

REVIEWS

MEDIA REVIEWS

Eyes on the Prize II: America at the Racial Crossroads - 1965-1985. Produced by Blackside, Inc., Boston, MA, 1989. Order from PBS Video, 1320 Braddock Place, Alexandria, VA 22314. (800) 424-7963. 8-part series: \$395.00 (VHS) or \$575.00 (3/4" U-Matic)

Of all of the cataclysmic events of the mid twentieth century the American civil rights movement ranks among those whose eventual outcome is still being played out in various individual and societal struggles. Unlike other great social movements, this one developed and matured at a time when a great communication revolution was also occurring, namely the advent of television as a mass medium within our society. As both evolved, the record kept by television provides us with a powerful means to reexamine not only the historical outcomes but the actors and their motivations during critical moments of this period.

PBS first provided us with an early look at the civil rights struggle in *Eyes on the Prize Part I*. This second series of eight programs picks up the story in 1964 with a look at the impact of Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam on black Americans and carries us through the reelection of Harold Washington as the first Afro-American mayor of Chicago in 1987.

In viewing each of these programs the sense of a personalized view of this era comes through. The camera takes us from Harlem in the mid 1960s through James Meredith's march in Mississippi. It focuses on Martin Luther King as he attempts to integrate a hostile Chicago after the Watts riots of 1965. It continues to Cleveland as Carl Stokes is elected mayor. The use of force in controlling these unleashed forces is presented during a confrontation with Huey Newton. The assassination of King and the rise of black pride is examined as well as white reaction to the civil rights movement in the form of the Boston school boycott and the reverse discrimination issues raised by the Bakke case. The series concludes with a look at the black communities in Miami and Chicago.

In addition to the eight video tapes, an extensive teaching guide is also provided. This guide has a lengthy bibliography for each program as well as teaching suggestions and explanatory notes.

This series would be an excellent addition to a media library and could be a focal point of a course in Recent American History or a History of the American Civil Rights movement. It is appropriate for both secondary as well as collegiate audiences. In an age when students spend more time in front of the television than in elementary and secondary classrooms combined, these tapes are a perfect vehicle to capture their interest and, at the same time, provide them with an open window to their heritage.

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Richard A. Diem

The Western Tradition. With Eugen Weber. The Annenberg/CPB Project, 1989. A television course in two semesters of 13 units, 52 half-hour programs. VHS or Beta 1/2", \$350.00 semester I or II, \$650.00 both semesters, \$29.90 per cassette, 2 consecutive programs. 3/4", \$500.00 semester I or II, \$950.00 both semesters, \$45.00 per cassette, 2 consecutive programs. (Order from: The Annenberg/CPB Project c/o Intellimation, P.O. 1922, Santa Barbara, CA 93116-1922. 1-800-Learner)

The Western Tradition is a major new college television course constructed around the western civilization lectures of Eugen Weber, Professor of History at UCLA, and the author of *A Modern History of Europe* (1971) and the highly praised *Peasants into Frenchmen* (1976). The tendency in recent successful telecourses, such as Kenneth Clark's *Civilization*, J. Bronowski's *The Ascent of Man*, or the recent Annenberg/CPB Project, *Art of the Western World*, has been to consciously take the host or scholar of the series out of the classroom, away from the lectern, and transport him to some dramatic historical backdrop such as the palace of Versailles or the Parthenon. Sensing quite naturally that television is an action oriented medium, directors normally like to have their hosts in constant motion. So when the scholar in the *Art of the Western World* describes a Gothic cathedral, he appropriate enough does so while casually walking around the ambulatory. Such a format does solve the problem of the boring talking head with spectacles that marked so many educational films from the 1950s, such as the Encyclopedia Britannica series. Still, such a format can easily give an impression of being staged or contrived, with an actor merely reading his lines, rather than a scholar/teacher engaged in a dialogue with his audience or students. Eugen Weber has not been