

to avoid the worst work and to watch those condemned to it. Yet more likely, the film might well pierce what Herbert Marcuse called the “happy consciousness,” blind to social pain and oppression. By having the people in his film speak casually, without polemic, Glowogger puts forward the ordinariness of suffering in so much of this world’s work. By shooting the workers with an artfulness denied them in their own labor, Glowagger and Thaler offer a glimpse of a present of possibilities denied.

Ralph Bunche: An American Odyssey, produced by William Greaves, 2001. Running time: 120 minutes. Available from William Greaves Productions, Inc., 230 West 55 Street, New York, NY 10019-6150.

Citizen King, produced by Orlando Bagwell and W. Noland Walker, 2004. Running time: 120 minutes. Available from PBS Video <http://www.shoppbs.org/home/index.jsp>.

Reviewed by PAULA D. McCLAIN

Ralph Bunche and *Citizen King* are documentaries about two extraordinary men—one (King) widely known, admired, and honored, the other (Bunche) almost forgotten and unknown to almost all college-age students today. Yet Ralph Johnson Bunche was one of the most respected and honored public officials in the United States and internationally in the decades leading up to the most recent phase of the United States civil rights movement. Moreover, his activities and accomplishments, in many ways, laid the groundwork for Martin Luther King Jr. and others in the civil rights movement to accomplish many of their objectives.

Ralph Bunche: An American Odyssey, narrated by Sidney Poitier, takes us through the public and private lives of the first Black American to receive a Ph.D in political science and the first Black, American or otherwise, to receive a Nobel—the Peace Prize in 1950. The film is based on the biography of the same title by Sir Brian Urquhart, Bunche’s colleague at the United Nations. The film weaves historical narration by Poitier with the voices of Bunche scholars (Charles Henry and Jonathan Holloway), academics familiar with Bunche’s work (Ronald Walters and Robert Hill), and Bunche relatives and friends.

The private side of Bunche gives us a window into the public Bunche, whose commitment to the equality of humanity was present in everything he undertook. Among those influences: the tremendous race pride instilled in him by his beloved Nana, who although white in appearance was fiercely proud of her blackness; his graduation from Thomas Jefferson High School in Los Angeles first in his class, but being denied recognition by the city-wide Ephebian Society, an honor society for the valedictorians of all Los Angeles high schools; his undergraduate education at UCLA, where he was not only a star athlete but a proponent of racial justice, giving speeches to local groups; his graduate work at Harvard University, partly made possible by The Ladies Iroquois Friday Morning Civic and Social Club of Los Angeles, a Black women’s club that provided him money for his

Paula D. McClain is Professor of Political Science and Public Policy at Duke University.

Address correspondence to Paula D. McClain, Department of Political Science, Box 90204, Duke University, Durham, NC 27708, USA. E-mail: paula.mcclain@duke.edu

living expenses his first year; his marriage to Ruth Ethel Harris, who literally kept the family going and raising the children during his many absences, while providing the emotional support and foundation Bunche needed throughout his public life.

The public side of Bunche was an evolution from an academic and scholar who enjoyed his outsider status to criticize U.S. racial policies and presidential administrations' lack of attention to the rights and freedoms of Black Americans to his decision to leave academe and to move within the inner circles of the US government and the United Nations in the hopes of using his influence to change domestic and international policies. The film uses pictures from various events in Bunche's life to give the viewer a more complex and nuanced picture of Bunche—his time at Howard University, where he founded the political science department and was a central figure in what Charles Henry refers to as “The Howard School of Thought”; his cofounding with college friend John P. Davis of the National Negro Congress (Davis and Bunche later became estranged because of Davis's connection to the American Communist Party, yet it was Davis who helped clear Bunche when he was brought before the U.S. Senate Internal Security Sub-committee); his work on Africa during World War II with the Office of Strategic Services, the forerunner of the CIA; his decision to leave Howard permanently to continue his international work; his key role in the writing of chapters XI and XII of the charter that created the United Nations; his tireless work for the decolonization of the African continent; his brokering of the peace agreement at Rhodes that ended the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1948, for which he received the Nobel Peace Prize; and his commitment to the domestic civil rights movement.

Greaves's use of interviews with individuals involved in these various activities with Bunche or who worked with or were taught by Bunche brings Ralph Bunche the individual and the public figure to life. The excerpts of letters written between Bunche and his wife, Ruth, are touching, and the letter he wrote enclosing a copy of his will after the assassination of Count Folke Bernadotte during the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict is emotional and drives home the point that many of the situations in which Bunche found himself could have resulted in his death.

Bunche and King converged in the civil rights movement. Bunche believed that it was essential for the domestic fight for Black civil rights to put pressure on the United States by exposing its hypocrisy on the international stage. The United States could not talk about democracy for other countries while denying basic human and civil rights to its Black American population. Bunche spoke at the 1963 March on Washington, returning from Europe to make sure to be in attendance, and marched with King again in 1965 on the Selma-to-Montgomery Voting Rights March.

Citizen King, unlike the historical biography of Bunche, covers the last 5 years of his life—1963 to 1968. The title evokes images of Orson Welles's first feature film, *Citizen Kane* (1941), where Charles Foster Kane created an artificial image of a civic-minded, yet ruthless, individual; *Citizen King* develops a portrait of Martin Luther King as an everyday man who sought to create a better and more equitable place for his people. Clearly, King was not an “everyday man” by any means, but the film shows a personal side of King along with the evolving nature of his ideas and the conflicts encountered during the process. Home movies (apparently) along with family pictures reveal the ordinary aspects of his life—throwing a ball with his sons, talking at the dinner table, finding out that he kissed each of his children in a different place on their face, so each child received a kiss meant only for them. This ordinariness is juxtaposed against the public King, the civil rights icon, the man with the ability to rouse crowds to a fevered frenzy with his eloquent speech, and then calm them back down before letting them leave.

Bagwell and Walker do not have a single narrator, but use the voices of those such as Taylor Branch and David Halberstam, along with the voices of those who knew him best, Andrew Young, Walter Fauntroy, and Joseph Lowry, and news clips and interviews to construct the internal struggle King endured during this time period. We see him deciding to take the offensive and move into Birmingham over the Easter holiday in 1963, a decision that resulted in his arrest and the writing of the now-famous "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." We experience his decision to expand the movement from the southern civil rights movement to segregation and discrimination in non-southern locations (Detroit in 1963 and Chicago and Cicero in 1966). His penultimate August 1963 March on Washington and his memorable "I Have a Dream Speech," coupled with the bombing of the church and murder of four little girls in Birmingham in September of that year, are vividly portrayed. We see the weight on King's shoulders and the grief in his face as he walks up the stairs of the church during the funeral.

King becomes the third Black, but second Black American, to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 for his work in Birmingham the previous year. Yet, 1964 also represents a beginning of the questioning of King's nonviolent approach by young college students involved in the movement and his own rethinking of the goals of the civil rights movement. On April 4, 1967, King comes out against the war in Vietnam at a speech at Riverside Church in Harlem. His public opposition severs his relationship with President Lyndon Johnson and puts him at odds with many supporters of the civil rights movement. Criticism of his position by Massachusetts Senator Edward Brooke is shown in the film, but another individual who publicly criticized King for his position was Ralph Johnson Bunche. Bunche also opposed the war, but thought that King's linking the civil rights movement with the war in Vietnam damaged the former.

Citizen King ends with the assassination of King on April 4, 1968. But it provides the context for how King found himself involved in the sanitation workers' strike in Memphis and why he believed that economic rights were intricately connected to civil rights. At the time of his death, King and SCLC were planning the Poor People's Campaign to explain that connection. The campaign moved forward, but without King's presence his vision was not realized.

These two documentaries are superb. Even those who are familiar with the lives of Ralph Johnson Bunche and Martin Luther King Jr. will learn new things about the two and identify the connections between them. Together, the two explain how Bunche's behind-the-scenes work internationally and domestically paved the way for the young preacher from Atlanta to become the face of the United States civil rights movement. They also show how two "ordinary" men achieved such extraordinary accomplishments that affected the lives of millions and changed the course of a nation and the world.