



**POLITICAL AND CIVIL RIGHTS**

**WE SHALL NOT BE MOVED:**  
New York and Civil Rights 1945-1964



**OVERVIEW**

Through viewing photographs, questionnaires, and flyers, students will learn about activists involved in the civil rights movement in New York City who fought for integration in public schools and quality education for Puerto Rican and African-American children in the 1950s-60s.

**STUDENT GOALS**

- Students will learn about de facto segregation that was practiced in northern cities and how African-American communities were affected by multiple systems of racial inequality with regard to jobs, housing, and schools.
- Students will learn about individuals, such as Ella Baker and Milton Galamison, who participated in the civil rights movement in New York and thus played a role in the fight for racial equality.
- Through analyzing primary sources (photographs, questionnaires, and flyers) students will observe the various tactics and strategies that activists used to address segregation in NYC schools and incite action.
- Students will create murals commemorating the work of activists who had a local impact.

**COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS**

**Grade 3:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.1

Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

**Grades 6-8:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

**Grades 11-12:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2

Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.



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### KEY TERMS/VOCABULARY

- Segregation
  - Jim Crow
  - Discrimination
  - Boycott
  - Integration
  - Civil Rights
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### ACTIVISTS

- Ella Baker
  - Milton Galamison
  - A. Phillip Randolph
  - Bayard Rustin
  - Macolm X
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### ORGANIZATIONS

- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
  - Parents in Action Against Educational Discrimination
  - New York State Committee against Discrimination in Housing
  - Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)
  - Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)
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## POLITICAL AND CIVIL RIGHTS

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Ella Baker. *Check Your School Questionnaire*, ca. 1950s. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.

The southern states practiced de jure segregation (mandated by law) in most public facilities: in schools, public transportation, restaurants, restrooms, and drinking fountains. This kind of segregation caused economic, educational, and social inequalities for African Americans by providing them inferior facilities and services, and enforcing this color line often involved violence and intimidation. Segregation in the North is often considered de facto (de facto meant “in fact” though not as a matter of law), yet was also enforced through institutional policies as well as individual practices. Many businesses refused to hire African Americans or relegated them to the lowest menial positions, and on the other hand, good paying jobs in construction, plumbing, fire, and police patrol often went to restrictive trade unions that had predominately white membership. After restrictive covenants preventing African Americans from certain housing were outlawed, banks and mortgage companies often refused to give African Americans loans to purchase homes and businesses and they were forced to live in over-crowded neighborhoods with substandard housing conditions and poor sanitation services. Since the Board of Education zoned children to schools based on housing, the schools remained predominantly segregated, long after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954.

In *Civil Rights in New York City: From World War II to the Giuliani Era*, Clarence Taylor describes activist Ella Baker, a labor organizer and longtime leader in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, who sought to address school inequality in New York City. During her time as chair of the New York NAACP’s education committee in the 1950s, Baker oversaw efforts to canvass African-American parents about conditions in their local public schools. She created an organization called Parents in Action Against Educational Discrimination that consisted of Puerto Rican and African-American parents who demanded school integration and greater parent participation in school policy. In 1957 Parents in Action brought together 500 parents to protest in front of Mayor Wagner’s office, arguing that the city had not responded to the concerns of black and Puerto Rican parents. Ella Baker distributed the following document to school administrators in the 1950s.



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**CHECK YOUR SCHOOL!**

145.129M  
F.S. Number

Christina Johnson  
Name of President of P.T. A.

140 West 140<sup>th</sup> St  
School Address

3235-5<sup>th</sup> Ave - 143-5421  
President's Address..... Telephone

**IMPROVEMENT AND REPAIRS :**

What year was your school built? 1924 When was it last painted... May 1937

1947-50 ? How many toilets for boys 4 ; for girls 0

Describe Conditions of:	Good	Adequate	Poor
Play Area			
Lunchroom		<u>Space for lunchroom is adequate. Furniture</u>	
Auditorium		<u>Hand painting</u>	
Teachers Rest Rm.		<u>✓</u>	
Class Rooms		<u>✓ Equipped, clean, room</u>	

**Most Needed Repairs Are :**

Heating and Plumbing Roofing  
Plumbing modernization

Electrical Wiring in school poor and inadequate

Others Modernization of main entrance  
Painting

DO YOU HAVE A PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM IN YOUR SCHOOL No ?

**PUPIL ENROLLMENT... 400..... TEACHERS... 20..... ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS**

How many Children enrolled 400 ? School's Capacity 400 ?

Is Your school on Double Session Now No ? Has it Been No ?

How Many Regular Teachers 46 ? Substitutes 37 Probationary 0

How many Children are behind in reading: 3rd grade \_\_\_ ; 4th gr \_\_\_  
5th grade 1 6th \_\_\_

How many children behind in arithmetic: 3rd grade \_\_\_ 4th \_\_\_  
5th grade \_\_\_ 6th \_\_\_ ?

What per cent of the children are : Negro 97 ; Puerto Rican 1 ?

How Many SPANISH SPEAKING TEACHERS Have You? 0 How Many Needed \_\_\_

How many Children are Now getting REMEDIAL Reading 100 ? Arith. \_\_\_ ?

How many Remedial Teachers are Needed 4 ?

What is the present class size( excluding special classes) 30.0 ?

Submitted by the Educational Committee, P.T. Branch NAACP, 165 W 131 St.

Signed: Christina Johnson  
President P.T. Branch

Ella Baker. *Check Your School Questionnaire*, ca. 1950s. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.



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**DOCUMENT BASED QUESTIONS**

- What kind of information is Ella Baker collecting from the public schools?
- Do you notice an argument that comes across through the questions she posed and the answers filled in? What point is she proving in collecting this data?
- Once these statistics were gathered, what do you imagine activists would do with this information? How can they be used to advocate for change?



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## INTRODUCING RESOURCES 2, 3, & 4

**Resource 2:** Unknown. *Milton Galamison with picketers at Brooklyn School, March 16, 1964*. Digital reproduction. Bettmann Archive, Corbis Images.

**Resource 3:** *School Boycott Flyer, 1964*. Elliott Linzer Collection, Queens College Civil Rights Archives, City University of New York.

**Resource 4:** Milton Galamison. *Letter to Parents of New York City School Children, March 16, 1964*. Queens College Civil Rights Archives, City University of New York.

According to Clarence Taylor in *Civil Rights in New York City: From World War II to the Giuliani Era*, New York City's public schools became racial battlegrounds in the 1950s. Segregation was officially illegal, but activists accused the city of violating the U.S. Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. They complained that the city tolerated inferior schools in Harlem, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brownsville, and other neighborhoods with majority populations of people of color, and was not actively working to achieve school integration. (There was only one high school in Harlem, the city's largest black community, and no school building had been built between the First World War and 1940).

In 1955, Reverend Milton Galamison was elected chair of the education committee of the Brooklyn branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Born in Philadelphia, Galamison became a minister of the Siloam Presbyterian Church in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn and a leader of New York City's school integration movement in the 1950s and '60s. In 1956, Galamison and other New York activists formed the NAACP Schools Workshop to lobby city government for school integration.

After years of frustrated efforts, on February 3, 1964, Galamison launched a citywide public school boycott to pressure the city to create a timetable for integration. In one of the largest civil rights demonstrations in the nation's history, over 400,000 New York City children stayed out of school. But a second boycott, called for March 16, saw less response and stirred discord within the movement. Activists faced the fact that over a decade of work had failed to integrate the city's public schools — a realization that would soon lead to calls for a new strategy: community control as a way to put power in the hands of minority parents.



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Milton Galamison with picketers at Brooklyn School, March 16, 1964. Bettmann Archive, Corbis Images.

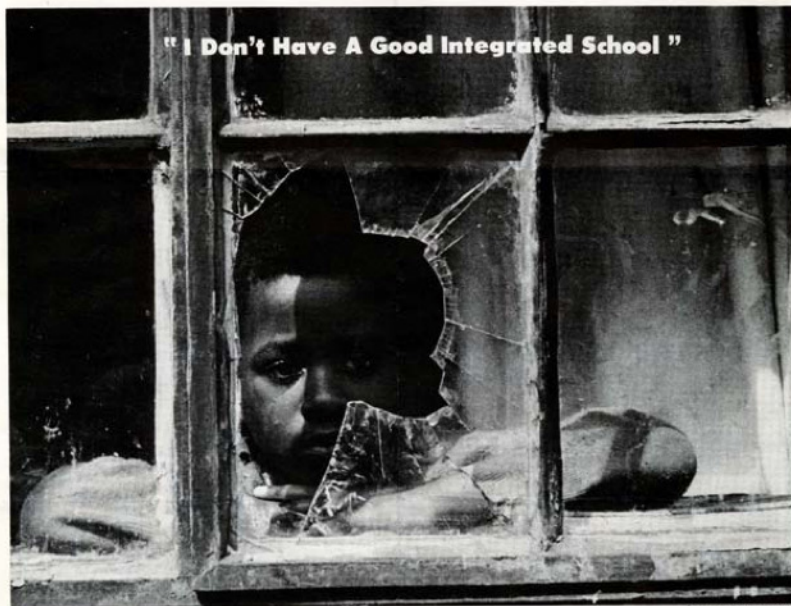


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# SCHOOL BOYCOTT!

**FREEDOM DAY FEBRUARY 3, 1964**



**JOIN THE ONE DAY BOYCOTT!**

FOR INFORMATION CALL:

BRONX  
LU 9-8409  
JE 7-6270

BROOKLYN  
UL 7-9200  
ST 9-7050

QUEENS  
JA 6-9070  
RA 1-6855

MANHATTAN  
AU 1-6333  
Uptown MO 6-0400  
Lower East Side SP 7-9090

City Wide Committee for Integrated Schools

*School Boycott Flyer, 1964. Queens College Civil Rights Archives, City University of New York.*



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**CITY-WIDE COMMITTEE FOR INTEGRATED SCHOOLS**  
260 Jefferson Avenue, Brooklyn, N. Y.

*Dear Friend,*

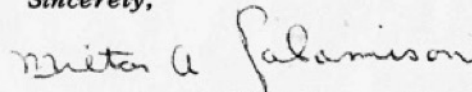
*Despite the 1954 Supreme Court decision, there are more segregated schools in New York City today than there were ten years ago. Segregated schools are inferior schools - North or South. Classes are overcrowded, the curriculum is below standard, and these schools are generally behind city norms. This means the children are not being properly prepared for tomorrow's jobs.*

*Despite a successful boycott of the public schools on February 3rd, the Board of Education has not moved to meet the demands of civil rights groups. We must have pictures of people of color in readers, the Negro's contribution to history properly presented in textbooks, Negro principals, and a representative number of Negro teachers. As Jimmy Hicks said in the February 27th edition of the Amsterdam News: "WHAT, THEN, IS THERE LEFT FOR THE NEGRO AND PUERTO RICAN PARENTS EXCEPT TO TAKE TO THE STREETS AGAIN IN ANOTHER BOYCOTT?" The Board will never act unless we act.*

*Monday, March 16th, we will have a chance to help our children by joining the second city-wide boycott of the public schools. Thousands of parents will keep their children out of school to serve notice on the city and the state that we will no longer tolerate second-class education. Throughout the city children will be cared for in our own freedom schools where parents and teachers will instruct the children in freedom and dignity, not in "Jim Crow." For the name of the freedom school nearest you, call one of the numbers listed below.*

**ON MARCH 16th, JOIN THE SECOND GIGANTIC SCHOOL BOYCOTT!**  
*Teach the children to fight for their own freedom. Their future depends on what we do NOW.*

Sincerely,



Rev. Milton A. Galamison, Chm.

<b>MANHATTEN:</b>	<i>Harlem Parents Committee</i>	<b>AU 1-6333</b> <b>AU 1-7778</b>
<b>BRONX:</b>	<i>Congress of Racial Equality</i>	<b>LU 9-8409</b>
<b>BROOKLYN:</b>	<i>Parents' Workshop for Equality</i>	<b>ST 9-8861</b> <b>ST 9-7050</b>
	<i>Congress of Racial Equality</i>	<b>UL 7-9200</b>

Milton Galamison. Letter to Parents of New York City School Children, March 16, 1964. Queens College Civil Rights Archives, City University of New York.



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**DOCUMENT BASED QUESTIONS**

- Why did activists like Milton Galamison believe that boycotting was an effective strategy?
- Why did activists choose to involve children in these public actions?
- Describe the image on the flyer for the boycott. What response did the creator of the flyer intend for the reader to have?
- What criticisms does Milton Galamison voice about the school system in his letter?
- What demands does Galamison make? And what tactics does he use?
- Who is his audience and what reaction is he seeking from them?



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## ACTIVITY

Students will revisit some of the unsung heroes of the civil rights movement who were actively involved in New York City, but are not as widely known as activists like Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and Rosa Parks. Students will design murals or posters to commemorate the efforts of activists like Ella Baker, Milton Galamison, A. Philip Randolph (leader of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters—the first predominantly African-American labor union and the leaders of the March on Washington Movement) and Bayard Rustin (a chief organizer of the 1963 March on Washington and a leading strategist of the civil rights movement who advised King). The purpose of these murals is to inform others about these unsung heroes who were the backbone of the civil rights movement. The student murals should include some or all of the criteria below:

- A visual of the activist drawn by students from a photograph (either a portrait or one of them taking action)
- Text honoring the work they have done and why it was important for New York City
- Dates or span of years when the activist worked
- A place or specific area in New York City where this mural would be located. Note, Ella Baker, A. Philip Randolph, and Bayard Rustin all resided and were active in Harlem and Milton Galamison was the pastor of Siloam Presbyterian Church in the Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn.
- Optional: Inclusion of a quote by the activist



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**ADDITIONAL READING****THE NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLES**

“Galamison sees Boycott Success” by Martin Arnold, March 16, 1964, provides Milton Galamison’s account of the school boycott of February 3, 1964.

<http://www.nytimes.com/1964/03/16/galamison-sees-boycott-success.html>

“New Rights Leaders” by Fred Powledge, February 6, 1964, describes the leaders of New York’s civil rights movement.

<http://www.nytimes.com/1964/02/06/new-rights-leaders.html>

“Ella Baker, Organizer for Groups in Civil-Rights Movement in South” by C. Gerald Fraser, December 17, 1986, is an obituary that highlights Ella Baker’s life of activism.

<http://www.nytimes.com/1986/12/17/obituaries/ella-baker-organizer-for-groups-in-civil-rights-movement-in-south.html>

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**CONTEMPORARY CONNECTIONS**

“25,000 March in New York to Protest Police Violence” by Benjamin Mueller and Ashley Southall, December 13, 2014, describes contemporary protests in response to Eric Garner’s death.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/14/nyregion/in-new-york-thousands-march-in-continuing-protests-over-garner-case.html>

“Race and Class Collide in a Plan for Two Brooklyn Schools” by Kate Taylor, September 22, 2015, explores the relationship between racial demographics and school zoning in Brooklyn Heights today.

<http://mobile.nytimes.com/2015/09/23/nyregion/race-and-class-collide-in-a-plan-for-two-brooklyn-schools.html?referrer>



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## SOURCES

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Biondi, Martha. *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003.

Galamison, Milton. *Letter to Parents of New York City School Children, March 16, 1964*. Queens College Civil Rights Archives, City University of New York.

*Milton Galamison with picketers at Brooklyn School, March 16, 1964*. Digital reproduction. Bettmann Archive, Corbis Images.

Purnell, Brian. *Fighting Jim Crow in the County of Kings: the Congress of Racial Equality in Brooklyn*. Louisville: University Press of Kentucky, 2013.

*School Boycott Flyer, 1964*. Queens College Civil Rights Archives, City University of New York.

Taylor, Clarence. *Civil Rights in New York City: From World War II to the Giuliani Era*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2011.