**Chapter 29, Section 2: Challenging Segregation**

**I. The Sit-In Movement** *(pages 873–874)*

**A.** In 1960 four African Americans staged a sit-in at a Woolworth’s whites-only lunch counter. This led to a mass movement for civil rights. Soon sit-ins were occurring across the nation.

**B.** Students like **Jesse Jackson** from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College felt that sit-ins gave them the power to change things.

**Discussion Question**

Why did the sit-in movement gain attention of Americans across the nation? *(Even after the demonstrators of the sit-ins were verbally and physically abused, they remained peaceful.)*

**II. SNCC** *(page 874)*

**A.** As sit-ins became more popular, it was necessary to choose a leader to coordinate the effort. **Ella Baker,** executive director of the SCLC, urged students to create their own organization. The students formed the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee** (SNCC). Among SNCC’s early leaders were **Marion Barry,** later the mayor of Washington, D.C., and John Lewis, later a member of Congress.

**B.** Robert Moses, an SNCC volunteer from New York, pointed out that most of the civil rights movement was focused on urban areas, and rural African Americans needed help as well.

**C.** When they went South, SNCC volunteers had their lives threatened and others were beaten. In 1964 three SNCC workers were murdered as they tried to register African Americans to vote.

**D.** SNCC organizer, **Fannie Lou Hamer,** was arrested in Mississippi after encouraging African Americans to vote. While in jail, she was beaten by police. Later she helped organize the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. She challenged the legality of the segregated Democratic Party at the 1964 Democratic National Convention.

**Discussion Question**

What was the role of the SNCC in the civil rights movement? *(The group led student sitins to desegregate public facilities in Southern communities. Members of the group went to rural areas of the Deep South to register African Americans to vote.)*

**III. The Freedom Riders** *(pages 874–875)*

**A.** In 1961 CORE leader James Farmer asked teams of African Americans and white Americans to travel into the South to integrate bus terminals. The teams became known as **Freedom Riders.**

**B.** Violence erupted in several Alabama cities, making national news and shocking many Americans. President John F. Kennedy was compelled to control the violence.

**Discussion Question**

What happened when the Freedom Riders arrived in Anniston, Birmingham, and Montgomery, Alabama? *(Angry mobs of white people attacked the Freedom Riders, throwing* *rocks and slitting the bus tires. In Birmingham, the riders were met by a gang that beat them.)*

**IV. John F. Kennedy and Civil Rights** *(pages 875–877)*

**A.** During John F. Kennedy’s presidential campaign in 1960, he supported the civil rights movement, which resulted in African American votes that helped him narrowly win the race.

**B.** Once in office, President Kennedy became cautious on civil rights, realizing that in order to get other programs passed through Congress, he would have to avoid new civil rights legislation.

**C.** President Kennedy had his brother, Robert F. Kennedy of the Justice Department, actively support the civil rights movement. Robert Kennedy helped African Americans register to vote by having lawsuits filed throughout the South.

**D.** When violence broke out in Montgomery Alabama, the Kennedy brothers urged the Freedom Riders to stop for a “cooling off “ period. A deal was struck between Kennedy and Senator James Eastland of Mississippi. The senator stopped the violence, and Kennedy agreed not to object if the Mississippi police arrested the Freedom Riders.

**E.** The CORE used all their funds to bail the riders out of jail, which threatened future rides. Thurgood Marshall offered the use of the NAACP’s Legal Defense Fund, and the rides began again. President Kennedy ordered the Interstate Commerce Commission to increase regulations against segregation at bus terminals. By 1962 segregation on interstate travel had ended.

**F.** In 1962 **James Meredith,** an African American air force veteran, tried to register at the segregated University of Mississippi. Meredith was met with the governor blocking his path. President Kennedy ordered 500 federal marshals to escort Meredith to the campus. A full-scale riot broke out with 160 marshals being wounded. The army sent in thousands of troops. For the remainder of the year, Meredith attended classes under federal guard until he graduated the following August.

**G.** Martin Luther King, Jr., was frustrated with the civil rights movement. As the Cuban missile crisis escalated, foreign policy became the main priority at the White House. King agreed to hold demonstrations in Alabama, knowing they might end in violence but feeling that they were the only way to get the president’s attention. King was jailed, and after his release the protests began again. The televised events were seen by the nation. Kennedy ordered his aides to prepare a civil rights bill.

**Discussion Question**

Why did President Kennedy not take immediate action when violence erupted against the Freedom Riders? *(Kennedy was meeting with Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, and he did* *not want the violence in the South to make the United States seem weak and divided.)*

**V. The Civil Rights Act of 1964** *(pages 877–879)*

**A.** After Alabama Governor George Wallace blocked the way for two African Americans to register for college, President Kennedy appeared on national television to announce his civil rights bill.

**B.** Martin Luther King, Jr., wanted to pressure Congress to get Kennedy’s civil rights bill through. On August 28, 1963, he led 200,000 demonstrators of all races to the nation’s capital and staged a peaceful rally.

**C.** Opponents of the civil rights bill did whatever they could to slow the procedure to pass it. The bill could easily pass in the House of Representatives, but it faced difficulty in the Senate. Senators could speak for as long as they wanted while debating a bill. A **filibuster** occurs when a small group of senators take turns speaking and refuse to stop the debate to allow the bill to be voted on. Today a filibuster can be stopped if at least three-fifths of the Senate (60 senators) vote for **cloture,** a motion which cuts off debate and forces a vote. In 1960 a cloture had to be two-thirds, or 67 senators. The minority of senators opposed to the bill could easily prevent it from passing into law.

**D.** After Kennedy’s assassination, President Johnson committed himself to getting Kennedy’s program, including the civil rights bill, through Congress.

**E.** The **Civil Rights Act of 1964** gave the federal government broad power to stop racial discrimination in the segregation in public places, to bring lawsuits to end school segregation, and to require employers to end discrimination in the workplace.

**Discussion Question**

What happened to the civil rights bill after Lyndon Johnson became president? *(President Johnson’s leadership helped produce the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.)*

**VI. The Struggle for Voting Rights** *(pages 879–880)*

**A.** The Civil Rights Act of 1964 did little to guarantee the right to vote. Many African American voters were attacked, beaten, and killed. Bombs exploded in many African American businesses and churches. Martin Luther King, Jr., decided it was time for another protest to protect African American voting rights.

**B.** The protest was staged for Selma, Alabama, where African Americans were the majority of the population while only 3 percent were registered to vote. Their march for freedom began in Selma and headed toward the state capitol in Montgomery. Sheriff Jim Clark ordered 200 state troopers and deputized citizens to rush the peaceful demonstrators. The brutal attack became known as Bloody Sunday, and the nation saw the images on television.

**C.** On August 3, 1965, the House of Representatives passed the voting bill, with the Senate passing the bill the following day. The **Voting Rights Act of 1965** gave the attorney general the right to send federal examiners to register qualified voters, bypassing the local officials who often refused to register African Americans. This resulted in 250,000 new African American voters and an increase in African American elected officials in the South.