

**“Blessed Are The Peacemakers”: Resistance to the Vietnam War at  
Chicago Catholic Universities**

I. Introduction

A. Brief vignette: November 13-14, 1969 at DePaul University

1. November Moratorium: “A group of 60 people gathered near the University flagpole at noon for raising of the peace flag at 12:15. Fr. Charles Shelby, CM, was asked to give a dedication prayer. Shelby responded saying the most appropriate thing he could say was, ‘Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.’” (*The DePaulia*, Nov. 21, 1969
  - a. “The design [of the flag] is similar to the buttons: A blue field with a dove and the slogan ‘Work for Peace’ in white.” (*Alethia*, Nov. 19, 1969).

B. Anti-war activism in the Catholic social justice tradition: in what forms did it take on college campuses? Explain the direct action approach.

1. Strikes
2. Moratoriums on “business-as-usual”
3. Teach-ins
4. Draft board raids
5. Militancy?

C. Brief introduction of schools: Loyola University, Mundelein College, and DePaul University

D. Thesis: The proliferation of the Vietnam War in the late 1960s and early 1970s resulted in an upheaval of anti-war sentiment on college campuses across the United States. Specifically, in Chicago, students and faculty members at the Catholic universities and colleges of Loyola, Mundelein, and DePaul participated with their respective communities in resisting the Vietnam War through direct action.

II. Loyola University Chicago

A. Student organizations

1. SDS had been on campus since 1965, but was not recognized by the university until 1968.
2. Student Mobilization Committee to End the War (SMC)
3. How did Niles College Seminary (present-day St. Joseph's) join forces with Loyola to oppose the War?
  - a. Niles Seminary Peace Council offers outreach to the Loyola and Mundelein communities: create open dialogue between people with differing opinions on war and race. ("Letter to the Editor," *Loyola News*, Nov. 8, 1968).
  - b. Seminarians dropped Niles, went to Loyola as lay people (Thom Clark, John Baranski, Cleve Kiley)
4. Strike Steering Committee
  - a. Responsible for accommodating 1969 Moratorium and planning Kent State strike
5. Conspiracy for Life Council (Letter to "Friends of Peace" from James Mueller, Sept. 1, 1970
  - a. Emerged out of Strike Committee

## B. ROTC

1. "Molotov cocktail" thrown at ROTC building
  - a. How did this affect the nonviolent approach upheld by many of the anti-war demonstrators?
2. What other actions were taken against ROTC?

## C. 1969 Moratorium

1. October Moratorium
  - a. Supported by President Maguire: Loyola sets aside October 15 as "a day of prayer and consideration of the issues of peace confronting the United States" (letter to University community, Oct. 13, 1969)
  - b. Moratorium observed at Lake Shore and Lewis Tower Campuses
    - 1) Leaflets handed out at CTA and bus stops
    - 2) Mass for peace in Madonna Della Strada

- 3) Interfaith service with Jesuits and Niles seminarians
- 4) Planting tree of life at Mertz Hall

#### D. Kent State and Jackson State response

1. Student demands
  - a. Remove ROTC from campus
  - b. Introduce classes that bring global awareness
2. Faculty votes to support student strike, from May 6 to May 10
  - a. President Maguire: class will not be cancelled, grading policy changed to accommodate students on strike
3. Strike continues until end of semester
  - a. Classes not cancelled, students are given grade options
    - 1) Administration wants to be supportive, but must also reaffirm Loyola's academic standing
4. Students against the strike
  - a. Young Republicans: "irrational nature of the strike...it will not remove one soldier from Cambodia nor resurrect one casualty at Kent State." (Memo from YR, n.d., 1970)

#### E. 1971 Evanston draft board raid- "The Four of Us"

1. Thom Clark interview
  - a. Highlight: federal government provided tools (blood from Stockyards) to commit this act
  - b. "Put the War on trial by going to trial"

### III. Mundelein College

#### A. Student organizations

1. SDS recognized on campus in 1966, two years before Loyola
2. Free Society Movement: similar to the Free Speech Movement at University of California, Berkeley
3. Student Mobilization Committee to End the War (SMC)
4. Moratorium Committee
5. Strike Steering Committee
6. Smaller institution: how effective

## B. Mobilization, April 20-30, 1968

1. Planned by SDS and SMC: conference on war in Washington, DC inspired students
2. Student Mobilization calls for “international student-faculty strike of classes to bring the troops home from Vietnam now, to end racial oppression and to stop the draft.”
3. On April 30, the last day of the Mobilization, President Ida Gannon states her position on the war
  - a. President Gannon was an integral part of the planning: she suggested a teach-in
4. Group of students and faculty members plan to fast on bread and tea for the duration of the Mobilization: how did the administration and other students/faculty members respond?

## C. 1969 Moratorium

1. October Moratorium
  - a. Faculty Senate voted to direct President Gannon to declare a moratorium on “business-as-usual”
  - b. Reactions from Rogers Park/Edgewater community
2. November Moratorium
  - a. Marge Skenclear: “mother” of the Moratorium, Mundelein alumna
  - b. Group of students participate in Washington march

## D. Kent State and Jackson State response

1. Students view strike as a sign of disgust with the state of American foreign policy and the government’s treatment of its citizens
2. May 6: march to Broadway Armory with Loyola students
3. Sr. Jean Dolores Schmidt, academic dean: grading policy is determined by each faculty member

## IV. DePaul University

### A. Student organizations

1. Young Americans for Freedom
2. SDS

3. Strike Steering Committee
4. Student Mobilization Committee to End the War (SMC)
5. Moratorium Committee

#### B. ROTC

1. What actions were taken against the ROTC program at DePaul?

#### C. 1969 Moratorium

1. October Moratorium
  - a. Classes suspended for two hours on both campuses
    - 1) Originally, President Cortelyou was reluctant in suspending class for any amount of time
  - b. President Cortelyou announce opposition to war: “Within the framework of the Judaeo-Christian principles, peace cannot be achieved through war,” Oct. 11, 1969
2. November Moratorium
  - a. Planned by committee, but not supported by administration

#### D. Kent State and Jackson State response

1. Students against the strike
  - a. Letters of disapproval addressed to President Cortelyou: students felt that their education should be a priority
2. President Cortelyou supportive of strike unless actions impinge on others’ rights
  - a. Choice of the student to strike
  - b. Did not believe closing the university would make a difference
3. Student demands, May 14, 1970
  - a. Terminate ROTC contract, remove rifle range in basement of church
  - b. Remove research programs with Department of Defense funding
  - c. End university stock holdings in corporations with military contracts

#### V. Conclusion

- A. Refer back to “Blessed Are The Peacemakers” vignette

- B. Restate thesis: In Chicago, students and faculty members at the Catholic universities and colleges of Loyola, Mundelein, and DePaul participated with their respective communities in resisting the Vietnam War through direct action.
1. Highlights of direct action taken at each school
    - a. Include Loyola's draft board raid, the "Four of Us"
- C. How do Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker fit into all of this?
- D. How does campus activism today compare to the level of activism in the 1960s and 1970s?