

GRADE 8, Fourth Quarter Civil Rights and Political Developments

I like to see it lap the miles, And lick the valleys up,
And stop to feed itself at tanks; And then, prodigious,
To fit its sides, and crawl between,
Complaining all the while In horrid,
hooting stanza; Then chase itself
down hill... Emily Dickinson, "XLIII"

Word Windows into History

Poems, Songs and Documents

Selected for the Themes and Eras Illuminated through American Art

*Prepared by the DePaul University Center for Urban Education
for the Terra Teacher Lab
Terra Foundation for American Art*

These are examples of songs, poems and documents that illustrate times in US history. You can use them to help students understand that a poem or song is a word picture and can be interpreted just as a painting can be—and that in context it makes more sense as well as providing a window into that context.

GRADE 8, Fourth Quarter

Civil Rights and Political Developments

Documents

Full program of the Chicago Freedom Movement, July 1966

Dr. Martin Luther King's letter from Birmingham Jail is not reprinted in this binder, but can be viewed here: <http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/frequentdocs/birmingham.pdf>

Poems and Songs

The following poems and songs are not reprinted in this binder, but can be accessed at the websites listed below.

"We Real Cool"	http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/15433
"American History"	http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/15872
"I, Too, Sing America"	http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/15615
"The Negro Speaks of Rivers"	http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/15722
"Lift Every Voice and Sing"	http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/1558

P R O G R A M
O F T H E
C H I C A G O F R E E D O M M O V E M E N T

July, 1966

Introduction: The Problems of Racism, Ghettoes, and Slums

Racism, slums and ghettoes have been the essentials of Negro existence in Chicago. While the city permitted its earlier ethnic groups to enter the mainstream of American life, it has locked the Negro into the lower rungs of the social and economic ladder. The Negro in Chicago has been systematically excluded from the major rewards of American life; he is restricted in the jobs he may hold, the schools he may attend, and the places where he may live. In the year 1966 the Negro is as far behind the white as he was in the year 1940.

Chicago today is a divided city--segregated in all areas of social and economic activity, in employment, in education, in housing and in community organization. The Negro community is sectioned off from the larger metropolis into areas of the city that have been set aside for black ghettoes. Within these confines the Negro community is regulated from the outside like a colony--its potential economic resources underdeveloped, its more than one million inhabitants, the daily victims of personal rebuffs, insults and acts of prejudice, and its poorer citizens at the mercy of police, welfare workers, and minor government officials.

Racism in the large Northern cities has not featured lynchings, denial of the vote, or other clear injustices that could easily be removed as is the case in the South. Yet, racism in Chicago has been a stark reality, visible in many dimensions. It is reflected in the existence of the massive overcrowded ghetto that grows each year. It is reflected in the crime-infested slums where the living standards of the Negro poor often do not cover the bare necessities of urban living. It is reflected in the exploitation of Negroes by the dominant white society in higher rents and prices, lower wages and poorer schools.

Under the system of northern racism the Negro receives inferior and second-class status in every area of urban living. The Negro is concentrated in the low-paying and second-rate jobs. In housing, proportionately more Negroes live in substandard or deteriorating dwellings. In education, Negro schools have more inexperienced teachers, fewer classrooms, and less expenditures per pupil. In the maintenance of law and order Negroes are frequently the victims of police brutality and of stop and search methods of crime detection.

All Negroes in Chicago are confined to the ghetto and suffer second class treatment regardless of their social or economic status. But the worst off are the Negro poor, locked into the slum which is the most deprived part of the ghetto. The forty (40) per cent of the Negro population who make up a black urban peasantry in the slums are the hardest hit victims of discrimination and segregation. Their incomes often have to be supplemented by welfare payments dispensed under procedures that are ugly and paternalistic. They are frequently unemployed. They are forced to live in rat infested buildings or in the Chicago Housing Authority's cement reservations. Their children are all but ignored by the school system. In short they have been frozen out of American society by both race and poverty.

The subjugation of Negroes in Chicago has not been the result of long-established legal codes or customs, like those that existed in the South. Although Chicago has not for a century had any segregation laws or discrimination ordinances, the subordination of Negroes in the North has been almost as effective as if there had been such laws. Northern segregation resulting from policies, in particular the decision-making procedures, of the major economic and social institutions. The employment policies of business firms and government, and practices of realtors, and the operation of the Chicago School System have all reinforced one another to keep the Negroes separate and unequal. The system of racial separation resulting from their interaction have become so strongly imbedded in the city's life that present racial patterns are passed on from generation to generation.

In many instances, although these restrictive policies have now been formally abolished or concealed, the effects of their operations over several decades remains. Very often, Negroes are no longer excluded consciously and deliberately. In employment, personnel men need not discriminate so long as Chicago's inferior schools send their pupils into the labor market less prepared than white graduates. Realtors can justify their discrimination when white parents rightfully fear that integrated schools eventually deteriorate because the school system considers them less important than white schools. School administrators can efficiently segregate by following neighborhood school policies in allocating school facilities.

In the past, the Negro's efforts to improve his living conditions have concentrated on going through the well-defined channels of white authority. Negroes for years have been asking, begging, and pleading that white employers, board presidents, bankers, realtors, politicians, and government officials correct racial patterns and inequities. The major lesson that the Negro community has learned is that racial change through this process comes only gradually, usually too late, and only in small measures.

In this rapidly changing world where technological changes may displace the un-skilled workers, where affluence makes it possible to spend millions in waging wars in far away places like Vietnam, and where the elimination of poverty and racism have become National goals, Negroes no longer have the patience to abide by the old, unsuccessful gradualism of the respectable defenders of status-quo.

The present powerlessness of Negroes hinders them from changing conditions themselves or even in developing effective coalitions with others, but the time has now come for Negroes to set up their own instruments that will direct pressure at the institutions that still adhere to racism policies. Negroes must form their own power base from which Negro aspirations and goals can be demanded, a base from which they can make a strong common fight with others that share their problems or their aspirations. Chicago will become an open city only when Negroes develop power in proportion to their numbers.

The Chicago Freedom Movement

The Chicago Freedom Movement is a coalition of forces for the purpose of wiping out slums, ghettos and racism. Its core is formed by the unity of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (S.C.L.C.) and the Coordinating Council of Community Organizations (C.C.C.O.). S.C.L.C., operating under the leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was invited to Chicago by C.C.C.O. because of its dynamic work in the South. C.C.C.O. is a coalition of thirty-six (36) Chicago civil-rights and Negro community organizations. Cooperating with the Chicago Freedom Movement are a number of religious organizations, social agencies, neighborhood groups and individuals of good will.

Many groups in the Chicago region share with Negroes common problems of slum housing, welfare dependency, inferior education, police brutality, and color discrimination. Puerto Rican and Mexican Chicagoans are becoming increasingly vocal about these problems, and the Freedom Movement is seeking ways to join in a united effort with its Latin American brothers. Therefore, the Freedom Movement is making many proposals that provide for the improvement and upgrading of conditions of Latin Americans, other non-whites and some white minorities.

The Freedom Movement proposals and demands are designed to set the broad guidelines for a just and open city in which all men can live with dignity. Three interrelated goals set forth the direction to such a society:

1. To bring about equality of opportunity and of results.
2. To open up the major areas of metropolitan life of housing, employment, and education.
3. To provide power for the powerless.

Many will affirm these goals and wish that they could be achieved. But very little will happen unless Negroes, Latin Americans, other oppressed minorities and their white friends join hands and organize to bring about change--for power does not yield to pleading.

The Freedom Movement will achieve its goals through the organization of a non-violent movement which provides the power to participate in the decisions which now subjugates rather than elevates, which suppresses man's humanity rather than expresses it.

In order to generate the necessary power the movement will:

1. Organize a series of direct actions which will make the injustices so clear that the whole community will respond to the need to change.
2. Organize people in every sector of the ghettos--in neighborhoods, in schools, in welfare unions,

in public housing, in hospitals, to give the strength of numbers to the demands for change.

3. Strengthen the institutions which contribute to the goals of a just and open society and withdraw support from those institutions-- banks, businesses, newspapers and professions-- which drain the resources of the ghetto communities without contributing in return.
4. Demand representation of the organizations of the ghetto community (Chicago Freedom Movement) on decision-making bodies at every level of government, industry, labor, and church, affecting the lives of people in the ghetto.
5. Promote political education and participation so that the needs and aspirations of Negroes and other oppressed minorities are fully represented.

The Chicago Freedom Movement and its constituent organizations use many means to bring about change. Community organization, education, research, job development, legal redress and political education are all weapons in the arsenal of the Movement. But, its most distinctive and creative tool is that of non-violent direct action.

Non-violence is based on the truth that each human being has infinite dignity and worth. This truth, which is at the heart of our religious and democratic heritage, is denied by systems of discrimination and exploitation. The beginning of change in such systems of discrimination is for men to assert with simple dignity and humanity that they are men and human and that they will no longer be oppressed or oppressors. A just society is born when men cease to be accomplices in a system of degradation.

Then specific injustices and discriminations must be exposed by direct actions which reveal, without excuse or rationalization, the extent and nature of the problem. They bring into the open, as conflicts, social antagonisms that in the past had been hidden as subjugation or exploitation. The methodology of non-violence keeps attention focused on the real issues of injustice and discrimination rather than on false issues which arise when conflict becomes violent.

The non-violent movement seeks to create a community in which justice and equality provide the framework for all human relationships and are embodied in its institutions. The practice of justice is the evidence of a community based on respect for every person and of a society in which human values prevail over cash values. A genuine human community does not exist until all citizens are given an opportunity to participate to the fullest limits

of their capacity. In this way each person contributes to the community's solution to its problems and fulfills himself as a member of the community.

The Chicago Freedom Movement commits itself to the struggle for freedom and justice in this metropolis and pledges our non-violent movement to the building of the beloved community where men will live as brothers and no group or class or nation will raise its hand against another.

An Open and Just City

To wipe out slums, ghettos, and racism we must create an open city with equal opportunities and equal results. To this end we have drawn up program proposals for employment and income, housing and metropolitan planning, education, financial services, police and legal protection. We only sketch the major ideas of the full program here as that document shall be released shortly.

Two different approaches are necessary to do the job. The first approach involves gigantic development programs for the slum ghettos similar to those for underdeveloped nations. The second involves proposals for the various institutions of the whole metropolitan area.

We propose three major redevelopment program areas for three slum areas. The redevelopment projects will constitute a concrete application of the domestic Marshall Plan idea. A redevelopment authority, with majority control by persons and institutions in the area, will shape a unified plan for housing, employment, educational, social, and cultural development. Massive expenditures would create a climate for further public and private spending. The objective would be to make what are now the slum ghettos as good places to live as any in Chicago.

In education our program is based on proposals that all schools should have at least the same expenditures as the best suburban public schools. Racial separation should be broken down by such new ideas as educational parks and city-suburban educational cooperation.

In employment our program proposals call for fair employment by the elimination of all forms of job bias and of all measures which screen out minority groups. The proposals call for full employment at decent wages by the creation of tens of thousands of new jobs in rebuilding our city and in new sub-professional positions in health, education, and welfare. We call for effective job training and retraining with the provision of a job at the successful completion of the program.

In housing our program calls for an open city in which no man is discriminated against. We call for adequate financing and programs for the redevelopment of slum and deteriorating housing and for the elimination of exploitation by slum lords. We call for humanization of the present public housing projects. We propose the development of a vastly increased supply of decent low and middle cost housing throughout the Chicago area.

In planning we call for the development of a metropolitan-wide land and transportation plan, including the City of Chicago, that will promote and facilitate access to jobs and housing for all men throughout the entire region; the plan would include the development of new areas, the eradication of slums and the redevelopment of these blighted areas both in Chicago and the older suburbs.

In welfare we call for the elimination of welfare dependency by a guaranteed adequate annual income as a matter of right with provision for payment in the most dignified manner possible. In the immediate future, pending the change in the manner of income distribution, we propose measures to humanize the welfare system and to strengthen the autonomy and rights of recipients.

In politics and governments we call for increased representation of Negroes, Latin Americans, and other exploited minorities.

We call for measures to equalize protection from police and the courts, including a citizen review board to monitor complaints of police brutality and arbitrary arrest.

The task of wiping out racism, slums, and ghettos in order to make Chicago an "open city" is large, but necessary. We recognize that many of the proposals in our full program are long-range ones--some of which will take a number of years before they are in full operation--and Chicago is receiving its total benefits. However, a good number of our proposals can be implemented this summer by the action of government and private executives; therefore, it is these proposals that constitute the demands for the summer campaign of the Chicago Freedom Movement.

Since people and organizations resist change, the Freedom Movement shall have to demonstrate by the tools of non-violent direct action that our summer demands can be implemented. We shall prove that the Chicago metropolitan area can be an open city. For this purpose we have chosen a small number of specific target demands, around which we shall organize non-violent direct action campaigns. With the creative help and pressure of the Freedom Movement, government and private organizations will find that the target demands can be met. Then they will be able to meet the other immediate summer demands.

Selected Immediate Action Demands--Summer 1966

For our primary target we have chosen housing. As of July 10 we shall cease to be accomplices to a housing system of discrimination, segregation, and degradation. We shall begin to act as if Chicago were an open city. We shall act on the basis that every man is entitled to full access of buying or renting housing that is sound, attractive, and reasonably priced.

- - Demands For Open Housing

From the Real Estate Boards and Brokers:

1. All listings immediately available on a non-discriminatory basis. This means that no realtor or real estate broker will handle a property that is not available to anyone, without regard to race, color, creed, or national origin.
2. Endorsement of, and support for open occupancy.

From the Banks and Savings Institutions:

1. Public statements of a non-discriminatory mortgage policy so that loans will be available to any qualified borrower without regard to the racial composition of the area, or the age of the area, a policy that takes into account years of discrimination against Negro borrowers.
2. Creation of special loan funds for the conversion of contract housing purchases to standard mortgages.

From the Chicago Housing Authority:

1. Program to rehabilitate present public housing, including such items as locked lobbies, restrooms in recreation areas, increased police protection and child care centers on every third floor.
2. No more public housing construction in the ghetto until a substantial number of units are started outside the ghetto.

From the Chicago Housing Authority and the Chicago Dwelling Association:

A program to increase vastly the supply of low-cost housing on a scattered basis. The program should provide for both low and middle income families.

From the Governor of Illinois:

Enforcement of his Fair Practices Code, especially by revoking the licenses of real estate brokers who discriminate.

From the Illinois Public Aid Department and the
Cook County Department of Public Aid:

Direct the housing placement of welfare recipients so as to use the entire housing market.

From the Federal Government:

1. An executive order for Federal supervision of the non-discriminatory granting of loans by banks and saving institutions that are members of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or by the Federal Savings and Loan Association.
2. Passage of the 1966 Civil Rights Act with a provision to make it illegal to discriminate in the sale or renting of property on the basis of race, color, creed, or national origin.

From the Mayor and City Council:

1. Ordinance giving ready access to the names of owners and investors for all slum properties.
2. A saturation program of increased garbage collection street cleaning and building inspection services in the slum areas.

From Advertising Media:

No advertising media will list either housing or jobs not available for every man.

- - Demands for Open Employment

From the Mayor and City Council:

1. Publication of headcounts of whites, Negroes, and Latin Americans for all city departments and for all firms from which city purchases are made.
2. A compliance program that checks on all contractors on a routine basis.
3. Revocation of contracts with firms that do not have a full-scale fair employment practice.

From Business:

1. Racial headcounts, including white, Negro, and Latin American, by job classification and income level, made public.
2. Radical steps to upgrade and to integrate all departments, at all levels of employment.

From Unions:

1. Headcounts in unions for apprentices, journeymen and union staff and officials by job classification.
2. A crash program to remedy any inequities discovered by the headcount.
3. Support for the organization of the unorganized minority workers since Negro and other minority workers are concentrated in the low paying, unorganized industries.
4. Indenture of at least 400 Negro and Latin American apprentices in the craft unions.

From the Governor of Illinois:

1. Prepare legislative proposals for a \$2.00 State minimum wage law and for credit reform, including the abolition of garnishment and wage assignment.
2. Publication of headcounts of whites, Negroes, and Latin Americans for all State departments and for all firms from which state purchases are made.

- - Welfare Demands

From the Illinois Public Aid Department and
the Cook County Department of Public Aid:

1. Recognition of welfare unions and community organizations as bargaining agents for welfare recipients.
2. Regular meetings between representatives of the recipients and top department administrators.
3. Institution of a declaration of income system to replace the degrading investigation and means test for welfare eligibility.
4. Change in the rules and procedures to speed up the issuance of emergency checks and to eliminate withholding of checks pending investigation.

Education Demands

From the Chicago Board of Education:

1. Announce plan for desegregation of teachers in Chicago schools during 1966-67 school year.
2. Immediate publication of the achievement scores of all schools by grades.

From the Federal Government:

Executive enforcement of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act regarding the complaint against the Chicago Board of Education.

- - Other Demands

From the Mayor and City Council:

Creation of a citizens review board for grievances against police brutality and false arrests or stops and seizure.

From the Political Parties:

The replacement of absentee precinct captains, with the requirement that precinct captains be residents of their precincts.

From the Federal Government:

Direct funding of Chicago community organizations by the Office of Economic Opportunity.

- - Demands of Ourselves

From the People:

1. Financial support of the Freedom Movement.
2. Selective buying from firms that do not practice racial discrimination in hiring and upgrading of employees.
3. Deposit money in banks and savings institutions with clean records on hiring and lending policies.
4. Selective buying campaigns against businesses that boycott the products of Negro-owned companies.
5. Participation in the Freedom Movement target campaigns for this summer, including volunteer services and membership in one of the Freedom Movement organizations.

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