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James Lewes. *Protest and Survive: Underground GI Newspapers during the Vietnam War.* Westport: Praeger, 2003. xi + 243 pp. $67.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-275-97861-7.

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Non-Combat Soldier Dissent during the Vietnam War

Following the Tet Offensive, American popular support for the Vietnam War waned and anti-war sentiment increased, particularly among young people. Searching for a way to demonstrate their disillusionment, college students flocked to Students for a Democratic Society and other, less well-known, activist organizations. Coffeehouses, gathering places for members of the subculture, became centers of anti-war opinion and education and underground newspapers devoted ever more ink to anti-war articles. This anti-war, anti-military spirit also manifested itself within the enlisted personnel of the American armed forces, most of whom were young male draftees. One way that servicemen voiced their disaffection was by publishing their own underground newspapers where they could express their unique anti-war perspectives. In *Protest and Survive*, James Lewes uses GI underground newspapers to study the anti-military subculture that developed within the American armed forces between 1968 and 1970.

Lewes begins with a careful explanation of his terminology, a useful practice that more scholars should adopt. Chapter 1 examines the book's theoretical foundation and the author's methodology; chapter 2 is a survey of the literature on underground presses from the American Revolution forward. In the Vietnam era, Lewes identifies two generations of underground, or alternative, newspapers. Initially, alternative papers were published by people who were connected to the community they served. After 1967, however, underground publications were typically run according to the ideal of participatory democracy by committees who considered themselves part of a larger revolutionary movement.

Chapters 3 and 4 consider whether the GI press clearly focused on the concerns of its readers. Lewes concludes that GI newsworkers understood their relationship with their audience in one of three ways: 1) it was equivalent and interdependent; 2) the newspaper's character was determined by the readers' interests; or 3) the GI press shaped the needs of its subscribers. In other words, audience and newsworkers shared the same interests, no matter the character of the relationship. It is no surprise that underground GI publications solicited written and financial contributions from their readers, but the author does not fully explore how the newsworkers' dependence on their audience affected the relationship he was otherwise at pains to define.

In chapter 5, Lewes discusses official attempts to repress GI alternative publications and newsworkers' concomitant need for anonymity. When newsworkers dared print their names, they were, according to the author, at risk of severe punishment. For instance, Roger Priest, a seaman stationed at the Pentagon, appended his name to his publication. Moreover, Priest regularly excoriated military leaders; in one instance he called Secretary of Defense Melvyn Laird "a prostitute and a pimp for the military industrial complex" (p. 82). Despite official limitations on repressing dissent within the ranks, Priest eventually faced general court-martial charges on, among other offenses, interfering with the "loyalty, morale and discipline of the military" (pp. 85-86). We are not told of Priest's fate, and although Lewes lists several other alternative publications that were harassed by the military, he provides no details of those cases. Nevertheless, Lewes contends that the military consistently and systemically attempted to subvert the First Amendment rights of its personnel.

Lewes's discussion of the GI newsworkers' contention that they were merely continuing the inherently American tradition of patriotic dissent continues in chapters 6 and 7. Ultimately, according to the author, military authority faced the dilemma of whether to ignore the insubordination of GI activists, or to justify interfering with servicemembers' right of free speech. Although he does not make the connection between the two events clear, Lewes argues that, after unfavorable publicity from the prison riot at the Presidio in San Francisco, the Pentagon

loosened restrictions on the "rights of GIs to publish and petition" (p. 149).

Lewes contends that although over time GI and civilian activists had forged sympathetic relationships, the GI movement was a "spectacular subculture" (p. 130) independent of the civilian anti-war movement. As the author sees it, GI activists were formed by their home communities and interpreted their dissent in terms of class and race. As with so many of his claims, however, Lewes fails to convincingly pursue his argument. For instance, if he wishes to separate race and class from the civilian anti-war movement, we need to know how he defines that movement. Given his claim, one must assume that he considers only middle-class white students as being actively anti-war. Startlingly, Lewes ends his work with the declaration that GI newsworkers and their publications "helped end U.S. intervention in South Vietnam" (p. 152). This is a peculiar claim, considering that the effects of the GI alternative press on the government's Vietnam policy had not been a thesis of the book.

Protest and Survive is a curious work. Although thought-provoking, it is seriously flawed. Although I rarely grouse about editing, and moan when other reviewers do so, after reading Lewes's work I feel compelled to beg for more careful proofreading. Throughout the book, "effect" is used in place of "affect," often clouding the authors' meaning. Oddities in organization and theses peregrinations prompted frequent revisiting of earlier passages, and suggest the book is an essentially unrevised dissertation. Most grievously, however, *Protest and Survive* is almost entirely lacking in context. Although Lewes is not an historian, as a scholar he is obligated to develop a general knowledge of his subject. Clearly, Lewes is not adequately familiar with the Vietnam War, draft resistance, the civilian anti-war movement, nor even the traditions of soldier dissidence, and makes only the most desultory efforts at placing GI protest within a larger framework. Sadly, this failure badly undermines what could have been a valuable addition to the study of Vietnam-era dissension.

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