

Whatever happens to the structure of opportunity, women are increasingly motivated to work—and they want to work short hours on schedules that meet their needs as wives and mothers. They want fewer hours a week because emancipation, while it has released them for work, has not released them from home and family responsibilities.

I oppose the equal rights amendment since the equality it may achieve may well be equality of mistreatment.

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## THE TURBULENT SIXTIES

### Viewpoint 31A *America Is Fighting for a Just Cause in Vietnam (1965)*

Lyndon B. Johnson (1908–1973)

**INTRODUCTION** *The Vietnam conflict was a central dividing issue during the 1960s. Controversy over Vietnam was largely responsible for the political downfall of Lyndon B. Johnson, president of the United States from 1963 (after John F. Kennedy's assassination) to 1969.*

*Johnson had inherited the conflict from his White House predecessors. Vietnam was an Asian nation that had been under French colonial rule. In 1954 Vietnamese rebel forces led by Ho Chi Minh, a longtime nationalist leader, defeated the French and established a communist government in what became North Vietnam. The United States under President Dwight D. Eisenhower, was locked in a Cold War rivalry with the Soviet Union and China. Unwilling to let all of Vietnam fall into the communist orbit, the United States lent its support to a noncommunist regime that became South Vietnam. Eisenhower sent several hundred American soldiers as military advisers and millions of economic aid dollars to South Vietnam. Kennedy increased the number of American troops there to sixteen thousand during his brief presidency. Under Johnson the United States began intensive bombing campaigns against North Vietnam in early 1965 and increased the number of U.S. troops deployed there to 267,000 by 1966 (American troop levels eventually peaked at 543,000 in 1969).*

*As U.S. involvement escalated, the war became an increasingly divisive issue within the nation. In the*

*following viewpoint, taken from an April 7, 1965, speech delivered at Johns Hopkins University, Johnson defends his actions, arguing that the American war effort was necessary to fight communism in that part of the world.*

*What American goals and ideals are at stake, according to Johnson? What U.S. objectives does he state?*

Tonight Americans and Asians are dying for a world where each people may choose its own path to change.

This is the principle for which our ancestors fought in the valleys of Pennsylvania. It is the principle for which our sons fight tonight in the jungles of Viet-Nam.

Viet-Nam is far away from this quiet campus. We have no territory there, nor do we seek any. The war is dirty and brutal and difficult. And some 400 young men, born into an America that is bursting with opportunity and promise, have ended their lives on Viet-Nam's steaming soil.

Why must we take this painful road?

Why must this Nation hazard its ease, and its interest, and its power for the sake of a people so far away?

#### WHY WE FIGHT

We fight because we must fight if we are to live in a world where every country can shape its own destiny. And only in such a world will our own freedom be finally secure.

This kind of world will never be built by bombs or bullets. Yet the infirmities of man are such that force must often precede reason, and the waste of war, the works of peace.

We wish that this were not so. But we must deal with the world as it is, if it is ever to be as we wish.

The world as it is in Asia is not a serene or peaceful place.

The first reality is that North Viet-Nam has attacked the independent nation of South Viet-Nam. Its object is total conquest.

Of course, some of the people of South Viet-Nam are participating in attacks on their own government. But trained men and supplies, orders and arms, flow in a constant stream from north to south. This support is the heartbeat of the war.

And it is a war of unparalleled brutality. Simple farmers are the targets of assassination and kidnapping. Women and children are strangled in the night because their men are loyal to their government. And helpless villages are ravaged by sneak attacks. Large-scale raids are conducted on towns, and terror strikes in the heart of cities.

The confused nature of this conflict cannot mask the fact that it is the new face of an old enemy.

Reprinted from *Public Papers of the Presidents: Lyndon B. Johnson, 1965* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1966).

## THE THREAT OF CHINA

Over this war—and all Asia—is another reality: the deepening shadow of Communist China. The rulers in Hanoi [the capital of North Vietnam] are urged on by Peking [Beijing, the capital of China]. This is a regime which has destroyed freedom in Tibet, which has attacked India, and has been condemned by the United Nations for aggression in Korea. It is a nation which is helping the forces of violence in almost every continent. The contest in Viet-Nam is part of a wider pattern of aggressive purposes.

Why are these realities our concern? Why are we in South Viet-Nam?

*We are there because we have a promise to keep.* Since 1954 every American President has offered support to the people of South Viet-Nam. We have helped to build, and we have helped to defend. Thus, over many years, we have made a national pledge to help South Viet-Nam defend its independence.

And I intend to keep that promise.

To dishonor that pledge, to abandon this small and brave nation to its enemies, and to the terror that must follow, would be an unforgivable wrong.

*We're also there to strengthen world order.* Around the globe, from Berlin to Thailand, are people whose well-being rests, in part, on the belief that they can count on us if they are attacked. To leave Viet-Nam to its fate would shake the confidence of all these people in the value of an American commitment and in the value of America's word. The result would be increased unrest and instability, and even wider war.

## IMPORTANT STAKES

*We are also there because there are great stakes in the balance.* Let no one think for a moment that retreat from Viet-Nam would bring an end to conflict. The battle would be renewed in one country and then another. The central lesson of our time is that the appetite of aggression is never satisfied. To withdraw from one battlefield means only to prepare for the next. We must say in southeast Asia—as we did in Europe—in the words of the Bible: "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further."

There are those who say that all our effort there will be futile—that China's power is such that it is bound to dominate all southeast Asia. But there is no end to that argument until all of the nations of Asia are swallowed up.

There are those who wonder why we have a responsibility there. Well, we have it there for the same reason that we have a responsibility for the defense of Europe. World War II was fought in both Europe and Asia, and when it ended we found ourselves with continued responsibility for the defense of freedom.

Our objective is the independence of South Viet-Nam, and its freedom from attack. We want nothing for ourselves—only that the people of South Viet-Nam be allowed to guide their own country in their own way.

We will do everything necessary to reach that objective. And we will do only what is absolutely necessary.

In recent months attacks on South Viet-Nam were stepped up. Thus, it became necessary for us to increase our response and to make attacks by air. This is not a change of purpose. It is a change in what we believe that purpose requires.

We do this in order to slow down an aggression.

We do this to increase the confidence of the brave people of South Viet-Nam who have bravely borne this brutal battle for so many years with so many casualties.

## WE WILL NOT LOSE

And we do this to convince the leaders of North Viet-Nam—and all who seek to share their conquest—of a very simple fact:

We will not be defeated.

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*Because we fight for values and we fight for principles, rather than territory or colonies, our patience and our determination are unending.*

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We will not grow tired.

We will not withdraw, either openly or under the cloak of a meaningless agreement.

We know that air attacks alone will not accomplish all of these purposes. But it is our best and prayerful judgment that they are a necessary part of the surest road to peace. . . .

Because we fight for values and we fight for principles, rather than territory or colonies, our patience and our determination are unending.

Once this is clear, then it should also be clear that the only path for reasonable men is the path of peaceful settlement.

Such peace demands an independent South Viet-Nam—securely guaranteed and able to shape its own relationships to all others—free from outside interference—tied to no alliance—a military base for no other country.

These are the essentials of any final settlement.

We will never be second in the search for such a peaceful settlement in Viet-Nam.

There may be many ways to this kind of peace: in discussion or negotiation with the governments concerned; in large groups or in small ones; in the reaffirmation of old agreements or the strengthening with new ones.

We have stated this position over and over again, fifty times and more, to friend and foe alike. And we remain ready, with this purpose, for unconditional discussions. . . .

These countries of southeast Asia are homes for millions of impoverished people. Each day these people rise at dawn and struggle through until the night to wrestle existence from the soil. They are often wracked by disease, plagued by hunger, and death comes at the early age of 40.

Stability and peace do not come easily in such a land. Neither independence nor human dignity will ever be won, though, by arms alone. It also requires the work of peace. The American people have helped generously in times past in these works. Now there must be a much more massive effort to improve the life of man in that conflict-torn corner of our world.

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The first step is for the countries of southeast Asia to associate themselves in a greatly expanded cooperative effort for development. We would hope that North Viet-Nam would take its place in the common effort just as soon as peaceful cooperation is possible.

The United Nations is already actively engaged in development in this area. As far back as 1961 I conferred with our authorities in Viet-Nam in connection with their work there. And I would hope tonight that the Secretary General of the United Nations could use the prestige of his great office, and his deep knowledge of Asia, to initiate, as soon as possible, with the countries of that area, a plan for cooperation in increased development.

For our part I will ask the Congress to join in a billion-dollar American investment in this effort as soon as it is under way.

And I would hope that all other industrialized countries, including the Soviet Union, will join in this effort to replace despair with hope, and terror with progress. . . .

I also intend to expand and speed up a program to make available our farm surpluses to assist in feeding and clothing the needy in Asia. We should not allow people to go hungry and wear rags while our own warehouses overflow with an abundance of wheat and corn, rice and cotton. . . .

In areas that are still ripped by conflict, of course, development will not be easy. Peace will be necessary for final success. But we cannot and must not wait for peace to begin this job.

#### WE MUST CHOOSE

We may well be living in the time foretold many years ago when it was said: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."

This generation of the world must choose: destroy or build, kill or aid, hate or understand.

We can do all these things on a scale never dreamed of before.

*Well, we will choose life.* In so doing we will prevail over the enemies within man, and over the natural enemies of all mankind.

#### Viewpoint 31B *America Is Not Fighting for a Just Cause in Vietnam (1967)*

Eugene McCarthy (1916–2005)

INTRODUCTION *Between 1950 and 1975 the conflict in Vietnam cost the United States more than fifty-eight thousand lives and \$150 billion. The Vietnam War was fought as part of America's Cold War containment policy of opposing the spread of communism (and the influence of communist China and the Soviet Union). Defenders of American actions argued that the United States must take all necessary actions to defend South Vietnam from falling to the communist North Vietnam. But as military intervention sharply escalated in the 1960s under Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, peace demonstrations and public debate swept the United States, both over U.S. actions in Vietnam, and the Cold War assumptions behind them.*

*On November 30, 1967, political opposition to the Vietnam War took a new turn when Eugene McCarthy, a Democratic senator from Minnesota, announced that he would challenge President Johnson for the Democratic Party's nomination for president in 1968. The following viewpoint is excerpted from a December 2, 1967, address by McCarthy to a gathering of Democratic antiwar activists in Chicago, Illinois: McCarthy argues that the war has become indefensible on both military and moral grounds. McCarthy ultimately did not get the presidential nomination he sought, but his early success in the Democratic primaries—attributable at least in part to the antiwar stance expressed here—is credited by many historians for influencing Johnson's decision to not seek reelection in 1968.*

*What contrast does McCarthy make between America in 1963 and 1967? To what does he attribute the changes? How does he define what would be an acceptable and peaceful outcome in Vietnam?*

In 1952, in this city of Chicago, the Democratic party nominated as its candidate for the presidency Adlai Stevenson.

His promise to his party and to the people of the country then was that he would talk sense to them. And he did in the clearest tones. He did not speak above the people, as his enemies charged, but he raised the hard and difficult questions and proposed the difficult answers. His voice became the voice of America. He lifted the spirit of this land. The country in his language, was purified and given direction.

Before most other men, he recognized the problem of our cities and called for action.

Before other men, he measured the threat of nuclear war and called for a test-ban treaty.

Before other men, he anticipated the problem of conscience which he saw must come with maintaining a peacetime army and a limited draft and urged the political leaders of this country to put their wisdom to the task.

In all of these things he was heard by many but not followed, until under the presidency of John F. Kennedy his ideas were revived in new language and in a new spirit. To the clear sound of the horn was added the beat of a steady and certain drum.

John Kennedy set free the spirit of America. The honest optimism was released. Quiet courage and civility became the mark of American government, and new programs of promise and of dedication were presented: the Peace Corps, the Alliance for Progress, the promise of equal rights for all Americans—and not just the promise, but the beginning of the achievement of that promise.

All the world looked to the United States with new hope, for here was youth and confidence and an openness to the future. Here was a country not being held by the dead hand of the past, nor frightened by the violent hand of the future which was grasping at the world.

This was the spirit of 1963.

#### THE SPIRIT OF 1967

What is the spirit of 1967? What is the mood of America and of the world toward America today?

It is a joyless spirit—a mood of frustration, of anxiety, of uncertainty.

In place of the enthusiasm of the Peace Corps among the young people of America, we have protests and demonstrations.

In place of the enthusiasm of the Alliance for Progress, we have distrust and disappointment.

Instead of the language of promise and of hope, we have in politics today a new vocabulary in which the

Address by Eugene McCarthy at Conference of Concerned Democrats, Chicago, Illinois, December 2, 1967.

critical word is *war*: war on poverty, war on ignorance, war on crime, war on pollution. None of these problems can be solved by war but only by persistent, dedicated, and thoughtful attention.

But we do have one war which is properly called a war—the war in Vietnam, which is central to all of the problems of America.

#### AN INDEFENSIBLE WAR

A war of questionable legality and questionable constitutionality.

A war which is diplomatically indefensible; the first war in this century in which the United States, which at its founding made an appeal to the decent opinion of mankind in the Declaration of Independence, finds itself without the support of the decent opinion of mankind.

A war which cannot be defended in the context of the judgment of history. It is being presented in the context of an historical judgment of an era which is past. Munich appears to be the starting point of history for the secretary of state [Dean Rusk] and for those who attempt to support his policies. What is necessary is a realization that the United States is a part of the movement of history itself; that it cannot stand apart, attempting to control the world by imposing covenants and treaties and by violent military intervention; that our role is not to police the planet but to use military strength with restraint and within limits, while at the same time we make available to the world the great power of our economy, of our knowledge, and of our good will.

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*It is no longer possible to prove that the good that may come with what is called victory . . . is proportionate to the loss of life . . . and to other disorders that follow from this war.*

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A war which is not defensible even in military terms; which runs contrary to the advice of our greatest generals—Eisenhower, Ridgway, Bradley, and MacArthur—all of whom admonished us against becoming involved in a land war in Asia. Events have proved them right, as estimate after estimate as to the time of success and the military commitment necessary to success has had to be revised—always upward: more troops, more extensive bombing, a widening and intensification of the war. Extension and intensification have been the rule, and projection after projection of success have been proved wrong.

With the escalation of our military commitment has come a parallel of overleaping of objectives: from protecting South Vietnam, to nation building in South Vietnam, to protecting all of Southeast Asia, and ultimately to suggesting that the safety and security of the United States itself is at stake.

Finally, it is a war which is morally wrong. The most recent statement of objectives cannot be accepted as an honest judgment as to why we are in Vietnam. It has become increasingly difficult to justify the methods we are using and the instruments of war which we are using as we have moved from limited targets and somewhat restricted weapons to greater variety and more destructive instruments of war, and also have extended the area of operations almost to the heart of North Vietnam.

Even assuming that both objectives and methods can be defended, the war cannot stand the test of proportion and of prudent judgment. It is no longer possible to prove that the good that may come with what is called victory, or projected as victory, is proportionate to the loss of life and property and to other disorders that follow from this war. . . .

#### THE PRICE OF VICTORY

Those of us who are gathered here tonight are not advocating peace at any price. We are willing to pay a high price for peace—for an honorable, rational, and political solution to this war, a solution which will enhance our world position, which will permit us to give the necessary attention to our other commitments abroad, both military and nonmilitary, and leave us with both human and physical resources and with moral energy to deal effectively with the pressing domestic problems of the United States itself.

I see little evidence that the administration has set any limits on the price which it will pay for a military victory which becomes less and less sure and more hollow and empty in promise.

The scriptural promise of the good life is one in which the old men see visions and the young men dream dreams. In the context of this war and all of its implications, the young men of America do not dream dreams, but many live in the nightmare of moral anxiety, of concern and great apprehension; and the old men, instead of visions which they can offer to the young, are projecting, in the language of the secretary of state, a specter of one billion Chinese threatening the peace and safety of the world—a frightening and intimidating future.

The message from the administration today is a message of apprehension, a message of fear, yes—even a message of fear of fear.

#### RECLAIMING HOPE

This is not the real spirit of America. I do not believe that it is. This is a time to test the mood and spirit:

To offer in place of doubt—trust.

In place of expediency—right judgment.

In place of ghettos, let us have neighborhoods and communities.

In place of incredibility—integrity.

In place of murmuring, let us have clear speech; let us again hear America singing.

In place of disunity, let us have dedication of purpose.

In place of near despair, let us have hope.

This is the promise of greatness which was stated for us by Adlai Stevenson and which was brought to form and positive action in the words and actions of John Kennedy.

Let us pick up again these lost strands and weave them again into the fabric of America.

Let us sort out the music from the sounds and again respond to the trumpet and the steady drum.

#### FOR FURTHER READING

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#### Viewpoint 32A

#### *Riots Are Mob Criminal Acts (1966)*

Richard M. Nixon (1913–1994)

INTRODUCTION *Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream of a nonviolent revolution in American race relations (see viewpoint 29A) was shattered by a series of urban riots in the mid-1960s. In Harlem, New York, in 1964; Watts, Los Angeles, in 1965; Chicago and Cleveland in 1966; Detroit and Newark in 1967, and numerous other places, local residents clashed with police, looted stores and businesses, and burned buildings; they in turn were fired upon by police and National Guard troops who were sent to restore order. From 1964 to 1968, riots resulted in almost \$200 million in destroyed property, forty thousand arrests, seven thousand injured, and around two hundred deaths.*

*Americans differed on the causes of the riots. The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, appointed by President Lyndon B. Johnson, implicated "white racism"*

for creating an "explosive mixture" of poverty, police brutality, and poor schools in the nation's cities, and called for government programs to help the urban poor. But in the following viewpoint, Richard Nixon provides a different explanation. In a 1966 article, excerpted here, he argues that riots are caused by a general societal breakdown in respect for law, which he attributes in part to the civil disobedience ideas of the civil rights movement. Nixon, who lost the 1960 presidential race to John F. Kennedy, was able to successfully utilize the theme of "law and order" to make a political comeback and win the presidency in 1968.

*What two "extremist" positions about riots does Nixon reject? What examples of lawlessness does he describe? How does he respond to the argument that a person's conscience should determine whether a law is unjust and should be disobeyed?*

The polls still place the war in Vietnam and the rising cost of living as the major political issues of 1966. But, from my own trips across the nation, I can affirm that private conversations and public concern are increasingly focusing upon the issues of disrespect for law and race turmoil.

The recent riots in Chicago, Cleveland, New York and Omaha have produced in the public dialogue too much heat and very little light. The extremists have held the floor for too long.

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*It would be a grave mistake to charge off the recent riots to unredressed Negro grievances alone. To do so is to ignore . . . a major national problem: the deterioration of respect for the rule of law.*

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One extreme sees a simple remedy for rioting in a ruthless application of the truncheons and an earlier call to the National Guard.

The other extremists are more articulate, but their position is equally simplistic. To them, riots are to be excused upon the grounds that the participants have legitimate social grievances or seek justifiable social goals.

#### DECLINING RESPECT FOR LAW

I believe it would be a grave mistake to charge off the recent riots to unredressed Negro grievances alone.

To do so is to ignore a prime reason and a major national problem: the deterioration of respect for the rule of law all across America.

Richard M. Nixon, "If Mob Rule Takes Hold in the U.S.—A Warning from Richard Nixon," *U.S. News & World Report*, August 15, 1966.

That deterioration can be traced directly to the spread of the corrosive doctrine that every citizen possesses an inherent right to decide for himself which laws to disobey and when to disobey them.

The doctrine has become a contagious national disease, and its symptoms are manifest in more than just racial violence. We see them in the contempt among many of the young for the agents of the law—the police. We see them in the public burning of draft cards and the blocking of troop trains.

We saw those symptoms when citizens in Chicago took to the streets to block public commerce to force the firing of a city official. We saw them on a campus of the University of California, where students brought a great university to its knees in protest of the policies of its administration.

Who is responsible for the breakdown of law and order in this country? I think it both an injustice and oversimplification to lay blame at the feet of the sidewalk demagogues alone. For such a deterioration of respect for law to occur in so brief a time in so great a nation, we must look to more important collaborators and auxiliaries.

It is my belief that the seeds of civil anarchy would never have taken root in this nation had they not been nurtured by scores of respected Americans: public officials, educators, clergymen and civil rights leaders as well.

When the junior Senator from New York [Robert Kennedy] publicly declares that "there is no point in telling Negroes to obey the law," because to the Negro "the law is the enemy," then he has provided a rationale and justification for every Negro intent upon taking the law into his own hands. . . .

The agonies and indignities of urban slums are hard facts of life. Their elimination is properly among our highest national priorities, but within those slums, political phrases which are inflammatory are as wrong and dangerous as political promises which are irredeemable.

In this contest, men of intellectual and moral eminence who encourage public disobedience of the law are responsible for the acts of those who inevitably follow their counsel: the poor, the ignorant and the impressionable.

#### A CLIMATE OF LAWLESSNESS

Such leaders are most often men of good will who do not condone violence and, perhaps even now, see no relation between the civil disobedience which they counsel and the riots and violence which have erupted. Yet, once the decision is made that laws need not be obeyed—whatever the rationale—a contribution is made to a climate of lawlessness.

To the professor objecting to de facto segregation, it may be crystal clear where civil disobedience may begin and where it must end. But the boundaries have become

fluid to his students. And today they are all but invisible in the urban slums.

In this nation we raise our young to respect the law and public authority. What becomes of those lessons when teachers and leaders of the young themselves deliberately and publicly violate the laws?

There is a crucial difference between lawful demonstration and protests on the one hand—and illegal demonstrations and “civil disobedience” on the other.

I think it is time the doctrine of civil disobedience was analyzed and rejected as not only wrong but potentially disastrous.

If all have a right to engage in public disobedience to protest real or imagined wrongs, then the example set by the minority today will be followed by the majority tomorrow.

Issues then will no longer be decided upon merit by an impartial judge. Victory will go to the side which can muster the greater number of demonstrations in the streets. The rule of law will be replaced by the rule of the mob. And one may be sure that the majority's mob will prevail.

From mob rule it is but a single step to lynch law and the termination of the rights of the minority. This is why it is so paradoxical today to see minority groups engaging in civil disobedience; their greatest defense is the rule of law. . . .

Civil disobedience creates a climate of disrespect for law. In such a climate the first laws to be ignored will be social legislation that lacks universal public support. In short, if the rule of law goes, the civil-rights laws of recent vintage will be the first casualties.

Historic advances in civil rights have come through court decisions and federal laws in the last dozen years.

Only the acceptances of those laws and the voluntary compliance of the people can transfer those advances from the statute books into the fabric of community life.

If indifference to the rule of law permeates the community, there will be no voluntary acceptance. A law is only as good as the will of the people to obey it. . . .

Continued racial violence and disorders in the cities of the nation will produce growing disenchantment with the cause of civil rights—even among its staunchest supporters.

It will encourage a disregard for civil rights laws and resistance to the legitimate demands of the Negro people.

Does anyone think that progress will be made in the hearts of men by riots and disobedience which trample upon the rights of those same men? But then is it not enough to simply demand that all laws be obeyed?

Edmund Burke once wrote concerning loyalty to a nation that “to make us love our country, our country

ought to be lovely.” There is an analogy in a commitment to the rule of law. For a law to be respected, it ought to be worthy of respect. It must be fair and it must be fairly enforced.

It certainly did nothing to prevent a riot when Negroes in Chicago learned that while water hydrants in their own area were being shut down, they were running free in white neighborhoods just blocks away.

#### BASIC DIGNITY

Respect for the dignity of every individual is absolutely essential if there is to be respect for law.

The most common and justifiable complaint of Negroes and members of other minority groups is not that their constitutional rights have been denied, but that their personal dignity is repeatedly insulted.

As an American citizen, the American Negro is entitled to equality of rights, under the Constitution and the law, with every other citizen in the land. But, as important as this, the Negro has the right to be treated with the basic dignity and respect that belong to him as a human being.

Advocates of civil disobedience contend that a man's conscience should determine which law is to be obeyed and when a law can be ignored. But, to many men, conscience is no more than the enshrinement of their own prejudices. . . . But if every man is to decide for himself which to obey and which to ignore, the end result is anarchy.

The way to make good laws is not to break bad laws, but to change bad laws through legitimate means of protest within the constitutional process.

In the last analysis, the nation simply can no longer tolerate men who are above the law. For, as Lincoln said, “There is no grievance that is a fit object of redress by mob law.”

#### Viewpoint 32B *Riots Are Social Revolutions (1967)*

Tom Hayden (b. 1939)

INTRODUCTION *The arrest of a black taxi driver in July 1967 in Newark, New Jersey, set off five days of arson and looting. The violence, in which twenty-five blacks were killed by police, was one of a series of riots that swept many American cities during that time, including Watts, Los Angeles, in 1965 and Detroit in 1967.*

*Some people argued that the root cause of the Newark riots and similar incidents was the oppressive living conditions under which America's black urban poor were living. Among those who put forth such an interpretation was Tom Hayden, a political and antiwar activist and former president of Students for a*

*Democratic Society (SDS). Hayden, one of the principal authors of the 1962 "Port Huron Statement" of SDS (see viewpoint 33A), had been active in Newark since 1964 as part of SDS's Economic Research and Action Project (ERAP), an effort to promote community empowerment and organizing in urban ghettos. He argues in the following viewpoint, excerpted from his 1967 book Rebellion in Newark, that because ordinary political and economic channels of change have been ineffective for blacks in Newark and similar impoverished areas, ghetto residents are forced to resort to an "American form of guerilla warfare" in order to force necessary social reforms.*

*What objections does Hayden make to the idea that blacks need economic "self-help"? What role do the police play in creating urban riots, according to Hayden? What assumption do both liberals and conservatives make about riots, according to Hayden?*

This country is experiencing its fourth year of urban revolt, yet the message from Newark is that America has learned almost nothing since Watts.

Of primary importance is the fact that no national program exists to deal with the social and economic questions black people are raising. Despite exhaustive hearings over the last five years on problems of manpower and unemployment, anti-poverty programs and the urban crisis, there is no apparent commitment from national power centers to do something constructive.

During the height of the rioting in Newark and Detroit, Congress discussed gun-control laws, voted down with chuckles a bill for rat extermination, and President [Lyndon] Johnson set up a commission to do more investigating of the crisis. The main emphasis of governmental remedial programs seems likely to be on ending the riots rather than dealing with the racial and economic problem. President Johnson made this clear in his televised July 28 [1967] address on the "deeper questions" about the riots:

Explanations may be offered, but nothing can excuse what [the rioters] have done. There will be attempts to interpret the events of the past few days, but when violence strikes, then those in public responsibility have an immediate and a very different job: *not to analyze but to end disorder.*

When it moves past riot-control to discussion of social programs, Congress is likely to lament the failure of past civil rights, welfare, and anti-poverty programs, rather than focus on the need for new ones. As with foreign aid, white politicians (and their voters) tend to view aid to Negroes as a form of "charity" to be trimmed wherever possible, or as a means of eliminating surplus food, or a way to enlarge urban patronage roles. Negroes more than likely will be instructed to "help themselves."

From *Rebellion in Newark* by Tom Hayden. New York: Random House, 1967.

But unlike the Italians, Irish, and Jews, black Americans have always faced a shrinking structure of economic opportunity in which to "help themselves." If sheer effort were the answer, the black people who chopped cotton from dawn to sunset would today be millionaire suburban homeowners. Self-help does not build housing, hospitals, and schools. The cost of making cities livable and institutions responsive is greater than any sum this country has ever been willing to spend on domestic reform. In addition, the very act of spending such money would disrupt much of the status quo. Private interests, from the real estate lobby and the construction unions to the social work profession, would be threatened. Urban political machines would have to make space for black political power. Good intentions tend to collapse when faced with the necessity for massive spending and structural change.

This political bankruptcy leads directly to the use of military force. When citizens have no political way to deal with revolution, they become counter-revolutionary. The race issue becomes defined exclusively as one of maintaining white society. Holding this view forces the white community to adopt the "jungle attitudes" that they fear the Negroes hold. "Go kill them niggers," white crowds shouted to Guardsmen at 7 o'clock Friday morning as they rode into Newark. During the riot, a *New York Times* reporter was stopped at 2:30 A.M. in Mayor Addonizio's west side neighborhood by a pipe-smoking gentleman carrying (illegally) a shotgun. He explained that a protection society was formed in case "they" should come into the neighborhood. Rifle stores in white neighborhoods all over the east coast are selling out. In such way, the society becomes militarized.

#### DECLARING WAR ON NEGROES

A police "takeover" of local government is not necessary to declare war on Negroes. All that is necessary is to instill in the white citizens the idea that only military force stands between them and black savages. The civilians merely turn over the problem to the troops, who define the problem in terms of using arms to maintain the racial status quo. A typical military attitude in the wake of the riots was offered in the July 29th [1967] [*New York Times*] by the commander of the New York State National Guard, who said that a greater commitment of force might have prevented rioting around the country. He recommended the use of heavy weapons including hand grenades, recoilless rifles and bazookas. He blamed indecisive civilian authority for making National Guard units operate "with one hand behind their backs" in riot areas.

This military orientation means that outright killing of people is condoned where those people cannot accept law and order as defined by the majority. The country is not moved by the deaths of twenty-five Negro "rioters."



News of a Negro's death is received at most as a tragedy, the inevitable result of looting and lawlessness. When a picture appears of a policeman over a fallen victim, the typical reaction is framed in the terms set by the majority: the dead man is a sniper, a looter, a burner, a criminal. If history is any guide, it is a foregone conclusion that no white policeman will be punished for murder in Newark.

Even many white sympathizers with the Negro cause, and Negro leaders themselves, believe that disorder must be stopped so that, in [NAACP leader] Roy Wilkins' words, "society can proceed." The question they do not ask is: whose society? They say that Negro rioting will create a backlash suppressing the liberties needed to organize for change. But this accurate prediction overlooks the fact that those very civil liberties have meant little protection for civil rights workers and ordinary black people in the South, and nearly as little for people in the ghettos of the North. The freedom that middle-class people correctly feel are real to themselves have very little day-to-day meaning in the ghetto, which is more like a concentration camp than an open society for a large number of its residents. But in order to protect these liberties, many civil rights leaders take part in condemning the ghetto to brutal occupation. Even where "excessive force" is deplored, as Roy Wilkins deplored it in Newark, the assumption still remains that there is a "proper" degree of force that should be used to maintain the status quo. Top officials welcome this liberal support, and agree that any "excessive" force is regrettable and will be investigated. Thus most of the society becomes involved in organizing and protecting murder.

However, the use of force can do nothing but create a demand for greater force. The Newark riot shows that troops cannot make a people surrender. The police had several advantages over the community, particularly in firepower and mechanical mobility. Their pent-up racism gave them a certain amount of energy and morale as well. But as events in the riot showed, the troops could not apply their methods to urban conditions. The problem of precision shooting—for example, at a sniper in a building with forty windows and escape routes through rooftop, alley, and doorway—is nearly as difficult in the urban jungle as precision bombing is in Vietnam. There is a lack of safe cover. There is no front line and no rear, no way to cordon an area completely. A block that is quiet when the troops are present can be the scene of an outbreak the moment the troops leave.

At the same time, the morale fueled by racism soon turns into anxiety. Because of racism, the troops are unfamiliar with both the people and structure of the ghetto. Patrol duty after dark becomes a frightening and exhausting experience, especially for men who want to return alive to their families and homes. A psychology of desperation leads to careless and indiscriminate violence toward

the community, including reprisal killing, which inflames the people whom the troops were sent to pacify.

The situation thus contains certain built-in advantages for black people. The community is theirs. They know faces, corners, rooms, alleys. They know whom to trust and whom not to trust. They can switch in seconds from a fighting to a passive posture. It is impressive that state and local officials could not get takers for their offer of money and clemency to anyone turning in a sniper.

This is not a time for radical illusions about "revolution." Stagnancy and conservatism are essential facts of ghetto life. It undoubtedly is true that most Negroes desire the comforts and security that white people possess. There is little revolutionary consciousness or commitment to violence *per se* in the ghetto. Most people in the Newark riot were afraid, unorganized, and helpless when directly facing the automatic weapons. But the actions of white America toward the ghetto are showing black people, especially the young, that they must prepare to fight back.

#### GUERRILLA WARFARE

The conditions slowly are being created for an American form of guerrilla warfare based in the slums. The riot represents a signal of this fundamental change.

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*Disobedience, disorder, and even violence  
must be risked as the only alternative to  
continuing slavery.*

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To the conservative mind the riot is essentially revolution against civilization. To the liberal mind it is an expression of helpless frustration. While the conservative is hostile and the liberal generous toward those who riot, both assume that the riot is a form of lawless, mob behavior. The liberal will turn conservative if polite methods fail to stem disorder. Against these two fundamentally similar concepts, a third one must be asserted, the concept that a riot represents people making history.

The riot is certainly an awkward, even primitive, form of history-making. But if people are barred from using the sophisticated instruments of the established order for their ends, they will find another way. Rocks and bottles are only a beginning, but they cause more attention than all the reports in Washington. To the people involved, the riot is far less lawless and far more representative than the system of arbitrary rules and prescribed channels which they confront every day. The riot is not a beautiful and romantic experience, but neither is the day-to-day slum life from which the riot springs. Riots

will not go away if ignored, and will not be cordoned off. They will only disappear when their energy is absorbed into a more decisive and effective form of history-making.

Men are now appearing in the ghettos who might turn the energy of the riot to a more organized and continuous revolutionary direction. Middle-class Negro intellectuals (especially students) and Negroes of the ghetto are joining forces. They have found channels closed, the rules of the game stacked, and American democracy a system that excludes them. They understand that the institutions of the white community are unreliable in the absence of black community power. They recognize that national civil-rights leaders will not secure the kind of change that is needed. They assume that disobedience, disorder, and even violence must be risked as the only alternative to continuing slavery.

The role of organized violence is now being carefully considered. During a riot, for instance, a conscious guerrilla can participate in pulling police away from the path of people engaged in attacking stores. He can create disorder in new areas the police think are secure. He can carry the torch, if not all the people, to white neighborhoods and downtown business districts. If necessary, he can successfully shoot to kill.

The guerrilla can employ violence effectively during times of apparent "peace," too. He can attack, in the suburbs or slums, with paint or bullets, symbols of racial oppression. He can get away with it. If he can force the oppressive power to be passive and defensive at the point where it is administered—by the caseworker, landlord, storeowner, or policeman—he can build people's confidence in their ability to demand change. Persistent, accurately-aimed attacks, which need not be on human life to be effective, might disrupt the administration of the ghetto to a crisis point where a new system would have to be considered.

#### DEMOCRACY: A REVOLUTIONARY ISSUE

These tactics of disorder will be defined by the authorities as criminal anarchy. But it may be that disruption will create possibilities of meaningful change. This depends on whether the leaders of ghetto struggles can be more successful in building strong organization than they have been so far. Violence can contribute to shattering the status quo, but only politics and organization can transform it. The ghetto still needs the power to decide its destiny on such matters as urban renewal and housing, social services, policing, and taxation. Tenants still need concrete rights against landlords in public and private housing, or a new system of tenant-controlled living conditions. Welfare clients still need a livable income. Consumers still need to control the quality of merchandise

and service in the stores where they shop. Citizens still need effective control over those who police their community. Political structures belonging to the community are needed to bargain for, and maintain control over, funds from government or private sources. In order to build a more decent community while resisting racist power, more than violence is required. People need to create self-government. We are at a point where democracy—the idea and practice of people controlling their lives—is a revolutionary issue in the United States.

#### FOR FURTHER READING

Michael W. Flamm, *Law and Order: Street Crime, Civil Unrest, and the Crisis of Liberalism in the 1960s*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

Tom Hayden, *Reunion: A Memoir*. New York: Random House, 1988.

National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. *The Kerner Report: The 1968 Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*. New York: Pantheon, 1988.

Nathan Wright Jr., *Ready to Riot*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968.

#### Viewpoint 33A *America's Youth Must Lead a New Revolution* (1962, 1968)

Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)

INTRODUCTION *For much of the 1960s a vocal segment of college students was at the forefront of both political and cultural radicalism among America's youth. One leading radical organization of the era was Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). The following viewpoint consists of two SDS documents from different points in the organization's history. Part I is taken from a political platform created at a 1962 meeting in Port Huron, Michigan. The "Port Huron Statement" called on college students to organize against racism, the nuclear arms race, and other perceived injustices of American society. It was widely distributed on college campuses. Due in part to the Vietnam War and the end of automatic student deferments from the military draft, by the end of 1967 SDS claimed about three hundred campus chapters.*

*Part II consists of a resolution passed by some members of SDS in its December 1968 National Council meeting. The document reflects the tumultuous events of that year, during which SDS members organized numerous antiwar demonstrations, including an uprising at Columbia University in New York City that shut down the school's operations. Members of SDS were also involved in a violent confrontation with Chicago riot police during the Democratic National Convention that August. The resolution argues for the need for a "revolutionary youth movement" that would*

*transform society. Shortly after the December meeting, SDS split into various factions, some of which became involved in riots, bombings, and other violent activities. It never regained its former prominence.*

*What faults does SDS see in American society? What events during the generation's coming-of-age account for feelings of discontentment, according to SDS? What differences in tone and content do you see between the 1962 and 1968 statements?*

## I

We are people of this generation, bred in at least modest comfort, housed now in universities, looking uncomfortably to the world we inherit.

When we were kids the United States was the wealthiest and strongest country in the world; the only one with the atom bomb, the least scarred by modern war, an initiator of the United Nations that we thought would distribute Western influence throughout the world. Freedom and equality for each individual, government of, by, and for the people—these American values we found good, principles by which we could live as men. Many of us began maturing in complacency.

As we grew, however, our comfort was penetrated by events too troubling to dismiss. First, the permeating and victimizing fact of human degradation, symbolized by the Southern struggle against racial bigotry, compelled most of us from silence to activism. Second, the enclosing fact of the Cold War, symbolized by the presence of the Bomb, brought awareness that we ourselves, and our friends, and millions of abstract “others” we knew more directly because of our common peril, might die at any time. We might deliberately ignore, or avoid, or fail to feel all other human problems, but not these two, for these were too immediate and crushing in their impact, too challenging in the demand that we as individuals take the responsibility for encounter and resolution.

## PARADOXES OF AMERICA

While these and other problems either directly oppressed us or rankled our consciences and became our own subjective concerns, we began to see complicated and disturbing paradoxes in our surrounding America. The declaration “all men are created equal . . .” rang hollow before the facts of Negro life in the South and the big cities of the North. The proclaimed peaceful intentions of the United States contradicted its economic and military investments in the Cold War status quo.

“Port Huron Statement of the Students for a Democratic Society,” 1962. Reprinted in *Anatomy of a Student Movement* of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Internal Security, 91st Cong., 2nd sess., October 6, 1970. “Toward a Revolutionary Youth Movement,” a 1968 resolution of the Students for a Democratic Society.

We witnessed, and continue to witness, other paradoxes. With nuclear energy whole cities can easily be powered, yet the dominant nation-states seem more likely to unleash destruction greater than that incurred in all wars of human history. Although our own technology is destroying old and creating new forms of social organization, men still tolerate meaningless work and idleness. While two-thirds of mankind suffers undernourishment, our own upper classes revel amidst superfluous abundance. Although world population is expected to double in forty years, the nations still tolerate anarchy as a major principle of international conduct and uncontrolled exploitation governs the sapping of the earth's physical resources. Although mankind desperately needs revolutionary leadership, America rests in national stalemata, its goals ambiguous and tradition-bound instead of informed and clear, its democratic system apathetic and manipulated rather than “of, by, and for the people.”

Not only did tarnish appear on our image of American virtue, not only did disillusion occur when the hypocrisy of American ideals was discovered, but we began to sense that what we had originally seen as the American Golden Age was actually the decline of an era. The worldwide outbreak of revolution against colonialism and imperialism, the entrenchment of totalitarian states, the menace of war, overpopulation, international disorder, supertechnology—these trends were testing the tenacity of our own commitment to democracy and freedom and our abilities to visualize their application to a world in upheaval. . . .

Some would have us believe that Americans feel contentment amidst prosperity—but might it not better be called a glaze above deeply-felt anxieties about their role in the new world? And if these anxieties produce a developed indifference to human affairs, do they not as well produce a yearning to believe there *is* an alternative to the present, that something *can* be done to change circumstances in the schools, the workplaces, the bureaucracies, the government? It is to this latter yearning, at once the spark and engine of change, that we direct our present appeal. The search for truly democratic alternatives to the present, and a commitment to social experimentation with them, is a worthy and fulfilling human enterprise, one which moves us and, we hope, others today. On such a basis do we offer this document of our convictions and analysis: as an effort in understanding and changing the conditions of humanity in the late twentieth century, an effort rooted in the ancient, still unfulfilled conception of man attaining determining influence over his circumstances of life.

## II

At this point in history, SDS is faced with its most crucial ideological decision, that of determining its direction with regards to the working class. At this time there

must be a realization on the part of many in our movement that students alone cannot and will not be able to bring about the downfall of capitalism, the system which is at the root of man's oppression. Many of us are going to have to go through important changes, personally. As students, we have been indoctrinated with many racist and anti-working-class notions that in turn have produced racism and class-chauvinism in SDS and were responsible largely for the student-power focus which our movement has had for many years. Student power at this stage of our movement has to be seen as economism: that is, organizing people around a narrow definition of self-interest as opposed to class-interest. We are moving beyond this now, but that movement must be planned carefully and understood by all.

The fact that we saw ourselves as students as well as radicals, and accepted that classification of ourselves and many of the false privileges that went along with it (2-S deferment [the draft deferment for students], promise of the "good life" upon graduation, etc.) was primarily responsible for the reactionary tendencies in SDS.

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*Youth around the world have the potential to become a critical force. A youth movement raises the issues about a society in which it will be forced to live.*

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The main task now is to begin moving beyond the limitations of struggle placed upon a student movement. We must realize our potential to reach out to new constituencies both on and off campus and build SDS into a youth movement that is revolutionary.

The notion that we must remain simply "an anti-imperialist student organization" is no longer viable. The nature of our struggle is such that it necessitates an organization that is made up of youth and not just students, and that these youth become class-conscious. This means that our struggles must be integrated into the struggles of working people.

One thing should be clear. This perspective doesn't see youth as a class or say that youth will make the revolution by itself. Neither does it say that youth are necessarily more oppressed than older people, simply that they are oppressed in different ways. There are contradictions that touch youth specifically. To understand why there is a need for a youth movement, first we must come to see how youth are oppressed.

#### OPPRESSION OF YOUTH

Youth around the world have the potential to become a critical force. A youth movement raises the issues about

a society in which it will be forced to live. It takes issues to the working class. They do this because, in America, there exists an enormous contradiction around the integration of youth into the system. The period of pre-employment has been greatly extended due to the affluence of this highly industrialized society and the lack of jobs.

Institutions like the schools, the military, the courts and the police all act to oppress youth in specific ways, as does the work place. The propaganda and socialization processes focused at youth act to channel young people into desired areas of the labor market as well as to socialize them to accept without rebellion the miserable quality of life in America both on and off the job.

The ruling class recognizes the critical potential of young people. This is why they developed so many organizational forms to contain them. Many young people have rejected the integration process that the schools are supposed to serve and have broken with and begun to struggle against the "establishment." This phenomenon has taken many forms, ranging from youth dropping out as a response to a dying capitalist culture, to young workers being forced out by industry that no longer has any room for the untrained, unskilled, and unorganized. Both the dropout and the forced-out youth face the repressive nature of America's police, courts, and military, which act to physically and materially oppress them. The response from various strata of youth has been rebellion, from the buildings at Columbia to the movement in the streets of Chicago to Haight-Ashbury [a famous San Francisco "hippie" area] to the Watts uprising [a 1965 Los Angeles riot].

#### REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH

We must also understand what role a youth movement would have in the context of building a revolution. An organized class-conscious youth movement would serve basically four functions in building revolutionary struggle:

1. An organized revolutionary youth movement is itself a powerful force for revolutionary struggle. In other words, our struggle is the class struggle, as is the Vietnamese and the black liberation struggle. To call youth or even the student movement a section of the bourgeoisie which must simply support any struggle fought by working people is economism. The struggle of youth is as much a part of the class struggle as a union strike. We ally with workers by waging struggle against a common enemy, not by subjugating our movement patronizingly to every trade union battle. We also ally with the liberation struggle of those fighting against imperialism, recognizing that this is the true expression of the working class at its most conscious level.

2. Youth is a critical force which—through struggle—can expose war, racism, the exploitation of labor and the oppression of youth. We do this by putting forth our class analysis of capitalist institutions via propaganda and sharp actions. Exemplary actions of the youth movement lead to higher consciousness and struggle among other people.
3. Because we can organize—as a student movement—around those contradictions which affect youth specifically, we can organize young working people into our class-conscious anti-capitalist movement. These young workers will (a) strengthen the anti-capitalist movement among the work force, (b) provide an organic link between the student movement and the movement of working people, and (c) add to the effect that we will have as a critical force on older working people today.
4. The expansion of the base of the youth movement to include young working people changes the character of our movement importantly: because it fights the tendency of our student movement to define itself in terms of “student interest” rather than class interest.

Because we see a revolutionary youth movement as an important part of building a full revolutionary working-class movement we must shape our own strategy self-consciously now with a view to that youth movement. This means that, in addition to expanding our base to include more young working people, we must insure the class-consciousness of our movement now, and we must attack the class nature of the schools we are organizing against.

### Viewpoint 33B *Student Rebellion Leaders Are a Disgrace (1969)*

K. Ross Toole (1920–1981)

INTRODUCTION *During the 1960s the activities of America's youth attracted much media and public attention. This was in part due to baby-boom demographics; by 1970 people under the age of thirty constituted more than half of America's population. But in addition to sheer numbers, many (not all) young Americans gained notoriety by rebelling against the values and institutions of mainstream American society. They experimented with drugs, participated in civil rights demonstrations and antiwar marches, and reexamined traditional American beliefs on sex, work, and family. Social unrest sparked by youth protests peaked in the late 1960s. In the spring of 1968 at least forty thousand students on one hundred campuses took part in demonstrations against war and racism—protests that sometimes turned violent. University buildings were seized, American flags and draft cards were burned, and universities were closed. Similar demonstrations continued in 1969, when the article reprinted here was*

*first published. The writer was K. Ross Toole, a history professor at the University of Montana. The essay, critical of the direction student movements were taking, was widely reprinted in newspapers and magazines across the country.*

*How does Toole defend his own generation? How do his views on American society differ from those expressed in the opposing viewpoint? How should police and college authorities respond to radicals, according to Toole?*

I am forty-nine years old. It took me years of considerable anguish to get where I am, which isn't much of any place except exurbia. I was nurtured in the Depression; I lost four years to war; I have had one coronary; I am a “liberal,” a square and a professor of history.

As such, I am supposed to have “liaison” with the young. But the fact is that I am fed up with hippies, Yuppies, militants and nonsense.

I am also the father of seven children, ranging in age from seven to twenty-three. And I am beginning to wonder what the hell I am incubating as a “permissive” parent. Maybe, indeed, I am the fellow who is producing the “campus rebel,” whose bearded visage, dirty hair, body odor and “tactics” are childish but brutal, naive but dangerous, and the essence of arrogant tyranny—the tyranny of spoiled brats. Maybe all of this begins with me and my kind.

Wherever and however it begins, it is time to call a halt, time to live in an adult world where we belong and time to put these “children” in their places. We have come by what we have and become what we are through work, sweat, anguish and time. We owe the “younger generation” what all “older generations” have owed younger generations—love, protection to a point and respect when they deserve it. We do not owe them our souls, our privacy, our whole lives; and, above all, we do not owe them immunity from our mistakes or their own.

### MY GENERATION

Every generation makes mistakes, always has and always will. We have made our share. But my generation has made America the most affluent country on earth; it has tackled, head-on, a racial problem which no nation on earth in the history of mankind had dared to do. It has publicly declared war on poverty and it has gone to the moon; it has desegregated schools and abolished polio; it has presided over the beginning of what is probably the greatest social and economic revolution in man's history. It has *begun* these things, not finished them. It has declared itself and committed itself and taxed itself and damn near run itself into the ground in the cause of social justice and reform.

From K. Ross Toole, *An Angry Man Talks Up to Youth*. (New York: Award Books, 1970).

Its mistakes are fewer than my father's generation, or his father's, or his father's. Its greatest mistake is *not* Viet Nam; it is the abdication of its first responsibility, its pusillanimous capitulation to its youth and its sick preoccupation with the problems, the minds, and the psyches, the *raison d'être* of the young.

Since when have children ruled this country? By virtue of what right or what accomplishment should thousands of teenagers, wet behind the ears and utterly without the benefit of having lived long enough to have either judgment or wisdom, become the sages of our time?

Well, say the psychologists, the educators and preachers, the young are rebelling against our archaic mores and morals, our materialistic approach to life, our failures in diplomacy, our terrible ineptitude in racial matters, our narrowness as parents, our blindness to the root ills of society. Balderdash!

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*Too many 'youngsters' are egocentric boors.*

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Society hangs together by the stitching of many threads. No eighteen-year-old is simply the product of his eighteen years; he is the product of three thousand years of the development of mankind. And throughout those years, injustice has existed and has been fought; rules have grown outmoded and been changed; doom has hung over the heads of men and been avoided; unjust wars have occurred; pain has been the cost of progress. But man has persevered. Society is obviously an imperfect production, but each generation changes its direction just a little, and most of the time it works.

As a professor and father of seven, I have watched this new generation and concluded that *most* of them are fine. A minority are not. The trouble is that that minority genuinely threatens to tyrannize the majority and take over. I dislike that minority; I am aghast that the majority "takes" it and allows itself to be used; I am appalled that I have participated thus far in condoning it. I speak partly as a historian, partly as a father and partly as one fed up, middle-aged and angry member of the so-called "Establishment"—which, by the way, is nothing but a euphemism for "society."

#### EGOCENTRIC BOORS

Common courtesy and a regard for the opinions of others is not merely a decoration on the pie crust of society, it is the heart of the pie. Too many "youngsters" are egocentric boors. They will not listen, they will only shout down. They will not discuss but, like four-year-olds, they throw rocks and shout.

Wisdom is not precocity; it is an amalgam of experience, reading, thought and the slow development of perception. While age is no guarantor of wisdom, whatever else the young are, they are not wise, precisely because they are young. Too many of them mistake glibness for wisdom and emotion for thought.

Arrogance is obnoxious; it is also destructive. Society has classically ostracized arrogance when it is without the backing of demonstrable accomplishment. Why, then, do we tolerate arrogant slobs who occupy our homes, our administration buildings, our streets and parks, urinating on our beliefs and defiling our premises? It is not the police we need, it is an expression of our disgust and disdain. Yet we do more than permit it, we dignify it with introspective flagellation. Somehow it is *our* fault. Balderdash again!

Sensitivity is not the property of the young, nor was it invented in 1960. The young of any generation have felt the same impulse to grow, to reach out, to touch stars, to live freely and to let the mind loose along unexplored corridors. Young men and young women have always stood on the same hill and felt the same vague sense of restraint that separated them from the ultimate experience, the sudden and complete expansion of the mind and the final fulfillment. It is one of the oldest, sweetest and most bitter experiences of mankind.

Today's young people did not invent it; they do not own it. And what they seek to attain all mankind has sought to attain throughout the ages. Shall we, therefore, approve the presumed attainment of it through violence, heroin, speed, LSD and other drugs? And shall we, permissively, let them poison themselves simply because we brought them into this world? Again, it is not police raids and tougher laws that we need; it is merely strength. The strength to explain, in our potty, middle-aged way, that what they seek, we sought; that it is somewhere but sure as hell not in drugs; that, in the meanwhile, they will goddam well cease and desist. And this we must explain early and hard—and then police it ourselves.

Society, "the Establishment," is not a foreign thing we seek to impose on the young. *We* know it is far from perfect. We did not make it; we have only sought to change it. The fact that we have been only minimally successful is the story of *all* generations, as it will be the story of the generation coming up. Yet we *have* worked a number of wonders with it. We *have* changed it. We are deeply concerned about our failures. We have not solved the racial problem, but we have at least faced it; we are terribly worried about the degradation of our environment, about injustices, inequities, the military-industrial complex and bureaucracy. But we *have* attacked these things. All our lives we have taken arms against our sea of troubles—and fought effectively. But we also have fought with a *rational* knowledge of the strength of our

adversary; and, above all, we have known that the war is one of attrition in which the “unconditional surrender” of the forces of evil is not about to occur tomorrow. We win, if we win at all, slowly and painfully. That is the kind of war society has always fought because man and society are what they are.

Knowing this, why do we listen subserviently to the violent tacticians of the new generation? Either they have total victory by Wednesday next or burn down our carefully built barricades in adolescent pique; either they win now or flee off to a commune and quit; either they solve all problems this week or join a wrecking crew of paranoids.

Youth has always been characterized by impatient idealism. If it were not, there would be *no* change. But impatient idealism does not extend to guns, fire bombs, riots, vicious arrogance and instant gratification. That is not idealism; it is childish tyranny. And the worst of it is that we (professors and faculties in particular), go along in a paroxysm of self-abnegation and apology, abdicate, apologize as if we had personally created the ills of the world and thus lend ourselves to chaos. We are the led, not the leaders. And we are fools. . . .

I assert that we are trouble with this younger generation not because we have failed our country, not because of affluence or stupidity, not because we are antediluvian, not because we are middle-class materialists, but simply because we have failed to keep that generation in its place and have failed to put them back there when they got out of it. We have the power, we do not have the will; we have the right, we have not exercised it.

To the extent that we now rely on the police, mace, the National Guard, tear gas, steel fences and a wringing of hands, we will fail. What we need is a reappraisal of our own middle-class selves, our worth and our hard-won progress. We need to use disdain, not mace; we need to reassess a weapon we came by the hard way—firm authority as parents, teachers, businessmen, workers and politicians.

The vast majority of our children from one to twenty are fine kids. We need to back up this majority with authority and with the firm conviction that we owe it to them and to ourselves. Enough of apology, enough of analysis, enough of our abdication of our responsibility, enough of the denial of our own maturity and good sense.

#### UNIVERSITY REFORMS

The best place to start is at home. But the most practical and effective place, right now, is our campuses. This does not mean a flood of angry edicts, a sudden clampdown, a “new” policy. It simply means that faculties should stop playing chicken, that demonstrators should be met not with police but with expulsions. The power to expell (strangely unused) has been the legitimate recourse of universities since 1209.

More importantly, it means that at freshman orientation, whatever form it takes, the administration should set forth the ground rules—not belligerently but forthrightly.

A university is the microcosm of society itself. It cannot function without rules for conduct. It cannot, as society cannot, legislate morals. It is dealing with young men and women of eighteen to twenty-two. But it can and *must* promulgate rules. It cannot function without order; therefore, those who disrupt order must leave. It cannot permit the students to determine when, what and where they shall be taught; it cannot permit the occupation of its premises, in violation both of the law and its regulations, by “militants.”

There is room within the university complex for basic student participation, but there is *no* room for slob, disruption and violence. Therefore, the first obligation of the administration is to lay down the rules, early in the game, clearly and positively, and to attach to this statement the penalty for violation. It is profoundly simple, and the failure to state it in advance is the salient failure of university administrators in this age. . . .

This is a country full of decent, worried people like myself. It is also a country full of people fed up with nonsense. Those of us over thirty, tax-ridden, harried, confused, weary, need to reassert our hard-won prerogatives. It is our country too. We have fought for it, bled for it, dreamed for it, and we love it. It is time to reclaim it.

#### FOR FURTHER READING

- John A. Andrew, *The Other Side of the Sixties: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of Conservative Politics*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997.
- Peter Collier and David Horowitz, *Destructive Generation: Second Thoughts About the Sixties*. New York: Summit Books, 1989.
- Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*. New York: Bantam Books, 1987.
- James Kunen, *The Strawberry Statement: Notes of a College Revolutionary*. New York: Random House, 1969.
- Irwin Unger, *The Movement: History of America's New Left, 1959–1972*. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1974.

## FROM NIXON TO REAGAN

Viewpoint 34A  
*Executive Privilege Protects a President's Private Communications (1973)*

Richard M. Nixon (1913–1994)

INTRODUCTION *In the 1970s a series of political scandals involving President Richard M. Nixon caused a national crisis. The focal point of the scandals was a burglary at the Democratic Party National Headquarters at the Watergate building complex in Washington, D.C., on June 17, 1972. Although the seven*