

At the River I Stand

Video Questions

1. What movement brought Martin Luther King, Jr. to Memphis, Tennessee in 1968?

2. Explain the term social caste from the perspective of one of the following men: Coby Smith (community activist) or Taylor Rogers (sanitation worker).

3. List 4 reasons why the sanitation workers decided to strike.

- a.

- b.

- c.

- d.

4. Who was T.O. Jones?

5. What was the AFSCME?

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6. Cite the specific event that prompted 1300 men to "walk."

7. Describe plantation mentality.

8. Reverend James Lawson was one of the major organizers of the 1968 marches in Memphis. According to him, what was at "the heart of racism?"

9. What visual cues presented in the video suggest that union activity was supportive of the Civil Rights movement?

10. The ideal of unity helped precipitate the "Memphis Movement." What was the slogan of the movement that brought the local movement to a national level?

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Answer Key

1. **What movement brought Martin Luther King, Jr. to Memphis, Tennessee in 1968?**

A labor strike and the economic depravity of black citizens of Memphis.

2. **Explain the term social caste from the perspective of one of the following men: Coby Smith (community activist) or Taylor Rogers (sanitation worker).**

Coby Smith: Being a sanitation worker was beneath the level of work allowed for a white man.

Clinton Burrows: Workers received hand-outs rather than adequate pay.

3. **List 4 reasons why the sanitation workers decided to strike.**

a. Injury could lead to firing.

e. Filthy working conditions.

b. No benefits/workmen's compensation.

f. No paid vacation.

c. No overtime pay.

g. No grievance procedures.

d. Long work hours.

h. Full time workers qualified for welfare benefits (poor salary).

4. **Who was T.O. Jones?**

He was a former sanitation worker and organizer of a 1963 strike that had little success. He continued to pursue union organization and helped rally men during 1968 strike.

5. **What was the AFSCME?**

American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees

6. **Cite the specific event that prompted 1300 men to "walk."**

Two men were killed by an electrical malfunction that caused them to be crushed. There were no benefits or insurance provided for their families; with nothing to lose, all 1300 walked off the job.

7. Describe the "plantation mentality."

It was the white man's responsibility to look out for the black man.

8. Reverend James Lawson was one of the major organizers of the 1968 marches in Memphis. According to him, what was at "the heart of racism?"

At the heart of racism is the notion that a man is not a man.

9. What visual cues presented in the video suggest that union activity was supportive of the Civil Rights movement?

The officials of AFSCME were multiracial (possibly multiethnic) and were from a variety of regions throughout the country. Non-black people were seen working along side and rallying with strikers.

10. The ideal of unity helped precipitate the "Memphis Movement." What was the slogan of the movement that brought it to a national level?

I AM A MAN