

**THE CONTRIBUTION OF PHOTOGRAPHY TOWARD  
ANTI-VIETNAM WAR MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

A THESIS

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## ABSTRAK

Dalam tesis ini, penulis membahas tentang kontribusi fotografi terhadap pergerakan masyarakat Amerika dalam menentang Perang Vietnam di Amerika Serikat.

Kajian ini merupakan penelitian pustaka. Penulis menjadikan foto-foto, buku-buku, dan artikel-artikel sebagai sumber utama pembahasan topik ini. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah metode kualitatif dengan memakai pendekatan ilmu komunikasi massa. Teori yang digunakan oleh penulis adalah teori sistem yang terdapat dalam ilmu komunikasi massa. Teori tersebut dikembangkan dan dikemukakan oleh Bertalanffy.

Dari hasil analisa masalah, penulis menemukan bahwa protes anti Perang Vietnam di Amerika tidak dapat dipisahkan dari maraknya publikasi foto-foto perang itu sendiri di media massa yang beredar ditengah-tengah masyarakat Amerika pada masa itu. Banyak dari mereka terkejut dengan foto-foto yang mereka saksikan mengenai tragedi di Vietnam. Lebih jauh lagi, mereka juga menyadari bahwa apa yang berhasil divisualisasikan oleh foto-foto itu tidak sesuai dengan tujuan pemerintah Amerika yaitu menahan laju penyebaran komunisme di Indocina. Namun demikian, protes anti Perang Vietnam di Amerika tidak secara langsung disebabkan oleh publikasi foto-foto tersebut di media massa. Akan tetapi, foto-foto tersebut memperkuat setiap alasan rakyat Amerika untuk menolak dilanjutkannya perang tersebut di masa setelah itu. Kontribusi fotografi terhadap protes anti Perang Vietnam di Amerika adalah sebuah lompatan besar di dalam sejarah Amerika yang dalam prosesnya telah ikut mengubah alur sejarah bangsa itu sendiri.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 The Background of the Study

Vietnam War which is also known as the Second Indochina War lasted in Vietnam from 1959 to 1975, bringing the North Vietnam and National Liberation Front into the frontline of the battlefield with the United States of America and South Vietnamese army. Several years before this war, the Vietnamese had fought for its independence from France in First Indochina War. After the first war, Vietnam was divided into South and North Vietnam. The North Vietnam was under control of Communists which demanded a unified Vietnam under Communist rule. In other hand, the South was non-communist Vietnam.

The fact that communism could broaden in Southeast Asia especially in Vietnam was bothering the government of the United States of America at that time. Then, the United States of America involvement in Vietnam was soon begun. About the information, Atwood stated that, "The United States became involved in Vietnam because American policymakers believed that if the entire country fell under a Communist government, communism would spread throughout Southeast Asia. This belief was known as the "domino theory." The U.S. government, therefore, helped to create the anti-Communist South Vietnamese government. This government's



repressive policies led to rebellion in the South, and in 1960 the NLF was formed with the aim of overthrowing the government of South Vietnam and reunifying the country" (2005: Vietnam War)

Moreover, the direct involvement of the United States of America in Vietnam War was in 1965 when the South Vietnamese government about to fall. Duiker and Spielvogel in their book *World History: Volume two* (2001: 828) say,

"By early 1965, the Viet Cong, whose ranks were now swelled by military units infiltrating from North Vietnam, were on the verge of seizing control of the entire country. In March, President Lyndon Johnson decided to send U.S combat troops to South Vietnam to prevent a total defeat for the anticommunist government in Saigon."

However, the final result was the United States failed in achieving its objective. In January 1973, a peace treaty was signed in Paris which ended in withdrawal of U.S troops in South Vietnam. But two years later in 1975, Communist invaded the South Vietnam and the South Vietnam government finally surrendered. Later Vietnam was reunified under Communist government and in 1976 it became the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. During the war, approximately 3.2 millions Vietnamese lost their lives and nearly 58,000 Americans were killed in action.

In other hand, while U.S troops fought in Vietnam, in the United States of America it self, many American participated on a massive protest wave against the war which was popular as the anti-Vietnam War Movement. This anti-war movement

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

From this study, the writer can conclude the contribution of photography toward the Anti-Vietnam War Movement in the United States of America during the war. Photography gave its part by the publishing of horrifying images of war widespread in newspaper and magazines in the United States which then change the attitude of many Americans about the war. This change, however, influenced more heavy resistance toward the government policy in Vietnam to end the war.

First, the writer found that the horrifying images of Vietnam War cannot be separated from the role of war photographers in the event and what were contained inside the images themselves. These two aspects were interrelated and supporting for each other. The role of war photographers in Vietnam War was achievable because the access for them to report was unrestricted and considerably casier than the former war involving the United States. The camera improvements at that time also took its own part to help this fact happened. In result, there were many photographers along with other news reporters able to move freely in the battlefield to record as accurate and much as possible for then informed to the American about the tragedy in Vietnam through the mass media.

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