

**GRADE 12 HISTORY****CIVIL SOCIETY PROTEST****IF. THE STUDENT MOVEMENT**

The following is taken directly from <http://www.lessonsite.com/ArchivePages/HistoryOfTheWorld/Lesson31/Protests60s.htm> with a couple of edits by myself.

**PROTEST MOVEMENTS**

Supporters of these movements questioned traditional practices about how people were treated.

Why did black and white children attend separate schools?

Why were women prevented from holding certain jobs?

Why could a person be drafted at 18 but not able to vote until 21?

This questioning inspired people to begin organizing movements to fight against injustice and for equal rights for all people.

In addition, they did not use traditional methods of political activity. Instead of voting for a political candidate and then hoping that the elected official would make good policies, these protesters believed in a more direct democracy. They took direct action and went straight to the White House!

They used public marches, picketing, sit-ins, rallies, petition drives, and teach-ins—to win converts to their causes and to change public policies at the local, state, and federal levels. They contributed their time, energy, and passion with the hope of making a better, more just society for all.

**REASONS FOR CHANGE & PROTESTS****CONTRADICTIONS AT HOME**

America's role as a global power provided people who were advocating social change with a powerful argument. Activists asked this: How can the United States tell African or Asian countries to reject Soviet-style Communism and emulate the American way of life, when racism and inequality are so obviously a part of that way of life? Americans, they said, need to work toward democracy and equality for all citizens if they want to win the Cold War. They argued that America's global leadership made American social problems not simply domestic problems but international ones as well.

**UNEQUAL ECONOMIC PROSPERITY**

Another factor contributing to the growth of social activism in the 1960s was increased affluence. Incomes increased in the United States after World War II, allowing more Americans to enter the middle class. Similarly, between 1945 and 1960 the gross national product of the United States had increased almost 250 percent. As a result, many Americans were better off financially than they had ever been. BUT not

everyone shared in the new national prosperity, and those who did not began to look for the reasons why.

Discrimination often played a major role in their impoverishment. With inequality so clearly a part of American society, protestors began to organize and win national attention.

### **BABY BOOMERS**

Young people played an important role in the movements for social change during the 1960s. Numbers alone made them important; more than 76 million babies were born during the post-World War II "baby boom." In addition, these young people spent more years in school and were more affluent than previous generations. By the mid-1960s, nearly 3 out of 4 students finished high school, and about half of those students went on to college. As a result, by the 1960s, young people stayed with their peers for at least 12 years. College campuses in particular teemed with young people who had the freedom to question the moral and spiritual health of the nation. These young men and women would become a vital component of the social change movements of the 1960s era.

### **THE CHANGING ROLE OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

By the 1960s, many Americans had come to believe that the federal government had the responsibility to protect them from unfair and unjust social forces. People began to pressure all branches of the federal government—the courts, Congress, and the president—to provide remedies to the injustices that plagued the nation.

### **THE NEW LEFT**

The New Left was a broad political movement mainly in the 1960s and 1970s consisting of activists in the Western world who campaigned for a broad range of social issues such as civil and political rights, feminism, gay rights, abortion rights, gender roles and drug policy reforms.

## **THE STUDENT MOVEMENT**

The Student Movement was the next major social change movement to develop in the 1960s. Many of its early organizers had first become politically active in the early 1960s working alongside blacks in Civil Rights protests. Composed mainly of white college students, the student movement worked primarily to fight racism and poverty, increase student rights, and to end the Vietnam War.

At the core of the student movement was a belief in participatory democracy, or the idea that all Americans, not just a small elite, should decide the major economic, political, and social questions that shaped the nation. In a participatory democracy, citizens would join together and work directly to achieve change at the local level. The students hoped to give power to the people so that they could fight for their own rights and for political and economic changes.

This democratic, activist faith led many student activists to reject government and school administration policies. Students sat-in to protest restrictions on students' rights to free speech and held rallies against the in loco parentis rules that allowed school

officials to act like parents in setting curfews and dorm rules. They demanded that faculty and administrators stop all research and activities that contributed to the Vietnam War.

### **STUDENTS FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY**

In 1960 a small group of young people formed Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) at Ann Arbor University in Michigan City. However, it was really launched, or gained prominence, when the Port Huron Statement was publicized

By 1968 some 100,000 young people around the nation had joined the SDS. But by 1974 it faded and was over taken by other university organizations.

### **THE PORT HURON STATEMENT**

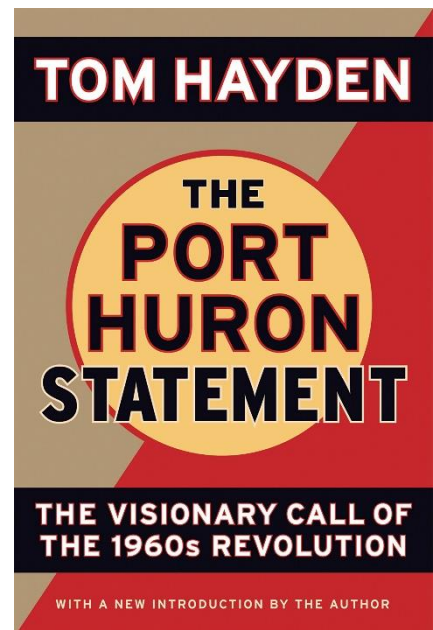
The Port Huron Statement is a 1962 political manifesto of the American student activist movement Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). The statement was mostly written by 21 year old Tom Hayden with contributions from other members.

The following was directly taken from <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/the-port-huron-statement-at-fifty> written by Michael Kazin with edits by me.

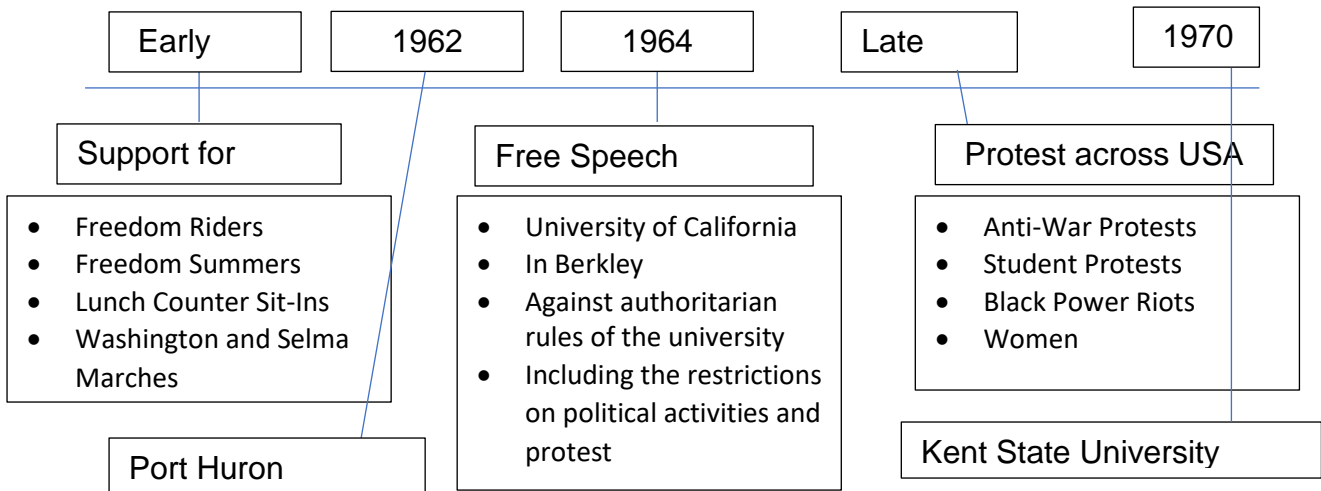
The Port Huron Statement of Students for a Democratic Society, is the most ambitious, the most specific, and the most eloquent manifesto in the history of the American Left. It is also, at just over 25,000 words, undoubtedly the longest one. But it had to be lengthy to accomplish its aim—to propose an entire “agenda for a generation.” It had intelligent and provocative things to say on: moral values, American politics, the U.S. economy, the nation’s intellectual and academic life, the labour movement, the cold war, the nuclear arms race, the anticolonial revolution, and a vivid description of why the black freedom movement was so pivotal to the birth of a new Left. All this was informed by a sensibility attuned to what one might call the “national psychology.” And that’s just a summary of the first half of the statement.

The Huron Statement managed to fuse two types of ideological advocacy that are often viewed as antagonists: first, the romantic desire for achieving an authentic self through crusading for individual rights and, second, the yearning for a democratic socialist order that would favour the collective good over freedom of the self.....

As the memorable coda of the Port Huron Statement put it, “If we appear to seek the unattainable . . . then let it be known that we do so to avoid the unimaginable.”



### TIMELINE OF STUDENT PROTEST



### THE FREE SPEECH MOVEMENT

The SDS gained strength from the Free Speech Movement that occurred at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1964. Berkeley students protested after university officials banned political leafleting on campus. They complained that they were treated like numbers, not people, at the overcrowded Berkeley campus. Other students around the country formed similar protest organizations, demanding an end to restrictive campus rules that failed to treat them like responsible individuals.



The following is taken directly from <https://calisphere.org/exhibitions/43/the-free-speech-movement/> with some editing by me

The Free Speech Movement (FSM) was a college campus phenomenon inspired first by the struggle for civil rights and later fuelled by opposition to the Vietnam War.

The Free Speech Movement began in 1964, when students at the University of California, Berkeley protested a ban on on-campus political activities. The protest was led by several students, who also demanded their right to free speech and academic freedom.

Many images in this group make it clear that the centre of the activity on the UC Berkeley campus was in Sproul Plaza. On the 1<sup>st</sup> October 1964, in defiance of the ban on on-campus political activities, graduate student Jack Weinberg set up a table with political information and was arrested. But a group of approximately 3,000 students surrounded the police car in which he was held, preventing it from moving for 36 hours.



**Mario Savio** (December 8, 1942 – November 6, 1996) was an American activist and a key member in the Berkeley Free Speech Movement. He is most famous for his passionate speeches, especially the "put your bodies upon the gears" address given at Sproul Hall, University of California, Berkeley on December 2, 1964.



Mario Savio interview Steven Marcus, photographer Dec. 7, 1964  
<https://calisphere.org/institution/4/collections/>

## STUDENT PROTEST METHODS

- \* Teach – Ins: organized at more than 100 universities where many people attended anti-war lectures, rallies, seminars, movies and sessions of folk singing. The first one was at the University of Michigan in March 1959, attended by over 2 500 people.
- \* Tantrum - Tactics: in which students smashed windows and created general disorder on college campuses.
- \* Child – Stealing: meant that protesters converted the children of influential people in government and society to their way of thinking. They influenced the children to

put pressure on their parents. Many children embarrassed parents who had influential government jobs supporting the war effort.

\* Pre-planned Direct Action; included organized draft resistance and sieges of important places. When conscription was introduced, it affected all healthy young American men. Students dodged the draft by emigrating to Canada, burnt their draft cards and deserted.

\* Organized Demonstrations – these received wide media coverage. Protestors demonstrated on campus and in mass marches. One of the largest was in Washington DC, held on the 17<sup>th</sup> March 1965, organized by SDS.

\* Revolts against university administration - The most important revolts took place at the University of California after 1964. At one, a 36 hour sit-in attracted 30 000 people.

Student protest grew as time developed and can be looked at in three phases:

1. 1964 – 1965: the idealistic phase: first revolts against draft.
2. 1966 – 1968: more practical phase: almost 300 demonstrations during this time.
3. 1969 – 1972: the legitimate phase: actually quite active (violent) as pressure was put on government.

Often, when police were called out on the directions of the government, these student protest marches would turn ugly and resulted in tragic deaths, injuries and the closure of universities until order had been retained.

## **STUDENT EXTREMISTS**

Some student activists were frustrated by the escalating Vietnam War, widespread poverty amidst great wealth, and by continuing racial inequality; they became more extreme. They rejected the traditional American belief in private enterprise and argued that the economy should be organized by the government to guarantee every American a decent standard of living. Angered by most Americans' resistance to ending the Vietnam War and to the relatively slow pace of social change, some even lost their faith in democracy. The most radical students believed that Communist leaders, such as Cuba's Fidel Castro and China's Mao Zedong, offered better visions for bringing justice and equality to people. Some of the most extreme activists argued that only violent protests would lead to real social change. The Weathermen, a revolutionary group formed in 1969, advocated an armed struggle to overthrow the U.S. government. They were responsible for a number of bombings during the late 1960s and 1970s.

# WHEN THE YOUTH IS THE ENEMY

**May 10 1970**  
Nixon besieged in angriest US demo

**How the *Sunday Times* covered it**

Washington, Saturday — President Nixon's desperate bid to appease his critics was an inadequate response to the mood of despair and frustration infecting the young as America's angriest peace march began yesterday.

Nearly 6,000 Federal troops were on call at nearby bases to reinforce police and Peace Movement marshals if the crowd, which might swell to 100,000 before nightfall, got out of hand.

As Mr. Nixon's conciliatory words were broadcast to 10,000 youngsters at a pre-demonstration rock rally near the White House, a television set on the stage bearing his image was smashed to pieces by wild-eyed activists.

A girl, speaking for many, screamed: "Nixon is the biggest incentive to riot in the whole nation." In the coast-to-coast televised press conference — his first since January — the President said he shared the peace motives of his critics but would not be swayed from his course in Indo-China by street demonstrations.

The march was led by Dr. Benjamin Spock, actress Jane Fonda — who claims to have been "radicalised" — and Black Panther

leader David Hilliard. Although Washington is 70 percent black, relatively few Negro faces are in the crowds.

The President remained in the White House as the chanting, speech-making and singing of John Lennon's "All we are saying is give peace a chance" swelled at the gates of America's most hallowed building.

The President also failed to placate his Congressional critics in his TV appearance. Afterwards, Congressman George Brown, California Democrat, reacted with these bitter words: "Richard Nixon was wrong in saying the first American troops will leave Cambodia next week. The first contingent has already left — in funeral caskets."

Today's event caps a week of unprecedented turmoil and violence on America's campuses. The unrest was triggered by Mr. Nixon's invasion of Cambodia, the brief resumption of bombing over North Vietnam — and the "Kent massacre" on Monday in which four students were shot dead by guardsmen.

The Pentagon says 5,600 Federal troops are on call in the Washington area for use at the request of local authorities. The huge peace rally is the climax of nine days of crisis. In this short span all this has happened:

A "neutral" foreign country has been invaded by American troops; Mr. Nixon has lost his celebrated "cool"; the Peace Movement has



CAMPUS CARNAGE: Mary Ann Vecchio screams over the body of fellow Kent State University student Jeffrey Miller

Picture: JOHN FLO, GALLO IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES

been given its first martyrs. Mr. Nixon's Cabinet has been split; the stock market has plunged downward; and America has experienced its first general student strike.

On Friday, May 1, the war-weary country woke up to find that President Nixon had opened two new fronts: one in Cambodia, to root out Red sanctuaries; the other on the college campuses, whose activists he called "bums" and anarchists.

**THE WAR AGAINST THE VIETNAM WAR**

In April 1970, US President Richard Nixon announced that he was sending US forces into Cambodia. The announcement, coupled with growing disenchantment with the Vietnam War, sparked protests on campuses across the US. Casualties in the Vietnam War — already five years old and with another five years to run before the US's ignominious defeat — were mounting. On May 4, National Guardsmen shot and killed four students at Kent State University. Days later, 100,000 incensed protesters gathered in Washington DC to tell the president what they thought of him and his war