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The multitudinous effects of the vietnam war on the social, political and economic tensions is extremely apparent through the popular culture of the time. From legislature, such as the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, to pop music such as “I-Feel-Like-I’m-Fixin’-To-Die” there is much concern expressed about the future safety of the United States and it’s citizens.

One of the first documents signed in relation to the war, the Gulf of Tokin Resolution, signed in response to a sea battle involving the deaths of several north vietnamese, can be seen as an relic of america’s early support of the war (although it wasn’t considered a war at this point in time). The justification for further US involvement is that US involvement is not for ambitions of US gain, but for the defense of Southeast Asia. All but 2 senators voted “Yay” to this bill, one of the senators who did not stated that we had no business sending American boys into someone elses escalating war.

Another, different, representation of the American opinion slightly later in the war came in the medium of music, it addressed both the economic and moral concerns of such a war. In the first verses of the song, “Country Joe and the Fish” accuse leaders of wall street being the motive of the war, more weapons sales meant a greater profit. This is to show the cause of the war, previous to this opinion of causality little had been said as to a reasonable cause. The next verse refers to the risk to the American homeland of fighting such a war, as well as the risk to soldiers. The artist says “there ain’t no time to wonder why Whoopee! we’re all gonna die.” This decimation, in the opinion of the artist, could happen in two ways, the first of which is the Vietnamese retaliated and killed us all, or we (as soldiers) were deployed by the same entity that was supposed to be protecting us. The latter of these concerns is addressed in the last verse, asking every mother to pack your boys off to vietnam. This was the greatest concern of people of the time, having their children, or themselves go off to vietnam, and “come back in a box” for a cause not worthy of even one life.

Martin Luther King had some different opinions about the war, his issue was not with the purpose, but who was fighting the war. Martin Luther King took issue with African Americans being sent in “extraordinarily higher proportions” than the rest of the population. The other issue Martin Luther King took was that these soldiers were fighting for rights that these men had not had in their own country until very recently, and in some cases still did not have. As he put it they were being sent “away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in southwest Georgia or Harlem”. Not only does Martin Luther King touch on civil rights issues, but also on just how ludicrous this war was. We had so many unresolved issues at home (i.e. racism, sexism, economic, etc.) that we shouldn’t even begin to focus on anything foreign unless it was an immediate threat.

From all these relics of the Vietnam War, we can discern that the economic, political, and social tensions of this time were extremely high. Although there were many objections to the war both by loud groups and by the silent majority as was referenced in Richard Nixon’s address in 1969, the war continued. This split, peace and war caused tensions to be so high, and ultimately ended up costing hundreds of thousand of american lives and even more vietnamese lives.