Collective Action of the American State, Collective Action of the American Masses

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COLLECTIVE ACTION OF THE AMERICAN STATE,
COLLECTIVE ACTION OF THE AMERICAN MASSES

by

Brett Robert Wilcox
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A thesis submitted to the Department of Education and Human Development of the State University of New York College at Brockport in partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Education
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### TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page .................................................................................. 1

Signature Page ........................................................................... 2

Table of Contents ........................................................................ 3

Whose Side Are You On? : Mob Violence and Collective Action through the Eyes of Revolutionary America ............... 4


Applications of New Knowledge: Student-Centered Resources Focusing on Collective Action in America History ....... 89

Bibliography ............................................................................. 267
Whose Side Are You on? : Mob Violence and Collective Action through the Eyes of Revolutionary America

Thesis Sequence- Part I

Brett Wilcox

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Although violence was not the cause of the American Revolution, two historical factors contributed to America's violent mode of opposing British policies in the 1760s and 1770s: one was the colonial tradition of insurgency that reached back into the seventeenth century, and the other was the habitual use of the riot as a purposive weapon of protest and dissent in both Great Britain and America during the preceding two centuries. Each of the original thirteen states experienced large-scale social violence between 1750 and 1800. Richard Maxwell Brown proposes that the Revolution made a contribution to the "demonic side" of our national history for its origin was violent and the concept of popular sovereignty lent itself frequently to majoritarian tyranny.
Apparently, violence reared its ugly head more frequently during the Revolutionary era than it does today (although this obviously is subject to debate). Cities such as Philadelphia, Baltimore, and especially New York and Boston turned to violence when the opportunity presented itself. People took to the streets, tore down offices, and defaced property. Yet amid all of this anarchistic behavior, riots were infrequently of the bloody sort.

Popular uprisings and crowd action were significant contributing factors in colonial America towards the coming of the Revolution. It has been argued by a number of historians that early Americans lived in a world filled with chaos and disorder. Prior to the Revolution, New England Puritans used violent methods against Quakers and in dealing with witchcraft (such as Salem in 1692). Drinking men in taverns settled their differences with fists and knives. People in crowds threatened violence and sometimes turned to it to resolve problems that no one of them alone could handle. These are just a few examples that represent the significance of crowd action during early American times of conflict and it is quite possible that such accepted occurrences of collective action and mob violence in colonial era society may have contributed to our nation's character to this day.

Not all eighteenth century mobs simply defied the law; some used extralegal means to implement official demands to enforce laws not otherwise enforceable, others in effect extended the law in urgent situations beyond technical limits. Pauline Maier argues that popular government saw mobs as legitimate because they took on the defense of the public welfare. While not advocating popular uprisings, they could still grant such incidents an established and necessary role in free societies, one that made them an
integral and even respected element of the political order. Maier argues that violence was a natural phenomenon in colonial America and embedded within its culture through the use and execution of popular uprisings and riots on a habitual basis. This fervent trend was rooted in the mother country. Since concern for English rights and liberties was a concept deeply embedded in the society, it came to be tacitly accepted by that society that mob violence in [defense of] those rights or in protest against some major grievances was in itself a legitimate, if not a right of freeborn English subjects. And since this derived from the mother country, nearly every level of society appeared to have accepted justified crowd action. Popular upheavals were central to the way that British power came to its end, and they were central as well to the beginning of republicanism. Thus, it has been argued that America’s inclination towards violence and collective action runs historically deep and can perhaps be linked to European ancestry.

Collective action did not usually involve bloodshed, however when it did, authorities (and not the crowd) were most often the cause. Regardless, in most cases, mob behavior was typically seen as justified and reflected an atmosphere of what was right and what was wrong within a colonial community. Contrary to conventional views of rioting, these popular uprisings (more often than not) were well organized and disciplined in their forms of resistance.

Political authorities in colonial America generally found coercion ineffective for maintaining social control. Lacking a standing army or regular police force, governors, legislators, and selectmen had to rely on the militia to preserve order. Often, a sheriff’s posse was called upon to curb unlawful behavior. Drawn into the ranks and given officers, a crowd became a unit of the militia. Revolutionary re-organization occurred
within the colonial militia as well. Groups of “minutemen” were organized by the Whig parties; so were clubs and organizations, whose officers were elected by leaders of the movement to resist Parliament. As late as the Battle of Bunker Hill (June 17, 1775) it is loosely associated, illegally established people’s militia that formed the heart of the colonial armed resistance. Informal crowds were important also as they protected entire communities from danger. Perhaps the irony in all of this is that many members of the militia had aligned themselves with members of popular uprisings.

Indeed, collective action reflected numerous strategies of self-preserving survival within colonial society. For example, crowds were able to keep epidemic-stricken victims from entering townships that stunted an imminent spread of particular diseases such as smallpox. In times of shortage, crowds kept merchants from exporting scarce foodstuffs. In times of moral outrage, they closed down houses of prostitution. Overall, direct action among crowds was the quintessential social weapon of ordinary men and women.

Yet, it is important to note that crowds consisted of a vast range of social classes. Among educated “gentlemen” within a crowd, there were also laborers, artisans and apprentices. Edward Countryman’s argument supports the notion that a “legitimate” crowd acted within the corporatist political economy of the colonies. In times of shortage, the rich had an obligation to help the rest; in times of trouble, the powerful had an obligation to help the weak. But if privileged men failed in their duty, lesser people might use violence to protect themselves. In essence, Countryman emphasizes that fair prices of food for the poor were more important than a merchant’s profit. A community’s right to keep out smallpox was more important than the right of victims to wander in their
misery. Its right to share work among its members was more important than the right of outsiders to drift in, seeking jobs.\textsuperscript{13}

One of the most interesting phenomena that occurred during the American Revolution is the formation of “extra-legal” and “illegal” organizations for the purpose of political agitation. In cities, for example, mechanics, artisans, laborers, storekeepers, and merchants all combined collective efforts towards agitation of their adversaries. By the dawn of the American Revolution, the movement became the focus of British Parliament itself. The pressing need for mass movement was becoming more evident as the Revolution drew near. The questions placed on the agenda for immediate resolution to British policy demanded mass participation and full-time activity and some kind of discipline so that the effect was not dissipated in anarchistic or purely individual acts.\textsuperscript{14} As a result, organizations of mass opposition towards the policies of Parliament evolved. These types of mobs often took on the defense of the public welfare and were seen as necessary in shaping the political events of the Revolutionary era. Pauline Maier argues that mobs defended the interests of the community “where established authorities failed to act.” This notion stemmed from the ideas of many colonials that authority had to be faced by the people directly. Mobs were seen as Americans acting outside of the law, yet not generally viewed as anti-authoritarian by fellow colonials.

Despite the conventional image of mobs as bloody and violent, Maier paints a more subdued picture of popular uprisings. She argues that mobs were domesticated and controlled and that violence was only viewed as a last resort. John Jay reiterates that “they are more temperate, cool and regular in their conduct- they hitherto have abstained from plunder, nor have they that I know of committed outrages but such as the
accomplishment of their purpose made necessary."

Thus like Maier, Jay attributes less violence and casualties due to the lack of an army in eighteenth century America. Communities who relied on posses and militias called upon local men to form mobs "acting by habit with relative restraint and responsibility" and who did not exert more force than was necessary to overcome overt resistance. Nevertheless, Maier suggests that mobs were an essential phenomenon under free government when people were nervous, spirited, jealous of their rights, ready to react against unjust provocations; and this being the case, popular disorders could be interpreted as symptoms of a strong and healthy Constitution. It seemed as if colonial mobs were actually an experiment of bigger things to occur, ultimately evolving into the social order of America, and in essence, contributing to the nation's moral and definitive character.

Thomas Slaughter reemphasizes Maier's argument and proposes that riots resulted in minimal violence. Instead of lashing out at individuals and institutions themselves, crowds took out their grievances on objects of a vicarious nature such as effigies (which had come to symbolize revolutionary colonial America's riotous nature). The burning of effigies allowed for political public demonstrations without causing actual harm to the individuals that were under protest. Indeed, colonials were undeniably creative in terms of voicing their opinions. Effigies of stamp distributor Andrew Oliver and of a huge boot with a "green-vile sole" and a devil peeping out of it were dangling from a tree near Boston Neck. The boot and its sole were a pun on the names of the hated figures of Lord Bute and George Grenville. Colonists were standing by the tree to collect the mock stamp duty from every passerby. Consequently, three to five thousand colonials took part in the demonstration.
Edward Countryman suggests that there were two distinct types of popular uprisings, namely urban and rural. Indeed, there was plenty of upheaval in the countryside. Often in colonial rural instances, upper classes and royal officials would respond to rural rebellion with firm repression. They called out the militia and regular troops: against the Regulators in both Carolinas, against Hudson Valley tenants in 1766, against Shay’s Rebellion in Massachusetts in 1786, and against Whiskey rebels in Pennsylvania in 1792. Townsmen usually went about rioting unarmed (with the exception of stones and sticks). Often, after demonstrations, they would disperse posing no true challenges to institutions of authority. Nevertheless, rural individuals were more likely to carry arms and attack “symbols” of authority. They broke up courts; they kidnapped judges and sheriffs; they opened jails. Crowds acted that way in North Carolina during Regulation, in New Jersey during the land riots, in the Hudson Valley in 1766, in the Green Mountains through the early 1770s, and in western Massachusetts during the Shay’s affair. These movements tended to be well organized and could last for a considerable amount of time.

Despite agrarian unrest throughout the colonies, it seems as though the Sugar Act, Stamp Act, Townshend taxes, and the Tea Act were most threatening in an immediate sense to urban interests. A sequence of urban violence runs from the Stamp Act riots in 1765, during the Sons of Liberty violence throughout New England, the Boston Massacre, the burning of the Gaspee, and the Boston Tea Party to the incident that triggered the Revolutionary War—the fighting at Lexington and Concord. Customs officers and the constant presence of redcoats made life for many urban colonials (particularly in New England) miserable. If it were not for the action of urban colonial
crowds, opposition to any of these acts would have been impossible. Crowds continually confronted customs officials and redcoats that they so vehemently detested. They forced officials to resign high positions; they gathered in huge, sometimes illegal meetings; they paraded with effigies, they tore down elegant buildings, disrupted concerts, and erected liberty poles. Individuals opposed these crowds at their own risk. Consequences often resulted in destroyed property or perhaps public ridicule such as tarring and feathering. Yet the behavior reflected by these crowds did not normally fall under the category of anarchistic hostility. Their focus was controlled and direct.

The rioters in Boston were all taking part for different reasons, but perhaps their primary focus was based on fiscal economics. Dirk Hoerder suggests that rioting, mob violence, and collective action resembled a type of class warfare. Grievances from every strata of the lower and middle classes of society became unified under the struggle for independence (with exception to many colonials who believed that they were rioting because of their economic shortcomings). Consequently, it seemed to come to full socioeconomic circle for the lower classes. Just as Whig elites exploitatively capitalized on the use of crowds for their own political purposes, they also witnessed those crowds break up as a result of social-class warfare again after American independence.

Social scholar Gary Nash set aside literary sources and evaluated previously unused data such as tax lists, inventories of estate, probate records, and records of poor relief in order to understand the changing structures of wealth and opportunity in colonial America. He believes that the social fluctuations within colonial urban society were ultimately linked to the revolutionary movement. The rich were getting richer while the number of poor increased continually. Nash suggests that cities (such as Boston, New
York, and Philadelphia) accumulated an increasing proportion of property-less persons as they grew in size and commerciality. As a result, these societies became more economically stratified and developed an increasing split between the wealthy and impoverished classes. He presumes that the social changes were ultimately connected to revolutionary politics in colonial cities.

The tax lists confirmed that the overall trends in the cities were towards an increasing concentration of wealth. Probate records corroborated the [analytical] thesis suggested by the tax data, that a major aggrandizement of wealth occurred at the top of society, especially within the uppermost 5 percent. Both sources reflect the inequality within the cities. Meanwhile, the relentless rate of impoverishment began to run rampant in all three of the major cities. Boston’s overseers of the poor began to systematically “warn out” hundreds of poverty-stricken individuals which relieved the town of any obligation to assist them through poor relief. Towards the end of the colonial period, the average wealth of the Bostonians was merely half of what it had been in the late seventeenth century (as decedents gradually left smaller and less valuable estates).

New York also suffered economic distress as prosperous centers of oppositional British military activities and colonial privateering exploits during the Seven Years’ War, the postwar recession, combined with price inflation, also struck with [economic] severity. Although Boston succumbed to the shadow of economic hardship somewhat earlier, the rate of poverty in Philadelphia jumped to about fifty per thousand inhabitants in the decade before the Revolution - a fivefold increase in one generation. Overall, the chances of success at any level of society below the upper class seems to have been
considerably less in the eighteenth century than beforehand and the restructuring of colonial society was highly visible to rich and poor alike.

Towards the end of the colonial period, it is apparent that urban dwellers were beginning to re-assess the distressful conditions of their lives. Nash suggests that the war itself was spawned by the urban response to these conditions coinciding with the evolution of revolutionary ideas through print. Accordingly, careful attention must be paid to the printed attacks on the wealthy that appeared with increasing frequency in newspapers and tracts in the late colonial period. It was no coincidence, then, that revolutionary radicals such as James Otis and Samuel Adams gained widespread support in reference to the changing conditions of the cities towards the end of the colonial period. As a result, it is reasonable to suggest that the wealthy became obvious targets of the economically downtrodden in urban centers where socioeconomic status became so visibly apparent. When the Stamp Act riots occurred, it was entirely appropriate from the lower class point of view that the initial targets should be the luxuriously appointed homes of Andrew Oliver, Benjamin Hallowell, and Thomas Hutchinson.

Overall, Nash argues that unexplored statistical evidence carries more weight than any sort of ideological interpretation in terms of the creation and reception of the revolutionary sentiment. Thus, Gary Nash offers a perspective that treads against the conventional historiographical grain of many American Revolutionary scholars. He suggests that evolving social and economic circumstances such as the collapse of the Atlantic economy at the end of the French Indian War coinciding with internal restructuring of urban society “where elements of the elite were increasingly being viewed as conscience-less aggrandizers of wealth and power” provides for a deeper
understanding of reasons for revolution. Combining these changing circumstances with the imposition of Parliamentary taxes, there is little wonder that popular uprisings involving mob violence took place.

Other esteemed historians have painted factors contributing to collective action among colonials with a broader stroke. For instance, revolutionary scholars such as Edmund and Helen Morgan offer reasons why the American colonies may have conducted themselves in a collective manner towards the cause of colonial freedom. This school of historical analysis alludes that Parliamentary abuses of power may have propagated a universal colonial resistance to Great Britain. Thus, as Parliamentary abuse affected colonial government negatively, so too did it adversely affect colonials themselves.

The Sugar Act was an abuse of Parliamentary power to regulate trade because it infringed colonial rights not only by extending the jurisdiction of admiralty courts, but by imposing duties on branches of colonial commerce which did not conflict with British interests. Some historians have argued that the commercial dominance of the British Empire would have worked indefinitely if neither side decided to explain their economic purpose, but once Britain tried to cross the lines of trade towards a relationship of monetary exploitation, the situation evolved from a mercantilist relationship into an imperial one.

The Stamp Act had brought the historical riff to a boiling point and Edmund and Helen Morgan argue that colonial leaders were opposed to such taxes from the very beginning of the trans-Atlantic relationship. Colonists would find themselves taxed without consent for purpose of revenue, their right to common-law trials abridged, the
authority of one prerogative (admiralty) court enlarged, and the establishment of another (ecclesiastical) hinted at.\textsuperscript{27} Naturally, there were ominous repercussions as colonials objected to what appeared as basic violations of civil liberties from a tyrannical government.

Indeed, colonials may have presumed that it would be permissible to regulate trade via tax, but if for Britain's unwarranted profit and exploitative political agendas, it was summarily thought of as wholly unjust. The relationship had turned from one of arbitrary economics to political. Perhaps this was the spark that catapulted the experimentation towards American democracy that advocated civil rights, freedom, and liberty.

When people of Boston began to pull down houses, they transformed the debate over Parliamentary authority into a test of Parliamentary power.\textsuperscript{28} They were challenging the explicit authority that Parliament claimed. If all rebelled together, it might not be so easy for the English lawmakers to demonstrate their absolute authority.\textsuperscript{29} Ultimately, the results proved that collective action would work within the colonies. Boston led the way for the other colonies. Richard Maxwell Brown describes the city as the "cockpit of urban Revolutionary turbulence." The resignation of royal governors throughout the colonies appeared to spread like an infection in the eyes of the British. As a result, a united colonial effort stood in Parliament's way.

Impressments further split the colonists from the British since the institution was very much like being held in bondage by the Royal Navy. It not only had a negative effect on colonial commerce, but also violated the civil rights of seamen. Urban crowds, the majority of whom were seamen, would demonstrate opposition to impressments.
This was a tradition of hostility and antagonism. From the beginning, impressment’s most direct violations— the seamen— were its most active opponents. Armed mobs repeatedly took over vessels and held captains hostage for the men that they pressed.

There were numerous instances where crowds had dragged ship’s boats to the center of town for “ceremonial bonfires.” Such was a classical case of colonial collective action to address perceived civil injustice. Impressment riots are rooted deep within America’s history.

As early as 1747 during the Knowles Riot, popular uprisings towards impressments occurred. Thousands of people responded to an impressments sweep with three days of rioting at Boston Harbor. Negroes, servants, and hundreds of seamen seized a naval lieutenant, assaulted a sheriff and put his deputy in the stocks, surrounded the governor’s house, and stormed the Town House where the General Court was sitting. The crowd demanded the seizure of the impressing officers, the release of the impressed men, and death sentences as punishment.

Press riots occurred more frequently on the eve of the American Revolution. The pattern of rioting towards impressments gradually evolved into a response towards the Stamp Act. Thus, rioting became more politically discriminative within the New World. England’s new attitude (via the Stamp Act) led to a radical approach among seamen. The results proved undeniably beneficial for Whig leaders. Customs officers were allowing ships to sail without stamps, offering as the reason the fear that the seamen, “who are the people that are most dangerous on these occasions, as their whole dependence for subsistence is upon trade,” would certainly “commit some terrible mischief.” This is because British policy directly affected the livelihood of the seamen. Instead of fleeing
from each of the royal ships, the seamen began to take part in an active resistance movement. Under intolerable conditions, seamen from each of the colonies shared a common view for their reasons of resistance. Impressment meant the loss of freedom, both personal and economic, and, sometimes, the loss of life itself. The seamen who defended himself sought to protect his rights of liberty and this became a communal effort on the eve of revolution.

Not only did collective resistance occur alongside the harbors of Boston, another instrument of opposition during the revolutionary era took place on university campuses. The college population was overwhelmingly pro-Whig. Anti-Tory sentiment characterized most college publications. Thus, many college papers themselves dealt with incendiary subjects such as the right of resistance to a tyrannical chief magistrate; the natural rights of man, the compact theory of government; and the question of taxation without representation. Overall, these papers dealt with considerable measures of colonial repression by the British.

A notable example of resistance towards the politically and economically repressive efforts of the British occurred with the case of President Thomas Clap at Yale University. Seeking to eliminate the “exuberance” of the student body, Clap instituted in 1765 exceedingly tight discipline, heavy fines for its infractions, increased tuition, poorer meals, and a policy of quick expulsion. However, he was repaid with a visitation from most of the student body who expressed their feelings towards him by breaking the windows in his home, and nearly breaking several of the bones in his body. The aftermath of this resulted in the withdrawal of most of the students and instructors from
Yale in 1766. Consequently, Clap resigned and Yale continued with the return of the faculty and students.

In New York and Boston, the constant presence of Redcoats turned into perpetual aggravation. Simply the appearance of the troops threatened the liberty of colonials at face value. The soldiers interfered with the everyday activities among these cities. They pitched their tents on Boston Common and then commandeered one building after another. The army needed to drill, and when better than a Sunday morning, when trumpets, drums, and shouted orders were sure to disturb the Puritans as they prayed. Soldiers cut down liberty poles almost as soon as they were erected. As a depressed economy made jobs all the more valuable, the presence of military men made the effects of a glum economic situation even worse. A historically defining moment during the era of the American Revolution considering all of these military activities was, indeed, the Boston Massacre.

On March 5, 1770, a crowd confronted British troops on King Street (now State Street in Boston) who were guarding the customs house. A few members started to throw snowballs at the British. The panicked soldiers then proceeded to open fire on colonials killing five and wounding others. This was the Boston Massacre, and for the next thirteen years Bostonians would gather each March 5th to commemorate it. Only when the Peace of Paris brought the final guarantee of American independence would they begin celebrating July 4th instead. Consequently, the Massacre occurred only days after a customs officer, Ebenezer Richardson, had fired into a crowd that was demonstrating at his house and shot and killed a young boy by the name of Christopher Sneider.
Challenges by sentries in the streets, bands marching past while [colonials] worshipped their God, soldiers at work while Bostonians could not find it, a son of the town shot dead at the age of eleven; these were memories that stung, and snowballs were a mild enough way to express them. 38 Obviously, colonial rage was ultimately funneled towards popular resistance that ultimately led to independence. However, there is the other side of the story also. The troops may well have been miserable too. The soldiers themselves were young men, sent far from home to serve in a place where they were despised for who they were. They were the dregs of Britain, serving under aristocrats who paid more for their commission than a private would ever see in his life. 39 What the British soldiers may have seen on the night of March 5, 1770, were an irrational crowd, and not an “outraged citizenry.” When they heard the order to fire, they did not pause to ask who gave it or why they were there at all. They did what they were told. 40 These men did not indulge in the fine life that their commanders were luxuriously accustomed to, yet symbolized nearly all of the ruthless exploitation that the colonials grew to vehemently hate.

Indeed (as Gary Nash has offered), within the decades leading up to the war, the increasing displays of wealth and luxury by the upper classes further contributed to the separation of status in early America. The upper class were inclined to believe that it was wrong for the rioters to oppose their displays of wealth, but in the eyes of the lower classes, the rioters were provoked by the wealthy. Colonials despised of extravagance. The good fortune that Andrew Oliver and Thomas Hutchinson took pleasure in was glaringly visible to Bostonians (not to mention that the economy was on a steady decline at this time).
Another school of historical analysis proposed by historians such as Dirk Hoerder was that collective action and mob violence were justified under notions of a “Puritan ethic” as traditions of equality and equity were historically intertwined with New England. For a century and a half, ministers had preached against the sins of pride, ambition, and covetousness, whether for possessions or for offices. In this sense, social and class-consciousness caused riotous behavior. Many rioters, therefore, thought that they were doing “God’s work.” For example, a newspaper account of the burning of Andrew Oliver’s effigy was described as an “Offering for the Sins of the People.”

Collective colonial crowds’ selections of targets made the Puritan ethic a palpable influence of their agendas. These targets included support or connection with the Stamp Act, malpractice in office, arrogance, pride through wealth, and flamboyant displays of luxury. Rioters often damaged the most expensive goods of the houses that they gutted because they signified class divisions.

One can argue the probable connection between popular sovereignty and revolutionary events that occurred as a result. Richard Maxwell Brown describes popular sovereignty as a “justification for the people in all their power to take the law into their own hands and to put the miscreants to death by summary justice.” According to Brown, it was the Tories that bore the brunt of the combination of popular sovereignty and violence. The Continental Congress’ adoption of the Continental Association (total cessation of trade with Britain) made possibilities for harassment of Tories all the more plausible. What resulted was a nation-wide patriotic movement that gave credence to the likes of Samuel Adams and James Otis (and their “seditious” beliefs). Those were the voices that throngs of the lower classes yearned to hear.
Popular uprisings during the era of the American Revolution were often vigorously passionate, however (as Pauline Maier has suggested), usually never wrought with total chaos. Disguises, liberty poles, the carrying of effigies, tarring and feathering, bonfires, even tearing down houses were all well understood in the eighteenth century world. Colonials turned to them because they were familiar acts. Crowds maintained a sense of order through a focused aura of mutually desired goals.

It was the presence of the Sons of Liberty that guided uprisings in a purposeful direction. The Sons began to take shape throughout the colonies around 1765. They derived their name from a well-publicized speech that was given in Parliament by Colonel Isaac Barre, who was sympathetic to the American cause, and there were times when the term was used to mean virtually any American who was involved in resistance. The Sons consisted of various types of men including intellectuals such as Samuel Adams, all variety of dissidents, artisans such as Paul Revere, and merchants such as Isaac Sears. Many of these men knew that their personal welfare and their community’s welfare were bound together (socially and economically). All played an important role within the resistance movement that was the American Revolution. Historian David Hackett Fischer suggests that men like Paul Revere were important organizers of popular resistance as they occupied a position in colonial society that linked the relationship between wealthy and political elites and lower classes. For the American Revolution to be truly revolutionary (in every sense of the word), it was arguably necessary for every strata of colonial society to be involved.

The Sons of Liberty understood the pressures that “common” people were under. Their great task was to turn traditional crowd action toward the British question and to
generate new political consciousness among ordinary Americans. The Sons attempted to fuse domestic problems with the imperial issue that the colonists blatantly faced. Radicals like Adams carried on an endless propagandist campaign against the British and their policies through the *Boston Gazette*.

The Sons of Liberty in New York were even more radical than those in Boston. Domestic issues were clearly at the root of crisis among colonials. New York’s most radical newspaper, the *New York Journal*, dramatized the British issue, but it also carried essay after essay attacking the evils of high rents, rising prices, and short employment. It also castigated fashionable youth who would not give up their finery. As a result, luxurious mansions and carriages among the wealthy were destroyed. There was no emergence of a Sons of Liberty in Philadelphia as many of the working-class artisans were divided on the revolutionary issue.

With the Puritan ethic rooted in colonial society, it did not help to be wealthy (let alone British). The likes of Royal Governor Thomas Hutchinson and customs collector Andrew Oliver made themselves enemies of the community because they served as British minions, and they made themselves enemies of ordinary people because they were profiting greatly at a time of severe distress. Yet they were loathed by the lower classes of Boston not only because of their wealth, but because of their pompous nature also. Hutchinson was so arrogant that he did not even condescend to explain to his troubled neighbors his position on the Stamp Act. To appear at a window and talk to the multitude, he considered an “indignity, to which he would not submit.”

On August 8, 1765, a crowd of men paraded with effigies (of Grenville and Bute) to a brick building and tore it down. It was believed to be Andrew Oliver’s stamp office...
under construction. They then proceeded to Oliver’s house and broke some windows before Governor Hutchinson arrived with the sheriff. The rioters met them with a volley of stones and then went their ways.\textsuperscript{49}

Twelve days later, a crowd destroyed Hutchinson’s house. With the destruction of both Oliver’s and Hutchinson’s homes, the Sons of Liberty (Loyal Nine) demonstrated that they were not afraid of anyone who dared oppose them and would bring out the mob if such a situation presented itself. Throughout the country, the position of “Stamp Officer” all but disappeared due to a growing fear of the mob following the events in Boston. Men who worked for the mother country were shunned and ridiculed amidst the patriotic fervor of the new world. Oliver was never aware of his worst humiliation. It came [March 3, 1774] with the cheering of people watching the one time stamp man’s body being laid in its grave.\textsuperscript{50}

Each group of the Sons of Liberty was unique and operated in their own particular way. Some members came from wealthy leadership, while others were castaways. However, it is important to realize that they all cooperated with one another and pledged mutuality in their efforts toward colonial independence and liberty. As Edward Countryman has vigorously expressed, leaders are nothing without followers. Neither the colonial elite nor the Sons of Liberty could have done anything serious against British policies without enormous popular support.\textsuperscript{51} It was the people themselves who transformed the rhetoric of revolution towards the actual movement. Crowd action allowed this to happen. But the sustained popular political militance on a great political issue that developed in America’s towns was something very new.\textsuperscript{52} Indeed, the advent
of the Sons of Liberty transpired into a broader sort of collective action that led to the nation’s independence.

Under the guidance of the Sons of Liberty, the Stamp Act Congress was founded in an effort to force the repeal of the Stamp Act in 1765. This congress formulated notions of “inter-colonial solidarity” in their quest for resistance and ultimately evolved into the Committees of Correspondence. James Otis proposed the formation of the Stamp Act Congress in June of 1765. The idea was for each of the provincial legislatures to appoint committees to consult jointly on the problems raised by the Stamp Act. Most of the colonies approved of this plan and the system spread like wildfire. All the while, Committees of Correspondence began to appear in smaller towns throughout New England. The Committees kept each town informed and united in opposition towards crisis.

At the Congress was represented all colonial opinion: radical, moderate, and conservative; only the view of direct crown agents was missing. The congress adapted unanimously, after days of discussion, three documents: A Declaration of Rights, a Petition to the King, and a memorial to both Houses of Parliament. The Declaration proposed taxes by consent, rights of trial by jury, and urged the repeal of the Stamp Act. Although both the King and Parliament denied these documents, they were well received by the public and represented a new means of political struggle against Britain. Shortly thereafter, merchants and storekeepers obliged not to take part in any goods shipped from Great Britain. Methods of passive resistance (such as non-importation and non-consumption) were often used instead of actual riots. Yet many “rioters” were adversely affected by non-importation. The paradox lay in the fine line between economics and
politics. By supporting colonial resistance to the British, many shopkeepers, merchants, and mechanics saw a deterioration of their personal and entrepreneurial economic status. Conversely, those who chose importation could face collective action via the mob.

Results of the Stamp Act Congress were widespread. By November 1, 1765, every stamp agent in every colony resigned. This, coincidentally, was the date that the Stamp Act was to take effect.

Additionally, perhaps the broadest and most rigid established popular organization of resistance in New England was the town meeting. These meetings adopted resolutions of boycotts and demanded the repeal of all “obnoxious” laws and emulated smaller schemes of much larger things to come. These resolutions generally contained governmental theories and political proposals that were further to the left than that of Congress and that, in many instances, were harbingers of the Declaration of Independence. In sum, the Town Meetings were basically programs that guided actions of resistance.

Colonists could draw on their experiences of collective action in opposition to the Stamp Act in order to battle the Townshend taxes. Non-importation became more extensive as a result. Also, there was a revival of the Committees of Correspondence. The colonial political organization was carried out by Representatives of Massachusetts, which in February, 1768, sent a “circular letter,” drawn up by Samuel Adams, to each of the other twelve colonies protesting the Townshend Acts, and other recent British acts limiting the power of the House, and reiterating sharp objection to taxation without representation. The letter and the tyrannical response that it brought from the British
resulted in more fully uniting the colonies and further estranging them from Great Britain.\textsuperscript{56}

What resulted from this were new revolutionary instruments known as provincial conventions that advocated strong anti-Parliamentary resolves. The provincial conventions appeared throughout the colonies. It is noteworthy that even after the British repealed the Townshend Acts- with the forceful exception of the tea tax- the popular leaders and mass organizations and parties wanted to retain the boycott until all obnoxious legislation was repealed and the principle of no taxation without representation was conceded.\textsuperscript{57}

New England Town Meetings were set up like committees similar to those that were implemented by the Sons of Liberty. Thus, by 1774 all the communities in the colonies were knit together by one or another form of official and unofficial Committee of Correspondence. For the remainder of the Revolution, Americans relied on the instruments of resistance (Committees of Correspondence, Boycotts, provincial conventions) that they were already accustomed to. The culmination came in a revival of the Stamp Act Congress on a grander and more highly organized form, known to history as the First Continental Congress- a culmination forecast by Samuel Adams in 1771 and by Benjamin Franklin in 1773.\textsuperscript{58}

Rural crowds also played a significant role in the coming of the Revolution. It may be argued that city crowds provided the “punch” for the movement against Great Britain, but rural movements allowed resistance to become fully revolutionary. The new world was intended to act as a refuge for people who wanted to escape the modernization of the old. New England lifestyles stressed consensus, harmony, integral agreement, and
focus on the whole rather than on the individual, and during the seventeenth century their static and non-commercial way of life was more or less in harmony with these values. By 1700, however, this experiment was beginning to fall apart as nonagricultural business began to replace farms. As a result, new forms of wealth and poverty began to take shape and the overall quality of life began to dissolve on the frontier. Also, the monopoly of the Congregational Church was threatened by the influx of Anglicans, Baptists, Quakers, and Presbyterians.

Nucleated town centers, village greens, and town-meeting politics all signified that these people wanted to continue their old ways. Their greatest single fear continued to be that they would lose their farms and descend to the status of tenant under the dominion of a great landlord. Proprietors in early America were not only gaining wealth through someone else’s labor, but also political power as well. Landlords also willingly used the power of provincial governments to acquire their needs. The landlord’s dream was the New Englander’s nightmare. Frontiersmen were clearly fearful of a revival of feudalism and were hardly willing to succumb to such practices of exploitation.

It was only a matter of time until the “old-fashioned” communities exploded from within. These changes, and parallel ones in politics, meant the destruction of the communal way of life that had supported New England’s early values of harmony and stability, but the old ways of thinking and feeling died hard. Well-settled communities faced the threat of being shattered by proprietor interests as many landlords saw their tenants much in the same light as that of serfdom.
Rural uprisings primarily involved riots over land. With a limited amount of land, there arose strife applied to ownership principles among the settlers and the royal governments and proprietors. In most situations, conflicts took place because legal positions tended to side with the upper class. As a result, new governments emerged among farmers and rural lower class settlers. It can be seen that the insurgents were not responding to sudden crisis or short-term institutions but rather to structural conditions basic to their existing societies and to major trends in their developments.63

Thus, the movements applied counter-governments since the one in place was not compatible with a frontier way of life. In each case one side was composed of wealthy, prominent, and powerful men, and since these men had the authority of government with them, the rioting took on profound political importance as well.64 Indeed, it may be argued that rural uprisings reflected class warfare universally similar to those in colonial cities at that time.

Rural crowd action often entailed Enlightenment ideals of human rights and was highly organized, sometimes lasting for years. Rural rioters generally targeted property rather than people. They acted to prevent occupation of land by men who had leased it from the “great ones.” Many occupants destroyed land that they had previously owned as revenge against new, wealthy proprietors. Sometimes this meant [total] destruction, sometimes it meant turning the occupants out and installing others in their places, and sometimes it meant harassing them by spoiling their crops and pulling down fences.65 Rural rioters also enforced their agenda by targeting jails where arrested rioters were held; settlers claiming the land under title granted by landlords; justices of the peace enforcing landlord law; and sometimes the landlords themselves.66
Rural uprisings often challenged social and political patterns as a whole. It was the revolutionary generation that perfected techniques of violence to enforce modes of popular sovereignty. Such was the case with the South Carolina Regulator movement. The movement from 1767-1769 was a classic example of the vigilante mob tradition prior to the actual Revolution.

During the eighteenth century, the term “Regulator” was synonymous with “vigilante.” Charleston’s settlers sought some form of government and petitioned for courts and sheriffs, but were constantly denied. Energized by an outbreak of frontier crime and violence that arose in the aftermath of an especially destructive Indian war and without county courts and sheriffs to combat the banditry, respectable settlers of affluent and average means formed as “Regulators” in late 1767 and began a two-year vigilante campaign. These men attempted to restore order within the colony and broke up outlaw gangs and communities. The idle and immoral were locked up, given trials, flogged, and expelled or subjected to forced labor on Regulator plantations. Their legacy appears to have been contagious. The Regulators as vigilantes were an example of the popular sovereignty impulse of the era that flared up into anti-British rioting in the cities and in the incidents of tarring and feathering. Consequently, many of the South Carolina Regulators later became Whigs and fought on the American side during the Revolution.

The North Carolina frontier did not suffer from an absence of government (unlike South Carolina), but rather from the type of government that was in place. In Regulators’ eyes, it was foreign and corrupt. The colony contained two distinct societies: the east that was largely made up of the gentry class, and the west where subsistence farmers had settled years before. The movement lasted from 1766 to 1771 and ended with the eastern
militia defeating a group of western farmers at the Battle of Alamance. At its height, between six and seven thousand of the eight thousand farmers who lived in the Piedmont counties of Orange, Rowan, and Anson were involved.  

By the 1760s, economic depression and the scarcity of currency made it impractical for the western farmers to pay unfair taxes that were imposed upon them. Something had to give. Beset by economic stagnation, corrupt officials, oppressive taxes, and eastern domination; westerners took part in a “peasant’s uprising” devoid of leaders and ideology and bent only on punishing the most obvious offenders: the “courthouse rings.” A political struggle on a provincial level arose due to the under-representation of western counties (and eastern domination) in North Carolina’s assembly that isolated the Regulator area both socially and economically.  

As more merchants and especially lawyers entered North Carolina, tensions grew. Regulators viewed with great alarm what seemed to them the demise of a simpler society in which planters ruled unchallenged by men who did not work the soil. The Regulation was compounded of their resentment at this loss of dominance and their anxiety about the future. 

Since the most socially acceptable paths towards wealth and political advancement were planting and land speculation (not to mention landed wealth), lawyers and other highly educated men posed an obvious threat to this planter elite. Lawyers accumulated power and wealth in very little time, much to the chagrin of the Regulators. By the 1760s, Regulators viewed lawyers as “leeches” who enriched themselves at the expense of the community. In addition, these men saw North Carolina courts evolve
from planter dominance to outside-lawyer arenas. Accordingly, a significant number of lawyers thought of planters as “unworthy” of the court also.

Planters became increasingly dissatisfied as lawyers and merchants came to dominate judicial and political offices. Officials tended to be self-seeking adventurers who looked upon public office as just one way to improve their fortunes. Among these men, embezzlement, bribe taking, and extortion were so rife that Regulators sang ballads making fun of their climb to wealth. These types of people were aristocratic in nature and were unwilling to work with people of a “lesser” sort, namely the farmers.

The breaking point occurred when the provincial assembly appropriated public funding to build a mansion for Governor William Tryon. Hence, “Tryon’s Palace” became the contemptuous name for the project. The issues at hand as a result of the governor’s project were both economic and symbolic. An economic controversy arose because statewide taxes paid for the “palace.” The project itself was symbolic of the Revolutionary era in the south as there became an increasing division between wealthy and poor, haves and have-nots. Imposing houses for planters and a palace for the governor were symbols of increasing wealth, but they were also among the means that the rulers of such a society could use to dominate others. Regulators attempted to stunt this project by first pressuring officials to withdraw, and ultimately, with armed confrontation.

However, the Regulator movement was not sustained as the armed confrontation was defeated on May 16, 1771 in the Battle of Alamance, but the uprising leaves a lasting impression on issues of both social and economic justice in early America. The regulator insurrection seemed to occur as a cause of pure frustration. The planters simply could not
fathom the increasing dominance and corruption of the educated, lawyer class. Thus, collective action and armed mob violence was a necessary and legitimate cause to redefine the nature of the relationship between lower class planters and economically exploitative oppressors. The uprising was the planter's response to social and economic change. In but a decade the planter's economic world had been greatly jumbled, and, worse, their political power had been challenged by a group that appeared at once alive and hostile. The Regulation was their response.\textsuperscript{75}

In reality, the only truly successful rural insurrection movement was the Green Mountain uprising. Perhaps the rural uprising that exemplified the cause of collective action during the era of the American Revolution with such decisive execution occurred in the Green Mountains of New York under the leadership of Ethan Allen. The Green Mountain Boys viewed themselves as New Englanders and commonly saw New York settlers as "outsiders." For the Green Mountain rebels it meant a chance to identify their own cause with the larger one through Ethan Allen's dramatic capture of Fort Ticonderoga, and through repeated insistence that the Yorker officials whose lives they made miserable were tools of the British.\textsuperscript{76}

Ethan Allen did not act in a jurisdictional vacuum; he and his Green Mountain Boys created the vacuum which they then moved to fill. Allen brought more than just organizational skill to these tasks, treating the northern frontier to one of the greatest demonstrations of political slight of hand seen in the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{77} Thus, these men created their own society and laws and lived in a manner that they saw fit.

It began with forming an extralegal militia company against a new and forceful neighbor with Ethan Allen as "Colonel Commandant." Under Allen's guidance, the
settlers undertook their first real act of resistance to New York’s royal authority by creating a militia without provincial authorization. In all, five companies of Green Mountain Boys emerged and were organized by vicinity. It simply did not become an option for these men to secure their land titles since the dispute centered on who owned the land in New York’s Albany County.

New England political tradition allowed the people to employ collective action if the state violated the welfare or norms of the community. Ethan Allen interpreted the laws of New York as a means to further enrich the wealthy. He appealed to notions of natural law, specifically “the law of self-preservation.” For Allen, the preservation of the family formed a core justification of political resistance to superior authority. And, he of course included his own family in this equation, for between them they held title to thousands of acres in grants. Allen was of the opinion that preservation of the family depended upon the security of the land. He insisted that settlers had a right to the Green Mountains because they worked on and preserved this land. If, only for a glimpse, Allen’s philosophy could be seen in the same context as Thomas Paine’s Common Sense. He argued that only the people “could establish governments and borders.”

The Green Mountain settlers began as unwilling outlaws, but Ethan Allen- and the government of New York- transformed them into rebels against tyranny. Yet it is important to note that Allen and the Green Mountain Boys’ dissent reflected “nonviolent communal action.” In a sense, it was as if Allen played the part of a colonial Robin Hood. His techniques of threat, bluff, and outrageous self-exaggeration propelled him into the leadership of the Green Mountain rebellion and kept an essentially nonviolent
conflict alive far longer than anyone could have reasonably expected—certainly longer than New York’s government desired.81

The Green Mountain Boys pattern reflecting the logic of resistance was similar to those that were carried out in Boston and New York. First, they petitioned New York, New Hampshire, and the Privy Council. When that did not work, they refused to acknowledge the authority of any of the three mentioned. Finally, in response to the continued effort by New York to seize their land, the Green Mountain Boys became “masters of the theater of humiliation.” Ethan Allen’s sudden accumulation of power persuaded mobilization and support among his neighbors. For Allen, techniques of terror and intimidation proved most beneficial. Public humiliation drew ever more of the community into political action while reminding the hesitant which side held power. Allen aimed not just to scare off Yankees but to intimidate the undecided into joining the insurgents.82

Ethan Allen literally took the law into his own hands and began his own portable court in the woodlands of New Hampshire. He re-invented himself into a symbol of “necessary violence” and “frontier lawlessness,” all the while condemning New York’s government as a “ruthless tyranny.” He was truly the master of symbolic propaganda. Allen played on popular images of wilderness disorder for all they were worth, encouraging the suspicion among his enemies that he was a border line savage, a known associate of Indians, and an infidel lacking Christian moral restraints. He terrorized New Yorkers with little more than words and the occasional fist, forestalling the need for direct action.83 A classic example of this occurred when the “Colonial Commandant” captured two Albany County sheriffs and locked them within separate rooms on the
opposite sides of a building. While they slept he hung an effigy from a tree outside each of their windows and in the morning he informed each that the other had been hanged. Allowed to escape, each fled to Albany, where they spread tales of barbarism in the Green Mountains before discovering the trick. 84

Perhaps Ethan Allen’s greatest political accomplishment was the linkage of the American Revolutionary movement with the Grant settler’s claims to their own lands and institutions. Allen clothed the Grants’ cause in a language of American resistance to Parliament and King, equating the struggle of the Sons of Liberty with that of the Green Mountain Boys. America battled for control of its property and future; so did the New Hampshire Grants. 85 In this sense, Allen was comparing the Grants to America and New York to Great Britain. If Parliament had no right to pass taxes or to regulate trade, neither did the General Assembly of New York. The admiralty courts violated the English Constitution and common law, and so did New York courts. 86 Allen was paralleling the American patriot with the Green Mountain farmer and because of this, was able to mobilize further support. From 1772 on Allen declared it the same struggle: what New York’s Whigs objected to in British rule, the Grants objected to in New York’s rule. Equal partners in the struggle against Britain’s “ministerial tyranny,” the Grants settlers faced a second tyranny closer to home. 87 The reasoning was that the conspiracies were the same on both national and local levels.

Despite these tales of so-called “lawlessness” by the Green Mountain Boys, it is evident that they desired to respect the rule of law. Their petitions to New York calling for the establishment of counties, as well as their willingness to go first to New York’s courts with their grievances, demonstrates such a desire. 88 The settlers understood that
the society in which they lived depended on structures within the law. Government supplies order by protecting property and community, which in turn secures freedom. When New York could not deliver on the first and threatened the latter, the people of the Grants felt justified in using their collective power to seek independence.⁸⁹

It is fair to conclude that the Green Mountain Boys were pushed towards economic and political sovereignty by the ignorance of the British Empire. As a result, they looked to themselves for political solutions and legal order. Ethan Allen made all of this possible through his logical methodologies of resistance. The Green Mountain Boys molded law in such a manner as they saw fit and used classic colonial collective action (both violent and non-violent) as a way to execute frontier justice.

Overall, rural collective crowds served as important and necessary elements in terms of economic, social, and political justice within the American Revolutionary movement. They challenged and undermined the authority of provincial institutions while urban crowds challenged British government. Great Britain’s Coercive Acts in 1774 and the resort to arms the following year served to bind the urban and rural movements into one large question and to mobilize country people who had hitherto remained quiet.⁹⁰ The existence of rural rioters told the majority of the American population that something was terribly wrong with the standing order. Combined with urban crowds, collective action in rural America made the Revolution complete. These rural risings exposed the lines of stress that ran through late-colonial rural life as nineteen of twenty people lived in the countryside in the 1770s. Their problems, like those of townsfolk, gave shape to their era and to the Revolution they helped to make.⁹¹
Michael Bellesiles proposes quite simply that the American Revolution can be seen as a battle of Whig and Tory ideologies. The Whigs saw themselves upholding constitutional liberties, protecting traditional legal rights and structures against perceived threats of British tyranny. 92 With respect to this personal account of collective action, there were obviously more intricacies involved than purely opposing ideologies. Within the era of the Revolution itself, the Stamp Act riots were just the beginning of using violence as an acceptable means of intimidation. Many historians have argued that revolutionary era colonists lived in a passionately brutal world and had little confidence in their ability to alter the violence within their society. They were accustomed to collective action and mobs because they lived in a world filled with vehemently ferocious acts. Indeed, mob violence led to social and ultimately, political reforms within the colonies.

Eventually during post-revolutionary America, it became understood that liberty demanded the rule of law and anti-riot statutes were passed in order to temper the mob phenomenon. It was no coincidence, then, that attitudes were changing towards popular uprisings after American independence. Although insurgencies were tolerated during governmental shortcomings in pre-Revolutionary times, Americans became less ready to “endure domestic turbulence” or accept its disturbing implications during the advent of republicanism after 1776. Some colonials viewed the uprisings as an insult to the new government where grievances could be addressed through the courts or ballot box.

In America, this stability demanded that operative sovereignty, including the right finally to decide what was and what was not in the community’s interest, and which laws were and were not constitutional, be entrusted to established governmental institutions. 93
Thus, the appropriateness of popular uprisings came to an eventual end (or did it?) as the federal Constitution came to be seen as the "final product of long-term institutional experimentation." However, there can be no denying the fact that colonial collective action and the mob violence that it occasionally triggered had a large impact on defining the overall character and image, whether for good or bad, of this revolutionary, historic nation.
Notes


6 Brown, 90.

7 Countryman, 75.


9 Countryman, 77.


11 Countryman, 77.


14 Aptheker, 61.

15 Maier, 17.


17 Countryman, 88.

19 Ibid., 80.

20 Brown, 83.

21 Countryman, 87.


23 Ibid., 561.

24 Ibid., 580.

25 Ibid., 581.


27 Ibid., 74.

28 Ibid., 150.

29 Ibid., 150.


31 Ibid., 391.

32 Ibid., 398.

33 Ibid., 407.

34 Aptheker, 66.

35 Ibid., 66.

36 Countryman, 96.

37 Ibid., 90.

38 Ibid., 96.

39 Ibid., 96.

40 Ibid., 97.

41 Dirk Hoerder, Rioters and Radicals in Revolutionary Massachusetts, ed. Alfred Young (DeKalb: Northern Illinois Press University, 1976), 244.

42 Brown, 110.

43 Countryman, 97.
44 Ibid., 97.
45 Ibid., 100.
46 Ibid., 103.
47 Ibid., 94.
48 Hoerder, 243.
49 Countryman, 88.
50 Ibid., 94.
51 Ibid., 104.
52 Ibid., 104.
53 Aptheker, 62.
54 Ibid., 63.
55 Ibid., 66.
56 Ibid., 68.
57 Ibid., 69.
58 Ibid., 70.
60 Countryman, 85.
61 Ibid., 86.
63 Ibid., 42.
64 Ibid., 49.
65 Ibid., 45.
66 Countryman, 66.
67 Brown, 106.
68 Ibid., 106.
69 Ibid., 107.
70 Countryman, 81.

Ibid., 221.

Ibid., 82.

Whittenburg, 228.


Bellisiles, 80.

Ibid., 86.

Ibid., 87.

Ibid., 89.

Ibid., 94.

Ibid., 97.

Ibid., 97.

Ibid., 105.

Ibid., 106.

Ibid., 106.

Ibid., 110.

Ibid., 110.


Countryman, 87.

Bellisiles, 110.

Maier, 35.
Collective Action of the American State, Collective Action of the American Masses in the 21st Century

Thesis Sequence: Part II

Brett Wilcox

Spring 2009
"The central paradox of American history has been a belief in progress coupled with a dread of change, an urge towards the inevitable combined with the longing for the irretrievable past; a deeply ingrained belief in America's unfolding destiny and a haunting conviction that the nation was in a state of decline."¹

-Lawrence Levine

“There is a rowdy strain in American life, living close to the surface but running very deep. Like an ape behind a mask, it can display itself suddenly with terrifying effect. It is slack-jawed, with leering eyes and loose wet lips, with heavy feet and ponderous cunning hands; now and then, when something tickles it, it guffaws, and when it is made angry it snarls; and it can be aroused much more easily than it can be quieted."²

-Bruce Catton

Contemporarily and historically, America has been considered a bastion of individual and collective freedom. Indeed, Americans have made tremendous strides and sacrifices to achieve social equality, but the United States has not always lived up to its celebrated freedoms. Time and again, America has boldly repressed individual and collective freedom while, in the same breath, presenting itself as a land of opportunity and equality on a global scale. During World War I for instance, individual freedoms did not necessarily correlate with America’s global ventures in terms of freedom, democracy, and particularly economics. At the time, America had increasingly evolved itself into a
militaristic state of conformity dictated by what historian Cecilia Elizabeth O’Leary describes as a perpetual effort towards “100 percent Americanism.” During the same era, many white Anglo-Saxon Protestants dominated the cultural, economic, and political landscape and deemed other ethnic groups “unfit” to lead the nation. This was perhaps due to a fear of social change that reflected what Lawrence Levine considers “Old Stock” sentiment that yearned for an America dating back to its economic and social “Golden Age” rooted in the sentiments personified by former president Theodore Roosevelt.

Yet despite these examples of collective repression throughout contemporary American history, many people were able to enjoy new types of freedoms. In numerous cases, ethnic minorities preserved their heritage and strengthened their communities economically in an attempt to survive within an increasingly diverse nation. As our twentieth century dramatically unfolded, President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal addressed many issues of social and especially economic inequalities in the wake of the Great Depression even if it evolved more as a blanket of security rather than a heightening of social liberties. Each of these examples reflects the paradoxical nature of collective action between the individual and the state. Despite what America represented throughout the world in terms of freedom, it did not always reverberate in the domestic realm and democracy held different meanings for different people depending often on one’s wealth, sex, social status, or race.

Thus, there has been a tradition of collective action that has permeated the fabric of the American culture. Our nation has been in a state of flux since literally decades prior to its War of Revolution for Independence. As centuries have passed and more of our citizens have become involved, collective action and the struggle for change- for the
good or bad (as historical hindsight will always remain 20/20) - has become more pronounced and complex. Throughout the era of the Cold War (particularly between World War I and the Vietnam War), collective action and change became a vital and necessary instrument of the American state while also crucial to promoting various forms of grass-roots democracy among American groups and masses. Democracy, in its purest sense, is an experiment of evolving ideas. Twentieth century America exemplified this through a continuous thread of sociological, economic, and political evolution and collective reinvention.

**Going Green in the 20th Century**

Hindsight suggests that it was only a matter of time before Americans necessarily became concerned with environmental conservation. After over two centuries of unrestrained resource exploitation by “unbridled capitalism,” many Americans finally addressed their unsustainable association with their natural environment. Out of necessity perhaps, public policy makers gradually adapted more sensible environmental approaches that considered the resource needs of future generations.

According to Clayton R. Koppes, the conservation movement helped preserve the “American Dream” by restoring “grass-roots democracy” within a capitalist society. Thus environmental policies, like other government regulations, might intrude on the market with the idea of making capitalism better in the long run. Koppes suggests that the Progressive-era conservation movement included three schools of thought, efficiency,
equity, and esthetics. Efficiency incorporated technological advancements towards the natural environment, equity promoted an equally fair distribution of resources among American citizens, and esthetics allowed our national community to realize our lasting connection to nature. Each targeted the conservation of natural resources, but they were fundamentally different and often incompatible. Each of the three schools seemingly came to the national forefront for reasons primarily based around the dictates of context and time.

Efficiency was probably most congruent with America’s capitalism. The efficiency school wanted to manage natural resources by applying modern engineering and managerial techniques, in contrast to the haphazard, short-run practices of the past. Notions of efficiency continued to use the environment in a manner towards productivity and proclaimed to uphold long-term goals that were vested within the American public. Perhaps the best example of this could be seen through the construction of dams in order to create nuclear power in the interest of national security during World War II and throughout the Cold War that followed. Of course, with such an emphasis on efficiency, the concepts of equity seemed to resemble an afterthought for the federal government in light of what was happening during that time in our nation’s history.

The equity advocates stressed that natural resources, which belonged to all of the [citizens], should be retained in public control in order to insure that the benefits of resource development were distributed fairly. Indeed, this ideology promoted good old-fashioned “grass-roots” democracy, but consistently faced political opposition, particularly by the more powerful efficiency school of thought. As Koppes has suggested, the equity portion of the movement proved to be the “least successful,”
although it gained significant notoriety in the 1930s. Ironically, the great Depression actually boosted the conservation movement in terms of the equity of natural resources as an “ethical imperative.”

The development ethos of both the efficiency and equity schools coexisted uneasily with the third conservation principle- esthetics- the desire to preserve areas of natural beauty or scientific importance. The emerging science of ecology helped to bolster this school of thought as increasing numbers of Americans sought to preserve a more authentic relationship with nature within “Biotic Communities.” Perhaps the esthetic branch, with its tangible legacies of national parks and monuments, is the best reminder that there was indeed a conservation movement that has affected the environmental overtones of American society to this day. Arguably, preservation in terms of esthetics was also a product of its time considering that it occurred primarily during the Great Depression and the era of the New Deal “when pressure to use resources was minimal.”

Thus, it appears as though the conservation movement, however wrought with internal contradictions, was heavily impacted by particular moments that called for action collectively within American history. Yet among these groups were competition that often reflected a conflict of interest. For example, Secretary of The Interior (under Franklin D. Roosevelt) Harold Ickes’ agendas of equitable and esthetic philosophies towards conservation stood in stark contrast to such policy makers as Reclamation Bureau Commissioner Michael Strauss who shamelessly leaned towards expansion and efficiency in the interest of the American government and economy.
The West is the Best?

Marshall Sahlins is an advocate of historical anthropology. According to Sahlins, there seems to be an anthropological paradox concerning Western and non-Western cultural change. He suggests that “When we [the West] change, it is called ‘progress,’ but when they [non-Western culture] do- notably when they adopt some of our progressive things- it’s a kind of adulteration, a loss of culture.” Thus, it is as if the history of non-Western societies only began when Western culture made their presence felt at a particular location. According to this school of thought, “Despondency theories” came to fruition as a result of Western imperialism. With the backdrop of Enlightenment ideals, “Despondency theory” reflected notions that non-Westerners would assimilate (pending survival, of course) to the Western culture for the good of mankind. At the turn of the 20th century, it was clear that the American state appeared to emulate this anthropological philosophy.

As the nineteenth century came to a close, so too did the American frontier according to famed Progressive-era historian Frederick Jackson Turner. Living in an increasingly industrialized country, many Americans believed that they needed to “Americanize” an increasingly diverse population through assimilation and/or coercion. Their Americanization efforts targeted immigrants and Native Americans who they tried to “civilize” by changing their religion, economics, and culture, or by outright annihilation if they attempted resistance.
In “The Indian Question: From Reservation to Reorganization,” by Ronald Takiki and Gail Bederman’s “Theodore Roosevelt: Manhood, Nation, and Civilization,” each discusses the paternalistic views that white America held towards the “savage” and “uncivilized” Natives. However, policies differed in accordance to those public servants who were in positions of power. Individual power by the State resulted in collective power among the masses. Indeed, the agenda(s) of the American government towards Native Americans may have been paternalistic, albeit in a variety of ways that were generally coercive in nature. Each of their research provides examples of paternalistic, yet diverse and pluralistic policies.

It can be argued that Theodore Roosevelt had a mission when considering Native Americans. He depicted ranchers like himself as pivotal characters in the evolutionary struggle between civilization and savagery- the struggle to establish the American nation. According to Gail Bederman, Roosevelt’s ultimate goal was to establish a purified America where there were rigid boundaries in terms of race, sex, and class. This was especially within the divisions of gender and race. For Roosevelt, “heroic racial formation” had everything to do with superior masculine control that naturally allowed a dominant and advanced people to control a particular land and its resources over those who were considered “savage” or “primitive.” Such an ideology provided America’s underlying sentiment towards Native Americans and European immigrants for generations to come. Thus, Anglo-Saxons had a “sacred duty” of implementing a higher civilization at every turn in order to advance the [collective] evolution of a nation. Therefore, America’s nationhood itself was the product of both racial superiority and virile manhood.
For Roosevelt, race and gender were inextricably intertwined with each other, and with imperialistic nationalism. Unfortunately for Native Americans, Roosevelt held the opinion of them as being both primitive, and at the same time, “unmanly.” Such shortsightedness by the former American President coincided with his aggressive personal pursuit of a masculine identity on the heavily populated Native frontier. Thus, if America had a sacred duty to strive to develop the so-called “highest possible civilization,” than Roosevelt had no problem carrying out such an agenda. Social Darwinist theories on race and masculinity were popular ideologies of his era and allowed Roosevelt a platform for carrying out policies towards Native Americans in the manner which he chose. This ethnocentric school of thought portrayed Natives as innately inferior and unable to acquire American virtues of democracy and prosperity. Hence, racism and racial profiling came to be a deep-rooted aspect of the social fabric of American culture. The advent of nationalism allowed social Darwinism to perpetuate in America and, in turn, to thwart racial tolerance and boost imperialist thought.

Roosevelt’s ideologies were carried out by his destructive agenda towards those inhabiting this nation well before the Anglo-Saxon race had arrived. In short, racial health and civilized advancement were both meanings of manhood and imperialism. This legacy of national virility and masculinity would carry on for generations to come. Thus, an effeminate race was a decadent race; and a decadent race was too weak to advance civilization. Only by embracing virile racial expansionism could a civilization achieve its true manhood. This, as Theodore Roosevelt saw it, was the ultimate meaning of imperialism.
Indeed, imperialist agendas towards Native Americans seemed to have percolated throughout our nation’s history, although not necessarily to the bold extent as Roosevelt’s policies. Generally, Anglo-Saxon America saw advancement in terms of social engineering as both inevitable and necessary. However, the “progress” that was made by white America in terms of societal and technological changes ultimately brought an end to the nation’s frontier and stripped Natives of their cherished culture.

Francis Amasa Walker, the commissioner of Indian affairs during the 1870s, foresaw the change for Natives as inevitable, but wanted to make the process a bit more paternal with the establishment of reservations for Plains Indians. Walker was of the opinion that the government should oversee the welfare of Natives in a scientific manner. Since industrial “progress” had cut them off from their traditional means of livelihood, Indians should be given temporary support to help them make the necessary adjustment for entering civilization. Walker viewed the implementation of reservations as a way for Native Americans to assimilate into an increasingly industrialized society. Much like Theodore Roosevelt’s convictions towards Native Americans, Walker’s policies were reflective of the so-called “White Man’s Burden,” although in a manner that was far less severe. However, such a policy remained coercive in nature because Natives often rebelled in the event that the American government attempted to regulate their lives. In Walker’s paternalistic view, there was no longer a West, no longer the boundlessness of “vacant lands” on the other side of the frontier. Indians everywhere would eventually have to settle down to farming and urban labor.

The policies of the American government reinforced by the ideology of Manifest Destiny guided much of America’s thought on the justification for expansion while either
coercing or literally ridding the “innately inferior” race of the Native Americans. It seems as though many Anglo-Saxons viewed Native American resistance to policies of collective paternalistic conversions as a personal slap in the face by them. In turn, such American political leaders such as Theodore Roosevelt may have taken out their frustration by instilling new, negative ideologies of the Natives into the mindset of the majority of White Anglo-Saxon Protestants, particularly towards European immigrants. By implying an inferiority complex to Native Americans, science and nature was able to collectively trump earlier thoughts of democracy towards them. Naturally, personal agendas and objectives took the place of universal ones that may have previously been present throughout the United States, including the Western frontier.

“100% Americanization”

Lawrence Levine’s “Progress and Nostalgia: The Self Image of the Nineteen Twenties” provides a broad, sociological look into our nation as it faced dramatic social change and a reaction by “Old Stock” Americans who sought to stunt the economic, political, and cultural growth of European immigrants and return their country to a more purified “golden past.” Alan Dawley’s “Restoration by Suppression,” reiterates what Levine suggests and offers concrete examples of how national policy addressed the increasingly diverse nation by drawing on the premises of the past while incorporating new ideologies of subversion including race, biology, and fundamentalism. Lizabeth Cohen’s “Ethnicity in the New Era,” presents a more intimate account of how various
ethnic groups including Jews, Italians, Irish, and Poles dealt with America's "Progress," "Nostalgia," and "Repression" in the urban setting of Chicago. Concerning America's often paranoid dealings with culture and race during this era, Cohen sheds a different light and argues how American institutions that were intended to assimilate those "ethnics" actually backfired and created and intensified community life among them.

According to Levine, America's forces of nostalgia lied in the yearning for a more purified America returning to the times of its "golden past" while remaining ambivalent towards its future. He suggests that an example of this occurred when the United States wanted to restore (particularly on a global scale) national purity and purpose as it related to their reaction to the Russian Revolution of 1917. Thus, the full significance of the Red Scare of 1919 cannot be grasped unless it is perceived as an attempt to restate traditional American values, to reconfirm long-standing American images, to purify the nation and call it back to its historic mission by ridding it of intruding ideologies and groups.14 Thus, the method that America chose in coping with its rapidly changing society was "revivification" that called upon its core "values" in an effort to rid it of "alien influences." In essence, this was a collective reactionary cause to the ever-increasing rates of immigration by various ethnic groups that threatened to diminish those values. Following World War I, this could be seen throughout America in terms of race, class, labor, and economics.

Such sentiments were predicated on a conscientious strive to return the country to an era that was dominated and dictated by white Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) thought. Indeed, many Yankee Protestants looked to reestablish the "old ways" of the country. Alan Dawley suggests that these sentiments were reactionary and perhaps a
paranoid product of the times. That was why the attempt to restore Yankee Protestant
privilege drew energy from the dark side of the American myth to become a nasty nest of
"antis"-anti-unionism, anti-immigration, antifeminism, anti-new Negro, and
anticommunism.\textsuperscript{15} Clearly, the age of the so-called "Melting Pot" was firmly placed on
hold. This especially held true in terms of immigration and assimilation.

A substantial portion of the nation faced the new decade not in excited
anticipation of what might be or in stubborn satisfaction of what was, but with a nostalgic
yearning for what had been. Americans continued to have grandiose hopes for the future,
but increasingly their dreams were molded upon the patterns of the past.\textsuperscript{16} Alan Dawley
suggests that nativist reaction to new threats of diversity resulted in "One Hundred
Percent Americanism," a coercive method of restoring WASP prominence in an
increasingly diverse America.

The fear of a pluralistic democracy perpetuated a "status panic" by the old
American stock who considered themselves as the "elite" social class capable of leading
the nation. As it were, because ethnic groups occupied different niches in a hierarchal
social order, cultural differences were magnified by class antagonisms.\textsuperscript{17}

The controlled selective human breeding movement known as eugenics further
led the self-determination of the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant movement towards
regulations and restrictions of minority cultures. According to Dawley, whereas
progressive reformers had once emphasized the environmental causes of social evils,
anti-reformers now trotted out biology to explain crime, poverty, urban squalor, disease,
and sexual transgression.\textsuperscript{18} Social reformers could now rely on so-called "empirical
evidence" to bolster their arguments for the nation's need to take a closer look at its
“social hygiene,” not to mention the consequences that could result in a lack thereof. Eugenics allowed for the biological exclusion of southern and eastern Europeans as well as African and Asian Americans out of society. Just as America ignored a Balkanized Europe, they also ignored those races that were deemed socially unfit into a modern eugenic-style nation. Thus, there was a policy of racial homogeneity among WASPs to revive the self-government of “old America.” As Dawley suggests, immigration restriction elevated the invidious assumptions of the biological republic to the level of national policy.  

Land of the “Free”

During the First World War, the federal government undermined civil liberties and economic individual freedom through unprecedented actions of mobilizing the patriotic movement and in promoting a particularly intolerant and authoritarian brand of patriotism. It was during this period that the institutional and ideological basis for what became the national-security state assumed its modern shape.  

Prior to the Great War, there was some degree of openness about whom and what should represent the nation. Political, economical, and cultural pluralism narrowed during the war in unprecedented fashion as the state actively mobilized patriotic support for the war and promoted intolerant, nativist, militaristic, and authoritarian agendas. Such agendas reinforced what Cecelia Elizabeth O’Leary sees as a restrictive definition of “Americanism.” For example, in terms of American legislation, there were
efforts directed at national cultural homogeneity and cohesion that were justified from issues involving national security. The Espionage Act of 1917 and Sedition Act of 1918 each penalized written and spoken opposition to World War I and further demonstrated the collective paranoia much on the same level as the 18th century Salem Witch Trials. Ironically, this occurred during a war effort to promote global democracy and seemed to contradict everything that could be seen on the domestic front.

Federal propaganda and coercion could be witnessed through the lens of popular culture also. Songs such as George M. Cohan’s “Over There” and films such as The Boy Who Cried Wolf both promoted and reflected the increasingly militaristic society that resonated heavily with the American public during the era.

Gradually, distinctions between patriotism and Anglo-conformity became increasingly blurred. Well before World War I, white Anglo-Saxon Protestants proclaimed themselves as the only group capable of self-government. An official patriotic culture—defined by Anglo superiority and political intolerance—eclipsed competing interpretations. Lawrence Levine suggests that much like Europe, “American nationalism developed in which loyalty was attached not just to a particular country but to an ideologically constructed and politically exclusive version of what that country should represent.”21 In the climate of World War I, “Americanism” trumped the true nature of democracy in the sense that it stripped Americans of the ideals that America was supposed to represent including individual and collective freedom. The façade of nationalism and government pronouncements of pro-war inadvertently helped homogenize many social groups in an effort to gain further rights. For instance, O’Leary suggests that “moral themes in government pronouncements resonated with progressive
circles and among suffrage groups and black Americans who believed that by entering into the social contract of war, they could gain full citizenship rights.”

Often, social change was met with public resistance as Martin Luther King, Jr. would learn nearly two generations later as he reiterated similar sentiments during the war in Vietnam.

Although government leaders, conservative political forces, industrialists, business corporations, and patriotic organizations marginalized the left wing of progressivism during World War I, the forced ideologies of patriotism and homogeneity ultimately backfired and created disillusionment and eventually insubordination across race, class, ethnicity, gender, and regional lines. In general, the global rhetoric embodied by nationalism during World War I did not resonate with a wide range of Americans on the domestic front. Indeed, liberty and equality abroad did not necessarily correlate with liberty and equality at home. This truly revealed the paradoxes of American nationalism and ultimately revitalized the long tradition of political debate and resistance especially among “minorities.”

In comparison to contemporary steps towards equality and tolerance, the decades that followed World War I could arguably be seen as an era of inequality and intolerance. Rather than integration, collective governmental policies in many instances resorted to repression, subversion, or assimilation of the mass-wave of immigration, particularly within urban settings. According to Levine, the social strife had occurred because of the fear of social change that had perpetually been gaining momentum since the beginning of the republic.

Lawrence Levine proposes that “the central paradox of American history has been a belief in progress coupled with a dread of change, an urge towards the inevitable
combined with the longing for the irretrievable past; a deeply ingrained belief in America's unfolding destiny and a haunting conviction that the nation was in a state of decline.**23** In essence, there was a struggle between a romantic view of America and the consistently evolving apparent reality. Levine suggests that post-World War I America was a nation faced with dramatic social change and reactions by "Old Stock" Americans sought to stunt economic and social developments of ethnic minorities in an effort to return "their" country to a more purified "Golden Age."

Despite antagonisms from the "Old Stock" of America, the 1920s did see small ethnic groups actually competing with the larger economic society. Lizabeth Cohen's "Ethnicity in the New Era" has allowed for a more intimate account of how various ethnic groups including Jews, Italians, Irish, and poles dealt with America's "Progress," "Nostalgia," and "Repression" in the urban setting of Chicago. Although limited in geographical scope, Cohen's study of Chicago minorities contrasts Levine's assessment by suggesting American institutions that were intended to assimilate those "ethnics" actually backfired and collectively created and intensified community life among each group.

Cohen contrasts her findings with that of Levine's and Dawley's by explaining that the smaller ethnic groups actually competed against the larger economic society. Cohen suggests that Europeans who predominated in mass production work remained invested in the institutions of their ethnic communities as leaders hoped or began to look to alternatives provided by the larger society is a measure of workers' cultural loyalties during the 1920s.**24** Her argument was that those very influences that were trying to assimilate such ethnic groups triggered the efforts of them to, in fact, intensify their
culture and ethnicity. Examples in the Chicago communities such as local media, banks, churches, benefit societies, burial societies, and insurance companies reflected that transformation of culture could be ingrained within the American institutions. Indeed, those institutions actually were able to perpetuate local and regional identities into national ones for Jews, Italians, Irish, and Poles throughout the United States.

Land of “Equality”

Robert McElvaine focuses his research on values and how a society’s values tend to conform to historical circumstance. He suggests although most economic systems should be based on morality, the unrestricted marketplace created for an amoral society (among the masses). The marketplace came to be seen by most classical economists as a realm in which morality had no place. It was not immoral, but amoral.25

Concerning this economic system, Social Darwinism widened the gap between Laissez Faire and morality. This resulted in America’s quest for “Independence” based on two separate values including either selflessness (cooperation) or egoism (competition and acquisition). McElvaine argues that the two camps of individualism were based generally on historical circumstance. The majority of the American wealthy did not have any problem with the economic system, deeming the capitalist machine as “acquisitive” and “competitive,” whereas the collective masses were seen as “cooperative.” For example, the significance of these general tendencies for the Depression decade is, of course, that it was a time of both liberalism and of economic collapse.26
In broad terms, McElvaine argues that the dominant conservative ideologies of the 1920s that were fostered by the upper classes and acquisitive by nature were subdued by Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal liberalism coinciding with intellectual elites who appealingly empathized with the collective “common folk” Americans in the wake of the Great Depression. As the Depression unfolded, a number of American intellectuals embraced Marxist concepts that emphasized the crises of capitalism, class conflict, and consequently, condemned the nature of acquisitive individualism that dominated the “Roaring Twenties.” The Depression had confirmed what many intellectuals had been arguing for years: an economy built on acquisitiveness and competition was destructive economically, socially, and psychologically. Indeed according to McElvaine, “Americanizing Marxism” appealed to the masses because it allowed the economic security that was necessary for Americans to express their inherent individuality.

Overall, it seems apparent that our history generally tends to dictate what values Americans will cling to. According to Robert McElvaine, it seemed inevitable that the mood of the masses changed with the dramatic shift in the economic system. For good reason, the lower to middle classes favored collective individualism and cooperation in the era of the Depression. Americans in the 1930s may not have known much about ideology, but they knew what they liked- and what they did not like. Their rejection of greed, egoism, and the unfettered marketplace led them toward values through which they could “remoralize” the American economy and society.

Alan Dawley suggests that the United States itself was likely the source of the Great Depression. Indeed, that the crash was more of a “symptom” than the “cause.” An insatiable appetite by consumers for goods and services could reflect the acquisitive
nature of the economic system in the 1920s. However, Herbert Hoover's utopian dream of pure capitalism did not last long primarily due to the glaring disparity between industrial production and popular consumption.

Giant corporations and big investors were benefiting from this "utopian" system, but the individual laborer did not reap the fruits of security and/or higher wages within this system of "trickle down economics." When hourly wages were going up by only eight percent and weekly earnings by even less, workers were constrained in what they could buy back from what they had produced. The concentration of wealth in the hands of a few proved to be disastrous and resulted in perhaps the darkest hour of American capitalism.

An increasing number of Americans became poverty-stricken and likely disillusioned by the laissez faire economic system under President Hoover. Overproduction, maldistribution, speculation, and inadequate welfare were a crisis waiting to happen. The crux of the problem was that the laboring masses had too little income to purchase the fruits of their rising productivity, while the corporate rich had too much capital to invest profitably.

Although acquisition of property through liberty had been at the heart of the American capitalist dream, the Great Depression shed new light on the disparity of wealth accumulation, the downfall of the American consumer family ideal, and Laissez Faire in general. The worse the Depression became, the more Americans began to wonder whether unbridled liberty for private enterprise had not resulted in a denial of liberty for the majority. To a small but growing band of social critics, the time had come to change the basic relation between the state and society.
Enter the managerial ideas of Franklin D. Roosevelt who made an immediate impact in a country of economic despair. Of course, it is debatable that Roosevelt provided *every* American with social and economic opportunity; however, he undoubtedly made significant efforts in re-assessing the role of the state towards society. The new president fulfilled his campaign promise of "bold, persistent experimentation" with a vengeance. No other administration, before or since, took so many landmark actions in so short a time - the Bank Holiday, the National Recovery Administration, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, to name only the highlights.\textsuperscript{32}

If not for anything else, the New Deal managerial ideas at last represented a change that directly related to the American masses. For instance, the national Recovery Administration was implemented in an effort to maintain wage and production rates, not to mention having the capacity to chart consumption capacities. Perhaps more importantly, Roosevelt's New Deal created a more optimistic sense among Americans by creating and providing more social and economic opportunities. A unique example of this was the creation of the Home Owner's Loan Corporation which essentially created a government-backed mortgage system. The credited backings for these loans were based on sound fiscal principles. Consequently, the HOLC's long-term rates allowed the mass media to propagandize the emerging nuclear family norm.

Indeed, Roosevelt's managerial programs rejuvenated developments among materials and the labor masses as well as increased production and consumption. However, the programs did not necessarily resolve vast inequalities. Instead [New Dealers] tried to find ways of providing economic security in an unequal environment-
security to business through stabilization of prices and production, security to farmers through price supports, security to wage workers through relief and recovery. Not liberty, not equality, but security was emerging as a pivotal concept of the New Deal.\textsuperscript{33}

**Containment Abroad = Collective Containment at Home**

The Cold War was a multi-faceted battle between East and West, communism and capitalism, and the Soviet Union and the United States. It is convenient to study the Cold War some eighteen years after it officially ended (or did it?) The Cold War cannot only be depicted as an arms race or a subject involving the foreign policies of competing nations, but also as a struggle of what happened on core, periphery, and the domestic fronts. Indeed, collective containment at broad affected collective containment at home. Women, gay men, and lesbian’s lives changed as procedures towards communism influenced policies of domesticity. Many of this “minority” were shaped by these new state-imposed guidelines, while others used those very policies to shape the world around them.

The Cold War dragged on for four and a half decades. The Cold War went on for so long that towards its end few of its experts had experienced any other international system: comparisons across space and time faded as a result.\textsuperscript{34} Author John Gaddis argues that “new” Cold War historians have an advantage over those that were interpreting during the struggle between the superpowers. Marxist-Leninists states kept their archives hidden until the latter 1980s. It has only been a fairly recent phenomenon
for us to see the Cold War not just through the eyes of the United States, but through the eastern sphere as well. Gaddis suggests that the “new” Cold War historians have an advantage in their analysis because they are aware of the events from a known beginning and an end. They do not have to see the Cold War (as past historians have) “as a continuing permanent condition.” This allows historians to see a conflict within a broader range of history. They are now able to compare and contrast the Cold War with other historical events. Historians have only recently attained the capacity to draw sources from a number of countries allowing the new history to be “multi-archival.” Thus, drawing from all the major participants of the Cold War portrays the struggle as more of an international study. In Gaddis’ personal view, ideals were the root causes and ends of the Cold War. He forecasts that scholars will continue (and probably until the end of time for that matter) to learn more about the Cold War.

Consequently, Gaddis argues that most historians neglect ideology as a serious issue concerning the Cold War. It can be argued that Cold War historians have tended to overlook ideas. He suggests Marxism-Leninism fostered “authoritarian romanticism” which reflects the notion that Soviet leaders relied on emotion over rational calculation in terms of governing style. In Gaddis’ view, authoritarianism in general and Joseph Stalin in particular led to the Cold War. In this sense, Stalin can be portrayed as a leader who lost touch with reality and believed in a system (and the expansion of it) that could not trump America’s. Gaddis proposes that the collective power of American ideals were superior to those of the Soviet’s. We were good, while they were evil. Democracy worked, whereas autocracy did not. He supports his presumptions by pointing out the effects that each of the superpowers had on their satellite states, noting that the United
States had the advantage. The civility of Americans in contrast to the brutality by the Soviets, particularly concerning the rampant cases of rape in Germany, allowed America to preserve democracy in Europe, which ultimately ensured western success in the global conflict.

However, in order to ensure such success, ideals of democracy and freedom had to be a realization on the home front. Following World War II up through the early 1990s, presidents and their administrations had to deal with the Cold War on two fronts: globally and domestically. According to H.W. Brands, “The same spirit of endeavor that must motivate Americans domestically would energize the advocates of freedom overseas.”35 For most presidents during this time, it was ultimately critical to parallel democracy and human rights at home and within their fight against communism. For instance, “like Eisenhower, Kennedy perceived an intimate connection between what Americans did abroad and what they did at home.”36 Placed in social context domestically, there was an increasing debate over the importance of masculine identity and the rise of the Civil Rights movement. Thus, the macro (global) Cold War ultimately affected the micro (domestic) realm of it.

The overall backdrop of historian Gary Gerstle’s argument rests on his assumption that the most important factor in triggering the Civil Rights was the collapse of the European empires in Africa and Asia following World War II. Thus by the 1960s, colonized people everywhere could envision themselves as not only being free of their “Western masters,” but also on the same level socially as “minorities.” Perhaps Gerstle’s most general proposal in “Civil Rights, White Resistance, Black Nationalism, 1960-
1968,” was that the Civil Rights movement was part of the worldwide revolt against Western domination and its associated ideologies of white supremacy.37

Martin Luther King, Jr., in many ways, was perfectly suited for his time. Post World War II America reflected a period of national confidence and kept nationalist consciousness razor-sharp and intensified popular devotion to principles of freedom and democracy.38 King was able to parallel the use of Cold War rhetoric which stressed that American ideology was critical in the worldwide struggle for freedom against tyranny with social issues concerning civil rights and race.

JFK: Personification of the State

At the end of the 19th century, there became a growing concern over white masculinity. The era of Theodore Roosevelt had witnessed the end of the frontier and the rise of factory production. As a result, an increasing number of white males were leading sedentary lives as their bodies collectively grew softer and physically less fit. At the same time, birthrates of “elite” white males were steadily declining. Although unforeseen within the majority of contemporary society, the crisis of masculinity was occurring everywhere during the latter part of the 20th century while being “soft” was considered a sign of weakness as well as reflecting an overall social climate of homophobia that permeated throughout America. It was not until John F. Kennedy took the presidential oath that this “problem” was formally addressed.
Robert Dean’s analysis focuses on gender persona in terms of policy reasoning. He proposes that ideals of masculinity could influence the way that leaders (such as John F. Kennedy) “perceived threats posed by foreign powers.” The constant fear of being judged as “unmanly” weighed collectively on the politics (and policies) of Kennedy’s administration towards foreign threats. In this sense, gender must be understood not as an independent cause of policy decisions, but as part of the very fabric of reasoning employed by office holders.\(^\text{39}\)

Dean proposes that Kennedy used an “ideology of masculinity” to justify his claim to presidential power. Kennedy constructed an aristocratic persona embodying the stoic warrior intellectual.\(^\text{40}\) At this time during the Cold War, there came to be perceived “crisis of American masculinity with decline of American power abroad.” Dean presumes that Kennedy both shared and exploited this fear throughout his short presidency. President Kennedy insisted that the United States had become “soft—physically, mentally, and spiritually.” As a result, the former president presented himself with a “masculine persona” reflecting an image of toughness.

Dean suggests that Kennedy and members of his administration (such as Robert McNamara and Robert Kennedy) were shaped by a tradition of “strenuous” manliness which they imposed upon the American public during a period of the Cold War when “anxieties about the decline of American manhood” manifested. The administration mirrored men who had established brilliant careers in “government, academia, law, and banking.” They were taught that the United States had an imperial destiny; that the United States faced danger and the possibility of decline; and that it was the responsibility of men with a legitimate claim to social power to harden their bodies and
During the 1960s, there also became a collective fear of “feminized” men who were thought of as unwilling to resist communist encroachment. This notion was primarily blamed on women as the concept of the “smothering mom” emerged. Women were seen as threats in the form of “momism” which surfaced during the Second World War. In this view, mothers destroyed soldiers’ masculinity during the war and were seen as “agents of effeminized weakness and decline.” Represented as powerful figures controlling a “matriarchy,” women, in the shapes of “moms,” were held responsible for a variety of evils besetting American men and society, including (but not limited to) immaturity, impotence, homosexuality, unfitness for the military draft, isolationism, materialism, consumerism, and susceptibility to various forms of totalitarianism. This phenomenon along with the “debilitating effects of consumerism” were seen as detrimental forces to weaken American resolve during the Cold War. Kennedy vowed to combat these “ominous” trends towards regression throughout his administration.

Mothers may have been seen as negative influences on their sons during this era, but the irony lies in the fact that these women were supposed to stay within their domestic sphere at home (as will be discussed at further length below). According to Dean, women were also viewed as a possible collective threat to America’s imperial interests during Kennedy’s years in office. Ideally, “tough-minded” men were supposed
to defend their boundaries from seductive (and possibly communist) women. In his novel, *The Ugly American*, William Lederer warned women could subvert the imperial project from two directions: from within, as indulgent luxury-loving “moms,” and from without, as alien sexual temptresses. This was somewhat paradoxical in the case of Kennedy, the man. It seems as though nearly every American adult has heard some of the details involving his explicit sexual liaisons while in office (not that it affects what his political career was worth). Kennedy was equipped with an elite ideology of masculinity, focused on heroic deeds of masculine will and courage in the “public” sphere and masculine sexual privilege and power in the “private” sphere. On the subject of his late marriage, further maintaining (or perhaps defending) his masculinity as ideology, Kennedy reportedly confessed to one of his staffers that “I was 37 years old, I wasn’t married, and people would think that I was a queer if I weren’t married.”

Wholly influenced by Lederer’s 1958 best selling novel, Kennedy found the publication congruent with his administrative policies of confrontation towards communism. In fact, he had copies sent to every member of Senate offering the view that he shared with the book about celebrating masculine heroism as a defense aimed towards communist subversion. The important characters involved tended to make heroic solutions in America’s struggle against communist subversion. Yet there were also characters that undermined the will of “tough” and “hard” Americans. These characters were viewed as “effeminate, fat, and ostentatious” and were considered a threat to U.S. interests. Overall, *The Ugly American* helped shape Kennedy’s campaign rhetoric, and its themes were reflected in the foreign policy of his administration with programs like the U.S. Army’s Special Forces, “counterinsurgency” doctrine, covert warfare against
Cuba, and the Peace Corps.\textsuperscript{44} It legitimized the former president’s position of self-representation as “youthful war-hero” and a defender of America’s “new postcolonial empire.”

Although Edward Judge and John Langdon agree that the “Kitchen Debate” captured on film did wonders for former Vice President Richard Nixon’s image in the United States it both stimulated and amused Soviet leader Nikita Krushchev, who enjoyed the rare occasions in which adversaries stood up to him in blunt, earthy terms. Kennedy was not impressed.\textsuperscript{45} His campaign in general linked the Eisenhower administration to an increasing decline of American power within the world “experienced in policies of retreat, defeat, and weakness.” As far as masculine ideology goes, Kennedy viewed the famous debate as “inappropriate” while it combined public power with the private sphere of women. JFK rips Nixon by portraying him as an advocate of feminine consumerism within a woman’s space (the kitchen). While Nixon attempted to represent the abundance of American consumer appliances as symbols of national strength and prosperity, Kennedy implied that such indulgence made the United States more vulnerable to the militarized regimentation and discipline of the Soviets.\textsuperscript{46} Kennedy’s domestic tastes were quite simple: the former president despised consumerism and apparently preferred bombs and rockets over television and Frigidaires.

Kennedy clung to “cyclical and organic” theories of national power and held the conviction that men’s bodies represented the personification of the state. He held the collective democratic ideals of America as youthful and strong compared to a communist Russia that was old and tired. In this sense, he paralleled his own body with the state (although paradoxically, this was a difficult feat considering his deteriorating health
problems and back). As president, Kennedy always cast himself as the embodiment of the national struggle against the Soviets, who in this drama were embodied by Nikita Khrushchev. Kennedy constantly theorized a congruence of the power of the state with the power of male bodies. He emphasized that the nation’s “growing softness” and lack of physical fitness were becoming increasingly detrimental to the security of the nation. It is as if this hard-nosed ideology became embodied by Kennedy because he was born into such an elite status. Whereas a president such as Dwight Eisenhower was already viewed upon as “the man” because of his prior ambitions as a general during a time of war, JFK needed to outwardly prove it. Some scholars have argued that Kennedy spent his short presidential career in an effort to rebound successfully from the failure of the Bay of Pigs (an event that JFK seemingly took personal).

Accordingly, the former president backed up his words by enforcing new policies and measures. He resurrected the U.S. Army Special Forces and became closely identified with the Green Berets who were depicted as young American supermen possessed of hard bodies and tough minds. Kennedy also initiated the Peace Corps who were publicized as an elite volunteer unit much like the Green Berets “with standards so high that only ten percent of applicants were accepted.” Of course, these recruits were highly educated and received special training in the languages and customs of their assigned destinations. They also had to go through a ritual boot camp in Puerto Rico, thus reinforcing the importance of attaining hard bodies. Altogether, the Peace Corps provided another opportunity to toughen the youth of the nation, to strengthen the body politic, by sacrificing the effeminate luxury of American material consumption in a global struggle for hearts and minds. In speeches, Kennedy began to assert for the
Peace Corps a role in the management of America’s unique colonial empire. It would help solve the problems with the “Ugly American.” Thus, the Peace Corps, like the U.S. Army Special Forces and the Green Berets provided further outlets to implore Kennedy’s notion of masculinity and ideology.

**Containment Abroad and Containment at Home**

It has been noted that the nuclear family became a collective social crusade by the early 1950s throughout America. Jane Sharon DeHart discusses how the Cold War affected the thinking towards gender and sexuality in the United States. She discusses the roles of men and women during the period known as the “long fifties” (1945-1965) and proposes that America had a willingness to incorporate the foreign policies of containment to the domestic sphere—containing the sexuality and the roles of women in general. She alludes that American men were pressured to succeed in order to provide the comforts necessary to attain the “American dream” of the suburbanized lifestyle portrayed in the media, and women were expected to look no further than the boundaries of their white picket fences for fulfillment.

DeHart suggests that this phenomenon constituted a domestic version of containment. Just as anti-communism required the containment of Sino-Soviet expansion abroad, gender revolution and deviant expression of sexual desire had to be effectively contained at home. As a result, the promotion of family values was seen as necessary for personal and national security in terms of the struggle against communism. Domestic
containment gradually became the "new" Cold War consensus about the meaning of America. The "cult of true womanhood" again became the order of the day. Women were advised that they should stay at home for the good of their husbands, their children, and their country. Many "experts" of the day advised that female freedom (in the form of "work") would lead to "race suicide," promiscuity, the consequent explosion of venereal disease, and the devastation of American youth. Women who were outside of the house, were viewed as jeopardizing masculine autonomy. Instead, women were supposed to seek their livelihood within a domestic sphere. If one takes Nixon at his word, a smoothly functioning kitchen was a metaphor for a strong, prosperous, and happy family and thus a strong United States. As well as moral nurturers and educators of their nation's future leaders, women were vital custodians of the country's material marvels—electric ranges, refrigerators and freezers.

By 1947, the Cold War had made the United States a new and permanent national security state with substantial power to manipulate attitudes towards gender, sexual behavior, and disease. The men who built the U.S. security state joined with allies in corporate, religious, scientific, medical, and academic circles to ostracize domestic groups deemed harmful to national safety by identifying them with the terrible "Other." As a result, the collective dominance of white, heterosexual males emerged as was exemplified by the popular 1950s television show "Father Knows Best." These men "knew best" for several reasons. If the second world war opened up domestic labor opportunities for millions of women, the conflict also proved a boon to American masculinity: male military and civilian experts won the most complex, demanding war in history; male science fashioned the most awesome weapon the world had known; and
when the soldiers returned from Europe and Asia, hastening the retreat of women to home and hearth, they encountered a grateful government which provided unprecedented opportunity for education (the GI Bill), and placed unprecedented value upon preparation for professional careers for white males.55

Collective Containment on the Domestic Front

Harry Truman’s attorney general Howard McGrath warned that “communists are everywhere- in factories, offices, butcher shops, on street corners, in private business, and each carries in himself the germs of death for society.” Geoffrey Smith suggests that McGrath’s view reflected the notion of “poison of disloyalty” which justified “a state initiated counter-epidemic of anti-communism.”

The gay community found itself a primary target for anti-communist crusaders after World War II. The early 1950s saw “widespread purging of homosexuals from the State Department, the military, and other federal agencies.” Homosexuals were seen as deficient in character, moral integrity, and real masculinity. Unfit as Cold Warriors, they were undesirable citizens.56 Homosexuality was seen as a contagious disease spread by communists to weaken the United States. In effect, the oppression of homosexuals at all levels of the government became part of a new domestic containment policy to fight against communism because of the notion that “a single homosexual could contaminate an entire government office” was held prevalent. Perhaps homosexuality was demonized in order to create boundaries for acceptable sexuality. Gay men and lesbians were seen
as a threat to the prevalent gender and sexual norms that were thought of as important to our nation’s safety. Since “normal” sexuality was a form of containment at home, homosexuality was probably viewed as only being able to occur outside of this sphere, thus reinforcing this new sense of domestic containment at home during post WW II.

Naturally, the witch-hunt for homosexuals began at the top as congress took the lead in “purifying” the government (usually with little regard for the civil liberties of those persons facing allegations). As mention previously, McGrath saw this opportunity as a test of “loyalty.” The lavender scare ensued and congressional reports linking homosexuality with communism and disloyalty to the state arose. The Senate shortly thereafter organized a “pervert bureau” under J. Edgar Hoover to monitor the sexual habits of government employees. The armed forces also removed persons who simply exhibited “homosexual tendencies.” Homosexuality posed a threat to national security precisely because people had to keep it a secret. Secrecy was too long the imperative for individual survival by gays and lesbians in the “straight world” as increasingly and paradoxically, it was the rationale for the national security state itself.57

Smith also discusses sexuality as a powerful force that was contained during fears of communism. He contends that a woman sought to marry at a young age in order to regulate their sexual urges that would be otherwise frowned upon in a society personified by a security culture through domestic containment. Hence, the notion of “disease” became a powerful metaphor to intertwine “deviant” sexual and political behavior during the 1950s and a lever to push women out of the paid labor force and make them full-time wives and mothers.58 According to DeHart, women of the long 1950s did what they were expected to do. These women dropped out of college or chose not to pursue graduate
degrees in order to get married; they often married in order to have sex, fearing the consequences of premarital relationships, especially pregnancy; they often chose partners who they anticipated would be good providers; and they had children because they felt they were supposed to, staying home with them despite the boredom that, for many, childrearing and housekeeping produced. All in all, Cold War politics effected the way that men and women collectively presented themselves in terms of sexuality.

It is debatable that notions of domestic containment were re-enforced by popular films following World War II. Christian Appy discusses how movies emulated the “goodness” of military life. Indeed, sentimental militarism enveloped a number of these films portraying issues of loyalty and morality during a time in our nation’s history when we were becoming an increasingly militarized society. Appy contends that Hollywood played a crucial role in translating sentimental stories (such as *White Christmas*) to the American public who were largely ignorant of the country’s transformation into a permanent national security state. By the time *White Christmas* appeared in 1954, America had initiated a global policy of containment and counterrevolution, had developed a national security system that included massive public and private efforts to eliminate left-wing domestic dissent, had instituted the first peacetime draft, had used the CIA to build support, and sometimes overthrow governments around the world, had permitted itself to a permanent wartime economy, had fully embarked on a nuclear arms race and an enormous program of domestic civil defense, and had just concluded a brutal and stalemated war in Korea.60

Most films (like *White Christmas*) made little mention of Cold War realities and the ones that did project an anticommunist message, were likely to turn out as “box office
flops.” So it is probably wise to turn to popular film as a better vehicle for exploring the
cultural work of encouraging Americans to collectively follow the “Old Man” (domestic
containment) into an age of Cold War militarization while believing that there nation had
remained essentially peace-loving and anti-authoritarian.61

In films like The Caine Mutiny and Bridges at Toko-Ri, the message was for
America’s citizens to never question the “Old Man.” The people of America were
supposed to allow the elected leaders make the heavy decisions. Further reinforcing
domestic containment, the “Old Man” was portrayed as competent enough to make all of
the important, meaningful decisions. These types of films not only projected the
importance of an orderful military, but also the significance of a systematic society in
general. In other words, containment in the military ranks could be paralleled with
containment at home.

American Women Unite!

Yet, although the notion of never questioning the “Old Man” in the 1950s reigned
prevalent in American society, it took quite a dramatic turn in the decade that followed.
By the 1960s, millions of young Americans discovered their costs of faith in the jungles
and villages of Vietnam and turned on the Old Men who ordered or supported the
killing.62 It has been argued that the fear of communism pushed the majority of middle-
class Americans to look to masculine strength and the “patriarchal home” as protective
forces in a perilous world. In this anxious context, independent women, gay men,
lesbians, “domineering moms,” and “matriarchs,” among others, seemed to threaten
masculinity, the nuclear family, and the nation, just as communism seemed to threaten the international order. Although there appears to be an overall contention that the Cold War assault on communism supports the notion that women became subordinate and sexually repressed, JoAnne Meyerowitz offers a contrasting perspective. Meyerowitz argues that certain reforms developed into what came to be known as a distinct “Cold War language” that ultimately provided for gender equality and sexual freedom. In essence, this Cold War language produced a new vocabulary for propagating democratic ideals and “demanding individual freedom.” These reforms, in fact, used the language of the Cold War to establish their agendas promoting liberal social change.

Meyerowitz’s essential argument centers on the ability of the women’s movement and the movement for sexual freedom among gays and lesbians to add more “manpower” to the nation’s cause during the Cold War. She suggests that feminist women’s organizations such as the Business and Professional Women’s clubs (BPW) and the American Association of University Women (AAUW) not only demanded equality and defended women’s rights, but did so in such a manner as to denounce communism in the process. Yet, for the leaders of the BPW, support for the Cold War did not entail support for the containment of women within the home. Instead, this organization used the Cold War to enhance women’s participation in the public sphere. The underlying argument was clear: Cold War competition demanded that employers, educators, and government officials develop and use the talent of women. Cold War ideals converged conveniently with the BPW’s long standing commitment to using women’s full capacities in government and industry. For these women’s organizations, winning the Cold War did not depend on maintaining domesticity, but rather on promoting democratic
constitutional rights. “Womanpower” would provide for a more efficient workforce that would ultimately enhance national security in the United States through “maximum participation.”

In her chapter entitled “Nothing Distant About it: Liberation and Sixties Radicalism,” Alice Echols discusses some important similarities between the women’s liberation movement and liberal feminism. Liberal feminism took more of what appears to be a “professional” approach concerning civil liberties and equality. Whereas liberal feminism sought to end sex discrimination via legislation, an open-door policy, and through the already established structures of society, liberationists wanted to change America’s entire social, economic, and cultural structures in an overtly aggressive manner. With particular emphasis concerning labor, reproduction, and “patriarchal” institutions in general, liberationists held an inherent desire to render gender ultimately meaningless. For liberationists, abortion defied patriarchal structures, whereas the “Miss America” pageant merely reinforced long-standing patriarchal attitudes. For women liberationists, gender equality was a facet of civil rights equality.

The women’s movement paralleled other movements of the 1960s. Indeed many of the broad themes of the women’s liberation movement—especially its concern with revitalizing the democratic process and reformulating “politics” to include the personal—were refined and recast versions of ideas and approaches already present in the New Left and black freedom movement.66

During the 1960s, women were becoming more active in mainstream America. A growing number of women not only joined in the labor force, but also sought to enhance their livelihood and independence by enrolling and graduating from college. Echols
argues that the introduction of birth control further increased women's collective independence. However, although many women desired further recognition and equality, they were divided within themselves. The relationship between women's liberation and the larger movement was at its core paradoxical. Although feminists and women's liberationists had similar goals of ending sex discrimination, they differed in the sense that the former wanted to achieve this primarily through constitutional principles via legislation and pre-existing societal structures. Women's liberationists were different in the sense that they were much more radical. They saw gender inequality within all facets of everyday life. They sought for change that conscientiously defied the patriarchal nature of American society. Thus, whereas liberalism feminists talked of ending sex discrimination, women's liberationists called for nothing less that the destruction of capitalism and patriarchy.

Gay activists were also able to use Cold War language as a means to promote their civil rights. They achieved this through the most basic of measures: by collectively glorifying the democracy of America, while vilifying the repressive nature of communism. Gays argued that liberal individualism in a "free" society contrasted them directly with "totalitarianist regimes such as that in communist Russia." Individual rights were supposed to be protected in a democratic society- something that wasn't plausible in the Soviet Union. For gay activists, it boiled down to individualism (democracy) versus conformity (communism). The Cold War rendition of totalitarianism thus enabled homophile activists to place the cause of gay rights on the side of "good" American ideals of individual freedom and to associate homophobic suppression with "bad" communism as well as fascism. Gay men and lesbians could argue that by their very
existence as dissenters, that they were strengthening American liberalism against the “perceived totalitarian threat.” Liberated forms of freer sexual expression became congruent within the new Cold War language for activists paralleling their ideals with the broader concepts of national security.

Overall, Meyerowitz contests that reformers used the new language by adapting the Cold War to liberal causes. She insists that the language of reform shed new light on American society. Reformers were thus able to translate Cold War ideology into a new vernacular in order to question previous ideals of domesticity and sexual containment. Using Cold War language, they promoted women’s public participation, supported the Equal Rights Amendment, and argued for homosexual rights and more generally for sexual freedom. They reinscribed the ideology of the Cold War as they attempted to carve out respectable oppositional niches on gender and sexuality.70 Meyerowitz concludes that these movements of the 1950s by women and promoters of sexual freedom paved the way for the more radical changes that dramatically occurred in the 1960s.

Epilogue: Collective Action in the 21st Century

Even though the Cold War has come to an end, there is still a continued effort to find national identity within the United States. Jane DeHart argues that America continues to witness conflicting groups within our national borders who seek to collectively redefine “the people” versus “the other” through “wars” of culture.
the passionate rhetoric and seemingly irreconcilable values associated with the epic struggle between the free world and communism, these new battles are fought over a wide range of social policy issues of abortion and multiculturism to gays in the military. HeHart stresses that through these wars, the overwhelming concern appears to be the struggle for national identity. At issue are competing visions of what this nation stands for, what it has and aspires to be, and who we are as people. That so much of this conflict involves issues of gender and sexuality is itself a measure of just how embedded and contested these boundaries remain in the contemporary construction of American identity.
Notes


14 Levine, 193.


16 Levine, 193.

17 Dawley, 256.


22 Ibid., 230.
23 Levine, 191.

24 Lizabeth Cohen, Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939, (Cambridge University, 1990), 56.


26 Ibid., 202.
27 Ibid., 204.
28 Ibid., 223.


30 Ibid., 341.
31 Ibid., 342.
32 Ibid., 360.
33 Dawley, 370.


36 Ibid., 175.

38 Ibid., 277.


40 Ibid., 32.
41 Ibid., 35.
42 Ibid., 42.
43 Ibid., 44.
44 Ibid., 38.
45 Edward H. Judge and John W. Langdon, A Hard and Bitter Peace: A Global History of the Cold War

46 Dean, 46.

47 Ibid., 47.

48 Ibid., 50.

49 Ibid., 56.

50 Ibid., 56.


53 Ibid., 330.

54 Ibid., 308.

55 Ibid., 310.

56 DeHart, 125.

57 Smith, 335.

58 Ibid., 333.

59 DeHart, 130.


61 Ibid., 78.

62 Ibid., 97.


64 Ibid., 109.

65 Ibid., 109.


67 Ibid., 153.

68 Ibid., 157.

69 Meyerowitz, 114.
70 Ibid., 117.

71 DeHart, 145.

72 Ibid., 145.
Applications of New Knowledge: 
Student-Centered Resources Focusing on Collective Action in 
American History

Thesis Sequence- Part III

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The over-arching theme of my thesis proposes that the United States has held a unique tradition unlike any other nation this world has witnessed. The tradition of collective action has threaded a needle through America’s history across space and time-dating back to well before the official declaration of the free republic. However, the notion of “freedom” has been in question since our beginning and the concept itself has held different meanings for different people throughout the American ages.

The maturation of American collective rights as citizens is truly astounding though, particularly when one considers the relative youth of the Western nation itself. Our “City upon a Hill” envisioned by John Winthrop, our democratic experiment rooted in ancient Roman ideals and literally put to the test by our visionary founders’ verbiage and colonial patriots’ tenacity and dedication; although incredibly admirable and prolific, was far from perfect, predominantly in terms of the rights of all of its individuals. However, the system that has been laid out before us has allowed America to ultimately develop into a progressive bastion of civil and collective conscience reflected in law, politics, education, and equality that we have all come to bear witness to at this moment.
Americans have, throughout our country's inception (and before), found ways to collectively change this nation towards the benefit of nearly all who reside here. It took us quite a while to get to where we are today and it should never go unnoticed as to how the struggles and sacrifices of so many have gotten us to this point. And if I have learned anything from the research that I have endeavored relating to this topic, we as a nation, still have not reached the places where we would like to be.

For this final part of my thesis, I have incorporated a sequence that includes numerous primary resources in order to improve student learning in terms of focusing on the aforementioned legacies of collective action in America. Thus, section III opens up with a power-point timeline that addresses social, economic, and political changes in America from the 1950s through the 1990s. In essence, this portion will serve as an anticipatory set for the remainder of Part III as students will immediately be placed in a mindset that considerable change has occurred in this nation through the means of concerted collective action. It will serve purely as a visual discussion piece and for class notes (as it could be used at the beginning of any Modern America unit sequence).

The second portion of this section lies more along the lines of a humanities dialogue concerning collective action. It will address the topic of racism directly and students will have the opportunity to examine the legacies of America's "peculiar institution." To give students more of a worldview, they will be able to see how racism gradually became institutionalized within our nation's culture (and subcultures). They will also have the opportunity to explain the formation of White Identity and how it separated itself from other cultures/races.
The third portion will address how the Women's Suffrage Movement challenged the customs, traditions, laws, and religious views of the 19th and early 20th centuries in order to secure political rights for women in America. This will be achieved through the views of distinguished African American leaders Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois. These prominent figures shed further light on the Woman Suffrage Movement during a time when the political debate appeared to have diametric opposing views across the United States.

The Civil Rights Movement embodied the true nature of collective action in American history and Martin Luther King, Jr. personified the embodiment of that movement. Thus, it was a no-brainer that his rhetoric and actions became part of this part of my thesis. This includes his ideologies of nonviolence as it relates to civil disobedience. In 1960s America, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s concepts relating to nonviolent forms of resistance towards segregation became an effective method for securing civil rights for black Americans. The great orator's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" and "I Have a Dream" speech in 1963 reflects the philosophic ideologies of a man who stood for the nonviolent means to act collectively within the rights of a citizenry who can effectively create positive changes. Of course, with change always comes resistance and this portion of part III will also address King's detractors including prominent clergymen from Birmingham, Alabama as well as Reverend Joseph H. Jackson.

Perhaps the most famous of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s detractors was Malcolm X. Another component of this section will contrast the respective desires of both King and Malcolm X in their pursuit for civil rights among African Americans. Malcolm X
proposed that black Americans needed a separate nation unto their own in order to improve the quality of their individual and collective lives and demeaned Reverend King's ideas and methods of nonviolent protest strategies, seeing them as futile in order to gain civil freedoms for blacks. Thus, students will have the opportunity to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each of the activist's arguments and decide which approach was the most effective in terms of securing civil rights for African Americans.

In the final piece, I thought it would be interesting to include a section that would compare methods of achieving civil rights for African Americans across two generations that are, more times than not, separated by a significant number of pages in our ordinary history textbooks. Were John Brown and Malcolm X all that much different from each other? This portion of part III will allow students to compare the social conditions of African Americans prior to the Civil War and during the Civil Rights Movement and analyze a variety of perspectives during both the eras of John Brown and Malcolm X.
Social, Economic and Political Change

1950's-1990's
Social Changes - 1950’s

- People earned good money during WWII and were able to build their savings. The increased savings and the G.I. Bill brought about a rapid increase in homebuilding.
- Suburbanization – the rapid growth of suburbs which contributed to the decline of cities.
- By the 1960’s 1/3 of all Americans lived in suburbs.
Social Changes – 1950’s

• Automobiles – made the movement of people to the suburbs possible. They also led to the spread of people to new parts of the country. People moved from the decaying Rust Belt (Northeast) to the South and West.

• Television – The # of homes with a television grew in the 1950’s and TV became the leading form of entertainment.
Social Changes – 1950’s

- Civil Rights
  - The South was still segregated in the 1950’s, in the North, AA were restricted to poor neighborhoods and low-paying jobs.
  - Jackie Robinson became the 1st black player in MLB in 1947 signifying attitudes toward segregation were beginning to change.
Social Change – 1950’s

- Civil Rights
  - Truman banned segregation in the armed forces in 1948.
  - Truman also strengthened the Justice Department’s civil rights division which aided blacks who challenged segregation in the courts.
Social Changes – 1950’s

- Civil Rights
  - President Eisenhower appointed Earl Warren as Chief Justice. The Warren Court made a number of decisions that deeply affected AA.
  - *Brown v. Board of Education* reversed the “separate but equal” ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson* which had been the basis for legal segregation.

MAY 17, 1954
Social Change – 1950’s

- Civil Rights
  - The governor of Arkansas ordered the state’s National Guard to prevent AA students from attending Central High School in Little Rock.
  - Eisenhower viewed the governor’s defiance as a challenge to the Constitution and he placed Arkansas’ National Guard under Federal control and used it to enforce integration.
Social Change – 1950’s

- Civil Rights
  - Montgomery Bus Boycott
    - Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white man and was arrested.
  - Martin Luther King Jr. leads a boycott of the bus system and emerges as a leader in the developing civil rights movement. He drew support of large numbers of people.
Social Change - 1960’s

- Civil Rights
  - African Americans organized into civil rights groups. NAACP (1909), Black Muslims (1931), Core of Racial Equality (1942), SCLC (1957), SNCC (1960) are all groups that fought for equal rights.
  - Tactics ranged from MLK’s nonviolent civil disobedience (SCLC) to militant approaches (black power) advocated by Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael.
Social Change – 1960’s

- Civil Rights Protests
  - Greensboro – AA sat at “whites only” lunch counter and refused to leave.
  - Birmingham – Police used dogs and fire hoses to break up marchers. 2,000 people were arrested including MLK.
  - University of Alabama – Governor George Wallace tried to prevent 2 AA students from registering. Kennedy and the National Guard forced Wallace to back down.
Alabama Governor, George Wallace, blocks an entry way to prevent African Americans from registering for classes at the University of Alabama.

Police use fire hoses to break up marchers in Birmingham.
Social Change – 1960’s

- Civil Rights Protests
  - March on Washington – Kennedy gave the 1st ever presidential speech on the need to guarantee civil rights. That week he sent a civil rights bill to Congress. Civil rights groups organized a huge march on Washington to show support for the bill. MLK gave his “I have a dream” speech at this protest.
Social Change – 1960’s

- Civil Rights Act of 1964 – President Johnson signed the Act which
  - Protected the voting rights of AA
  - Opened public facilities to all races
  - Established a commission to protect equal job opportunities for all Americans.
Social Change – 1960's

- Voting Rights Act of 1965
  - Southern states continued to resist civil rights laws, so Johnson passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965 which
    - Put an end to literacy tests
    - Authorized federal examiners to register voters
    - Directed the Attorney General to take legal action against states using poll taxes.
Social Change – 1960’s

- By the mid 1960’s some activists became frustrated at the pace of change and began demanding “Black Power.”
- Leaders like Malcolm X began advocating the use of violence as a means of speeding up the rate of change.
- Riots erupted in NYC, Rochester, and L.A.
- Malcolm X, MLK, and Robert Kennedy were all assassinated because of their commitment to civil rights.
Social Change – 1960’s

- Women’s Rights
  - By the 1960’s women had been voting for 40 years, but they had not achieved equal status with men economically or socially.
  - Women’s groups called for more job opportunities, equal pay, and an end to sex-based discrimination.
Social Change - 1960’s

- Women’s Rights
- Changes that occurred during the 1960’s included
  - More women entered male dominated fields like medicine and science.
  - Betty Friedan wrote a book stating women were not content with their role as homemaker.
  - Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 barred job discrimination based on sex.
  - NOW (National Organization for Women) formed.
Social Change - 1970’s

- Women’s Rights
  - Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) – approved in 1972 guaranteed equal rights under the law regardless of sex. It was not ratified by the states however.
  - Equal Opportunity Act of 1972 – required employers to pay equal wages for equal work.
  - Title IX – gave female college athlete the same financial funding as male athletes.
Social Change – 1970’s

- Women’s Rights
  - *Roe V. Wade* – Supreme Court decision that protected a woman’s right to terminate a pregnancy.
  - Birth Control Pill – led to greater sexual freedom among women.
Social Change

- People with Disabilities
- 1960's – Kennedy establishes a commission to highlight the problems of mentally handicapped citizens and back the establishment of the Special Olympics.
- Rehabilitation Act of 1973 – barred discrimination against people with disabilities in federally funded programs.
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 – prohibited discrimination in employment, transportation, and all state and local services.
Economy – 1950’s

- “Eisenhower Prosperity” – Eisenhower was a Republican who looked to reduce to role of gov’t. Americans prospered in the 1950’s. Reasons included:

  • During WWII, Americans earned good wages, but, because of rationing, they only spent their money on basic necessities.
  • Americans accumulated capital or wealth.
  • After the war, factory production shifted from war supplies to consumer products.
Economy – 1960’s

- Kennedy’s New Frontier and LBJ’s Great Society programs increased the role of gov’t and the spending of the gov’t.
- The programs of the New Frontier and Great Society attempted to fight poverty and economic inequality.

Examples
- VISTA aided poor citizens
- Medicare gave medical care to the needy
- Head Start - education to poor preschoolers
- Upward Bound – assistance to low-income college students.

- Project Head Start was designed to help break the cycle of poverty by providing preschool children of low income families with a comprehensive program to meet their emotional, social, health, nutritional and educational needs.
Economy – 1970’s

- Nixon, a Republican, again looked to reduce the role of the government which was expanded under Kennedy and LBJ.
Economy – 1970’s

- President Carter also confronted rising inflation and unemployment.
- Stagflation – a stagnant economy in a time of rising inflation
- Energy Crisis – The U.S. was the world’s largest industrial power and largest consumer of energy. In the late 1970’s, The U.S. imported 40% of its oil. OPEC kept prices high causing a trade deficit.
Economy – 1980’s

- During the mid-1980’s Reagan made deep cut to federal programs in an attempt to balance the national budget.
- The national debt climbed due to a trade imbalance. The U.S. was importing more goods than it exported. Reagan passed the trade deficit and national debt to his successor, George H.W. Bush.

Source: U.S. National Debt Clock
http://www.brillig.com/debt_clock/
Economy – 1990’s

- President Bush promises “no new taxes” when running for President in 1988 but breaks his promise in 1990 as the budget problem grew worse.

- A global economy emerges as the U.S., Canada, and Mexico sign NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) which eliminated trade barriers between the nation.

- The European Union (EU) did the same for European nations.
Government 1950’s

- Eisenhower was a Republican president who tried to cut back the size and power of the federal gov’t.
- Again, farm production increased and prices dropped, so Eisenhower issued subsidies (payments from the gov’t to individuals” to not grow crops.
Government – 1960’s

- *New Frontier* – Continuing the tradition of FDR’s New Deal of the government taking an increased responsibility for its citizens, Kennedy’s *New Frontier* programs created jobs and maintained the government’s commitment to develop new regions and to fight poverty. The *Space Program* and the *Peace Corps* are two such programs.
Government – 1960’s

Great Society – Johnson continued Kennedy’s efforts to fight poverty with his Great Society programs. Example of these programs include VISTA, Medicare, Department of Housing and Urban Development.

His Office of Economic Opportunity established Project Head Start (provided preschool education to low income families), Project Upward Bound (helped students from low-income families attend college), and the Job Corps.
President Johnson

"You do not wipe away the scars of centuries by saying: 'now, you are free to go where you want, do as you desire, and choose the leaders you please.' You do not take a man who for years has been hobbled by chains, liberate him, bring him to the starting line of a race, saying, 'you are free to compete with all the others,' and still justly believe you have been completely fair . . . This is the next and more profound stage of the battle for civil rights. We seek not just freedom but opportunity—not just legal equity but human ability—not just equality as a right and a theory, but equality as a fact and as a result."
Government – 1960’s

- Kennedy and Johnson were Democrats who increased the size of gov’t and the amount of $ spent on social programs. The New Frontier and the Great Society programs were similar to the New Deal and the Square Deal programs of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt.
Government – 1970’s

• Nixon, a Republican, was elected in 1968. Because the Democrats controlled Congress, it was difficult for him to push much legislation through Congress.

• He did manage to establish
  - OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) – ensures safe working conditions for all.
  - EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) – protects the environment and fights pollution.
  - DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) – enforced federal drug laws.
Government – 1970’s

- Watergate
  - Where: Watergate Towers, an apartment complex in Washington D.C.
  - Who: Committee to Reelect the President, act with the permission of Nixon advisers.
  - Why: To get information about the Democratic campaign against Nixon.
Government – 1970’s Watergate

- Washington Post journalists, Woodward and Bernstein, exposed the scandal and the cover-up.
- Nixon refused to turn over tapes of conversations b/w he and his aids dealing with the cover-up.
- In *The United States v. Richard Nixon*, the Supreme Court ordered Nixon to give up the tapes.
Government - 1970's

Watergate

- Based in the evidence in the tapes, impeachment proceeding began.
- In 1974, Nixon resigned to avoid impeachment.
- Although Nixon was never convicted of a crime, Watergate proved that a President is not above the law.
- Watergate caused the American people to distrust gov't even more.
Government 1970’s

• Nixon achieved great success in world affairs.

• He establishes an era of Détente with the Soviet Union which leads to SALT.

• He visits communist China and establishes diplomatic and economic relations with the giant country.
Government - 1970's

- Jimmy Carter was elected in 1976.
- Carter worked out a peace treaty b/w the Israelis and the Palestinians called the Camp David Accords.
- After the Iranian Revolution, Carter agreed to let the toppled Shah have his cancer treated in America. The new Iranian gov’t, angered by this, took 50 hostages from the American embassy in Iran.
Government – 1980’s

- Reagan, a Republican president, cut taxes for businesses and the rich hoping for a trickle down effect.
- He tried to balance the budget by cutting social programs and the EPA.
- He paid farmers to not grow crops again as they faced the worst economic problems since the Great Depression.
Government – 1980’s

• Reagan faced the growing problem of terrorism around the world.

• Reagan fought to end apartheid in South Africa.

• Reagan also launched a new anti-drug campaign.
Government - 1990's

- George H.W. Bush inherited a huge national debt and a flawed economy from Reagan which hurt his popularity.
- H.W. Bush sent troops to Saudi Arabia to confront Saddam Hussein after the invasion of Kuwait.
- Operation Desert Storm began in 1991 and ended with Iraq accepting UN demands.
Government – 1990’s

- President Clinton won the 1992 election.
- The issues of health-care reform and Social Security reform were debated during Clinton’s administration, but no changes were agreed upon.
- Clinton’s activities were the subject of investigations. The Whitewater investigation accused he and his wife of involvement in an illegal real estate scheme in Arkansas.
Government – 1990’s

- Clinton was accused of perjury and obstruction of justice in 1998.
- The House of Representatives impeached him, meaning he was formally accused of wrongdoing.
- The Senate found Clinton not guilty 2 months later.
- Although Clinton had many accomplishments as President, his impeachment casts a shadow over his legacy.
Supreme Court Decisions

- *Miranda v. Arizona* – Ruling states that those accused of crimes must be read their rights before being questioned. Evidence obtained without this warning cannot be used against them in court.

- *Gideon v. Wainwright* – Ruling says that States must provide a lawyer to poor people accused of felonies.
LESSON: Racism in the USA: An American Legacy

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:
• How did racism become institutionalized as part of the fabric of our society?
• What are the core roots of racism in the United States?
• How did “White Identity” come to fruition in America?

OBJECTIVES:
Students will be able to:
• Examine the history of racism within the United States.
• Determine how racism became institutionalized within this nation’s culture (and/or subcultures).
• Explain the overall formation of White Identity.

NCSS STANDARDS: SOCIAL STUDIES
Time, Continuity and Change
• Establishing a sense of order and time
• Understanding connections to the past

People, Places, and Environment
• Making connections between people and the social forces of race and culture that surround them
• Analyzing human behavior (both positive and negative) in relation to the environment

Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
• Understanding how institutions are formed, what controls and influences them, and how they are maintained and/or changed

Civic Ideas and Practices
• Establishing and understanding methods for involvement in public policy
• Analyzing how the democratic process can influence policies (both positively and negatively)
NYS STANDARDS: UNITED STATES HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT
History of the United States and New York
- Compare and contrast the experiences of different groups in the United States
- Analyze the development of American culture, explaining of how ideas, values, beliefs, and traditions have changed over time and how they unite all Americans.

Civics, Citizenship, and Government
- Identify and analyze advantages and disadvantages of various governmental systems.
- Trace the evolution of American values, beliefs, and institutions.
- Explore how citizens influence public policy in a representative democracy.
- Consider the need to respect the rights of others, to respect others’ point of view.
- Participate in school/classroom/community activities that focus on an issue or problem.
- Explain how democratic principles have been used in resolving an issue or problem.

MARZANO STRATEGIES:
- Identifying similarities and differences
- Cooperative learning
- Cues, Questions, and advanced organizers

AGENDA:

On-Time Activity: “What is Race”
- Students will complete an activity in which they write down and then offer their responses to questions that will help them focus on the overall topic. The guided questions that will be included are:
  - What is “race”?
  - What are some examples of how race has played an important role in the history of the United States since the era of World War II?
  - How have the issues of race impacted your life on a personal basis? Consider such things as work, school, health, family, etc. in your responses.

Class Notes: Do American Textbooks Address the Topics of Racism in our Nation’s History?
- Although race is a widely discussed issue in our contemporary culture, the history of racism in the United States is rarely studied in high school or (in many cases) college.
• Students will thus be introduced to the teachings of Professor James Loewen (University of Vermont) who has argued that numerous contemporary American history textbooks have not properly acknowledged the existence of racism or antiracism in our nation's history. This will become an ideal manner in which to introduce the critical readings for this lesson.

Formulating a Hypothesis: When did Racism in America Begin? Did Racism Begin in America? If not, how did the American Experience Shape the Dimensions of Racism in the United States?

• Students will be requested to work in pairs or small groups and discuss two important themes that will relate to this lesson:
  o When do you think racist elements began in American culture?
  AND
  o When did White Identity come to fruition in the United States?
    ▪ That is, when did a white American’s identity change from being English, German, Polish, Italian, or Irish?
    ▪ Did these individuals consider themselves as “white” before coming to America?
    ▪ When and why did White Identity become important?
    ▪ What impact has White Identity held upon the history and culture of the United States?

• Students will be given excerpts from Howard Zinn’s A People’s History of the United States (Harper Collins) and “Roots of Racism” (Institute for Race Relations in London, England) to help them with the essential questions that are related to the topics of race and racism in America. Guided questions for the readings will be provided as well.

Laying it All Out: Timeline Interpretation of Race in America

• Students will work in small groups and create a timeline that will reflect the history of race and race relations in America utilizing prior knowledge, the readings, and class discussions as their immediate basis for the assignment.

• Students will be encouraged to create the timeline in a manner that will reflect the topic on macro (institutions, laws, education) and micro (family, personal lives) levels.

Closure: Reflections of (The Way Life Used to be..)

• Students will be given the opportunity to reflect on their assumptions that were discussed at the beginning of the lesson.

• The short answer responses will address the following questions:
o Have your views on the history of race in America changed since the beginning of this discussion? Are they the same? How have your views changed?

o How important do you think it is for students to learn more about the history of race and race relations in the United States? Why is this important (or not)?

o How could you, in your role as a student, share your insight on race and race relations with the greater community at large? How could you help abridge racial relations in order to build a better, more tolerant community?

**Independent Practice: Take this Conversation Home with You**

- Students will be encouraged to take this conversation home with them. They will be urged to carry on this conversation with people they are close to such as parents, grandparents, and siblings. This will grant students a broader perspective on race and race relations along generational lines. Ideally, this will prompt further discussion and ultimately promote further greater diversity in the given community.
Guided Questions for Howard Zinn’s Excerpt from *A People’s History of the United States* and “Roots of Racism” (London Institute for Race Relations):

- In your approximation, when did racism become culturally ingrained in the United States?

- According to the readings, what evidence is there that whites were, at one time, born inherently racist?

- What were some of the ways in which white groups/ethnicities encouraged to think of themselves as a caste above other races/cultures?

- Why was racism overtly promoted during previous eras in our nation’s history? Who did it benefit and who did it harm?

- What impact did slavery have on whites? How have white groups/cultures been historically effected by elements of racism?
Slavery and the roots of racism

Dave Stockton introduces the first in a series of articles on the history of the slave trade and its abolition. In this article he explains the roots of slavery and the racist ideology that was used to justify it.

March and April 2007 will see the launch of a series of events to commemorate the bi-centenary of the abolition of the slave trade within the British Empire. Museums in English cities involved in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, Bristol, Liverpool and London, will hold exhibitions. Special lessons will take place in schools. The London Mayor will unveil a memorial. £16m from the National Lottery Fund will be spent on these celebrations.

Indeed it is high time that slave trade’s real scale is told to the population. Unfortunately it will be presented as a story where the slaves are the suffering of victims and the liberators the good Christian (white) men and women who campaigned for it.

What will not be stressed is the role played by the slaves as actors in their own liberation, in uprisings and, in the case of Haiti, a revolution. The fact that these uprisings and the real mass movement in England, France, America for Abolition, were both essential will not be acknowledged. These mass movements involved freed slaves like Olaudah Equiano, who played important roles. They involved women and radical artisans as well as landowners like William Wilberforce or Thomas Clarkson.

The official celebrations will also fail to stress that slavery was an essential part of the birth of modern capitalism. Production of tropical and sub-tropical commodities like tobacco, coffee, sugar and cotton required a mass labour force in the new West Indian and American colonies, recently acquired by Britain and France. It was not possible to persuade European free labour to cross the Atlantic. The answer lay in compulsory transfer. The high levels of exploitation of slave labour in the colonies allowed for a massive accumulation of capital and its transfer to the home countries.

Slaves were captured in the interior of Africa and then marched to the coast for sale. They waited in large forts called factories till ships were ready to depart. Those who survived often fell victim to diseases and suffered malnutrition and dehydration on the one to two month voyage. About 13 per cent perished on the voyage. It has been estimated that a total of 2.5 million Africans died during these voyages, as a result of being packed into tight, unsanitary state places, in the ships holds. The horrors of the Middle Passage are movingly described by Olaudah Equiano, describing his passage to Americas.

"The stench of the hold while we were on the coast was so intolerably loathsome, but now that the whole ship's cargo were confined together, it became absolutely pestilential. The closeness of the place, and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us... This wretched situation was again aggravated by the galling of the chains, now become insupportable; and the filth of the necessary tubs [latrines], into which the children often fell, and were almost suffocated. The shrieks of the women, and the groans of the dying, rendered the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable."

Perhaps double the number who perished during the voyage died in first months after arrival in camps designed to "break them in". Then came the horrors of the plantation itself. As well as twelve hour days under the tropical sun, which whites bithely claimed Africans were designed by Nature to endure, slave families suffered such high infant mortality rates that the population of Caribbean and Brazilian sugar plantations in the eighteenth century could not be sustained without constant new supplies from Africa. Large scale rape of slave women took place by white overseers and plantation owners.

The people who benefited directly from slavery were the great merchants of the City of London, Bristol and Liverpool, the great landowners who built their fine classical mansions from immense fortunes made from their plantations in the West Indies.

The merchants and landowners were far from unaware of the inhumanity with which their slaves were treated. As a consequence they had to dehumanise the slaves: to put them in a category where the ideals of freedom, Justice, that they
proclaimed in the British, American and French Revolutions, simply did not apply to the slaves. Their journalists, pamphleteers, and philosophers obligingly produced a racist ideology to justify such wholesale mistreatment of fellow human beings.

How widely this racist ideology spread can be seen by the fact it was not just used by plantation owners but argued in books by many of the leading figures of the eighteenth century Enlightenment. The German philosopher Immanuel Kant wrote:

"The Negroes of Africa have received from nature no intelligence that rises above the foolish. The difference between the two races is thus a substantial one: it appears to be just as great in respect to the faculties of the mind as in colour."

Even the leaders of the democratic revolution in America, men like George Washington and Thomas Jefferson owned hundreds of slaves apiece.

The abject misery and poverty that the slaves found themselves in led to massive revolts and struggles to end this terrible chapter in human history.

**Key Dates**

1562 First English slaving expedition by Sir John Hawkins
1673 First slave revolt on Jamaica
1760 Great slave uprising in Jamaica: 'Tacky's Rebellion' takes six months to put down
1772 Slavery declared illegal in England, Wales & Ireland
1781 Over 100 enslaved Africans thrown overboard from the slave ship Zong, a fact only revealed because of the cost (#30 per head) to the London insurer
1787 Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade founded; Granville Sharp as president of a mostly Quaker committee
1789 Olaudah Equiano publishes The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa the African a powerful first hand description of slavery. Equiano becomes a tireless campaigner for Abolition.
1791-1804 Haitian Revolution. Slave revolt succeeds and independent state founded
1794 French Revolutionary Convention abolishes slavery in French colonies and grants citizenship to all men (sic) "regardless of colour."
1796 William Wilberforce Bill defeated in House of Commons by four votes
1807 25 March - Slave Trade Abolition Bill passed in the British Parliament
1816 Major slave uprising in Barbados led by Bussa, brutally suppressed
1823 Major slave uprising in Demerara (British Guiana) led by Quamina and Jack Gladstone; defeated and reign of terror ensued
1831 Nat Turner's insurrection, Virginia.
1831-2 Major Slave Revolt ("Baptist War" led by Samuel Sharpe, a deacon) in Jamaica involves 60,000 slaves
1833 Abolition of Slavery British Empire Bill passed, with effect from 1834 but providing for up to six year transition and with £20M voted as compensation to slave owners
1838 1st August - enslaved men, women and children in British Empire became free
1848 Emancipation by the French of their slaves
1863 Abraham Lincoln issues Emancipation Proclamation freeing the Southern Slaves.
1888 Slavery abolished in Brazil

*Back to Top

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The United States government's support of slavery was based on an overpowering practicality. In 1790, a thousand tons of cotton were being produced every year in the South. By 1860, it was a million tons. In the same period, 500,000 slaves grew to 4 million. A system harried by slave rebellions and conspiracies (Gabriel Prosser, 1800; Denmark Vesey, 1822; Nat Turner, 1831) developed a network of controls in the southern states, hacked by the laws, courts, armed forces, and race prejudice of the nation's political leaders.

It would take either a full-scale slave rebellion or a full-scale war to end such a deeply entrenched system. If a rebellion, it might get out of hand, and turn its ferocity beyond slavery to the most successful system of capitalist enrichment in the world. If a war, those who made the war would organize its consequences. Hence, it was Abraham Lincoln who freed the slaves, not John Brown. In 1859, John Brown was hanged, with federal complicity, for attempting to do by small-scale violence what Lincoln would do by large-scale violence several years later end slavery.

With slavery abolished by order of the government-true, a government pushed hard to do so, by blacks, free and slave, and by white abolitionists-its end could be orchestrated so as to set limits to emancipation. Liberation from the top would go only so far as the interests of the dominant groups permitted. If carried further by the momentum of war, the rhetoric of a crusade, it could be pulled back to a safer position. Thus, while the ending of slavery led to a reconstruction of national politics and economics, it was not a radical reconstruction, but a safe one-in fact, a profitable one.

The plantation system, based on tobacco growing in Virginia, North Carolina, and Kentucky, and rice in South Carolina, expanded into lush new cotton lands in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi-and needed more slaves. But slave importation became illegal in 1808. Therefore, "from the beginning, the law went unenforced," says John Hope Franklin (From Slavery to Freedom). "The long, unprotected coast, the certain markets, and the prospects of huge profits were too much for the American merchants and they yielded to the temptation..." He estimates that perhaps 250,000 slaves were imported illegally before the Civil War.

How can slavery be described? Perhaps not at all by those who have not experienced it. The 1932 edition of a best-selling textbook by two northern liberal historians saw slavery as perhaps the Negro's "necessary transition to civilization." Economists or cliometricians (statistical historians) have tried to assess slavery by estimating how much money was spent on slaves for food and medical care. But can this describe the reality of slavery as it was to a human being who lived inside it? Are the conditions of slavery as important as the existence of slavery?

John Little, a former slave, wrote:

They say slaves are happy, because they laugh, and are merry. I myself and three or four others, have received two hundred lashes in the day, and had our feet in fetters; yet, at night, we would sing and dance, and make others laugh at the rattling of our chains. Happy men we must have been! We did it to keep down trouble, and to keep our hearts from being completely broken: that is as true as the gospel! Just look at it, must not we have been very happy? Yet I have done it myself! I have cut capers in chains.

A record of deaths kept in a plantation journal (now in the University of North Carolina Archives) lists the ages and cause of death of all those who died on the plantation between 1850 and 1855. Of the thirty-two who died in that period, only four reached the age of sixty, four reached the age of fifty, seven died in their forties, seven died in their twenties or thirties, and nine died before they were five years old.
But can statistics record what it meant for families to be torn apart, when a master, for profit, sold a husband or a wife, a son or a daughter? In 1858, a slave named Abream Scriven was sold by his master, and wrote to his wife: "Give my love to my father and mother and tell them good Bye for me, and if we Shall not meet in this world I hope to meet in heaven."

One recent book on slavery (Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman, \emph{Time on the Cross}) looks at whippings in 1840-1842 on the Barrow plantation in Louisiana with two hundred slaves: "The records show that over the course of two years a total of 160 whippings were administered, an average of 0.7 whippings per hand per year. About half the hands were not whipped at all during the period." One could also say: "Half of all slaves were whipped." That has a different ring. That figure (0.7 per hand per year) shows whipping was infrequent for any individual. But looked at another way, once every four or five days, some slave was whipped.

Barrow as a plantation owner, according to his biographer, was no worse than the average. He spent money on clothing for his slaves, gave them holiday celebrations, built a dance hall for them. He also built a jail and "was constantly devising ingenious punishments, for he realized that uncertainty was an important aid in his gangs well in hand."

The whippings, the punishments, were work disciplines. Still, Herbert Gutman (\emph{Slavery and the Numbers Game}) finds, dissecting Fogel and Engerman's statistics, "Over all, four in five cotton pickers engaged in one or more disorderly acts in 1840-41.... As a group, a slightly higher percentage of women than men committed seven or more disorderly acts." Thus, Gutman disputes the argument of Fogel and Engerman that the Barrow plantation slaves became "devoted, hardworking responsible slaves who identified their fortunes with the fortunes of their masters."

Slave revolts in the United States were not as frequent or as large-scale as those in the Caribbean islands or in South America. Probably the largest slave revolt in the United States took place near New Orleans in 1811. Four to five hundred slaves gathered after a rising at the plantation of a Major Andry. Armed with cane knives, axes, and clubs, they wounded Andry, killed his son, and began marching from plantation to plantation, their numbers growing. They were attacked by U.S. army and militia forces; sixty-six were killed on the spot, and sixteen were tried and shot by a firing squad.

The conspiracy of Denmark Vesey, himself a free Negro, was thwarted before it could be carried out in 1822. The plan was to burn Charleston, South Carolina, then the sixth-largest city in the nation, and to initiate a general revolt of slaves in the area. Several witnesses said thousands of blacks were implicated in one way or another. Blacks had made about 250 pike heads and bayonets and over three hundred daggers, according to Herbert Aptheker's account. But the plan was betrayed, and thirty-five blacks, including Vesey, were hanged. The trial record itself, published in Charleston, was ordered destroyed soon after publication, as too dangerous for slaves to see.

Nat Turner's rebellion in Southampton County, Virginia, in the summer of 1831, threw the slaveholding South into a panic, and then into a determined effort to bolster the security of the slave system. Turner, claiming religious visions, gathered about seventy slaves, who went on a rampage from plantation to plantation, murdering at least fifty-five men, women, and children. They gathered supporters, but were captured as their ammunition ran out. Turner and perhaps eighteen others were hanged.

Did such rebellions set back the cause of emancipation, as some moderate abolitionists claimed at the time? An answer was given in 1845 by James Hammond, a supporter of slavery:

\begin{quote}
But if your course was wholly different-If you distilled nectar from your lips and discoursed sweetest music... do you imagine you could prevail on us to give up a thousand millions of dollars in the value of our slaves, and a thousand millions of dollars more in the depreciation of our lands...? 
\end{quote}

The slaveowner understood this, and prepared. Henry Tragic (\emph{The Southampton Slave Revolt of 1831}), says:

\begin{quote}
In 1831, Virginia was an armed and garrisoned state... With a total population of 1,211,405, the State of Virginia was able to field a militia force of 101,488 men, including cavalry, artillery, grenadiers, riflemen, and light infantry! It is true that this was a "paper army" in some ways, in that the county regiments were not fully armed and equipped, but it is still an astonishing commentary on the state of the public mind of the time.
\end{quote}
During a period when neither the State nor the nation faced any sort of exterior threat, we find that Virginia felt the need to maintain a security force roughly ten percent of the total number of its inhabitants: black and white, male and female, slave and free!

Rebellion, though rare, was a constant fear among slaveowners. Ulrich Phillips, a southerner whose *American Negro Slavery* is a classic study, wrote:

A great number of southerners at all times held the firm belief that the negro population was so docile, so little cohesive, and in the main so friendly toward the whites and so contented that a disastrous insurrection by them would be impossible. But on the whole, there was much greater anxiety abroad in the land than historians have told of...

Eugene Genovese, in his comprehensive study of slavery, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, sees a record of "simultaneous accommodation and resistance to slavery." The resistance included stealing property, sabotage and slowness, killing overseers and masters, burning down plantation buildings, running away. Even the accommodation "breathed a critical spirit and disguised subversive actions." Most of this resistance, Genovese stresses, fell short of organized insurrection, but its significance for masters and slaves was enormous.

Running away was much more realistic than armed insurrection. During the 1850s about a thousand slaves a year escaped into the North, Canada, and Mexico. Thousands ran away for short periods. And this despite the terror facing the runaway. The dogs used in tracking fugitives "bit, tore, mutilated, and if not pulled off in time, killed their prey," Genovese says.

Harriet Tubman, born into slavery, her head injured by an overseer when she was fifteen, made her way to freedom alone as a young woman, then became the most famous conductor on the Underground Railroad. She made nineteen dangerous trips back and forth, often disguised, escorting more than three hundred slaves to freedom, always carrying a pistol, telling the fugitives, "You'll be free or die." She expressed her philosophy: "There was one of two things I had a right to, liberty or death; if I could not have one, I would have the other; for no man should take me alive...."

One overseer told a visitor to his plantation that "some negroes are determined never to let a white man whip them and will resist you, when you attempt it; of course you must kill the overseer to his absent employer: "Sir, I write you a few lines in order to let you know that six of your hands has left the plantation-every man but Jack. They displeased me with their work and I give some of them a few lashes, Tom with the rest. On Wednesday morning, they were missing."

The instances where poor whites helped slaves were not frequent, but sufficient to show the need for setting one group against the other. Genovese says:

The slaveholders ... suspected that non-slaveholders would encourage slave disobedience and even rebellion, not so much out of sympathy for the blacks as out of hatred for the rich planters and resentment of their own poverty. White men sometimes were linked to slave insurrectionary plots, and each such incident rekindled fears.

This helps explain the stern police measures against whites who fraternized with blacks.
Herbert Aptheker quotes a report to the governor of Virginia on a slave conspiracy in 1802: "I have just received information that three white persons are concerned in the plot; and they have arms and ammunition concealed under their houses, and were to give aid when the negroes should begin." One of the conspiring slaves said that it was "the common run of poor white people" who were involved.

In return, blacks helped whites in need. One black runaway told of a slave woman who had received fifty lashes of the whip for giving food to a white neighbor who was poor and sick.

When the Brunswick canal was built in Georgia, the black slaves and white Irish workers were segregated, the excuse being that they would do violence against one another. That may well have been true, but Fanny Kemble, the famous actress and wife of a planter, wrote in her journal:

But the Irish are not only quarrelers, and rioters, and fighters, and drinkers, and despisers of niggers-they are a passionate, impulsive, warm-hearted, generous people, much given to powerful indignations, which break out suddenly when not compelled to smoulder sullenly-pestilent sympathizers too, and with a sufficient dose of American atmospheric air in their lungs, properly mixed with a right proportion of ardent spirits, there is no saying but what they might actually take to sympathy with the slaves, and I leave you to judge of the possible consequences. You perceive, I am sure, that they can by no means be allowed to work together on the Brunswick Canal.

The need for slave control led to an ingenious device, paying poor whites-themselves so troublesome for two hundred years of southern history-to be overseers of black labor and therefore buffers for black hatred.

Religion was used for control. A book consulted by many planters was the Cotton Plantation Record and Account Book, which gave these instructions to overseers: "You will find that an hour devoted every Sabbath morning to their moral and religious instruction would prove a great aid to you in bringing about a better state of things amongst the Negroes."

As for black preachers, as Genovese puts it, "they had to speak a language defiant enough to hold the high-spirited among their flock but neither so inflammatory as to rouse them to battles they could not win nor so ominous as to arouse the ire of ruling powers." Practicality decided: "The slave communities, embedded as they were among numerically preponderant and militarily powerful whites, counseled a strategy of patience, of acceptance of what could not be helped, of a dogged effort to keep the black community alive and healthy-a strategy of survival that, like its African prototype, above all said yes to life in this world."

It was once thought that slavery had destroyed the black family. And so the black condition was blamed on family frailty, rather than on poverty and prejudice. Blacks without families, helpless, lacking kinship and identity, would have no will to resist. But interviews with ex-slaves, done in the 1930s by the Federal Writers Project of the New Deal for the Library of Congress, showed a different story, which George Rawick summarizes (From Sundown to Sunup):

The slave community acted like a generalized extended kinship system in which all adults looked after all children and there was little division between "my children for whom I'm responsible" and "your children for whom you're responsible." ... A kind of family relationship in which older children have great responsibility for caring for younger siblings is obviously more functionally integrative and useful for slaves than the pattern of sibling rivalry and often dislike that frequently comes out of contemporary middle-class nuclear families composed of highly individuated persons. ... Indeed, the activity of the slaves in creating patterns of family life that were functionally integrative did more than merely prevent the destruction of personality. ... It was part and parcel, as we shall see, of the social process out of which came black pride, black identity, black culture, the black community, and black rebellion in America.
Old letters and records dug out by historian Herbert Gutman (The Black Family in
Slavery and Freedom) show the stubborn resistance of the slave family to pressures of
disintegration. A woman wrote to her son from whom she had been separated for twenty
years: "I long to see you in my old age... Now my dear son I pray you to come and see
your dear old Mother... I love you Cato you love your Mother You are my only son...."

And a man wrote to his wife, sold away from him with their children: "Send me some of
the children's hair in a separate paper with their names on the paper... I had rather anything
to had happened to me most than ever to have been parted from you and the children. . . .
Laura I do love you the same...."

Going through records of slave marriages, Gutman found how high was the incidence of
marriage among slave men and women, and how stable these marriages were. He studied
the remarkably complete records kept on one South Carolina plantation. He found a birth
register of two hundred slaves extending from the eighteenth century to just before the Civil
War; it showed stable kin networks, steadfast marriages, unusual fidelity, and resistance to
forced marriages.

Slaves hung on determinedly to their selves, to their love of family, their wholeness. A
shoemaker on the South Carolina Sea Islands expressed this in his own way: "I'se
lost an arm but it hasn't gone out of my brains."

This family solidarity carried into the twentieth century. The remarkable southern black
farmer Nate Shaw recalled that when his sister died, leaving three children, his father
proposed sharing their care, and he responded:

That suits me. Papa... Let's handle em like this; don't get the two little,
boys, the youngest ones, off at your house and the oldest one be at my
house and we bold these little boys apart and won't bring em to see one
another. I'll bring the little boy that I keep, the oldest one, around to your
home amongst the other two. And you forward the others to my house and
let em grow up knowin that they are brothers. Don't keep em separated in
a way that they'll forget about one another. Don't do that, Papa.

Also insisting on the strength of blacks even under slavery, Lawrence Levine (Black
Culture and Black Consciousness) gives a picture of a rich culture among slaves, a complex
mixture of adaptation and rebellion, through the creativity of stories and songs:

We raise de wheat,
Dey gib us de corn;
We bake de bread,
Dey gib us de crust,
We sif de meal,
Dey gib us de huss;
We peel de meat,
Dey gib us de skin;
And dat's de way
Dey take us in;
We skim de pot,
Dey gib us de liquor,
An say dat's good enough for nigger.

There was mockery. The poet William Cullen Bryant, after attending a corn shucking in
1843 in South Carolina, told of slave dances turned into a pretended military parade, "a sort
of burlesque of our militia trainings...."

Spirituals often had double meanings. The song "O Canaan, sweet Canaan, I am bound
for the land of Canaan" often meant that slaves meant to get to the North, their Canaan.
During the Civil War, slaves began to make up new spirituals with bolder messages:
"Before I'd be a slave, I'd be buried in my grave, and go home to my Lord and be saved."
And the spiritual "Many Thousand Go":

No more peck o ' corn for me, no more, no more.
No more driver's lash far me, no more, no more.....

Levine refers to slave resistance as "pre-political," expressed in countless ways in daily life
and culture. Music, magic, art, religion, were all ways, he says, for slaves to hold on to their
humanity.
While southern slaves held on, free blacks in the North (there were about 130,000 in 1830, about 200,000 in 1850) agitated for the abolition of slavery. In 1829, David Walker, son of a slave, but born free in North Carolina, moved to Boston, where he sold old clothes. The pamphlet he wrote and printed, Walker's Appeal, became widely known. It infuriated southern slaveholders; Georgia offered a reward of $10,000 to anyone who would deliver Walker alive, and $1,000 to anyone who would kill him. It is not hard to understand why when you read his Appeal.

There was no slavery in history, even that of the Israelites in Egypt, worse than the slavery of the black man in America, Walker said. "...show me a page of history, either sacred or profane, on which a verse can he found, which maintains, the Egyptians heaped the insupportable insult upon the children of Israel, by telling them that they were not of the human family."

Walker was scathing to his fellow blacks who would assimilate: "I would wish, candidly ... to be understood, that I would not a pinch of snuff to be married to any white person I ever saw in all the of my

Blacks must fight for their freedom, he said:

Let our enemies go on with their butcheries, and at once fill up their cup. Never make an attempt to gain our freedom or natural right from under our cruel oppressors and murderers, until you see your way clear-when that hour arrives and you move, be not afraid or dismayed. ... God has been pleased to give us two eyes, two hands, two feet, and some sense in our heads as well as they. They have no more right to hold us in slavery than we have to hold them... Our sufferings will come to an end, in spite of all the Americans this side of eternity. Then we will want all the learning and talents among ourselves, and perhaps more, to govern ourselves..."Every dog must have its day," the American's is coming to an end.

One summer day in 1830, David Walker was found dead near the doorway of his shop in Boston.

Some born in slavery acted out the unfulfilled desire of millions. Frederick Douglass, a slave, sent to Baltimore to work as a servant and a laborer in the somehow learned to read and write, and at twenty-one, in the year 1838, escaped to the North, where he became the most famous black man of his time, lecturer, newspaper editor, writer. In his autobiography, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, he recalled his first childhood thoughts about his condition:

Why am I a slave? Why are some people slaves, and others masters? Was there ever a time when this was not so? How did the relation commence?

Once, however, engaged in the inquiry, I was not very long in finding out the true solution of the matter. It was not color, but crime, not God, but man, that afforded the true explanation of the existence of slavery; nor was I long in finding out another important truth, viz: what man can make, man can unmake. . . .

I distinctly remember being, even then, most strongly impressed with the idea of being a free man some day. This cheering assurance was an inborn dream of my human nature-a constant menace to slavery-and one which all the powers of slavery were unable to silence or extinguish.

The Fugitive Slave Act passed in 1850 was a concession to the southern states in return for the admission of the Mexican war territories (California, especially) into the Union as nonslave states. The Act made it easy for slaveowners to recapture ex-slaves or simply to pick up blacks they claimed had run away. Northern blacks organized resistance to the Fugitive Slave Act, denouncing President Fillmore, who signed it, and Senator Daniel Webster, who supported it. One of these was J. W. Loguen, son of a slave mother and her white owner. He had escaped to freedom on his master's horse, gone to college, and was now a minister in Syracuse, New York. He spoke to a meeting in that city in 1850:

The time has come to change the tones of submission into tones of defiance-and to tell Mr. Fillmore and Mr. Webster, if they propose to execute this measure upon us, to send on their blood-hounds. ... I received my freedom from Heaven, and with it came the command to defend my title to it. ... I don't respect this law-I don't fear it-I won't obey it! It
outlaws me, and I outlaw it... I will not live a slave, and if force is
employed to re-enslave me, I shall make preparations to meet the crisis as
becomes a man. ... Your decision tonight in favor of resistance will give
vent to the spirit of liberty, and it will break the bands of party, and shout
for joy all over the North. ... Heaven knows that this act of noble daring
will break out somewhere—and may God grant that Syracuse be the
honored spot, whence it shall send an earthquake voice through the land!

The following year, Syracuse had its chance. A runaway slave named Jerry was captured
and put on trial. A crowd used crowbars and a battering ram to break into the courthouse,
defying marshals with drawn guns, and set Jerry free.

Loguen made his home in Syracuse a major station on the Underground Railroad. It was
said that he helped 1,500 slaves on their way to Canada. His memoir of slavery came to the
attention of his former mistress, and she wrote to him, asking him either to return or to send
her $1,000 in compensation. Loguen's reply to her was in the abolitionist
newspaper, The Liberator:

Mrs. Sarah Logue. ... You say you have offers to buy me, and that you
shall sell me if I do not send you $1000, and in the same breath and almost
in the same sentence, you say, "You know we raised our own children." Woman, did you raise your own children for the market?
Did you raise them for the whipping post? Did you raise them to be driven
off, bound to a coffle in chains? ... Shame on you!

But you say I am a thief, because I took the old mare along with me.
Have you got to learn that I had a better right to the old mare, as you call
her, than Manasseh Logue had to me? Is it a greater sin for me to steal
his horse, than it was for him to rob my mother's cradle, and steal me? ...
Have you got to learn that human rights are mutual and reciprocal, and if
you take my liberty and life, you forfeit your own liberty and life? Before
God and high heaven, is there a law for one man which is not a law for
every other man?

If you or any other speculator on my body and rights, wish to know
how I regard my rights, they need but come here, and lay their hands on
me to enslave me....

Yours, etc. J. W. Loguen

Frederick Douglass knew that the shame of slavery was not just the South's, that the
whole nation was complicit in it. On the Fourth of July, 1852, he gave an Independence
Day address:

Fellow Citizens: Pardon me, and allow me to ask, why am I called upon to
speak here today? What have I or those I represent to do with your
national independence? Are the great principles of political freedom and
of natural justice, embodied in that Declaration of Independence,
extended to us? And am I, therefore, called upon to bring our humble
offering to the national altar, and to confess the benefits, and express
devout gratitude for the blessings resulting from your independence to
us?...

What to the American slave is your Fourth of July? I answer, a day
that reveals to him more than all other days of the year, the gross injustice
and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. 'In him your celebration is
a sham; your boasted liberty an unholy license; your national greatness,
swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your
denunciation of tyrants, brass-fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty
and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and
thanksgivings, with all your religious parade and solemnity, are to him
mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy—a thin veil to
cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a
nation of the earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than are
the people of these United States at this very hour.
Go where you may, search where you will, roam through all the monarchies and despotisms of the Old World, travel through South America, search out every abuse and when you have found the last, lay your facts by the side of the everyday practices of this nation, and you will say with me that, for revolting barbarity and shameless hypocrisy, America reigns without a rival...

Ten years after Nat Turner’s rebellion, there was no sign of black insurrection in the South. But that year, 1841, one incident took place which kept alive the idea of rebellion. Slaves being transported on a ship, the Creole, overpowered the crew, killed one of them, and sailed into the British West Indies (where slavery had been abolished in 1833). England refused to return the slaves (there was much agitation in England against American slavery), and this led to angry talk in Congress of war with England, encouraged by Secretary of State Daniel Webster. The Colored Peoples Press denounced Webster’s "bullying position," and, recalling the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, wrote:

If war be declared... Will we fight in defense of a government which denies us the most precious right of citizenship?... The States in which we dwell have twice availed themselves of our voluntary services, and have repaid us with chains and slavery. Shall we a third time kiss the foot that crushes us? If so, we deserve our chains.

As the tension grew, North and South, blacks became more militant. Frederick Douglass spoke in 1857:

Let me give you a word of the philosophy of reforms. The whole history of the progress of human liberty shows that all concessions yet made to her august claims have been born of struggle. ... If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. The struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will... .

There were tactical differences between Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison, white abolitionist and editor of The Liberator—differences between black and white abolitionists in general. Blacks were more willing to engage in armed insurrection, but also more ready to use existing political devices—the ballot box, the Constitution—anything to further their cause. They were not as morally absolute in their tactics as the Garrisonians. Moral pressure would not do it alone, the blacks knew; it would take all sorts of tactics, from elections to rebellion.

How ever-present in the minds of northern Negroes was the question of slavery is shown by black children in a Cincinnati school, a private school financed by Negroes. The children were responding to the question "What do you think most about?" Only five answers remain in the records, and all refer to slavery. A seven-year-old child wrote:

Dear schoolmates, we are going next summer to buy a farm and to work part of the day and to study the other part if we live to see it and come home part of the day to see our mothers and sisters and cousins if we are got any and see our kind folks and to be good boys and when we get a man to get the poor slaves from bondage. And I am sorrow to hear that the boat... went down with 200 poor slaves from up the river. Oh how sorrow I am to hear that, it grieves my heart so drat I could faint in one minute.

White abolitionists did courageous and pioneering work, on the lecture platform, in newspapers, in the Underground Railroad. Black abolitionists, less publicized, were the backbone of the antislavery movement. Before Garrison published his famous Liberator in Boston in 1831, the first national convention of Negroes had been held, David Walker had already written his "Appeal," and a black abolitionist magazine named Freedom’s Journal had appeared. Of The Liberator’s first twenty-five subscribers, most were black.

Blacks had to struggle constantly with the unconscious racism of white abolitionists. They also had to insist on their own independent voice. Douglass wrote for The Liberator, but in 1847 started his own newspaper in Rochester, North Star, which led to a break with Garrison. In 1854, a conference of Negroes declared: "... it is emphatically our battle; no one else can fight it for us. ... Our relations to the Anti-Slavery movement must be and are changed. Instead of depending upon it we must lead it."

Certain black women faced the triple hurdle of being abolitionists in a slave society, of being black among white reformers, and of being women in a reform movement dominated by men. When Sojourner Truth rose to speak in 1853 in New York City at the Fourth National Woman's Rights Convention, it all came together. There was a hostile mob in the hall shouting, jeering, threatening. She said:

I know that it feels a kind o' hissin' and ticklin' like to see a colored woman get up and tell you about things, and Woman's Rights. We have all been thrown down so low that nobody thought we'd ever get up again; but ... we will come up again, and now I'm here. . . . we'll have our rights; see if we don't; and you can't stop us from them; see if you can. You may hiss as much as you like, but it is comin'.... I am sittin' among you to watch; and every once and awhile I will come out and tell you what time of night it is. ...

After Nat Turner's violent uprising and Virginia's bloody repression, the security system inside the South became tighter. Perhaps only an outsider could hope to launch a rebellion. It was such a person, a white man of ferocious courage and determination, John Brown, whose wild scheme it was to seize the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, and then set off a revolt of slaves through the South.

Harriet Tubman, 5 feet tall, some of her teeth missing, a veteran of countless secret missions piloting blacks out of slavery, was involved with John Brown and his plans. But sickness prevented her from joining him. Frederick Douglass too had met with Brown. He argued against the plan from the standpoint of its chances of success, but he admired the ailing man of sixty, tall, gaunt, white-haired.

Douglass was right; the plan would not work. The local militia, joined by a hundred marines under the command of Robert E. Lee, surrounded the insurgents. Although his men were dead or captured, John Brown refused to surrender: he barricaded himself in a small brick building near the gate of the arsenal. The troops battered down a door; a marine lieutenant moved in and struck Brown with his sword. Wounded, sick, he was interrogated. W. E. B. Du Bois, in his book John Brown, writes:

Picture the situation: An old and blood-bespattered man, half-dead from the wounds inflicted but a few hours before; a man lying in the cold and dirt, without sleep for fifty-five nerve-wrecking hours, without food for nearly as long, with the dead bodies of his two sons almost before his eyes, the piled corpses of his seven slain comrades near and afar, a wife and a bereaved family listening in vain, and a Lost Cause, the dream of a lifetime, lying dead in his heart. . . .

Lying there, interrogated by the governor of Virginia, Brown said: "You had better-all you people at the South-prepare yourselves for a settlement of this question. . . . You may dispose of me very easily-I am nearly disposed of now, but this question is still to be settled,—this Negro question, I mean; the end of that is not yet."

Du Bois appraises Brown's action:

If his foray was the work of a handful of fanatics, led by a lunatic and repudiated by the slaves to a man, then the proper procedure would have been to ignore the incident, quietly punish the worst offenders and either pardon the misguided leader or send him to an asylum.... While insisting that the raid was too hopelessly and ridiculously small to accomplish anything ... the state nevertheless spent $250,000 to punish the invaders, stationed from one to three thousand soldiers in the vicinity and threw the nation into turmoil.

In John Brown's last written statement, in prison, before he was hanged, he said: "I, John Brown, am quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but with blood." Ralph Waldo Emerson, not an activist himself, said of the execution of John Brown: "He will make the gallows holy as the cross."

Of the twenty-two men in John Brown's striking force, five were black. Two of these were killed on the spot, one escaped, and two were hanged by the authorities. Before his execution, John Copeland wrote to his parents:

Remember that if I must die I die in trying to liberate a few of my poor and oppressed people from my condition of servitude which Cod in his Holy Writ has hurled his most bitter denunciations against ...
I am not terrified by the gallows....

I imagine that I hear you, and all of you, mother, father, sisters, and brothers, say—"No, there is not a cause for which we, with less sorrow, could see you die." Believe me when I tell you, that though shut up in prison and under sentence of death, I have spent more happy hours here, and... I would almost as lief the now as at any time, for I feel that I am prepared to meet my Maker.

John Brown was executed by the state of Virginia with the approval of the national government. It was the national government which, while weakly enforcing the law ending the slave trade, sternly enforced the laws providing for the return of fugitives to slavery. It was the national government that, in Andrew Jackson's administration, collaborated with the South to keep abolitionist literature out of the mails in the southern states. It was the Supreme Court of the United States that declared in 1857 that the slave Dred Scott could not sue for his freedom because he was not a person, but property.

Such a national government would never accept an end to slavery by rebellion. It would end slavery only under conditions controlled by whites, and only when required by the political and economic needs of the business elite of the North. It was Abraham Lincoln who combined perfectly the needs of business, the political ambition of the new Republican party, and the rhetoric of humanitarianism. He would keep the abolition of slavery at the top of his list of priorities, but close enough to the top so it could be pushed there temporarily by abolitionist pressures and by practical political advantage.

Lincoln could skillfully blend the interests of the very rich and the interests of the black at a moment in history when these interests met. And he could link these two with a growing section of Americans, the white, up-and-coming, economically ambitious, politically active middle class. As Richard Hofstadter puts it:

Thoroughly middle class in his ideas, he spoke for those millions of Americans who had begun their lives as hired workers—as farm hands, clerks, teachers, mechanics, flatboatmen, and rail-splitters—and had passed into the ranks of landed farmers, prosperous grocers, lawyers, merchants, physicians and politicians.

Lincoln could argue with lucidity and passion against slavery on moral grounds, while acting cautiously in practical politics. He believed "that the institution of slavery is founded on injustice and bad policy, but that the promulgation of abolition doctrines tends to increase rather than abate its evils." (Put against this Frederick Douglass's statement on struggle, or Garrison's "Sir, slavery will not be overthrown without excitement, a most tremendous excitement") Lincoln read the Constitution strictly, to mean that Congress, because of the Tenth Amendment (reserving to the states powers not specifically given to the national government), could not constitutionally bar slavery in the states.

When it was proposed to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, which did not have the rights of a state that was directly under the jurisdiction of Congress, Lincoln said this would be Constitutional, but it should not be done unless the people in the District wanted it. Since most there were white, this killed the idea. As Hofstadter said of Lincoln's statement, it "breathes the fire of an uncompromising insistence on moderation."

Lincoln refused to denounce the Fugitive Slave Law publicly. He wrote to a friend: "I confess I hate to see the poor creatures hunted down... but I bite my lips and keep quiet." And when he did propose, in 1849, as a Congressman, a resolution to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, he accompanied this with a section requiring local authorities to arrest and return fugitive slaves coming into Washington. (This led Wendell Phillips, the Boston abolitionist, to refer to him years later as "that slaveshroud from Illinois"). He opposed slavery, but could not see blacks as equals, so a constant theme in his approach was to free the slaves and to send them back to Africa.

In his 1858 campaign in Illinois for the Senate against Stephen Douglas, Lincoln spoke differently depending on the views of his listeners (and also perhaps depending on how close it was to the election). Speaking in northern Illinois in July (in Chicago), he said:

Let us discard all this quibbling about this man and the other man, this race and that race and the other race being inferior, and therefore they must be placed in an inferior position. Let us discard all these things, and unite as one people throughout this land, until we shall once more stand up declaring that all men are created equal.

Two months later in Charleston, in southern Illinois, Lincoln told his audience:
I will say, then, that I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races (applause); that I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of making voters or jurors of negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people...

And inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race.

Behind the secession of the South from the Union, after Lincoln was elected President in the fall of 1860 as candidate of the new Republican party, was a long series of policy clashes between South and North. The clash was not over slavery as a moral institution—most northerners did not care enough about slavery to make sacrifices for it, certainly not the sacrifice of war. It was not a clash of peoples (most northern whites were not economically favored, not politically powerful; most southern whites were poor farmers, not decisionmakers) but of elites. The northern elite wanted economic expansion—free land, free labor, a free market, a high protective tariff for manufacturers, a bank of the United States. The slave interests opposed all that; they saw Lincoln and the Republicans as making continuation of their pleasant and prosperous way of life impossible in the future.

So, when Lincoln was elected, seven southern states seceded from the Union. Lincoln initiated hostilities by trying to repossess the federal base at Fort Sumter, South Carolina, and four more states seceded. The Confederacy was formed; the Civil War was on.

Lincoln's first Inaugural Address, in March 1861, was conciliatory toward the South and the seceded states: "I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where I believe I have no lawful to do and I have no inclination to do so." And with the war four months on, when General John C. Fremont in Missouri declared martial law and said slaves of owners resisting the United States were to be free, Lincoln countermanded this order. He was anxious to hold in the Union the slave states of Maryland, Kentucky, Missouri, and Delaware.

It was only as the war grew more bitter, the casualties mounted, desperation to win heightened, and the criticism of the abolitionists threatened to unravel the tattered coalition behind Lincoln that he began to act against slavery. Hofstadter puts it this way: "Like a delicate barometer, he recorded the trend of pressures, and as the Radical pressure increased he moved toward the left." Wendell Phillips said that if Lincoln was able to grow "it is because we have watered him."

Racism in the North was as entrenched as slavery in the South, and it would take the war to shake both. New York blacks could not vote unless they owned $250 in property (a qualification not applied to whites). A proposal to abolish this, put on the ballot in 1860, was defeated two to one (although Lincoln carried New York by 50,000 votes). Frederick Douglass commented: "The black baby of Negro suffrage was thought too ugly to exhibit on so grand an occasion. The Negro was stowed away like some people put out of sight their deformed children when company comes."

Wendell Phillips, with all his criticism of Lincoln, recognized the possibilities in his election. Speaking at the Tremont Temple in Boston the day after the election, Phillips said:

If the telegraph speaks truth, for the first time in our history the slave has chosen a President of the United States. . . . Not an Abolitionist, hardly an antislavery man. Mr. Lincoln consents to represent an antislavery idea. A pawn on the political chessboard, his value is in his position; with fair effort, we may soon change him for knight, bishop or queen, and sweep the board. (Applause)

Conservatives in the Boston upper classes wanted reconciliation with the South. At one point they stormed an abolitionist meeting at that same Tremont Temple, shortly after Lincoln's election, and asked that concessions be made to the South "in the interests of commerce, manufactures, agriculture."

The spirit of Congress, even after the war began, was shown in a resolution it passed in the summer of 1861, with only a few dissenting votes: "... this war is not waged... for any purpose of... overthrowing or interfering with the rights of established institutions of those states, but... to preserve the Union."
The abolitionists stepped up their campaign. Emancipation petitions poured into Congress in 1861 and 1862. In May of that year, Wendell Phillips said: "Abraham Lincoln may not wish it; he cannot prevent it; the nation may not will it, but the nation cannot prevent it. I do not care what men want or wish; the negro is the pebble in the cog-wheel, and the machine cannot go on until you get him out."

In July Congress passed a Confiscation Act, which enabled the freeing of slaves of those fighting the Union. But this was not enforced by the Union generals, and Lincoln ignored the nonenforcement. Garrison called Lincoln's policy "stumbling, halting, prevaricating, irresolute, weak, besotted," and Phillips said Lincoln was "a first-rate second-rate man."

An exchange of letters between Lincoln and Horace Greeley, editor of the New York Tribune, in August of 1862, gave Lincoln a chance to express views. Greeley wrote:

"Dear Sir. I do not intrude to tell you—for you must know already—that a great proportion of those who triumphed in your election ... are sorely disappointed and deeply pained by the policy you seem to be pursuing with regard to the slaves of rebels.... We require of you, as the first servant of the Republic, charged especially and preeminently with this duty, that you EXECUTE THE LAWS.... We think you are strangely and disastrously remiss... with regard to the emancipating provisions of the new Confiscation Act...."

"We think you are unduly influenced by the councils ... of certain politicians hailing from the Border Slave States."

Greeley appealed to the practical need of winning the war. "We must have scouts, guides, spys, coeks, teamsters, diggers and choppers from the blacks of the South, whether we allow them to fight for us or not.... I entreat you to render a hearty and unequivocal obedience to the law of the land."

"Lincoln had already shown his attitude by his failure to countermand an order of one of his commanders, General Henry Halleck, who forbade fugitive Negroes to enter his army's lines. Now he replied to Greeley:

"Dear Sir: ... I have not meant to leave any one in doubt. ... My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or destroy Slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could do it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about Slavery and the colored race, I do because it helps to save this Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union. ... I have here stated my purpose according to my view of official duty, and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men, everywhere, could be free. Yours. A. Lincoln."

So Lincoln distinguished between his "personal wish" and his "official duty."

"When in September 1862, Lincoln issued his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, it was a military move, giving the South four months to stop rebelling, threatening to emancipate their slaves if they continued to fight, promising to leave slavery untouched in states that came over to the North:

"That on the 1st day of January, AD 1863, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States shall be then, thenceforward and forever free."

Thus, when the Emancipation Proclamation was issued January 1, 1863, it declared slaves free in those areas still fighting against the Union (which it listed very carefully), and said nothing about slaves behind Union lines. As Hofstadter put it, the Emancipation Proclamation "had all the moral grandeur of a bill of lading." The London Spectator wrote concisely: "The principle is not that a human being cannot justly own another, but that he cannot own him unless he is loyal to the United States."
Limited as it was, the Emancipation Proclamation spurred antislavery forces. By the summer of 1864, 400,000 signatures asking legislation to end slavery had been gathered and sent to Congress, something unprecedented in the history of the country. That April, the Senate had adopted the Thirteenth Amendment, declaring an end to slavery, and in January 1865, the House of Representatives followed.

With the Proclamation, the Union army was open to blacks. And the more blacks entered the war, the more it appeared a war for their liberation. The more whites had to sacrifice, the more resentment there was, particularly among poor whites in the North, who were drafted by a law that allowed the rich to buy their way out of the draft for $300. And so the draft riots of 1863 took place, uprisings of angry whites in northern cities, their targets not the rich, far away, but the blacks, near at hand. It was an orgy of death and violence. A black man in Detroit described what he saw: a mob, with legs of beer on wagons, armed with clubs and bricks, marching through the city, attacking black men, women, children. He heard one man say: "If we are not to be killed up then we will kill every one in this town."

The Civil War was one of the bloodiest in human history up to that time: 600,000 dead on both sides, in a population of 30 million—the equivalent, in the United States of 1978, with a population of 250 million, of 5 million dead. As the battles became more intense, as the bodies piled up, as war fatigue grew, the existence of blacks in the South, 4 million of them, became more and more a hindrance to the South, and more and more an opportunity for the North. Du Bois, in Black Reconstruction, pointed this out:

... these slaves had enormous power in their hands. Simply by stopping work, they could threaten the Confederacy with starvation. By walking into the Federal camps, they showed to doubting Northerners the easy possibility of using them thus, but by the same gesture, depriving their enemies of their use in just these fields....

It was this plain alternative that brought Lee's sudden surrender.
Either the South must make terms with its slaves, free them, use them to fight the North, and thereafter no longer treat them as bondsmen; or they could surrender to the North with the assumption that the North after the war must help them to defend slavery, as it had before.

George Rawick, a sociologist and anthropologist, describes the development of blacks up to and into the Civil War:

The slaves went from being frightened human beings, thrown among strange men, including fellow slaves who were not their kinsmen and who did not speak their language or understand their customs and habits, to what W. E. B. DuBois once described as the general strike whereby hundreds of thousands of slaves deserted the plantations, destroying the Smith's ability to supply its army.

Black women played an important part in the war, especially toward the end. Sojourner Truth, the legendary ex-slave who had been active in the women's rights movement, became recruiter of black troops for the Union army, as did Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin of Boston. Harriet Tubman raided plantations, leading black and white troops, and in one expedition freed 750 slaves. Women moved with the colored regiments that grew as the Union army marched through the South, helping their husbands, enduring terrible hardships on the long military treks, in which many children died. They suffered the fate of soldiers, as in April 1864, when Confederate troops at Fort Pillow, Kentucky, massacred Union soldiers who had surrendered-black and white, along with women and children in an adjoining camp.

It has been said that black acceptance of slavery is proved by the fact that during the Civil War, when there were opportunities for escape, most slaves stayed on the plantation. In fact, half a million ran away—about one in five, a high proportion when one considers that there was great difficulty in knowing where to go and how to live.

The owner of a large plantation in South Carolina and Georgia wrote in 1862: "This war has taught us the perfect impossibility of placing the least confidence in the negro. In too numerous instances those we esteemed the most have been the first to desert us." That same year, a lieutenant in the Confederate army and once mayor of Savannah, Georgia, wrote: "I deeply regret to learn that the Negroes still continue to desert to the enemy."
A minister in Mississippi wrote in the fall of 1862: "On my arrival I was surprised to hear that our negroes stampeded to the Yankees last night or rather a portion of them... I think every one, but with one or two exceptions will go to the Yankees. Eliza and her family are certain to go. She does not conceal her thoughts but plainly manifests her opinions by her conduct—insolent and insulting." And a woman's plantation journal of January 1865:

The people are all idle on the plantations, most of them seeking their own pleasure. Many servants have proven faithful, others false and rebellious against all authority and restraint... Their condition is one of perfect anarchy and rebellion. They have placed themselves in perfect antagonism to their owners and to all government and control... Nearly all the house servants have left their homes; and from most of the plantations they have gone in a body.

Also in 1865, a South Carolina planter wrote to the New York Tribune that

"The conduct of the Negro in the late crisis of our affairs has convinced me that we were all laboring under a delusion... I believed that these people were content, happy, and attached to their masters. But events and reflection have caused me to change these positions... If they were content, happy and attached to their masters, why did they desert him in the moment of his need and flock to an enemy, whom they did not know, and thus left their perhaps really good masters whom they did know from infancy?"

Genovese notes that the war produced no general rising of slaves, but: "In Lafayette County, Mississippi, slaves responded to the Emancipation Proclamation by driving off their overseers and dividing the land and implements among themselves." Aptheker reports a conspiracy of Negroes in Arkansas in 1861 to kill their enslavers. In Kentucky that year, houses and barns were burned by Negroes, and in the city of New Castle slaves paraded through the city "singing political songs, and shouting for Lincoln," according to newspaper accounts. After the Emancipation Proclamation, a Negro waiter in Richmond, Virginia, was arrested for leading "a servile plot," while in Yazoo City, Mississippi, slaves burned the courthouse and fourteen homes.

There were special moments: Robert Smalls (later a South Carolina Congressman) and other blacks took over a steamship, The Planter, and sailed it past the Confederate guns to deliver it to the Union navy.

Most slaves neither submitted nor rebelled. They continued to work, waiting to see what happened. When opportunity came, they left, often joining the Union army. Two hundred thousand blacks were in the army and navy, and 38,000 were killed. Historian James McPherson says: "Without their help, the North could not have won the war as soon as it did, and perhaps it could not have won at all."

What happened to blacks in the Union army and in the northern cities during the war gave some hint of how limited the emancipation would be, even with full victory over the Confederacy. Off-duty black soldiers were attacked in northern cities, as in Zanesville, Ohio, in February 1864, where cries were heard to "kill the nigger." Black soldiers were used for the heaviest and dirtiest work, digging trenches, hauling logs and cannon, loading ammunition, digging wells for white regiments. White privates received $13 a month; Negro privates received $10 a month.

Late in the war, a black sergeant of the Third South Carolina Volunteers, William Walker, marched his company to his captain's tent and ordered them to stack arms and resign from the army as a protest against what he considered a breach of contract, because of unequal pay. He was court-martialed and shot for mutiny. Finally, in June 1864, Congress passed a law granting equal pay to Negro soldiers.

The Confederacy was desperate in the latter part of the war, and some of its leaders suggested the slaves, more and more an obstacle to their cause, be enlisted, used, and freed. After a number of military defeats, the Confederate secretary of war, Judah Benjamin, wrote in late 1864 to a newspaper editor in Charleston: "... It is well known that General Lee, who commands so largely the confidence of the people, is strongly in favor of our using the negroes for defense, and emancipating them, if necessary, for that purpose...."

One general, indignant, wrote: "If slaves will make good soldiers, our whole theory of slavery is wrong."
By early 1865, the pressure had mounted, and in March President Davis of the Confederacy signed a "Negro Soldier Law" authorizing the enlistment of slaves as soldiers, to be freed by consent of their owners and their state governments. But before it had any significant effect, the war was over.

Former slaves, interviewed by the Federal Writers' Project in the thirties, recalled the war's end. Susie Melton:

I was a young gal, about ten years old, and we done heard that Lincoln gonna turn the niggers free. Ol' missus say there wasn't nothin' to it. Then a Yankee soldier told someone in Williamsburg that Lincoln done signed the 'mancipation. Was wintertime and mighty cold that night, but everybody commenced getting ready to leave. Didn't care nothin' about missus - was going to the Union lines. And all that night the niggers danced and sang right out in the cold. Next morning at day break we all started out with blankets and clothes and pots and pans and chickens piled on our backs, 'cause missus said we couldn't take no horses or carts. And as the sun come up over the trees, the niggers started to singing: Sun, you be here and I'll be gone
Sun, you be here and I'll be gone
Sun, you be here and I'll be gone
Bye, bye, don't grieve after me
Won't give you my place, not for yours
Bye, bye, don't grieve after me
Cause you be here and I'll be gone.

Anna Woods:

We wasn't there in Texas long when the soldiers marched in to tell us that we were free. ... I remembers one woman. She jumped on a barrel and she shouted. She jumped off and she shouted. She jumped hack on again and shouted some more. She kept that up for a long time, just jumping on a barrel and back off again.

Annie Mae Weathers said:

I remember hearing my pa say that when somebody came and hollered, "You niggers is free at last," say he just dropped his hoc and said in a queer voice, "Thank God for that."

The Federal Writers' Project recorded an ex-slave named Fannie Berry:

Niggers shoutin' and clappin' hands and singin'! Chillun runnin' all over the place beatin' time and yellin'! Everybody happy. Sho' did some celebratin'. Run to the kitchen and shout in the window:

"Mammy, don't you cook no more.
You's free! You's free!"

Many Negroes understood that their status after the war, whatever their situation legally, would depend on whether they owned the land they worked on or would be forced to be semislaves for others. In 1863, a North Carolina Negro wrote that "if the strict law of right and justice is to be observed, the country around me is the entailed inheritance of the Americans of African descent, purchased by the invaluable labor of our ancestors, through a life of tears and groans, under the lash and yoke of tyranny."

Abandoned plantations, however, were leased to former planters, and to white men of the North. As one colored newspaper said: "The slaves were made serfs and chained to the soil. ... Such was the boasted freedom acquired by the colored man at the hands of the Yankee."

Under congressional policy approved by Lincoln, the property confiscated during the war under the Confiscation Act of July 1862 would revert to the heirs of the Confederate owners. Dr. John Rock, a black physician in Boston, spoke at a meeting: "Why talk about compensating masters? Compensate them for what? What do you owe them? What does the slave owe them? What does society owe them? Compensate the master? ... It is the slave who ought to be compensated. The property of the South is by right the property of the slave."
Some land was expropriated on grounds the taxes were delinquent, and sold at auction. But only a few blacks could afford to buy this. In the South Carolina Sea Islands, out of 16,000 acres up for sale in March of 1863, freedmen who pooled their money were able to buy 2,000 acres, the rest being bought by northern investors and speculators. A freedman on the Islands dictated a letter to a former teacher now in Philadelphia:

My Dear Young Missus: Do, my missus, tell Linkum dat we wants land - disbery land dat is rich wid de sweat ob de face and de blood ob we back.. .. We could a bin buy all we want, but dey make de lots too big, and cut we out.

De word cum from Mass Linkum's self, dat we take out claims and hold on ter um, an' plant um, and he will see dat we get um, every man ten or twenty acre. We too We stake out an' list, but fore de time for plant, dese commissionaries sells to white folks all de best land. Where Linkum?

In early 1865, General William T. Sherman held a conference in Savannah, Georgia, with twenty Negro ministers and church officials, mostly former slaves, at which one of them expressed their need: "The way we can best take care of ourselves is to have land, and till it by our labor..." Four days later Sherman issued "Special Field Order No. 15," designating the entire southern coastline 30 miles inland for exclusive Negro settlement. Freedmen could settle there, taking no more than 40 acres per family. By June 1865, forty thousand freedmen had moved onto new farms in this area. But President Andrew Johnson, in August of 1865, restored this land to the Confederate owners, and the freedmen were forced off, some at bayonet point.

Ex-slave Thomas Hall told the Federal Writers' Project:

Lincoln got the praise for freeing us, but did he do it? He gave us freedom without giving us any chance to live to ourselves and we still had to depend on the southern white man for work, food, and clothing, and he held us out of necessity and want in a state of servitude but little better than slavery.

The American government had set out to fight the slave states in 1861, not to end slavery, but to retain the enormous national territory and market and resources. Yet, victory required a crusade, and the momentum of that crusade brought new forces into national politics: more blacks determined to make their freedom mean something; more whites—whether Freedman's Bureau officials, or teachers in the Sea Islands, or "carpetbaggers" with various mixtures of humanitarianism and personal ambition—concerned with racial equality. There was also the powerful interest of the Republican party in maintaining control over the national government, with the prospect of southern black votes to accomplish this. Northern businessmen, seeing Republican policies as beneficial to them, went along for a while.

The result was that brief period after the Civil War in which southern Negroes voted, elected blacks to state legislatures and to Congress, introduced free and racially mixed public education to the South. A legal framework was constructed. The Thirteenth Amendment outlawed slavery: "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or in any place subject to their jurisdiction." The Fourteenth Amendment repudiated the prewar Dred Scott decision by declaring that "all persons born or naturalized in the United States" were citizens. It also seemed to make a powerful statement for racial equality, severely limiting "states' rights":

No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

The Fifteenth Amendment said: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

Congress passed a number of laws in the late 1860s and early 1870s in the same spirit—laws making it a crime to deprive Negroes of their rights, requiring federal officials to enforce those rights, giving Negroes the right to enter contracts and buy property without discrimination. And in 1875, a Civil Rights Act outlawed the exclusion of Negroes from hotels, theaters, railroads, and other public accommodations.
With these laws, with the Union army in the South as protection, and a civilian army of officials in the Freedman’s Bureau to help them, southern Negroes came forward, voted, formed political organizations, and expressed themselves forcefully on issues important to them. They were hampered in this for several years by Andrew Johnson, Vice-President under Lincoln, who became President when Lincoln was assassinated at the close of the war. Johnson vetoed bills to help Negroes; he made it easy for Confederate states to come back into the Union without guaranteeing equal rights to blacks. During his presidency, these returned southern states enacted “black codes,” which made the freed slaves like serfs, still working the plantations. For instance, Mississippi in 1865 made it illegal for freedmen to rent or lease farmland, and provided for them to work under labor contracts which they could not break under penalty of prison. It also provided that the courts could assign black children under eighteen who had no parents, or whose parents were poor, to forced labor, called apprenticeships - with punishment for runaways.

Andrew Johnson clashed with Senators and Congressmen who, in some cases for reasons of justice, in others out of political calculation, supported equal rights and voting for the freedman. These members of Congress succeeded in impeaching Johnson in 1868, using as an excuse that he had violated some minor statute, but the Senate fell one vote short of the two-thirds required to remove him from office. In the presidential election of that year, Republican Ulysses Grant was elected, winning by 300,000 votes, with 700,000 Negroes voting, and so Johnson was out as an obstacle. Now the southern states could come back into the Union only approving the new Constitutional amendments.

Whatever northern politicians were doing to help their cause, southern blacks were determined to make the most of their freedom, in spite of their lack of land and resources. Study of blacks in Alabama in the first years after the war by historian Peter Kolchin finds that they began immediately asserting their independence of whites, forming their own churches, becoming politically active, strengthening their family ties, trying to educate the children. Kolchin disagrees with the contention of some historians that slavery had create a "Sambo" mentality of submission among blacks. "As soon as they were free, these Negroes were now elected to southern state legislatures, although in all these they were a minority except in the lower house of the South Carolina legislature. A great propaganda campaign was undertaken North and South (one which lasted well into the twentieth century, in the history textbooks of American schools) to show that blacks were inept, lazy, corrupt, and ruinous to the governments of the South when they were in office. Undoubtedly there was corruption, but one could hardly claim that blacks had invented political conniving, especially in the bizarre climate of financial finagling North and South after the Civil War.

It was true that the public debt of South Carolina, $7 million in 1865, went up to $29 million in 1873, but the new legislature introduced free public schools for the first time into the state. Not only were seventy thousand Negro children going to school by 1876 where none had gone before, but fifty thousand white children were going to school where only twenty thousand had attended in 1860.

Black voting in the period after 1869 resulted in two Negro members of the U.S. Senate (Hiram Revels and Blanche Bruce, both from Mississippi), and twenty Congressmen, including eight from South Carolina, four from North Carolina, three from Alabama, and one each from the other former Confederate states. (This list would dwindle rapidly after 1876; the last black left Congress in 1901.)

A Columbia University scholar of the twentieth century, John Burgess, referred to Black Reconstruction as follows:

In place of government by the most intelligent and virtuous part of the people for the benefit of the governed, here was government by the most ignorant and vicious part of the population.... A black skin means membership in a race of men which has never of itself succeeded in subjecting passion to reason; has never, therefore, created civilization of any kind.
One has to measure against those words the black leaders in the postwar South. For instance, Henry MacNeal Turner, who had escaped from peonage on a South Carolina plantation at the age of fifteen, taught himself to read and write, read law books while a messenger in a lawyer's office in Baltimore, and medical books while a handyman in a Baltimore medical school, served as chaplain to a Negro regiment, and then was elected to the first postwar legislature of Georgia. In 1868, the Georgia legislature voted to expel all its Negro members-two senators, twenty-five representatives- and Turner spoke to the Georgia House of Representatives (a black woman graduate student at Atlanta University later brought his speech to light):

Mr. Speaker... I wish the members of this House to understand the position that I take. I hold that I am a member of this body. I shall neither fawn or cringe before any party, nor stoop to beg them my ... I am here to demand my rights, and to hurl thunderbolts at the men who would dare to cross the threshold of my manhood....

The scene presented in this House, today, is one unparalleled in the history of the world.... Never, in the history of the world, has a man been arraigned before a body clothed with legislative, judicial or executive functions, charged with the offense of being of a darker hue than his fellow-men.... it has remained for the State of Georgia, in the very heart of the nineteenth century, to call a man before the bar, and there charge him with an act for which he is no more responsible than for the head which he carries upon his shoulders. The Anglo-Saxon race, sir, is a most surprising one.... I was not aware that there was in the character of that race so much cowardice, or so much pusillanimity. ... I tell you, sir, that this is a question which will not the today. This event shall be remembered by posterity for ages yet to come, and while the sun shall continue to climb the hills of heaven....

... we are told mat if black men want to speak, they must speak through white trumpets; if black men want their sentiments expressed, they must be adulterated and sent through white messengers, who will quibble, and equivocate, and evade, as rapidly as me pendulum of a clock.. ...

The great question, sir is this: Am I a man? If I am such, I claim the rights of a man....

Why, sir, though we are not white, we have accomplished much. We have pioneered civilization here; we have built up your country; we have worked in your fields, and garnered your harvests, for two hundred and fifty years! And what do we ask of you in return? Do we ask for compensation for the sweat our fathers bore for you-for the rears you have caused, and the hearts you have broken, and the lives you have curtailed, and the blood you have spilled? Do we ask retaliation? We ask it not. We are willing to let the dead past bury its but we ask you now for our RIGHTS....

As black children went to school, they were encouraged by teachers, black and white, to express themselves freely, sometimes in catechism style. The records of a school in Louisville, Kentucky:

TEACHER: Now children, you don't think white people are any better than you because they have straight hair and white faces?
STUDENTS: No, sir.
TEACHER: No, they are no better, but they are different, they possess great power, they formed this great government, they control this vast country. ... Now what makes them different from you?
STUDENTS: Money!
TEACHER: Yes, but what enabled them to obtain it? How did they get money?
STUDENTS: Got it off us, stole it off we all!
Black women helped rebuild the postwar South. Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, born free in Baltimore, self-supporting from the age of thirteen, working as a nursemaid, later as an abolitionist lecturer, reader of her own poetry, spoke all through the southern states after the war. She was a feminist, participant in the 1866 Woman's Rights Convention, and founder of the National Association of Colored Women. In the 1890s she wrote the first novel published by a black woman: *Iola Leroy or Shadows Uplifted*. In 1878 she described what she had seen and heard recently in the South:

An acquaintance of mine, who lives in South Carolina, and has been engaged in mission work, reports that, in supporting the family, women are the mainstay; that two-thirds of the truck gardening is done by them in South Carolina; that in the city they are more industrious than the men. . . . When the men lose their work through their political affiliations, the women stand by them, and say, "stand by your principles."

Through all the struggles to gain equal rights for blacks, certain black women spoke out on their special situation. Sojourner Truth, at a meeting of the American Equal Rights Association, said:

There is a great stir about colored men getting their rights, but not a word about the colored women; and if colored men get their rights, and not colored women theirs, you see the colored men will be masters over the women, and it will be just as bad as it was before. So I am for keeping the thing going while things are stirring; because if we wait till it is still, it will take a great while to get it going again... .

I am above eighty years old; it is about time for me to be going. I have been forty years a slave and forty years free, and would be here forty years more to have equal rights for all. I suppose I am kept here because some-thing remains for me to do; I suppose I am yet to help break the chain. I have done a great deal of work; as much as a man, but did not get so much pay. I used to work in the field and bind grain, keeping with the cradler; but men doing no more, got twice as much pay... I suppose I am about the only colored woman that goes about to speak for the rights of the colored women. I want to keep the thing stirring, now that the ice is cracked. . . .

The Constitutional amendments were passed, the laws for racial equality were passed, and the black man began to vote and to hold office. Cut so long as the Negro remained dependent on privileged whites for work, for the necessities of life, his vote could be bought or taken away by threat of force. Thus, laws calling for equal treatment became meaningless. While Union troops-including colored troops-remained in the South, this process was delayed. But the balance of military powers began to change.

The southern white oligarchy used its economic power to organize the Ku Klux Klan and other terrorist groups. Northern politicians began to weigh the advantage of the political support of impoverished blacks-maintained in voting and office only by force-against the more stable situation of a South returned to white supremacy, accepting Republican dominance and business legislation. It was only a matter of time before blacks would be reduced once again to conditions not far from slavery.

Violence began almost immediately with the end of the war. In Memphis, Tennessee, in May of 1866, whites on a rampage of murder killed forty-six Negroes, most of them veterans of the Union army, as well as two white sympathizers. Five Negro women were raped. Ninety homes, twelve schools, and four churches were burned. In New Orleans, in the summer of 1866, another riot against blacks killed thirty-five Negroes and three whites.

Mrs. Sarah Song testified before a congressional investigating committee:

Have you been a slave?

I have been a slave.

What did you see of the rioting?

I saw them kill my husband; it was on Tuesday night, between ten and eleven o'clock; he was shot in the head while he was in bed sick, . . . There were between twenty and thirty men. . . . They came into the room. . . . Then one stopped back and shot him . . . he was not a yard from him; he put the pistol to his head and shot him three times. . . . Then one of them kicked him, and

Another shot him again when he was down. ... He never spoke after he fell. They then went running right off and did not come back again. ...

The violence mounted through the late 1860s and early 1870s as the Ku Klux Klan organized raids, lynchings, beatings, burnings. For Kentucky alone, between 1867 and 1871, the National Archives lists 116 acts of violence. A sampling:

1. A mob visited Harrodsburg in Mercer County to take from jail a man named Robertson Nov. 14, 1867...
5. Sam Davis hung by a mob in Harrodsburg, May 28, 1868.
7. Geo. Roger hung by a mob in Bradsfordville Martin County July 11, 1868...
10. Silas Woodford age sixty badly beaten by disguised mob. ...

A Negro blacksmith named Charles Caldwell, born a slave, later elected to the Mississippi Senate, and known as "a notorious and turbulent Negro" by whites, was shot at by the son of a white Mississippi judge in 1868. Caldwell fired back and killed the man. Tried by an all-white jury, he argued self-defense and was acquitted, the first Negro to kill a white in Mississippi and go free after a trial. But on Christmas Day 1875, Caldwell was shot to death by a white gang. It was a sign. The old white rulers were taking back political power in Mississippi, and everywhere else in the South.

As white violence rose in the 1870s, the national government, even under President Grant, became less enthusiastic about defending blacks, and certainly not prepared to arm them. The Supreme Court played its gyroscope role of pulling the other branches of government back to more conservative directions when they went too far. It began interpreting the Fourteenth Amendment—passed presumably for racial equality—in a way that made it impotent for this purpose. In 1883, the Civil Rights Act of 1875, outlawing discrimination against Negroes using public facilities, was nullified by the Supreme Court, which said: "Individual invasion of individual rights is not the subject-matter of the amendment." The Fourteenth Amendment, if said, was aimed at state action only. "No state shall ..."

A remarkable dissent was written by Supreme Court Justice John Harlan, himself a former slaveowner in Kentucky, who said there was Constitutional justification for banning private discrimination. He noted that the Thirteenth Amendment, which banned slavery, applied to individual plantation owners, not just the state. He then argued that discrimination was a badge of slavery and similarly outlawable. He pointed also to the first clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, saying that anyone born in the United States was a citizen, and to the clause in Article 4, Section 2, saying "the citizens of each State shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States."

Harlan was fighting a force greater than logic or justice; the mood of the Court reflected a new coalition of northern industrialists and southern businessmen-planters. The culmination of this mood came in the decision of 1896, Plessy v. Ferguson, when the Court ruled that a railroad could segregate black and white if the segregated facilities were equal:

The object of the amendment was undoubtedly to enforce the absolute equality of the two races before the law, but in the nature of things it could not have been intended to abolish distinctions based upon color, or to enforce social, as distinguished from political equality, or a commingling of the two races upon terms unsatisfactory to either.

Harlan again dissented: "Our Constitution is color-blind. ..."

It was the year 1877 that spelled out clearly and dramatically what was happening. When the year opened, the presidential election of the past November was in bitter dispute. The Democratic candidate, Samuel Tilden, had 184 votes and needed one more to be elected: his popular vote was greater by 250,000. The Republican candidate, Rutherford Hayes, had 166 electoral votes. Three states not yet counted had a total of 19 electoral votes; if Hayes could get all of those, he would have 185 and be President. This is what his managers proceeded to arrange. They made concessions to the Democratic party and the white South, including an agreement to remove Union troops from the South, the last military obstacle to the reestablishment of white supremacy there.

Northern political and economic interests needed powerful allies and stability in the face of national crisis. The country had been in economic depression since 1873, and by 1877 farmers and workers were beginning to rebel. As C. Vann Woodward puts it in his history of the 1877 Compromise, Reunion and Reaction:
It was a depression year, the worst year of the severest depression yet experienced. In the East labor and the unemployed were in a bitter and violent temper. . . . Out West a tide of agrarian radicalism was rising. . . . From both East and West came threats against the elaborate structure of protective tariffs, national banks, railroad subsidies and monetary arrangements upon which the new economic order was founded.

It was a time for reconciliation between southern and northern elites. Woodward asks: "... could the South be induced to combine with the Northern conservatives and become a prop instead of a menace to the new capitalist order?"

With billions of dollars' worth of slaves gone, the wealth of the old South was wiped out. They now looked to the national government for help: credit, subsidies, flood control projects. The United States in 1865 had spent $103,294,501 on public works, but the South received only $9,469,363. For instance, while Ohio got over a million dollars, Kentucky, her neighbor south of the river, got $25,000. While Maine got $2 million, Mississippi got $136,000. While $83 million had been given to subsidize the Union Pacific and Central Pacific railroads, thus creating a transcontinental railroad through the North, there was no such subsidy for the South. So one of the things the South looked for was federal aid to the Texas and Pacific Railroad.

Woodward says: "By means of appropriations, subsidies, grants, and bonds such as Congress had so lavishly showered upon capitalist enterprise in the North, the South might yet mend its fortunes- or at any rate the fortunes of a privileged elite." These privileges were sought with the backing of poor white farmers, brought into the new alliance against blacks. The farmers wanted railroads, harbor improvements, flood control, and, of course, land-not knowing yet how these would be used not to help them but to exploit them.

For example, as the first act of the new North-South capitalist cooperation, the Southern Homestead Act, which had reserved all federal lands one-third of the area of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi for farmers who would work the land, was repealed. This enabled absentee speculators and lumbermen to move in and buy up much of this land.

And so the deal was made. The proper committee was set up by both houses of Congress to decide where the electoral votes would go. The decision was: they belonged to Hayes, and he was now President.

As Woodward sums it up:

The Compromise of 1877 did not restore the old order in the South. ... It did assure the dominant whites political autonomy and non-intervention in matters of race policy and promised them a share in the blessings of the new economic order. In return, the South became, in effect, a satellite of the dominant region. . . .

The importance of the new capitalism in overturning what black power existed in the postwar South is affirmed by Horace Mann Bond's study of Alabama Reconstruction, which shows, after 1868, "a struggle between different financiers." Yes, racism was a factor but "accumulations of capital, and the men who controlled them, were as unaffected by attitudinal prejudices as it is possible to be. Without sentiment, without emotion, those who sought profit from an exploitation of Alabama's natural resources turned other men's prejudices and attitudes to their own account, and did so with skill and a ruthless acumen."

It was an age of coal and power, and northern Alabama had both. "The bankers in Philadelphia and New York, and even in London and Paris, had known this for almost two decades. The only thing lacking was transportation." And so, in the mid-1870s, Bond notes, northern bankers began appearing in the directories of southern railroad lines. J. P. Morgan appears by 1875 as director for several lines in Alabama and Georgia.

In the year 1886, Henry Grady, an editor of the Atlanta Constitution, spoke at a dinner in New York. In the audience were J. P. Morgan, H. M. Flagler (an associate of Rockefeller), Russell Sage, and Charles Tiffany. His talk was called "The New South" and his theme was: Let bygones be bygones; let us have a new era of peace and prosperity; the Negro was a prosperous laboring class; he had the fullest protection of the laws and the friendship of the southern people. Grady joked about the northerners who sold slaves to the South and said the South could now handle its own race problem. He received a rising ovation, and the band played "Dixie."

That same month, an article in the New York Daily Tribune:
The leading coal and iron men of the South, who have been in this city during the last ten days, will go home to spend the Christmas holidays, thoroughly satisfied with the business of the year, and more than hopeful for the future. And they have good reason to be. The time for which they have been waiting for nearly twenty years, when Northern capitalists would be convinced not only of the safety but of the immense profits to be gained from the investment of their money in developing the fabulously rich coal and iron resources of Alabama, Tennessee, and Georgia, has come at last.

The North, it must be recalled, did not have to undergo a revolution in its thinking to accept the subordination of the Negro. When the Civil War ended, nineteen of the twenty-four northern states did not allow blacks to vote. By 1900, all the southern states, in new constitutions and new statutes, had written into law the disfranchisement and segregation of Negroes, and a New York Times editorial said: "Northern men ... no longer denounce the suppression of the Negro vote... The necessity of it under the supreme law of self-preservation is candidly recognized."

While not written into law in the North, the counterpart in racist thought and practice was there. An item in the Boston Transcript, September 25, 1895:

A colored man who gives his name as Henry W. Turner was arrested last night on suspicion of being a highway robber. He was taken this morning to Black's studio, where he had his picture taken for the "Rogue's Gallery". That angered him, and he made himself as disagreeable as he possibly could. Several times along the way to the photographer's home he resisted the police with all his might, and had to be clubbed.

In the postwar literature, images of the Negro came mostly from southern white writers like Thomas Nelson Page, who in his novel Red Rock referred to a Negro character as "a hyena in a cage," "a reptile," "a species of worm," "a wild beast." And, interspersed with paternalistic urgings of friendship for the Negro, Joel Chandler Harris, in his Uncle Remus stories, would have Uncle Remus say: "Put a spellin-book in a nigger's han', en right den en dar' you loozes a plowhand. I kin take a barl' stave an fling sense inter a nigger in one minnit dan all de schoolhouses betwixt dis en de state er Midgigin."

In this atmosphere it was no wonder that those Negro leaders most accepted in white society, like the educator Booker T. Washington, a one-time White House guest of Theodore Roosevelt, urged Negro political passivity. Invited by the white organizers of the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta in 1895 to speak, Washington urged the southern Negro to "cast down your bucket where you are"—that is, to stay in the South, to be farmers, mechanics, domestics, perhaps even to attain to the professions. He urged white employers to hire Negroes rather than immigrants of "strange tongue and habits." Negroes, "without strikes and labor wars," were the "most patient, faithful, law-abiding and unsentimental people that the world has seen." He said: "The wisest among my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremest folly."

Perhaps Washington saw this as a necessary tactic of survival in a time of hangings and burnings of Negroes throughout the South. It was a low point for black people in America. Thomas Fortune, a young black editor of the New York Globe, testified before a Senate committee in 1883 about the situation of the Negro in the United States. He spoke of "widespread poverty," of government betrayal, of desperate Negro attempts to educate themselves.

The average wage of Negro farm laborers in the South was about fifty cents a day, Fortune said. He was usually paid in "orders," not money, which he could use only at a store controlled by the planter, "a system of fraud." The Negro farmer, to get the wherewithal to plant his crop, had to promise it to the store, and when everything was added up at the end of the year he was in debt, so his crop was constantly owed to someone, and he was tied to the land, with the records kept by the planter and storekeeper so that the Negroes "are swindled and kept forever in debt." As for supposed laziness, "I am surprised that a larger number of them do not go to fishing, hunting, and loafing."

Fortune spoke of "the penitentiary system of the South, with its infamous chain-gang... . the object being to terrorize the blacks and furnish victims for contractors, who purchase the labor of these wretches from the State for a song... The white man who shoots a negro always goes free, while the negro who steals a hog is sent to the chain-gang for ten years."
Many Negroes fled. About six thousand black people left Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi and migrated to Kansas to escape violence and poverty. Frederick Douglass and some other leaders thought this was a wrong tactic, but migrants rejected such advice. "We have found no leader to trust but God overhead of us," one said. Henry Adams, another black migrant, illiterate, a veteran of the Union army, told a Senate committee in 1880 why he left Shreveport, Louisiana: "We seed that the South - every state in the South - had got into the hands of the very men that held us slaves."

Even in the worst periods, southern Negroes continued to meet, to organize in self-defense. Herbert Aptheker reprints thirteen documents of meetings, petitions, and appeals of Negroes in the 1880s - in Baltimore, Louisiana, the Carolinas, Virginia, Georgia, Florida, Texas, Kansas - showing the spirit of defiance and resistance of blacks all over the South. This, in the face of over a hundred lynchings a year by this time.

Despite the apparent hopelessness of this situation, there were black leaders who thought Booker T. Washington wrong in advocating caution and moderation. John Hope, a young black man in Georgia, who heard Washington's Cotton Exposition speech, told students at a Negro college in Nashville, Tennessee:

If we are not striving for equality, in heaven's name for what are we living? I regard it as cowardly and dishonest for any of our colored men to tell white people or colored people that we are not struggling for equality. . . . Yes, my friends, I want equality, Nothing less. . . . Now catch your breath, for I am going to use an adjective: I am going to say we demand social equality.... I am no wild beast, nor am I an unclean thing.

Rise, Brothers! Come let us possess this land. . . Be discontented. Be dissatisfied. . . Be as restless as the tempestuous billows on the boundless sea. Let your discontent break mountain-high against the wall of prejudice, and swamp it to the very foundation. . . .

Another black man, who came to teach at Atlanta University, W. E. B. Du Bois, saw the late-nineteenth-century betrayal of the Negro as part of a larger happening in the United States, something happening not only to poor blacks but to poor whites. In his book Black Reconstruction, written in 1935, he said:

God wept; but that mattered little to an unbelieving age; what mattered most was that the world wept and still is weeping and blind with tears and blood. For there began to rise in America in 1876 a new capitalism and a new enslavement of labor.

Du Bois saw this new capitalism as part of a process of exploitation and bribery taking place in all the "civilized" countries of the world:

Home labor in cultured lands, appeased and misled by a ballot whose power the dictatorship of vast capital strictly curtailed, was bribed by high wage and political office to unite in an exploitation of white, yellow, brown and black labor, in lesser lands. . .

Was Du Bois right - that in that growth of American capitalism, before and after the Civil War, whites as well as blacks were in some sense becoming slaves?
LESSON: On the Road to Equality: Differing Perspectives Concerning the Woman Suffrage Movement

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- How did the women’s suffrage movement challenge the customs, traditions, laws, and religious views of the 19th and early 20th centuries in order to secure political rights for women?
- How did the views of prominent African American leaders including Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois shed further light on the Woman Suffrage Movement during an era when suffragists were either aggressively challenged or staunchly supported?

NYS STANDARDS: UNITED STATES HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT

- Standard 1 “History of the United States and New York”
- Standard 5 “Civics, Citizenship, and Government.”

PRIMARY SOURCES:


OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to:

- Record answers/assumptions in accordance with the questions based on each document.
- Use new terminology that relates to issues surrounding the Woman Suffrage Movement.
- Identify the concerns of elite members of the African American community as they relate to the woman suffragist movement.
- Distinguish between supportive and contradictory positions among African Americans towards the woman suffrage movement.
- Formulate a broader view of the circumstances that the champions for women’s rights experienced in their quest for equality.
NCSS STANDARDS: SOCIAL STUDIES

Time, Continuity, and Change
- Establishing a sense of order and time
- Understanding connections to the past

People, Places, and the Environment
- Making connections between people, political ideologies and environments
- Analyzing human behavior (both positive and negative) in relation to social and political environments

Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- Understanding how institutions are formed, what controls and influences them, and how they can be maintained and/or changed

Civic Ideas and Practices
- Establishing and understanding methods for involvement in public policy
- Analyzing how the democratic process can influence public policies

MARZANO STRATEGIES:

- Activating prior knowledge
- Identifying similarities and differences
- Cooperative learning
- Cues, questions, and advanced organizers
- Homework and practice (learning extension)

Providing Background: All “Men” are Created Equal?

- Students will be asked, “According to what we have already learned about the Constitution and the abolition of slavery, why would women seek equality under United States federal law?”
- Also, they will be asked if they have any background information on the Woman Suffrage Movement including any of the prominent figures that were involved throughout the lengthy movement.
- After receiving data-based questions, students will be reminded that many Americans had a different mindset during the early part of the 20th century that would likely be unrecognizable in today’s society. This includes a significant proportion of the U.S. population who did not want women to vote, including African American men.
Finally, it will be stressed to students that the woman suffrage movement was no small feat, but rather, that it was a long, laborious, and sometimes dangerous road to equality that was scrutinized by both supporters and detractors alike.


- Following the brief lecture, students will be given the data-base question sheets and asked to answer the questions that chronologically correlate with it. After working independently for approximately 25 to 35 minutes, students will be asked to gather together in small groups to discuss and ultimately clarify the important points concerning the data-based question sheet(s) as it relates to the topic of the woman suffrage movement in early 20th century America.
- Ideally, this will encourage students to create their own questions about the topic resulting in discussion from the class as a whole.
- The class as a whole will review the data-based question sheets and further clarify (and perhaps predict) what happens as the history of the Woman Suffrage Movement unfolds. Overall, these activities will be reflected as a form of reciprocal teaching. It will engage both students and teacher with the use of prior knowledge.
- Finally, there should be a discussion that deals with how the Woman Suffrage Movement changed the course of American history and how it still affects us today.

Closure: Discussing the Legacies of Woman Suffrage in America:

- In closing, the class will discuss some of the legacies/outcomes that the Woman Suffrage Movement had on the United States. It will be mentioned how inequality at that time spread across both gender and racial lines and that there were differing views even among those who were oppressed. In other words, not everyone strove for equality in the same manner since all situations were unique.
- However, it would be essential to remind students that America is what it is today in terms of racial and gender equality because of the brave men and women who upheld the democratic principles that this nation was founded upon despite facing overwhelming odds.
Independent Practice: Taking it to the Streets:

- Students will be requested to find someone within the community who either lived during the suffragist movement or was close to someone who did (family or friend) and interview the particular person based on some of the learning that we have come across throughout the 3 lessons that we had in class. I will encourage them to bring a tape recorder (if permissible) so that the atmosphere of the interview can be more fluid and relaxed.

- Naturally, I would like students to come back into the classroom eagerly willing to share their accounts with others since the interviews will serve as the most useful primary sources of history.
Document Based Question

This question is based on the accompanying documents (1-3). The question is designed to test your ability to work with historical documents. Some of the documents have been edited for the purposes of the question. As you analyze the documents, take into account the source of each document and any point of view that may be presented in the document.

Historical Context:
During the latter part of the 19th and early 20th centuries, male black leaders developed contrasting views towards woman suffrage, particularly Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois. Many African Americans who supported woman suffrage likely anticipated racial equality as a whole. However, others remained aloof and faced the issues of equality based on gender and race in different ways.

Task:
Using information from the documents and your knowledge of United States history, answer the questions that follow each document in part A. Your answers to the questions will help you write the part B of the essay in which you will be asked to:

- Identify and explain reasons why some black Americans actively participated in the woman suffrage movement.

- Identify and explain reasons why some black Americans distanced themselves from the woman suffragist movement.
"I am in favor of every measure that will give to woman, the opportunity to develop to the highest possible extent, her moral, intellectual, and physical nature so that she may make her life as useful to herself and to others as it is possible to make it. I do not, at the present moment, see that this involves the privilege or the duty, as you choose to look upon it, of voting.

"The influence of woman is already enormous in this country. She exerts, not merely in the homes, but through the schools and in the press, a powerful and helpful influence upon affairs. It is not clear to me that she would exercise any greater or more beneficent influence upon the world than she now does, if the duty of taking an active part in politics were imposed on her.

"But this is a question concerning which, it seems to me, the women know better than men, and I am willing to leave it to their deliberate judgment."

Booker T. Washington, 1908

Describe some reasons that Booker T. Washington gave for not actively supporting the woman suffrage movement.
Document 2

“The signs of awakening womanhood in the world today are legion. The best novelists are women. Some of the keenest essayists and graceful writers of verse are women. Women are among the greatest leaders of social reforms, and at last in England they are fighting, literally fighting, for their political rights. Of course there are fools a plenty to tell them they don’t need the ballot and to feed them the ancient taffy about homes and babies.”

W.E.B. Du Bois, 1909

Are Du Bois’ descriptions of women customary to them during this era?
Document 3

“The statement that woman is weaker than man is sheer rot: It is the same sort of thing that we hear about ‘darker races’ and ‘lower classes.’ Difference, either physical or spiritual, does not argue weakness or inferiority....”

W.E.B. Du Bois, 1915

How does Du Bois parallel his personal views of inequality with those of the woman suffrage movement?
Martin Luther King, Jr. and Lessons of Nonviolent Resistance
"Letter from Birmingham Jail"

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:
- Were Martin Luther King, Jr.'s concepts relating to nonviolent forms of resistance towards segregation laws an effective means of securing civil rights for black Americans in the 1960s?
- How did King conceptualize nonviolent resistance as it related to civil disobedience?
- What were the primary criticisms of King’s methods of nonviolent resistance and what alternatives were proposed that opposed his philosophies of securing civil rights for black Americans in the 1960s?

NCSS STANDARDS: SOCIAL STUDIES
Culture
- Helping to understand ourselves both as individuals and as members of different racial and political groupings
- Understanding how American culture is dynamic and ever-changing

Time, Continuity, and Change
- Establishing a sense of order and time
- Understanding connections to the past
- Reconstructing the past in order to make sense of the present in terms of culture, race, and politics

People, Places, and the Environment
- Making cultural, racial, and political connections between people and their environment
- Analyzing human behavior (both positive and negative) in relation to a turbulent environment
- Application of geographic understanding

Individual Development and Identity
- Analyzing personal identity through cultural, institutional, and racial influences
- Examining the social processes that influence identity formation

Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- Understanding how institutions are formed, what controls and influences them, how they can be maintained, altered, and ultimately changed
• Examining how institutions and groups change over time

Civic Ideals and Practices
• Establishing and understanding methods for involvement in public policy
• Understanding how the democratic process can influence policies

NYS STANDARDS:

Geography
• Analyzing the role and influence of geography on historical and cultural development
• Relating the past to geographic issues today

Diversity, Justice, Civic Values, Human Rights
• Activists and leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. developed strategies to secure civil rights for African Americans

Change, Power
• Groups in society turn to violence (and nonviolence) to reach their goals

Reform in America
• Understanding the role of progressivism in government action

MARZANO STRATEGIES:
• Identifying similarities and differences
• Summarizing and note-taking
• Cooperative learning
• Cues, questions, and advanced organizers
• Assessing prior knowledge
• Intrinsic learning

AGENDA:

Class Notes: Activating Prior Knowledge of American Civil Rights
• Teacher will provide information and background on Civil Rights Movement and more specifically, upon Martin Luther King, Jr.’s legendary “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.”
Cooperative Learning: Identifying, Comparing Similarities and Differences

- Students will be provided important primary resources in order to bolster their general understanding of the American Civil Rights movement, and more specifically the events surrounding Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 10 day 1963 jail term for violating a court injunction against any "parading, demonstrating, boycotting, trespassing and picketing" in Birmingham.

- Other primary resources will include:
  - King's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"
  - King's "I Have a Dream" speech/transcript
  - Birmingham, Alabama's Racial Segregation Ordinances
  - Letter from the group of Birmingham clergymen
  - Photographs- fire hoses against Birmingham demonstrators
  - Voter registration forms (Mississippi)
  - Joseph H. Jackson speech/transcript (promoting court/legal methods)

- In addition to the above primary resources, this educational portfolio will contain questions that will help facilitate learning and interpretation among students.

- Students will thus gather in small groupings and gather knowledge/data from the primary resources and have the opportunity to distinguish similarities and differences among the schools of thought proposed by King, the Birmingham clergymen, and Dr. Joseph H. Jackson concerning civil rights for African Americans.

Classroom Open Forum

- King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail" as opposed to public statements of the Birmingham clergymen and Joseph Jackson's 1964 Address to the National Baptist Convention creates for a natural discussion of the pros and cons for the use of nonviolent resistance in America.

- For background information, students will have the opportunity read over a few sections of the Birmingham Segregations Ordinances written in 1951 in order to provide context of the discrimination that black Americans faced during that era.

- Following this, students will read the "Letter to Martin Luther King, Jr. from a group of Clergymen" (April 12, 1963) and answer guided questions (attached)

- Students will be able to engage in an open forum-style discussion concerning the aforementioned opposing views on both sides of this critical civil rights occurrence in our nation's history.
American Civil Rights through the ideas of Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Students will have the opportunity to listen and/or read excerpts from Martin Luther King, Jr.’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech in order to gain further understanding and background of his methods/messages of nonviolent resistance.
- This will enhance student interest in King’s overall rhetoric and become an excellent bridge to the next primary document concerning his “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.” Along with this document, students will be given a series of questions in order to facilitate learning. (Attached)
- In addition, students will be provided visual imagery of the Birmingham police brutality through Charles Moore’s infamous photos of a water hydrant used as a weapon against demonstrators. (Attached)

Different Means to the Same End: Dr. Joseph H. Jackson’s Vision on Civil Rights
- During the civil rights era, a venerable critic of Dr. Martin Luther King offered different ideas for African Americans to secure civil rights in America. Dr. Joseph H. Jackson, president of the National Baptist Convention (also known as the “black pope”) believed that King’s rhetoric of nonviolent civil disobedience undermined the proper legislation that black America desperately needed.
- Jackson promoted the belief that legislature and the rule of law in general were the most effective methods to gain civil rights for blacks. He emphasized that it was important to work within the structures that the United States was founded upon in order to seek self-improvement. Much of the basis of his argument/overall philosophy alluded to the Brown v. Board of Education decision (1954) and the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- Jackson’s point of view will be further emphasized with the support of a Charles Moore photograph that reflects an image of registering black voters in Mississippi.

Think-Pair-Share Activity: Differentiating Philosophies of Social Change
- With a partner, students will create a list of items that they consider critically important for each of the schools of thought posed by Martin Luther King, Jr., Dr. Joseph H. Jackson, and the Birmingham clergymen.
- Pairs will team up to create groups of 4 and will compare lists.

Closure: Nonviolent Resistance or Law and Order?
- Class, as a whole, will discuss the different schools of thought proposed by Martin Luther King, Jr., Dr. Joseph Jackson, and the Birmingham clergymen and make conclusions about how each made an impact on this historic moment during the Civil Rights era.
• The general debate will revolve around the contrasting differences between Non-Violence forms of American protest (as reflected by King) and those promoted through the lens of Law & Order (as reflected by Jackson and the clergymen).

Independent Practice: What Do the Teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Mean to Me?

• Students will use class notes, activities, and discussions in order to reflect what they have learned from Martin Luther King on a personal level.
• Students will complete Dr. King’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech (August 1963) in the context of today’s society/world. They will replace King’s original words (found within each of the parenthesis) with their own thoughts. In this manner, students will be able to assess themselves in an introspective manner.
Guided Questions for the “Letter to Martin Luther King, Jr. from a Group of Clergymen” (April 12, 1963):

- What recommendations did a group of Alabama clergymen propose in order to resolve the racial divide in Montgomery, Alabama?

- What were the clergymen’s primary criticisms of the King-driven protests and demonstrations that took place in Montgomery?

- Why do you think that the conduct of Birmingham police officers and local media were given a pass by the clergymen?
“Letter from Birmingham Jail” Guided Questions:

- Why does Martin Luther King, Jr. consider himself an “outsider” in terms of his advocated protest movement(s) in Birmingham?

- How does King justify civil disobedience without lending itself to anarchy?

- In his letter, King refers to “eternal and natural law.” Why?

- Explain why King believes that the protest movement promotes social reform?

- At that time, why does King remain optimistic about the possibility for equality of African Americans?

- Describe King’s response to the clergymen’s support of the Birmingham police officers during the protests.
Guided Questions for Joseph H. Jackson’s “Annual Address to the National Baptist Convention” (September 10, 1964):

- Why did Jackson believe that civil disobedience and forms of nonviolent protest were counterproductive towards the overall civil rights movement?

- What recommendations does Jackson make instead of “street marches, boycotts, and picket lines” in order to attain equal rights?

- What important historical events does Jackson use in order to support the basis of his philosophies?
What Do the Teachings of Martin Luther King, Jr. Mean to Me?

I have a dream that one day this nation will: (rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.")

I have a dream that one day: (on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood.)

I have a dream that one day: (even the state of Mississippi, a desert state, sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.)

I have a dream that: (my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.)
I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day: (the state of Alabama, whose governor’s lips are presently dripping the words of interposition and nullification, will be transformed into a situation where little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers.)

This is our hope... With this faith we will be able to: (hew out of the mountains of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords
of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when: (all of God's children will be able to sing with a new meaning, My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring.)
"Letter from a Birmingham Jail [King, Jr.]

16 April 1963
My Dear Fellow Clergymen:
While confined here in the Birmingham city jail, I came across your recent statement calling my present activities "unwise and untimely." Seldom do I pause to answer criticism of my work and ideas. If I sought to answer all the criticisms that cross my desk, my secretaries would have little time for anything other than such correspondence in the course of the day, and I would have no time for constructive work. But since I feel that you are men of genuine good will and that your criticisms are sincerely set forth, I want to try to answer your statement in what I hope will be patient and reasonable terms.

I think I should indicate why I am here in Birmingham, since you have been influenced by the view which argues against "outsiders coming in." I have the honor of serving as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization operating in every southern state, with headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. We have some eighty-five affiliated organizations across the South, and one of them is the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights. Frequently we share staff, educational and financial resources with our affiliates. Several months ago the affiliate here in Birmingham asked us to be on call to engage in a nonviolent direct action program if such were deemed necessary. We readily consented, and when the hour came we lived up to our promise. So I, along with several members of my staff, am here because I was invited here. I am here because I have organizational ties here.

But more basically, I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Just as the prophets of the eighth century B.C. left their villages and carried their "thus saith the Lord" far beyond the boundaries of their home towns, and just as the Apostle Paul left his village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to the far corners of the Greco Roman world, so am I compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my own home town. Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonian call for aid.

Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial "outside agitator" idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere within its bounds.

You deplore the demonstrations taking place in Birmingham. But your statement, I am sorry to say, fails to express a similar concern for the conditions that brought about the demonstrations. I am sure that none of you would want to rest content with the superficial kind of social analysis that deals merely with effects and does not grapple with underlying causes. It is unfortunate that demonstrations are taking place in Birmingham, but it is even more unfortunate that the city's white power structure left the Negro community with no alternative.

In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation; self-purification; and direct action. We have gone through all these steps in Birmingham. There can be no gainsaying the fact that racial injustice engulfs this community. Birmingham is probably the most thoroughly segregated city in the United States. Its ugly record of brutality is widely known. Negroes have experienced grossly unjust treatment in the courts. There have been more unsolved bombings of Negro homes and churches in Birmingham than in any other city in the nation. These are the hard, brutal facts of the case. On the basis of these conditions, Negro leaders

http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html
12/13/2010
sought to negotiate with the city fathers. But the latter consistently refused to engage in good faith negotiation.

Then, last September, came the opportunity to talk with leaders of Birmingham’s economic community. In the course of the negotiations, certain promises were made by the merchants—for example, to remove the stores’ humiliating racial signs. On the basis of these promises, the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth and the leaders of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights agreed to a moratorium on all demonstrations. As the weeks and months went by, we realized that we were the victims of a broken promise. A few signs, briefly removed, returned; the others remained. As in so many past experiences, our hopes had been blasted, and the shadow of deep disappointment settled upon us. We had no alternative except to prepare for direct action, whereby we would present our very bodies as a means of laying our case before the conscience of the local and the national community. Mindful of the difficulties involved, we decided to undertake a process of self purification. We began a series of workshops on nonviolence, and we repeatedly asked ourselves: "Are you able to accept blows without retaliating?" "Are you able to endure the ordeal of jail?" We decided to schedule our direct action program for the Easter season, realizing that except for Christmas, this is the main shopping period of the year. Knowing that a strong economic-withdrawal program would be the by product of direct action, we felt that this would be the best time to bring pressure to bear on the merchants for the needed change.

Then it occurred to us that Birmingham’s mayoral election was coming up in March, and we speedily decided to postpone action until after election day. When we discovered that the Commissioner of Public Safety, Eugene "Bull" Connor, had piled up enough votes to be in the run off, we decided again to postpone action until the day after the run off so that the demonstrations could not be used to cloud the issues. Like many others, we waited to see Mr. Connor defeated, and to this end we endured postponement after postponement. Having aided in this community need, we felt that our direct action program could be delayed no longer.

You may well ask: "Why direct action? Why sit ins, marches and so forth? Isn't negotiation a better path?" You are quite right in calling for negotiation. Indeed, this is the very purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored. My citing the creation of tension as part of the work of the nonviolent resister may sound rather shocking. But I must confess that I am not afraid of the word "tension." I have earnestly opposed violent tension, but there is a type of constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth. Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, so must we see the need for nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood. The purpose of our direct action program is to create a situation so crisis packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation. I therefore concur with you in your call for negotiation. Too long has our beloved Southland been bogged down in a tragic effort to live in monologue rather than dialogue.

One of the basic points in your statement is that the action that I and my associates have taken in Birmingham is untimely. Some have asked: "Why didn’t you give the new city administration time to act?" The only answer that I can give to this query is that the new Birmingham administration must be prodded about as much as the outgoing one, before it will act. We are sadly mistaken if we feel that the election of Albert Boutwell as mayor will bring the millennium to Birmingham. While Mr. Boutwell is a much more gentle person than Mr. Connor, they are both segregationists, dedicated to maintenance of the status quo. I have hope that Mr. Boutwell will be reasonable enough to see the futility of massive resistance to desegregation. But he will not see this without pressure from devotees of civil rights. My
friends, I must say to you that we have not made a single gain in civil rights without determined legal and nonviolent pressure. Lamentably, it is an historical fact that privileged groups seldom give up their privileges voluntarily. Individuals may see the moral light and voluntarily give up their unjust posture; but, as Reinhold Niebuhr has reminded us, groups tend to be more immoral than individuals.

We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have yet to engage in a direct action campaign that was "well timed" in the view of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word "Wait!" It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This "Wait" has almost always meant "Never." We must come to see, with one of our distinguished jurists, that "justice too long delayed is justice denied."

We have waited for more than 340 years for our constitutional and God given rights. The nations of Asia and Africa are moving with jetlike speed toward gaining political independence, but we still creep at horse and buggy pace toward gaining a cup of coffee at a lunch counter. Perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say, "Wait." But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate-filled policemen curse, kick and even kill your black brothers and sisters; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six year old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see ominous clouds of inferiority beginning to form in her little mental sky, and see her beginning to distort her personality by developing an unconscious bitterness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five year old son who is asking: "Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?"; when you take a cross county drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading "white" and "colored"; when your first name becomes "nigger," your middle name becomes "boy" (however old you are) and your last name becomes "John," and your wife and mother are never given the respected title "Mrs."; when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tiptoe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next, and are plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of "nobodiness"--then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into the abyss of despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience. You express a great deal of anxiety over our willingness to break laws. This is certainly a legitimate concern. Since we so diligently urge people to obey the Supreme Court's decision of 1954 outlawing segregation in the public schools, at first glance it may seem rather paradoxical for us consciously to break laws. One may well ask: "How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?" The answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust. I would be the first to advocate obeying just laws. One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that "an unjust law is no law at all."

Now, what is the difference between the two? How does one determine whether a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. To put it in the terms of St. Thomas Aquinas: An unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal law and natural law. Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality. It gives the segregator a false sense of superiority and the segregated a false sense of inferiority. Segregation, to use the terminology of the
Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, substitutes an "I it" relationship for an "I thou" relationship and ends up relegating persons to the status of things. Hence segregation is not only politically, economically and sociologically unsound, it is morally wrong and sinful. Paul Tillich has said that sin is separation. Is not segregation an existential expression of man's tragic separation, his awful estrangement, his terrible sinfulness? Thus it is that I can urge men to obey the 1954 decision of the Supreme Court, for it is morally right; and I can urge them to disobey segregation ordinances, for they are morally wrong.

Let us consider a more concrete example of just and unjust laws. An unjust law is a code that a numerical or power majority group compels a minority group to obey but does not make binding on itself. This is difference made legal. By the same token, a just law is a code that a majority compels a minority to follow and that it is willing to follow itself. This is sameness made legal. Let me give another explanation. A law is unjust if it is inflicted on a minority that, as a result of being denied the right to vote, had no part in enacting or devising the law. Who can say that the legislature of Alabama which set up that state's segregation laws was democratically elected? Throughout Alabama all sorts of devious methods are used to prevent Negroes from becoming registered voters, and there are some counties in which, even though Negroes constitute a majority of the population, not a single Negro is registered. Can any law enacted under such circumstances be considered democratically structured?

Sometimes a law is just on its face and unjust in its application. For instance, I have been arrested on a charge of parading without a permit. Now, there is nothing wrong in having an ordinance which requires a permit for a parade. But such an ordinance becomes unjust when it is used to maintain segregation and to deny citizens the First-Amendment privilege of peaceful assembly and protest.

I hope you are able to see the distinction I am trying to point out. In no sense do I advocate evading or defying the law, as would the rabid segregationist. That would lead to anarchy. One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty. I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law.

Of course, there is nothing new about this kind of civil disobedience. It was evidenced sublimely in the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to obey the laws of Nebuchadnezzar, on the ground that a higher moral law was at stake. It was practiced superbly by the early Christians, who were willing to face hungry lions and the excruciating pain of chopping blocks rather than submit to certain unjust laws of the Roman Empire. To a degree, academic freedom is a reality today because Socrates practiced civil disobedience. In our own nation, the Boston Tea Party represented a massive act of civil disobedience.

We should never forget that everything Adolf Hitler did in Germany was "legal" and everything the Hungarian freedom fighters did in Hungary was "illegal." It was "illegal" to aid and comfort a Jew in Hitler's Germany. Even so, I am sure that, had I lived in Germany at the time, I would have aided and comforted my Jewish brothers. If today I lived in a Communist country where certain principles dear to the Christian faith are suppressed, I would openly advocate disobeying that country's antireligious laws.

I must make two honest confessions to you, my Christian and Jewish brothers. First, I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Councilor the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action"; who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the
Negro to wait for a "more convenient season." Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.

I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice and that when they fail in this purpose they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress. I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that the present tension in the South is a necessary phase of the transition from an obnoxious negative peace, in which the Negro passively accepted his unjust plight, to a substantive and positive peace, in which all men will respect the dignity and worth of human personality. Actually, we who engage in nonviolent direct action are not the creators of tension. We merely bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive. We bring it out in the open, where it can be seen and dealt with. Like a boil that can never be cured so long as it is covered up but must be opened with all its ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, injustice must be exposed, with all the tension its exposure creates, to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured.

In your statement you assert that our actions, even though peaceful, must be condemned because they precipitate violence. But is this a logical assertion? Isn't this like condemning a robbed man because his possession of money precipitated the evil act of robbery? Isn't this like condemning Socrates because his unswerving commitment to truth and his philosophical inquiries precipitated the act by the misguided populace in which they made him drink hemlock? Isn't this like condemning Jesus because his unique God consciousness and never ceasing devotion to God's will precipitated the evil act of crucifixion? We must come to see that, as the federal courts have consistently affirmed, it is wrong to urge an individual to cease his efforts to gain his basic constitutional rights because the quest may precipitate violence. Society must protect the robbed and punish the robber. I had also hoped that the white moderate would reject the myth concerning time in relation to the struggle for freedom. I have just received a letter from a white brother in Texas. He writes: "All Christians know that the colored people will receive equal rights eventually, but it is possible that you are in too great a religious hurry. It has taken Christianity almost two thousand years to accomplish what it has. The teachings of Christ take time to come to earth." Such an attitude stems from a tragic misconception of time, from the strangely irrational notion that there is something in the very flow of time that will inevitably cure all ills. Actually, time itself is neutral; it can be used either destructively or constructively. More and more I feel that the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than have the people of good will. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people. Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co workers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation. We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right. Now is the time to make real the promise of democracy and transform our pending national elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood. Now is the time to lift our national policy from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of human dignity.

You speak of our activity in Birmingham as extreme. At first I was rather disappointed that fellow clergymen would see my nonviolent efforts as those of an extremist. I began thinking about the fact that I stand in the middle of two opposing forces in the Negro community. One is a force of complacency, made up in part of Negroes who, as a result of long years of oppression, are so drained of self respect and a sense of "somebodiness" that they have adjusted to segregation; and in part of a few middle-class Negroes who, because of a degree of academic and economic security and because in some ways they profit by segregation, have become insensitive to the problems of the masses. The other force is one of bitterness and hatred, and it comes perilously close to advocating violence. It is expressed in the various black nationalist groups that are springing up across the nation, the largest and best known being Elijah Muhammad's Muslim movement. Nourished by the Negro's frustration over the continued existence of
racial discrimination, this movement is made up of people who have lost faith in America, who have absolutely repudiated Christianity, and who have concluded that the white man is an incorrigible "devil."

I have tried to stand between these two forces, saying that we need emulate neither the "do nothingism" of the complacent nor the hatred and despair of the black nationalist. For there is the more excellent way of love and nonviolent protest. I am grateful to God that, through the influence of the Negro church, the way of nonviolence became an integral part of our struggle. If this philosophy had not emerged, by now many streets of the South would, I am convinced, be flowing with blood. And I am further convinced that if our white brothers dismiss as "rabble rousers" and "outside agitators" those of us who employ nonviolent direct action, and if they refuse to support our nonviolent efforts, millions of Negroes will, out of frustration and despair, seek solace and security in black nationalist ideologies--a development that would inevitably lead to a frightening racial nightmare.

Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself, and that is what has happened to the American Negro. Something within has reminded him of his birthright of freedom, and something without has reminded him that it can be gained. Consciously or unconsciously, he has been caught up by the Zeitgeist, and with his black brothers of Africa and his brown and yellow brothers of Asia, South America and the Caribbean, the United States Negro is moving with sense of great urgency toward the promised land of racial justice. If one recognizes this vital urge that has engulfed the Negro community, one should readily understand why public demonstrations are taking place. The Negro has many pent up resentments and latent frustrations, and he must release them. So let him march; let him make prayer pilgrimages to the city hall; let him go on freedom rides -and try to understand why he must do so. If his repressed emotions are not released in nonviolent ways, they will seek expression through violence; this is not a threat but a fact of history. So I have not said to my people: "Get rid of your discontent." Rather, I have tried to say that this normal and healthy discontent can be channeled into the creative outlet of nonviolent direct action. And now this approach is being termed extremist. But though I was initially disappointed at being categorized as an extremist, as I continued to think about the matter I gradually gained a measure of satisfaction from the label. Was not Jesus an extremist for love: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." Was not Amos an extremist for justice: "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever flowing stream." Was not Paul an extremist for the Christian gospel: "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Was not Martin Luther an extremist: "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise, so help me God." And John Bunyan: "I will stay in jail to the end of my days before I make a butchery of my conscience." And Abraham Lincoln: "This nation cannot survive half slave and half free." And Thomas Jefferson: "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal . . ." So the question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be. Will we be extremists for hate or for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice or for the extension of justice? In that dramatic scene on Calvary's hill three men were crucified. We must never forget that all three were crucified for the same crime--the crime of extremism. Two were extremists for immorality, and thus fell below their environment. The other, Jesus Christ, was an extremist for love, truth and goodness, and thereby rose above his environment. Perhaps the South, the nation and the world are in dire need of creative extremists.

I had hoped that the white moderate would see this need. Perhaps I was too optimistic; perhaps I expected too much. I suppose I should have realized that few members of the oppressor race can understand the deep groans and passionate yearnings of the oppressed race, and still fewer have the vision to see that injustice must be rooted out by strong, persistent and determined action. I am thankful, however, that some of our white brothers in the South have grasped the meaning of this social revolution and committed themselves to it. They are still all too few in quantity, but they are big in quality. Some - such as Ralph McGill, Lillian Smith, Harry Golden, James McBride Dabbs, Ann Braden and Sarah

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Patton Boyle--have written about our struggle in eloquent and prophetic terms. Others have marched with us down nameless streets of the South. They have languished in filthy, roach infested jails, suffering the abuse and brutality of policemen who view them as "dirty nigger-lovers." Unlike so many of their moderate brothers and sisters, they have recognized the urgency of the moment and sensed the need for powerful "action" antidotes to combat the disease of segregation. Let me take note of my other major disappointment. I have been so greatly disappointed with the white church and its leadership. Of course, there are some notable exceptions. I am not unmindful of the fact that each of you has taken some significant stands on this issue. I commend you, Reverend Stallings, for your Christian stand on this past Sunday, in welcoming Negroes to your worship service on a nonsegregated basis. I commend the Catholic leaders of this state for integrating Spring Hill College several years ago.

But despite these notable exceptions, I must honestly reiterate that I have been disappointed with the church. I do not say this as one of those negative critics who can always find something wrong with the church. I say this as a minister of the gospel, who loves the church; who was nurtured in its bosom; who has been sustained by its spiritual blessings and who will remain true to it as long as the cord of life shall lengthen.

When I was suddenly catapulted into the leadership of the bus protest in Montgomery, Alabama, a few years ago, I felt we would be supported by the white church. I felt that the white ministers, priests and rabbis of the South would be among our strongest allies. Instead, some have been outright opponents, refusing to understand the freedom movement and misrepresenting its leaders; all too many others have been more cautious than courageous and have remained silent behind the anesthetizing security of stained glass windows.

In spite of my shattered dreams, I came to Birmingham with the hope that the white religious leadership of this community would see the justice of our cause and, with deep moral concern, would serve as the channel through which our just grievances could reach the power structure. I had hoped that each of you would understand. But again I have been disappointed.

I have heard numerous southern religious leaders admonish their worshipers to comply with a desegregation decision because it is the law, but I have longed to hear white ministers declare: "Follow this decree because integration is morally right and because the Negro is your brother." In the midst of blatant injustices inflicted upon the Negro, I have watched white churchmen stand on the sideline and mouth pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities. In the midst of a mighty struggle to rid our nation of racial and economic injustice, I have heard many ministers say: "Those are social issues, with which the gospel has no real concern." And I have watched many churches commit themselves to a completely other worldly religion which makes a strange, un-Biblical distinction between body and soul, between the sacred and the secular.

I have traveled the length and breadth of Alabama, Mississippi and all the other southern states. On sweltering summer days and crisp autumn mornings I have looked at the South's beautiful churches with their lofty spires pointing heavenward. I have beheld the impressive outlines of her massive religious education buildings. Over and over I have found myself asking: "What kind of people worship here? Who is their God? Where were their voices when the lips of Governor Barnett dripped with words of interposition and nullification? Where were they when Governor Wallace gave a clarion call for defiance and hatred? Where were their voices of support when bruised and weary Negro men and women decided to rise from the dark dungeons of complacency to the bright hills of creative protest?"

Yes, these questions are still in my mind. In deep disappointment I have wept over the laxity of the church. But be assured that my tears have been tears of love. There can be no deep disappointment where there is not deep love. Yes, I love the church. How could I do otherwise? I am in the rather unique

http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html 12/13/2010
position of being the son, the grandson and the great grandson of preachers. Yes, I see the church as the body of Christ. But, oh! How we have blemished and scarred that body through social neglect and through fear of being nonconformists.

There was a time when the church was very powerful—in the time when the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society. Whenever the early Christians entered a town, the people in power became disturbed and immediately sought to convict the Christians for being "disturbers of the peace" and "outside agitators." But the Christians pressed on, in the conviction that they were "a colony of heaven," called to obey God rather than man. Small in number, they were big in commitment. They were too God-intoxicated to be "astronomically intimidated." By their effort and example they brought an end to such ancient evils as infanticide and gladiatorial contests. Things are different now. So often the contemporary church is a weak, ineffectual voice with an uncertain sound. So often it is an archdefender of the status quo. Far from being disturbed by the presence of the church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the church's silent—and often even vocal—sanction of things as they are.

But the judgment of God is upon the church as never before. If today's church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century. Every day I meet young people whose disappointment with the church has turned into outright disgust.

Perhaps I have once again been too optimistic. Is organized religion too inextricably bound to the status quo to save our nation and the world? Perhaps I must turn my faith to the inner spiritual church, the church within the church, as the true ekklesia and the hope of the world. But again I am thankful to God that some noble souls from the ranks of organized religion have broken loose from the paralyzing chains of conformity and joined us as active partners in the struggle for freedom. They have left their secure congregations and walked the streets of Albany, Georgia, with us. They have gone down the highways of the South on tortuous rides for freedom. Yes, they have gone to jail with us. Some have been dismissed from their churches, have lost the support of their bishops and fellow ministers. But they have acted in the faith that right defeated is stronger than evil triumphant. Their witness has been the spiritual salt that has preserved the true meaning of the gospel in these troubled times. They have carved a tunnel of hope through the dark mountain of disappointment. I hope the church as a whole will meet the challenge of this decisive hour. But even if the church does not come to the aid of justice, I have no despair about the future. I have no fear about the outcome of our struggle in Birmingham, even if our motives are at present misunderstood. We will reach the goal of freedom in Birmingham and all over the nation, because the goal of America is freedom. Abused and scorned though we may be, our destiny is tied up with America's destiny. Before the pilgrims landed at Plymouth, we were here. Before the pen of Jefferson etched the majestic words of the Declaration of Independence across the pages of history, we were here. For more than two centuries our forebears labored in this country without wages; they made cotton king; they built the homes of their masters while suffering gross injustice and shameful humiliation—and yet out of a bottomless vitality they continued to thrive and develop. If the inexplicable cruelties of slavery could not stop us, the opposition we now face will surely fail. We will win our freedom because the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of God are embodied in our echoing demands. Before closing I feel impelled to mention one other point in your statement that has troubled me profoundly. You warmly commended the Birmingham police force for keeping "order" and "preventing violence." I doubt that you would have so warmly commended the police force if you had seen its dogs sinking their teeth into unarmed, nonviolent Negroes. I doubt that you would so quickly commend the policemen if you were to observe their ugly and inhumane treatment of Negroes here in the city jail; if you were to watch them push and curse old Negro women and young Negro girls;
if you were to see them slap and kick old Negro men and young boys; if you were to observe them, as they did on two occasions, refuse to give us food because we wanted to sing our grace together. I cannot join you in your praise of the Birmingham police department.

It is true that the police have exercised a degree of discipline in handling the demonstrators. In this sense they have conducted themselves rather "nonviolently" in public. But for what purpose? To preserve the evil system of segregation. Over the past few years I have consistently preached that nonviolence demands that the means we use must be as pure as the ends we seek. I have tried to make clear that it is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends. But now I must affirm that it is just as wrong, or perhaps even more so, to use moral means to preserve immoral ends. Perhaps Mr. Connor and his policemen have been rather nonviolent in public, as was Chief Pritchett in Albany, Georgia, but they have used the moral means of nonviolence to maintain the immoral end of racial injustice. As T. S. Eliot has said: "The last temptation is the greatest treason: To do the right deed for the wrong reason."

I wish you had commended the Negro sit-inners and demonstrators of Birmingham for their sublime courage, their willingness to suffer and their amazing discipline in the midst of great provocation. One day the South will recognize its real heroes. They will be the James Merediths, with the noble sense of purpose that enables them to face jeering and hostile mobs, and with the agonizing loneliness that characterizes the life of the pioneer. They will be old, oppressed, battered Negro women, symbolized in a seventy-two-year-old woman in Montgomery, Alabama, who rose up with a sense of dignity and with her people decided not to ride segregated buses, and who responded with ungrammatical profundity to one who inquired about her weariness: "My feet is tired, but my soul is at rest." They will be the young high school and college students, the young ministers of the gospel and a host of their elders, courageously and nonviolently sitting in at lunch counters and willingly going to jail for conscience' sake. One day the South will know that when these dispossessed children of God sat down at lunch counters, they were in reality standing up for what is best in the American dream and for the most sacred values in our Judaeo-Christian heritage, thereby bringing our nation back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the founding fathers in their formulation of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

Never before have I written so long a letter. I'm afraid it is much too long to take your precious time. I can assure you that it would have been much shorter if I had been writing from a comfortable desk, but what else can one do when he is alone in a narrow jail cell, other than write long letters, think long thoughts and pray long prayers?

If I have said anything in this letter that overstates the truth and indicates an unreasonable impatience, I beg you to forgive me. If I have said anything that understates the truth and indicates my having a patience that allows me to settle for anything less than brotherhood, I beg God to forgive me.

I hope this letter finds you strong in the faith. I also hope that circumstances will soon make it possible for me to meet each of you, not as an integrationist or a civil-rights leader but as a fellow clergyman and a Christian brother. Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear drenched communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty.

Yours for the cause of Peace and Brotherhood, Martin Luther King, Jr.

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King, Martin Luther Jr.

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Birmingham's Racial Segregation Ordinances
Birmingham, AL
May, 1951

The following is an excerpt from the original city ordinances for the city of Birmingham. The ordinances are posted in the Institute's Barriers Gallery.

SECTION 369. SEPARATION OF RACES.
It shall be unlawful to conduct a restaurant or other place for the serving of food in the city, at which white and colored people are served in the same room, unless such white and colored persons are effectually separated by a solid partition extending from the floor upward to a distance of seven feet or higher, and unless a separate entrance from the street is provided for each compartment.

SECTION 597. NEGROES AND WHITE PERSONS NOT TO PLAY TOGETHER.
It shall be unlawful for a negro and a white person to play together or in company with each other in any game of cards or dice, dominoes or checkers. Any person, who being the owner, proprietor or keeper or superintendent, of any tavern, inn, restaurant or other public house or public place, or the clerk, servant or employee or such owner, proprietor, keeper or superintendent, knowingly permits a negro and a white person to play together or in company with each other at any game with cards, dice, dominoes or checkers, in his house or on his premises shall, on conviction, be punished as provided in section 4.

ORDINANCE 798-F
An Ordinance To Amend Section 597 Of The General Code Of The City Of Birmingham Of 1944.

Be It Ordained by the Commission of the City of Birmingham that Section 597 of the General Code of the City of Birmingham of 1944 be, and said section is, amended so as to read as follows:

S.E.C. 597 Negroes and White Persons Not To Play Together
It shall be unlawful for a Negro and a white person to play together or in company with each other in any game of cards, dice, dominoes, checkers, baseball, softball, football, basketball or similar games.
Any person, who being the owner, proprietor or keeper or superintendent of any tavern, inn, restaurant, ballfield, stadium or other public house or public place, or the clerk, servant or employee of such owner, proprietor, keeper, or superintendent, knowingly permits a Negro and a white person to play together or in company with each other, at any game with a baseball, softball, basketball or other ball, in his house or on his premises or in a house or on premises under his charge, supervision or control, shall, on conviction, be punished as provided in Section 4.

Approved Sept. 19, 1950 A true copy,
Eunice S. Hewes, City Clerk Post-Herald, Sept 21, 1950
SECTION 359. SEPARATION OF RACES.
(a) It shall be unlawful for any person in charge or control of any room, hall, theatre, picture house, auditorium, yard, court, ballpark, public park, or other indoor or outdoor place, to which both white persons and negroes are admitted, to cause, permit or allow therein or thereon any theatrical performance, picture exhibition, speech, or educational or entertainment program of any kind whatsoever, unless such room, hall, theatre, picture house, auditorium, yard, court, ball park, or other place, has entrances, exits and seating or standing sections set aside for and assigned to the use of white persons, and other entrances, exits and seating or standing sections set aside for and assigned to the use of negroes, unless the entrances, exits and seating or standing sections set aside for and assigned to the use of white persons are distinctly separated from those set aside for and assigned to the use of negroes, by well defined physical barriers, and unless the members of each race are effectively restricted and confined to the sections set aside for and assigned to the use of such race.

(b) It shall be unlawful for any member of one race to use or occupy any entrance, exit or seating or standing section set aside for and assigned to the use of members of the other race.

SECTION 939. SEPARATION OF RACES.
It shall be unlawful for a negro and a white person to play together or in company with each other at any game of pool or billiards. Any person, who, being the owner, proprietor or in charge of any poolroom, pooltable, billiard room or billiard table, knowingly permits a negro and a white person to play together or in company with each other at any game of pool or billiards on his premises shall, upon conviction, be punished as provided in section 4.

SECTION 1002. SEPARATION OF RACES.
Every common carrier engaged in operation streetcars in the city for the carriage of passengers shall provide equal but separate accommodations for the white and colored races by providing separate cars or by clearly indicating or designating by physical visible marks the area to be occupied by each race in any streetcar in which the two races are permitted to be carried together and by confining each race to occupancy of the area of such streetcar so set apart for it. Every common carrier engaged in operating streetcars in the city for the carrying of passengers shall provide for each car used for white and colored passengers, separate entrances and exits to and from such cars in such manner as to prevent intermingling of the white and colored passengers when entering or leaving such car, but this provision for separate entrances and exits shall not apply to the cars operated on the following lines: The South Highlands, Idlewild and Rugby Highland lines or routes. It shall be unlawful for any such common carrier to operate or cause or allow to be operated, or for any servant, employee or agent of any such common carrier to aid in operating for the carriage of white or colored passengers, any streetcar not equipped as provided in this section. And it shall be unlawful for any person, contrary to the provisions of this section providing for equal and separate accommodations for the white and colored races on streetcars, to ride or attempt to ride in a car or a division of a car designated for the race to which such person
does not belong.
Failure to comply with this section shall be deemed a misdemeanor.

**SECTION 1413. SEPARATION OF RACES.**
Every owner or operator of any jitney, bus or taxicab in the city shall provide equal but separate accommodations for the white and colored races by dividing separate vehicles or by clearly indicating or designating by visible markers the area to be occupied by each race in any vehicle in which the two races are permitted to be carried together and by confining each race to occupancy of the area of such vehicle so set apart for it.It shall be unlawful for any person to operate or cause or allow to be operated or to aid in operating for the carriage of white and colored passengers any vehicle not equipped as provided in this section. And it shall be unlawful for any person, contrary to the provisions of this section providing for equal and separate accommodations for the white and colored races, to ride or attempt to ride in a vehicle or a division of a vehicle designated for the race to which such person does not belong.
Failure to comply with this section shall be deemed a misdemeanor.

STATE OF ALABAMA )
JEFFERSON COUNTY )

I, Eunice S. Hewes, City Clerk of the City of Birmingham, do hereby certify that the above are true and correct copies of Sections 369, 597, 859, 939, 1002, 1413 of the 1944 Code of Birmingham.GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND CORPORATE SEAL of the City of Birmingham, this the 25th day of May, 1951.

City Clerk
We clergymen are among those who, in January, issued "an Appeal for Law and Order and Common Sense," in dealing with racial problems in Alabama. We expressed understanding that honest convictions in racial matters could properly be pursued in the courts, but urged that decisions of those courts should in the meantime be peacefully obeyed.

Since that time there has been some evidence of increased forbearance and a willingness to face facts. Responsible citizens have undertaken to work on various problems which cause racial friction and unrest. In Birmingham, recent public events have given indication that we all have opportunity for a new constructive and realistic approach to racial problems.

However, we are now confronted by a series of demonstrations by some of our Negro citizens, directed and led in part by outsiders. We recognize the natural impatience of people who feel that their hopes are slow in being realized. But we are convinced that these demonstrations are unwise and untimely.

We agree rather with certain local Negro leadership which has called for honest and open negotiation of racial issues in our area. And we believe this kind of facing of issues can best be accomplished by citizens of our own metropolitan area, white and Negro, meeting with their knowledge and experiences of the local situation. All of us need to face that responsibility and find proper channels for its accomplishment.

Just as we formerly pointed out that "hatred and violence have no sanction in our religious and political traditions," we also point out that such actions as incite to hatred and violence, however technically peaceful those actions may be, have not contributed to the resolution of our local problems. We do not believe that these days of new hope are days when extreme measures are justified in Birmingham.

We commend the community as a whole, and the local news media and law enforcement officials in particular, on the calm manner in which these demonstrations have been handled. We urge the
public to continue to show restraint should the demonstrations continue, and the law enforcement officials to remain calm and continue to protect our city from violence.

We further strongly urge our own Negro community to withdraw support from these demonstrations, and to unite locally in working peacefully for a better Birmingham. When rights are consistently denied, a cause should be pressed in the courts and in negotiations among local leaders, and not in the streets. We appeal to both our white and Negro citizenry to observe the principles of law and order and common sense.

Signed by:


JOSEPH A. DURICK, D.D., Auxiliary Bishop, Diocese of Mobile-Birmingham

Rabbi MILTON L. GRAFMAN, Temple Emanu-El, Birmingham, Alabama

Bishop PAUL HARDIN, Bishop of the Alabama-West Florida Conference of the Methodist Church

Bishop NOLAN B. HARMON, Bishop of the North Alabama Conference of the Methodist Church

GEORGE M. MURRAY, D.D., LL.D., Bishop Coadjutor, Episcopal Diocese of Alabama

EDWARD V. RAMAGE, Moderator, Synod of the Alabama Presbyterian Church in the United States

EARL STALLINGS, Pastors, First Baptist Church, Birmingham, Alabama

VOTER REGISTRATION LAWS IN MISSISSIPPI

SUBVERSION OF THE FIFTEENTH AMENDMENT IN MISSISSIPPI

“All political power is vested in, and derived from, the people; all government of right originates with the people, is founded upon their will only, and is instituted solely for the good of the whole.”

Article 3, Bill of Rights, Section 5
Mississippi Constitution,
Adopted 1890

“Federal District Judge Harold Cox is expected to rule . . . on a Justice Department suit to speed up the processing of Negro voter applicants at Canton (Mississippi) . . . At yesterday’s hearing Judge Cox, the first judge appointed by President Kennedy under the 1961 expansion of
... now with your hand, pull the lever down.

James Chaney
Andrew Goodman
Michael Schwerner
You Too Can Register To Vote

http://ncmuseumofhistory.org/workshops/civilrights1/voter_register_poster.jpg

12/13/2010
Annual Address by Joseph Jackson

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Annual Address

Joseph Jackson
September 10, 1964
Delivered at 84th Annual Session of the National Baptist Convention
Cobo Hall Arena
Detroit, Michigan

PARTICIPATING IN THE STRUGGLE OF AMERICA

As Christians we are a part of our nation and a part of the struggle of America. America was brought into being to satisfy and to answer the human longing for freedom. There was the urge in man to be related to other men as men without a modifier or any kind of limitation or restriction. There was an awareness of a human kinship deeper than race, more profound than nationality, and more inclusive than any accepted religious creed. In addition to the quest for a new geographical spot there was a search for a new human relationship, a new freedom, and new opportunities. These basic urges inspired the early colonies to brave the dangers of a rough and unknown sea, and seek a land in which they could live as free men and aspire to the highest possible goals of life without the enslavement of the past or being the victims of the determinism of enforced circumstances. They wanted a chance to explore and to search out the meaning of life for themselves, and an opportunity to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience.

They soon became convinced that there was no such land, no such Utopia, but all they would find would be an opportunity to make such a land and such a country. They were convinced it could be made out of the desires that now possessed their souls and out of the thirst for liberty that dominated their lives.

America was born in a struggle and as a struggle for freedom, and for the opportunity to develop the highest resources of mankind. The Declaration of Independence and the Federal Constitution were the results of our fathers’ attempts to put on paper the ideals that inspired the birth of the nation, and those principles by which and on which the nation was erected and sustained. There have been errors, mistakes, and gross sins committed against this American venture, but this high venture has not been repudiated or negated. The Massachusetts theocracy became oppressive and hostile toward freedom. Some human beings were slain in the episode of the great Witch
Hunt. Slavery took its toll, denying to thousands the human dignity that God had bestowed upon them; and as a result of the defense of this cruel institution, the nation was divided into two armed camps, and a cruel civil war saw Americans take the lives of Americans, and brothers shedding their brothers' blood. But from the dust and dirt of this tragic event the American ideals sprang up again with new vigor and vitality, and continued its upward march on the rough highway of human history. This American venture is powerful but not perfect; ever growing but not grown; and still becoming, but is not yet complete. The kind hand of destiny and the benevolent providence of Almighty God have placed the American Negro along with other races and nationalities in this flowing stream of the nation's life for which we are justly proud. As patriotic Americans we are devoted to our nation's cause, and are wedded to its ideals and principles. By precept and example, by instinct and intuition, we now know the difference between that which is truly American and that which is not. We draw a clear distinction between that which is germane to the nation's life and that which is foreign, hostile, and antagonistic to the soul of our nation. To the former we pledge our total allegiance and commit every ounce of energy, our strength, all of our powers, and even our very lives. But against the latter we stand with uncompromising determination, and will not rest until all the enemies of our nation have been subdued and conquered. This is the true meaning of the civil rights struggle.

THE CIVIL RIGHTS STRUGGLE

Much time and space is given in the public press to the problem of civil rights. It has engaged the minds of our congressmen, and has occasioned many days of debate and deliberation. In the name of civil rights thousands have marched through the streets of our cities, boycotts have been staged, picket lines have been thrown around places of businesses, institutions of learning; and in every nook and corner of the country voices have been heard in the defense of and in the interest of civil rights.

What is this struggle for civil rights? I answer, it is an effort of American citizens to get full equality of opportunity. It is the resolution and the determination that there shall be in these United States one class of citizens and that is first class citizens. This is a struggle to adopt in practice as well as theory the concept of man on which the Declaration of Independence is based, and to fully implement the Federal Constitution, one of the greatest documents for human freedom since the writing of the Magna Carta. The civil rights struggle is a struggle for full freedom, justice, and equality before the law. It is a struggle to bring from paper the lofty ideals of America, and to apply them in practice to the lives and actions of all Americans. In reality it is America's struggle to be herself, to fulfill the highest promises of her being, and to build a social order after the pattern and dreams of our founding fathers and in the light of the wisdom of the ages.
The civil rights struggle then is not a struggle to negate the high and lofty philosophy of American freedom. It is not an attempt to convert the nation into an armed camp or to substitute panic and anarchy in the place of law and order. It is in no wise an attempt to negate or to amend downward the highest laws of this land proclaiming freedom and justice for all.

WHY THEN THE STRUGGLE?

The answer is there is a group in the United States that believes that when the constitution speaks of the rights of American citizens it meant only men whose skins were white. This group believes in segregation as a means of protecting the best interests of the nation and of keeping the races separate and pure. But as we look at the degrees of pigmentation among all the races in these United States, I ask my segregationist friends, don't you think it is rather late now to talk about the purity of the race; for the blood of white segregationists is in the veins of many whom they would ostracize, and their kinship is a biological fact. Many segregationists fear that granting equality of opportunity to people of color will in some way jeopardize their liberties, encroach upon their freedom, and threaten their rank, position, and security. But such fear is unfounded if the doctrine of American democracy is true. For no free man has any grounds to fear the spread of the privileges of true freedom to all men, for the greater the number of free men the more secure is freedom and less is the power and danger of oppression. Abraham Lincoln sensed this fact when he said: "By giving freedom to the slaves we insure freedom to the free." The presence of one bound man pollutes the whole stream of human society; and the rattle of one chain of oppression creates a discord that breaks the harmony in every democratic system, and disturbs the mind and poisons the heart of every man with fear and dread, so that the would-be master finds himself mentally and morally the dweller in the hovels of slaves, the servant of a cause that is hostile to democracy, and becomes himself, the victim of the baser emotions of his own nature.

This struggle for civil rights has remained for a hundred years because there are persons among us who are still the victims of the psychology of chattel slavery and are yet blinded to the verdict of history and indifferent to the logic of life, and in deep rebellion against the voice of God. Some believe that their very future and the future well-being of their families depend on keeping alive the cursed demon of segregation. In the language of one segregationist: "Yes, we believe in segregation, and we will not be changed. We will not be frightened or forced. We will oppose you with every ounce of strength that we have. We will fight you from breakfast until noon. We will eat our noon-day meal and then re-turn to the field of battle and fight you until sunset. If opportunity permits we will catch a bite to eat in the twilight and return to our post and fight until the morning comes." With such determination, with such faith in the way of segregation, with such commitment to the evils of discrimination, and with such opponents of democracy and freedom, it is no surprise that the struggle for civil rights has remained so long and still re-mains one of the
grave struggles of the land and country.

The second reason why the struggle for civil rights has continued is that the segregated does not and cannot accept segregation as a way of life. The bound men have read with care the great promises of our Federal Constitution, and they have heard clearly the pronouncements of statesmen, and have followed the logic of every philosopher of freedom, and they now know that segregation and racial discrimination have no logical or legitimate place in the American character and constitution. The segregated is just as determined to destroy the awful demand of racial segregation as segregationists are to keep it alive.

This struggle will continue because of the inner nature of the segregated themselves. There has been implanted in the hearts and minds of all men the hope, the love, and expectation of freedom, and this inner conviction compels us, and the freedom of soul constrains us so that we cannot rest in chains or be at peace in a house of bondage, or compromise with the dungeons of discrimination and accept as our lot the cruel and oppressive hand of those heartless masters who allow pigmentation of skin to blind them to the inner principles of truth and to the revealed purposes of God. The struggle goes on because two determinations meet: one; to enslave, and the other; to be free, and here can be no compromise, and from the task of solving the problem of freedom there must be no retreat.

SOME SUGGESTIONS TO THE AMERICAN NEGRO

But we as a people must keep ever before us the true meaning of our struggle so that we will never be used as tools in the hands of those who love not the nation’s cause but seek the nation’s hurt and not our help. Hence there are some things that we must do.

1. In our struggle for civil rights we must remain always in the mainstream of American democracy. Our cause must never be divorced from the American cause, and our struggle must not be separated from the American struggle. We must stick to law and order, for as I have said in the past I say now, there are no problems in American life that cannot be solved through commitment to the highest laws of our land and in obedience to the American philosophy and way of life. In spite of criticisms and not-with-standing threats and open attacks, I have not retreated from this position and never will as long as America is the America of the Federal Constitution and a land of due process of law. We cannot win our battle through force and unreasonable intimidation. As a minority group we cannot win outside of the protection and power of the just laws of this land. Read history with open eyes and attentive minds, and we will discover that no minority group has and can win in a struggle by the direct confrontation of the majority and by employing the same type of pressures and powers that the majority possess in abundance.
hope of the minority struggle is with the just laws of the land and the moral and constructive forces that are germane to this nation's life and character.

While we must be determined to achieve the best, we must not be guided by a spirit of revenge, blind emotions, and uncontrolled temper. When we act by these baser emotions we find ourselves contradicting ourselves. We will deny freedom of speech to those who differ with us, and will seek to do the things that will embarrass others however costly it may be to us and to them. When we are guided by revenge we do not choose our program of action wisely. There are some groups who are thus motivated, will go in, sit in, or lie in, in places that have objected to their presence. These same groups when they are dissatisfied in places that have accepted them, will give up their achieved rights and walk out in protest and revenge. Our actions must be guided both by logic and by law.

2. The methods that we employ in the present struggle must not lead us into open opposition to the laws of the land. In some cases the technique of direct action and demonstrations have led to mob violence and to vandalism. At least some who have desired to practice these negative methods have used the technique of so-called direct action.

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3. Negroes must become registered voters and fight their battles in the polling booth. In the coming campaign we must not allow our prejudices, our hatred for individuals, to lead us into emotional outbursts and disrespect. The candidates contending for the presidency of the United States deserve, and should enjoy, the respect from every American citizen. It is beneath the dignity of this fair land of ours to seek to howl down, and to boo from platforms any candidate whom we do not favor. We must make choice of the candidate whom we think will serve the best interest of this nation and the nation's cause, and then take our ballot and help to elect our choice. As I told this convention in 1956, I tell you again, the ballot is our most important weapon. We must not neglect it, forfeit or sell it, but use it for the protection of the nation, the promotion of freedom, the promotion of every citizen, and for the glory of the United States of America. What I said in 1956 I still say now.

4. Negroes must still make their own leaders. We must not expect the public press, radio, and television to do this job for us. These news media are too busy with other responsibilities to be assigned the task of choosing Negro leaders to represent the race in these days of stress and strain. Negroes must not forget that we have many fields in which leaders are necessary and important, and we should accept and follow the leaders in their respective field; that is, when they are right. We have political leaders, many of whom are worthy of our confidence and our respect.
We shall follow them and show our appreciation for them. We have some dedicated civil rights leaders. We should respect them and follow them in their chosen field when they are right. We have religious leaders. We should respect and follow them when they are committed to the task of human betterment, human uplift, and the work of re-making the social order in the name of justice, righteousness, and peace.

We have worthy business leaders who can show us the way to improve our economic status, and to develop our available economic resources. Let us follow them. We have educators who are making their contribution in the field of thought and of mental growth. Let us honor them and respect them, and let us not discourage Negro educators by advocating directly or indirectly, that they are by nature inferior to educators in other racial groups.

We have athletes and comedians. Let us still applaud our athletes when they achieve on the field of competition, and let us join with others and freely laugh at the jokes that our comedians give. But we must not confuse these various fields. There must not develop any dictatorship of any one field, and athletes and comedians must not make the mistake of assuming the role of political, religious, and cultural leaders. We as a race must see to it that each man serves in his field, and we must not allow the white community to pick our leaders or to tell us what Negro we should follow.

5. Let us be courageous enough not only to oppose the wrong and the un-American actions in our nation, but we must also appreciate and rejoice in the achievements of our nation. There are some recent achievements which give us reason for hope, grounds for trust, and basis for rejoicing.

Ten years ago the Supreme Court of the United States rose above its old concept of separate but equal, and declared that segregation had no place in America’s system of public education. This year, after a long, hard, and laborious fight, the Congress of the United States passed the strongest civil rights bill in its history, and the president signed into law a document that said that segregation has no place in American life and destiny. The call is to all of us to accept these facts and build on them. We must not ignore the constructive laws of our land, we must not organize, condone, or support mobs that parade in the name of freedom. We must not turn aside from decency and the constructive American standards in our quest for freedom. In our haste let us not be haughty. In our determination we must not become detrimental, and in our demonstrations we cannot afford to damn the nation of which we are a vital part.

6. DIRECT ACTION IN THE POSITIVE
We have heard much in recent months about direct action in terms of boycotts, pickets, sit-ins, and demonstrations of various kinds. In each case the purpose as stated is a lofty one; namely, the winning of civil rights and the achievement of the equality of opportunity. I repeat, these are worthy ends and desirable goals, but this kind of direct action is orientated against others, and for the most part, must be classified in the negative since they have been designed to stop, arrest, or hinder certain orderly procedures in the interest of civil rights. In some cases however, these actions have been against practices and laws considered to be both evil and unjust.

Today, I call for another type of direct action; that is, direct action in the positive which is orientated towards the Negro's ability, talent, genius, and capacity. Let us take our economic resources, however insignificant and small, and organize and harness them, not to stop the economic growth of others, but to develop our own and to help our own community. If our patronage withdrawn from any store or business enterprise will weaken said enterprise, why not organize these resources and channel them into producing enterprises that we ourselves can direct and control. In the act of boycotting, our best economic talents are not called into play, and we ourselves are less productive and seek to render others the same. Why not build for ourselves instead of boycotting what others have produced? We must not be guilty of possessing the minds and actions of a blind Sampson who pulled a massive building down upon him-self as well as his enemies, and died with them in a final act of revenge. No act of revenge will lift a race from thralldom, and any direct actions that reduce the economic strength and life of the community is sure to punish the poor as well as the rich. Direct actions that encourage and create more tensions, ill will, hostility, and hate, will tend to make more difficult the mental, moral, and spiritual changes essential to new growth and creativity in human relations. Remember that when we seek to change certain acquired notions and habits of men we are seeking to change that which is very vital in human nature. When we labor to change segregationists and racists who believe they are right, we are facing the task of re-conditioning human emotions and building within new patterns of thought, and changing human nature itself. In addition to that type of direct action which is negative and aimed at the correction of others, we need the type of direct action also that starts with ourselves which tends to produce a higher type of life within us as well as within others, and which aims to build a better community in which the available moral forces may be used to create new attitudes and new dispositions where human beings will regard others as they regard them-selves. Why should we expect direct actions against others to bear immediate fruit, and then procrastinate and postpone the direct actions that will make us better business men, better statesmen, better thinkers, and better men and women with better homes and better fellowship NOW? Now must not only be applied to the needs for changes and attitudes of segregationists, it must also be applied to us as as people and as a race when we aspire for the best and seek the more constructive and creative methods of life. We can be better now. We can
acquire a better education now, we can organize our capital now and receive our share in this
economy of free enterprise now. In spite of all that we have attained as a people we have not
exhausted our possibilities, and the past does not define the limits of our potential. Are we not as
well equipped to respond to the call of the right, the just, the good, the highest, and the best as
are the white segregationists against whom we fight? Has not the great God put in our souls the
thirst for truth and righteousness? Are we not endowed as co-workers with the great creative
spirit of the universe? Then we need not wait until all is well before we harness our resources and
venture upon new ways of life and creativity.

We must not play ourselves too cheap or postpone the day of greater things when the hour of
fulfillment is already at hand. To the leaders of school boycotts who have called children to remain
out of school in order to help correct the evils and errors of an imperfect system of education, are
you willing now to use your influence to lead young people to desert the ranks of drop-outs and
struggle now to make the best out of the education that is now available? The call to stay out of
school does not appeal to the highest in students but to the ordinary and the easy. It requires less
initiative to stay out of school than it does to attend school. It requires less mental alertness to
refuse to study than it does to study. Is not some education better than no education? Of course
we should get all the education possible and go as far up the ladder of intellectual attainments as
our powers will allow us. We must strive for the very best opportunities, the best possible schools,
and the best possible teachers, but if these are not available to us then let us make the best use
of what we do have. Remember that the future is with the person who knows, thinks,
understands, and who has character and soul, and who can pro-duce, invest, create and live in
harmony with the highest and the best. Of course we adults must continue to correct all the evils
which make education more difficult. We must strive for quality education and seek to make
available all the resources possible for the education of the young, but our young people must
keep their feet in the upward path of learning and their minds stayed on the quest for truth.

The progress of the race lies not in continued street demonstrations, and the liberation of an
oppressed people shall not come by acts of revenge and retaliation but by the constructive use of
all available opportunities and a creative expansion of the circumstances of the past into stepping
stones to higher things.

LESSON: American Civil Rights: Black Separatism or Nonviolence?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:
• What are the differences between Martin Luther King, Jr.’s philosophies of “the beloved community” and Malcolm X’s separate black nation in terms of achieving civil rights?
• How would (black) Americans need to organize and/or act in order to allow each of King’s or Malcolm X’s vision/mission come to fruition?

OBJECTIVES:
Students will be able to:
• Contrast the respective desires and methods of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. in order to evaluate the possibilities for black civil rights during the 1960s.
• Explain why Malcolm X proposed that black Americans needed a separate nation of their own in order to improve the quality of their individual and collective lives.
• Understand why Malcolm X believed that peaceful integration and Martin Luther King’s ideas/methods of nonviolent protest strategies were a false hope for blacks in America.
• Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each activist’s argument and decide which approach better secures civil rights for American blacks.

NCSS STANDARDS: SOCIAL STUDIES
Time, Continuity and Change
• Establishing a sense of order and time
• Understanding connections to the past

People, Places, and the Environment
• Making connections between people, race, and interpersonal relationships
• Application of geographic understanding

Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
• Understanding how institutions are formed, what controls and influences them, how they can be maintained and changed

Civic Ideas and Practices
• Establishing and understanding methods for involvement in American public policy
• Analyzing how the democratic process can ultimately influence public policies
NYS STANDARDS: UNITED STATES HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT

Geography
- Analyzing the role and influence of geography on historical and cultural development
- Relating the past to geographic issues today

Diversity, Justice, Civic Values, Human Rights
- Activists and leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. developed strategies to secure civil rights for African Americans

Change, Power
- Groups in society turn to violence (and nonviolence) to reach their goals

Reform in America
- Understanding the role of progressivism in government action

MARZANO STRATEGIES:
- Identifying similarities and differences
- Summarizing and note taking
- Homework and practice
- Cooperative learning
- Cues, questions, and advanced organizers
- Check for understanding

PRIMARY SOURCES:

Primary Sources of Malcolm X:
- Audio recording and/or transcript: “Message to the Grassroots” (November 10, 1963)
- Interview (transcript) with Louis Lomax (November 1963)

Primary Sources of Martin Luther King, Jr.:
- Audio recording of “I Have a Dream” speech (August 28, 1963)
- “The Power of Nonviolence” transcript
AGENDA:

**Eyes on the Prize: Seeing the End Product at the Beginning**

- Based upon their analysis of the primary documents/recording, students will be directed to write a report/editorial (style of their choosing) in order to judge which reformer provided greater opportunities in order for black Americans to achieve civil rights.
- Thus, as eyewitnesses of civil rights era history, students will play the role of a reporter who has seen, on a personal level the racial strife that plagues some of America’s urban centers. By doing so, each reporter will take into account the conflicting messages of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X.
- Accordingly, students will write an editorial/column that will argue what strengths and weaknesses that each of the civil rights leader possessed based on the speeches, interviews, and writings that are part of the public domain (as mentioned above).
- The goal of writing a piece based upon the two reformers’ political/social philosophies should be addressed at the beginning of this project so that students can keep the ultimate goal in mind throughout their endeavor. Students will have the option to either work with another reporter (classmate) or to work by themselves.

**Malcolm X’s Perspective: Black Nationalism in the Era of American Civil Rights**

- Students will have the opportunity to gain an understanding of the mission of the Civil Rights Movement through the eyes of Malcolm X and his interview with Louis Lomax in November 1963.
- Additionally, students will gain a further understanding of the Civil Rights Movement overall and will learn about specific examples of racial discrimination that occurred during this era in American history.
- Students will then have the opportunity to listen to Malcolm X’s “Message to the Grassroots” (November 10, 1963) and answer questions that directly pertain to the interview.
- Finally, students will be provided with questions that will help guide their understanding of both Malcolm X’s “Message to the Grassroots” and the interview with Louis Lomax.
Nonviolent Resistance in the Era of American Civil Rights: What Would Martin Luther King, Jr. Do?

- Students will be introduced to Martin Luther King’s stirring rhetoric by listening to a brief excerpt of his famous “I Have a Dream” speech. (Students will also be provided with the entire MLK “I Have a Dream” transcript in its entirety).
- Additionally, students will be provided with questions that will help guide their understandings of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech as well as his “Power of Nonviolence.”

The Final Product: Dissenting Opinions Concerning American Civil Rights

- By this point, students should have a fairly good understanding of each of the civil rights leaders’ overall philosophies through the prisms of their spoken words (audio) and written rhetoric (primary resources).
- Thus, this will enable students to take on the task of completing their culminating project of writing a column for a newspaper (keeping in mind its audience). The assignment must include:
  - Explanations supported by at least a few details concerning conditions that black Americans faced prior to and during the civil rights era.
  - A segment that assesses the strengths and weaknesses of Malcolm X’s vision of a separate nation for black Americans.
  - A segment that assesses the strengths and weaknesses of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s vision of the “beloved community” that alludes to a peaceful integration of blacks and whites into a united America.
  - What the writer thinks is the better solution of the two visions that each of the civil rights leaders offer for the dilemmas that the black community faced and justify their reasons for supporting either Malcolm X or Dr. King.

Learning Extension/Closure: Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Appeal to the American Masses in the Wake of Malcolm X’s Death

- An increasing number of black youths began to reject Martin Luther King, Jr.’s rhetoric of nonviolent resistance following the assassination of Malcolm X in February 1965. The Civil Rights Movement began to trend towards “Black Power” and away from “We Shall Overcome” for a time in the wake of X’s violent death.
- In response to the “Black Power” advocacy groups, Dr. King wrote an article for Ebony magazine that countered the claims of the new Civil Rights Movement and
explained why he believed that nonviolent protest remained the most critical means for achieving the aims for black Americans.

- Students will have the opportunity to read Dr. King's "The Power of Nonviolence" (June 4, 1957) and answer questions that will help guide their understanding(s).
Questions concerning Malcolm X’s interview with Louis Lomax (November 1963):

Why does Malcolm X refer to whites as “devils”?

The Nation of Islam does not want to integrate blacks into the larger American society. Why is this and what does Malcolm X propose as solutions?

How does Malcolm X divert criticisms claiming black extremism and violence from the Nation of Islam?

Why does Malcolm X disapprove of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s approach to secure civil rights for black Americans?

Does Malcolm X think of African Americans as citizens of the United States? Why or why not?
Guided Questions for Malcolm X’s “Message to the Grass Roots” (November 10, 1963):

- What are the goal(s) of any revolution according to Malcolm X?

- How does Malcolm X justify violence as a means for black Americans to ascertain civil rights?

- According to Malcolm X, what are “Uncle Toms” and how do they slow progress for blacks in America?
Guided Questions for Martin Luther King, Jr.'s “I Have a Dream” speech:

-How does King characterize his philosophies as strong-willed rather than cowardly or passive?

-What are the ultimate goals of nonviolent resistance?

-Explain how MLK believes that God is involved in the Civil Rights Movement.

-What does Dr. King mean by pursuing a “policy of moderation”?
Guided Questions for Martin Luther King, Jr.'s October 1966 essay is entitled “Nonviolence: the Only Road to Freedom.”

- Why does King propose that advocacy for violence will not work in terms of securing civil rights for black Americans?

- Why does Dr. King believe that a focus on self-defense to promote progress for African Americans will be unproductive?

- Dr. King proposes that protestors should risk injury rather than seek their own safety and self-defense in the name of civil rights progress. Why?

- Why does Dr. King theorize that the “moral power” of a committed minority will create significant change socially, politically, and economically in America?

- In 1966, Dr. King believes that marches, boycotts, and organization still hold the best possibilities for progress in the black communities of America. Why?
Message to Grassroots

Malcolm X
October 10, 1963

We want to have just an off—the—cuff chat between you and me — us. We want to talk right down to earth in a language that everybody here can easily understand. We all agree tonight, all of the speakers have agreed, that America has a very serious problem. Not only does America have a very serious problem, but our people have a very serious problem. America’s problem is us. We’re her problem. The only reason she has a problem is she doesn’t want us here. And every time you look at yourself, be you black, brown, red, or yellow — a so-called Negro — you represent a person who poses such a serious problem for America because you’re not wanted. Once you face this as a fact, then you can start plotting a course that will make you appear intelligent, instead of unintelligent.

What you and I need to do is learn to forget our differences. When we come together, we don’t come together as Baptists or Methodists. You don’t catch hell ’cause you’re a Baptist, and you don’t catch hell ’cause you’re a Methodist. You don’t catch hell ’cause you’re a Methodist or Baptist. You don’t catch hell because you’re a Democrat or a Republican. You don’t catch hell because you’re a Mason or an Elk. And you sure don’t catch hell ’cause you’re an American; ’cause if you was an American, you wouldn’t catch no hell. You catch hell ’cause you’re a black man. You catch hell, all of us catch hell, for the same reason.

So we are all black people, so-called Negroes, second-class citizens, ex-slaves. You are nothing but a [sic] ex-slave. You don’t like to be told that. But what else are you? You are ex-slaves. You didn’t come here on the "Mayflower." You came here on a slave ship — in chains, like a horse, or a cow, or a chicken. And you were brought here by the people who came here on the "Mayflower." You were brought here by the so-called Pilgrims, or Founding Fathers. They were the ones who brought you here.

We have a common enemy. We have this in common: We have a common oppressor, a common exploiter, and a common discriminator. But once we all realize that we have this common enemy, then we unite on the basis of what we have in common. And what we have foremost in common is that enemy — the white man. He’s an enemy to all of us. I know some of you all think that some of them aren’t enemies. Time will tell.
In Bandung back in, I think, 1954, was the first unity meeting in centuries of black people. And once you study what happened at the Bandung conference, and the results of the Bandung conference, it actually serves as a model for the same procedure you and I can use to get our problems solved. At Bandung all the nations came together. Their were dark nations from Africa and Asia. Some of them were Buddhists. Some of them were Muslim. Some of them were Christians. Some of them were Confucianists; some were atheists. Despite their religious differences, they came together. Some were communists; some were socialists; some were capitalists. Despite their economic and political differences, they came together. All of them were black, brown, red, or yellow.

The number—one thing that was not allowed to attend the Bandung conference was the white man. He couldn't come. Once they excluded the white man, they found that they could get together. Once they kept him out, everybody else fell right in and fell in line. This is the thing that you and I have to understand. And these people who came together didn't have nuclear weapons; they didn't have jet planes; they didn't have all of the heavy armaments that the white man has. But they had unity.

They were able to submerge their little petty differences and agree on one thing: That though one African came from Kenya and was being colonized by the Englishman, and another African came from the Congo and was being colonized by the Belgian, and another African came from Guinea and was being colonized by the French, and another came from Angola and was being colonized by the Portuguese. When they came to the Bandung conference, they looked at the Portuguese, and at the Frenchman, and at the Englishman, and at the other ---- Dutchman ---- and learned or realized that the one thing that all of them had in common: they were all from Europe, they were all Europeans, blond, blue-- eyed and white—skinned. They began to recognize who their enemy was. The same man that was colonizing our people in Kenya was colonizing our people in the Congo. The same one in the Congo was colonizing our people in South Africa, and in Southern Rhodesia, and in Burma, and in India, and in Afghanistan, and in Pakistan. They realized all over the world where the dark man was being oppressed, he was being oppressed by the white man; where the dark man was being exploited, he was being exploited by the white man. So they got together under this basis ---- that they had a common enemy.

And when you and I here in Detroit and in Michigan and in America who have been awakened today look around us, we too realize here in America we all have a common enemy, whether he's in Georgia or Michigan, whether he's in California or New York. He's the same man: blue eyes and blond hair and pale skin ---- same man. So what we have to do is what they did. They agreed to stop quarreling among themselves. Any little spat that they
had, they'd settle it among themselves, go into a huddle — don't let the enemy know that you got [sic] a disagreement.

Instead of us airing our differences in public, we have to realize we're all the same family. And when you have a family squabble, you don't get out on the sidewalk. If you do, everybody calls you uncouth, unrefined, uncivilized, savage. If you don't make it at home, you settle it at home; you get in the closet — argue it out behind closed doors. And then when you come out on the street, you pose a common front, a united front. And this is what we need to do in the community, and in the city, and in the state. We need to stop airing our differences in front of the white man. Put the white man out of our meetings, number one, and then sit down and talk shop with each other. [That's] all you gotta do.

I would like to make a few comments concerning the difference between the black revolution and the Negro revolution. There's a difference. Are they both the same? And if they're not, what is the difference? What is the difference between a black revolution and a Negro revolution? First, what is a revolution? Sometimes I'm inclined to believe that many of our people are using this word "revolution" loosely, without taking careful consideration [of] what this word actually means, and what its historic characteristics are. When you study the historic nature of revolutions, the motive of a revolution, the objective of a revolution, and the result of a revolution, and the methods used in a revolution, you may change words. You may devise another program. You may change your goal and you may change your mind.

Look at the American Revolution in 1776. That revolution was for what? For land. Why did they want land? Independence. How was it carried out? Bloodshed. Number one, it was based on land, the basis of independence. And the only way they could get it was bloodshed. The French Revolution — what was it based on? The land—less against the landlord. What was it for? Land. How did they get it? Bloodshed. Was no love lost; was no compromise; was no negotiation. I'm telling you, you don't know what a revolution is. 'Cause when you find out what it is, you'll get back in the alley; you'll get out of the way. The Russian Revolution — what was it based on? Land. The land—less against the landlord. How did they bring it about? Bloodshed. You haven't got a revolution that doesn't involve bloodshed. And you're afraid to bleed. I said, you're afraid to bleed.

[As] long as the white man sent you to Korea, you bled. He sent you to Germany, you bled. He sent you to the South Pacific to fight the Japanese, you bled. You bleed for white people. But when it comes time to seeing your own churches being bombed and little black girls be murdered, you haven't got no blood. You bleed when the white man says bleed; you bite when the white man says bite; and you bark when the white man says bark. I hate to say this


12/13/2010
about us, but it's true. How are you going to be nonviolent in Mississippi, as violent as you were in Korea? How can you justify being nonviolent in Mississippi and Alabama, when your churches are being bombed, and your little girls are being murdered, and at the same time you're going to violent with Hitler, and Tojo, and somebody else that you don't even know?

If violence is wrong in America, violence is wrong abroad. If it's wrong to be violent defending black women and black children and black babies and black men, then it's wrong for America to draft us and make us violent abroad in defense of her. And if it is right for America to draft us, and teach us how to be violent in defense of her, then it is right for you and me to do whatever is necessary to defend our own people right here in this country.

The Chinese Revolution —— they wanted land. They threw the British out, along with the Uncle Tom Chinese. Yeah, they did. They set a good example. When I was in prison, I read an article —— don't be shocked when I say I was in prison. You're still in prison. That's what America means: prison. When I was in prison, I read an article in Life magazine showing a little Chinese girl, nine years old; her father was on his hands and knees and she was pulling the trigger 'cause he was an Uncle Tom Chinaman, When they had the revolution over there, they took a whole generation of Uncle Toms —— just wiped them out. And within ten years that little girl become [sic] a full—grown woman. No more Toms in China. And today it's one of the toughest, roughest, most feared countries on this earth —— by the white man. 'Cause there are no Uncle Toms over there.

Of all our studies, history is best qualified to reward our research. And when you see that you've got problems, all you have to do is examine the historic method used all over the world by others who have problems similar to yours. And once you see how they got theirs straight, then you know how you can get yours straight. There's been a revolution, a black revolution, going on in Africa. In Kenya, the Mau Mau were revolutionaries; they were the ones who made the word "Uhuru" [Kenyan word for "freedom"]). They were the ones who brought it to the fore. The Mau Mau, they were revolutionaries. They believed in scorched earth. They knocked everything aside that got in their way, and their revolution also was based on land, a desire for land. In Algeria, the northern part of Africa, a revolution took place. The Algerians were revolutionists; they wanted land. France offered to let them be integrated into France. They told France: to hell with France. They wanted some land, not some France. And they engaged in a bloody battle.

So I cite these various revolutions, brothers and sisters, to show you —— you don't have a peaceful revolution. You don't have a turn—the—other—cheek revolution. There's no such thing as a nonviolent revolution. [The] only kind of revolution that's nonviolent is the Negro
revolution. The only revolution based on loving your enemy is the Negro revolution. The only revolution in which the goal is a desegregated lunch counter, a desegregated theater, a desegregated park, and a desegregated public toilet; you can sit down next to white folks on the toilet. That's no revolution. Revolution is based on land. Land is the basis of all independence. Land is the basis of freedom, justice, and equality.

The white man knows what a revolution is. He knows that the black revolution is world-wide in scope and in nature. The black revolution is sweeping Asia, sweeping Africa, is rearing its head in Latin America. The Cuban Revolution — that's a revolution. They overturned the system. Revolution is in Asia. Revolution is in Africa. And the white man is screaming because he sees revolution in Latin America. How do you think he'll react to you when you learn what a real revolution is? You don't know what a revolution is. If you did, you wouldn't use that word.

A revolution is bloody. Revolution is hostile. Revolution knows no compromise. Revolution overturns and destroys everything that gets in its way. And you, sitting around here like a knot on the wall, saying, "I'm going to love these folks no matter how much they hate me." No, you need a revolution. Whoever heard of a revolution where they lock arms, as Reverend Cleage was pointing out beautifully, singing "We Shall Overcome"? Just tell me. You don't do that in a revolution. You don't do any singing; you're too busy swinging. It's based on land. A revolutionary wants land so he can set up his own nation, an independent nation. These Negroes aren't asking for no nation. They're trying to crawl back on the plantation.

When you want a nation, that's called nationalism. When the white man became involved in a revolution in this country against England, what was it for? He wanted this land so he could set up another white nation. That's white nationalism. The American Revolution was white nationalism. The French Revolution was white nationalism. The Russian Revolution too — yes, it was — white nationalism. You don't think so? Why [do] you think Khrushchev and Mao can't get their heads together? White nationalism. All the revolutions that's going on in Asia and Africa today are based on what? Black nationalism. A revolutionary is a black nationalist. He wants a nation. I was reading some beautiful words by Reverend Cleage, pointing out why he couldn't get together with someone else here in the city because all of them were afraid of being identified with black nationalism. If you're afraid of black nationalism, you're afraid of revolution. And if you love revolution, you love black nationalism.

To understand this, you have to go back to what [the] young brother here referred to as the house Negro and the field Negro — back during slavery. There was two kinds of slaves.
There was the house Negro and the field Negro. The house Negroes — they lived in the house with master, they dressed pretty good, they ate good 'cause they ate his food —— what he left. They lived in the attic or the basement, but still they lived near the master; and they loved their master more than the master loved himself. They would give their life to save the master's house quicker than the master would. The house Negro, if the master said, "We got a good house here," the house Negro would say, "Yeah, we got a good house here."

Whenever the master said "we," he said "we." That's how you can tell a house Negro.

If the master's house caught on fire, the house Negro would fight harder to put the blaze out than the master would. If the master got sick, the house Negro would say, "What's the matter, boss, we sick?" We sick! He identified himself with his master more than his master identified with himself. And if you came to the house Negro and said, "Let's run away, let's escape, let's separate," the house Negro would look at you and say, "Man, you crazy. What you mean, separate? Where is there a better house than this? Where can I wear better clothes than this? Where can I eat better food than this?" That was that house Negro. In those days he was called a "house nigger." And that's what we call him today, because we've still got some house niggers running around here.

This modern house Negro loves his master. He wants to live near him. He'll pay three times as much as the house is worth just to live near his master, and then brag about "I'm the only Negro out here." "I'm the only one on my job," "I'm the only one in this school." You're nothing but a house Negro. And if someone comes to you right now and says, "Let's separate," you say the same thing that the house Negro said on the plantation. "What you mean, separate? From America? This good white man? Where you going to get a better job than you get here?" I mean, this is what you say. "I ain't left nothing in Africa," that's what you say. Why, you left your mind in Africa.

On that same plantation, there was the field Negro. The field Negro —— those were the masses. There were always more Negroes in the field than there was Negroes in the house. The Negro in the field caught hell. He ate leftovers. In the house they ate high up on the hog. The Negro in the field didn't get nothing but what was left of the insides of the hog. They call 'em "chit'lin" nowadays. In those days they called them what they were: guts. That's what you were —— a gut—eater. And some of you all still gut—eaters.

The field Negro was beaten from morning to night. He lived in a shack, in a hut; He wore old, castoff clothes. He hated his master. I say he hated his master. He was intelligent. That house Negro loved his master. But that field Negro —— remember, they were in the majority, and they hated the master. When the house caught on fire, he didn't try and put it out; that field Negro prayed for a wind, for a breeze. When the master got sick, the field
Negro prayed that he’d die. If someone come [sic] to the field Negro and said, "Let’s separate, let’s run," he didn’t say "Where we going?" He’d say, "Any place is better than here." You’ve got field Negroes in America today. I’m a field Negro. The masses are the field Negroes. When they see this man’s house on fire, you don’t hear these little Negroes talking about "our government is in trouble." They say, "The government is in trouble." Imagine a Negro: "Our government"! I even heard one say "our astronauts." They won’t even let him near the plant —- and "our astronauts"! "Our Navy" —- that’s a Negro that’s out of his mind. That’s a Negro that’s out of his mind.

Just as the slavemaster of that day used Tom, the house Negro, to keep the field Negroes in check, the same old slavemaster today has Negroes who are nothing but modern Uncle Toms, 20th century Uncle Toms, to keep you and me in check, keep us under control, keep us passive and peaceful and nonviolent. That’s Tom making you nonviolent. It’s like when you go to the dentist, and the man’s going to take your tooth. You’re going to fight him when he starts pulling. So he squirts some stuff in your jaw called novocaine, to make you think they’re not doing anything to you. So you sit there and ‘cause you’ve got all of that novocaine in your jaw, you suffer peacefully. Blood running all down your jaw, and you don’t know what’s happening. ‘Cause someone has taught you to suffer —— peacefully.

The white man do the same thing to you in the street, when he want [sic] to put knots on your head and take advantage of you and don’t have to be afraid of your fighting back. To keep you from fighting back, he gets these old religious Uncle Toms to teach you and me, just like novocaine, suffer peacefully. Don’t stop suffering —— just suffer peacefully. As Reverend Cleage pointed out, "Let your blood flow In the streets." This is a shame. And you know he’s a Christian preacher. If it’s a shame to him, you know what it is to me.

There’s nothing in our book, the Quran —— you call it "Ko—ran" —— that teaches us to suffer peacefully. Our religion teaches us to be intelligent. Be peaceful, be courteous, obey the law, respect everyone; but if someone puts his hand on you, send him to the cemetery. That’s a good religion. In fact, that’s that old—time religion. That’s the one that Ma and Pa used to talk about: an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, and a head for a head, and a life for a life: That’s a good religion. And doesn’t nobody resent that kind of religion being taught but a wolf, who intends to make you his meal.

This is the way it is with the white man in America. He’s a wolf and you’re sheep. Any time a shepherd, a pastor, teach [sic] you and me not to run from the white man and, at the same time, teach [sic] us not to fight the white man, he’s a traitor to you and me. Don’t lay down our life all by itself. No, preserve your life. it’s the best thing you got. And if you got to give it up, let it be even—steven.
The slavemaster took Tom and dressed him well, and fed him well, and even gave him a little education — a little education; gave him a long coat and a top hat and made all the other slaves look up to him. Then he used Tom to control them. The same strategy that was used in those days is used today, by the same white man. He takes a Negro, a so-called Negro, and make [sic] him prominent, build [sic] him up, publicize [sic] him, make [sic] him a celebrity. And then he becomes a spokesman for Negroes — and a Negro leader.

I would like to just mention just one other thing else quickly, and that is the method that the white man uses, how the white man uses these "big guns," or Negro leaders, against the black revolution. They are not a part of the black revolution. They're used against the black revolution.

When Martin Luther King failed to desegregate Albany, Georgia, the civil-rights struggle in America reached its low point. King became bankrupt almost, as a leader. Plus, even financially, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference was in financial trouble; plus it was in trouble, period, with the people when they failed to desegregate Albany, Georgia. Other Negro civil-rights leaders of so-called national stature became fallen idols. As they became fallen idols, began to lose their prestige and influence, local Negro leaders began to stir up the masses. In Cambridge, Maryland, Gloria Richardson; in Danville, Virginia, and other parts of the country, local leaders began to stir up our people at the grassroots level. This was never done by these Negroes, whom you recognize, of national stature. They controlled you, but they never incited you or excited you. They controlled you; they contained you; they kept you on the plantation.

As soon as King failed in Birmingham, Negroes took to the streets. King got out and went out to California to a big rally and raised about —— I don't know how many thousands of dollars. [He] come [sic] to Detroit and had a march and raised some more thousands of dollars. And recall, right after that [Roy] Wilkins attacked King, accused King and the CORE [Congress Of Racial Equality] of starting trouble everywhere and then making the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] get them out of jail and spend a lot of money; and then they accused King and CORE of raising all the money and not paying it back. This happened; I've got it in documented evidence in the newspaper. Roy started attacking King, and King started attacking Roy, and Farmer started attacking both of them. And as these Negroes of national stature began to attack each other, they began to lose their control of the Negro masses.

And Negroes was [sic] out there in the streets. They was [sic] talking about [how] we was [sic] going to march on Washington. By the way, right at that time Birmingham had exploded, and the Negroes in Birmingham —— remember, they also exploded. They began...

to stab the crackers in the back and bust them up 'side their head — yes, they did. That's when Kennedy sent in the troops, down in Birmingham. So, and right after that, Kennedy got on the television and said "this is a moral issue." That's when he said he was going to put out a civil—rights bill. And when he mentioned civil—rights bill and the Southern crackers started talking about [how] they were going to boycott or filibuster it, then the Negroes started talking — about what? We're going to march on Washington, march on the Senate, march on the White House, march on the Congress, and tie it up, bring it to a halt; don't let the government proceed. They even said they was [sic] going out to the airport and lay down on the runway and don't let no airplanes land. I'm telling you what they said. That was revolution. That was revolution. That was the black revolution.

It was the grass roots out there in the street. [It] scared the white man to death, scared the white power structure in Washington, D. C. to death; I was there. When they found out that this black steamroller was going to come down on the capital, they called in Wilkins; they called in Randolph; they called in these national Negro leaders that you respect and told them, "Call it off." Kennedy said, "Look, you all letting this thing go too far." And Old Tom said, "Boss, I can't stop it, because I didn't start it." I'm telling you what they said. They said, "I'm not even in it, much less at the head of it." They said, "These Negroes are doing things on their own. They're running ahead of us." And that old shrewd fox, he said, "Well If you all aren't in it, I'll put you in it. I'll put you at the head of it. I'll endorse it. I'll welcome it. I'll help it. I'll join it."

A matter of hours went by. They had a meeting at the Carlyle Hotel in New York City. The Carlyle Hotel is owned by the Kennedy family; that's the hotel Kennedy spent the night at, two nights ago; [it] belongs to his family. A philanthropic society headed by a white man named Stephen Currier called all the top civil—rights leaders together at the Carlyle Hotel. And he told them that, "By you all fighting each other, you are destroying the civil—rights movement. And since you're fighting over money from white liberals, let us set up what is known as the Council for United Civil Rights Leadership. Let's form this council, and all the civil—rights organizations will belong to it, and we'll use it for fund—raising purposes." Let me show you how tricky the white man is. And as soon as they got it formed, they elected Whitney Young as the chairman, and who [do] you think became the co—chairman? Stephen Currier, the white man, a millionaire. Powell was talking about it down at the Cobo [Hall] today. This is what he was talking about. Powell knows it happened. Randolph knows it happened. Wilkins knows it happened. King knows it happened. Everyone of that so—called Big Six —— they know what happened.

Once they formed it, with the white man over it, he promised them and gave them
$800,000 to split up between the Big Six; and told them that after the march was over
they'd give them $700,000 more. A million and a half dollars — split up between leaders
that you've been following, going to jail for, crying crocodile tears for. And they're nothing
but Frank James and Jesse James and the what—do—you—call—'em brothers.

[As] soon as they got the setup organized, the white man made available to them top public
relations experts; opened the news media across the country at their disposal; and then they
begin [sic] to project these Big Six as the leaders of the march. Originally, they weren't even
in the march. You was [sic] talking this march talk on Hastings Street —— Is Hastings
Street still here? —— on Hastin Street. You was [sic] talking the march talk on Lenox
Avenue, and out on —— What you call it? —— Fillmore Street, and Central Avenue, and
32nd Street and 63rd Street. That's where the march talk was being talked. But the white
man put the Big Six [at the] head of it; made them the march. They became the march. They
took it over. And the first move they made after they took it over, they invited Walter
Reuther, a white man; they invited a priest, a rabbi, and an old white preacher. Yes, an old
white preacher. The same white element that put Kennedy in power —— labor, the
Catholics, the Jews, and liberal Protestants; [the] same clique that put Kennedy in power,
joined the march on Washington.

It's just like when you've got some coffee that's too black, which means it's too strong. What
you do? You integrate it with cream; you make it weak. If you pour too much cream in, you
won't even know you ever had coffee. It used to be hot, it becomes cool. It used to be strong,
it becomes weak. It used to wake you up, now it'll put you to sleep. This is what they did
with the march on Washington. They joined it. They didn't integrate it; they infiltrated it.
They joined it, became a part of it, took it over. And as they took it over, it lost its militancy.
They ceased to be angry. They ceased to be hot. They ceased to be uncompromising. Why, it
even ceased to be a march. It became a picnic, a circus. Nothing but a circus, with clowns
and all. You had one right here in Detroit —— I saw it on television —— with clowns leading
it, white clowns and black clowns. I know you don't like what I'm saying, but I'm going to
tell you anyway. 'Cause I can prove what I'm saying. If you think I'm telling you wrong, you
bring me Martin Luther King and A. Phillip Randolph and James Farmer and those other
three, and see if they'll deny it over a microphone.

No, it was a sellout. It was a takeover. When James Baldwin came in from Paris, they
wouldn't let him talk, 'cause they couldn't make him go by the script. Burt Lancaster read
the speech that Baldwin was supposed to make; they wouldn't let Baldwin get up there,
'cause they know Baldwin's liable to say anything. They controlled it so tight —— they told
those Negroes what time to hit town, how to come, where to stop, what signs to carry, what
song to sing, what speech they could make, and what speech they couldn't make; and then told them to get out town by sundown. And everyone of those Toms was out of town by sundown. Now I know you don't like my saying this. But I can back it up. It was a circus, a performance that beat anything Hollywood could ever do, the performance of the year. Reuther and those other three devils should get a Academy Award for the best actors 'cause they acted like they really loved Negroes and fooled a whole lot of Negroes. And the six Negro leaders should get an award too, for the best supporting cast.
The I Have a Dream Speech

In 1950's America, the equality of man envisioned by the Declaration of Independence was far from a reality. People of color — blacks, Hispanics, Asians — were discriminated against in many ways, both overt and covert. The 1950's were a turbulent time in America, when racial barriers began to come down due to Supreme Court decisions, like Brown v. Board of Education; and due to an increase in the activism of blacks, fighting for equal rights.

Martin Luther King, Jr., a Baptist minister, was a driving force in the push for racial equality in the 1950’s and the 1960’s. In 1963, King and his staff focused on Birmingham, Alabama. They marched and protested non-violently, raising the ire of local officials who sicced water cannon and police dogs on the marchers, whose ranks included teenagers and children. The bad publicity and break-down of business forced the white leaders of Birmingham to concede to some anti-segregation demands.

Thrust into the national spotlight in Birmingham, where he was arrested and jailed, King helped organize a massive march on Washington, DC, on August 28, 1963. His partners in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom included other religious leaders, labor leaders, and black organizers. The assembled masses marched down the Washington Mall from the Washington Monument to the Lincoln Memorial, heard songs from Bob Dylan and Joan Baez, and heard speeches by actor Charlton Heston, NAACP president Roy Wilkins, and future U.S. Representative from Georgia John Lewis.

King's appearance was the last of the event; the closing speech was carried live on major television networks. On the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, King evoked the name of Lincoln in his "I Have a Dream" speech, which is credited with mobilizing supporters of desegregation and prompted the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The next year, King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

The following is the exact text of the spoken speech, transcribed from recordings.

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. So we have come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we have come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes,
black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the 
pursuit of happiness.

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are 
concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, 
a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of 
justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of 
opportunity of this nation. So we have come to cash this check — a check that will give us upon demand 
the riches of freedom and the security of justice. We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind 
America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take 
the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is 
the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now 
is the time to lift our nation from the quick sands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. 
Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the 
moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate 
discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of 
freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a 
beginning. Those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off 
steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the 
nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor 
tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship 
rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the 
foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people who stand 
on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place 
we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking 
from the cup of bitterness and hatred.

We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow 
our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic 
heights of meeting physical force with soul force. The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the 
Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as 
evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our 
destiny. They have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot 
walk alone.

As we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back. There 
are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be 
satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never 
be satisfied, as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of 
the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is 
from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of 
their selfhood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating "For Whites Only". We cannot be satisfied as 
long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to 
vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and 
righteousness like a mighty stream.

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you
have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.

Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.

I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification; one day right there in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with a new meaning, "My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring."

And if America is to be a great nation this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!
Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado!

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California!

But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia!

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee!

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! free at last! thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"
A Summing Up: Louis Lomax interviews Malcolm X by Louis Lomax

Louis Lomax
1963

LOMAX: Minister Malcolm, we are all by now familiar with your basic philosophy; we have heard you speak, seen you on television, and read your remarks in magazines and newspapers. By now, I think, everybody knows your position that the white man is a devil, a man incapable of doing right; you hold that the black man is of God’s divine nature, that he fell from power because of weakness; you hold further that the white man’s rule over the earth was scheduled to end in 1914, but that his end has been delayed because of the need to get the American Negro into the fold of the black brotherhood.

MALCOLM X: Yes, sir, that is what The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches us. The white devil’s time is up; it has been up for almost fifty years now. It has taken us that long to get the deaf, dumb, and blind black men in the wilderness of North America to wake up and understand who they are. You see, sir, when a man understands who he is, who God is, who the devil is... then he can pick himself up out of the gutter; he can clean himself up and stand up like a man should before his God. This is why we teach that in order for a man to really understand himself he must be part of a nation; he must have some land of his own, a God of his own, a language of his own. Most of all he must have love and devotion for his own kind.

LOMAX: Wouldn’t you say the Negro has a nation—America?

MALCOLM X: Sir, how can a Negro say America is his nation? He was brought here in chains; he was put in slavery and worked like a mule for three hundred years; he was separated from his land, his culture, his God, his language!

The Negro was taught to speak the white man’s tongue, worship the white God, and accept the white man as his superior.

This is a white man’s country. And the Negro is nothing but an ex-slave who is now trying to get himself integrated into the slave master’s house.
And the slave master doesn’t want you! You fought and bled and died in every war the white man waged, and he still won’t give you justice. You nursed his baby and cleaned behind his wife, and he still won’t give you freedom; you turned the other cheek while he lynched you and raped your women, but he still won’t give you equality. Now, you integration-minded Negroes are trying to force yourselves on your former slave master, trying to make him accept you in his drawing room; you want to hang out with his women rather than the women of your own kind.

LOMAX: Are you suggesting that all of us who fight for integration are after a white woman?

MALCOLM X: I wouldn’t say all of you, but let the evidence speak for itself. Check up on these integration leaders, and you will find that most of them are either married to or hooked up with some white woman. Take that meeting between James Baldwin and Robert Kennedy; practically everybody there was interracially married. Harry Belafonte is married to a white woman; Lorraine Hansberry is married to a white man; Lena Horne is married to a white man.

Now how can any Negro, man or woman, who sleeps with a white person speak for me? No black person married to a white person can speak for me!

LOMAX: Why?

MALCOLM X: Why? Because only a man who is ashamed of what he is will marry out of his race. There has to be something wrong when a man or a woman leaves his own people and marries somebody of another kind. Men who are proud of being black marry black women; women who are proud of being black marry black men.

This is particularly true when you realize that these Negroes who go for integration and intermarriage are linking up with the very people who lynched their fathers, raped their mothers, and put their kid sisters in the kitchen to scrub floors. Why would any black man in his right mind want to marry a lynchera, a murderer, a rapist, a dope peddler, a gambler, a hog eater... Why would any black man want to marry a devil... for that’s just what the white man is.

LOMAX: I have heard you say that a thousand times, but it always jolts me. Why do you call the white man a devil?

MALCOLM X: Because that’s what he is. What do you want me to call him, a saint? Anybody who rapes, and plunders, and enslaves, and steals, and drops hell bombs on people... anybody who does these things is nothing but a devil.

Look, Lomax, history rewards all research. And history fails to record one single instance in which
the white man—as a people—did good. They have always been devils; they always will be devils, and they are about to be destroyed. The final proof that they are devils lies in the fact that they are about to destroy themselves. Only a devil—and a stupid devil at that—would destroy himself!

Now why would I want to integrate with somebody marked for destruction?

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches us to get away from the devil as soon and as fast as we can. This is why we are demanding a separate state. Tell the slave master we will no longer beg for crumbs from his table; let him give us some land of our own so we can go for ourselves. If he doesn’t give us some land, there is going to be hell to pay. As I said at Howard University and at Queens College, once the white man let the Negro get an education, the Negro began to want what the white man has. But he let Negroes get an education and now they are demanding integration; they want to have exactly what he has. And the white man is not going to give it to them!

LOMAX: But we have made some gains...

MALCOLM X: What gains? All you have gotten is tokenism—one or two Negroes in a job or at a lunch counter so the rest of you will be quiet. It took the United States Army to get one Negro into the University of Mississippi; it took troops to get a few Negroes in the white schools at Little Rock and another dozen places in the South. It has been nine years since the Supreme Court decision outlawing segregated schools, yet less than ten per cent of the Negro students in the South are in integrated schools. That isn’t integration, that’s tokenism! In spite of all the dogs, and fire hoses, and club-swinging policemen, I have yet to read of anybody eating an integrated hamburger in Birmingham.

You Negroes are not willing to admit it yet, but integration will not work. Why, it is against the white man’s nature to integrate you into his house. Even if he wanted to, he could no more do it than a Model T can sprout wings and fly. It just isn’t in him.

Now The Honorable Elijah Muhammad says it would be the easiest thing in the world for the white man to destroy all Black Muslims. We contend that the white man is a devil. If he is not a devil, let him prove it!

He can’t do it, Lomax; it isn’t in him; it is against his nature.

He’ll keep on granting tokenism; a few big Negroes will get big jobs, but the black masses will catch hell as long as they stay in the white man’s house.
The only possible way out for the white man is to give us some land of our own; let us get out, get away from his wicked reign and go for ourselves.

But the white man will not do that, either. He is going to keep you integration-minded Negroes cooped up here in this country, and when you discover that the white man is a trickster, a devil, that he has no intentions of integrating, then you Negroes will run wild. That will be the time...

LOMAX: The time for what?

MALCOLM X: Only The Honorable Elijah Muhammad can answer that!

LOMAX: This is strong gospel, Minister Malcolm; many people, Negro and white, say what you preach amounts to hate, that your theology is actually anti-Semitic. What is your comment to that?

MALCOLM X: The white people who are guilty of white supremacy are trying to hide their own guilt by accusing The Honorable Elijah Muhammad of teaching black supremacy when he tries to uplift the mentality, the social, mental and economic condition of the black people in this country. Jews who have been guilty of exploiting the black people in this country, economically, civically, and otherwise, hide behind—hide their guilt by accusing The Honorable Elijah Muhammad of being anti-Semitic, simply because he teaches our people to go into business for ourselves and take over the economic leadership in our own community. And since the white people collectively have practiced the worst form of hatred against Negroes in this country and they know that they are guilty of it, now when The Honorable Elijah Muhammad comes along and begins to list the historic deed—the historic attitude, the historic behavior of the white man in this country toward the black people in this country, again, the white people are so guilty and they can't stop doing these things to make Mr. Muhammad appear to be wrong, so they hide their wrong by saying "he is teaching hatred." History is not hatred. Actually we are Muslims because we believe in the religion of Islam. We believe in one God. We believe Muhammad is the Apostle of God. We practice the principles of the religion of Islam, which mean prayer, charity, fasting, brotherhood, and The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches us that since the Western society is deteriorating, it has become overrun with immorality, that God is going to judge it and destroy it, and the only way the black people who are in this society can be saved is not to integrate into this corrupt society but separate ourselves from it, reform ourselves, lift up our moral standards and try and be godly—try to integrate with God—instead of trying to integrate with the white man, or try and imitate God instead of trying to imitate the white man.

LOMAX: It is suggested also that your movement preaches violence.
MALCOLM X: No, sir. The black people of this country have been victims of violence at the hands of the white men for four hundred years, and following the ignorant Negro preachers, we have thought that it was godlike to turn the other cheek to the brute that was brutalizing us. Today The Honorable Elijah Muhammad is showing black people in this country that, just as the white man and every other person on this earth has God-given rights, natural rights, civil rights, any kind of rights that you can think of, when it comes to defending himself, black people—we should have the right to defend ourselves also. And, because The Honorable Elijah Muhammad makes black people brave enough, men enough to defend ourselves no matter what the odds are, the white man runs around here with a doctrine that Mr. Muhammad is advocating the violence when he is actually telling Negroes to defend themselves against violent people.

LOMAX: Reverend Martin Luther King teaches a doctrine of nonviolence. What is your attitude toward this philosophy?

MALCOLM X: The white man supports Reverend Martin Luther King, subsidizes Reverend Martin Luther King, so that Reverend Martin Luther King can continue to teach the Negroes to be defenseless—that’s what you mean by nonviolent—be defenseless in the face of one of the most cruel beasts that has ever taken people into captivity—that’s this American white man, and they have proved it throughout the country by the police dogs and the police clubs. A hundred years ago they used to put on a white sheet and use a bloodhound against Negroes. Today they have taken off the white sheet and put on police uniforms and traded in the bloodhounds for police dogs, and they’re still doing the same thing. Just as Uncle Tom, back during slavery used to keep the Negroes from resisting the bloodhound or resisting the Ku Klux Klan by teaching them to love their enemies or pray for those who use them despitefully, today Martin Luther King is just a twentieth-century or modern Uncle Tom or religious Uncle Tom, who is doing the same thing today to keep Negroes defenseless in the face of attack that Uncle Tom did on the plantation to keep those Negroes defenseless in the face of the attack of the Klan in that day.

Now the goal of Dr. Martin Luther King is to give Negroes a chance to sit in a segregated restaurant beside the same white man who has brutalized them for four hundred years. The goal of Martin Luther King is to get the Negroes to forgive the people the people who have brutalized them for four hundred years, by lulling them to sleep and making them forget what those whites have done to them, but the masses of black people today don’t go for what Martin Luther King is putting down.

LOMAX: Minister Malcolm, you often speak of unity among our people. Unity for what?

MALCOLM X: The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches us that God now is about to establish a
kingdom on this earth based upon brotherhood and peace, and the white man is against brotherhood and the white man is against peace. His history on this earth has proved that. Nowhere in history has he been brotherly toward anyone. The only time he is brotherly toward you is when he can use you, when he can exploit you, when he will oppress you, when you will submit to him, and since his own history makes him unqualified to be an inhabitant or citizen in the kingdom of brotherhood, The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches us that God is about to eliminate that particular race from this earth. Since they are due for elimination, we don't want to be with them. We are not going to integrate with that which we know has come to the end of its rope. We are trying to separate from it and get with something that is more lasting, and we think that God is more lasting than the white man.

LOMAX: Then your movement does not share the integration goals of the NAACP, CORE, Martin Luther King's movement, and the Student Nonviolent movement.

MALCOLM X: You don't integrate with a sinking ship. You don't do anything to further your stay aboard a ship that you see is going to go down to the bottom of the ocean. Moses tried to separate his people from Pharaoh, and when he tried, the magicians tried to fool the people into staying with the Pharaoh, and we look upon these other organizations that are trying to get Negroes to integrate with this doomed white man as nothing but modern-day magicians, and The Honorable Elijah Muhammad is a modern-day Moses trying to separate us from the modern-day Pharaoh. Until the white man in America sits down and talks with The Honorable Elijah Muhammad, he won't even know what the race problem—what makes the race problem what it is. Just like Pharaoh couldn't get a solution to his problem until he talked to Moses, or Nebuchadnezzar or Belshazzar couldn't get a solution to his problem until he talked to Daniel, the white man in America today will never understand the race problem or come anywhere near getting a solution to the race problem until he talks to The Honorable Elijah Muhammad. Mr. Muhammad will give him God's analysis, not some kind of political analysis or psychologist's analysis, or some kind of clergyman's analysis, but God's analysis. That's the analysis that Moses gave Pharaoh, that's the analysis that Daniel gave Belshazzar. Today we have a modern Belshazzar and a modern Pharaoh sitting in Washington D.C.

LOMAX: I am struck by the fact that each of the biblical figures you mentioned—Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, and Belshazzar—came to a rather sorry end. Are you willing to complete the analogy and say the American white establishment will come to a bitter end, perhaps be destroyed?

MALCOLM X: I have spoken on this many times, and I am sure you know what The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches on this. But since we are on record I will—as they sometimes say in
Harlem—make it plain.

Now, sir, God is going to punish this wicked devil for his misdeeds toward black people. Just as plagues were visited on Pharaoh so will pestilences and disasters be visited on the white man. Why, it has already started: God has begun to send them heat when they expect cold; he sends them cold when they expect heat. Their crops are dying, their children are being born with all kinds of deformities, the rivers and lakes are coming out of the belly of the earth to wash them away.

Not only that, but God has started slapping their planes down from the sky. Last year [1962] God brought down one of their planes loaded with crackers whose fathers had lynched your and my brothers and sisters. They were from your state, Lomax, down there in Georgia where both you and Mr. Muhammad come from. Now, long before that plane crash I predicted [in Los Angeles] that God was going to strike back at the devil for the way white cops brutalized our brothers in Los Angeles. When the plane fell, I said this was God’s way of letting his wrath be known. I said much the same thing when that submarine—the Thresher—went down to the bottom of the sea. Now for this I was called—names some of these Uncle Tom Negroes rushed into print to condemn me for what I had said. But what was wrong with what I said? Everybody has a God and believes that his God will deliver him and protect him from his enemies! Why can’t the black man have a God? What’s so wrong when a black man says his God will protect him from his white foe? If Jehovah can slay Phillistines for the Jews, why can’t Allah slay crackers for the so-called Negro?

LOMAX: Is that the reasoning behind your remark after the assassination of President Kennedy? You are reported to have said that Kennedy’s death was an instance of "chickens coming home to roost."

MALCOLM X: Yes, but let’s clear up what I said, I did not say that Kennedy’s death was a reason for rejoicing. That is not what I meant at all. Rather I meant that the death of Kennedy was the result of a long line of violent acts, the culmination of hate and suspicion and doubt in this country. You see, Lomax, this country has allowed white people to kill and brutalize those they don’t like. The assassination of Kennedy is a result of that way of life and thinking. The chickens came home to roost; that’s all there is to it. America—at the death of the President—just reaped what it had been sowing.

LOMAX: But you were disciplined for making these remarks; The Honorable Elijah Muhammad has publicly rebuked you and has ordered you not to speak in public until further notice.

MALCOLM X: This is true. I was wrong; the Messenger had warned me not to say anything about
the death of the President, and I omitted any reference to that tragedy in my main speech. But during a question-and-answer period someone asked about the meaning of the Kennedy assassination, and I said it was a case of chickens coming home to roost. Now about that suspension—it's just as if you have cut off a radio. The radio is still there, but it makes no sound. You can cut it back on when it pleases you.

LOMAX: How long do you think this suspension will last?

MALCOLM X: Only The Honorable Elijah Muhammad can answer that. I don't think it will be permanent.

LOMAX: Then you do expect to return to your duties?

MALCOLM X: Yes, sir.

LOMAX: And you will continue to preach separation from the white man?

MALCOLM X: Yes, sir.

LOMAX: Just a moment, if I may, Minister Malcolm. Now, you talk about separation from the white man.

MALCOLM X: Yes, sir.

LOMAX: You even take it so far as to suggest that we shouldn't even get on airplanes and ships with white people. Am I correct in that?

MALCOLM X: Yes, sir, on the whole. Yes.

LOMAX: But Minister Malcolm, few people, Negro or white, travel as much as you and I do. You spend much of your life getting on and off aircraft. Don't you fear that you just might be aboard when God sees fit to slap down a jet and kill a few score white people?

MALCOLM X: Sir, my faith in God is such that I am not afraid. I know that I will not die until my time comes. But if I am aboard one of these vessels I will be happy to give my life to see some of these white devils die. Like Samson, I am ready to pull down the white man's temple, knowing full well that I will be destroyed by the falling rubble.

LOMAX: But Minister Malcolm, you make no accommodation for the changes that have come about as a result of the Negro Revolt. What do you think will be the results of the current
demonstration against segregation?

MALCOLM X: Lomax, as you know, these Negro leaders have been telling the white man everything is all right, everything is under control, and they have been telling the white man that Mr. Muhammad is wrong, don’t listen to him. But every thing that Mr. Muhammad has been saying is going to come to pass, is now coming to pass. Now the Negro leaders are standing up saying that we are about to have a racial explosion. You’re going to have a racial explosion, and a racial explosion is more dangerous than an atomic explosion. It’s going to explode because black people are dissatisfied; they’re dissatisfied not only with the white man, but they’re dissatisfied with these Negroes who have been sitting around here posing as leaders and spokesmen for black people and actually making the problem worse instead of making the problem better.

LOMAX: Do you deny that Negroes are now getting the protection of the Federal Government; after all, both the President and the Attorney General have come to our aid.

MALCOLM X: You never will get protection from the Federal Government. Just like King is asking Kennedy to go to Alabama to stand in a doorway—to put his body in a doorway. That’s like asking the fox to protect you from the wolf! The masses of black people can see this, and it is only the Negro leadership, the bourgeois, hand-picked, handful of Negroes who think that they’re going to get some kind of respect, recognition, or protection from the Government. The Government is responsible for what is happening to black people in this country. The President has power. You notice he didn’t send any troops into Birmingham to protect the Negroes when the dogs were biting the Negroes. The only time he sent troops into Birmingham was when the Negroes erupted, and then the President sent the troops in there, not to protect the Negroes, but to protect them white people down there from those erupting Negroes.

LOMAX: Are not Negroes American citizens?

MALCOLM X: If they were citizens, you wouldn’t have a race problem. If the Emancipation Proclamation was authentic, you wouldn’t have a race problem. If the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution were authentic, you wouldn’t have a race problem. If the Supreme Court desegregation decision was authentic, you wouldn’t have a race problem. All of this hypocrisy that has been practiced by the so-called white so-called liberal for the past four hundred years that compounds the problem, makes it more complicated, instead of eliminating the problem.

LOMAX: What, then, do you see as the final result of all these demonstrations?

MALCOLM X: Any time you put too many sparks around a powder keg, the thing is going to
explode, and if the things that explodes is still inside the house, then the house will be destroyed. So The Honorable Elijah Muhammad is telling the white man, "Get this powder keg out of your house—let the black people in this country separate from you, while there's still time." If the black man is allowed to separate and go into some land of his own where he can solve his own problems, there won't be any explosion, and the Negroes who want to stay with the white man, let them stay with the white man—but those who want to leave, let them go to The Honorable Elijah Muhammad.

LOMAX: Now that you have mentioned The Messenger, I would like to ask you about this article in the [New York] Amsterdam News...

MALCOLM X: It's a lie. Any article that says there is a "minor" difference between Mr. Muhammad and me is a lie. How could there be any difference between The Messenger and me? I am his slave, his servant, his son. He is the leader, the only spokesman for the Black Muslims.

But I will tell you this: The Messenger has seen God. He was with Allah and was given divine patience with the devil. He is willing to wait for Allah to deal with this devil. Well, sir, the rest of us Black Muslims have not seen God, we don’t have this gift of divine patience with the devil. The younger Black Muslims want to see some action.

LOMAX: What kind of action?

MALCOLM X: Some things are better done than said.

LOMAX: According to your own newspaper, one of the things you Muslims may do in the near future is vote.

MALCOLM X: Yes. After long and prayerful consideration, The Honorable Elijah Muhammad allowed us to announce the possibility of Muslims voting. The announcement came at our annual Saviour's Day Convention in Chicago.

LOMAX: What does it mean?

MALCOLM X: Mr. Muhammad is the only one who can explain that fully. However, I can say that we may register and be ready to vote. Then we will seek out candidates who represent our interests and support them. They need not be Muslims; what we want are race men who will speak out for our people.

LOMAX: There are rumors that you may run against Adam Clayton Powell.
MALCOLM X: Why must I run against a Negro? We have had enough of Negroes running against and fighting with each other. The better bet is that we would put a Muslim candidate in the field against a devil, somebody who is against all we stand for.

LOMAX: What are the chances of Black Muslims joining us in picket lines for better jobs?...

MALCOLM X: As I told you, only Mr. Muhammad can answer that. But let me tell you something: Better jobs and housing are only temporary solutions. They are aspects of tokenism and don’t go to the heart of the problem.

This is why integration will not work. It assumes that the two races, black and white, are equal and can be made to live as one. This is not true.

The white man is by nature a devil and must be destroyed. The black man will inherit the earth; he will resume control, taking back the position he held centuries ago when the white devil was crawling around the caves of Europe on his all fours. Before the white devil came into our lives we had a civilization, we had a culture, we were living in silks and satins. Then he put us in chains and put us aboard the "Good Ship Jesus," and we have lived in hell ever since.

Now the white man’s time is over. Tokenism will not help him, and it will doom us. Complete separation will save us—and who knows, it might make God decide to give the white devil a few more years.

**URL:** http://www.TeachingAmericanHistory.org/library/index.asp?documentprint=539
From the very beginning there was a philosophy undergirding the Montgomery boycott, the philosophy of nonviolent resistance. There was always the problem of getting this method over because it didn’t make sense to most of the people in the beginning. We had to use our mass meetings to explain nonviolence to a community of people who had never heard of the philosophy and in many instances were not sympathetic with it. We had meetings twice a week on Mondays and on Thursdays, and we had an institute on nonviolence and social change. We had to make it clear that nonviolent resistance is not a method of cowardice. It does resist. It is not a method of stagnant passivity and deadening complacency. The nonviolent resister is just as opposed to the evil that he is standing against as the violent resister but he resists without violence. This method is nonaggressive physically but strongly aggressive spiritually.

**NOT TO HUMILIATE BUT TO WIN OVER**

Another thing that we had to get over was the fact that the nonviolent resister does not seek to humiliate or defeat the opponent but to win his friendship and understanding. This was always a cry that we had to set before people that our aim is not to defeat the white community, not to humiliate the white community, but to win the friendship of all of the persons who had perpetrated this system in the past. The end of violence or the aftermath of violence is bitterness. The aftermath of nonviolence is reconciliation and the creation of a beloved community. A boycott is never an end within itself. It is merely a means to awaken a sense of shame within the oppressor but the end is reconciliation, the end is redemption.

Then we had to make it clear also that the nonviolent resister seeks to attack the evil system rather than individuals who happen to be caught up in the system. And this is why I say from time to time that the struggle in the South is not so much the tension between white people and Negro people. The struggle is rather between justice and injustice, between the forces of light and the forces of darkness. And if there is a victory it will not be a victory merely for fifty thousand Negroes. But it will be a victory for justice, a victory for good will, a victory for democracy.
Another basic thing we had to get over is that nonviolent resistance is also an internal matter. It not only avoids external violence or external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit. And so at the center of our movement stood the philosophy of love. The attitude that the only way to ultimately change humanity and make for the society that we all long for is to keep love at the center of our lives. Now people used to ask me from the beginning what do you mean by love and how is it that you can tell us to love those persons who seek to defeat us and those persons who stand against us; how can you love such persons? And I had to make it clear all along that love in its highest sense is not a sentimental sort of thing, not even an affectionate sort of thing.

AGAPE LOVE

The Greek language uses three words for love. It talks about eros. Eros is a sort of aesthetic love. It has come to us to be a sort of romantic love and it stands with all of its beauty. But when we speak of loving those who oppose us we're not talking about eros. The Greek language talks about philia and this is a sort of reciprocal love between personal friends. This is a vital, valuable love. But when we talk of loving those who oppose you and those who seek to defeat you we are not talking about eros or philia. The Greek language comes out with another word and it is agape. Agape is understanding, creative, redemptive good will for all men. Biblical theologians would say it is the love of God working in the minds of men. It is an overflowing love which seeks nothing in return. And when you come to love on this level you begin to love men not because they are likeable, not because they do things that attract us, but because God loves them and here we love the person who does the evil deed while hating the deed that the person does. It is the type of love that stands at the center of the movement that we are trying to carry on in the Southland—agape.

SOME POWER IN THE UNIVERSE THAT WORKS FOR JUSTICE

I am quite aware of the fact that there are persons who believe firmly in nonviolence who do not believe in a personal God, but I think every person who believes in nonviolent resistance believes somehow that the universe in some form is on the side of justice. That there is something unfolding in the universe whether one speaks of it as a unconscious process, or whether one speaks of it as some unmoved mover, or whether someone speaks of it as a personal God. There is something in the universe that unfolds for justice and so in Montgomery we felt somehow that as we struggled we had cosmic companionship. And this was one of the things that kept the people together, the belief that the universe is on the side of justice.

God grant that as men and women all over the world struggle against evil systems they will struggle with love in their hearts, with understanding good will. Agape says you must go on with wise restraint and calm reasonableness but you must keep moving. We have a great opportunity.
in America to build here a great nation, a nation where all men live together as brothers and respect the dignity and worth of all human personality. We must keep moving toward that goal. I know that some people are saying we must slow up. They are writing letters to the North and they are appealing to white people of good will and to the Negroes saying slow up, you’re pushing too fast. They are saying we must adopt a policy of moderation. Now if moderation means moving on with wise restraint and calm reasonableness, then moderation is a great virtue that all men of good will must seek to achieve in this tense period of transition. But if moderation means slowing up in the move for justice and capitulating to the whims and caprices of the guardians of the deadening status quo, then moderation is a tragic vice which all men of good will must condemn. We must continue to move on. Our self—respect is at stake; the prestige of our nation is at stake. Civil rights is an eternal moral issue which may well determine the destiny of our civilization in the ideological struggle with communism. We must keep moving with wise restraint and love and with proper discipline and dignity.

THE NEED TO BE "MALADJUSTED"

Modern psychology has a word that is probably used more than any other word. It is the word "maladjusted." Now we all should seek to live a well—adjusted life in order to avoid neurotic and schizophrenic personalities. But there are some things within our social order to which I am proud to be maladjusted and to which I call upon you to be maladjusted. I never intend to adjust myself to segregation and discrimination. I never intend to adjust myself to mob rule. I never intend to adjust myself to the tragic effects of the methods of physical violence and to tragic militarism. I call upon you to be maladjusted to such things. I call upon you to be as maladjusted as Amos who in the midst of the injustices of his day cried out in words that echo across the generation, "Let judgment run down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream." As maladjusted as Abraham Lincoln who had the vision to see that this nation could not exist half slave and half free. As maladjusted as Jefferson, who in the midst of an age amazingly adjusted to slavery could cry out, "All men are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights and that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." As maladjusted as Jesus of Nazareth who dreamed a dream of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. God grant that we will be so maladjusted that we will be able to go out and change our world and our civilization. And then we will be able to move from the bleak and desolate midnight of man's inhumanity to man to the bright and glittering daybreak of freedom and justice.


ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

• How do you compare the age of John Brown to Malcolm X in terms of racial relations?
• In what ways were John Brown and Malcolm X similar? In what ways were they different?

OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to:

• Compare the social condition of African Americans prior to the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement.
• Analyze a variety of perspectives during both the eras of John Brown and that of Malcolm X.
• Create an argument/essay comparing and contrasting the ideologies of two major figures that contributed to the social change of African Americans in the United States.

NCSS STANDARDS: SOCIAL STUDIES

Time, Continuity, and Change

• Establishing a sense of order and time
• Understanding connections to the past

People, Places, and Environment

• Making connections with people, social relations, and racial relations within their environment
• Analyzing human behavior (both positive and negative) in relation to their social environment
 Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
  • Understanding how racial relations are formed, what controls and influences them, and how they can be managed and changed

 Civic Ideas and Practices
  • Establishing and understanding methods for involvement in public policy
  • Analyzing how the democratic process can influence policies

 NYS STANDARDS: UNITED STATES HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT
  • Students will use a variety of skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, themes, developments, turning points in the history of the United States and New York.

 MARZANO STRATEGIES:
  • Identifying similarities and differences
  • Cooperative learning
  • Summarizing and note taking
  • Intrinsic learning
  • Cues, questions, and advanced organizers
  • Homework and practice

 AGENDA:
 Bridging Historical Figures into our Personal Lives
  • Students will be asked 3 essential questions that will guide them throughout the entire lesson:
    1. In what ways were John Brown and Malcolm X similar?
    2. In what ways were John Brown and Malcolm X different?
    3. What would YOU sacrifice for a noble cause?
Class Notes: Abolitionist Movement and the Ending of Slavery

- Teacher will provide information on motivations that led to the abolitionist movement as well the events that led to the American institution of slavery.
- Class will discuss historical issues that led to the aforementioned events in American history.

Video Clip: “John Brown, the Abolitionist: 150 Years Later”
(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RjVoZvlfveg)

- In groups, Students will engage themselves at a numerous different stations and evaluate readings, images, song lyrics, and biographies to determine the social views of John Brown and Malcolm X.
- Within each station, students will complete a summary page and create 3 inquiry questions using the Socratic method.
- Other groups will have the opportunity to answer inquiry questions that were created by their peers and share out/discuss their summaries and inquiry questions. This will help in the facilitation of a discussion entire class concerning the topic(s).

Closure: John Brown & Malcolm X Venn Diagram

- Students will complete a Venn Diagram comparing and describing the differences between John Brown and Malcolm X.
- They will utilize the Venn Diagram in order to describe how these 2 major figures contributed to the social change of African Americans within the United States. Hence, they will do this by creating a short persuasive essay of their findings.

Independent Practice: “Quote Me on It!”

- Students will choose a quote from the following and describe it in their personal interpretation:
  - “Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins.”
    - John Brown
“If you don’t stand for something, you will fall for anything.”

-Malcolm X

• Students will decide if they either agree or disagree with the statement/quote and offer details using their personal experience and knowledge of U.S. History & Government to support their outlook.
Station Title: ________________________________

Station # ________________________________

Group Members: ________________________________

**Station Summary**

Describe your document:

Describe what you have learned:

Why is this knowledge important to you?

What are the contributions of the historic figure that you have chosen?

*On a separate sheet, develop 3 questions pertinent to your new knowledge*
John Brown's address to the court

Address of John Brown to the Virginia Court at Charles Town, Virginia on November 2, 1859

I have, may it please the court, a few words to say.

In the first place, I deny everything but what I have all along admitted, -- the design on my part to free slaves. I intended certainly to have made a clean thing of that matter, as I did last winter, when I went into Missouri and took slaves without the snapping of a gun on either side, moved them through the country, and finally left them in Canada. I designed to do the same thing again, on a larger scale. That was all I intended. I never did intend murder, or treason, or the destruction of property, or to excite or incite slaves to rebellion, or to make insurrection.

I have another objection; and that is, it is unjust that I should suffer such a penalty. Had I interfered in the manner which I admit, and which I admit has been fairly proved (for I admire the truthfulness and candor of the greater portion of the witnesses who have testified in this case), -- had I so interfered in behalf of the rich, the powerful, the intelligent, the so-called great, or in behalf of any of their friends -- either father, mother, sister, wife, or children, or any of that class -- and suffered and sacrificed what I have in this interference, it would have been all right; and every man in this court would have deemed it an act worthy of reward rather than punishment.

The court acknowledges, as I suppose, the validity of the law of God. I see a book kissed here which I suppose to be the Bible, or at least the New Testament. That teaches me that all things whatsoever I would that men should do to me, I should do even so to them. It teaches me further to "remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them." I endeavored to act up to that instruction. I say, I am too young to understand that God is any respecter of persons. I believe that to have interfered as I have done -- as I have always freely admitted I have done -- in behalf of His despised poor, was not wrong, but right. Now if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children and with the blood of millions in this slave country whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments. -- I submit; so let it be done!

Let me say one word further.

I feel entirely satisfied with the treatment I have received on my trial. Considering all the circumstances, it has been more generous than I expected. I feel no consciousness of my guilt. I have stated from the first what my intention was, and what was not. I never had any design against the life of any person, nor any disposition to commit treason, or excite slaves to rebel, or make any general insurrection. I never encouraged any man to do so, but always discouraged any idea of any kind.
Let me say also, a word in regard to the statements made by some to those connected with me. I hear it has been said by some of them that I have induced them to join me. But the contrary is true. I do not say this to injure them, but as regretting their weakness. There is not one of them but joined me of his own accord, and the greater part of them at their own expense. A number of them I never saw, and never had a word of conversation with, till the day they came to me; and that was for the purpose I have stated.

Now I have done.

Early years and conversion

Born in Nebraska, while an infant Malcolm moved with his family to Lansing, Mich. When Malcolm was six years old, his father, the Rev. Earl Little, a Baptist minister and former supporter of the early black nationalist leader Marcus Garvey, died after being hit by a streetcar, quite possibly the victim of murder by whites. The surviving family was so poor that Malcolm’s mother, Louise Little, resorted to cooking dandelion greens from the street to feed her children. After she was committed to an insane asylum in 1939, Malcolm and his siblings were sent to foster homes or to live with family members.

Malcolm attended school in Lansing, Mich., but dropped out in the eighth grade when one of his teachers told him that he should become a carpenter instead of a lawyer. As a rebellious youngster Malcolm moved from the Michigan State Detention Home, a juvenile home in Mason, Mich., to the Roxbury section of Boston to live with an older half sister from his father’s first marriage. There he became involved in petty criminal activities in his teenage years. Known as “Detroit Red” for the reddish tinge in his hair, he developed into a street hustler, drug dealer, and leader of a gang of thieves in Roxbury and Harlem (in New York City).

While in prison for robbery from 1946 to 1952, he underwent a conversion that eventually led him to join the Nation of Islam, an African American movement that combined elements of Islam with black nationalism. His decision to join the Nation also was influenced by discussions with his brother Reginald, who had become a member in Detroit and who was incarcerated with Malcolm in the Norfolk Prison Colony in Massachusetts in 1948. Malcolm quit smoking and gambling and refused to eat pork in keeping with the Nation’s dietary restrictions. In order to educate himself,
he spent long hours reading books in the prison library, even memorizing a
dictionary. He also sharpened his forensic skills by participating in debate classes.
Following Nation tradition, he replaced his surname, “Little,” with an “X,” a custom
among Nation of Islam followers who considered their family names to have
originated with white slaveholders.

Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam

After his release from prison Malcolm helped to lead the Nation of Islam during the
period of its greatest growth and influence. He met Elijah Muhammad in Chicago in
1952 and then began organizing temples for the Nation in New York, Philadelphia,
and Boston and in cities in the South. He founded the Nation's newspaper,
Muhammad Speaks, which he printed in the basement of his home, and initiated the
practice of requiring every male member of the Nation to sell an assigned number of
newspapers on the street as a recruiting and fund-raising technique. He also
articulated the Nation's racial doctrines on the inherent evil of whites and the natural
superiority of blacks.

Malcolm rose rapidly to become the minister of Boston Temple No. 11, which he
founded; he was later rewarded with the post of minister of Temple No. 7 in Harlem,
the largest and most prestigious temple in the Nation after the Chicago
headquarters. Recognizing his talent and ability, Elijah Muhammad, who had a
special affection for Malcolm, named him the National Representative of the Nation of
Islam, second in rank to Muhammad himself. Under Malcolm’s lieutenancy, the
Nation claimed a membership of 500,000. The actual number of members fluctuated,
however, and the influence of the organization, refracted through the public persona
of Malcolm X, always greatly exceeded its size.

![Martin Luther King, Jr. (centre), and Malcolm X (right), 1964. [Credit: Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (digital file no. 3d01847u)]](image)

An articulate public speaker, a charismatic personality, and an indefatigable
organizer, Malcolm X expressed the pent-up anger, frustration, and bitterness of
African Americans during the major phase of the civil rights movement from 1955 to
1965. He preached on the streets of Harlem and spoke at major universities such as Harvard University and the University of Oxford. His keen intellect, incisive wit, and ardent radicalism made him a formidable critic of American society. He also criticized the mainstream civil rights movement, challenging Martin Luther King, Jr.'s central notions of integration and nonviolence. Malcolm argued that more was at stake than the civil right to sit in a restaurant or even to vote—the most important issues were black identity, integrity, and independence. In contrast to King's strategy of nonviolence, civil disobedience, and redemptive suffering, Malcolm urged his followers to defend themselves "by any means necessary." His biting critique of the "so-called Negro" provided the intellectual foundations for the Black Power and black consciousness movements in the United States in the late 1960s and '70s (see; black nationalism). Through the influence of the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X helped to change the terms used to refer to African Americans from "Negro" and "coloured" to "black" and "Afro-American."

**Final years**

In 1963 there were deep tensions between Malcolm and Elijah Muhammad over the political direction of the Nation. Malcolm urged that the Nation become more active in the widespread civil rights protests instead of just being a critic on the sidelines. Muhammad's violations of the moral code of the Nation further worsened his relations with Malcolm, who was devastated when he learned that Muhammad had fathered children by six of his personal secretaries, two of whom filed paternity suits and made the issue public. Malcolm brought additional bad publicity to the Nation when he declared publicly that Pres. John F. Kennedy's assassination was an example of "chickens coming home to roost"—a violent society suffering the consequences of violence. In response to the outrage this statement provoked, Elijah Muhammad ordered Malcolm to observe a 90-day period of silence, and the break between the two leaders became permanent.
Malcolm left the Nation in March 1964 and in the next month founded Muslim Mosque, Inc. During his pilgrimage to Mecca that same year, he experienced a second conversion and embraced Sunni Islam, adopting the Muslim name el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz. Renouncing the separatist beliefs of the Nation, he claimed that the solution to racial problems in the United States lay in orthodox Islam. On the second of two visits to Africa in 1964, he addressed the Organization of African Unity (known as the African Union since 2002), an intergovernmental group established to promote African unity, international cooperation, and economic development. In 1965 he founded the Organization of Afro-American Unity as a secular vehicle to internationalize the plight of black Americans and to make common cause with the people of the developing world—to move from civil rights to human rights.

The growing hostility between Malcolm and the Nation led to death threats and open violence against him. On Feb. 21, 1965, Malcolm was assassinated while delivering a lecture at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem; three members of the Nation of Islam were convicted of the murder. He was survived by his wife, Betty Shabazz, whom he married in 1958, and six daughters. His martyrdom, ideas, and speeches contributed to the development of black nationalist ideology and the Black Power movement and helped to popularize the values of autonomy and independence among African Americans in the 1960s and '70s.

_Lawrence A. Mamiya_
## Six Types of Socratic Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Questions</th>
<th>Sample Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Clarification</td>
<td>What do you mean by ____?</td>
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<td>Could you put that another way?</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>How do you know?</td>
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<td>Why do you think that is true?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What would change your mind?</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>What effect would that have?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is an alternative?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>How can we find out?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Why is this issue important?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Questions about Questions</td>
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Group Members ____________________________________________

Station Summary

Describe your document(s):

Explain what you learned:

Why is this information important?

What are the contributions of your historic figure?

Using your station materials develop 3 quiz questions using the Socratic Method (open-ended)

1.

2.

3.
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