HANDOUT

Los Angeles, California

You are a member of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in Los Angeles. LA is often seen as a racial "Promised Land," but you aren't sure why. The city has a long history of discrimination—deporting Mexicans and Filipinos in the 1930s and incarcerating Japanese Americans in internment camps in the 1940s. Black people have fared no better. Many hotels, beaches, pools, and restaurants are segregated, or bar Mexican Americans, Black people, and Asian Americans altogether.

CORE has focused its efforts on fighting police brutality, housing discrimination, and school segregation. Black people face constant police abuse in Los Angeles. In 1962, after Ronald Stokes, a secretary of the Nation of Islam, was shot and beat to death by the police, CORE organized a march of 3,000 people and collected 10,000 signatures to send to the United Nations. The Mayor, however, blamed marchers for "bringing about the very condition" you were "complaining about."

The city also denies there is a problem with LA's separate but unequal schools. The School District maintains that they have a "color-blind" policy. However, Black people, Mexican Americans, and other minority groups are funneled into segregated and overcrowded schools. Students are tracked into technical education and shop classes rather than college prep. There are few Black teachers, and racist textbooks often celebrate slavery through "happy slave tales." The few Black students who have been able to attend the wealthier white schools have been met with violence. At one school hundreds of white students protesting integration held a mock lynching, burning mock-ups of six Black students, and faced no consequences.

In 1961, CORE worked with the NAACP and the ACLU to organize a school desegregation march of more than 28,000 people. Dr. Martin Luther King spoke at the rally. In 1963, while everyone's attention was on the struggle in Birmingham, Alabama, King returned to your city, recognizing that "Birmingham or Los Angeles, the cry is always the same. We want to be free."

Housing segregation has been another key issue for CORE. At a recent demonstration in Beverly Hills, one NAACP leader proclaimed "there is more residential segregation in Los Angeles than any major Southern City in the United States." The federal government uses a ranking system to provide loans for housing development. Black and multiracial neighborhoods receive the lowest grades. As a result, these neighborhoods can't get loans to improve buildings, build new ones, or buy homes elsewhere. Meanwhile, developers can get federal funds to build new housing complexes in places like the Valley, which has a Black population of less than 1%.

Meanwhile, white neighborhoods have formed "race restriction committees" and "homeowner associations" (HOAs) to convince white people to rent and sell only to other white families. Some LA neighborhoods outright advertise themselves to be a "100% Caucasian Race Community." The NAACP has focused on fighting such blatant housing discrimination in courts. But other HOAs are more careful not to talk about race. They exclude Black people by saying we don't meet the personal qualification as a "good neighbor." This makes it harder to prove racial discrimination in court.

CORE activists use direct action to challenge housing discrimination. This past year you organized picketing and sit-ins at segregated suburbs and gated communities across the city; one of these sit-ins lasted 34-days and resulted in Bob and Helen Liley, a Black family, getting to buy a home in Monterey Highlands, a nearly all-white neighborhood. The Lileys had the support of Al Song, a Korean American, who had been elected to the City Council, and several Japanese American families who had been allowed to move into the neighborhood.

Your actions have helped contribute to some housing victories statewide. Just this year, state officials passed the Rumford Fair Housing Act, which made it illegal for public housing facilities and landlords of multi-unit buildings to discriminate. However, angry homeowners associations and realtor groups are already fighting to get the Act repealed. They claim it is "un-American" and against people's civil liberties to "force" homeowners to sell or rent to particular people. These "liberal" Los Angeles residents support civil rights three thousand miles away in the South but won't support them in their own backyard. As one white Angeleno put it, "Your rights end where my property begins."

You're excited to attend the March on Washington to tell people about your struggle in Los Angeles and to demand the federal government take action against discriminatory practices in California.

HANDOUT

Birmingham, Alabama

You are a young Black woman from Birmingham, Alabama — nicknamed "Bombingham" because of near-daily violence. The KKK has bombed almost fifty homes here — so many in one neighborhood it's called "Dynamite Hill."

Segregation in Birmingham, which is 40% Black, is legally required. The Black schools you attend are so crowded that some of you have to attend classes at night. But you are still proud of your school. You "dress for success" each day, hoping college is around the corner. But colleges in Alabama are just as segregated as high schools. In 1955, when Autherine Lucy tried to enroll at the all-white University of Alabama she was met with a mob of students and Klansmen chanting '"Kill her!" Police had to escort her away and the University suspended her "for her own safety."

You helped found a young women's group. You fundraise for families in need and participate in lunch counter sit-ins organized by the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR), a civil rights group made up of nearly two-thirds women. ACMHR fights to desegregate public facilities, but also for jobs. In Birmingham, unemployment is 2.5 times higher for Black people than white people. Black people are only hired for low-pay positions. More than 75% of Black women, including many of your mothers, are domestic workers, exempt from the federal minimum wage.

While Black women have been the backbone of the civil rights movement in Birmingham, you felt the need to bring in nationally recognized leaders like Martin Luther King to focus national attention on your campaign. AMCHR organizers invited Dr. King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) to Birmingham. In April of 1963, you began wide-scale marches and boycotts of segregated stores. Police Commissioner Bull Connor responded by forbidding all public protest, using police dogs against the marchers, and arresting you, King, and others. But still, the media barely noticed.

After the arrests, many of your parents were afraid to continue the campaign. If your parents went to jail or were fired in retaliation, then how would your family eat?

Young students like you became even more important to the movement. If you were arrested it wouldn't hurt your family as much. Plus, as prom queens, cheerlead captains, radio DJs, and organizers you have networks at school to call on. SCLC leaders recruited more young students like you to capture the attention of your peers and the nation. You and your peers attended trainings on nonviolence and used transistor radios to secretly spread the word to young people across the city.

On May 2nd,"D-Day," two thousand Black students ditched school to march for justice. At your school, the principal blocked the door, but you left anyways. In groups of 50, you marched across the city. By the end of the day a thousand of you were jailed, but they couldn't arrest you all.

The next day you skipped school again to join the rapidly growing protests. With the jails already filled to capacity, Bull Connor decided to bring out K-9 attack dogs and high-pressure fire hoses to blast you to the ground. Some in your group were only nine years old. Some of you had your dresses ripped off by the water pressure, but you held firm. As your parents looked on many tried to intervene by throwing rocks and bricks at the police officers assaulting you.

The media finally paid attention. 200 journalists poured into Birmingham and captured your protests on the front pages of papers across the country. More of you were arrested, taken to animal pens at the county fairground. Some of you were sexually harassed and a few of you assaulted. Those of you who weren't arrested continued your protest all week long.

MLK had hoped that young people like you would help "subpoena the conscience of the nation." It worked. Northerners have sent bail money and started their own protests. The city of Birmingham, shamed by the national attention, has agreed to a gradual 60-day plan to desegregate and President Kennedy has called for federal civil rights legislation. However, white violence has not stopped, only one Black salesclerk has been hired, and you are not sure you are happy with the compromise. You are going to Washington because there is still lots of work left to be done. You want to demand the federal government step in to end police violence towards demonstrators, support desegregation and fund job training programs.

HANDOUT

McComb, Mississippi

You are a young member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) from McComb, Mississippi. McComb is one of the most deeply racist communities in Mississippi. Jim Crow segregation is strictly enforced. Restaurants, parks, pools, libraries are all segregated. But McComb also has a long history of civil rights activism.

McComb was founded as a railroad town. From the beginning white and African American workers were kept separate and the best jobs were for whites only. Jim Crow also put education out of reach for most African Americans. Schools were designed to teach Black students just enough to work on the local railroad and no more. Voting was out of the question. African Americans were over 30% of McComb's population but violence kept most unregistered and away from the polls. In the 1960s, McComb's mayor was chairman of the White Citizen's Council and its police chief headed up the local chapter of Americans for the Preservation of the White Race. This was well known but went on without investigation or action from the federal government.

In spite of the hostile white community, African Americans organized. C.C. Bryant was elected head of the local NAACP chapter. He doubled membership in the chapter and became Vice President of the Statewide organization. He had a small library in his barber shop and discussed civil rights with young people regularly. In 1961 he invited SNCC field secretary Bob Moses to start a voter registration project in McComb. They hoped to use new federal protections to register people to vote. Dozens showed up to meetings but very few people were willing to take the dangerous risk of going to the courthouse to register.

They feared violence and other retaliation from the white community. Their fears were justified. Bob Moses was beaten badly by a sheriff in neighboring Amite County while accompanying two people trying to register to vote. Although SNCC notified federal authorities about the incident, the FBI did nothing.

But Bryant had been inspiring you and other young people in McComb for years, so when you heard about the arrival of civil right workers you were not scared, but excited. You and several other young people were trained by Moses and other SNCC members in non-violent direct action. You joined SNCC and decided to launch sit-ins in McComb.

On August 30th you joined three other High School students, in a sit-in at McComb's Greyhound Station. You were all arrested and remained in jail for over a month. While you were in jail, Herbert Lee, one of the founding members of the local NAACP who had been helping Bob Moses register people to vote, was murdered in broad daylight by a white State Legislator. Witness Louis Allen received regular death threats over the possibility of his testifying. Local FBI agents had to be forced to investigate and when they finally did, they took no action.

When you were released, Brenda Travis, one of the students who had participated in the sit-in

with you was expelled from school for her participation. So you and over 100 other high school students led a spontaneous walk out and march to City Hall protesting her expulsion. All the students were arrested and one SNCC member was badly beaten by police. Students were also expelled from school. SNCC set up a temporary Non Violent High to teach the expelled students. Despite all the violence and reprisals for engaging in lawful protest, the federal government refused to help.

The walkout and sit-ins frustrated many adult activists in McComb. Many wanted SNCC workers to leave. They had supported voter registration but felt that direct action was a distraction that put young people in danger. The murder of Herbert Lee and the arrests and expulsions of students made local people even more cautious about participating in voter registration classes. Because of these tensions SNCC decided to shut down the project in McComb. But you were not ready to quit. You had joined SNCC and decided to take your training and experience to help other communities across the state continue direct action and voter registration.

Now you and other SNCC activists have come to Washington D.C. to demand the federal government take action to achieve freedom and democracy for Black people in Mississippi and around the country. The local police and white community have attacked and killed Black people in McComb for simply trying to exercise their rights. It's time the federal government stepped in and enforced the law.

HANDOUT

Brooklyn, New York

You are a member of the Brooklyn chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). When people hear segregation, they think Montgomery or Little Rock, but they should think New York City. Officials in New York claim to support civil rights, but government policies have created and maintained segregation and inequality.

Since the 1930s, the government enforced residential segregation through a process known as redlining. They rated every neighborhood from A to D. Neighborhoods in New York with more than 5 percent Black people were given C and D ratings. They were marked in red and deemed unsafe for loans and development. The government sponsored suburban development and home loans for white New Yorkers while trapping families of color in crumbling neighborhoods.

Landlords in white neighborhoods maintain segregation by refusing to rent to Black pepole. While this is illegal, CORE has had to organize to compel the city to enforce the law. After a Black person is rejected by a landlord, you encourage them to report the incident to CORE. You than send a white CORE member to the same apartment to try and rent it. If they are offered the apartment, the original Black applicants return and CORE demands the landlord rent the apartment to them. If the landlord still refuses, you picket in front of the building and file a complaint with the city. Because most landlords don't want to be labeled racist, you have been able to secure housing for dozens of African Americans.

One of your most dramatic actions was dumping garbage in front of Borough Hall, the political and judicial center of Brooklyn. For years, citizens in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood complained to the Department of Sanitation and the mayor about the infrequent garbage collection. In white neighborhoods garbage was picked up every day but in Bedford-Stuyvestant only three times a week. The streets were always dirty with garbage overflowing. After the city refused to increase the pickup, you and other CORE activists gathered garbage in U-Haul trailers and left it where it couldn't be ignored.

One of the longest standing grievances of Black people in New York City has been the segregated school system. As 2.5 million Black and Puerto Rican people migrated into segregated city neighborhoods in the two decades before 1960, the schools quickly became overcrowded. Instead of redrawing school boundaries to send students of color to less crowded white schools, school leaders implemented part-time school days in overcrowded schools, so two different groups of students could attend the same school. Black and Puerto Rican students are tracked into low-level classes and Black and Puerto Rican teachers are less likely to be hired. The Department of Education has an oral, in-person test designed to prevent people with "foreign" or "Southern" accents from getting a job.

When *Brown v. Board of Education* declared that segregated schools were "inherently unequal," many of the city's civil rights leaders began calling for integration. City officials opposed deseg-

regation just like officials in the South, but they went about it differently. The Superintendent of Schools attacked the very idea that the city's schools were segregated. He claimed that unlike in the South, the "racial imbalance" in New York City was "natural" and "accidental" because people just chose to live with their own.

It became clear the city was unwilling to desegregate. In 1957, a group of mothers in Harlem, led by Mae Mallory, began to keep their children home from school to demand "that our children be educated the same way as everybody else's." Instead of integrating, the city brought up the nine mothers on charges. Their lawyer called out this Northern racism, "Down home [in the South], our bigots come in white sheets. Up here, they come in Brooks Brothers suits and ties."

In 1959, the integration battle came to Brooklyn. CORE allied with a new group formed by Rev. Milton Galamison, called the Parents' Workshop that was organizing rallies of several hundred parents outside of the superintendent's office. Together you began picketing schools that were doing a poor job of educating Black and Puerto Rican children.

In the summer of 1963, CORE and the Parents' Workshop joined other civil rights organizations to form the City-Wide Committee for Integrated Schools. Together you've announced a city-wide boycott for integrated schools and have secured Bayard Rustin, the head organizer of the March on Washington, to help you organize for the boycott. You're excited to attend the March on Washington to demand an end to segregation and build support for the upcoming boycott.

HANDOUT

Detroit, Michigan

You are part of one of the largest Black communities in the country. Detroit is the proud home of Rosa Parks. Parks moved to Detroit in 1957 after constant death threats and economic hardships as a result of her participation in the Montgomery Bus Boycott. But Parks calls Detroit "the Northern promised land that wasn't" and finds that there isn't "too much difference" between racism in Detroit and Montgomery.

Like Parks, thousands of Black people migrated from the South to Detroit in the two decades before 1960. Detroit was home to the major automakers and you could make a lot more money working in a Detroit factory than down south. However, Black people were always the last hired and the first fired. Black women have it even worse. Some were able to get factory jobs during World War II, but most were laid off after the war. Most Black women can't get a job outside of the low-paying domestic or service industries. Unemployment in the Black community is at depression-era levels.

But you are part of a growing group of civil rights activists that is fighting back. Rosa Parks joins a number of female leaders in Detroit that have played a crucial role. For example, Marilyn Adams is the secretary of the Trade Union Leadership Council, an African American labor organization that fights against the discrimination of Black workers and for African American representation in the autoworker's union. Chinese-American Marxist Grace Lee Boggs has been a crucial mentor for a growing young Black radical community and has invited Malcolm X to speak in Detroit later this year.

Black mothers have also led boycotts and pickets of Detroit's segregated schools. 45 percent of Black students attend schools that are over 80 percent Black. The curriculum is full of racist stereotypes. When students at Northwestern High School protested the lack of Black history in their textbook, one teacher responded, "Black people didn't do anything." The result is that 50 percent of Black students drop out.

The segregated schools are a result of segregated housing. As the Black population grew, white people fled the city taking advantage of federal loans that Black people were denied access to. The city responded with an "urban renewal" policy. They destroyed Black communities like Paradise Valley and Black Bottom claiming that they were "raising slums," when they were really trying to attract white people back to the city. With rent for the new housing units four to ten times higher than before over 30,000 Black residents were displaced.

Growing increasingly frustrated, you and other activists organized a mass march to highlight the segregation in jobs, housing and schools. Held two months before the March on Washington, Detroit's Great March to Freedom drew almost 200,000 people making it the largest civil rights march to date. Thousands packed into Cobo Hall to hear from civil rights leaders, including Martin Luther King. King condemned racial injustice as a "national problem."

One of the issues the march didn't address, however, was police brutality. Between 1955 and 1960 there were nearly 250 complaints filed against the Detroit police. White police officers were notorious for beating up Black people. The NAACP estimated that in 47 cases police beat people so badly they had to be hospitalized. In one instance, Chrysler autoworker, Mary Stewart, was forcibly dragged from her car. A

white officer struck her in the face with a nightstick while other officers held back her hair and arms. She was beaten so badly she needed stitches. Nothing happened to the police officers but she spent two days in jail for "drunk driving." Like hundreds of other cases, there was no evidence she did anything wrong, so the charges were dismissed.

Thirteen days after the Great March, a police officer killed a young Black woman, Cynthia Scott. Shot twice in the back and once in the stomach, the prosecutor claimed that the police officer had shot the "fleeing suspect" in self-defense. But you knew that Cynthia Scott was another victim of Detroit police brutality. One victim too many. You demonstrated with five thousand people outside of police headquarters, yelling "stop killer cops!" You and dozens of other activists sat-in the Mayor's office demanding the removal of the chief of police and a Black officer to replace him.

Now you're headed to the March on Washington as part of the Detroit delegation. You want to demand the federal government investigate the Detroit police department's brutality and take action to end racial discrimination.

HANDOUT

Cambridge, Maryland

You are a member of the Cambridge Nonviolent Action Committee (CNAC), an affiliate of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). While much of the focus of the Civil Rights Movement has been on the Deep South, for the last two years, Cambridge, 75 miles away from Washington D.C., has become a hotbed of activism.

Black people in Cambridge face constant discrimination. African Americans are segregated into one neighborhood, the Second Ward, and Black children are kept away from the better resourced white schools. Black patients have trouble being admitted to the local hospital. Many downtown businesses refuse to serve Black customers or hire Black workers. The few businesses that do serve Black people, discriminate in other ways. For example, movie theatres force Black people to sit in the balcony. Unemployment rates for Black men and women in Cambridge are nearly 30% — four times as high as for white people.

So when the movement came to town in 1962, you were ready to fight. After the ambassador to the newly independent African nation, the Republic of Chad, was thrown out of a Maryland restaurant, college students began sit-ins and freedom rides all over the state. Members of the Black community invited SNCC members to organize in Cambridge.

On January 13, 1962, one hundred activists participated in Cambridge's first civil rights demonstration. You marched downtown and tested several segregated businesses and facilities. White people lined the streets, calling you names and shoving you while you marched. At one restaurant a SNCC leader got caught inside and a mob beat him out the door. He got up, tried to go back in and was again knocked down. After his third attempt, a policeman who watched the series of beatings, arrested the demonstrator (not those who beat him). A week later, student activists poured into Cambridge from nearby colleges to take part in the second demonstration, but by the third they were encouraged to go elsewhere because so many people in Cambridge's Black community had gotten involved.

Despite all the protests, the city council refused to outlaw discriminatory practices and the school board refused to desegregate schools. White leaders blamed the protests on "outside agitators". It was clear that it would take more organization and determination to force the city to desegregate.

The Cambridge Nonviolent Action Committee (CNAC) was formed out of these initial protests. Gloria Richardson soon emerged as CNAC's leader, even though she was 20 years older than most leaders in SNCC. Her daughter had taken part in the first sit-ins and grew disillusioned after white leaders refused to budge. Gloria decided she needed to get involved.

After surveying the Black community, CNAC created a set of demands that went beyond the initial effort to integrate public accommodations. These demands included equal treatment on all scores, from employment to police protection, from schools to housing and healthcare.

In March of 1963 Cambridge's Dorsett Theater altered its seating policy, limiting Black people to not just

the balcony, but the back half of the balcony. CNAC's leaders met with the city council to complain but the council brushed them off. CNAC decided to renew the protests.

Between March and June there were constant marches and sit-ins. Hundreds were arrested. After two local Black youths were arrested for praying outside of a segregated bowling alley and sentenced to an indefinite term in juvenile detention, tensions boiled over. Many Black people, including several CNAC leaders began questioning nonviolent tactics. Some began carrying guns to defend themselves and others began fighting back when harassed by white people. On June 14, a riot broke out, several white-owned businesses in the Second Ward were burned and local police who entered the neighborhood were met with bricks and bottles.

As a result, the Maryland Governor called in the National Guard to Cambridge and began negotiations with CNAC. Eventually, the President sent his brother, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy to lead negotiations. An agreement was reached that met nearly all of CNAC's demands including the complete and immediate desegregation of schools and hospitals, the construction of 200 units of low-income housing for Black people, and an adoption of an amendment to the city charter that prohibited businesses from refusing service to Black people.

While there is still much work to be done to ensure Black people are on equal footing with white people in Cambridge, the agreement is a tremendous victory. Now CNAC members are joining the March on Washington to share the story of their successful fight and continue pressuring the Kennedy administration to directly intervene to ensure civil rights across the country.