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THE POWER OF PROTESTS: AN ANALYSIS OF GRASSROOT GROUPS' PROTEST  
TACTICS WITHIN THE CIVIL RIGHTS, WOMEN'S LIBERATION AND ANTI-VIETNAM  
WAR MOVEMENTS

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## ABSTRACT

Between the mid 1950s and 1970s, three massive movements converged, which shook the political and social climate of America. The Civil Rights, Women's Liberation and Anti-Vietnam War emerged with the intent to create political reform through the use of protests, sponsored by differing grassroots groups. When looking at each movement, it is essential to understand the deeply complex network of groups behind each movement and their diverse approaches to political advocacy. This paper will discuss the role of protest within each movement and the goals each protest targeted. Each grassroots organizations' protest methodology formed on the premise of unifying their followers, educating the masses and/or garnering the country's attention to demand change through forms of lobbying, public demonstrations or literary publications. The Civil Rights grassroots groups through the establishment of this protest methodology heavily influenced the formation and actions of protest groups within the Women's Liberation and the Anti-Vietnam War movements.

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

The United States is no stranger to protests. Americans have been using their first amendment right to protest injustices since the establishment of the First Amendment. A protest is defined as “the act of objecting or a gesture of disapproval.”<sup>1</sup> Protests hold a powerful weight for achieving positive political and social change. Protests effectively draw attention to, educate and demand changes be made regarding specific conflicts or issues. Leading up to the 1950s, America held little regard for people of color and women. Institutionalized racism and sexism were embedded to America’s core. However, a political and social transformation occurred between the mid 1950s and mid 1970s through the convergence of three massive political and social movements: the Civil Rights, Women’s Liberation and Anti-Vietnam War. When speaking about the Civil Rights, Women’s Liberation and Anti-War movements it is easy to view them as singular cohesive movements, but understanding the complex network of grassroots groups supporting each movement is essential in establishing how the Civil Rights movement served as a catalyst for the Women’s and Anti-War movements through the use of powerful protest tactics developed by their grassroots organizations. This thesis will evaluate the Civil Rights grassroots groups’ influence over the Women’s Liberation and Anti-Vietnam War movements by analyzing specific grassroots groups within each movement and the protest strategies they shared as well as where they diverged. Each chapter will discuss one of the movements and analyze several grassroots groups within each. Each of these grassroots groups formed under their designated movement sharing the same purpose as their counterparts: ending racial discrimination, sexual/gender based

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<sup>1</sup> “Protest Definition.” Merriam Webster, n.d. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/protest>.

discrimination or to end the Vietnam war and its unfair draft process, however, they all portray a wide range of protest tactics; these tactics exemplify motives stemming from more passive to more radical approaches. However, within the Women's Liberation and Anti-War groups' protest tactics, the precedent set by the Civil Rights groups is apparent through their shared forms of protests methods.

Within the Civil Rights, four groups will be evaluated: the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Southern Christian Leader's Conference (SCLC), Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Black Panthers. Under the Women's Liberation three organizations will be unpacked: the National Organization for Women (NOW), Third World Women's Alliance and (TWWA), and the Redstockings. Finally, under the Anti-War movement three organizations including one already discussed under the Civil Rights chapter will be evaluated: Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW).

The Civil Rights chapter will begin with the first forms of protests performed with the NAACP in 1954 following the win of their court case: *Brown v. Board of Education*.<sup>2</sup> The Civil Rights movement does not have a clear ending point, however, their efforts will continue through 1968 with the Black Panther Party.<sup>3</sup> Towards the end of the Civil Rights strong presence in society, the Women's Liberation garners more public attention with the formation of the NOW in 1966 and continues into the 1970s with public demonstrations performed by multiple organizations including NOW and the Redstockings.<sup>4</sup> While the Women's Liberation was taking

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<sup>2</sup> "Documents Related to Brown v Board of Education." National Archives, August 15, 2016. <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/brown-v-board>.

<sup>3</sup> Peniel, Joseph. *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era*. New York: Routledge, 2006. 138

<sup>4</sup> Highlights." National Organization for Women, n.d. <https://now.org/about/history/highlights/>.

off, the Anti-War movement was simultaneously gathering support. Beginning in the 1960, SDS formed. Six years later SNCC transitioned some of their focus from Civil Rights to the Vietnam war and the VVAW's protest efforts against the Vietnam War continued throughout the late 1970s.<sup>5</sup>

Protests are not unique to the time period or history in general, however, the formation of three movements all aimed at ensuring the legal and societal rights for marginalized groups is significant and can tell us a lot about the impact of protests on societal and political change. Each of these movements was comprised of dozens of advocacy groups. Each groups' goals were all aimed toward political and social advocacy, however, their means and approaches differed. The groups varied in their levels of intensity, however, the Civil Rights groups' protest tactics influenced how the groups within the Women's Liberation and and Anti-War organized themselves. This paper will analyze the way these three movements converged over the issues of social injustice and evaluate the influence between groups from movement to movement. Through this analysis we can better see the evolution of tactics and how influential the Civil Rights grassroots groups were during this pivotal time in history.

The protest tactics shared between these movements aimed at achieving political and social change through three possible courses of action: (1) legal action such as court cases and political pressure groups, (2) public demonstrations like sit-ins, marches and speeches or (3) publications such as dispensing literature through newspapers or letters. The Civil Rights movement utilizes all of the above forms of action, which is later adopted by the Women's and Anti-War groups. The role of protests within each of the groups focuses on unifying their followers, educating the public and drawing the public/government's attention to specific

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<sup>5</sup> The Murder of Sammy Young and SNCC's Statement on Vietnam." Digital SNCC Gateway, <https://snccdigital.org/events/murder-of-sammy-young-snccs-statement-on-vietnam/>



injustices. Through the use of lobbying, public demonstrations or publications, the Civil Rights groups created a range of approaches to utilizing each of these forms of protest. Ranging from peaceful to radical, each group can be identified on this scale. The NAACP, SCLC, SNCC and Black Panthers all vary in their level of peaceful to radical forms of protest. This variance carries over into the Women's Liberation and Anti-War groups as well, further highlighting the influence of the Civil Rights' movement. Within each chapter, each grassroots organization will be evaluated based the protest methods they utilized, specifically beginning with the Civil Rights' actions.

The NAACP set the stage for lobbying protesting through forms of pressure politics and governmental lobbying. Through the use of lobbying and fighting in court over racial discrimination, the NAACP represents a more peaceful form of protesting. Pressure politics were exemplified by calling out politicians through speeches or publicly addressing the individuals. The SCLC, led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., exemplified the power of political demonstrations through marches, rallies and strikes, however, his leadership always stressed the importance of civility and peacefulness. SNCC and the Black Panthers were both perceived of more radical protests through their use of rhetoric and actions which placed them on the offensive rather than the defensive. SNCC and the Black Panthers also utilized publications as a means to educate their followers and anyone else who was interested in reading their opinions. Lobbying, public demonstrations and the dispensing of literature through newsletters or newspapers were the three main forms of protests. Each of the Civil Rights group's modified these methods to fit their agenda whether that was more peaceful or radical.

The Women's Liberation chapter discusses three groups: NOW, TWAA and the Redstockings. This chapter unpacks each group, revealing the level of influence each of the

Civil Rights' groups held within the groups' structure and their protests. Similarly to the NAACP, NOW formulated their organization in bureaucratic manner and focused primarily on political pressure groups to end sexual discrimination. The TWAA was more unique in the sense that it represented women who were also facing racial discrimination. Their formation stemmed from the SNCC when they realized their purpose was not appreciated by the Black men in that organization. Their protests were similar to the SCLC and their use of marches and demonstrations, however, their newspaper was their primary form of protest. Like the Black Panthers or SNCC, they published articles about their work, beliefs and other educational aspects they believed women of color should possess through a newspaper titled, *Triple Jeopardy*. The public viewed the Redstockings similarly to how they viewed the Black Panthers, radical. The Redstockings tackled issues many people refused to discuss like abortion through the use of speak-outs. Their approaches directly called out lawmakers and other men in power, which was something the Black Panthers conducted regularly. While Women's groups did not always agree on the methods to achieve such change, their range of tactics reflected those set before them in the Civil Rights movement. Through the use of lobbying, public demonstrations, and forms of publications, the influence of the Civil Rights groups is transparent within these three notable grassroots Women's Liberation groups.

While the Anti-Vietnam war did not directly protest the discrimination of a marginalized people, it did protest the America's imperialistic agenda in Vietnam and the draft which disproportionately favored the selection of minority and low income men. The Students for a Democratic Society was a massive student organized group which focused on the war and Civil Rights. Their protests were all about educating and unifying. Similar to the Greensboro Sit-Ins which influenced SNCC and their use of sit-ins during their efforts for Civil Rights, the Students

for a Democratic Society hosted teach-ins to prompt discussion and debates on the Vietnam War. The Students for a Democratic Society also shaped their own March on Washington after the one SCLC sponsored. Their protest methods while direct, focused on educating and unifying which was heavily influenced on the SCLC's peaceful tactics. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee was first discussed as a Civil Rights grassroots group, but as the Vietnam war became a point of contention in America, SNCC directed their efforts towards anti-war protests. SNCC protested using sit-ins, and rallies with intense rhetoric. Their approaches were seen as more radical and aligned similarly with the tactics they and the Black Panthers used for Civil Rights protests. The final group discussed is the Vietnam Veterans Against the War. The VVWA offered a multitude of services to their veterans similarly to the Black Panthers and the NAACP and their efforts to offer legal counsel and bail money to their protestors who were arrested. Besides the support services provided to veterans, the VVWA published a newspaper called the *Veteran*, which like the SNCC or TWWA focused on educating the masses and offering information on the war and their efforts to protest it. Their protests exemplify a wide range of methods from marches, publications and pressure political groups.

Within a span of twenty years from the mid 1950s to the mid 1970s, three movements converged on the basis of justice for all individuals. The formation of three massive political movements in such a short period of time was not a coincidence. The Civil Rights movement and its many grassroots groups represented the blueprint model for protest tactics which set the stage for the Women's Liberation and Anti-Vietnam War groups to follow suit. This thesis will go in depth over the three movement's intersectionality and how each grassroots group discussed fits into its movement and how the Civil Rights' groups influenced the subsequent protest

methods. Through the actions of groups under the Civil Rights umbrella they cast light on injustices occurring in America and revealed the impact and success protests could achieve.

Racism, sexism, imperialism and classism have always existed in America's history. These movements between the 1950s and 1970s are not unique in their existence. Abolitionists fought for Civil Rights throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first wave of feminism took place only a few decades prior to the Women's Liberation movement with their fight to vote and many openly protested World War II. What is unique about the three movements discussed in this paper is the relationship between each movement and the influence carried between the groups supporting these causes. Beginning with the Civil Rights movement and its supporting organizations, their influence on the Women's and the Anti-War groups is not questionable. Not only the forms of protest, but the people involved. This paper will address individuals like Dr. King, Pauli Murray, and Stokely Carmichael who originally represented the Civil Rights movement, but their efforts and words transformed to represent the other movements. The strategies set by the Civil Rights' groups are visible in every protest method within the Women's and Anti-War group. By evaluating this influence between the groups, we can better understand the power of protests and how political and social change can be achieved.

## **Chapter 2: The Civil Rights Movement**

The Civil Rights movement set the groundwork for the Women's Liberation and Anti-Vietnam War movements, however, the Civil Rights movement was not one organization, it was composed of multiple organizations with various philosophies, goals and protest tactics. This chapter will juxtapose the NAACP, SCLC, SNCC, and the early iteration of the Black Panther party to demonstrate how a variety of protest tactics focused on lobbying, public demonstrations and publications were used with the shared goal of achieving civil rights by unifying their followers, educating the public masses and garnering the attention of the government and public to demand change. It was through this far-reaching influence that the Civil Rights methodology for protests set the framework for grassroots groups within the other movements in the 1960s and 1970s.

The Civil Rights movement can be defined in many different ways. Discrimination against Black Americans and their communities in the United States has always existed and there have always been groups fighting for equal and civil rights. In this paper the Civil Rights movement is defined as the push for fair and equal governmental and legal protection specifically targeted toward the African American communities. The Civil Rights movement did not have a distinct starting point. Abolitionists in the 1800s fought tirelessly for the abolishment of slavery as one of the first strides towards gaining Civil Rights. The movement gained more traction in the 20th century. Some may argue it was sparked by the Jim Crow Laws in the late 19th century, and saw success with President Truman's vow to end discrimination in the military in 1948. However, the 1950s and 60s saw the expedient and impassioned unification of the

movement under careful and tactful actions sponsored through grassroots movements like the NAACP, SCLC, SNCC and several years after, the Black Panthers. Each of these groups carried the same goal to end White supremacy and ensure equality for Black Americans, however, their philosophies and protest methods differed which are essential in understanding how they molded the tactics used in the Women's Liberation and Anti-War movements.

The Civil Rights movement was a continuation of a very long struggle, while it exploded in the 1950s with *Brown v Board of Education*, the fight endured many obstacles through the Reconstruction period. Before the fight could focus on equal rights, White America had to first acknowledge Black Americans as humans. Following the end of slavery, a system permitting "legalized" slavery spread through the South with the use of the Black Codes.<sup>6</sup> The ratification of the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment meant little to nothing to the previously Confederate states. Their efforts feverishly prevented equal rights to those they still considered their "property."<sup>7</sup> The Civil Rights movement between the 1950s and 1970s saw many of the attempts for equal rights during the Reconstruction era come to fruition. The emergence of the Civil Rights movement in the 1950s was in response to decades of perpetual violence sponsored by the Southern states. During the Reconstruction era several pieces of legislation<sup>8</sup> were passed to

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<sup>6</sup> Southern states passed the Black Codes which trapped the freed men and women into labor contracts. Those who refused to enter into a contract were labeled as criminals and thus ended up working to pay off their criminal fees anyway. The system was set up to entrap the recently freed men and women back into a virtual slave world. *The New Orleans Tribune*. 1965. "Mississippi Black Codes," December 24, 1965. [https://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/HistArchive/?p\\_product=EANX&p\\_theme=ahnp&p\\_nbid=X52K4BEAMTUzOTc5NDI1OC45MjY3MT oxOjExOjY2LjcxLjg3LjY1&p\\_action=doc&d\\_viewref=search&s\\_lastnonissuequeryname=11&p\\_queryname=11&p\\_docnum=15&p\\_docref=v2:12B3C01E490E6BA0@EANX-12C053D3BA9037D0@2402595-12B882102151E458@2-12DA67B9E4398388@Black%20Codes](https://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/HistArchive/?p_product=EANX&p_theme=ahnp&p_nbid=X52K4BEAMTUzOTc5NDI1OC45MjY3MT oxOjExOjY2LjcxLjg3LjY1&p_action=doc&d_viewref=search&s_lastnonissuequeryname=11&p_queryname=11&p_docnum=15&p_docref=v2:12B3C01E490E6BA0@EANX-12C053D3BA9037D0@2402595-12B882102151E458@2-12DA67B9E4398388@Black%20Codes).

<sup>7</sup> On December 24, 1865 *The New Orleans Tribune* published an article written in *The Chicago Tribune*, discussing the establishment of the "Black Codes" and their close relation to slavery. It stated, "It matters not to the late rebels whether their constitution reads 'slavery is abolished' or 'slavery is restored' so long as the masters are at liberty to govern their own 'Black Code' *The New Orleans Tribune*. 1965. "Mississippi Black Codes," December 24, 1965.

<sup>8</sup> In 1866, The Civil Rights Bill is passed stating citizenship for all African Americans and ensuring their equal rights. "The Civil Rights Bill of 1866." United States House of Representatives. <https://history.house.gov/Historical-Highlights/1851-1900/The-Civil-Rights-Bill-of-1866/>

provide citizenship and rights to the Black Americans, however, the reaction of many White Americans was pure contempt. The responses to Civil Rights Act of 1866 were causation for anger and fear among many White communities. As result many riots broke out like the Memphis race riot and the New Orleans' riot.<sup>9</sup> The police, state and local governments often initiated the severe violence that was brought down on Black Americans<sup>10</sup>. Within these pogroms, the Ku Klux Klan was born. The KKK created terror throughout the South, targeting anyone sympathetic to equality.<sup>11</sup> Within the build up to the Civil Rights movement, White America was provoking the build up to the Civil Rights movement with intense racial tensions. Black Americans as a result faced a long list of struggles, which comes into play with the development of different grassroots groups whose aims of reaching equality differed.

The end of the Reconstruction era and the formulation of the Jim Crow era propelled the Black communities into a tumultuous 20th century.<sup>12</sup> Violence and racism continue to exist in the early 20th century, nevertheless, Black efforts to unify and build up many impoverished communities persisted with the creation of organizations like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

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<sup>9</sup> Less than a month after the government takes this step, riots are started in Memphis now called the Memphis Race Riot where white civilians and police kill 46 black citizens and burn down 90 homes and schools along with four churches in Memphis. On July 30th, New Orleans follows suit and police kill over 40 black citizens and white Republicans, wounding 150. Du Bois, W.E.B. *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay toWard a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy*. Oxford University Press, n.d. [https://books.google.com/books?id=TXbiAgAAQBAJ&dq=Black+reconstruction+:+an+essay+toWard+a+history+of+the+part+which+black+folk+played+in+the+attempt+to+reconstruct+democracy+in+America,+1860-1880&source=gbs\\_navlinks\\_s.,](https://books.google.com/books?id=TXbiAgAAQBAJ&dq=Black+reconstruction+:+an+essay+toWard+a+history+of+the+part+which+black+folk+played+in+the+attempt+to+reconstruct+democracy+in+America,+1860-1880&source=gbs_navlinks_s.,) 2007.

<sup>10</sup>Du Bois, W.E.B. *Black Reconstruction in America*

<sup>11</sup> “Grant, Reconstruction and the KKK.” PBS, n.d. [https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/grant-kkk/](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/grant-<u>kkk</u>/).

<sup>12</sup> By 1910 all the former Confederate states had established or codified legal segregation along with several Northern states classified as the Jim Crow Laws. “American Anti-Slavery and Civil Rights Timeline.” UShistory.org, <http://www.ushistory.org/more/timeline.htm>.

*National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)*

The oldest and possibly the most well known Civil Rights organization, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, was founded in 1909. The NAACP was established by both Black and White activists in response to the growing violence toward African American communities. In 1909 the predecessor to the NAACP, the National Negro Committee, hosted its first meeting where they recorded their platform. In their final lines they outline their mission and what they demand of the United States government:

That the Constitution be strictly enforced and the civil rights guaranteed under the Fourteenth Amendment be secured impartially to all. (2). That there be equal educational opportunities for all and in all the States, and that public school expenditure be the same for the Negro and white child: (3). That in accordance with the Fifteenth Amendment the right of the Negro to the ballot on the same terms as other citizens be recognized in every part of the country.<sup>13</sup>

They set out with the goal to “advance the interest of colored citizens”<sup>14</sup> specifically focusing on civil justice, voting rights and employment issues. During the Civil Rights movement, the NAACP was at the forefront of setting legal precedent through their assistance in the integration of the armed forces in 1948, the *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1964, and 1968 as well as. NAACP was a protest organization that protested using court cases and other legalities to achieve constitutional change.

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<sup>13</sup> “Meeting Minutes for 1909 Board of Directors.” National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, March 1909. [https://hv-proquest-com.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu/pdfs/001412/001412\\_001\\_0001/001412\\_001\\_0001\\_From\\_1\\_to\\_12.pdf](https://hv-proquest-com.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu/pdfs/001412/001412_001_0001/001412_001_0001_From_1_to_12.pdf)-[https://hv-proquest-com.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu/historyvault/docview.jsp?folderId=001412-001-0001&q=\(nofulltext%3A%22Minutes%20of%20the%20Meetings%20of%20the%20Board%20of%20Directors%2C%201909-1950%22\)&position=1&numResults=10&numTotalResults=42](https://hv-proquest-com.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu/historyvault/docview.jsp?folderId=001412-001-0001&q=(nofulltext%3A%22Minutes%20of%20the%20Meetings%20of%20the%20Board%20of%20Directors%2C%201909-1950%22%20and%20nofulltextrelonly%3A%22Minutes%20of%20the%20Meetings%20of%20the%20Board%20of%20Directors%2C%201909-1950%22)&position=1&numResults=10&numTotalResults=42)

<sup>14</sup> Ibid



Their focus was on ending employment discrimination and racial segregation, which would pave the way for other groups and individuals to protest for cultural changes. Throughout the early 20th century, the NAACP was winning court cases which all contributed to the one of the most significant court cases for the Civil Rights movement, *Brown v. Board of Education*.<sup>15</sup> Thurgood Marshall, executive director of the NAACP's Legal Defense and Educational Fund along with some of America's top tier lawyers: Robert Carter, Jack Greenberg, Constance Baker, Motley, Spottswood Robinson, Oliver Hill, Louis Redding, Charles and John Scott, Harold R. Boulware, James Nabrit, and George E.C. Hayes.<sup>16</sup> *Brown v. Board of Education* was a compilation of cases from school districts in Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, Delaware and D.C. Marshall emphasized the unconstitutionality behind separate but equal and its negative psychological consequences on Black children.<sup>17</sup> Another figure who held a substantial role in this case and the NAACP as well as later women's groups was Pauli Murray. Murray was a Black woman coming from an impoverished background. However, her plight to fight against racial segregation eventually landed her in the spotlight with the NAACP. Murray eventually wrote a book called, *State's Laws on Race and Color* in 1952, which Thurgood Marshall described as the "bible of *Brown v. Board of Education*."<sup>18</sup> Murray is not recognized nearly enough for her contributions to the NAACP and Civil Rights movement, however, her research and publication greatly aided the win, which led to the desegregation process in America. Her

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<sup>15</sup> In 1954 *Brown v Board of Education* found racial segregation illegal in public education and acted a domino effect for other public and private settings. The court's decision ended an oppression that prevented many changes from occurring prior to the 50s. This decision came from a unanimous ruling to end the segregation of public schools based on its violation of the 14th amendment. "Documents Related to *Brown v Board of Education*." National Archives, August 15, 2016. <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/brown-v-board>.

<sup>16</sup>"Landmark: *Brown v. Board of Education*." NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, n.d. <http://www.naacpldf.org/case/brown-v-board-education>.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/04/17/the-many-lives-of-pauli-murray>

role was also not limited to this movement, and she will be discussed within the context of the Women's movement in the following chapter.

The NAACP's win took the first major step into an era of intense political and social change. While many other Civil Rights groups continued to fight against desegregation, this court ruling created the first steps to desegregate schools, which took place at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas with the Little Rock Nine.<sup>19</sup> The NAACP was actively involved in this integration process at Central High School.<sup>20</sup> Daisy Bates, a civil rights activist, played a leading role with the Little Rock Nine. She wrote a letter in December 1957 to NAACP Executive Secretary, Roy Wilkins.<sup>21</sup> She described how rough the situation was for the nine children, "the treatment of the children has been getting steadily worse for the last two weeks in the form of kicking, spitting and general abuse. As a result of our visit, stronger measures are being taken against the white students who are guilty of committing these offenses."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> In 1957, nine Black American students enrolled at Little Rock Central High School, a "white school" which the Supreme Court sanctioned by passing their decision on *Brown v. Board of Education*. Nevertheless, dozens of White protestors as well 270 Arkansas National guards guarded the entrance from these 9 children, screaming racial slurs and death threats. Governor Faubus refused to acknowledge the Supreme Court's decision. After Governor Faubus recalled the National Guard, he let violence and chaos ensue, forcing President Eisenhower to send 1,000 U.S. Army paratroopers from the 101st Airborne Division into Little Rock to alleviate the chaos and help restore order. "Fifty Years Ago: The Little Rock Nine Integrate Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas." *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, no. 57 (Autumn 2007): 5.

<sup>20</sup>"Eisenhower and the Little Rock Crisis." America's Story from America's Library, n.d. [http://www.americaslibrary.gov/aa/eisenhower/aa\\_eisenhower\\_littlerock\\_3.html](http://www.americaslibrary.gov/aa/eisenhower/aa_eisenhower_littlerock_3.html).

<sup>21</sup> Bates, Daisy. "Little Rock Nine," December 17, 1957. <https://iowaculture.gov/history/education/educator-resources/primary-source-sets/school-desegregation/daisy-bates-letter>. <https://iowaculture.gov/history/education/educator-resources/primary-source-sets/school-desegregation/daisy-bates-letter>

<sup>22</sup>Bates, Daisy. "Little Rock Nine," December 17, 1957

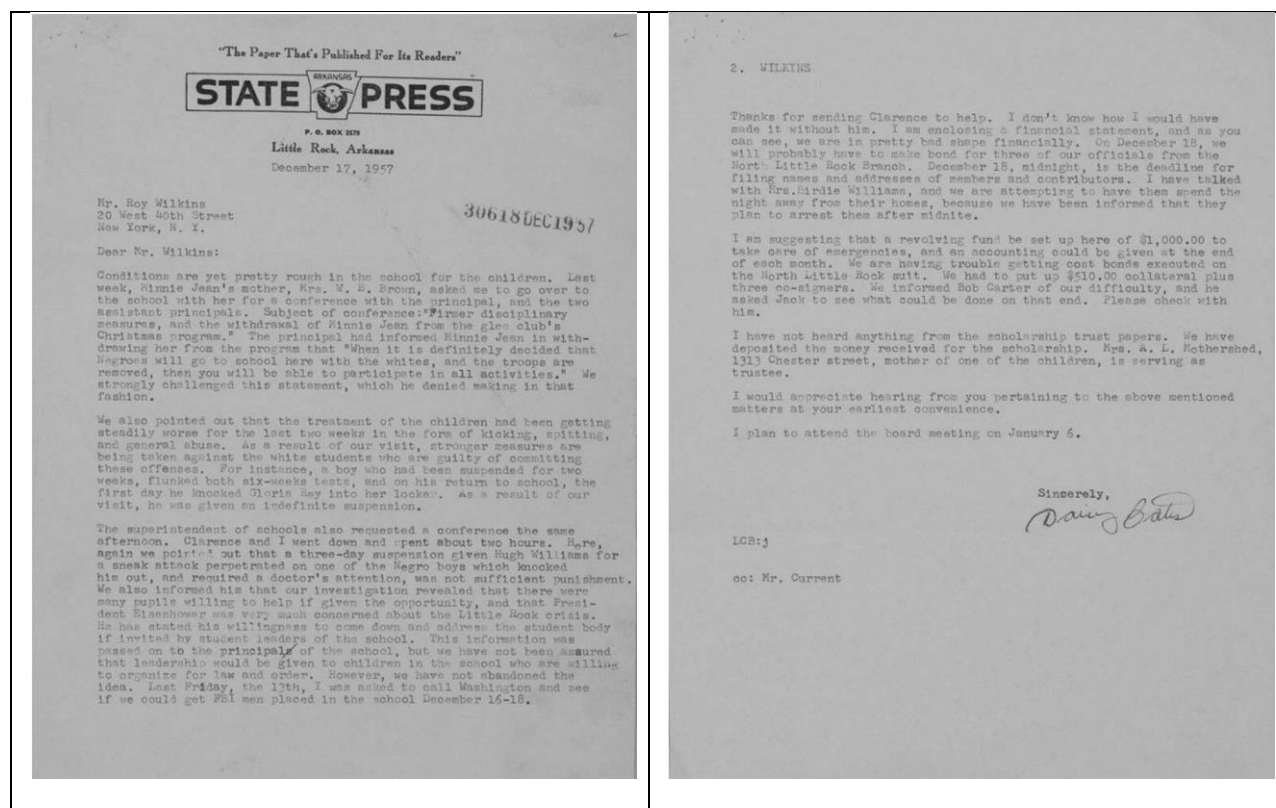


Figure 1. Daisy Bates' letter to Roy Wilkins, December 17, 1957

Another major component of the NAACP's protests was through educating their masses specifically, through voter registration. The NAACP offered support to Black Americans through activism with voter registration of Black Americans. In an article published in 1952 by the Arkansas State Press, the NAACP's yearly accomplishments are discussed beginning with their "non-partisan political action campaign." It discusses the program they developed as part of a non-partisan drive to increase the turn out of Black voters in Southern states as well training for those involved in these outreach programs, "More concrete action was planned in Atlanta in April, at a political action institute where emphasis was placed on training workers in the techniques of organizing registration and voting drives."<sup>23</sup> The article also discusses how the

<sup>23</sup> "Vote Drive, School Case, NAACP Highlights In 1952." *Arkansas State Press*. January 1, 1953. <https://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw->

NAACP sent officials to both Democratic and Republican national conventions to help the parties understand more civil rights initiatives and how the parties can be more racially inclusive.<sup>24</sup> While many marches and physical protests evolved from the NAACP's lobbying and legal advocacy, their primary focus was on constitutional change, which differentiated them from many of the other grassroots groups like Southern Christian Leadership Conference or SNCC. However, while the organizations differed in their methods of approach, often times shared leadership and plans when addressing a specific issue. Rosa Parks exemplifies one of the people who brought together several organizations to one particular event.

Historically, students are taught about the spontaneous decision of Rosa Parks, mother of the Civil Rights movement, who enthralled the nation by revealing the plight of Black Americans, but it was much more intricate than this. Rosa Parks was a NAACP chapter secretary in Montgomery, AL, when on December 1, 1955 she protested the Montgomery Public Bus System's racial segregation. By remaining in her seat, she paved the way for the Montgomery Bus Boycott which would last over a year and developed into the *Browder v. Gayle* 1956 Supreme Court case which found the discrimination within the Montgomery bus system unconstitutional.<sup>25</sup> The boycott represents one of the several events planned and supported by several grassroots groups. Prior to Park's defiance of the system, in 1954 Jo Ann Robinson, a Black professor of English at the All-Black Alabama State College and a leader in the Montgomery's Women's Political Council (WPC) contacted the mayor of Montgomery to tell

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[search/we/HistArchive/?p\\_product=EANX&p\\_theme=ahnp&p\\_nbid=J62S5ERUMTUzNjg2MTY5My41MzU0OD A6MToxNToxMzluMTc0LjI1NC4xNTk&p\\_action=doc&d\\_viewref=search&s\\_lastnonissuequeryname=5&p\\_queryname=5&p\\_docnum=1&p\\_docreft=v2:12F3CB549363AB38@EANX-13390AFE075CAC90@2434380-1338528533106728@0-137E2342FB14F2F9@Vote%20Drive%2C%20School%20Case%2C%20NAACP%20Highlights%20In%201952.](http://search/we/HistArchive/?p_product=EANX&p_theme=ahnp&p_nbid=J62S5ERUMTUzNjg2MTY5My41MzU0OD A6MToxNToxMzluMTc0LjI1NC4xNTk&p_action=doc&d_viewref=search&s_lastnonissuequeryname=5&p_queryname=5&p_docnum=1&p_docreft=v2:12F3CB549363AB38@EANX-13390AFE075CAC90@2434380-1338528533106728@0-137E2342FB14F2F9@Vote%20Drive%2C%20School%20Case%2C%20NAACP%20Highlights%20In%201952.)

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> Dreier, Peter. "Rosa Parks: Angry, Not Tired." *Dissent*, Winter 2006, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/73342562.pdf>. 90

him, “there has been a talk from 25 or more local organizations of planning a city-wide boycott of buses.”<sup>26</sup> A plan to boycott the system was already in place. All that was needed was a poster person for the cause. Rosa Parks was arrested for her actions and overnight the boycott was organized. The news was spread like wildfire. Volunteers in the NAACP and members who would soon create the SCLC passed out leaflets containing information on the bus boycott. E.D. Nixon, a former chair of the Alabama NAACP along with Robinson asked the Montgomery Black ministers to spread the boycott information through their sermons, one of the ministers being Martin Luther King Jr.<sup>27</sup> This boycott was the first of many events to require the collaboration of several grassroots movements. The event involved not only the NAACP and WPC, but initiated the creation for the Montgomery Improvement Association and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) both of which Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. served as the president.<sup>28</sup> Rosa Parks while serving a vital role not only as a Black American, but a Black woman, she was still only one thread in a web of organizations that exemplified a high level of skill performed in a passionate and expedient manner that communicated who needed this information and why they should be participating. For a movement to be successful and bring about social change it relies on the behind the scene actions of hard working men and women. These individuals are the bedrock for these grassroots movements with their strategic and tactful decisions, but their names are often hidden behind the organization or one or two representatives for the movement. These men and women are the ones behind developing younger leaders who continue their work, creating partnerships with outside organizations and determining what

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid. 90

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. 90

<sup>28</sup> Ibid 91

forms of protest will make the biggest difference as well as what battles to fight and which ones to compromise.<sup>29</sup>

Parks and the boycott are a specific example of the more physical protesting the NAACP became involved in and how integrated the entire Civil Rights movement was which makes measuring and analyzing the success of each organization that much more difficult, however, their influence was far reaching, which can be seen among other movements.

The efforts of the NAACP reached high levels of government. Actual laws were eradicated and created due to the pressure of lobbying from the NAACP and through the court cases like *Brown v. Board*. The NAACP pursued their mission through a variety of tactics including legal action, lobbying, peaceful protest, and publicity.<sup>30</sup> Protesting in the form of lobbying and arguing court cases is a unique form of protesting and not the classic example most people think of when visualizing political protests. The NAACP during this time period was sometimes criticized by groups like SNCC for its rigid methodology, however, SNCC failed to realize the power behind “pressure group politics.”<sup>31</sup> By actively lobbying Congress and the president, the NAACP influenced the successful establishment of the Civil Rights Act of 1957, 1964, 1968 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. It was the NAACP’s successful court case, *Browder v. Gayle* in 1956,<sup>32</sup> which desegregated the transportation system and it was the NAACP that instigated the desegregation of public schools with their win over the *Brown v. Board of Education* case.<sup>33</sup> Within all of these paramount successes that changed policies across the country, there will always be set backs and in this case, violence and the loss of innocent

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid 91

<sup>30</sup> Ibid 91

<sup>31</sup> Ware, Gilbert. “Lobbying as a Means of Protest: The NAACP as an Agent of Equality.” *The Journal of Negro Education* 33, no. 2 (Spring 1964): 109. [https://www.jstor.org/stable/2294575?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/2294575?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents)

<sup>32</sup> Dreier, Peter. “Rosa Parks: Angry, Not Tired.” *Dissent*, Winter 2006, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/73342562.pdf>. 90

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.learningtogive.org/resources/national-association-advancement-colored-people-naACP>

lives resulted, but it does not take away from their successes, if anything it makes their accomplishments that more meaningful. As discussed, the organizations supporting the cause did collaborate and share a dialogue, but their approaches to protest differed, which diversified the movement into a multi-faceted effort advocating for many different issues. This structure in turn influenced women and the Anti-War advocates in the formation of their movements.

### *Southern Christian Leaders Conference*

While the NAACP faced a long history prior to even witnessing the first signs of hope with the 1950s and 1960s, the Southern Christian Leaders Conference, as we saw above, was born out of the Montgomery Bus Boycott and led by Martin Luther King Jr.<sup>34</sup> On January 10-11, 1957 leaders from the Montgomery Improvement Association<sup>35</sup> met with other protest group leaders and created a regional protest organization to discuss future protests and events throughout the South. The aims of the SCLC are outlined in their constitution:

I. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference has the basic aim of achieving full citizenship rights, equality, and the integration of the Negro in all aspects of American life. II. Social and economic forces are bringing about great changes in the South. Urbanization, industrialization, scientific agriculture and mass education are making it possible to remove the barriers to a prosperous, free and creative life for all Southerners. However, these barriers will not disappear automatically. III The Southern Christian Leadership Conference is organized as a service agency to facilitate coordinated action of local protest groups and to assist in their sharing: of resources and experiences. The

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<sup>34</sup> "SCLC History." Southern Christian Leadership Conference. <http://nationalsclc.org/about-us/history/>.

<sup>35</sup> The Montgomery Improvement Association formed shortly after the December 1955 arrest of Rosa Parks. They formed and supported the bus boycott along with other desegregation efforts in Montgomery. Woodham, Rebecca. "Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA)." Encyclopedia of Alabama, April 7, 2010. <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-2567>.

magnitude of the problem calls for the maximum commitment of resources of all institutions in Negro life, North and South. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference seeks to cooperate with all existing agencies' attempting to bring full democracy to our great nation.<sup>36</sup>

The SCLC placed heavy emphasis on their Christian influence and non-violent methods of protest. The creators of this organization encouraged their constituents to reject the racial injustice they were receiving but only by using non-violent measures. In the first conference they organized, the leaders call out White southerners, “realize that the treatment of Negroes is a basic spiritual problem...Far too many have silently stood by as a violent minority stalks over the southland.”<sup>37</sup> Similarly to the NAACP, SCLC strategized their protests to include public lobbying. They published their telegrams to the President. They pleaded that President Eisenhower make a statement to the South to follow the Civil Rights laws set forth by the Supreme Court. In one telegram Dr. King sent to President Eisenhower in December 1961, he stated, “We urge you issue at once a second emancipation proclamation to free all Negroes from second class citizenship.”<sup>38</sup> Through these changes led by the NAACP, the SCLC built new strategies for lobbying and protesting the government. During the conference Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. read a telegram from former first lady, Eleanor Roosevelt where she said she “was deeply distressed by violence which has occurred...and would suggest an appeal to the President

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<sup>36</sup> “Constitution and the Bylaws of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.” Southern Christian Leadership Conference. [https://www.crmvet.org/docs/sclc\\_const.pdf](https://www.crmvet.org/docs/sclc_const.pdf).

<sup>37</sup> “A Statement to the South and the Nation.” Atlanta, Georgia: The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project, 1957. [http://okra.stanford.edu/transcription/document\\_images/Vol04Scans/103\\_11-Jan-1957\\_A%20Statement%20to%20the%20South.pdf](http://okra.stanford.edu/transcription/document_images/Vol04Scans/103_11-Jan-1957_A%20Statement%20to%20the%20South.pdf). 103

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/december-13-1961-telegram>



since this is a Supreme Court order.”<sup>39</sup> Unlike the NAACP, SCLC functioned as an overarching umbrella organization with affiliations to many different Southern protest groups who retained their own members. SCLC offered support and a way to connect multiple organizations as well training in their non-violent protest methods.<sup>40</sup> In 1957, the SCLC broadcasts its first efforts at social and political change through voter education and registration. The actions to educate and promote voting are a form of protest specifically in a time where local governments barred Black American efforts with White supremacist agendas. The Crusade for Citizenship aimed at registering Black southerners to vote and between 1958 and 1960 the SCLC pushed for this voting campaign.<sup>41</sup> In the press conference where King announced these plans he stated, “We intend to encourage every Negro in the South to register and to vote. We intend to make the citizenship of Negroes a living reality.”<sup>42</sup> The SCLC and King were very aware that this was a dangerous take on, registered Black voters was the only way to ensure actual change would occur in the future. While voting was a constitutional right afforded to Black Americans almost a hundred years prior, the use of literacy tests and general intimidation at the polls prevented Black Americans from actually turning out to vote. This was one of the most powerful forms of protest any group could have performed. The SCLC combined efforts with local groups to

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<sup>39</sup>Popham, John. “President Urged to Talk on Rights.” *New York Times*, January 12, 1957. <https://www.nytimes.com/1957/01/12/archives/president-urged-to-talk-on-rights-negroes-in-atlanta-call-for-a.html?url=http%253A%252F%252Ftimesmachine.nytimes.com%252Ftimesmachine%252F1957%252F01%252F12%252F91150081.html%253FpageNumber%253D26>.

<sup>40</sup> “Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).” The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute. <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/southern-christian-leadership-conference-sclc>.

<sup>41</sup> “Crusade for Citizenship.” Southern Christian Leadership Conference, 1961. [https://www.crmvet.org/docs/61\\_sclc\\_crusade.pdf](https://www.crmvet.org/docs/61_sclc_crusade.pdf).

<sup>42</sup> “Press Release, Announcement of the Crusade for Citizenship.” Memphis, Tennessee: The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project, 1957. [http://okra.stanford.edu/transcription/document\\_images/Vol04Scans/307\\_5-Nov-1957\\_Crusade%20for%20Citizenship.pdf](http://okra.stanford.edu/transcription/document_images/Vol04Scans/307_5-Nov-1957_Crusade%20for%20Citizenship.pdf).

organize voter registration drives throughout the South, specifically in Albany, Georgia, Birmingham, Selma and St. Augustine.<sup>43</sup>

The SCLC utilized a wide array of protest strategies as seen above: voter registration, boycotts, national and public lobbying, but also protest speeches used in their public demonstrations were a strong characteristic to the group. While there are several prominent names associated with the SCLC, Bayard Rustin, Ralph Abernathy, Fred Shuttlesworth, among others; Martin Luther King Jr came to represent their organization on a global scale. King's voice became the face of the movement. His numerous speeches carried passion and invoked a drive to change the world.<sup>44</sup> Each of his speeches invokes levels of positivity surrounding the movement and the progress they have made thus far. His speeches reached millions of people of all different races and gathered the attention of the White House.<sup>45</sup> Following the "I have a Dream Speech" in Washington, D.C. on August 28, 1963, King was invited to the White House with other leaders of the March on Washington to speak with President John F. Kennedy.<sup>46</sup> Through public telegrams and demonstrations like the March on Washington, SCLC seemed to direct most of their efforts at gaining the attention of the White House.

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<sup>43</sup>"Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)." The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute.

<sup>44</sup> "The Death of Evil upon the Seashore" (May 17, 1956), "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (April 16, 1963), "I Have a Dream" (Aug. 28, 1963), "Our God is Marching On", March 25, 1965, "A Time to Break Silence" (April 4, 1967), "The Other America" (April 14, 1967), and "I've Been to the Mountaintop" (April 3, 1968) are just some of his powerful and public messages to the public. Plesset, Emilie. "5 of Martin Luther King Jr.'s Most Memorable Speeches." Washington Week, April 3, 2018. <https://www.pbs.org/weta/washingtonweek/blog-post/5-martin-luther-king-jr%E2%80%99s-most-memorable-speeches>.

<sup>45</sup> Rothman, Lily. "5 Things Written by Martin Luther King Jr. That Everyone Should Read, According to an Expert." Time, April 3, 2018. <http://time.com/5221314/martin-luther-king-jr-speeches/>.

<sup>46</sup>"President Kennedy with Leaders of the March on Washington." John F Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, n.d. <https://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/1CuiXLZD20Go3B0o7rpWvg.aspx>.



Figure 2. President Kennedy with Leaders of the March on Washington"

One of the most significant protests for the SCLC due its massive population of protestors, the national media coverage as well as gaining the support from President Johnson was the Selma to Montgomery march in March, 1965.<sup>47</sup> Dr. King and the SCLC began a vigorous voter registration campaign in Selma due to the severe discrimination occurring toward Black Americans registering to vote.<sup>48</sup> As a result of the discrimination, the SCLC planned a march from Selma to Montgomery to draw public acknowledgment to the voting issues and create voting reform. On Sunday, March 7 1965, the SCLC planned a march from Selma to Montgomery in protest of not only the voting discrimination, but the death of Jimmie Lee Jackson, who was shot and killed while peacefully protesting a few weeks prior.<sup>49</sup> The marching protestors were met with unwarranted violence from state troopers, injuring hundreds of innocent Black Americans on live television. The event ignited a spark within many Americans.

<sup>47</sup>“Selma to Montgomery March.” National Park Service, n.d. <https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/civilrights/al4.htm>.

<sup>48</sup> 300 out of 1500 Black Americans were registered to vote in Selma which was only 2% of the Black population. Voter registration was barred with literacy tests and a voucher system, which required an already registered voter to vouch for your qualifications to vote. These challenges were state sponsored on top of the violence and intimidation that occurred at the polls.“The Selma Conflict.” Stanford Graduate School of Business, 2015. [http://web.stanford.edu/group/instr\\_design/case\\_study/selma/](http://web.stanford.edu/group/instr_design/case_study/selma/).

<sup>49</sup> Ibid

Hundreds more religious leaders and social activists Black and White arrived in Selma to help support their cause.<sup>50</sup> Two days later, King marched with 2,000 Americans in a second attempt to march to the capitol, but turned around after facing a wall of state troopers. After national media coverage portraying hundreds of unprovoked protestors beaten senselessly with batons and tear gas by State troopers, President Johnson addressed his support for the cause on national television. In his address he stated, “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.”<sup>51</sup> Five months later President Johnson signed the Equal Voting Rights Act into law.<sup>52</sup> The SCLC eventually made it to the state capitol on March 25, where they were met with 50,000 supporters and gathered at the steps of the capitol building.<sup>53</sup> This form of protest was assisted with the presence of strong media coverage. By portraying innocence met with grotesque use of violence to oppress them, people got angry and wanted to see change. The SCLC at no point fought back, but rather used their victimization and Christian standing to their advantage and gathered support to make constitutional and social change. The anti-violence stance was a distinguishing characteristic of SCLC.

The SCLC was a grassroots movement, which differentiated from their sister organizations due to their Christian foundation and role as more of a platform to connect already existing protest groups. The SCLC did face criticism, however, for their overly peaceful stances especially in the face of a call for Black Power.<sup>54</sup> After years of oppression, violence, and racism many people among the Black communities were fed up with Dr. King and the SCLC’s non-

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid

<sup>51</sup> “Lyndon B. Johnson: Voting Rights Act Address.” Great American Documents, n.d. <https://www.greatamericandocuments.com/speeches/lbj-voting-rights/>.

<sup>52</sup> “The Selma Conflict.” Stanford Graduate School of Business, 2015.

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/civilrights/al4.htm>

<sup>54</sup> “Black Power.” The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute. <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/black-power>.

violent approach. Groups like SNCC, the Congress of Racial Equality and the Black Panthers were more aggressive in voicing their frustration compared to SCLC. Black power came to represent the goals of these less-pacifist groups which King and SCLC grew distant from. It was over this term, “Black power”, that a divide formed in the Civil Rights movement. While King and the SCLC preached an anti-violent agenda they were still able to invoke positive change through public demonstrations and marches, voter registration and conversations with the government all amidst life ending violence was thrown at them. However, Black Americans were exhausted of their victimization and wanted many could not sit and take it any longer.

### ***Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)***

In April 1960, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee formed during a conference held by the SCLC. The conference was held in response to the plethora of sit-ins<sup>55</sup> that had been occurring like the Greensboro and Nashville sit-ins and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, encouraged over 200 students attending creating their own student organization to move the masses of a younger generation in the Civil Rights movement.<sup>56</sup> While not forming as a youth branch of either the NAACP or the SCLC, SNCC worked closely with both two organizations during the early 60s. Their constitution is quite similar to SCLC’s as it states in its purpose, ““We affirm the philosophical or religious ideal of nonviolence as the foundation of our purpose, the presupposition of our faith, and the manner of our action...SNCC shall serve as the coordination and communication for the student movement.”<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Sit-ins are a form of protest, which enlist people occupying a space and not leaving until their demands are met. In the case of the lunch counter sit-ins, white store owners had the Black students thrown out by force. “The Sit-In Movement.” U.S History, n.d. <http://www.ushistory.org/us/54d.asp>.

<sup>56</sup>“Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).” The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute, n.d. <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/student-nonviolent-coordinating-committee-sncc>.

<sup>57</sup>“The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee Constitution.” The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, April 29, 1963. [https://www.crmvet.org/docs/sncc\\_constitution\\_63.pdf](https://www.crmvet.org/docs/sncc_constitution_63.pdf).

It was student involvement in the Greensboro Sit-In that served as a catalyst for the formation of SNCC. The Civil Rights sit-in like voter registration offered a new, unique form of protesting the racial inequality. Students sat at the White-only lunch counters and used careful tactics by sitting still and not acknowledging the jeers, food and physical attacks thrown at them; and they refused to move until they were offered equal service or as often seen were pulled out by force. This form of protest spread throughout the country. In the beginning years of SNCC, King agreed with their strategies. King once described the sit-in protest method as “An electrifying movement of Negro students has shattered the placid surface of campuses and communities across the South....the students tenaciously continue to sit down and demand equal service at variety store lunch counters, and extend their protest from city to city.”<sup>58</sup>

SNCC was the first grassroots movement from the Civil Rights era to manifest itself among students. This younger generation mobilized into a fierce force, dedicated to altering their futures by changing the culture. As more sit-ins formed under the supervision of SNCC, students from Atlanta asked Dr. King if he would join them at a sit-in. The 300 students and King were arrested as a result.<sup>59</sup> But the collaboration portrays how strong the connection was between the SNCC and SCLC in its early years. Due to the emergence of the term Black Power, the schism between the two Civil Rights groups will be described later in this paper.

Major forms of protest led in part by, SNCC were the freedom rides. The freedom rides were established to test the Supreme Court’s ruling from *Morgan v. Virginia* (1946) and *Boynton v. Virginia* (1960) that racial segregation in public buses and facilities for interstate traveling was

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<sup>58</sup>King, Martin Luther Jr. ““The Burning Truth in the South.”” The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project, May1960.[http://okra.stanford.edu/transcription/document\\_images/Vol05Scans/May1960\\_TheBurningTruthintheSouth.pdf](http://okra.stanford.edu/transcription/document_images/Vol05Scans/May1960_TheBurningTruthintheSouth.pdf)

<sup>59</sup>“Sit-Ins.” The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute, n.d. <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/sit-ins>.

unconstitutional. Initiated by the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), which was another influential Civil Rights group, SNCC and SCLC joined forces to produce interracial groups of travelers to bus through the South, challenging the South's denial of the federal law now in place.<sup>60</sup> On May 4, 1961, the freedom riders left on buses from D.C to Mississippi. The riders garnered national attention, arrests, and violence against them. *The New York Times* reported on July 17, that 236 riders had already been arrested for the "breach of peace."<sup>61</sup> However, CORE disassociated from the freedom rides and attempted to cancel the entire movement due to an attack by the KKK on May 14, 1961, including a firebombing of one of the buses.<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, the students in SNCC refused to quit. One SNCC student argued against the surrender stating, "We can't let them stop us with violence. If we do, the movement is dead,"<sup>63</sup> so SNCC persisted. Shortly after the rides resumed, governmental intervention occurred. However, the governor's intervention was short lived and the police escort that was expected to meet the students in Montgomery did not show, and as a result a white mob severely attacked the riders. Dr. King quickly arrived in Montgomery after the beating to speak out against the abuse.<sup>64</sup>

The freedom rides not only exemplify a powerful form of protest, but one of sheer sacrifice. These students placed themselves in lethal danger to reveal the truly racist capabilities of White Southerners. SNCC's actions further display the efforts the Civil Rights activists would go to fight to end racial discrimination. Their influence was far-reaching and collected

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<sup>60</sup>"Freedom Rides." The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute. <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/freedom-rides>.

<sup>61</sup> "8 on Freedom Ride Seized in Jackson." *The New York Times*, July 17, 1961. <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1961/07/17/118918203.html?action=click&contentCollection=Archives&module=LedeAsset&region=ArchiveBody&pgtype=article&pageNumber=25>

<sup>62</sup>Freedom Rides." The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute

<sup>63</sup>Ross, Rosetta. *Witnessing and Testifying: Black Women, Religion, and Civil Rights*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003. 117

<sup>64</sup>Freedom Rides." The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute

American's attention along with the government's. On May 29, 1961, Attorney General Kennedy required the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) to comply with the law and end its segregation. Unfortunately as seen in previous scenarios, these implementations were not immediate so the rides persisted. Five months later, however, the ICC finally met the White House's demands and the segregation was banned.<sup>65</sup> Similarly to the lunch counter sit-ins, the students strategized very peaceful actions, which provoked severe violence, creating a national spotlight that placed pressure on the federal and local government to intervene. *The New York Times* covered the story and their headline stated, "Bi-Racial Buses Attacked, Riders Beaten in Alabama; Alabama Whites Fire Bi-Racial Bus."<sup>66</sup> Their descriptions do not hold back and the press describes the White terrorists' horrific actions.<sup>67</sup> There is something to be said for national media coverage of young adults, sitting on seats in a bus being firebombs and beaten to bloody pulps that the American public does not agree with and therefore invokes some sort of change. Along with the NAACP and SCLC, SNCC advocated heavily for Black voter registration. SNCC was involved in the Selma to Montgomery March and coordinated the Freedom Rides all aimed at either raising awareness to the violence faced by Black Americans attempting to vote or encouraging more Black Americans to vote.<sup>68</sup> However, following the violent attack on SCLC's first attempt to march to the Montgomery capitol on March 7, 1965 also known as Bloody Sunday, many student activists in SNCC grew frustrated with SCLC's non-violent methodology.<sup>69</sup> Publication was a powerful form of protest as well. Communication was key in

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<sup>65</sup>Ibid

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/1961/05/15/archives/biracial-buses-attacked-riders-beaten-in-alabama-alabama-whites.html>

<sup>67</sup> Ibid

<sup>68</sup> Ibid

<sup>69</sup> Fitz, Alston. "Bloody Sunday." Encyclopedia of Alabama, n.d. <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1876>.



ensuring a group's supporters were educated on the issues and unified to help contribute. SNCC published a newspaper called, *The Student Voice*, beginning in 1960. The newspaper sought to inform its members on matters involving marches, demonstrations and sit-ins.<sup>70</sup> The paper was also seen as a form of support and offered information on resources like scholarships.<sup>71</sup> The form of protest through publications was something adopted within the Women's Liberation movement to educate the readers on issues similarly to how SNCC utilized "The Student Voice."

In May 1966, Stokely Carmichael was elected chairman of SNCC where he presented more radical views, specifically in his advocacy of "Black Power." Carmichael had a more militaristic viewpoint for their cause and as a result SNCC shifted from an organization that placed emphasis on the non-violence in their name to a more racially divided militant organization. The new SNCC underwent a transformation in 1966 and as a result of their adoption of the "Black Power" philosophy split from the SCLC<sup>72</sup>. Black Power created a schism within the Civil Rights movement due to its ambiguity. There was no cohesive definition to Black Power and as a result people in the movement reacted differently to it. Carmichael supported Black Separatism, calling for the exclusion of White Americans from their Civil Rights efforts, which many in the movement especially SCLC strongly opposed.<sup>73</sup> In August 1966 *The New York Times* published a working paper by SNCC where they discussed their support for Black Separatism. The paper explains their reasoning for cutting out White Americans from their movement, but still encourages them to fight for the cause. Quote from the paper so reader knows what this means. Their argument is that all of these issues of racism do

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<sup>70</sup> *The Student Voice*. Wisconsin Historical Society, n.d. <http://cdm15932.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15932coll2/id/50279>.

<sup>71</sup> SNCC. "Scholarships." *The Student Voice*, June 1960, 1 edition.

<sup>72</sup> Carson, Clayborne. *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1981.154

<sup>73</sup> Ibid 154

not rest in the Black community, but rather manifest themselves in the White communities and thus White people need to address their own communities first.<sup>74</sup> The letter points out how White participants have hindered their efforts, “Further white participation means in the eyes of the black community that whites are the ‘brains’ behind the movement, and that blacks cannot function without whites...if we are to proceed toward true liberation, we must cut ourselves off from white people.”<sup>75</sup> Black Power became a defining feature in what many viewed as a radicalization of the Civil Rights, which was exemplified by groups like SNCC and the Black Panthers. SNCC Chairman H. Rap Brown made a bold statement about Black Power and argued that their responses must be more aggressive in order to unify and stand up to oppression, “We stand on the eve of a black revolution. Masses of our people are on the move, fighting the enemy tit-for-tat responding to the counter revolutionary violence with revolutionary violence, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and a life for a life.”<sup>76</sup> Brown and Carmichael represented the more radical forms of protest. Their focus on Black Power and more offensive tactics compared to the passive protest methods of the NAACP, SCLC and SNCC in its former years, alienated them, which divided the movement as a whole, but also influenced how the movement was perceived on a national level. These forms of protest placed a greater emphasis on sacrifice and White exclusion. Their tactics focused less on pacifism like the early sit-in and Freedom rides and more on igniting a rage within the Black community, driving them to seek power for

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<sup>74</sup> SNCC. “The Basis of Black Power.” The Radical Education Project, August 5, 1966. <http://asp6new.alexanderstreet.com.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu/sixt/sixt.object.details.aspx?id=1003267215&view=detailview&objecturl=4DW8>.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid

<sup>76</sup> SNCC. “Statement by H. Rap Brown.” The Radical Education Project, July 26, 1967. <http://asp6new.alexanderstreet.com.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu/sixt/sixt.object.details.aspx?id=1003267217&view=detailview&objecturl=4DW8>.

themselves. This more aggressive stance of protests was not unique to the SNCC, but also seen in groups like the Black Panthers. Oppression affected groups differently and while all the Civil Rights grassroots groups wanted to end racial discrimination, their levels of patience and endurance to achieve these goals varied. The evolution of the groups also played a role in their reactions through protests. By the time of SNCC's peak involvement with the freedom rides in 1961, it had been seven years since the NAACP won the *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 and six years since SCLC formed shortly after the Montgomery bus boycott. SNCC was composed of students who had grown up watching their parents and grandparents fight with peaceful tactics, but continuously endure violent oppression as a result. SNCC and the Black Panthers exemplified groups who refused to be victimized. This mindset is something many women and Anti-War groups felt similarly towards and also influenced their protest methods.

### ***The Black Panthers***

In 1966, Huey Newton and Bobby Seale initiated the Black Panther Party in Oakland California [so regionally, a really different situation].<sup>77</sup> While this movement, also addressed the need for social and economic rights, similarly to previous groups, it was labeled as radical and militant because its origin was tied to self-defense.<sup>78</sup> Their efforts emphasized human rights based in a philosophy of revolutionary socialism.<sup>79</sup> Heavily influenced by Malcolm X, the Black Panthers' main objectives was focused on addressing human rights specifically in regards to the

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<sup>77</sup>"History of the Black Panther Party." Marxist Internet Archive, n.d.  
<https://www.marxists.org/history/usa/workers/black-panthers/index.htm>.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid

<sup>79</sup> Ibid

discrimination in housing, education, health care and employment facing the Black communities.<sup>80</sup>

The Black Panthers formed their protest tactics around the premise of empowerment. On May 2, 1967, thirty armed Black Panther members approached the California State Capitol to protest lawmakers' attempts to strip the Party of their Second Amendment right to bear arms.<sup>81</sup> Six Panthers successfully entered the capitol and approached a room full of lawmakers. As police tried to evacuate the armed protesters, they reminded the police they were legally permitted to have these firearms as long as they were not concealed.<sup>82</sup>



Figure 3. The Sacramento Bee's Article: Capitol is Invaded, May 2 1967

This bold form of protest represented the Black Panther's vow to be a group of action rather than simply words. One of their main points of contention was combating police brutality against the Black communities. Patrolling the streets with guns and recording devices became an active

<sup>80</sup>Roman, Meredith. "The Black Panther Party and the Struggle for Human Rights," *Spectrum: A Journal on Black Men*, 5, no. 1 (2016). <https://muse.jhu.edu/>.

<sup>81</sup>Wing, Nick. "Here's How The Nation Responded When A Black Militia Group Occupied A Government Building." *Huffpost*, January 6, 2016. [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/black-panthers-california-1967\\_us\\_568accfce4b014efe0db2f40](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/black-panthers-california-1967_us_568accfce4b014efe0db2f40)

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*

form of protest for the Panthers.<sup>83</sup> Even compared to SNCC, the Black Panthers took on an entirely new form of protesting, which emphasized being on the offensive rather than the defensive. One of the key characteristics of the party was their police patrols or “pig” patrols as some Panthers called it. Panthers would approach the scene, armed and holding a tape recorder where they would inform the detainee of his rights and follow the detainee to the jail where they would bail him out.<sup>84</sup> They used these patrols to deter police brutality and recruit new members to their party.<sup>85</sup> The use of firearms was unique to the Black Panthers compared to previous groups and they used them as not only defense, but also a symbol of their power. The Panthers embodied a Robin Hood-like mentality to their communities but instead of focusing on wealth, they focused on empowerment and advocacy. The group offered community engagement and service with organized free breakfasts for children, a Black Panther newspaper and educated their new recruits on the laws along with providing firearms.<sup>86</sup> While the community service was not something many people think of when it comes to the militant group, they were versatile in their advocacy approaches. They embodied the Black Power ideology and let it influence their protest tactics. These tactics of radicalism would eventually take hold of groups in both the Women’s Liberation and the Anti-War movements, starkly contrasting to the more pacifist methods of protest exemplified by the NAACP and SCLC.

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<sup>83</sup> “‘The Only Good Pig Is a Dead Pig’: A Black Panther Paper Editor Explains a Political Cartoon.” History Matters,. <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6460/>.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid

<sup>86</sup> Ibid

## Chapter 2

### Women's Liberation Movement

The Civil Rights movement presented an accumulation of groups advocating for racial equality using a variety of methods and philosophies. With their protest methods categorized into three main forms: legal action, public demonstrations and publications. The Women's Liberation movement was influenced by these methods in their formation of an array of grassroots groups, ranging with groups more focused on winning court cases and applying political pressure to publishing newspapers aiming to educate the masses in sexual discrimination. This chapter will delve into three Feminist grassroots groups: the National Organization for Women (NOW), Third World Women's Alliance (TWWA), and the Red Stockings. Each section will exemplify how heavily influenced each organization was by the tactics set fourth by the NAACP, SCLC, SNCC and the Black Panthers.

The Women's Liberation movement offered a broad range of issues facing their freedom and as a result the movement branched into dozens of groups all advocating for women's equality, but different aspects of said equality. Sexual, reproductive, financial, cultural, legal, and psychological freedoms were not fully achievable to women. Prior to analyzing the pivotal grassroots movements which shaped this movement during the 1960s and 1970s, reviewing the decades leading up to the movement is imperative for fully comprehending why this movement occurred when it did.

The Women's Liberation movement or the Second Wave of Feminism, like the Civil Rights movement developed from previous movements advocating for change. Between 1948

and 1920, a first wave of feminism swept through the nation.<sup>87</sup> In 1920 one of the cornerstone goals of the Suffrage movement was to obtain the right to vote, which was accomplished by Constitutional Amendment on August 18, 1920.<sup>88</sup> However, many of the efforts in the First Wave of Feminism went silent for several years after this change was achieved. It was not until World War II that a push for feminism entered back into society.<sup>89</sup> Companies were quickly training women in skills to work in these environments due to the large absence of men from the workforce. Through the Lanham Act, government sponsored daycares opened to allow more women to work.<sup>90</sup> While WWII is seen as massive casualty to all countries involved, its impact for women was extraordinarily beneficial. Nevertheless, with the conclusion of the War and the return of men, women's importance in the work sectors was vanquished, which ignited a spark for the movement.

The movement emerged in the 1960s when women started meeting together to discuss the disparities between men and women in economic and social contexts.<sup>91</sup> Frustrated with this set back, many women who had also been connected to the Civil Rights movement began their own independent organizations.

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<sup>87</sup> Beginning in 1948 with the Seneca Falls Convention, Women's Suffrage activists discussed the goals of their movement. The leader, Elizabeth Stanton drafted a "Declaration of Sentiments, Grievances, and Resolutions". The draft focused on obtaining rights but most importantly the right to vote. "The Women's Rights Movement, 1848–1920." United States House of Representatives, n.d. <https://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/WIC/Historical-Essays/No-Lady/Womens-Rights/>.

<sup>88</sup>"19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Women's Right to Vote (1920)." Ourdocuments.gov, <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=63>.

<sup>89</sup> WWII created a gaping need for employment with a majority of men occupied by the War. Women filled these roles and for the first time were working to support their families on top of still raising children. The government fully supported this initiative.

<sup>90</sup>Freeman, Jo. "The Women's Liberation Movement: Its Origins, Structures and Ideas," 1971. <https://www.jofreeman.com/feminism/liberationmov.htm>.

<sup>91</sup> Bruley, Sue, and Laurel Forster. "Historicising the Women's Liberation," *Women's History Review*, 25, no. 5 (2016): 697–700.

### *The National Organization for Women (NOW)*

NOW's origin is important to note because it plays a key role in their relationship with politics and lobbying, further exemplifying the influence the Civil Rights groups had through their use of protests, specifically with pressure politics. In 1961, President Kennedy created the President's Commission on the Status of Women, which was chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt.<sup>92</sup> The commission found substantial evidence regarding the discrimination women were still dealing with in every day life, however the commission held an even greater impact in its ability to connect these politically active women together.<sup>93</sup> Another factor that led to the formation of NOW was when sex was added to Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. According to Jo Freeman, a prominent feminist during the Liberation movement, many men perceived this addition as a joke. Even the EEOC executive director stated that this addition was a "fluke", which was "conceived out of wedlock."<sup>94</sup> It was within these overtly sexist attitudes that supporters for this Civil Rights Act wished for "some sort of NAACP for women", which would ensure more advocacy within the government.<sup>95</sup> Under this need for a national advocacy organization for women, NOW was born and its structure was molded similarly into the cast set by the NAACP.

In 1966 Betty Friedan initiated the National Association of Women during the Third National Conference of Commissions on the Status of Women.<sup>96</sup> NOW developed into the largest women's rights group in the United States. Their goals sought to use legislative, and

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<sup>92</sup> Freeman, Jo. "The Women's Liberation Movement: Its Origins, Structures and Ideas," 1971.  
<https://www.jofreeman.com/feminism/liberationmov.htm>.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid

<sup>94</sup> Ibid

<sup>95</sup> Ibid

<sup>96</sup> Ibid



other legal means to end sexual discrimination, specifically in the workplace.<sup>97</sup> Their mission statement in 1966 stated,

We, men and women who hereby constitute ourselves as the National Organization for Women, believe that the time has come for a new movement toward true equality for all women in America, and toward a fully equal partnership of the sexes, as part of the world-wide revolution of human rights now taking place within and beyond our national borders.<sup>98</sup>

Along with Betty Friedman, three other influential founders to NOW were: Shirley Chisholm, Muriel Fox and mentioned in the NAACP section, Pauli Murray.<sup>99</sup>

Pauli Murray as discussed greatly influenced the NAACP through her legal insight. Murray addressed the intersectionality of the two movements with sexual and racial discrimination. In 1964, two years before the formation of NOW, Murray co-authored, *Jane Crow and the Law: Sex discrimination and Title VII*, which discusses the similarities between gender based discrimination and Jim Crow Laws.<sup>100</sup> Throughout this chapter, a divide will be analyzed within the Women's movement. The divide occurs between White women and women of color fighting for women's rights, but women of color faced far more barriers and their issues were not always addressed. Murray's role in NOW, one of the more mainstream Women's groups is unique due to her emphasis on fighting sexually and racially charged discrimination.

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<sup>97</sup>“This Day in History: National Organization for Women Was Founded.” The White House Barack Obama, June 30, 2015. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2015/06/30/day-history-national-organization-women-was-founded>.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid

<sup>99</sup> “Honoring Our Founders & Pioneers.” National Organization for Women, n.d. <https://now.org/about/history/honoring-our-founders-pioneers/>.

<sup>100</sup> “Pauli Murray Project.” Duke Human Rights Center, n.d. <https://paulimurrayproject.org/pauli-murray/timeline/>.

NOW resembled closely the structure of the NAACP with their very bureaucratic establishment. The NAACP acted under a board of directors and developed local and national chapters of their organization. NAACP relied heavily on their legal council and found it garnered the most impact with their victory in the courtrooms.<sup>101</sup> In 1966, NOW formed a legal committee consisting of Dr. Marguerite Rawalt, Phineas Indritz, Mary Eastwood, and Caruthers Berger. These women began a crusade to end workplace discrimination.<sup>102</sup> NOW like the NAACP was formed as a national chapter with very top-down hierarchal structure.<sup>103</sup>

NOW created task forces with specific goals in mind: Equal Opportunity of Employment; Legal and Political Rights; Education; Women in Poverty; The Family; Image of Women; and Women and Religion.<sup>104</sup> One of the largest challenges NOW faced was dealing with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). NOW used pressure groups, which similarly to the Civil Rights groups like the NAACP and SCLC, utilized all legal, political and media related resources at their disposal to forcibly draw America and its governing bodies' attention to their issues.<sup>105</sup> In 1966 during this legislative action, NOW filed a petition with the EEOC to establish hearings on the regulations regarding sex-segregated "Help Wanted" ads.<sup>106</sup> However, in May of 1967 the EEOC did not end sex-segregated "Help Wanted" ads and as a result NOW members protested outside EEOC offices throughout the country.<sup>107</sup> Following these demonstrations, the EEOC found sex-segregated help wanted ads illegal, which in 1973 were reinforced by the

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<sup>101</sup> Rudwick, Elliot, and Meier August. "Organizational Structure and Goal Succession: A Comparative Analysis of the NAACP and CORE, 1964-1968." *Social Sciences Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (1970): 9–24. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42858539>.

<sup>102</sup> Honoring Our Founders & Pioneers." National Organization for Women

<sup>103</sup> Freeman, Jo. "The Origins of the Women's Liberation Movement." *American Journal of Sociology* 78, no. 4 (1973): 807. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2776604>.

<sup>104</sup>"Highlights." National Organization for Women, n.d. <https://now.org/about/history/highlights/>.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid

<sup>106</sup> Ibid

<sup>107</sup> Ibid

Supreme Court.<sup>108</sup> Combining pressure group tactics on a legislative level, supported by supporters on the streets garnering local and national attention is something the Civil Rights movement excelled in and both movements saw constitutional and legislative change from these combined efforts.

Along with workplace gender discrimination, NOW sought the fight for reproductive rights. At the national conference for NOW in 1968, Friedman's report she discussed their efforts to legalize abortion, "A national conference will shortly be held in which NOW will join with all these groups in a new coalition to repeal abortion laws. We picketed Governor Rockefeller's hearing on abortion because only two women were on the Commission deciding this question"<sup>109</sup>. Friedan's report during the conference invoked high levels of pathos for the importance of representation. Her rhetoric was bold and like with the Civil Rights movement, she discussed the importance of combining efforts with other women's groups. Another aspect from Friedan's report, which draws parallels to Civil Rights groups was the role of Black Power.

NOW realized the importance of political power. NOW like Black Power was about political empowerment. NOW addressed multiple issues and advocated on the streets, in the homes and within the government. Friedman's 1968 report stated, "it's not enough to change laws in America; to change institutions in America we must get political power...here we must learn from black power, not in a separatist sense but in the same sense that we must absolutely realistically talk in terms of power."<sup>110</sup> Friedman like the later Civil Rights groups: the SNCC and the Black Panthers visualized the importance of not playing the victim. Women held a

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<sup>108</sup> Freeman, Jo. "The Origins of the Women's Liberation Movement."

<sup>109</sup>Friedan, Betty. "National Woman's Party Correspondence on Equal Rights Amendment and National Organization for Women Report." Atlanta, Georgia, December 6, 1968. [https://hv-proquest-com.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu/historyvault/docview.jsp?folderId=002612-111-0304&q=\(organization-name%3A%22National%20Organization%20for%20Women%22%20and%20nofulltextrelonly%3A%22National%20Organization%20for%20Women%22\)&position=2&numResults=10&numTotalResults=16](https://hv-proquest-com.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu/historyvault/docview.jsp?folderId=002612-111-0304&q=(organization-name%3A%22National%20Organization%20for%20Women%22%20and%20nofulltextrelonly%3A%22National%20Organization%20for%20Women%22)&position=2&numResults=10&numTotalResults=16).

<sup>110</sup>Ibid

minimal role in society throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and Friedman was pushing to end this passive role by embracing the philosophies of strength set by the Black Power ideology. She also discusses how it is not coincidental that this wave of new feminism developed from the Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, prohibiting sex discrimination in the workplace along with racial discrimination.<sup>111</sup> Civil Rights while primarily known for working on the end of racial discrimination did also incorporate battling sexism to some extent. Throughout the 1950s and 60s, both White and Black women fought alongside the Black communities advocating for civil rights. These efforts were key in influencing women to branch off and fight for their own experienced discrimination. NOW utilized boycotts, picketing, demonstrations and pressure group to grasp the media and government's attention. Here is where the interest conversion lies when the Civil Rights movement was organizing and holding their marches and boycotts, women were utilizing that same drive, passion and strategy to fight for their own equal rights, and NOW was born out of their efforts.

### *The Third World Women's Alliance (TWWA)*

As discussed above, in the 1960s, SNCC worked to support voter registration through civic engagement while protesting institutional racism through a plethora of demonstrations. Even within a movement to secure equal rights, where Black men and women were fighting side-by-side they faced sexual discrimination. One infamous example was when the SNCC chairman, Stokely Carmichael stated, "the only position for women in SNCC is prone."<sup>112</sup> Black women had always been heavily involved with SNCC, but by 1968 they formed their own organization

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid

<sup>112</sup>Peck, Sabina. "The Only Position for Women in SNCC Is Prone': Stokely Carmichael and the Perceived Patriarchy of Civil Rights Organizations in America." *History in the Making* 1, no. 1 (n.d.). <http://www.historyitm.org/index.php/hitm/article/view/19>.

to address their specific gender needs, forming the Black Women's Liberation Committee (BWLC).<sup>113</sup> Leading this group were Gwendolyn Patton, Frances Beal, and Mae Jackson who by 1970 had transitioned the group into just the Black Women's Alliance (BWA), whose philosophies depended heavily on Marxism.<sup>114</sup> As the group grew, they attracted other women of color and under the leadership of Frances Beal, changed their name to the Third World Women's Alliance (TWWA) to incorporate the expanding ethnic groups in their membership.<sup>115</sup> Their purpose statement, stated:

Our purpose is to make a meaningful and lasting contribution to the Third World community by working for the elimination of the oppression and exploitation from which we suffer. We further intend to take an active part in creating a socialist society where we can live as decent human beings, free from the pressures of racism, economic exploitation, and sexual oppression.<sup>116</sup>

The feminist movement may have been influenced by the Civil Rights movement, but it was a predominately White woman show. Organization like the TWWA addressed many issues from minority women communities that neither the Civil Rights or the mainstream Women's movement noticed. Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Asian, and Native American women congregated and began fighting against the shared oppression of third world women, especially regarding labor. The TWWA circulated a document titled, "Black Women's Manifesto" within their own newspaper, which will be discussed later. In it, one article discussed the discrimination within labor between Black women and those of Black men and White women:

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<sup>113</sup>Farmer, Ashley. "The Third World Women's Alliance, Cuba, and the Exchange of Ideas." Black Perspectives, April 7, 2017. <https://www.aaihs.org/the-third-world-womens-alliance-cuba-and-the-exchange-of-ideas/>.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid

<sup>115</sup> Ibid

<sup>116</sup>Crow, Barbara. "Women in the Struggle: Third World Women's Alliance" *Radical Feminism: A Documentary Reader*. New York: New York University Press, 2000. 462.

‘The Servant in the House’, gives a vivid portrayal of the exploitation of domestic workers. He speaks of the personal degradation of their work...paid extremely low wages and subjected to the sexual exploitation of the ‘master.’ All this proves that because the Black woman worked, it did not make her more ‘independent’ than the white woman. Rather, she became more subject to the brutal exploitation of capitalism-as Black, as worker, as woman.<sup>117</sup>

In a society where men of color still faced discrimination, the women of color faced even more disparaging discrimination. This grassroots group was unique in its intersectionality as well as its stance against imperialism and capitalism on a global scale. Their name alone represented this plight. They were women coming from what the globe labeled as third worlds, areas that had been subject to colonization, imperialism and capitalism at the hands of Western countries like the United States.

Their efforts were put toward ending gender restrictive roles and demanding that housework and childcare be shared by men and women in the house as well as access to safe family planning including abortion.<sup>118</sup> In the Black Women’s Manifesto, they wrote, “It is women who must decide whether they wish to have children or not. Women must have the right to control their own bodies.”<sup>119</sup> They believed in fair pay and an end to sexual discrimination in the workplace, emphasizing that third world women receive the brunt of low-income wages in unsafe environments.<sup>120</sup> TWWA represents a group of women who in all definitions of the phrase drew the shortest straw. Women struggled to have a voice and people of color also

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<sup>117</sup> “Abortion and Birth Control.” The Black Women’s Manifesto, n.d. [https://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/wlmpc\\_wlmms01009/](https://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/wlmpc_wlmms01009/). 16

<sup>118</sup> Crow, Barbara. “Women in the Struggle: Third World Women’s Alliance” *Radical Feminism: A Documentary Reader*. New York: New York University Press, 2000. 462.

<sup>119</sup> [https://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/wlmpc\\_wlmms01009/#info](https://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/wlmpc_wlmms01009/#info) 16

<sup>120</sup> Ibid 463

struggled to have a voice, but by combining the two into one advocacy group, their courage and passion created a group who would face a multitude of social and political barriers. Their own mother organization, SNCC did not even value their existence, but instead saw them as sexual objects as seen by Chairman Stokely's crass comments. With discrimination coming from all directions, TWWA had to fight that much harder to have their voices heard and legitimized. As a result their efforts fell closely in line with tactics established by SNCC and other Civil Rights groups.

One of the first points of action for TWWA was collaborating with NOW in their participation of the Women's Liberation Day parade on August 26, 1970. The parade was labeled as "Women's Strike for Equality"<sup>121</sup> and listed four demands: access to abortions, free childcare, equal employment, and education opportunities.<sup>122</sup> At first hesitant to join the White feminists in their event and demands, TWWA wanted to get their name out there and garner some national attention for their cause.<sup>123</sup>

One of the most substantial forms of protest the TWWA utilized was their newspaper, *Triple Jeopardy*, which they began publishing in 1971.<sup>124</sup> Similarly to *The Student Voice*, the SNCC newspaper, *Triple Jeopardy* sought to draw attention to the struggle of minorities, specifically women, and the many issues people did not discuss. The idea behind the title, *Triple Jeopardy*, represented the three factors of oppression facing third world women: racism,

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<sup>121</sup>Peniel, Joseph. *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era*. New York: Routledge, 2006. 136

<sup>122</sup> Ibid 136

<sup>123</sup> Ibid 136

<sup>124</sup> "Third World Women's Alliance Records, 1971-1980." Five College Archives and Manuscript Collections, n.d. <https://asteria.fivecolleges.edu/findaids/sophiasmith/mnsss527.html>.

imperialism and sexism.<sup>125</sup> The paper was a tool used to communicate ideological struggles and information to minority women across the nation.<sup>126</sup> Communication is a key piece of the Women's Liberation movement. Whether it was through national conventions or newspapers or more intimate consciousness raising sessions, in order to unite people toward a cause, disseminating information was essential and as a result served a successful form of protest which can be seen within the Civil Rights movement as well. The newspaper was also written as a resource for women. It had a section on employment skills and a column on general skills like how to change a tire, skill more notably belonging to men.<sup>127</sup> Their articles like "Daycare centers: A Problem for Whom?" addressed an issue many minority women face, but turned it into a public concern.<sup>128</sup> The article argued that the welfare of children should not have been seen solely as a woman's concern. Men and women of all races needed to be concerned about the facilities they were placing their children in and how they were being educated within these places.

Writing was a powerful tool for the TWWA. In a booklet they published titled, "Women and our Bodies", they provide ample information on reproduction, which was not readily provided to many of these minority communities.<sup>129</sup> The pamphlet addressed questions about sexual health that many women of color did not have access to learning about, but made a difference in their reproductive and sexual health decisions. Women not fully understanding the way their bodies reproduce was a gaping hole in the education system. How could women be expected to advocate for reproductive rights when many of them did not fully understand their

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<sup>125</sup> Peniel, Joseph. *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era*. New York: Routledge, 2006. 138

<sup>126</sup> Ibid 138

<sup>127</sup> Ibid 138

<sup>128</sup> Ibid 138

<sup>129</sup> Ibid 140



own reproductive systems. The TWWA, like SNCC and the SCLC, sought to educate their masses on subjects that would empower them. Educating women on their reproduction was just as important and needed as educating Black Southerners in their voter literacy and knowledge of political activism. Victims of discrimination will never break the system if they don't possess the knowledge and education to keep them safe and aware.

The TWWA tackled many issues with their writing and physical protests, combining efforts and the attitudes of Black Power, but inclusive to Black Feminism which branched into a multicultural feminism. TWWA fought racial injustice and broadcasted these issues with their writing and publication tools. These protest tactics while taken one step further with these women, were a staple piece of organizations like SNCC in their fight for civil rights.

### ***The Redstockings***

By the late 1960s, multiple feminist liberation organizations developed from the remnants of the New York Radical Feminists. Two of their organizers: Shulamith Firestone and Kathie Sarachild came together to create the Redstockings.<sup>130</sup> In 1969 they coined their name as Redstockings based off the bluestocking phrase associated with women's groups in earlier eras and changed it to red to symbolize the revolution.<sup>131</sup> The Redstockings focused on female liberation from the oppressive male supremacy. The group formed with the intention of being perceived as a very radical and militant group fighting against their oppressors.<sup>132</sup> They believed wholeheartedly that male supremacy was cause of all issues including racism and corrupt

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<sup>130</sup> Echols, Alice. *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975*. Vol. 3. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1989. <http://sites.middlebury.edu/utopias/files/2013/02/varieties-of-radical-feminism.pdf>. 140

<sup>131</sup> "About Redstockings of the Women's Liberation Movement." Redstockings, <https://www.redstockings.org/index.php/about-redstockings>.

<sup>132</sup> Echols, Alice. *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975* 139

capitalism.<sup>133</sup> The Redstockings differed from TWAA and NOW due to their more aggressive stance on male oppression and how women must realize how fully oppressed they are by these men. The Redstockings criticized NOW for its narrow advocacy over workplace discrimination when it did not address where the real oppression was festering: the household.<sup>134</sup> Redstockings identified the major issue with the female struggle in how women shared a very intimate relationship with their oppressors and due to this relationship and the duty of women to stay home isolated women from women.<sup>135</sup>

The Redstockings approach to protesting focused primarily on the notion of consciousness raising. Consciousness-raising is the form activism focusing on discussion and conversations using personal experiences to find the root of the problem. This was first witnessed in the Civil Rights Movement, but was adopted by women's liberation groups. Specifically, the Redstockings in their manifesto declare their mission to unite women to expel this oppression through consciousness raising: "Our chief task at present is to develop female class consciousness through sharing experience and publicly exposing the sexist foundation of all our institutions"<sup>136</sup>. While this concept of consciousness raising was not explicitly mentioned as a tactic by the Civil Rights groups, the concept was very much there. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was constantly promoting consciousness raising in both the Black and White communities. He drew attention to the inherent racism all around in his sermons and public speeches. The radical feminists believed the first step in tackling the issue was informing women and men about the disparaging sexism that existed in society before they could take any actions. Consciousness-

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<sup>133</sup>Redstockings. "Redstocking Manifesto," July 7, 1969. <https://www.redstockings.org/index.php/rs-manifesto>.

<sup>134</sup>Echols, Alice. *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975* 139. 140

<sup>135</sup> Ibid 140

<sup>136</sup>Redstockings. "Redstocking Manifesto" July 7, 1979.

raising was seen as a “both a method for arriving at the truth and a means for action and organizing.”<sup>137</sup>

A major issue the Redstockings addressed and protested was abortion. Ellen Willis, one of the leaders of the group stated, “our first target was the ‘reformers’ who sat around splitting hairs over how sick or poor or multifarious a pregnant woman had to be to deserve exemption from reproductive duty.”<sup>138</sup> In 1969 New York put together a legislative hearing to discuss abortion reform. In this hearing fourteen men and one woman were selected to provide expert testimony. This one woman was a nun.<sup>139</sup> At this hearing, Ellen Willis and several other Redstocking women attended. During the proceedings, Willis stood up and shouted, “Alright, now let’s hear from some real experts-the women.”<sup>140</sup> The lack of representation from the people who this legislation would directly affect was baffling and the Redstockings were infuriated. Willis, like the Black Panthers who entered the law making session to protest their right to open carry, placed the actual legislation on the spot by addressing the “male abortion experts” head on as well as garnering the media’s attention. In an interview following her comments to the committee she discussed how the entire system is dominated by male supremacy and individual choice over one’s own body is not valued. She also drew direct links to the Black Power movement, stating: “We are particularly interested in exposing the concept of expertise, as opposed to letting people make decisions about their lives. This is the same stuff they tried to push over on the black movement.”<sup>141</sup> The parallels between the movements’ tactics were similar

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid 404

<sup>138</sup> Echols, Alice. *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975* 139. 141

<sup>139</sup> Ibid 141

<sup>140</sup> Ibid 141

<sup>141</sup> Ibid 142



children or maintaining a job there was little time to meet with other women. When these meetings did occur for decades no one wanted to discuss the oppression they were facing, let alone something as taboo as abortion, rape or sex. Civil Rights movements had men and women and the church played a large role in their meeting locations. When Black families attended church they were surrounded solely by those who were experiencing the same hardships. When White women attended church it was with their husbands. When Black women attended church, the focus was on Civil Rights not women's. Women across the country felt the heavy weight on their chests of oppression, they were aware of their similarities to sex objects and children bearers, but conversations needed to begin in order to bring all women to the same page. This is why consciousness-raising served such a vital role with the Women's Liberation movement because it was the first step in starting these conversations. It made more women aware they were not alone. Once awareness was spreading more readily, it was inherently easier to form events that protested the issues being discussed. Kathie Sarachild described consciousness raising methods, "there has been no one method of raising consciousness. What really counts in consciousness-raising are not methods, but results. The only 'methods' of consciousness raising are essentially principles. They are the basic radical political principles of going to the original sources, both historic and personal, going to people—women themselves, and going to experience for theory and strategy"<sup>146</sup>. Conscious raising was the ideal way to connect women through hearing each others' stories

The Red Stockings like many Civil Rights and previous Women's liberation groups acknowledged literary power and published several works. They contributed several essays, but three notable works included: "The Redstockings Manifesto" and "Program for Consciousness-

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<sup>146</sup> Redstockings Inc. *Feminist Revolution*. New York: Random House, 1978. 147-148

Raising", and "The Politics of Housework" by Pat Mainardi.<sup>147</sup> These works proclaimed their radical statements to take down male supremacy. Their manifesto was divided into seven sections declaring their mission and their contempt with white male supremacy as the oppressor of women.<sup>148</sup> Radical feminism was a point of contention for the Women's movement. Similarly to the divide over Black Power between SNCC and SCLC, more mainstream groups like NOW and leaders like Betty Friedan feared this radical feminism "turned women off."<sup>149</sup> But Ellen Willis, a formative leader to the Red Stockings, disagreed. In an article she wrote in 1984 called "Radical Feminism and Feminist Radicalism, she discussed the importance of radical feminism: "it was radical feminism that put women's liberation on the map."<sup>150</sup> In this article, Willis reassesses her time in the Red Stockings and shows how they were heavily influenced by Civil Rights tactics, "men had power and privilege and like any other ruling class would defend their interests; challenging that power required a revolutionary movement of women...out model of course was black power-a number of the early radical feminists had been civil rights activists."<sup>151</sup> Black power offered women groups especially the Redstockings a light of hope that they could rid themselves of the second-class citizenship they were so accustomed to. It was through this term that not only did SNCC and the Black Panthers find an ability to take a more aggressive role toward their oppression, but inspired the women to fight against male supremacy too.

Black Power was seen as changing the conversation of the Civil Rights movement from victimization and pacifism to aggressive advocacy through radical statements and actions. The Red Stockings made radical claims towards male supremacy and disassociated from the belief

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<sup>147</sup> Redstockings Inc. *Feminist Revolution*. New York: Random House, 1978.

<sup>148</sup> Redstockings. "Redstocking Manifesto"

<sup>149</sup> Willis, Ellen. "Radical Feminism and Feminist Radicalism," *Social Text*, 9 1984. 92

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid* 93

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid* 93

that women were brainwashed into their oppression. Through uniting women under consciousness-raising and discussing topics like abortion, sex or rape, they empowered women to change not only the conversations, but the way men and women perceived these conversations. Like Civil Rights activists, women were not powerless and they broadcasted this notion to the entire nation, by calling out abortion experts, hosting their own public speak-outs and publishing literature supporting their claims.

Women's Liberation was not one movement just as the Civil Rights was not only a movement. It was a tree with its base rooted deeply in the belief of equality, but each branch burgeoning in a different direction reaching toward different issues. The interconnectedness between the Civil Rights and Women's liberation is not something that can be argued. Where one sees political advocacy through pressure groups, both NOW and NAACP emerge as exemplary models. TWWA and SNCC as well as the Black Panthers exemplify the use of publication as a form of protest by creating a newspaper to advocate and disseminate information specifically related to their cause. Making bold claims and demanding change by interrupting the legislative process is shared between the Black Panthers and the Red Stockings. These Civil Rights grassroots groups displayed impactful forms of protest through lobbying, public demonstrations and publications in which the Women's Liberation adopted and modified for their own advocacy.

### Chapter 3: The Anti-Vietnam War Movement

The Vietnam War sparked rage within the United States and can be visualized through the many protests formed to voice their frustrations with America's political decisions. The efforts set forth by the Civil Rights movement is clearly seen in the feverish protest methods utilized by Anti-War groups. In order to understand this rage and how it mobilized thousands of Americans: men and women of all ages and ethnic backgrounds to protest against it, the timeline of the War is crucial. The Vietnamese spent centuries under the control of foreign powers.<sup>152</sup> However, when they finally regained their independence the United States intervened in an election when they feared it would result in a communist victory.<sup>153</sup> This enraged the Viet Cong who began mobilizing support against the United States.<sup>154</sup> This is seen as the initiation of the Vietnam War for the United States. Under President Kennedy, increased numbers of military personnel were sent to the conflict in Vietnam as military "advisors" to S. Vietnam, however, under President Johnson, they starting a bombing campaign in North Vietnam.<sup>155</sup>

The Vietnam War was the one of the few times in American history where everyday-average Americans were protesting their own country. Even under the Civil Rights and

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<sup>152</sup> In the mid-19th century France colonized Vietnam along with Laos and Cambodia. Vietnam resistance was prominent leading up to the Japanese invasion during the second World War. This invasion sparked the resistance intensity with communist guerilla Warfare. The United States supported the French in regaining control of the resistance. However in 1954 at the Geneva Peace Conference, Vietnam's control is uplifted and they are given independence. The Vietnamese has split into two sides. One side led by Emperor Bao Dai who was supported by the French and Ho Chi Minh who led a significant part of the resistance was backed by communists. Both sides wanted to unify Vietnam, but represented different political ideologies to do so. Zunes, Stephen, and Jesse Laird. "The US Anti-Vietnam War Movement (1964-1973)." The International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, January 2010. <https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/the-us-anti-vietnam-war-movement-1964-1973/>.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid

<sup>154</sup> Ibid

<sup>155</sup> Ibid



Women's Liberation, their protests are directed at specific institutions or men, but for the War many American citizens grew to despise the United States' role in this international conflict. Americans either disagreed with the United State's reason for intervening or were enraged the United States' government claimed it was to salvage democracy from the corruption of communism. The Anti-War sentiments mobilized thousands of Americans, however, university students were at the forefront of much of the activism. This chapter will break down several three grassroots groups: Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), Students, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, (SNCC), and Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) to exemplify the complexities behind the protest movement, which will highlight how and when they were influenced by the previous two movements.

### **Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)**

SDS was the largest student protest group to protest the War. By 1968 it had accumulated between 80,000-100,000 members.<sup>156</sup> It was established in 1960 at the University of Michigan and drew much of its influence from the civil rights movement through its concern with equality, economic freedom, and peace.<sup>157</sup> SDS was known as the “the main New Left organization.”<sup>158</sup> SDS set out to fight for injustice by engaging with younger generations to spread awareness. SDS formed their mission by publishing their Port Huron statement in 1962. The statement similar to a manifesto, declared the need to increase participatory democracy through non-violent civil disobedience.<sup>159</sup> It addressed its two main issues: racial discrimination and the Cold War,

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<sup>156</sup> Coomes, Michael. “Students Armed with a Dream: The 1960s’ New Left Student Movement,” *Journal of College Student Development*, 57, no. 3 (2016). <https://muse.jhu.edu/>. 335-340.

<sup>157</sup>“Links to Resources from Students for a Democratic Society (SDS).” Students for a Democratic Society, n.d. <https://www.sds-1960s.org/>.

<sup>158</sup> Rossinow, Doug. *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998. 1-2.

<sup>159</sup>“Port Huron Statement.” Students for a Democratic Society, 1962. [http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML\\_docs/Resources/Primary/Manifestos/SDS\\_Port\\_Huron.html](http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML_docs/Resources/Primary/Manifestos/SDS_Port_Huron.html).

“The declaration ‘all men are created equal...’ rang hollow before the facts of Negro life in the South and the big cities of the North. The proclaimed peaceful intentions of the United States contradicted its economic and military investments in the Cold War status quo.”<sup>160</sup> They conclude their statement by defining their overall mission: “As students for a democratic society, we are committed to stimulating this kind of social movement, this kind of vision and program in campus and community across the country.”<sup>161</sup> SDS did not form in response to the Vietnam War, but rather to America’s failure to promote peace and justice nationally and internationally.

SDS created a national name for itself with its participation in teach-ins, marches on Washington and more radical publications. Al Haber, the first president of SDS and White man invited some of the Black students who had executed the lunch counter sit-ins in Greensboro to share their experiences with students at the University of Michigan.<sup>162</sup> The foundation for SDS was framed around the advocacy and protesting exemplified by the Civil Rights movement. One of the unique characteristics of the Anti-War movement was the development of teach-ins, which first began at the University of Michigan. Molded after the Civil Rights’ sit-ins, the teach-ins gathered large groups of students and faculty after classes were over and held discussions on the Vietnam War throughout the night. Under the SNCC’s role with sit-ins during their Civil Rights protests, they developed a powerful, yet peaceful means of public demonstration. The role of sit-ins was to occupy a space and through the simple act of existence in this time and location provide the public their own chance to witness the racism through the violent attempts to throw these students out of the buildings. The use of protesting in something rather than out such as a walk-out, exemplified the power of their occupation and how the forces acted racially against

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid

<sup>161</sup> Ibid

<sup>162</sup> Coomes, Michael. “Students Armed with a Dream: The 1960s’ New Left Student Movement,” 137

them. While people attempted to paint these sit-ins as disruptive and radical, at the end of the day they were simply students taking a seat. Tom Hayden, one of the leaders of SDS discussed in a report SDS published in January 1962 how influential SNCC's Civil Rights activism was in shaping SDS and their efforts to advocate for Civil Rights and Ant-War issues.<sup>163</sup> Teach-in discussions incorporated lectures, debates, films, performances, and workshops all aimed at exploring the War and suggesting how its conflicts could be resolved.<sup>164</sup> SDS was pivotal in organizing and conducting these discussions. On March 24 and 25th, 3,000 students and faculty participated in the first of many teach-ins at the University of Michigan, which would spread to multiple universities. The following day Columbia University hosted a teach-in with 2,500 participants and by the end of the 1964-65 school year over 120 universities had participated in their own teach-ins.<sup>165</sup> Teach-ins like sit-ins were used as an educational tool to highlight the injustices occurring in the country at the time. Sit-ins portrayed a violent display of racism as those participating in the sit-in endured violent aggressions from bystanders in attempts to remove them from their peaceful stances. The surrounding witnesses through in person and through media coverage offered these stories for America to see and learn from this horrific form of treatment. Teach-ins while a more direct way of educating the masses, offered structured methods to provide information on the War and insightful discussions between students and faculty. As the SDS grew they developed into local chapters around the country. They all worked tirelessly to organize and plan local protests. Their work accumulated into one massive march that took place April 17, 1965. This March on Washington was the largest mass gathering

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<sup>163</sup> Hayden, Tom. "Revolution in Mississippi: Special Report." Labadie Special Collections, University of Michigan, 1961. <http://michiganintheworld.history.lsa.umich.edu/antivietnamwar/items/show/299>.

<sup>164</sup>"First 'Teach-in' Held at University of Michigan: New Tool for Public Education Is Born." History of Education, <http://schugurensky.faculty.asu.edu/moments/1965teachin.html>.

<sup>165</sup>Wolfe, Lisa. "Vietnam War and Protest Movement Timeline." Cold War, February 1, 2016. <https://coldwarstudies.com/2016/02/01/vietnam-War-and-protest-movement-timeline/>.

of Anti-War protestors of its time.<sup>166</sup> During the march's development, SDS aimed to incorporate other social issues into their campaign. Their slogans related to ongoing civil rights movement, with statements like "War on Poverty--Not on People," "Ballots not Bombs in Vietnam," and "Freedom Now in Vietnam."<sup>167</sup> During the march, SDS President Paul Potter declared, "The real lever for change in America is a domestic social movement..."<sup>168</sup> This march was the largest of its kind so far and shared many similar traits with the march Martin Luther King Jr. led two years prior. SDS's march drew parallels between the War in Vietnam with the many issues occurring in the United States. Reflecting back on the Anti-War movement protests, Tom Hayden described the issue at a conference in 2015: "racism, discrimination, poverty, vote less sharecroppers from the Mississippi Delta to the Mekong Delta."<sup>169</sup> The interconnectedness between the Civil Rights and Anti-War activist stemmed from the insanity in fighting a War to save democracy when it was barely being achieved for Black Americans in their very own country. Racism was very much integrated into the War in Vietnam and for many Civil Rights activists it hit close to home so their advocacy was transferable to the Anti-War cause. This can be heavily witnessed within SNCC who transformed from a Civil Rights group to a grassroots group with an Anti-War agenda.

### ***Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)***

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<sup>166</sup>"The March on Washington." Resistance and Revolution: The Anti-Vietnam War Movement at the University of Michigan.  
[http://michiganintheworld.history.lsa.umich.edu/antivietnamWar/exhibits/show/exhibit/the\\_teach\\_ins/national\\_teach\\_in\\_1965](http://michiganintheworld.history.lsa.umich.edu/antivietnamWar/exhibits/show/exhibit/the_teach_ins/national_teach_in_1965).

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Hayden, Tom. "The Forgotten Power of the Vietnam Protest 1965-1975," April 27, 2015.  
<http://tomhayden.com/home/the-forgotten-power-of-the-vietnam-protest-1965-1975.html>.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid

The Vietnam War was unsettling for many Americans, but it was horrifyingly ironic for Black Americans. For years the Civil Rights movement had been gaining traction with the efforts of groups like NAACP, SCLC, SNCC and the Black Panthers. However, their demands for equality were met reluctantly by law-makers. They faced systemic racism and oppression and were still unable to vote, but the United States was now entering a War to fight for freedom. The government claimed the War was to fight for democracy of the oppressed people of Vietnam, but in Mississippi, policemen were still permitting intimidation at the polls. The War was also destroying the lives of poor, rural Vietnamese families, who like Black Americans had no say in these interventions. The draft system was also racially charged and many Black men did not possess the means to defer their draft. The entire premise for the War triggered the Black community, which is why SNCC branched from its advocacy for Civil Rights to Anti-War protests.

As discussed in a previous chapter, SNCC underwent a transformation from their more peaceful methods to under Carmichael Stokely's leadership in 1966 focusing on more aggressive rhetoric, focused on the term Black Power. It was this transformation that paved the way for SNCC to branch its efforts into the Anti-War movement. On January 3, 1966 a Black Vietnam Navy veteran, Sammy Younge was shot and killed by White supremacists in Alabama for trying to use a "white" only bathroom. Younge was a member of SNCC and had been heavily involved in the Civil Rights movement. SNCC was devastated and enraged with his death, which prompted them to declare an official statement against the War.<sup>170</sup> In their statement against the War they compared Younge's death with those of the Vietnamese, "for both Younge and the Vietnamese sought, and are seeking, to secure the rights guaranteed them by law. In each case

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<sup>170</sup>“The Murder of Sammy Young and SNCC’s Statement on Vietnam.” Digital SNCC Gateway, <https://snccdigital.org/events/murder-of-sammy-younge-snccs-statement-on-vietnam/>.

the United States government bears a great part of the responsibility for these deaths.”<sup>171</sup> SNCC highlighted the similarities between the atrocities in the South with those in Vietnam and named the victimizer as the United States in both instances. This statement was a bold claim, which set the stage for the remainder of protest methods SNCC executed against the War.

SNCC’s Atlanta Project in Atlanta hosted a two-day protest against the draft in August, 1966. Their protest began with eleven Black individuals standing at the headquarters at the Induction Center and grew into a week-long protest.<sup>172</sup> They carried placards stating slogans such as, “The Vietcong never called me a Nigger.”<sup>173</sup> During this protest the men and women took seats inside the lounge of the building and refused to leave. It took army personnel physically dragging out the men out for the protest to conclude.<sup>174</sup> However, every day for a week the crowds grew and more men and women gathered protesting the draft. Following this protest, eleven Black protesters were imprisoned, but the Atlanta Project continued its efforts by promoting the *Atlanta Black Paper*, and spreading awareness through anti-draft leaflets, statements and press releases.<sup>175</sup> SNCC used the same tactics for Anti-War sentiments as they did with Civil Rights because for them they were one in the same. The Vietnam War was just another example of America’s racism and obsession with power over the well-being and equality of all its own citizens.

### ***Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW)***

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<sup>171</sup>Montgomery, Lucile. “Statement by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee on the War in Vietnam,” January 6, 1966. <http://content.wisconsinhistory.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15932coll2/id/35466>.

<sup>172</sup>“Anti-Draft Protests by SNCC’s Atlanta Project.” Digital SNCC Gateway, <https://snccdigital.org/events/anti-draft-protests-snccs-atlanta-project/>.

<sup>173</sup> Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. “Report on the Draft Program.” *Atlanta’s Black Paper*. August 25, 1966. <http://content.wisconsinhistory.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15932coll2/id/65933>, 2.

<sup>174</sup>Ibid.

<sup>175</sup>“Anti-Draft Protests by SNCC’s Atlanta Project.” Digital SNCC Gateway.

Patriotism is something America holds to the highest degree. One of the main reasons the Anti-War movement holds such a significant place in American history is due to the divide that occurred between citizens. Large groups of people were not only questioning their country's intentions, but were committing acts of civil disobedience to voice their frustrations. This issue became even more alarming when Vietnam veterans began protesting against their country's actions. On February 5, 1966 Vietnam War veterans marched to the White House and returned their service medals and discharge papers to protest the War. One year later the Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) formed after a demonstration of Anti-War protesting took place in New York City with 400,000 protestors. It was at this protest that under the leadership of Jan Barry Crumb, five other veterans mobilized into an Anti-War organization.<sup>176</sup> Their organization states in its history, "It was organized to voice the growing opposition among returning servicemen and women to the still-raging War in Indochina...through ongoing actions and grassroots organization, VVAW exposed the ugly truth about US involvement in Southeast Asia and our first-hand experiences helped many other Americans to see the unjust nature of that War."<sup>177</sup> The VVAW offered multiple services to veterans including counseling services, assistance with healthcare, and legal advocacy to War resisters along with their Anti-War protest efforts.<sup>178</sup> Similar to the Black Panthers with their breakfast for the community and assistance to Black children in poverty as well as bailing out protesters from jails, VVAW offered a social support to this marginalized community of protesters. Veterans endured tiers of discrimination. Since America was divided on the War, veterans were criticized for their involvement, but also veterans who voiced their opposition were criticized as being anti-patriotic. A publication from

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<sup>176</sup>Goldberg, Art. "Vietnam Vets: The Anti-War Army," Ramparts, 10, no. 1 (July 1971). 14

<sup>177</sup>"VVAW: Where We Came From, Who We Are." Vietnam Veterans Against the War, <http://www.vvaw.org/about/>.

<sup>178</sup>Ibid

the VVAW reported on a group made up of four White and one Black veteran who tried to enter a restaurant in Texas, but were denied entry due to racial discrimination by the store owner who refused to let in the Black veteran. When the police arrived after being summoned by the veterans themselves, the police officer said, "This place is this man's business. He can refuse service to anyone for any reason.... and every time people like you come to our town you cause trouble." Following this interaction the veterans reflected on how the police were making them feel like this whole situation was their fault, "Why are GIs and Vietnam vets treated this way? Not only in Austin but in every town in the United States that's near a military installation. President Nixon tells the GIs that they are fighting for Freedom. But when the GI gets back to the states things are just as bad, if not worse than when they left"<sup>179</sup>. Besides the horrific display of racism in this situation, the veterans expressed their concern for their treatment by the American people. It was a lose-lose situation and that was why they were protesting.

The VVWA formed a well-organized structure for their operation. Under their national committee, they had regional coordinators who represented VVWA within their assigned geographical areas. Through this structure their chapters operated throughout the United States and had far reach to offer veteran support and organize protests. Until 1969, the organization had only reached a few hundred members, however by 1970 the group had burgeoned to around 5,000 members.<sup>180</sup>

The VVWA's protest methods parallel Civil Rights' activism in their political pressure groups, marches, and literary publications. In January 1971 the VVWA sponsored a hearing on the War crimes in Vietnam called the Winter Soldier Investigation, which applied political

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<sup>179</sup>VVAW. "Black Brother Refused Service." *The Veteran*, October 1971.

<http://www.vvaw.org/veteran/article/?id=913>.

<sup>180</sup>Young, Marilyn, and Robert Buzzanco. *A Companion to the Vietnam War*. Vol. 7. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2002. 407.



pressure through broadcasting veteran testimony of War crimes. In Detroit, 105 veterans came forward and testified to the crimes they had not only witnessed, but committed.<sup>181</sup> One veteran, William Crandell wrote, “In VVAW we knew as veterans that everyone who participates in War crimes suffers, and we needed to tell our country that these horrible acts were not simply aberrations or psychotic episodes, but the inevitable outcomes of the direction soldiers in Vietnam had been given.”<sup>182</sup> Each veteran who stood up and shared their experiences, shed light on the absolute atrocities occurring in Vietnam. The American people had been horrified when details of the My Lai massacre emerged, but as their testimonies exemplified, these War crimes were a commonality over there. This investigation was not a trial, but rather a platform to garner national attention and urge the country’s leaders to take action and end these brutalities. The VVWA offered raw truth and testimony, hoping to achieve a public outcry. When hundred of innocent Black Americans were watched on national television being beaten, American bystanders lost their composure. Achieving shock value by simply presenting the story is a powerful form of protest, which both the VVWA and SNCC excelled in.

Following the Winter Soldier Investigation, the VVWA began strategizing a demonstration in Washington they titled, Dewey Canyon III. This demonstration came to fruition on April 19 when around 1,000 veterans and Gold Star parents<sup>183</sup> arrived in D.C to march through Washington. The men and women marched first to Arlington cemetery to pay their respects, however, they were denied entry. They held a ceremony outside the gates and

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<sup>181</sup>VVWA. “Winter Soldier Investigation & Dewey Canyon.” *The Veteran*, March 1981. <http://www.vvaw.org/veteran/article/?id=2076>.

<sup>182</sup>Crandell, William. “What Did America Learn from the Winter Soldier Investigation?” The Sixties Project, n.d. [http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML\\_docs/Texts/Narrative/Crandell\\_Winter.html](http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML_docs/Texts/Narrative/Crandell_Winter.html).

<sup>183</sup> Gold Star parents are the parents of fallen Vietnam soldiers. VVAW. “Vets’ History: Operation ‘Dewey Canyon III,’” April 1977. <http://www.vvaw.org/veteran/article/?id=1656>.

hung a wreath on the locked gate. Their demonstrations continued throughout the week as they camped out on the mall. During their protests at the capitol, several congressmen took the stand to speak with the veterans and assure them they were trying to end the War. During one their speeches a veteran yelled out, ““You've been talking to us long enough, it's time you began listening.”<sup>184</sup> Placing law makers on the spot and demanding accountability was not a new notion. Both Civil Rights and Women Liberation groups applied pressure to the government via direct, public confrontation. Whether it was the Red Stockings or the Black Panthers, demonstrations that called out the inadequate actions of government officials was a powerful and resourceful move.

A staple factor within the VVAW structure was their newspaper, *The Veteran*. The VVAW began publications in 1971 titled *Ist Casualty*. Then from 1973 to 1975 it was called the *Winter Soldier*. In 1975 it officially became *The Veteran*. *The Veteran* represented the first few voices of veteran opposition to the War and continued to advocate as their base grew. Their articles cover a multi-faceted range of topics from the danger of Agent Orange to PTSD in the veteran community.<sup>185</sup> Like SNCC or TWWA’s newspapers, it offered resources, support and updates on the War itself as well as Anti-War protests. Like any newspaper, it was a way for veterans to express themselves and unify their supporters. In the December, 1971 publication, a veteran wrote a poem to express his contempt with the government:

Pull down those presidents  
That are at War.  
We are not at War.  
Let the presidents who are at War

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid

<sup>185</sup>“VVAW: Where We Came From, Who We Are.” Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

Kill each other.  
 Let's let the congressmen who voted 80 billion dollars  
 For War  
 Go without food  
 And clothing  
 And let them kill  
 Each other  
 Too.  
 Give them big cheap  
 Steel knives  
 To make it  
 Easier  
 To cut  
 Each other's balls off  
 So that the War will not be passed  
 Down from generation  
 To generation  
 Forever.<sup>186</sup>

This poem is full of anger for what the author perceived as a pointless War. This veteran's frustrations points to the hypocrisy of these powerful men who proclaim Wars, but never have to witness the atrocities the veterans are witnessing. It is so easy for congress and the president to support this War behind the comfort of their desks and send thousands to die. It was stories like this, which protested the War, but also gave a voice to veterans and a platform where they could explain their reasoning behind their protest. In a letter titled, "Odyssey for Peace", former veteran, Larry Rottman summarized the point to these publications,

Perhaps the most important points we have made is to help prove that concerned and dedicated people in the movement, can and do have a role, however small, in helping

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<sup>186</sup>VVAW. "An Eastlake POME." *The Veteran*, December 1971. <http://www.vvaw.org/veteran/article/?id=1017>.

shape world opinion. Many have gone before us, and the only precedent we set was that of being the first contingent of veterans of an ongoing War to publicly denounce that War on an international scale. It seemed the very least we could do.<sup>187</sup>

This is what grassroots groups stand for; finding a cause and believing their efforts will impact change. VVWA hold a significant role in the Anti-War movement. In a *New York Times* article, VVWA founder discussed the role veterans played in educating the public,

We know, because we have been there, that the American public has not been told the truth about the War or about Viet-Nam...We believe that true support for our buddies still in Viet-Nam is to demand that they be brought home...before anyone else dies in a War the American people did not vote for and do not want.<sup>188</sup>

These veterans' position on the War said a lot about the political climate in the country during this time. These veterans were government employees who had been on the ground fighting this War, however, they came together and wrote Anti-War statements, marched to their legislators and demanded answers while admitting they were the ones who committed the crimes in the Winter Solider Investigation. This level of involvement from the men who were the most impacted by this War exemplified a bold protest group, which utilized the boldness depicted by the Civil Rights groups who sacrificed everything to fight for their rights.

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<sup>187</sup>Rottman, Larry. "Odyssey For Peace." *The Veteran*, December 1971.  
<http://www.vvaw.org/veteran/article/?id=1011>.

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## Conclusion

The Civil Rights, Women's Liberation and Anti-War movements erupted one after another between the mid 1950s and mid 1970s. This thesis evaluated the influence the Civil Rights movement possessed over the Women's and Anti-War movements through their shared protest methodology focusing on lobbying, public demonstrations and forms of publications. However, these movements did not just happen. Their existence was strategically enabled through the diligent work of grassroots groups. These organizations were the backbone of each movement and required passion, coordination and strong leadership. The three movements each formed to battle their own issues, however, their issues all shared one commonality. Oppression was at the root of each barrier they faced. Whether it was white supremacy, the patriarchy, or United States' government and its lack of empathy toward foreign people or its own, The Civil Rights, Women Liberation and Anti-War groups were fighting for their own advocacy.

The mid 1950s to the mid 1970s saw the formation of some of the most influential changes within social and political construct of the United States. Amendments that stated the end of sex and racially based discrimination, or the public testimony of veterans describing the War crimes occurring in Vietnam were just some of the influential changes of success brought fourth from forms of powerful protests. The interconnectedness comes not only from the shared fight against oppression, but the role of specific leaders who advocated for multiple movements. Dr. Martin Luther King, Pauli Murray, and Stokely Carmichael were some of the most impactful leaders of the Civil Rights movement, however their influence was far reaching into the Women's Liberation and the Anti-War movements.

It was not one form of protest which characterized each grassroots group, but the convergence of tactics utilizing political pressure, public demonstrations and publications which aimed their goals at one or more of the following: unifying their followers, educating the masses and/or garnering the public and government's attention in order to demand change. The Civil Rights groups each utilized at least one of the protest methods focusing on achieving one of the goals listed above and through their successful

ability to create change and impact the national dialogue surrounding these issues, they heavily influenced the Women's and Anti-War groups in their efforts to protest.

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