

# Infinite Patience, Indomitable Will

## Ralph Bunche and His Struggle for Peace and Justice

- Lesson 1 "The Goal of My Ambition" Beginnings: 1903–1927
- Lesson 2 Ralph Bunche and Black Political Life: 1928–41
- Lesson 3 "This is a Killing Assignment": Ending the 1948 Arab-Israeli War
- Lesson 4 "Full Explosion May Be Averted" Crisis in the Congo, 1960
- Lesson 5 Never Too Late, 1962–1971

### Ralph Bunche

#### *Infinite Patience, Indomitable Will*

#### His Struggle for Peace and Justice



TOM LAICHAS

A Unit of Study for Grades 9–12

National Center for History in the Schools

Lesson 1 focuses on Ralph Bunche's Los Angeles years with his grandmother Lucy Johnson. Students will read excerpts from a mid-1950s teleplay produced to dramatize Bunche's youth and will write additional episodes focusing on other events in these years.

In the second lesson, students will study African-American intellectuals and activists in the 1930s, comparing and contrasting Bunche's own views on the civil rights issues of the day. Students are also introduced to Bunche's evolving views on international politics, especially anticolonial movements in Africa.

Lesson 3 takes up Bunche's role, after the assassination of UN mediator Folke Bernadotte in 1948, in ending the first Arab-Israeli war. Meeting for nearly three months on the island of Rhodes, Bunche led an exhausting but ultimately successful negotiation marathon which earned him the 1950 Nobel Peace Prize. Student essays will analyze Bunche's negotiating methods, assessing both the opportunities and obstacles facing diplomats who seek to resolve tense international crises.

Lesson 4 deals with Bunche's key role in the crisis in the newly independent Congo after World War II. This was one of the most serious and complex crises of the early 1960s. As the United States and Soviet Union made the country

an arena for their Cold War rivalries, Congolese factions, Belgian government officials, and UN officials jockeyed for advantage. The crisis demanded all of Bunche's energy and talent. Students will participate in a simulation of the 1960 negotiation, predict its outcome, and measure their predictions against the events which followed.

The final lesson takes up Bunche's struggles during the 1960s to prevent the outbreak of regional and world wars, while he lent his support to the Civil Rights movement at home. Students will debate his career, drawing on both his diplomatic work and his social activism. Finally, students will write their own *New York Times*-style obituary, evaluating Bunche's achievements.

## Ordering Information

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