

## blame

(CONTINUED) youth for drug involvement or minimizes the possibility of permanent damage to their physical and mental health. But perhaps it helps explain why drug-taking is this generation's highball.

The organization known as Students for a Democratic Society and other campus troublemakers comprise only a small segment of the five to six million students enrolled in U.S. colleges. But the minority makes a lot of noise and gets most of the attention.

After a handful of student and faculty activists disrupted a tranquil New England campus recently, one S.D.S. coed was elated when told her picture was in the newspaper. Her joy turned to dismay when she learned it was her hometown paper.

Hypocrisy? Almost a week after the same demonstration, which made headlines in many of the country's newspapers, approximately 1,500 students held another demonstration on the same campus. They stood in freezing weather to proclaim their support of the administration. Not one word about that appeared outside of the university area.

Adolescents with surging sexual drives made The Pill their own when it came along. It meant gratification of their biological urges without the

need for hasty marriages or nasty abortions. They have experimented with cohabitation and have learned a thing or two about the opposite sex that may help them avoid the kind of unsuccessful marriage some of their parents experienced.

If youthful morals are to be questioned, then so must adult technology. What else were our children to think The Pill was for but to use?

Today's youth are better educated, more widely exposed, and in closer contact with the world than their parents. They have formed judgments about bureaucracy and our marvelous new technology that are not always favorable. They do not understand why adults, who share their distaste at being reduced to a serial number on an IBM card, pander to, and support what they consider an odious power structure.

With luck, this new young breed will prove strong enough to keep the currently underprivileged from copping out and brave enough to insist that men join hands in the effort to adapt to this world.

Don't sell our youth short. They're a gutsy bunch, with tender hearts. In their search for individualism and independence, they even show signs of becoming this country's largest crop of enlightened conservatives. Having already cut through a maze of society's red tape and petty deceptions, they may well settle down to helping their fellow men build the better world we've been hearing about for so long.

## THE GENERATION GAP\*

By Judith Viorst

*Our sons are growing up  
And any day now  
They'll be sniffing glue,  
Smoking pot,  
Slipping LSD into their cream of wheat,  
And never trusting anyone over thirty,  
Even parents  
Who once sang Foggy Foggy Dew  
In youth hostels  
And Freshets  
In trench coats on the Fire Island ferry.*

*Our sons are growing up  
And any day now  
They'll be burning draft cards,  
Doubting the Warren Commission,  
Saying God is dead,  
And never trusting anyone over thirty,  
Even parents*

*Who once deplored prejudice  
In petitions,  
And capital punishment  
In unpublished letters to the Times.*

*Our sons are growing up  
And any day now  
They'll be doing their own thing,  
Telling it like it is,  
Denouncing the military-industrial complex,  
And never trusting anyone over thirty,  
Even parents  
Who tried agitation  
Before they did,  
And alienation  
Before they did,  
And once never trusted anyone  
Over thirty.*

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# Let's put the blame where it belongs

A defense of today's youth — and a few harsh words for their parents

What's wrong with youth today? Nothing that can't be blamed on their parents and teachers.

Most young people are struggling admirably to survive as individuals in the modern bureaucratic Sodom that their elders designed but can't control. Considering all the adult crudity and opportunism, the miracle is not that today's young people are contemptuous of adults but that they are able to zero in on the real needs of the very society that has smothered them with sensualism and material possessions since birth.

This defense is of the majority of today's youth, who passionately want better things for everyone, especially for children and the poor — and a little for themselves. Who, after all, is more deserving of defense?

Campus demonstrations, obscenity, the breakdown of law and order, immorality, disrespect for authority, and wanton destruction are all issues that horrify today's adults. But today's youth has its own list of complaints:

- The war in Vietnam.
- Racial and class discrimination.
- Hypocrisy among our leaders.
- The quality of education available.

Our children are confused and deeply troubled. They see man's relations with men, children and nations dominated by double standards and ruthless bids for power. They see ethnic group pitted against ethnic group, educator against parent.

The double standard is a form of hypocrisy so widespread that most adults are scarcely aware of it even when they are indulging in it personally. Yet it has been obvious to most young people since they were toddlers. Children learn early that rules are to be broken — especially if it suits a parent's convenience — just as they learn that adults will lie to avoid unpleasant obligations or to defend their own actions.

Hardly a child was ever bundled off to Sunday school who wasn't fascinated by the wonders of religion. If one or both parents did not betray a lack of faith, thus spoiling the child's experience, some

well-meaning Sunday school teacher — with no real knowledge of the magnitude of his or her subject — did. Little thought or preparation went into the child's need to understand, his constant need for inspiration.

How were the children supposed to reconcile the verses they memorized in Sunday school (that brought smiling approval from their parents) with the ruthlessness of business, the national immorality in foreign affairs, the day-to-day meanness that touched their lives?

When parents mortgaged their homes beyond all reason, took out bank loans unnecessarily and persisted in the use of overdue charge accounts all over town, they did their children no favor. How could teenagers, watching their parents drive themselves in this way, aspire to such an end for themselves? With life goals seemingly reduced to the pursuit of material wealth — and youth already in control of big chunks of that — what incentive was there to grow up?

Consider, too, how many children had their world reel dangerously while watching their parents entertain. Seeing parents grow tipsy, flirt with each other's mates, make biting remarks about their spouses, and tell off-color jokes — none of this helped make the good-night kiss sweet or the next day's discipline palatable.

Drug involvement by modern youth is frightening, but is it entirely the fault of youth? On major college campuses, faculty members and spiritual leaders have been known to introduce students to the use of drugs. And when confronted with the choice of reporting their own children to authorities for illegal drug use or closing their eyes, most parents have shut their eyes because it might jeopardize their status or be an admission of personal failure.

None of this excuses (TURN PAGE)

KAY HURLEY, a former newspaperwoman, is a free-lance writer and a mother who has shared the joys and heartaches of today's youth — her own and others — on college campuses across the country. From these experiences, she has drawn some strong conclusions.

## Last Laugh BY KAUFMAN

