# United States History

**Voices of Black Protest**

**SOURCE A: Interview with Huey Newton, founder of the Black Panthers (1973)**

PLAYBOY: Do you think the *only* way to achieve your revolutionary goals is through armed violence?

NEWTON: Yes, and I think that ultimately it will be through armed violence, because the American ruling circle will not give up without a bitter struggle. But America will not be changed until the world is changed. To say that change will come here just through the ballot box would be a fantasy. We’re running for city council offices today. But if you ask if we would be prepared to fight with armed force when the time is right, I would say yes, when the occasion presents itself—and I think it will come, at some point in the future. . . .

PLAYBOY: So you would feel no hesitation about using violence as a tool, even to the point of killing people, provided it advanced your movement or your principles?

NEWTON: That’s right.

PLAYBOY: And you say that without reservation?

NEWTON: The death of any man diminishes me, but sometimes we may have to be diminished before we can reconstruct.

PLAYBOY: That raises our last question: If you’re ready to kill for the cause, you must also be ready to die for it. Are you?

NEWTON: I will fight until I die, however that may come. But whether I’m around or not to see it happen, I know we will eventually succeed, not just in America but all over the world, in our struggle for the liberation of all oppressed peoples.

SOURCE B: Nikki Giovanni, “Adulthood,” 1968

Adulthood

(For Claudia)

i usta wonder who i’d be

when i was a little girl in indianapolis

sitting on doctors porches with post-dawn pre-debs

(wondering would my aunt drag me to church sunday)

i was meaningless

and i wondered if life

would give me a chance to mean

i found a new life in the withdrawal from all things

not like my image

when i was a teen-ager i usta sit

on front steps conversing

the gym teacher’s son with embryonic eyes

about the essential essence of the universe

(and other bullshit stuff)

recognizing the basic powerlessness of me

but then i went to college where i learned

that just because everything i was was unreal

i could be real and not just real through withdrawal

into emotional crosshairs or colored bourgeois

intellectual pretensions

but from involvement with things approaching reality

i could possibly have a life

so catatonic emotions and time wasting sex games

were replaced with functioning commitments to logic

and

necessity and the gray area was slowly darkened into

a Black thing

for a while progress was being made along with a certain

degree

of happiness cause i wrote a book and found a love

and organized a theatre and even gave some lectures on

Black history

and began to believe all good people could get

together and win without bloodshed

then

hammarskjöld was killed

and lumumba was killed

and diem was killed

and kennedy was killed

and malcolm was killed

and evers was killed

and schwerner, chaney and goodman were killed

and liuzzo was killed

and stokely fled the country

and le roi was arrested

and rap was arrested

and pollard, thompson and cooper were killed

and king was killed

and kennedy was killed

and i sometimes wonder why i didn’t become a

debutante

sitting on porches, going to church all the time,

wondering

is my eye make-up on straight

or a withdrawn discoursing on the stars and moon

instead of a for real Black person who must now feel

and inflict

pain

**Child of Amerika, Jerry Rubin (1970)**

I am a child of

Amerika.

If I’m ever sent to

Death Row for my revolutionary

“crimes,” I’ll

order as my last meal: a

hamburger, french fries

and a Coke.

I dig big cities.

I love to read the

sports pages and gossip

columns, listen to the radio

and watch color TV.

I dig department

stores, huge supermarkets

and airports. I feel

secure (though not necessarily

hungry) when I

see Howard Johnson’s

on the expressway.

I groove on Hollywood

movies—even bad

ones.

I speak only one language—

English.

I love rock ‘n’ roll.

I collected baseball

players’ cards when I was a kid and wanted to play second base

for the Cincinnati Reds, my home team.

I got a car when I was sixteen after flunking my first driver’s

test and crying for a week waiting to take it a second time.

I went to the kind of high school where you had to pass a test

to get *in*.

I graduated in the bottom half of the class.
My classmates voted me the “busiest” senior in the school.

I had short, short, short hair.

I dug *Catcher in the Rye*.

I didn’t have pimples.

I became an ace young reporter for the Cincinnati *Post and*

*Times-Star*. “*Son*,” the managing editor said to me, “*someday you’re*

*going to be a helluva reporter, maybe the greatest reporter this city’s ever*

*seen*.”

I loved Adlai Stevenson.

My father drove a truck delivering bread and later became an

organizer in the Bakery Drivers’ Union. He dug Jimmy Hoffa (so

do I). He died of heart failure at fifty-two.

My mother had a college degree and played the piano. She

died of cancer at the age of fifty-one.

I took care of my brother, Gil, from the time he was thirteen.

I dodged the draft.

I went to Oberlin College for a year, graduated from the

University of Cincinnati, spent 1 1/2 years in Israel and started

graduate school at Berkeley.

*I dropped out*.

I dropped out of the White Race and the Amerikan nation.

I dig being free.

I like getting high.

I don’t own a suit or tie.

I live for the revolution.

I’m a yippie!

I am an orphan of Amerika.

Malcom X, “To Mississippi Youth,” 1964

I myself would go for nonviolence if it was consistent, if everybody was going to be nonviolent all the time. I’d say, okay, let’s get with it, we’ll all be nonviolent. But I don’t go along with any kind of nonviolence unless everybody’s going to be nonviolent. If they make the Ku Klux Klan nonviolent, I’ll be nonviolent. If they make the White Citizens Council nonviolent, I’ll be nonviolent. But as long as you’ve got somebody else not being nonviolent,

I don’t want anybody coming to me talking any nonviolent talk. . . .

But we do not go along with anybody telling us to help nonviolently. We think that if the government says that

Negroes have a right to vote, and then some Negroes come out to vote, and some kind of Ku Klux Klan is going to put them in the river, and the government doesn’t do anything about it, it’s time for us to organize and band together and equip ourselves and qualify ourselves to protect ourselves. And once you can protect yourself, you don’t have to worry about being hurt. . . .