

Draft Dodgers in Canada: The Unseen Story of Vietnam War Resisters

During the tumultuous era of the Vietnam War, countless young Americans grappled with the moral and ethical dilemmas of conscription. For many, the decision to defy military service and seek refuge in Canada was a profound and life-altering choice.

Motivations for Draft Resistance

The motivations of draft dodgers were complex and varied. Some were driven by religious or pacifist beliefs that opposed all forms of violence. Others were swayed by the anti-war movement, which denounced the war as immoral and unjust. Still others feared the horrors and uncertainties of combat.



All American Boys: Draft Dodgers in Canada from the Vietnam War by Frank Kusch

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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For many, the war's racial and geopolitical dimensions played a significant role. The disproportionate number of African American and lower-class

youth sent to fight in Vietnam fueled resentment and a sense of injustice. Additionally, the Cold War context and the fear of communism made some question the legitimacy of U.S. involvement.

The Journey to Canada

Fleeing to Canada was a perilous undertaking. Draft dodgers often faced harsh penalties in the United States, including imprisonment and loss of citizenship. The journey to Canada required stealth, ingenuity, and a network of underground contacts.

Many crossed the border on foot, through rugged terrain and freezing conditions. Others traveled by car or plane, using false identities and forged documents. Once in Canada, they applied for refugee status, a process that could take months or even years.

Challenges for Draft Dodgers

Life for draft dodgers in Canada was often fraught with challenges. They faced discrimination, social stigma, and financial hardship. Some were ostracized by family and friends back home. Others struggled to find meaningful employment or pursue higher education.

The psychological toll of exile was also significant. Many felt isolated and guilt-ridden, torn between their desire to avoid the war and their obligations to their homeland. Some suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, having witnessed the horrors of war in Vietnam.

Impact on Canada and the Vietnam War

The arrival of draft dodgers in Canada had a profound impact on both countries. For Canada, it raised questions about national identity, immigration policies, and the country's role in the global conflict.

For the United States, the exodus of draft dodgers contributed to the growing anti-war sentiment and undermined public support for the war. It also highlighted the complexities of war and the consequences of government policies that alienated its own citizens.

Legacy and Remembrance

The story of draft dodgers in Canada is a testament to the power of conscience and the limits of national authority. It offers insights into the human costs of war, the complexities of political dissent, and the enduring bonds of friendship and solidarity.

Today, many former draft dodgers have made Canada their permanent home. They have left a lasting legacy through their contributions to arts, academia, business, and social activism.

The history of draft dodgers in Canada is a compelling and thought-provoking chapter in the annals of the Vietnam War. It sheds light on the personal struggles and profound choices made by those who refused to participate in a war they deemed unjust.

By exploring the motivations, challenges, and impact of draft dodgers, we gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of war, the nature of dissent, and the enduring human spirit.



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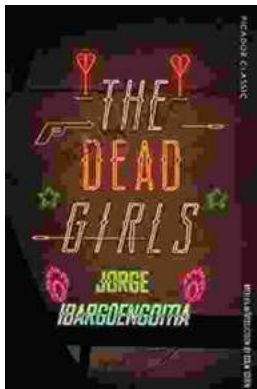
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