

K. N. Volkova, R. V. Kochariyev

Ivanovo State University

School of History

**FLOWERS ARE BETTER THAN BULLETS:
ANTI-WAR SENTIMENTS IN THE USA IN 1970s**



Introduction

This paper aims at tracing the changes in the mentality of students in the 1970s. This requires historical research on student life during this particular period. This period of the history of the USA influenced the development of the whole world.

We used journalists' articles and historical literature for our research.

Reasons of anti-war sentiments in the USA and popular support

The beginning of the Vietnam War gave new impetus to the development of pacifist organizations. The growth of anti-war sentiment was a new stage in the evolution of human history that affected literally everything. People didn't want war, especially in Vietnam.

Pacifist organizations emerged during this period. They were mostly supported by the younger generation represented by students. Protests were the main fighting method of these organizations. Unfortunately, other representatives of the American society did not share those ideals calling the protestants "idlers".

One of the most interesting examples was their campaign known as the "March on the Pentagon" during which they were protesting against military conscription. That was the first nationwide demonstration against the Vietnam War. According

to various sources, 70,000 to 100,000 or more people arrived in Washington for the weekend to participate in the event. After the rally at the Lincoln memorial, a crowd of 35-50 thousand people moved in the direction of the Pentagon. The March on the Pentagon was a transition from scattered protests to mass resistance on a national scale.



A participant in an anti-war demonstration in front of the Pentagon hands a flower to a military policeman. Arlington, Virginia, October 1967

Tragedy of Allison Krause and the Kent State shootings

Allison Krause is one of the most important figures in the American and world history. She was a new idol for a lot of people. Her slogan «Flowers are better than bullets» became a motto of pacifist organizations.

Students of Kent University held a demonstration against the American invasion of Cambodia. The government decided to use national guards. For reasons unknown, the soldiers opened fire on the students. Allison Krause, Geoffrey Miller, William Knox Schroeder and Sandra Lee Shoyer were killed.

John Filo wrote: *“I thought they were using blanks. When I raised the camera, I noticed that one of the soldiers was aiming directly at me. I said to myself: “I’ll take a picture of this,” and then a shot rang out. I even released the camera when I realized the bullets were real. I don’t know where this mixture of naivety and stupidity came from, but I didn’t hide. There was no one near me on the hillside. I felt myself, then turned to my left and saw the body of Geoffrey Miller and a pool of blood running out from under it, as if someone had overturned a bucket of blood.”*



This carelessness of the government led to a catastrophe. There was a large wave of student strikes involving about 4 billion students.

Student riots were not something new for Americans. The reaction to Martin Luther King's assassination was the same. However, it was the US invasion of Vietnam and Cambodia, the Kent State shootings and the death of Allison Krause that provoked the largest student rebellion in the history of the USA.

Conclusion

There were many opinions, some of them were opposite. For example, former US president Nixon called Allison Krause an idler, but the Soviet poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko defended her in his works. It stimulated multiple discussions and changed the views of many.

The historical significance of the above-mentioned events cannot be overestimated. They caused drastic changes in the way of thinking for millions of young people. The establishment of new pacifist organizations and the development of institutions protecting human rights influenced students all over the world considerably.

The most important thing is that students were a driving force of those events. If one looks at the situation nowadays, it will become obvious that students are the same. They are the main force of any movement. *At any time students fight for their ideals because flowers are better than bullets.*