

American women may not know the precise reasons for the contagious violence and brutality of our times, where it comes from, what makes it flourish. But they do know some of the sources from which their children are drinking in this violence, and they know they have to turn it off before the poison gets beyond reach.

American women will turn it off because they are weary of the bomb-burst, the gunshot, the fisted hand. They have had enough of violence late and soon, and of the people and groups who use it for their own ends. They are sick with the collective havoc of the mindless crowd, and the individual savagery of those whose discontent has festered into rash destruction.

The bullet that killed Robert F. Kennedy has wounded us all. John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King—each of these murders set off acute phases of our anxiety. There is a pervasive sense of fear, the feeling we are in the grip of terrible forces we cannot even name—within the borders of our country, within the setting of the entire world.

The sickness has been here a long time. It simmers and flares in the ghettos where people have felt its curse for years and would now pay it back in kind. It mows down our men—and theirs—in Vietnam. It erupts on the campuses of the nation, where some of our young men and women have turned against their own proclaimed abhorrence of violence and have disfigured not just their universities but their own lives. It stalks our cities, our parks and subways, and destroys the green and gentle calm of the countryside.

It rams its way into our homes, on the television screen that brings instant brutality and savagery, instructing children in the ease and casualness with which life can be humiliated, tormented, twisted. The need to respect the fragility and preciousness of life is blotted out by the thousands of good-man-bad-man deaths that make up the daily television-tube feeding of children.

It weakens those precious arts of gentleness, of compassion, of moderation, of love that women alone can give to their families and the world.

McCall's believes that the violence in our land is not a shameful national flaw of character that must be regarded as inevitable.

Violence is not the accidental product of a few crazed assassins that can be cured by adding some Secret Service men. Nor is it simply a lapse in what is known as "law and order" that can be corrected just by a massive crackdown on youth or restless minorities.

The attack on violence must be basic. It must be knowledgeable. It must be thorough.

McCall's makes no rigid distinction between the breakdown of law and order in the nation and the breakdown of law and order in the world. Violence is airborne. Violence among nations cannot be separated from the violence within nations.

In a very real sense, Robert F. Kennedy paid with his life for the failure of the world's nations to develop an effective mechanism of world law. If the United Nations had been given the workable authority to resolve the crisis in the Middle East, Robert Kennedy might be alive today.

The Middle East is not the only area in the world on which an American President or a Presidential aspirant must take a position. Nor is the Middle East the only area in which passions are attached to triggers.

American women can see to it that the first order of business for American policy makers is to move mightily inside the United Nations in the effort to equip it with the responsible authority to substitute law for force in the affairs of nations.

Attacking the basic causes of violence in the world is inseparable from the need to eradicate it at home. Here, within the United States, there is much that women can do if only they are willing to use the power that is clearly theirs.

Approximately fifteen million women read McCall's magazine. We believe that these women, by acting together and acting promptly, can play a pivotal role in combating violence where it occurs.

Here is a five-point program that can make a difference if enough women get behind it:

(1) *Guns.*—The present gun-control legislation, existing or proposed, must be drastically strengthened. Millions of letters to Representatives could do it. Sit down today and write informed letters to your Congressmen and two Senators. If you don't know who they are, write to us and we'll send you their names. Tell them it makes no sense to have a gun readily available, as Robert Kennedy pointed out, to every child, every insane person, every criminal who wants one.