***Voting Rights- Exeeding* Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Taken From *A People’s History of the United States* by Howard Zinn**

…Congress began reacting to the black revolt, the **turmoil**, the world **publicity**. Civil rights laws were passed in 1957, 1960, and 1964. They promised much, on voting equality, on employment equality, but were enforced poorly or ignored. In 1965, President Johnson sponsored and Congress passed an even stronger Voting Rights Law, this time ensuring on-the-spot federal protection of the right to register and vote. The effect on Negro voting in the South was dramatic. In 1952, a million southern blacks (20 percent of those eligible) registered to vote, In 1964 the number was 2 million- 40 percent. By 1968, it was 3 million, 60 percent—the same percentage as white voters.

The federal government was trying—without making **fundamental** changes—to control an explosive situation, to channel anger into the traditional cooling mechanism of the ballot box, the polite petition, the officially endorsed quiet gathering. When black civil rights leaders planned a huge march on Washington in the summer of 1963 to protest the failure of the nation to solve the race problem, it was quickly embraced by President Kennedy and other national leaders, and turned into a friendly assemblage…

Schlesinger describes the Washington march admiringly and then concludes: "So in 1963 Kennedy moved to incorporate the Negro revolution into the democratic coalition. ..."

But it did not work. The blacks could not be easily brought into "the democratic **coalition**" when bombs kept exploding in churches, when new "civil rights" laws did not change the root condition of black people. In the spring of 1963, the rate of unemployment for whites was 4.8 percent. For nonwhites it was 12.1 percent. According to government estimates, one-fifth of the white population was below the poverty line, and one-half of the black population was below that line. The civil rights bills emphasized voting, but voting was not a fundamental solution to racism or poverty. In Harlem, blacks who had voted for years still lived in rat-infested slums.

In precisely those years when civil rights legislation coming out of Congress reached its peak, 1964 and 1965, there were black outbreaks in every part of the country: in Florida, set off by the killing of a Negro woman and a bomb threat against a Negro high school; in Cleveland, set off by the killing of a white minister who sat in the path of a bulldozer to protest discrimination against blacks in construction work; in New York, set off by the fatal shooting of a fifteen-year-old Negro boy during a fight with an off-duty policeman. There were riots also in Rochester, Jersey City, Chicago, Philadelphia.

In August 1965, just as Lyndon Johnson was signing into law the strong Voting Rights Act, providing for federal registration of black voters to **ensure** their protection, the black ghetto in Watts, Los Angeles, erupted in the most violent urban outbreak since World War II. It was provoked by the forcible arrest of a young Negro driver, the clubbing of a bystander by police, the seizure of a young black woman falsely accused of spitting on the police. There was rioting in the streets, looting and firebombing of stores. Police and National Guardsmen were called in; they used their guns. Thirty-four people were killed, most of them black, hundreds injured, four thousand arrested. Robert Conot, a West Coast journalist, wrote of the riot (Rivers of Blood, Years of Darkness): "In Los Angeles the Negro was going on record that he would no longer turn the other cheek. That, frustrated and **goaded**, he would strike back, whether the response of violence was an appropriate one or no."

In the summer of 1966, there were more outbreaks, with rock throwing, looting, and fire bombing by Chicago blacks and wild shootings by the National Guard; three blacks were killed, one a thirteen-year-old boy, another a fourteen-year-old pregnant girl. In Cleveland, the National Guard was summoned to stop a commotion in the black community; four Negroes were shot to death, two by troopers, two by white civilians.

It seemed clear by now that the nonviolence of the southern movement, perhaps **tactically** necessary in the southern atmosphere, and effective because it could be used to appeal to national opinion against the segregationist South, was not enough to deal with the entrenched problems of poverty in the black ghetto. In 1910, 90 percent of Negroes lived in the South. But by 1965, mechanical cotton pickers harvested 81 percent of Mississippi Delta cotton. Between 1940 and 1970, 4 million blacks left the country for the city. By 1965, 80 percent of blacks lived in cities and 50 percent of the black people lived in the North…

Was there fear that blacks would turn their attention from the controllable field of voting to the more dangerous arena of wealth and poverty-of class conflict? In 1966, seventy poor black people in Greenville, Mississippi, occupied an unused air force barracks, until they were evicted by the military. A local woman, Mrs. Unita Blackwell, said:

**I feel that the federal government have proven that it don't care about poor people. Everything that we have asked for through these years had been handed down on paper. It's never been a reality. We the poor people of Mississippi is tired. We're tired of it so we're going to build for ourselves, because we don't have a government that represents us…**

The system was working hard, by the late sixties and early seventies, to contain the frightening explosiveness of the black upsurge. Blacks were voting in large numbers in the South, and in the 1968 Democratic-Convention three blacks were admitted into the Mississippi delegation. By 1977, more than two thousand blacks held office in eleven southern states (in 1965 the number was seventy-two). There were two Congressmen, eleven state senators, ninety-five state representatives, 267 county commissioners, seventy-six mayors, 824 city council members, eighteen sheriffs or chiefs of police, 508 school board members. It was a dramatic advance. But blacks, with 20 percent of the South's population, still held less than 3 percent of the elective offices. A *New York Times* reporter, analyzing the new situation in 1977, pointed out that even where blacks held important city offices: "Whites almost always retain economic power." After Maynard Jackson, a black, became mayor of Atlanta, "the white business establishment continued to exert its influence."

Those blacks in the South who could afford to go to downtown restaurants and hotels were no longer barred because of their race. More blacks could go to colleges and universities, to law schools and medical schools. Northern cities were busing children back and forth in an attempt to create racially mixed schools, despite the racial segregation in housing. None of this, however, was halting what Frances Piven and Richard Cloward (*Poor People's Movements*) called "the destruction of the black lower class"—the unemployment, the deterioration of the ghetto, the rising crime, drug addiction, violence.

***Voting Rights- Approaching* Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Taken From *A Young People’s History of the United States* by Howard Zinn- Chapter 17**

The national government had refused, again and again, to defend blacks against violence. Still, the uproar about civil rights, and the attention it drew around the world, made Congress pass some civil rights laws, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964. These laws promised much but were ignored or poorly **enforced**. Then, in 1965; a stronger Voting Rights Act made a difference in southern voting. In 1952, only 20 percent of blacks who could vote had registered to do so. But by 1968, 60 percent were registered—the same percentage as white voters.

The federal government was trying to control an explosive situation without making any basic changes. It wanted to **channel** black anger into traditional places, such as voting booths and quiet meetings with official support.

One meeting like that had taken place in 1963, when Martin Luther King led a huge march on Washington, D.C. The crowd thrilled to King’s magnificent “I Have a Dream” speech, but the speech lacked the anger that many blacks felt. John Lewis was a young SNCC leader who had been arrested and beaten many times in the fight for racial equality. Lewis wanted the meeting to express some outrage, but its leaders wouldn’t let him **criticize** the national government…

Nonviolence had worked in the southern civil rights movement, partly by turning the country’s opinion against the **segregationist** South. But by 1965, half of all African Americans lived in the North. There were deep problems in the ghettos, the poor black neighborhoods, of the nation’s cities…

Was the government afraid that black people would turn their attention from issues such as voting to something more dangerous, such as the question of wealth and poverty? If poor whites and blacks united, large-scale class conflict could become a reality.

***Voting Rights- Meeting* Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Taken From *Passionate Declarations* by Howard Zinn pgs. 252-254**

The Voting Rights Act of 1965, for the first time, took the registration of blacks out of the hands of racist **registrars** in areas with a record of discrimination and put the force of the federal government behind the right to vote. David Garrow, in his book *Protest at Selma,*calls the new law “a legislative **enactment** that was to stimulate as great a change in American politics as any one law ever has.” It resulted in a **dramatic** increase in black voters and the election of black officials all through the Deep South.

What isclear from Garrow’s careful study is how the protest movement in Selma was curcial in bringing about the Voting Rights Act. He gives some credit to thte federal courts, but he says, “black southerners were unable to experience truly **substantial** gains in voting rights until, through their own actions, they were able to activate the federal executive and Congress.”…

Voting brought some black Americans into political office. It gave many more the feeling that thy now had political rights equal to that of whites. They were now *represented* in local government and in Congress, at least more than before.

But there were limits to what such representation could bring. It could not change the facts of black poverty or destroy the black ghetto. After all, black people in Harlem or the South Side of Chicago had the right to vote long ago; they still lived in Harlem or the South Side, in broken-down tenements, amid rats and garbage. Thirty to 40 percent of young blacks were unemployed. Crime and drugs are inevitable in that atmosphere…

The constitutional system set up by the Founding Fathers, a system of representation and checks and balances, was a defense in depth of the existing **distribution** of wealth and power…But poverty remained as the most powerful barrier to equality…

Representative government does not solve the problem of race. It does not solve the problem if class. The very *principle* of representation is flawed, as Jean Jaqcques Rousseau…pointed out…”How have a hundred men who wish for a master the right to vote on behalf of ten who do not?”…

(Representation) has serious problems. No representative can **adequately** represent another’s needs; the representative tends to become a member of a special elite; he has privileges that weaken his sense of concern over his **constituents’ grievances**.

**Voting Rights Assignment:**

**Step 1:** Annotate using annotation guidelines we have discussed.

**Step 2:** Consider the “Thinking Like a Historian” questions. Choose one question to answer and answer that question citing one or more piece of evidence from the text.

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| **Grading:**  This assignment will be worth a 3-point homework grade, averaged between the components below.  **Text Annotation Rubric**   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | **1** | **2** | **3** | | **Underlining, Circling, Highlighting Passages** | \*Missing in most passages  \*Underlined/ highlighted portions are too long | \*Present in some passages  \*In some cases, too much information is highlighted or underlined | \*Present in all passages  \*Are brief and specific, bringing focus to the most important points | | **Notes in the Margin** | \*Per page, the text includes less than 2 notes in the margin | \*Per page, the text includes between 2-4 notes in the margin | \*Per page, the text includes at least 5 notes in the margin, ranging from paraphrasing/reaction to the text, to commenting on it. | | **Questions** | \*No questions provided | \*Per page, there is 1 question  \*Per page, there are 2 questions that are basic and not thought-provoking. | \*Per page, there are 2 questions, at least one of which that is thought-provoking that you could ask the class (use the sentence starters to help with this!) |   **“Thinking Like a Historian” Answer, Including Evidence:**   * **3 Points**- Student provides a thoughtful answer that is five or more sentences long. Evidence that is cited enhances the point the student is making and supports their claim. * **2 Points**- Student provides an answer that is 3-5 sentences. Evidence that is cited may be limited and/or may not support their claim. * **1 Point**- Student provides a brief answer that is less than three sentences and/or is missing evidence to support their claim(s). |