spread of communism. By 1965 the number of military personnel in Vietnam had risen to more than 180,000. There was an average of a 200% increase in soldiers deployed to Vietnam between the years 1959 and 1965, with a 400% increase from 1960 to 1962, and an almost 700% increase from 1964 to 1965. By 1970, the troop count in Vietnam had risen to more than 300,000.⁴ During the war, more than two million American men were drafted. Twenty-five percent of troops in combat zones were draftees, and many more volunteered to avoid forced enlistment. An estimated 58,000 American soldiers were killed during the war, and of those sixty-eight percent were college-age males (18-22 years old) and thirty percent were draftees. While that 58,000 total devastated the American public, 65,000 Vietnamese were killed each

⁴“Aspects of the Vietnam Situation.” *The Tufts Weekly*. 4 Jan. 1967, p. 2.

Tufts University and the Vietnam War, From 1964 to 1970

On a cold Sunday evening in December of 1964, on the eve of a conflict now known as the Vietnam War, Tufts students ventured off campus to the Ford Hall Forum to hear Retired Brigadier General S.L.A. Marshall speak. The Ford Hall Forum, the oldest public lecture series in the country, was located at Northeastern University at the time, a short trip from Tufts campus.¹ As students listened intently, General S. L. A. Marshall advocated for a strong “fighting alliance between South Vietnam and the United States” and encouraged the audience to support full military intervention in Vietnam.² Tufts junior and the *Tufts Weekly* Editor-in-Chief, John Hornik, was in attendance that night and wrote in *The Tufts Weekly* about the General’s clear and direct interest in a war with Vietnam. Hornik quoted the General’s interest in a “military solution” to the Vietnam problem, his determination to commit U.S. combat units to fight alongside the South Vietnamese, and finally his opinion that U.S. forces ought to begin “patrolling the roads... mounting ambushes, and possibly taking over as the main striking force.”³ For the Tufts community, this local lecture was third page news; the front was graced with more important stories about Christmas parties and parents on campus.

After the 1964 Tonkin Gulf Resolution, which allowed President Johnson the ability to conduct war-like activity in Vietnam without consent from congress, he began increasingly U.S. presence significantly. By mid 1965, Johnson had increased the draft to more than 35,000 per month, and U.S. soldiers were conducting full fledged land battles in Vietnam, starting with the Battle of Ia Drang Valley where 300 American soldiers are killed and hundreds more injured. As it became increasingly evident to the American people that the United States was waging a full on war in Vietnam large scale protests began as did their extensive media coverage.

The Vietnam War invigorated the Tufts University campus in the 1960’s and 1970’s. The early sixties brought a buzz of newfound student voices to Tufts, as students advocated for gender equality,

¹ FordHallForum.org. About Section

² Waters, Bertram. “U.S.- Viet Effort Held Too Small .” *The Boston Globe*, 7 Dec. 1964, p. 7.

³ Hornik, John. “Marshall Calls for US - South Vietnam Alliance.” *The Tufts Weekly*, 11 Dec. 1964, p. 3.