

The original documents are located in Box D27, folder “Commencement Address, Grove City College, Grove City, PA, June 8, 1968” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. The Council donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS AT GROVE CITY COLLEGE, GROVE CITY. PA., JUNE 8, 1968.

In a mixed audience I am always embarrassed to be introduced as the Minority Leader of the House - all husbands know who the minority leader of the House is.

We also know, as husbands, who the Speaker of the House is,

MR. PEW, PRESIDENT HARKER, DEAN
SWEZEY, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, FACULTY AND
FRIENDS OF GROVE CITY COLLEGE, AND THE FAMILIES
AND MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OF 1968, GREETINGS
AND CONGRATULATIONS.

WHEN DR. HARKER ASKED ME TO SUPPLY THE
TITLE OF MY SPEECH FOR TODAY'S PRINTED PROGRAM,
AND I REPLIED, WITHOUT HAVING YET FORMULATED
WHAT I INTENDED TO SAY, THAT WE MIGHT CALL IT
"A TIME OF DECISION," WE DID NOT KNOW HOW
FITTING THAT WOULD BE. I HAD IN MIND, OF COURSE,
THAT THIS IS A NATIONAL ELECTION YEAR, BUT NOW
WE KNOW THAT THE TIME OF DECISION WILL NOT WAIT
EVEN UNTIL NOVEMBER. IT IS NOW.


THIS AFTERNOON I MUST RETURN TO



WASHINGTON TO PAY MY LAST RESPECTS TO SENATOR ROBERT F. KENNEDY, BUT I THINK HE WOULD BE THE LAST ~~TO WANT~~ TO DAMPEN THE SPIRITS OF YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN ON THIS LONG-AWAITED DAY. LIFE IS NEVER FREE OF TRAGEDY AND SORROW, AND WE THINK ALSO OF THE 99 BRAVE MEN OF THE SUBMARINE SCORPION, WHO ALSO WERE TAKEN FROM THEIR LOVED ONES IN THE PRIME OF MANHOOD WHILE SERVING THEIR COUNTRY IN ANOTHER WAY.

WE CAN NEITHER FULLY UNDERSTAND NOR COMPLETELY PREVENT SUCH LOSSES, BUT WE CAN -- AND WE MUST -- HERE AND NOW RESOLVE TO CUT THE RED THREAD OF VIOLENCE AND INTOLERANCE, WITH ITS UGLY KNOTS OF ASSASSINATION AND ANARCHY, WHICH HAS RUN THROUGH ALL YOUR STUDENT YEARS.

THIS SERENE CAMPUS, THE EMBODIMENT OF THE FOUNDING FATHERS' DREAM OF DOMESTIC TRANQUILLITY, SEEMS LIKE A LOVELY OASIS OF CIVILIZATION TO ME AFTER THE TURMOILS AND TENSIONS OF RECENT WEEKS. I WOULD LIKE TO



LINGER HERE FOR REFRESHMENT OF MY CONFIDENCE IN AMERICA'S FUTURE THAT BEING AMONG YOU HAS ALREADY BEGUN. I AM DEEPLY HONORED, AND DEEPLY MOVED, BY THE HONORARY DEGREE THAT GROVE CITY COLLEGE HAS DECIDED TO CONFER UPON ME, MAKING ME ONE OF YOU AND ONE WITH YOU IN THE REMEMBRANCE OF THIS DAY.)

IT IS PARTICULARLY GRATIFYING TO RECEIVE A DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF LAWS BECAUSE I AM A LAWYER BY PROFESSION AND A LAWMAKER BY CHOICE, AND THROUGH THE TRUST OF MY GOOD CONSTITUENTS. THIS THING WE CALL CIVILIZATION, WHICH HAS BEEN NURTURED THROUGH COUNTLESS CENTURIES, IS AT ALL TIMES AND IN ALL PLACES A HIGHLY COMPLEX AND DELICATE MECHANISM. IT IS LIKE A FINE WATCH, IN WHICH THE COLLEGES AND THE CHURCHES ARE SET AS JEWELS, AND THE MAINSPRING IS THE ETERNAL ENERGY OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT SEEKING A FULLER LIFE AND A BETTER WORLD.

BUT THE BALANCE WHEEL OF THAT MECHANISM



IS THE LAW.

WITHOUT THE LAW, EVERYTHING GOES AWRY, AND THE WATCH IS WORSE THAN USELESS. I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT ANY PERSON OR ANY GROUP CAN TINKER OR TAMPER WITH THIS BALANCE WHEEL OF THE LAW WITHOUT RUNNING THE RISK OF WRECKING CIVILIZATION ITSELF. AMERICA IS SAD TODAY, BUT AMERICANS WILL BE MAD TOMORROW.

LIKE A GATHERING SUMMER STORM, A POWERFUL DEMAND AND DETERMINATION FOR CHANGE IS STIRRING AND SURGING THROUGHOUT OUR COUNTRY. THESE TIMES THAT TRY MEN'S SOULS.-TO BORROW TOM PAINE'S WORDS, MAY SUMMON PATRIOTS TO ACTION, BUT THEY ALSO CAN RAISE DEMAGOGUES TO POWER. TRULY THIS IS A TIME OF DECISION FOR AMERICA -- AND I TELL YOU WITH ALL THE SINCERITY I POSSESS, THAT OUR FIRST DECISION MUST BE TO LIVE WITHIN THE LAW.

I WAS INFORMED ON MY WAY HERE THAT THE ONLY DEMONSTRATION WHICH HAS OCCURRED ON THE

GROVE CITY CAMPUS THIS YEAR WAS A DEMONSTRATION BY STUDENTS IN SUPPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION.

I'M NOT TOO CLEAR WHAT THE CONTROVERSY WAS ABOUT BUT I CERTAINLY COMMEND THIS KIND OF STUDENT POWER -- THE STUDENT POWER THAT SPRINGS FROM WILLINGNESS AND WORK.

I ALSO AM DELIGHTED TO HEAR THAT THE ONLY KIND OF BLACK POWER AND WHITE POWER YOU HAVE HERE IS ^{that ultimate} ~~THE~~ POWER ^{democracy - a} OF A BLACK "X" ON A WHITE BALLOT. THAT'S THE WAY IT SHOULD BE. AND THE WAY IT IS WITH MOST AMERICANS WHATEVER THEIR BACKGROUNDS OR THEIR POLITICAL BELIEFS.

OF COURSE, COMMOTIONS ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES IN THE SPRINGTIME ARE NOT EXACTLY A NEW IDEA. IN MY DAY THE CHIEF CAUSES OF CAMPUS COMMOTION WERE SWALLOWING GOLDFISH, OR RAIDING THE WOMEN'S DORMITORIES. I UNDERSTAND THE LATTER SITUATION HAS BEEN REVERSED NOWADAYS, WITH THE GIRLS DOING THE RAIDING, /AND TO ME THIS SEEMS TO BE REAL PROGRESS.

AS FOR THE GOLDFISH SWALLOWING -- I BELIEVE THE RECORD WAS 87 -- THAT APPEARS TO HAVE PASSED QUICKLY, PROVING ONLY THAT WHAT YOU PUT INTO YOUR HEAD IN COLLEGE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHAT YOU PUT INTO YOUR STOMACH.

LET ME SUGGEST, HERE IN THE INDUSTRIAL HEART OF AMERICA, THAT THE FIRST POOR PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT OF THIS COUNTRY WAS ACROSS THE ATLANTIC OCEAN, AND THEN ON ACROSS THE MOUNTAINS, AND IT HAS NEVER REALLY CEASED.

THESE POOR PEOPLE, THESE OUTCASTS, THESE DISADVANTAGED, THESE REBELS AGAINST THE OLD ESTABLISHMENT, BROUGHT VERY LITTLE WITH THEM, BUT WHAT THEY DID BRING WAS PRECIOUS AND MUST BE PRESERVED. THEY BROUGHT, EVEN AS THEY PROTESTED ITS CAPRICIOUS ABUSE, AN ABIDING RESPECT FOR THE RULE OF LAW -- THEY BUILT THEMSELVES SYSTEMS OF ORDERLY SELF-GOVERNMENT EVEN BEFORE THEY ERECTED DRY HOUSES.

THEY BROUGHT, ALSO, TO THIS UNKNOWN AND



UNTAMED WILDERNESS, A PROFOUND APPRECIATION OF, AND INSISTENCE UPON, THE DISCIPLINES OF FORMAL EDUCATION. AS THEY BUILT CRUDE LOG STOCKADES THEY ALSO BUILT SCHOOLROOMS, AND THEN OPENED THEM TO THE CHILDREN OF THEIR SAVAGE ENEMIES AS WELL AS THEIR OWN.

FINALLY, THIS POOR PEOPLE'S MARCH HALF A WORLD AROUND CARRIED WITH IT A COMMON COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE, TO THE HALF-HUMANIST, HALF-THEOLOGICAL IDEA OF THE PERFECTABILITY OF SOCIETY, THE ENLARGEMENT OF FREEDOM AND THE INNATE AND UNIQUE WORTH OF INDIVIDUAL MAN. EACH OF YOU, AS YOU RECEIVE YOUR DEGREES THIS ^{morning} ~~EVENING~~, REPRESENT THE LATEST FRUITION OF THIS ANGLO-AMERICAN LEGACY OF LAW, LEARNING, AND LIBERTY.

WE HEAR A GOOD DEAL THESE DAYS ABOUT A "GENERATION GAP" WHICH IS SUPPOSED TO CUT OFF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN, SAY, THE CLASS OF 1935 AND THE CLASS OF 1968. I AM NOT SURE THIS IS ANYTHING MORE PROFOUND THAN A NEW NAME

FOR A VERY OLD COMPLAINT; PAPA ISN'T ALWAYS LISTENING WHEN SONNY IS TALKING, AND VICE VERSA. YOUTH AND AGE -- OR FOR THAT MATTER MALE AND FEMALE -- HAVE ALWAYS GRUMBLED THAT THEY WEREN'T REALLY UNDERSTOOD BY THE OTHER, AND WHAT A DULL LIFE IT WOULD BE IF WE ALWAYS WERE!

YOU CAN REACH BACK INTO THE PAST ABOUT 3000 YEARS AND FIND IN THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON PAGE AFTER PAGE OF GOOD ADVICE FROM FATHER TO SON, WITHOUT ANY HINT AS TO WHETHER THE SON EVER PAID ANY ATTENTION. [TO IT]

ONE PROVERB THAT STICKS IN MY MIND, HOWEVER -- AND IT IS HONESTLY THE ONLY THING I CAN NOW REMEMBER FROM MY OWN BACCALAUREATE -- GOES LIKE THIS:

"WISDOM IS THE PRINCIPAL THING: THEREFORE GET WISDOM:

"AND WITH ALL THY GETTING, GET UNDERSTANDING."

NOW THIS IS PRETTY GOOD COUNSEL, COMING



FROM SOLOMON, WHO WAS REPUTED TO BE THE WISEST MAN OF ALL TIME -- THOUGH I'VE ALWAYS WONDERED HOW YOU COULD SAY THAT ABOUT ANYONE WHO HAD 700 WIVES AND 300 PLAYMATES IN ONE PALACE. YOU HAVE TO ADMIT, THOUGH, THAT SUCH A HOUSEHOLD DOES CALL FOR A LOT OF UNDERSTANDING.

I THOUGHT I'D SEE WHETHER SOLOMON'S ADVICE TO HIS SON HAS ANY RELEVANCE FOR TODAY'S GRADUATING SENIORS. SO I ASKED ONE OF MY YOUNGER GENERATION CONSULTANTS, WHO STILL COMMUNICATES FAIRLY SUCCESSFULLY, WHAT IT MEANT TO HIM:

"WISDOM IS THE PRINCIPAL THING! THEREFORE GET WISDOM:

"AND WITH ALL THY GETTING, GET UNDERSTANDING."

HIS ANSWER WAS NOT LONG IN COMING.

"I GUESS THAT MEANS, LIKE, FIRST YOU GET WITH IT; BUT DON'T JUST GET WITH IT -- GET INTO IT!" *This was his translation* ~~IS THE WAY HE TRANSLATED IT.~~

NOT BAD. I DOUBT THAT IT WILL REPLACE

THE KING JAMES RENDERING, OR EVER GO VERY BIG
IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOLS. BUT I'M GOING TO TOSS
IT ACROSS ^{the} GENERATION GAP TO YOU TODAY, FROM
SOLOMON AND ME, 30 YEARS OR 30 CENTURIES GIVE
OR TAKE A LITTLE, AND ^I HOPE YOU'LL REMEMBER IT.

"DON'T JUST GET WITH IT -- GET INTO IT."

I CAN ALMOST HEAR SOME OF YOUR FATHERS
AND MOTHERS WHISPERING: NOW WHAT ON EARTH IS
HE TELLING THEM -- THEY'RE ALREADY MESSING INTO
A LOT MORE THINGS THAN THEY OUGHT TO BE. [WE
ALWAYS HEARD THAT JERRY FORD WAS A NICE, SOLID
TYPE AND HERE HE IS TALKING LIKE THAT!]

AND DID I HEAR STILL ANOTHER WHISPER?

YEAH, WHAT HAVE WE GOT TO GET INTO --
THE ARMY? WHO DO YOU THINK YOU'RE KIDDING
ABOUT LAW AND LEARNING AND LIBERTY? WE'VE HAD
TOO MUCH OF THE FIRST, JUST ABOUT ENOUGH OF THE
SECOND, AND NOT VERY MUCH OF THE THIRD. YOU
AND ALL THE POLITICIANS WHO HAVE BEEN RUNNING
THINGS EVER SINCE WE WERE BORN HAVE REALLY MADE


A MESS OF IT. SO NOW /YOU WANT US/ TO GET INTO IT WITH YOU.

WELL, WE ARE IN QUITE A MESS, THAT'S CERTAIN. I SUPPOSE I COULD DUCK THIS BY SAYING I'VE BEEN IN THE MINORITY MOST OF THE YEARS I'VE BEEN IN CONGRESS, SO DON'T BLAME ME. THAT WON'T DO, OF COURSE. ALL ADULT AMERICANS HAVE TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY, AT LEAST SOME RESPONSIBILITY, FOR THE WAY THINGS ARE; BECAUSE AS THEODORE ROOSEVELT PUT IT BLUNTLY:

"THE GOVERNMENT IS US; WE ARE THE GOVERNMENT, YOU AND I."


ANOTHER PRESIDENT, WHO ^{HAD BEEN} ~~WAS ALSO~~ A PROFESSOR, SAID IT A LONGER WAY:

"GOVERNMENT," SAID WOODROW WILSON, "IS MERELY AN ATTEMPT TO EXPRESS THE CONSCIENCE OF EVERYBODY, THE AVERAGE CONSCIENCE OF THE NATION, IN THE RULES THAT EVERYBODY IS COMMANDED TO OBEY. THAT IS ALL IT IS. IF THE GOVERNMENT IS



GOING FASTER THAN THE PUBLIC CONSCIENCE, IT WILL PRESENTLY HAVE TO PULL UP; IF IT IS NOT GOING AS FAST AS THE PUBLIC CONSCIENCE, IT WILL PRESENTLY HAVE TO BE WHIPPED UP."

THE TRUTH OF WILSON'S DEFINITION IS NOWHERE MORE EVIDENT THAN IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WHICH IS WHY SERVING THERE IS SO REWARDING. CONGRESS IS OFTEN THE SCAPEGOAT FOR THE SINS OF AMERICAN SOCIETY BECAUSE CONGRESS IS THE PEOPLE IN MICROCOSM. THIS YEAR AND EVERY TWO YEARS WE GO HOME TO THE PEOPLE WHO SENT US TO WASHINGTON AND DO WHAT MANY OF YOU HAVE BEEN DOING -- SEEING ABOUT A JOB. IF THEY LIKE THE WAY WE'VE BEEN ACTING FOR THEM AND SPEAKING UP FOR THEM THEY HIRE US FOR ANOTHER TWO-YEAR CONTRACT, BUT IF THEY DON'T -- THAT'S ALL, BROTHER! IF YOU DON'T GET GOVERNMENT THAT SERVES YOU BEST OUT OF THIS ARRANGEMENT YOU AT LEAST GET THE KIND THAT SERVES YOU RIGHT, AS GOOD AS YOU DESERVE.




BUT IS THIS GOOD ENOUGH TO COME TO GRIPS WITH TODAY'S CHALLENGES?

NO, FRANKLY, IT IS NOT.

WITHOUT WANTING TO STRIKE A PARTISAN NOTE IT'S MERELY A FACT OF RECENT HISTORY THAT MY PARTY GAINED 47 SEATS IN THE HOUSE TWO YEARS AGO. WE NEEDED REINFORCEMENTS BADLY, WE REJOICED IN THE QUANTITY, BUT EVEN MORE IN THE QUALITY OF THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO JOINED OUR RANKS -- MANY OF THEM NOT TOO FAR FROM THEIR OWN COLLEGE COMMENCEMENTS.


THESE HARD-DRIVING, ENTHUSIASTIC AND TOUGH-MINDED YOUNG LEGISLATORS NOT ONLY BROUGHT THE INSIGHTS AND INITIATIVES OF A NEW BREED OF POLITICIAN TO OUR DEBATES; ALREADY THEY HAVE LEFT THEIR MARK ON THE CONGRESS. THEIR EXTRA VOTES AND PERSISTENT PRESSURES HELPED TO CREATE A NEW CODE OF OFFICIAL CONDUCT FOR THE HOUSE, TO GREATLY IMPROVE AND STRENGTHEN ANTI-CRIME AND CONSUMER PROTECTION LAWS, TO EXPOSE WASTE



AND CORRUPTION IN THE POVERTY AND FOREIGN AID PROGRAMS, TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON URBAN NEEDS, TO DEMAND LONG OVERDUE REFORMS IN THE MACHINERY OF CONGRESS AND THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH, TO MENTION ONLY A FEW AREAS OF THEIR ACTIVITY.

THE YOUNGER MEN AND WOMEN COMING UP IN WASHINGTON ARE NOT ONLY WITH IT, THEY ARE IN IT -- AND WE ARE WAITING TO WELCOME MORE. BUT OBVIOUSLY, IT WILL REQUIRE MORE THAN BETTER AND BOLDER LEADERSHIP FROM GOVERNMENT TO ^{DEAL} ~~COPE~~ WITH THE PROBLEMS THAT FACE US. IF MY GENERATION HAS LEARNED NOTHING ELSE IN THE POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL OF EXPERIENCE IT MUST BE THAT GOVERNMENT CAN DO ONLY SO MUCH, THAT SIMPLY PASSING LAWS THAT PROMISE EASY SOLUTIONS AND RAISING TAXES TO REDISTRIBUTE THE GREAT WEALTH OF THIS COUNTRY CANNOT BEGIN TO COPE WITH WHAT ARE ESSENTIALLY MORAL AND INDIVIDUAL PROBLEMS; INDEED, GOVERNMENT ACTION CAN COMPOUND THEM.

LOOK AT THE GRAVE ISSUES WHICH FACE



AND CORRUPTION IN THE POVERTY AND FOREIGN AID PROGRAMS, TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON URBAN NEEDS, TO DEMAND LONG OVERDUE REFORMS IN THE MACHINERY OF CONGRESS AND THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH, TO MENTION ONLY A FEW AREAS OF THEIR ACTIVITY.


THE YOUNGER MEN AND WOMEN COMING UP IN WASHINGTON ARE NOT ONLY WITH IT, THEY ARE IN IT -- AND WE ARE WAITING TO WELCOME MORE. BUT OBVIOUSLY, IT WILL REQUIRE MORE THAN BETTER AND BOLDER LEADERSHIP FROM GOVERNMENT TO ~~COPE~~^{DEAL} WITH THE PROBLEMS THAT FACE US. IF MY GENERATION HAS LEARNED NOTHING ELSE IN THE POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL OF EXPERIENCE IT MUST BE THAT GOVERNMENT CAN DO ONLY SO MUCH, THAT SIMPLY PASSING LAWS THAT PROMISE EASY SOLUTIONS AND RAISING TAXES TO REDISTRIBUTE THE GREAT WEALTH OF THIS COUNTRY CANNOT BEGIN TO COPE WITH WHAT ARE ESSENTIALLY MORAL AND INDIVIDUAL PROBLEMS; INDEED, GOVERNMENT ACTION CAN COMPOUND THEM.

LOOK AT THE GRAVE ISSUES WHICH FACE



OUR NATION AND EACH OF US TODAY. ALL OF THEM, WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT SERIOUSLY, ARE AT THE VERY CORE/MORAL CONCERNS. THE PROS AND CONS OF THESE QUESTIONS ARE FUNDAMENTALLY MORAL ARGUMENTS, AND PERHAPS THIS EXPLAINS WHY DEBATE HAS BECOME SO IMPASSIONED AND EVEN VIOLENT.

TAKE THE WAR IN VIETNAM. THIS IS A MAJOR NATIONAL CONCERN, PROBABLY THE CHIEF CONCERN OF YOUNG AMERICANS. LET THERE BE NO DOUBT ON ONE POINT -- WE ALL, EVERY ONE OF US, WOULD MUCH RATHER MAKE LOVE THAN WAR. THIS WAR IS UNPOPULAR, BUT I DOUBT VERY MUCH THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS EVER HAD A REALLY POPULAR WAR -- EVEN THE WAR WITH SPAIN HAD ITS AFTERMATH OF DISILLUSIONMENT. THE YEAR I WAS GRADUATED FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN WAS THE YEAR ADOLF HITLER SEIZED ALL POWER IN GERMANY -- AND MY GENERATION DIDN'T LIKE THE PROSPECT OF WAR DISRUPTING OUR LIVES ANY MORE THAN YOURS. BUT THE NATION MET THAT CHALLENGE

A circular library stamp is located in the bottom right corner of the page. The text "LIBRARY" is visible along the top inner edge of the circle, and "CALIFORNIA" is visible along the bottom inner edge. The center of the stamp contains some illegible text.

SUCCESSFULLY BECAUSE AMERICA'S MORAL COMMITMENT TO THE CAUSE OF HUMAN DECENCY WAS CLEAR, AND WE SAW IT CLEARLY. WE FOUGHT THAT WAR FOR YOU -- EVEN THOUGH YOU DIDN'T YET EXIST.


THE MORAL DILEMMA OF VIETNAM IS MUCH MORE DIFFICULT. ITS MAGNITUDE IS MEASURED BY THE CRUEL FACT THAT JUST LAST WEEK, EVEN WITH PEACE TALKS GOING ON -- 438 YOUNG AMERICANS WERE KILLED IN ACTION IN VIETNAM, MORE THAN GROVE CITY COLLEGE WILL GRADUATE HERE TODAY. IT HAS BECOME A CLICHE TO SAY THAT WE ARE BOGGED DOWN IN A WAR WE CANNOT WIN AND CANNOT LOSE, THAT THERE IS NO WAY OUT. THIS NATION HAS THE MATERIAL STRENGTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES TO DO ANYTHING IT SETS ITS MIND TO; WHAT IS LACKING IS THE CLEAR MORAL COMMITMENT OF OUR PEOPLE TO A COURSE OF ACTION THAT IS BOTH REASONABLE AND RIGHT, AND WE HAVE NEITHER NOW.

THE TASK OF LEADERSHIP IS TO SET ~~SUCH~~ A COURSE. THE TASK OF CITIZENS IS TO MAKE SUCH

A COMMITMENT. IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, I SAY TO THE CLASS OF 1968 TO GET INTO IT. WE ARE THE GOVERNMENT, YOU AND I. NOBODY IS GOING TO GET US OUT OF THIS MESS EXCEPT OURSELVES.

TAKE CRIME AND LAWLESSNESS, RIOTS AND DISORDERS. ALREADY, THIS LOOMS AS A LARGER NATIONAL ISSUE THAN THE WAR, AND ALREADY IT DIRECTLY AFFECTS MORE AMERICANS. HALF THE WOMEN IN THIS COUNTRY ARE AFRAID TO WALK ALONE AT NIGHT IN THEIR OWN NEIGHBORHOODS -- AND NO WONDER, SOMEONE IS MURDERED IN COLD BLOOD EVERY 41 MINUTES AND A SEXUAL ATTACK OCCURS EVERY 19 MINUTES, ON THE AVERAGE.

THE CRIME RATE IS RISING EIGHT TIMES AS FAST AS THE POPULATION. IN THE TIME I'VE BEEN TALKING ~~here~~ THERE HAVE BEEN SIX ROBBERIES AND NINE AGGRAVATED ASSAULTS SOMEWHERE IN AMERICA. THEY SAY IN WASHINGTON IT'S SO BAD EVEN THE PURSE-SNATCHERS AND MUGGERS ONLY WALK IN PAIRS.



EVERY OTHER AMERICAN NOW OWNS A GUN,
AND ADMITS IT. MORE ALARMING, ~~ONLY~~ LAST
AUGUST ONLY 27% OF THESE GUN-OWNERS SAID THEY
WOULD USE THEIR WEAPON AGAINST ANOTHER PERSON
IN THE EVENT OF A RIOT; NOW 67% SAY THEY'D SHOOT
UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES. [UNTOUCHED BY THE
POLLSTERS ARE THOSE WHO ARE KILLING JUST FOR
KICKS, OR OTHER MENTALLY SICK MOTIVES.]

OF COURSE THERE'S A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
ORDINARY CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES AND THE RIOTS AND
ARSON AND LOOTING THAT SWEEPED MORE THAN 125
CITIES IN ONE WEEK LAST APRIL. BUT THE
DISTINCTION IS NOT SO PRECISE AS ONE MIGHT THINK;
IT WAS ONE "ORDINARY" CRIME -- MURDER -- THAT
TRIGGERED THE "EXTRA-ORDINARY" RACIAL EXPLOSION
THAT FOLLOWED; AND THAT SPASM OF ANARCHY AND
DESTRUCTION WAS COMPOSED OF THOUSANDS OF
INSTANCES OF THE "ORDINARY" CRIMES OF BURGLARY,
THEFT, ARSON, ASSAULT AND MURDER.

WHAT ALL THESE FORMS OF LAWLESSNESS AND

VIOLENCE HAVE IN COMMON, WHETHER IN A DARK ALLEY OR IN FRONT OF NEWSREEL CAMERAS, IN BROAD DAY-LIGHT OR IN THE ACADEMIC HALLS OF IVY, IS THE BREAKDOWN OF THE MORAL VALUES AND THE BOUNDARIES AROUND BEHAVIOR BY WHICH SOCIETY JUSTIFIES AND PROTECTS ITSELF.

THUS THIS NATIONAL CONCERN OVER CRIME IS ALSO, AT THE CORE, A MORAL MATTER. IT HAS BEEN PROVED TIME AND AGAIN THAT CONGRESS CANNOT LEGISLATE MORALITY; ONLY IN AN IMPERFECT SENSE CAN IT REINFORCE AND DEFINE, AS WILSON SAID, THE AVERAGE CONSCIENCE OF THE NATION. TO SAY THAT GOVERNMENT IS BASED UPON THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED IS TO STOP TOO SHORT; IT IS NOT ENOUGH THAT A MAJORITY OF CITIZENS CONSENT TO A LAW, AND AGREE TO OBEY IT THEMSELVES. THAT SAME PREPONDERANCE OF THE PEOPLE MUST COMMIT THEMSELVES TO THE MORAL PRINCIPLE THAT ALL LAW MUST BE OBEYED.

THE TASK OF LEADERSHIP IS TO TRANSLATE




THE NATIONAL CONSCIENCE INTO EFFECTIVE LAWS AND TO ENFORCE THOSE LAWS FIRMLY BUT FAIRLY AGAINST OFFENDERS. THE TASK OF CITIZENS IS TO MAKE THEIR BROAD COMMITMENT TO THE RULE OF LAW CLEAR AND UNEQUIVOCAL AND TO USE THE READY ELECTORAL, LEGISLATIVE AND JUDICIAL MECHANISMS TO CHANGE SUCH SPECIFIC LAWS AS SEEM TO THEM UNWISE OR UNJUST. SO I SAY AGAIN TO THE CLASS OF 1968, GET INTO IT. WE ARE THE GOVERNMENT, YOU AND I. NOBODY IS GOING TO GET US OUT OF THIS MESS EXCEPT OURSELVES.

THE LAST GREAT NATIONAL CONCERN I SHALL MENTION TODAY IS INFLATION, AND YOU MAY WONDER HOW I AM GOING TO MAKE ECONOMICS A MORAL ISSUE. YOUR PROFESSORS AND PARENTS ARE PERHAPS MORE TROUBLED BY CONTINUOUSLY RISING PRICES, RISING TAXES, RISING INTEREST RATES THAN YOU HAVE BEEN. THE DOLLAR DRAIN HAS BEEN, FOR SOME OF YOU, A PROBLEM BEST SOLVED BY A COLLECT PHONE CALL TO DEAR OLD DAD. AND EVEN WHEN YOU'RE

HOLDING DOWN A JOB IN COLLEGE, IF I REMEMBER RIGHTLY, YOU DON'T HANG ONTO ANY DOLLAR BILL LONG ENOUGH TO REALIZE IT'S LOSING ITS VALUE.

BUT I ALSO SUSPECT A LOT OF YOU, IN CONSIDERING WHICH JOB LOOKS BEST, HAVE HAD OCCASION TO COMPARE THE FRINGE BENEFITS AND VARIOUS PENSION PLANS AND PROFIT-SHARING SYSTEMS WHICH TODAY'S EMPLOYERS USE TO ATTRACT THE ABLEST GRADUATES AND KEEP THEM ONCE THEY'RE ON THE PAYROLL. MAYBE YOU FIGURED YOUR CAREER WOULD BE BRIGHTER WITH ONE COMPANY RATHER THAN ANOTHER, EVEN THOUGH THE STARTING SALARY WAS A LITTLE LESS, BECAUSE OF THESE PROVISIONS FOR YOUR FUTURE SECURITY AND THAT OF YOUR FAMILY.

YOU WOULDN'T HAVE ANY DOUBT THAT IT WAS A MORAL ISSUE IF, AFTER GIVING THE BEST YEARS OF YOUR LIFE TO THAT EMPLOYER, YOU WERE TOLD WHEN YOU REACH THE AGE OF 50 OR 60 THAT THEY'D SPENT THE MONEY, YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS AS WELL, ON SOMETHING ELSE, SO YOU'D HAVE TO GET ALONG



ON HALF THE PENSION THEY'D PROMISED YOU IN 1968.

IS IT ANY DIFFERENT WHEN THE GOVERNMENT DOES THIS TO EVERYBODY? AND THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT GOVERNMENT HAS DONE, AND IS STILL DOING. IF AUNT JANE GAVE YOU A SAVINGS BOND -- WHAT DO THEY CALL THEM NOW, PEACE BONDS? -- WHEN YOU GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL, LET ME BREAK THE BAD NEWS -- INTEREST AND ALL, IT ISN'T WORTH AS MUCH TODAY AS WHAT DEAR OLD AUNT JANE PAID FOR IT IN REAL PURCHASING POWER. IF IT'S WRONG FOR UNCLE SAM TO TAKE A FEW YEARS OUT OF A CITIZEN'S LIFE AT THE START OF IT, AS SOME YOUNG PEOPLE CLAIM, THEN IT'S CERTAINLY IMMORAL FOR UNCLE SAM TO RUIN THE LAST FEW YEARS OF A CITIZEN'S LIFE BY STEALING HALF HIS SAVINGS. AND THAT'S WHAT INFLATION IS ALL ABOUT.

THE EXPERTS WARN WE'RE ON THE BRINK OF THE WORST WORLDWIDE FISCAL CRISIS SINCE 1931. I REMEMBER THAT AS WELL AS YOU REMEMBER YOUR FIRST

DAY IN COLLEGE -- AND I DON'T WANT IT TO HAPPEN AGAIN. BUT ~~IT~~ CAN HAPPEN IF WE AS A NATION FAIL TO PUT OUR FISCAL HOUSE IN ORDER, IF WE HESITATE TOO LONG TO TAKE THE NASTY ECONOMIC MEDICINE EVERY DOCTOR HAS PRESCRIBED. THIS COUNTRY IS RICH AND PRODUCTIVE BEYOND THE WILDEST IMAGININGS OF THE MEN WHO BUILT THIS COLLEGE. OUR ECONOMY CAN "AFFORD" ANYTHING WE NEED AND MUCH THAT WE REALLY DON'T NEED, BUT IT CANNOT GIVE US EVERYTHING WE WANT AND EVERYTHING WE MUST HAVE AND DO ALL THESE THINGS AT THE SAME TIME.

WE ^{*must*} ARE GOING TO HAVE TO SET PRIORITIES FOR OUR NATIONAL UNDERTAKINGS EXACTLY AS YOU HAVE HAD TO SET PRIORITIES FOR STUDYING FOR FINALS, WRITING TERM PAPERS, DATING AND DANCING AND DEMONSTRATING AND WHATEVER ELSE SENIORS DO THESE DAYS. A SOUND DOLLAR DOESN'T TURN EVERYBODY ON EMOTIONALLY LIKE THE DEADLY WAR IN VIETNAM AND THE CRIME RAGING IN OUR CITIES, BUT

IT TOO DEMANDS CITIZEN COMMITMENT AND ENLIGHTENED LEADERSHIP. IT TOO IS SOMETHING THE CLASS OF 1968 OUGHT TO GET INTO. WE ARE THE GOVERNMENT, YOU AND I. NOBODY IS GOING TO GET US OUT OF THIS MESS EXCEPT OURSELVES.

WHY DO I KEEP TELLING YOU TO GET COMMITTED, TO BECOME INVOLVED, NOT JUST TO GET WITH IT BUT TO GET INTO IT. I'VE VISITED 22 COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES ALREADY THIS YEAR AND I KNOW VERY WELL THAT'S JUST WHAT YOU INTEND TO DO. I AM PERFECTLY AWARE OF WHAT THIS GENERATION OF STUDENTS IS LIKE AND I'M NOT CONFUSED BY THE ANTICS OF AN IMMATURE HANDFUL WHO BANG THEIR HEADS ON THE FLOOR OR THREATEN TO HOLD THEIR BREATH IF THEY CAN'T HAVE THEIR WAY -- OR DON'T GET ENOUGH ATTENTION. I'M MORE WITH SEN. McCARTHY'S YOUNG VOLUNTEER WORKERS THAN I AM WITH HIS POLITICS, TO BE HONEST, BUT I'D RATHER YOU ALL WENT OUT AND WORKED TO ELECT DEMOCRATS THAN GO OUT TO STORM THE PENTAGON, DO

BLOODY BATTLE WITH THE POLICE, OR SHOUT DOWN THOSE WITH WHOM YOU DISSENT.

YOU ARE GRADUATING FROM COLLEGE IN A PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN YEAR, AND WHILE THIS IS HIDDEN BY A LOT OF FUN AND HOOPLA THERE ARE GRAVE AND VITAL CHOICES TO BE MADE NEXT NOVEMBER THAT WILL AFFECT YOUR LIVES VERY DIRECTLY. DON'T JUST GET WITH IT -- GET INTO IT.


I RECENTLY GOT A LOOK AT A VERY EXTENSIVE SURVEY MADE BY THE GALLUP POLL FOR THE AMERICAN HERITAGE FOUNDATION ON THE ATTITUDES AND POLITICAL OPINIONS OF YOUNG AMERICANS AGED 21 THROUGH 29. MUCH OF IT HASN'T BEEN PUBLISHED, AND IT'S AS FULL OF SURPRISES AND CONTRADICTIONS AS YOUTH ITSELF.

FIRST, YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE TO THINK OF THEMSELVES AS "INDEPENDENTS" IN POLITICS -- THIS CATEGORY OUTNUMBERS BOTH REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS AND AMONG COLLEGE GRADUATES IT AMOUNTS TO 44 PER CENT. YOUNG MEN ARE MORE INDEPENDENT

THAN YOUNG WOMEN -- I'M SPEAKING STRICTLY OF POLITICS -- AND, CURIOUSLY, THOSE TRADITIONAL BASTIONS OF DEMOCRATIC AND REPUBLICAN STRENGTH, THE SOUTH AND MIDWEST, TURN OUT THE MOST INDEPENDENT 20-YEAR-OLDS.

IN THIS AGE GROUP TWO-THIRDS EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN POLITICS, AND THIS ROSE TO 80 PERCENT ON THE COLLEGE CAMPUSES. FORTH-ONE PERCENT SAID THEY'D BE WILLING TO VOLUNTEER FOR CAMPAIGN WORK AND 42 PERCENT WOULD KICK IN \$5 FOR THEIR FAVORITE CANDIDATE OR PARTY -- A LOT BETTER ON BOTH COUNTS THAN THEIR AFFLUENT AND COMPLACENT ELDERS.

BUT THEN WHEN IT COMES TO THE SIMPLEST TEST OF POLITICAL COMMITMENT -- VOTING IN A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION -- YOU DON'T COME OFF SO WELL. TOO OFTEN, "INDEPENDENT" REALLY MEANS "INDIFFERENT." WHEN A RECORD 65 PERCENT OF THE ELIGIBLE ELECTORATE VOTED IN THE CLIFFHANGER KENNEDY-NIXON CONTEST OF 1960, ONLY 54 PERCENT




OF THOSE IN THEIR TWENTIES TURNED OUT. IN '64 THE RECORD WAS SLIGHTLY WORSE.

THIS YEAR, ALTHOUGH IT'S EARLY IN THE GAME, ONLY 48 PERCENT OF THOSE IN THE 21 TO 29 BRACKET ARE REGISTERED TO VOTE IN THE PRECINCT WHERE THEY LIVE. FOR ALL THEIR EXPRESSED INTEREST, FOR ALL THEIR INVOLVEMENT WITH EXCITING CAUSES AND FOR ALL THEIR IDEALS, ONLY ABOUT 13 MILLION YOUNG AMERICANS ARE ACTUALLY EXPECTED TO CAST THEIR BALLOTS THIS YEAR.

SURE, YOU GET BUSY, DOING YOUR JOB, STARTING A HOME, MOVING AROUND, BUT THAT'S WHY I KEEP HARPING ON MY THEME: GET INTO IT, AND STAY IN.

IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE WAY IT IS, DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. MAYBE YOU DON'T WANT TO MAKE PUBLIC SERVICE YOUR CAREER, OR EVER RUN FOR ELECTIVE OFFICE. BUT THERE ARE A MILLION WAYS EACH OF YOU CAN UPGRADE THE STANDARDS OF POLITICS AND THE QUALITY OF GOVERNMENT AT EVERY



LEVEL. YOU CAN'T ALL BE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, BUT PROBABLY ALL OF YOU WHO WANT TO BADLY ENOUGH TO WORK AT IT COULD BE PRESIDENT OF A SCHOOL BOARD, OR CHAIRMAN OF A COUNTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE. AND REMEMBER, IF YOU DON'T YOU CAN BE SURE SOME IDIOT WILL GET THE JOB AND DO EVERYTHING WRONG. NOBODY IS GOING TO GET US OUT OF THIS MESS EXCEPT OURSELVES. WE ARE THE GOVERNMENT, YOU AND I.

ONE FINAL WORD AS ONE WHO HAS SOME EXPERIENCE WITH MINORITY STATUS. I HOPE MINE IS TEMPORARY, BUT YOURS IS PERMANENT. YOU ARE ABOUT TO JOIN THE OLDEST MINORITY IN THE WORLD -- THOSE WHO HAVE THE BRAINS AND THE DISCIPLINES OF EDUCATION THAT ENABLE THEM TO GIVE CIVILIZATION A LITTLE BIT MORE THAN THEY TAKE FROM IT.

THE EDUCATIONAL EXPLOSION IN THIS COUNTRY HAS BEEN FAR MORE SIGNIFICANT THAN ANY NUCLEAR BLAST. IN 1900 ALL THE INSTITUTIONS OF

HIGHER LEARNING IN AMERICA AWARDED 27,410 DEGREES, ONLY 5,237 TO WOMEN. WHEN I RECEIVED MY DIPLOMA AT ANN ARBOR, THE COMBINED CLASS OF 1935 WAS NEARLY FIVE TIMES THAT LARGE, TWO-FIFTHS OF THEM WOMEN. YOU ARE AMONG AN ESTIMATED 673,000 SENIORS GRADUATING THIS SPRING, ANOTHER FOURFOLD INCREASE. THERE STILL AREN'T QUITE ENOUGH GIRLS TO GO AROUND -- I THINK THEY SEE TO THAT.

BUT WE BACHELORS OF ARTS AND ALL LIVING AMERICANS WHO HAVE EARNED A COLLEGE DEGREE STILL AMOUNT TO ONLY ABOUT 11 PERCENT OF THE ADULT POPULATION. WE ARE STILL IN THE MINORITY AND ARE LIKELY TO REMAIN THERE ALL OUR DAYS. SO LET'S TAKE AS OUR MOTTO "BUILD, MAN, BUILD!" INSTEAD OF "BURN, BABY, BURN."

TRY

LET'S BUILD ON THE SOLID TRIAD OF LAW, LEARNING AND LIBERTY -- NOT FOR OUR ANCESTORS' SALES, BUT FOR OUR DESCENDENTS. LET'S NOT QUENCH THE REBEL AND THE DISSENTER IN US, BECAUSE



OUR FATHERS WERE REBELS AND DISSENTERS AND SO
WILL OUR CHILDREN BE. BUT LET'S BUILD INSTEAD
OF BURN, WORK INSTEAD OF WRECK AND HELP INSTEAD
OF HATE.

JOHN STEINBECK IN "THE GRAPES OF WRATH"
WROTE THAT, ALONE IN THE UNIVERSE, "MAN GROWS
BEYOND HIS WORK, WALKS UP THE STAIRS OF HIS
CONCEPTS, EMERGES AHEAD OF HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS."

YOU HAVE FINISHED THE WORK OF THE
CLASSROOM, YOU HAVE SORTED OUT YOUR CONCEPTS,
AND NOW COMES THE TIME FOR ACCOMPLISHMENT.

COME OUT AHEAD, CLASS OF 1968, AND GOD BE
WITH YOU.

- END -

