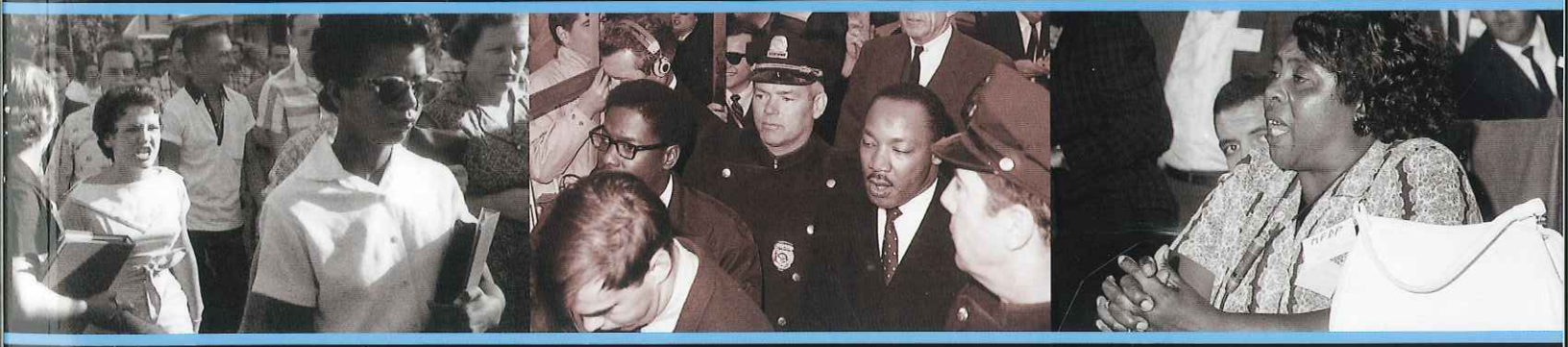
EYES ON THE PRIZE

America's Civil Rights Movement 1954-1985

A Study Guide to the Television Series



Written by Facing History and Ourselves

BLACKSIDE

A Blackside Publication

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FOREWORD

REP. JOHN LEWIS
5th Congressional District, Georgia

> *"If you will protest courageously and yet with dignity and …. love, when the history books are written in future generations, the historians will have to pause and say, 'There lies a great people, a black people, who injected new meaning and dignity into the very veins of civilization.' This is our challenge and our responsibility."*
>
> ***Martin Luther King, Jr., Dec. 31, 1955 Montgomery, Alabama.***

The documentary series you are about to view is the story of how ordinary people with extraordinary vision redeemed democracy in America. It is a testament to nonviolent passive resistance and its power to reshape the destiny of a nation and the world. And it is the chronicle of a people who challenged one nation's government to meet its moral obligation to humanity.

We, the men, women, and children of the civil rights movement, truly believed that if we adhered to the discipline and philosophy of nonviolence, we could help transform America. We wanted to realize what I like to call, the Beloved Community, an all-inclusive, truly interracial democracy based on simple justice, which respects the dignity and worth of every human being.

Central to our philosophical concept of the Beloved Community was the willingness to believe that every human being has the moral capacity to respect each other. We were determined to rise above the internal injuries exacted by discriminatory laws and the traditions of an unjust society meant to degrade us, and we looked to a higher authority. We believed in our own inalienable right to the respect due any human being, and we believed that government has more than a political responsibility, but a moral responsibility to defend the human rights of all of its citizens.

When we suffered violence and abuse, our concern was not for retaliation. We sought to redeem the humanity of our attackers from the jaws of hatred and to accept our suffering in the right spirit. While nonviolence was, for some, merely a tactic for social change, for many of us it became a way of life. We believed that if we, as an American people, as a nation, and as a world community, are to emerge from our struggles unscarred by hate, we have to learn to understand and forgive those who have been most hostile and violent toward us.

We must find a way to live together, to make peace with each other. And we were willing to put our bodies on the line, to die if necessary, to make that dream of peaceful reconciliation a reality. Because of the fortitude and conviction of thousands and millions of ordinary people imbued with a dream of liberation, this nation witnessed a nonviolent revolution under the rule of law, a revolution of values, a revolution of ideas.

Fifty years have passed since the first days of the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the lynching of Emmett Till. Forty years have passed since that "Bloody Sunday" in Selma, Alabama and the passage of the Voting Rights Act. Gone are the legal barriers of segregation, but our freedom as a nation has not yet been won. We have come a great distance, but we still have much further to go before we lay down the burden of race in America. And if we are to fulfill the true destiny of this nation, then that struggle must continue. In the civil rights movement we used to say that our struggle was not for a month, a season, or a year. We knew that ours was the struggle of a lifetime and that each generation had to do its part to build the Beloved Community, a nation at peace with itself.

Consider those two words: Beloved and Community. "Beloved" means not hateful, not violent, not uncaring, not unkind. And "Community" means not separated, not polarized, not locked in struggle. The most pressing challenge in our society today is defined by the methods we use to defend the dignity of humankind. But too often we are focused on accumulating the trappings of a comfortable life.

The men, women and children you witness in this documentary put aside the comfort of their own lives to get involved with the problems of others. They knew that if they wanted a free and just society, they could not wait for someone else to create that society. They knew they had to be the change that they were seeking. They knew they had to do their part, to get out there and push and pull to move this society forward.

As American citizens and citizens of the world community, we must be maladjusted to the problems and conditions of today. We have to find a way to make our voices heard. We have an obligation, a mission and a mandate to do our part. We have a mandate from the Spirit of History to follow in the footsteps of those brave and courageous men and women who fought to make a difference.

This study guide for *Eyes on the Prize* reminds us of our legacy and our commitment. These readings will help you examine the power you have as an individual citizen to make a difference in our society, and they will help you examine the tools of democracy that can create lasting change.

Eyes on the Prize serves as an important reminder to all who view it of the sacrifices one generation made for the cause of civil rights. It serves as a reminder to all who view it of the sacrifices we may have to make again, if we do not value the freedom we have already won. It serves as a reminder to all who view it of the sacrifices it takes to answer the call of justice.

Let this study of history inspire you to make some contribution to humanity. You have a mission and a mandate from the founders of this nation and all of those who came before who struggled and died for your freedom. Go out and win some victory for humanity, and may the Spirit of History and the spirit of the modern-day civil rights movement be your guide.

Rep. John Lewis, 5th Congressional District, Georgia

INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

JUDI HAMPTON
President, Blackside

When I read through the *Eyes on the Prize* study guide, it evokes emotional memories of my experiences as a young civil rights worker in Mississippi in the mid-1960's.

I remember the fear I felt about leaving my comfortable college life in New York and going down South to become a civil rights worker. I went down to Mississippi to work on the voter registration campaign and to build a Freedom School to provide remedial help to youngsters. It was shortly after the three civil rights workers, Goodman, Chaney, and Schwerner, had disappeared and tensions were high. Resentment was focused on us and there was an underlying threat of violence, but at the same time, community support was unparalleled.

I remember staying with an elderly couple who volunteered to have me in their home because they believed in the cause. The local police retaliated by sitting outside all night with their patrol car high beams glaring into the couple's house. This was, of course, terrifying for the volunteers—yet despite their fear they still wanted to shelter me.

I remember the day I felt I had truly made a contribution. A young black man with cataracts was going blind because he was afraid to go into Jackson to the "white" hospital to get his surgery. I went with him and together we met this challenge. He came by the Freedom House one day to hug me and say thanks. What a privilege for me!

I remember creating a Freedom School from a burned-out building. Members of the community came to help and together we cleaned up the site, got donations of books—and suddenly I was teaching. I loved it, and have continued to find innovative ways to educate and mentor throughout my career.

Learning, teaching, and giving back to the community have always been very important in our family. Our father, Henry Hampton, Sr., was the first black surgeon to become a Chief Hospital Administrator in St. Louis, Missouri. After the Supreme Court ruled in Brown v. Board of Education in 1954, my parents decided it would be in our best educational interest if my brother, Henry, my sister Veva, and I were to attend a previously all-white school. Later, in high school (which I integrated with a few other students), my classmates elected me class president, but the restaurant where the reception in my honor was to be held turned me away at the door because of my color. It was one of many experiences that strengthened our family's commitment to civil rights—and to spreading the message through education.

Although Henry Hampton was widely known and acclaimed as a brilliant filmmaker, he was also an educator at heart. Now, with this new study guide written by Facing History and Ourselves, the educational influence of *Eyes on the Prize* will be extended through many generations. This thorough and

balanced guide will teach young people the history and significance of the civil rights epoch. But beyond the historical value, the study guide and film series have another purpose: to provoke discussion about *today's* pressing human rights concerns. When Henry first made *Eyes*, his goal was to spark a national dialogue. This guide will help to rekindle it.

I would like to thank Margot Stern Strom, Adam Strom, Brooke Harvey and the staff and interns at Facing History and Ourselves for their excellent work on this study guide. Thanks also to Robert Lavelle and James Jennings for their careful reading and editorial guidance.

My deep thanks to Sandra Forman, Project Director and Legal Counsel for the *Eyes on the Prize* re-release, who took on the many challenges involved with bringing *Eyes* back before the public after a long absence. She raised funds, managed all aspects of the project, and was the driving force behind the return of *Eyes on the Prize* to public television and educational distribution.

Many thanks to the other dedicated and hard-working people on the re-release team, without whom the return of *Eyes* would not have been possible. I am also grateful to all the talented people who worked to create the *Eyes on the Prize* films and books in the 1980's and '90's.

Thanks to the Zimmermans: my sister Veva, David, Tobias and Jacob, and to the memory of our dear parents, who would expect nothing less than for us to continue to fight for what we believe in.

Since my brother's death in 1998, it has been my primary goal to preserve his legacy. In particular, I have struggled to make *Eyes on the Prize* available to a wide audience. With the rebroadcast and this superb study guide to accompany the educational distribution of *Eyes*, I feel assured that this monumental series will be a permanent resource for all generations.

Much love and gratitude to my big brother and soul mate, Henry Hampton, for giving me an opportunity to extend his great gifts to the world.

JUDI HAMPTON

PRESIDENT, BLACKSIDE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

AUGUST, 2006

INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

MARGOT STERN STROM

President and Executive Director, Facing History and Ourselves

A black-and-white photograph of Henry Hampton sits perched on a shelf overlooking the table where the Facing History and Ourselves writing team assembled to create these educational materials to accompany the film *Eyes on the Prize*, Henry's magnificent, truly groundbreaking documentary series on the history of the civil rights movement in the United States. I knew Henry; he was my friend and understood Facing History's mission. We both believed education must help citizens confront controversial and difficult aspects of our history if we are ever to understand the responsibility of living in a just society. He demanded the highest standards and would have been pleased with the process that Adam Strom and Brooke Harvey have led for the "*Eyes on the Prize*" team at Facing History.

We are grateful for the trust and support of Judi Hampton, President of Blackside, the production company founded by Henry in 1968, and Sandra Forman, Project Director and Legal Counsel for the *Eyes on the Prize* re-release project, and are honored to have spent this collaborative year together. Facing History's partnership with Blackside will enable us to deliver workshops for teachers and the community and continue to offer timely and relevant resources online for students and teachers.

As stacks of books, videos, and computers invaded our writing table, the conversations deepened. The learning community that emerged from this project included Facing History staff who had assembled from our offices worldwide, both face-to-face and virtually. This team included Dan Eshet, a historian and writer; photo and archival researcher Jennifer Gray; Dadjie Saintus, who interned as a researcher; Aliza Landes, who interned as an editor; the editorial team of Phredd Matthews-Wall, Howard Lurie, Jennifer Jones Clark, Jimmie Jones, Tracy Garrison-Feinberg, Marty Sleeper, Marc Skvirsky, and myself. We met regularly to read aloud drafts—often many drafts—for each of the fourteen parts of this series. We searched memoirs, biographies, and histories of the movement and considered the viewpoints of the advisors Adam had consulted. The comments of historian and activist Vincent Harding, Robert Lavelle, former head of publishing at Blackside, and James Jennings, Professor of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning at Tufts University, helped us interpret our perspectives and evoked memories of the events depicted in the series. Congressman John Lewis, our friend who accompanied the staff and board of Facing History and Ourselves on a trip to the South in 2001 to learn more about the civil rights movement, agreed to pen the introduction to these materials.

Together we meditated in a group setting—black and white, young and old—marveling at the beautiful principles of freedom exemplified by the moral dilemmas that faced not only the leaders, but also the ordinary men, women, and children who, dedicated to nonviolence, struggled to force a nation to reckon with brutal injustice and to transform itself. Indeed, we were all students. For the younger

among us this was "ancient" history—it happened before they were born. For others of us, we were rediscovering new meaning for the history we had come of age in. For me the work was personal.

I grew up in Memphis, Tennessee, before the civil rights movement began—at a time when separate meant never equal. For it was in Memphis that simple childhood notions of logic and fairness were shattered. It was there that water fountains for "colored only" didn't spout water which reflected the colors of the rainbow as the child might expect but instead, as one learned later, stood as symbols of the unchallenged dogmas and practices of racism—dogmas that attempted to instill indignity, shame, and humiliation in some and false pride and authority in others, and practices that reflected centuries of unchallenged myth and hate.

I grew up in Memphis at a time when black libraries housed books discarded from the white library; when there were empty seats in the front of the bus for young white girls on a shopping trip downtown, while those of darker skin color crowded the back of the bus on their way to work; when Thursdays were "colored day" at the zoo and a rear entrance led to a colored section in the movie theatre balcony—if admission was allowed at all.

I remember an officer of the law in that Memphis explaining to me that I shouldn't ride in the front seat of the family car with a colored man—a man who had worked for my family and with whom I had ridden in the front since I was very young, but was suddenly suspect now that I was an adolescent. (I felt his discomfort—part shame, part anger, part humiliation—as the policeman righteously walked away from the car.) Later I listened when the phone call came from family friends in Mississippi warning my parents to keep my brother, then a Justice Department lawyer working on voting rights legislation, out of Mississippi (They, like Judge Cox of the Circuit Court, questioned why a white Southerner and a Jew would be causing such "trouble.") Later, I read the letters sent to our home declaring that my brother's work for Negroes must be inspired by the Jewish-communist conspiracy and that he would have to be cremated, for his body, if buried, would contaminate the earth just as fluoridation had done.

All this and more I brought to our writing table. Each of the other team members brought their own experiences, and the sum of these experiences—and more—can be felt in these educational resources.

At our editing sessions we all found a renewed appreciation for the contribution—the gift—of "Eyes." Our appreciation grew as we saw how carefully and honestly Henry and Blackside had prepared their teaching tool—their documentary of history for a new generation of students of all ages who, in classroom, home, and community settings, will use their work to confront the fundamental reality that a strong democracy depends on the education of its youth to the meaning and responsibility of freedom. This is the "Prize" Henry left us. Facing History and Ourselves is dedicated to bringing important and challenging history to the teachers who will tap the next generation of moral philosophers ready to be engaged in the hard work of thinking and acting with head and heart.

That is the promise we make to Henry and to the future.

Margot Stern Strom
President and Executive Director
Facing History and Ourselves

USING THE STUDY GUIDE

This study guide serves as a classroom companion to the acclaimed *Eyes on the Prize* film series, the most comprehensive television documentary ever produced on the American civil rights movement. The series was created and executive produced by Emmy award-winning filmmaker and historian Henry Hampton, who endeavored to honor the voices and perspectives of those who shaped the civil rights movement in the United States.[1] The guide focuses on the individuals and groups that over three decades fought to dismantle the laws and customs used to discriminate against black Americans. Often at great personal risk, these civil rights activists forced America to face its entrenched culture of racial injustice and extend its promise of equal rights to all its citizens.

Each episode in the series has a corresponding chapter in the study guide. Each chapter includes a brief overview of the episode and a series of questions designed to stimulate a discussion on its basic themes. A timeline in each chapter identifies the episode's key events and dates.

The documents were selected to reflect themes and events in the episode. A brief introduction frames the documents, each of which is followed by "connections"—a list of questions that underline the broader themes within the episodes. These questions are also designed to promote personal engagement with particular aspects of the events described in the episodes and to encourage viewers to explore their own perspectives, as well as the national and international context of these developments.

The readings were selected from memoirs, oral histories, public documents, declarations, and news stories. In addition to a number of recent reflections and commentaries, many documents came directly from the interviews and other materials produced for the series.[2] Others were selected from earlier *Eyes on the Prize* study guides edited by Steve Cohen.

Most episodes cover two stories. In an effort to update the stories, we elected in some cases to include materials produced after the series was originally aired. In a few cases, we highlighted aspects we deemed especially important for contemporary viewers. Sample lesson plans using the film and the guide are available on the Facing History and Ourselves website: www.facinghistory.org.

The introduction to the study guide was written by Congressman John Lewis, who, like the individuals discussed in the series, aspired to compel America to fulfill its promises of equality and justice for all its citizens. By shattering stereotypes, opening public dialogue, and striving to empower black citizens politically and economically, Lewis and other activists in the civil rights movement transformed the attitudes of both black and white Americans and inspired other

groups around the world to explore their ethnic, religious, and cultural heritage.

Over 50 years ago, civil rights movement leaders articulated a vision for social change in America. Embedded in their vision was the belief that voting is the primary engine for nonviolent change in a democracy. We hope that the series and the new study guide will inspire a new generation of students to explore this idea, to become informed citizens, and to aspire to fulfill the movement's commitment to a diverse and tolerant democracy.

In addition to this study guide and to *The Voices of Freedom: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s through the 1980s* (published by Bantam Books), educators will find the first series' companion book quite useful. That book, *Eyes on the Prize*: *America's Civil Rights Years 1954-1965*, by Juan Williams with the *Eyes on the Prize* Production Team (published by Penguin Books) is now in its twenty-third printing and has been a resource to countless secondary and post-secondary students.

[1] Blackside, Inc., founded by the late Henry Hampton in 1968, is a production company devoted to raising awareness about America's social issues and history through documentary films and other educational materials.

[2] Clayborne Carson, David J. Garrow, Gerald Gill, Vincent Harding, and Darlene Clark Hine, *The Eyes on the Prize Reader: Documents, Speeches, and Firsthand Accounts from the Black Freedom Struggle* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991); Henry Hampton and Steve Fayer, *Voices of Freedom: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s through the 1980s* (New York: Bantam Books, 1990).

EPISODE 7:
THE TIME HAS COME *(1964–1966)*

Episode 7 is the first installment of the original *Eyes on the Prize II: America at the Racial Crossroads 1965–85*. The eight episodes of *Eyes on the Prize II* examine the challenges activists faced as they worked to translate the legal and legislative victories in the 1950s and early 1960s to social and economic policies and assume greater control over their lives. Those efforts would expand the reach of American democracy and inspire other minorities to fight for recognition and influence. Despite their legal and constitutional successes, black Americans still were subjected to discrimination and terror as they attempted to live out their constitutionally guaranteed rights. Frustration with the slow pace of change and perceived indifference to their cause would lead some black Americans to question many of the key assumptions of the Southern freedom movement, including the need for integration with the white community and the role of nonviolence in the freedom struggle.

Episode 7 focuses on black militancy and the roots of the black power movement. It also tracks the influence of ideas such as black separatism and black nationalism on a new generation of black Americans and analyzes the long-term impact they had on whites who supported the freedom movement.

The first segment of episode 7 introduces Malcolm X and describes how his views challenged the nonviolent tradition of the civil rights movement. Born Malcolm Little in 1925, in Omaha, Nebraska, he grew up in Michigan, Boston, and New York. As a young adult, Little became involved in a life of crime and violence for which he was jailed for several years. While in prison he joined the Nation of Islam* (NOI) and changed his name to Malcolm X. Under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad, the Nation of Islam made inroads into black communities in the urban North by advocating a program of self-help, black separatism, and black nationalism. In the 1950s, the Nation of Islam grew in popularity in these communities and began to challenge long-held beliefs in integration and reconciliation.

In this segment, Malcolm X presents his thoughts on black nationalism and independence.

1946

Malcolm X (born Malcolm Little) is convicted of burglary and sent to prison, where he becomes influenced by the teachings of Nation of Islam leader Elijah Muhammad

1959

Jul. 13-17 The program "The Hate That Hate Produced" airs on television and dramatically depicts the Nation of Islam and Malcolm X to the American public

1964

In Alabama, black activists form the Lowndes County Freedom Organization to mobilize local blacks to register to vote and gain political control of the area

Mar. - Apr. Malcolm X publicly severs ties with the Nation of Islam, undertakes a pilgrimage to Mecca, and converts to Sunni Islam

Jun. 28 Malcolm X publicizes the establishment of the Organization of Afro-American Unity to promote black nationalism and human rights

1965

Feb. 21 Malcolm X is assassinated in New York
Co-author Alex Haley publishes *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*

1966

Jun. 5 James Meredith begins a "March Against Fear" from Memphis, Tennessee, to Jackson, Mississippi, but is shot on the second day and confined to a hospital

Jun. 7-26 The SCLC and SNCC, headed by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Stokely Carmichael, lead thousands in a protest designed to complete Meredith's march

*The Nation of Islam was established in 1930 with the goal of improving the social and economic conditions of blacks in America. Preaching a racially focused version of Islam, the NOI prospered during the 1950s and early 1960s when the organization, under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad, attracted disillusioned blacks in urban centers by advocating pride and self-empowerment.

Challenging advocates of nonviolence, Malcolm X declared that blacks could not be expected to respond nonviolently when attacked. The segment also chronicles his break with the Nation of Islam and his evolving vision of black political participation and social change.

The second half of the episode describes Malcolm X's influence on members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).** Black nationalism and the militancy of Malcolm X appealed to SNCC members, many of whom had been beaten and terrorized by segregationists.

After the march from Selma to Montgomery (see Episode 6), SNCC targeted one of the poorest communities of Alabama—Lowndes County, where blacks constituted 80 percent of the population and as of 1965 not a single black person was registered to vote. Testing federal enforcement of the new Voting Rights Act, local farmer John Hulett, with the help of SNCC activists, founded the Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO). The LCFO was conceived as an independent political party whose goal was to offer an alternative to the Alabama Democratic Party, which continued to block black voter participation. Seeking an image to represent the party, LCFO members adopted the black panther as their symbol. Despite harassment and threats of violence, LCFO had registered 2000 new black voters by the spring of 1966.

Following the Lowndes County campaign, Stokely Carmichael replaced John Lewis as chairman of SNCC. Carmichael's new, militant vision of black nationalism changed the tone and direction of SNCC.

The episode concludes with the story of James Meredith's "March Against Fear." Meredith, the first black American to enroll at the previously all-white University of Mississippi, had set out on a 200-mile march from Memphis, Tennessee, to Jackson, Mississippi. Meredith hoped his example would encourage blacks to stand up against intimidation and to register to vote. On the second day of his march, Meredith was shot and wounded. Leaders from all the major civil rights organizations came to Mississippi to continue the march, register voters, and protest the violent backlash against the civil rights struggle. Along the route, conflicts over strategy between the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and SNCC rose to the surface. Those tensions—over white participation and the efficacy of nonviolence—became public at a rally in Greenwood, Mississippi. Challenging the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the SCLC, Carmichael announced the arrival of the black power movement.

KEY QUESTIONS

1. How do the various people featured in this episode describe the obstacles black Americans faced in their pursuit of freedom?
2. What are the different visions of freedom and democracy articulated in this episode?
3. How did the call for black power shape the direction of the freedom struggle?
4. How did Malcolm X's vision challenge practitioners of nonviolent direct action? Why do you think his ideas resonated with many SNCC activists?
5. Did black separatism and black nationalism offer a long-term, democratic solution to racism and discrimination in America? Did these strategies offer a way to the "prize" the civil rights movement sought?
6. What role should group identity and racial pride have in politics?

** SNCC was a political organization that played a central role in the civil rights movement in the 1960s. Begun as an interracial group advocating nonviolence, it adopted greater militancy late in the decade, reflecting nationwide trends in black activism. For more information see "Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee," at Britannica.com, http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9399806 (accessed on July 21, 2006)

Document 1: THE FUTURE OF THE MOVEMENT

As a young man, Malcolm X had become involved in a life of crime and violence. In 1946, he was sentenced to seven years in prison for burglary. During his time in prison, Malcolm X converted to Islam and became a disciple of Elijah Muhammad, the leader of the Nation of Islam. Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, the Nation of Islam developed a strong following in America's urban centers; the organization offered a powerful vision of black separatism and suggested that blacks needed to develop an independent, black identity. Within a few years, Malcolm X emerged as the Nation of Islam's most prominent spokesman.

In November 1960, WBAI, a New York radio station, hosted Malcolm X and the black activist Bayard Rustin for a discussion on the future of the civil rights movement. Rustin, who was raised as a Quaker, was a tireless campaigner for civil rights. One of the leading strategists of nonviolent direct action, Rustin is best known for organizing the 1963 March on Washington. While Malcolm X and Rustin cared deeply about the plight of black Americans, they differed fundamentally on the right strategy to achieve social change.

May 10, 1963. Malcolm X speaks to the press at Washington, DC's National Airport. Malcolm X became the most prominent spokesman of the Nation of Islam and urged all blacks to adopt a militant approach in defending their rights.

BAYARD RUSTIN: I am very happy to be here and I think Malcolm X can clarify some of the questions he has brought up in my mind. I believe the great majority of the Negro people, black people, are not seeking anything from anyone. They are seeking to become full-fledged citizens. Their ancestors have toiled in this country, contributing greatly to it. The United States belongs to no particular people, and in my view the great majority of Negroes and their leaders take integration as their key word—which means that rightly or wrongly they seek to become an integral part of the United States. We have, I believe, much work yet to do, both politically and through the courts, but I believe we have reached the point where most Negroes, from a sense of dignity and pride, have organized themselves to demand to become an integral part of all the institutions of the U.S. We are doing things by direct action which we feel will further this cause. We believe that justice for all people, including Negroes, can be achieved.

This is not a unique position, and while a controversial one it is certainly not as controversial as the one Malcolm X supports. Therefore I would like to ask him this question: the logic of your position is to say to black people in this country: "We have to migrate and set up some state in Africa." It seems to me that this is where you have to come out.

[MALCOLM] X: Well, Mr. Rustin, let me say this about "full-fledged" or as they say "first-class" citizenship. Most of the so-called Negro leaders have got the Negro masses used to thinking in terms of second-class citizenship, of which there is no such thing. We who fol-

low the Honorable Elijah Muhammad believe that a man is either a citizen or he is not a citizen. He is not a citizen by degree. If the black man in America is not recognized as a first-class citizen, we don't feel that he is a citizen at all. People come here from Hungary and are integrated into the American way of life overnight, they are not put into any fourth class or third class or any kind of class. The only one who is put in this category is the so-called Negro who is forced to beg the white man to accept him. We feel that if 100 years after the so-called Emancipation Proclamation the black man is still not free, then we don't feel that what Lincoln did set them free in the first place.

RUSTIN: This is all well and good but you are not answering my question.

X: I am answering your question. The black man in America, once he gets his so-called freedom, is still 9,000 miles away from that which he can call home. His problem is different from that of others who are striving for freedom. In other countries they are the majority and the oppressor is the minority. But here, the oppressor is the majority. The white man can just let you sit down. He can find someone else to run his factories.

So we don't think the passive approach can work here. And we don't see that anyone other than the so-called Negro was encouraged to seek freedom this way. The liberals tell the so-called Negro to use the passive approach and turn the other cheek, but they have never told whites who were in bondage to use the passive approach. They don't tell the whites in Eastern Europe who are under the Russian yoke to be passive in their resistance. They give them guns and make heroes out of them and call them freedom fighters. But if a black man becomes militant in his striving against oppression then immediately he is classified as a fanatic.

[…]

RUSTIN: Then what you are saying is that you are opposed to integration because it is not meaningful and can't work. If you believe that integration is not possible, then the logic of your position should be that you are seeking to find a piece of territory and go to it. Either you are advocating the continuation of slavery, since you feel we cannot get integration by the methods that I advocate—which is to say the slow, grinding process of integration—or you are proposing separation.

X: We believe integration is hypocrisy. If the government has to pass laws to let us into their education system, if they have to pass laws to get the white man to accept us in better housing in their neighborhoods, that is the equivalent of holding a gun to their head, and that is hypocrisy. If the white man were to accept us, without laws being passed, then we would go for it.

RUSTIN: Do you think that is going to happen?

X: Well, your common sense tells you, sir, that it's not going to happen.

RUSTIN: But if you cannot do it through the constitutional method, and you cannot do it through brotherhood, then what do you see as the future of black people here and why should they stay?

X: As any intelligent person can see, the white man is not going to share his wealth with his ex-slaves. But God has taught us that the only solution for the ex-slave and the slave master is separation.

RUSTIN: Then you do believe in separation.

X: We absolutely do believe in separation.[1]

CONNECTIONS

1. Compare the way that Bayard Rustin and Malcolm X view the impediments to black freedom and equality. What led each man to form his particular view? How did their different views influence the strategies they used and their willingness to work within the system? What do you think America would look like had each accomplished his goals?
2. How did Malcolm X characterize the nonviolent movement? Do you agree with his assessment that the movement was "passive"?
3. Why did Malcolm X believe that separation was the only solution to racial discrimination in the United States? Compare the way that Malcolm X and Rustin viewed white people: who were these people in each man's eyes?
4. What questions would you ask Rustin and Malcolm X?

Document 2: BLACK NATIONALISM

Malcolm X's brilliance and militancy began to overshadow the leadership of his mentor, Elijah Muhammad. By late 1963, conflicts between Malcolm X and Nation of Islam leader Elijah Muhammad exploded. Malcolm X became increasingly isolated within the NOI and, in early 1964, decided to leave. A few months later, he formed the Organization of Afro-American Unity. The purpose of the new organization was to promote black nationalism—a vision of social and political autonomy among blacks. Malcolm X argued in an interview:

> The black man should control the politics of his own community and control the politicians who are in his own community. My personal economic philosophy is […] that the black man should have a hand in controlling the economy of the so-called Negro community. He should be developing the type of knowledge that will enable him to own and operate the businesses and thereby be able to create employment for his own people, for his own kind.[2]

In 1964, Malcolm X embarked on a hajj to Mecca (the hajj is the pilgrimage that is required of all Muslims) and converted to Sunni Islam—the largest denomination of Islam. On his hajj, Malcolm X was struck by the interracial harmony he experienced in Mecca. The stark contrast between the "spir-

it of unity and brotherhood" among Muslims and race relations in America led Malcolm X to entertain the possibility of black cooperation with white people.[3]

On his return from the hajj, Malcolm X began to develop a new vision of black political engagement, a vision that had its roots in the ideas of Frederick Douglass, Ida B. Wells, and W.E.B. DuBois. In his assessment, the barriers to black freedom were no longer legal (segregation was already against the law) but problems of political power and enforcement. Frustrated with the lack of response to the movement's appeals to the moral conscience of the nation, Malcolm X believed that blacks needed new allies. During travels through Africa, Malcolm X brought the plight of black Americans to an international audience. By appealing to African nations and the United Nations, he hoped to extend the scope of the freedom struggle and to shift its focus from civil rights (an American, legal issue) to human rights (an international, universal issue). He explained after a trip to Africa:

> My purpose is to remind the […] African heads of state that there are 22 million of us in America who are also of African decent and to remind them also that we are the victims of […] America's colonialism or American imperialism and that our problem is not an American problem, it's a human problem. It's not a Negro problem. It's a problem of humanity. It's not a problem of civil rights, but a problem of human rights.[4]

But this vision was crippled by the harsh oppression of blacks, he exclaimed in front of students in a public debate held in Oxford, England, in December 1964. He continued:

> I live in a society whose social system is based upon the castration of the black man, whose political system is based on the castration of the black man, and whose economy is based upon the castration of the black man.
>
> They came up with what they call a civil rights bill in 1964, supposedly to solve our problem and after the bill was signed, three civil rights workers were murdered in cold blood (see Episode 5). Civil rights bill down the drain. No matter how many bills passed, black people in that country where I'm from, our lives were not worth two cents. Well any time you live in a society supposedly based upon law and it does not enforce its own law because the color of a man's skin happens to be wrong, then I say those people are justified to resort to any means necessary to bring about justice where the government can't give them justice.[5]

At the invitation of SNCC, on February 14, 1965, Malcolm X visited protestors in Selma, Alabama (see Episode 6). There he met Coretta Scott King, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s wife, and expressed a desire to support other civil rights leaders. Speaking to reporters, he explained:

> I think the people in this part of the world would do well to listen to Dr. Martin Luther King and give him what he's asking for and give it to him fast before some other factions come along and do it another way. What he's asking for is right, that's the ballot. And if he can't get it the way he's trying to get it, then it's going to be gotten, one way or the other.[6]

CONNECTIONS

1. What did black nationalism mean to Malcolm X? What did he believe were the political, economic, and social goals of black nationalism?
2. How did Malcolm X's rhetoric change between the interview with Rustin and his break with the Nation of Islam?
3. What is the difference between civil rights and human rights? Why did Malcolm X think that black Americans should focus on human rights rather civil rights? Why did he think they should turn to the United Nations for support?
4. Malcolm X was born in 1925 as Malcolm Little. He changed his name three times during his lifetime:
   - During the early 1940s, he was known as Detroit Red—a reference to the color of his hair.
   - On his release from prison in 1953, he took the name Malcolm X—a symbolic break from the name "Little," which he considered to be a slave name.
   - After his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1964, he changed his name to el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz (in Arabic, *hajj* is the pilgrimage devout Muslims are obliged to take; *malik* means king or monarch; and *shabazz* refers to holy people, presumably of an ancient Asian nation from which blacks descended).

   What can names tell us about a person's identity? What identities did Malcolm X adopt in the names he chose for himself? What political stances were involved in his name changes? How did they represent his transformation as a person, leader, and activist?

Document 3: MALCOLM AND MARTIN

Tensions between the Nation of Islam and Malcolm X, which had already become public following Malcolm X's comments on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in November 1963, reached new heights when Malcolm X's house was fire-bombed on February 14, 1965. Fortunately, Malcolm X and his family escaped physical harm. A week later, during a speech in Harlem's Audubon Ballroom, three men, all with ties to the Nation of Islam, rushed the stage and shot him. He was pronounced dead in a nearby hospital.

In an *Eyes on the Prize* interview, Coretta Scott King remembered Malcolm X. She used that opportunity to talk about the similarities and differences between her husband's and Malcolm X's views of the freedom struggle:

> I think that Martin and Malcolm agreed in terms of the ultimate goal of the freedom struggle. I don't think there was any difference there. I think it was basically one of strategy. My husband believed that to accomplish the goals of freedom and justice and equality it was necessary to use nonviolent means, particularly in a society such as ours, where we were ten percent of the population. And he believed finally that nonviolence was the only alternative that oppressed people had in this kind of society. I think Malcolm felt that people had a right to use any means necessary, even violence, to achieve goals of their freedom. I think that was the basic difference. Martin, I don't think, ever spoke publicly against Malcolm in any forum. I think Malcolm did against Martin, unfortunately. But Martin never held that against him.

> I think they respected each other. I know Martin had the greatest respect for Malcolm and he agreed with him in terms of the feeling of racial pride and the fact that black people should believe in themselves and see themselves as lovable and beautiful. Martin had a strong feeling of connectedness to Africa and so did Malcolm. I think that if Malcolm had lived, at some point the two would have come closer together and would have been a very strong force in the total struggle for liberation and self-determination of black people in our society.[7]

James Cone, the author of *Martin and Malcolm and America: A Dream or a Nightmare*, was asked what are the most common misperceptions about King, Malcolm X, and their visions of social change in American democracy. Cone responded:

> The most common misperception about Martin King is that he was nonviolent in the sense of being passive. That is incorrect and he would have rejected it absolutely. In fact, Martin King would say that if nonviolence means being passive, he would rather advocate violence. Nonviolence for him meant direct action, not passivity in the face of violence, so the world would understand how brutal the system is upon those who are poor and weak.
>
> The most common misunderstanding of Malcolm X is that he advocated violence. Malcolm did not advocate violence but rather self-defense. He did not believe that oppressed people could gain their dignity as human beings by being passive in the face of violence. There was some tension between Malcolm and Martin largely because they tended to accept these perceptions of [each other]. But what is revealing is that Martin King came to realize that Malcolm did not really advocate violence in the same way as [for example,] the Ku Klux Klan did. Even though he could not go along with self-defense as a form of social change, Martin King did advocate self-defense in terms of individuals who protect their home, their children, and their loved ones [from] people who would hurt them. Malcolm X came to see that Martin King's idea of nonviolence was not passive. Actually, he wanted to join up with the civil rights movement and Martin King largely because [he saw] that nonviolent activists actually created more fear and more change than some of [the] people within the Muslim movement. So he came to see Martin King in a much more positive light than is generally understood.[8]

CONNECTIONS

1. According to Coretta Scott King, how did Malcolm X's view of the struggle against discrimination and exploitation differ from that of her husband? What did the two have in common?
2. Why do you think Cone makes a distinction between nonviolence and passivity? How does he explain the differences?
3. Cone believes that "[t]he most common misunderstanding of Malcolm X is that he advocated violence. Malcolm did not advocate violence but rather self-defense." Why is this distinction important?

Document 4: SPEAKING FOR OURSELVES

Lowndes County's history of raw violence and exploitation earned it the nickname "Bloody Lowndes." During the march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama organizers agreed to comply with Judge Johnson's request to cut the number of marchers through Lowndes County to 300, fearing that the authorities would be unable to keep them safe. Hours after the march, Viola Liuzzo, a white civil rights volunteer, was shot by four Klansman while driving through the county with Leroy Moton (a young black man). As late as 1965, not one black citizen in Lowndes County was registered to vote, despite the fact that black people were 80 percent of the county's population. Bob Mants, a SNCC activist, remembers:

> Lowndes County had the reputation of being the most violent county in the state of Alabama. It had a long history of violence and repression. It was in Selma [during the march to Montgomery] that we decided we wanted to tackle Lowndes County. […] Here was an opportunity, especially with the Voting Rights Act in the making, where it seemed to us that it would be a lot more appropriate to deal with that group of people who were able to register their vote. So this was a major contributing factor to our coming into Lowndes County. That and the abject fear that black people had there.[9]

Days before the Selma to Montgomery March, John Hulett became the first black person since Reconstruction to register to vote. A courageous local farmer, Hulett, with the help of Mants, Stokely Carmichael, and other SNCC activists, founded an alternative to Alabama's all-white Democratic Party: The Lowndes County Freedom Organization. In a 1966 speech, he described the impact of the organization:

> Too long Negroes have been begging, especially in the South, for things they should be working for. So the people in Lowndes County decided to organize themselves—to go out and work for the things we wanted in life—not only for the people in Lowndes County, but for every county in the state of Alabama, in the Southern states, and even in California. […]
>
> In Lowndes County, the sheriff is the custodian of the courthouse […] who walks around and pats you on the shoulder, who does not carry a gun […]. After talking to the sheriff about having the use of the courthouse lawn for our mass nominating meeting, not the courthouse but just the lawn, he refused to give the Negroes permission. We reminded him that last year in August, that one of the biggest Klan rallies that has ever been held in the state of Alabama was held on this lawn of this courthouse. And he gave them permission. A few weeks ago an individual who was campaigning for governor—he got permission to use it. He used all types of loudspeakers and anything that he wanted.
>
> But he would not permit Negroes to have the use of the courthouse. For one thing he realized that we would build a party—and if he could keep us from forming our own political group then we would always stand at the feet of the Southern whites and of the

Democratic Party. So we told him that we were going to have this meeting, we were going to have it here, on the courthouse lawn. And we wouldn't let anybody scare us off. We told him, we won't expect you to protect us, and if you don't, Negroes will protect themselves.

Then we asked him a second time to be sure he understood what we were saying. We repeated it to him the second time. […] And he said, I will not give you permission to have this meeting here. I can't protect you from the community.

Then we reminded him that according to the law of the state Alabama, that this mass meeting which was set up to nominate our candidates must be held in or around a voters' polling place. And if we decide to hold it a half a mile away from the courthouse, some individual would come up and protest our mass meeting. And our election would be thrown out.

So we wrote the Justice Department and told them what was going to happen in Lowndes County. All of a sudden the Justice Department started coming in fast into the county. They said to me, John, what is going to happen next Tuesday at the courthouse? I said, We are going to have our mass meeting. And he wanted [to] know where. And I said on the lawn of the courthouse. He said, I thought the sheriff had told you couldn't come there. And I said, Yes, but we are going to be there. Then he wanted to know, if shooting takes place, what are we going to do. And I said, that we are going to stay out here and everybody die together. And then he began to get worried, and I said, Don't worry. You're going to have to be here to see it out and there's no place to hide, so whatever happens, you can be a part of it.

And then he began to really panic. And he said, There's nothing I can do. And I said, I'm not asking you to do anything. All I want you to know is we are going to have a mass meeting. If the sheriff cannot protect us, then we are going to protect ourselves. And I said to him, through the years in the South, Negroes have never had any protection, and today we aren't looking to anybody to protect us. We are going to protect ourselves. […]

That was on Saturday. On Sunday, at about 2 o'clock, we were having a meeting, and we decided among ourselves that we were going to start collecting petitions for our candidates to be sure that they got on the ballot. The state laws require at least 25 signatures of qualified electors and so we decided to get at least 100 for fear somebody might come up and find fault. And we decided to still have our mass meeting and nominate our candidates.

About 2:30, here comes the Justice Department again, and he was really worried. And he said he wasn't satisfied. He said to me, John, I've done all I can do, and I don't know what else I can do, and now it looks like you'll have to call this meeting off at the courthouse.

And I said, we're going to have it.

He stayed around for a while and then got in his car and drove off, saying, I'll see you tomorrow, maybe. And we stayed at this meeting from 2:30 until about 11:30 that night. About 11:15, the Justice Department came walking up the aisle of the church and said to me, Listen. I've talked to the Attorney General of the state of Alabama, and he said that you can go ahead and have a mass meeting at the church and it will be legal.

Then we asked him, Do you have any papers that say that's true, that are signed by the Governor or the Attorney General? And he said no. And we said to him, Go back and get it legalized, and bring it back here to us and we will accept it.

And sure enough, on Monday at 3 o'clock, I went to the courthouse and there in the sheriff's office were the papers all legalized and fixed up, saying that we could go to the church to have our mass meeting.

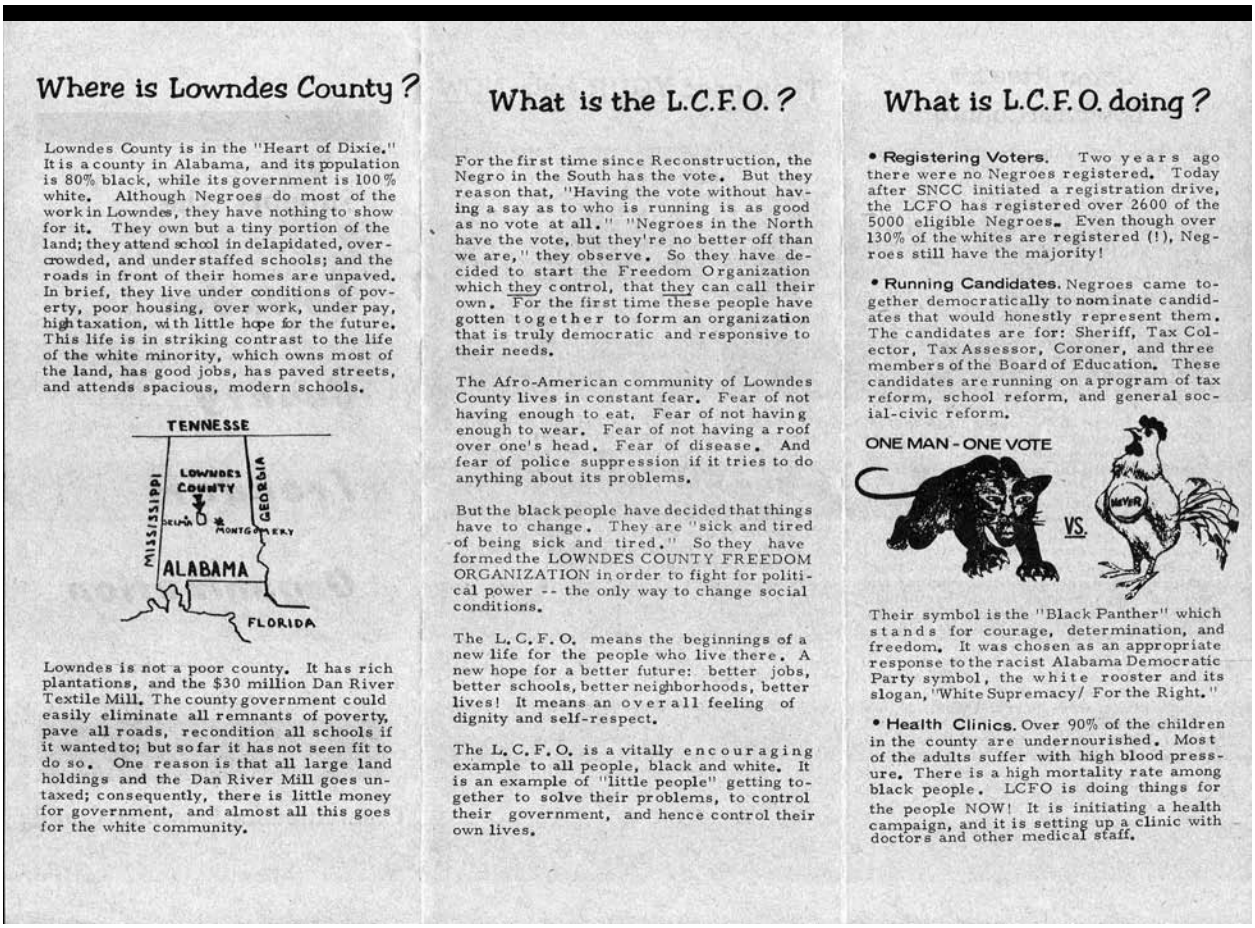
To me, this showed strength. When people are together, they can do a lot of things, but when you are alone you cannot do anything. […] We have seven people who are running for office this year in our county: namely, the coroner, three members of the board of education—and if we win those three, we will control the board of education—tax collector, tax assessor, and the individual who carries a gun at his side, the sheriff.

Let me say this—that a lot of persons tonight asked me, Do you really think if you win that you will be able to take it all over, and live?

I say to the people here tonight—yes, we're going to do it. If we have to do like the present sheriff, if we have to deputize every man in Lowndes County 21 and over, to protect people, we're going to do it. There was something in Alabama a few months ago they called fear. Negroes were afraid to move on their own, they waited until the man, the people whose place they lived on, told them they could get registered. They told many people, don't you move until I tell you to move and when I give an order, don't you go down and get registered. […]

I would like to let the people here tonight know why we chose this black panther as our emblem […]. But this black panther is a vicious animal as you know. He never bothers anything, but when you start pushing him, he moves backwards, backwards, and backwards into his corner, and then he comes out to destroy everything that's before him. Negroes in Lowndes County have been pushed back through the years. We have been deprived of our rights to speak, to move, and to do whatever we want to do at all times. And now we are going to start moving […].

We've decided to stop begging. We've decided to stop asking for integration. Once we control the courthouse, once we control the board of education, we can build our school sys-



Where is Lowndes County?

Lowndes County is in the "Heart of Dixie." It is a county in Alabama, and its population is 80% black, while its government is 100% white. Although Negroes do most of the work in Lowndes, they have nothing to show for it. They own but a tiny portion of the land; they attend school in delapidated, overcrowded, and understaffed schools; and the roads in front of their homes are unpaved. In brief, they live under conditions of poverty, poor housing, over work, under pay, high taxation, with little hope for the future. This life is in striking contrast to the life of the white minority, which owns most of the land, has good jobs, has paved streets, and attends spacious, modern schools.

Lowndes is not a poor county. It has rich plantations, and the $30 million Dan River Textile Mill. The county government could easily eliminate all remnants of poverty, pave all roads, recondition all schools if it wanted to; but so far it has not seen fit to do so. One reason is that all large land holdings and the Dan River Mill goes untaxed; consequently, there is little money for government, and almost all this goes for the white community.

What is the L.C.F.O.?

For the first time since Reconstruction, the Negro in the South has the vote. But they reason that, "Having the vote without having a say as to who is running is as good as no vote at all." "Negroes in the North have the vote, but they're no better off than we are," they observe. So they have decided to start the Freedom Organization which they control, that they can call their own. For the first time these people have gotten together to form an organization that is truly democratic and responsive to their needs.

The Afro-American community of Lowndes County lives in constant fear. Fear of not having enough to eat. Fear of not having enough to wear. Fear of not having a roof over one's head. Fear of disease. And fear of police suppression if it tries to do anything about its problems.

But the black people have decided that things have to change. They are "sick and tired of being sick and tired." So they have formed the LOWNDES COUNTY FREEDOM ORGANIZATION in order to fight for political power -- the only way to change social conditions.

The L.C.F.O. means the beginnings of a new life for the people who live there. A new hope for a better future: better jobs, better schools, better neighborhoods, better lives! It means an overall feeling of dignity and self-respect.

The L.C.F.O. is a vitally encouraging example to all people, black and white. It is an example of "little people" getting together to solve their problems, to control their government, and hence control their own lives.

What is L.C.F.O. doing?

• **Registering Voters.** Two years ago there were no Negroes registered. Today after SNCC initiated a registration drive, the LCFO has registered over 2600 of the 5000 eligible Negroes. Even though over 130% of the whites are registered (!), Negroes still have the majority!

• **Running Candidates.** Negroes came together democratically to nominate candidates that would honestly represent them. The candidates are for: Sheriff, Tax Collector, Tax Assessor, Coroner, and three members of the Board of Education. These candidates are running on a program of tax reform, school reform, and general social-civic reform.

Their symbol is the "Black Panther" which stands for courage, determination, and freedom. It was chosen as an appropriate response to the racist Alabama Democratic Party symbol, the white rooster and its slogan, "White Supremacy/ For the Right."

• **Health Clinics.** Over 90% of the children in the county are undernourished. Most of the adults suffer with high blood pressure. There is a high mortality rate among black people. LCFO is doing things for the people NOW! It is initiating a health campaign, and it is setting up a clinic with doctors and other medical staff.

An LCFO pamphlet explaining its mission. The organization chose a black panther as its emblem—a symbol of "courage, determination and freedom"— in contrast with the Democratic Party's white rooster.

tem where our boys and girls can get an education in Lowndes County. There are 89 prominent families in this county who own 90 percent of the land. These people will be taxed. And we will collect these taxes. And if they don't pay them; we'll take their property and sell it to whoever wants to buy it […].

We aren't asking any longer for protection—we won't need it—or for anyone to come from the outside to speak for us, because we're going to speak for ourselves now and from now on. And I think not only in Lowndes County, not only in the state of Alabama, not only in the South, but in the North—I hope they too will start thinking for themselves. And that they will move and join us in this fight for freedom […].[10]

CONNECTIONS

1. How did the lawlessness and violence in Lowndes County reveal the betrayal of the promises of American democracy to its citizens?
2. How did Hulett and the supporters of the LCFO hope to use the power of the ballot— newly protected by the Voting Rights Act—to transform Lowndes County?
3. Hulett explained that the people in Lowndes Country decided to organize and "work for the things we wanted in life" not just for the people of their county, or their state, but for the people of

California as well. What does he mean? How did he hope the group's actions would expand the application of American democracy?

4. Why did Hulett insist on holding the LCFO meeting in front of the courthouse? How did he hope the LCFO would transform the way individuals and communities regard, and exercise, their political power?

5. According to Hulett, 89 families out of a population of approximately 15,000 owned 90 percent of the land in Lowndes County. Why did Hulett and others feel that concentration of wealth was harmful to democracy? How did Hulett relate that issue to questions of civil and human rights?

Document 5: BLACK POWER

By the time John Lewis returned home from a trip with SNCC leaders to Africa in the fall of 1965, it was clear that he was becoming increasingly isolated in the organization. Some openly questioned the effectiveness of Lewis's steadfast commitment to an integrated, nonviolent movement. In May 1966, SNCC staff voted to remove Lewis as chairman and replace him with Stokely Carmichael. Carmichael—fresh from his experiences in Lowndes County—explained why Lewis had to go:

> [I]f you took a clear look at John Lewis, he looked more like a young Martin Luther King, Jr. than anything else. A role which he himself was quite happy and pleased with. Because of his policies and the space between SNCC's field workers and himself, he had become alienated from the SNCC staff. So the vote against him represented that. More importantly, it represented the SNCC organizers who understood that the question of morality upon which King's organization depended to bring about changes in the community was not possible. The SNCC people had seen raw terror and they understood properly this raw terror had nothing to do with morality but had to do clearly with power. It was a question of economic power, of the exploitation of our people, and they clearly saw that the route to this liberation came first through political organization of the masses of the people.
>
> We saw the political organization of the masses as the only route to solving our problem. We placed a strong emphasis on the fact that nonviolence for us was a tactic and not a philosophy […]. Our direction was clear, with a heavy emphasis on nationalism.[11]

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November 1966. Stokely Carmichael addresses a crowd in Watts, Los Angeles. Carmichael replaced John Lewis as chairman of SNCC, and his new, militant vision of black nationalism changed the tone and direction of the organization.

Carmichael tested his message during James Meredith's "March Against Fear" through Mississippi. During the 220-mile march Carmichael replaced SNCC's famous chant: "We want our freedom and we want it now" with "Black Power." The call for black power, as Carmichael later acknowledged in his autobiography, was received with fear and suspicion.

Pressed to clarify the meaning of the term, Carmichael wrote a paper with Michael Thelwell in which the two attempted to define black power and dispel a host of misconceptions that surrounded its introduction into America's political lexicon. The position paper, entitled "Toward Black Liberation," called for separating the struggle for black liberation from the terms, tactics, and ideas endorsed by the older generation of black and white activists. It also called for a redefinition of black identity:

> […] Our concern for black power addresses itself directly to this problem: the necessity to reclaim our history and our identity from the cultural terrorism and depredation of self-justifying white guilt. To do this we shall have to struggle for the right to create our own terms through which to define ourselves and our relationship to the society, and to have these terms recognized. This is the first necessity of a free people, and the first right that any oppressor must suspend. […] Thus the victimization of the Negro takes place in two phases—first it occurs in fact and deed, then, and this is equally sinister, in the official recording of those facts.[…]
>
> Negroes are defined by two forces: their blackness and their powerlessness. There have been traditionally two communities in America. The white community, which controlled and defined the forms that all institutions within the society would take, and the Negro community, which has been excluded from participation in the power decisions that shaped the society, and has traditionally been dependent upon, and subservient to the white community.
>
> This has not been accidental. The history of every institution of this society indicates that a major concern in the ordering and structuring of the society has been the maintaining of the Negro community in its condition of dependence and oppression. This has not been on the level of individual acts of discrimination between individual whites against individual Negroes, but as acts by the total white community against the Negro community. This fact cannot be too strongly emphasized—that racist assumptions of white supremacy have been so deeply ingrained in the structure of the society that it infuses its entire functioning, and is so much a part of the national subconscious that it is taken for granted and is frequently not even recognized.
>
> […] It is more than a figure of speech to say that the Negro community in America is the victim of white imperialism and colonial exploitation. This is in practical economic and political terms true. There are over twenty million black people comprising 10 percent of this nation. They for the most part live in well-defined areas of the country—in the shantytowns and rural black belt areas of the South, and increasingly in the slums of northern and western industrial cities. If one goes into any Negro community, whether it be in Jackson, Mississippi, Cambridge, Maryland, or Harlem, New York, one will find that the same combination of political, economic, and social forces are at work. The people in the Negro community do not control the resources of that community, its political decisions, its law enforcement, its housing standards; and even the physical ownership of the land,

houses, and stores *lies outside that community.*

It is white power that makes the laws, and it is violent white power in the form of armed white cops that enforces those laws with guns and nightsticks. The vast majority of Negroes in this country live in these captive communities and must endure these conditions of oppression because, and only because, *they are black and powerless.* I do not suppose that at any point the men who control the power and resources of this country ever sat down and designed these black enclaves and formally articulated the terms of their colonial and dependent status, as was done, for example, by the apartheid government of South Africa. Yet, one can not distinguish between one ghetto and another. As one moves from city to city, it is as though some malignant racist planning unit had done precisely this—designed each one from the same master blueprint. […] [The ghetto is] the result of identical patterns of white racism which repeat themselves in cities as distant as Boston and Birmingham. […]

In recent years, the answer to these questions which has been given by most articulate groups of Negroes and their white allies, the "liberals" of all stripes, has been in terms of something called "integration." According to the advocates of integration, social justice will be accomplished by "integrating the Negro into the mainstream institutions of the society from which he has been traditionally excluded." […]

This concept of integration had to be based on the assumption that there was nothing of value in the Negro community and that little of value could be created among Negroes, so the thing to do was to siphon off the "acceptable" Negroes into the surrounding middle-class white community. Thus the goal of the movement for integration was simply to loosen up the restrictions barring the entry of Negroes into the white community. […] The civil rights movement saw its role as a kind of liaison between the powerful white community and the dependent Negro one. The dependent status of the black community apparently was unimportant since—if the movement were successful—it would blend into the white community anyway. We made no pretense of organizing and developing institutions of community power in the Negro community, but appealed to the conscience of white institutions of power. The posture of the civil rights movement was that of the dependent, the suppliant. […]

As long as people in the ghettos of our large cities feel that they are victims of the misuse of white power without any way to have their needs represented—and these are frequently simple needs: to get the welfare inspectors to stop kicking down their doors in the middle of the night, and the cops from beating their children, to get the landlord to exterminate the vermin in their home, the city to collect their garbage—we will continue to have riots. These are not the product of "black power," but of the absence of any organization capable of giving the community the power, the black power, to deal with its problems.

SNCC proposes that it is now time for the black freedom movement to stop pandering to the fears and anxieties of the white middle class in the attempt to earn its "good will," and to return to the ghetto to organize these communities to control themselves.[12]

CONNECTIONS

1. John Lewis and other proponents viewed nonviolence as a way of life and a moral principle of the movement. In contrast, Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, and others saw nonviolence as a tactic. Believers in nonviolent direct action understood that their actions could prompt a violent response. For them, the violent backlash sharpened the moral question at the heart of the freedom movement. How did proponents of nonviolence hope to build broader support for the expansion of democracy? Why do you think Carmichael and other SNCC members were skeptical about the power of nonviolence to transform the country?
2. What did it mean for the movement when SNCC changed its slogan from "Freedom Now" to "Black Power"?
3. What do you think caused Carmichael to rethink his vision for the future of SNCC?
4. Carmichael and Thelwell argued that black power was a call for blacks to reclaim their history and identity. From whom did they have to reclaim it? Why was the assertion of black identity critical for the struggle for liberation?
5. Carmichael and Thelwell argued that the "racist assumptions of white supremacy have been so deeply ingrained in the structure of the society that it infuses its entire functioning." What did they mean by that statement? If the problems in black communities were not the result of the sinister actions of individual whites, what caused them?
6. Why were Carmichael and Thelwell critical of integration as a strategy for the black freedom movement? What concerns did they address about integration? What role do you think integration should play in a democratic struggle for justice and equal rights?

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[1] Devon W. Carbado and Donald Weise (eds.), *Time on Two Crosses: The Collected Writings of Bayard Rustin* (San Francisco: Cleis Press, 2003), 164–68.
[2] Malcolm X, "The Time Has Come," *Eyes on the Prize II: America at the Racial Crossroads-1965 to 1985*, VHS, Produced by Henry Hampton (Boston, MA: Blackside, 1989).
[3] Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, with assistance of Alex Haley, (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1964), 339.
[4] Malcolm X, "The Time Has Come"
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Henry Hampton and Steve Fayer, *Voices of Freedom: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s through the 1980s* (New York: Bantam Books, 1990), 264.
[8] "Malcolm and Martin: Still Teachers of Resistance: The Satya Interview with James H. Cone," http://www.satyamag.com/mar04/cone.html (accessed on May 26, 2006).
[9] Hampton, *Voices of Freedom*, 270-271.
[10] John Hulett, "How the Black Panther Party Was Organized," The Black Panther Party (New York: Merit Publishers, 1966) as quoted in Clayborne Carson, David J. Garrow, Gerald Gill, Vincent Harding, and Darlene Clark Hine, *The Eyes on the Prize Reader: Documents, Speeches, and Firsthand Accounts from the Black Freedom Struggle* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 273-78.
[11] Hampton, *Voices of Freedom*, 279–80.
[12] Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture) and Ekwueme Michael Thelwell, "Toward Black Liberation," *The Massachusetts Review*, vol. 7 (Autumn 1966), 639-49.