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"When the Spring Flowers Bloom": Dorothy Fuldheim, The Kent State Killings, and Vietnam War Foreign Policy

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“WHEN THE SPRING FLOWERS BLOOM”: DOROTHY FULDHEIM, THE KENT STATE
KILLINGS, AND VIETNAM WAR FOREIGN POLICY

A Thesis

by

PABLO RANGEL JR.

Submitted to Texas A&M International University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

December 2023

Major Subject: History & Political Thought

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ABSTRACT

“When The Spring Flowers Bloom”: Dorothy Fuldheim, the Kent State Killings, and Vietnam War Foreign Policy (December 2023)

Pablo Rangel Jr., B.A., Texas A&M International University;

Chair of Committee: Dr. Jerry Thompson

Dorothy Fuldheim is a significant figure in American history. A local legend of news broadcasting in Cleveland, Ohio, Fuldheim wrote and broadcasted exceptional commentaries that demanded the attention of her audience. Her evolving style caught the attention of many across the United States, eventually making her a nationally recognized journalist. Little scholarship has been written on Fuldheim and her contributions to the fields of history, allowing this thesis to lead the way in analyzing her life and work. The primary purpose of this thesis is to use Dorothy Fuldheim as a window to contextualize the events at Kent State University and United States foreign policy related to the Vietnam War while prioritizing Fuldheim as a multifaceted individual that defies simple classification. Breaking through the gender barriers of the time, Fuldheim’s thought-provoking and controversial approach to her craft paved the way for other women in journalism to lead successful careers. Overall, this thesis seeks to establish a connection between Fuldheim’s contributions as a female American news media icon and her writings to the field of history.

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CHAPTER I

FROM NEW JERSEY TO OHIO AND BEYOND

Dorothy Violet Fuldheim is a significant figure in American history deserving of meaningful historical analysis. Fuldheim's character, rhetoric, and writings defined her career. From obtaining an interview with Adolf Hitler to exchanging words with Jerry Rubin, Fuldheim did not submit to impudence. This thesis aims to discuss the life and the work of Dorothy Fuldheim. More specifically, her writings on United States foreign policy concerning the Vietnam War and the student deaths at Kent State University. This will be accomplished by developing a biographical background of Fuldheim and placing her at the center of two historical points. Lastly, this thesis discusses the theme of Fuldheim's legacy as an American news media icon and determined woman in journalism.

Reimagining the life of Dorothy Fuldheim is a task in itself. She wrote four autobiographies discussing the intricacies of her life and career. However, her first book, *I Laughed, I Cried, I Loved*, will be the most consistent and relevant source for the following chapter. Along with her book, this study will utilize additional biographical works, news articles, and personal archived material. In her papers at Kent State University, Fuldheim speaks to the many social and political issues during the 1970s and early 1980s. In them, she speaks critically on Nixon's foreign policy regarding the Vietnam War and the student deaths at Kent State and discusses the backlash she received for her views. The life of Dorothy Fuldheim is a life filled with hardships, significant accomplishments, luck, and an abundance of determination.

This thesis follows the model of the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*.

In the context of women in the news industry, studies have uncovered advancements over the previous two centuries while detecting and acknowledging the hardships women faced while attempting to break into this medium. To connect Fuldheim's career to the struggles of women in the news industry, Patricia Bradley's *Women and the Press* grapples with the gatekept newsroom in the context of political, economic, and political improvements. One such advancement Bradley notes is the boost in female positions in journalism during the 1880s, 1890s, and 1900. According to the U.S. Census, between 1880 and 1890, the number of women journalists increased from 288 to 1,800.¹ Similarly, the number peaked at over 2,000 by the start of the 20th Century. Throughout the 20th Century, the opportunities for women increased, and the number of women in journalism at the start of Fuldheim's career would be exponentially more significant than in 1900.

Fuldheim's news broadcasting career started at the age of 54 when, in 1947, she became a news analyst at WEWS in Cleveland, making her the first woman to appear on broadcast news in the entire United States.² As Bradley discusses, it would be ostensibly more straightforward for Fuldheim to enter the industry compared to women in the previous sixty years. Comfortably, women began making strides in journalism and news broadcasting, but as Bradley argues, there remained a tension between the genders on the news set. "For male reporters, the entry of women into the newsrooms further challenged notions of both job and masculine identity, and because women reporters were there for management goals, [this] may have furthered [gender] antagonism," Bradley writes.³ Fuldheim does not note any negative experiences with her male

¹ Patricia Bradley, *Women and the Press: The Struggle for Equality*, (Evanston, Illinois: Midwestern University Press), 2005, 115.

² "First Female News Anchor," PBS Video, <https://klm.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/57935f48-7cee-463d-9b67-f53ce1f98270/first-female-news-anchor-know-ohio/>, (accessed October 23, 2023).

³ Bradley, *Women and the Press*, 132.

colleagues. However, this is not to say that tension among the sexes did not exist during this period.

It is pertinent to note that Fuldheim did not pursue the journalism industry directly. Had Jane Addams not persuaded Fuldheim to join the lecture circuit in the early 1920s, Fuldheim would have been content with acting at local theater houses. Although her fame appears to be incidental, Fuldheim became a leading figure in news media who deserves praise and further scholarly study. With Fuldheim's dominant influence and admiration, this study's recurring theme places Fuldheim within the historiography of women in journalism and the troubles many overcome to reach an elevated level of success. *Women and Journalism*, by Deborah Chambers, Linda Steiner, and Carole Fleming, looks at the journalism industry through a much broader perspective and weaves in direct cases of inequality, sexism, and discrimination against women in journalism. This work provides the context of the industry in which Fuldheim found herself in the early 1930s and 1940s. Chambers, Steiner, and Fleming argue that women faced stereotypes, sexual objectification, and sexism. The authors do not solely focus on the negative aspects and experiences; they also celebrate the roles and accomplishments of many influential women in the industry. This book serves as a vessel to discuss the journalism industry subjectively.

Fuldheim enters the discussion of age and its relation to television news. The authors argue that women are expected not to let themselves go and take care of their appearance as they age, while men are celebrated for their appearance and are allowed to age.⁴ The book focuses on this specific hardship, but the authors claim an exception to this was Fuldheim herself. The section of the book where Fuldheim is discussed fails to elaborate on the direction of their statement. Despite this, it connects Fuldheim to the historiography of women in journalism. This

⁴ Deborah Chambers, Linda Steiner, and Carole Fleming, *Women and Journalism*, (New York: Routledge, 2004), 61.

analysis uncovers Fuldheim's persistence past the standards set for women and the discriminatory expectations placed on beauty and femininity for many women in the news industry.

Within the historiography of women in journalism, a consensus has been established that societal norms have developed, and the standards for women have evolved over fifty years. Through her writings, we encounter the paradox of a lack of prejudice and her career advancement. It is noted, however, the natural progression of Fuldheim's career that allowed her to step into the broadcasting role in 1947 at age 54. It is important to note that Fuldheim did not immediately go on air in her twenties and thirties. She earned the respect of her peers through her robust and persistent attitude. Having discussed Fuldheim's placement in the historiography in journalism, this work moves forward with the analysis of the life and writings of Dorothy Fuldheim. Despite a few scholarly works, Fuldheim has faded from the minds of scholars.⁵ This study will hopefully reignite interest in the person and her work.

Fuldheim's story begins with her mother and father immigrating to the United States and quickly building their young family. Schnell's father, Herman Schnell, was born in Germany and, in 1886, at age fifteen, immigrated to the United States alone in search of the "American Dream." He learned how to read, write, and speak a new language upon his arrival. Many European arrivals were funneled into tenements and ghettos, leading to a life of poverty. Although Schnell fought to rid himself of the shackles of destitution, he and his family eventually faced this issue head-on. Despite this, Schnell's father and many other immigrants

⁵ Reisman, Judith Ann. *A Rhetorical Analysis of Dorothy Fuldheim's Television Commentaries*, (Case Western Reserve University, 1980). In researching Fuldheim, this dissertation was the only recent scholarship of Dorothy Fuldheim and her writings.

managed their misery, built roots in the United States, and tried to provide their children with a better environment and upbringing.⁶

Schnell's mother, Bertha Wishner, followed the same path as Herman, immigrating to the United States from Russia at age seventeen in 1891. As many immigrants did, Bertha learned the language, educated herself, and eventually absorbed the new ways and customs of the United States. After arriving in the United States, Herman and Bertha married and settled in Passaic, New Jersey. Herman worked various odd jobs to try and support his young family. After their daughters, Dorothy and Janette, were born, the Schnell's established themselves in Milwaukee as both Herman and Bertha had ambitions to create a brighter future for their children.⁷

Dorothy Violet Schnell was born June 26, 1893, in Passaic, New Jersey. Passaic served as Schnell's hometown for only a few short years. After her younger sister Janette was born in the mid-1890s, the family moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Once in Milwaukee, Schnell's younger brother, David, was born in September 1897.⁸ Schnell was the eldest of three children, and the responsibility of watching over her younger siblings was entrusted to her upon the family's arrival in Wisconsin. The family's decision to move to Milwaukee was an attempt to flee poverty in New Jersey. Despite Schnell's father's efforts to provide a better life for his family, poverty consistently pursued the family, and Schnell's early childhood memories were plagued with vivid recollections of destitution.

Despite Herman and Bertha's efforts, the Schnells' hardships continued in Milwaukee. Herman continued working odd jobs to make ends meet. The Schnell children walked the two-

⁶ Dorothy Fuldheim, *I Laughed, I Cried, I Loved* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1966), 3-4

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ancestry Library, Wisconsin, U.S., Births and Christenings Index, 1801-1928, (accessed September 30, 2023).

mile journey to and from school in the winter months with thin coats, holes in their shoes, and no money for their carfare.⁹ Within a few months of their arrival in Milwaukee, the Schnell family welcomed a fourth child. However, in what was perhaps the lowest point for the Schnell family, the unnamed child died from strep throat at age one. The family was so poor that there was no money for a proper burial, and the infant sister was laid to rest in an orange crate.¹⁰ The death of her baby sister was a dismal moment for Schnell and her family.

Schnell described her childhood as one of cold, hunger, and humiliation. The Schnell family lingered around Milwaukee's Fifth Ward throughout Schnell's childhood. A young Schnell weaved through trash cans and alleyways to reach her front door. To avoid humiliation, Schnell lagged behind her schoolmates on her way home. Once Schnell crossed her front gate, she abandoned the harshness of her reality. In her bedroom, surrounded by books, Schnell entered a world of imagination and make-believe.¹¹

Schnell's next-door neighbor was Mrs. Dehni. On her journey home from school, Schnell stopped at Mrs. Dehni's house, where she had a little shed lined with shelves of books, and pick up a new dime novel. Soon, this became part of Schnell's afterschool routine.¹² Recalling her youth, Schnell does not give her readers Mrs. Dehni's full name. She merely remembers Mrs. Dehni as the individual who led her to a world of knowledge. As Schnell grew older, her mother allowed her to make bi-weekly trips to the Milwaukee Public Library. Schnell made the twelve-block trip to the library to check out new novels and enter a world of enchantment and wonder.

⁹ Patricia Mote, *The First First Lady of Television News: Dorothy Fuldheim* (Berea, Ohio: Quixote Publications, 1997), 15.

¹⁰ Fuldheim, *I Laughed, I Cried, I Loved*, 1.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

While Schnell was allowed to make the journey, her mother attached a non-negotiable condition. Schnell was to wear a bonnet to protect her face from the summer sun and the harsh winter cold.¹³

Growing up, Schnell discovered that her father was little inclined to work. He worked odd jobs but nothing that provided solid financial security. Schnell did not resent her father for this. Instead, she knew that work was not his top priority, even from a young age. Schnell said her father had only three interests: his fraternal circle lodge, his children, and listening to courtroom arguments.¹⁴ Herman attended the lodge faithfully as many other immigrant men did. Many attended the lodge as it was a community of migrants that would congregate together to share stories from back home and share the warm embrace of the European culture to escape the bitterness of a big city like Milwaukee. It was also during this time that Schnell's brother David developed a talent for the piano. By age three, David could play any piece he heard. Schnell's sister, Janette, also distinguished herself as a ballerina and began working at a local department store to pay for dance lessons. As Schnell discusses, another of her father's interests was his children. Herman often infused his love for the lodge and his children by taking David to play piano for the lodge members and Janette to dance. Schnell did not reciprocate the same inclination for dance or piano. On a few occasions, Herman would get his daughter Dorothy to write a speech for the lodge members, but Schnell felt that the members only tolerated her to enjoy the talents of David and Janette.¹⁵

¹³ Mote, *The First First Lady of Television News*, 15-17.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 21-22.

Herman's third interest was listening to lawyers argue cases at the Milwaukee County Court House. This was an escape from his reality and an entrance to a world of logic. Often, Herman would bring his daughter Dorothy along to enjoy the dulcet sounds of courtroom jargon. Regardless of the weather, Herman and his daughter went to the courthouse, where they would spend hours listening to lawyers argue their cases back and forth. On rare occasions, Herman and Bertha allowed Schnell to miss school, but only when an outstanding legal personage was set to appear in court. These trips to the Milwaukee County Courthouse with her father led Schnell to fall in love with the beauty of the English language. Schnell wrote that she was "moved by elegant and eloquent language as other people are by music."¹⁶ Although Herman struggled to provide financially for his family, he did not fail to take an interest in his children's lives.

In 1905, at age twelve, Schnell worked as a cashier at the Boston Store, a local department store, for \$1.75 a week. Schnell would work tirelessly from 9 A.M. to 9 P.M., only working Saturdays as nothing was allowed to interfere with her schooling.¹⁷ Although her parents sought to keep Schnell focused on her education, they were open to additional income for the family. Proudly, Schnell got home on Saturday nights and handed her pay to her mother. In response, her mother would say, "Someday you will have as much money as you want; you wait and see."¹⁸ Schnell worked for the Boston Store only for a short while, as her parents soon established stricter rules for the Schnell children regarding their education. Herman and Bertha Schnell were destined to achieve the American dream for themselves and their children.

¹⁶ Fuldheim, *I Laughed, I Cried, I Loved*, 4.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 2-3

¹⁸ Mote, *The First First Lady of Television News*, 23.

In her early teenage years, Schnell met someone from a wealthy Milwaukee family whom she came to greatly admire named Roseka. Schnell describes Roseka as a good friend whom she adored. It was meeting Roseka that introduced Schnell to the extravagant life of excess. On one occasion, Schnell was invited to Roseka's house for lunch. Schnell witnessed great opulence, which she had never experienced before. There was a three-course lunch with finger bowls between courses. Schnell was overwhelmed with the elegant silverware and food left over after their lunch, an occurrence that never happened in the Schnell house. What also impressed Schnell was Roseka's family. Roseka had five older brothers. One was a doctor, a lawyer, a dentist, another an architect, and the fifth was a minister. Roseka would joke with Schnell that her mother chose not to have any more children because no more professions were left to fill. The girls were inseparable. They shared secrets and discussed their grade school crushes and life aspirations. Roseka and Schnell would often go to the ice cream parlor and have chocolate sundaes, which Roseka would pay for with her weekly allowance of twenty cents.¹⁹

As Schnell entered high school, she got a job selling dresses in a women's department store. Here, she spent her time cataloging and categorizing the women who passed through the store, guessing their dress sizes. Her time at the department store was divided between learning the ways of life from the older clerks in the lunchroom and spectating the beauty battle between Amanda and Lilly, co-workers looking to win the boss' attention. At this job, Schnell met a woman named Martha. As Schnell mentioned, she "opened new vistas for me." Martha introduced Schnell to the world of poetry.²⁰ Aside from developing an interest in poetry for Schnell, Martha served as an informant for the ongoing beauty battle between Amanda and Lilly.

¹⁹ Fuldheim, *I Laughed, I Cried, I Loved*, 10-11.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

At the end of the day, Schnell relayed the information to Roseka, who would, in turn, place her bet on who would win. Roseka placed her bet on Amanda. Schnell was adamant that the boss would marry Lilly because she was sweeter than Amanda. In the end, Roseka was right. Amanda would be the winner, and Lilly continued her job as a seamstress while Amanda stopped working.²¹

In 1910, Schnell finished high school. Shortly thereafter, she enrolled in the Milwaukee Normal School. The school's objectives were to provide its students with the methods and preparation for teaching. Although Schnell's ambition was not to teach, she saw it as an avenue for higher education. As a Wisconsin resident, Schnell paid no tuition to attend Milwaukee Normal. The school and Schnell's parents instilled two prime qualities in her: sound scholarship and breadth of view. Schnell would carry these qualities throughout her life and her career.²² Schnell graduated from the Milwaukee Normal School in 1912 and soon began working in a county schoolhouse.

At the schoolhouse, the faculty consisted of Schnell and a male teacher, whom Schnell does not name. Schnell endured the daily mile walk from the nearest street car to the schoolhouse. Schnell's most profound memory from this period was the controversy raised by the male teacher over Dorothy's long hair. Her colleague complained to the school board that Schnell's hair distracted the older children. Schnell refused to entertain such foolishness. Overall, the school board chair decided that Schnell's hair, whether it distracted the older children or not, could stay up or down, however Schnell saw fit. For this, Schnell was grateful. She jokingly proposed that she should have cut off a lock of hair and sent it to the school board as "a memento

²¹ Ibid., 12-14.

²² Mote, *The First First Lady of Television News*, 29-30.

of their liberal attitude.” Nevertheless, Schnell resisted as she did not wish to offend or tease the school board that graciously paid her fifty dollars a month.²³ Aside from this anecdote, Schnell does not discuss any other moment from her teaching career. Schnell’s early career as a teacher prepared her to gather and spread knowledge, something she would excel in later in her television broadcasting career.

On May 10, 1918, Schnell married Milton H. Fuldheim of Cleveland, becoming Dorothy Fuldheim, a name she would carry until the end of her life in 1989.²⁴ Milton Fuldheim was born June 3, 1883, in Cleveland, Ohio. Schnell does not write or recall anywhere an account of how the two met. Milton Fuldheim graduated from the Cleveland Law School and was doing well for himself when he met Dorothy. After the two married, Fuldheim gave birth to her one and only daughter, Dorothy Louise Fuldheim, in 1920.²⁵ Milton and Dorothy would remain in Milwaukee until 1921 when they left for Cleveland, Ohio, where Milton practiced law.²⁶

Despite her experience and education at the Milwaukee Normal School, Fuldheim would only work as a school teacher for three years.²⁷ In 1918, she joined the local theatre group, the “Wisconsin Players,” and began starring in what she described as “unimportant roles.”²⁸ Fuldheim performed in an outdoor theatre in Milwaukee and soon garnered attention from the

²³ Fuldheim, *I Laughed, I Cried, I Loved*, 15.

²⁴ Ancestry Library, Wisconsin, U.S., Marriage Records, 1820-2004, (accessed September 30, 2023).

²⁵ Ancestry Library, U.S., Social Security Applications and Claims Index, 1936-2007, (accessed September 30, 2023).

²⁶ Milton Fuldheim died in August of 1952 at age 69. After Milton’s death, Dorothy married William L. Ulmer the same year.

²⁷ Cary O’Dell, *Women Pioneers in Television: Biographies of Fifteen Industry Leaders* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 1997), 106.

²⁸ Fuldheim, *I Laughed, I Cried, I Loved*, 16.

audience. Eventually, Fuldheim landed the leading role in a play titled “The State Forbids” by Sada Cowan. Fuldheim played the role of a mother of two sons – one conscripted and another born an imbecile. Fuldheim’s performance was gripping. Her performance caught the attention of the nationally recognized Jane Addams. During a performance of the “The State Forbids,” Jane Addams was in the audience. Captivated by Fuldheim’s performance, Addams went backstage to greet Fuldheim. Addams invited her to the famous Hull House for tea the next day.

At their meeting, Addams discussed her admiration for Fuldheim’s oratory skills and ability to take command of the stage. In the same instance, Addams invited Fuldheim to speak at a Philadelphia dinner to raise money for the Peace Movement. The Peace Movement followed soon after World War I, focusing on reducing military appropriations, outlawing war, and disarmament. At this talk, Addams told Fuldheim that Hendrik Willem van Loon would be the featured speaker at the dinner but believed he would be unable to rouse the audience the way Fuldheim would. At the time, van Loon was an experienced author, journalist, historian, orator booked to headline the event. Flattered by the offer, Fuldheim was taken aback with such an opportunity sprung up on her so abruptly. “But Miss Addams... I don’t know how. I’ve never spoken before a group,” Fuldheim remembered saying.²⁹

Despite Fuldheim’s reservations, Addams maintained her confidence in Fuldheim and replied, “You have a week to prepare.”³⁰ Recalling her maiden speech, Fuldheim discussed her lack of experience. “I came to Philadelphia too ignorant to understand how momentous the occasion was and how it would influence my whole life.”³¹ Fuldheim continued to lecture as part

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 17-18.

of the Peace Movement, touching on the aspects of appropriations and disarmament, and later served as president for the Milwaukee branch of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.³² However, this first talk in Philadelphia would kickstart Fuldheim's career as a nationally known lecturer.

Fuldheim's love of books helped cultivate her career as a lecturer. In the 1920s, Fuldheim still attempted to provide income for her family despite leaving home after marrying Milton. As the years progressed, Fuldheim developed strong opinions on current events and understood that she could make the public listen to her. In the late 1920s, Fuldheim registered with a lecture bureau and was booked for talks that would soon thrust her into the national spotlight. With these lectures, Fuldheim earned a favorable wage; a large part of which she sent to her family. In her talks, Fuldheim became infamous for not using notes on stage. She believed notes were an obstruction between her and her listeners. With a theatre background, Fuldheim theorized that a lecture was like a performance in which the audience deserved her full attention and projection.³³

Fuldheim later confessed that she suffered from stage fright. She said it would take her fifteen minutes to get comfortable, organize her thoughts, and get into the subject with feeling and expression. While managing her stage fright, Fuldheim learned to control the stage and the importance of developing a rapport with her audience.³⁴ In doing so, Fuldheim studied her audience and quickly gauged their receptiveness and mood. The audience and their reactions were how Fuldheim measured the success of her talks. She prided herself on her command of

³² "Peace League Delegates," *Madison Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison), April 26, 1925, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.eul.proxy.openathens.net/us/wisconsin/madison/madison-wisconsin-state-journal/1925/04-26/page-15/>, (Accessed August 31, 2023).

³³ Mote, *The First First Lady of Television News*, 44-46.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 46-47

language and refused to talk down to her audience. Fuldheim delivered her lectures with finesse and professionalism, which soon garnered her a reputation as an elegant and superb speaker.

The 1930s saw Fuldheim's interests begin to shift. She remained on the lecture circuit, but she focused her attention on global events. Giving lectures in her new home state of Ohio, Fuldheim grew tired of researching newspaper editorials to develop opinions. After working on the lecture circuit for a few years, Fuldheim saved enough money for a trip to Europe.

Dominated by her interest to experience the precarious atmosphere that was Western Europe, Fuldheim found herself in Nazi Germany in 1934, where she experienced the brewing tensions first-hand.³⁵ Upon arriving in Germany, Fuldheim was greeted warmly by the hotel staff. After checking into her hotel in Hamburg, Fuldheim decided to take a stroll into the night. To her surprise, as Fuldheim described the sense of "momentary terror," a prostitute dressed in a low-cut transparent blouse and doused in perfume approached her, asking for something to eat. Confused, Fuldheim invited the woman over to the hotel dining room. As the two sat at a table, Fuldheim got a better image of this woman. It was evident on her face that she had been crying. Her eyes were red and swollen, and the look of shame and fragility lingered on her face. Fuldheim attempted to make conversation, but the woman would respond rudely, thinking Fuldheim was patronizing her. "Please," the woman said, "don't moralize and tell me how wicked I am. I know all that, but you try and get a job in Germany today."³⁶

Dorothy deflected the woman's snark and continued to make conversation. The woman continued talking about the brutality of her mother and father, both of whom had been

³⁵ Patricia Mote in her book *The First First Lady of Television News*, notes that Fuldheim visited Germany in 1936. Fuldheim, however, said she was in Germany in 1934.

³⁶ Fuldheim, *I Laughed, I Cried, I Loved*, 55.

institutionalized. However, a spot of hope remained for the future and a leader who would help her escape this life. The woman asked, “Do you know about Hitler?” Dorothy sat and continued to listen as the woman rambled on how “he is going to get jobs for all of us” and how “Hitler is a great man” and that she will join the Nazi Party. After the woman had spoken for several minutes, she adjusted herself and, with a brief thank you, started to make her way out of the dining room. Fuldheim never saw the woman again but remained curious about how “Hitler was able to give that pitiful girl such hope.”³⁷

A few days later, Fuldheim continued her journey through Germany and wound up in Dresden. While strolling the streets, she was stopped by a German who proclaimed bluntly, “You’re American.” “How can you tell,” asked Fuldheim. The woman told her she could tell from her shoes because they were not European. The woman spoke excellent English, which Fuldheim probed the woman about. She revealed that she tutored her extended family in the United States for many years but returned to Germany after her two brothers were killed in the war and her parents were left alone.³⁸ Through further questioning and light conversation, the woman revealed that she was unemployed and her savings were gone. She lamented returning to Germany and wished she was back in the United States. Despite her reservations about Germany, the woman believed things would get better through the rising Nazi Party, which promised Germany a better future. This was the second time in a few days that the native Germans mentioned to Fuldheim the Nazi Party and Adolf Hitler were mentioned to Fuldheim, and her interest reached a boiling point. She asked the woman, “How do you know you can trust this party?” The woman responded, “I have no other hope.” At this moment, Fuldheim understood

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 56.

that the most susceptible to Hitler's message were those who were unemployed and had no other choice. The woman was eager to hear Hitler speak, as was Fuldheim. The woman invited Fuldheim to hear Hitler speak later that evening.

The two women had dinner before the speech. As a token of appreciation for her invitation to the talk, Fuldheim presented the woman with a new pair of shoes. Dinner between the two soon became a blur as Fuldheim grew eager to hear Hitler speak. As the two women arrived, the hall was packed, and after a long wait, Hitler and his entourage made their way onto the stage. Fuldheim's first impression was that "he looked and sounded ridiculous."³⁹ Fuldheim could not believe that he was taken seriously by his followers. She scoffed at his discussion and hatred of the Jews. After listening to his harangue, Fuldheim felt exhausted. Despite this, she became aware of Hitler's magnetism and passion that answered something in the hungry minds of his listeners.⁴⁰ In retrospect, Fuldheim understood how the Germans had become so mistaken. Hitler was "no run-of-the-mill politician," she would write. "He was a fanatic with an evil soul."⁴¹ While at the talk, Fuldheim overheard how the Brown House was where many Nazi leaders would conduct meetings and where she could get more information on the Nazi Party. The next day, Fuldheim made her way to Munich to try and get an interview with Hitler.

Arriving at the Brown House, Fuldheim attempted to speak to a secretary to secure an interview. Before she could approach the secretary, Hitler walked into the very office Fuldheim was in. In broken German, Fuldheim approached him, saying, "Herr Hitler, I heard you speak a few nights ago in Dresden, and I was so impressed that I hoped to be able to interview you."⁴²

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 57.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., 58.

Fuldheim later clarified that she was not above a bit of flattery to accomplish her purpose. As Fuldheim describes, Hitler invited her to the adjacent room, where they talked for about twenty minutes. She questioned his approach and his overall goals for Germany. He snapped and began a tyrannical speech on how he would make Germany a great power and how the Jews were primarily to blame for the Germans losing the Great War. “Der Juden!” he said, raising his voice. In what can be interpreted as a slight towards Hitler, Fuldheim asked, “Shall I tell the Americans that the Jews were responsible for Germany’s defeat, and the Allies had no part in it?”⁴³ Hitler glared at Fuldheim intensely and continued his rant that Jewish international bankers were to blame for Germany’s downfall. Fuldheim recalls him carrying a riding whip and striking his boots every so often. “He was a circus trainer, and the world was to jump through the hoops at his command. Alas, the German people did, and the hoop became a ball of fire circling the world,” Fuldheim would recall.⁴⁴ After a brief interview, the two went their separate ways. This interview with Hitler served as Fuldheim’s early introduction to journalism.

During World War II, Fuldheim continued with a heavy lecture schedule. She would speak in her home city and wherever her agency could find availabilities. Her most prominent lecture topic during the war was the danger and the inevitable downfall of Hitler and Mussolini. She discussed the building of concentration camps, the delousing of party enemies in Italy, and the threat to democracy from Germany, Italy, and Japan. She traveled across her home state of Ohio and as far south as South Texas to bring her knowledge and experiences to the masses.

Having gathered experience from her travels and delivering the news in her lectures, Fuldheim’s early career soon transitioned to the world of radio. Fuldheim began a career in radio

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

broadcasting in 1943 for the Cleveland radio station WJW. She was hired as a regular commentator and worked for ABC Radio, providing editorials and news commentary on Saturday nights following the opera.⁴⁵ Her radio job gave Fuldheim a more manageable schedule and more money than her public speaking. However, she would only work with WJW and ABC for a few short years because, after the war in 1947, the Scripps-Howard Broadcasting Company was set to establish its first station between Chicago and New York. WEWS Cleveland was established, and with her notoriety as a lecturer and book reviewer, Fuldheim was hired as the nightly newscaster two months before WEWS was set to air.⁴⁶ WEWS made its first broadcast in December 1947. Fuldheim would conduct her commentaries, news reports, and occasional interviews.

Fuldheim began her television broadcasting career at the age of 54. Her determination remained strong as she anchored the news by herself for over ten years and conducted hundreds of interviews with figures such as Pope Pius XII, Albert Einstein, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Cecil B. DeMille, Madame Chiang Kai-shek, Jane Fonda, Jimmy Hoffa, and Helen Keller.⁴⁷ According to Fuldheim, Keller was her favorite subject. How Fuldheim spoke of Keller expressed her feelings for the person she was: “She never saw any sunshine, never saw a smile,

⁴⁵ Mote, *The First First Lady of News Television*, 59.

⁴⁶ O'Dell, *Women Pioneers in Television*, 108.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 109.

never heard a ripple of water, the sound of music, and yet this woman understood everything. A moment of emancipation from the senses left me awed.”⁴⁸



Figure 1: Dorothy Fuldheim. Source: WEWS News 5 Cleveland

In the 1950s, Senator Joseph McCarthy began a crusade to weed out Communists, who he somehow concluded had infiltrated the United States government. Fuldheim had become familiarized with Communism on a trip to Russia with her best friend Roseka in the summer of 1937. Upon arrival, Fuldheim noticed the endless posters and images of Josef Stalin scattered throughout the subway, buildings, restaurants, and parks.⁴⁹ Fuldheim, disillusioned with Stalin and the Russian government, began to grow bored with Moscow's museums, sanitoriums, and factories.⁵⁰ As Senator McCarthy's hunt raged on, Fuldheim felt compelled to speak against

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Fuldheim, *I Laughed, I Cried, I Loved*, 29.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 30.

Communism while also disagreeing with McCarthy's methods. Fuldheim would criticize McCarthy in her talks and commentaries. A source for her dislike of McCarthy's tactics came following his attacks on CBS news correspondent and analyst Edward R. Murrow. In a later interview with Murrow, Dorothy celebrated Murrow's courage to denounce McCarthy and attack his abuse of power.⁵¹

By 1957, WEWS-TV had moved to a new location with ample room to consider airing a new talk show, "The One O'clock Club." Fuldheim and her co-host Bill Gordon were set to host. Gordon recalled Fuldheim as the "epitome of confidence," which allowed her to walk into the studio and collect the awe of the viewers.⁵² Along with guests and exclusive interviews, the "One O'clock Club" would often feature book reviews by Fuldheim. Fuldheim would revert to her experience as an actress and began to act out the characters from the books she would review. Although Fuldheim had the impressive ability to capture and wow the audience with her theatrics, the "One O'clock Club" would eventually succumb to competition after only seven years. By 1964, WEWS canceled the "One O'clock Club." Despite the show's short run, Dorothy cemented herself in the hearts and memories of thousands of WEWS-TV viewers.⁵³

By the 1960s and 1970s, the Vietnam War was a disruptive issue across the country. Fuldheim delivered fiery commentaries about the war and the financial and human costs. It would be in May of 1970 that an event would strike close to home for Fuldheim. In late April 1970, the United States invaded Cambodia, and President Richard Nixon addressed the country on the ongoing war. As a result, protests sprang up across the country on college campuses in

⁵¹ Mote, *The First First Lady of Television News*, 70.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 78.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 82.

opposition to the invasion. One of these protests was at Kent State University in Kent, Ohio, on May 4, 1970. The protests began peacefully but ended with the Ohio National Guard firing over 60 rounds into a crowd of unarmed student protesters in 13 seconds.⁵⁴ Outrage engulfed the country and the city of Kent. Fuldheim would take a pro-student stance, which angered many who believed the students had brought the actions of the Ohio National Guard on themselves. As a result of her pro-student stance, Fuldheim received death threats against her and her family. As this thesis will discuss, the Kent State incident significantly impacted Fuldheim's life and career, highlighting Fuldheim's abilities as a speaker and reporter.

Throughout the 1970s, Fuldheim presented commentaries, book reviews, and interviews with WEWS-TV. A notable interview was with Jerry Rubin, a prominent American political activist, who joined Fuldheim for a "discussion" that quickly turned sour. Promoting his new book, Rubin began the interview with an antagonistic attitude. Fuldheim reciprocated the tone, and the two ultimately clashed as they argued about the use of marijuana and its comparison to alcohol and the social constructions against marijuana consumption. The two-minute interview heated up when Rubin called policemen "pigs." Fuldheim, clearly bothered by the comment, responded, "I am quite friendly with the police." Rubin appeared to have struck a nerve and added that he was "friendly with the Black Panther Party," to which Fuldheim slammed Rubin's book on the desk and demanded to end the interview.⁵⁵ In her later years, Fuldheim would always recall this moment. Despite her tranquility and decorum, Fuldheim also had a rough side to her. No one learned of that more than Jerry Rubin.

⁵⁴ Jerry M. Lewis and Thomas R. Hensley, "The May 4 Shootings At Kent State University: The Search For Historical Accuracy," *The Ohio Council for the Social Studies Review*, 34, no.1 (1998): 4-5.

⁵⁵ Leónidas Martín, "Dorothy Fuldheim vs Jerry Rubin 19703718," November 15, 2013, Archived Footage, 2:12, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EFrfZcCVtZY&ab_channel=le%C3%B3nidasMart%C3%ADn

Throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, Fuldheim continued to make headlines. On May 9, 1980, Fuldheim was speaking at the Lorain County Community College in Lorain, Ohio, when a member of the Cleveland Socialist Worker Youth Group disrupted Fuldheim's talk with a tirade against the capitalist system.⁵⁶ This event did not lead to a physical altercation, but Fuldheim's talk was cut short. However, another demonstration led to a greater threat to Fuldheim's safety. On March 20, 1980, just a few weeks after the first incident, Fuldheim found herself in the middle of another protest. She was speaking in Solon, Ohio, at the Solon High School Auditorium when suddenly, she was distracted by the flash photography being taken. An individual had made their way to the front of the stage and began to blind Fuldheim with the camera flash. While this occurred, another individual began, as Fuldheim recalled, a "harangue on Iran."⁵⁷ Suddenly, a woman appeared out of the wing of the stage and threw a pie in Fuldheim's face. The three individuals escaped the scene but would later be arrested for the assault. Eventually, it was discovered that the two individuals arrested were part of a revolutionary group attempting to make a political statement.⁵⁸ Fuldheim would spend the following weeks testifying in court as the two individuals were charged with inducing panic and various misdemeanors.⁵⁹ This incident occurred while Fuldheim discussed the ongoing inflation crisis and the Iran Hostage Crisis. Indubitably, these topics called for controversy. Of course, such strong opinions amassed resentment among those who opposed Fuldheim. Despite this, she continued with her lectures. Reflecting on the event, Fuldheim discusses it with grace and humor:

⁵⁶ "Socialist worker disrupts Fuldheim speech at LCCC," Elyria, Ohio, *Chronicle-Telegram*, March 13, 1980

⁵⁷ Dorothy Fuldheim, "Assault on Dorothy," typescript, March 21, 1980, Dorothy Fuldheim Papers, Kent State University Archives and Special Collections, Kent, Ohio (hereafter cited as Fuldheim Papers).

⁵⁸ "Fuldheim incident a 'political statement' group says," Elyria, Ohio, *Chronicle-Telegram*, March 22, 1980.

⁵⁹ "Dorothy Fuldheim recounts pie-throwing incident in court," Cleveland, *The Plain Dealer*, March 25, 1980.

In a commentary, she remembered wanting to continue her talk despite what had transpired. Although shaken, she recalls the flavor of the pie being vanilla, to which she joked that she would have preferred chocolate.⁶⁰ In the face of a potentially serious situation, Fuldheim deflected the issue with elegance and humor.

Despite her graceful and strong personality, the death of her daughter Dorothy Louise Fuldheim Urman would be a wound that Fuldheim could not easily overcome. On Wednesday, November 26, 1980, Dorothy Louise Fuldheim Urman passed away at the age of 60. The *Elyria Chronicle-Telegram* reported on her death in the next day's paper.⁶¹ Urman was survived by her mother and daughter, Halla Urman. In the days following her daughter's death, Fuldheim went on air at WEWS-TV to deliver a heartwarming and tear-jerking commentary about her daughter. She celebrated her daughter's life, describing her as an "aristocrat of life" of whom the "perfume of life intoxicated her." Through a breaking voice, Dorothy detailed a conversation with her granddaughter Halla to which she comforted her, affirming that they would all meet again in a valley of beauty where she and her mother would be without pain. Dorothy noted that she would be denied the sound of her voice and laughter and that her life would never be whole again.⁶²

Well into her eighties, Fuldheim maintained a consistent work schedule with WEWS-TV, so much so that she decided to renew her contract with WEWS-TV and ask for a substantial raise. In 1983, at age 89, Fuldheim entered contract negotiations, demanding a raise that startled executives. Fuldheim believed she was worth it and would be an easy decision for channel executives. Having provided the station with commentaries, news, and interviews, Fuldheim was

⁶⁰ Fuldheim Papers, "Assault on Dorothy," March 21, 1980.

⁶¹ "Dorothy Fuldheim's daughter dies at 60," Elyria, Ohio, *Chronicle-Telegram*, November 27, 1980.

⁶² Jpolzner, "Dorothy Fuldheim on the death of her daughter.mpg," May 20, 2011, Archived footage, 3:19, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntFMWAUYt3E&ab_channel=jpolzner

the most deserving, having been with WEWS-TV since its inception in 1947. Hesitation stemmed from the fact of renewing an 89-year-old's contract. When the *Akron Beacon Journal* asked about it, Fuldheim said, "I've been doing these shows for 1,000 years, and I'll continue to keep doing them."⁶³ Fuldheim's contract was renewed for three more years with a "substantial raise." President of the Scripps-Howard Broadcasting Company, Don Perris, commented, "I'm delighted that Dorothy plans to stay with us... I know no other firm with a 90-year-old employee demanding a raise."⁶⁴ Even into her late eighties and nineties, Fuldheim was viewed as a dominant figure worth any dollar amount. WEWS-TV and Scripps-Howard Broadcasting recognized the value Fuldheim had provided the station for over 30 years. Their decision was almost automatic to ensure they kept Fuldheim on the air for as long as she wished.

Although many made a big deal about Fuldheim's age, she embraced it with grace and a bit of grit. She discussed her age, commenting on society's erroneous and stupid conviction that you are worthless if you are 65 years old. Fuldheim added, "Science will substantiate my belief that we are living longer and thinking more boldly."⁶⁵ Although she neared her nineties, Fuldheim remained headstrong and determined to maintain her steady work schedule despite many questioning her ability to keep up with the hustle of being a news analyst.

Nearing her 90th birthday, Fuldheim was celebrated by WEWS-TV, Scripps-Howard Broadcasting, and various news stations and newspapers across Ohio. The *Akron-Beacon Journal* published a three-page article celebrating Fuldheim's life and career. The article includes various topics to which Fuldheim provided her opinions. Topics ranged from prostitution, sex,

⁶³ "Ch. 5 'startled,' but found more money for Fuldheim," *Akron Beacon Journal*, March 31, 1983.

⁶⁴ "Fuldheim gets a 'substantial' raise," Elyria, Ohio, *Chronicle-Telegram*, March 30, 1983.

⁶⁵ "Irked Dorothy: I'm only 89 until June 26," Elyria, Ohio, *Chronicle-Telegram*, March 31, 1983.

literature, technology, and politics.⁶⁶ It irked Fuldheim to discuss her age, but it did not prevent many from celebrating her age and her extraordinary career and accomplishments. On Friday, July 27, 1984, ten minutes after interviewing President Ronald Reagan, Fuldheim suffered a stroke and was rushed to the hospital in Cleveland, where she went into a coma. It was reported that when Fuldheim arrived at Mount Sinai Medical Center, she complained of feeling ill but was mentally aware. The Cleveland *Plain Dealer* later reported that Fuldheim entered surgery Friday evening to remove a blood clot in her brain that appeared to have caused the stroke.⁶⁷ The surgery was successful, but Fuldheim remained in critical but stable condition. Fuldheim went into a coma for two weeks, which kept her on the hospital's critical list. On August 10, 1984, the *Record-Courier* reported that Fuldheim came out of the coma and was responsive.⁶⁸ Due to the stroke, Fuldheim was forced to retire.

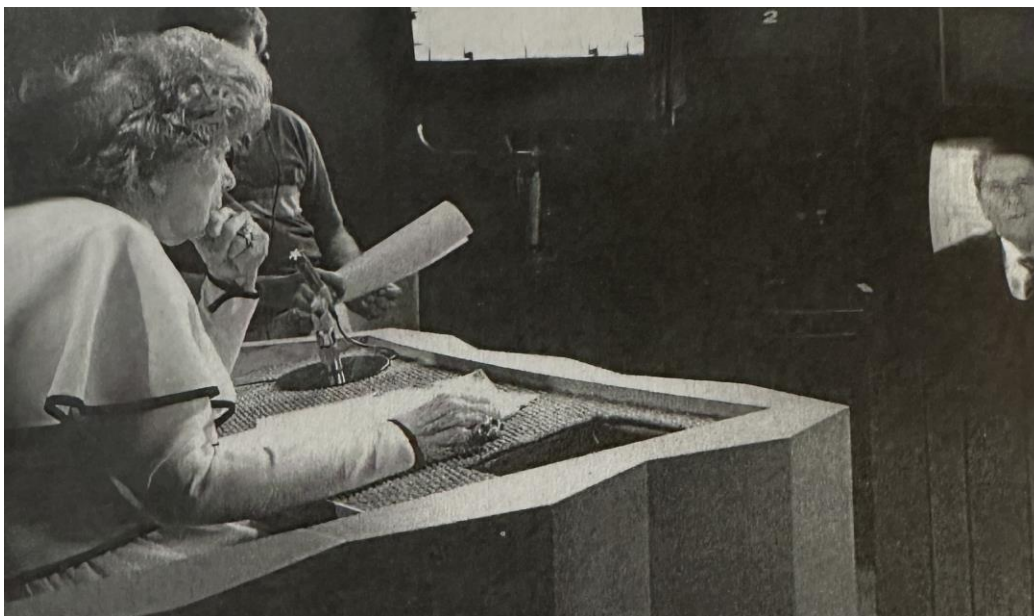


Figure 2: Fuldheim speaks to President Ronald Reagan in one of her last interviews in 1984.
Source: Patricia Mote, *The First First Lady of Television News*.

⁶⁶ David Bianculli, "Dorothy," *Akron-Beacon Journal*, June 19, 1983.

⁶⁷ "Fuldheim's condition is critical," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, July 30, 1984.

⁶⁸ "TV's Fuldheim out of coma," Ravenna-Kent, Ohio, *Record-Courier*, August 10, 1984.

Following her stroke and coma, Fuldheim was released from the hospital into the care of her private physician, Dr. James Kaufman, and transferred to the Margaret Wagner convalescent facility in Cleveland for further recovery and rehabilitation.⁶⁹ However, controversy circled the notion that Fuldheim was being sent to the convalescent home against her wishes. The public began to grow concerned for updates on Fuldheim's condition and sought to get her released from the Margret Wagner House. The *Akron-Beacon Journal* and the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* published stories regarding the debate of whether to keep Fuldheim in the Margaret Wagner House or let her leave to her private residence. Fuldheim's neurologist, Dr. Michael Devereaux, stated that "Fuldheim remained intellectually impaired" and required "round-the-clock nurses seven days a week."⁷⁰ Fuldheim was quoted as saying she wanted to "get the hell out" of the nursing home and go home. Fuldheim contracted lawyers to help her get out, but ultimately, discussions of Fuldheim's release subsided around June 1985, and she would remain at the convalescent home.

On Tuesday, October 8, 1985, Fuldheim suffered a second stroke. The director of marketing and public relations from WEWS said that Fuldheim entered the hospital with a cerebral hemorrhage.⁷¹ Local newspapers covered Fuldheim's condition closely, referring to the Chief of Neurology at Mount Sinai Medical Center, Dr. Michael Devereaux, and her personal physician, Dr. James Kaufman, for any updates on Fuldheim. She would jump between the hospital and the Margaret Wagner House for the next few years.

⁶⁹ "TV commentator released from hospital," Delphos, Ohio, *Delphos Tri-County Herald* (September 27, 1984).

⁷⁰ Mote, *The First First Lady of Television News*, 201.

⁷¹ "2nd stroke puts Fuldheim in hospital; prognosis poor," Elyria, Ohio, *Chronicle-Telegram*, October 9, 1985.

On Friday, November 3, 1989, Dorothy Fuldheim passed away at 96 from complications from her second stroke. Newspapers nationwide published tribute stories of “Big Red” and celebrated her remarkable life and career. Many remembered Fuldheim's legacy, calling her TV’s first lady and a grande dame of the press corps.⁷² Inspired by Fuldheim, Barbara Walters of ABC News spoke on Fuldheim’s influence and effectiveness as a speaker, news analyst, and person. She “was probably the first woman to be taken seriously doing the news,” Walters said.⁷³ General Manager of WEWS, James Knight, spoke on her energy, intellect, and compassion that truly spoke to all who worked with her.⁷⁴ Fuldheim was survived only by her granddaughter Halla Urman.

Many viewed Fuldheim’s death as the end of an era. However, her influence, passion, and integrity remained with all those who knew her personally and knew of her. Fuldheim carried herself with a confidence that outsized her small frame. Her background in theater made Fuldheim an emotional and grandiose lecturer who could control the audience seemingly with the snap of her fingers.

Fuldheim was full of opinions, many popular and many unpopular. Regardless, her opinion was always heard. In an era where it was not common for women to be in front of the camera, Fuldheim made a name for herself and took the airwaves by storm, becoming one of the first women to be a news analyst on television. Fuldheim is undoubtedly the First Lady and the Grand Dame of Television, as her life and career speak volumes of her abilities. We must look at the history of Dorothy Fuldheim to closely examine aspects of her career to provide context to

⁷² Shannon Jewell, “Dorothy Fuldheim, TV’s first lady, dies,” Elyria, Ohio, *Chronicle-Telegram*, November 3, 1989.

⁷³ Alan Seifullah and Mary Strassmeyer, “Dorothy Fuldheim, TV news legend, dies,” Cleveland, *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, November 4, 1989.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

specific historical events. With a narrow lens, the following chapters focus on an analysis of Fuldheim's commentaries, quotes, and lectures that center around the Vietnam War and the tragic student deaths at Kent State. The next chapter focuses on her writings on the events at Kent State, to which she received harsh criticism and deemed "too emotional." Despite this, Fuldheim's commentaries allow this study to analyze her writing style and the benefit of contextualizing historical events through subjective news media.

CHAPTER II

TRAGIC EVENTS AT KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

Dorothy Fuldheim was well into her career as a television broadcaster and lecturer when the conflict in Vietnam began. As early as May 1965, the United States Marines entered Vietnam to begin operations against the Viet Cong. By 1965, Fuldheim was a seasoned analyst for WEWS-TV in Cleveland. As the Vietnam War entered its fifth year, the topic became polarizing and led to increased tensions between patriotic Americans and anti-war protesters. On May 4, 1970, this turbulent political environment came to a violent climax, leaving four Kent State University students dead and nine others wounded. Feeling the day's emotions, Fuldheim immediately rushed to cover the event. To understand her position on the events at Kent State, it is imperative to understand the history and the significance of May 4, 1970. The records in the archives at Kent State University provide a timeline of events leading up to May 4.

This chapter will analyze the Kent State incident and Fuldheim's work, analysis, and reaction to the event. Opposed to the war and its effects, Fuldheim took a strong pro-student stance following the Kent killings, which garnered copious public attention. However, some attention was not particularly complimentary. In later years, as detailed in the Fuldheim Papers archived at Kent State and various speeches, she discussed the harm of this event on the younger generation and the sadness and bloodshed the war generated.

The series of events culminating in the Kent State shooting began in late April when President Richard Nixon announced that the United States was continuing operations in Vietnam and was prepared to invade Cambodia. Nixon explained that this invasion aimed to weaken

Cambodia's Viet Cong supply lines.⁷⁵ Outrage spread nationwide, and protests sprang up across college campuses. The public's reaction of indignation stemmed from Nixon's presidential campaign promise to end the war in Vietnam. Instead, the war broadened, and there looked to be no end to U.S. involvement.

The day following President Nixon's announcement, students at Kent State convened at the Commons, a prominent location for student activities in the center of campus. Students and other demonstrators delivered fiery speeches condemning the Nixon administration. As early evening approached, the crowd dispersed into downtown Kent and made their way to the local bars, and another demonstration was scheduled for the upcoming Monday. The evening of May 1 was relatively uneventful and peaceful. However, for reasons unknown, events escalated into violent interactions between the protesters and the police. Fires were set, cars stopped, windows shattered, and the police became targets for beer bottles. Storefront windows were broken, and downtown Kent took the brunt of the boisterous crowd. The Kent Police force was called to handle the crowd, and the mayor of Kent, Leroy Satrom, declared a state of emergency.⁷⁶

The next day, city officials met to discuss a plan to manage the ongoing protests and subsequent riots from the previous day. Mayor LeRoy Satrom and the Governor of Ohio, James Rhodes, decided to send the Ohio National Guard to Kent. It has since been revealed that the purpose of sending the Ohio National Guard was fear of further disturbances and rumors of radical revolutionaries at Kent who would destroy the city and the university.⁷⁷ It is unsure

⁷⁵ Jerry M. Lewis and Thomas R. Hensley, "The May 4 Shootings at Kent State University: The Search for Historical Accuracy," *Ohio Council for The Social Studies Review*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Summer, 1998), 9-21, (accessed September 19, 2023).

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

whether the rumors of revolutionaries at Kent State were true. However, the crowd continued on their path of destruction, and the ROTC building was burned to the ground. It remains unknown who sparked the blaze that destroyed the ROTC building. Over one thousand protesters surrounded the burning building and celebrated as the structure collapsed. Some confrontations with firemen were reported as protesters interfered with firemen looking to extinguish the inferno.⁷⁸

During World War II, ROTC programs sprang up on college campuses, contributing hundreds of thousands of officers to the war. However, Nixon's announcement triggered a slew of anti-war sentiments that led to ROTC buildings being the primary targets for destruction. This anti-war sentiment originated from the start of the war as changes to the Selective Service Act led many to be drafted. Frustration and anger piled on the anti-war sentiment following Nixon's announcement, to which ROTC programs and military recruiting became heavily villainized. Many saw these programs as a symbol of militarization and the broadening of the war. Many of the ROTC buildings were located along the periphery of college campuses and were typically isolated, which made them perfect targets for vandalism and destruction.⁷⁹

As the Kent State ROTC building went up in flames, the Ohio National Guard made its way onto campus. They were met with heavy resistance and a hail of chants from student protesters. As student Margaret Barnetson described in a letter to the *Akron Beacon Journal*, after the ROTC building was burnt to the ground, ironically, the army arrived, and "I wept for the loss of innocence."⁸⁰ The protest at Kent proceeded as planned despite many attempts to cancel the

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Howard Means, *67 Shots: Kent State and the End of American Innocence* (Boston: De Capo Press, 2016), 25-26.

⁸⁰ Margaret Barnetson, *ABJ Reader Response*: Kent State University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives, <http://omeka.library.kent.edu/special-collections/items/show/9119>, (accessed September 5, 2023).

proceedings and disperse the crowds. Around noon on May 4, crowds began to gather in the Commons. As the crowd began to work itself into a frenzy, the Kent State Police ordered the protesters to disperse. This was met with shouts and hurling of rocks, and the Kent State Police were forced to retreat. Then, Gen. Robert Canterbury ordered the Ohio National Guard to move forward and huddle together to hold their positions amidst the heavy crowds. The National Guard eventually made their way into the middle of the field and were pelted with rocks and verbal abuse. The guardsmen held their position for about ten minutes. Eventually, they worked their way back up Blanket Hill, on the edge of the Commons. Once they reached the top of the hill, 28 of the 70 Guardsmen turned and fired their weapons. Some Guardsmen fired into the air and others to the ground; however, a few fired directly into the crowd. In thirteen seconds, sixty-seven shots were fired into the crowd.⁸¹ The students scurried and hid behind trees, benches, and behind one another. Four students died after those terrifying thirteen seconds, and nine others were wounded.

As the smoke settled in Kent, Allison Krause, Jeffery Glen Miller, Sandra Lee Scheuer, and William Knox Schroeder lay dead. Protesters and students caught in the crossfire walking across campus retreated to their dormitories and scattered throughout the town after facing perhaps the most shocking day of their lives. The day following the killings, 19,000 Kent State students were ordered to return home, and the university was swarmed with police patrols and guardsmen.⁸² In an official press release, Kent State would close for the remainder of the Spring Semester due to conclude on June 13. Graduate School Dean Hames McGrath spoke on behalf of

⁸¹ Jerry M. Lewis and Thomas R. Hensley, "The May 4 Shootings at Kent State University: The Search for Historical Accuracy," (accessed September 5, 2023).

⁸² Mike Shanahan, "Kent has grim and empty look," *Chronicle Telegram*, (Elyria, Ohio), May 5, 1970.

Kent State University President Robert White to announce that the last of the National Guardsmen had now withdrawn from the university.⁸³

Confusion and outrage spread across the country as the news of the events in Kent was relayed. The media coverage and later reports on the anniversary of the events would mark this event as a catalyst of American polarization during this period. The events at Kent State and Fuldheim's reporting would mark the rise of her career to the national spotlight. The opinions of this event differed heavily, and with many Americans siding with the National Guard, the students were painted as violent revolutionaries who deserved what they got.⁸⁴ Moreover, the events of May 4 fostered debates placing the blame on either the students or the National Guard and developing factions among the public.

Responses flooded in from other universities across the United States. Many universities also followed with curfews and closures to avoid another such event. The reactions that came in were a mixture of sympathy and caution. The Kent State May 4 collection of documents relative to the tragic event contains Associated Press releases; this mixture of compassion and warning is evident throughout the collection. A May 8 press release read that Ohio State University and Miami University remained closed, and the Oxford, Ohio, mayor enacted a curfew.⁸⁵

Another notable example of campus violence was the events at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, which saw violent interactions between protesters and the police. The

⁸³ "AP: Press Releases," May 8, 1970, Kent State University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives, <http://omeka.library.kent.edu/special-collections/items/show/3271>, (accessed September 5, 2023).

⁸⁴ Chris McGreal, "How the Kent State massacre marked the start of America's Polarization," *The Guardian*, May 4, 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/may/04/kent-state-massacre-marked-start-of-americas-polarization> (Accessed: September 4, 2023).

⁸⁵ "AP: Press Releases," Kent State University Libraries Special Collections and Archives, May 8, 1970, <http://omeka.library.kent.edu/special-collections/items/show/3271>, (accessed September 5, 2023).

week of May 4 saw several protests on campus that ultimately led to several fire bombings and destruction of property. The National Guard was called to Madison in response to the violence, further infuriating the already irritated crowd. The violence witnessed at the University of Wisconsin seemed to dwarf the events at Kent to a degree. Bombs were found in the Memorial Library on campus, which developed into additional protests by library workers demanding an end to campus violence. As weeks turned to months, August saw further demonstrations and destruction. By the end of August, over 2.7 million dollars of damage had been done to at least six campus buildings, causing one death.⁸⁶

The Kent State May 4 online collection contains posters, correspondence, flyers, and postcards from students at other universities. Like Kent State, students from other universities also searched for justice. In a collection titled “Strike Papers,” there is a long list of universities that protested the Vietnam War and the violence on May 4. These records uncover a protest that predates the Kent killings held at Johns Hopkins University in April 1970. A document from the Johns Hopkins Strike Committed details their demands from the university. The most popular demand, in coordination with protesting the Vietnam War, is an end to military recruitment on campus. An additional demand is the immediate end of the ROTC program on campus. Like other universities, the ROTC programs were easy targets for protests and demonstrations because they symbolized a strong military presence on campus. Tied into the anti-war demands is an additional clause demanding the organization of new university governance to which students hold a dominant majority in decisions relating to the university.⁸⁷ The Johns Hopkins Strike

⁸⁶ University of Wisconsin at Madison, Protests and Social Action at UW-Madison During the 20th Century, 1970-1979, <https://www.library.wisc.edu/archives/exhibits/campus-history-projects/protests-social-action-at-uw-madison-during-the-20th-century/1970-1979/>, (accessed September 26, 2023).

⁸⁷ “Strike Papers: Maryland: Johns Hopkins University,” Kent State University Libraries Special Collections and Archives, April 21, 1970, <http://omeka.library.kent.edu/special-collections/items/show/4044>. (accessed September 11, 2023).

Committee papers and the overall demonstrations held at Johns Hopkins and other universities are examples of peaceful protests that were not met with violence but rather words to display dissatisfaction with the Vietnam War. However, peaceful does not describe the actions and events at Kent State.

On May 5, the day after the deadly event at Kent State, the University of Kentucky's ROTC building was set on fire in a direct protest of the killings at Kent State. What began as a simple protest resulted in flames and confrontation between students and campus administration. University of Kentucky student Sue Ann Salmon was arrested in connection to the fire and charged with arson. Aside from Salmon's arrest, two additional students, Mason Taylor and John Woodring, would be arrested following the fire and protests and charged with disorderly conduct.⁸⁸ Compared to the University of Wisconsin and Kent State, the torching of the ROTC building at the University of Kentucky is less significant yet considered the standard of protests across college campuses.

Perhaps the most shocking reaction came from President Nixon himself. Upon delivering a speech on April 30, 1970, announcing the invasion of Cambodia, which resulted in a slew of protests. The following day, Nixon was quizzed on the state of these protests and the violence emerging from them. The *New York Times* reported that he made his way to the Pentagon following the announcement, where he was met with cheers, handshakes, and affirmative words. A woman shouted from the crowd of Pentagon employees, "I loved your speech. It made me proud to be an American."⁸⁹ Nixon stopped and said he had "those kids out there" in mind as he

⁸⁸ "Strike Papers: Kentucky: University of Kentucky," Kent State University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives, <http://omeka.library.kent.edu/special-collections/items/show/4038>, (accessed September 11, 2023).

⁸⁹ Juan de Onis, "Nixon Puts 'Bums' Label on Some College Radicals," *New York Times*, May 2, 1970 (Accessed: September 5, 2023).

wrote his speech. The “kids” he refers to were the troops in Vietnam. However, the shocking aspect of President Nixon’s discussion would come from the following lines: “You see these bums, you know, blowing up the campuses. The boys on college campuses today are the luckiest people in the world, going to the greatest universities, and here they are burning up books, storming around about these issues. You name it. Get rid of the war; there will be another one.”⁹⁰ Shockingly, the President of the United States had called anti-war protesters “bums.” This was the strongest language used publicly by the president to discuss the topic of campus violence. With these words, one could argue that Nixon sparked the polarization between anti-war student protesters and patriotic nationalists.

As the events of May 4 unfolded, Dorothy Fuldheim was wrapping up her noon broadcast at WEWS in Cleveland. A commotion caught her attention as she walked down the hallway at the news station. Through the quiet commotion and faces of concern on the station workers Fuldheim made out the words in the sea of whispers revealing the news of the shooting that had just occurred. Until now, the only news she had heard was the burning of the ROTC building and the protests scheduled for the following days. Finally, she was made aware of the situation at Kent State and immediately rushed to the campus. She commandeered a WEWS vehicle and driver and rushed down the Ohio Turnpike to the normally serene campus in northeastern Ohio.⁹¹

The scene to which Fuldheim arrived was shocking. Thirteen bodies lay scattered on the grass of the Commons. Tear gas floated over the campus, and students scattered from the Commons, looking to escape the commotion. Fuldheim, overcome with emotion, began to weep

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Patricia Mote, *The First First Lady of Television News: Dorothy Fuldheim* (Berea, Ohio: Quixote Publications, 1997), 135.

at the bloodshed she witnessed. She returned to the station, dried her eyes, and prepared to deliver an emotional commentary during her evening broadcast. Fuldheim and many others looked for answers and repercussions for the guardsmen who opened fire on the students. The night of May 4, Fuldheim began her commentary as she normally would, and by the end of it, she was weeping, mourning the loss of the four students.

Before Fuldheim finished her teary commentary, the WEWS phone lines exploded. Thousands of viewers called the studio in the days following the commentary to voice their opinions and criticisms. About ninety-five percent of those who called were fervently critical of Fuldheim's stance. "Why are you sorry for those deaths? Too bad the National Guard didn't kill more. It's about time someone put them in their place. Good for the National Guard," one caller said.⁹² Surprised with the reaction to her emotional commentary, Fuldheim was shaken and rushed to meet Donald Perris, the station manager, to offer her resignation. Perris responded, "Nonsense, Dorothy... you are nine feet tall."⁹³ He understood that Fuldheim could withstand far worse criticism and controversy. Following her commentary, Fuldheim received countless death threats and messages to WEWS calling for her resignation. Backlash re-emerged in response to Fuldheim's later commentaries about the events at Kent State. Remarkably, Fuldheim persisted past the cruel criticism, proceeded to be more vocal, and used her emotion as a new tool for her craft.

In a later commentary, Fuldheim outlined the facts and the tragic consequences of the events at Kent State:

There were no guns in the hands of the four who were killed and the nine who were wounded – they had no weapons, no iron rods in their hands, they

⁹² Ibid., 137.

⁹³ Ibid.

were giving no speeches. Their sin was protesting against the war, and the four [who] were killed were only bystanders. No one told them the state governor had called out the National Guard. The governor decided it would show these long-haired troublemakers that protest meetings would not be tolerated. There was some jostling, shouting, and rock-throwing, but what prompted the National Guard to shoot? Since when do we shoot our children? Ask the parents of these young people how they feel. When will their anguish be over? So, they died, and I returned to Cleveland, went on the air, and showed my emotion and anger about the killings. As I recounted their deaths, I called it murder, for these four were no housebreakers, no killers, no drug addicts, no muggers, no rapists.⁹⁴



Figure 3: Student Kneeling Over Victim at Kent State. Source: CNN

The day following the Kent shootings, Fuldheim was surprised by a basket of flowers outside her office door. The card read, “We wept with you last night.” It was signed, “Some students.”⁹⁵ This gesture was a pleasant surprise for Fuldheim as she had only encountered negative comments and threats following her commentary. In the weeks that followed the events at Kent State, Fuldheim would go on WEWS to address the controversy surrounding her pro-

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 136.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 138.

student stance. She argued that what happened was inexplicable. She had more questions than answers for the events of May 4. She saw the event as a tragic aberration of the American spirit. As a result of this position, she continued to be villainized. Fuldheim did not deny that the students were responsible for the destruction. She understood that the burning of the ROTC building was wrong and that those guilty deserved some form of punishment, but not death. She believed that those who contributed to the destruction in the town should have been arrested, but the slaughter happened on campus and not in the town.⁹⁶

Fuldheim discussed how appalled she was with the outrage caused by her comments. She understood that her comments came from a source of sadness and anger but were true. Many who disagreed with Fuldheim's stance started a petition to get her thrown off the air. The irony was that the criticism originated among patriotic conservative listeners who had previously praised Fuldheim for kicking Jerry Rubin off her show for rude comments regarding the police and an affiliation with the Black Panther Party. This disapproval led Fuldheim to reconsider her comments, but she remained a woman of her word. She was astonished by the degree of hatred for the students and herself. She was evermore puzzled by the unnerved public who supported the National Guard and who thought the students deserved to die.⁹⁷ WEWS Station manager Donald Perris assured Fuldheim that the controversy would soon fizzle out, and eventually, it did. However, Fuldheim was not prepared to let the memory of May 4 fade.

Not only did Fuldheim have to manage criticism of her views, but she also faced criticism and angry scrutiny from various news outlets. One instance was a piece written by William

⁹⁶ Robert Torricelli, Andrew Carroll, and Doris Kearns Goodwin, *In Our Own Words: Extraordinary Speeches of the American Century*, (New York: Kodansha America, Inc., 1999), 298-99.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*,

Hickey, a writer for the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, who later published his article in the *Van Wert Times*. Titled “KSU Story on TV was One-Sided,” Hickey accused media outlets of demonizing the Ohio National Guard. Hickey first criticized David Brinkley of NBC-TV, whom Hickey claimed “has never mastered the fine art of concealing emotions despite his long tenure in front of television cameras and [who] was nothing less than a disgrace.”⁹⁸ Hickey then fires criticisms toward Fuldheim and depicts her as an emotionally unstable news analyst “who never quite managed to get her emotions under control” and whose story “should never have been aired.”⁹⁹ Hickey blames Brinkley and Fuldheim for allowing emotion to win the day and reason to be damned.¹⁰⁰

Having survived the avalanche of threats and comments, Fuldheim’s stance and language grew stronger as years passed, and anniversaries of the Kent killings came and went. Fuldheim and many others, especially the Kent State students, looked for answers and for those involved to be held accountable for the deaths of four students and the suffering of others. On May 4, 1973, three years removed from the tragic event, Fuldheim delivered another emotional commentary recalling the event and the names of the dead, poetically saying, “They walked across the campus where some spring flowers were lifting their heads to sun only to meet death, for them there will be no sunshine.”¹⁰¹ She continued, “Their eyes were innocent, their hands bare no weapon, their hearts were pure with the hope of peace in Vietnam; for this hope they died.”¹⁰²

⁹⁸ William Hickey, “KSU Story on TV was One-Sided,” *Van Wert Times*, May 18, 1970.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Fuldheim Papers, “The Anniversary of the Kent Killing,” May 4, 1973.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

Following the event, investigations were launched in search of the truth as to how the Ohio National Guardsmen were ordered to fire. A Kent State student caucus would form to gather evidence and witness testimonies in hopes of discovering answers to the many questions that appeared on May 4, 1970. Fuldheim did not directly act with, nor was she connected to the Kent student caucus and investigation committees. However, she served as a pillar for Allison Krause, William Schroeder, Jeffery Miller, and Sandra Scheuer's lives to be remembered as investigations and lawsuits polluted the memory of that fateful day.

In the years following the events of May 4, tensions lingered between the townspeople and the students. There also remained heightened tensions between the students and members of the ROTC program at Kent State. A member of the Kent State Alumni and Cleveland native, James Norris discusses his memories of Kent as he enrolled at Kent State University in 1972. As a member of the ROTC program, Norris recalls students hurling items and insults at him and his colleagues. He specified that although these engagements did not escalate into further violence, it encapsulated the somber emotions felt across campus. "Many students wore t-shirts and sweatshirts with targets drawn on them," mentioned Norris.¹⁰³ In another instance of protest, Norris discusses the students surrounding the new ROTC area, located in the student records building, looking to intimidate those inside. The tensions ultimately led many ROTC members to carry their uniforms separately to avoid strolling across campus in uniform, drawing attention to themselves.

Norris also spoke about seeing Fuldheim on television. He praised her talk show, the "One O'clock Club," as it was an intellectual talk show focused on interviews and informing its audience rather than comedy. "In a time where people watched the news," Norris asserts, "you

¹⁰³ James Norris, interviewed by author, Laredo, Texas, October 25, 2023.

sat and listened.”¹⁰⁴ Norris remembers being mesmerized by Fuldheim as she strongly relayed the news with her captivating vocabulary and emotion. Fuldheim would carry this emotion while reporting on the events of May 4 and subsequent anniversaries.



Figure 4: Kent State ROTC photo. Courtesy of James Norris.

On later anniversaries, Fuldheim continued to write commentaries of the event in the search for justice and accountability. On April 1, 1974, she wrote, once more, a solid emotional piece targeting the Ohio National Guard. Fuldheim addresses the dark reality that the students continued to be blamed heavily by the public. “There is something poignant, something agonizing about the Kent deaths,” wrote Fuldheim.¹⁰⁵ In the same commentary, she points to who should be to blame for the injuries and deaths. “Are only the guards responsible? What about those in authority over them?”¹⁰⁶ In search of accountability, there appeared to be none. The overall tone of Fuldheim’s commentary was critical of the National Guardsmen and the Ohio

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Fuldheim Papers, “Once More Kent,” April 1, 1974.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

Attorney General. The primary effort for Fuldheim's commentaries following the event and the years after was justice for the victims.

Throughout the 1970s, Fuldheim continued airing her commentaries and agreed to speaking engagements across Ohio. According to one article in the *Sandusky Register*, Fuldheim was still as opinionated as ever, even in the years after the incident. Speaking at the Erie County Farm Bureau's annual meeting in northern Ohio, Fuldheim discussed the morality and freedoms on the country as well as foreign countries. She also discussed comparisons between Soviet farming and farming in Erie County, Ohio. However, in what appears as a small footnote in the meeting, Fuldheim touched on a sensitive topic for many Ohio natives in the 1970s. She discussed the building of a new gymnasium at Kent State University. Fuldheim argued that "the board of regents acted without tact."¹⁰⁷ Rather than building the gymnasium, Fuldheim suggested that the area be dedicated to those whom the National Guardsmen killed. Still, years following the event, Fuldheim maintains her emotional connection and respect to Kent State by keeping those who died in the memories of Ohio natives.

In search for retribution, students and citizens of Kent, Ohio came together to sign a petition to request a federal investigation by a grand jury.¹⁰⁸ Prior to 10,000 persons signing a petition for a federal investigation, Ohio Gov. James Rhodes had already agreed to a federal investigation on May 5 immediately following the killings. Despite Governor Rhode's request the Pentagon responded that the federal government would not pursue an investigation because the National Guard dispatched to Kent State were on non-federal status and were thus under the

¹⁰⁷ Jim Walters, "Dorothy Fuldheim Has Definite Opinions: Television Personality At Erie Co. Farm Bureau Annual Meeting," *Sandusky Register*, October 6, 1977.

¹⁰⁸ Alvin Flory, "\$1 million for Kent Justice," Kent State University Summer News, August 1, 1972, Newspaper Archives. Kent State.

command of the State of Ohio.¹⁰⁹ It seemed that efforts to investigate the deaths and violence at Kent State had been thwarted. However, efforts would not stop. United States Attorney General John N. Mitchell announced on May 21, 1970, that he was stepping up action with the Justice Department's investigations to determine whether there were any criminal violations of federal laws in the Kent State deaths along with the deaths of two black students at Jackson State University in Mississippi.¹¹⁰

On Saturday, June 13, 1970, President Nixon announced a special commission to investigate campus violence. This commission was not directly related to the events at Kent State but rather the general campus violence nationwide. With the announcement of the special commission, Nixon released the names of those appointed to the commission whose goal was to peacefully resolve student grievances and avoid future incidents such as the ones at Kent State and Jackson State.¹¹¹ Unfortunately, this commission failed to provide any sense of justice to the students, but there were continued hopes for an FBI investigation.

In late July 1970, the Justice Department released a report on the Kent State killings that was published in the *Akron-Beacon Journal* and elsewhere. The ten-page report cited several FBI agents and Jerris Leonard, Chief of the Civil Rights Division. Leonard argued the shootings "were unnecessary and not in order."¹¹² The report insightfully supported the claims from the students and witnesses on campus at the time of the shooting. Through the work of FBI

¹⁰⁹ "Margaret Ann Garmon and Jennifer Schrage, Legal Cases Chronology May 5, 1970 – January 4, 1979." Accessed September 12, 2023.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

investigators and additional consultants in the case of Kent State, the National Guardsmen appeared to be at fault and were not exempt from prosecution.

Despite the struggles to gather evidence and conduct formal investigations, those efforts would dwindle in the weeks following May 4. Families of the deceased were left in the dark regarding the investigations but soon began to act for themselves. On Wednesday, June 10, 1970, Arthur Krause, father of Allison Krause, filed a \$6 million lawsuit in federal court against Gov. James A. Rhodes and two Ohio National Guard commanders. In the suit, Krause argued that the defendants “intentionally and maliciously disregarded the lives and safety of students, spectators, and passersby, including Allison Krause.”¹¹³ In the same vein, Louis Schroeder, father of William Schroeder, filed a \$4 million lawsuit against the state of Ohio for the death of his son. Just as in previous suits filed by the parents, the ruling is the same. The state of Ohio had sovereign immunity and could not be sued unless the state consented.¹¹⁴

The puzzling issue was the avenue to have reparations paid to the families of the deceased for the suffering the events of May 4 had caused. Through a Circuit Court and up to the Supreme Court of the United States, the 1974 case of *Scheuer v. Rhodes* held that Scheuer and other families who filed suit against the state of Ohio, were allowed to sue Ohio officials and officers of the National Guard. In an 8-0 decision, the Supreme Court reversed a District Court decision that initially dismissed the complaint for lack of jurisdiction along with the Court of Appeals, that affirmed the District Court’s ruling based on the common law doctrine of executive

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

immunity, thus allowing the state of Ohio to be sued by the plaintiffs.¹¹⁵ Although this decision would allow the families to pursue their lawsuits, conclusive settlements were still years away.

It was not until 1979 that a settlement was eventually made. Fuldheim wrote and presented a commentary on the ultimate settlement made with the families, which was reached to prevent further litigation by the families against the Ohio National Guard, Kent State University officials, and the State of Ohio. In her commentary, Fuldheim discusses the details of the settlement. She writes that the State Controlling Board in the state capital in Columbus had appropriated \$675,000 for suits against Governor Rhodes and the National Guard. For the parents of the students killed, each received \$15,000. A larger settlement of \$350,000 was paid to Dean Kahler, who was critically wounded and crippled by a bullet. “The settlement is an acknowledgment that the state went way beyond its authority in shooting and killing,” Fuldheim wrote.¹¹⁶

Fittingly, Fuldheim’s discussion of the Kent State settlement brought some conclusiveness to the events that had unfolded eight years earlier. From the moment the smoke lifted at Kent State, Fuldheim witnessed firsthand the psychological carnage that remained on that fateful day. Although filled with anger and sadness, Fuldheim managed to write and deliver an emotional commentary discussing the tragedy. As time rolled along, more questions developed than answers. No doubt families were impacted greatly, having lost sons and daughters. The sadness of the event is often overlooked in exchange for justice and retribution for the students killed. Fuldheim embraced the emotion of sadness and ensured her audience was aware of this monumental event in American history.

¹¹⁵ *Scheuer v. Rhodes*, 416 U.S. 232 (1974)

¹¹⁶ Fuldheim Papers, “Kent State Settlement,” January 4, 1979.

Overall, Fuldheim's views of the student deaths at Kent State are based on her well-articulated commentaries written throughout the 1970s. For these views, she was criticized for being too emotional, the convenient argument against women at the time. Despite this, she persisted past the stereotype, and her passionate writings on the event provide her subjective perspective and proceeds to further analyze the foreign policy movements of the United States in relation to the Vietnam War.

CHAPTER III

FULDHEIM ON NIXON, VIETNAM PEACE, AND POLICY

As mentioned earlier in Chapter One, Dorothy Fuldheim excelled in demanding and grabbing her audience's attention. Throughout her career, she utilized her artistic vocabulary to its fullest extent in her speeches and writings. The commentaries discussed thus far demonstrate this exemplary rhetoric that Fuldheim was celebrated for. The similarities among these commentaries and the focus of this research revolve around the Vietnam War. In her writings on the progress of the war and the social events concerning American foreign engagements, she evokes various emotions. She captures attention by conjuring sadness, anger, frustration, fear, and urgency. Whether she reports on the war's financial cost, the anniversary of the Kent State killings, or updates on the peace negotiations with the North Vietnamese, Fuldheim speaks to the layperson with her writing style and delivery.

Despite the backlash after President Richard Nixon announced the invasion of Cambodia, it was clear that the Vietnam War was entering another phase. Grudgingly, Fuldheim understood that despite the protests, there was nothing to be done about the hypocrisy of the Nixon administration. Much like the coverage of the Kent State killings, Fuldheim delivered critical commentaries on the status of the war and voiced her displeasure with it. With U.S. involvement in Vietnam dating back to the early 1960s, this uncovers a limitation in the research, however. The Fuldheim Papers at Kent State begin in 1972, narrowing the scope of an analysis of Fuldheim's views of the war. Through primary and secondary sources of Fuldheim's work, however, we piece together her positions on the Vietnam War, the perceived threat of communism, and U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Despite this limitation, numerous commentaries

detail the status of the war at various times, talks of peace, and the gradual removal of American troops.

One of the first documents in the Fuldheim Papers is a commentary on the State of the Union address by President Nixon. Fuldheim's opinion of Nixon can be described as noncomplimentary. Fuldheim harshly criticized Nixon's domestic policies and international diplomacy throughout his presidency. This must be considered when reviewing Fuldheim's commentaries moving forward as she discusses the president, the Vietnam War, and the human and monetary price of the war. As the incumbent, Nixon prepared for the 1972 election campaign by delivering his State of the Union speech in mid-January 1972. Nixon urged young Americans to volunteer for the army as the United States still found itself entangled in the web of Vietnam. He called for inflation-proof social security benefits, increased benefits for widows, and a five percent increase in social security benefits. These promises came as a late Christmas gift for many Americans, but Fuldheim saw through Nixon's hollow assertions.¹¹⁷

On January 20, 1972, Fuldheim delivered her afternoon commentary on WEWS in Cleveland, discussing Nixon's address in detail and providing her counterpoints. She pointed out the financial deficit to which the war had been funded and the two billion dollars spent on the Navy, further exacerbating the inflation crisis. She points out that Nixon did not provide a fiscal plan to tackle the deficit. She, instead, points to a laundry list of guarantees by the president, to which she skeptically says, "Can he do all this in a year?"¹¹⁸ Fuldheim's night broadcast discussed the same topic but more concisely. However, she did list items that had not appeared in the first commentary. She added that Nixon looked to end the draft, increase defense spending,

¹¹⁷ Fuldheim Papers, "The Meaning of the President's State of the Union Message," January 20, 1972.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

and end the war. Again, she closes the piece by posing whether Nixon could execute his program of promises all within a year.¹¹⁹

Following her report on Nixon's State of the Union address, Fuldheim focused her attention on the eye sore that was the financial deficit the country found itself in as a result of the Vietnam War. Outlined in a January 25, 1972 commentary, Fuldheim presented the issue plainly with the title, "The \$87 Billion Deficit." In it, she emphasizes the fact that the war had set the country back financially by \$87 billion in the three years of Nixon's administration alone. She also asserted that the debt would amount to \$100 billion by the end of the year.¹²⁰ Fuldheim presents an alternative approach to use \$100 billion, which in itself targets the decision-making of President Nixon. "If that \$100 billion had been spent to create jobs instead of blowing up in the devastation of war, we would have had full employment, which in turn would have increased the amount collected in taxes, and we would have no debt," she elaborates¹²¹ Also considered to be a great feminist of her generation, Fuldheim ends her commentary with a line that touches both the spectrum of feminism and displays indignation to the president. She says, "one sometimes wonders if men are rational."¹²² Perhaps there is no ulterior motive to this line other than voicing her displeasure. Still, she criticizes Nixon and the entire bureaucratic apparatus of the United States government, which so happens to be male-dominated, and continued to filter money into a war entering its seventh year.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Fuldheim Papers, "The \$87 Billion Deficit," January 25, 1972.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

By 1972, U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia festered longer than many had expected. Anti-war sentiments had climaxed after the events at Kent State and the University of Wisconsin. Having experienced multiple acts of violence and protests across college campuses, there seemed to be a sense of urgency for President Nixon, or so it appeared, to negotiate terms for peace and prepare a withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam. By March 1972, there appeared to be progress in peace talks. The United States had been attempting to prepare peace offers to the North Vietnamese, but there was no compromise. In her March 23, 1972 commentary, Fuldheim discusses the stalemate the United States found while negotiating with the North Vietnamese. For years, the United States had been delivering demands for peace and had met resistance. As per Fuldheim, the most considerable resistance came from “the Communists [refusal] to allow impartial inspection of the prisoners of war camps.”¹²³ The “Communists” that Fuldheim refers to appear to be the obstacle to peace. Just as the United States looked to inspect prisoners of war camps, the North Vietnamese had their demands. “Hanoi now is demanding nothing less than the total dismantling of the South Vietnamese government,” Fuldheim articulated.¹²⁴

The language and tone set by Fuldheim in this commentary appear to be one of annoyance with the lack of compromise between the parties. Fuldheim denounces the North Vietnamese, whom she refers to as “Communists,” as they have discouraged any hope for peace and solely wish for complete victory. Urgency and frustration fill the commentary to which Fuldheim notes that 200,000 American troops remain in Vietnam while the South Vietnamese have lost 140,000 men. As a result of these unattainable demands, the United States declared that

¹²³ Fuldheim Papers, “United States Tells The North Vietnamese No More Meetings Unless They Are Prepared To Make Serious Offers For Peace,” March 23, 1972.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

no additional peace meetings were to be considered unless the North Vietnamese were prepared to discuss serious offers for peace.

Fuldheim's discourse on the peace negotiations read with urgency and desperation. As she had written a month earlier, there appeared to be a more optimistic tone as it had been announced that peace talks had been ongoing for over a year, according to President Nixon. However, her commentary developed into a discussion of the immovable nature of the North Vietnamese. "If the North Vietnamese could not be defeated when [500,000] American soldiers were there, how can the South Vietnamese alone defeat the communists?" Fuldheim asks. Her perception of the North Vietnamese is one of fear, as they sought total control of Vietnam. Bitterly, Fuldheim understands that the North Vietnamese are unshakeable, and the war will continue to grow more malignant as reducing the number of American forces would allow the South Vietnamese to be overthrown.¹²⁵

She continued to devote considerable time contemplating the current position of the United States in advancing peace with the North Vietnamese and removing all American troops from Vietnam. Fuldheim presents a dilemma, to which the United States chooses to either withdraw entirely or continue the bombing and destruction of both North and South Vietnam. In an April 4, 1972 presentation, mentioning:

The [United States] is in a cruel bind. Can we stand by and see the South Vietnamese slaughtered? Do we want to be involved in an endless war again? Are there political overtones to this advance of the Communist troops? Are they hoping to influence the presidential election to defeat President Nixon? Is it possible that they believe that a Democrat who wants the war ended would be elected if U.S. troops are once more involved in the fighting?¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Fuldheim Papers, "The North Vietnamese Turn Down President Nixon's Peace Treaty," January 27, 1972.

¹²⁶ Fuldheim Papers, "Why The North Vietnamese Started to Attack Again," April 4, 1972.

On the night of April 4 on WEWS in Cleveland, Fuldheim drew the attention of her audience by posing a question. At the end of her eleven o'clock commentary, she asked, "If you were President Nixon, what would you do? Would you bomb or withdraw altogether?"¹²⁷ Coming across this commentary, it was surprising that a news analyst and broadcaster would pose such a question to her audience. Typically, broadcasts relay the news to its audience, and not impose a social dilemma. Fuldheim would pose this issue in commentaries that week as President Nixon and United States Secretary of State Henry Kissinger looked to conclude a war that had seemed to drag on forever.

As the United States and the North Vietnamese "ping-ponged" terms of peace, there would be glimpses of hope, but Fuldheim reminded her audience that if terms were to be settled for either party, the United States would be left looking like a fool, having fought a useless war. In February 1972, the Viet Cong submitted peace terms in Paris for review, which were, as Fuldheim describes, "simple, direct and devastating."¹²⁸ Set by the Viet Cong, the United States was to set a precise withdrawal date. Only when all American troops were withdrawn would the prisoners of war be released. Furthermore, negotiations for a more detailed peace agreement would be considered only if President Nguyen Van Thieu resigns and the Saigon government restructures its policy.¹²⁹ Considering Fuldheim's writing style, one could assume the news of these terms was dramatized, but upon closer examination, it is not the case.

In an extensively detailed document in the Office of the Historian database, there is a joint proposal between the United States and the Republic of Vietnam. The withdrawal and

¹²⁷ Fuldheim Papers, "What Does President Nixon Do – Bomb or Withdraw," April 4, 1972.

¹²⁸ Fuldheim Papers, "The Viet Cong Offer New Terms for Peace," February 3, 1972.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

prisoner exchange terms are detailed conservatively as they were to be carried out simultaneously. Regarding the Saigon government, the North Vietnamese demanded the restructuring of the future political framework of South Vietnam. According to the document, once a peace agreement had been reached, presidential elections would to be conducted six months later in which all political forces could participate and present potential candidates under international supervision. During these elections, the United States would declare that it supports no candidate, remains neutral, abides by the outcome, and prepare to define its military and economic relationship with the newly established government.¹³⁰

With these details coming to light and the United States debating an appropriate peace proposal, Fuldheim organized the news and utilized her elocution to put the audience in the middle of this position. As she addresses this peace offer from the North Vietnamese, she recounts new financial estimates of the war. “If we accept, let’s face it, we fought a useless unwinnable war that cost us \$120 billion, and 55,000 Americans killed plus 300,000 wounded,” Fuldheim writes.¹³¹

Previously her report on the day of the Kent State killings and the criticism she received for her “emotional” delivery were discussed. Although these reports of peace talks are delivered with a sense of urgency, there is a beauty and elegance in which Fuldheim speaks on the topic that is distinctive from her Kent State report. This style of reporting would be synonymous to Dorothy Fuldheim during this period.

¹³⁰ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Vol. VII, Vietnam, January-October 1972*, ed. John M. Carland (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2010), Document 8, 33.

¹³¹ Fuldheim Papers, “The Viet Cong Offer New Terms for Peace,” February 3, 1972.

In the midst of the peace debates, President Nixon decided to visit China, which Fuldheim described as “a historic incident.”¹³² Nixon would become the first American president to visit mainland China while in office.¹³³ The trip was a success as it reduced the hostilities between the two countries and demonstrated the initiation of a new cooperative relationship that would align the two nations. Fuldheim, too, understood the magnitude of such an event. She was astonished at such a visit as only a few years earlier, during his official years as a senator, vice president, and president, Nixon had been an anti-communist, even siding at times with the late Senator Joseph McCarthy in all of his “red baiting.”¹³⁴

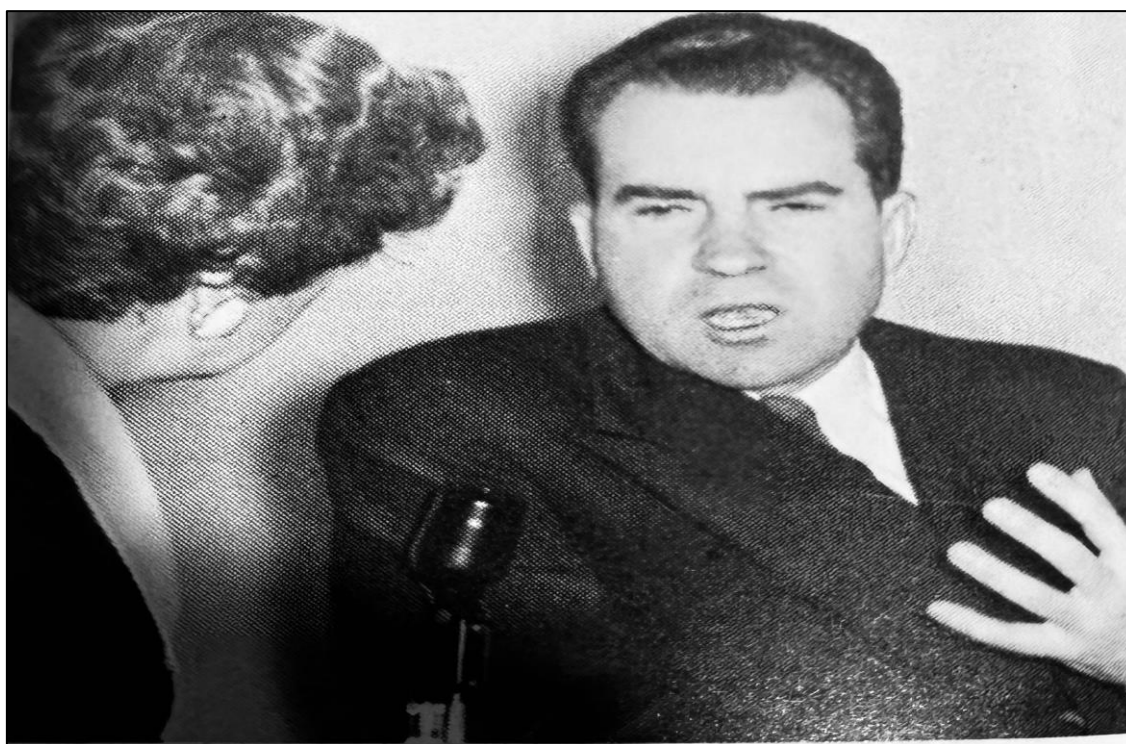


Figure 5: Nixon discussing his campaign with Fuldheim. Image Source: Dorothy Fuldheim, "I Laughed, I Cried, I Loved," 1966.

¹³² Fuldheim Papers, “The World Stood Still to Watch A Historic Incident – Nixon Arriving in Peking,” February 21, 1972.

¹³³ Charles Krause, “Nixon’s 1972 Visit to China at 50,” Wilson Center (blog), February 21, 2022, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/nixons-1972-visit-china-50>, (accessed October 2, 2023).

¹³⁴ Fuldheim Papers, “The World Stood Still to Watch A Historic Incident – Nixon Arriving in Peking,” February 21, 1972.

In this meeting of the minds, Russia appeared as a footnote in the conversation between Nixon and Mao Zedong, where the two briefly met. Fuldheim adds that Russia has grown to be robust and greedy, and it best suits the United States to discomfort Russia by appearing to be “buddy-buddy” with the People's Republic of China as a mode of inhibiting further expansionism by the Soviet Union.¹³⁵ Fuldheim understands the monumental event that unfolded in China and how it would seem in the eyes of Russia and Vietnam. In a rare instance, Fuldheim praises Nixon for this visit as it appears to have aligned the United States and China despite their drastic ideological differences. Nonetheless, Fuldheim adds her traditional flare. She describes Nixon as bold and courageous for reversing his stand on China and admires his use of chopsticks to compliment his hosts. She recalls, “When I was interviewing Chiang [Kai-shek], I tried, and I was so inept that if a fork had not been given to me, I would have starved unless I ate with my fingers.”¹³⁶

Fuldheim framed Nixon’s visit to China as a strategic movement by the United States against the North Vietnamese. On July 6, 1972, Fuldheim delivered a commentary that appeared to be a progressive step toward peace. Titled “Russia and China Urges North Vietnam to Accept U.S. Peace Terms,” she details the interesting situation China finds itself in with its relationship with the United States. Fuldheim portrays Russia and China as nations pursuing peace, perhaps reflecting that they no longer see the North Vietnamese as successful in the war. However, she points to the factor of the production of planes, which the United States excels in, keeps the friendly relationship between China and the United States.¹³⁷ From an exterior perspective, it

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Fuldheim Papers, “Russia and China Urge North Vietnam to Accept U.S. Peace Terms,” July 6, 1972.

appears as a stretch that the production of airplanes would be a factor for China to persuade the North Vietnamese to seek peace. However, Fuldheim portrays this reciprocity as a factor for the Chinese to carefully craft their decisions concerning Vietnam. Her language tells the audience that the United States has taken the lead and allowed other international actors to promote peace.

Throughout peace negotiations, Fuldheim permitted her audience to feel that they, too, are being eased through the tunnel of foreign diplomacy. In addition to the optimism that appears as an exterior motif in her commentaries, she often reminds her audience of the trauma and devastation that continues in Vietnam. She does this numerous times throughout the many stages of the war until the cessation of the war was finally agreed to in 1973. Incidentally, on the second anniversary of the death of the Kent State students, Fuldheim discusses the destruction caused to both North and South Vietnamese due to the war. She discusses an article reporting that the United States military exploded thirteen million tons of munitions in Indo-China during the seven years of the Vietnam War.¹³⁸ However, rather than bombing in a war against armies, she considers the war as a war against land. “Thousands of missile fragments in the ground cut the hooves of water buffaloes, causing infection and the death of many animals,” Fuldheim reports.¹³⁹ Rather than supplying her audience with statistics on the death toll of lives lost, she sees the hazards on the land due to the strategic bombing. “The cold, hard irony of it all is that South Vietnam would have been better off losing to Hanoi than winning with us. Now much of her land is destroyed, and her chances of independent survival after we leave, is in grave doubt,”

¹³⁸ Fuldheim Papers, “Devastation of Land in South Vietnam due to Bombing,” May 4, 1972.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

Fuldheim declared.¹⁴⁰ In closing her commentary, she shuns the bombing campaigns, having caused more damage to South Vietnam, leaving it vulnerable once the United States withdraws.

As the presidential election loomed, the summer of 1972 was Nixon's opportunity to deliver on the promises he announced in his State of the Union speech. On her afternoon broadcast on August 28, 1972, Fuldheim went on air to present the news of the end of the draft. During the Vietnam War, the draft had become a source of resentment and controversy. Fuldheim notes this and acknowledges Nixon's brilliant political strategy of ending the draft just in time to take care of the young voter and bring in more Republican votes.¹⁴¹ "At last, the end of the draft is in sight," Fuldheim opens her commentary.¹⁴² Seemingly relieved, she presents her audience with the optimism that this decision brought. Following those lines, she connects the draft with the history of military service, once imposed by kings and dictators. Fuldheim's motive for this is evident as she expresses her resentment for the draft and its connection to the Vietnam War.

Month by month, Fuldheim continued her disdain for the Vietnam War by detailing the costs and the number of men lost. She becomes more critical of the Nixon administration for pursuing an end to the war so close to election day. She finds it convenient for the president to pursue peace before November 7. "President Nixon needs a cessation of the war for re-election," Fuldheim mentions.¹⁴³ As a harsh reminder, she turns to the figures to serve the public as a reminder of the true cost of the war. Until this point in the war, Vietnam was considered the most costly war in American history. Approximately \$200 billion had been funneled into ammunition,

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Fuldheim Papers, "The End of the Draft," August 28, 1972.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Fuldheim Papers, "What the War Has Cost Us In Money and Manpower," October 23, 1972.

pay, and equipment. However, this figure does not consider an additional \$3 billion in benefits for veterans who served in Vietnam.¹⁴⁴ In an impressively detailed breakdown of figures, Fuldheim puts the financial costs into simple terms and definitions for her audience. In addition to the economic woes of the war, Fuldheim addresses the grim casualty statistics. “Almost [500,000] South Vietnamese had been killed and severely wounded, 45,847 American soldiers were dead, and 305,000 had been wounded,” Fuldheim discloses.¹⁴⁵ In typical Fuldheim fashion, she delivers her morality question on the achievements of the war. She refers to the ghastly price of the war and calls into question the North Vietnamese’s resistance to release the American prisoners of war. “If the North Vietnamese had released our prisoners of war, the war could have ended at that moment,” Fuldheim asserts.¹⁴⁶ Seemingly, the more news that develops from Vietnam, the more disdain and resentment grows towards the United States for its involvement in a seemingly unwinnable war. Fuldheim openly expresses her frustrations as she continues to deliver her daily commentaries.

A significant criticism, not only from Fuldheim but also from anti-war protesters, was the heavy involvement and aerial bombing by the United States of North Vietnam. As Fuldheim would come to discover and discuss, however, the South Vietnamese were not prepared to fight the North Vietnamese. Hypothetically, one cannot understand the actual outcome had the United States not gotten involved in Vietnam. It is assumed that the North Vietnamese would have easily swallowed the South. In this case, as peace talks continued, the United States began training the South Vietnamese Army in preparation for the withdrawal of American forces. Once the United

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

States left, the South Vietnamese will be left to fend for themselves. In an October 25, 1972, evening commentary, Fuldheim discusses South Vietnamese troops' recruiting and training, or lack thereof. Reports from Vietnam indicate that the South Vietnamese have performed abysmally and survived thanks only to bombings from the U.S. Air Force and Navy.

The United States, at the time, Fuldheim reports, was in the midst of a two-week training course. "Americans were appalled at what the South Vietnamese did know and couldn't do," Fuldheim reports.¹⁴⁷ American officers were shocked to discover that many South Vietnamese troops did not know how to shoot accurately or conserve ammunition. Many being trained by American soldiers could not maintain or reload their firearms properly. Their military tactics also shocked the American forces as they were prone to bunching up and reloading their weapons simultaneously, leaving them vulnerable to a Viet Cong or North Vietnamese counterattack. "Unless the North Vietnamese are badly equipped, South Vietnam wouldn't have the proverbial Chinamen's chance if the American Air Force left and the war continued," Fuldheim asserted.¹⁴⁸ This draws the question that Fuldheim poses, "One wonders at [Nguyen Van] Thieu's insistence that the war must go on."¹⁴⁹ Fuldheim called into question South Vietnam's intentions as she had done with all actors in the conflict.

While reporting on the progress of the Vietnam War, Fuldheim also concerned herself with the 1972 presidential election. The Democratic nominee, George McGovern, faced a bruised campaign from the incumbent President Nixon, who was licking his wounds, having endured a problematic administration in the previous years, garnering resentment from the

¹⁴⁷ Fuldheim Papers, "The Appalling Lack of Recruiting Training in South Vietnam," October 25, 1972.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

American people. A week prior to the election, Fuldheim's commentary presented the presidential election campaign as lacking excitement. 'There is no burning allegiance at one or other of the candidates,' Fuldheim editorialized.¹⁵⁰ Many Americans expressed their distrust in the candidates, saying they would vote without enthusiasm. To spark some excitement for either nominee, Fuldheim was able to interview McGovern. "No presidential candidate [I have] interviewed in the last 20 years has lost," she said.¹⁵¹ Despite Fuldheim's attempt to energize McGovern's campaign, it fell short as Nixon easily won reelection despite an uninspirational campaign from both parties. The country was reeling during this time as the dark clouds of Vietnam and Kent State still lingered.

In late October 1972, United States Secretary of State Henry Kissinger announced a cessation of hostilities. However, it appears many Americans were suspicious as to the timing of the cease-fire. For her afternoon broadcast, Fuldheim announced the cease-fire Kissinger had reported earlier. Even to Fuldheim, the announcement was conveniently made only a few days before the election. As she mentions in her commentary, "Kissinger insists that negotiations to end the war were completely divorced from the United States' domestic political considerations."¹⁵² The pause of the war came as an utterly fortuitous coincidence. Kissinger feared that many Americans would view the cessation as a political tactic, which led him to release a statement that would avoid public backlash. Although Kissinger believed he avoided public scrutiny, he was not immune to a more fervent Fuldheim examination. It was not rare for

¹⁵⁰ Fuldheim Papers, "The Presidential Campaign Lacks Excitement," October 24, 1972.

¹⁵¹ "McGovern Campaign Still the Same," *Kingsport News*, October 13, 1972, (accessed October 12, 2023).

¹⁵² Fuldheim Papers, "Mr. Kissinger Announces a Cessation of the War," October 26, 1972.

Fuldheim to openly voice her displeasure. Although some criticized her for being rude and pompous with her commentaries, she would lead the way for this style of journalism.

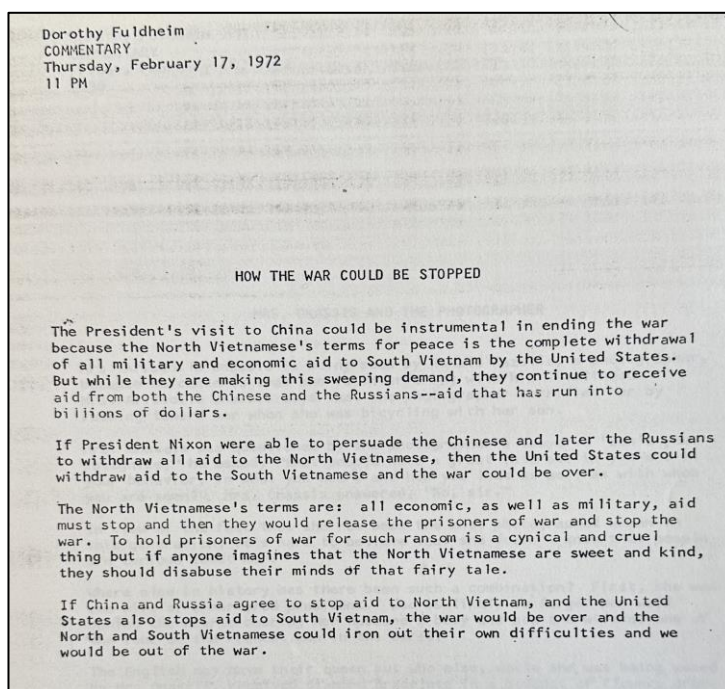


Figure 6: Fuldheim Commentary courtesy of the Kent State Archives and Special Collections

With peace now imminent, Fuldheim was confident in her commentaries that an armistice would come at any time. However, she still wishes to understand the full extent of the war and the financial burden it had become. Almost a month after covering Kissinger's cessation announcement and Nixon's reelection victory, she returned to the topic of the true costs of the war with her audience. "According to the Pentagon, the cost of the war by the middle of 1972 amounted to approximately \$110 billion," she writes.¹⁵³ She does her due diligence, however, to add up the collateral costs accompanying a war that has spanned nearly eight years. Additional costs to consider are veteran benefits rounding up to \$220 billion, financial reparations of \$33 million for South Vietnam, \$700 million provided to the Saigon government, and \$40 billion in

¹⁵³ Fuldheim Papers, "It Is Estimated That the War Will Have Cost Us \$400 Billion," November 27, 1972.

economic aid to Thailand, Taiwan, and South Korea.¹⁵⁴ Many Americans would remain oblivious to the financial deficit caused by the war had Fuldheim not thoroughly analyzed the costs accumulated over the years.

The Vietnam War would reach a definitive end on January 27, 1973, with the Paris Peace Accords.¹⁵⁵ As the country breathed a sigh of relief, Fuldheim continued to discuss the toll of the war. Just as she had done in her previous commentaries, She was also determined to address the horrendous casualties of the war. In addition to estimating the number of victims, she is sure to establish her rhetorically critical questions as to the outcomes of the war. “Was it worth it... Have the Communists been defeated,” she asks.¹⁵⁶ Fuldheim does not necessarily have the answers or want answers. Instead, she prefers to voice her displeasure for the ignorance of the war's deadly costs. As for victory, Fuldheim says, “Only the future will determine the victor.”¹⁵⁷

As the war ended, an estimated 415,000 South Vietnamese were dead, and one million were injured. In contrast, 925,000 North Vietnamese were killed. An estimated 45,933 American troops died. Fuldheim concludes that a total of 1,386,000 died in the fighting. However, these figures do not include the wounded, prisoners of war, or missing persons. She ends her commentary with profound words meant to target the hearts of many Americans. “We paid dearly for a war we didn’t want, but let it be remembered that the American people had nothing to gain by with war. It cost us billions of dollars, and we couldn’t win it because we weren’t

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Walter Scott Dillard, *Sixty Days to Peace: Implementing the Paris Peace Accords, Vietnam 1973*, (Washington, D.C., National Defense University, 1982).

¹⁵⁶ Fuldheim Papers, “The War is Over,” January 24, 1973.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

prepared to destroy North Vietnam.,” writes Fuldheim.¹⁵⁸ Surely, words like these have been written or spoken before. However, Fuldheim’s delivery and rhetorical display of such thoughts were more powerful than most public speakers. When peace is announced to end a war, a blanket of calm and happiness comes over a country. Whether Fuldheim felt this happiness to discover the war's end is unknown. Perhaps she felt a relief. Still, it takes an exceptional individual to remember the true costs of the war that would fade with the passage of time.

In analyzing Fuldheim’s commentaries, the scholar is forced to conclude that Fuldheim’s genuine opinions were not the primary reason for her writing these commentaries. The intricacies of the events truly influenced Fuldheim as her love for knowledge dominated her work, as is evident in her papers at Kent State University. There is little doubt that her career as a news analyst is worthy of serious scholarly contemplation and discussion. Proceeding forward, her achievements as a woman in the field of news reporting will not go unnoticed, as Fuldheim was able to push through the gender barriers that existed at the time and become an accomplished writer and news analyst.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

THE LEGACY OF DOROTHY FULDHEIM

The work of Dorothy Fuldheim lends itself to insightful scholarly analysis and praise. Her contributions to the journalism industry make for a meaningful study of the struggles of women in news media. Fuldheim conducted numerous attention-grabbing interviews with various guests over her illustrious career. This research merely scratches the surface, as the focus was on the Vietnam War and the tragedy at Kent State University. The Fuldheim Papers at Kent State University allow anyone wishing to study Fuldheim to access a bountiful collection of private correspondence, manuscripts, and commentaries written for broadcast at WEWS in Cleveland, Ohio.

Through thousands of pages of archived material, this research uncovered the masterful writer and speaker that Fuldheim was. As discussed previously, Fuldheim advanced through her news broadcasting career, providing the people of Northeast Ohio the grand opportunity to experience her as a figure of great notoriety. More intently, however, it is vital to understand the apparent paradox Fuldheim experienced as a woman in a predominately male-orientated profession of news broadcasting. Her rise to fame appeared to have come through a steady evolution. Fuldheim emerged through the gender barriers of the times but at a gradual pace. Her means of presenting, however, were not immune to the male critique of being emotional, as evident through her numerous commentaries on the student deaths at Kent State.

Fuldheim's career as a lecturer was reputable and appreciated when she first went on air at WEWS in Cleveland. She harmoniously entered the WEWS studios and quickly established herself as a news analyst and presenter with a certain zest missing in the industry. A business trendsetter, Fuldheim demonstrated that women could bypass stereotypes about gender, age, and

work ethic, allowing others to follow suit. Barbara Walters, another prominent name in broadcasting, credited Fuldheim as a force to follow in her endeavor in news media. Following Fuldheim's death in 1989, Barbara Walters spoke on Fuldheim's courageous and monumental life and career:

She defied prejudice against women in general... she defied the prejudice about women doing the news because she did the news. She defied all the prejudices about aging. She showed that women could do anything... and that women [could] continue to work just as men could long after the period where supposedly they should stop.¹⁵⁹

Walters expresses her admiration and respect for Fuldheim in her interview. She presents Fuldheim as a guiding figure for women in the broadcasting business and working women in general. Genuinely admirable, Fuldheim demonstrated to women the decorum and tenacity one must have to break through fixed mindsets, particularly gender barriers set in particular fields of



Figure 7: Dorothy Fuldheim and Barbara Walters. Source: Cleveland Public Library

¹⁵⁹ Scott Spears, "Barbara Walters on the death of Dorothy Fuldheim in 1989," YouTube video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dD-AOofUOmM&ab_channel=scottspears, (accessed October 23, 2023).

work such as news broadcasting. Seemingly, Fuldheim accomplished this by being herself, an unrelenting, pugnacious, emotional, and eloquent figure.

Fuldheim's impact was profound in Ohio and the greater Cleveland area. The Fuldheim Papers at the Kent State University archives contain a collection of correspondence Fuldheim had received during the 1970s while working at WEWS. Many letters thanked Fuldheim for receiving them warmly and making their visit to Cleveland enjoyable. An example is a letter from Secretary of the Navy John H. Chafee, who wrote about the pleasure of meeting Fuldheim and thanking her for such a well-conducted interview with insightful questions.¹⁶⁰ Perhaps the most fascinating correspondence in the Fuldheim Papers is a letter from Richard Nixon congratulating Fuldheim on celebrating her twenty-fifth year of work with WEWS in Cleveland.¹⁶¹ Her correspondence can be described as letters of admiration and gratitude for service as a resilient journalist and individual.

The most accurate description of Fuldheim as a person, speaker, and analyst comes from an obituary in the *Sandusky Register*. "She was an actress, a scrapper, and an enthusiastic non-conformist. She has an instinct for the unexpected, the startling, and she followed it faithfully," the newspaper writes.¹⁶² Most prominently, newspapers touched on her contract negotiation at age 89. Many assumed Fuldheim would retire and rest on her laurels, but she ardently wished to continue her work, demonstrating that age would not be a restraint and that she proved.

This thesis aimed to contextualize the Vietnam War and the Kent State shootings through the writings and career of Dorothy Fuldheim. The archives at Kent State University played an

¹⁶⁰ Fuldheim Papers, John H. Chafee to Dorothy Fuldheim, February 26, 1972.

¹⁶¹ Fuldheim Papers, Richard Nixon to Dorothy Fuldheim, October 31, 1972.

¹⁶² "Dorothy Fuldheim, veteran broadcaster, dies at age 96," *Sandusky Register*, November 3, 1989.

imperative component in the organization and creation of this study. From the numerous commentaries serving as Fuldheim's script for her daily broadcasts, it is possible to discern her distinctive style of writing and broadcasting, which in turn allowed a different objective and subjective view of historical events. This, in turn, allows the researcher to draw conclusions on the personality of Dorothy Fuldheim and pursue meaningful scholarly research through her work. Ultimately, this project also aimed to revive the history and career of Dorothy Fuldheim, whose contributions to history and news media have been largely overlooked.

In conclusion, Fuldheim's writings offer an in-depth view of foreign policy of the Vietnam War and the student deaths at Kent State. The Fuldheim papers are rich with objective and subjective views of various historical events not solely restricted to Vietnam and Kent State and are worthy of sound and thorough examination and analysis. In addition, this study concludes that Fuldheim was a trailblazer for women in the news industry. She was among the first women to appear in front of the camera. Not only did Fuldheim deliver the news, but she also adopted an individual style that set her apart from other reporters. Despite the gender barriers and stereotypes that existed at the time, Fuldheim paved a path for forward for gender equality in the news industry.

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