



## **Citizen Voices in Peace and War: A Portal into Ap English Lit**

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### **Introduction**

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"...Civil or Social Liberty: the nature and limits of the power which can be legitimately exercised by society over an individual." John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*<sup>1</sup>

"I love America more than any other country in this world, and, exactly for this reason, I insist on the right to criticize her perpetually." James Baldwin, *Notes of a Native Son*<sup>2</sup>

"Citizen Voices in Peace and War: A Portal into AP English Lit" is designed to be both an entry way and a recurring theme for the Advanced Placement course in English Literature and Composition. Many works of literature encompass the struggle for the human liberty to speak in the face of societal or governmental control. Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* and Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* poignantly depict the fate of youngsters conscripted to fight a war begun by their elders. Richard Wright's *Black Boy (American Hunger)* and Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* show how economic and political battles moved and involved African Americans. Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston's *Farewell to Manzanar* and Marge Piercy's *Gone to Soldiers* detail the impact of World War II on minority civilian life. Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* is a thinly-disguised discourse on the excesses of McCarthyism in the Cold War 1950's.

Writers themselves, as citizens as well as artists, must seek freedom of expression in the context of societies which may set limits or even penalties for their individual civic and artistic statements. Governments set on political or military goals rarely welcome public questioning by an articulate author. In our own nation's history, public stances by racial or religious minority citizens questioning societal structures have often been doubly unwelcome. For example, an inclination for African Americans (Langston Hughes and Richard Wright) and Jews (Arthur Miller and Allen Ginsberg) to affiliate with non-mainstream political parties has often been viewed as subversive rather than understandable. Wright, in his book *American Hunger*, attempts an explanation for this alienation:

My knowledge of how Negroes react to their plight makes me declare that no man can be individually guilty of treason, that an insurgent act is but a man's desperate answer to those who twist his environment so that he cannot fully share the spirit of his native land. Treason is a crime of the state.<sup>3</sup>

Wright soon rejected Communist party strictures, but he voted with his feet by moving to France for the later part of his life. In June, 1956, in an appearance before the House Un-American Activities Committee, Arthur Miller iterated his opposition to outlawing the Communist Party and "...refused to name people he had seen at a Communist writers' meetings seventeen years earlier." Nine years after that, Miller registered his opposition to the Vietnam War by turning down President Johnson's invitation to the White House.<sup>4</sup> Even in cases where African Americans were anxious to serve in their country's uniform, the opportunities were limited. Lt. Col. (Ret.) Michael Lee Lanning, in his 1997 history, *The African-American Soldier: From Crispus Attucks to Colin Powell*, noted along with Langston Hughes the reluctance of whites to see "...blacks in military dress..." but not "in other kinds of uniforms." In the poet's words, "We are elevator boys, janitors, red caps, maids a race in uniform."<sup>5</sup> Finally, in the case of my uncle, Frederic Adler, the military service he gave in World War II was not sufficient grounds in the 1950's for exemption from being confronted with the demand to sign a loyalty oath as a condition of keeping his job.<sup>6</sup>

Through an introductory unit in the AP class, students will embark upon a brief journey into the history of civil liberties in speech and action, reflect on the importance of human rights in their own lives, and begin to discern meaning from challenging texts and develop skill in producing complex written responses. From the outset, we will make use of the Self-Evaluation Rubric for the Advanced Placement Essays.<sup>7</sup>

Once the introductory unit is complete, the class will reference our reflections on civil liberties as we proceed through the standard AP English Literature and Composition class, making use of John Stuart Mill's broad definition as a thematic thread throughout the year. A readily available AP preparation guide, Thomson/Peterson's *AP\* Success: English Literature & Composition*, 5th Edition (2004), offers a comprehensive choice of readings on the themes of liberty and war, including Mary Wollstonecraft's "A Vindication of the Rights of Women," Shakespeare's "Sonnet 55 and Henry V's St. Crispin Day speech," Henry David Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience," Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Self-Reliance," Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass," Paul Laurence Dunbar's "Douglass," Frederick Douglass' "My Bondage and My Freedom," and George Orwell's "Politics and the English Language." We will round out the segment with a Virginia Woolf disquisition on the reasons for war from her book, *Three Guineas*.<sup>8</sup>

This unit is derived from a Yale National Initiative summer seminar on "War and Civil Liberties," in which we took a chronological trek through the varying losses and gains in civil liberties in American history beginning with the Civil War and Lincoln's suspension of the Writ of Habeas Corpus - a vaguely offered right seemingly eligible to be suspended by Congress "in Cases of Rebellion or Invasion" where "public Safety" is in jeopardy. Until the issue was settled in 1865, Lincoln's unalloyed sainthood (an article of faith in my family of origin) was, in the view of some, rather in doubt. During World War I and its aftermath, government agencies, citizen's groups delegated to enforce patriotism, and random self-appointed enforcers wreaked havoc on the rights and persons of innumerable citizens who demonstrated insufficient enthusiasm for the battle in Europe. The 1920's provided a Red Scare and the government-assisted demise of the International Workers of the World (IWW or Wobblies.) West Coast citizens of Japanese extraction bore the brunt of civil liberty loss in WWII, and fervent anti-Communism carried us through the Cold War and Vietnam until September 11, 2001, when FDR's characterization of "nameless unreasoning fear" became horrifyingly apt. The students we are teaching in high school today were four years closer to their babyhood on that horrifying, heart-wrenching day. The current administration has avoided much of the more egregious abrogation of civil liberties in the American past, yet a sense of uneasiness, exacerbated by the tragically costly enterprise in Iraq, lingers as we see electronic surveillance of citizens and advocacy groups increase, a blurring of the distinction between foreign and domestic intelligence, the replacement of civilian with military tribunals, and the admixture of

immigration and criminal spheres of official enforcement.<sup>9</sup> In order for our students to keep whole their constitutional entitlements, they need to be fully informed as to their rights as well as to the history of the establishment and periodic endangerment of those same rights. Knowledge is power.

The tension, of course, in a time of war, aside from the essential question on the justice of the conflict engagement, is the balance of security with citizens' rights. For our highly idealized democracy, the tension is particularly difficult to resolve. As Chief Justice William Rehnquist cogently points out in *All the Laws but One*, Lincoln's suspension of the Writ of Habeas Corpus came in the midst of credible pre-Inauguration assassination threats and actual post-Fort Sumter attacks on Federal troops and burning of critical bridges in Baltimore.<sup>10</sup> Flash forward one hundred forty-four years to July 7, 2005, to the terrorist bombings in the London Underground. *The Boston Globe* opined on July 17th, before a second, unsuccessful though frightening set of attacks had occurred, that although additional security measures are called for, these "...must be scrutinized to make sure they are truly necessary and will not curtail civil liberties that are the justified pride of Europe's liberal democracies." Yet who would dispute the comment by Charles Clarke, British Home Secretary, included in the editorial, that "It is a fundamental civil liberty of people in Europe to be able to go to work on their transport system in the morning without being blown up."<sup>11</sup> The conundrum intensifies when pundits like Jarrett Murphy in the *Village Voice* note that the security measures may be more form than substance: "Random searches are as much about the appearance of safety as safety itself."<sup>12</sup> Even more to the point, lifelong civil libertarians who condemn profiling may be tempted to acknowledge on some level that its value in the present context of terror might need to be re-considered. Paul Sperry, in a *New York Times* op-ed piece, cites the harsh reality: "Young Muslim men bombed the London tube, and young Muslim men attacked New York with planes in 2001....Unfortunately, this demographic group won't be profiled. Instead, the authorities will be stopping Girls Scouts and grannies..."<sup>13</sup>

Even as people worldwide, but particularly in metropolitan transit systems of countries fighting the insurgency in Iraq, consider the value of ceding liberties in exchange for security, a report surfaces that the Federal Bureau of Investigation has admitted that it is spending significant time and resources on monitoring groups like Greenpeace, the American Civil Liberties Union and United for Peace and Justice, the last a self-described "...coalition of more than 1,300 antiwar groups." An FBI memo reveals that Internet sites that advocated protests at the 2004 Republican Convention in New York City were considered of interest to counterterrorism entities.<sup>14</sup> I feel this tension quite personally. As a former card-carrying member of the ACLU, and a verifiable protester with my younger child at that very Republican gathering in the Big Apple, I hold precious both the civil liberties of all Americans and the life of that same child as she commutes to work daily on New York City public transit. At the end of the day, if I were compelled to choose between the two, the "liberties" would be gone in a twinkling.

In some cases, now and in the past, the contention between devotion to country and freedom to speak has spilled over into the world of artists and writers. Witness New York Governor George E. Pataki's well-publicized warning to a cultural group with a history of "controversial artwork" typified by a current exhibit apparently "making light" of President Bush's 'Axis of Evil' phrase, that anything they display in their proposed site near Ground Zero must promise "an absolute guarantee" not to "...offend 9/11 families and pilgrims...". Reporter Patrick D. Healy describes the context as "...the nexus of art and politics, the First Amendment and the symbolism of the twin towers site." Pataki averred that, "...we will not tolerate anything on that site that denigrates America, denigrates New York or freedom, or denigrates the sacrifice or courage that the heroes showed on Sept. 11."<sup>15</sup> We can ask whether this development echoes the governmental and civilian critiques of war questioners from Civil War Days, both World Wars, the Cold War and the Vietnam era and where the

artist fits in the interdependent web of a nation's self-defense and the protection of individual freedom.

## Overview

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### School and Subject

A Philip Randolph Career Academy is a small career and technical high school in the School District of Philadelphia. Our curriculum includes a variety of career experiences: culinary arts, health related technology, automotive technology, and construction along with a full program of college-preparatory academics. The AP class of 20 students is scheduled as a 90-minute block for the fall semester and as a single period (50 minutes) in the spring. Preparation for May AP test occupies the bulk of time for the second semester.

### Namesake

Our school is named for Asa Philip Randolph, one of the greatest human rights activists of the 20th century, a man whose accomplishments are largely unknown among the general citizenry as well as among our student body. Juan Williams, in his 2001 Public Broadcast System tribute, "In Search of A. Philip Randolph," noted that despite statues honoring Randolph at two East Coast train stations (Union Station in Washington, D.C. and Back Bay Station in Boston) and brief citations in some history texts, few would know that "Randolph was the one American leader who had the vision, from early in the century, to use his voice to speak directly to the issue of jobs for black people - including fair wages, union membership, apprenticeships and labor contracts - as the key to racial equality." Yet when Philip spoke out against the expectation that African Americans, subject to lynching at home should risk their lives in army uniforms abroad, he was labeled the 'most dangerous Negro in America' by no less a figure than the Attorney General of the United States.<sup>16</sup>

Even less well known is the gay man, Bayard Rustin, who collaborated with Randolph on so many worthy causes. Wall Street Journal columnist Joshua Muravchik, in reviewing the recent biographical documentary on Rustin, "Brother Outsider," calls him the civil rights movements "master tactician" and "undoubtedly the most fascinating personality among the constellation of top civil-rights leaders."<sup>17</sup> Rustin spent two years in jail for his pacifist-based rejection of military service in World War II. Ironically, today it is the military itself that rejects the service of gay citizens.

Almost any American could, if asked, identify Dr. Martin Luther King and recall the name of the speech he delivered at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on August 28, 1963. Yet it was A. Philip Randolph who first proposed a March on Washington in the year 1941, on that occasion in an effort to secure equity in war-industry jobs for African Americans; and it was Rustin whose brilliant logistics brought a quarter of a million black and white to marchers to the nation's capital for a glorious day that both celebrated brotherhood and highlighted the distance between our country's ideals and its realities.

### Benefit

How poignant the thought that 70 plus years of devoted service to the cause of liberty remains largely invisible to our young people. A. Philip Randolph's achievements addressed the atrocity of lynching, the need for respect, dignity, decent pay and working conditions for organized labor, and the essential justice of an integrated military. Bayard Rustin's efforts, not infrequently in partnership with Randolph, encompassed

pacifism, racial reconciliation, support for the interned Japanese, aid for Soviet Jews, and assistance to Vietnamese refugees. By navigating a unit focused on citizen voices, the students at our school - or any school - can learn about our own inspirational figures and many others through extensive reading and perhaps use the example of these endeavors to secure their very own right to speak up and speak out, now and in the future.

It is possible, via the Internet, or for those fortunate enough to visit the Yale Beinecke rare books and manuscripts library or the statue at Union Station in Washington, D.C. to ponder Randolph's own words:

At the banquet table of nature there are no reserved seats.

You get what you can take, and you keep what you can hold.

If you can't take anything, you won't get anything; and if you

Can't hold anything, you won't keep anything.

And you can't take anything without organization.<sup>18</sup>

## **Elements**

### *Connection to Student and School Life*

Secondary students in Philadelphia enter their high schools every day in a manner not unlike prisoners of war. They must dress in easy-to-identify uniform clothing, register their presence electronically with a photo I.D., and pass both body and possessions through a metal detector. As a majority African American school in an age of racial profiling, we have a substantial number of students who have had close encounters of the unpleasant kind with police authorities. Parents and guardians routinely instruct their youngsters, especially their boys, on how to interact with police in a way that will reduce the likelihood of inciting the use of force. This past year, our school was part of a pilot program that checked students in through use of a biometric finger identification device. Students lined up compliantly to place their finger on the pad each day, evoking images of Rosa Parks being finger-printed the day she sat down for her rights.

Students complain regularly about being required to dress uniformly, but not too often about the scanner and metal detector. "Custom reconciles us to everything" as Edmund Burke once said. Their conversation frequently turns to another facet of their everyday life in the city: death by gun violence. Virtually every student can name a friend, acquaintance, or family member who has been injured or killed by gunfire. It is not unusual for our school to lose a student to gun violence in the course of the academic year. Some students have personally witnessed a shooting. The state legislature in "Pistolvania" (an adapted spelling suggested by one of my students) has so far been reluctant to accede to Philadelphia's plea for firearms regulations like restricting volume handgun purchases. Could a concert of student voices raised in anguish make a difference?

The seniors I teach are subject, under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2002, to be recruited for military service with the help of contact information provided to the armed forces by the school district. A lack of employment opportunities post high school and rising college costs might induce some of our young people to commit themselves to a career that could land them in yet another shooting zone. An informed study of the history of civil liberties, the struggle for fair employment opportunities, and voicing reluctance to endorse sending young people of color into war to defend a democracy that has often left them in the lurch - all these, the hallmarks of Asa Philip Randolph's lifetime of striving, can provide our students with a depth of

understanding about issues that affect them profoundly every day.

### *Connection to Faculty and Family*

Part of our focus will be on the collection of stories from school staff and student families. The age range of staff can cover experiences dating back to World War II, and students may have family members or neighbors who can recount events from even earlier eras. Vietnam era veterans can describe the experience of being shot at on a non-traditional battlefield or the "hits" of disrespect they received upon their return from service. Other veterans, like my brother, can recount their army superior's response to a soldier posted in "Nam" signing a newspaper advertisement in opposition to the war. Teachers who entered the profession in part to avoid the draft can explain their choice. Family members who stayed behind can share the anguish they underwent during their brother's or father's or husband's common one-year assignments in the war zone or the reasoning behind speaking or acting out against the war policies of Presidents Johnson and Nixon. Using the techniques of recording oral history, students will gain a vivid sense of the American history of civil liberties and civil rights in speech and action.

### *Interdisciplinary Opportunities*

Through the research on A. Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin, along with the full roster of novelists, poets and playwrights included in the AP Curriculum, students will have opportunities to make connections between their studies in English literature with areas covered in social studies, science, and perhaps even mathematics. Of particular value for academic partnering will be the traditional American History course as well as the innovative African American History course being introduced as a graduation requirement for the first time in Philadelphia in the fall of 2005. By making a practice of establishing the historical and political settings for each work of literature, students will have a sense of the complete world from which each writer emerged, New Criticism theories of seeing-literature-in-isolation aside! The connections between written expression and war, citizen rights and responsibilities, and civil liberties is clearly drawn by Frederick Douglass during the Civil War, W.H. Auden in World War I, Joseph Heller in World War II, Arthur Miller during the Cold War, and Alan Ginsberg and Audre Lorde in the Vietnam era. Each understood the risk of challenging people and policies in power, yet they never wavered in their confidence that the United States of America afforded them the protection they required to speak and write freely from their hearts.

### *The Lively Arts*

Where school budgets preclude extensive music and art exposure, the "Civil Liberties in Times of War" unit is especially rich in options for enhancing basic study. Songs of protest embody the arguments brought forward by dissenters and offer fascinating histories of their own. "Joe Hill" from the IWW struggles, "Strange Fruit" coming from the Civil Rights era, with a curious link to the Rosenbergs, and "The House I Live In" echoing messages from the heart and profound controversy from World War II through the Cold War, Vietnam, and the War on Terror.<sup>19</sup> The strands connecting activists in diverse eras find exemplification in the career of Earl Robinson, writer of both "Joe Hill" and "The House I Live In" who was himself called to Washington to be interrogated by Sen. Joseph McCarthy.<sup>20</sup> Bayard Rustin sang with black folk singer, Josh White, who in turn performed one of the better-known versions of "The House I Live In."

Visual art can further amplify understanding of wartime horror with examples like "Guernica," "The Scream," and others. Photography can serve as both a record (Matthew Brady) and a source of dispute (My Lai photos from Vietnam).<sup>21</sup> Film treatments of war and civil liberties are another rich source of making vivid for students

the anguish and nobility of human experience in war and social protest. *Glory*, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Bad Day at Black Rock*, and *Born on the 4th of July* are among the possibilities.

### *Literature*

No help is needed to identify literary works with our theme. The Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition course contains more than enough authors, in addition to those already mentioned, who can certainly be read through the lens of society's power over the individual who speaks out: Adrienne Rich (*The Dream of a Common Language*), Eugene Ionesco (*Rhinoceros*), Kurt Vonnegut (*Slaughterhouse Five*), and James Baldwin (*The Fire Next Time*).

### *State and District Standards*

State and school district standards, indicated here by underlined phrases, will be incorporated into the curriculum as a sure-fire means of helping prepare students for the Advanced Placement Examination. Attention to these items also establishes continuity with what students have been addressing throughout their high school careers. They need to learn to read independently (and accurately) as both the Advanced Placement test and college will require assignments to be completed without the immediate support of an instructor. They will need to read critically, with an ear and eye for bias, in all content areas. The "Citizen Voices in Peace and War" unit places particular emphasis on the crossover between literature and social studies. Just as students are likely to assume bias in texts written from the creative angle, the factual aura of social studies materials may mislead students into assuming objectivity where a hidden agenda exists under the radar. Being attuned to manipulations in language is essential to their understanding of what is going in their lives right now as they prepare to leave high school, acquire a job, attend college, and, it is to be hoped, register to vote — all during a wartime with no apparent end in sight. Students will of course need to analyze and interpret literature - bolstering their understanding of literary devices and their uses for basic comprehension and higher-level analysis. Confidence and success in the Advanced Placement Examination hinges on the students' real-time experiences in that area of skill. Through a combination of spontaneous and carefully planned, peer edited, and revised writing assignments, especially geared to the Advanced Placement essays, students will gain proficiency and quality in different types of writing. Although oral presentations are not part of the AP English and Composition examination as currently constituted, it is nevertheless important for youngsters to have opportunities to speak with facility in group discussions and for oral presentation. It is in this way that they are able to discern, elucidate and defend their own (eventually) carefully reasoned point of view, which in turn will serve them both educationally and civically. Throughout the entire year's course, students will at all times need to understand the characteristics and function of the English language. Whatever career and/or education path our students take, understanding their own language, the language of the past that found expression in our country's founding documents, the language of current politicians, public documents and news media is critical both to success and survival. Finally, our students need to be adept at meaningful and original research. Academic assignments that demand rigorous and vigorous thinking, critical analysis of sources, whether they be news or magazine articles or books, should and will provide clear instruction and experience in eschewing cut-and-paste plagiarism as well as resisting the assumption that anything in print or on the web is inherently accurate. After extensive reading of original documents establishing the liberty to act and think, after experiencing wide-ranging acquaintance with the tension between government and societal interface with individuals defending their rights, and after thorough-going discussions focused on careful listening, students should be well-prepared to be the actively engaged citizen scholars that the best democracies demand.<sup>22</sup>

### *Strategies for Implementing Standards*

As we approach each reading assignment, short or long, we will utilize researched strategies for genuine comprehension. These include making predictions about the reading before beginning, sharing what we already know about the topic at hand and scanning the passage(s) for unfamiliar vocabulary.

To make the text more likely to be understood during reading, we will write notes (post-its are handy for this) about any portion of the text not understood and use graphic organizers to classify ideas in the material.

We will "monitor" our comprehension during the reading as a means of self-testing our understanding after reading. The questions we write down during reading can become inquiry, investigation or test questions for discussion, research and assessment afterward. The standard who, what, when, where, why and how questions is one possible format. We can also discuss how the material in the reading connects to what we already knew, how it would be applied in real-world situations, and how our understanding has changed through the process of reading.

Summaries may be spoken or written in class or written for homework.

Readers use summarizing strategies after reading as a means of self-review by identifying the most important points of the text selection. Given the complexity of the reading material, these routines should insure greater understanding.<sup>23</sup>

### *Culminating Project and Presentation*

Students will select an author or theme to research based on class and independent readings, media sources and lectures, then prepare a multi-media presentation or publication for a specific audience. A student may want to re-enact a speech on a particular constitutional issue, present a mock argument before the Supreme Court, deliver a Court opinion, or dramatize a scene based on one of our readings, or on the life experience of one our authors.

### *Assessment*

In addition to the score received on the AP Test, students will be evaluated on the basis of their in-class and homework essays, following peer and the Self-evaluation Rubric for the Advanced Placement Essays, participation in discussions, classroom presentations, teacher-made tests, AP practice tests, and the culminating multi-media project. The class will develop the rubrics for the project.

## **Objectives**

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### **Establish Historical Context**

#### *Primary Documents and Timeline*

Students will gain an understanding of the concept of civil liberty in a historical context aided by an annotated timeline of their own creation. They will experience authentic

interaction with essential documents in the development of political philosophy from the 18th through the 20th centuries. It is common practice in our nation to toss about random phrases from founding documents without taking the time to read the actual materials in depth and with an understanding of their historical settings. By the combined use of maps and timelines, students will come to have both comprehension of the contents in context and an appreciation for the unfinished work of democracy.

### *England and France*

John Locke, born in 1632, though he obviously did not live to witness the American Revolution, nevertheless sensed the glorious possibilities in the New World. His assessment is laudatory: "In the beginning all the world was America."<sup>24</sup> Locke, of course would overlook the early beginnings of the slave trade.

From France came Jean Jacques Rousseau's battle cry for freedom: *The Social Contract*: "MAN is born free; and everywhere he is in chains. One thinks himself the master of others, and still remains a greater slave than they."<sup>25</sup> Rousseau was born in 1712. His writing sparked the Founders' thinking, and he pre-echoes both Henry David Thoreau and Abraham Lincoln.

### *The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution*

Both these documents had their brief moment of possibility for promoting true equality, but circumstances, political in nature, seemed to make delaying justice somehow acceptable. Jefferson's original intent to condemn George of England for the British slave trade as a "cruel war against human nature itself" met the opposition of Congress. He could not in good conscience oppose slavery in its American manifestation as he owned more than 175 slaves himself.<sup>26</sup> Students may want to ponder how our country's history would have been different with a different decision.

It is worthwhile for students to have available the text for a close reading and/or memorization: "WHEN in the Course of human Events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the Political Bands which have connected them with another...a decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the Separation."<sup>27</sup> This section provides an opportunity to discuss the issue of how a country functions in the light of world opinion.

"WE hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness." Students will be asked to delineate specifics from these generalities and to contemplate the evolving definition of "all Men."

The Constitution need not have sanctioned slavery (with the cruel hoax of boosting Africans' status as people from zero to 3/5ths of a person for the purpose of increasing the Southern planters' representation in Congress), except that the South would not have joined the Union. The price to keep them in more than half a century later would be steep indeed. The Preamble is every citizen's opportunity to embrace: "We, the people of the United States of America, in order to form a more perfect Union, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."<sup>28</sup> This might be an appropriate juncture to consider the terms "strict constructionist" and "activist justice." Given that the founding document of our government excluded African, female, and non-propertied white males, perhaps "honoring the Founders' intentions" should be considered is less than absolute terms!

## *The Forgotten*

When the opportunity presented itself, persons of color and of the female gender made known their righteous distress over their lengthy exclusion from the rights and duties of citizenship. First, Frederick Douglass asked, "Fellow-citizens, pardon me, allow me to ask, What have I, or those I represent, to do with you national independence? Are the great principles of political freedom and of natural justice, embodied in that Declaration of Independence, extended to us?" July 5, 1852.<sup>29</sup>

### **Declaration of Sentiments by Elizabeth Cady Stanton**

"When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied..." Stanton echoes the original language so closely that it is at first difficult to discern where the changes lie.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness..." <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/Senecafalls.html>.

## *Modern Times*

No more powerful moment in my recollection of living American history was the opening statement at the Watergate hearings by Representative Barbara Jordan: "Earlier today we heard the beginning of the Preamble to the Constitution of the United States, 'We, the people.' It is a very eloquent beginning. But when that document was completed, on the seventeenth of September in 1787, I was not included in that 'We, the people.'" Here is an occasion where students might write "reverse time capsule" letters to the Founders, explaining the context for Ms. Jordan's remarks and querying the Framers on their assessment of the nation's progress.<sup>30</sup>

Twenty-five years later, Keith Boykin brought the issue of exclusion full circle when he began his "Poem for the Millennium (Gay Rights) March" in Washington, D.C. in 2000: "I speak Today/As One Black Gay Man...I Speak Because/Barbara Jordan/Langston Hughes, and/The Reverend James Cleveland could not speak...I Speak for myself,/but I also speak for my uncle,/a black gay man/who could not be here..."(<http://>>). Discussing gay rights is a challenge in classrooms today, despite school district policies that protect rights of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender students and staff. Students will raise questions of religion and family values. Boykin catalogues individuals living and dead who are or were part of the GLBT community. Perhaps as students realize that persons they have known about and respected shared this particular characteristic, they may focus on the totality of the individuals' lives. The question of gay rights has currency in the context of the war on terror, as the army has blocked or expelled large numbers of gay people from military service, including a group of Arabic-trained translators.<sup>31</sup>

### **Understand Changes Over Time**

#### *Civil War*

Students will review essentials of *Ex parte Milligan* (1866) that include the demographics and political orientation of Indiana, anxiety over possibility of Rebel spies and saboteurs, the Constitutional questions, and the outcome.<sup>32</sup>

### *World War I*

We will consider the difficulty the Wilson administration had in winning public support, the measures taken against a variety of groups (Socialists, progressives, women), the continuation of the debate on how a state of war impacts civil liberties as evidenced by the *Schenk v. U.S.* decision (1918).<sup>33</sup>

Of particular interest for A. Philip Randolph students is an item found on page 114 in Goldstein's book, without identifying our namesake: "If much of the government's repressive activity seemed to be random terrorism, much of it was not. It was certainly not happenstance that...the editors of the *Messenger*, one of the few black publications that refused to back the war all-out were jailed and the paper banned from the mails."

### *World War II*

We will consider the events surrounding the internment of Japanese citizens through the lens of Bayard Rustin's involvement, the *Korematsu v. U.S.* decision, and the reparations decision.

### *Cold War and Vietnam*

A brief history of the House Committee on Un-American Activities will include a list of AP writers called to testify, chief among them, Langston Hughes. Hughes' experience as a poet and political activist will be the paradigm we consider in one of the lesson plans.

Here I will share my personal stories of one relative's strong anti-Communism and another's loss of a job over refusal to sign a loyalty oath. Students will be asked to consider how they might have reacted to the challenges of that era.

George Orwell's essay on "Politics and the English Language" will lead us to a consideration of the propaganda war and writings by former Communists. First-hand accounts of experiences during the Vietnam War will be presented by former service members, war opponents, and war supporters. The novels *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien and *Fallen Angels* by Walter Dean Myers will be offered for independent reading. *The War on Terror*

Personal reflection journals will afford students the opportunity to write about their memories of September 11th. Marge Piercy's poem on the topic will be available. Students will analyze which areas of their lives are significantly impacted by provisions of the Patriot Act. (<http://>).

As a way of fostering student appreciation of their individual access to civil liberties and their action options for safe-guarding these hard-won entitlements, we will compile a list of actions taken by citizens throughout history, then rank these actions in order of their appeal, availability, and effectiveness. From this catalogue, we will create a checklist for use as we proceed to read works on AP list.

### *Evaluate Literary Works*

At the end of the introductory phase, we will bring together the evidence for Mills' definition of Civil/Social Liberty in readings so far. We will then begin our first reading outside the Civil Liberties Unit - from the Advanced Placement preparation materials. Students will maintain an ongoing journal of their findings from the literature relating to individual expression vis-à-vis government and society strictures as we progress through the year.

## Strategies

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Through reading, discussion, and writing, students will consider the issues in their personal and school lives that entail rights and that might provide opportunities to voice their thoughts. These include the right to privacy of person and locker, freedom and limitations regarding religion on school grounds, speech itself in a school setting, assembly as a means to register grievances, the requirements for identification, uniformity in clothing, school attendance itself, and options regarding standardized testing and information sharing with the military.

Define Liberty. Define Civil Liberty.

Review John Stuart Mill's definition; generate examples of situations where the power of society to limit or eliminate an individuals' right to question is apparent to them in today's world. "...Civil or Social Liberty: the nature and limits of the power which can be legitimately exercised by society over an individual."

Reflection/Discussion on Overarching Concepts

- Many of society's "protections" are either unjust or ineffective, e.g. laws regarding firearms: In present day
- Philadelphia, young people are at high risk for gun violence. City streets in some ways represent a "war zone."
  - Society's power over individuals is a recurring theme in many works of literature, e.g.: Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience", Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas*, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*. (Student Reading List)
  - Students can gain an understanding of these issues through the lenses of history (see above), language (S. Johnson, Orwell, et al), and activism (role models like King, Rustin, Randolph, Anthony, and Bob Herbert ("...the correct response is not to grow fainthearted or to internalize the views of those who wish you ill .... (but to develop) a radically heightened awareness of the issues, increased civic participation, and recognition that traditional fault lines of prejudice and fear must be overcome." (<http://www.>).

Tricia Rose, the reviewer of Bob Herbert's book, postulates "If we heed his recommendation, perhaps our collective social warrant for justice and democracy, while deferred, won't be denied."

## Lesson Plans

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### Day One

This segment will last for two days. The first day of classes is generally truncated, so that the activities will necessary carry over to a second day.

The first step in the introductory lesson plan is to introduce the students both to the concept of civil liberty and to each other. Students will be provided with a survey sheet with spaces for making notes. They will be given a time period of 10 to 15 minutes to move around the room and speak individually to other students, recording their responses.

They will ask each of their classmates only one question but may ask a follow-up to the answer if they wish and if the other student wishes to elaborate.

(Find someone who...)

Has been stopped by the police

Has had their belongings or person searched by an "official"

Has been denied an opportunity to voice a political opinion

Has had their religious freedom abridged

Has been a participant in a demonstration

Knows the name of their state representative, state senator, congressperson, city council person

Has called a government official or agency with a concern

Has thanked a government official or agency

Has written a letter of complaint to a government official or the newspaper

Has spoken at a community meeting

Has participated in a community cleanup day

Has suffered a job loss for reasons other than performance

Is registered to vote or helped to register others to vote

Has voted

Has worked for a candidate

At the end of the interview period, students return to their seats. On the board or on newsprint, the teacher will ask for students to report on their findings. Names will not be used as the information is designed to be a class survey. Once all responses have been recorded for viewing, the class will be asked to analyze the significance of the answers, e.g. which questions elicited the most responses, which were interesting, which were surprising, which were troubling, which were encouraging. For the second part of the discussion, we will consider John Stuart Mill's definition of liberty: "...*Civil or Social Liberty: the nature and limits of the power which can be legitimately exercised by society over an individual.*" In pairs, students will be asked to list specific ways that society currently exercises power in their lives. Allow ten to fifteen minutes for this conversation. Pairs would then match with up with another pair, share their conclusions for an additional ten minutes, then report out to the class as a whole. We would conclude with a journal entry reflection on the activities and the discussion. Students would have the option of reading journal entries aloud, time permitting. As a homework assignment, students would be asked to read a minimum of five news stories or view five stories on television and write a paragraph describing where in the story of their choice the issue of liberty is found.

Introduction Day Two.

- Distribute copies of the Declaration of Independence. Students working in groups of three or four will create a list of at least ten specific modern rights that would be granted based on the language of the original. Groups report out to the class via posters entitled "21st Century Declaration of Independence." Repeat exercise with copies of the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights. In a journal entry, students briefly compare and contrast the documents.
1. Distribute copies of John Locke's and Jean Jacques Rousseau's paragraphs (without identifying source) on liberty. Ask students to guess dates and countries of origin. Compare to our American documents. Assign students to groups of four by counting off. Each group receives a copy of one of the following: Frederick Douglass' "Fourth of July" message, Elizabeth Cady Stanton's "Declaration of Sentiments," Barbara Jordan's opening statement from the Watergate Hearings, and Keith Boykin's "Millennium Poem."
  3. Each group will create a poster summary of the contents of their document. When the class re-assembles, their reports will be used to create a Venn diagram comparison of each document with either the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution, depending on which is the closer parallel.
  4. Conclude with student sitting in a circle and going round robin to reflect on the significance in their everyday lives of the material they have read. Students may then respond to the original set of reflections.
  5. For homework, each student will be asked to write her or his own updated version of either the Declaration or the Preamble/Bill of Rights.

## **Lesson Plan #2: Local Hero and School Namesake, A. Philip Randolph**

Time Allowance: Two 90-minute periods.

### *Content/Concepts*

Individuals close to home have struggled for civil liberties to benefit of students living today. Internet research can help us learn about their contributions.

### *Instructional Strategy/Delivery*

Survey class on what they know about Martin Luther King, Paul Robeson, Fannie Lou Hamer, A. Philip Randolph, Bayard Rustin, and Cecil B. Moore and Rev. Paul Washington and C. Delores Tucker. Record information and note variations in knowledge base.

### *Performance Tasks*

- a. Gather internet biographies for A. Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin.
- b. Develop a combined timeline for the two men.
- c. Note five differences in information presented between either of the two sets of biographies.
- d. write a journal reflection on the information is most obscure and speculate as to why this is so.
- e. Create individual posters that convey the most important information that high school students (particularly at A. Philip Randolph Career Academy - fill in for your individual school) should know. Posters will be displayed at a designated time and place in the building.
- f. In a group of four, compose an easy-to-read flyer for incoming freshmen that will provide key learnings about our namesake and his associate. Print out result for voting by the class.
- g. In journal, record which aspects of Randolph's and Rustin's lives are most closely related to the issue of civil liberties as we have discussed them from Mill through Boykin.
- h. Design a cyberspace segment about Randolph and Rustin to be incorporated into our school's website.

### *Musical conclusion*

Distribute texts for "Joe Hill" and "The House I Live In." Students listen to recordings and respond to messages. They may speculate regarding dates and places. Return to internet search to ascertain history of song, "The House I Live In." Compare to history of "Joe Hill" from *Songs of Work and Freedom*. Explain how the two songs relate to war and/or civil liberties and to the life and work of A. Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin.

### *Homework*

Students may select a current song, rap or other musical composition that speaks to the theme of liberty and society (grandparent language rule). Record title, artist, most significant lyrics and write an explanation drawing on material from the two classes so far.

## **Lesson Plan # 3: A Writer as Social Activist: Langston Hughes**

### *Content*

Poems of Langston Hughes: the well known ("Mother to Son") and the obscure ("Chant for Tom Mooney").

### *Concepts*

That the general public knows little about some very important individuals. Artists as idealists are often likely to affiliate themselves with out-of-mainstream organizations. Society and governments sometimes exact a price for the artist's questioning.

### *Instructional Strategy*

- a. Survey class for their acquaintance with the life and work of Langston Hughes.
- b. Present a sheet of statements regarding his life, some true, and some false. Direct students to biographies of Hughes in the Norton *Anthology of African American Literature* (Gates et al) and on the web by Arnold Ampersad.
- c. Read accounts of two trials from *Great American Trials*: Mooney and Billings; the Scottsboro Boys.

### *Performance Task*

Create a geographical timeline using the combined information. Link Hughes' political efforts to those of Randolph and Rustin via a graphic organizer of the students' choice. Compare the Hughes poem best known to you with "Chant for Tom Mooney. Evaluate the effect of his political involvement on Hughes' life and career.

### *Video*

View the Langston Hughes biographical documentary from *Voices and Visions*.<sup>34</sup> Evaluate production value of video and effectiveness in portraying Hughes' life.

### *Journal Reflection*

Select Randolph, Rustin, or Hughes. Write a ten-paragraph essay speculating on where one of these individuals (your choice) would stand today on issues including the War in Iraq, the Patriot Act, the war on terror, race relations, the economy, education, music/entertainment, gun control, racial profiling, the political parties, the environment, opportunity. Use material from your notes over the last week.

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Fabre, Michel. *The Unfinished Quest of Richard Wright*. Urbana and Chicago:

University of Illinois Press, 1993. This is a thorough, sympathetic rendering of the life of Richard Wright with particular emphasis on his political activity and his emigration to Paris. Fabre is a Frenchman and was a personal acquaintance of Wright's.

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Fowke, Edith and Joe Glazer. *Songs of Work and Freedom*. Chicago: Roosevelt University, 1960. Every labor song you ever wanted to know, with accessible piano parts and thorough-going histories of the circumstances behind the composition of each song. Publisher permission to use for religious or educational purposes.

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr., and Nellie Y. McKay, eds. *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*. New York: Norton, 1997. An excellent compendium with college-level, though not exhaustive, biographies.

Goldstein, Robert J. *Political Repression in Modern America: From 1870 to 1976*. University of Illinois Press, 2001. Extensively detailed history of how government in the world's greatest democracy repeatedly falls into the trap of resembling some dictatorships. Fascinating background material.

Healy, Patrick D., "Pataki Warns Cultural Groups for Museum at Ground Zero." *New York Times*, June 25, 2005: B1-2. A recent article that reports on a governor's attempting to limit the place and kind of expression that artists might be allowed in light of the terror attacks, the war in Iraq, President Bush and Ground Zero.

Hughes, Langston. *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*. New York: Knopf, 1997. The only collection I have found that includes "The Chant for Tom Mooney". Also includes the poem about Christ and Lenin that got Hughes in trouble with the radical right of his day.

—. *The Langston Hughes Reader*. New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1958. There is no better way to gain an appreciation of the comprehensive humanity and creativity of Langston Hughes. Humorous and creative.

Kairys, David. *With Liberty and Justice for Some: Critique of the Conservative Supreme Court*. New York, New, 1993. A tonic for liberals as we contemplate the new conservative turn of the Supreme Court. Extensive treatment of the World War II Pledge of Allegiance and *Korematsu v. United States* decision. Thumbs up for the first, thumbs down for the second.

Knapppman, Edward W. et al, Editor. *Great American Trials: From Salem Witchcraft to Rodney King*. Detroit:

Visible Ink, 1994. An extremely helpful book of trial accounts, many of which can be matched with literature: *The Crucible*, *Inherit the Wind*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and "The Chant of Tom Mooney," to name a few.

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Linfield, Michael. *Freedom Under Fire: U.S. Civil Liberties in times of War*. South End Press, 1990. A casebook for anyone considering questioning the government during wartime. As we look forward to never-ending battles, Linfield's insights may prove useful.

Loewen, James W. *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995. Disillusioning but needful information about Woodrow Wilson on race, women's rights, and world politics. Fascinating related story about the no-so-well-known Socialist, Helen Keller.

Lynch, Jack, "Dr. Johnson's Revolution." *New York Times*, July 2, 2005, p. A15. A review of the most recent publication of Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language*. The first edition served as a reference Jefferson and other contributors to the Declaration and the Constitution. Essential for those who want to know the original meaning of the original terms in the original documents.

McClaren, Joseph. *Langston Hughes: Folk Dramatist in the Protest Tradition, 1921-1943*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1997. Focus on Hughes' lesser known genre. Interesting stories about his life as both a playwright and theater operator. Look here for information about the play that epitomized the left's support for the Scottsboro boys.

Mill, John Stuart Mill. *On Liberty: Rethinking the Western Tradition*. Edited by David Bromwich and George Kateb. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003. Essential expression of philosophy on this most compelling issue in our world today. Good practice reading for AP students and a good example for all men writers: Mill credits his wife with helping him succeed.

Muravchik, Joshua. "Marquis (sic) at Last." *opinionjournal.com*. 17 Jan. 2003. Wall Street Journal 27 July 2005 <http://www.opinionjournal.com/taste>. Excellent, detailed rendition of Rustin's life and contributions to the Civil Rights Movement. Clear account of the effect his sexual orientation had on suppressing recognition of his accomplishments. The title of the original article was "Marquee at Last," to indicate the coming out process, not his accession to a rank in French nobility!

Rehnquist, William. *All the Laws but One: Civil Liberties in Wartime*. Vintage Books, 1998. A wonderful book for Civil War and civil liberties buffs. Try to forget Rehnquist's support for restricted covenants. He demonstrates a passion for the law and American history that is impressive regardless of one's political orientation.

Rose, Tricia. Review: "Promises Betrayed: Waking Up from the American Dream," by Bob Herbert, *The New Crisis*, May/June 2005, Vol. 112 Issue 3, 52+. Bob Herbert, a columnist for the *New York Times*, sees connections between the war in Iraq, the war on terror, the economy, the need for oil, and civil liberties. The reviewer adds her own, supportive, analysis.

Safire, William. "The Jailing of Judith Miller." *New York Times*, June 29, 2005, A23. The most recent case regarding consequences for a reporter's guarding her sources. Safire compares Miller to Henry David Thoreau.

Smith, Rogers M. "Civil Liberties in the Brave New World of Antiterrorism." *Radical History Review*. Issue 93,

Fall 2005: 170-85. In a succinct and clear reflection, Dr. Smith draws the parallels between actions of the current administration and Previous administrations as the ideal balance between rights and security seems ever elusive.

Robinson, Earl. "Obituary." *Philadelphia Inquirer*. 23 July 1991, A14.

Sperry, Paul. "It's the Age of Terror: What Would You Do?" *New York Times* 28 July 2005: A25.

Stephens, Elaine C. and Jean E. Brown. *A Handbook of Content Literacy Strategies - 75 Practical Reading and Writing Ideas*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon, 2000. A wonderful support for the creative teacher. Addresses the reality of student reading difficulties with flair.

"Teamwork on Terrorism." Editorial. *Boston Globe* 16 July 2005, sec. A: 18. A careful and thoroughly reasoned response to the July London Tube bombings.

Williams, Juan. "In Search of A. Philip Randolph." *PBS.org*. 2001. 16 Dec. 2005  
<http://www.pbs.org/weta/apr/juanwms.html>. Beautifully written and thorough reflection on the life of A. Philip Randolph.

Woolf, Virginia. *Three Guineas*. New York: Burlingame/Harcourt, 1938, 1963. At the request of a male friend, Woolf speculates on how war can be prevented, though acknowledging the limited experience (at the time) of the average woman in that enterprise.

Wright, Richard. *American Hunger*, Harper and Row, 1944. Only part of the autobiography Wright wrote in the 1940's. The Book-of-the-Month Club chose to publish only the earlier part of Wright's life, before he became active in the Communist Party. Valuable for insights into his struggle and for reveling in the exquisite quality of his language. We should all remember that Wright wrote haiku toward the end of his life.

## Student Reading List

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Auden, W.H. "The Unknown Citizen." *Collected Shorter Poems 1927-1957*. New York: Random, 1966, 146. A powerfully humorous poem depicting the life of a citizen who made no waves.

Hughes, Langston. "The Chant for Tom Mooney," "Mother to Son," "Let America Be America Again," "Harlem," "Theme for English B." There is no need to limit students. Let them read widely from the Hughes canon.

*The International Bill of Human Rights*. Foreword by Jimmy Carter. Glen Ellen CA: Entwhistle Books, 1981. This document demonstrates the importance of the United States in inspiring the world to move toward human rights.

Myers, Walter Dean. *Fallen Angels*. Austin: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1988. Account of a young African American soldier in Vietnam. Compelling story followed by a thorough collection of war-related poetry, letters, and fiction going back to World War I.

O'Brien, Tim. *The Things They Carried*. New York: Broadway, 1998. Wrenching account of a young man's Vietnam experience from draft notice, through combat, and after return stateside. 2004-2005 selection for

One Book, One Philadelphia.

## Classroom Materials and Resources

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Chalk or white board

Chalk or markers

Large newsprint tablet

Computers with internet connections

Videotape player

Audio tape player

Journal Books

Class set of AP Preparation work books and related literature

"The House I Live In." *SongFacts.com*. 2005. 12 Mar. 2005 <http://www.songfacts.com/detail.lasso?id=we06>.

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8. New York: Harcourt, 1938; Harbinger ed. 1963
9. Rogers M. Smith, "Civil Liberties in the Brave New World of Antiterrorism" (*Radical History Review*: Issue 93, Fall 2005) 170.
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12. Jarrett Murphy, "Terror by the Numbers." <http://villagevoice.com/news/0530,murphy2,6626,5.html>>
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14. Mark Sherman, "FBI confirms it has files on ACLU, Greenpeace, others." *Philadelphia Inquirer* 18 July 2005: A3.
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