

NONVIOLENCE TO BLACK POWER: THE EVOLUTION OF THE MOVEMENT



ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

How did the civil rights movement evolve as Black activists strived for racial justice?



OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Discuss the discipline of nonviolence and the ways in which it was enacted during the civil rights era.
- Examine primary source documents related to the 1963 March on Washington.
- Investigate the contributions of women and LGBTQ people to the movement, and their marginalization.
- Analyze a speech by Black Panther Party leader Bobby Seale.
- Compare and contrast the nonviolent Black Power and Black Lives Matters movements.



LEARNING STANDARDS

See the [standards alignment chart](#) to learn how this lesson supports New Jersey State Standards.



TIME NEEDED

150–180 minutes



MATERIALS

- AV equipment for playing video clips and projecting handouts
- *Original Draft of John Lewis' Speech at the March on Washington* handout (one per student)
- *March on Washington Program* handout (one to project or one per student)
- *Excerpt of Letter from Pauli Murray to A. Philip Randolph* handout (one to project)
- *Bayard Rustin Quotes* handout (one to project)
- *Malcolm X on the March on Washington* handout (one to project)
- *Excerpt of Bobby Seale Speech* handout (one per student)



VOCABULARY

March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom

Black Lives Matter

Black Panther Party for Self Defense

Black Power movement

civil rights

Civil Rights Act of 1964

civil rights movement

discrimination

marginalized

Nation of Islam

nonviolence

police brutality

segregated

tokenism

Procedures

PART 1

Concepts of Nonviolence (30 mins.)

- 1 Note that the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s is known for its discipline of nonviolence. Ask students what words or ideas come to mind when they hear the term *nonviolence*. List their associations on the board.
- 2 Comment that the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom is one of the most well-known nonviolent actions of the movement. Tell students they will analyze a major speech given at the march and consider how the ideas in the address align with their concepts of nonviolence (as noted in step 1). Distribute the handout *Original Draft of John Lewis' Speech to the March on Washington*. Explain that John Lewis was the national chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the youngest speaker at the march (age 23). In pairs or small groups, have students read and annotate the speech using the following guidelines:
 - Circle language that confirms or contradicts your concept of nonviolence.
 - Underline evidence of the goals or demands of the march.
 - In the margins, note language that stands out and questions that come up as you read.
- 3 Gather the class. Discuss how Lewis' speech matched or differed from students' concepts of nonviolence. Answer any questions students noted as part of their annotation, and discuss the following questions as well.
 - Did this speech change your concept of nonviolence? If so, how?
 - What were some of the key goals or demands of the march, as expressed by Lewis? [*Demands included an end to job discrimination and economic inequality; freedom from segregation and police brutality; voting rights; and the passage of a strong civil rights act.*]

NOTE

Share the definition of nonviolence in the unit glossary. Emphasize that nonviolence is about action rather than inaction; that it is not the absence of violence, but the presence of justice through strategic confrontation.

- Why did Lewis assert, “we have nothing to be proud of”?
- What were Lewis’ criticisms of the U.S. government?
- How did Lewis propose to “burn Jim Crow to the ground — nonviolently”?
- Why do you think some of the other movement leaders pressured Lewis to revise his speech? Do you think it was the right decision to make these changes? Explain.

PART 2

Marginalized within the Movement (60–90 mins.)

- 4 Project or distribute the handout *March on Washington Program*. In pairs or small groups, have students closely examine the program and note what stands out to them about the agenda. As a class, discuss their observations. If no one has pointed it out, highlight that the major speakers were all men; with the exception of a “Tribute to Negro Women,” the only role played by women was that of entertainer.
- 5 Highlight that there was only one woman on the organizing committee for the march (Anna Hedgeman) and, during the march itself, women leaders were separated from the men and routed down a different street. Project the handout *Excerpt of Letter from Pauli Murray to A. Philip Randolph*, which voices the concerns of women leaders about their marginalization. Read together as a class and discuss the ways in which sexism was deeply rooted in a movement that promoted the values of equality.
- 6 In small groups, have students view or read one of the resources below and then choose one woman from the list of leaders who they want to learn more about. Have them consult two to three sources on their subject and create a brief panel highlighting the leader’s achievements during the civil rights movement. Assemble the panels into a display on women of the movement. Provide students time to read their classmates’ work and take in the significant contributions of women who were integral to the movement but largely unacknowledged at the time.

RESOURCES	WOMEN LEADERS
<p>VIDEO [9:18]</p> <p><i>The microphone at the March on Washington was dominated by men</i>, CBS News, https://cbsn.ws/3hYU88l</p> <p>ARTICLE</p> <p><i>Where Were the Women in the March on Washington?</i> by Jennifer Scanlon, The New Republic, https://bit.ly/3hA01tz</p> <p>ARTICLE</p> <p><i>Tribute to Women: Spotlighting the 6 Women Honored During the First March on Washington</i> by Ama Kwarteng, Cosmopolitan, https://bit.ly/3hvBZQq</p>	<p>Ella Baker</p> <p>Daisy Bates</p> <p>Myrlie Evers</p> <p>Anna Hedgeman</p> <p>Dorothy Height</p> <p>Coretta Scott King</p> <p>Evelyn Lowery</p> <p>Pauli Murray</p> <p>Diane Nash</p> <p>Rosa Parks</p> <p>Gloria Richardson</p>

7 Share with students that there is another important figure who helped to shape the March on Washington and was marginalized in the civil rights movement. Write the name Bayard Rustin on the board and allow students to share any prior knowledge they have about him. Play the following clip from the documentary *Out of the Past*: <https://bit.ly/3hVx-a1Q> [2:01]. After, discuss some of the following questions.

- What were the special talents that Bayard Rustin brought to the civil rights movement?
- What does it mean that Rustin was a “man without a history”?
- What do you think it was like to be gay in the 1950s and 1960s? What was it like to be both gay and Black?
- How did the treatment of Rustin conflict with the ideals of the movement? How do you think civil rights leaders reconciled this at the time?
- How do you interpret Rustin’s observation, “Gays are beginning to realize what Blacks learned long ago”? How did the Black civil rights movement inform the growing LGBTQ rights movement?
- Why do we remember King and not Rustin? Who decides how history is told?

NOTE

A number of states, including New Jersey, now require that LGBTQ history be included in school curriculum. See Garden State Equality’s LGBTQ-Inclusive Lessons & Resources (<https://www.teach.lgbt/lesson-plans>) for examples of lessons that can be incorporated into middle and high school classes.

NOTE

It is important to avoid oversimplification of both Malcom X's and Dr. King's views. While Malcolm X criticized the nonviolent approach as being too slow-moving and accommodating, he later adopted a more conciliatory tone and expressed an interest in working closely with the nonviolent movement. Likewise, King evolved over the years, expressing more radical positions on issues including economic justice and the Vietnam War that put him at odds with moderate civil rights leaders.

NOTE

Seale's speech can be listened to in its entirety [37:39] on the American Archive of Public Broadcasting website at <https://bit.ly/3wwFLxa>.

8

Project or distribute the handout *Bayard Rustin Quotes*. Have students choose one that resonates for them and engage in reflective writing in response to one or more of the following prompts:

- What does the quote mean to you?
- How does the quote reflect the ideals of the civil rights movement or the spirit of nonviolence?
- How does the quote relate to the experiences of women, LGBTQ people or others who were marginalized in the movement?

PART 3

From Nonviolence to Self-Defense (60 mins.)

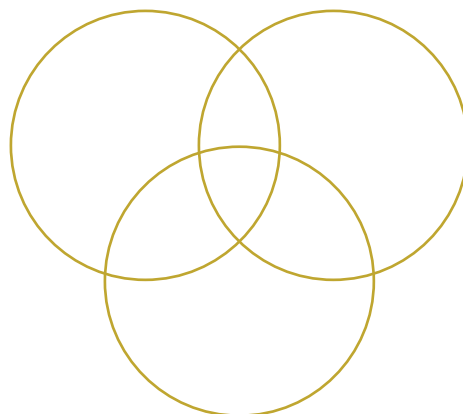
9

Comment that the nonviolent approach—as demonstrated in the March on Washington and advocated by leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr., John Lewis, Bayard Rustin and Dorothy Height—was not embraced by all Black activists. Project the handout *Malcolm X on the March on Washington*. Read aloud the quote and allow students to react. Discuss why Malcolm X and others were dismissive of efforts such as the March on Washington and impatient with the tactics of nonviolence.

10

Ask students what they know about the Black Panther Party, formed in 1966 as part of the broader Black Power movement. Allow them to share their prior knowledge. Distribute the handout *Excerpt of Bobby Seale Speech* and review the introduction together. In small groups, assign students to read the excerpt and compare it to the John Lewis speech read in step 2. Have them create a Venn diagram as pictured below (leaving the third circle blank for now). Direct students to note similarities and differences regarding the goals, methods and tone of the nonviolent and Black Power movements.

NONVIOLENT
MOVEMENT



BLACK POWER
MOVEMENT

- 11** Gather the class and discuss their observations of the ways in which the nonviolent and Black Power movements intersected and diverged. Tell students they will compare these 1960s civil rights movements with a current-day movement for racial justice. Have students label the bottom circle of their diagram “Black Lives Matter Movement.” Show the NY Times Op-Doc *Black Panthers Revisited*: <https://bit.ly/3i4yeAy> [7:28]. As students view the video, have them take notes in the bottom circle based on the clip and their knowledge of current issues.
- 12** Highlight the common desire for justice that unites the various movements students have investigated, even if some of the circumstances and methods are different. Underscore as well that all of these movements were vilified and accused of being radical or dangerous, when in reality they were acting to protect their communities from police brutality and other forms of violence and discrimination. Conclude the lesson by discussing some of the questions on the next page.

NOTE

If students need additional background to complete the Venn diagram, have them read the “About” section of the Black Lives Matter website (<https://blacklives-matter.com>) and/or consult news articles about the movement.



Discussion Questions

1

Why did the civil rights movement evolve to encompass both nonviolent and more militant approaches? Do you think the existence of multiple approaches was effective or counterproductive? Explain.

2

How were certain groups marginalized in movements that promoted equality? Do you see such blind spots or bias in any of today's rights movements?

3

How has the Black Power movement, including groups such as the Black Panthers, been portrayed in mainstream media? What did you learn about this movement that is different from these portrayals?

4

The nonviolent movement of Dr. King has often been idealized as the "right way" to protest. How is this view limiting or damaging to current anti-discrimination movements?

5

How do the Black Lives Matter and racial justice movements of today reflect the goals and methods of earlier civil rights movements? How are they different?

6

What criticisms are used to discredit current racial justice movements? Do you agree with these criticisms? Explain.

7

What are examples of ways in which your life is better today as a result of past civil rights efforts? What are examples of inequities that still exist?

Lesson Extensions

- “The Big Six” is a term used to describe the leaders of six prominent civil rights organizations who organized the 1963 March on Washington and other major civil rights events. However, there was a seventh organization that has been largely unacknowledged due to sexism—the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) under the leadership of Dorothy Height. Assign students to conduct research and design a poster highlighting the work of Height and the NCNW during the civil rights era.
- Screen *Judas and the Black Messiah* (see Additional Resources) or another film about the Black Panther Party. Discuss ways in which portrayals of the Black Power movement have been historically distorted, for example by focusing on violence over social programs and self-determination.
- Work with students to organize learning events or community actions to promote racial justice. Visit Black Lives Matter at School (<https://www.blacklivesmatteratschool.com>) to learn about their annual week of action to advance understanding of structural racism, intersectional Black identities, Black history and anti-racist movements.
- Assign students to conduct research and create a multimedia presentation about a rights movement that was influenced by the Black civil rights movement, for example the feminist, LGBTQ, American Indian and Mexican American rights movements. Have students note the ways in which each movement was informed by the struggle for Black civil rights and the ways in which they innovated to achieve equality in new ways.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- + Black History in Two Minutes (or So). <https://blackhistory-intwominutes.com>.
- + Civil Rights Movement Archive. <https://www.crm-vet.org>.
- + Digital Public Library of America. *Primary Source Sets (Voting Rights Act of 1965, Fannie Lou Hamer, The Black Power Movement)*. <https://dp.la/primary-source-sets>.
- + Kates, Nancy and Singer, Bennett, dirs. *Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin*. 2003, The American Documentary. <http://rustin.org>.
- + King, Shaka, dir. *Judas and the Black Messiah*. 2021, BRON Studios, Bron Creative, MACRO.
- + Lewis, John and Aydin, Andrew. *March Trilogy*. Marietta, GA: Top Shelf Productions, 2016.
- + PBS Learning Media. *The Civil Rights Collection*. <https://ny.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/civil>.



Original Draft of John Lewis' Speech at the March on Washington



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

In good conscience, we cannot support wholeheartedly the administration's civil rights bill, for it is too little and too late. There's not one thing in the

bill that will protect our people from police brutality.

This bill will not protect young children and old women from police dogs and fire hoses, for engaging in peaceful demonstrations: This bill will not protect the citizens in Danville, Virginia, who must live in constant fear in a police state. This bill will not protect the hundreds of people who have been arrested on trumped up charges. What about the three young men in Americus, Georgia, who face the death penalty for engaging in peaceful protest?¹⁹

The voting section of this bill will not help thousands of black citizens who want to vote. It will not help the citizens of Mississippi, of Alabama and Georgia, who are qualified to vote but lack a sixth-grade education. "ONE MAN, ONE VOTE" is the African cry. It is ours, too. It must be ours.

People have been forced to leave their homes because they dared to exercise their right to

register to vote. What is there in this bill to ensure the equality of a maid who earns \$5 a week in the home of a family whose income is \$100,000 a year?

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

We are now involved in a serious revolution. This nation is still a place of cheap political leaders who build their careers on immoral compromises and ally themselves with open forms of political, economic and social exploitation. What political leader here can stand up and say, "My party is the party of principles?" The party of Kennedy is also the party of Eastland. The party of Javits is also the party of Goldwater.²⁰ Where is *our* party?

In some parts of the South we work in the fields from sunup to sundown for \$12 a week. In Albany, Georgia, nine of our leaders have been indicted not by Dixiecrats but by the federal government for peaceful protest. But what did the federal government do when Albany's deputy sheriff beat attorney C. B. King and left him half dead? What did the federal government do when local police officials kicked and assaulted the pregnant wife of Slater King,²¹ and she lost her baby?

It seems to me that the Albany indictment is part of a conspiracy on the part of the federal government and local politicians in the interest of expediency.

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

19 In February 1963, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) fieldworkers Ralph Allen, Don Harris and John Perdew led voter registration and community organizing drives as part of the Southwest Georgia Project. Local authorities arrested them on charges of insurrection, which carried the death penalty in Georgia. The charges were dropped when they were released from prison the following November.

20 In 1963, James Oliver Eastland was a Democratic Senator from Mississippi who was known for his resistance to racial integration; Jacob Javits was a Senator from New York who was known as a liberal Republican and supporter of civil rights efforts; and Barry Goldwater was a conservative Republican Senator from Arizona who supported some desegregation and civil rights efforts but opposed the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

21 C.B. King co-founded the Albany movement, a civil rights campaign in Georgia. In 1962, while attempting to meet with a jailed protester, a sheriff beat King with a walking cane, splitting open his scalp. Marion King, wife of civil rights activist Slater King, was knocked to the ground and beaten by police during the same incident while her children looked on. She later lost her unborn baby as a result of the attack.



ORIGINAL DRAFT OF JOHN LEWIS' SPEECH AT THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON (CONTINUED)

The revolution is at hand, and we must free ourselves of the chains of political and economic slavery. The nonviolent revolution is saying, "We will not wait for the courts to act, for we have been waiting for hundreds of years. We will not wait for the President, the Justice Department, nor Congress, but we will take matters into our own hands and create a source of power, outside of any national structure, that could and would assure us a victory."

To those who have said, "Be patient and wait," we must say that "patience" is a dirty and nasty word. We cannot be patient, we do not want to be free gradually. We want our freedom, and we want it *now*. We cannot depend on any political party, for both the Democrats and the Republicans have betrayed the basic principles of the Declaration of Independence.

We all recognize the fact that if any radical social, political and economic changes are to take place in our society, the people, the masses, must bring them about. In the struggle, we must seek more than civil rights; we must work for the community of love, peace and true brotherhood. Our minds, souls and hearts cannot rest until freedom and justice exist for *all people*.

The revolution is a serious one. Mr. Kennedy is trying to take the revolution out of the streets and put it into the courts. Listen, Mr. Kennedy. Listen, Mr. Congressman. Listen, fellow citizens. The black masses are on the march for jobs and freedom, and we must say to the politicians that there won't be a "cooling-off" period.

All of us must get in the revolution. Get in and stay in the streets of every city, every village and every hamlet of this nation until true freedom comes, until the revolution is complete. In the Delta of Mississippi, in southwest Georgia, in Alabama, Harlem, Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia and all over this nation, the black masses are on the march!

We won't stop now. All of the forces of Eastland, Bamett, Wallace and Thurmond²² won't stop this revolution. The time will come when we will not confine our marching to Washington. We will march through the South, through the heart of Dixie, the way Sherman did. We shall pursue our own scorched earth policy and burn Jim Crow to the ground — nonviolently. We shall fragment the South into a thousand pieces and put them back together in the image of democracy. We will make the action of the past few months look petty. And I say to you, WAKE UP AMERICA!

NOTE

The Kennedy administration and several organizers of the march were uncomfortable with some of Lewis' original language and pressured him to change it. In order to preserve unity with movement leaders, Lewis agreed to remove or revise certain phrases. For example, he cut the phrase "cheap political leaders," his criticism of the civil rights bill as "too little and too late" and the provocative question, "I want to know, which side is the federal government on?" He also removed the Civil War references to marching through "the heart of Dixie" and pursuing a "scorched earth policy." See the revised speech that Lewis actually delivered on the Civil Rights Movement Archive website at <https://www.crmvet.org/info/mowjl2.htm>.

Text Sources: Lewis, John. *Walking With the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998; Civil Rights Movement Archive. *The March on Washington, Original Draft of SNCC Chairman John Lewis' Speech to the March*. <https://www.crmvet.org/info/mowjl.htm>.

Photo Source: Adelman, Bob, photographer. *John Lewis, then leader of SNCC now congressman, rises to speak at the March on Washington* Bob Adelman. Washington D.C., 1963. Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2013645770>.

²² Eastland, Bamett, Wallace and Thurmond were conservative politicians who opposed desegregation efforts and promoted white supremacy.



March on Washington Program

MARCH ON WASHINGTON FOR JOBS AND FREEDOM

AUGUST 28, 1963

LINCOLN MEMORIAL PROGRAM

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. The National Anthem | <i>Led by Marian Anderson.</i> |
| 2. Invocation | <i>The Very Rev. Patrick O'Boyle, Archbishop of Washington.</i> |
| 3. Opening Remarks | <i>A. Philip Randolph, Director March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.</i> |
| 4. Remarks | <i>Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, Stated Clerk, United Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A.; Vice Chairman, Commission on Race Relations of the National Council of Churches of Christ in America.</i> |
| 5. Tribute to Negro Women
Fighters for Freedom
Daisy Bates
Diane Nash Bevel
Mrs. Medgar Evers
Mrs. Herbert Lee
Rosa Parks
Gloria Richardson | <i>Mrs. Medgar Evers</i> |
| 6. Remarks | <i>John Lewis, National Chairman, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.</i> |
| 7. Remarks | <i>Walter Reuther, President, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, AFL-CIO; Chairman, Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO.</i> |
| 8. Remarks | <i>James Farmer, National Director, Congress of Racial Equality.</i> |
| 9. Selection | <i>Eva Jessye Choir</i> |
| 10. Prayer | <i>Rabbi Uri Miller, President Synagogue Council of America.</i> |
| 11. Remarks | <i>Whitney M. Young, Jr., Executive Director, National Urban League.</i> |
| 12. Remarks | <i>Mathew Ahmann, Executive Director, National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice.</i> |
| 13. Remarks | <i>Roy Wilkins, Executive Secretary, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.</i> |
| 14. Selection | <i>Miss Mahalia Jackson</i> |
| 15. Remarks | <i>Rabbi Joachim Prinz, President American Jewish Congress.</i> |
| 16. Remarks | <i>The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., President, Southern Christian Leadership Conference.</i> |
| 17. The Pledge | <i>A Philip Randolph</i> |
| 18. Benediction | <i>Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, President, Morehouse College.</i> |

"WE SHALL OVERCOME"



Excerpt of Letter from Pauli Murray to A. Philip Randolph



On August 21, 1963—one week before the march—lawyer and civil rights activist Pauli Murray wrote to A. Philip Randolph, the prominent labor and civil rights movement leader and head of the March on Washington.

“I have been increasingly perturbed over the blatant disparity between the major role which Negro women have played and are playing in the crucial grass-roots levels of our struggle and the minor role of leadership they have been assigned in the national policy-making decisions. It is indefensible to call a national march on Washington and send out a Call which contains the name of not a single woman leader.”

“The time has come to say to you quite candidly, Mr. Randolph, that ‘tokenism’ is as offensive when applied to women as when applied to Negroes, and that I have not devoted the greater part of my adult life to the implementation of human rights to now condone any policy which is not inclusive.”

Anna Pauline “Pauli” Murray (1910-1985) *was an American lawyer, civil rights activist and priest. In 1940, Murray and a friend were arrested for sitting in the whites-only section of a Virginia bus. This incident motivated her to become a civil rights lawyer and advocate for women’s rights. Murray became the first African American to earn an S.J.D. (doctor of the science of law) from Yale University. She served on the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women from 1961–1963 and co-founded the National Organization for Women in 1966. In the 1970s, Murray joined the Episcopal Church and became the first African American woman to be ordained as an Episcopal priest. Throughout her adulthood, Murray struggled with sexual and gender identity issues, and a number of scholars have described her as transgender. In addition to her civil rights activism, Murray published two autobiographies and a book of poetry.*



Bayard Rustin Quotes



- 1 We are all one—and if we don't know it, we will learn it the hard way.”
- 2 “When an individual is protesting society's refusal to acknowledge his dignity as a human being, his very act of protest confers dignity on him.”
- 3 “We need, in every community, a group of angelic troublemakers.”
- 4 “If we desire a society without discrimination, then we must not discriminate against anyone in the process of building this society. If we desire a society that is democratic, then democracy must become a means as well as an end.”
- 5 “There are three ways in which one can deal with an injustice. (a) One can accept it without protest. (b) One can seek to avoid it. (c) One can resist the injustice non-violently. To accept it is to perpetuate it.”
- 6 “People will never fight for your freedom if you have not given evidence that you are prepared to fight for it yourself.”

PHOTO SOURCE: Wolfson, Stanley, photographer. Bayard Rustin, half-length portrait, facing front, microphones in foreground / World Telegram & Sun photo by Stanley Wolfson. 1965. Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/97518846>.



Malcolm X on the March on Washington



Malcolm X (1925–1965) was a leader of the Black-separatist group Nation of Islam and a proponent of the Black Power movement. In his autobiography, he was critical of the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

"...Yes, I was there. I observed that circus. Who ever heard of angry revolutionists all harmonizing 'We Shall Overcome...Suuum Day...' while tripping and swaying along arm-in-arm with the very people they were supposed to be angrily revolting against? Who ever heard of angry revolutionists swinging their bare feet together with their oppressor in lily-pad park pools, with gospels and guitars and 'I Have A Dream' speeches?

And the black masses in America were—and still are—having a nightmare..."

QUOTE SOURCE: Malcolm X and Haley, Alex. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1965.

PHOTO SOURCE: Hiller, Herman, photographer. *Malcolm X at Queens Court* / *World Telegram & Sun* photo by Herman Hiller. 1964. Photograph.
<https://www.loc.gov/item/97519439>.



Excerpt of Bobby Seale Speech

Kaleidoscope Theater Los Angeles

April 16, 1968



Bobby Seale (born 1936) was co-founder and chairman of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense and a leader of the Black Power movement. Seale and Huey P. Newton founded the party in Oakland, California, in 1966, and drafted a 10-point program ("What we want! What we believe") outlining the goals of the party.

In this 1968 speech, Seale spoke in defense of Newton, who had been jailed for the murder of Oakland police officer John Frey. In 1971, after two years in prison, the charges against Newton were dismissed.

"...Do I have to lay out to you again the platform of the program of the Black Panther Party? Do I have to get you to understand what we mean by black liberation in this country? Do we have to get you to understand the necessity of black people taking up arms to defend themselves against racist attack in this country? Well damn it if I have to do it, we're going to do it. Here we are, alright, come on now!

Listen, in our program it states, if you haven't read it you begin to read it you begin to understand it. This program is not outlined for the white community, it's outlined for the black community. Now, number one: we want power to determine our own destiny in our own black communities. Number two: we want full employment for our people. Number three: we want decent housing fit for shelter of human beings. Number four: we want an end to the robbery by the white men to the black people in the black communities. Number five: we want decent education that teaches us about the true nature of this racist decadent system and education that

teaches us about our true history and our role in society in the world. Number six: we want all black men to be exempt from military service. Number seven: we want immediate end of police brutality and murder of black people. Number eight: we want all black men and women to be released from county jails, prisons, federal, state, what-have-you because they have not had fair trial, they have been tried by all white juries. Number nine: we want all people when brought to trial to be tried in a court by their peer groups or people from their black community as defined by your jive Constitution of the United States. Number ten: and in summarization, we want some land, we want some bread, we want some clothing, we want some education, we want some justice, and we want some damn peace.

If I say I want peace, then you say, 'You should put down your gun.' But hasn't it occurred to you by now after 400 years of being brutalized and murdered and lynched and maimed by guns and force on the part of racists and the racist power structure in this



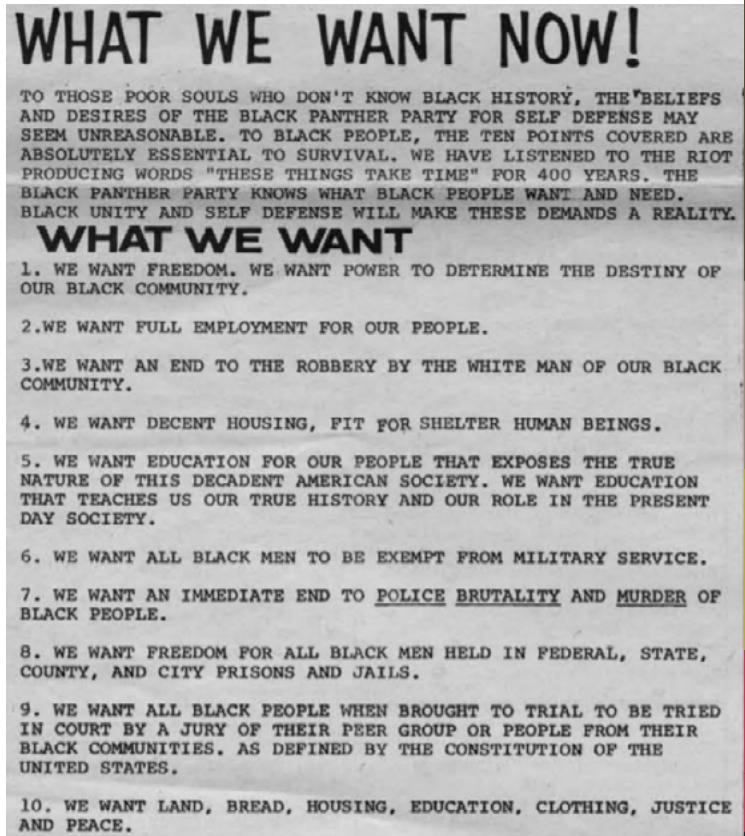
EXCERPT OF BOBBY SEALE SPEECH (CONTINUED)

country; it's damn near time we picked up the gun to try to begin to get some peace, to defend ourselves and our community from racist attacks by the pigs,²³ to defend ourselves against racist attacks by bird giant saw, Minuteman or Ku Klux Klansman or what have you?

Hasn't it occurred to you that it's damn near time we organize ourselves in some fashion to have some ability to begin to make racists and the racist power structure act in a desired manner as we define the functional definition of what power is? The ability to define the situation and we have been defining it, now we must organize our black communities to also make the power structure of racism act in a desired manner.

And what is that desired manner? Politics, what is politics? What is politics? You think politics start with a seat in the assembly, no it doesn't. It's related to it but it doesn't start there. Politics starts with a hungry stomach. Politics starts with a pig crushing us across our skull and murdering our people. Politics starts with the fact that we get a rotten education and we get brainwashed and fooled in a trick notion and trick knowledge and everything else that goes on in terms of the exploitation that goes down.

Politics starts with the fact that you want decent housing, fit for shelter of human beings, now this is where politics starts. And black people now understand with the Black Panther Party that we are going to relate to politics in a real fashion. We are not going for no more jive verbal sincerity—at all. Don't give me Robert F. Kennedy your jive shuck, 'I think it is necessary here, that we come forth.' I don't want to hear it..."



From an early edition of *The Black Panther Black Community News Service*, Vol. 1, No. 2, May 15, 1967. <https://bit.ly/3wAkX88>.

TEXT SOURCE: American Public Media. *Bobby Seale: Speech delivered at the Kaleidoscope Theater, Los Angeles, California—April 16, 1968.* <https://bit.ly/2VDPYez>.

IMAGE SOURCE: Michiganensian. *Bobby Seale at John Sinclair Freedom Rally at Crisler Arena in Ann Arbor, Michigan, December 10, 1971.* University of Michigan yearbook, 1972. <https://bit.ly/3yQi1pk>.

²³ The Black Panthers deliberately and provocatively used the term "pig" to describe police officers of any race who were part of the oppression of Black people. They defined pig as "a low natured beast, that has no regard for law or justice, or the rights of the people, bites the hand that feeds it, usually masquerades as the victim of an unprovoked attack."