the Rules Committee can stand up against a public pressure" for reporting legislation out of committee and allowing a floor vote.

Then there was the extraordinary power of a single senator to kill legislation. Under the filibuster rule, any senator could hold up a floor vote on any issue by simply talking on the floor of the Senate. That senator could read *War and Peace* or the New York telephone book, as long as he kept talking. To shut him up—to cut off debate and force a vote of the full body—required a "supermajority" of two-thirds of the Senate. But that was hard. Thirty-four senators representing about 12 million people could frustrate a group of sixty-six senators representing 168 million people, just by talking.

Because of the filibuster and the committee system, reformers often delete the most controversial provisions of their reforms—not because they lack a majority, but because they cannot get the two-thirds vote to cut off a filibuster, or the support of key committee chairs.

The champion of the filibuster, in fact, was Strom Thurmond of South Carolina. In 1957, Thurmond spoke for twenty-four hours to thwart a vote on civil rights legislation. Thurmond read the voting rights laws of all fifty states, the Declaration of Independence, and a history of Anglo-Saxon juries. Thurmond hoped that his marathon speaking session would rally Southerners against the civil rights bill pending in the Senate, but a coalition of two-thirds of Senators eventually rose up to stop the filibuster. The bill passed.

Miracles happen.

On one issue, the March on Washington could claim credit for the passage of controversial legislation. Soon after the Big Ten left Capitol Hill, both the House and Senate passed emergency legislation that directed an arbitrator to resolve the labor impasse between the nation's railroad companies and their unions.

At exactly the moment when Martin Luther King delivered his address, the House voted to accept the Senate's action establishing a seven-man arbitration board. Kennedy signed the railroad legislation at 6:15 p.m.

BONNIE PRINCE CHARLIE—CHARLIE GETER, the disc jockey from WDAS, Philadelphia's leading black radio station—was jubilant.

Getting off one of the thirteen buses sponsored by the station, Geter noticed the all-black military police directing traffic, moving bodies from the parking area to the Washington Monument.

"When you have black people who serve as special units, they take an

extra pride," he said. "Those black police were *sharp.* Boots were spit-shined, helmet liners were chrome-plated, and they were directing traffic like, *precision.* Like *drill teams.* That really made my heart pound, made my eyes well up. They were doing everything, precision-wise, and they looked so great."

Philadelphia was one battleground in a broad new offensive in the civil rights war. The Northern Student Movement targeted ten cities in the North for organizing, and local organizers spread the movement to dozens more cities. In New York and Los Angeles, Muslims battled police in the streets. In New York, activists picketed construction sites for new hospitals in Harlem and Queens and took over the mayor's office, demanding that blacks get 25 percent of those jobs. Protesters in Elizabeth, New Jersey, linked arms and sat in front of a construction site for a new apartment complex, demanding fairness in hiring.

Segregated schools were also targeted in Northern cities. In Chicago, protesters rallied against the use of temporary trailers for schools in black neighborhoods. Protesters asked for the right to attend mostly white schools where there were open seats, rather than getting packed into the "Willis Wagons" (named after the school superintendent) in crowded black school grounds. Other protests took place in New York, Long Island, Boston, Cleveland, St. Louis, and other cities. Blacks were planning "stay-outs" of schools in Boston, Chicago, Detroit, New York, Oakland, and St. Louis.

Token efforts to integrate neighborhoods met with violence in Chicago and Philadelphia. But mobs were not the real cause of housing discrimination. Blacks and whites were kept apart by banking discrimination, realtor steering, restrictive covenants, and zoning. Only twenty-two of Chicago's 253 suburban towns had a hundred or more black residents. In California, blacks had access to fewer than 2 percent of all homes built since World War II. Housing discrimination was hard to confront. Settling into homes was not as easy as finding a stool at a lunch counter. Still, activists tried. In Bowie, Maryland, CORE picketed an all-white development.

In Philadelphia, things got . . . *rancid.* One week before the March on Washington, tenants in South Philly, ignored for years in their protests over slum conditions, dumped trash at the Laundromat owned by one slumlord and at the suburban home of another. More than 250 CORE activists gathered trash from all over the neighborhood—furniture, wasted appliances, garbage, even dead rats—and rode a caravan of trucks and cars to the dump-in sites. When police blocked access to a street, the protesters unloaded the trash and piled it at their feet.

Cecil Moore, the NAACP leader who led Philadelphia's protests, hung out most days at WDAS. He spoke more like a revolutionary than a member

of Roy Wilkins's old-line organization. "My basic strength is those three hundred thousand lower-class guys," Moore said, "who are ready to mob, steal, and kill."

In civil rights battles across the country, the grim, square-shouldered cops usually battled the protesters. They hauled the pregnant women to the paddy wagons. They hacked away at the chains connecting protesters to bulldozers and chain-link fences. They pulled the protesters out of the mayor's office. They were, almost without exception, white. Northern cops usually avoided the kind of meanness and racial venom found in Birmingham and Jackson. But not always.

But here in Washington, for one day, the cops looked friendly. So Charlie Geter skipped and smiled at the sight of black military officers, on duty to make everything *go right.*

WDAS, Philadelphia's premier black station, both stoked the fires of black resentment—mostly just by reporting black news—and cooled them off. On clear nights, WDAS signals covered parts of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland. Sometimes its signals reached as far as Nebraska.

The staff at WDAS was a royal court—Bonnie Prince Charlie (Geter), Sir Lancelot (George Johnson Jr.), the Gospel Queen (Louise Williams), the King of Blues (Kae Williams), Lord Fauntleroy (John Bandy), and the Bishop of Soul (Jimmy Bishop). The royal court dazzled listeners with rapid-fire banter: *This is your record-mixin', platter-pushin' papa, the blue-eyed soul brother, Bonnie Prince Charlie. . . .* Or: *Eee-tiddly-ock. This is the jock. And I'm back on the scene with the record machine, saying ooh-pop-a-doo, how do you do . . . ?*

WDAS played the full spectrum of music—jazz, R&B, gospel, soul, rock—and reported black news. A who's who of black music came to the station for interviews: Ray Charles, Louis Armstrong, B. B. King, Sam Cooke, Chuck Berry, Lou Rawls, and Count Basie. And also black leaders and intellectuals: Martin and Coretta King, Malcolm X, Adam Clayton Powell, Bayard Rustin, James Farmer, and Roy Wilkins.

The station issued blistering editorials. "President Kennedy has been a reluctant man surrounded by reluctant followers," one editorial said, while blacks faced "shotguns, blasts and bombings, physical and economic intimidation while peacefully demonstrating for rights which should have been theirs one hundred years ago."

The WDAS bus trips were jovial, rocking. The radio played. People packed sandwiches and coffee and sodas. Everyone buzzed about the enormity of the event. *A quarter of a million black people in one place! What would that be like?*

Booze could have been a big issue. Some brought beer in coolers. "But we kept that pretty much under control. We figured they'd have the liquor stores closed—not because of people drinking that day, but because if they didn't all those buses would have been filled with booze coming back." People all over the East Coast travel to D.C. for the cheap liquor and fill their trunks with fifths. Today was not the day for bargain booze.

The history gathered at the Mall made Geter's head swirl. Geter saw a lot of these people back at the station. But seeing them here, gathered in one place—as part of a mass, with everyone in black America—was different. And so he went prowling. He worked his way up to the platform at the Lincoln Memorial, caught glimpses of Martin Luther King and Phil Randolph, Roy Wilkins and Harry Belafonte, Mahalia Jackson and Andrew Young.

Geter used his press credentials to get up on the podium. He looked over the crowd and thought about Booker T. Washington, the Niagara Movement, and W. E. B. Du Bois.

"What a beautiful day this is," he exulted. "We've really come a long, long way."

BY THE TIME HARVEY JONES GOT TO UNION STATION, the place was jumping like it was 1945.

For years, Union Station had been a graveyard. Designed by Daniel Burnham to evoke the grandeur of global cities—Rome of Constantine, Paris of Baron von Haussmann, London of Queen Victoria—Union Station was now seedy and dilapidated. Traveling by train was an anachronism; Americans chose the convenience of cars and the speed of planes. Nationwide, the passenger miles traveled on trains declined from 96 billion to 20 billion between 1945 and 1960. The B&O and Pennsylvania railroads pondered selling or even giving away the station, or razing it to make room for office buildings. Cultural advocates debated turning the station into a performing arts center.

Early morning, and Union Station was quiet as usual. A few people sat on benches. Police lurked by the walls and doors. Newsboys and waiters at coffee shops craned their necks to see when the next train might come in. The dawn's light crept in, dust hanging in the air.

The first train for the March on Washington, the regularly scheduled Pennsylvania Railroad train from Boston, arrived at Union Station at 7:25 a.m. Then came the B&O train from Baltimore. Marchers carrying box lunches and signs stepped off the trains' steps.