

Complacency and Change, 1952-1965

Cooper v. Aaron (1958) 358 U.S.C. 1 (1958)

In the 1958 decision Cooper v. Aaron, the Supreme Court declared unconstitutional a decision by the state government of Arkansas to suspend the integration of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. President Eisenhower had already intervened and sent U.S. Army units to maintain peace in Little Rock and secure access to the school for those African American students who wished to attend classes.

Opinion of the Court by the Chief Justice and Justices Black, Frankfurter, Douglas, Burton, Clark, Harlan, Brennan, and Whittaker.

As this case reaches us it raises questions of the highest importance to the maintenance of our federal system of government. It necessarily involves a claim by the Governor and Legislature of a State that there is no duty on state officials to obey federal court orders resting on this Court's considered interpretation of the United States Constitution. Specifically it involves actions by the Governor and Legislature of Arkansas upon the premise that they are not bound by our holding in *Brown v. Board of Education*. . . We are urged to uphold a suspension of the Little Rock School Board's plan to do away with segregated public schools in Little Rock until state laws have been further challenged and tested in the courts. We reject these contentions. . .

What has been said, in the light of the facts developed, is enough to dispose of the case. However, we should answer the premise of the actions of the Governor and Legislature that they are not bound by our holding in the *Brown* case. It is necessary only to recall some basic constitutional propositions which are settled doctrine.

Article VI of the Constitution makes the Constitution the "supreme Law of the Land." In 1803, Chief Justice Marshall, speaking for a unanimous Court, referring to the Constitution as "the fundamental and paramount law of the nation," declared in the notable case of *Marbury v. Madison*, 1 Cranch 137, 177, that "It is emphatically the province and duty of the judicial department to say what the law is." This decision declared the basic principle that the federal judiciary is supreme in the exposition of the law of the Constitution, and that principle has ever since been respected by this Court and the Country as a permanent and indispensable feature of our constitutional system. It follows that the interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment enunciated by this Court in the *Brown* case is the supreme law of the land, and Art. VI of the Constitution makes it of binding effect on the States "any Thing in the Constitution or Laws of any States to the Contrary notwithstanding." Every state legislator and executive and judicial officer is solemnly committed by oath taken pursuant to Art. VI, cl. 3, "to support this Constitution."...

No state legislator or executive or judicial officer can war against the Constitution without violating his undertaking to support it. Chief Justice Marshall spoke for a unanimous Court in saying that: "If the legislatures of the several states may, at will, annul the judgements of the courts of the United States, and destroy the rights acquired under those judgements, the constitution itself becomes a solemn mockery..." *United States v. Peters*... A Governor who asserts a power to nullify a federal court order is similarly restrained. If he had such power, said Chief Justice Hughes, in 1932, also for a unanimous Court, "it is manifest that the fiat of a state Governor, and not the Constitution of the United States, would be the supreme law of the land; that the restriction of the Federal Constitution upon the exercise of state power would be but impotent phrases..." *Sterling v. Constantin*...

It is, of course, quite true that the responsibility for public education is primarily the concern of the States, but it is equally true that such responsibilities, like all other state activity, must be exercised

consistently with federal constitutional requirements as they apply to state action. The Constitution created a government dedicated to equal justice under law. The Fourteenth Amendment embodied and emphasized that ideal. State support of segregated schools through any arrangement, management, funds, or property cannot be squared with the Amendment's command that no State shall deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws. The right of a student not to be segregated on racial grounds in schools so maintained is indeed so fundamental and pervasive that it is embraced in the concept of due process of law... The basic decision in *Brown* was unanimously reached by this Court only after the case had been briefed and twice argued and the issues had been given the most serious consideration. Since the first *Brown* opinion three new Justices have come to the Court. They are at one with the Justices still on the Court who participated in that basic decision as to its correctness, and that decision and the obedience of the States to them, according to the command of the Constitution, are indispensable for the protection of the freedoms guaranteed by our fundamental charter for all of us. Our constitutional ideal of equal justice under law is thus made a living truth.

Dwight D. Eisenhower, Dien Bien Phu (1954)

Initially, Eisenhower considered coming to the aid of the French at Dien Bien Phu. However, he insisted that in order to obtain American assistance, the French had to internationalize the war and to promise freedom for Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam if and when the communists were defeated. The French would not agree to Eisenhower's terms, so Eisenhower refused to commit American forces. The first document is from a letter Eisenhower wrote on April 26, 1954 to Alfred Gruenther, who was on Eisenhower's staff during World War II, served as Ike's chief of staff at NATO, and later was himself Supreme Allied Commander of NATO forces. The second document is an excerpt from a letter Eisenhower wrote to Swede Hazlett, a boyhood friend, with whom Eisenhower corresponded in long, frank, and revealing letters. This letter was written the day after the letter to Gruenther. The third document comes from the diary kept by James C. Hagerty, Eisenhower's press secretary. The excerpt is from the entry for April 26, 1954.

Dwight D. Eisenhower to Alfred Gruenther, April 26, 1954

As you know, you and I started more than three years ago trying to convince the French that they could not win the Indo-China war and particularly could not get real American support in that region unless they would unequivocally pledge independence to the Associated States upon the achievement of military victory. Along with this - indeed as a corollary to it - this administration has been arguing that no Western power can go to Asia militarily, except as one of a concert of powers, which concert must include local Asiatic peoples.

To contemplate anything else is to lay ourselves open to the charge of imperialism and colonialism or - at the very least - of objectionable paternalism. Even, therefore, if we could by some sudden stroke assure the saving of the Dien Bien Phu garrison, I think that under the conditions proposed by the French, the free world would lose more than it would gain.

Dwight D. Eisenhower to Swede Hazlett, April 27, 1954

In my last letter I remember that I mentioned Dien Bien Phu. It still holds out and while the

situation looked particularly desperate during the past week, there now appears to be a slight improvement and the place may hold on for another week or ten days. The general situation in Southeast Asia, which is rather dramatically epitomized by the Dien Bien Phu battle, is a complicated one that has been a long time developing. . . .

For more than three years I have been urging upon successive French governments the advisability of finding some way of "internationalizing" the war; such action would be proof to all the world and particularly to the Viet Nameese that France's purpose is not colonial in character but is to defeat Communism in the region and to give the natives their freedom. The reply has always been vague, containing references to national prestige, Constitutional limitations, inevitable effects upon the Moroccan and Tunisian peoples, and dissertations on plain political difficulties and battles within the French Parliament. The result has been that the French have failed entirely to produce any enthusiasm on the part of the Vietnamese for participation in the war. . . .

In any event, any nation that intervenes in a civil war can scarcely expect to win unless the side in whose favor it intervenes possesses a high morale based upon a war purpose or cause in which it believes. The French have used weasel words in promising independence and through this one reason as much as anything else, have suffered reverses that have been really inexcusable.

James C. Hagerty, Diary, April 26, 1954

Indochina. The President said that the French "are weary as hell." He said that it didn't look as though Dienbienphu could hold out for more than a week and would fall possibly sooner. Reported that the British thought that the French were not putting out as much as they could, but that he did not necessarily agree with their viewpoint. "The French go up and down every day - they are very volatile. They think they are a great power one day and they feel sorry for themselves the next day." The President said that if we were to put one combat soldier into Indochina, then our entire prestige would be at stake, not only in that area but throughout the world. . . . The President said the situation looked very grim this morning, but that he and Dulles were doing everything they could to get the free countries to act in concert. In addition, he said "there are plenty of people in Asia, and we can train them to fight well. I don't see any reason for American ground troops to be committed in Indochina, don't think we need it, but we can train their forces and it may be necessary for us eventually to use some of our planes or aircraft carriers off the coast and some of our fighting craft we have in that area for support."

Dwight D. Eisenhower, Farewell Address, 1961

As Supreme Commander of Allied forces during World War II, Dwight D. Eisenhower had won wide admiration for forging an effective fighting force out of a huge agglomeration of disparate armies and military leaders. As president, Eisenhower's conservative managerial style emphasized national unity in the face of conflict. His conservatism also caused him to worry over the rapid growth of the arms race and the "military-industrial complex."

SOURCE: Papers of the Presidents: Dwight D. Eisenhower (1960–1961).

Three days from now, after half a century in the service of our country, I shall lay down the responsibilities of office as, in traditional and solemn ceremony, the authority of the Presidency is vested in my successor....

We now stand ten years past the midpoint of a century that has witnessed four major wars among great nations. Three of them involved our own country. Despite these holocausts America is today the strongest, the most influential and most productive nation in the world. Understandably proud of this pre-eminence we yet realize that America's leadership and prestige depend, not merely upon our unmatched material progress, riches and military strength, but on how we use our power in the interests of world peace and human betterment.

Throughout America's adventure in free government, our basic purposes have been to keep the peace; to foster progress in human achievement, and to enhance liberty, dignity and integrity among people and among nations. To strive for less would be unworthy of a free and religious people. Any failure traceable to arrogance, or our lack of comprehension or readiness to sacrifice would inflict upon us grievous hurt both at home and abroad.

Progress toward these noble goals is persistently threatened by the conflict now engulfing the world. It commands our whole attention, absorbs our very beings. We face a hostile ideology—global in scope, atheistic in character, ruthless in purpose, and insidious in method.

Unhappily the danger it poses promises to be of indefinite duration. To meet it successfully, there is called for, not so much the emotional and transitory sacrifices of crisis, but rather those which enable us to carry forward steadily, surely, and without complaint the burdens of a prolonged and complex struggle—with liberty the stake. Only thus shall we remain, despite every provocation, on our chartered course toward permanent peace and human betterment....

A vital element in keeping the peace is our military establishment. Our arms must be mighty, ready for instant action, so that no potential aggressor may be tempted to risk his own destruction.

Our military organization today bears little relation to that known by any of my predecessors in peacetime, or indeed by the fighting men of World War II or Korea. Until the latest of our world conflicts, the United States had no armaments industry. American makers of plowshares could, with time and as required, make swords as well. But now we can no longer risk emergency improvisation of national defense; we have been compelled to create a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions. Added to this, three and a half million men and women are directly engaged in the defense establishment. We annually spend on military security more than the net income of all United States corporations.

This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence—economic, political, even spiritual—is felt in every city, every statehouse, every office of the federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave

implications. Our toil, resources, and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society.

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.

Akin to, and largely responsible for the sweeping changes in our industrial-military posture, has been the technological revolution during recent decades.

In this revolution, research has become central; it also becomes more formalized, complex, and costly. A steadily increasing share is conducted for, by, or at the direction of, the federal government....

The prospect of domination of the nation's scholars by federal employment, project allocations, and the power of money is ever present—and is gravely to be regarded. Yet, in holding scientific research and discovery in respect, as we should, we must also be alert to the equal and opposite danger that public policy could itself become the captive of a scientific-technological elite.

It is the task of statesmanship to mold, to balance, and to integrate these and other forces, new and old, within the principles of our democratic system—ever aiming toward the supreme goals of our free society.

Another factor in maintaining balance involves the element of time. As we peer into society's future, we—you and I, and our government—must avoid the impulse to live only for today, plundering, for our own ease and convenience, the precious resources of tomorrow. We cannot mortgage the material assets of our grandchildren without risking the loss also of their political and spiritual heritage. We want democracy to survive for all generations to come, not to become the insolvent phantom of tomorrow.

Down the long lane of the history yet to be written America knows that this world of ours, ever growing smaller, must avoid becoming a community of dreadful fear and hate, and be, instead, a proud confederation of mutual trust and respect.

Such a confederation must be one of equals. The weakest must come to the conference table with the same confidence as do we, protected as we are by our moral, economic, and military strength. That table, though scarred by many past frustrations, cannot be abandoned for the certain agony of the battlefield.

Disarmament, with mutual honor and confidence, is a continuing imperative. Together we must learn how to compose differences, not with arms, but with intellect and decent purpose. Because this need is so sharp and apparent I confess that I lay down my official responsibilities in this field with a definite sense of disappointment. As one who has witnessed the horror and the lingering sadness of war—as one who knows that another war could utterly destroy this civilization which has been so slowly and painfully built over thousands of years—I wish I could say tonight that a lasting peace is in sight.

Happily, I can say that war has been avoided. Steady progress toward our ultimate goal has been made. But, so much remains to be done. As a private citizen, I shall never cease to do what little I can to help the world advance along that road....

1. *Dwight D. Eisenhower had been a military man all his life. Why did he choose to focus on the dangers of military buildup in his farewell to the American people?*
2. *What specific threats does Eisenhower see posed to the nation's domestic life by "an immense military establishment"? To its foreign policy?*

Executive Order 10730: Desegregation of Central High School, 1957

Within a week of the Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Brown v Board*, Arkansas announced it would begin immediately to comply, only one of two southern states. A moderate state, its medical and law schools had been integrated in the previous decade. Blacks had been appointed to state boards, elected to local offices. Public buses, the zoo, library, and parks system had all been desegregated. In 1957, Little Rock's school board had voted unanimously to begin desegregation of the high school, followed by junior high schools the next year and elementary schools following. The plan was gradual, limited to only nine African American students. But protests over their enrollment at Central High School brought civil rights into the homes of millions of Americans who worried about the unraveling of the very fabric of southern society.

The night before school was to start, Faubus ordered 270 Arkansas National Guardsmen to surround Central High School and to stop any black students from entering. The Governor claimed he wanted to protect citizens and property from possible violence by protesters. After Eisenhower and Faubus met in Rhode Island, the president thought the governor had backed down and had agreed to enroll the African American students; Eisenhower consented to keeping the National Guard at Central High to enforce the High Court's order. But, instead of keeping the troops, Faubus withdrew the troops. The president believed Faubus had "double crossed" him, and like high ranking generals everywhere, he deeply resented a direct challenge.

A few days later, rioting erupted when nine African American students slipped into the school to enroll. Little Rock was out of control, and Governor Faubus failed to stop the violence. Finally, Congressman Brooks Hays and Little Rock Mayor Woodrow Mann asked the Federal Government for help. Eisenhower was presented with a difficult problem. He was required to uphold the Constitution and the laws, but he also wanted to avoid a bloody confrontation in Arkansas. With Executive Order 10730, the President placed the Arkansas National Guard under Federal control and sent 1,000 U.S. Army paratroopers from the 101st Airborne Division to assist them in restoring order in Little Rock.

CITATION: Executive Order 10730, September 23, 1957 (Little Rock Crisis); General Records of the United States Government; Record Group 11; National Archives.

EXECUTIVE ORDER 10730

PROVIDING ASSISTANCE FOR THE REMOVAL OF AN OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE WITHIN THE STATE OF ARKANSAS

WHEREAS on September 23, 1957, I issued Proclamation No.3204 reading in part as follows: "WHEREAS certain persons in the state of Arkansas, individually and in unlawful assemblages, combinations, and conspiracies, have wilfully obstructed the enforcement of orders of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas with respect to matters relating to enrollment and attendance at public schools, particularly at Central High

School, located in Little Rock School District, Little Rock, Arkansas; and "WHEREAS such wilful obstruction of d justice hinders the execution of the laws of that State and of the United

States, and makes it impracticable to enforce such laws by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings; and "WHEREAS such obstruction of justice constitutes a denial of the equal protection of the laws secured by the

Constitution of the United States and impedes the course of justice under those laws: "NOW, THEREFORE, I, DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, President of the United States, under and by virtue of the

authority vested in me by the Constitution and Statutes of the United States, including Chapter 15 of Title 10 of the United States Code, particularly sections 332, 333 and 334 thereof, do command all persons engaged in such obstruction of justice to cease and desist therefrom, and to disperse forthwith;" and

WHEREAS the command contained in that Proclamation has not been obeyed and wilful obstruction of enforcement of said court orders still exists and threatens to continue:

NOW, THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and Statutes of the United States, including Chapter 15 of Title 10, particularly sections 332, 333 and 334 thereof, and section 301 of Title 3 of the United States Code, It is hereby ordered as follows:

SECTION 1. I hereby authorize and direct the Secretary of Defense to order into the active military service of the United States as he may deem appropriate to carry out the purposes of this Order, any or all of the units of the National Guard of the United States and of the Air National Guard of the United States within the State of Arkansas to serve in the active military service of the United States for an indefinite period and until relieved by appropriate orders.

SEC. 2. The Secretary of Defense is authorized and directed to take all appropriate steps to enforce any orders of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas for the removal of obstruction of justice in the State of Arkansas with respect to matters relating to enrollment and attendance at public schools in the Little Rock School District, Little Rock, Arkansas. In carrying out the provisions of this section, the Secretary of Defense is authorized to use the units, and members thereof, ordered into the active military service of the United States pursuant to Section 1 of this Order.

SEC. 3. In furtherance of the enforcement of the aforementioned orders of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas, the Secretary of Defense is authorized to use such of the armed forces of the United States as he may deem necessary.

SEC. 4. The Secretary of Defense is authorized to delegate to the Secretary of the Army or the Secretary of the Air Force, or both, any of the authority conferred upon him by this Order.

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER THE WHITE HOUSE, September 24, 1957.

Document Analysis

1. Given Eisenhower's personal views regarding Brown v. Board, and the Civil Rights Act of 1957, why did he nationalize the state's guard?
2. Which Reconstruction Era Amendment was violated by Faubus?
3. What larger issues do you find in Faubus' actions? Could he have had another agenda? Why,

do you suppose, he chose this issue in Little Rock?

Jo Ann Gibson Robinson, Bus Boycott

On the afternoon of December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks got on a bus and took a seat in no-man's land, an area in the middle section of the thirty-six-seat bus not designated for white or African-American riders. When the bus driver asked her to give up her seat to a white passenger, Parks's refusal and subsequent arrest sparked a firestorm that would last more than a year and require the federal government to extinguish. For 381 days African-American citizens of Montgomery refused to ride the busses, instead choosing to carpool or walk, suffering the consequences for challenging white authority. The boycott attracted reporters from around the globe, gave the movement with a new leader, and renewed hope for change. The following selection offers an intimate look from one of the participants.

SOURCE: The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It: The Memoir of Jo Ann Gibson Robinson. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1987, pp. 121-128

White Citizens Council Grows

Reactions to the commission's stand on the bus situation made themselves felt in different ways. For example, white Montgomerians rushed to respond to the call of the White Citizens Council. State Senator Sam Engelhardt of Macon County, who was president of the wcc, welcomed large crowds of prominent members into the fold. The very same day the mayor halted boycott discussions, hundreds of people joined the wcc. A picture in the Advertiser showed busy volunteer wcc workers recording memberships and fees. As numbers increased, blacks prayed.

Attorney Luther Ingalls, a wcc spokesman, told the Advertiser's Azbell that Negroes would never again be able to use the threat of a "bloc vote" on a candidate running for office in Montgomery County. Council members, he said, could "outvote Negroes five or more to one. And," he added, "we are only starting."

Mr. Ingalls meant what he said. Two months later, on March 27, the wcc held a mammoth public meeting at the city auditorium, where records were created on 104 candidates up for election or reelection in the May primary. Two thousand people were present to hear the candidates' views on segregation and to take notes on those candidates who, according to the spokesman, "failed to give the right answers." If one of the candidates was not present, his or her questionnaire was there to speak instead. If the candidate was not there, and the questionnaire was not there either, that spoke, too; failure to reply was taken as an admission, an answer.

The candidates present were asked the following questions:

1. Are you for segregation?
2. Are you for the mixing of the races in the public schools?
3. Do you want the Negro vote?

4. Do you favor denying the Negro his right to vote?

There was never a question on candidates' character, competence, or citizenship. The wcc's requirements for election the candidate had to be a segregationist and willing to deprive black people of their rights of citizenship.

Only fifty-one candidates answered the questionnaires or came to the meeting. But evidently all those answered in the "right way." The television report was a thing to see. One man in particular made a statement that probably gained him many wcc votes. He said that he did "not want a nigger vote, nor a colored vote, nor Negro vote."

Perhaps he had seen the voters' list which had been prep for publication in the very next afternoon's Journal. There were eleven pages of qualified white voters, numbering an estimated 25,000 for Montgomery County. There was one page of black voters, numbering 2,026 in all. This meeting showed that the wcc meant to break the back of the already scant black vote. With 25,000 whites and 2,000 blacks, one can easily campaign on a platform of white supremacy and racial hatred.

Police Harassment of Boycotters

Things really got hot in late January, as the police began to enforce their commissioner's "get-tough" policy. Hundreds of black motorists were stopped, searched, questioned, and given tickets for traffic violations. People who had never been accosted by policemen before were declared guilty of speeding or failing to recognize red lights, caution lights, or stop signs. Some were even accused of failing to ease up on a yield sign, staying too long at a stop sign, or not staying long enough. I myself received seventeen traffic tickets for all kinds of trumped-up charges.

The number of passengers riding in a car became an issue, and some were arrested for carrying too many people on the front seat. Drivers were stopped, searched, questioned, and in many cases given tickets. Fines ran from two dollars up. Many paid up to \$22.00 for "speeding." According to television reports, within two weeks' time sixty-four black drivers had been arrested and put in jail for minor traffic violations.

In this latter group was Dr. King himself, who was arrested and put in jail, allegedly for driving thirty miles an hour in a twenty-five mile zone. The minister, accompanied by a friend, Professor Robert Williams of Alabama State College, had been by the down-town parking lot to get a load of passengers and was driving away from the lot toward South Jackson Street. They were stopped by policemen who habitually stood at the entrance of the parking lot to nab drivers as they came out with their loads of passengers. Dr. King and Professor Williams were questioned, and when they showed their drivers' licenses, they heard the policemen whisper among themselves, "This is that King fellow." The police allowed the minister and his passengers to drive away, followed them to South Jackson, and stopped them when the car paused to put out the riders. The police informed Dr. King that he was under arrest for going thirty miles an hour in a twenty-five mile zone.

As Dr. King got into the officers' car, he asked Professor Williams to notify his wife. Then Professor Williams drove Dr. King's car away, as the police took the minister to jail.

Dr. King was held in a cell for only a short time. Reverend Abernathy went in to bail him out and was told that he had to get a statement from the tax office first. "But it's night," he protested, "and the office is closed." "Well, wait until tomorrow when it opens," was the reply.

But within minutes, hundreds of boycotters were milling around the jail. They did not look too pleased either, for their spokesman was locked up inside. People kept coming, coming, coming! In a very few minutes, Dr. King was released on his own signature, without paying a dime. He was told to come to trial on Saturday. He went and was found guilty and fined. He appealed the case, but later he paid the fine.

Many of the laid-off bus drivers were deputized as extra policemen. This was not announced publicly, but former bus riders, who had come into daily contact with the bus drivers, recognized them immediately and informed the MIA. These idle drivers patrolled the areas where pickup and dispatch stations were located, harassing and intimidating black drivers, questioning them, taking the license tag numbers, examining their drivers' licenses, taking the names of passengers, and trying to ascertain whether they had insurance. Sometimes one car was held up for thirty minutes. In information later given to the grand jury, Mr. Richard Jordan stated that he was stopped and questioned twenty-six times.

Quite often city officers sat in a car across the street from the parking lot, looking on. Many of the Negroes recognized them, and one snapped pictures, just for the record.

Many sad ramifications of the get-tough policy occurred there at the parking lot. For example, one public school teacher was stopped at the lot by a policeman. When questioned by the officers, the teacher replied that he was an American citizen, that he had constitutional rights. For such effrontery he was slapped in the face, his arms were twisted, and he was put in jail. His companion, another teacher, told the ministers about the man's ordeal. However, when the first man was released from jail, after paying a fine, he never told anyone of the encounter. Although he tried to act normal, he was never the same after that. At the end of the school year, he withdrew from the school system. He never explained why, but those who knew of his experience with the police felt that the man had to get away from all reminders of his bitter experience with the law. He moved away from the city, and nobody heard from him after that.

One black taxicab driver failed to display certain legal papers on his cab's window. The driver was ordered to drive the cab and his five passengers to the back yard of the jail. The driver was taken inside and locked up. The arresting officer returned to the cab for the keys. His eyes glared contempt. As he took the keys and turned to re-enter the house of punishment, one of the passengers asked, "Officer, must we wait here for the driver?" He muttered as he walked away, "He's in jail. You can sit there all night for all I care."

The Hate Campaign

Whether it was intended or not, the commissioners' stand against the boycott had started a hate campaign. Only when the three City Fathers joined the wcc and started the get-tough policy did tension begin to rise and attitudes start to change. Whites began staring at Negroes as they passed by in crowded cars. Some would harass blacks who walked along the streets. "Walk, nigger, walk," whites commonly called as they rode past.

Young white teenagers contributed their share to the hate campaign. Cars filled with white youngsters would drive through black neighborhoods and squirt water from rubber balloons upon Negro pedestrians. After a week of water squirting, the water was changed to urine; as it sprayed faces, hair, suits, or dresses, black children and adults had to return home to clean themselves of the stench.

Some speeding cars threw rotten eggs, potatoes, and apples, well as other objects that not only messed up the victims' appearance but brought physical hurt as well. A teenaged black boy was walking along the sidewalk one day when a carload of white male youths drove past. One threw out a looped rope in cowboy fashion as at a rodeo and tried to catch the boy's head in the noose. Luckily the boy saw it and ducked in time. The loop glanced off his shoulder without injury as the car, filled with laughing youngsters, sped away.

Someone in another speeding car hurled a brick into the back of a Negro boy as he walked along. It hurt him badly, but he was not able to get the car's license number.

Then there was the Negro amateur boxer who walked home from one of the mass meetings. He was beaten unconscious by a carload of young white men who stopped him as he walked along. He was hospitalized for a time.

One interesting observation during this time was the display of Confederate flags. Many of the white youngsters who rode through black neighborhoods had Confederate flag stickers on their cars. People about town displayed the tiny flags on cars, suitcases, and so on. Wcc members displayed them on their coat lapels at the city auditorium meeting, which was televised. For a long time as he broadcast the news, an analyst at a local television station kept a Confederate flag on his desk.

One cannot truthfully say that white youngsters were the only ones reflecting the "hate" mood and retaliating in some foolish way. In an article on juvenile racial unrest, City Editor Azbell reported that a white girl had been knocked down, her dress torn, and her books scattered by a group of black children. Moreover, a group of young blacks had thrown bricks at white youths as their cars stopped for a signal light.

Rumor had it that young Negro pranksters looked through telephone directories and copied down many of the names of white women, then telephoned them and frightened them with foolish threats. It was easy to do, because all the names of white women were listed with titles of "Miss" or "Mrs." and could be readily identified. It was the local phone company's policy not to give titles with the names of black women. Even this discriminatory practice had repercussions.

The telephone became a prime channel for threats for everybody. The leading black ministers who had active parts in the protest were not able to sleep nights for the ringing threats of white people. The ringing nuisance began with Reverend Graetz. As we have seen, this white Lutheran pastor of a Negro congregation was also one of the carpool drivers. Whites pestered him, his wife, and his children so much that he had to have his telephone number changed.

The torturing gave Dr. King and his wife, Coretta, no peace of mind; even their young daughter showed nervousness from the incessant telephone ringing. Reverend Abernathy and his wife, secured the help of neighbors in answering the telephone. Fred Gray, one of the main MIA attorneys, was pestered and threatened. All the MIA Executive Board members had telephones ringing far into the night, with angry voices delivering nerve-shattering and frightening threats.

Many black people left their telephone receivers off the hooks at night so they could sleep. And Commissioner Sellers stated through the press that many Negroes threatened him by telephone to such an extent that he had to put a police guard in front of his house nights for some degree of comfort. Several crosses were burned around town, but blacks ran to the scene much too rapidly for comfort; after a few efforts when some of the guilty ones were almost caught, this type of intimidation stopped.

Quite a few whites showed effects of the tension. One day I hurried into a supermarket to make some purchases. Not looking where I was going, I accidentally bumped into a white woman shopper. A spasm of hate spread over the woman's face as she drew her self up to soaring heights, as if she had grown a foot taller. She glared at me in contempt. But I reached out and touched the white woman's arm, and in a pleading tone said, "Oh, please forgive me. It was my fault for being in a hurry and not looking where I was going. I am so sorry!"

Slowly the hard, cold expression in the steel-blue eyes softened. A slow smile touched her thin lips. "Of course," she replied. "No harm's done." With understanding smiles, we two women, one white, one black, went our separate ways, having narrowly averted what could have been an ugly scene. Reverend Bonner once drove up to a red traffic light and stopped beside a car driven by a white woman. Suddenly she began cursing him, calling him obscene and profane names, some of which he had never heard spoken before. Reverend

Bonner did not part his lips to her, but he said later that he had looked at her quietly with great pity and breathed a silent prayer that "God might give her peace of mind."

John F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address (1961)

John F. Kennedy won the presidency by a tiny margin in 1960. He had promised "to get the country moving again" during his campaign, telling the nation that "We stand on the edge of a New Frontier." He cultivated an image of youthful vitality, designed to distinguish him from the Eisenhower-Nixon administration. His inaugural address, written by aide Theodore C. Sorensen, captured the themes and goals of his campaign and presidency. SOURCE: Public Papers of the Presidents: John F. Kennedy (1961).

We observe today not a victory of party but a celebration of freedom - symbolizing an end as well as a beginning - signifying renewal as well as change. For I have sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn oath our forebears prescribed nearly a century and three-quarters ago.

The world is very different now. For man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life. And yet the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe - the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God.

We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution. Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans - born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage - and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world.

Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.

This much we pledge - and more.

To those old allies whose cultural and spiritual origins we share, we pledge the loyalty of faithful friends. United, there is little we cannot do in a host of cooperative ventures. Divided, there is little we can do - for we dare not meet a powerful challenge at odds and split asunder.

To those new states whom we welcome to the ranks of the free, we pledge our word that one form of colonial control shall not have passed away merely to be replaced by a far more iron tyranny. We shall not always expect to find them supporting our view. But we shall always hope to find them strongly supporting their own freedom - and to remember that, in the past, those

who foolishly sought power by riding the back of the tiger ended up inside.

To those people in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves, for whatever period is required - not because the Communists may be doing it, not because we seek their votes, but because it is right. If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.

To our sister republics south of the border, we offer a special pledge - to convert our good words into good deeds - in a new alliance for progress - to assist free men and free governments in casting off the chains of poverty. But this peaceful revolution of hope cannot become the prey of hostile powers. Let all our neighbors know that we shall join with them to oppose aggression or subversion anywhere in the Americas. And let every other power know that this hemisphere intends to remain the master of its own house.

To that world assembly of sovereign states, the United Nations, our last best hope in an age where the instruments of war have far outpaced the instruments of peace, we renew our pledge of support - to prevent it from becoming merely a forum for invective - to strengthen its shield of the new and the weak - and to enlarge the area in which its writ may run.

Finally, to those nations who would make themselves our adversary, we offer not a pledge but a request: that both sides begin anew the quest for peace, before the dark powers of destruction unleashed by science engulf all humanity in planned or accidental self-destruction.

We dare not tempt them with weakness. For only when our arms are sufficient beyond doubt can we be certain beyond doubt that they will never be employed.

But neither can two great and powerful groups of nations take comfort from our present course - both sides overburdened by the cost of modern weapons, both rightly alarmed by the steady spread of the deadly atom, yet both racing to alter that uncertain balance of terror that stays the hand of mankind's final war.

So let us begin anew - remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof. Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate.

Let both sides explore what problems unite us instead of belaboring those problems which divide us.

Let both sides, for the first time, formulate serious and precise proposals for the inspection and control of arms - and bring the absolute power to destroy other nations under the absolute control of all nations.

Let both sides seek to invoke the wonders of science instead of its terrors. Together let us explore the stars, conquer the deserts, eradicate disease, tap the ocean depths, and encourage the arts and commerce.

Let both sides unite to heed in all corners of the earth the command of Isaiah - to "undo the heavy burdens...[and] let the oppressed go free."

And if a beachhead of co-operation may push back the jungle of suspicion, let both sides join in creating a new endeavor, not a new balance of power, but a new world of law, where the strong are just and the weak secure and the peace preserved.

All this will not be finished in the first one hundred days. Nor will it be finished in the first one thousand days, nor in the life of this administration, nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin.

In your hands, my fellow citizens, more than mine, will rest the final success or failure of our course. Since this country was founded, each generation of Americans has been summoned to give testimony to its national loyalty. The graves of young Americans who answered the call to service surround the globe.

Now the trumpet summons us again - not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need, - not as a call to battle, though embattled we are - but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and year out, "rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation" - a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself.

Can we forge against these enemies a grand and global alliance, North and South, East and West, that can assure a more fruitful life for all mankind? Will you join in that historic effort?

In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility - I welcome it. I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it - and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.

And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country.

My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.

Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us here the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own.

John Lewis, Address at the March on Washington (1963)

A high point of the civil rights movement was the March on Washington. A number of civil rights leaders, including Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke in favor a civil rights law. John Lewis was a leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

We march today for jobs and freedom, but we have nothing to be proud of, for hundreds and thousands of our brothers are not here - they have no money for their transportation, for they are receiving starvation wages . . . or no wages, at all.

In good conscience, we cannot support the Administration's civil rights bill, for it is too little, and too late. There's not one thing in the bill that will protect our people from police brutality.

The voting section of the bill will not help the thousands of citizens who want to vote. . . .

What is in the bill that will protect the homeless and starving people of this nation? What is there in this bill to ensure the equality of a maid who earns \$5.00 a week in the home of a family whose income is \$100,000 a year?

The bill will not protect young children and old women from police dogs and fire hoses for engaging in peaceful demonstrations. . . .

For the first time in 100 years this nation is being awakened to the fact that segregation is evil and it must be destroyed in all forms. Our presence today proves that we have been aroused to the point of action.

We are now involved in a serious revolution. This nation is still a place of cheap political leaders who build their careers on immoral compromise and ally themselves with open forms of political, economic, and social exploitation. . . . The party of Kennedy is also the party of Eastland. The party of Javits is also the party of Goldwater. Where is our party?

I want to know - which side is the federal government on?

The revolution is at hand, and we must free ourselves of the chains of political and economic slavery. The non-violent revolution is saying, "We will not wait for the courts to act, for we have been waiting hundreds of years. We will not wait for the President, nor the Justice Department, nor Congress, but we will take matters into our own hands, and create a great source of power, outside of any national structure that could and would assure us victory." . . . We cannot be patient, we do not want to be free gradually, we want our freedom, and we want it now. We can not depend on any political party, for both the Democrats and Republicans have betrayed the basic principles of the Declaration of Independence. . . .

The revolution is a serious one. Mr. Kennedy is trying to take the revolution out of the streets and put it in the courts. Listen, Mr. Kennedy, listen. Mr. Congressman, listen, fellow citizens - the black masses are on the march for jobs and freedom, and we must say to the politicians that

there won't be a "cooling-off period."

We won't stop now. All of the forces of Eastland, Barnett, and Wallace won't stop this revolution. The next time we march, we won't march on Washington, but will march through the South, through the Heart of Dixie, the way Sherman did - nonviolently. We will make the action of the past few months look petty. And I say to you, WAKE UP AMERICA!

Julian Bond, Sit-ins and the Origins of SNCC, 1960

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was founded in 1960 by student protestors. SNCC accepted the non-violent principles and the principles of civil disobedience espoused by Martin Luther King, Jr. while involving itself in social, economic, and political issues. By 1965, SNCC had challenged segregation and had commenced voter registration projects across the South.

SOURCE: *Monthly Review: An Independent Socialist Magazine*, October 2000, Vol. 52 Issue 5, pp. 14–15.

“Strong people don’t need strong leaders,” Ella Baker told us. We were strong people; we did strong things. These are some of the things we did.

It began for me as it did for many others in early 1960. On February 4, I was sitting in a café near my college campus in Atlanta, Georgia. It was our hangout, a place where students went between—or instead of—classes. A fellow student named Lonnie King approached me with a copy of that day’s *Atlanta Daily World*, the local black newspaper. The headline read: GREENSBORO STUDENTS SIT-IN FOR THIRD DAY!

In exact detail, the story told how black college students from North Carolina A & T University in Greensboro had, for the third consecutive day, entered a Woolworth’s Five and Ten Cents Store and asked for service at the whites-only lunch counter. It described their demeanor, their dress, and their determination to return the following day—and for as many days as it took to gain the service they were denied.

“Have you seen this?” Lonnie demanded. “Yes, I have,” I replied. “What do you think about it?” he inquired. “I think it’s great!”

“Don’t you think it ought to happen here?” he asked. “Oh, I’m sure it will happen here,” I responded. “Surely someone here will do it.” Then it came to me, as it did to many others in those early days in 1960—a query, an invitation, and a command:

“Why don’t we make it happen here?” The two of us and our friend, Joe Pierce, canvassed the café, talked to students, invited them to discuss the

Greensboro events and to duplicate them in Atlanta. The Atlanta student movement had begun. We recruited schoolmates and with them formed an organization, reconnoitered downtown lunch counters, and within a few weeks, seventy-seven of us had been arrested. . . .

As former President Jimmy Carter told former SNCC worker and author Mary King, “if you wanted to scare white people in Southwest Georgia, Martin Luther King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference wouldn’t do it. You only had to say one word—SNCC.” SNCC was founded in 1960 by southern student protesters engaged in sit-in demonstrations against lunch-counter segregation. Within a year, it evolved from a coordinating agency to a hands-on organization, helping local leadership in rural and small-town communities across the South participate in a variety of protests, as well as in political and economic organizing campaigns. This set SNCC apart from the civil rights mainstream of the 1960s. Its members, its youth, and its organizational independence enabled SNCC to remain close to grassroots currents that rapidly escalated the southern movement from sit-ins to freedom rides, and then from voter drives to political organizing.

By 1965, SNCC fielded the largest staff of any civil rights organization in the South. It had organized nonviolent direct action against segregated facilities, as well as voter registration projects, in Alabama, Arkansas, Maryland, Missouri, Louisiana, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Illinois, North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Mississippi; built two independent political parties and organized labor unions and agricultural cooperatives; and given the movement for women’s liberation new energy. It inspired and trained the activists who began the “New Left.” It helped expand the limits of political debate within black America, and broadened the focus of the civil rights movement. Unlike mainstream civil rights groups, which merely sought integration of blacks into the existing order, SNCC sought structural changes in American society itself.

In 1960, the dominant organization fighting for civil rights was the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Its preferred method was litigation and it had achieved its greatest victory in 1954 in *Brown v. Board of Education*, outlawing segregation in public schools. The NAACP lobbied Congress and presidents to adopt antisegregation measures. Its local branches were often the main civil rights outposts in communities. The NAACP—and similar groups and many individuals—fought against a system of racial domination that whites had solidified over time. The system, as Aldon Morris wrote in *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, “protected the privileges of white society and generated tremendous human suffering for blacks. In the cities and rural areas of the South, blacks were controlled economically, politically and personally,” relegated to the worst jobs, prevented—often by force and terror—from free participation in the political process, and denied due process of law and personal freedoms that all whites routinely enjoyed.

Ironically, a consequence of segregation was the development of institutions in close-knit communities, churches, schools, and organizations that nurtured and encouraged the fight against white supremacy. The young people who began the 1960 student sit-in movement lived and

learned among such institutions. The student movement's goals were described to the Democratic Convention's Platform Committee in 1960 by SNCC's first Chair, Marion Barry, as seeking a community in which man can realize the full meaning of self, which demands open relationships with others." Barry declared southern students wanted an end to racial discrimination in housing, education, employment, and voting. SNCC's goals were set out in similar terms by Executive Secretary James Forman in 1961 as "working full-time against the whole value system of this country and by working toward revolution;" in 1963, as a "program of developing, building and strengthening indigenous leadership;" and by third SNCC Chair John Lewis, at the 1963 March on Washington, as building "a serious social revolution" against "American politics dominated by politicians who build their careers on immoral compromises and ally themselves with open forms of political, economic and social exploitation."

SNCC pioneered first-time electoral races by blacks in the deep South in the 1960s, while adding foreign-policy demands to the black political agenda, thus broadening the acceptable limits of political discourse. SNCC was in the vanguard in demonstrating that independent black politics could be successful. Its early attempts to use black candidates to raise issues in races where victory was unlikely expanded the political horizon. SNCC's development of independent political parties mirrored the philosophy that political form must follow function and that nonhierarchical organizations were necessary to counter the growth of cults of personality and self-reinforcing leadership.

For much of its early history, SNCC battled against the fear that had kept rural southern blacks from wholeheartedly organizing and acting on their own behalf. It strengthened or built aggressive, locally led movements in the communities where it worked. While organizing grassroots voter-registration drives, SNCC workers offered themselves as a protective barrier between private and state sponsored-terror and the local communities where SNCC staffers lived and worked.

The rural South that SNCC encountered in 1961 had a long history of civil rights activism; in many instances, however, SNCC staffers were the first paid civil rights workers to base themselves in isolated rural communities, daring to "take the message of freedom into areas where the bigger civil rights organizations fear to tread." SNCC workers were more numerous and less transient than those from other civil rights organizations and their method of operation was different as well.

The NAACP was outlawed in Alabama in 1956 and did not begin operating there again until 1964, although NAACP activists continued under other sponsorship. In 1962, the NAACP had one field secretary each in South Carolina, Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi, and a regional staff headquartered in Atlanta. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) hired its first field secretary in 1960; in 1964, SCLC staff numbered sixty-two. By summer 1965, SCLC had staff in every southern state except Florida and Tennessee. Much of the organization's work, like the NAACP's effort, was conducted through affiliates. The historian Adam Fairclough wrote, "SCLC has to adopt a strategy of 'hit and run,' striking one target at a time." SCLC's willingness to run as well as hit provoked consistent criticism from SNCC, which organized the same communities for years rather than months or weeks.

“SCLC mobilized,” someone said. “SNCC organized.”

By the spring of 1963, SNCC had eleven staff members in southwest Georgia, and twenty staff member—and six offices—in Mississippi. By August, SNCC had projects and permanent staff in a dozen Mississippi communities; in Selma, Alabama; Danville, Virginia; and Pine Bluff, Arkansas. There were twelve workers in the Atlanta headquarters, sixty field secretaries, and 121 fulltime volunteers.

Typically, SNCC began campaigns by exploring the economic and political history of a target community. Field workers were supplied by SNCC’s own research office with detailed information on a community’s economic and financial power structure, tracing corporate relationships from local bankers and business leadership in a local White Citizens Council to the largest U.S. banks and corporations. Other research, like the report on “The Economic Status of Blacks in Alabama” provided invaluable intelligence on the condition of the state’s black population.

SNCC organizers spent their first weeks in a new community meeting local leadership, formulating with them an action plan for more aggressive registration efforts, and recruiting new activists through informal conversation, painstaking house-to-house canvassing, and regular mass meetings. Registering rural southern blacks, a SNCC worker wrote, “would greatly liberate American politics as a whole.” At the very least, these new voters would defeat the powerful, hidebound, Southern Democrats who were holding the reigns of Congress and the Senate on the basis of being elected year after year from districts where Black citizens were denied the franchise. The Southern Democratic legislators weren’t just holding up civil rights legislation, they were a serious impediment to any kind of meaningful social or economic changes.”

SNCC and other organizations fought white terrorism and helped create a willingness to risk danger in order to register to vote. By one estimate, reported in Pat Watters’ and Reese Cleghorn’s *Climbing Jacob’s Ladder: The Arrival of the Negro in Southern Politics*, “a majority of the unregistered had at least been confronted with registration’s challenge” by 1965.

SNCC’s broader definition of the civil rights movement’s purposes was obvious from its beginning. At its founding conference, in April 1960, SNCC Executive Committee member Charles Jones declared that “this movement will affect other areas beyond [lunch counter] services, such as politics and economics.” A report from the conference concluded with a warning about America’s false preoccupations in early 1960: “Civil defense and economic power alone will not insure the continuation of Democracy,” it said.

Democracy itself demands the great intangible strength of the people able to unite in a common endeavor because they are granted human dignity. This challenge cannot be met unless and until all Americans enjoy the full promise of our democratic heritage—first class citizenship.

Another recommendation noted:

Students have a natural claim to leadership in this project. They have pioneered in nonviolent direct action. Now we can show we understand the political implications of our movement—that

it goes far beyond lunch counters. We are convinced of the necessity of all local areas joining in the campaign to secure the right to vote. No right is more basic to the American citizen, none more basic to a democracy.

Within four months of these declarations, SNCC volunteer worker Robert Moses was planning a student-staffed registration project in all-black Mound Bayou in the Mississippi Delta for the summer of 1961. The state of Mississippi became a laboratory for SNCC's unique methods of organizing. SNCC's work began in southwestern Mississippi in 1961, but when its workers were driven from the area by violence, state suppression, and federal indifference, the organization regrouped in Jackson and in Mississippi's Delta counties in early 1962.

Earlier in 1961, SNCC's Nashville affiliate had continued the Freedom Rides, a direct-action campaign launched by the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) that year to integrate interstate bus lines, when Alabama violence threatened to bring them to a halt. After they were released from Parchman Penitentiary, many jailed Freedom Riders had joined the McComb movement. Several became part of the organizing cadre for the Mississippi movement that followed. Unencumbered by allegiances to the national Democratic Party, which frequently constrained other, older organizations, SNCC encouraged two black candidates to run for Congress from Mississippi; Moses served as unofficial campaign manager. They ran, wrote James Forman, "to shake loose the fear" among blacks, and, through their progressive platforms, gave their intended constituents an expanded notion of what meaning politics might have in their lives. They talked about issues that no white Mississippi politicians had ever dreamed of mentioning ideas which resonate even today. In his book, *Jackson, Mississippi*, John R. Salter described these ideas

as legislation to improve the school system, a broader plan of medical coverage, and special training facilities to develop industrial skills among the great mass of Mississippians who lacked these completely.

To demonstrate that disenfranchised Mississippi blacks did want to vote, SNCC mounted a "Freedom Vote" campaign in November 1963. Over eighty thousand blacks cast votes in a mock election for Governor and Lieutenant Governor. One hundred white northern students worked in this campaign (including Yale student Joseph Lieberman), attracting attention from the Department of Justice and the national media as black registration workers had never done, and paving the way for the "Freedom Summer" campaign in 1964.

"Freedom Summer" brought one thousand, mostly white, volunteers to Mississippi for the summer of 1964. They helped build the new political party SNCC had organized, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP); registered voters; and staffed twenty-eight "Freedom Schools" intended by their designer, Charles Cobb, "to provide an education which will make it possible for them to challenge the myths of our society, to perceive more clearly its realities, and to find alternatives, and ultimately new directions for action."

Over the next several years, SNCC-backed candidates for Congress ran in Albany, Georgia; Selma, Alabama; Danville, Virginia; and Enfield, North Carolina. SNCC helped candidates for Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service Boards in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, North Carolina, and Mississippi; aided school board candidates in Arkansas in 1965; and worked

toward “solving the economic problems of the Southern Negro” by organizing the Mississippi Freedom Labor Union and Poor People’s Corporation and mounting economic boycotts against discriminatory merchants.

Among SNCC’s contributions to electoral politics were the formation of two political parties—the aforementioned MFDP and the Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO)—and the conception and implementation of my successful campaigns for the Georgia State Legislature. The MFDP challenged the seating of the regular, all-white delegation from Mississippi at the 1964 Democratic Convention and, in 1965, challenged the seating of Mississippi’s congressional delegation in Washington. The convention challenge ended in failure when pressures from President Lyndon Johnson erased promised support from party liberals. An offer was made—and rejected—of two convention seats to be filled by the national party, not the Freedom Democrats, to which Fannie Lou Hamer declared, “We didn’t come for no two seats when all of us is tired!”

Each challenge served as an object lesson for strengthening black political independence, and the organizing and lobbying efforts for each laid the groundwork for congressional passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The MFDP served as a prototype for the model of Black Power advocated and popularized by Stokely Carmichael. In 1965, the McComb MFDP Branch became the first black political organization to express opposition to the war in Vietnam. State MFDP officials not only refused to repudiate the McComb statement, they reprinted it in the state MFDP newsletter, giving it wider circulation and laying the groundwork for future black opponents of the war.

The MFDP’s legal efforts against white resistance to political equality proved important to black political efforts across the South. An MFDP-directed lawsuit resulted in the Supreme Court’s landmark 1969 decision in *Allen v. State Board of Elections*, 393 U.S. 544 (1969). Frank Parker, in *Black Votes Count*, wrote that the victory was “critical to continuing black political progress throughout the South. For the first time,” he asserted, “[although in the context of interpreting the Voting Rights Act rather than applying constitutional principles] the Supreme Court recognized and applied the principle of minority vote dilution—that the black vote can be affected as much by dilution as by an absolute prohibition on casting a ballot.”

The mid-sixties were a turning point in the southern human rights struggle. Federal legislation passed in 1964 and 1965 accomplished the immediate goals of many in the civil rights movement. Cleveland Sellers wrote, “When the federal government passed bills that supposedly supported Black voting and outlawed public segregation, SNCC lost the initiative in these areas.” Northern urban riots in the late sixties made the nation and southern civil rights workers aware that victories at lunch counters and ballot boxes meant little to blacks locked in northern ghettos. “The North was a different thing,” CORE Director James Farmer wrote. “Civil rights organizations had left the Northern poor to Malcolm X. . . . The movement had been means-oriented up until the March on Washington, now as the poor in the streets came in, the Movement ceased being that. Ghetto folks had been politicized by the Muslims, by Malcolm X, and by others. They were not means-oriented; they demanded results, concrete results.” SNCC had long believed its work ought to be expanded to larger cities in the South and outside the region. Executive Committee minutes from December 1963 record James Forman asserting that “SNCC is going to have to go into the poor sections of large cities to work.”

My campaign for the Georgia House of Representatives in 1965 was an attempt to take the techniques SNCC had learned in the rural South into an urban setting, and to carry forward SNCC's belief that grassroots politics could provide answers to problems faced by urban blacks in the United States. In keeping with SNCC's style, a platform was developed in consultation with the voters. The campaign supported a two-dollar minimum wage, repeal of the right-to-work law, and abolition of the death penalty. When the legislature twice rejected me, objecting to my support of SNCC's antiwar position, the resulting two campaigns gave SNCC a chance to successfully test its critique of American imperialism at the ballot box. The campaign—like the MFDP—enabled SNCC to provide a political voice for the politically powerless and inarticulate black poor.

In 1966 in Alabama, SNCC helped to create a black political party called the LCFO, “an independent political party which would prove to be a factor in Alabama politics for years to come. . . . The political consciousness of some of Alabama's blacks had been raised to another level.” The party was formed in reaction to the racism of local and state Democratic parties. Like the MFDP, the new party was open to whites, but no whites in Lowndes County would participate in a black-dominated political effort.

Concurrently with the organizing efforts of the MFDP and LCFO and the Bond campaign, SNCC was reassessing its concentration on the South. At a retreat in May 1966, Ivanhoe Donaldson argued in favor of SNCC's replicating its successful southern political organizing efforts in the North, and the staff agreed. Donaldson and Robert Moses suggested that techniques learned in southern campaigns could be employed to ease SNCC's passage into northern cities. Organizing for political power and community control could mobilize northern urban-dwellers, they contended. Michael Thelwell proposed that the organization move “to the ghetto and organize those communities to control themselves. The organization must be attempted in Northern and Southern areas as well as in the rural Black belt of the South,” Thelwell said.

Projects were established in Washington, D.C., to fight for home rule; in Columbus, Ohio, where a community foundation was organized; in New York City's Harlem, where SNCC workers organized early efforts at community control of public schools; in Los Angeles, where SNCC helped monitor local police and joined an effort at creating a “Freedom City” in black neighborhoods; and in Chicago, where SNCC workers began to build an independent political party and demonstrated against segregated schools. In each of these cities, the southern experiences of SNCC organizers informed their work.

As SNCC Chair, Marion Barry had written members of Congress in 1960 to “urge immediate action to provide selfgovernment to the voteless residents of our nation's capitol, the District of Columbia.” In February 1966, Barry, then

Director of SNCC's Washington Office, announced the formation of the “Free D.C. Movement” (FDCM). He wrote, “The premise . . . is that we want to organize Black people for Black power.” Barry and the FDCM conducted a successful boycott of Washington merchants who did not support home rule. In New York, SNCC worker William Hall helped a Harlem group working for community control of Intermediate School 201 in Fall 1966. His efforts laid the groundwork for later successful protests for community control of schools throughout the city. In

Los Angeles, SNCC worker Clifford Vaughns described his work as “a manifestation of self-help, self-determination, power for poor people.” As the focus of the southern movement had changed, so would the aim of the northern organizer. Desegregation had proven both illusive and insufficient to the problems of American blacks in the north or south. The black community’s ability to have control over itself and its elected officials had become paramount in rural Mississippi as well as in urban New York.

Just as its concern for social change had never been limited to the southern states alone, SNCC’s concern for human rights had long extended beyond the borders of the United States. It had linked the fight of American blacks with the struggle for African independence from its first public statements. At its founding conference, SNCC first announced its identification with the African liberation struggle. “We identify ourselves with the African struggle as a concern for all mankind,” they said. At SNCC’s Fall 1960 conference in Atlanta, a featured speaker was Alphonse Okuku, an Antioch College student and brother of Kenyan labor leader Tom MBoya. The mass meeting program said Okuku “brings to our attention the great significance of the African struggle and its relationship to our fight.” SNCC Chairman John Lewis told the March on Washington in 1963, “One man, one vote is the African cry. It must be ours!”

In December 1963, SNCC workers in Atlanta conferred with Kenyan leader Oginga Odinga and, in September 1964, an eleven-member SNCC delegation went to Guinea as guests of that country’s President, Sekou Touré. Two members of the group toured Africa for a month following the Guinea trip. In October 1965, two SNCC workers represented SNCC at the annual meeting of the Organization of African Unity in Ghana.

SNCC’s January 1966 antiwar statement charged the United States with being “deceptive in claiming concern for the freedom of colored people in such other countries as the Dominican Republic, the Congo, South Africa and the United States itself.” Singer Harry Belafonte organized a supportive reception at the United Nations with fifteen African diplomats and myself in early 1966, and on March 22, 1966, seven SNCC workers—John Lewis, James Bond, James Forman, Cleveland Sellers, Willie Ricks, Judy Richardson, and William Hall—were arrested at the South African Consulate in New York, *preceding by twenty years* the “Free South Africa Movement” that later saw hundreds arrested at the South African embassy in Washington.

At a June 1967 staff meeting, SNCC declared itself a human rights organization, dedicated to the “liberation not only of Black people in the United States but of all oppressed people, especially those in Africa, Asia and Latin America.” At that meeting, Forman became director of SNCC’s International Affairs Commission; in this capacity, he visited Tanzania and Zambia. SNCC Chair Stokely Carmichael visited Algeria, Syria, Egypt, Guinea, and Tanzania in mid-1967. In November 1967, Forman testified for SNCC before the United Nation’s Fourth Committee against U.S. investments in South Africa.

There are many reasons for SNCC’s demise despite its clear historic consequence. The current of nationalism, everpresent in black America, widened at the end of the 1960s to become a rushing torrent that swept away the hopeful notion of “black and white together” that the decade’s beginning had promised. SNCC’s white staff members were asked to leave the organization and devote their energies to organizing in white communities; some agreed, but most believed this

action repudiated the movement's hopeful call to "Americans all, side by equal side." For many on the staff, both white and black, nearly a decade's worth of hard work at irregular, subsistence-level pay, in an atmosphere of constant tension, interrupted by jailings, beatings, and official and private terror, proved too much to bear.

Nonetheless, when measured by the legislative accomplishments of the 1964 Civil Rights and 1965 Voting Rights Acts, SNCC's efforts were successful. But the failure of the MFDP to gain recognition at Atlantic City presaged the coming collapse of support from liberals. The murders in 1963 of four schoolgirls in Birmingham and of Medgar Evers in Jackson, of civil rights workers and others in Mississippi in 1964, and Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968 indicated that nonviolence was no antidote to a violent society. The outbreak of urban violence at the decade's end further produced a sense of frustration and alienation in many SNCC veterans.

Throughout its brief history, SNCC insisted on group-centered leadership and community-based politics. It made clear the connection between economic power and racial oppression. It refused to define racism as a solely southern phenomenon, to describe racial inequality as caused by irrational prejudice alone, or to limit its struggle solely to guaranteeing legal equality. It challenged U.S. imperialism while mainstream civil rights organizations were silent or carried favor with President Lyndon Johnson, condemning SNCC's linkage of domestic and international poverty and racism with overseas adventurism. SNCC refused to apply political tests to its membership or supporters, opposing the redbaiting that other organizations and leaders endorsed or condoned. And it created an atmosphere of expectation and anticipation among the people with whom it worked, trusting them to make decisions about their own lives. Thus SNCC widened the definition of politics beyond campaigns and elections; for SNCC, politics encompassed not only electoral races, but also organizing political parties, labor unions, producer cooperatives, and alternative schools.

SNCC initially sought to transform southern politics by organizing and enfranchising blacks. One proof of its success was the increase in black elected officials in the southern states from seventy-two in 1965 to 388 in 1968. But SNCC also sought to amplify the ends of political participation by enlarging the issues of political debate to include the economic and foreign-policy concerns of American blacks. SNCC's articulation and advocacy of Black Power redefined the relationship between black Americans and white power. No longer would political equity be considered a privilege; it had become a right.

A final SNCC legacy is the destruction of the psychological shackles which had kept black southerners in physical and mental peonage; SNCC helped break those chains forever. It demonstrated that ordinary women and men, young and old, could perform extraordinary tasks.

They did then and can do so again.

Document Analysis

1. What was the inspirational event Julian Bond described that helped found SNCC? What was his reaction?
2. How did SNCC differ from the NAACP in terms of strategies and goals? Describe SNCC and its impact on African-American politics.
3. Explain former President Jimmy Carter's belief that SNCC scared white people in southwest Georgia more than Martin Luther King and Southern Christian Leadership Conference.
4. Describe how SNCC planned and organized a campaign.
5. Explain the SNCC's position on Vietnam and its concern for African Americans.

National Defense Education Act (1958)

The Cold War and, specifically, the "space race" set in motion by the successful 1957 launch of the Soviet satellite Sputnik led many Americans to fear that their country had fallen behind the Soviets in science and technology. As a result, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act (NDEA), which provided \$575 million to enhance math, science, and foreign language education in primary and secondary schools, graduate fellowships, foreign language and area studies, and vocational-technical training. Perhaps the act's most important provision for U.S. college students, both in 1958 and today, was the funding of low-interest loans for students.

Title I: General Provisions

Sec. 101. The Congress hereby finds and declares that the security of the Nation requires the fullest development of the mental resources and technical skills of its young men and women. The present emergency demands that additional and more adequate education opportunities be made available. The defense of this Nation depends upon the mastery of modern techniques developed from complex scientific principles. It depends as well upon the discovery and development of new principles, new techniques, and new knowledge.

We must increase our efforts to identify and educate more of the talent of our Nation. This requires programs that will give assurance that no student of ability will be denied an opportunity for higher education because of financial need; will correct as rapidly as possible the existing imbalances in our education programs which have led to an insufficient proportion of our population educated in science, mathematics, and modern foreign languages and trained in technology.

The Congress reaffirms the principle and declares that the states and local communities have and must retain control over and primary responsibility for public education. The national interest requires, however, that the Federal Government give assistance to education for programs which are important to our defense. To meet the present educational emergency requires additional effort at all levels of government. It is therefore the purpose of this act to provide substantial assistance in various forms to individuals, and to States and their subdivisions, in order to insure trained manpower of sufficient quality and quantity to meet the national defense needs of the United States.

Sec. 102. Nothing contained in this act shall be construed to authorize any department, agency, officer, or employee of the United States to exercise any direction, supervision, or control over the curriculum, program of instruction, administration, or personnel of any educational institution or school system.

Title III: Financial Assistance for Strengthening Science, Mathematics, and Modern Foreign Language Instruction

Sec. 301. There are hereby authorized to be appropriated \$70,000,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1959, and for each of the three succeeding fiscal years, for (1) making payments to State educational agencies under this title for the acquisition of equipment (suitable for use in providing education in science, mathematics, or modern foreign language) . . .

Southern Manifesto on Integration (1956)

The landmark 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision Brown v. Board of Education mandated an end to public school segregation in the United States. Popular reaction throughout the South, especially, was predictable. One very public response to the decision was the Southern Manifesto, read before Congress, preserved in the Congressional Record, and published in newspapers throughout the country. One hundred southern senators and representatives signed the Manifesto, which detailed their objection to the Brown decision.

Declaration of Constitutional Principles

The unwarranted decision of the Supreme Court in the public school cases is now bearing the fruit always produced when men substitute naked power for established law.

The Founding Fathers gave us a Constitution of checks and balances because they realized the inescapable lesson of history that no man or group of men can be safely entrusted with unlimited power. They framed this Constitution with its provisions for change by amendment in order to secure the fundamentals of government against the dangers of temporary popular passion or the personal predilections of public officeholders.

We regard the decision of the Supreme Court in the school cases as a clear abuse of judicial power. It climaxes a trend in the Federal judiciary undertaking to legislate, in derogation of the authority of Congress, and to encroach upon the reserved rights of the States and the people.

The original Constitution does not mention education. Neither does the 14th amendment nor any other amendment. The debates preceding the submission of the 14th amendment clearly show that there was no intent that it should affect the systems of education maintained by the States.

The very Congress which proposed the amendment subsequently provided for segregated schools in the District of Columbia.

When the amendment was adopted, in 1868, there were 37 States of the Union. Every one of the 26 States that had any substantial racial differences among its people either approved the operation of segregated schools already in existence or subsequently established such schools by action of the same lawmaking body which considered the 14th amendment.

As admitted by the Supreme Court in the public school case (*Brown v. Board of Education*), the doctrine of separate but equal schools "apparently originated in *Roberts v. City of Boston* . . . (1849), upholding school segregation against attack as being violative of a State constitutional guarantee of equality." This constitutional doctrine began in the North—not in the South, and it was followed not only in Massachusetts, but in Connecticut, New York, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New

Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and other northern States until they, exercising their rights as States through the constitutional processes of local self-government, changed their school systems.

In the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, in 1896, the Supreme Court expressly declared that under the 14th amendment no person was denied any of his rights if the States provided separate but equal public facilities. This decision has been followed in many other cases. It is notable that the Supreme Court, speaking through Chief Justice Taft, a former President of the United States, unanimously declared, in 1927, in *Lum v. Rice*, that the "separate but equal" principle is "within the discretion of the State in regulating its public schools and does not conflict with the 14th amendment."

This interpretation, restated time and again, became a part of the life of the people of many of the States and confirmed their habits, customs, traditions, and way of life. It is founded on elemental humanity and commonsense, for parents should not be deprived by Government of the right to direct the lives and education of their own children.

Though there has been no constitutional amendment or act of Congress changing this established legal principle almost a century old, the Supreme Court of the United States, with no legal basis for such action, undertook to exercise their naked judicial power and substituted their personal political and social ideas for the established law of the land.

This unwarranted exercise of power by the Court, contrary to the Constitution, is creating chaos and confusion in the States principally affected. It is destroying the amicable relations between the white and Negro races that have been created through 90 years of patient effort by the good people of both races. It has planted hatred and suspicion where there has been heretofore friendship and understanding.

Without regard to the consent of the governed, outside agitators are threatening immediate and revolutionary changes in our public-school systems. If done, this is certain to destroy the system of public education in some of the States.

With the gravest concern for the explosive and dangerous condition created by this decision and inflamed by outside meddlers:

We reaffirm our reliance on the Constitution as the fundamental law of the land.

We decry the Supreme Court's encroachments on rights reserved to the States and to the people, contrary to established law and to the Constitution.

We commend the motives of those States which have declared the intention to resist forced integration by any lawful means.

We appeal to the States and people who are not directly affected by these decisions to consider the constitutional principles involved against the time when they, too, on issues vital to them, may be the victims of judicial encroachment.

Even though we constitute a minority in the present Congress, we have full faith that a majority of the American people believe in the dual system of Government which has enabled us to achieve our greatness and will in time demand that the reserved rights of the State and of the people be made secure against judicial usurpation.

We pledge ourselves to use all lawful means to bring about a reversal of this decision which is contrary to the Constitution and to prevent the use of force in its implementation.

In this trying period, as we all seek to right this wrong, we appeal to our people not to be provoked by the agitators and troublemakers invading our States and to scrupulously refrain from disorders and lawless acts.

Signed by:

[Nineteen] Members of the United States Senate

[Eighty-one] Members of the United States House of Representatives

The Teenage Consumer, *Life* (1959)

One consequence of the postwar "baby boom" was the emergence of a growing "teen market." For the first time businesses designed product lines and advertising appeals aimed specifically at teenagers with money to spend. The following report from Life Magazine outlined how teenage buying power had become an integral part of the larger consumer culture of the postwar era. SOURCE: "A Young \$10 Billion Power," in Life Magazine, August 31, 1959. Courtesy of Life Magazine, © Time Warner. Copyright 1959 Life inc. Reprinted with permission. All rights reserved.

Life Magazine Identifies the New Teenage Market, 1959

To some people the vision of a leggy adolescent happily squealing over the latest fancy present from Daddy is just another example of the way teen-agers are spoiled to death these days. But to a growing number of businessmen the picture spells out the profitable fact that the American teen-agers have emerged as a big-time consumer in the U.S. economy. They are multiplying in numbers. They spend more and have more spent on them. And they have minds of their own about what they want. The time is past when a boy's chief possession was his bike and a girl's party wardrobe consisted of a fancy dress worn with a string of dime-store pearls. What Depression-bred parents may still think of as luxuries are looked on as necessities by their offspring. Today teen-agers surround themselves with a fantastic array of garish and often expensive baubles and amusements. They own 10 million phonographs, over a million TV sets, 13 million cameras. Nobody knows how much parents spend on them for actual necessities nor to what extent teen-agers act as hidden persuaders on their parents' other buying habits. Counting only what is spent to satisfy their special teen-age demands, the youngsters and their parents will shell out about \$10 billion this year, a billion more than the total sales of GM. Until recently businessmen have largely ignored the teen-age market. But now they are spending millions on advertising and razzle-dazzle promotional stunts. Their efforts so far seem only to have scratched the surface of a rich lode. In 1970, when the teen-age population expands from its present 18 million to 28 million, the market may be worth \$20 billion. If parents have any idea of organized revolt, it is already too late. Teenage spending is so important that such action would send quivers through the entire national economy.... At 17 Suzie Slattery of Van Nuys, Calif. fits any

businessman's dream of the ideal teen-age consumer. The daughter of a reasonably well-to-do TV announcer, Suzie costs her parents close to \$4,000 a year, far more than average for the country but not much more than many of the upper middle income families of her town. In an expanding economy more and more teen-agers will be moving up into Suzie's bracket or be influenced as consumers by her example. Last year \$1,500 was spent on Suzie's clothes and \$550 for her entertainment. Her annual food bill comes to \$900. She pays \$4 every two weeks at the beauty parlor. She has her own telephone and even has her own soda fountain in the house. On summer vacation days she loves to wander with her mother through fashionable department stores, picking out frocks or furnishings for her room or silver and expensive crockery for the hope chest she has already started. As a high school graduation present, Suzie was given a holiday cruise to Hawaii and is now in the midst of a new clothes-buying spree for college. Her parents' constant indulgence has not spoiled Suzie. She takes for granted all the luxuries that surround her because she has had them all her life. But she also has a good mind and some serious interests. A top student in her school, she is entering Occidental College this fall and will major in political science....

SOME FASCINATING FACTS ABOUT A BOOMING MARKET

FOOD: Teen-agers eat 20% more than adults. They down 3 1/2 billion quarts of milk every year, almost four times as much as is drunk by the infant population under 1. Teen-agers are a main prop of the ice cream industry, gobbling 145 million gallons a year. **BEAUTY CARE:** Teen-agers spent \$20 million on lipstick last year, \$25 million on deodorants (a fifth of total sold), \$9 million on home permanents. Male teenagers own 2 million electric razors. **ENTERTAINMENT:** Teen-agers lay out more than \$1.5 billion a year for entertainment. They spend about \$75 million on single pop records. Although they create new musical idols, they are staunchly faithful to the old. Elvis Presley, still their favorite, has sold 25 million copies of single records in four years, an all-time high. **HOMEMAKERS:** Major items like furniture and silver are moving into the teen-age market because of a growing number of teen-age marriages. One-third of all 18- and 19-year-old girls are already married. More than 600,000 teen-agers will be married this year. Teen-agers are now starting hope chests at 15. **CREDIT RISKS:** Some 800,000 teen-agers work at full-time jobs and can buy major items on credit.

When Historians Disagree

Understanding Civil Rights History

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s—often known as the Black Freedom Struggle—transformed the United States. In spite of terrible tragedies, failures, and half-completed accomplishments, this is a very different country than it was in the 1950s when schools and transportation were segregated by law in many parts of the country, when the vast majority of African Americans living in the South could not vote, and when economic opportunity was defined completely by the color of one's skin. In 1967 when calling on his

colleagues in the movement to have “courage to face the uncertainties of the future,” Martin Luther King, Jr. said “Let us realize the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice.” But while the history of the bending toward justice embodied in the civil rights movement is often celebrated, it is usually a greatly simplified history. Without reducing the significance of Dr. King and the courageous boycott that led to the integration of the buses of Montgomery, Alabama in 1956 or the March on Washington that announced a new dream for the American people in 1963, there were also other actors and other stories that need to be told. Two historians represented here do not necessarily disagree at all but each one seeks to tell other aspects of the movement and add complexity and a new human dimension to civil rights history.

Charles M. Payne, *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995, pp. 1-5.

As late as 1960, fewer than two percent of Mississippi’s Black adults were registered to vote. During the early summer of 1962, a handful of youthful organizers fanned out across the state to stimulate voter-registration drives. Seldom more than two or three to a county at first, they went into towns that few Americans had ever heard of—Greenwood, Hattiesburg, Holly Springs, Ruleville, Greenville. The organizers represented a coalition of civil rights groups, but most owed their primary allegiance to the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC, pronounced snick), the organization that had under the watchful eye of Ella Baker, grown out of the sit-ins of the 1960s...

Many of the young leaders who spread across Mississippi in 1962 were carriers of a particular tradition of social struggle, and this book is also an examination of that tradition. Bob Moses, himself responsible for much of what made the Mississippi movement distinctive, even among SNCC projects, has written that the civil rights movement can be thought of as having two distinct traditions. There was what he labels the community-mobilizing tradition, focused on large-scale, relatively short-term public events. This is the tradition of Birmingham, Selma, the March on Washington, the tradition best symbolized by the work of Martin Luther King. This is the movement of popular memory and the only part of the

Manning Marable, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention*. New York: Viking, 2011, pp. 7-13.

The leader most closely linked to Malcolm in life and death was, of course, [Martin Luther] King. However, despite having spent much of his early life in urban Atlanta, King was rarely identified as a representative of ghetto blacks. In the decades following his assassination, he became associated with images of the largely rural and small-town South. Malcolm, conversely, was a product of the modern ghetto. The emotional rage he expressed was a reaction to racism in its urban context: segregated urban schools, substandard housing, high infant mortality rates, drugs, and crime... Consequently, he was able to establish a strong audience among urban blacks, who perceived passive resistance as an insufficient tool for dismantling institutional racism...

Malcolm always assumed an approachable and intimate outward style, yet also held something in reserve. These layers of personality were even expressed as a series of different names, some of which he created, while others were bestowed upon him: Malcolm Little, Homeboy, Jack Carlton, Detroit Red, Big Red, Satan, Malachi Shabazz, Malik Shabazz, El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz. No single personality ever captured him fully. In this sense, his narrative is a brilliant series of reinventions, “Malcolm X” being just the best known...

To black Americans, however, Malcolm’s appeal was rooted in entirely different cultural imagery. What made him truly

movement that has attracted sustained scholarly attention.

The Mississippi movement reflects another tradition of Black activism, one of community organizing, a tradition with a different sense of what freedom means and therefore a greater emphasis on the long-term development of leadership in ordinary men and women, a tradition best epitomized, Moses argues, by the teaching and example of Ella Baker—and, I would add, by that of Septima Clark...

There are heroes and, emphatically, heroines enough in this history. Yielding to the temptation to focus on their courage, however, may miss the point. Part of the legacy of people like Ella Baker and Septima Clark is a faith that ordinary people who learn to believe in themselves are capable of extraordinary acts, or better, of acts that seem extraordinary to us precisely because we have such an impoverished sense of the capabilities of ordinary people. If we are surprised at what these people accomplished, our surprise may be a commentary on the angle of vision from which we view them. That same angle of vision may make it difficult to see that of the gifts they brought to the making of the movement, courage may have been the least.

original was that he presented himself as the embodiment of the two central figures of African-American folk culture, simultaneously the hustler/ trickster and the preacher/ minister. ... His speeches mesmerized audiences because he could orchestrate his themes into a narrative that promised ultimate salvation. He presented himself as an uncompromising man wholly dedicated to the empowerment of black people, without regard to his own personal safety...

The great temptation for the biographer of an iconic figure is to portray him or her as a virtual saint ... I have devoted so many years in the effort to understand the interior personality and mind of Malcolm that this temptation disappeared long ago. He was a truly historical figure in the sense that more than any of his contemporaries, he embodied the spirit, vitality, and political mood of an entire population—black urban mid-twentieth century America. He spoke with clarity, humor, and urgency, and black audiences both in the United States and throughout Africa responded enthusiastically. Even when he made controversial statements with which the majority of African Americans strongly disagreed, few questioned his sincerity and commitment.

Lives Changed, 1961-1968

George Ball's Dissenting Opinion on Vietnam (1965)

Below is an excerpt from a top-secret memo prepared by Undersecretary of State George Ball, who served in both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, for President Johnson and Secretary of State Dean Rusk. Ball consistently questioned U.S. policy in Vietnam, although generally not in public. This memo became public when the Pentagon Papers, a secret government study of the history of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, were leaked to the New York Times and published in 1971. Ball's memo seemed to confirm suspicions that U.S. officials understood the perils of involvement in Vietnam from an early date but had deceived the American public on this issue.

(1) A Losing War: The South Vietnamese are losing the war to the Viet Cong. No one can assure you that we can beat the Viet Cong or even force them to the conference table on our terms, no matter how many hundred thousand white, foreign (U.S.) troops we deploy.

No one has demonstrated that a white ground force of whatever size can win a guerrilla war—which is at the same time a civil war between Asians—in jungle terrain in the midst of a population that refuses cooperation to the white forces (and the South Vietnamese) and thus provides a great intelligence advantage to the other side. . . .

(2) The Question to Decide: Should we limit our liabilities in South Vietnam and try to find a way out with minimal long-term costs?

The alternative—no matter what we may wish it to be—is almost certainly a protracted war involving an open-ended commitment of U.S. forces, mounting U.S. casualties, no assurance of a satisfactory solution, and a serious danger of escalation at the end of the road.

(3) Need for a Decision Now: So long as our forces are restricted to advising and assisting the South Vietnamese, the struggle will remain a civil war between Asian peoples. Once we deploy substantial numbers of troops in combat it will become a war between the U.S. and a large part of the population of South Vietnam, organized and directed from North Vietnam and backed by the resources of both Moscow and Peiping.

The decision you face now, therefore, is crucial. Once large numbers of U.S. troops are committed to direct combat, they will begin to take heavy casualties in a war they are ill-equipped to fight in a noncooperative if not downright hostile countryside.

Once we suffer large casualties, we will have started a well-nigh irreversible process. Our involvement will be so great that we cannot—without national humiliation—stop short of achieving our complete objectives. Of the two possibilities I think humiliation would be more likely than the achievement of our objectives—even after we have paid terrible costs. . . .

John F. Kennedy, Cuban Missile Crisis Address (1962)

This is an excerpt from the television address President Kennedy gave on October 22, 1962, to the American people, letting them know about the security threat posed by the Soviets in Cuba and his willingness to take strong aggressive action against it. It is interesting to note that while all this transpired the Soviet Union already had missiles stationed in Siberia which were within

range of the West Coast and that the United States had missiles in Europe that were certainly within range of the Soviet Union's major population centers.

Good evening, my fellow citizens. This Government, as promised, has maintained the closest surveillance of the Soviet military build-up on the island of Cuba. Within the past week unmistakable evidence has established the fact that a series of offensive missile sites is now in preparation on that imprisoned island. The purposes of these bases can be none other than to provide a nuclear strike capability against the Western Hemisphere.

Upon receiving the first preliminary hard information of this nature last Tuesday morning [October 16] at 9:00 A.M., I directed that our surveillance be stepped up. And now having confirmed and completed our evaluation of the evidence and our decision on a course of action, this Government feels obliged to report this new crisis to you in fullest detail.

The characteristics of these new missile sites indicate two distinct types of installations. Several of them include medium-range ballistic missiles capable of carrying a nuclear warhead for a distance of more than 1,000 nautical miles. Each of these missiles, in short, is capable of striking Washington, D.C., the Panama Canal, Cape Canaveral, Mexico City, or any other city in the southeastern part of the United States, in Central America, or in the Caribbean area.

Additional sites not yet completed appear to be designed for intermediate-range ballistic missiles capable of traveling more than twice as far - and thus capable of striking most of the major cities in the Western Hemisphere, ranging as far north as Hudson Bay, Canada, and as far south as Lima, Peru. In addition, jet bombers, capable of carrying nuclear weapons, are now being uncrated and assembled in Cuba, while the necessary air bases are being prepared.

This urgent transformation of Cuba into an important strategic base - by the presence of these large, long-range, and clearly offensive weapons of sudden mass destruction - constitutes an explicit threat to the peace and security of all the Americas, in flagrant and deliberate defiance of the Rio Pact of 1947, the traditions of this nation and Hemisphere, the Joint Resolution of the Eighty-seventh Congress, the Charter of the United Nations, and my own public warnings to the Soviets on September 4 and 13.

This action also contradicts the repeated assurances of Soviet spokesmen, both publicly and privately delivered, that the arms build-up in Cuba would retain its original defensive character and that the Soviet Union had no need or desire to station strategic missiles on the territory of any other nation. . . .

In that sense missiles in Cuba add to an already clear and present danger - although it should be noted the nations of Latin America have never previously been subjected to a potential nuclear threat.

But this secret, swift, and extraordinary build-up of Communist missiles - in an area well known to have a special and historical relationship to the United States and the nations of the Western Hemisphere, in violation of Soviet assurances, and in defiance of American and hemispheric

policy - this sudden, clandestine decision to station strategic weapons for the first time outside of Soviet soil - is a deliberately provocative and unjustifiable change in the status quo which cannot be accepted by this country if our courage and our commitments are ever to be trusted again by either friend or foe.

Johnson's Defense of the U.S. Presence in Vietnam (1965)

In July 1965 U.S. involvement in Vietnam was escalating. That month, President Johnson had approved an immediate increase in American troop strength to 125,000, with a commitment to raise that number to 200,000 by year's end. But the speech that Johnson gave to defend his actions in Vietnam was not delivered to Congress, nor was it a prime-time television event. Rather, it was given at a press conference and, according to Johnson's advisers in later interviews, was meant to be as "low-key" as possible.

. . . Three times in my lifetime, in two world wars and in Korea, Americans have gone to far lands to fight for freedom. We have learned at a terrible and brutal cost that retreat does not bring safety and weakness does not bring peace.

It is this lesson that has brought us to Viet-Nam. This is a different kind of war. There are no marching armies or solemn declarations. Some citizens of South Viet-Nam, at times with understandable grievances, have joined in the attack on their own government.

But we must not let this mask the central fact that this is really war. It is guided by North Viet-Nam, and it is spurred by Communist China. Its goal is to conquer the South, to defeat American power, and to extend the Asiatic dominion of communism.

There are great stakes in the balance.

Most of the non-Communist nations of Asia cannot, by themselves and alone, resist the growing might and the grasping ambition of Asian Communism.

Our power, therefore, is a very vital shield. If we are driven from the field in Viet-Nam, then no nation can ever again have the same confidence in American promise or in American protection.

In each land the forces of independence would be considerably weakened and an Asia so threatened by Communist domination would certainly imperil the security of the United States itself.

We did not choose to be the guardians at the gate, but there is no one else.

Nor would surrender in Viet-Nam bring peace, because we learned from Hitler at Munich that success only feeds the appetite of aggression. The battle would be renewed in one country and then another country, bringing with it perhaps even larger and crueller conflict, as we have learned from the lessons of history.

Moreover, we are in Viet-Nam to fulfill one of the most solemn pledges of the American nation. Three Presidents—President Eisenhower, President Kennedy, and your present President—over 11 years have committed themselves and have promised to help defend this small and valiant nation.

Strengthened by that promise, the people of South Viet-Nam have fought for many long years. Thousands of them have died. Thousands more have been crippled and scarred by war. We just

cannot now dishonor our word, or abandon our commitment, or leave those who believed us and who trusted us to the terror and repression and murder that would follow.

This, then, my fellow Americans, is why we are in Viet-Nam.

Lyndon Johnson, Address to the Nation Announcing Steps to Limit the War in Vietnam and Reporting His Decision Not To Seek Reelection (1968)

In the spring of 1968, President Johnson was fighting for his political life. The North Vietnamese Tet offensive, launched January 31, 1968, had been a military failure, but it convinced many Americans that the U.S. government's claims about the South's success in the war were, to say the least, exaggerated. Leading figures in the media called an end to the war. In the democratic primaries, Senator Eugene McCarthy was doing well against the president, and Robert Kennedy was considering a run for the office. Realizing that people wanted someone in the White House untainted by Vietnam, President Johnson wanted to go down in history as the man who initiated an end to the war, not the man who had escalated U.S. involvement in one of the most intractable and enduring conflicts of the 20th century. On March 31, 1968, on primetime television, Lyndon Johnson addressed the American people. Though Johnson's worries would end in January 1969, he served as president during one of the darkest years in U.S. history.

Good evening, my fellow Americans:

Tonight I want to speak to you of peace in Vietnam and Southeast Asia.

No other question so preoccupies our people. No other dream so absorbs the 250 million human beings who live in that part of the world. No other goal motivates American policy in Southeast Asia.

For years, representatives of our Government and others have traveled the world--seeking to find a basis for peace talks.

Since last September, they have carried the offer that I made public at San Antonio. That offer was this:

That the United States would stop its bombardment of North Vietnam when that would lead promptly to productive discussions -- and that we would assume that North Vietnam would not take military advantage of our restraint.

Hanoi denounced this offer, both privately and publicly. Even while the search for peace was going on, North Vietnam rushed their preparations for a savage assault on the people, the government, and the allies of South Vietnam.

Their attack -- during the Tet holidays -- failed to achieve its principal objectives.

It did not collapse the elected government of South Vietnam or shatter its army -- as the Communists had hoped.

It did not produce a "general uprising" among the people of the cities as they had predicted....

The Communists may renew their attack any day.

They are, it appears, trying to make 1968 the year of decision in South Vietnam -- the year that brings, if not final victory or defeat, at least a turning point in the struggle.

This much is clear:

If they do mount another round of heavy attacks, they will not succeed in destroying the fighting power of South Vietnam and its allies.

But tragically, this is also clear: Many men -- on both sides of the struggle -- will be lost. A nation that has already suffered 20 years of warfare will suffer once again. Armies on both sides will take new casualties. And the war will go on.

There is no need for this to be so.

There is no need to delay the talks that could bring an end to this long and this bloody war.

Tonight, I renew the offer I made last August -- to stop the bombardment of North Vietnam. We ask that talks begin promptly, that they be serious talks on the substance of peace. We assume that during those talks Hanoi will not take advantage of our restraint.

We are prepared to move immediately toward peace through negotiations.

So, tonight, in the hope that this action will lead to early talks, I am taking the first step to deescalate the conflict. We are reducing -- substantially reducing -- the present level of hostilities.

And we are doing so unilaterally, and at once.

Tonight, I have ordered our aircraft and our naval vessels to make no attacks on North Vietnam, except in the area north of the demilitarized zone where the continuing enemy buildup directly threatens allied forward positions and where the movements of their troops and supplies are clearly related to that threat...

Our purpose in this action is to bring about a reduction in the level of violence that now exists.

It is to save the lives of brave men -- and to save the lives of innocent women and children.

It is to permit the contending forces to move closer to a political settlement...

I call upon President Ho Chi Minh to respond positively, and favorably, to this new step toward peace.

But if peace does not come now through negotiations, it will come when Hanoi understands that our common resolve is unshakable, and our common strength is invincible.

Tonight, we and the other allied nations are contributing 600,000 fighting men to assist 700,000 South Vietnamese troops in defending their little country.

Our presence there has always rested on this basic belief: The main burden of preserving their freedom must be carried out by them -- by the South Vietnamese themselves.

We and our allies can only help to provide a shield behind which the people of South Vietnam can survive and can grow and develop. On their efforts--on their determination and resourcefulness -- the outcome will ultimately depend.

That small, beleaguered nation has suffered terrible punishment for more than 20 years.

I pay tribute once again tonight to the great courage and endurance of its people. South Vietnam supports armed forces tonight of almost 700,000 men -- and I call your attention to the fact that this is the equivalent of more than 10 million in our own population. Its people maintain their firm determination to be free of domination by the North.

There has been substantial progress, I think, in building a durable government during these last 3 years. The South Vietnam of 1965 could not have survived the enemy's Tet offensive of 1968. The elected government of South Vietnam survived that attack -- and is rapidly repairing the devastation that it wrought.

The South Vietnamese know that further efforts are going to be required. . .

President Thieu told his people last week:

"We must make greater efforts and accept more sacrifices because, as I have said many times, this is our country. The existence of our nation is at stake, and this is mainly a Vietnamese responsibility."

He warned his people that a major national effort is required to root out corruption and incompetence at all levels of government.

We applaud this evidence of determination on the part of South Vietnam. Our first priority will be to support their effort.

We shall accelerate the reequipment of South Vietnam's armed forces -- in order to meet the enemy's increased firepower. This will enable them progressively to undertake a larger share of combat operations against the Communist invaders.

On many occasions I have told the American people that we would send to Vietnam those forces that are required to accomplish our mission there. So, with that as our guide, we have previously authorized a force level of approximately 525,000.

Some weeks ago -- to help meet the enemy's new offensive -- we sent to Vietnam about 11,000 additional Marine and airborne troops. . .

In order that these forces may reach maximum combat effectiveness, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have recommended to me that we should prepare to send--during the next 5 months--support troops totaling approximately 13,500 men. . .

The tentative estimate of those additional expenditures is \$2.5 billion in this fiscal year, and \$2.6 billion in the next fiscal year.

These projected increases in expenditures for our national security will bring into sharper focus the Nation's need for immediate action: action to protect the prosperity of the American people and to protect the strength and the stability of our American dollar.

On many occasions I have pointed out that, without a tax bill or decreased expenditures, next year's deficit would again be around \$20 billion. I have emphasized the need to set strict priorities in our spending. I have stressed that failure to act and to act promptly and decisively would raise very strong doubts throughout the world about America's willingness to keep its financial house in order.

Yet Congress has not acted. And tonight we face the sharpest financial threat in the postwar era -- a

threat to the dollar's role as the keystone of international trade and finance in the world. . .

What is at stake is 7 years of unparalleled prosperity. In those 7 years, the real income of the average American, after taxes, rose by almost 30 percent -- a gain as large as that of the entire preceding 19 years.

So the steps that we must take to convince the world are exactly the steps we must take to sustain our own economic strength here at home. In the past 8 months, prices and interest rates have risen because of our inaction.

We must, therefore, now do everything we can to move from debate to action--from talking to voting. There is, I believe -- I hope there is -- in both Houses of the Congress--a growing sense of urgency that this situation just must be acted upon and must be corrected.

My budget in January was, we thought, a tight one. It fully reflected our evaluation of most of the demanding needs of this Nation.

But in these budgetary matters, the President does not decide alone. The Congress has the power and the duty to determine appropriations and taxes. . .

One thing is unmistakably clear, however: Our deficit just must be reduced. Failure to act could bring on conditions that would strike hardest at those people that all of us are trying so hard to help.

These times call for prudence in this land of plenty. I believe that we have the character to provide it, and tonight I plead with the Congress and with the people to act promptly to serve the national interest, and thereby serve all of our people.

Now let me give you my estimate of the chances for peace: the peace that will one day stop the bloodshed in South Vietnam, that will permit all the Vietnamese people to rebuild and develop their land, that will permit us to turn more fully to our own tasks here at home.

I cannot promise that the initiative that I have announced tonight will be completely successful in achieving peace any more than the 30 others that we have undertaken and agreed to in recent years.

But it is our fervent hope that North Vietnam, after years of fighting that have left the issue unresolved, will now cease its efforts to achieve a military victory and will join with us in moving toward the peace table.

And there may come a time when South Vietnamese -- on both sides -- are able to work out a way to settle their own differences by free political choice rather than by war.

As Hanoi considers its course, it should be in no doubt of our intentions. It must not miscalculate the pressures within our democracy in this election year.

We have no intention of widening this war.

But the United States will never accept a fake solution to this long and arduous struggle and call it peace.

No one can foretell the precise terms of an eventual settlement.

Our objective in South Vietnam has never been the annihilation of the enemy. It has been to bring about a recognition in Hanoi that its objective -- taking over the South by force -- could not be

achieved. . .

Our goal of peace and self-determination in Vietnam is directly related to the future of all of Southeast Asia -- where much has happened to inspire confidence during the past 10 years. We have done all that we knew how to do to contribute and to help build that confidence. . .

I think every American can take a great deal of pride in the role that we have played in bringing this about in Southeast Asia. We can rightly judge--as responsible Southeast Asians themselves do -- that the progress of the past 3 years would have been far less likely -- if not completely impossible -- if America's sons and others had not made their stand in Vietnam.

At Johns Hopkins University, about 3 years ago, I announced that the United States would take part in the great work of developing Southeast Asia, including the Mekong Valley, for all the people of that region. . .

So, I repeat on behalf of the United States again tonight what I said at Johns Hopkins -- that North Vietnam could take its place in this common effort just as soon as peace comes.

Over time, a wider framework of peace and security in Southeast Asia may become possible. The new cooperation of the nations of the area could be a foundation-stone. Certainly friendship with the nations of such a Southeast Asia is what the United States seeks--and that is all that the United States seeks.

One day, my fellow citizens, there will be peace in Southeast Asia.

It will come because the people of Southeast Asia want it -- those whose armies are at war tonight, and those who, though threatened, have thus far been spared.

Peace will come because Asians were willing to work for it -- and to sacrifice for it -- and to die by the thousands for it.

But let it never be forgotten: Peace will come also because America sent her sons to help secure it.

It has not been easy -- far from it. During the past 4½ years, it has been my fate and my responsibility to be Commander in Chief. I have lived -- daily and nightly -- with the cost of this war. I know the pain that it has inflicted. I know, perhaps better than anyone, the misgivings that it has aroused.

Throughout this entire, long period, I have been sustained by a single principle: that what we are doing now, in Vietnam, is vital not only to the security of Southeast Asia, but it is vital to the security of every American. . .

And the larger purpose of our involvement has always been to help the nations of Southeast Asia become independent and stand alone, self-sustaining, as members of a great world community -- at peace with themselves, and at peace with all others.

With such an Asia, our country -- and the world -- will be far more secure than it is tonight.

I believe that a peaceful Asia is far nearer to reality because of what America has done in Vietnam. I believe that the men who endure the dangers of battle -- fighting there for us tonight -- are helping the entire world avoid far greater conflicts, far wider wars, far more destruction, than this one.

The peace that will bring them home someday will come. Tonight I have offered the first in what I

hope will be a series of mutual moves toward peace.

I pray that it will not be rejected by the leaders of North Vietnam. I pray that they will accept it as a means by which the sacrifices of their own people may be ended. And I ask your help and your support, my fellow citizens, for this effort to reach across the battlefield toward an early peace.

Finally, my fellow Americans, let me say this:

Of those to whom much is given, much is asked. I cannot say and no man could say that no more will be asked of us.

Yet, I believe that now, no less than when the decade began, this generation of Americans is willing to "pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty."

Since those words were spoken by John F. Kennedy, the people of America have kept that compact with mankind's noblest cause.

And we shall continue to keep it.

Yet, I believe that we must always be mindful of this one thing, whatever the trials and the tests ahead. The ultimate strength of our country and our cause will lie not in powerful weapons or infinite resources or boundless wealth, but will lie in the unity of our people.

This I believe very deeply.

Throughout my entire public career I have followed the personal philosophy that I am a free man, an American, a public servant, and a member of my party, in that order always and only.

For 37 years in the service of our Nation, first as a Congressman, as a Senator, and as Vice President, and now as your President, I have put the unity of the people first. I have put it ahead of any divisive partisanship.

And in these times as in times before, it is true that a house divided against itself by the spirit of faction, of party, of region, of religion, of race, is a house that cannot stand.

There is division in the American house now. There is divisiveness among us all tonight. And holding the trust that is mine, as President of all the people, I cannot disregard the peril to the progress of the American people and the hope and the prospect of peace for all peoples.

So, I would ask all Americans, whatever their personal interests or concern, to guard against divisiveness and all its ugly consequences.

Fifty-two months and 10 days ago, in a moment of tragedy and trauma, the duties of this office fell upon me. I asked then for your help and God's, that we might continue America on its course, binding up our wounds, healing our history, moving forward in new unity, to clear the American agenda and to keep the American commitment for all of our people.

United we have kept that commitment. United we have enlarged that commitment.

Through all time to come, I think America will be a stronger nation, a more just society, and a land of greater opportunity and fulfillment because of what we have all done together in these years of unparalleled achievement.

Our reward will come in the life of freedom, peace, and hope that our children will enjoy through ages ahead.

What we won when all of our people united just must not now be lost in suspicion, distrust, selfishness, and politics among any of our people.

Believing this as I do, I have concluded that I should not permit the Presidency to become involved in the partisan divisions that are developing in this political year.

With America's sons in the fields far away, with America's future under challenge right here at home, with our hopes and the world's hopes for peace in the balance every day, I do not believe that I should devote an hour or a day of my time to any personal partisan causes or to any duties other than the awesome duties of this office -- the Presidency of your country.

Accordingly, I shall not seek, and I will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as your President.

But let men everywhere know, however, that a strong, a confident, and a vigilant America stands ready tonight to seek an honorable peace--and stands ready tonight to defend an honored cause -- whatever the price, whatever the burden, whatever the sacrifice that duty may require.

Thank you for listening.

Good night and God bless all of you.

Document Analysis

1. Why did President Johnson refer to President Kennedy's inaugural address and to his assassination? What political and personal purposes did these references serve?
2. By 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the President disagreed vehemently on the Vietnam War. Judging by this document, what impact did the Vietnam War have on the Great Society programs?
3. What general impression of the state of U.S. foreign affairs as well as domestic politics does this speech convey?

Lyndon Johnson, Message to Congress and the Tonkin Gulf Resolution (1964)

In August 1964, the USS Maddox became involved in a confrontation with North Vietnamese torpedo boats in the Gulf of Tonkin. To obtain a better sense of North Vietnam's defenses, the Maddox had been shadowing South Vietnamese naval raids into North Vietnamese territory. In frustration, the North Vietnamese sent small boats against the Maddox. No torpedoes hit the Maddox, while the North Vietnamese lost one boat and suffered severe damage to the others. Neither the U.S. commanders on the scene nor the U.S. government considered the incident to constitute a major crisis.

A few nights later, in poor atmospheric conditions, the crew of the *Maddox* misread their radar and sonar and believed they were once again under attack. They fired rounds in all directions and reported the engagement to authorities in Washington. The commander of the *Maddox* and the senior naval aviator on the scene both reported that they had no evidence of an attack--no one had ever seen the North Vietnamese vessels or any torpedoes. Nevertheless, the U.S. government demanded proof of a

second attack on the ship. Although no convincing proof was forthcoming, President Johnson ordered retaliatory counterstrikes against North Vietnamese installations. In the raids, Lieutenant Everett Alvarez became the first U.S. prisoner of war in North Vietnam, where he remained until 1972.

Meanwhile, insisting that the Maddox had been fired on without provocation, Johnson used the incident to convince Congress to give him a free hand in Vietnam. On August 5, the President sent the document excerpted below to Congress. Congress responded by passing a joint resolution--commonly known as the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution--authorizing the president "to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression." Johnson later used this authority to dramatically increase U.S. troop strength in Vietnam.

Last night I announced to the American people that North Vietnamese regime had conducted further deliberate attacks against US. Naval vessels operating in international waters, and that I had therefore directed air action against gunboats and supporting facilities used in these hostile operations. This air action has now been carried out with substantial damage to the boats and facilities. Two U.S. aircraft were lost in the action.

After consultation with the leaders of both parties in the Congress, I further announced a decision to ask the Congress for a resolution expressing the unity and determination of the United States in supporting freedom and in protecting peace in southeast Asia.

These latest actions of the North Vietnamese regime have given a new and grave turn to the already serious situation in southeast Asia. Our commitments in that area are well known to the Congress. They were first made in 1954 by President Eisenhower. They were further defined in the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty approved by the Senate in February 1955.

This treaty with its accompanying protocol obligates the United States and other members to act in accordance with their constitutional processes to meet Communist aggression against any of the parties or protocol states.

Our policy in southeast Asia has been consistent and unchanged since 1954. I summarized it on June 2 in our simple propositions:

1. America keeps her word. Here as elsewhere, we must and shall honor our commitments.
2. The issue is the future of southeast Asia as a whole. A threat to any nation in that region is a threat to all, and a threat to us.
3. Our purpose is peace. We have no military, political, or territorial ambitions in the area.
4. This is not just a jungle war, but a struggle for freedom on every front of human activity. Our military and economic assistance to South Vietnam and Laos in particular has the purpose of helping these countries to repel aggression and strengthen their independence.

The threat to the free nations of southeast Asia has long been clear. The North Vietnamese regime has constantly sought to take over South Vietnam and Laos. This Communist regime has violated the Geneva accords for Vietnam. It has systematically conducted a campaign of subversion, which included the direction, training, and supply of personnel and arms for the conduct of guerrilla warfare in South Vietnamese territory. In Laos, the North Vietnamese regime has maintained military forces, used Laotian territory for infiltration into South Vietnam, and most recently carried out combat operations--all in direct violation of the Geneva agreements of 1962.

In recent months, the actions of the North Vietnamese regime have become steadily more threatening. . . .

As President of the United States I have concluded that I should now ask the Congress, on its part, to join in affirming the national determination that all such attacks will be met, and that the United States will continue in its basic policy of assisting the free nations of the area to defend their freedom.

As I have repeatedly made clear, the United States intends no rashness, and seeks no wider war. We must make it clear to all that the United States is united in its determination to bring about the end of Communist subversion and aggression in the area. We seek the full and effective restoration of the international agreements signed in Geneva in 1954, with respect to South Vietnam, and again in Geneva in 1962, with respect to Laos. . . .

Joint Resolution of Congress

To promote the maintenance of international peace and security in southeast Asia.

Whereas naval units of the Communist regime in Vietnam, in violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law, have deliberately and repeatedly attacked United States naval vessels lawfully present in international waters, and have thereby created a serious threat to international peace; and

Whereas these attacks are part of a deliberate and systematic campaign of aggression that the Communist regime in North Vietnam has been waging against its neighbors and the nations joined with them in the collective defense of their freedom; and

Whereas the United States is assisting the peoples of southeast Asia to protect their freedom and has no territorial, military or political ambitions in that area, but desires only that these peoples should be left in peace to work out their own destinies in their own way; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that the Congress approves and supports the determination of the President, as Commander in Chief, to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression.

SEC. 2. The United States regards as vital to its national interest and to world peace the maintenance of international peace and security in southeast Asia. Consonant with the Constitution of the United States and the Charter of the United Nations and in accordance with its obligations under the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, the United States is, therefore, prepared, as the President determines, to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force, to assist any member or protocol state of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty requesting assistance in defense of its freedom.

SEC. 3. This resolution shall expire when the President shall determine that the peace and security of the area is reasonably assured by international conditions created by action of the United Nations or otherwise, except that it may be terminated earlier by concurrent resolution of the Congress.

Rachel Carson, from *Silent Spring* (1962)

*Rachel Carson was a marine biologist and writer who worked for many years with the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries. She combined the imagination of a creative writer with the scientific passion for fact, and her 1951 book *The Sea Around Us* became a worldwide best seller. More than any other individual, she alerted the world to the dangers of man-made pollution upon the*

natural environment. Her widely influential Silent Spring warned of the problems posed by the widespread use of chemical pesticides and helped to launch the modern environmental movement. SOURCE: From Silent Spring, by Rachel Carson. Copyright © 1962 by Rachel L. Carson, renewed 1990 by Roger Christie. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Co. All rights reserved.

The history of life on earth has been a history of interaction between living things and their surroundings. To a large extent, the physical form and the habits of the earth's vegetation and its animal life have been molded by the environment. Considering the whole span of earthly time, the opposite effect, in which life actually modifies its surroundings, has been relatively slight. Only within the moment of time represented by the present century has one species - man - acquired significant power to alter the nature of his world.

During the past quarter century this power has not only increased to one of disturbing magnitude but it has changed in character. The most alarming of all man's assaults upon the environment is the contamination of air, earth, rivers, and sea with dangerous and even lethal materials. This pollution is for the most part irrecoverable; the chain of evil it initiates not only in the world that must support life but in living tissues is for the most part irreversible. In this now universal contamination of the environment, chemicals are the sinister and little-recognized partners of radiation in changing the very nature of the world - the very nature of its life. Strontium 90, released through nuclear explosions into the air, comes to the earth in rain or drifts down as fallout, lodges in soil, enters into the grass or corn or wheat grown there, and in time takes up its abode in the bones of a human being, there to remain until his death. Similarly, chemicals sprayed on croplands or forests or gardens lie long in the soil, entering into living organisms, passing from one to another in a chain of poisoning and death. Or they pass mysteriously by underground streams until they emerge and, through the alchemy of air and sunlight, combine into new forms that kill vegetation, sicken cattle, and work unknown harm on those who drink from once pure wells. As Albert Schweitzer has said, "Man can hardly even recognize the devils of his own creation."

It took hundreds of millions of years to produce the life that now inhabits the earth - eons of time in which that developing and evolving and diversifying life reached a state of adjustment and balance with its surroundings. The environment, rigorously shaping and directing the life it supported, contained elements that were hostile as well as supporting. Certain rocks gave out dangerous radiation; even within the light of the sun, from which all life draws its energy, there were short-wave radiations with power to injure. Given time - time not in years but in millennia - life adjusts, and a balance has been reached. For time is the essential ingredient; but in the modern world there is no time.

The rapidity of change and the speed with which new situations are created follow the impetuous and heedless pace of man rather than the deliberate pace of nature. Radiation is no longer merely the background radiation of rocks, the bombardment of cosmic rays, the ultraviolet of the sun that have existed before there was any life on earth; radiation is now the unnatural creation of man's tampering with the atom. The chemicals to which life is asked to make its adjustment are no longer merely the calcium and silica and copper and all the rest of the minerals washed out of

the rocks and carried in rivers to the sea; they are the synthetic creations of man's inventive mind, brewed in his laboratories, and having no counterparts in nature.

To adjust to these chemicals would require time on the scale that is nature's; it would require not merely the years of a man's life but the life of generations. And even this, were it by some miracle possible, would be futile, for the new chemicals come from our laboratories in an endless stream; almost five hundred annually find their way into actual use in the United States alone. The figure is staggering and its implications are not easily grasped - 500 new chemicals to which the bodies of men and animals are required somehow to adapt each year, chemicals totally outside the limits of biologic experience.

Among them are many that are used in man's war against nature. Since the mid-1940s over 200 basic chemicals have been created for use in killing insects, weeds, rodents, and other organisms described in the modern vernacular as "pests"; and they are sold under several thousand different brand names.

These sprays, dusts, and aerosols are now applied almost universally to farms, gardens, forests, and homes - nonselective chemicals that have the power to kill every insect, the "good" and the "bad," to still the song of birds and the leaping of fish in the streams, to coat the leaves with a deadly film, and to linger on in the soil - all this though the intended target may be only a few weeds or insects. Can anyone believe it is possible to lay down such a barrage of poisons on the surface of the earth without making it unfit for all life? They should not be called "insecticides," but "biocides."

The whole process of spraying seems caught up in an endless spiral. Since DDT was released for civilian use, a process of escalation has been going on in which ever more toxic materials must be found. This has happened because insects, in a triumphant vindication of Darwin's principle of the survival of the fittest, have evolved super races immune to the particular insecticide used, hence a deadlier one has always to be developed - and then a deadlier one than that....

The "control of nature" is a phrase conceived in arrogance, born of the Neanderthal age of biology and philosophy, when it was supposed that nature exists for the convenience of man. The concepts and practices of applied entomology for the most part date from that Stone Age of science. It is our alarming misfortune that so primitive a science has armed itself with the most modern and terrible weapons, and that in turning them against the insects it has also turned them against the earth.

Students for a Democratic Society, The Port Huron Statement (1962)

In 1960, students at the University of Michigan formed an organization called the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) to support the civil rights struggle in the South. In 1962, SDS, which was gaining popularity among college students across the country, decided to confront not only civil rights but all the ills of postwar society.

Throughout the 1960s, SDS became increasingly radical. Although the media found it convenient to portray the SDS the one voice of young Americans, in reality the group lost members because of its increasing radicalism and because students were too diverse to be represented by just one organization. In 1969, the organization splintered and eventually dissolved. The most radical students, who became known as the Weathermen, resorted to terrorist violence to further their cause. Even that activity ceased, however, after three Weathermen were killed while making bombs.

In 1962 Tom Hayden and Robert Alan Haber wrote the “Port Huron Statement,” which appears below. The statement was a clarion call to their own generation and a warning to their parents' generation that the status quo was unacceptable.

We are the people of this generation, bred in at least modest comfort, housed now in the universities, looking uncomfortably to the world we inherit.

When we were kids the United States was the wealthiest and strongest country in the world; the only one with the atom bomb, the least scarred by modern war, an initiator of the United Nations that we thought would distribute Western influence throughout the world. Freedom and equality for each individual, government of, by, and for the people—these American values we found good, principles by which we could live as men. Many of us began maturing in complacency.

As we grew, however, our comfort was penetrated by events too troubling to dismiss.

First, the permeating and victimizing fact of human degradation, symbolized by the Southern struggle against racial bigotry, compelled most of us from silence to activism.

Second, the enclosing fact of the Cold War, symbolized by the presence of the Bomb, brought awareness that we ourselves, and our friends, and millions of abstract "others" we knew more directly because of our common peril, might die at any time. We might deliberately ignore, or avoid or fail to feel all other human problems, but not these two, for these were too immediate and crushing in their impact, too challenging in the demand that we as individuals take the responsibility for encounter and resolution.

Document Analysis

1. In this statement, why did the authors of the Port Huron Statement emphasize racial bigotry and the arms race?
2. What had changed in the United States, according to the students of this new generation?

When Historians Disagree

Could ... or Should ... the U.S. Have Won in Vietnam?

In 1978, three years after the last U.S. forces and diplomats left Vietnam in the hasty evacuation of April 1975, several historians published accounts of U.S. involvement in that country. The historians all agreed on certain basic information: Some 58,000 Americans and many times that number of Vietnamese died in the conflict. In the end the war failed from the U.S. perspective since by 1978 a unified Vietnam was firmly in Communist hands. On the other hand, historians disagreed sharply on how to understand the U.S. experience in Vietnam. While all agreed it ended in 1975, did it start in 1945 when Ho Chi Minh proclaimed the independence of Vietnam from both Japanese and French rule, or when President Truman started to provide support to the French effort to maintain control of the country in 1950, or when President Eisenhower ordered the training the South Vietnamese army in 1956 by U.S. advisors, or in 1961 when President Kennedy sent the first U.S. combat troops, a small contingent of Green Berets to the country, or only in 1964 and 1965 when President Johnson escalated the war and made it essentially an American war or as some said, "Johnson's war"? And in the end historians disagreed sharply about alternative courses of action and especially about the question of whether the U.S. could have "won" the war, and what the outlines and costs of a U.S. victory might have been. Recent history—and the war in Vietnam was very recent history in 1978—is always especially contentious and the history of the war in Vietnam will probably remain so for years to come.

Guenter Lewy, *America in Vietnam*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978, pp. v-vii, pp. 430-439.

To a large number of Americans the Vietnam war represents not only a political mistake and national defeat but also a major moral failure. The catalog of evils with which the United States is burdened includes the indiscriminate killing of civilians, the assassination and torture of political adversaries, the terror-bombing of North Vietnam, duplicity about it all in high places and much else. For many younger people, in particular, America in Vietnam stands as the epitome of evil in the modern world; this view of the American role in

George C. Hering, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978; Third edition, 1996, pp. x-xii, 298-299.

"Vietnam, Vietnam... There are no sure answers," veteran Southeast Asian correspondent Robert Shaplen wrote during an especially perplexing period of a long and confusing war. Despite the passage of time, the publication of thousands of books, and the declassification of hundreds of thousands of documents, Shaplen's lament remains as real today as in 1970, when it was penned. Why did the United States make such a vast commitment in an area of so little apparent importance? What did it

Vietnam has contributed significantly to the impairment of national pride and self-confidence that has beset this country since the fall of Vietnam.

It is the reasoned conclusion of this study ... that the sense of guilt created by the Vietnam war in the minds of many Americans is not warranted and that the charges of *officially condoned* illegal and grossly immoral conduct are without substance...

The decisive reason for the growing disaffection of the American people was the conviction that the war was not being won and apparently showed little prospect of coming to a successful conclusion...

The U.S. in the years from 1954 to 1975 could have pursued policies different from those actually followed. What if, instead of making a piece-meal commitment of military resources and adopting a policy of gradualism in their use, America had pursued a strategy of surprise and massed strength at decisive points? What if the mining of North Vietnamese harbors had taken place in 1965 instead of 1972? What if the U.S. from the beginning had implemented a strategy of population security ...? What if Vietnamization had begun in 1965 rather than 1968? While one cannot be sure that these different strategies, singly or in combination, would necessarily have brought about a different outcome, neither can one take their failure for granted.

attempt to do during the quarter century of its involvement there? Why, despite the expenditure of more than \$150 billion, the loss of more than 58,000 lives, the application of its great technical expertise, and the employment of a huge military arsenal, did the world's most powerful nation fail to achieve its objectives and suffer its first defeat in war, a humiliating and deeply frustrating experience for a people accustomed to success? What have been the consequences for Americans, Vietnamese, and others of the nation's longest and most divisive war? ...

I believe now, as I did then, that U.S. intervention in Vietnam was based on a policy fundamentally flawed in its assumptions and major premises. I do not believe that the war could have been won in any meaningful sense or at a moral or material cost that most Americans would—or should—have found acceptable...

Given these harsh realities, the American effort to create a bastion of anticommunism south of the seventeenth parallel was probably doomed from the start. The United States could not effect the needed changes in South Vietnamese society without jeopardizing the order it sought, and there was no long-range hope of stability without revolutionary change.