

# FOUR DEAD IN OHIO

# RESEARCH IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, CONFLICTS AND CHANGE

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RESEARCH IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, CONFLICTS  
AND CHANGE VOLUME 45

# **FOUR DEAD IN OHIO: THE GLOBAL LEGACY OF YOUTH ACTIVISM AND STATE REPRESSION**

EDITED BY

**JOHANNA A. SOLOMON**

*Kent State University, USA*



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# FOREWORD

This volume comes out of an international conference held at Kent State University on the Semicentennial of the occupation and shooting of students by the Ohio National Guard during a demonstration against the US wars in Vietnam and Cambodia, “Commemorating Violent Conflicts and Building Sustainable Peace.” The National Guard shooting of four white students on May 4, 1970, captured the American imagination. These deaths of unarmed protesters came to symbolize the divisions in the United States – both generational and political. The incident was memorialized in more than a dozen songs and plays, focused on in at least seven documentaries, and fictionalized in numerous novels, poems, comics, films, and television series. Numerous historical, journalist, and social science texts cover the lead-up, investigate what happened, and examine the memory of these shootings.

The Kent State shooting was not the first nor the last of such killings of students by state officers during this tumultuous period of heightened activism in the United States. Government information suppression and racism led to the near erasure of government shooting of students at historically Black colleges, such as the Orangeburg, South Carolina massacre and the Jackson State College, Mississippi, killings. The role of race in collective memory processes here are similar to the way that the 1964 Freedom Summer deaths of white and Black Civil Rights activists attracted attention during a time where the slayings of Black activists by whites attracted little attention. Similarly, the Kent State shootings are more commonly discussed in social movement texts than the much bloodier Corpus Christi Massacre in 1971 and the state infiltration of student movements during Mexican Dirty War. Thus, the editor of this Volume, Johanna A. Solomon, rightfully surmised that we do not need another book that interrogates the actions at Kent State related to the May 4th killings. Rather, this volume illuminates numerous other incidents of state suppression and/or student activism around the globe.

Lisa Leitz, PhD.  
Series Editor

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