**Hollitz, Chapter 10: “History and Popular Memory: The Civil Rights Movement”**

Because this homework will take the place of a full class session, it should take you a full two hours to complete. Your answers should be thoughtful and comprehensive, and show a careful reading of each document, as well as a careful synthesis of the documents as a whole.

This chapter examines the \*popular memory\* of the civil rights movement, rather than the usual history of the movement’s \*leaders\*. The chapter is meant to get us thinking about how popular culture can influence our views of the past. The Hollitz exercise should help you understand that “the way we frame our view of the past – the process by which events are selected, emphasized, and presented – is never objective.” It will also help demonstrate how our own personal choices – “whether we choose to look at history from the ‘top down’ or the ‘bottom up’ will determine the past that we see.” This view, in turn, will determine what lessons we learn from history.

**Please answer all of the questions below. Label each of your answers by the same numbers I have used here.**

First, read the entire chapter introduction and the paragraphs labeled “Setting” and “Investigation” (pgs. 247-251). Then read all of the documents in order, answering as you go the corresponding questions below for each individual document or grouping of documents:

1. **Read the Secondary Source, “I’ve Got the Light of Freedom,” by Charles M. Payne, including the paragraph (marked by a large “1”) introducing this document. (p. 252-258)**
   1. **What does Payne see as the most important effects, and lessons, of the SNCC/COFO Mississippi organizing activity?**
      1. Black Greenwood was “much behind the movement […] It was one of the decade’s earliest successful campaigns in the rural south… (253)”
      2. With the adoption of Freedom Schools it provided the African American community a quality education, one where they could further their race intellectually and challenge the predisposed idea that they were inferior.
   2. **What roles do Martin Luther King, Jr. and other civil rights \*leaders\* play in these efforts?**
      1. Because Dr. King and others had such a reputation in the civil rights movement, unless you were popular on a regional or national level most didn’t care to listen to what you said. This caused many driven, smart and influential AMs to never be heard outside of their local / regional area of which they were known.
   3. **What are the main goals of the Mississippi organizers?**
      1. The idea was to encourage as many people as possible to vote by affidavit. COFO people would serve as poll watchers. Pg. 254
   4. **What accounts for/explains the distortions in the popular accounts (ie, meaning by ordinary people rather than leaders) and media accounts of the civil rights movement, according to Payne?**
      1. The press was much more interested in what happened to whites instead of AMs. Pg. 257
      2. It wasn’t until white students from Yale and Stanford came did it become a “story.” Pg. 257
      3. “Scholarly and popular histories of the movement have […] reflected the same underlying analytical frames as did contemporaneous media.” Pg. 257
         1. Due to the lack of media and scholars covering more local stories, only the largest and grandest of events and speakers, we didn’t get an accurate representation of the events.
      4. This has begun to change according to the article within the last decade, so mid-late 1980s after taking into account when it was written is when more of the story started to get heard.
2. **Primary Source 2:**
   1. **According to Ella Jo Baker’s account, why did SNCC move from sit-ins to other activities?**
      1. At first they were concerned with the segregation of public accommodations.
      2. As “youngsters” had not considered the power structure, they realized that they needed to change how they approached things.
   2. **What were its goals?**
      1. “To change society so that the have-nots can share in it…” pg 259
      2. This was not focused on race, although we may view it as such, but rather the SNCC was “concerned with all excluded people.” Pg. 260
   3. **How was it different from other organizations?**
      1. They had Northern support in the masses and had substantial success from the start with their sit-ins.
3. **Primary Source 3:**
   1. **Explain Moore’s early involvement with the NAACP and later with SNCC?**
      1. Moore left the Army in 1946 and in 1951 he was elected the NAACP president despite never having attended a meeting.
      2. The SNCC he found was better suited for himself. The NAACP was focused on the legal aspect of things whereas the SNCC was for “business, live or die, sink or swim, survive or perish.” Pg 263
4. **Primary Source 4:**
   1. **What response did SNCC’s civil rights organizing draw from white Mississippians?**
      1. Whites used their power to beat or arrest individuals who represented the SNCC. Just about every few days someone who was involved with the SNCC was beat or arrested. Pg. 265
5. **Primary Source 5:**
   1. **How did Fannie Lou Hamer respond to the voter registration campaign carried out by SNCC?**
      1. Lou Hamer had been beaten down emotionally throughout the entire journey. After failing once, on the second try Fannie passed the test.
6. **Now, for the entire section labeled “SNCC and the Early Efforts to Organize Mississippi” (which began on pg. 259), answer the following questions by \*\*assessing Sources 2-5 as a whole\*\*:**
   1. **What do these primary sources (Sources 2-5) reveal about the differences between SNCC and other civil rights organizations?**
      1. The SNCC was incredibly dedicated to the same individuals who needed their help becoming registered voters.
      2. The SNCC had substantial white northern support relative to other civil rights organizations during the time.
   2. **What do they demonstrate about the obstacles confronting those who challenged the racial status quo?**
      1. They demonstrate through education that they can accomplish their end goal of getting more African Americans to be allowed to vote. They also provided the manpower to organize large-scale operations such as busing individuals on a consistent schedule to make sure that, even if it takes numerous attempts, that they will have the ability to have their voice heard.
   3. **What impact did this early organizing have?**
      1. The SNCC had gained the attention of local individuals and politicians. This had a backfire though because those individuals abused their power and arrested or beat many of their supporters, volunteers and individuals who were taking part in their activities.
   4. **Why was SNCC more effective at grassroots organizing than other civil rights organizations, according to these participants in early civil rights activity?**
      1. The SNCC was more effective at grassroots organizing because they were relatable, didn’t do things behind closed doors and were inviting to everyone.
7. **Primary Source 6:**
   1. **Why did Dennis think white students should be brought to Mississippi to carry out the voter registration campaign?**
      1. Dennis had a revolutionary viewpoint, others wouldn’t care if a thousand AMs showed up but they would if they were white and going against the principles that other “whites” had so passionately upheld over the years.
8. **Primary Source 7:**
   1. **What did Guyot believe was the only protection from white violence?**
      1. He saw the only protection from white violence was from the federal government.
         1. “We oughta be having more help from the federal government” pg. 272
9. **Primary Source 8:**
   1. **What does this letter demonstrate about the civil rights workers’ goals, and about the obstacles they confronted?**
      1. The goals were to educate the AMs of their rights. However, due to trespassing laws and the ability for a landholder to shoot if someone is on their premise they felt it was dangerous to try and talk to AMs who were close to white individuals by proximity.
10. **Primary Source 9:**
    1. **What \*broader\* impact did the Freedom Summer schools have on many black students, \*beyond\* the simple tasks of teaching writing, reading, and arithmetic?**
       1. They taught basic nutrition, history of AM individuals and found ways to bring together a community through an educational program.
       2. They educated individuals about their rights, protected by the laws of the United States. They had been withheld these teachings in other primary schools.
11. **Now, for the entire section labeled “Freedom Summer” (which began on pg. 269), answer the following by \*\*assessing Sources 6-9 as a whole\*\*:**
    1. **What do these sources reveal about the reasons for the Freedom Summer, the broader goals of its organizers, and the dangers and obstacles confronting the participants?**
       1. The Freedom Summer had a life-changing goal in mind for each pupil. They provided safe access to education, taught life skills and empowered those who felt powerless.
12. **Primary Document 11:**
    1. **What did Fannie Lou Hamer learn from her experiences at the Democratic National Convention in 1964?**
       1. “We have to build our own power. We have to win every single political office we can, where we have a majority of black people.” Pg. 277
       2. “If the white man gives you anything – just remember when he gets ready he will take it right back. We have to take for ourselves.” Pg. 277
13. **Primary Document 12:**
    1. **According to his 1966 essay “What We Want,” what exactly did Stokely Carmichael mean by the slogan “black power” (a rallying cry that whites found very threatening)?**
       1. Black power can be defined “for those who do not attach the fears of white America to their questions about it.”
       2. These individuals were not afraid to stand up for what they believed in, unalienable rights as given to us by our founding fathers.
       3. By encouraging African Americans to vote for their own race they felt that if they won power, say at the sheriff level, through representation of their own race they could end police brutality. This benefits all parties involved.
14. **Now, for the entire section labelled “SNCC and Political Change” (which began on pg. 275), answer the following by \*\*assessing Sources 10-12 as a whole\*\*:**
    1. **What do sources 10-12 reveal about the reasons that such SNCC activists as Stokely Carmichael became advocates of “black power” later in the 1960s?**
       1. As violence increased during the 1960s African Americans became more passionate about their cause. They wanted to take over the political aspect of the United States, and if we have learned anything in the last few decades, they made considerable progress.
    2. **Did such a position represent a radical change for SNCC?**
       1. No. The SNCC was rooted to change how those who were excluded could be represented. By encouraging taking political positions that still was aligned with their goals.
15. **All of the Primary Sources in this chapter reflect the \*personal memories\* of those involved in the civil rights movement. Considered as a whole, do the Primary Sources support Payne’s argument in Source #1 (the Secondary Source), that journalists and historians have distorted our \*collective\* memory of the black struggle for equality by focusing too narrowly on civil rights \*leaders\*? Explain your answer.**
    1. Absolutely! While I would not consider myself a history buff by any means, I had never heard of most everyone in these passages. These individuals seemed to have a positive change in the civil rights movement but were marginalized by those who we most recognize such as Dr. King.
16. **Finally, putting it all together:**
    1. **What do all of these sources together (including the Secondary Source by Paine as well as the Primary Sources) reveal about the goals of the civil rights movement in the early 1960s? To what extent were the goals of those involved in the early 1960s achieved?**
       1. In the early 1960s the goal was to change the segregation that was happening. The civil rights movement made a positive stride towards achieving these goals but we also still see racism within our country at both a citizen and political level. Examples such as Ferguson and Trayvon Martin come to light as examples of where there is still work to be done by not just Caucasians but also African Americans. To achieve the goals of the civil rights movement all parties have to be willing to agree, without that we’ll be stuck in the same political state we are in now.
    2. **What do all of the sources together reveal about the most important obstacles confronting the civil rights movement, including also, divisions within the movement itself?**
       1. The corruption and abuse of power within the elected officials. Without representation at the local, state and federal level they would forever be marginalized by their peers. Within the movement you had those who took the violent approach and those who took the non-violent approach. Even with the non-violent approach, although it later changed, sit-ins were a nuisance and offered little positive views of African Americans. By changing their stance to become more about empowering the individuals and educating them they provided a foundation for those who thought lower of them to finally view them as higher beings and “worthy” of their acceptance.
    3. **How does a “bottom-up” approach offer a different view of the black struggle from one that focuses more on the movement’s leaders (like Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, etc.)? How did the sources in this chapter alter YOUR views about the civil rights movement?**
       1. I was happy to learn more about those whom rarely get recognized for their contributions to the civil rights movement. Gaining a better understanding of the trials and tribulations of the individuals written about in these passages we all live in a better world. There is still progress to be made but where we are now is leaps and bounds of improvement compared to the 1960s.