



Unit III: The 1960's
John F. Kennedy + Lyndon Baines Johnson



Mr. Tengowski
Spring 2013

- I. John Fitzgerald Kennedy (1961-1963)-Democrat, Mass.**
 - a. Political Background House 1947, Senate 1953
 - b. Harvard Educated and PT 109
 - c. Camelot and "Best and Brightest"
 - d. Elections of 1960-JFK vs. Nixon
- II. JFK Foreign Policy-Flexible Response**
 - a. Nuclear Weapons
 - b. Conventional Weapons
 - c. Covert Operations-Green Berets, "Wars of counter-insurgency"
 - d. Economic Aid-Alliance for Progress, Marshall Plan for Latin America
 - e. Peace Corps-March 1, 1961-1st Used in Ghana/Tanzania
 - f. Diplomacy
- III. Instances of JFK Foreign Policy**
 - a. Kennedy Doctrine
 - b. 1961-"It was a mean year."-RFK
 - i. Space Program-April 12, 1961
 - ii. Bay of Pigs-April 17, 1961-\$55.5 Million to Cuba
 - iii. Berlin Crisis-June 1961-Construction of Berlin Wall + Checkpoint Charlie
 - iv. USSR Test Detonates 50 Bombs over 2 months-Sept. 1, 1961-USSR Breaks '58 Test Ban
 - v. US Detonates H-Bomb in response to USSR-November 2, 1961-Christmas Islands, Pacific
 - c. Vietnam-"Cornerstone of the Free World in SE Asia" + Quiet Escalation of US Troops
 - d. Trade Expansion Act (1962)
 - e. John Glenn orbits the Earth-Feb. 7, 1962-Friendship 7
 - f. *Engel v. Vitale*-June 25, 1962-Reading of prayer in NY public schools is unconstitutional
 - g. Cuban Missile Crisis (August 22-October 28, 1962) **Closest ever to WWII
 - i. August 22-US receives intelligence about missiles in Cuba-U2 flights commence
 - ii. October 16-U2 flights find conclusive evidence of USSR missiles pointing at US
 - iii. October 22-Naval Quarantine of Cuba
 - iv. October 28-JFK + Khrushchev agree to remove all missiles from Cuba...
 - h. Speech at American University-June 1963-Beginnings of Détente
 - i. US, GB, USSR sign Limited Test Ban Treaty-July 25, 1963
 - j. US Starts selling wheat (150 Million Bushels) to USSR-October 4, 1963
- IV. JFK Domestic Policy-"New Frontier"**
 - a. Fair Labor Standards Act-May 5, 1961-Minimum wage to \$1.25
 - b. Social Security Act of 1961-July 1, 1961-lower the age of Social Security to 62
 - c. Housing Act of 1961-June 30, 1961
 - d. Argument with US Steel-April 11, 1962-(Idea of a Conservative Democrat)
 - e. Call for a \$11.1 Billion Tax Cut-January 1963
 - f. Equal Pay Act of 1963-May 22, 1963-Men and women cannot be paid differently for same job.
 - g. War on Organized Crime-June 1963
- V. JFK Assassination-November 22, 1963**
 - a. Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby
 - b. Lone Assassin vs. Conspiracy Theory
- VI. Lyndon Baines Johnson (1963-1969)-Democrat, TX**
 - a. Bio in Stonewall, TX-unlike JFK
 - b. Most Powerful Senate Majority Leader in History
 - c. Johnson Treatment
- VII. LBJ Foreign Policy-Vietnam**-*"Like a Gambler who keeps losing and doubling his bet."*
 - a. US sends ground forces to Vietnam-June 8, 1965

VIII. LBJ Domestic Policy

a. Pre-1964 Election

- i. Tax Cut 4% February 26, 1964 JFK Idea
- ii. War on Poverty-Office of Economic Opportunity-January 8, 1964
 1. Food Stamps-made permanent
 2. Job Corps-job training for 16-21 year olds
 3. VISTA-Volunteers In Service To America
 4. Head Start-Pre-School Programs
 5. Upward Bound-College Prep
- iii. 24th Amendment passed-January 23, 1964-outlaws poll taxes in federal elections

b. Great Society-May 22, 1964-U. of Michigan Speech

- i. Medicare/Medicaid
- ii. Education-Elementary/Secondary Education Act-April 11, 1965
- iii. Immigration & Nationality Act abolished-Oct. 3, 1965-abolish 1924 quota system
- iv. Department of Transportation-October 15, 1966-“fast, safe, efficient, accessible travel”
- v. Department of Housing and Urban Development + Omnibus Housing Act-Sept. 6, 1965
- vi. Higher Education Act of 1965-November 8, 1965-\$23 Billion over 3 years
- vii. 25th Amendment passed-February 10, 1967-Deals with Presidential Succession
- viii. Minimum Wage Act-up to \$1.40-November 4, 1966

c. 1968-“The Worst Year in American History

- i. USS Pueblo-January 23 – December 23
- ii. Tet Offensive-January 30
- iii. US halts bombing of North Vietnam + LBJ will not run for reelection-March 31
- iv. Assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King-April 4-James Earl Ray
- v. Civil Rights Riots-Throughout 1968-168 total riots
- vi. Assassination of RFK-June 5-Sirhan Sirhan
- vii. Chicago Democratic National Convention-August 28

IX. The Civil Rights Movement

- a. Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)-Freedom Riders
- b. James Meredith admitted to U. of Mississippi by SC order-Sept. 10, 1962
- c. Birmingham, Alabama-King vs. Eugene “Bull” Connor-May 10, 1963
- d. 2 Black students admitted to U. of Alabama-June 11, 1963
- e. March on Washington- August 28, 1963- “I Have a Dream Speech”
- f. March on Selma-March 21-25, 1964
- g. Freedom Summer-Summer of 1964
- h. Civil Rights Act of 1964-July 2, 1964-bans racial discrimination in employment and public accom.
- i. Dr. King arrested in Selma, Alabama w/ 770 supporters-February 1, 1965
- j. Voting Rights Act of 1965-August 6, 1965-eliminates literacy tests
- k. Watts Riots-August 11-16, 1965
- l. *Loving v. Virginia*-June 13, 1967-US States cannot forbid interracial marriage
- m. NJ Riots-June 14, 1967-26 Dead, 300+ injured
- n. Civil Rights Act of 1968-April 11, 1968-forbids discrimination in selling/renting of housing-80%
- o. Dr. King (Non-Violence) vs. Malcolm X (Black Power)

X. The Counterculture

- a. Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How?
 - i. ~~Women's Movement-Betty Friedan and N.O.W~~
 - ii. Environmental Movement-Rachel Carson-*Silent Spring*
 - iii. Art-Andy Warhol-Pop Art Movement
 - iv. Music-Woodstock
- b. End of the Hippies ☹

Independent Practice: Unit III (15 points)-Due the Day Before the Test!!

Prompt #1: JFK Assassination (5 points)

Lee Harvey Oswald was obviously involved in some part of JFK's Assassination. You are a lawyer who must either prosecute Oswald with the idea that he was the only person involved in the murder in the first degree of JFK or that he was part of a larger conspiracy and it is a "patsy" for others who are getting away with the crime. (If you select the latter example, Oswald would receive a lesser charge and you are trying to get him out of the death penalty.)

- Write your closing argument to the jury with at least 5 reasons and explanations that would support your opinion

Prompt #2: JFK/LBJ Campaign Poster (5 Points)

- Create a campaign poster for JFK/LBJ that would be used during the campaigns of the 1960's.
- Write a 5 sentence essay explaining the meaning/message put forward by the poster.

Prompt #3: Texting or Twittering from Woodstock (5 points)

- Text or tweet 10 lines with at least 1 specific fact from the Woodstock Concert in each line.
- Pretend you are there witnessing the concert as it happened in 1969.
- No inappropriate material.

Activity #4: Conceptual Art (5 points)

- Create an actual work of conceptual art to be displayed in the classroom.
- Students must also accompany the art with an essay that explains the meaning and purpose of the art. (Essay should be a minimum of 5 sentences in length).

- Students may complete one artistic piece of conceptual art for the entire assignment. It should be worth 15 points of work and an accompanying 15 sentence essay must also be completed.

Name: _____

Period: _____

Identification Sheet-The 1960's

Mr. Tengowski

1. JFK
2. LBJ
3. RFK
4. George Wallace
5. Hubert Humphrey
6. Martin Luther King
7. James Earl Ray
8. Sirhan Sirhan
9. Lee Harvey Oswald
10. Yuri Gagarin
11. John Glenn
12. Fidel Castro
13. Nikita Khrushchev
14. Malcolm X
15. Betty Friedan
16. Earl Warren
17. Dean Rusk
18. Robert MacNamara
19. Richard Nixon
20. Marilyn Monroe
21. Alan Shepard
22. Barry Goldwater
23. Robert C. Weaver
24. Andy Warhol

Important Places to Know:

- Ghana
- Tanzania
- North Vietnam
- South Vietnam
- USSR
- East Germany
- Laos
- Cuba
- Thailand
- North Korea

Important States to Know:

- Pennsylvania
- Massachusetts
- Texas
- California
- Louisiana
- Illinois
- Tennessee
- New Jersey
- Alabama
- Washington D.C

23.1

John F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address (1961)

The presidential election of 1960 was a turning point in American political history. Democrat John F. Kennedy (1917–1963) faced Republican Richard M. Nixon (1913–1994). Both candidates were in their forties and were WWII veterans. But Nixon, who served two terms as vice president under Eisenhower, had more political experience than Kennedy, a U.S. senator from Massachusetts. Pundits predicted a Nixon landslide.

Kennedy ignored these gloomy forecasts. Born the second of nine children in an Irish Catholic family, he grew up in a privileged, competitive environment. His father, Joseph P. Kennedy, had made a fortune as a banker, bootlegger, and film producer. In the 1930s, he headed the Securities and Exchange Commission and then served as U.S. ambassador to Great Britain. John accompanied his father to Europe and examined Britain's belated response to the Nazis in his Harvard senior thesis. In 1940, when John published the essay as *Why England Slept*, his father secretly bought 40,000 copies to ensure that the book became a best seller. In 1943, while Kennedy was serving in the U.S. Navy, a Japanese destroyer rammed and sank his patrol torpedo (PT) boat in the Solomon Islands. His heroic efforts in saving his crew were recognized with the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps Medal. The incident aggravated an old back injury that left Kennedy in constant pain despite three surgeries. He also suffered from Addison's disease, a rare endocrine disorder characterized by weight loss, muscle weakness, fatigue, and low blood pressure. Throughout his career, Kennedy concealed this ailment as well as his use of several prescription drugs.

These impediments did not thwart Kennedy's ambition. After his older brother died in combat, John deferred to his father's wish that he enter politics. In 1946, at age twenty-nine, he won the House of Representatives seat for the Massachusetts 11th district. In 1952, he ran successfully for the U.S. Senate and became known for his anti-Communism and New Deal liberalism. In 1953, Kennedy married the elegant Jacqueline Lee Bouvier. Three years later, he published the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Profiles in Courage*, later revealed to be mainly the work of Ted Sorensen, a Kennedy aide. When the Democrats almost selected him as Adlai Stevenson's 1956 running mate, Kennedy became a national sensation. During his 1960 campaign for the presidency, Kennedy

SOURCE "Inaugural Address," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, John F. Kennedy*, 1961 (Washington DC, 1962), 1–3.

assured Protestant voters that his Catholicism would not interfere with his political judgment. After winning the Democratic nomination, he defeated Nixon by only 118,500 popular votes and a 303-219 vote in the Electoral College. Many observers claimed that voter fraud had determined the close election.

Dismissing such allegations, Kennedy supporters adored the eloquent and stylish president. On January 20, 1961, Kennedy withstood frigid weather and gave his inaugural address outside the U.S. Capitol.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. What tone does Kennedy try to establish for his presidency and the nation as a whole?
2. What are Kennedy's foreign policy goals? Did he realize these objectives? Support your answer with examples.
3. Why do you think Kennedy's remarks inspired so many Americans?
4. How should we weigh recent revelations about Kennedy's private life in assessing his presidency? What is your evaluation of his presidency?

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 forbears prescribed nearly a century and three quarters ago.

The world is very different now. For man holds 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 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 peoples 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 our border, we offer a special pledge to assist free men and free governments in casting off the chains of poverty—to 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. . . .

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 a 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, 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 power to control 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. . . .

And if a beach-head of cooperation may push back the jungle of suspicion, let both sides join in creating a new endeavor, not a new balance of power, but a 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 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.

23.2

Young Americans for Freedom, The Sharon Statement (1960)

In the 1940s and 1950s, a number of intellectuals revitalized American conservatism. Books like Friedrich Hayek's The Road to Serfdom (1944), Richard Weaver's Ideas Have Consequences (1948) and Russell Kirk's The Conservative Mind (1953) denounced Communism, celebrated individual

The Stormy Sixties, 1960–1968

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

President John F. Kennedy, 1961

Prologue: Youthful President John F. Kennedy launched his administration with high hopes and great vigor. Young people seemed particularly attracted to the tough-minded yet idealistic style of Kennedy's presidency. Yet Kennedy's record in office, before his tragic assassination in 1963, was spotty. He presided over a botched invasion of Cuba in 1961 and in the same year took the first fateful steps into the Vietnam quagmire. In 1962 he emerged victorious from a tense standoff with the Russians over the emplacement of Soviet missiles in Cuba. Sobered by this brush with the prospect of nuclear holocaust, Kennedy initiated a new policy of realistic accommodation with the Soviets—while the Soviets, determined never again to be so humiliated, began a massive military buildup. At home, the black revolution, led most conspicuously by Martin Luther King, Jr., exploded. Lyndon Johnson, ascending to the presidency after Kennedy's death, won election in his own right in 1964 and promptly threw his support behind the cause of civil rights. In a remarkable burst of political leadership, Johnson persuaded the Congress to pass a vast array of social welfare legislation, known collectively as the Great Society programs. But Johnson's dreams for a happier America were blasted by the mounting unpopularity of the war in Vietnam, which had drawn half a million U.S. troops by the mid-1960s. Bedeviled by the Vietnam problem, Johnson withdrew from the 1968 presidential race, paving the way for the election of Richard Nixon.

A. The Cuban Missile Crisis

1. President Kennedy Proclaims a "Quarantine" (1962)

After the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, the United States watched Castro's Cuba for further trouble. Officials in Washington knew that the Soviet Union was sending Castro immense quantities of weapons, which Moscow repeatedly claimed

¹*Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy: 1962* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, 1963), pp. 807–808 (October 22, 1962).

A. The Cuban Missile Crisis

were defensive.* In mid-October 1962, high-flying U.S. spy planes returned with startling photographic evidence that Soviet technicians were installing about forty nuclear missiles with a striking range of about twenty-two hundred miles. Rather than forewarn Premier Nikita Khrushchev in Moscow, Kennedy quietly consulted with members of Congress and then went on radio and television with a bombshell address that caught the Soviets off guard. In this excerpt, what options did he leave for himself if the initial "quarantine" should fail? What were the risks in Kennedy's strategy? Were they worth it?

Acting, therefore, in the defense of our own security and of the entire Western Hemisphere, . . . I have directed that the following *initial* steps be taken immediately:

First: To halt this offensive buildup, a strict quarantine on all offensive military equipment under shipment to Cuba is being initiated. All ships of any kind bound for Cuba from whatever nation or port will, if found to contain cargoes of offensive weapons, be turned back. This quarantine will be extended, if needed, to other types of cargo and carriers. We are not at this time, however, denying the necessities of life, as the Soviets attempted to do in their Berlin blockade of 1948.

Second: I have directed the continued and increased close [aerial] surveillance of Cuba and its military buildup. . . .

Third: It shall be the policy of this Nation to regard any nuclear missile launched from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere as an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States, requiring a full retaliatory response upon the Soviet Union.

Fourth: As a necessary military precaution, I have reinforced our base at Guantanamo [Cuba], evacuated today the dependents of our personnel there, and ordered additional military units to be on a standby alert basis.

Fifth: We are calling tonight for an immediate meeting of the Organ of Consultation under the Organization of American States, to consider this threat to hemispheric security and to invoke Articles 6 and 8 of the Rio Treaty in support of all necessary action. . . . Our other allies around the world have also been alerted.

Sixth: Under the Charter of the United Nations, we are asking tonight that an emergency meeting of the Security Council be convoked without delay to take action against this latest Soviet threat to world peace. Our resolution will call for the prompt dismantling and withdrawal of all offensive weapons in Cuba, under the supervision of U.N. observers, before the quarantine can be lifted.

Seventh and finally: I call upon Chairman Khrushchev to halt and eliminate this clandestine, reckless, and provocative threat to world peace and to stable relations between our two nations. I call upon him further to abandon this course of world domination, and to join in an historic effort to end the perilous arms race and to transform the history of man.

*The Soviets were correct in the sense that so-called offensive weapons aimed at the United States were defensive in that they would deter an invasion of Cuba.

B. President Johnson's Great Society

I. Michael Harrington Discovers Another America (1962)

*Some books shape the course of history. Michael Harrington's *The Other America*, published in 1962, was such a book. It shook middle-class Americans out of their complacent assumption that the problem of poverty had been solved in their country. With reasoned yet passionate argument, Harrington forcefully documented the existence of an "invisible" America populated by hopelessly impoverished people. The book's millions of readers—many of them idealistic young people—helped form the political constituency that made possible the Johnson administration's War on Poverty in the late 1960s. Who are the poor people Harrington describes? Why are they "invisible"? What does Harrington identify as historically new about their condition? Are the problems he describes now resolved?*

There is a familiar America. It is celebrated in speeches and advertised on television and in the magazines. It has the highest mass standard of living the world has ever known.

In the 1950's this America worried about itself, yet even its anxieties were products of abundance. . . .

While this discussion was carried on, there existed another America. In it dwelt somewhere between 40,000,000 and 50,000,000 citizens of this land. They were poor. They still are. . . .

The millions who are poor in the United States tend to become increasingly invisible. Here is a great mass of people, yet it takes an effort of the intellect and will even to see them. . . .

There are perennial reasons that make the other America an invisible land.

Poverty is often off the beaten track. It always has been. The ordinary tourist never left the main highway, and today he rides interstate turnpikes. He does not go into the valleys of Pennsylvania where the towns look like movie sets of Wales in the thirties. He does not see the company houses in rows, the rutted roads (the poor always have bad roads whether they live in the city, in towns, or on farms), and everything is black and dirty. And even if he were to pass through such a place by accident, the tourist would not meet the unemployed men in the bar or the women coming home from a runaway sweatshop. . . .

It is a blow to reform and the political hopes of the poor that the middle class no longer understands that poverty exists. But, perhaps more important, the poor are losing their links with the great world. If statistics and sociology can measure a feeling as delicate as loneliness. . . ., the other America is becoming increasingly populated by those who do not belong to anybody or anything. They are no longer

¹Reprinted with the permission of Scribner, a Division of Simon & Schuster, Inc., from *The Other America: Poverty in the United States* by Michael Harrington. Copyright © 1962, 1969, 1981 by Michael Harrington. Copyright renewed © 1990 by Stephanie Harrington. All rights reserved.

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participants in an ethnic culture from the old country; they are less and less religious; they do not belong to unions or clubs. They are not seen, and because of that they themselves cannot see. Their horizon has become more and more restricted; they see one another, and that means they see little reason to hope. . . .

Here is the most familiar version of social blindness: "The poor are that way because they are afraid of work. And anyway they all have big cars. If they were like me (or my father or my grandfather), they could pay their own way. But they prefer to live on the dole and cheat the taxpayers."

This theory, usually thought of as a virtuous and moral statement, is one of the means of making it impossible for the poor ever to pay their way. There are, one must assume, citizens of the other America who choose impoverishment out of fear of work (though, writing it down, I really do not believe it). But the real explanation of why the poor are where they are is that they made the mistake of being born to the wrong parents, in the wrong section of the country, in the wrong industry, or in the wrong racial or ethnic group. Once that mistake has been made, they could have been paragons of will and morality, but most of them would never even have had a chance to get out of the other America.

There are two important ways of saying this: The poor are caught in a vicious circle; or, The poor live in a culture of poverty. . . .

Here is one of the most familiar forms of the vicious circle of poverty. The poor get sick more than anyone else in the society. That is because they live in slums, jammed together under unhygienic conditions; they have inadequate diets, and cannot get decent medical care. When they become sick, they are sick longer than any other group in society. Because they are sick more often and longer than anyone else, they lose wages and work, and find it difficult to hold a steady job. And because of this, they cannot pay for good housing, for a nutritious diet, for doctors. At any given point in the circle, particularly when there is a major illness, their prospect is to move to an even lower level and to begin the cycle, round and round, toward even more suffering. . . .

What shall we tell the American poor, once we have seen them? Shall we say to them that they are better off than the Indian poor, the Italian poor, the Russian poor? That is one answer, but it is heartless. I should put it another way. I want to tell every well-fed and optimistic American that it is intolerable that so many millions should be maimed in body and in spirit when it is not necessary that they should be. My standard of comparison is not how much worse things used to be. It is how much better they could be if only we were stirred. . . .

These, then, are the strangest poor in the history of mankind.

They exist within the most powerful and rich society the world has ever known. Their misery has continued while the majority of the nation talked of itself as being "affluent" and worried about neuroses in the suburbs. In this way tens of millions of human beings became invisible. They dropped out of sight and out of mind; they were without their own political voice.

Yet this need not be. The means are at hand to fulfill the age-old dream: poverty can now be abolished. How long shall we ignore this underdeveloped nation in our midst? How long shall we look the other way while our fellow human beings suffer? How long?

We want to hear new ideas and new solutions and new answers. And at that time, if we see fit then to form a black nationalist party, we'll form a black nationalist party. If it's necessary to form a black nationalist army, we'll form a black nationalist army. It'll be the ballot or the bullet. It'll be liberty or it'll be death.

23.8

Lyndon Johnson Proposes the "Great Society" (1964)

Raised in an impoverished part of southwest Texas, Lyndon B. Johnson (1908-1973) succeeded through sheer force of will. While attending Southwest Texas State Teachers College, he taught at a predominantly Mexican-American school and was deeply affected by his students' poverty. Upon graduating, he began working in Washington, D.C., as a legislative assistant to a Texas congressman. In 1934, he married Claudia "Lady Bird" Taylor. In 1937, he won election to the U.S. House of Representatives. Twelve years later, he won a seat in the U.S. Senate. He quickly ascended through the Democratic ranks and in 1955 became the youngest Senate majority leader ever. Johnson possessed an extraordinary talent for effecting compromises and built a powerful Democratic coalition.

Although he was disappointed when he lost the 1960 presidential nomination to John F. Kennedy, he agreed to be Kennedy's running mate. He found the vice-presidency frustrating and disliked many of Kennedy's aides. Nonetheless, when Kennedy was assassinated, he retained many Kennedy advisors and pushed the fallen president's policies. Using his formidable political skills, he secured passage of a federal civil rights law significantly stronger than the one that Kennedy originally proposed.

In May 1964, in a commencement address at the University of Michigan, Johnson outlined his own domestic agenda. His "Great Society" was the most ambitious legislative program since the New Deal. It included job training, preschool for poor children, anti-poverty initiatives, additional civil rights laws, federally funded health benefits for the elderly and poor, public housing, urban renewal, conservation,

SOURCE: Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Lyndon Johnson, 1963-1964 (Washington, 1965), 704-707.

public broadcasting, support for the arts and humanities, consumer protection, federal aid for education, and new immigration policies. It contributed to a substantial decline in poverty. Between 1959 and 1969, the percentage of Americans living below the poverty line fell from 21 percent to 12 percent.

At the same time, the Great Society expanded government spending and the federal bureaucracy. At first, a thriving economy enabled the nation to absorb its costs. But, as the Vietnam War escalated, the Great Society founder, and Johnson's reform consensus disintegrated. The economy stalled. Some programs failed. Poor Americans grew disillusioned. Black radicalism and urban riots alienated many whites. In the years to come, Americans would hotly debate the impact of the Great Society and the proper role of the federal government in addressing social problems.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. How does Johnson define the "Great Society"?
2. What programs does he propose?
3. Was the Great Society a success? What role should the federal government play in addressing social problems? Explain your answers.

...I have come today from the turmoil of your Capital to the tranquility of your campus to speak about the future of your country.

The purpose of protecting the life of our Nation and preserving the liberty of our citizens is to pursue the happiness of our people. Our success in that pursuit is the test of our success as a Nation.

For a century we labored to settle and to subdue a continent. For half a century we called upon unbounded invention and uniting industry to create an order of plenty for all of our people.

The challenge of the next half century is whether we have the wisdom to use that wealth to enrich and elevate our national life, and to advance the quality of our American civilization.

Your imagination, your initiative, and your indignation will determine whether we build a society where progress is the servant of our needs, of a society where old values and new visions are buried under unbridled growth. For in your time we have the opportunity to move not only toward the rich society and the powerful society, but upward to the Great Society.

The Great Society rests on abundance and liberty for all. It demands an end to poverty and racial injustice, to which we are totally committed in our time. But that is just the beginning.

The Great Society is a place where every child can find knowledge to enrich his mind and to enlarge his talents. It is a place where leisure is a welcome chance to build and reflect, not a feared cause of boredom and restlessness. It is a place where the city of man serves not only the needs of the body and the demands of commerce, but the desire for beauty and the hunger for community.

It is a place where man can renew contact with nature. It is a place which honors creation for its own sake and for what it adds to the understanding of the race. It is a place where men are more concerned with the quality of their goals than the quantity of their goods.

But most of all, the Great Society is not a safe harbor, a resting place, a final objective, a finished work. It is a challenge constantly renewed, beckoning us toward a destiny where the meaning of our lives matches the marvelous products of our labor.

So I want to talk to you today about three places where we begin to build the Great Society—in our cities, in our countryside, and in our classrooms.

Many of you will live to see the day, perhaps 50 years from now, when there will be 400 million Americans—four-fifths of them in urban areas. In the remainder of this century urban population will double, city land will double, and we will have to build homes, highways, and facilities equal to all those built since this country was first settled. So in the next 40 years we must re-build the entire urban United States.

Aristotle said: "Men come together in cities in order to live, but they remain together in order to live the good life." It is harder and harder to live the good life in American cities today. The catalog of ills is long: there is the decay of the centers and the despoiling of the suburbs. There is not enough housing for our people or transportation for our traffic. Open land is vanishing and old landmarks are violated.

Worst of all expansion is eroding the precious and time-honored values of community with neighbors and communion with nature. The loss of these values breeds loneliness and boredom and indifference.

Our society will never be great until our cities are great. Today the frontier of imagination and innovation is inside those cities and not beyond their borders. New experiments are already going on. It will be the task of your generation to make the American city a place where future generations will come, not only to live but to live the good life.

I understand that if I stayed here tonight I would see that Michigan students are really doing their best to live the good life.

This is the place where the Peace Corps was started. It is inspiring to see how all of you, while you are in this country, are trying so hard to live at the level of the people.

A second place where we begin to build the Great Society is in our countryside. We have always prided ourselves on being not only America the strong and America the free, but America the beautiful. Today that beauty is in danger. The water we drink, the food we eat, the very air that we breathe, are threatened with pollution. Our parks are overcrowded, our seasons overburdened. Green fields and dense forests are disappearing.

A few years ago we were greatly concerned about the "Ugly American."

Today we must act to prevent an ugly America. For once the battle is lost, once our natural splendor is destroyed, it can never be recaptured. And once man can no longer walk with beauty or wonder at nature his spirit will wither and his sustenance be wasted.

A third place to build the Great Society is in the classrooms of America. There your children's lives will be shaped. Our society will not be great until every young mind is set free to scan the farthest reaches of thought and imagination. We are still far from that goal.

Today, 8 million adult Americans, more than the entire population of Michigan, have not finished 5 years of school. Nearly 20 million have not finished 8 years of school. Nearly 54 million—more than one-quarter of all America—have not even finished high school.

Each year more than 100,000 high school graduates, with proved ability, do not enter college because they cannot afford it. And if we cannot educate today's youth, what will we do in 1970 when elementary school enrollment will be 5 million greater than 1960? And high school enrollment will rise by 5 million. College enrollment will increase by more than 3 million.

In many places, classrooms are overcrowded and curricula are outdated. Most of our qualified teachers are underpaid, and many of our paid teachers are unqualified. So we must give every child a place to sit and a teacher to learn from. Poverty must not be a bar to learning, and learning must offer an escape from poverty.

But more classrooms and more teachers are not enough. We must seek an educational system which grows in excellence as it grows in size. This means better training for our teachers. It means preparing youth to enjoy their hours of leisure as well as their hours of labor. It means exploring new techniques of teaching, to find new ways to stimulate the love of learning and the capacity for creation.

These are three of the central issues of the Great Society. While our Government has many programs directed at those issues, I do not pretend that we have the full answer to those problems.

But I do promise this: We are going to assemble the best thought and the broadest knowledge from all over the world to find those answers for America. I intend to establish working groups to prepare a series of White House conferences and meetings—on the cities, on natural beauty, on the quality of education, and on other emerging challenges. And from these meetings and from this inspiration and from these studies we will begin to set our course toward the Great Society.

The solution to these problems does not rest on a massive program in Washington, nor can it rely solely on the strained resources of local authority. They require us to create new concepts of cooperation, a creative federalism, between the National Capital and the leaders of local communities.

Woodrow Wilson once wrote: "Every man sent out from his university should be a man of his Nation as well as a man of his time."

Within your lifetime powerful forces, already loosed, will take us toward a way of life beyond the realm of our experience, almost beyond the bounds of our imagination.

For better or for worse, your generation has been appointed by history to deal with those problems and to lead America toward a new age. You have the chance never before afforded to any people in any age. You can help build a society where the demands of morality, and the needs of the spirit, can be realized in the life of the Nation.

Christ, we cheered when Nixon sent troops to Cambodia—we are praying we'll also see Laos.

And how in the hell do you think that we in Vietnam feel when we read of the dissension and unrest in our country caused by young, worthless radicals and the foremost runner of them all: the vile and disease ridden SDS. This is what we feel like: We have an acute hatred, an unfathomable lust to maim, yes, even kill. You ask, "Is this towards the NVA and VC?" We answer, "Hell, no, it's for all of you back in the World who are striving to make us feel like a piece of shit for fighting and dying for what we believe in—freedom."

Last month my company lost 12 good men and five more were torn up so bad that they have been sent back to the States. We shed true tears for these men. What did you do? Protest. In your feeble and deteriorating and filthy degenerate minds you have forced and caused these men to die for nothing. Do you place such a low value on our heads? We are trying to end the war so that our loved ones will never have to face the harsh realities of death in our own country.

Do not judge us wrongly. We are not pleading for your praise. All we ask is for our great nation to unite and stand behind President Nixon. Support us, help us end the war, damn it, save our lives. . . .

I am coming home soon. Don't shout and preach your nothingness to me. I am ashamed to be fighting to keep you safe, the rest of the loyal Americans. I am proud to give my life for you members of the SDS and your followers. I am returning to educate you on what it feels like to be in Nam. Yes, I am bringing the war home. We'll see if you're as good in fighting as you are in protesting.

Prepare yourselves—the makers are returning. May your children honor and respect our dead and chastise your actions.

We personally challenge you to come to Vietnam and talk with the VC and NVA in the A Shau Valley. Let us know what they say, if you live.

We the undersigned are in full [agreement] with the forth-put statements. . . .

With love,

Greg Lusco

Phu Bai

South Vietnam

Sp/4 Gregory Lusco, who served in Vietnam between November 1968 and August 1970, and nineteen other soldiers from Company B, 159th Aviation Battalion, 101st Airborne Division, wrote this letter, which was published in the Greenfield (Massachusetts) Recorder on 23 July 1970. He is now in the Navy, stationed in Japan aboard the U.S.S. Midway.

6 September '70

Dear John,

. . . Saigon [is] completely different from I Corps—almost luxurious. The MACV [Military Assistance Command/Vietnam] complex, where so many of my friends work, has a golf course, Olympic-size swimming pool, etc. But with all the surface glitter and bustle of Saigon, I came away with a very gloomy

feeling. The people are frantically trying to make every last cent they can from the Americans before [the soldiers] leave. The war has brought out all the venality imaginable in these people. . . .

My friends are somewhat depressed. It now seems they have to rewrite all their reports because the truth they are putting out is too pessimistic. The higher echelons, for their career's sake and the plans of Nixon's Vietnamization, will not allow a bad situation to exist—no matter how true it may be! I saw myself some of the different drafts of some reports that were to go to [General Creighton] Abrams [commander of American forces in Vietnam]—and how they had to be changed to get to him. What a disgrace—and still people are dying every day!

To top this all off, we got hit again last week—twice in one night. The second phase was while we were all watching a Korean floor show. It was *mas hysteria* when those rockets started coming in! Chairs flying, people running to bunkers! Boy, do I hate those things. I'm going to be a nervous wreck when I get out of here! Then, there has begun a witch hunt for pot smokers. We have a group of self-appointed vigilantes (most of whom are Southern beer-drinking, obnoxious alcoholics! You can see my prejudices in that statement!) who go around spreading untrue rumors about those they do not like. It's at such a point that open warfare might break out in the company. I'm so worked up now because one of the vigilantes is my own boss. It just makes me sick! My own impressions are that the supposed "pot heads" are much easier to work with more pleasant, never bothersome, and more intelligent than the redneck fanatic of booters! Yet that counts for nothing in the Army. . . .

John, Peace—my warmest regards and thanks for letting me ramble on and take out my frustrations.

Tom

Sp/5 Thomas Pellaton, 101st Avn. Cp., 101st Abn. Div., Phu Bai, 1970-1977

23.12

Guy Strait, "What Is a Hippie?"

While some young people gravitated to the political movements of the sixties, others were attracted to the counterculture. Like their predecessors the Beats, the "hippies" or "flower children" challenged traditional views of sexuality and

SOURCE: Alexander Bloom and Wim Brinnes, ed., *Takin' It to the Streets: A Sixties Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 310-312.

threw away. The white boys went running back to their hot rods. I tried to order a retreat.

During the fight I had been talking to the store manager and to some newspaper men. I did not apologize for our sit-in—only for unwanted fighters of both races and for their conduct. Going home, I was very dejected. I felt that this outbreak had killed our movement. I was not surprised the following day when a mob of 3,000 people formed. The fire department, all of the police force, and police dogs were mobilized. The police turned the dogs loose on the Negroes—but not on the whites. Peaceful victory for us seemed distant.

Next day was rainy and I was thankful that at least no mob would form. At 10:00 a.m. I received a telephone call that was to change our whole course of action. Mr. Hamilton, director of the YMCA, urged me to bring a few students from the original sit-in group to a meeting that afternoon. I did. That meeting was with Gordon Carey, a field secretary of CORE. We had seen his picture in the paper in connection with our recent campaign for integrated library facilities and we knew he was on our side. He had just left North Carolina where he had helped the student sit-ins. He told us about CORE and what CORE had done in similar situations elsewhere. I decided along with the others, that Carey should help us organize a nonviolent, direct action group to continue our peaceful protests in Portsmouth. He suggested that an all-day workshop on nonviolence be held February 20.

Rev. Chambers organized an adult committee to support our efforts. At the workshop we first oriented ourselves to CORE and its nonviolent methods. I spoke on "Why Nonviolent Action?" exploring Gandhi's principles of passive resistance and Martin Luther King's methods in Alabama. We then staged a socio-drama acting out the right and wrong ways to handle various demonstration situations. During the lunch recess, we had a real-life demonstration downtown—the first since the fighting. With our new methods and disciplined organization, we were successful in deterring violence. The store manager closed the counter early. We returned to the workshop, evaluated the day's sit-in, and decided to continue in this manner. We established ourselves officially as the Student Movement for Racial Equality.

Since then, we have had no real trouble. Our struggle is not an easy one, but we know we are not alone and we plan to continue in accordance with our common ideal: equality for all through nonviolent action.

3. Riders for Freedom (1961)

In December 1960, in the case of Boynton v. Virginia (364 U.S. 454), the U.S. Supreme Court declared that segregation in waiting rooms and restaurants serving interstate bus passengers was in violation of the Interstate Commerce Act. On this narrow but firm legal base, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) decided to mount a dramatic protest against segregation: two racially mixed busloads of volunteers would travel from Washington, D.C., through the deepest South. "Our intention," CORE director

³James Farmer" and "Hank Thomas," from *My Soul is Rested* by Howell Raines, copyright © 1977 Howell Raines. Used by permission of G. P. Putnam's Sons, a division of Penguin Group (USA), Inc.

James Farmer declared, "was to provoke the southern authorities into arresting us and thereby prod the Justice Department into enforcing the law of the land." On May 4, 1961, after graphic and realistic rehearsals of the harassment and beatings they expected to receive, seven blacks and six whites set out from Washington on their fateful "Freedom Ride." The two selections below describe what happened. The first statement is by CORE director James Farmer; the second is by Hank Thomas, one of the riders. Did the Freedom Riders achieve their objectives? Were their tactics justified? What was the federal government's role at this stage of the civil rights movement? Was the attitude of whites uniform throughout the South?

James Farmer

I was impressed by the fact that most of the activity thus far had been of local people working on their local problems—Greensborans sitting-in in Greensboro and Atlantans sitting-in in Atlanta—and the pressure of the opposition against having outsiders come was very, very great. If any outsider came in . . . , "Get that outside agitator." . . . I thought that this was going to limit the growth of the Movement. . . . We somehow had to cut across state lines and establish the position that we were entitled to act any place in the country, no matter where we hung our hat and called home, because it was our country.

We also felt that one of the weaknesses of the student sit-in movement of the South had been that as soon as arrested, the kids bailed out. . . . This was not quite Gandhian and not the best tactic. A better tactic would be to remain in jail and to make the maintenance of segregation so expensive for the state and the city that they would hopefully come to the conclusion that they could no longer afford it. Fill up the jails, as Gandhi did in India, fill them to bursting if we had to. In other words, stay in without bail.

So those were the two things: cutting across state lines, putting the movement on wheels, so to speak, and remaining in jail, not only for its publicity value but for the financial pressure it would put upon the segregators. We decided that a good approach here would be to move away from restaurant lunch counters. That had been the Southern student sit-in movement, and anything we would do on that would be anticlimactic now. We would have to move into another area and so we decided to move into the transportation, interstate transportation. . . .

It would be necessary, he decided, to violate custom and local law to focus attention on the federal laws barring discrimination in interstate transportation. He knew that in 1946 the Supreme Court had ruled against segregated seating on interstate buses, and in 1960, against segregated terminal facilities. The rulings were uniformly ignored throughout the South.

So we, following the Gandhian technique, wrote to Washington. We wrote to the Justice Department, to the FBI, and to the President, and wrote to Greyhound Bus Company and Trailways Bus Company and told them that on May first or May fourth—whatever the date was,* I forget now—we were going to have a Freedom

*May 4.

C. *The Black Revolution Erupts*

Ride. Blacks and whites were going to leave Washington, D.C., on Greyhound and Trailways, deliberately violating the segregated seating requirements and at each rest stop would violate the segregated use of facilities. And we would be nonviolent, absolutely nonviolent, throughout the campaign, and we would accept the consequences of our actions. This was a deliberate act of civil disobedience....*

Did Justice try to head you off?

No, we got no reply. We got no reply from Justice. Bobby Kennedy, no reply. We got no reply from the FBI. We got no reply from the White House, from President Kennedy. We got no reply from Greyhound or Trailways. *We got no replies.* [Laughs]

He recruited an interracial group of thirteen and brought them to Washington for a week's training.

We had some of the group of thirteen sit at a simulated counter asking for coffee. Somebody else refused them service, and then we'd have others come in as white hoodlums to beat 'em up and knock them off the counter and club 'em around and kick 'em in the ribs and stomp 'em, and they were quite realistic, I must say. I thought they bent over backwards to be realistic. I was aching all over. [Laughs] And then we'd go into a discussion as to how the roles were played, whether there was something that the Freedom Riders did that they shouldn't have done, said that they shouldn't have said, something that they didn't say or do that they should have, and so on. Then we'd reverse roles and play it over and over again and have lengthy discussions of it.

I felt, by the way, that by the time that group left Washington, they were prepared for anything, even death, and this was a possibility, and we knew it, when we got to the Deep South.

Through Virginia we had no problem. In fact they had heard we were coming, Greyhound and Trailways, and they had taken down the For Colored and For Whites signs, and we rode right through. Yep. The same was true in North Carolina. Signs had come down just the previous day, blacks told us. And so the letters in advance did something.

In South Carolina it was a different story.... John Lewis started into a white waiting room in some town in South Carolina[†]...and there were several young white hoodlums, leather jackets, ducktail haircuts, standing there smoking, and they blocked the door and said, "Nigger, you can't come in here." He said, "I have every right to enter this waiting room according to the Supreme Court of the United States in the Boynton case."[‡]

They said, "Shit on that." He tried to walk past, and they clubbed him, beat him, and knocked him down. One of the white Freedom Riders... Albert Bigelow,[§]

*Before beginning the Salt March, Gandhi sent a letter of warning to British authorities, although he did not outline the specifics of his strategy.

[†]Rock Hill.

[‡]The 1960 Supreme Court case outlawing segregated facilities at bus terminals.

[§]Despite his military background, a Quaker pacifist. He was best known for sailing the yacht *Golden Rule* into an atomic testing area in the Pacific as a protest against nuclear warfare.

who had been a Navy captain during World War II, big, tall, strapping fellow, very impressive, from Connecticut—then stepped right between the hoodlums and John Lewis. Lewis had been absorbing more of the punishment. They then clubbed Bigelow and finally knocked him down, and that took some knocking because he was a pretty strapping fellow, and he didn't hit back at all. [They] knocked him down, and at this point police arrived and intervened. They didn't make any arrests. Intervened.

Well, we went through the rest of South Carolina without incident and then to Atlanta, Georgia, and there we met with Dr. King. We called him and told him we were coming, and he had dinner with us and wished us well. Went to Albany first and then Atlanta. And when we were in Atlanta—my father by the way, was in Freedman's Hospital here in Washington with cancer, and I got word just about two hours before the buses left Atlanta that my father had died, and I had to go back and bury him. My mother insisted until her death five years later that my father willed his death at that time, willing the timing of it because he had my schedule. I had talked with him here in Washington during our training session, when he was in the hospital before I left, and told him what we were going to do, and he said, "Well, that's an interesting idea and I hope you survive it." He said, "I think the most dangerous part of it will be through Bama," as he put it, "and Mississippi. There, somebody will probably take a potshot at you, and I just hope they miss." And my mother says that every morning he would take out my itinerary and look at it and say, "Well, now, let's see where Junior is today." And he was relaxed about it until I got to Atlanta, and he says, "Oh, tomorrow he goes through Bama."

He died, and she says that he willed the timing of it to bring me back. It's apocryphal I'm sure. At any rate I had to return then to bury him and informed the Freedom Riders that I would rejoin them as soon as I had gotten this family obligation out of the way. I must confess that while I felt guilty leaving, there was also a sense of relief at missing this leg of the trip, because all of us were scared. There was one reporter who was one of the Freedom Riders at this stage, and that was Simeon Booker of Johnson publications, *Jet* and *Ebony*. Simeon had come to me just before I got the telegram telling me of my father's death, or the phone call, and he said, "Jim, you know, I've decided that you are the only Freedom Rider I can outrun. So what I'm going to do is stick with you on this trip, and I figure it's the fellow bringing up the rear who's gonna get caught." [Laughs]

Hank Thomas

The Freedom Ride didn't really get rough until we got down in the Deep South. Needless to say, Anniston, Alabama, I'm never gonna forget that, when I was on the bus that they threw some kind of incendiary device on.

He was on the first of two buses to cross into "Bama." When it pulled into the depot at Anniston, a Klan hotbed about sixty miles from Birmingham, the bus was surrounded by white men brandishing iron bars. Anniston police held them back long enough for the bus to reach the highway again, but about six miles outside town the pursuing mob caught up.

I got real scared then. You know, I was thinking—I'm looking out the window there, and people are out there yelling and screaming. They just about broke every window out of the bus. . . . I really thought that that was going to be the end of me.

How did the bus get stopped?

They shot the tires out, and the bus driver was forced to stop. . . . He got off, and man, he took off like a rabbit, and might well have. I couldn't very well blame him there. And we were trapped on the bus. They tried to board. Well, we did have two FBI men aboard the bus. All they were there to do were to observe and gather facts, but the crowd apparently recognized them as FBI men, and they did not try to hurt them.

It wasn't until the thing was shot on the bus and the bus caught afire that everything got out of control, and . . . when the bus was burning, I figured . . . [pauses] . . . panic did get ahold of me. Needless to say, I couldn't survive that burning bus. There was a possibility I could have survived the mob, but I was just so afraid of the mob that I was gonna stay on that bus. I mean, I just got that much afraid. And when we got off the bus . . . first they closed the doors and wouldn't let us off. But then I'm pretty sure they realized, that somebody said, "Hey, the bus is gonna explode," because it had just gassed up, and so they started scattering then, and I guess that's the way we got off the bus.* Otherwise, we probably all would have been succumbed by the smoke, and not being able to get off, probably would have been burned alive or burned on there anyway. That's the only time I was really, really afraid. I got whacked over the head with a rock or I think some kind of a stick as I was coming off the bus.

What happened in Anniston after the bus was attacked?

We were taken to the hospital. The bus started exploding, and a lot of people were cut by flying glass. We were taken to the hospital, most of us, for smoke inhalation.

By whom?

I don't remember. I think I was half out of it, half dazed, as a result of the smoke, and, gosh, I can still smell that stuff down in me now. You got to the point where you started having the dry heaves. Took us to the hospital, and it was incredible. The people at the hospital would not do anything for us. They would not. And I was saying, "You're *doctors*, you're medical personnel." They wouldn't. Governor Patterson got on statewide radio and said, "Any rioters in

*John Patterson, then governor of Alabama, maintains that he and his public safety director, Floyd Mann, were indirectly responsible for the Freedom Riders' getting off the burning bus: "Floyd recommended that we send a state plainclothes investigator to Atlanta to catch the bus and ride with the Freedom Riders, and we did. Now this has never been reported that I know of in any paper. . . . We sent a man named E. L. Cowling. . . . He went over to Atlanta and caught the bus, and he was on the bus when they came to Anniston. . . . So Cowling walked up to the door of the bus and drew his pistol and backed the crowd away from the bus and told them that if anybody touched anybody he'd kill them. And he got the Freedom Riders off the burning bus. That's true."

this state will not receive police protection.” And then the crowd started forming outside the hospital, and the hospital told us to leave. And we said, “No, we’re not going out there,” and there we were. A caravan from Birmingham, about a fifteen-car caravan led by the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth, came up from Birmingham to get us out.

Without police escort, I take it?

Without police escort, but every one of those cars had a shotgun in it. And Fred Shuttlesworth had got on the radio and said—you know Fred, he’s very dramatic—“I’m going to get my people.” [Laughs] He said, “I’m a nonviolent man, but I’m going to get my people.” And apparently a hell of a lot of people believed in him. Man, they came there and they were a welcome sight. And each one of ‘em got out with their guns and everything and the state police were there, but I think they all realized that this was not a time to say anything because, I’m pretty sure, there would have been a lot of people killed.

The black drivers were openly carrying guns?

Oh, yeah. They had rifles and shotguns. And that’s how we got back to Birmingham. . . . I think I was flown to New Orleans for medical treatment, because still they were afraid to let any of us go to the hospitals in Birmingham, and by that time—it was what, two days later—I was fairly all right. I had gotten most of the smoke out of my system.

No one received any attention in the hospital in Anniston?

No, No. Oh, we did have one girl, Genevieve Hughes, a white girl, who had a busted lip. I remember a nurse applying something to that, but other than that, nothing. Now that I look back on it, man, we had some vicious people down there, wouldn’t even so much as *treat* you. But that’s the way it was. But strangely enough, even those bad things then don’t stick in my mind that much. Not that I’m full of love and goodwill for everybody in my heart, but I chalk it off to part of the things that I’m going to be able to sit on my front porch in my rocking chair and tell my young’uns about, my grandchildren about.

Postscript: That same day, Mother’s Day, May 14, 1961, the second bus escaped the mob in Anniston and made it to Birmingham. At the Trailways station there, white men armed with baseball bats and chains beat the Freedom Riders at will for about fifteen minutes before the first police arrived. In 1975 a former Birmingham Klansman, who was a paid informant of the FBI at the time, told the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence that members of the Birmingham police force had promised the Klansmen that no policemen would show up to interfere with the beatings for at least fifteen minutes. In 1976 a Birmingham detective who refused to be interviewed on tape told me that account was correct—as far as it went. The detective said that word was passed in the police department that Public Safety Commissioner Eugene “Bull” Connor had watched from the window of his office in City Hall as the crowd of Klansmen, some brandishing weapons, gathered to await the Freedom Fighters. Asked later about the absence of his policemen, Connor said most of them were visiting their mothers.

4. Martin Luther King, Jr., Writes from a Birmingham Jail (1963)

The year 1963 marked the one hundredth anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, yet millions of African Americans remained enchained by racism. Although racial prejudice was a national curse, it worked most viciously in the South, the ancient homeland of slavery. Nearly a decade after the Supreme Court's desegregation order, fewer than 10 percent of black children in the South attended classes with white children. The problem was especially acute in Birmingham, Alabama, the most segregated big city in the United States. Segregation was the rule in schools, restaurants, restrooms, ballparks, libraries, and taxicabs. Although African Americans were nearly half the city's residents, they constituted fewer than 15 percent of the city's voters. More than fifty cross-burnings and eighteen racial bombings between 1957 and 1963 had earned the city the nickname of "Bombingham" among blacks. Thus Birmingham was a logical choice—and a courageous one—as the site of a mass protest by the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., and his Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Arrested during a protest demonstration on Good Friday, 1963, King penned the following letter from jail, writing on scraps of paper smuggled to him by a prison trusty. He was responding to criticism from eight white Alabama clergymen who had deplored his tactics as "unwise and untimely"—though King throughout his life preached the wisdom of nonviolence. Why does King believe that African Americans could wait no longer for their civil rights? How does he view himself in relation to white "moderates" and black extremists?

My Dear Fellow Clergymen:

. . .

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

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

We have waited for more than 340 years for our constitutional and God-given rights. The nations of Asia and Africa are moving with jetlike speed toward gaining political independence, but we still creep at horse-and-buggy pace toward gaining

a cup of coffee at a lunch counter. Perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say, "Wait." But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate-filled policemen curse, kick, and even kill your black brothers and sisters; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six-year-old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see ominous clouds of inferiority beginning to form in her little mental sky, and see her beginning to distort her personality by developing an unconscious bitterness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five-year-old son who is asking: "Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?"; when you take a cross-country drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading "white" and "colored"; when your first name becomes "nigger," your middle name becomes "boy" (however old you are) and your last name becomes "John," and your wife and mother are never given the respected title "Mrs."; when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tip-toe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next, and are plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of "nobodiness"—then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into the abyss of despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience....

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

I have tried to stand between these two forces, saying that we need emulate neither the "do-nothingism" of the complacent nor the hatred and despair of the black nationalist. For there is the more excellent way of love and nonviolent protest. I am grateful to God that, through the influence of the Negro church, the way of nonviolence became an integral part of our struggle.

If this philosophy had not emerged, by now many streets of the South would, I am convinced, be flowing with blood. And I am further convinced that if our white brothers dismiss as "rabble-rousers" and "outside agitators" those of us who employ nonviolent direct action, and if they refuse to support our nonviolent efforts, millions of Negroes will, out of frustration and despair, seek solace and security in black-nationalist ideologies—a development that would inevitably lead to a frightening racial nightmare....

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

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

5. *Malcolm X Is Defiant (1964)*

The dramatic confrontation in Birmingham—marked by footage of policemen training fire hoses and attack dogs on defenseless black children—roused public support in favor of a federal civil rights bill, introduced by John F. Kennedy in June of 1963. But by spring of the following year, the bill had yet to pass, blocked by a filibuster in the Senate. While King counseled patience, black nationalist leader Malcolm X struck a less compromising tone, warning whites that civil rights would come, either by the ballot or the bullet. How does Malcolm X justify his more militant stance? How might white Americans have reacted to his message?

*Escorted by four hundred federal marshals and three thousand federal troops, James Meredith was the first black student to enroll at the historically all-white University of Mississippi in 1962. Four years later, he was wounded by gunfire while leading a voter-registration drive in Mississippi.

⁵George Breitman, ed., *Malcolm X Speaks: Selected Speeches and Statements*. 2nd cloth edition (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1965). Copyright © 1965, 1989 by Betty Shabazz and Pathfinder Press.

If we don't do something real soon, I think you'll have to agree that we're going to be forced either to use the ballot or the bullet. It's one or the other in 1964. It isn't that time is running out—time has run out! 1964 threatens to be the most explosive year America has ever witnessed. The most explosive year. Why? It's also a political year. It's the year when all of the white politicians will be back in the so-called Negro community jiving you and me for some votes. The year when all of the white political crooks will be right back in your and my community with their false promises, building up our hopes for a letdown, with their trickery and their treachery, with their false promises which they don't intend to keep. As they nourish these dissatisfactions, it can only lead to one thing, an explosion; and now we have the type of black man on the scene in America today—I'm sorry, Brother Lomax—who just doesn't intend to turn the other cheek any longer. . . .

I'm not a politician, not even a student of politics; in fact, I'm not a student of much of anything. I'm not a Democrat, I'm not a Republican, and I don't even consider myself an American. If you and I were Americans, there'd be no problem. Those Hunkies that just got off the boat, they're already Americans; Polacks are already Americans; the Italian refugees are already Americans. Everything that came out of Europe, every blue-eyed thing, is already an American. And as long as you and I have been over here, we aren't Americans yet.

Well, I am one who doesn't believe in deluding myself. I'm not going to sit at your table and watch you eat, with nothing on my plate, and call myself a diner. Sitting at the table doesn't make you a diner, unless you eat some of what's on that plate. Being here in America doesn't make you an American. Being born here in America doesn't make you an American. Why, if birth made you American, you wouldn't need any legislation, you wouldn't need any amendments to the Constitution, you wouldn't be faced with civil-rights filibustering in Washington, D.C., right now. They don't have to pass civil-rights legislation to make a Polack an American.

No, I'm not an American. I'm one of the 22 million black people who are the victims of Americanism. One of the 22 million black people who are the victims of democracy, nothing but disguised hypocrisy. So, I'm not standing here speaking to you as an American, or a patriot, or a flag-saluter, or a flag-waver—no, not I. I'm speaking as a victim of this American system. And I see America through the eyes of the victim. I don't see any American dream; I see an American nightmare. . . .

And now you're facing a situation where the young Negro's coming up. They don't want to hear that "turn-the-other-cheek" stuff, no. In Jacksonville, those were teenagers, they were throwing Molotov cocktails. Negroes have never done that before. But it shows you there's a new deal coming in. There's new thinking coming in. There's new strategy coming in. It'll be Molotov cocktails this month, hand grenades next month, and something else next month. It'll be ballots, or it'll be bullets. It'll be liberty, or it will be death. The only difference about this kind of death—it'll be reciprocal. You know what is meant by "reciprocal"? That's one of Brother Lomax's words, I stole it from him. I don't usually deal with those big words because I don't usually deal with big people. I deal with small people. I find you can get a whole lot of small people and whip hell out of a whole lot of big people. They haven't got anything to lose, and they've got everything to gain. And they'll let you know in a minute: "It takes two to tango; when I go, you go."

6. President Johnson Supports Civil Rights (1965)

Prompted largely by the mass outpouring of sentiment inspired by Martin Luther King, Jr., Congress passed a major Civil Rights Act in 1964. It prohibited discrimination in most public places, forbade employers or unions to discriminate on the basis of race, and created an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to provide enforcement. Yet King and other black leaders were determined not to rest until they had secured federal legislation protecting the right of African Americans to vote. Once again, King chose Alabama as the stage for demonstrations designed to force the Johnson administration's hand. On March 7, 1965, demonstrators marching from Selma, Alabama, to the state capital at Montgomery were brutally beaten and dispersed by state troopers and hastily deputized "possemen." Millions of Americans witnessed the violent assault on television, and within days hundreds of clergy of all faiths had poured into Selma to aid King. One of them, a Boston Unitarian minister, died after having been clubbed by a gang of white hoodlums. The pressure on Washington to act mounted to irresistible proportions, and on March 15 President Johnson addressed Congress and the nation, as follows, to plead for a voting rights bill. Although Johnson had in fact tried to discourage King from marching in Alabama, he now threw the full moral and legal weight of his office behind the cause of black voting rights. In what broader context does he try to see the civil rights movement? How do his personal feelings and experiences influence his political action?

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, Members of the Congress:

I speak tonight for the dignity of man and the destiny of democracy.

I urge every member of both parties, Americans of all religions and of all colors, from every section of this country, to join me in that cause.

At times history and fate meet at a single time in a single place to shape a turning point in man's unending search for freedom. So it was at Lexington and Concord. So it was a century ago at Appomattox. So it was last week in Selma, Alabama.

There, long-suffering men and women peacefully protested the denial of their rights as Americans. Many were brutally assaulted. One good man, a man of God, was killed.

There is no cause for pride in what has happened in Selma. There is no cause for self-satisfaction in the long denial of equal rights of millions of Americans. But there is cause for hope and for faith in our democracy in what is happening here tonight. . . .

...[R]arely in any time does an issue lay bare the secret heart of America itself. Rarely are we met with a challenge, not to our growth or abundance, our welfare or our security, but rather to the values and the purposes and the meaning of our beloved Nation.

The issue of equal rights for American Negroes is such an issue. And should we defeat every enemy, should we double our wealth and conquer the stars, and still be unequal to this issue, then we will have failed as a people and as a nation.

⁶Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Lyndon B. Johnson, 1965, vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, 1966), pp. 281-287.

For with a country as with a person, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"...

This was the first nation in the history of the world to be founded with a purpose. The great phrases of that purpose still sound in every American heart, North and South: "All men are created equal"—"government by consent of the governed"—"give me liberty or give me death."...

Those words are a promise to every citizen that he shall share in the dignity of man. This dignity cannot be found in a man's possessions; it cannot be found in his power, or in his position. It really rests on his right to be treated as a man equal in opportunity to all others. It says that he shall share in freedom, he shall choose his leaders, educate his children, and provide for his family according to his ability and his merits as a human being.

To apply any other test—to deny a man his hopes because of his color or race, his religion or the place of his birth—is not only to do injustice, it is to deny America and to dishonor the dead who gave their lives for American freedom.

The Right to Vote

Our fathers believed that if this noble view of the rights of man was to flourish, it must be rooted in democracy. The most basic right of all was the right to choose your own leaders. The history of this country, in large measure, is the history of the expansion of that right to all of our people.

Many of the issues of civil rights are very complex and most difficult. But about this there can and should be no argument. Every American citizen must have an equal right to vote. There is no reason which can excuse the denial of that right. There is no duty which weighs more heavily on us than the duty we have to ensure that right.

Yet the harsh fact is that in many places in this country men and women are kept from voting simply because they are Negroes.

Every device of which human ingenuity is capable has been used to deny this right. The Negro citizen may go to register only to be told that the day is wrong, or the hour is late, or the official in charge is absent. And if he persists, and if he manages to present himself to the registrar, he may be disqualified because he did not spell out his middle name or because he abbreviated a word on the application.

And if he manages to fill out an application he is given a test. The registrar is the sole judge of whether he passes this test. He may be asked to recite the entire Constitution, or explain the most complex provisions of State law. And even a college degree cannot be used to prove that he can read and write.

For the fact is that the only way to pass these barriers is to show a white skin....

In such a case our duty must be clear to all of us. The Constitution says that no person shall be kept from voting because of his race or his color. We have all sworn an oath before God to support and to defend that Constitution. We must now act in obedience to that oath.

Guaranteeing the Right to Vote

Wednesday I will send to Congress a law designed to eliminate illegal barriers to the right to vote....

This bill will strike down restrictions to voting in all elections—Federal, State, and local—which have been used to deny Negroes the right to vote.

This bill will establish a simple, uniform standard which cannot be used, however ingenious the effort, to flout our Constitution.

It will provide for citizens to be registered by officials of the United States Government if the State officials refuse to register them.

It will eliminate tedious, unnecessary lawsuits which delay the right to vote.

Finally, this legislation will ensure that properly registered individuals are not prohibited from voting. . . .

To those who seek to avoid action by their National Government in their own communities; who want to and who seek to maintain purely local control over elections, the answer is simple:

Open your polling places to all your people.

Allow men and women to register and vote whatever the color of their skin.

Extend the rights of citizenship to every citizen of this land. . . .

We Shall Overcome

But even if we pass this bill, the battle will not be over. What happened in Selma is part of a far larger movement which reaches into every section and State of America. It is the effort of American Negroes to secure for themselves the full blessings of American life.

Their cause must be our cause too. Because it is not just Negroes, but really it is all of us, who must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice.

And we shall overcome.

As a man whose roots go deeply into Southern soil I know how agonizing racial feelings are. I know how difficult it is to reshape the attitudes and the structure of our society.

But a century has passed, more than a hundred years, since the Negro was freed. And he is not fully free tonight. . . .

The time of justice has now come. I tell you that I believe sincerely that no force can hold it back. It is right in the eyes of man and God that it should come. And when it does, I think that day will brighten the lives of every American.

For Negroes are not the only victims. How many white children have gone uneducated, how many white families have lived in stark poverty, how many white lives have been scarred by fear, because we have wasted our energy and our substance to maintain the barriers of hatred and terror?

So I say to all of you here, and to all in the Nation tonight, that those who appeal to you to hold on to the past do so at the cost of denying you your future.

This great, rich, restless country can offer opportunity and education and hope to all: black and white, North and South, sharecropper and city dweller. These are the enemies: poverty, ignorance, disease. They are the enemies and not our fellow man, not our neighbor. And these enemies too, poverty, disease and ignorance, we shall overcome. . . .

The Purpose of This Government

My first job after college was as a teacher in Cotulla, Texas, in a small Mexican-American school. Few of them could speak English, and I couldn't speak

much Spanish. My students were poor and they often came to class without breakfast, hungry. They knew even in their youth the pain of prejudice. They never seemed to know why people disliked them. But they knew it was so, because I saw it in their eyes. I often walked home late in the afternoon, after the classes were finished, wishing there was more that I could do. But all I knew was to teach them the little that I knew, hoping that it might help them against the hardships that lay ahead.

Somehow you never forget what poverty and hatred can do when you see its scars on the hopeful face of a young child.

I never thought then, in 1928, that I would be standing here in 1965. It never even occurred to me in my fondest dreams that I might have the chance to help the sons and daughters of those students and to help people like them all over this country.

But now I do have that chance—and I'll let you in on a secret—I mean to use it. And I hope that you will use it with me. . . .

7. A Conservative Denounces Black Rioters (1965)

With the passage of the Voting Rights Act in the summer of 1965, the civil rights movement seemed to stand triumphant, and the Johnson administration seemed at last to have fulfilled the promises of emancipation made a century earlier. But the moment of satisfaction was brief. Just five days after President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act, a rampaging riot swept through the black Los Angeles ghetto of Watts, leaving some thirty-four persons dead. Moderates were shocked and disillusioned; conservatives were angry. They turned their rage on African American leaders like Martin Luther King. In the following selection, Dr. Will Herberg, a noted conservative intellectual of the day, denounces the Watts rioters and blames King for their actions. Is his assessment of King's role fair?

The country is still reeling from the shock of what happened in Los Angeles. Six days of "racial" rioting, of violence uncontrolled and uncontrollable. Thousands of Negroes running wild, burning, destroying, looting, spreading from the Negro section outward, on a scale that made a senior officer of the National Guard, which finally quelled the rioting, describe it as veritable insurrection.

The fury of hatred and violence revealed in these six dreadful days has engendered a profound uneasiness through every part of the country. How could it have happened? After all, Los Angeles is not the Congo—or is it?

Of course, the politicians and the professional bleeding hearts immediately began to mumble the tired old phrases about "poverty" and "frustration," as though nobody was, or ever had been, poor or frustrated except the Los Angeles Negroes. (The living standards and conditions of life of the Negroes in Los Angeles, bad as they are, would have seemed something near to heaven to most of the immigrants who came to this country in earlier years.) . . .

⁷*National Review* 17 (September 7, 1965): 769–770. 150 E. 35th Street, New York, N.Y. 10016. By permission.