

# THE FORT HOOD THREE



THE CASE OF THE THREE  
G.I.'S WHO SAID "NO" TO  
THE WAR IN VIETNAM

25¢

Cover: from left — Pvt. Dennis Mora, Pvt. David Samas, and  
PFC James Johnson

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
PRESS RELEASE . . . . .	4
INTRODUCTION BY DAVE DELLINGER . . . . .	6
JOINT STATEMENT OF THREE G.I.'S . . . . .	9
LETTER FROM DONALD DUNCAN . . . . .	12
ROBERT SCHEER SUPPORTS CASE . . . . .	13
PVT. DENNIS MORA'S STATEMENT . . . . .	14
PVT. DAVID SAMAS' SPEECH . . . . .	15
PFC JAMES JOHNSON'S SPEECH . . . . .	19
CORE STATEMENT . . . . .	21
SNCC STATEMENT . . . . .	22
AL EVANOFF'S SPEECH . . . . .	24
PARADE COMMITTEE PROTEST . . . . .	26
REPRINT FROM NEW YORK POST . . . . .	28



Photo by Finer

Pvt. Dennis Mora, PFC James Johnson, and Pvt. David Samas at June 30th press conference

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Release: immediately

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GI'S REFUSE SHIPMENT TO VIETNAM  
FILE INJUNCTION SUIT VS. McNAMARA

NEW YORK, JUNE 30—Three soldiers who are under embarkation orders for Vietnam declared today that they would refuse to board ship on the ground that the war is "illegal, immoral and unjust."

Simultaneously with their announcement, legal proceedings were instituted on their behalf in Washington, D. C., Federal court against Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara and Secretary of the Army Stanley Resor to bar the officials from shipping them to Southeast Asia. The suit, in the form of an application for a permanent injunction, was filed by their attorney, Stanley Faulkner, 9 E. 40th St., through associate counsel, Selma Samols, of Washington.

The three men, all draftees, said they were prepared to face a court martial if the injunction is denied.

The men are: *PFC James Johnson*, 20, a native of East Harlem and a student at Bronx Community College at the time he was drafted a year ago;

*PVT. Dennis Mora*, 25, born in Spanish Harlem, a graduate of the City College of New York with a B.A. in history;

*PVT. David Samas*, 20, a native of Chicago, a student at Modesto Junior College, Modesto, Calif., when drafted. He was married this month.

All three are enrolled in the 142nd Signal Battalion, Second Armored Division. They are now on 30-day leave from Fort Hood, Texas, with instructions to report on July 13 to Oakland Army Terminal in California for final processing and shipment to Vietnam.

The Rev. A. J. Muste, pacifist leader and chairman of the Vietnam Peace Parade Committee, is treasurer pro tem of a defense committee formed to support the three men in their refusal to fight in Vietnam. Other members include David Dellinger, editor of Liberation Magazine, and Staughton Lynd, Assistant Professor of History at Yale.

The defense committee has scheduled a rally for July 7 at the Community Church to marshal wider support.

The injunction plea filed in Washington today cites the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1925, the United Nations Charter, the Geneva Agreements of 1954, and the Nuremberg Judgments as bases for the charge of illegality of the U. S. position in the Vietnam war. The Nuremberg Judgments have been adopted by the United Nations as official guiding policy.

# # #

(INFORMATION: Vietnam Peace Parade Committee - 964-0070  
Stanley Faulkner, Esq. - DE 2-7780)

## INTRODUCTION

The struggle against the war in Vietnam entered an important new phase on June 30, when three brave soldiers announced their refusal to obey army orders to go to Vietnam. The three men, Private Dennis Mora, Private First Class James Johnson, and Private David Samas, were on a thirty-day pre-embarkation leave after having received their orders for Vietnam.

Significantly, the soldiers made their announcement at a press conference in New York City, called by the Fifth Avenue Vietnam Peace Parade Committee and attended by Stokely Carmichael, chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and Lincoln Lynch, public relations director of CORE, both of whom expressed their hope that other soldiers would follow the example of the three refusers. Thus, badly needed muscle was added to the peace movement, not only by the soldiers' action but also by this coming together of three important groups: the traditional peace movement, the militant Afro-American movement for civil rights, and the soldiers themselves. In the past, the peace movement has been surprisingly slow to carry its message to the soldiers, the men on whose unquestioning obedience the government relies to be able to thwart the democratic will in time of unpopular war. But then, in our lifetime no other war has been so clearly unpopular as the American aggression in Vietnam.

David Samas makes clear (See page 15) that the war's unpopularity extends to the men in the armed forces. He makes a moving plea for closer cooperation between the G. I.'s and the peace movement: "The G. I. should be reached somehow. He doesn't want to fight. He has no reason to risk his life. Yet he doesn't realize that the peace movement is dedicated to his safety."

At the press conference the three soldiers stated that after seven months in the army it was their opinion that a majority of the soldiers do not believe in the war but feel trapped and helpless. Our democracy is not vital enough to encourage its citizens to believe that they can decide for themselves such an important matter as whether or not to risk their lives suppressing the independence of the Vietnamese. After the conference, Michael Armstrong, an ex-Marine who served ten months in Vietnam told me that as many as 80% of the military in Vietnam are disillusioned and disgusted by the war and want out.

These figures may be exaggerated. What is more, soldiers are notoriously brave under combat conditions, even when they are frankly cynical about the motives and trustworthiness of the home-front politicians who lie to the troops and the public and insist on fighting to the last dead soldier. But clearly the men in the armed forces must learn that they are not alone, that it is honorable to resist, that in the spirit of Nuremburg large sectors of the American public will support those who refuse to commit atrocities against their fellow human beings.

An important beginning can be made by distributing this pamphlet to men in the armed forces—at bus and train stations, in front of U. S. O. headquarters, and at army gates. There is no reason why any Americans, including servicemen, should be cut off from the constitutional guarantees of freedom of the press, speech, and assembly. On the soldiers' part, they should contact CORE, SNCC and nearby or national peace groups—to find out about their rights. Soldiers ready to take a stand similar to that of Mora, Johnson, and Samas should be given help in finding lawyers and gaining the support of broadly based defense committees similar to the Fort Hood Three Defense Committee.

In part it was a coincidence that the soldiers announced their refusal in the same week that their country's murderous air bombardment was extended into the densely populated industrial complex of the Hanoi-Haiphong area and simultaneously began to nibble away at the life-sustaining, life-protecting dikes of North Vietnam. Even so, the new bombings served to emphasize the logic of the three men's refusal to take part in a war which they characterized as "immoral, illegal, and unjust." In their joint statement they say: "[In the army] we have been told that many times we may face a Vietnamese woman or child and that we will have to kill them." Extending the bombing shocked and horrified most of the world. (Only Americans are sufficiently insulated and blindly enough pro-American to be relatively immune to the horror.) But this new act of terror was only the latest of many immoral escalations in the illegal commitment of more and more American conscripts to the killing of more and more Vietnamese, including women and children, in an unjust war for American domination of Southeast Asia.

Two days after the press conference, the Pentagon announced, in its best public-relations manner, that the three men "had exercised their right of free speech and had not—as yet—violated military discipline." (*New York Times*, July 3.) But in

the same interview there was an ominous note: "A senior legal expert at the Defense Department indicated today that members of the armed forces who refused to fight in Vietnam might be prosecuted under existing laws and regulations and, in extreme cases, might be sentenced to death." (*New York Times*, July 3, same story.) As usual the government gave lip service to America's high ideals but issued a thinly veiled threat to those who might seriously assert their inalienable human rights. This was in the spirit of the President, whose speeches usually sound like a combination of the idealism of Jesus Christ and the brutal political realism of Machiavelli. After the men had made clear their refusal to succumb to bribery by retracting their statements (See speech by Samas, page .) and had agreed to speak at a series of public meetings in their remaining days of leave, the government forgot its profound devotion to free speech.

We must press for exoneration for James Johnson, David Samas and Dennis Mora. We should hail them as the heroes they are and make it possible for them to put their courage and devotion to humane and humanitarian tasks.

The major reason for the growing unity of the peace and civil rights movements in opposition to the war in Vietnam is, of course, the flagrant violations of human decency involved in

The June 30th press conference saw unity between the peace movement, the Afro-American movement, and the soldiers. From left to right—Dave Dellinger, Secretary of Fort Hood Defense Committee; Stokley Carmichael, SNCC; A.J. Muste, Co-Chairman of Fort Hood Defense Committee and Chairman of Fifth Ave. Peace Parade Committee; Pvt. Dennis Mora; PFC James Johnson; Pvt. David Samas; Lincoln Lynch, CORE; Stoughton Lynd, Co-Chairman of Fort Hood Defense Committee

Photo by Finer





the administration's relentless war against the Vietnamese people. Despite the President's clear failure to secure a consensus in support of the war, despite public exposure of the dishonesty of the government's claims, despite the unassailable evidence that the majority of the Vietnamese people oppose the ruthless U. S. - Ky dictatorship and want to work out Vietnamese solutions to Vietnamese problems, the U. S. government has continued to extend the war.

At times there seems to be nothing that can be done within the traditional democratic process to curb the government's insatiable appetite for domination and control of Southeast Asia. But the examples of Private First Class Johnson and Privates Mora and Samas gives us a cue. More and more people must put their lives where their convictions are. If all of us - soldiers, scientists and war workers; wives, parents and friends; students, teachers and clergymen - refuse to take part in or condone acts that violate our consciences, the government will be forced to abandon its obscene war of aggression and the democratic will of the people will triumph, both in the United States and in Vietnam.

- Dave Dellinger, Secretary of Fort Hood Three Defense Committee  
July 1966

## JOINT STATEMENT BY FORT HOOD THREE

The following statement was read to over 40 cameramen, reporters, and antiwar fighters at a press conference in New York on June 30th. The statement was prepared jointly and read by Pvt. Dennis Mora.

\* \* \*

We are Pfc. James Johnson, Pvt. David Samas, and Pvt. Dennis Mora, three soldiers formerly stationed at Fort Hood, Texas in the same company of the 142 Signal Battalion, 2nd Armored Division. We have received orders to report on the 13th of July at Oakland Army Terminal in California for final processing and shipment to Vietnam.

We have decided to take a stand against this war, which we consider immoral, illegal and unjust. We are initiating today, through our attorneys, Stanley Faulkner of New York and Mrs. Selma Samols of Washington, D. C. an action in the courts to enjoin the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Army from sending us to Vietnam. We intend to report as ordered to the Oakland Army Terminal, but under no circumstances will we board ship for Vietnam. We are prepared to face Court Martial if necessary.

We represent in our backgrounds a cross section of the Army and of America. James Johnson is a Negro, David Samas is of Lithuanian and Italian parents, Dennis Mora is a Puerto Rican. We speak as American soldiers.

We have been in the army long enough to know that we are not the only G. I.'s who feel as we do. Large numbers of men in the service either do not understand this war or are against it.

When we entered the army Vietnam was for us only a newspaper box score of G. I.'s and Viet Cong killed or wounded. We were all against it in one way or another, but we were willing to "go along with the program," believing that we would not be sent to Vietnam.

We were told from the very first day of our induction that we were headed for Vietnam. During basic training it was repeated often by sergeants and officers, and soon it became another meaningless threat that was used to make us take our training seriously.

But later on Vietnam became a fact of life when some one you knew wondered how he could break the news to his girl, wife, or family that he was being sent there. After he solved that problem, he had to find a reason that would satisfy him. The reasons were many - "Somebody's got to do it," "When your number's up, your number's up," "The pay is good," and "You've got to stop them someplace" were phrases heard in the barracks and mess hall, and used by soldiers to encourage each other to accept the war as their own. Besides, what could be done about it anyway? Orders are orders.

As we saw more and more of this, the war became the one thing we talked about most and the one point we all agreed upon. No one wanted to go and more than that, there was no reason for anyone to go.

The Viet Cong obviously had the moral and physical support of most of the peasantry who were fighting for their independence. We were told that you couldn't tell them apart - that they looked like any other skinny peasant.

Our man or our men in Saigon has and have always been brutal dictators, since Diem first violated the 1954 Geneva promise of free elections in 1956.

The Buddhist and military revolt in all the major cities proves that the people of the cities also want an end to Ky and U.S. support for him.

The Saigon Army has become the advisor to American G.I.'s who have to take over the fighting.

No one used the word "winning" anymore because in Vietnam it has no meaning. Our officers just talk about five and ten more years of war with at least 1/2 million of our boys thrown into the grinder. We have been told that many times we may face a Vietnamese woman or child and that we will have to kill them. We will never go there - to do that - for Ky!

We know that Negroes and Puerto Ricans are being drafted and end up in the worst of the fighting all out of proportion to their numbers in the population; and we have first hand knowledge that these are the ones who have been deprived of decent education and jobs at home.

The three of us, while stationed together, talked a lot and found we thought alike on one over-riding issue - the war in Vietnam must be stopped. It was all talk and we had no intentions of getting into trouble by making waves at that stage.

Once back in Texas we were told that we were on levy to Vietnam. All we had discussed and thought about now was real. It was time for us to quit talking and decide. Go to Vietnam and ignore the truth or stand and fight for what we know is right.

We have made our decision. We will not be a part of this unjust, immoral, and illegal war. We want no part of a war of extermination. We oppose the criminal waste of American lives and resources. We refuse to go to Vietnam!!!!!!

## LETTER FROM DONALD DUNCAN

The following letter was sent to the three G.I.'s from Donald Duncan, former Special Forces Master Sergeant who left the Army after 18 months in Vietnam. It was read to the June 30th press conference.

\* \* \*

To Privates Johnson, Mora and Samas:

Today you are publicly taking a step that will provoke people at all levels of our society. Some will be enraged, some sympathetic, and others apathetic. For yourselves it will be most difficult. Many pressures in a variety of forms will be brought to bear on you. Your defense is an attack on the military establishment of our country. We have had ample proof how ruthlessly they can respond, as in the case of Vietnam, a nation of people who offered less provocation than yourselves.

Having never met you I know little of your individual backgrounds or beliefs. I can only trust that your motivations are sincere and that the reasons for your stand are as you have stated. I, too, believe the war is illegal, immoral and unjust but perhaps for different reasons than yourselves. Further, I am not only appalled with our destruction of the Vietnamese people and their beautiful country, I am equally concerned with the destruction our actions are wreaking on our own country. It becomes more obvious every day that our leaders have not been honest with the American people in pressing a war that recruits strength for the thing that we are supposedly fighting.

Yours will be a lonely position. Your actions, if properly motivated, take a strength greater than that required to go to Vietnam. To persevere will be an act of personal bravery far beyond the capabilities of most of us, certainly far beyond anything I have ever done. Most people, whether they agree with your positions or not, will fail to understand this.

Half of a soldier's weaponry is his belief that he is fighting for a just cause. In Vietnam this means that a soldier's survival is in large part dependent upon his ignorance of the truth of the war. Once a soldier has found some of the truth of Vietnam it is my belief that he should not be sent there, since going into battle only half-armed endangers not only himself but also his less enlightened companions. I can personally testify to the awfulness of fighting in Vietnam once the truth is known.

Your reasons as stated for not going to Vietnam are a monumental triumph over twenty years of Madison Avenue style conditioning. Having myself, once been stationed at Fort Hood in Central Texas, an area not conducive to enlightened and individual thought, I find your actions that much more significant. Ours is a wonderful country capable of doing great things. It saddens me, as it should sadden all loyal Americans, to see the things being done in our name to Vietnam.

Whatever your final decisions are in this matter I wish all of you the best of luck and hope that you continue to seek truth.

Donald Duncan



## ROBERT SCHEER SUPPORTS THREE G.I.'S

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JA JOHNSON, DENNIS MORA, DAVID A SAMAS

5 BEEKMAN ST 10TH FLOOR NYK

YOUR DECISION OF REFUSAL TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS IMMORAL WAR, IS TO BE APPLAUDED I ADMIRE YOUR COURAGE AND HOPE THAT YOUR EXAMPLE AND PERSISTENCE WILL HELP STOP THIS UNJUST WAR

ROBERT SCHEER COMMUNITY FOR NEW POLITICS  
2214 GROVE ST BERKELEY CALIF

## STATEMENT BY DENNIS MORA

Besides the joint statement that was presented at the June 30th press conference, each of the three men presented individual statements. The following statement was prepared and read by Pvt. Dennis Mora.

\* \* \*

I was active in the peace movement before I was drafted. The Army knew this and took me anyway. My opposition to this criminal war of aggression has become stronger while I have been in the Army. The decision as to what I will give my life for remains mine and mine alone.

Contrary to what the Pentagon believes, cannon-fodder can talk. It is saying that we are not fighting for "freedom" in South Vietnam, but supporting a Hitler-loving dictator. It is saying that it will not accept as a rationale for exterminating a whole people, theories of dominoes, Chinese "aggression" or arguments of "appeasement." It further says that the only foreign power in Vietnam today is the United States and that the Vietcong is an indigenous force which has the support of most of the people and is in control of 80% of the country.

It is a war of genocide. A genocide which has at its disposal the technology of a military chamber of horrors from bomblets to napalm, gas and defoliants. The American people are victims of their war in a very real sense. Apart from the tragedy of losing American boys in a war we cannot win, the war is a colossal waste of resources which are urgently needed here at home. The hypocrisy of a war on poverty is clear. It is all guns and no butter. The war has created inflation and the chief sufferer is the working man. Corporate profits soar and union men are told to hold to 3.2 wage increase in the "national interest." Free lunch programs are cut by 80%. Are we now ready to accept, in the national interest of course, the malnutrition of our children in order to incinerate Vietnamese children? This is the price we must pay for military miracles.

As a Puerto Rican the first war I knew was against the poverty of Spanish Harlem. My mother worked for \$35 a week to help make ends meet and we seldom saw her. I went to school where teachers counseled Puerto Ricans to forget plans for higher education because they were Puerto Ricans and therefore somehow inferior.

The first uniform I knew was that of the cop on the corner. He was there to let you know that you could only look at the clean world outside as a prisoner looks from his cell. The billy clubs told us to keep our place.

The first casualties I knew in this war were two childhood buddies who became drug addicts. They died trying to escape a world which held no jobs or education for them, and where they were made to feel ashamed of their color, language and culture.

This is the war we must fight. The billions for slaughter must be invested in the reconstruction of our country's ghettos and the meeting of our social and educational needs. This is the only battle which makes sense and which can truly honor the U.S.

There must be jobs provided for all youth—White, Negro, Puerto Rican and Mexican-American.

Our leaders have just brought us knowingly another step closer to an all out land war in Asia with the attacks on Hanoi and Haiphong. Will this mean war for generations to come?

I will not fight for the blood money of war industries nor will I give my life so that U.S. corporations can claim as their property the people and resources of Vietnam.

## SPEECH BY DAVID SAMAS

The following speech was prepared by Pvt. David Samas for the July 7th meeting. When he was seized by military police minutes before the meeting, his wife, Marlene Samas, read the speech.

\* \* \*

*Thank you. I was asked to read my husbands speech to-night. since I guess you already know he's unable to be here. This is a rough draft actually because he intended to proofread it on the way down here but circumstances have prevented that so bear with me.*

I've been in the army since December 1965 and my feelings about the Vietnam situation have always been as they are now. I've been opposed to American participation in Vietnam from the very beginning but have never until a few days ago made my feelings public. Last Thursday afternoon we held a press

conference in this same church and announced our refusal to participate in any way in the Vietnam war. Since that time we have been plagued by federal agents and what can only be called hired thugs.

I kept my whereabouts secret from the press and the police and only my parents and a very few people knew where I was living. The Modesto city police visited my parents in California saying they had been sent by some "higher authorities" but were not able to reveal those authorities. An officer who my father happened to know approached him in a friendly manner saying he came to help the family. My parents live three thousand miles away in California and it is not easy to remain in close and constant contact with them, so they don't realize the actual circumstances that exist here in New York. And they are not familiar with any of the peace groups—either here or on the West Coast. It didn't prove hard for the police to persuade my parents into believing I was being used as a tool of the Communists. They were told that I was in serious trouble and that the only way for them to help was to reveal my address to the police so that the authorities in New York might get in contact with me and try to help and protect me. My father became terribly upset, fearing for my safety, and gave the police my address in New York. He immediately sent me a telegram urging me to call home as soon as possible.

I called and found my parents very upset and they told me what the police had said to them. Although they have absolutely no authority the Modesto city police had offered me a deal. They had told my father that if I would retract my statement and withdraw completely from the civil action now in progress that I would receive a discharge from the army and no serious repercussions would result. In their concern for me my parents believed this fantastic story.

The next morning, when we left our apartment we were followed by three men in their early twenties who made no attempt to be discreet about tailing us. They remained within twenty feet of us all day long and when approached would deny any connection with us. Since then there have at all times been at least two men parked in front of our apartment. Undoubtedly they are present now. They have attempted to intimidate the three of us in one way or another and have approached all of our parents in different ways.

But we have not been scared. We have not been in the least shaken from our paths. And we will not be, even if physical violence is used. We are not pacifists. We are not non-violent, and if the need arises we will fight back.



I have never been involved with any of the peace groups until a few weeks ago when we approached the Parade Committee for help. As a civilian I was interested and extremely concerned, but I neglected to show my concern. In a great way I too am responsible for the boys who already are in Vietnam.

But even as an unaffiliated civilian, I was closer to the peace movement than most soldiers are now. To me the peace movement always looked like concerned students and citizens trying to protect their country from war and nuclear devastation. To a soldier the movement appears very differently. The soldier is very far indeed from the outside world and the normal news media do not usually reach him. News of the free world reaches



Photo by Finer

Friends and families of the 3 G.I.'s sit on platform at July 7th meeting in Community Church. From left to right: Darwin Johnson (James Johnson's brother), Joseph Mora (Dennis Mora's brother), Manuel Magana (Dennis Mora's uncle), Dave Dellinger (Secretary of Fort Hood Three Defense Committee), Alton Pertilla (SNCC worker), Mrs. Grace Mora Newman (Dennis Mora's sister), Mrs. Agnes Johnson (James Johnson's mother), A. J. Muste (co-chairman of Fort Hood Three Defense Committee), James Johnson Sr. (James Johnson's father), Joseph Morales (Dennis Mora's nephew), Elinor Johnson (James Johnson's sister), Stanley Faulkner (attorney for the Fort Hood Three), Al Evanoff (Assistant Vice President of District 65)

him through letters from home, or through his buddies. It often seems that the peace groups are united against the soldier, and that forces the soldiers to cling together and ignore the real issues made public by the peace movement. The stories that reach the soldiers usually show that the peace movement is backing their enemies, and is against the Army, and against the individual soldiers. Upon too many occasions groups have offered aid to the Viet Cong and too few times have they approached the G. I.'s with help.

The G. I. should be reached somehow. He doesn't want to fight. He has no reasons to risk his life. Yet he doesn't realize that the peace movement is dedicated to his safety. Give the G. I. something to believe in and he will fight for that belief. Let them know in Vietnam that you want them home, let them know that you are concerned about their lives also. Tell them you want them to live, not die. Bring home our men in Vietnam!

The three of us here, James, Dennis, and I came to the movement for help and we received help. We asked for support in our stand and we received that support. We asked for money for the case and have gotten some. The legal aspects of our case are numerous and complex, but we cannot depend alone upon our legal stand. The war in Vietnam cannot be stopped just by legal action. The war can only be stopped by the efforts of the movement with the sympathy of the public.

In the end we depend entirely upon the public. We have placed ourselves in the hands of the people of the United States, and all of our hopes lie with them. We win or lose depending upon how the people respond. We risk our futures and maybe our lives on the hopes of the American public. We need your help.

**Marlene Samas participates in Times Square protest against seizures of her husband and the other two men**

Photo by Finer



## SPEECH BY JAMES JOHNSON

The following speech was to be given by PFC James Johnson to a public meeting in New York at the Community Church on July 7th. On the way to the meeting Johnson and the other two G.I.'s were seized and taken to Fort Dix for "investigative detention". Darwin Johnson, James' brother, read the speech in his place.

\* \* \*

*I was with Jimmy when he got arrested today. Just like Dave and Dennis he didn't finish his speech either, so this is just a rough draft of his speech but I'll do my best to see how it comes out. Okay?*

"On December 6, 1965, I entered the Army reluctantly. Although I did not voice my opposition I was opposed to the war in Vietnam. But like most of the other G. I.'s I was inducted and went along with the program. After basic training I began to seriously consider the prospect of Vietnam. I devoted much of my free time to reading, listening, and discussing America's role in Vietnam. I felt that I had been following blindly too long in the Army. A soldier is taught not to question, not to think, just to do what he is told. Are your convictions and your conscience supposed to be left at home, or on the block? I had to take a stand.

I once told a Colonel about my opposition to the war. I was told that I was being paid to be a soldier not a politician. Should I let the Pentagon decide whether I should live or die? After studying the situation in Vietnam, I learned that the government was not being honest with the American people. The government tells us that the United States is in Vietnam at the request of the Vietnamese government in Saigon. They fail to tell us, though, that the Saigon government was not elected by the people. There have never been free elections there. In fact the U. S. government installed a regime of its own choosing, headed by Diem, in 1954. Since then there has been a succession of military dictators. All supported at our expense. Not one of these governments was worth the support of the people. They were supported by our army.

The government also tells us that we are spending our men and money to preserve freedom in Vietnam. Yet the current dictator, General Ky, declared that Adolf Hitler is his hero. Like Hitler he uses extreme brutality to crush any opposition that may arise. President Johnson tells us that he is trying to bring

about discussions for peace in Vietnam. Yet peace offers were made by North Vietnam last spring. But they were rejected by our government and the American people were not told about them.

Is the U. S. afraid of losing Asia to the Communists? I read a statement by Senator Church which said, "We cannot lose what we never owned. We cannot force everyone to adopt our way of life. We must escape the trap of becoming so preoccupied with communism that we dissipate our strength in a vain attempt to force local quarantine against it."

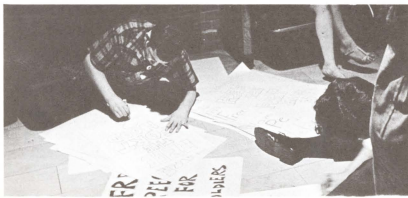
Now there is a direct relationship between the peace movement and the civil rights movement. The South Vietnamese are fighting for representation, like we ourselves. The South Vietnamese just want a voice in the government, nothing else. Therefore the Negro in Vietnam is just helping to defeat what his black brother is fighting for in the United States. When the Negro soldier returns, he still will not be able to ride in Mississippi or walk down a certain street in Alabama. There will still be proportionately twice as many Negroes as whites in Vietnam. Those Negroes that die for their country still cannot be assured of a burial place which their family feels is suitable for them. His children will still receive an inferior education and he will still live in a ghetto. Although he bears the brunt of the war he will reap no benefits.

It is time that the Negro realizes that his strength can be put to much better use right here at home. This is where his strength lies. We can gain absolutely nothing in Vietnam. All this is lending to the decision I have made. I know it is my right to make this decision.

*This is what my brother was going to say, but they wouldn't let him speak. They just wouldn't give him a chance.*

**Supporters of the Fort Hood Three make posters during July 7th meeting for protest in Times Square**

Photo by Finer



## CORE STATEMENT



Lincoln Lynch  
Public Relations Director of CORE

Photo by Finer

July 8—Floyd B. McKissick, National Director, Congress of Racial Equality, today deplored the arbitrary arrest of three young Americans whose consciences would not allow them to participate in the war in Vietnam because the war is "immoral, illegal, and unjust." The three Army privates, Pvt. Dennis Mora, 25 years old, PFC James A. Johnson, 20 years old, and Pvt. David A. Samas, 20 years old, were arrested on Thursday night shortly before they were to appear at a meeting sponsored by the Fifth Avenue Vietnam Peace Parade Committee. Eyewitnesses report that they were arrested by 5 men dressed in civilian clothes. Mr. McKissick charged that the arrests were made explicitly to prevent these young men from exercising their First Amendment right to freedom of speech and were reminiscent of "police state tactics." Recently in Baltimore at its National Convention CORE went on record as being opposed to the Vietnam war and pledged to aid and support those who would not serve in Vietnam.

## SNCC STATEMENT

July 9, 1966—Three soldiers who had announced their refusal to participate in the United States' illegal and immoral aggression on the peoples of Vietnam were arrested July 7 on the way to speak at a rally in New York City. They are currently being held at Fort Dix, New Jersey.

Two of these soldiers are non-white. In the words of the soldiers' statement, "we are being drafted and end up in the worst of the fighting, all out of proportion to our numbers in the population . . . we are the ones who have been deprived of decent education and jobs at home."

The terror perpetrated by the United States in Vietnam stands nakedly exposed for the condemnation of men and women everywhere who are aspiring to freedom. The spiriting away of these three soldiers as they were on their way to speak out about the horror they were expected to participate in as so-called "good Americans," demonstrates once again the almost paranoid fear of free men which exists in the American Government.

The fact that two of the arrested soldiers were non-white, serves to underscore the growing awareness among non-whites in this country that they must begin to resist the efforts of the national government to use them as cannon fodder for racist oppression around the world. If the United States Government must engage in a cold-war power struggle, we must refuse to be used as tools.

Freedom-loving people everywhere should join hands and protest the arrest of these three soldiers.

Speaking for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, we demand that the federal government immediately release these soldiers, or stand accused and condemned of being opposed to the basic human rights. We call for the movement to rise to the defense of these courageous soldiers, in support actions around the South.



Photo by Finer

The families back the three men at Fort Dix demonstration. From left to right; Joseph Morales (Dennis Mora's nephew), Manuel Magana (Dennis Mora's uncle), Mrs. Grace Mora Newman (Dennis Mora's sister), Mrs. Barbara Mora (Dennis Mora's sister-in-law), Elinor Johnson (James Johnson's sister) Joseph Mora (Dennis Mora's brother), James Johnson Sr.

## AL EVANOFF OF DISTRICT 65, AFL-CIO SUPPORTS FORT HOOD THREE

The following speech was delivered by Al Evanoff, Assistant Vice President of District 65, Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Workers Union, AFL-CIO, at the July 7th meeting in Community Church. Besides promising to build a defense committee for the Fort Hood Three in his union, Evanoff gave \$200 to the case collected from union members.

\* \* \*

"I know that as an officer of the union I am here to pledge support to the three men, not on behalf of my organization—we have not taken a poll of our members—but as indicated by that envelope [containing money collected at the union for the case] we are an organization that believes in action more than just words. And I believe that the support I bring here is brought on the basis of recognizing that these three men have the moral right to reject going to Vietnam.

As a trade unionist, long ago I learned the fact that an injury to one is an injury to all. Our government has acted reprehensibly in the last year, in trying to destroy our prior moral fiber little by little by first saying to us: "We're just going to send a few men. We're just going to retaliate for attack." Then the claim was made that we used gas, and we said "no, no, we don't use such a thing." And as each month went by, we were sucked in more and more. Now we find ourselves at this time standing on the threshold of being compared to the Englishmen who permitted England to subjugate colored nations across the world. We stand in the same position as the German trade unionist and as the German worker stood when Hitler raped Europe.

There comes a time when you have to stand up for what you think is right regardless of the punishment, regardless of the abuse. And I think that time is now.

Our government has told us that they're conducting a war on poverty and that we can have guns *and* butter, to buy us out. Now just one example. Their so-called war on poverty is one which we should be conducting to a much greater extent than they even planned a number of years ago. They glorify the fact that they are going to recruit 45,000 youngsters to the Job Corps. And they say, this is 10,000 more than two years ago.



But they neglect to tell us, and they lie about it, that the original plans were to recruit 100,000 in this period to provide jobs and to provide training for youth which badly needs it. They talk about democracy and freedom. But we all saw it, on June 8, I believe it was, in the *New York Times*, when you took that first page and you saw on one side the fact that troopers were shoving freedom marchers off of U. S. Route 51 in Mississippi. And then elsewhere in the paper you saw that the government had the audacity to reveal that very same day that they are going to send another 100,000 troops to Vietnam to clear the roads, so we can have freedom in Vietnam.

I more or less committed myself to the fight for the three men a number of days ago when I heard two of them. But my commitment has grown so much stronger because I discovered a personal involvement. Just as our government tries to practice the theory of "what you don't know won't bother you." You know the story: "We bombed Hanoi, but we killed no civilians, so don't feel for these people." And sometimes we get lost in the number of facts and the number of figures and the bodies that are counted. The 100 or 200, and we can't feel for the mother or the parent that suffered a loss or the baby that was killed. I think all of us react this way. You can't feel for somebody who's not too close. As I say I committed myself to this fight before, but my commitment is grown so much greater because I found out yesterday that I know one of these parents. I never connected the name of James Johnson with a fellow brother of our union, a steward in our union, a worker who was active and militantly responded to every strike call and every action in our union. And brother Johnson I'd like to pledge to you now, that we will form a defense committee, not only for your son, but for the other two, so that definitely they will have more money than has now been pledged, and active participation of our membership.

I think at this meeting that we're on the line. And either we produce, and actively participate to make sure that President Johnson knows what we mean and feels it in every corner of this land, or else we will go the way of the German workers. Thank you.

## Parade Committee Protests Harassment of Fort Hood Three

The following is the text of a telegram sent the morning of July 7, before the arrests, to Attorney General Nicholas de B. Katzenbach and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. It was released to the press.

\* \* \*

We strongly condemn harassment by Federal agents of servicemen such as PFC James Johnson, Pvt. Dennis Mora and Pvt. David Samas, who have filed injunction in Federal Court against shipment to Vietnam on grounds of immorality and illegality of that war.

We are reliably informed that on July 4 an officer of the Modesto, California police force visited the parents of Pvt. Samas. The officer said he had been contacted by "higher authorities" and that if Pvt. Samas would rescind his action and his statement against the war, and in effect abandon his fellows, he would not be prosecuted and would receive an Army discharge. The officer obviously acted under instructions of Federal agents in proposing such a bribe.

Such acts show desperation in attempt to stem growing opposition to the war among young men facing the draft or already in military service. The peace movement will continue to aid in every possible lawful way anyone, civilian, soldier, sailor or Marine, who opposes this illegal and immoral war. The young men in the armed services are entitled to know the truth about the war and to engage in discussions about it. Citizens are likewise entitled to communicate the truth about the war to servicemen and the peace movement is determined to exercise that right.

(signed)

A. J. Muste, Chairman; Dave Dellinger, Norma Becker, Coordinators; Fifth Avenue Vietnam Peace Parade Committee.



Photo by Finer

**A. J. Muste confronts Fort Dix authorities at demonstration on July 9th**

# The Anti-Viet GIs: Rebels With a Dream

By **BERNARD BARD**

When the cop came to the door a few days ago to check his address, Pvt. David Samas invited him in for a beer. That's how open and trusting he is, says his wife.

When one of his classmates at Brown made sport by torturing birds and cats, Dennis Mora was repelled, and eventually became so disenchanted he quit the school. He was always an idealist and sensitive—"he's beautiful inside and out," says his sister.

When Pfc. James Johnson knew he'd be going to jail, he told his fiance they ought not to get married after all because he'd never be able to get a good job. But she would have none of that; "he's practical—very practical," she smiled.

These three—Samas, 20, who in civilian life had been a wanderer and a sometime worker in his father's furniture store and, lately, a student at Modesto, Cal., Junior College; and Mora, 25, a graduate of Bronx HS of Science, and welfare case investigator and member of the W. E. B. DuBois Clubs; and Johnson, 20, parochial-school graduate, a year at Bronx Community College, teller at the Bronx Savings Bank, a neat, punctual sort—are in custody at Fort Dix today after saying they would refuse to accept orders to Viet Nam. A fourth GI being held with them is Pvt. Joel Turtel, 20, of Brooklyn.

The four are restricted to quarters but not technically under arrest as their actions are under investigation. An officer said he did not know when the inquiry would be completed.

The findings will be sent to the commanding general of the post, who will then determine if they are guilty of violating the military code.

All had been assigned to report to the Oakland, Cal., Army Terminal July 13 for assignment to Viet Nam, but these orders have been postponed until the inquiry is over.

The four have been forbidden to speak to reporters since they were taken into custody.

Meanwhile, the Fifth Av. Viet Nam Peace Parade Committee announced plans to picket Fort Dix later today. Buses have been chartered to take demonstrators to the installation.

\* \* \*

At Brown, remembers Mora's sister, Mrs. Grace Newman, he became disenchanted with "the sons of the wealthy." He was not achieving the high grades in science courses he expected of himself, so he switched to uptown CCNY, and changed his major from physics to history.

An East Harlem boy who grew up around 113th St. and 5th Av., he was an excellent student, an accomplished swimmer, and "very determined in everything he does," says Mrs. Newman.

At CCNY, he joined the DuBois Clubs, to protest U. S. policies in Viet Nam, Guatamala, and Puerto Rico, which he regards as an economic colony of the U. S. (Mora is himself Puerto Rican).

A classmate at CCNY and fellow member of the DuBois Clubs, Ricky Eisenberg, said today Mora was never a Communist. "He's a socialist, and interested in Marxist interpretation of history, but he's not a Communist." And Eisenberg added with a grin, "or what he'd tell you is 'Not yet' if you asked him."

From CCNY, Mora joined the Welfare Dept. as a case worker, covering the Dyckman St. area of uptown Manhattan. He often felt, says his brother, Joseph, "a certain amount of futility in his job, that he wasn't getting at the root of people's problems, just filling out forms and papers."

In the department, he was active in union affairs and was known to be sympathetic to rent strikes and any moves to lower rents in slum buildings.

When he got his first induction notice, Mora passed out leaflets at the induction center denouncing the Viet Nam war. They told him to come back a week later, and hustled him right onto the bus to Fort Jackson, S. C. He also refused to sign the loyalty oath, feeling to be asked about organizational affiliations was an infringement of his Constitutional rights.

"He voted for Johnson, and so did the American people, believing there would not be a war in Viet Nam," says his brother. "Now he feels his vote has been taken from him, and this is the only way he can protest."

\* \* \*

Samas grew up on the West Coast, graduated from Bakersfield, Cal., HS, and is the son of a trucking-company employe who later went into the furniture business. With \$200 in his pockets, he hitch-hiked across country after graduation

and wound up in Chicago, visiting relatives. There he met a girl across the street, Marlene, 17, now his wife, then a high school girl working as a supermarket cashier. They were married last June 17, while he was home on a 30-day leave, five days before her high school graduation. They had "no honeymoon to speak of."

He is a tall, handsome and extremely-friendly person, says his wife. "He's very upset when people aren't friendly. He says 'Hi' to everybody." She doesn't know what will happen now.

\* \* \*

Emelda McDonald, 18, met James Johnson, 20, at a dance sponsored by United Caribbean Youth, of which his father is an officer. They have been going steady for three years. His family is from the Virgin Islands, hers from the British West Indies.

"James, I guess I'm the only one that calls him James," says Emelda, grew up in Harlem, 101st St. near First Av. His father works in direct mailing. He was graduated from St. Cecillias Parochial School and Rice HS, also a parochial school.

Johnson wanted to be a lawyer, but those plans were sidetracked for lack of money. He went to Bronx Community College, quit after a year to bring home some income, and became a bank teller. He is, says Emelda and others who know him, "well-mannered, well-dressed, soft-spoken, and very definite in his ideas."

One of his ideas is that the Viet Nam war is illegal, and that "we have no right to be there," says Emelda, a graduate of Cardinal Spellman HS, and now a liberal arts student at Hunter.

## SUPPORT THE FORT HOOD THREE

The Fort Hood Three Defense Committee is organizing as wide as support as possible for Pvts. Samas and Mora and PFC Johnson. You can help by checking any or all of the following blanks:



- I am interested in receiving more information about the Fort Hood Three.
- I would like to become a sponsor for the case.
- I am enclosing a contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- I would like to order \_\_\_\_\_ copies of this pamphlet.  
(single copies: \$ .25— 50 or more copies: \$ .15 each)
- I would like to order \_\_\_\_\_ buttons (buttons in red, white and blue read: Free Samas, Johnson, Mora). Each button: \$ .25; 10 or more \$ .15.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: Fort Hood Three Defense Committee  
5 Beekman St. 10th Floor  
New York, N.Y., 10038  
Tel. (212) 227-8891

**FORT HOOD THREE DEFENSE COMMITTEE  
STATEMENT OF AIMS**

1. To provide funds for the legal defense of PFC James Johnson, Pvt. Dennis Mora and Pvt. David Samas, three members of the United States Army who have refused to serve in Vietnam because of their belief that the war there is illegal, immoral and unjust.
2. To publicize and gain support for these three G.I.'s, not only among the public at large, but also among servicemen and those facing the military service. To publicize the reasons for the three G.I.'s stand and keep the public informed on developments in the case.
3. It is the position of the committee that citizens generally and servicemen as citizens are free to exercise their rights of freedom of thought, conscience and expression. The committee will defend these rights.

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