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## CANADA'S IMPACT ON THE GLOBAL BLACK POWER MOVEMENT REVEALED IN "TRUE NORTH: CANADIAN MYTHS AND BLACK POWER" PREMIERING ON PBS'S INDEPENDENT LENS JULY 6

*How 1960s Montreal Helped Shape the Global Movement for  
Black Liberation*

(San Francisco, CA) February 23, 2026— Revealing the largely untold history of anti-Black racism in Canada, "True North: Canadian Myths and Black Power" will premiere July 6, 2026, on PBS's INDEPENDENT LENS. Through historic archives and the voices of those who lived through 1960s Montreal, "True North" explores pivotal events that impacted the global movement for Black liberation.

In 1968, the war in Vietnam was escalating, African nation-states were decolonizing, and revolutionary activity was increasing in the Caribbean. Civil unrest reverberated throughout the Western Hemisphere. In Montreal, protests were led by taxi drivers, teachers, and police officers. During this politically charged climate, a group of students converged, hailing from Jamaica, Haiti, Trinidad, and elsewhere in Canada. Their anti-colonial ideas merged with Montreal's Black communities' long-standing spirit of social change. As student protests ignited the Sir George Williams Affair at one of the city's anglophone universities, Black youth faced violent repression, unfolding a powerful chapter of the global Black Power era.

Featuring never-before-seen footage and centering the voices of Black students and activists who lived through these events, "True North" weaves intimate personal accounts with historical analysis. The film illuminates a pivotal chapter in the Black Power movement and its lasting impact on the global struggle for Black liberation.

"Celebrating America's 250th anniversary means acknowledging our history, and sharing the stories of people committed to the idea of equality," said Lois Vossen, INDEPENDENT LENS Founding Executive Producer. "True North shines light on a critical chapter of the Black Civil Rights movement and

helps us understand current events, including how activism took hold on college campuses.”

“True North” also revisits the convergence of Black liberation movements at the Congress of Black Writers, held at McGill University in October 1968. Widely regarded as the largest Black Power conference held outside the United States, it featured speakers including Stokely Carmichael (a.k.a. Kwame Ture), Alvin Poussaint, James Forman, and C.L.R. James. These titans of thought and politics discussed the meaning of Black Power and the challenges faced by communities across the Black diaspora.

Montreal’s Congress of Black Writers later fed into and influenced the Black student leaders of the Sir George Williams Affair. In 1969, incensed by a racial incident involving a white faculty member, over 400 students and activists occupied the school’s computer labs in protest. What ensued was a violent reaction by the Canadian government and Montreal’s police against Black youth seeking justice.

“True North: Canadian Myths and Black Power” will premiere on PBS’s INDEPENDENT LENS on July 6, 2026, (check local listings) and will be available to stream on the [PBS app](#) and [PBS Documentaries YouTube Channel](#).

#### **ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS**

##### **Michèle Stephenson, Director**

Filmmaker and artist Michèle Stephenson, pulls from her Haitian and Panamanian roots to think radically about storytelling. Her feature documentary "Going To Mars" won the 2023 Grand Jury Prize at Sundance. She is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and a Guggenheim Fellow in film/video.

##### **Leslie Norville, Producer**

Leslie Norville is an Emmy® Award-winning producer. Her work is spurred by a passion to tell untold and nuanced stories about people of color. Recent projects include "The First Wave" and the forthcoming series "Black Life: Untold Stories." She is an alum of the Sundance Documentary Creative Producing Fellowship.

#### **CREDITS**

Director	Michèle Stephenson
Producer	Leslie Norville

Michèle Stephenson

Executive Producers

Carrie Lozano  
Lois Vossen  
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Miranda De Pencier  
Nelson George

### **ABOUT INDEPENDENT LENS**

INDEPENDENT LENS is an award-winning documentary series that fosters understanding, seeks to build empathy, and encourages a more united society. Produced by ITVS, INDEPENDENT LENS documentaries have premiered on PBS for 25 years and streamed on YouTube, helping Americans foster deeper connections between communities and themselves. From the Oscar-nominated “I Am Not Your Negro” to the Peabody-acclaimed docuseries “Philly D.A.” and the Emmy® Award-winning “The Invisible War,” INDEPENDENT LENS provides viewers with in-depth, nuanced storytelling reflecting the experiences of people from a variety of voices and communities. INDEPENDENT LENS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting: a private corporation funded by the American People, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Ford Foundation, Acton Family Giving, Park Foundation, and Wyncote Foundation.

Stream anytime on the PBS app or YouTube. Learn more at [pbs.org/independentlens](https://pbs.org/independentlens).

### **ABOUT ITVS**

Independent Television Service (ITVS) is the largest co-producer of independent documentaries in the United States. For more than 30 years the San Francisco nonprofit has funded and partnered with documentary filmmakers to produce and distribute untold stories. ITVS incubates and co-produces these award-winning titles and premieres them on our Emmy Award-winning PBS series, INDEPENDENT LENS. ITVS titles appear on PBS, WORLD, NETA, and can be streamed on various digital platforms including the PBS app. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Acton Family Giving, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Ford Foundation, Park Foundation, and Wyncote Foundation. For more information, visit [itvs.org](https://itvs.org).

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