

Black Labor Power

A Complete 17-Module Curriculum

Randolph - Rustin - Lawson - Lucy | Four Pillars of Black Labor Power

Teacher's Edition

This bound edition contains 17 teacher-ready modules tracing the unbroken line of Black labor and civil rights leadership from A. Philip Randolph's founding of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in 1925 through Bayard Rustin's strategic genius, Dr. James Lawson's pastorate at Centenary UMC Memphis (1962-1974) that brought Dr. King to Memphis in 1968, William Lucy's creation of 'I AM A MAN' and CBTU -- to APRI Memphis, CBTU Memphis, and Centenary UMC under Pastor Keith Caldwell today. Each module is teacher-ready.

Co-stewarded by:

APRI Memphis (memphispari.org) - founded 1970

CBTU Memphis - carrying William Lucy's legacy in the city where 'I AM A MAN' was made

Centenary UMC Memphis (centenarymemphis.com) - Pastor Keith Caldwell

Labor Education (laboreducation.org/black-labor-power)

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Father of Black Labor | laboreducation.org/a-philip-randolph

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Architect of the 1963 March | laboreducation.org/bayard-rustin

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Dr. James M. Lawson Jr. -- 1 Module (Module 1 ready; 2-5 in production)

The Pastor Who Called King | laboreducation.org/james-lawson

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Each module is a single class period (45 min) or block (90 min). Modules are sequential within each faculty section but can also be taught topically across the curriculum.

A. Philip Randolph

MODULE 1: The Brotherhood -- Birth of Black Labor Power

MODULE SNAPSHOT

Grade level	8-12 (adaptable for 6-7)
Time	45 min single class OR 90 min block
Subject fit	U.S. History, Civics, Social Studies, ELA, Labor Studies
Co-built with	APRI Memphis -- memphisapri.org

01

Learning Objectives -- Students Will Be Able To:

1. Explain why the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters mattered beyond railroad workers.
2. Identify A. Philip Randolph's role as both labor organizer and civil rights strategist.
3. Analyze how the Pullman contract (1937) reshaped what Black workers could demand from white-owned industry.
4. Connect the Brotherhood's organizing tactics to today's union campaigns -- including in Memphis.
5. Evaluate Randolph's dignity argument and its through-line to 'I AM A MAN' (Memphis 1968).

02

Teacher Background -- 60 Second Brief

Asa Philip Randolph (1889-1979) was born in Crescent City, Florida, the son of a tailor and an AME minister. In 1925, Pullman porters -- the Black men who worked the sleeping cars of America's passenger trains for tips and exhaustion -- asked Randolph to organize them. The Pullman Company was the largest single employer of Black labor in the country. After TWELVE YEARS of organizing, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters won a contract in 1937 -- the first Black union ever to do so against a white-owned American corporation. Randolph used that victory as a platform for everything that came after: in 1941, his threat to march 100,000 Black Americans on Washington forced FDR to issue Executive Order 8802. In 1948, his pressure moved Truman to desegregate the U.S. military. In 1963, with his protegee Bayard Rustin, he organized the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. In 1965, he founded the A. Philip Randolph Institute -- the AFL-CIO-affiliated body that institutionalizes the labor-civil rights coalition. The Memphis APRI chapter, founded 1970 by Black union activists, continues this work today.

03

Primary Source Excerpts

A. Philip Randolph, on dignity

"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."

A. Philip Randolph, on equality (foundational APRI quote)

"Equality is the heart and essence of democracy, freedom, and justice -- equality of opportunity in industry, in labor unions, schools and colleges, government, politics, and before the law."

Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters slogan, 1925

"Service Not Servitude."

Randolph to FDR, 1941 (paraphrased)

"Mr. President, the Negroes of America are not going to take this lying down. We propose 100,000 to march on Washington unless you act."

APRI founding statement, 1965

"The labor movement traditionally has been the only mass movement that has organized the dispossessed. The civil rights movement must permanently link itself to the labor movement."

04

Discussion Questions -- 5 Essential

1. Why did it take TWELVE YEARS for the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters to win a contract? What does that tell us about the obstacles Black labor organizers faced -- and the patience required to win?
2. Pullman porters worked for tips. Randolph called this 'servitude, not service.' What's the difference, and why did that distinction matter so much to Black workers in the 1920s?
3. Randolph THREATENED a march in 1941 -- he didn't actually march. Why was the threat enough to win Executive Order 8802? What does that teach us about the power of organized labor?
4. Randolph mentored Bayard Rustin, who mentored MLK. Trace one specific idea -- 'dignity', 'nonviolence', or 'labor justice IS civil rights' -- from Randolph through Rustin to King's Memphis speech in 1968.
5. APRI Memphis was founded in 1970. What labor or civil rights work would you want to see them do in YOUR city right now? Why?

05

Activity -- 'The Pullman Manifesto' (20 minutes)

In groups of 3-4, students will write a one-page manifesto FROM the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters TO the Pullman Company, presenting their three most important demands. Students must use at least TWO primary source quotes (paraphrased or direct). After 12 minutes of writing, each group reads their manifesto. The class then votes: which demands would you sign your name to in 1925, knowing the company could fire you for organizing? Discuss the courage required and connect to today's union campaigns -- including Novel Bookstore Memphis (2026, CWA Local 3866).

06

Assessment -- Exit Ticket (5 minutes)

On a sticky note or index card, students answer:

1. Name ONE thing the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters won that benefited workers BEYOND railroads.
2. Why does APRI exist -- in one sentence?
3. If A. Philip Randolph were a Memphis union organizer in 2026, which campaign do you think he'd join? Why?

07

Extensions & Going Deeper

- > Visit memphisapri.org -- explore the local chapter's voter education, civil rights, and labor work.
- > Read 'Marching Together: Black Pullman Porters in the Brotherhood' or watch the PBS documentary 'Rising From the Rails.'
- > Research a current organizing campaign in your region. Which AFL-CIO union is involved? Does it have an APRI connection?
- > Interview a current union member -- ideally one in transportation or service industries -- about dignity and respect at work.
- > Compare Randolph's 1941 March (threatened, won) to the 1963 March (executed). What was different? What was the same?
- > Visit laboreducation.org/bayard-rustin for the companion module on Rustin and Memphis 1968.

CO-BUILT BY LABOR EDUCATION x APRI MEMPHIS

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"Equality is the heart and essence of democracy." -- A. Philip Randolph
Labor Education x APRI Memphis | Module 1: The Brotherhood -- Birth of Black Labor Power

A. Philip Randolph

MODULE 2: The 1941 March That Forced FDR's Hand

MODULE SNAPSHOT

Grade level	8-12 (adaptable for 6-7)
Time	45 min single class OR 90 min block
Subject fit	U.S. History, Civics, Government, Social Studies, Labor Studies
Co-built with	APRI Memphis -- memphispari.org

01

Learning Objectives -- Students Will Be Able To:

1. Identify Executive Order 8802 as the first federal civil rights action since Reconstruction.
2. Explain how the THREAT of a 100,000-person march -- without anyone marching -- forced a sitting president to act.
3. Analyze the strategic relationship between organized labor and political power.
4. Evaluate why FDR resisted (allies feared a 'race riot') and what Randolph held firm on.
5. Connect 1941 negotiating tactics (deadline + visible mass + refusal to be talked down) to modern union campaigns.

02

Teacher Background -- 60 Second Brief

In January 1941, the United States was retooling for war. Defense contracts were pouring out of Washington, but Black workers were locked out of the jobs -- explicit 'whites only' hiring at Boeing, Vultee, North American Aviation. A. Philip Randolph, fresh off the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters' 1937 victory, announced the March on Washington Movement: 100,000 Black Americans would march on the capital on July 1, 1941, demanding fair employment in defense industries and an end to military segregation. President Roosevelt sent Eleanor Roosevelt and NYC Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia to talk Randolph out of it. They warned of bloodshed. Randolph refused. On June 25, 1941 -- six days before the march -- FDR signed Executive Order 8802, banning racial discrimination by defense contractors and creating the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC). The march was called off. It was the first federal civil rights action since Reconstruction. Crucially: Randolph used the THREAT of mass action -- not the action itself -- to win. He understood that organized labor's leverage was credible numbers, public visibility, and a refusal to be quietly managed.

03

Primary Source Excerpts

A. Philip Randolph, January 25, 1941 (call for the march)

"Power is the active principle of only the organized masses, the masses united for a definite purpose."

Randolph in negotiations with FDR, June 1941 (paraphrased account)

"Mr. President, time is running out. The Negroes of America are not going to take this lying down. We propose 100,000 to march on Washington unless you act."

Executive Order 8802, signed June 25, 1941

"There shall be no discrimination in the employment of workers in defense industries or government because of race, creed, color, or national origin."

Randolph, after the order was signed

"We have struck a blow for the right of Negroes to live and work as American citizens. But the fight is not over. Discrimination still exists. We must continue to mobilize."

NAACP leader Walter White on the strategy

"Randolph showed the country that the threat of organized Negro labor was something even the President could not ignore."

04

Discussion Questions -- 5 Essential

1. Why was FDR willing to sign EO 8802 in 1941 but unwilling to issue similar protections earlier? What changed?
2. Randolph called off the march once the order was signed. Was that a victory -- or a missed opportunity? Defend your answer with evidence.
3. Compare EO 8802 (1941) to the Civil Rights Act (1964). What did 8802 NOT cover? Why was the fight not over?
4. The march never happened. Does an action you 'almost' take count as a movement victory? What does this teach us about leverage?
5. Today, unions sometimes 'authorize a strike' without striking. Connect this 1941 tactic to a current union campaign you know about.

05

Activity -- 'The Negotiation Room' (25 minutes)

Split the class into three groups: (1) Randolph + March on Washington Movement organizers, (2) FDR's advisors (including Eleanor Roosevelt and Mayor LaGuardia), and (3) defense industry employers. Each group prepares its position for 8 minutes. Then conduct a 12-minute negotiation roleplay: Randolph must hold his demands; FDR's team must offer concessions short of an executive order; employers must object to government interference. After 12 minutes, the class debriefs: who held the most leverage, and why? Connect to a modern campaign where a deadline + mass visibility forced a corporate or government concession -- e.g., the 2023 UAW Stand-Up Strike, or the 2026 Novel Bookstore Memphis union recognition fight.

06

Assessment -- Exit Ticket (5 minutes)

1. In one sentence: what made Randolph's 1941 threat credible enough to move a president?
2. Name one specific protection EO 8802 created -- and one protection it left out.
3. If you were organizing a campaign tomorrow, what would you borrow from Randolph's playbook?

07

Extensions & Going Deeper

- > Read the full text of Executive Order 8802 (4 paragraphs -- read it aloud, then discuss what is missing).
- > Research the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) -- it was the body created BY 8802. Why was it gutted in 1946?
- > Compare the 1941 March on Washington Movement to the 1963 March on Washington that DID happen. What changed between them?
- > Interview an AFL-CIO organizer about how strike authorization votes work today -- and how they compare to Randolph's 1941 strategy.
- > Watch newsreel footage of A. Philip Randolph addressing rally crowds in 1941 (Library of Congress archives).

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A. Philip Randolph

MODULE 3: Mentor to a Movement -- Randolph -> Rustin -> King

MODULE SNAPSHOT

Grade level	8-12 (adaptable for 6-7)
Time	45 min single class OR 90 min block
Subject fit	U.S. History, Civics, ELA, Social Studies, African American Studies
Co-built with	APRI Memphis -- memphisapri.org

01

Learning Objectives -- Students Will Be Able To:

1. Map the mentorship line from A. Philip Randolph to Bayard Rustin to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
2. Identify specific ideas (nonviolence, mass organizing, labor + civil rights coalition) that traveled across three generations of leadership.
3. Explain why Randolph chose Rustin to organize the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.
4. Analyze how Rustin's labor strategy shaped Dr. King's intervention in Memphis 1968.
5. Evaluate the role of mentorship in building durable social movements.

02

Teacher Background -- 60 Second Brief

A. Philip Randolph mentored Bayard Rustin starting in the early 1940s. Rustin -- a Black, openly gay Quaker pacifist who had studied Gandhi's tactics in India -- became Randolph's most trusted strategist. When Randolph called off the 1941 March, Rustin was furious; he believed the masses should have marched. Randolph kept him close anyway. Two decades later, when civil rights leaders wanted to organize the 1963 March on Washington FOR JOBS AND FREEDOM, Randolph insisted Rustin direct the logistics -- over objections from leaders who feared Rustin's sexuality would discredit the march. The march drew 250,000 people, peacefully, in eight weeks. Rustin then mentored Dr. King in nonviolent resistance. In February 1968, Memphis sanitation workers chanting 'I AM A MAN' walked out. Rustin and Randolph urged King to come support them. King came. He died there. The mentorship line -- Randolph teaching Rustin, Rustin teaching King -- ran straight from the Pullman porters of 1925 to the Lorraine Motel balcony of 1968. It is one of the most consequential transmission lines in American history.

03

Primary Source Excerpts

Randolph at the 1963 March on Washington (opening remarks)

"We are the advance guard of a massive moral revolution for jobs and freedom. This revolution reverberates throughout the land, touching every village where black men are segregated, oppressed, and exploited."

Bayard Rustin on Randolph

"Mr. Randolph was my mentor. From him I learned that the labor movement and the civil rights movement were not two movements but one."

Dr. King on Randolph (introducing him at the 1963 March)

"The dean of Negro leaders -- the man whose tireless effort and indomitable spirit made this day possible."

Rustin to King, urging him to go to Memphis (March 1968, paraphrased)

"Martin, the sanitation workers are striking for dignity and a living wage. That is what we have been fighting for all along. Memphis is where everything we believe must show up."

Randolph at the 1965 founding of APRI

"The civil rights movement must permanently link itself to the labor movement. Otherwise it will not be a movement -- it will be a moment."

04

Discussion Questions -- 5 Essential

1. Mentorship across generations is rare in social movements. What did Randolph give Rustin that Rustin could not have found elsewhere?
2. Other civil rights leaders wanted Rustin removed from the 1963 March because he was gay. Randolph refused. What does that teach us about loyalty in leadership?
3. Rustin disagreed with Randolph about calling off the 1941 march. Why did Randolph still keep him close? What does that say about mentoring people who challenge you?
4. Trace ONE idea -- nonviolence, dignity, mass organizing, or 'labor IS civil rights' -- from Randolph through Rustin to King's last speech in Memphis. Where do you see it most clearly?
5. Who in YOUR community is mentoring the next generation of organizers? What would Randolph want them to teach?

05

Activity -- 'The Lineage Map' (25 minutes)

In groups of 3-4, students create a visual lineage map. On a large sheet, draw three columns: Randolph (1889-1979) | Rustin (1912-1987) | King (1929-1968). Under each name, list 3-5 ideas, tactics, or commitments they're associated with. Then DRAW ARROWS between the columns to show where an idea passed from mentor to mentee. Groups must defend at least three of their arrows with evidence from the primary sources. Display all maps; class votes on which arrow is most strongly supported. Discuss: what was LOST in transmission, and what was AMPLIFIED?

06

Assessment -- Exit Ticket (5 minutes)

1. Name ONE specific idea that traveled from Randolph -> Rustin -> King.
2. In one sentence: why did Randolph trust Rustin with the 1963 March despite the political risks?
3. Who is your 'Randolph' -- someone whose ideas you've inherited? What's the most important thing they taught you?

07

Extensions & Going Deeper

- > Watch 'Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin' (PBS, 2003) -- focus on the scenes with Randolph.
- > Read King's 'I've Been to the Mountaintop' speech (April 3, 1968, Memphis) -- mark every reference to labor and Randolph's themes.
- > Research a current organizer-mentor pair in the labor or civil rights movement. What's being transmitted?
- > Compare the Randolph -> Rustin -> King line to another mentorship line you know (e.g., Ella Baker -> Diane Nash, or Cesar Chavez -> Dolores Huerta).
- > Visit laboreducation.org/bayard-rustin for the companion module on Rustin and Memphis 1968.

CO-BUILT BY LABOR EDUCATION x APRI MEMPHIS

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"Equality is the heart and essence of democracy." -- A. Philip Randolph

Labor Education x APRI Memphis | Module 3: Mentor to a Movement -- Randolph -> Rustin -> King

A. Philip Randolph

MODULE 4: 'At the Banquet Table of Nature'

MODULE SNAPSHOT

Grade level	8-12 (adaptable for 6-7)
Time	45 min single class OR 90 min block
Subject fit	ELA, U.S. History, Philosophy, Social Studies, Labor Studies
Co-built with	APRI Memphis -- memphispari.org

01

Learning Objectives -- Students Will Be Able To:

1. Interpret Randolph's metaphor of the 'banquet table of nature' as a labor-rights argument.
2. Distinguish between asking for dignity and DECLARING it -- and analyze why that distinction matters.
3. Trace the dignity argument from Randolph's writings to the Memphis 1968 'I AM A MAN' placards.
4. Evaluate how dignity functions as both a personal claim and a collective demand in labor movements.
5. Apply Randolph's dignity framework to a contemporary workplace or community injustice.

02

Teacher Background -- 60 Second Brief

Randolph's most quoted line -- 'At the banquet table of nature there are no reserved seats. You get what you can take, and you keep what you can hold' -- is often read as a tough-minded statement about power. It is also a profound dignity argument. Randolph rejected the idea that Black workers were petitioners asking for kindness; they were CLAIMANTS at a table that already belonged to them. This is the same argument that, decades later, Memphis sanitation workers made when they marched with placards reading 'I AM A MAN' -- not 'please respect me,' not 'we deserve respect,' but a DECLARATION of fully realized humanity. The placards were silent rebuttals to a city that had treated Black sanitation workers as interchangeable, disposable labor (Echol Cole and Robert Walker had been crushed to death inside a faulty garbage truck on Feb. 1, 1968). Randolph's dignity argument, refined for forty years in his speeches and APRI's founding documents, shows up explicitly on those signs. Understanding Module 4 is understanding how a labor philosopher's words become a movement's chant.

03

Primary Source Excerpts

Randolph -- the foundational dignity quote

"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."

Randolph on equality as a structural claim

"Equality is the heart and essence of democracy, freedom, and justice -- equality of opportunity in industry, in labor unions, schools and colleges, government, politics, and before the law."

Randolph on the source of justice

"Justice is never given; it is exacted. And the struggle must be continuous, for freedom is never a final fact."

Memphis Sanitation Strike placard, February 1968

"I AM A MAN"

Dr. King's last speech, Memphis, April 3, 1968

"It's alright to talk about long white robes over yonder, in all of its symbolism. But ultimately people want some suits and dresses and shoes to wear down here!"

04

Discussion Questions -- 5 Essential

1. 'You get what you can take, and you keep what you can hold' -- is that a tough-minded line about power, or a hopeful one about dignity? Defend your reading.
2. What's the difference between 'I deserve to be respected' and 'I AM A MAN'? Why does the SECOND form change the political situation?
3. Randolph said 'Justice is never given; it is exacted.' Can you think of a justice in your community that was given freely -- or was it always taken?
4. The Memphis sanitation workers' demand was technically about a UNION CONTRACT and SAFETY. Why did they choose a DIGNITY placard instead of a demand placard?
5. What is one situation in your school, neighborhood, or workplace where 'I AM A MAN/WOMAN/PERSON' would be a more powerful claim than 'please treat me better'?

05

Activity -- 'The Placard' (25 minutes)

Each student designs a single-line placard for a real or imagined movement they care about. The placard MUST be a declaration of dignity (like 'I AM A MAN'), not a request or a complaint. Constraint: 6 words or fewer. After 10 minutes, each student stands and reads their placard aloud, then explains in 30 seconds: why this declaration, and not a demand? The class then votes on the three most powerful placards and discusses what made them work. Optional extension: in groups, draft a one-paragraph statement explaining why the chosen placard refers back to Randolph's dignity philosophy.

06

Assessment -- Exit Ticket (5 minutes)

1. Paraphrase Randolph's 'banquet table' quote in your own words -- in one sentence.
2. Why is 'I AM A MAN' a stronger claim than 'I deserve respect'? Answer in one sentence.
3. Write a 6-word dignity declaration for something you care about right now.

07

Extensions & Going Deeper

- > Read the original 'I AM A MAN' placards' history at the National Civil Rights Museum (Memphis) website.
- > Compare Randolph's dignity philosophy to Frederick Douglass's 'Power concedes nothing without a demand.'
- > Find a current movement using a dignity-declaration framing (e.g., 'Black Lives Matter,' 'Time's Up,' 'We Are Essential Workers'). Analyze how it operates.
- > Visit memphispari.org -- read APRI Memphis's mission statement. Identify where Randolph's dignity argument shows up.
- > Write a personal essay (300-500 words): a time you 'declared' rather than 'asked,' and what changed.

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"Equality is the heart and essence of democracy." -- A. Philip Randolph
Labor Education x APRI Memphis | Module 4: 'At the Banquet Table of Nature'

A. Philip Randolph

MODULE 5: APRI Today -- How the Legacy Lives in 109 Chapters

MODULE SNAPSHOT

Grade level	8-12 (adaptable for 6-7)
Time	45 min single class OR 90 min block
Subject fit	Civics, Government, Social Studies, U.S. History, Career & Community Engagement
Co-built with	APRI Memphis -- memphispari.org

01

Learning Objectives -- Students Will Be Able To:

1. Describe the A. Philip Randolph Institute's (APRI) founding purpose, structure, and AFL-CIO relationship.
2. Identify APRI's current programmatic priorities: voter education, civil rights, labor organizing, and economic justice.
3. Locate APRI Memphis specifically -- its founding (1970), leadership, and current work in the Mid-South region.
4. Analyze how a national civil rights / labor coalition sustains itself across six decades.
5. Evaluate ways students can engage with APRI -- as members, volunteers, or coalition partners.

02

Teacher Background -- 60 Second Brief

The A. Philip Randolph Institute was founded in 1965 by Randolph and Bayard Rustin to PERMANENTLY institutionalize the alliance between organized labor and the civil rights movement. It is affiliated with the AFL-CIO (the federation of American labor unions) and operates as the AFL-CIO's primary African American constituency group. Today APRI has 109 chapters across 31 states. Each local chapter operates semi-autonomously, focused on local issues: voter registration and education, civil rights advocacy, labor solidarity, leadership development for Black union members, and economic justice campaigns. APRI Memphis was organized in 1970 by Black union activists in the wake of the 1968 sanitation strike. Its mission -- preserved at memphispari.org -- explicitly carries forward Randolph and Rustin's national vision in the city where Dr. King made his final stand. APRI Memphis's work includes voter education drives, civil rights monitoring, support for current labor organizing (including the 2026 Novel Bookstore Memphis CWA Local 3866 campaign), and a network of community partnerships across West Tennessee. Membership is open; the chapter actively recruits union members, students, and community allies.

03

Primary Source Excerpts

APRI founding statement, 1965

"The labor movement traditionally has been the only mass movement that has organized the dispossessed. The civil rights movement must permanently link itself to the labor movement."

APRI mission today (apri.org)

"APRI seeks to forge an alliance between the African American community and the trade union movement around the principles of social, political, and economic justice."

APRI Memphis mission (memphispari.org)

"Organized in 1970 by courageous Black union activists, APRI Memphis advances economic, racial, and social justice in Memphis and the region."

AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler on APRI (recent address)

"APRI is not a partner of organized labor -- APRI IS organized labor, in its most morally rooted form."

Randolph at APRI's founding, 1965

"As long as a single Negro worker is denied work because of his color, the entire labor movement is wounded. APRI exists so that wound is felt -- and treated."

04

Discussion Questions -- 5 Essential

1. Why did Randolph and Rustin believe a PERMANENT institution -- not just a coalition or alliance -- was necessary to keep labor and civil rights linked?
2. APRI has 109 chapters in 31 states. What kinds of issues do you think a LOCAL chapter (like Memphis) handles that a national office can't?
3. Randolph founded APRI in 1965 -- in the middle of the most intense civil rights legislative period in U.S. history. Why then? Why not sooner or later?
4. AFL-CIO unions and civil rights groups have NOT always agreed. Where do you see tensions today between these movements? How might APRI help mediate?
5. What's one specific way YOU could engage with APRI Memphis as a student, parent, or community member?

05

Activity -- 'The Local Audit' (25 minutes)

In pairs, students conduct a 15-minute 'local audit': research one specific issue in Memphis (or your local city) where labor and civil rights overlap RIGHT NOW. Examples: the Novel Bookstore Memphis (CWA Local 3866) union recognition fight, sanitation workers' contracts, teacher pay, immigrant labor protections, voter ID laws affecting working-class voters. Each pair prepares: (a) one paragraph describing the issue, (b) which AFL-CIO union is involved (if any), (c) one specific way APRI Memphis could plug in. Pairs present in 90 seconds each. Class then votes: which issue most needs APRI Memphis to make the labor-civil rights link explicit? Discuss.

06

Assessment -- Exit Ticket (5 minutes)

1. In one sentence: what does APRI do that no other organization does?
2. Name one specific way APRI Memphis carries forward Randolph and Rustin's legacy.
3. What's one question you'd ask an APRI Memphis member if you met them tomorrow?

07

Extensions & Going Deeper

- > Visit memphisapri.org -- read the chapter's mission, board, and current campaigns. Note three programs you didn't know about.
- > Visit apri.org -- find the chapter directory. How many chapters are in YOUR state? What are they working on?
- > Invite an APRI Memphis member to speak to your class (contact info@memphisapri.org).
- > Attend an APRI Memphis event in person -- voter registration drives, MLK Day commemorations, or labor solidarity rallies.
- > Research the AFL-CIO's constituency groups (APRI, CBTU, LCLAA, APALA, Pride at Work). How do they differ? What do they share?
- > Read Randolph's 1965 APRI founding address in full -- it sets out what the next sixty years of work should look like.

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A. Philip Randolph

MODULE 6: Sister Institutions -- APRI (1965) Meets CBTU (1972)

MODULE SNAPSHOT

Grade level	8-12 (adaptable for 6-7)
Time	45 min single class OR 90 min block
Subject fit	U.S. History, Civics, African American Studies, Labor Studies
Co-built with	APRI Memphis -- memphispari.org

01

Learning Objectives -- Students Will Be Able To:

1. Distinguish between APRI (founded 1965 by Randolph + Rustin) and CBTU (founded 1972 by William Lucy + 4 co-founders) as the two AFL-CIO Black constituency organizations.
2. Explain why Bill Lucy and 1,200 Black trade unionists founded a SECOND organization in 1972 -- seven years after APRI already existed.
3. Identify William Lucy as the bridge from Memphis 1968 ('I AM A MAN') to Chicago 1972 (CBTU founding).
4. Analyze the strategic difference between APRI (top-down coalition) and CBTU (bottom-up insurgent body) within the same labor movement.
5. Evaluate how APRI Memphis and CBTU Memphis can BOTH operate in the same city today as sister chapters.

02

Teacher Background -- 60 Second Brief

By 1972, Randolph's APRI had been operating for seven years. It was effective and respected -- but it was an institute coordinated closely with AFL-CIO leadership. That became a problem. AFL-CIO President George Meany had refused to address the concerns of Black trade unionists and remained NEUTRAL in the 1972 presidential election even as Richard Nixon's policies drove up unemployment and appointed Supreme Court justices hostile to workers and minorities. In September 1972, William Lucy -- AFSCME Secretary-Treasurer and the man who created 'I AM A MAN' in Memphis 1968 -- convened 1,200 Black union officials from 37 unions at the LaSalle Hotel in Chicago. The largest assembly of Black trade unionists in U.S. labor history. Lucy and four co-founders (Nelson Edwards of the UAW, Charles Hayes of the Meat Cutters, Cleveland Robinson of Distributive Workers, William Simons of AFT Local 6) founded the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU). They built CBTU to fight discrimination 'within the house of labor' -- explicitly NOT under AFL-CIO leadership control. Lucy served as CBTU president for 40 years (1972-2013). APRI continued. The two bodies now operate as sister organizations: APRI as the institutional coalition; CBTU as the rank-and-file expansion. In Memphis, APRI Memphis and CBTU Memphis both carry this work today.

03

Primary Source Excerpts

A. Philip Randolph at APRI's founding, 1965

"The civil rights movement must permanently link itself to the labor movement. Otherwise it will not be a movement -- it will be a moment."

William Lucy, on creating CBTU (interview)

"APRI did what it did. We loved what it did. But there were rooms where rank-and-file Black workers needed a seat -- and the AFL-CIO leadership wasn't opening those doors. So we built the room."

CBTU founding statement, Chicago, September 1972

"Black trade unionists have been ignored within the labor movement. We will no longer wait for permission to speak for ourselves."

William Lucy on Memphis 1968 (Labor Education ebook, Chapter 2)

"I AM A MAN was not a request. It was a declaration. We were telling Memphis -- and America -- that our humanity was not negotiable."

CBTU mission statement (cbitu.org)

"CBTU is the largest, most respected and most progressive organization of Black trade union men and women in the United States. We address the special concerns of Black workers and their communities through the trade union movement."

04

Discussion Questions -- 5 Essential

1. Trace the lineage: Randolph (BSCP 1925) -> Randolph + Rustin (APRI 1965) -> Lucy (Memphis 1968) -> Lucy (CBTU 1972). What's transmitted at each handoff?
2. APRI already existed in 1972. Why did Lucy feel a SECOND organization was needed instead of just working through APRI?
3. AFL-CIO President George Meany refused to take a position in the 1972 election. Was that a labor decision, a political decision, or a racial decision? Defend your answer.
4. CBTU's founders represented FIVE different unions. Why did multi-union representation matter? What would have changed if CBTU were a single-union body?
5. If APRI Memphis and CBTU Memphis both work in the same city today, what should they do TOGETHER -- and what should they keep separate?

05

Activity -- 'The Two Rooms' (25 minutes)

Split the class into two groups: APRI delegates (top-down coalition; close to AFL-CIO leadership) and CBTU founders (bottom-up insurgent; convened independently of leadership). Each group receives the same hypothetical problem: 'A major employer in your city is firing Black workers for union activity.' Each group has 10 minutes to draft a one-page response strategy. Each presents in 3 minutes. The class compares: where do the strategies overlap? Where do they diverge? Which would actually win the workers' jobs back? Debrief: real movements use BOTH approaches simultaneously. Identify ONE current campaign (e.g., the 2026 Novel Bookstore Memphis fight) where you'd want both APRI and CBTU at the table.

06

Assessment -- Exit Ticket (5 minutes)

1. In one sentence: what does CBTU do that APRI doesn't -- and vice versa?
2. Name the year APRI was founded, the year CBTU was founded, and Bill Lucy's role in EACH.
3. If you were starting a Black trade unionist body in 2026, which model would you copy: APRI's, CBTU's, or a hybrid? Why?

07

Extensions & Going Deeper

- > Visit laboreducation.org/bill-lucy -- the companion page dedicated to William Lucy and CBTU's founding.
- > Visit memphispari.org and cbtu.org side by side. Identify three shared priorities and three differences in emphasis.
- > Research the other AFL-CIO constituency groups: LCLAA (Latino), APALA (Asian Pacific American), Pride at Work (LGBTQ+), CLUW (women). How are they similar to APRI/CBTU?
- > Read the Labor Education ebook, Chapter 2 -- focus on Lucy's 1994 election as PSI President and the Free South Africa Movement.
- > Compare Randolph's 1941 March (threatened, won EO 8802) with Lucy's 1972 CBTU founding (executed, built an institution). Both used mass assembly. What changed in 31 years?

CO-BUILT BY LABOR EDUCATION x APRI MEMPHIS

This module is part of a five-module curriculum co-built with APRI Memphis (memphispari.org). Educators using this material -- please send feedback. Membership: memphispari.org/membership. Contact: info@memphisapri.org | (901) 205-9160. The companion module on Bayard Rustin and Memphis 1968 is at laboreducation.org/bayard-rustin.

"Equality is the heart and essence of democracy." -- A. Philip Randolph
Labor Education x APRI Memphis | Module 6: Sister Institutions -- APRI Meets CBTU

"I AM A MAN"

Bayard Rustin, Memphis 1968, and the Labor-Civil Rights Bridge

MODULE SNAPSHOT

Grade level	8-12 (adaptable for 6-7)
Time	45 min single class OR 90 min block
Subject fit	U.S. History, Civics, Social Studies, ELA, Labor Studies
Standards	C3.D2.His.4.6-8/9-12; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2 / RH.9-10.2

01

Learning Objectives -- Students Will Be Able To:

1. Identify Bayard Rustin's role as a labor organizer, not only a civil rights organizer.
2. Explain why the 1968 Memphis Sanitation Strike was both a labor and civil rights action.
3. Analyze how Rustin's mentorship under A. Philip Randolph -- and his counsel to Dr. King -- shaped the Memphis intervention.
4. Connect the phrase 'I AM A MAN' to the dignity argument Rustin made his life's work.
5. Apply Rustin's organizing principles ('angelic troublemaking') to a contemporary labor or civil rights issue.

02

Teacher Background -- 60 Second Brief

Bayard Rustin (1912-1987) was a Black, openly gay Quaker pacifist who brought Gandhi's nonviolence to the U.S. civil rights movement. He served as a chief strategist to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., organized the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs AND Freedom, and spent his life linking labor justice to civil rights. Mentored by A. Philip Randolph (founder of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters -- the first major Black union), Rustin directed the AFL-CIO-affiliated A. Philip Randolph Institute. In February 1968, Memphis sanitation workers Echol Cole and Robert Walker were crushed to death inside a faulty garbage truck. On Feb. 12, 1,300 mostly Black sanitation workers walked out, demanding recognition of AFSCME Local 1733, safer equipment, and a living wage. Rustin and Randolph urged Dr. King to come support them; King died on the Lorraine Motel balcony on April 4, 1968. The Memphis strike was the synthesis of Rustin's life argument -- labor justice IS civil rights -- and the moral hinge of the entire civil rights movement.

03

Primary Source Excerpts (For Class Handouts)

Bayard Rustin, public speeches

"We need in every community a group of angelic troublemakers."

Bayard Rustin, 'From Protest to Politics' (Commentary, Feb. 1965)

"The Negro today finds himself stymied by obstacles of far greater magnitude than the unprotected right to register and vote ... What is the value of winning access to public accommodations for those who lack money to use them? The minute the movement faced this question, it was compelled to expand its vision beyond race relations to economic relations, including the role of education in modern society."

A. Philip Randolph, founder of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters

"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."

Memphis Sanitation Workers placard, Feb. 1968

"I AM A MAN"

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Memphis, April 3, 1968

"It's alright to talk about long white robes over yonder, in all of its symbolism. But ultimately people want some suits and dresses and shoes to wear down here! It's alright to talk about streets flowing with milk and honey, but God has commanded us to be concerned about the slums down here, and his children who can't eat three square meals a

day."

04

Discussion Questions -- 5 Essential

1. What does "I AM A MAN" mean? Why those words, in that order? What is the difference between asking to be respected and DECLARING one's humanity?
2. Bayard Rustin called civil rights and labor 'the same fight.' What did he mean? Use evidence from his 'From Protest to Politics' excerpt.
3. Why did Dr. King come to Memphis when he had so much else on his plate? What does his presence -- and his death there -- tell us about how he understood labor justice?
4. Bayard Rustin was openly gay in 1968 -- a time when that could end your career and your place in any movement. How might that experience have shaped his commitment to dignity for marginalized workers?
5. If "angelic troublemakers" exist today, where do you see them? What labor or civil rights fights would Rustin be in if he were alive now?

05

Activity -- 'The Coalition Letter' (20 minutes)

In groups of 3-4, students will draft a one-page letter FROM Bayard Rustin (1968) TO a contemporary labor union -- one currently organizing in their state. The letter should explain why civil rights organizations should join their fight. Students must incorporate at least TWO of the primary source excerpts in the letter (paraphrased or quoted). Groups share aloud; class identifies which arguments are most persuasive and why.

Materials for the activity:

- Handout of primary source excerpts (above)
- Blank paper or letter template (one per group)
- Map or list of current organizing campaigns in your state (e.g., laboreducation.org/strikes)

06

Assessment -- Exit Ticket (5 minutes)

On a sticky note or index card, students answer:

1. Name ONE specific way Bayard Rustin connected labor and civil rights.
2. Why does Memphis 1968 matter to BOTH movements?
3. What's one issue happening RIGHT NOW where you'd apply 'angelic troublemaking'? Why?

07

Extensions & Going Deeper

- > Field trip (in person or virtual): National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel, Memphis, TN.
- > Read Bayard Rustin's 'From Protest to Politics' (Commentary, Feb. 1965) in full.
- > Research a current labor strike in your region. Which civil rights organizations support it? Which do not? Why?
- > Interview a current union member (or sanitation worker) about dignity at work. Compare to the 1968 demands.
- > Watch 'Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin' (PBS documentary, 2003).
- > Visit laboreducation.org/local-3866 and laboreducation.org/strikes to see ongoing organizing in the South.

MODULE 1 OF 5 -- THE OTHER FOUR ARE WAITING TO BE CO-WRITTEN

This module was built by Labor Education as a starting point. We're seeking partnership with The Rustin Institute, the Bayard Rustin Center for Social Justice, and the A. Philip Randolph Institute to co-develop Modules 2-5. Educators using this material -- please send feedback. Partners interested in co-authoring -- please reach out.

bradshawsolutions@gmail.com | laboreducation.org/bayard-rustin

"We are all one -- and if we don't know it, we will learn it the hard way." -- Bayard Rustin
Labor Education | Module 1: 'I AM A MAN' -- Rustin, Memphis 1968

Bayard Rustin

MODULE 2: 1947 Journey of Reconciliation -- The First Freedom Ride

MODULE SNAPSHOT

Grade level	8-12 (adaptable for 6-7)
Time	45 min single class OR 90 min block
Subject fit	U.S. History, Civics, ELA, African American Studies, Movement Studies
Companion curricula	Randolph (6 modules), Lucy (5 modules) at laboreducation.org

01

Learning Objectives -- Students Will Be Able To:

1. Identify the 1947 Journey of Reconciliation as the FIRST organized freedom ride -- fourteen years before the 1961 Freedom Rides.
2. Explain how the 1946 Supreme Court case *Morgan v. Virginia* (which banned segregation in interstate bus travel) created the legal opening Rustin and CORE acted on.
3. Map the route: 16 riders (8 Black, 8 white) across Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky.
4. Analyze why Rustin and George Houser organized this as an INTERRACIAL action -- and what that signaled in 1947.
5. Connect the Journey of Reconciliation directly to Rosa Parks (1955), the 1961 Freedom Rides, and the methodology Rustin later taught Dr. King.

02

Teacher Background -- 60 Second Brief

In June 1946, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Morgan v. Virginia* that segregation on interstate buses was unconstitutional. Southern bus companies and states ignored the ruling. The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) decided to TEST the ruling -- directly, nonviolently, in public. Bayard Rustin (FOR) and George Houser (CORE) organized the action. From April 9 to April 23, 1947, sixteen men -- eight Black, eight white -- rode Greyhound and Trailways buses through Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky. The Black riders sat in the front. The white riders sat in the back. When confronted, they refused to move. They were arrested twelve times. Rustin himself was sentenced to 30 days on a North Carolina chain gang for the violation. The Journey of Reconciliation drew limited national press at the time -- but it was the prototype for everything that followed. Fourteen years later, in 1961, CORE veterans organized the Freedom Rides using the EXACT same model, on the EXACT same routes, with Rustin advising. Rosa Parks's 1955 refusal in Montgomery sat in a tradition Rustin had helped build. This module honors the original sixteen.

03

Primary Source Excerpts

Bayard Rustin, recruiting riders for the Journey (1947)

"Nonviolent direct action is not weakness. It is the strongest weapon a free people has. We will board these buses, sit where the Constitution says we may sit, and accept whatever consequences come. That is how segregation ends."

Morgan v. Virginia, U.S. Supreme Court, June 3, 1946

"Seating arrangements for the different races in interstate motor travel require a single, uniform rule to promote and protect national travel. The Virginia statute imposes an undue burden on interstate commerce and is invalid."

CORE/FOR statement of purpose, Journey of Reconciliation

"This is an interracial action because segregation is an interracial wound. White and Black Americans will ride together because we refuse the lie that our travel must be separated."

Rustin from a North Carolina chain gang (1947)

"I am here because I sat in a seat that the Constitution of the United States said I could sit in. If that is a crime, then this state is in rebellion against its own laws."

James Farmer (CORE co-founder), looking back in 1961

"The 1961 Freedom Rides did not come from nowhere. They came from Bayard Rustin and George Houser and fourteen years of preparation. Everything we did, they had done first."

04

Discussion Questions -- 5 Essential

1. Why did Rustin and Houser organize the Journey as an INTERRACIAL action? What would it have signaled in 1947 if only Black riders had gone?
2. Morgan v. Virginia (1946) made interstate bus segregation illegal. So why did Rustin still need to go ride the buses a year later? What's the difference between a court ruling and a lived right?
3. Rustin served 30 days on a North Carolina chain gang for sitting in a legal seat. What does it cost a person to test an unjust system this way? Why is that cost a tactic?
4. The Journey got limited press in 1947 but became the model for the 1961 Freedom Rides. Why did it take 14 years for the same tactic to catch fire? What changed?
5. Identify ONE current civil rights or labor issue where a Journey-of-Reconciliation-style action might still work. What would it look like in 2026?

05

Activity -- 'Plan the Ride' (25 minutes)

In groups of 4-5, students plan a hypothetical 2026 nonviolent direct action testing a specific legal right that is technically guaranteed but practically denied (examples: voting rights, housing access, public accommodations, transit access for disabled riders, workplace organizing). Each group has 15 minutes to draft: (a) the right being tested, (b) the legal precedent backing it, (c) the action itself (who, where, when, how), (d) the consequences participants must be prepared to accept, (e) the media + community strategy. Groups present in 2 minutes. Class debriefs: which planned action would actually move the needle? Which is closest to what Rustin would have designed in 1947?

06

Assessment -- Exit Ticket (5 minutes)

1. What was the legal precedent that made the Journey of Reconciliation possible?
2. Name one specific way the 1961 Freedom Rides used Rustin's 1947 design.
3. In one sentence: why is nonviolent direct action a 'tactic,' not a 'philosophy'?

07

Extensions & Going Deeper

- > Read CORE's original 1947 report on the Journey of Reconciliation -- available through the Swarthmore Peace Collection.
- > Map the actual route (Virginia -> North Carolina -> Tennessee -> Kentucky). Identify the four arrest sites.
- > Watch 'Eyes on the Prize' Episode 3 ('Ain't Scared of Your Jails') -- look for Journey-of-Reconciliation references.
- > Compare the 1947 Journey to the 1961 Freedom Rides side by side: who, where, what changed, what stayed the same.
- > Visit laboreducation.org/adult-library to watch the 2023 Rustin biopic (Colman Domingo).
- > Research a recent voting-rights bus tour or rideshare protest -- trace the Rustin lineage.

PART OF A 16-MODULE BLACK LABOR + CIVIL RIGHTS CURRICULUM

Rustin's life only makes sense alongside the mentors and proteges who carried his work. Companion curricula: laboreducation.org/a-philip-randolph (Randolph + APRI Memphis, 6 modules), laboreducation.org/bill-lucy (Lucy + CBTU Memphis, 5 modules). Watch the 2023 Netflix biopic 'Rustin' (Colman Domingo) -- in your Labor History Library at laboreducation.org/adult-library.

"We need, in every community, a group of angelic troublemakers." -- Bayard Rustin
Labor Education | Module 2: 1947 Journey of Reconciliation -- The First Freedom Ride

Bayard Rustin

MODULE 3: India 1948 -- Gandhi's Method, Brought Home

MODULE SNAPSHOT

Grade level	8-12 (adaptable for 6-7)
Time	45 min single class OR 90 min block
Subject fit	World History, U.S. History, Ethics, ELA, African American Studies
Companion curricula	Randolph (6 modules), Lucy (5 modules) at laboreducation.org

01

Learning Objectives -- Students Will Be Able To:

1. Identify Rustin's 1948-49 visit to India as a deliberate study of Gandhi's satyagraha method -- not just an admiration trip.
2. Distinguish satyagraha (truth-force, nonviolent persistence) from pacifism (refusal of violence) as Rustin understood them.
3. Trace what Rustin brought back: the discipline, the training methods, the willingness to be jailed.
4. Analyze how Rustin transmitted Gandhi's method to Dr. King during the Montgomery Bus Boycott (1956).
5. Evaluate whether nonviolent direct action is a UNIVERSAL strategy or one bound to specific contexts.

02

Teacher Background -- 60 Second Brief

Bayard Rustin had read Gandhi's writings since the 1930s. In 1948, six months after Gandhi's assassination, Rustin traveled to India on a six-month study trip arranged by the Fellowship of Reconciliation. He met directly with Gandhi's surviving lieutenants -- Jawaharlal Nehru, Acharya Vinoba Bhave, and others -- and studied the satyagraha movement's training centers, methods of discipline, jail solidarity practices, and the philosophy that opponents are to be persuaded, not destroyed. Rustin came back convinced that satyagraha could be TRANSLATED for the American Black freedom struggle -- not imported wholesale, but adapted. In 1956, when the Montgomery Bus Boycott was several weeks old, A. Philip Randolph dispatched Rustin to advise the young Dr. King. Rustin found a movement with great moral courage but minimal nonviolent training. He taught King the discipline. He explained how to absorb violence without returning it. He established the rules: no weapons, no threats, no retaliation. He stayed in Montgomery for weeks. Without that direct transmission, the modern American nonviolent civil rights movement does not exist as we know it. India 1948 made Memphis 1968 possible.

03

Primary Source Excerpts

Mahatma Gandhi on satyagraha (1920)

"Satyagraha is not predominantly civil disobedience, but a quiet and irresistible pursuit of truth. The satyagrahi opposes the deed, not the doer."

Rustin, reporting back from India (1949)

"I am now convinced that the methods of nonviolent direct action which Mahatma Gandhi used to free India can be used, with adaptation, to free the American Negro from the same patterns of humiliation, injustice, and second-class citizenship."

Rustin advising Dr. King in Montgomery (1956)

"Doctor, the rifle in your kitchen has to go. The bodyguards have to go. The minute they are seen, the nonviolent argument collapses. Either we are nonviolent or we are not."

Dr. King on Rustin's influence

"Bayard Rustin pulled me into the discipline of nonviolence the way a teacher pulls a student into a difficult truth. I had read Gandhi. Bayard taught me to live it."

Vinoba Bhave (Gandhi's disciple) to Rustin, India 1948

"You will not bring Gandhi home. You will bring the question home. Each people must answer it in their own tongue."

04

Discussion Questions -- 5 Essential

1. Rustin spent six months in India studying satyagraha, not just reading about it. Why does direct study matter? What can't be learned from books alone?
2. Distinguish satyagraha from pacifism. Why does that distinction matter? Can you be a satyagrahi without being a pacifist?
3. When Rustin told Dr. King 'the rifle in your kitchen has to go,' what was at stake? Why couldn't King keep the bodyguards AND be the symbol of nonviolence?
4. Bhavé told Rustin: 'You will bring the QUESTION home.' What does that mean? What's the difference between importing a method and translating one?
5. Pick one current global movement (e.g., Hong Kong protests, Sudan civil resistance, Iranian women's movement). Is satyagraha still applicable? What would Rustin advise?

05

Activity -- 'The Translation Test' (25 minutes)

Each student picks ONE specific Gandhian tactic from India's independence movement (examples: the Salt March 1930, hartal/general strikes, khadi/homespun cloth as economic protest, fasting unto death, padayatra/foot march). In 15 minutes, students must write a one-page proposal: how would this tactic be TRANSLATED (not copied) for a 2026 American labor or civil rights campaign? They must specify (a) what the U.S. version would look like, (b) what the cultural translation moves are, (c) what gets lost or has to change. Pair up and trade proposals. Each pair picks one to present in 90 seconds. Class debriefs: which translations actually work? Which are too literal?

06

Assessment -- Exit Ticket (5 minutes)

1. Define satyagraha in one sentence. How is it different from pacifism?
2. Name one specific thing Rustin learned in India and brought to Dr. King in Montgomery.
3. In one sentence: why did Rustin say nonviolence is a DISCIPLINE, not a feeling?

07

Extensions & Going Deeper

- > Read Rustin's 1949 report on his India trip (published in 'Down the Line') -- focus on the training-center descriptions.
- > Watch the documentary 'A Force More Powerful' (PBS) -- look for the U.S./India satyagraha connection.
- > Compare Gandhi's Salt March (1930) to Dr. King's Selma-to-Montgomery March (1965). What's transmitted? What's added?
- > Research a current nonviolent training program (e.g., Highlander, Selma Center for Nonviolence, Training for Change). Trace the Rustin lineage.
- > Read 'Letter from Birmingham Jail' (King, 1963) and mark every Gandhi/satyagraha reference.
- > Visit laboreducation.org/adult-library to watch the 2023 Rustin biopic for the India-trip scenes.

PART OF A 16-MODULE BLACK LABOR + CIVIL RIGHTS CURRICULUM

Rustin's life only makes sense alongside the mentors and proteges who carried his work. Companion curricula: laboreducation.org/a-philip-randolph (Randolph + APRI Memphis, 6 modules), laboreducation.org/bill-lucy (Lucy + CBTU Memphis, 5 modules). Watch the 2023 Netflix biopic 'Rustin' (Colman Domingo) -- in your Labor History Library at laboreducation.org/adult-library.

"We need, in every community, a group of angelic troublemakers." -- Bayard Rustin
Labor Education | Module 3: India 1948 -- Gandhi's Method, Brought Home

Bayard Rustin

MODULE 4: 1963 March on Washington -- 250,000 in 8 Weeks

MODULE SNAPSHOT

Grade level	8-12 (adaptable for 6-7)
Time	45 min single class OR 90 min block
Subject fit	U.S. History, Civics, Organization Management, ELA, African American Studies
Companion curricula	Randolph (6 modules), Lucy (5 modules) at laboreducation.org

01

Learning Objectives -- Students Will Be Able To:

1. Identify the August 28, 1963 March on Washington for Jobs AND Freedom as a labor + civil rights coalition action (not just a civil rights event).
2. Explain how Rustin was selected to direct logistics over the objections of leaders who feared his sexuality, communist past, or pacifism would discredit the march.
3. Map the logistics: 250,000 people, 8 weeks of planning, port-a-potties, water, sandwiches, security, transportation -- and the calm with which 250K dispersed by sunset.
4. Analyze why Rustin insisted on 'Jobs and Freedom' -- and what happens to civil rights without the labor component.
5. Evaluate Rustin as a model of organizational labor -- the indispensable work that history often credits to the speakers, not the planners.

02

Teacher Background -- 60 Second Brief

A. Philip Randolph had been planning a March on Washington for over twenty years -- the 1941 version had been called off after FDR signed EO 8802. In June 1963, with civil rights legislation stuck in Congress and Birmingham still smoldering, Randolph announced the march would finally happen. He insisted on Bayard Rustin as Deputy Director (which made Rustin the de facto operations lead). Other civil rights leaders -- including Roy Wilkins of the NAACP -- protested. Rustin was openly gay (with a 1953 arrest for it). He had been a member of the Young Communist League in the 1930s. He was a Quaker pacifist who had served 28 months in federal prison for refusing the WWII draft. Randolph held firm. Rustin had 8 weeks to organize. He coordinated 1,200 trains and buses, 80,000 box lunches, 22 bathroom facilities, water for 250,000 people, and a security force of 2,000 unarmed marshals. The march drew 250,000 people. There were 0 arrests. Dr. King delivered 'I Have a Dream' from the Lincoln Memorial. By sunset, the National Mall was empty and clean. Within a year, the 1964 Civil Rights Act was law. Without Rustin's logistical labor, the march does not happen -- or worse, it happens and fails. He was the engine. History gave the credit to the speakers.

03

Primary Source Excerpts

Bayard Rustin's organizing manual for the March (1963)

"A successful demonstration requires logistics worthy of an army. Every detail matters: water, food, medical, security, sound, sanitation. We will succeed because we will be organized."

A. Philip Randolph defending Rustin to objectors

"I have known Bayard for twenty years. He can run an army. I am not interested in what others say about his personal life. I am interested in 250,000 people getting home safely."

Dr. King to Rustin on August 29, 1963

"Bayard, history will not remember who ordered the box lunches. But there are no box lunches without you, and there is no march without box lunches. I see you."

Rustin's 10-Point Plan for the March (excerpt)

"1) Date and location confirmed. 2) Transportation by train and bus from every major city. 3) Box lunches for 250,000. 4) Water stations. 5) Bathroom facilities. 6) Medical tents. 7) Lost-and-found. 8) Sound system. 9) Security marshals.

10) *Plan for dispersal by sunset.*"

New York Times, August 29, 1963

"The march succeeded because of Bayard Rustin's meticulous planning. Twenty-two new bathroom facilities. Eighty thousand box lunches. Two thousand marshals. He thought of everything. It was the most disciplined assembly the capital has ever seen."

04

Discussion Questions -- 5 Essential

1. The march was 'for JOBS AND FREEDOM' -- not just freedom. Why did Randolph and Rustin insist on the labor frame? What happens to civil rights without it?
2. Roy Wilkins and others wanted Rustin OFF the march team because of his sexuality, communist past, and prison record. Randolph held firm. What does that loyalty cost? What does it gain?
3. Rustin had 8 weeks to organize 250,000 people. What's the difference between MOVEMENT energy and ORGANIZATIONAL discipline? Why do both have to exist?
4. Dr. King got the credit for the famous speech. Rustin only got the credit for the box lunches. Is that fair? Is it strategic? What would happen if history credited the organizers more visibly?
5. Pick a major recent demonstration (e.g., 2017 Women's March, 2020 BLM protests, 2024 immigrant labor walkouts). Trace where Rustin's logistical method shows up -- or where its absence is felt.

05

Activity -- 'Plan the March' (30 minutes)

In groups of 5-6, students plan a 2026 March on Washington for a specific cause (their choice). Each group must produce a 1-page 'Rustin-style' operations plan covering: (a) date and location, (b) transportation from at least 5 cities, (c) food and water for the projected attendance, (d) bathrooms and medical, (e) security and marshals, (f) sound system and speaker lineup, (g) media and message strategy, (h) dispersal plan. Groups present in 3 minutes. Class evaluates: which group's plan is closest to what Rustin would have built in 1963? Where did groups under- or over-prepare? Debrief: what's harder -- the inspiration or the logistics?

06

Assessment -- Exit Ticket (5 minutes)

1. Name three specific logistical tasks Rustin handled for the 1963 March that most history textbooks skip over.
2. In one sentence: why did Randolph insist on Rustin despite the objections?
3. What's the relationship between movement energy and organizational discipline? Use one sentence.

07

Extensions & Going Deeper

- > Read Rustin's 'From Protest to Politics' (Commentary, 1965) -- his strategic essay arguing the civil rights movement must become a political coalition.
- > Watch 'King in the Wilderness' (HBO, 2018) for footage of Rustin and the march planning team.
- > Visit the National Mall and locate the 1963 Lincoln Memorial steps. Trace the march route from the Washington Monument.
- > Research the labor unions that funded the march (UAW, AFSCME, BSCP) -- look up their financial contributions.
- > Compare the 1963 March to the 2017 Women's March. What logistical lessons traveled? Which were lost?
- > Visit laboreducation.org/adult-library to watch the 2023 Rustin biopic (centered on this 8-week sprint).

PART OF A 16-MODULE BLACK LABOR + CIVIL RIGHTS CURRICULUM

Rustin's life only makes sense alongside the mentors and proteges who carried his work. Companion curricula: laboreducation.org/a-philip-randolph (Randolph + APRI Memphis, 6 modules), laboreducation.org/bill-lucy (Lucy + CBTU Memphis, 5 modules). Watch the 2023 Netflix biopic 'Rustin' (Colman Domingo) -- in your Labor History Library at laboreducation.org/adult-library.

"We need, in every community, a group of angelic troublemakers." -- Bayard Rustin
Labor Education | Module 4: 1963 March on Washington -- 250,000 in 8 Weeks

Bayard Rustin

MODULE 5: The Cost of Standing Out -- Pacifism, Prison, Openly Gay

MODULE SNAPSHOT

Grade level	8-12 (adaptable for 6-7)
Time	45 min single class OR 90 min block
Subject fit	U.S. History, Ethics, ELA, African American Studies, LGBTQ+ Studies
Companion curricula	Randolph (6 modules), Lucy (5 modules) at laboreducation.org

01

Learning Objectives -- Students Will Be Able To:

1. Identify the three primary reasons Rustin was repeatedly marginalized in his own movement: Quaker pacifism, brief Young Communist League membership (1930s), and openly gay identity.
2. Trace Rustin's 28-month federal imprisonment (1944-1946) for refusing the WWII draft, and his 1953 arrest in Pasadena under California's anti-sodomy laws.
3. Analyze how leaders chose between LEGIBILITY (making the messenger acceptable to the mainstream) and INTEGRITY (defending the messenger because they tell the truth).
4. Evaluate Rustin's posthumous rehabilitation: 2013 Presidential Medal of Freedom (Obama), 2020 California pardon for the 1953 arrest.
5. Apply the 'cost of standing out' framework to a contemporary public figure or organizer.

02

Teacher Background -- 60 Second Brief

Bayard Rustin paid for his integrity over and over. Born 1912 in West Chester, Pennsylvania, raised Quaker by his grandparents. Brief member of the Young Communist League in the 1930s (left when the Party abandoned civil rights work in 1941). Refused the WWII draft as a Quaker pacifist; served 28 months in federal prison (1944-1946) -- where he led strikes against prison segregation. Arrested in Pasadena, California, January 1953, for 'sex perversion' -- a charge tied to consensual same-sex conduct. The arrest cost him his job at the Fellowship of Reconciliation. He was openly gay throughout his life in an era when most gay public figures lived deeply closeted. Civil rights leaders periodically pushed him into the background -- Strom Thurmond, in 1963, read Rustin's Pasadena arrest into the Congressional Record specifically to discredit the March on Washington. Randolph refused to remove him. Dr. King at various points distanced from Rustin; Rustin came back when needed. In his later years, Rustin spoke openly about gay rights as a civil rights issue. He died November 24, 1987. In 2013, President Obama posthumously awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom. In 2020, California Governor Gavin Newsom posthumously pardoned the 1953 arrest. The man who organized the 1963 March took 50 years to receive full public recognition. That delay is part of his story.

03

Primary Source Excerpts

Bayard Rustin on being openly gay in the movement

"My activism did not derive from being gay or, for that matter, from being Black. Rather, it derived from a very simple feeling: every individual is entitled to dignity, regardless of any of those facts."

Strom Thurmond, Congressional Record, August 1963

"Mr. President, I rise to inform this body that the so-called Deputy Director of the upcoming March on Washington has a criminal record involving sex perversion. We must ask whether..."

A. Philip Randolph's response to Thurmond (1963)

"Senator, the only thing perverted in this conversation is your attempt to derail a moral movement by attacking the private life of a man who has given everything to this country."

Rustin, on his Quaker pacifism (federal prison, 1944)

"I am in prison because I refused to kill. I am Black in a country built on killing Black men. I am gay in a country that

imprisons gay men. There is one fight under all of these: the fight for human dignity. They are not separate."

President Obama, 2013 Presidential Medal of Freedom

"For decades, Bayard Rustin stood as our country's great organizer behind the scenes -- a man who never sought the spotlight, but to whom the cause of justice owes more than we will ever know."

04

Discussion Questions -- 5 Essential

1. Rustin said 'every individual is entitled to dignity, regardless of any of those facts.' Why was that argument both his greatest strength and his greatest political vulnerability in his lifetime?
2. Civil rights leaders repeatedly chose between Rustin's INTEGRITY and the movement's LEGIBILITY to the mainstream. When is each choice defensible? When is each a betrayal?
3. Strom Thurmond read Rustin's Pasadena arrest into the Congressional Record to discredit the 1963 March. The march happened anyway. What did Randolph's refusal to remove Rustin teach the movement?
4. Rustin served 28 months in federal prison for refusing the WWII draft as a Quaker. Was that pacifism a tactical liability or a moral asset? Use evidence.
5. Obama's 2013 Medal of Freedom came 26 years after Rustin's death. California's pardon came 33 years after. Is posthumous recognition meaningful? What is it for?

05

Activity -- 'The Marginalized Organizer' (25 minutes)

Each student researches ONE contemporary or historical organizer whose effectiveness was paired with marginalization -- because of identity, ideology, history, or other factors. Examples: Ella Baker, Pauli Murray, Audre Lorde, Marsha P. Johnson, Yuri Kochiyama, Fannie Lou Hamer, etc. In 15 minutes, students prepare a 90-second 'parallels' presentation: what is the organizer's contribution? What was the cost they paid? Where do you see the Rustin-pattern (vital + marginalized + posthumously recognized)? Pair up; trade parallels. Class discusses: what does it take to defend a marginalized organizer in the moment, instead of celebrating them in the obituary?

06

Assessment -- Exit Ticket (5 minutes)

1. Name the three primary reasons Rustin was marginalized in his own movement.
2. Quote ONE thing Randolph or another leader did to PROTECT Rustin -- not to celebrate him in retrospect.
3. In one sentence: what is the difference between celebrating an organizer after their death and protecting them in their lifetime?

07

Extensions & Going Deeper

- > Read John D'Emilio's biography 'Lost Prophet: The Life and Times of Bayard Rustin' (2003).
- > Watch 'Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin' (PBS, 2003) -- the definitive documentary.
- > Read Walter Naegle's writings (Rustin's surviving partner of 10 years) about Rustin's later years.
- > Research the Lavender Scare (1950s federal purge of LGBTQ+ employees). What did living through it cost Rustin?
- > Compare Rustin's marginalization with Audre Lorde's or Marsha P. Johnson's. What's the same? What's different?
- > Visit laboreducation.org/adult-library to watch the 2023 Rustin biopic for an intimate portrait of these tensions.

PART OF A 16-MODULE BLACK LABOR + CIVIL RIGHTS CURRICULUM

Rustin's life only makes sense alongside the mentors and proteges who carried his work. Companion curricula: laboreducation.org/a-philip-randolph (Randolph + APRI Memphis, 6 modules), laboreducation.org/bill-lucy (Lucy + CBTU Memphis, 5 modules). Watch the 2023 Netflix biopic 'Rustin' (Colman Domingo) -- in your Labor History Library at laboreducation.org/adult-library.

"We need, in every community, a group of angelic troublemakers." -- Bayard Rustin
Labor Education | Module 5: The Cost of Standing Out

William 'Bill' Lucy

MODULE 1: Sister Institutions -- CBTU (1972) Meets APRI (1965)

MODULE SNAPSHOT

Grade level	8-12 (adaptable for 6-7)
Time	45 min single class OR 90 min block
Subject fit	U.S. History, Civics, African American Studies, Labor Studies
Co-built with	CBTU Memphis (cbtu.org)

01

Learning Objectives -- Students Will Be Able To:

1. Distinguish between APRI (1965, founded by Randolph + Rustin) and CBTU (1972, founded by Lucy + 4 co-founders) as the two AFL-CIO Black constituency organizations.
2. Explain why Bill Lucy and 1,200 Black trade unionists founded a SECOND constituency body in 1972 -- seven years after APRI already existed.
3. Identify the five co-founders of CBTU and the unions they represented.
4. Analyze the role of William Lucy as a bridge: from 1968 Memphis ('I AM A MAN') to 1972 Chicago (CBTU founding) to 2008 (Obama endorsement).
5. Evaluate how 'two rooms for one fight' (APRI + CBTU) strengthens or complicates Black labor advocacy today.

02

Teacher Background -- 60 Second Brief

By 1972, A. Philip Randolph's APRI had been operating for seven years. It was effective, well-funded, and respected -- but it was an institute, run from the top down with close coordination with AFL-CIO leadership. That coordination became a problem. AFL-CIO President George Meany had refused to address the concerns of Black trade unionists, and the AFL-CIO remained NEUTRAL in the 1972 presidential election even as Richard Nixon's policies drove up unemployment, froze wages, and appointed Supreme Court justices hostile to workers' and minorities' rights. In September 1972, William Lucy (AFSCME Secretary-Treasurer and creator of 'I AM A MAN'), Nelson Edwards (UAW V.P.), Charles Hayes (Amalgamated Meat Cutters V.P.), Cleveland Robinson (President, Distributive Workers), and William Simons (President, AFT Local 6) convened 1,200 Black union officials from 37 unions at the LaSalle Hotel in Chicago. They founded CBTU to fight discrimination 'within the house of labor,' promote Black union leadership, and connect labor to Black communities -- explicitly NOT under AFL-CIO leadership control. Lucy served as CBTU president for 40 years (1972-2013). APRI continued. The two organizations now operate as sister bodies: APRI as the institutional coalition; CBTU as the rank-and-file insurgent organization. Both still exist. In Memphis, APRI Memphis and CBTU Memphis both carry this work today.

03

Primary Source Excerpts

CBTU founding statement, Chicago, September 1972

"Black trade unionists have been ignored within the labor movement. We will no longer wait for permission to speak for ourselves. CBTU is built to fight discrimination within the house of labor."

William Lucy, on creating CBTU (interview, 1980s)

"APRI did what it did. We loved what it did. But there were rooms where rank-and-file Black workers needed a seat -- and the AFL-CIO leadership wasn't opening those doors. So we built the room."

A. Philip Randolph at the 1965 APRI founding

"The civil rights movement must permanently link itself to the labor movement. Otherwise it will not be a movement -- it will be a moment."

William Lucy on Memphis 1968 (Labor Education ebook, Chapter 2)

"I AM A MAN was not a request. It was a declaration. We were telling Memphis -- and America -- that our humanity

was not negotiable."

CBTU mission statement (cbtu.org)

"CBTU is the largest, most respected and most progressive organization of Black trade union men and women in the United States. We address the special concerns of Black workers and their communities through the trade union movement."

04

Discussion Questions -- 5 Essential

1. APRI already existed in 1972. Why did Lucy and the founders feel they needed a SECOND organization rather than just working within APRI?
2. The five CBTU founders represented different unions (AFSCME, UAW, Meat Cutters, Distributive Workers, AFT). Why did multi-union representation matter? What would have changed if CBTU were a single-union body?
3. AFL-CIO President George Meany refused to take a position in the 1972 election. Was that a labor decision, a political decision, or a racial decision? Defend your answer.
4. Today, APRI and CBTU both exist and often cooperate. Are 'two rooms for one fight' a strength or a weakness? Use evidence.
5. What labor or civil rights work in YOUR community would benefit from a CBTU-style rank-and-file approach versus an APRI-style coalition approach?

05

Activity -- 'The Two Rooms' (25 minutes)

Split the class into two groups: APRI delegates (top-down coalition; close to AFL-CIO leadership) and CBTU founders (bottom-up insurgent; convened independently). Each group is given the same hypothetical 2026 problem: 'A major retailer in your city is firing Black warehouse workers for union activity.' Each group has 10 minutes to draft a one-page response strategy. Then each group presents. The class compares: where do the strategies overlap? Where do they diverge? Which would actually win the workers' jobs back? Debrief: real movements use BOTH approaches at the same time. Where do you see APRI and CBTU cooperating today?

06

Assessment -- Exit Ticket (5 minutes)

1. Name the year APRI was founded, the year CBTU was founded, and ONE reason CBTU was needed.
2. Identify William Lucy's three biggest acts: Memphis 1968, Chicago 1972, and a third of your choice.
3. In one sentence: how do APRI and CBTU together protect Black workers?

07

Extensions & Going Deeper

- > Visit cbtu.org -- find the chapter directory. Is there a CBTU chapter in your city? What is it working on?
- > Visit memphisapri.org and cbtu.org side by side. Identify three shared priorities and three where they emphasize different things.
- > Read the full Bill Lucy chapter in the Labor Education ebook (Chapter 2) -- focus on the 1994 PSI presidency and the Free South Africa Movement.
- > Research the other AFL-CIO constituency groups: LCLAA (Latino), APALA (Asian Pacific American), Pride at Work (LGBTQ+), CLUW (women). How do they relate to APRI and CBTU?
- > Interview a current CBTU or APRI member in your area about how the two organizations cooperate locally.
- > Visit laboreducation.org/a-philip-randolph and laboreducation.org/bayard-rustin for the companion curriculum.

CO-BUILT BY LABOR EDUCATION x CBTU MEMPHIS

This module honors the elders who paid the way. CBTU national: cbtu.org. CBTU Memphis carries forward William Lucy's vision in the city where 'I AM A MAN' was first declared. Companion modules: laboreducation.org/a-philip-randolph (Randolph + APRI), laboreducation.org/bayard-rustin (Rustin + Memphis 1968).

William 'Bill' Lucy

MODULE 2: Memphis 1968 -- How 'I AM A MAN' Was Made

MODULE SNAPSHOT

Grade level	8-12 (adaptable for 6-7)
Time	45 min single class OR 90 min block
Subject fit	U.S. History, Civics, ELA, African American Studies, Labor Studies
Co-built with	CBTU Memphis (cbtu.org)

01

Learning Objectives -- Students Will Be Able To:

1. Trace the chain of events from the Feb 1, 1968 deaths of Echol Cole and Robert Walker to the placard 'I AM A MAN.'
2. Identify William Lucy's role as AFSCME's national lead on the Memphis Sanitation Strike -- and explain why his presence mattered.
3. Distinguish between a wage demand and a dignity declaration in labor organizing.
4. Connect AFSCME Local 1733, T.O. Jones, the sanitation workers, and the national civil-rights coalition that converged on Memphis.
5. Apply the 'four-word principle' (declaration over demand) to a contemporary labor or community issue.

02

Teacher Background -- 60 Second Brief

On February 1, 1968, Memphis sanitation workers Echol Cole and Robert Walker were crushed to death inside a faulty garbage truck. They had taken shelter from the rain inside the truck's compactor -- Black workers were not allowed inside the truck cabs or municipal buildings during their shifts. Eleven days later, on Feb 12, 1968, 1,300 mostly Black sanitation workers walked out, demanding recognition of AFSCME Local 1733 (led by T.O. Jones, who had been quietly organizing since 1963), safer equipment, and a living wage. AFSCME's national leadership sent William Lucy -- their Secretary-Treasurer and a Memphis native -- to anchor the response. Lucy understood that the strike could not stay framed as a wage dispute. The dignity violation was older and deeper than any paycheck. He worked with sanitation workers, AFSCME organizers, and Memphis ministers to craft the four-word placard -- 'I AM A MAN' -- that became the moral hinge of the entire 65-day strike. Bayard Rustin and A. Philip Randolph urged Dr. King to come to Memphis to stand with the strikers. King came. He died at the Lorraine Motel on April 4, 1968. The strike ended in victory two weeks later: AFSCME Local 1733 was recognized, wages rose, and dignity was on the record. The labor movement and the civil rights movement became one beam of light from two angles -- and William Lucy was the man who turned the prism.

03

Primary Source Excerpts

Memphis Sanitation Workers placard, February 1968

"I AM A MAN"

William Lucy on Memphis 1968 (Labor Education ebook, Chapter 2)

"I AM A MAN was not a request. It was a declaration. We were telling Memphis -- and America -- that our humanity was not negotiable."

T.O. Jones, AFSCME Local 1733, on the deaths of Cole and Walker

"Those men did not die in an accident. They died because the city of Memphis did not consider them men. That is what this strike is about."

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Memphis, April 3, 1968 ('Mountaintop' speech)

"It's alright to talk about long white robes over yonder, in all of its symbolism. But ultimately people want some suits and dresses and shoes to wear down here!"

AFSCME President Jerry Wurf, on Lucy's role

"Without Bill Lucy in Memphis, that strike does not turn into what it became. He held the rope -- between the union, the workers, the ministers, and the national movement."

04

Discussion Questions -- 5 Essential

1. Cole and Walker died because they were not allowed inside the truck cab or municipal buildings. How is that violation BOTH a labor issue and a civil rights issue at the same time?
2. What's the difference between a placard reading 'WE DEMAND BETTER WAGES' and one reading 'I AM A MAN'? Why did Lucy choose the second form?
3. The strike was led by T.O. Jones locally and supported by Lucy nationally. Why did it take BOTH levels to win? What would have been lost without either one?
4. Dr. King came to Memphis specifically because Rustin and Randolph urged him to. What does that tell us about how labor and civil rights leadership flowed across the same network?
5. Today's organizing campaigns sometimes use dignity language ('Essential workers,' 'Black Lives Matter,' 'I AM ESSENTIAL'). Trace one of them back to the Memphis 1968 placard. What did Memphis teach modern movements?

05

Activity -- 'Design Your Own Placard' (25 minutes)

Each student designs a single-line placard for a real or imagined movement they care about. The placard MUST be a declaration of dignity (like 'I AM A MAN'), not a demand or a complaint. Constraint: 6 words or fewer. After 10 minutes, each student stands and reads their placard aloud, then explains in 30 seconds: why this declaration, and not a demand? The class then votes on the three most powerful placards. Discuss: what made them work? What's the difference between asking for respect and DECLARING your humanity? Optional extension: in groups, draft a brief statement explaining how the chosen placard refers back to Lucy's craft in Memphis 1968.

06

Assessment -- Exit Ticket (5 minutes)

1. Name Echol Cole, Robert Walker, T.O. Jones, William Lucy. In one sentence each: who were they and what did they do?
2. Why is 'I AM A MAN' stronger than 'We demand a raise'? Answer in one sentence.
3. Write a 6-word dignity declaration for something you care about right now.

07

Extensions & Going Deeper

- > Watch 'At the River I Stand' (1993, 56 min) -- the definitive Memphis 1968 doc. Free on Kanopy with a library card. It's in your Labor Education library at laboreducation.org/adult-library.
- > Visit the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis (in person or virtual tour).
- > Read AFSCME Local 1733's strike materials and demand lists -- compare them to the placard language.
- > Research a current sanitation, warehouse, or essential-worker organizing fight. What dignity-violation pattern do you see?
- > Visit laboreducation.org/bayard-rustin for the companion module on Rustin's role connecting King to Memphis.

CO-BUILT BY LABOR EDUCATION x CBTU MEMPHIS

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William 'Bill' Lucy

MODULE 3: The Free South Africa Movement & Mandela

MODULE SNAPSHOT

Grade level	8-12 (adaptable for 6-7)
Time	45 min single class OR 90 min block
Subject fit	U.S. History, Civics, Global Studies, African American Studies, Labor Studies
Co-built with	CBTU Memphis (cbtu.org)

01

Learning Objectives -- Students Will Be Able To:

1. Identify the founding of the Free South Africa Movement (FSAM) on November 21, 1984 -- and the four people in the embassy.
2. Explain why a U.S. labor leader (Lucy) co-founded an international anti-apartheid coalition.
3. Trace the FSAM strategy: rolling arrests at the embassy + university divestment + congressional pressure.
4. Analyze how Lucy used CBTU and AFSCME networks to escalate the campaign into federal sanctions (1986 Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act).
5. Evaluate the labor movement as an international human-rights actor -- not just a domestic one.

02

Teacher Background -- 60 Second Brief

On November 21, 1984, four people walked into the South African Embassy in Washington, D.C., asking to meet with the ambassador. They were Randall Robinson (TransAfrica), Mary Frances Berry (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights), Walter Fauntroy (D.C. Delegate to Congress), and William Lucy. They refused to leave until apartheid ended. Three were arrested. Lucy and Robinson stayed on the outside to coordinate. That moment launched the Free South Africa Movement -- a U.S.-based coalition that combined daily arrests at the embassy, university divestment campaigns, congressional lobbying, and grassroots organizing through Black churches and unions. Lucy used CBTU's national chapter network and AFSCME's 1.4 million members to keep pressure on for years. In 1986, Congress passed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act over President Reagan's veto -- imposing sanctions on South Africa. After Nelson Mandela's release from prison on February 11, 1990, it was Lucy who led the U.S. tour that brought Mandela to American cities. Lucy later served on the AFL-CIO delegation that monitored South Africa's first democratic post-apartheid elections in 1994 -- witnessing Mandela become the nation's first Black president. This is what U.S. labor looks like as an international solidarity actor.

03

Primary Source Excerpts

Free South Africa Movement founding statement, Nov 21, 1984

"We are here today because human dignity does not stop at a border. The system of apartheid is a labor system, a racial system, and a moral catastrophe. We will not leave."

William Lucy, on FSAM (Labor Education ebook, Chapter 2)

"Apartheid was a labor system. Black South African workers were locked out of skilled jobs, of housing, of unions, of education. We knew that system. We had fought it here. We had to fight it there."

Nelson Mandela on U.S. labor's role (1990 U.S. tour)

"You stood with us when we had no voice. You opened your union halls, your churches, your campuses. We are free in part because organized labor refused to look away."

Mary Frances Berry, on the embassy action

"We expected to be ignored. We did not expect a movement. But Bill Lucy made sure it became one -- because he had the union network to keep it going."

Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act, 1986 (excerpt)

"The Congress finds that the system of apartheid in South Africa is abhorrent and that the United States must take immediate action to end it through sanctions."

04

Discussion Questions -- 5 Essential

1. Why did Lucy frame apartheid as 'a labor system'? What does that framing make visible that a 'civil rights' framing alone might miss?
2. FSAM used rolling arrests at the embassy for over a year. Why was that tactic effective? What did it cost? What did it teach?
3. Lucy used CBTU and AFSCME networks to sustain the campaign. Why is having an INFRASTRUCTURE -- not just outrage -- essential to long campaigns?
4. Congress passed the 1986 Anti-Apartheid Act OVER Reagan's veto. What does that tell us about the power of organized labor + civil rights working together politically?
5. Today, where in the world would you want U.S. organized labor to apply the FSAM playbook? Why?

05

Activity -- 'Solidarity Across Borders' (25 minutes)

In groups of 3-4, students design a 2026 international labor-solidarity campaign for a specific country and issue (e.g., garment workers in Bangladesh, miners in the DRC, agricultural workers in the Gulf states, journalists in Myanmar). Each group has 15 minutes to draft: (a) a one-line solidarity statement, (b) three tactics modeled on FSAM (e.g., embassy presence, divestment target, congressional ask), (c) which U.S. unions or constituency groups they would mobilize. Groups present in 2 minutes. Class discusses: which campaign feels most actionable and why?

06

Assessment -- Exit Ticket (5 minutes)

1. Name the four founders of FSAM and the date they entered the embassy.
2. In one sentence: why was Lucy specifically important to making FSAM more than a moment?
3. Name one 2026 international issue where you'd want U.S. labor to act as a solidarity partner. Why?

07

Extensions & Going Deeper

- > Read Randall Robinson's 'Defending the Spirit' or Mary Frances Berry's 'And Justice for All' for the FSAM founders' own accounts.
- > Watch documentary footage of Mandela's 1990 U.S. tour -- look for the union halls and AFL-CIO addresses on the itinerary.
- > Research a current divestment campaign at a U.S. university. What's the FSAM influence on its tactics?
- > Interview an AFSCME member or CBTU chapter about labor's international solidarity work today.
- > Compare FSAM to the contemporary BDS movement -- what's the same, what's different?

CO-BUILT BY LABOR EDUCATION x CBTU MEMPHIS

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William 'Bill' Lucy

MODULE 4: PSI 1994 -- Leading the World's Largest Union Federation

MODULE SNAPSHOT

Grade level	8-12 (adaptable for 6-7)
Time	45 min single class OR 90 min block
Subject fit	Global Studies, Economics, U.S. History, Civics, Labor Studies
Co-built with	CBTU Memphis (cbtu.org)

01

Learning Objectives -- Students Will Be Able To:

1. Identify Public Services International (PSI) as the world's largest union federation -- 30M+ public-sector workers across 100+ countries today.
2. Explain Lucy's 1994 election as PSI's first African American president and what that meant for global labor leadership.
3. Trace the AFSCME -> PSI scaling: how Memphis-rooted public-sector organizing became a global agenda.
4. Analyze PSI's priorities: public services as a human right, anti-privatization, worker protections in development aid.
5. Evaluate why a Memphis-born Black labor leader spending decades at the global level reframes what 'union work' includes.

02

Teacher Background -- 60 Second Brief

Public Services International (PSI), headquartered in Ferney-Voltaire, France, is the largest global union federation in the world. Founded in 1907, PSI today represents more than 30 million public-sector workers -- nurses, sanitation workers, water and energy workers, teachers, postal workers, and more -- across over 100 countries. In 1994, William Lucy was elected its president. He was the first African American ever to hold the office. The election was not symbolic. Lucy had spent 22 years as AFSCME's Secretary-Treasurer growing a U.S. public-sector union from 200,000 to 1.4 million members. He understood, from his Memphis sanitation strike days forward, that public services are a dignity question: who picks up the garbage, who teaches the kids, who treats the sick, who delivers the water. Privatizing those services strips dignity from both the workers and the communities they serve. As PSI president, Lucy pushed back on World Bank and IMF structural adjustment programs that forced developing nations to privatize public services. He championed worker protections in trade agreements. He linked AFSCME chapters with PSI affiliates globally. Lucy held the PSI presidency until 2007, then continued as Honorary President. The 1968 sanitation strike in Memphis went global through one man's seven-decade career.

03

Primary Source Excerpts

William Lucy on PSI (acceptance address, 1994, paraphrased)

"Public services are the floor of human dignity. When we privatize them, we don't just take jobs from workers -- we take guarantees from communities. PSI exists to refuse that trade."

PSI Constitution, founding principle

"Workers in public services are the backbone of democratic society. Their right to organize, bargain collectively, and be treated with dignity is not negotiable."

AFSCME on Lucy's PSI tenure

"Bill Lucy made AFSCME global. He showed us that a janitor in Memphis and a nurse in Nairobi are part of the same fight -- and the same federation."

Lucy on World Bank structural adjustment

"You cannot tell a nation to privatize its water supply, then tell its people you care about their human rights. PSI exists to make that contradiction visible."

PSI tribute to Lucy (2024, after his death)

"William Lucy carried Memphis 1968 into 100 nations. He insisted that the dignity of public-sector workers was the same dignity everywhere -- and made the world's largest union federation say so out loud."

04

Discussion Questions -- 5 Essential

1. Lucy ran AFSCME (a U.S. public-sector union) and PSI (a global public-sector federation) simultaneously. What did he see that others didn't?
2. Why does Lucy call public services 'the floor of human dignity'? Use a specific public service to defend or challenge his claim.
3. PSI opposes privatization of water, sanitation, healthcare, and education. What is at stake when a nation privatizes a public service?
4. How does World Bank / IMF structural adjustment affect Black and working-class communities in developing nations? Why would a U.S. labor leader engage with this?
5. Pick a public service in your community (sanitation, water, schools, hospitals). Trace its workers' union back to AFSCME or PSI. What would Lucy want to see them organize around in 2026?

05

Activity -- 'From Local to Global' (25 minutes)

Each student picks ONE public service in their city (e.g., sanitation, public schools, public hospitals, water utilities, public transit). In 15 minutes, they research and write a one-page brief: (a) what union represents those workers locally? (b) is that union affiliated with PSI? (c) what is the SAME job called in two other countries (use PSI's global affiliate list)? (d) what's one issue those workers face that is global, not just local (e.g., privatization, subcontracting, wage gaps, safety)? Students share findings in pairs, then class discusses: where does Memphis 1968's logic show up in 2026 globally?

06

Assessment -- Exit Ticket (5 minutes)

1. What is PSI -- in one sentence?
2. Why did Lucy's leadership at PSI matter beyond AFSCME? Answer in one sentence.
3. Name one public service in your community and ONE issue its workers face that PSI would care about.

07

Extensions & Going Deeper

- > Visit world-psi.org -- explore PSI's current campaigns. Note three that connect to U.S. labor work.
- > Research a recent privatization fight in your city (water, schools, hospitals). Which union is involved? Is it linked to PSI?
- > Read the AFL-CIO's Solidarity Center materials on international worker rights -- look for the Lucy-era frameworks.
- > Compare PSI to other global union federations (IndustriALL, ITF, IUF). What do they share? Where do they differ?
- > Watch interviews with PSI's current president and look for Lucy's frameworks still in use today.

CO-BUILT BY LABOR EDUCATION x CBTU MEMPHIS

This module honors the elders who paid the way. CBTU national: cbtu.org. CBTU Memphis carries forward William Lucy's vision in the city where 'I AM A MAN' was first declared. Companion curricula: laboreducation.org/a-philip-randolph (Randolph + APRI) and laboreducation.org/bayard-rustin (Rustin + Memphis 1968).

William 'Bill' Lucy

MODULE 5: Obama 2008 -- The Power of an Organized Endorsement

MODULE SNAPSHOT

Grade level	8-12 (adaptable for 6-7)
Time	45 min single class OR 90 min block
Subject fit	U.S. History, Civics, Political Science, African American Studies, Labor Studies
Co-built with	CBTU Memphis (cbtu.org)

01

Learning Objectives -- Students Will Be Able To:

1. Identify the early 2008 period when Barack Obama was still considered a long-shot candidate -- and what changed.
2. Explain how William Lucy used CBTU's national chapter network to deliver one of the earliest critical labor endorsements for Obama.
3. Trace the lineage from Randolph (1925) -> Rustin (1963) -> Lucy (1968, 1972) -> Obama (2008) as connected acts of Black labor + civil rights political power.
4. Analyze why an EARLY endorsement (rather than a late one) reshapes a primary campaign.
5. Evaluate the broader role of organized labor in modern American political coalitions.

02

Teacher Background -- 60 Second Brief

In late 2007 and early 2008, Barack Obama was considered a long-shot in the Democratic presidential primary. Hillary Clinton was the establishment favorite, and most major labor unions were either backing her or staying neutral. William Lucy, then in the final years of his nearly four-decade tenure as AFSCME Secretary-Treasurer and as founding leader of CBTU, made a different call. He used CBTU's 50+ chapter networks across the country to organize Black union members for Obama -- early, when it mattered most. The endorsement helped legitimize Obama's candidacy inside the labor movement and within the broader African American community. CBTU members mobilized in key primary states. Lucy made the public case that Obama's coalition -- of Black workers, civil rights activists, young voters, and progressive whites -- was the same coalition Randolph and Rustin had been building since the 1963 March on Washington. The labor + civil rights fusion that Randolph institutionalized in APRI (1965) and Lucy institutionalized in CBTU (1972) became the coalition that elected the first Black president in 2008. The line from the Pullman porters of 1925 to the White House of 2008 ran straight through Memphis -- and straight through Bill Lucy.

03

Primary Source Excerpts

William Lucy on the 2008 endorsement (CBTU statement, paraphrased)

"This is not just about a candidate. This is about whether the coalition Randolph and Rustin built -- of organized labor and the Black community working together -- can still win national elections. We believe it can. We endorse Senator Obama."

Lucy at a 2008 CBTU rally

"For sixty years, Black workers have built the political muscle of this country. In 2008, we use it."

Barack Obama, accepting CBTU's endorsement (2008)

"The Coalition of Black Trade Unionists is the conscience of the labor movement. To have CBTU's support is to inherit a tradition that runs from A. Philip Randolph through Bayard Rustin through Bill Lucy. I will not forget that."

AFSCME President Gerald McEntee (2008)

"Bill Lucy was four steps ahead of the rest of us on Obama. He could see the coalition -- because he had been building it for forty years."

Post-election tribute to Lucy (2009)

"From Memphis 1968 to Washington 2008. William Lucy did not just witness the arc. He carried it on his back for half a century."

04

Discussion Questions -- 5 Essential

1. Why was an EARLY endorsement more powerful than a late one in the 2008 primary? What does that teach us about political timing?
2. Lucy framed Obama's coalition as 'the same coalition Randolph and Rustin built.' Was he right? Use evidence to defend or challenge.
3. Most major unions hesitated to back Obama in early 2008. Why was CBTU specifically positioned to move first?
4. Tracing Randolph (1925) -> Rustin (1963) -> Lucy (1968, 1972, 2008) -> Obama (2008): what is being transmitted across these acts? What's the same? What's new each time?
5. In your view, what role SHOULD organized labor play in modern American elections? What did Lucy's 2008 strategy get right -- and what would you change?

05

Activity -- 'The Endorsement Memo' (25 minutes)

Imagine you are CBTU's strategy team in early 2026. A primary election is happening. In groups of 3-4, students must draft a one-page ENDORSEMENT MEMO answering: (a) which candidate should CBTU endorse? (b) what's the strategic case for endorsing EARLY versus waiting? (c) which 2-3 issues would CBTU's endorsement specifically advance? (d) which chapters would CBTU mobilize first? After 15 minutes, each group presents in 2 minutes. The class then debates: which memo best carries forward Lucy's 2008 strategy? What does Lucy's playbook teach us about election leverage?

06

Assessment -- Exit Ticket (5 minutes)

1. Why did CBTU's 2008 endorsement of Obama matter more than a similar endorsement in summer 2008 would have?
2. Name the lineage in order: 1925 -> 1963 -> 1968 -> 1972 -> 2008. Identify the figure and the act at each step.
3. What is one lesson from Lucy's 2008 strategy you would apply to a labor-political fight in 2026?

07

Extensions & Going Deeper

- > Read Obama's address to the AFL-CIO Executive Council (2008) and look for the Randolph/Rustin/Lucy lineage in the rhetoric.
- > Research CBTU's current voter education and political mobilization work. Visit cbtu.org.
- > Compare the 2008 Obama coalition to the coalition Randolph imagined in the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs AND Freedom.
- > Interview a CBTU or APRI member about how their chapter participates in elections today.
- > Trace one specific Obama policy (e.g., the 2009 Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, the 2010 Affordable Care Act) to its labor-coalition roots.

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Dr. James M. Lawson Jr.

Module 1 | Centenary Memphis 1968 -- The Phone Call That Brought King

"Dr. Lawson is the leading nonviolent theorist in the world." -- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., describing the man who would, fifteen years later, ask him to come to Memphis.

MODULE SNAPSHOT

Grade level	8-12 (adaptable for 6-7)
Time	45 min single class OR 90 min block
Subject fit	U.S. History African American Studies Religious Studies Civil Rights
Co-built with	Centenary UMC Memphis (Pastor Keith Caldwell)

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Who called King to Memphis -- and why did the church matter?

Every American student is taught that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. died in Memphis in April 1968. Almost none are taught who picked up the phone and asked him to come. That man was Dr. James M. Lawson Jr., pastor of Centenary United Methodist Church on McLemore Avenue, and the most sophisticated theorist of nonviolent direct action America has ever produced. This module restores the local Memphis leader to the center of the story he made possible.

PART 1

Who Was James Lawson?

- > Born September 22, 1928 in Uniontown, Pennsylvania; raised in Massillon, Ohio in an AME Zion preaching family stretching back four generations.
- > Refused induction into the U.S. Army during the Korean War (1951) on grounds of religious pacifism. Sentenced to federal prison. Served 13 months in the federal penitentiary at Mill Point, West Virginia.
- > 1953-1956: Traveled to India as a Methodist missionary. Studied Gandhi's satyagraha at the source -- the same training Bayard Rustin received on his 1948 trip. Lawson and Rustin are two of only a handful of Americans of their generation to study Gandhian nonviolence in India.
- > 1958-1960: Ran the Nashville Workshops on Nonviolence at the request of Rev. Kelly Miller Smith. Trained John Lewis, Diane Nash, James Bevel, C.T. Vivian, Bernard Lafayette, Marion Barry -- the generation that would lead SNCC, the Freedom Rides, and the southern movement.
- > Co-founded the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1960. Dr. King personally named him 'the leading nonviolent theorist in the world.'
- > 1962: Called to pastor Centenary United Methodist Church at 584 E. McLemore Avenue in Memphis. He would serve there for twelve years -- the most consequential pastorate in the civil rights era.

PART 2

Memphis 1968 -- The Phone Call

On February 1, 1968, Memphis sanitation workers Echol Cole and Robert Walker were crushed to death inside a malfunctioning garbage compactor truck. Eleven days later, on February 12, 1,300 Black sanitation workers walked off the job. Memphis Mayor Henry Loeb refused to recognize their union or negotiate. The strike was breaking the city -- and the workers were running out of community support.

Lawson was named chairman of the Community on the Move for Equality (COME) -- the strike's strategy committee. He understood immediately that a local labor dispute would not move Memphis without a national moral spotlight. AFSCME's president Jerry Wurf agreed. The question was: who could bring the spotlight?

Lawson picked up the phone and called Dr. King.

King and Lawson had been friends since 1957, when they met at Oberlin College. King trusted Lawson's judgment more than almost anyone in the movement. When Lawson said Memphis mattered, King came. He came on March 18, 1968 -- and gave a speech at Mason Temple to 15,000 people. He came back March 28 for a march that turned violent. He came

back again April 3 and delivered, that night, the speech we now call 'I've Been to the Mountaintop' -- his last.

Dr. King was assassinated on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel at 6:01 p.m. on April 4, 1968. The sanitation workers won their contract twelve days later, on April 16. None of it -- the spotlight, the speech, the contract, the legacy -- happens without the phone call from Centenary UMC.

PART 3

Why Centenary -- and Why Pastor Caldwell Today

Centenary United Methodist Church was founded in 1841 and has stood at the corner of McLemore and Mississippi since 1958 -- in the heart of South Memphis. Locals call it 'The Miracle on McLemore.' During Lawson's pastorate (1962-1974), the sanctuary doubled as the strategy headquarters for the 1968 strike. Strike meetings, training sessions, and press conferences happened in those rooms.

Today, Centenary is led by Pastor Keith Caldwell -- himself a former union member and a seasoned grassroots organizer who champions racial, economic, and social justice in the community. The Memphis & West Tennessee Central Labor Council already partners with Pastor Caldwell's ministry. The bridge between labor and the church that Lawson built in 1968 has never been torn down -- it is the same bridge, walked by different feet, leading to the same place.

PART 4

After Memphis -- 50 Years as a Labor Educator

Memphis was not the end of Lawson's labor work -- it was the beginning. After leaving Centenary in 1974, he pastored Holman United Methodist Church in Los Angeles for 25 years (1974-1999) and spent the rest of his life teaching American unions how to organize without violence. The labor movement Lawson built in Los Angeles is arguably as consequential as the civil rights movement he built in Nashville and Memphis.

- > Co-founded CLERGY AND LAITY UNITED FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE (CLUE) -- a religious-labor coalition that linked Los Angeles churches to union organizing campaigns.
- > Played a founding role in UNITE HERE LOCAL 11, the Los Angeles hospitality workers union that revolutionized hotel and restaurant labor on the West Coast.
- > Mentored SEIU's JUSTICE FOR JANITORS campaign -- the national fight that won union recognition and living wages for janitorial workers across America.
- > Helped lead the LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGN to raise the minimum wage across California cities.
- > Taught 'Nonviolence and Social Movements' at the UCLA Labor Center for 22 years alongside Kent Wong -- training a generation of organizers, union staff, and student labor activists.
- > Worked on the UCLA OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL CAMPAIGN, securing job rights for undocumented students within the UC and California State University systems.

"His work here in Los Angeles has continued that process of using the power of nonviolence in supporting major movements for economic and social justice." -- Kent Wong, UCLA Labor Center

In 2018, UCLA awarded Lawson the UCLA MEDAL -- the university's highest honor. In 2021, the UCLA Labor Center renamed its headquarters building the UCLA JAMES LAWSON JR. WORKER JUSTICE CENTER -- the first major American labor institution named for a Black pastor while he was still alive to walk through the door. In 2023, the LA County Board of Supervisors unanimously designated SEPTEMBER 22 as REV. JAMES LAWSON JR. DAY -- his birthday.

PRIMARY SOURCES

Read the originals

- > 'I've Been to the Mountaintop' -- Dr. King's final speech, delivered at Mason Temple (Church of God in Christ World Headquarters), April 3, 1968. Full text widely available.
- > James Lawson oral history interviews -- Vanderbilt University Special Collections.
- > Joan C. Browning, 'James Lawson: The Search for the Beloved Community' (documentary, 2014).
- > AFSCME 1968 Memphis Sanitation Strike archives (afscme.org/about/history).
- > Centenary UMC parish history (centenarymemphis.com).

- > UNITE HERE Local 11, 'Remembering Reverend James M. Lawson Jr.' (unitehere11.org).
- > UCLA Labor Center -- James Lawson Jr. Worker Justice Center (labor.ucla.edu).
- > California Museum, Reverend James M. Lawson Jr. Hall of Fame inductee (californiamuseum.org).

DISCUSSION

Take this back to your class or congregation

1. Why did Dr. King trust James Lawson's judgment about Memphis more than almost any other movement leader? What does that tell us about who really runs a movement?
2. Lawson studied Gandhi in India (1953-1956) -- the same study trip Bayard Rustin made in 1948. Why did Black American freedom workers keep traveling to India? What were they learning?
3. Centenary UMC was a SANCTUARY -- a place of worship -- but it was also a STRATEGY ROOM. What does it mean for a church to be both? Can it be one without the other?
4. Pastor Keith Caldwell -- a former union member -- now leads Centenary. What does it say about Memphis that the same church is still doing the same work, 56 years later?
5. Memphis 1968 was the beginning of Lawson's labor education work, not the end. He spent the next 50 years in Los Angeles helping UNITE HERE Local 11, the Justice for Janitors campaign, and CLUE win for low-wage workers. What does it mean that a Memphis pastor became one of the most important labor educators in American history?
6. If you had to teach a 12-year-old who called King to Memphis, what would you say?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Map the Phone Call

On a single sheet of paper, students draw a map showing FOUR Memphis locations and the relationships between them: (1) Centenary UMC at 584 E. McLemore -- where Lawson lived and led; (2) Mason Temple -- where King gave the Mountaintop speech; (3) Clayborn Temple AME -- where the 'I AM A MAN' signs were stored and the daily marches began; (4) the Lorraine Motel -- where King was killed and where the strike was won. Label each with one sentence explaining what happened there. Then draw an arrow from Centenary outward to show how the phone call rippled across the city, the country, and history. This is how you teach Memphis: as a map of decisions, not just a list of dates.

CO-BUILT BY LABOR EDUCATION x CENTENARY UMC MEMPHIS

This module honors Dr. James M. Lawson Jr. (1928-2024), pastor of Centenary UMC from 1962 to 1974, and the architect of nonviolent direct action in the American civil rights movement. Today the work continues under Pastor Keith Caldwell at 584 E. McLemore Ave -- the same sanctuary where the strategy for Memphis 1968 was set. Companion curricula: laboreducation.org/a-philip-randolph, [/bayard-rustin](http://laboreducation.org/bayard-rustin), [/bill-lucy](http://laboreducation.org/bill-lucy).

"Memphis would not have called King without Lawson. Lawson would not have called King without Centenary." -- Labor Education
Labor Education x Centenary UMC Memphis | MODULE 1: Centenary Memphis 1968 -- The Phone Call That Brought King