



# MUSIC UNITES US

## Apartheid and the Struggle for Civil Rights United States and South Africa Lesson Plan

These lesson plans are offered in preparation for the October 18, 2004 MUUS program *Civil Rights: Songs of Hope and Struggle*. African-American singer, songwriter, and educator **Jane Sapp** collaborates with South African musician, educator, and peace activist **Stompie Selibe** in a program of freedom songs that speak out against inequality, racism, and injustice. With words that express anger and hurt, courage and dreams, strength and hope, this music inspired and united oppressed people, accompanying them in their long march toward freedom.

**Jane Sapp**, African American educator, musician, performer, and songwriter has made a career as an activist, working in civil rights, and community organizing. She has worked for the past twenty-five years to develop techniques that help the silenced find their voices through the arts.

**Stompie Selibe** is a South African artist, musician and art educator. He is deeply committed to empowering disadvantaged individuals and communities in South Africa and has been involved in several South African outreach programs in the areas of education, health and poverty relief. His work in Africa promotes reconciliation in divided communities through African drumming, music, and song.

*This unit is offered as a resource and may be broken down four individual lesson plans: Lesson I, Lesson II, Part 1, Lesson II, Part 2, and Supplement Lesson. For the specific purpose of preparing for the MUUS program, the following is recommended:*

*If only one time slot is available, teach Lesson One(see pages 4,5)*

*If two slots are available, add Lesson Two, Part II, for direct comparison between the American Civil Rights Movement and the South African Anti-Apartheid Movement.*

*The Supplement Lesson is a very powerful closing lesson which includes (for MUUS teachers) a cd with selected freedom songs from each Movement, provided by MUUS.*

Special thanks to Teaching Tolerance for the video *A Time for Justice* and its accompanying lesson plan. These materials are free and available upon request by schools, homeschool networks, teachers' colleges, religious organizations and nonprofit organizations that work with youth. [www.teachingtolerance.org/resources](http://www.teachingtolerance.org/resources)

## **Apartheid and the Struggle for Civil Rights United States and South Africa**

There are three lessons included in this unit:

**Lesson One:** America's Civil Rights Movement

**Lesson Two:** Apartheid and the Struggle for Freedom in South Africa

**Supplement Lesson:** Songs of Freedom

### **Unit Goals:**

1. To become familiar with the history of Civil Rights movement in the United States
2. To become familiar with the history of apartheid in South Africa, apartheid as a legally sanctioned system of racial segregation, and the fight for freedom and Majority Rule in South Africa
3. To experience the unifying power of the freedom songs and to understand their role in the anti-apartheid Movements in both countries

### **Unit Reflections:**

1. What were the goals of the Movements? What did they have in common, and how were they different?
2. Why did the Movements succeed?
3. What are some struggles for civil rights today?



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**Materials:**

*for the American Civil Rights lesson:*

**Multimedia Kit from Teaching Tolerance.** [www.teachingtolerance.org/resources](http://www.teachingtolerance.org/resources)

VHS film (38 minutes): *A Time For Justice: America's Civil Rights Movement*

The video, narrated by Julian Bond and produced by Academy Award-winning documentary filmmaker Charles Guggenheim, uses the voices of movement participants and historical photography to tell the story of the movement from 1954 to 1965.

Publication (108 pages with text and photos – good teachers' resource with significant historical events and short biographies for extended lesson plans): *Free at Last: A History of the Civil Rights Movement and Those Who Died in the Struggle*

Lesson plans, with one-day plan, 3-day plan, and 7 day unit plan. These excellent plans challenge students to understand the fundamental democratic principles behind the civil rights movement, to identify with the sacrifices that were made, and to reflect on the meaning of individual sacrifice.

**CD with selections of songs from the Civil Rights movement.** An excellent resource is the double-cd reissue of *The Voices of the Civil Rights Movement: Black American Freedom Songs 1960-1966*, put out by Smithsonian Folkways Recordings ([www.si.edu/folkways](http://www.si.edu/folkways))

*for the Apartheid and the Struggle for Freedom in South Africa lesson:*

**Maps**

world map

map of modern African nations

map of Africa showing European division of Africa at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

source documents, taken from Gaines: [Nelson Mandela and Apartheid in World History](#)

**CD with selections of songs from the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa.** An excellent resource is *South African Freedom Songs*, put out by Making Music Productions ([www.music.org.za/freedomsongs](http://www.music.org.za/freedomsongs)). This double-cd set includes a documentary containing interviews with Robben Island veterans, exiles, activists, and politicians. There are interviews with Desmond Tutu and veteran ANC leader Walter Sisulu. The documentary explores the power of the freedom songs, and the influences that contributed to both their creation and their popularity. The music cd contains 25 selections.

## Lesson One: America's Civil Rights Movement

**Objective:** Students will understand the fundamental democratic principles behind the civil rights movement and reflect on the meaning of individual sacrifice.

*This is Teaching Tolerance's One Day Lesson Plan, developed by Lori Punske, M.ED, designed by Susan Hulme/Wright. See Materials for acquiring video and publications*

### Introduce the video tape.

*Suggested reading (students may read aloud):*

"Imagine being unable to eat or sleep in most restaurants or hotels; being unable to sit where you wanted in a movie theater; having to sit in the back when you boarded a bus, even an empty one; being forced to attend an inferior school; and even being forbidden to drink from certain water fountains. These were the facts of everyday life for all black people in the Southern part of the United States as recently as 1960. They were citizens of a country founded on the principle that all people were created equal. yet, they were treated unequally, and declared unequal by law.

In the middle 1950's, a movement of ordinary women and men arose to challenge this way of life. Using boycotts, marches and other forms of protest, they ultimately forced the South to end its peculiar system of legalized segregation. They succeeded because, in a democracy, when the people speak, the government must listen.

The video you are about to see will describe the conditions that blacks were forced to live under in the South, and the risks they took to win equality. The pictures you'll see are actual historical photographs. The voices you hear are those of people who participated in the movement. As you watch, pay attention to the kinds of obstacles these people were up against and ask: what values were so important that they were willing to die for them?"

**Watch the video, *A time for Justice.* (38 minutes)**

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### Reflection

*Small group discussion, or use for homework (see below)*

1. **What were the goals of the movement?**

(The goals were to desegregate schools, restaurants, buses, and other public accommodations; to freely exercise the right to vote; and to win protection against intimidation, harassment, and violence – in general, to gain full and equal rights for black citizens.)

2. **What were the strategies of the movement participants?**

(They used boycotts, marches, sit-ins, mass meetings, and lawsuits. All of their strategies were based on nonviolence.)

3. **Why did the movement succeed?**

(The movement succeeded because it was based on the fundamental constitutional principles that all people are created equal and every citizen has a say in the democratic process. The movement had a great leader and a large, committed following. The contrast between the

nonviolence of the protesters and the injustice that they had to endure generated support for the movement. Most importantly, it succeeded because of individual commitment: the activists' willingness to risk their lives dramatized the importance of their cause and won them support from citizens throughout the country.)

4. **Given the chance to participate in any of the events of this movement, which events would you participate in and why?**

**Homework options**

1. Write a review of the film you saw today: *A Time for Justice*. Summarize the story, describe the segments or images that interested you most, and analyze why those segments were effective. Rate the film on a scale of one to five 'stars', and give reasons for your rating.
2. The film begins and ends with a picture of Jimmie Lee Jackson's tombstone. Jackson was a young man killed by a state trooper while he tried to protect his mother and grandfather during a voting rights march. Imagine you knew Jimmie Lee Jackson, and you were standing in that cemetery when his body was laid to rest. What are some of the thoughts you have? Write a diary entry for that day.
3. If you were going to plan a freedom ride anywhere in the world today, where would you travel, and what injustices would you protest?

**Enrichment**

The Teaching Tolerance publication *Free At Last: A History of the Civil Rights Movement and Those Who Died in the Struggle* (available free on request from Teaching Tolerance) includes profiles of forty people who gave their lives in the Civil Rights movement. Each profile is 2 pages long. Students may be asked to read a profile and create a first person 'autobiography' to read to the class. (Upper level)

In addition to the video *A Time for Justice* and its accompanying materials, Teaching Tolerance offers other videos, including *Mighty Times: The Legacy of Rosa Parks*, *A Place at the Table: Struggles for Equality in America*, *The Shadow of Hate: A History of Intolerance in the U.S.*, and more. These are available to schools, homeschool networks, teachers' colleges, religious organizations, and nonprofit organizations that work with youth.

Other videos:

*Martin Luther King Jr.: I Have a Dream*, an MPI release. (aprox. 25 minutes)

*Biography: Martin Luther King, Jr. – The Man and the Dream*, from A& E's award winning series. (aprox. 50 minutes)

See Materials for cds used in this lesson plan.

Resource books for students:

Levine, Ellen. *If You Lived at the Time of Martin Luther King*. Scholastic, Inc. New York. 1990. (level 3)

Parks, Rosa. *I am Rosa Parks*. Puffin Books, published by Penguin. New York. 1997. (level 3)

Turck, Mary. *The Civil Rights Movement for Kids: A History With 21 Activities*. Chicago Review Press. Chicago. 2000. (for ages 9 and up)

## Lesson Two: Apartheid and the Struggle for Freedom in South Africa

*This lesson is in two parts: History of South Africa before 1948, and History of the struggle against apartheid after 1948.*

### Objectives:

To learn the history of European minority rule in South Africa

To learn about the policy of apartheid in South Africa

To learn about the struggle against apartheid in South Africa

### Introduction:

*Find out what the students know of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, apartheid.*

We are used to democracy and the idea of Majority Rule. What would it feel like to us if some outside group of people from another country decided that they would: take control of all our resources, take our best land, making us live only in designated areas, deny us the right to travel freely, deny us a good education, deny us good jobs,...and then they created a government that made laws to keep us 'in our place', making all these rules legal? This is what happened to people in Africa - slowly and painfully over hundreds of years. The struggle against apartheid is the story of a people taking back what was theirs: the land, the country, and their lives.

*Apartheid: an Afrikaans word meaning "separation" or literally "apart-hood: (or apartness). In English, it has come to mean any legally sanctioned system of racial segregation, such as existed in South Africa between 1948 and 1990. The first recorded use of the word was in 1917 during a speech by Jan Smuts, who became Prime Minister of South Africa in 1919.<sup>1</sup>*

### Part I: History of South Africa before 1948

*This part of the lesson outlines how the stage was set for implementation of the policies of apartheid in South Africa. It is valuable to compare this history to the history of slavery leading up to the Civil War. Much of this lesson is directly drawn (quoted, excerpted, paraphrased) from the excellent resource: Nelson Mandela and Apartheid in World History, by Ann Graham Gaines.*

### Where is South Africa?

*Have students locate Africa. Have them locate Europe, India, East Indies, China. Have them trace out a possible water route from Europe around Africa to the East Indies. "The route to the East Indies was what European explorers were searching for at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, when some ended up in North America, in 1492. They wanted to come back with their ships filled with spices and other riches. The voyages around Africa and its eventual European colonization, and the accidental discovery of the (already populated) Americas was disastrous to native Africans. Those that weren't taken as slaves had their lands and rights taken away from them, natives without a country.*

*Have the students find South Africa. Note that Africa is a continent, made up of many (54) countries. Within each country are many clans and tribes, speaking many different languages. South Africa is large, both in terms of its size and its population. In 1990, SA had a population of approximately 40 million. Of these, 35 million were black and 5 million were white. Despite the much larger number of blacks, for many years, the white minority held all political power. Have students work out the ratio of 35 to 5, or 7 to 1 (if there are 24 students in the class, 21 one would be on one side, 3 on the other. In the case of apartheid SA, the 3 would dictate the rights of the 21.*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/Apartheid>

### **Europeans arrive in South Africa**

*Ask students if they can name any of the countries in Africa. Have students locate South Africa on modern map of Africa.*

The Portuguese were the first to arrive in what would become the nation of South Africa. They had finally succeeded in sailing around Africa to the Indies. The natives they met were the Khoikhoi, or Hottentots. The Portuguese weren't interested in colonizing Africa, only getting around it. They didn't know of the riches, (gold and diamonds) that would later interest European empire builders.

The story of European control over Africa began in earnest when the white Dutch and English took over the spice trade in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. They began to build small settlements along the coast so that their ships could stop for supplies. The Dutch settlers were first; they would become known as the Boers or Afrikaners, and they began to develop their own language, called Afrikaans.

The slave trade had already been established at this point (the first slave ships arrived in North America in 1619), and slaves were brought to South Africa as well, from other parts of Africa, Madagascar, Indonesia, India, and Ceylon. The European settlers used slaves to build roads and do other public works. Officials and well-to-do people came to depend on slaves to work in their houses, get wood and water, and plant gardens. Slaves worked in the fields on farms and plantations. (By 1708, there were more than one thousand slaves in the colony. In 1793, the population of SA was 30,000. Of that number, nearly half were slaves.)

When the Dutch settlers first arrived in 1652, the African natives (the Khoikhoi) were not particularly affected by them, but then the white farmers began to move beyond the colony's boundaries, killing as they went, claiming the land as their own. Two factors contributed toward a losing battle for the native people (Khoikhoi and the Xhosa): the Dutch had guns, and they brought the deadly disease smallpox with them.

### **Who would rule?**

The British arrival and capture of the Dutch Cape Colony in 1796 marked the beginning of a long series of battles over the rule of South Africa. While the Dutch and British fought over the Cape Colony, the Xhosa continued to challenge the white settlers. Throughout this period, Europeans viewed the black natives as inferior, but pressure from Christian missionaries resulted in The 50<sup>th</sup> Ordinance (1828) which granted civil rights to *free* non-whites. Eventually, with the British Parliament in London ruling that all slavery in the British empire be ended, and that lands from the newly created province in SA be given back to the natives, the Dutch Afrikaners had had enough. They moved into the land that they had previously pushed the natives into...in a migration that came to be known as the Great Trek. The Zulu people fought hard to keep their land, but the Afrikaners were able to establish their own republics in the interior."<sup>2</sup>

A pattern emerged. The Afrikaners (Boers) would take over native land, pushing the native inhabitants out, the British would claim these new Afrikaners' territories, and the Afrikaners would move on, further into native land. With the discovery of diamonds and gold came more competition to control South Africa. Fierce wars between the Afrikaners and British (the first and second Boer Wars) finally resulted (in 1902) in victory for the British.

"The wars had taken a tremendous toll on black South Africans. Estimates of the number of blacks who fought for the British are as high as thirty thousand. More than one hundred

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<sup>2</sup> direct quotes, excerpts and paraphrasing are taken from this excellent resource: Gaines, Ann Graham. 2001. Nelson Mandela and Apartheid in World History. Enslow Publishers, Inc. NJ.



thousand blacks who had been living under the Afrikaner government also ended up in concentration camps. And because the reform-minded British were afraid the Afrikaners would not sign the peace treaty if blacks were given equal status, blacks were denied the right to vote, except for in the Cape Colony.

In 1911, the total population of SA was 6 million. White people numbered 1.3 million. The population included half a million colored (mixed race) and 200,000 Indians. The majority, black Africans, numbered 4 million. South Africa, the rule of which had been divided between the Dutch Afrikaners and the British, was unified through a slow process that took from 1902 to 1910 to complete. Finally the British Parliament passed the South Africa Act, the law that made the several colonies of SA into one independent country. White South Africans rejoiced. For black South Africans, however, this was not a time of hope.

*Discussion topic: review the history of European arrival in North America. What happened to the natives as the Europeans settled? How did France, Spain, and England, the primary colonizers split of the territories? What was the prevailing attitudes toward the native American Indians?*

*Look at the map showing the European division of Africa in the early twentieth century. This was all minority rule.*

### **Segregation**

The Union Constitution spelled out a native policy, one approved by the extremist Afrikaners, those who were most interested in seeing black South Africans treated differently than white South Africans. The constitution made sure the new country's society would be a segregated one. Only a few black people would be allowed to vote, and only white men could serve in Parliament. Over the decades that followed, segregation would increase. Laws would say where black South Africans could live, what schools they could attend, and what jobs they could hold. They would have little freedom.

*Discussion topic: why is the right to vote so important?*

### **The Beginnings of Organized Political Resistance**

The South African government made it very difficult for black South Africans to fight segregation. Three political organizations were founded in the early 1900s to try to improve the lives of those groups facing segregation. Coloreds founded the African Political Organization, Indians formed the South African Indian Congress, and in 1912, blacks founded the South African Native National Congress. This group would later be called the African National Congress (ANC).

*Read through some of the main points in the beginning of the ANC's constitution (source document).*

In the beginning, the ANC's constitution specifically stated that it would work within the law. It listed as its main concerns, the 'educational, social, economic, and political elevation of the native people in South Africa'. In 1941, inspired by the international Atlantic Charter (signed by Churchill and FDR) which supported the rights of all individuals, the members of the ANC wrote their own charter, called the African Claims. It demanded citizenship for all Africans, and it called for blacks to be allowed to own land in South Africa. It was shortly after this, in 1943, that the young Nelson Mandela, who would become a hero of the anti-apartheid movement, came to the fore. He helped to establish a Youth League, an organization of young black men dedicated to African nationalism. They wanted to unite the various black tribes living in South Africa and overthrow the white government. The Youth League hoped to gain control of the entire ANC, forcing it to become a much more radical organization than in the past.



## **Part II: The Anti-Apartheid movement after 1948**

*Compare this history with the history of the Civil Rights movement in the US. Although the civil rights goals were shared, there were different strategies along the way. For example, compare SA's version of apartheid with the Jim Crow laws and the notion of 'separate but equal' in the US.*

### **The National Party and Apartheid Policies**

In 1948 the white Afrikaner National Party beat the United party. This was a crossroads for the official implementation of apartheid in South Africa. During their campaign, the Nationalists talked a lot about the 'black danger'. In office, they began to pass laws that created the new system called apartheid. Its roots stemmed from the decision the ruling Dutch and British officials had made years earlier to keep native Africans, slaves, and Colored people (mixed races) from having a voice in the colonial government. In the years that followed, the white settlers and their descendants kept control of the government, despite the fact that they made up a minority of the population. Not only did the National party want complete racial segregation, they went beyond the US policy of 'separate but equal'; instead, they pushed for a society 'in which the lighter your skin, the more benefits you received'. There would be four categories in this society: white, Indian, Colored, and African, or black. Whites got excellent public services, including schools, hospitals, parks, transportation, water, electricity, and sewage. Nonwhites did not get the same public services. Blacks were the most deprived.

Laws were passed. Mixed marriages were banned. Only Afrikaners could hold positions of authority in the government. All government employees had to speak both English and Afrikaans. People were issued ID cards that designated their race, and they were then required to live within their racial category. There were separate facilities for whites and nonwhites – post offices, trains, offices, beaches, parks, bus stops, benches, service counters, elevators – and people were uprooted from their homes, their land taken away according to the racial laws.

### **Resistance to the Policies of Apartheid**

From the beginning, many South Africans of all races were against apartheid. White South African churches issued statements against the new system. English-speaking students at white universities opposed apartheid. White women formed a protest group called the Black Sash. The Communist party tried to take away power from the Nationalists. But the ANC's Youth League would continue to be the most vocal protest group. When the National government, fearful of the power of the Communist party, drafted a new law called Suppression of Communism Act which banned almost all political protest, a number of groups, including the ANC banded together in the National Day of Protest, on June 26, 1950. This alliance between the Communist party and the ANC was to prove problematic in the years to come. In 1951, Nelson Mandela became president of the Youth League, and in 1952, he was elected president of the Transvaal branch of the ANC, with headquarters in Johannesburg. He was one of four ANC deputy presidents.

### **The new ANC and its 'Programme of Action'**

The early ANC had stressed moderation and had insisted that the group remain nonviolent. But the young ANC leaders, Mandela, Walter Sisulu, and Oliver Tambo were willing to risk everything to bring about change. They began a program of 'militant resistance'. Their first step was to cooperate with other South Africans fighting apartheid, forming the Joint Planning Council. When they went to the government with their request that the discriminatory laws be repealed, the prime minister replied that the government would not back down, and warned that, if troublemakers continued to resist government efforts to segregate South Africa society, the government would 'use the full machinery at its disposal to quell any disturbances'.

Protests began, as non whites went to 'whites only' areas, broke curfews, and further challenged the laws. Thousands were arrested, violence erupted, and the government fulfilled its promise to answer any threats to its control by disrupting prayer meetings, making arrests, and harassing

ANC leaders. In September 1953, the government ordered Mandela to give up his place in the ANC. Working from behind the scenes, he organized the Congress of the People, made up of non-whites and whites who were against apartheid. This group issued a document called the Freedom Charter. Despite its moderate tone, the government considered it subversive.

*Have students review the excerpt of the Freedom Charter (source document) and compare to the United States' Declaration of Independence.*

On December 5, 1956, the government ordered 156 people, including Nelson Mandela, arrested and charged with high treason. The trial would last for more than four years. During that period, Mandela and his codefendants were free on bail. They went about their daily lives, but had the threat of imprisonment always over their heads.

### **The Pressure Increases**

In the 1950's the ANC split. There was disagreement about whether enough was being done to fight apartheid; a new group headed by Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe was founded: the Pan-Africanist Congress. The PAC issued a call for protest on March 21, 1960, and fifteen thousand blacks answered the call by going out without their travel passes. Police opened fire on the protesters; sixty-seven of them died. Two days later, as part of a Day of Mourning led by the ANC, Mandela and Nokwe burned their own passes at a meeting attended by hundreds of people and recorded by dozens of photographers. The ANC put together a protest strike. The world reacted with horror to the news of the Sharpeville Massacre. Political leaders around the world began to pressure the South African government to abolish apartheid.

The government reacted strongly to the growing resistance. Strikers were beaten, a state of emergency was declared, the ANC and PAC were outlawed, and martial law was established. Thousands were arrested, including Mandela. The ANC and PAC sent some of their leaders out of the country so they could continue to lead in safety. After Mandela was tried unsuccessfully for treason, he announced he would be going underground as well. In the months that followed, the South African police tried and failed to capture Mandela. He used different disguises and lived on the run.

### **Violence in the Movement**

***'Over 300 years ago the white invaders began a ceaseless war of aggression against us, murdered our forefathers, stole our land and enslaved our people. Today they still rule by force. They murder our people. they still enslave us. Only by meeting force with force can we win back our motherland.'*<sup>3</sup>**

By this time, some black leaders in South Africa had decided that nonviolence was not working. They founded a new underground organization called Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation). Its goal was to sabotage government works. Mandela organized a guerrilla army of volunteers which bombed power plants and government buildings. Two hundred such actions took place before the government finally shut them down. Mandela asked for support from a group that later would be known as the Organization of African Unity, whose goal was to support liberation throughout Africa, and visited other countries to gain support for the struggle against apartheid. *What were the risks/gains for the Movement in using violence as a tool?*

### **Nelson Mandela Caught**

In August 1962, Mandela was captured. He was tried and received a sentence of five years. In 1963, more charges were brought, in spite of the fact that most of the acts he was accused of

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<sup>3</sup> Gaines, 2001. p. 87. The quote is from a source document put out by the militant wing of the ANC, Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation).

happened when he was in prison; he could not have been involved. By this time, forty prisoners had been sentenced to death, another thousand received prison sentences of one to twenty-five years. In 1964, Mandela and seven other defendants were given sentences of life imprisonment.

On Robben Island life was hard. The prisoners had to perform manual labor, pounding stones into gravel. They were not allowed to have visitors, receive letters, or read newspapers. Only occasionally could a message get out.

### **The Fight Goes On**

In spite of the use of force by the government to stop the resistance, the fight continued. The efforts to break up organizations by imprisoning their leaders backfired; a new generation of black South Africans became involved in the movement. In 1968, a college student named Steve Biko formed the new South African Students' Organization. His statements and writing brought a new 'black consciousness' to the movement: 'Black consciousness is in essence the realization by the black man of the need to rally together with his brothers around the cause of their subjection – the blackness of their skin – and to operate as a group in order to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude'<sup>4</sup>. Now, too, there was increasing pressure from foreign nations around the world. Britain warned it would not support South Africa if it continued to repress black nationalism. Responding in 1961, South Africa became a republic and formally left the British Empire. By 1965, Great Britain had transferred power to black nationalists in its former territories of Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Malawi, and Zambia. Other territories of Lesotho, Botswana, and Swaziland were also granted their independence. South Africa, retaining its cruel policy of apartheid, did not join these countries in their claim to freedom.

### **A Crime Against Humanity**

From 1952, the United Nations passed annual resolutions against apartheid. It called apartheid 'a crime against humanity'. The South African government tried to win support from other world leaders by claiming to be a stable, civilized country that was fighting communism, playing off the fears of the Cold War. The United States remained South Africa's main trading partner through the 1970's in spite of the exposed racist policies of apartheid. But human rights protesters complained strongly to companies that invested in SA. Gradually, those companies felt pressure to cut off trade, which many did.

*Discuss the conflict between economic interests and human rights interest. How effective are economic sanctions? Use contemporary comparisons and/or personal anecdotes from students.*

### **Nelson Mandela: Symbol of Freedom**

When the government offered to release Mandela in 1973, on their terms, he refused. He would only accept if he was truly free. He became a symbol of freedom for black South Africans. In 1979, India gave Mandela the Nehru prize for peace for his work. In 1981, several United States congressmen tried to see him, but the SA government refused. From France, seventeen thousand people signed a petition and sent it to the South African Embassy in France calling for Mandela's release. Oppressed people around the world looked to him for inspiration in their own struggles. The SA government began to feel the growing pressure to release Mandela and tried to negotiate with him, but he would not accept the government's terms. He remained so dedicated to the overthrow of apartheid that he gave up his personal freedom for the cause. He demanded to remain in prison until all blacks and other people of color in South Africa could be free.

*How/why might his choice make a difference? (Inspiration, world attention)*

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<sup>4</sup> Gaines. 2001. p. 95. Taken from Steve Biko's writings *I Write What I Like*.

### **Escalated Violence**

In the mid-1970's, the Afrikaners in charge of the government realized that the nation of South Africa was in a crisis. The country's economy was in trouble. Workers were becoming militant. Violence was spreading. South Africa was feeling increased pressure from the international community, for government condemnation, business withdrawals, and boycotts of all kinds. Finally in 1985, both Great Britain and the United States imposed economic sanctions on South Africa, squeezing the economy even further.

The president at the time, Pieter Willem Botha, head of the National Party was worried about the international efforts to overturn the system. He tried to weaken anti-apartheid efforts within the country by dividing the different non-white constituencies and offering some of them government privileges. He continued to oppress blacks, and of course this brought more protest and violence. On June 16, 1976, thousands of black school children who did not want to be taught in Afrikaans, as the law demanded, held a huge demonstration in Soweto. The police were called in to break up their protest. The police resorted to violence, picking up guns and using tear gas to break up the crowd. A thirteen year old child was shot and killed. In the months that followed, the government continued their harsh measures; police and soldiers killed 575 people, including 494 Africans, 75 Coloreds, and one Indian. Secret police brutalized anti-apartheid activists, organizations were banned, and leaders of the resistance jailed. Steven Biko, the leader of a new generation of freedom fighters died while in police custody, as a result of injuries to the head. Human rights activists throughout the world were shocked. Violence escalated as members of banned organizations trained themselves in guerrilla tactics, armed themselves and fought back. During all this, the government tried to mask the worst of the atrocities from the world.

### **Nelson Mandela and Frederik Willem de Klerk: The End of Apartheid**

Mandela held firm to his commitment to freedom. He would not compromise even when his life was in danger. In 1988, soon after he had turned seventy, Mandela became sick with tuberculosis. He recovered, weakened by the illness, after months in the hospital. The government, which did not want a martyr on their hands moved him to a prison with improved conditions, and tried to arrange to have his family live with him, but Mandela would not have it. He wanted to be viewed as a prisoner, not as a leader with special treatment. As prisoner, all his correspondence continued to be censored.

In September of 1989, F. W. de Klerk became the president of South Africa. In his inauguration speech, he talked of his hopes for a nonviolent transition to a nonracial South Africa. He took many steps: he lifted the ban on the ANC, he opened the way for the drafting of a new constitution, he met with Mandela, and on February 2, 1990 he delivered an important address. He proposed reforms that would: lift the ban on all anti-apartheid groups, end minority white control of the government, ban execution of prisoners and grant exiles the permission to return home. He wanted to restore blacks' civil rights and end racial segregation.

On February 11, 1990, after twenty-seven years in prison, Nelson Mandela was released, a free man. In 1991, members of the ANC elected him the organization's president. On December 10, 1993, Nelson Mandela and F.W. de Klerk together accepted the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize, a historic moment that harkened back to another Nobel Prize-winner - in another country, from another struggle for freedom - Martin Luther King. In 1994 apartheid was officially ended in South Africa with a new constitution, one that would guarantee all citizens equal rights,

regardless of race. In the 1994 presidential election, the first election Nelson Mandela ever voted in, he was elected president of South Africa."<sup>5</sup>

### **The Next Step**

The anti-apartheid movement in South Africa was a civil rights movement, and ultimately a revolution - a prolonged war against an unjust government. However, in any revolution, the winning of it is only the first step. As with the Civil War in the United States, laws can be changed but internal racism and poverty with all its evils is much harder to eliminate. Today South Africa is faced with the challenge of creating and maintaining a democracy. Education, the economy, poverty especially in the rural areas, securing a position in global politics are just some of the many issues facing a country that is just beginning to see the effects of its long march to freedom.

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### **Reflections**

1. **How did the early history of South Africa (from the first European arrivals) set the stage for the policies of apartheid?**

(European dominance, largely achieved because of more advanced weaponry, resulted in minority white rule. Natural tribal boundaries and ways of governing were disrupted as the European countries divided up the continent of Africa into colonial territories, pushing blacks out of their homelands and away from the cities. Slavery was introduced, and gradually blacks were controlled in every aspect of their lives. The view that black people were inferior pervaded the Africaner government.)

2. **What were the goals of the movement?**

(The goals were to desegregate schools, restaurants, buses, and other public accommodations; to freely exercise the right to vote; and to win protection against intimidation, harassment, and violence – in general, to gain full and equal rights for black citizens.)

3. **Why did the movements succeed?**

(There was organization – of different oppressed groups in South Africa: blacks, coloreds, Indians, and whites against apartheid – and strong leadership. There was unity of purpose which resulted in large scale protest action. Peaceful and violent means were employed, both of which ultimately pushed the movement along. There was international attention and pressure on the South African government. There was support from religious groups. There was attention from the media. There were innumerable acts of courage of many unnamed individuals as well as leaders such as Nelson Mandela.)

### **Enrichment**

Strazzabosco, Jeanne. Learning About Forgiveness from the Life of Nelson Mandela. The Rosen Publishing Group's Power Kids Press. New York. 1996.

Gaines, Ann Graham. Nelson Mandela and Apartheid in World History. Enslow Publishers, Inc. New Jersey. 2001

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<sup>5</sup> direct quotes, excerpts and paraphrasing are taken from this excellent resource: Gaines, Ann Graham. 2001. Nelson Mandela and Apartheid in World History. Enslow Publishers, Inc. NJ.

## Supplement Lesson: Songs of Freedom

### Objectives:

To learn about the history and role of the freedom songs in America's Civil Rights Movement and South Africa's Anti-Apartheid Movement

To experience the unifying power of the songs firsthand

### Materials

CD with selections of songs from the Civil Rights movement. An excellent resource is the double-cd reissue of *The Voices of the Civil Rights Movement: Black American Freedom Songs 1960-1966*, put out by Smithsonian Folkways Recordings ([www.si.edu/folkways](http://www.si.edu/folkways)). It documents a central aspect of the cultural environment of the Civil Rights Movement, acknowledging songs as the language that focused people's energy. These 43 tracks are a series of authentic musical images, many recorded live, of a people in conversation about their determination to be free.

CD with selections of songs from the Anti-Apartheid Movement in South Africa. An excellent resource is *South African Freedom Songs*, put out by Making Music Productions ([www.music.org.za/freedomsongs](http://www.music.org.za/freedomsongs)). This double-cd set includes a documentary cd containing interviews with Robben Island veterans, exiles, activists, and politicians. There are interviews with Desmond Tutu and veteran ANC leader Walter Sisulu. The documentary explores the power of the freedom songs, and the influences that contributed to both their creation and their popularity. The music cd contains 25 selections.

### INTRODUCTION

If ever there was proof that *Music Unites Us*, it is with the Freedom Songs that accompanied and inspired freedom fighters in the struggle for civil rights, in the United States and in South Africa. The songs were sung in churches, meeting halls, jails, streets, the workplace; they are part of an oral tradition that teaches about the past, binds people together in their lives, and gives hope for a better future.

"The 'oral' in oral tradition speaks to the centrality and importance of the human voice in oral cultures. In its most basic sense, this oral tradition is about communication, as with the African 'talking drums'. Talking drums were used to relay messages from one village in Africa to the next. The high and low drum pitches approximated the high and low tones of tonal languages. The drum 'words' were really colloquial phrases that were highly conventionalized. These villages did not necessarily speak the same language, but kinship systems ensured that someone in the village could speak both languages and translate the message into that village's signal language for further transmission.

'Call and response' is another incarnation of the centrality of the human voice in oral cultures. The leader/group call and response models African community musical practices where a conversive communicative musical system supported and fueled egalitarianism, and placed high value on the freedom of individual singers to embellish the musical lines and tell their own story as it were. It is a conversation.

Oral tradition acts as a living conduit, passing down the 'cultural memory' of a people. Stories may be actual historical events, or parables that teach the values of a culture. Freedom songs served the communicative function of providing a common rhetoric for all those invested in the movement."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> with special thanks to Georgiary McElveen, Ph.D, Assistant Professor of Music, Tufts University.



## FREEDOM SONGS IN AMERICA

*Excerpted, quoted, and paraphrased from the liner notes for "Voices of the Civil Rights Movement" double cd set.<sup>7</sup>*

**"History has never known a protest movement so rich in song as the Civil Rights Movement. Nor a movement in which songs are as important. Martin Luther King called them "vital".** *Newsweek*, August 31, 1964<sup>8</sup>

SONG (1:56)

**"Freedom Medley"** consists of "Freedom Chant," "Oh, Freedom," and "This Little Light of Mine". "Oh, Freedom," a song from slavery, was used as a marching song by Blacks protesting the Atlanta race riots of 1906, and again in the 1930's by organizers of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union. Medleys (groups of songs connected in a steady stream of singing) of this sort were common during mass meetings in the Civil Rights Movement.

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Music has always been integral to the black American struggle for freedom. The music culture of the Civil Rights Movement was shaped by its central participants: black and Southern. The power of these songs manifested itself through the process of linking the tradition of oral expression with everyday Movement experiences.

**"...I sang and heard the freedom songs, and saw them pull together sections of the Black community at times when other means of communication were ineffective. It was the first time that I knew the power of song to be an instrument for the articulation of our community concerns. In Dawson, Georgia, county seat of "Terrible Terrell," where Blacks were seventy-five percent of the population, I sat in church and felt the chill that ran through a small gathering of Blacks when the sheriff and his deputies walked in. They stood at the door, making sure everyone knew they were there.**

**Thne a song began. And the song made sure that the sheriff and his deputies knew we were there. We became visible; our image was enlarged as the sounds of the freedom songs filled all the space in that church."** Singer and activist Bernice Johnson Reagon

SONG (3:03)

**"We Shall Overcome"** was the theme song of the Movement. Here it is sung at a mass meeting in Mississippi, 1964.

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## Styles and Traditions

Most Civil Rights Movement singing was congregational: songs sung unrehearsed in the tradition of Black American choral style. Black American choral style is the union of songleader and congregation: the commitment of singers, masters of their tradition, to speak both individually and in one voice. It is an outstanding example of the unity of group statements existing in total communion with the sanctity of individual expression.

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<sup>7</sup> *Voices of the Civil Rights Movement: Black American Freedom Songs 1960-1966*. Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. Center for Folklife Programs & Cultural Studies. Washington, DC. 1997

<sup>8</sup> "Without These Songs." *Newsweek*, August 31, 1964. p. 74



Traditionally, Black American congregational-style singing is initiated by a songleader. The qualities of a good songleader are both musical and organizational. Community gatherings are usually opened with song and prayer; the songleader is the galvanizer. A good songleader must manifest strength, energy, and enthusiasm that make a group want to serve as an icon of group consciousness for the whole community.

One of the strongest characteristics of the African and Black American song tradition is the call-and-response pattern. The songleader usually issues the call, and the group responds in alternating sequence. With origins in the 'talking drums' of Africa, which communicated important events and meetings across vast stretches of territories, this style served the same function for black communities all through the South during the Civil Rights Movement. These songs often had as their origin old Spirituals or Hymns, tunes that most of the congregation would be familiar with.

SONG (2:03)

**"Certainly, Lord"**

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The popular rhythm and blues style was also a source of inspiration for Civil Rights Movement songs.

SONG (2:30)

**"Dog, Dog"** This satirical song became a favorite for freedom singers. Using rhythm and blues motifs and the sound of the black gospel based barber-shop quartet style, the song tells a parable of two boys who lived next door to each other but could not play together because of the color of their skin. Their homes were separated by a fence, but the dogs could slip under the fence to play. The song asks: If dogs can get together, why can't we?

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**Political Statement**

The core of Civil Rights Movement songs was formed from the reservoir of the Black American traditional song repertoire and older styles of singing. From this, activist songleaders made a new music for a changed time. New lyrics were added, telling the story of the movement.

SONGS

**"Oh Pritchett, Oh Kelly"** (2:12) was originally a spiritual "Rockin Jerusalem". Bertha Gober and Janie Lee Culbreth created the new version while in jail in Albany, Georgia. The verses refer to Albany's Chief of Police Laurie Pritchett and Mayor Asa Kelly

**"In the Mississippi River"** (3:36) was written in the aftermath of the disappearance of three Civil Rights workers during the summer of 1964. As local rivers were dragged in search of the men, several other bodies were found.

**"Ballad of Medgar Evers"** (4:28) was composed after the murder of Medgar Evers, 1963, in Mississippi. By the time Evers was 28, he had lost a family friend to a lynch mob, had been turned away from a voting place by a gang of armed white men, and been denied admission to law school because he was black. He fought in World War II for his country. His courageous leadership in a drive for fair employment and integration made him a hero to blacks and a mortal enemy to whites in Jackson, Mississippi. On the night President Kennedy gave an important speech calling for a "great change", Evers was shot and killed in front of his home. An FBI investigation identified the killer, but typical for the time, Byron De La Beckwith was tried twice for murder; the two trials ended with deadlocked all-white juries unable to reach a verdict. Beckwith was finally convicted in 1994, based on new evidence that he had boasted about the

killing at a Ku Klux Klan rally. He was given a life sentence for murder and died in prison in 2001 of heart problems, while his case was still being appealed.<sup>9</sup>

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### **FREEDOM SONGS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

*Drawn and quoted from information supplied by documentary cd, part of "South African Freedom Songs" double cd set.<sup>10</sup>*

**"Without these freedom songs, our struggle would have been a great deal longer, a great deal bloodier, and perhaps not even successful."** South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Chairperson of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

SONG

**"Rolihlahla"** (2:14 - in English). *"Mandela says fight for freedom. We say away with slavery in our land of Africa."*

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**"At no time has the liberation movement not been singing. At no time has the liberation movement not been dancing. Everywhere, culture becomes a very central and a very important element in this act of rebellion, in this act of assertion that we are human".** Thabo Mbeki

South African freedom songs were instrumental in the liberation of South Africa; the songs sustained morale and commitment during the darkest days of repression. They were heard in churches, on marches, at meetings, and in the jails and prisons. Just as with the freedom songs in the American Civil Rights movement, these songs were drawn from the oral tradition, songs, and dances already familiar to black South Africans. Their unifying power was threatening to the South African government.

With origins in the African tribal war dances of the past, South African Toyi Toyi, a hop-step dance provided rhythm for the chants and freedom songs at protest meetings and marches. In the camps, it was a way for people to feel unity, and to keep fit. Particularly in the 1980's, it was popular in demonstrations. **"Song and toyi toyi featured as a weapon. That is what inspired people, inflamed people and was very much part of this massive avalanche that buried apartheid."** Ronnie Kasrils, Deputy Minister of Defense

SONG (1:15)

**"Toyi Toyi Beat"** (in Xhosa). *"Salute our leaders Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela, clap, knees up and quick march".*

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As in the American Civil Rights Movement, many people were imprisoned, brutalized, and killed in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. Vuyisile Mini (1920-1964) was a black South African freedom fighter, composer, and singer who gave his life in the struggle. Sentenced to death for allegedly ordering the killing of an informer, he subsequently rejected a reprieve offered him if he gave evidence against others. He, together with two other freedom fighters, went to the gallows singing his own song "Naants' indod' emnyama Vervoerd".

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<sup>9</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byron\\_De\\_La\\_Beckwith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byron_De_La_Beckwith)

<sup>10</sup> *South African Freedom Songs*. Mayibuye Centre, 2000. Distributed by Making Music Productions. [www.music.org.za/freedomsongs](http://www.music.org.za/freedomsongs).

SONG (1:30)

**"Naants' indod' emnyama Vervoerd"** (in Xhosa). *"Watch out Vervoerd/Vorster, the black man will get you."*

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The freedom songs of South Africa unified and galvanized. They also etched into the collective memory the events of the movement. On June 16, 1976, thousands of black school children who did not want to be taught in Afrikaans, as the law demanded, held a huge demonstration in Soweto. The police were called in to break up their protest. The police resorted to violence, picking up guns and using tear gas to break up the crowd. A thirteen year old child was shot and killed.

SONG (1:32)

**"Ha Ke Sheba"** (in South Sotho). *"When I look up at the mountains I remember June 16 in Soweto."*

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For black South Africans, the end of apartheid and the beginning of Majority Rule was the reclaiming of their land, their country, and the spirit of Africa.

SONG (2:06)

**"Nkosi Sikel' iAfrica"** (in Xhosa/Sotho). *"God bless Africa, exalted be its name. hear our prayers; Lord grant us your blessings, come spirit and bless us."*

### Reflections: Freedom Songs

Where were freedom songs sung?  
What were some of the traditions/origins of the songs?  
Why were the songs so powerful?  
What would freedom songs today be about?