

A spiral-bound notebook with a brown cover and a white page. The spiral binding is on the left side. The text "CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT" is written in the center of the page in a bold, black, hand-drawn font. A horizontal line is drawn across the page, just above the text.

CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Prior knowledge necessary

- A bit of background
 - 2 assumptions: 1. The US population has always had strong racist elements; 2. Americans generally believe in the creed of equality.
 - These two factors are contradictory by nature and are played upon each other during the black drive for social, economic, and political equality. These also account for many of the ambiguities in the white response.

Prior knowledge necessary

- Americans tend to respond to alleviate social injustices
 - Racism, homophobia, ethnic prejudices, anti-Catholicism, and anti-Semitism have significantly declined since the 1960's.
- Presently, Indians, African-Americans, and Hispanics have full political rights.
- The discrimination that exists today is societal (*de facto*), not legal (*de jure*).

What would happen to everyone?

- What is put to the test with the Civil Rights Movement begun in the mid-1900's?
 - Ingrained racism deeply affected not only the enemies of black equality, but also its friends
 - Kennedy and Johnson administrations had to serve constituents that were diametrically opposed to each other.
 - Votes: how would presidents respond to the movement.
 - Northern opposition as affirmative action and school integration demands came forward

History of the movement

- Plessy v Ferguson 1896
 - “separate but equal” doctrine
 - In the South segregation was the norm
 - Movie theaters, water fountains, bathrooms, schools, hospitals, bus depots, public library
 - Segregation not confined to the South
 - Las Vegas hotels refused blacks to stay in the hotel or gamble in the casinos
 - In the South, if a black person tried to use a Southern public facility he had broken the law. In the North segregation was preserved through segregated housing and social pressure.

NAACP

- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was founded by W.E.B. DuBois, among others, in the early 1900's.
 - Worked for black rights
- By the 1950's the NAACP believed the time was right for an all out attack on segregation.
 - Remember the “Double V for victory” over the Axis powers abroad and victory over segregation?
- The Korean War showed that an integrated armed forces was workable.

Embarrassment for the country

- During the Cold War the idea of segregation was contrary to the national governments fight against Communism.
 - While fighting for the “hearts and minds” of the Sub-Saharan African countries, segregation was a big embarrassment

Increased political clout

- As many blacks moved north they gained the vote which increased their political power.
 - As opposed to the South where many were disenfranchised.

Challenging the Court

- Brown v Board of Education 1954
- See handouts
- [Brown v. Board of Education \(PBS\)](#)

Challenging the President?

- Little Rock, Arkansas, 1957: integration in schools
 - Nine black students attempted to attend the local white high school
 - Governor Orval Faubus ordered the National Guard to prevent their enrollment
 - Eisenhower had done nothing to enforce *Brown*, but he was not going to let Faubus directly challenge his authority
 - Negotiations failed between the two, so Ike federalized the National Guard and had them escort the kids to school
 - The phrase “all deliberate speed” was used in *Brown*; the Southern states used this as their way to keep segregation. “all deliberate speed” had no definition until 1968 when the Supreme Court defined “all deliberate speed” as “at once”.

The Nonviolent Movement

- MLK Jr. led the nonviolent protests
 - Montgomery bus boycott
 - See readings for more (*The Americans*; Zinn)
- Until his assassination in 1968, he was the movement's most influential spokesperson.
- After the election of JFK (his rhetoric far outpaced the reality of his actions) the movement picked up momentum. As black discontent grew, so did southern resistance.

Instances of Resistance

- Freedom Riders (p. 916-917 in “Americans”
 - To resist segregated seating on interstate buses and interstate facilities in bus depots, many blacks and whites rode buses between states in hopes of gaining national attention
 - what got JFK’s attention was not the ride itself, but the malicious beatings of the riders by white segregationists that gained attention and eventually led to the desegregation of the buses

Instances of Resistance

- Attendance at University of Mississippi (Ole Miss) September 1962
 - James Meredith won a federal case which allowed him to attend Ole Miss
 - when he arrived he was not allowed to register by Governor Ross Barnett
 - Pres. JFK ordered federal marshalls to escort Meredith to register
 - Barnett, on the radio, called for Mississippians to keep the faith and hold strong; this led to a huge riot on Sept. 30 on campus which resulted in 2 deaths
 - in the months that followed Meredith was escorted to class and his family protected by the federal marshalls

Instances of Resistance

- Birmingham, Alabama
 - King described this city as the most segregated in the country
 - days of demonstrations in protest of the segregation laws were held
 - many marchers were arrested and imprisoned for a time
 - after posting bail, King began to plan more demonstrations
 - One protest involved more than a 1000 children (“children’s crusades”), of which 959 were arrested

“children’s crusades”

- The nation watched in the second “children’s crusade” as the police used fire hoses, dogs, and clubs on the children
- Continued boycotts and protests, along with the media coverage, convinced Birmingham officials to end segregation
 - this was inspiration to many African-Americans all over the US
 - it further convinced JFK to pass a new civil rights bill to end racial violence and satisfy the demands of African-Americans for racial justice

JFK takes a stand

- JFK said to the nation:
 - “Are we to say to the world-and much more importantly, to each other-that this is the land of the free, except for the Negroes?”
 - He then demanded a civil rights bill be passed
- The civil rights bill JFK sent to Congress guaranteed equal access to all public accommodations and gave the US attorney general the ability to file school desegregation suits

Challenging the Court

- The Civil Rights Commission in 1963 reported that
 - “[black] Citizens of the United States have been shot, set upon by vicious dogs, beaten and otherwise terrorized because they sought to vote.”
- Less dramatic than violence but effective was the economic intimidation
 - The vast majority of jobs in the South were run by whites so it was easy for southern racists to ensure blacks, who registered to vote or who were active in the movement, lost their jobs

JFK's problem

- JFK needed the Southern congressman to pass his legislative agenda, so little was done to help gain rights
 - This led to less patience with the pace of civil rights
- In hopes of gaining rights quickly, many students in the group, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) began sit-ins at lunch counters in hopes of forcing integration in public accommodations.

JFK's problem

- The fear of southern white claims that MLK had Communist tendencies made it difficult for JFK to form an alliance with the civil rights movement, but he did.
 - Attorney General Robert Kennedy ordered FBI director J. Edgar Hoover to wiretap MLK's phone in 1963.
 - At the U of Mississippi JFK sent in 400 federal marshals and 3,000 troops to enable the school's first black student, James Meredith

“I Have a Dream”

- After the famous speech, the violence continued
 - 06/1963: Medgar Evers, leader of the NAACP, assassinated
 - 09/1963: explosion in a Birmingham church
 - Summer of 1964: “Freedom Summer Project”
 - Northern whites joined southern blacks to work for voting rights
 - 1 black and 2 whites were murdered during the summer and local all-white juries refused to convict
 - The Supreme Court was able to convict later on civil rights charges
 - Early 1965: a voter registration project in Selma, Alabama resulted in several deaths and the beating and tear gassing of civil rights workers

“I Have a Dream”

- The publicity of the events, especially on national tv enabled LBJ to get the Civil Rights Act of 1964 passed
 - This act forbade discrimination in public accommodations
- 1964: 24th Amendment made the poll tax illegal
- 1965 Voting Rights Act
 - Ensured African-Americans the right to vote

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- You will need to find Dr. King’s “Letter from the Birmingham Jail” on the internet or library and analyze the letter
 - look for the following in the letter:
 - tone
 - rationale
 - purpose
 - the type of arguments Dr. King used
 - philosophical analysis
 - your reaction had you been alive when it was penned
 - logos; ethos; pathos: what is this and how does it apply to this letter?
 - Analysis of values and limitations
 - We will have a discussion next class about civil disobedience
 - the history and efficacy of the idea

The Movement becomes militant

- Five days after the Voting Rights Act was signed there were riots in the neighborhood of Watts, in Los Angeles
 - Rioting was over the scenes of police brutality caught on television
 - 31 blacks and 3 whites were killed; more than 1,000 injured; hundreds of buildings burned
 - The Watts riot introduced a new phase to the movement: militant and violent
 - “Why would blacks turn to violence after winning so many victories in the South?”
(p. 925, *The Americans*)

Watts Riots

<http://www.usc.edu/isd/archives/la/watts.html>

The Movement becomes militant

- This new phase involved:
 - Belligerent confrontation in Northern cities led by radical spokespersons and often aimed not at interracial cooperation but black separatism.
 - Many young people who were frustrated by what they believed was a lack of true equality, turned away from nonviolence and integration, and toward militancy and “Black Power”
 - With the passage of the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act the movement began to attack *de facto* discrimination of the urban north.

“Black Power”

- What was the controversy of the phrase?
 - Divided the African-American community
 - some said the phrase meant just what it said
 - political, social, and economic power for blacks
 - separate nature of African-American society; promoted “Afro” hairstyles and dress, discarded their names for new African names, demanded black studies programs at colleges and universities
 - this phrase also disturbed many white supporters of integration and civil rights

“Black Power”

- Malcolm Little, better known as Malcolm X, was a proponent of Black Power
 - converted to the Nation of Islam (Black Muslims) and changed his surname to publicize his lost African identity in white America
 - He advocated black separatism and spoke against the “blue-eyed white devils”

“Black Power”

- turn to p. 925 in handout from *The Americans* and read the quote from Malcolm X
 - discuss the impact of this statement in 1964
- After Malcolm X took his pilgrimage to Mecca, how did his philosophy change? (p. 926)
- Malcolm X was killed on 21 February, 1965 while giving a speech in Harlem. He was 39.
 - Malcolm X said: “No one can get out without trouble.” In reference to leaving the Black Muslims. What does this insinuate about his death?

“Black Power”

- June 1966

- James Meredith set out on a 225 mile walk to “walk against fear”. He planned to walk all the way from the Tennessee border to Jackson, Mississippi. He was shot down by a racist white and was too injured to continue.
- MLK Jr. of the SCLC, Floyd McKissick of CORE, and Stokely Carmichael of SNCC decided to lead their followers and finish what Meredith started.
 - SNCC and CORE members were becoming militant as they began to shout out slogans of black separatists who followed Malcolm X. King tried to rally the marchers with “We Shall Overcome” and they changed it to “We Shall Overrun”

“Black Power”

- Carmicheal was arrested in Greenwood, MS. After he was arrested and released for the 27th time he made a speech and he said this on p. 926.
 - He defined Black Power as a “call for black people to begin to define their own goals... [and] to lead their own organizations.”

Black Panthers

- The militant movement grew further with the formation of the Black Panthers.

 - Huey Newton and Bobby Seale founded the political party
 - the party advocated for
 - self-sufficiency for African-American communities
 - full employment and decent housing
 - African-Americans should be exempt from military service because an unfair number of black youths had been drafted for service in Vietnam.
 - Dressed in black leather jackets, black berets, and sunglasses, the Panthers preached self-defense and the teachings of Mao Zedong, leader of the Chinese Communist Revolution.

Black Panthers

- There were several shootouts between the police and the Panthers. The FBI were in constant surveillance of Panther members, and often times used illegal means to get information.
- Many Panther activities won support in the ghetto
 - the establishment of daycare centers
 - free breakfast programs
 - free medical clinics
 - assistance to the homeless

Violence and the “end” of the movement

- Black frustration and violence peaked in 1967-68.
 - Riots in the following cities killed over 68 people and destroyed millions of dollars of property:
 - Newark, NJ
 - Detroit, MI
 - Los Angeles, CA
- The assassination of MLK Jr. on 4 April, 1968 led to more riots, burning, and looting that cost over 40 lives.

Cost of violence

- The increased militancy of the movement created a white backlash that the Republican party took advantage of.
 - Frustration with court ordered integration in Northern schools-”forced busing”, was a major cause of the backlash
- in 1968, Nixon used the concern of many Americans with anti-Vietnam War protestors and African-American violence to represent the “Moral Majority” to win a close election with Hubert Humphrey
 - With the election of Nixon the civil rights movement lost its momentum and faded out.