Hartford once served as home for Mark Twain, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and James W.C. Pennington in the 19th century. Pennington was an African American freedom fighter, fugitive slave, and religious leader. Hartford was known for the large numbers of insurance companies. Like many cities in the country, the freedom fight of African Americans in Hartford existed from the earliest inhabitation of African Americans in Hartford. Many of the tactics used by African American activists mirrored those used by African American activists in the South and other parts of the North. The advent of World War II seemed to offer hope to African Americans in the city; however, African Americans in Hartford found themselves being systematically discriminated against in the city. Initially, African Americans chose to confront discrimination in the city with quiet negotiation through established state agencies and reports until the 1960s. Hartford activists and young people in the SCLC, North End Community Action Program, CORE, Black Caucus, and Ministerial Alliance began to strongly urge the city and state governments to enforce laws against discrimination throughout the city. African American activists from 1943-69 knew that African Americans deserved better employment, housing, and education. They eventually abandoned quiet negotiation for non-violent confrontation, while people outside of older established civil rights groups chose rioting as a form of protest. Hartford activists intertwined their organized struggle with the larger African American freedom struggle in the nation.

While national issues spurred Connecticut to action, local leaders also served as catalysts for change. In 1943 Beaumont, Detroit, Mobile, and New York experienced vicious riots. The most violent and disturbing were the Detroit riots. After the violence, a number of state governors formed inter-racial commissions. These riots served as one of the catalysts for Connecticut's formation of the statewide Inter-Racial Commission. Commission member, Rabbi Morris Silverman echoed this sentiment in his acceptance letter. He said:

At a time like this the importance of this Commission becomes obvious and I hope that the Commission will do its share to spare Connecticut the unfortunate racial conflicts which have occurred in other states.¹

IRC formation also resulted because of community outrage over the beating of a Hartford pastor by white racists in Alabama. Rev. Dr. John Jackson of Union Baptist experienced firsthand the brutality of American racism. While traveling by train through

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FIRE IN THE BONES

Alabama in 1943, the African American minister attempted to walk through a car for whites only to join some of his friends. Two white men pummeled the minister severely for stepping outside the bounds of Jim Crow. The press reported the incident widely; however, the Department of Justice refused to bring the perpetrators up on charges. Incidents such as this one helped to unite African Americans in the north and south. The fact that the incident happened during World War II aided in the development of the IRC.

The commission focused on ending discrimination against Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and African Americans. The commission’s duties were to investigate and guarantee that all people received equal opportunity of profitable employment. The commission also had to report to the governor biennially with suggestions on how to remove injustices. The extremely limited commission had one full time staff person. In addition, only three of the ten members were black.

With an African American population of 7,090 by 1940, African Americans comprised 4.3% of the population. One local African American organization wrote a letter of complaint about the make-up of the IRC commission. The Colored Republican Club, an organization of African American Republicans, felt that the legislature made an egregious error in appointing only three African Americans. The Colored Republicans suggested that the governor appoint local committees to deal with the lack of African Americans. The governor’s executive assistant coldly told them to let the IRC (later the Connecticut Civil Rights Commission) do some work before offering suggestions.

The IRC appointed Frank Simpson, Associate Secretary of the Independent Social Center, Inc. of Hartford, as Investigator-Statistician. Simpson founded the center, which received heavy economic support from the white community. The center operated a camp for boys in Glastonbury, Connecticut. Simpson, who was an African American, held an A.B. from Tougaloo College and an M.A. and Master of Religious Education from Hartford Seminary Foundation. In addition, he took courses in psychology and sociology at Northwestern University. Before working with the ISC, Simpson worked as a field agent for the Congregational Extension Center, a public opinion analyst for the Civil Service Commission and lecturer at three southern colleges. He helped to place 2,500 people in jobs in 80 defense factories.

Even within the limits of being the only staff member, Frank T. Simpson managed to open Hartford companies, construction unions and department stores to African Americans. In many cases, Simpson worked directly with African American workers and white owned companies. After complaints from the Rockwell Labor and Management Group about African American workers being absent, Simpson visited the plant twelve times and held conferences with the workers about absenteeism. He also sent letters to all African American employees on absenteeism, made home visits with the personnel department, and recommended workers for employment. Absenteeism decreased through Simpson’s efforts; however, the governor exclusively praised Rockwell for the improvement. Walter E. Gray, chairman of the IRC, took it upon himself to inform the governor about the prominent role Simpson played. The state eventually gave the Inter-Racial Commission enforcement powers (IRC is now known as the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities).
On July 14, 1943, Richard Walker, regional representative of the federal Fair Employment Practice Commission, spoke to members of the Hartford Negro Citizens' Council in Hartford. While voters never elected an African American, local African American leaders formed the council to give the African American community a voice in city politics. Walker told members of the Hartford Negro Citizens' Council not to fight for personal liberation with knives, guns, and fists, but fight for freedom through proper agencies. The war, Walker said, offered an opportunity for black people to learn trades, which could be used for employment after the war's end. Walker argued that the last hired and the first fired syndrome would end because employees would have a reason to keep blacks employed. He also stated that many of the gains resulted because of the support by organized labor for African American workers. He probably meant the work of the CIO because the AFL remained. Walker visited the war plants and United States Employment Service. Wartime employment swelled the African American population from 6,500 to over 15,000. Employment was just one of the many problems encountered by African Americans. Led by Dr. I.W. Cornwall, Hartford Negro Citizens' Council urged the National Urban League (NUL) to study the plight of African Americans in the city. Members of the council knew that the timing for such a study was right.

The 1944 NUL report was a cleverly constructed document of protest. Members of the Hartford Negro Citizens' Council requested that NUL develop a report on the horrible housing condition for African Americans in Hartford with an eye on having an organ of protest. The National Urban League report of 1944 on Hartford came to many of the conclusions that later resounded through Simpson's work with the IRC. The report not only looked at the social and economic conditions of African Americans in the city; it also suggested that in state and city occupations that African Americans receive a fair share of the employment dollars based on their tax paying numbers. NUL workers spent four weeks in the field gathering information on the state of Black life in Hartford from September 7th to October 4th, 1944. For the estimated 10,000 or more African Americans in Hartford, the boom of World War II failed to change the nature of employment, health, education, crime, and social welfare for African Americans.

Excluding the city's Board of Education, the city employed only 77 African Americans. Significant is the fact that most of the positions were not those of power. The positions included those of building custodian, elevator operator, cook grade one, cook grade two, cook grade three, seamstress, laundry worker, custodial worker, recreation leader, equipment operator, laborer grade one, laborer grade two, unclassified hospital worker, and volunteer nurses aides. The top five positions were those of Court Clerk, Patrolman, Auto Serviceman, laboratory assistant, and clerk typist. The patrolman and the cook grade three received the highest salaries among the city workers. The court clerk's pay came in behind that of the patrolman and cook grade three. The patrolman was in the military during World War II; however, the city did hire an African American female in the police department, Ella Brown.

The NUL argued that based on the fact that the African American population was 4.7% of the population of Hartford, the community should have received based on population salaries of $175,000 excluding the Board of Education. African Americans received less than one-fourth of this amount in salaries. The local police spent close to
$900,000 annually on salaries; however, the city only employed two African Americans, one currently serving in the military. Based on percentages of the population the NUL argued that over $40,000 could flow into the African American Community, which would mean the employment of 12 officers. The city Fire Department, considered as one of the finest in the land, included no African Americans. The Fire Department salaries and wages amounted to over $800,000. The NUL felt that a fair compensation was the small sum of $37,000, which would compensate at least 15 African American firemen.10

After conducting research on the Board of Education, the Urban League found similar concerns. The Board of Education spent over $3,000,000 for its annual payroll. The city paid less than $30,000 in salaries and wages to African Americans. The school board employed among its workers five African American teachers out of a total of 800 teachers. In the eyes of the Urban League, African Americans should receive over $100,000 salaries and wages for at least 40 teachers: Other African American workers included two gym assistants, one messenger, one school fireman, four janitors, one matron, one part-time physician, and one welfare worker.11

The city’s most well known industry was the insurance industry. Its record of employing African Americans changed little since Charles Johnson reported on the city’s employment situation for African Americans in 1921. In the 1944 report Urban League officials sent surveys to 15 of the largest companies, and only 10 companies returned surveys. The ten companies employed 52 African Americans, while companies surveyed in 1921 employed 85 African Americans. The companies hired African Americans in positions as electrician, mail clerk, reception clerk, messenger, paper cutter, chauffeur, truck driver, elevator operator, hallman, supply department worker, maintenance workers, matron, janitor, and charwoman. No African Americans worked in a regular clerical occupation. Still, companies made special note that African Americans worked for their companies for over twenty years.12

The 1944 report slowly nudged the IRC to confront the “Bishops” of the insurance industry. The IRC minutes of August 29, 1946 revealed that Simpson willingly confronted insurance companies about their hiring practices. Simpson held several conferences with Hartford Fire, Connecticut General, Travelers, and Phoenix Mutual about hiring African American workers. Simpson seemed optimistic about the prospects for hiring African American workers. The entrance of African American workers into life in corporate Hartford would take time and a lot of work by people like Simpson.13

The local city banks’ employment of African Americans mirrored the insurance industry in 1944. The two highest positions of African Americans in the banking industry were those of proof clerk and mail attendant. The rest of the workers included a safe deposit attendant, floorman, runner, guard & floorman, floorman & janitor, elevator operator, maintenance worker, cafeteria worker, matron, part-time maintenance, and unclassified workers.14 The Urban League once again argued for more gainful employment of African Americans based on the fact that African American rents paid the mortgages for rental property. In addition, African Americans had enough deposits in city banks that called for fairer treatment in employment.15

The IRC learned that discrimination existed towards African Americans in Hartford hospitals and nursing schools. The April 27, 1944 minutes of the Inter-Racial Commission reported on a controversy at a local hospital. Rev. Dr. J.C. Jackson related a
complaint that stated that Hartford Hospital refused to accept blood from an African American to help a white child with the same blood type. Bishop Gray, head of the commission, agreed to speak with officials of Hartford Hospital about the matter. Leaders in the city had heard such an assertion in 1943. The issue of discrimination and African American Red Cross blood donors came up after a local station, WTIC, interviewed Professor Maurice R. Davis, an African American faculty member at Yale University. Davis made statements about blood given by African Americans and whites being separated once collected. Red Cross Officials stated that they accepted blood regardless of color. A leading Hartford pathologist explained that no differences existed between the blood of African Americans and whites. Staff member Frank Simpson also spoke with the Nurses Board Examiners Education Supervisor about African American women and nursing. The supervisor informed Simpson that no nursing school’s constitution refused admittance to African Americans; however, no school would accept African American students. St. Francis Hospital nursing program accepted Mary F. Jackson as its first African American student in 1945.16

On October 14, 1946, Simpson issued an IRC report to Governor Baldwin regarding democracy in employment and advancement of opportunities. The IRC special assistant noted that several firms have “Negro foremen, assistant foremen, and supervisors who are able to direct the work of both whites and Negroes in their department.” The sentiments towards black workers in one section of the report ran from praise to overtones of condescension. A bolt and stud maker said:

One of the many Negroes we employed eventually served as night foreman, the top position on the night crew; one of our Negro employees became head skipper; one, as truck driver, was so trustworthy that he was given keys for the entire plant and many times opened and closed the plant; Negroes have run every machine in the plant, including centerless grinders, roll threaders, millers, etc.

The Simpson report also stated that Hartford employed four school teachers, six police officers, one vocational guidance counselor, and one clerk in the office of the Board of Education, who were African American. Private companies such as Goodbody, Co., Colodney and Myers, and G. Fox and Co. also employed African Americans. Hartford’s G. Fox and Co., a large retail firm, had on staff six black saleswomen and one office clerk. The Sage-Allen, another retail firm’s staff, consisted of one black saleswoman and one black office clerk. A retail store official stated that his company planned to open additional occupations to African Americans, but the African American community needed to have the proper appearance when applying for a job. The vast majority of African American women worked as wrappers and elevator operators. Hartford’s YMCA employed black social workers, while two black workers served as interviewers for the United States Employment Service.17 The employment of African Americans in government positions and downtown stores provided activists with small, quietly negotiated victories.

In 1947 Connecticut instituted a Fair Employment Practices law forbidding discrimination in hiring. The Republican bills before 1947 proved weak and seemingly, deliberately ineffective. This bill gave Connecticut’s FEPC the ability to enforce the law against discrimination, thus surpassing that of Massachusetts and New York. The Massachusetts legislature wrote a strong FEPC, but failed to back legislation with money.
New York's legislature wrote weak legislation, but granted an enormous amount of funding to their FEPC.\textsuperscript{18}

The IRC made careful use of this law in June 1948. The IRC decided to file a complaint against the Connecticut Company, a local bus company, for its failure to hire African American drivers. The company agreed to hire two African American drivers, and IRC dismissed the complaint.\textsuperscript{19} The IRC established a pattern of dismissing a complaint once the party discriminated against received employment. The IRC wanted to establish a policy of goodwill. In its confrontation with Pratt and Whitney, the IRC discovered that a complaint of discrimination in promotion by an African American had serious problems. The complainant argued that less qualified whites received a promotion over him. The IRC investigation revealed that the complainant had a long record of tardiness, early excuses, and was sick twice. Pratt warned him in writing about the concerns. The commission did not report why the man was late for work or excused early. His case began on June 1, 1948. His promotion complaint failed. On June 25, 1948, IRC began work on a discrimination complaint against the Terry Square Diner. The diner sent an employment card to the Connecticut State Employment Service stating that they did not hire a worker because she was an African American. The IRC intervened and Terry Square offered the worker the job. The worker decided to take another appointment. A Hartford High School employee was also guilty of such action. A local employer called the high school looking for a stenographer. The Hartford High representative asked if the employer had racial or religious preferences. IRC letters to all high school principals stating that such action was illegal.\textsuperscript{20}

Complaints of discrimination lodged by African Americans continued throughout 1948. The state intervened on the behalf of African American honor student at Wimmelnicke State Teachers College, African American customers, and elementary students in Hartford. The college refused to grant the African American woman her diploma because she had taken two days off from a practice teaching position. The young woman believed that the college refused to grant the diploma because of her race. Simpson persuaded the college to grant the woman her diploma. The state later fined two area restaurants and a roller rink manager $25 for their refusal to provide service to African Americans. Before the fines in 1948, the state had a public accommodations act in existence in 1905. In 1941 a local judge, in an obvious case of mockery to the public accommodations act, fined a restaurant $0.44 for refusing to serve an African American couple. The IRC also received a complaint that African American children were not accepted in the 1st grade at Charter Oak Terrace School. The children had to walk 1½ miles to the Moylan School. Charter Oak’s first 30 seats went to children living closest to the school, other children walked to Moylan. IRC later initiated bus service for the children.\textsuperscript{21}

The migration of African Americans from the South continued. The African American population rose to 12,654 in 1950. The total population was 177,397. The median income for African Americans was $1,451. The median income for African American men was $1,979. African American women had a median income of $896. The median income for white men and women was $2,275 and $1,671 respectively. Most African American women worked as domestics. Most employment opportunities available to African men were in unskilled labor.\textsuperscript{22}
Whether skilled or unskilled work in the city, Simpson and the IRC struggled with persistent racism and discrimination in the 1950s. In 1950 Associated Construction Company fired a local African American without notice. The company superintendent told the IRC that the worker was too well educated and did not work enough at the job. Frank Simpson telephoned the architect in charge about the worker’s plight. His call resulted in the worker receiving his job as night watchman back. Another African American applicant applied for a job as a keypunch operator after reading about the job in an advertisement. After arriving at the job, he was told that the position was filled. He returned home and immediately telephoned the company. He was told the job was open. He filed a complaint with the IRC. The manager stated that the position was filled when an African American worker arrived the first time; however, the position opened during the time it took the worker to get home. The company eventually hired the worker. IRC managed to get the Institute of Living, Clark Dairy, Hartford Hospital, and N.E. Transportation to accept or hire African Americans. In a September 7, 1950 meeting, the commission discussed the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers’ blatant refusal to admit African Americans as apprentices. The commission decided to initiate a hearing. The issue would be resolved years later.

At a November 26, 1952 meeting, Simpson discussed his investigation of a case of discrimination against T.C. Construction Company. Jaspar Bailey, a local Hartford African American, went to the employment office of the company seeking work after a visit to an employment service. The company told him he was not needed. The African American worker returned to the employment office. An employee at the office, a Mr. Foley, told the African American worker: “If he didn’t want any sunburns he should have told me so and I wouldn’t have sent any.” Frank Simpson telephoned Foley about the statement, and he did not deny making the statement. Foley said that the job was non-union, while the African American worker was a union member. Simpson called the construction company, the company agreed they made a mistake not hiring Bailey. Foley’s boss would later reiterate to him the law prohibiting discriminatory practices.23

Some groups still refused to abide by anti-discrimination laws. Well into 1954, Hartford’s local IBEW refused qualified African Americans membership. Without union affiliation, the possibility of working in Hartford was sorely limited for skilled electrical workers. IBEW Local 35 stated that it was not in violation of the law because it discriminated against “all races.” Unimpressed, the CCRC ordered Local 35 to admit qualified African Americans. Local 35 boldly defied the CCRC and a court order to admit qualified African American workers. Local 35 reversed its decision only after being fined $2,000 and $500 for each week it remained in contempt of the court.24

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, African American leaders chose quiet negotiation to end most disputes in the city. Some leaders did engage in marches. Ella Brown and Arthur Johnson led marches in the 1950s. Brown led a march for a community center in the African American community. Johnson, who worked with Connecticut Commission on Civil Rights in the 1950s, later served as the head of the Human Relations Commission, the city’s civil rights commission. Johnson’s 1950s march protested inadequate housing for African Americans. Like local people in Mississippi, Hartford born African Americans willingly organized to confront racism. They realized the urgency
The NAACP, SCLC, and CORE increased their presence in the South, while they also increased their presence in Hartford in the 1960s. The African American population reached 24,895 by 1960. African Americans comprised over 15% of the 1960 population. The opportunity for employment and other forms of freedom in Hartford for African Americans seemed better than that offered in the South. African Americans kept migrating to the city. In 1960 total population decreased to 162,178. The decrease came because of whites leaving the city.

The expectations of thousands of African Americans in Hartford rose as the numbers increased. African Americans in the city wanted all the freedom exercised by whites. African Americans also recognized their ties to the South. This connection resulted in Hartford area leaders bringing Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other ministers to the area. During the late 1960s, King brought his refined message of hope and non-violence directly to Connecticut. As a Morehouse College student in the 1940s, Connecticut helped to open King’s eyes to the possibility of an integrated society. His time in the Connecticut tobacco fields had a positive impact on his views of living in an America without discrimination. King delivered the Alexander S. Keller Memorial lecture at the University of Hartford in 1959.

Hartford leaders informed the city that King would speak at a 1962 Freedom Rally at the Metropolitan AME Zion Church in Hartford; however, conditions in Albany, Georgia during the Albany Movement forced King to return to the southwest Georgia city. The Albany Movement began to engage in more forceful and militant protests. King was sentenced on July 10, 1962 in Albany for disorderly conduct and marching without a permit. The time seemed right for a showdown in Albany. King hoped to turn the city upside down. The increased militancy in Albany and coming federal injunction probably prevented his travel to Hartford to speak.

At the rally, the Reverend George Lawrence (Brooklyn, New York) fired up people disillusioned with the progress of Connecticut’s government on civil rights. He informed the throng of 5,000 in attendance that “not all our problems are in Albany, Ga. If the governor hasn’t done right by you, then give John Alsop (Alsop was a candidate for the governor’s post) a chance.” In essence, Lawrence indicated that Connecticut had bias and discrimination which needed addressing. His words were met with considerable applause. Lawrence resoundingly praised Alsop as a “man who has put his money where his mouth is.” Earlier in the year, Alsop donated $1,000 to the civil rights movement and another $50 at the rally. After his statement about the donations, Lawrence paused and looked at Connecticut’s Governor John Dempsey, Hartford Mayor Glenn, and Connecticut Secretary of State Ella Grasso. Obviously, the rally was a perfect opportunity for the candidates to achieve greater visibility in the African American and Puerto Rican communities. When given the opportunity to speak, Alsop said: “If we in Connecticut have hearts and consciences we must back him to the hilt. I am prepared to enlist others in the cause.”

The climate at the meeting after the words of Lawrence and Alsop was extremely tense. Rev. Richard Battles, pastor of Mt. Olive Baptist Church and a director of the local SCLC, maintained that Lawrence’s statements were an insult to Dempsey and inappropriate for the rally. Along the way, people like Richard Battles built powerful friendships with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Battles served on the board of the SCLC. He often proved instrumental in bringing King or his representatives to Hartford on a
number of occasions to speak at the opening of public housing and to raise funds for the SCLC. Battles and a small group of Hartford activists protested in Albany, Georgia in 1962. Battles became one of the city’s most well known proponents of “soul force.” A trusted advisor of King, Battles accompanied King to Norway for the presentation of the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize. King attributed his Nobel Prize to the work of Battles and others in the United States. Battles said of Lawrence’s speech: “This is not the purpose of the meeting. We are not here to urge anyone to vote for any candidate. I invited Gov. Dempsey here . . . but not to be insulted. We all recognize that problems in New York are different from Connecticut’s.”

Sensing the obvious tension, the Reverend Dr. Wyatt Tee Walker (SCLC staff member) asked the governor and others to join in singing “Come By Here, My Lord.” Shrewdly, sensing that rally participants came to support civil rights in the South and to demonstrate problems in the North, Walker left the rally participants with the following message:

If Dr. King were here, he would tell you that you can’t have freedom in Mississippi and Georgia until you have it up here in New York and Connecticut. . . We don’t have space to work and live. We don’t have adequate space in the hospitals. If you have bad politicians responsible for these conditions vote them out and get someone who is concerned about us.

The song and Walker’s words failed to soothe the tension within the state over Lawrence’s remarks. The Willimantic Daily Chronicle, Manchester Evening Herald, and New London Day papers referred to Lawrence’s speech as rabble rousing, a blast on Dempsey and the state, and as unfair targeting of the work of Dempsey. A Chronicle commentary took particular displeasure with the Brooklyn minister’s remarks.

The climate for more militant activism had been set. In July 1963, members of the NECAP (North End Community Action Program) staged several kneel-ins and protests in businesses that failed in hiring African Americans in visible positions in the Hartford area. The protests shocked leaders throughout the city. NECAP members seemed to be accepting President John Kennedy’s request for community action. This non-violent and integrated group of black activists and members of the Northern Student Movement shocked conservative Hartford with their bold kneel-ins. Police officials in Windsor, Connecticut arrested a group of NECAP protesters. NECAP wanted visible employment at places such as the Terry Square Diner, Carville’s Restaurant, and the Statler Hilton. NECAP wanted African Americans hired in positions other than cooks and dishwashers. Local leaders Rev. Richard Battles, Louis Steadwell, Blanton Hall, and James Rogers served as spokesmen and negotiators. Like Northerner counterparts in Harlem in the 1940s, they urged people not to buy where they can’t work. John Dittmer wrote in Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi that white Mississippians complained about being besieged by “outside agitators.” Whites meant the Freedom Riders, Bob Moses, and others. Whites in Hartford also argued that members of NECAP were outsiders because James Rogers was the only Hartford born member of NECAP. Many white Hartfordites felt that protest against discrimination was a southern issue. They believed that civil rights demonstrations were not necessary in the insurance capital. For their efforts, demonstrators received a number of threatening phone calls.
Protests and threats were not new to NECAP activists because some were among the Hartford contingent that boarded a bus to aid civil rights workers in Albany, Georgia. Others such as Blanton Hall of Atlanta, Georgia were veterans. An Albany State College student, Albany officials arrested Hall during the first wave of protests during the Albany Movement. He had been arrested at various demonstrations in the South. On July 13, 1963, he told a Hartford rally audience that he was “just as willing to go to jail in Hartford.” NECAP eventually won some concessions from Carville, Terry Square, and Statler Hilton. NECAP also won support from national leaders such as the SCLC’s Reverend A.D. King.

While he supported NECAP and his friend Reverend Richard Battles of the local SCLC, A.D. King came to Hartford to raise funds for the March on Washington, scheduled for August 28, 1963. A.D. King openly supported and marched with the members of NECAP. A.D. King, brother of Martin Luther King, Jr., said: “We recommend NECAP.” He referred to Hartford African Americans who did not support of NECAP as “sick.” He told supporters to “don’t get mad at them, feel sorry for them.” With members of the Nation of Islam selling papers within earshot, he also made it clear that he did not support separation between African Americans and whites. He said: “I was born in America, and I want to stay here.” He was not about to leave unless everyone else left except the American Indians.

NECAP’s efforts to improve the lives of African Americans involved focus on improving housing. NECAP picketed a Main Street building because of substandard living conditions for the poor. NECAP managed to get the owners to agree to a six point plan for improving the building. In support, Rev. A.D. King carried a placard along with the pickets.

Before and during the highly visible NECAP protests, members of the local CORE worked to negotiate several agreements with local firms about hiring. Shirly Scott, local head of CORE (Congress of Racial Equality), indicated that “Not all problems can be solved by demonstrations.” Under her leadership, CORE carried out successful negotiations with milk firms to hire more African Americans. The local CORE chapter was as of July 18, 1963 negotiating with F&M Schaefer Brewing to secure jobs for African Americans as drivers and salesmen.

The work of NECAP, SCLC, and other groups helped to imbue the national and local movement. Like thousands in other parts of the country, Hartford nonviolent activists participated in the pinnacle of non-violent protest in 1963. Before the train ride to the nation’s capital, an integrated group of Hartford residents prepared themselves for the 1963 March on Washington by gathering together for last minute statements by leaders and motivational moments. Leaders informed marchers to carry necessary food and clothing items. Raymond Blanks, a 17 year old from Weaver High School, led the Hartford delegation in freedom songs and rhythmic hand clapping. Already a veteran activist, he was jailed during his work in Mississippi and Alabama. The Reverend Richard Battles of Mount Olive Baptist Church and state coordinator of the march stressed the importance of maintaining strict non-violence. Connecticut’s Governor John Dempsey established support for the delegation’s efforts by issuing a statement declaring the August 28th March on Washington as Freedom Day. Hartford’s NAACP, Ministerial Alliance, Catholic churches, CCC, Jewish organizations, and other groups
The march and continued civil rights movement impressed some white supporters enough that they wrote to Governor John Dempsey urging him to make the Connecticut State Commission on Civil Rights more effective. In a letter to the governor, Mrs. Rodney Swain argued that the commission was ineffective because it had too few investigators. Swain indicated that “out of 2,000 cases suggested for investigation only 10 had actually come to public hearing.” The Dempsey office replied that part of the problem resulted from a budget cut of $20,000 for the Civil Rights Commission and refusal of the General Assembly to give the commission authority to initiate injunction proceeding against violators. Dempsey credited the 1963 General Assembly with broadening laws against discrimination in housing. Dempsey said the reason why the commission stressed conciliation, not hearings, was to lessen the bitterness of disputes.

However, there was also a segment of Hartford which disagreed with the civil rights protests. One white Hartford resident was particularly dismayed with pickets, who decided to sit-in at the governor’s mansion. The Scottish immigrant argued that regardless of color no person has the right to violate the law, which says “your home is your castle.” The Hartford resident urged the governor not to let anyone “trespass on the mansion.”

Other whites feared that a vacation in Connecticut might find them in the midst of civil rights strife. In a June 18, 1964 letter to Governor Dempsey, a New York resident said: “It would seem to be that my family wants to spend their vacation touring an area that isn’t having problems in Civil Rights.” Thomas Henry, Executive Secretary of the Civil Rights Department informed the New Yorker on June 29, 1964 that Connecticut does have problems with civil rights; however, it also has excellent laws. Henry further indicated that Connecticut did not have a history with racial violence and only a few demonstrations. Henry concluded his letter by stating that state statutes prohibited discrimination and segregation in public places, and also that Connecticut did not anticipate any civil rights demonstrations in vacation areas. In 1964, Dempsey firmly established that he abhorred violence in cities such as Detroit and Cleveland. Dempsey was also in the forefront of support for the Civil Rights Bill of 1964.

Undaunted by such fears, Hartford’s action oriented African American people pursued changes in the city with dogged determination. On May 26, 1964, the Greater Hartford branch of the Urban League received recognition by the national body. Hartford became the 66th city to form a league. The league was definitely needed. Between 1950 and 1960, the black population increased 100 percent. Black people occupied 41.7 percent of the public housing in the city. The formation of the organization went back to May 31, 1961 during a conference on the family in a changing community. Hartford residents corresponded with the National Urban League in New York as early as 1960. The early pioneers of a permanent Urban League in the city were Rachel Milton, Marion Grant, and Norris O’Neill. Milton, an African American leader, spoke with O’Neill after a meeting of the Concerned Citizens of the North End. A local politician and attorney, O’Neill went to the meeting because of the poor political showing of William Glynn in the North End, whom he supported during a recent mayoral election. Glynn won the election without a significant number of African American votes.
Milton served as the “centerpole,” while Marion Grant, a well-connected white Yankee, used her connections with local banks and businesses to organize a meeting at Aetna Life and Casualty Insurance. This meeting brought Urban League Executive Director Whitney Young to Hartford to speak. The Aetna meeting included every bank president in town, Aetna officials, and United Technology officials who came over from East Hartford. In a smooth style, Young managed to appeal to the officials. By 1962, the group raised $40,000 from these businesses, Hartford Foundation for Charitable Giving, and United Way. The fund raising arm of the local Urban League was the Urban League Guild. They shocked the community by holding a dance in the exclusively white, Hartford Club.42

Under the leadership of President Norris O’Neill, the Urban League adopted an interracial approach to opening doors to industry, increasing purchasing power, and reducing unemployment. It needed an executive director with the ability to fulfill that agenda. The Urban League also chose William Brown as its first executive director. The veteran of WWII earned a B.A. from West Virginia State College and an M.A. from Northwestern University. He once served as a dean of men at Talladega College in Alabama. Brown went to work on employers in the city with a speech at the Hartford County Manufacturer Association. His speech impressed Olcott D. Smith, Chairman of the Board of Aetna Life and Casualty. Brown went to the meeting knowing that he wanted the company to establish a paid training program for African American workers. After a month passed Olcott Smith requested that Brown return with a plan for the program. A group of 15 African American women served as the first six-week secretarial training class. Thirteen women accepted positions with Aetna. The others sought appointments elsewhere. The records of the group proved admirable. They impressed people wherever they went; telephone company, water department, and gas company. Brown wanted African American workers hired wherever they were not.43

The message of brotherhood, togetherness, love, and concern that flowed out of the movement captured the hearts of some Hartford area white students. White Connecticut student allies answered the Council of Federated (Civil Rights) Organizations call to become a part of 1964 “Freedom Summer” in Mississippi. COFO, SNCC, and CORE members urged white Connecticut College students to take part by working in freedom schools. Members of SNCC and CORE organized the summer project to educate African Americans in Mississippi and to register African Americans to vote. They stepped into arguably the most virulently racist state in the nation. Susan Gladstone, a 20-year-old Hartford area freedom summer volunteer and student at Pembroke College, said Clarksdale, Mississippi “Police Chief Ben Collins has the whole town terrified; he’s a very vicious man.” The all white police force followed civil rights workers and took pictures of civil rights workers. Clarksdale police arrested 19 year old John Sutter of Fairfield (Wesleyan University) on vagrancy charges while he worked on an African American voter registration drive. He was fortunate that the police only gave a stern cursing and five hours in jail. Collins’s viciousness continued as he told Clarksdale voter registration director, Lafayette Surrey, to go to the “nigger section of the town” or face the possibility of winding up like the kids (James Chaney, Michael Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman) in Philadelphia. Surrey had earlier informed the police chief that African Americans had a right to go anywhere they desired in the city. This statement enraged Collins. White students in Clarksdale lived with African
American families. The young northern white students understood the severity of the work they had undertaken, especially after authorities declared James Chaney, Michael Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman missing in June of 1964.

Hartford area parents with children engaged in civil rights work in Mississippi began to converge on Washington in July of 1964 to press the federal government for protection for civil rights workers. Hartford area parents Mrs. James Gladstone, Mrs. Paul Landerman, Roydon C. Berger, and Mr. and Mrs. I.M Chaikin of West Hartford formed the Parents’ Mississippi Emergency Committee. They organized in hopes of getting information on the safety of their children. The organization hoped for a meeting with President Lyndon Johnson; however, they failed in that quest. Instead, the group from Connecticut met with United States Senator Christopher Dodd and Assistant Attorney General John Doar (Doar was first assistant to Dep. Atty. Gen. Nicholas Katzenbach, chief of the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department).

Moss Point, Mississippi authorities arrested Hartford’s Mary Larsen, a graduate of Pembroke College in 1965. Members of COFO stated that police charged the twenty-two year old with disobeying a police order and gave her a $100 bond. Her arrest occurred on the 20th of February; however, members of COFO could not contact the desk sergeant about Larsen’s plight. Larsen’s mother contacted a relative in Minnesota, who was a lawyer and Senator Thomas Dodd for help. COFO officials assured the lawyer that police were treating Larsen well. Although Moss Point was not as terror filled as other areas of Mississippi, Larsen’s mother on a visit was terrified by a gas station attendant urging another attendant to throw dynamite into the Larsen car carrying integrated passengers. The attendant also refused to provide service for the travelers.

One college student found civil rights more terrifying than that experienced by visiting parents. During the summer of 1964, the Georgia Court of Appeals reversed an assault conviction on Ralph W. Allen III, a white student at Hartford’s Trinity College and civil rights worker in Americus, Georgia. Back in 1963, authorities arrested Allen after a clash between civil rights workers and police. The five charges brought against Allen included one for inciting an insurrection, which carried a death penalty. Local authorities jailed Allen for two months without bail until the Georgia Court of Appeals found the insurrection and unlawful assembly charges unconstitutional. The only two charges still pending were resisting arrest and inciting to riot. After a $5,000 appeal bond Allen returned to Trinity. Allen’s grand jury filed into the court after his indictment and commended the Americus officials for their conduct during the demonstrations. Allen’s civil rights activism ended after his release.

Unlike white college students such as Gladstone, Sutter, Larsen, and Allen, Connie O’Brien of East Hartford, a white student at Marymount College, argued against the South as a terror filled region. In 1964 she taught African American students at St. Francis Center in Greenwood, Mississippi. While not affiliated with COFO and SNCC, O’Brien lived with African Americans and instructed children in Christian education, reading, and mathematics. Still, O’Brien invoked a sense of fear when she eerily reported that “at night we’d lie in bed listening to the dark wondering if we’d be bombed.” The East Hartford native believed that African Americans and whites in the South did not want violence. As proof, she said:
Southerners (African Americans and whites) are a rather peaceful lot. I blame the newspapers and radios for a lot of agitation. All you ever hear is the terror that these people are living in. Well, they're not. Granted they're restless and none's happy about the present situation, but they live from day to day just as we do.49

O'Brien saw education as a key to improving the plight of African Americans in the South. She further stated that “these (college) students can do a lot of good but it doesn’t take radical attitudes or a great deal of education to teach someone to read. What it takes is organization.” She believed that the Southern whites should be judged as individuals, not as a group. Many individuals whom she said needed to change their way of life.50 O’Brien missed or failed to notice the oppressive nature of life for African Americans. Dittrner pointed out that violence and intimidation was rampant in 1964.51

Hartford area residents Grace Lee Kenyon and Anthony Fon Eisen felt that the time and efforts of Freedom Summer volunteers and other activists could be better utilized. Kenyon referred to the student activists as busybodies, do-gooders, and sob sisters. She asked, “Why didn’t they stay at home?” “If they meet with violence, they have no one to blame but themselves.” She believed that government funds (taxes) should not be used to protect people engaged in civil rights activity in the South. She further contended that the civil rights workers were not performing positive work. Anthony Fon Eisen suggested that white civil rights workers “bravely carrying the standard of high ideals into Mississippi” could send those same messages into the slums of big cities in the North. He also suggested that federal agents could offer their services by protecting local slums.52 Their statements reveal that the highly visible and vocal civil rights movement among student activists troubled some people. There is truth in their statements that North Hartford and other impoverished areas needed aid.

The 1960s activism of civil rights leaders, civil rights workers, martyrdom of JFK, and legislative pushes (state and national) around the country led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act (1964) and Voting Rights Act (1965). Hartford had a hand in their passage. During the same year of the Voting Rights Act, Watts exploded in tumultuous violence. The violence sent shock waves around the country. People in Hartford shuddered at the thought of violence in their city.

During his 1966 Hartford speech, Martin Luther King warned a crowd of 600 Hartfordites in a speech at Travelers Insurance that violence was a possibility given the climate in the North. He said that the South could surpass the North in human relations if the subtle forms of segregation were not dealt with they might become firmly entrenched. The northern white community needed, in his opinion, to become more active to solve the evil of segregation. The recent SCLC campaign in Chicago and Watts riots as his proof in the urgency for changes in the economic plight of black people. He explained the grim circumstances of black life in Chicago. King called the city “the prototype for cities all over the country.” He stated that “97.7 per cent of Chicago’s Negroes live in the ghetto — caught in segregated housing conditions.” Chicago’s schools were some of the most segregated in the country, “90 per cent segregated.” He warned Hartford of ominous days to come, worse than Watts. No community could be overlooked, he said. The economic plight of black people had to be dealt with immediately. He regarded the plight of black people as “freer but he (Negro) is not free. The Negro in 1966 has more dignity, but he is not yet equal.”53
Hosea Williams, SCLC's firebrand, joined his leader in speaking out at the March dedication. Williams informed the audience at the Travelers Insurance about improvements in voter registration in Alabama. He believed that Alabama was embarking on a new day. Of segregationist Governor George Wallace, he said that "We're not out to crucify George Wallace, but we are out to convert him."54

While Williams's words informed the audience, King's words became prophetic as shudders of fear materialized into the riots of 1967 in Hartford's North End section.55 The North End of the city contained the largest portion of the city's African American population. The heavily overcrowded area was the home for influential and poverty stricken African Americans. Ethnic whites also lived in the area. The three days of riots, disorders, and confrontations in July 1967 began in the North End section (or area) as a result of the arrest of a local black man, William Toules. Police arrested Toules following a complaint that he used vulgar language to a waitress during the purchase of a hot dog in the black owned Battles Patent Medicine and Luncheonette. After the arrest, four people met at the police station to object to the way in which the police treated Toules during his handcuffing and arrest. State Representative Leonard Frazier bonded Toules out of jail and returned him to a small crowd of 50 people gathered on Pavilion Street at the Mobil Station some time after 11:00 p.m. Frazier stated that "I couldn't reason with them, though. I told them here was their boy, but they wouldn't listen." A few minutes later someone firebombed the Westbar Super Market. Firemen from Engine Company 7 quickly extinguished the blaze. A group of young people threw rocks at the Meat Mart at 197 Westland Street Enraged young men also damaged Ben's Package Store, Battles Luncheonette, and Family Chef with bricks and rocks. They also assaulted passing cars with bottles.56 Rumors circulated that other places might be assaulted by disgruntled young people.57

Rumors materialized into physical damage as attackers smashed a window in the home of Adam Battles. Hartford police sensed a possible attack on the Battles family; however, they were unable to avert the rock throwing. It was Adam Battles who had Toules arrested in his restaurant. As Battles sat in the kitchen with his wife, a rock crashed through the breezeway window. Detectives posted on the front porch were unable to apprehend the rock thrower, who disappeared into nearby woods. Threats were also made against the home of Rev. Richard Battles, brother of Adam Battles. Richard Battles had recently returned from the national NAACP Conference in Boston. As a precautionary measure, police placed guards at the home of Battles.58

Hartford seemed to be undergoing a similar leadership phenomenon as other parts of the country as young African Americans began to question traditional African American leadership. The questioning is certainly evident from the attacks on Battles Luncheonette and proposed threats to the home of Richard Battles, not just the property of whites in the North End. Battles served in a number of posts as the pastor of Mt. Olive Baptist Church, member of the Ministerial Alliance, local leader of the SCLC, and a member of the NAACP. He was one of the city's strongest proponents of non-violent resistance. Battles saw the disturbances as not representative of the people of the North End. In his estimation, only a dozen people were responsible for the conflict. He believed that once those responsible were found they should be arrested.

Most local city officials seemed sure that only local residents were involved in the disturbances and not outsiders. Human Relations Director Authur L. Johnson, in a re-
port to City Manager Arthur Freedman, warned of the possibility of "more militant activists" provoking incidents.\textsuperscript{59} The city formed the Human Relations Commission in 1963 to serve as a city civil rights commission. Johnson, a former worker for the State Civil Rights Commission, became the first director in 1964. The nature of civil rights activism on the national scene underwent a transformation in 1966 as members of SNCC and CORE gravitated more towards "Black Power," rather than "Freedom Now."\textsuperscript{60} This transformation eventually found its way into Hartford's communities.

As Hartford and Newark exploded in 1967, traditional NAACP leadership met in Boston for their national conference to discuss a civil rights movement that was in transition. For some the NAACP was reduced to a defensive position by the more militant SNCC and CORE. Roy Wilkins, Executive Director of the NAACP, gave credit to the more militant SNCC and CORE for shaking up African Americans and whites; however, he argued that "riots cannot be allowed to become fixtures" with African American outbursts and white authorities seeing the cure as "giving as good as you get."\textsuperscript{61} When Bayard Rustin, chief organizer of the March on Washington, was questioned about the violence in Hartford and Newark, Rustin said: "This society is getting precisely what it deserves and is asking for . . . If they are not going to put Negroes to work, educate them and provide decent housing for them, they've got to expect a negative and violent response." He further added that "The Hebrews had a way of explaining it. Where there is justice, there can be order. Where there is injustice, disorder is inevitable."\textsuperscript{62}

From Boston, Hartford NAACP President Wilber Smith, in a letter to Arthur J. Lumsden of the Greater Hartford Chamber of Commerce, urged Lumsden not to "take any action which would reflect stop gap measures geared merely to controlling the present rebellion." Smith appealed to the chamber of commerce to implement many of the suggestions made by the local NAACP. The events of July 1967 disturbed Smith; however, he was more disturbed by past activity which forged the upheaval of July 1967.\textsuperscript{63}

Smith argued that the roots of conflict resulted from a refusal to "treat non-white human beings with dignity" and the city's shortcomings in hiring inner city youth year round.\textsuperscript{64} Smith, like many leaders, understood that the city needed better housing code regulations, traffic control, street cleaning, and recreation.\textsuperscript{65} Smith urged the city to stop the isolation of non-white children and parents by not constructing houses in already overcrowded areas.\textsuperscript{66}

The young African Americans in the North End echoed sentiments of their own about the problems in the community. They complained that North End businesses run by whites failed to employ substantial numbers of African Americans. Whites owned eighty percent of the businesses in the mostly African American North End. Young people also argued that stores run by African Americans charged higher prices for their goods in the North End than elsewhere. There were also charges that African American youths had a difficult time acquiring inroads into state labor union apprentice programs. They related the nationwide recurring theme of police abuse — verbal and physical.\textsuperscript{67}

In a meeting on August 16, 1967, Arthur Green of the Connecticut Commission of Human Rights and Opportunities (formerly the IRC) felt that newspapers in Hartford did a great disservice to legitimate civil rights groups by associating the perpetuators
of violence with legitimate civil rights groups. The commission planned to send a letter to the news media about the way in which they handled the situation.68

Upheavals also occurred in September 18, 1967 after an open housing march led by members of the Black Caucus. The marchers’ intended goal was the mostly white South End; however, the police halted the marchers at the overpass near Main and Morgan Streets. Police arrested twenty of the marchers including New Haven activist John Barber of the Black Caucus. The Black Caucus described itself as a completely democratic organization without a specific leader.69

The caucus led 1967 open housing march contained young men whom Barber could not control. “X,” a young man in attendance, proclaimed from a bench that black people should divorce themselves from the white power structure because of past transgressions against black people and continued harm.70 Barber leapt to the bench with “X” to confront young men throwing bottles. Barber yelled: “All this is not the Black Caucus. We want a peaceful demonstration. Cool it everybody. These bottles don’t prove nothin’. We gathered here to go to the South End, so let’s go.” A voice from the crowd cried out “We didn’t come here for speeches.”71

Police in riot gear circled the area as the group moved towards Main Street from Barber’s Restaurant. At I-84 someone reportedly threw a bottle onto the expressway, prompting Police Captain Benjamin Goldstein to stop the march. Goldstein informed Barber that the march had to be orderly. When Barber rushed forward to keep the march orderly, the results were minimal. Meanwhile, Goldstein used his loudspeaker and announced, “All right gentlemen, We’re going to ask you to disperse. You’re intentions aren’t peaceful.” Goldstein gave the marchers five minutes to disperse. Those remaining would be arrested. As he spoke, police officers with tear gas ready drove cruisers and paddy wagons up to block off Main Street. Barber’s followers rushed him forward to no avail. Police officials began the process of arresting Barber and others.72

In the South End, a crowd of over 300 whites eagerly awaited the open housing marchers along Franklin Avenue near Barker Street. The 300 or more South End residents perceived the North End march as an invasion. Frank Russo, one-time candidate for the House of Representatives, used a police loudspeaker to urge the largely Italian crowd to disperse without incident. He said: “This is Frank Russo talking now. They (North End Marchers) stopped at Main and Morgan streets. Please go home now. We’re not going to do any good hanging around here.” Russo repeated a portion of his message in Italian. Upon hearing the announcement, the crowd dispersed amid laughter, cheer, and applause. The potential clash or confrontation could have been disastrous.73 Rt. Rev. Monsignor Robert W. Doyle learned that the South End crowd contained people armed with bricks, bats, and worse. Doyle urged that all people remain calm and react like “disciples of Christ” because people have the right to demonstrate peacefully.74 Urban historian Ralph Pearson believed that white ethnic fears and dislike of African Americans paralleled those of non-ethnic whites. A case certainly could be made for Hartford.75

The following night’s confrontations were more intense as the police fired tear gas at teenagers who were throwing rocks and bottles. Police officials arrested 54 persons and alerted the National Guard. Some North End teenagers boldly taunted Hartford policemen.76 Teenagers hurled rocks large enough in some cases to cause severe damage to anyone hit. Young people threw bottles from windows on Canton Street. On
September 19, 1967, young people from the North End looted the Temken Pharmacy on Main Street. Police retaliated with tear gas pellets fired from rifles. The hit and run battle lasted until well past 11:00 pm on the 19th of September.\(^7\)

Realizing the severity of the disturbances, the 40 member Ministerial Alliance of Hartford’s North End Churches issued recommendations for immediate solutions to alleviate the problems confronting Hartford. Alliance members suggested more officers’ training and more associate policemen for troubled areas. The alliance recommended “that police administer discipline in an impartial manner without regard to race, creed, or color.” Ministerial Alliance officials also argued for an information officer from the police courts to assist and clarify procedures for African American citizens. On the issue of voting, the Alliance called for the adjustment of hours for voter registration for the working public. Members also asked the city council to make clear its position for open housing.\(^7\) These suggestions were part of the spiritual and public leadership responsibility of the ministers.

Rev. Richard Battles referred to the disturbances as “a repudiation of the Civil Rights movement.” Of the teen-agers involved Battles said: “I don’t like to see young teen-age boys who may feel that they have a just cause to do damage to themselves and their future careers.” Battles continued that “Previous demonstrations have pointed to the needs of our community. Disturbances of this nature make it exceedingly difficult to get money into poverty areas for job training programs and education.”\(^7\) Battles stated that he would talk with as many young men as possible and urge the Human Relations Commission to do the same. Hartford leaders organized this commission to deal with discrimination and race relations.\(^8\)

After two nights of disturbances, the Citizens Advisory Committee of the Human Relations Commission provided a forum for Black Caucus members to state grievances. Robert Morris (Black Caucus member) read a prepared statement in which he requested that the mayor call a meeting of the Community Renewal Team’s directors. The meeting would be used as a venue for the establishment of a self-help development center in the North End. Mayor Kinsella responded by saying he knew of the proposed program and it could not be instituted overnight. Caucus members also asked for an end to police harassment. In addition, they also requested that black and Puerto Rican police serve as liaisons between the North End and police. He furthered argued that white leaders in Hartford should stop viewing the city from Constitution plaza.\(^8\) Morris’s statement included a request for an investigation into the shooting and arrest of William Furbush on September 10 by Officer Thomas Ganley. Ganley shot Furbush after he took the 19-year-old into custody. Furbush was one of two people seen exiting a car left in the middle of Myrtle Street. The car was later reported stolen. Ganley arrested Furbush on Walnut Street and requested that the young man place his hands on the police cruiser. Ganley reported that Furbush suddenly dropped one of his hands towards his back pocket. The officer pulled his revolver and fired. Furbush fell in the street, and Ganley radioed for an ambulance.\(^8\)

In his statement at the meeting, white Hall High School faculty member, John Gale, president of the local American Independence Movement, revealed the attitudes of some of Hartford’s police force. Gale was on hand after one of the disturbances where an old friend on the police force told him that the “Negro” must be treated differently because they are savages just out of the jungle. While Gale revealed his respect for
many police, he also submitted that “the law can’t be honestly enforced in Hartford” with such attitudes being present. After his statements, demands were made that Gale reveal the names of the policemen. Executive Director of the Human Relations Commission, Arthur Johnson, intervened. Johnson informed Gale that the Human Relations Commission existed to deal with such complaints and names should be confidential until the commission investigated the allegations. Gale agreed to abide by the wishes of the commission.

The atmosphere at the meeting remained charged as State Senator Boce Barlow, an African American, leveled criticisms at the Mayor. Barlow argued that the Mayor’s opening statements were longer than necessary at the meeting. In addition, the Mayor’s office, in his opinion, failed to address Barlow’s reports of police brutality. Barlow related incidences of African Americans being beaten so badly that their faces were swollen. Barlow also believed that the bonds for the arrested marchers were higher than necessary.

An hour into the meeting, the recently released John Barber arrived after a stay in the Windham County State Jail for breach of peace. Black Caucus members greeted Barber with hugs and urged him to speak; however, Barber declined the offer and left the meeting soon after arriving. Later in the day, he discussed the violence that erupted in Hartford with reporter Theodore Driscoll. Of the violence Tuesday night, Barber said: “I’m glad I was not around Tuesday night when the violence broke out. They would have ascribed it to me.” Of himself, Barber stated “For some reason people in Hartford think they need Connecticut’s answer to H. Rap Brown and Stokely Carmichael.” Barber asserted that he was not Brown or Carmichael. Carmichael later changed his name to Kwane Ture. While working with the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in Mississippi, Ture, a former Howard University student, used the term “Black Power.” Ture wanted the African American community to close ranks to achieve power. Ture and Charles Hamilton articulated their ideas in the book Black Power. Brown took over leadership of SNCC after the departure of Carmichael. Brown’s rhetoric was just as frightening to whites as Carmichael’s was. The two no longer spoke of integration with whites and love for white people. Both argued for self-defense of African American neighborhoods from whites. The two argued that they were willing to meet force with force. African American and white leaders in the NAACP, CORE, and SCLC thought that some young people might be listening.

Barber further asserted that he was not an advocate of Black Power, but he was against the misuse of White Power. Barber informed Driscoll that although the intended march goal was the South End, he did not desire to live in the South End. The march’s intent was to focus non-violent attention on the problems of the North End.

The Black Caucus remained actively engaged in Hartford after the Human Relations Commission forum. Friday September 23, 1967, the Community Renewal Team received a proposal for funds to institute a program to aid the war on poverty in Connecticut waged by the CRT. CRT board members agreed to study the proposal. Black Caucus members argued that funds for the war on poverty failed to reach the poor. Members of Black Caucus argued that their program would allow the chronically unemployed and poor to run poverty programs from a center created from the requested $165,000. Members would conduct cultural enrichment programs and institute programs on housing, education, and jobs. CRT members living in poverty stricken areas
defended the organization against charges by the Black Caucus. One CRT member stated that he conducted weekly meetings and no caucus members ever attended. Caucus members stated that the CRT should go directly to people because many people are afraid to approach social agencies. Michelle Smith, a Black Caucus member, accused CRT members of failure to address the concerns of the needy. She reported an incident of a woman living on Magnolia Street without heat, light, refrigerator, or a stove for a month. A CRT member responded that Ms. Smith knew him and could have relayed the woman's plight to him.\(^\text{89}\)

After the Human Relations Commission meeting, Black Caucus members withdrew their proposal for $165,000 for a neighborhood center. The caucus would focus its attention on direct action on the business district. Barber "charged the CRT with looking at poverty with primrose glasses." He continued with the following:

We speak for the inarticulate and the brutalized in this city... the prostitutes, the pimps, the pot smokers, the people with criminal records who need help but 'don't even know CRT exists.' Through slavery the 'white power structure' destroyed the Negro family, 'yet you wonder why we throw bottles.' We welcome anyone to speak for the poor if they have better records at understanding. We think we're better agents of the poor than you (CRT) are.

Barber read a list of 35 businesses which donated $1000 each to CRT social programs. Barber deemed the donations extremely minuscule, given the funds firms take out of the African American community by selling retail goods. Barber further said that firms also sell "liquor to help us forget we live in hell."\(^\text{90}\)

In a seeming whirlwind of movement, the Black Caucus addressed its concerns about police brutality by establishing a Police Review Board. John Barber said that the board would be "investigating every allegation of police brutality." Jim Hines, head of the six-member panel review board, stated that the review board would investigate until the police or Human Relations Commission set up a review panel.\(^\text{91}\)

An editorial writer and a white Councilman Roger Ladd both commended the police for the manner in which they handled North End marchers and the South End group. The writer stated that neither group seemed representative of their communities. In addition, the editorialist referred to the North End marchers as "fewer than 200 by actual count and some of these were white and from out of town." This writer went on to describe the South End crowd as "leaderless and as little typical of the community as was that from the other end of the city." The writer also described the people involved from the North End and South End as "irresponsible elements." In further statements, the news writer argued that the "irresponsible elements should receive firm treatment by the police and courts." In the final analysis, the editorial writer stated that the police had led the crowd dispersal with "good sense and good temper." Ladd regarded the police action as controlled and disciplined in the face of violence. Ladd said of the 440 officer department: "I don't deny that there may be possible isolated instances of wrongdoing, but this can happen in any organization..." He believed that the police practiced so much restraint that "the police themselves have become the victims of brutality from certain elements of the community."\(^\text{92}\)

The mistreatment of white protestors by police bolstered the comments of African American leader, Boce Barlow’s statements about police beating marchers. During the open housing march, Hartford police arrested four white pacifists for breach of peace
in the September disturbances. Police jailed Mary Arnold, Erica Enzer, DeCourcy Squire, and Richard Gale. The first three held memberships in the New England Committee for Non-Violent Action, headquartered in Voluntown, Connecticut. Gale, a member of the American Independence Movement (AIM), listed the same home address as the other pacifists, Voluntown. Prosecutor Daniel Lynch agreed with the court's decision to nolle the charges after discussion in which he believed that the pacifists were not involved in "any type of physical or property damage." AIM invited members of the Connecticut Committee for Non-Violent Action to help avert incidences of violence. CCNA member Steve Trimm said that police arrested people for silly things such as "they didn't get out of the way fast enough." Squire received treatment for dizziness, blurred vision, and head pains, after she banged her head on a metal bar in the police patrol wagon. Squire declined to press charges for her injuries.93

Police arrested Gale after he inquired about the arrest of a female member of AIM. Similar to Civil Rights protestors in the Deep South, Gale resisted non-violently. He remained "limp" during his incarceration until a policeman "forced his index finger back, yanked his hair, and twisted his arm behind his back." The applied force was a ploy to get Gale to reveal his name. His arm contained black and blue marks, which Gale thought he received after being "banged into the police patrol wagon."94

Hartford's troubles reached some of the nation's leading black power advocates. Charles S. Stone, an executive committee member of the National Conference on Black Power, had words of praise for the Black Caucus. Stone, a native of Hartford, stated that "Hartford is saturated with black Uncle Toms — no real leadership." He continued with "Where are your real black voices, your black leaders? I think John Bailey (state democratic chairman) is primarily responsible for this." Stone argued that John Bailey "just doesn’t want black people to have this power."95 Hartford's population is 30% African American; however, African Americans do not hold 30% of the jobs, according to Stone. Part of the problem Stone argued resulted from the Democratic Party turning its back on African Americans.

The work of John Barber and the Black Caucus pleased Stone and he hoped to meet the demonstration leader. Stone agreed to a meeting with conditions. Stone said "If they're not committed to black power, I'm not interested." Stone believed that Hartford faced many of the same problems as other cities, "What the hell to do with black people?" According to Stone, that answer will come once Hartford has the proper African American leadership.96

Thirteen years before, a tall, spectacled Malcolm X introduced his ideas of black power and black self-respect to a group of people in the Bellevue Square housing project in Hartford. A Hartford resident heard him speak in Springfield and invited him to speak to a gathering in Hartford. Malcolm addressed a group of maids, cooks, chauffeurs, and housemen. Helen Rosalie Forest vividly remembered Malcolm X at the meeting and initially decided to cut short her visit. Her reason, Forest said that "I didn’t want anything to do with organized religion." This small group of people fished out more members in the area and Elijah Muhammad eventually assigned the Hartford Temple number 14. The mosque was located on 3284 Main Street. Malcolm X taught at the temple every Thursday.97 Mosque leaders chose Thursday because it frequently was a day off for a number of domestics in Hartford's African American
community. Malcolm served as a teacher for people such as Hartford resident Ruby King. She said: “He taught us things that would enlighten us, not things that would bring us down.” Helen Rosalie Forest said that “Malcolm challenged the belief that black people were inferior to whites.” Jerry Fahmy of Bridgeport drove Malcolm X to many of his speaking engagements in the Hartford area. Fahmy remembered how Malcolm raised the self-esteem of many people.98

Malcolm X also visited, toured, and preached in Hartford in 1961 and twice in 1963. During the 1961 visit, he toured city newspaper, radio stations, and television stations. The minister of Mosque No. 7 in New York City was known as the second ranking leader of the Nation of Islam. Malcolm said that “Muslims wanted ‘separation, which is done voluntarily by equals.’” His June 1963 lecture occurred in Bushnell Auditorium before 1,200 people. Malcolm declared that he would “tell it to you like it is.” He believed that anyone who spoke against separation was ignorant of history, divine intent, and their true feelings.

On October 29, 1963, Malcolm spoke to an overflow crowd at the University of Hartford. His appearance drew so many people that the event organizers moved his lecture outside from the 220 seat Auerbach Auditorium. He questioned the effectiveness of John Kennedy’s civil rights bill. Kennedy’s civil rights bill, according to Malcolm, was a case of the “fox defeating the wolf.” Malcolm perceived that Kennedy outfoxed the wolves of the House Judiciary Committee in bringing forth a civil rights bill with little power. He also believed that Martin Luther King, Jr. had lost control of his followers. Boldly he declared that Muslims “do not teach hate.” America’s token integration, said Malcolm, was doomed to fail. He also predicted racial bloodshed in the United States. Reporters stated that Malcolm compared the 20 million African Americans to a “dead body obnoxious to those who are near it.” He further described African Americans as mentally, spiritually, morally, socially, politically, and economically dead. He continued on to say that Elijah Muhammad restored racial pride. In addition, Muslims did not drink, smoke, or use profanity. Muslim women received respect from Muslim men and children. Children in Muslim homes rarely faced delinquency or dropped out of school. Malcolm offered a nationalist critique of life in Hartford and the United States for African Americans. He knew firsthand about the failure of civil rights policy and crushing poverty in the North and the inability or unwillingness of the government to solve the problems.

It was from Malcolm X’s teaching that black power advocates forged black power viewpoints. Malcolm also predicted that the United States would experience a period of violence in northern ghettos because black people were dissatisfied. The Hartford community encountered by Stone and Barber was already imbued with elements of Black Nationalism and black power, ideas which frightened many whites and blacks. This fear of the repercussions of Malcolm X’s words are evident in an editorial from the Hartford Courant (February 23, 1965). It read: “It is not surprising that Malcolm X wracked by hatred through the years, and preaching a doctrine of violence, should at last fall victim to hate and violence.” The editorialist continued to say that “those who live the lives of overlords” do not understand Malcolm’s motivation; however, some blacks do understand his message and agree in secret. The writer said that “their (black people) good sense tells them that his was not the way to overcome.”99
The riots and march by Black Caucus members stirred strong reactions from Connecticut's U.S. Senators. U.S. Senator Thomas J. Dodd made it clear to the national convention of Franco-American veterans on September 24, 1967 in Hartford that he believed the nation to be involved in a civil war. To the crowd of 650, Dodd said: "we have a condition now of incipient civil war, with black extremists preparing for action against the white community, and with affronted whites preparing for violence against the Negroes." Was Dodd referring to followers of Malcolm X, Black Caucus members, communists and some other black organization as Hartford's version of an extremist group? Dodd argued for gun control legislation and riot control legislation. In Dodd's estimation, efforts to eliminate poverty, injustice, and discrimination of African Americans should be melted with legislation to prevent riots and punish instigators of rioting.

Connecticut Senator Abraham Ribicoff saw the turmoil in Hartford in a similar manner as Dodd. Ribicoff argued that the conflicts were beyond the nature of mere summertime unrest. He stated that the plight of the urban ghetto resulted from 100 years of neglect of African Americans by the nation. He called for massive aid to the cities and blamed the Vietnam War for low spending on cities. Ribicoff termed urban riots more dangerous to national security than the war in Vietnam. He urged a group of Connecticut planners and architects to produce housing of a higher standard than the poor housing currently in place in many cities. Ribicoff seemed equally as concerned about an internal threat in the nation and Connecticut as Dodd.

Unlike Ribicoff, Deputy Mayor George J. Ritter called for a psychological study of the teenagers involved arrested in the first wave of violence in Hartford. Ritter believed that the city needed to find out on an "individual basis what has motivated individuals to take part in riots and to thwart the law." He wanted to study young people under the age of 19. After the investigations, Ritter felt that all parties (churches, schools, and social agencies) should work out programs so everyone can feel as if they have had a stake in Hartford.

Ritter wanted to know why a person would throw a brick or loot or destroy property. Ritter asked "Why does a person damage the property of persons of his own race?" An excellent answer to his question is that some people feel as if they have nothing to lose. He continued with the statement that "The City of Hartford must guarantee to every citizen that he will be safe on the streets, in his home and as he goes about his way of business." He urged that Hartford not divide itself. Ritter concluded that a "Hartford divided into sections into races, into competing sections cannot stand."

Deputy Mayor Ritter received an answer to his query as to why African American teenagers riot in a letter by Paula Reens of Bloomfield. Reens cited a Council on Human Rights newsletter, "Time for Action." The newsletter said: "Our conclusion is that riots are a product of a two-way hatred which racist America created." Reens suggested that high schools offer courses in leadership with African American and white leaders lecturing on how to make the governmental structure best serve people.

For African Americans and whites, the disturbances were difficult to understand. African Americans for the most part deplored the riots; however, some African Americans insisted that riots were the only way to be heard. In Fran's Variety Shop, a
A twenty-year-old African American man said he would throw a brick through a window. He continued with “we want better housing and to stop police brutality.” For him, “riots are the only way for us to be heard, heard you understand? Why we throw a bottle at your car, we’re going to be against you.” White storeowners in the North End spoke, according to reporter Barbara Carlson, in a tone of frenzied hatred. One white storeowner stated “I’ve got two guns, a revolver and an automatic.” One African American pharmacist said: “I imagine something had to happen. People have been discontented for too long.” Some white storeowners believed that African Americans don’t want to work and they make shambles of houses. Others believe that most African Americans are against riots, but white storeowners still remained on guard.

While the city and suburbs remained on guard after the riots, Hartford’s urban community (middle class, working class, and poor) like many northern cities was left with unfilled policy initiatives. A number of civil rights groups waged the fight to complete the failed initiatives; however, the city’s oldest civil rights organization proved most effective.

The World War I mass migration of Southern African Americans emerged around the same time that ideas about national freedom among African American leaders reached a turning point. W.E.B. DuBois and other members of the Niagara Movement forged an integrated alliance that became the NAACP. The economic approach and accommodations of Booker T. Washington and the Tuskegee Machine now had a powerful rival. Hartford’s NAACP would be born during this era. In 1917 twenty persons headed by Mary T. Seymour discussed methods of better integrating African Americans from the South into Hartford’s community. This meeting served as the catalyst for the formation of Hartford’s NAACP. The Executive Secretary of the parent body, James Weldon Johnson, and W.E.B. DuBois, editor of Crisis, attended the gathering. Mary Seymour perceived of the organization as an “organization of Americans of all races, creeds, and colors.” The program of the Hartford NAACP focused on such things as reduction of prejudice, increased understanding, and attainment of a society of equality. Hartford’s African American community grew from 1,500 to about 4,000 in 1917. The southern migrants were part of the huge numbers of southern African Americans to move to industrial cities in search of justice, jobs, and quality education.

The NAACP began its movement into civil rights with quiet negotiations in the teens; however, the 1960s saw a bold NAACP with an unrelenting President. Wilber Smith, a native of Florida, became one of the local NAACP’s most committed and confrontational activists. In a September 23, 1963 speech, Smith informed a Kiwanis Club audience that time was running out on promises of equality. His words during his speech echoed frightening portents. Smith spoke with firsthand knowledge and an urgency that revealed the mindset of young people in Hartford’s North End and mainstream Hartford. Smith was not the first, nor was he the last African American leader to diligently urge leaders to move as quickly as possible. The NAACP leader also addressed the scores of daily protests that swept the nation. He even answered the critics of the Hartford protest. Citing a recent Courant editorial, which asked if the demonstrations were needed, Smith said: “We are told our demonstrations are disgraceful.”

Smith spoke about the frustrations of African Americans with laws that uphold racism, segregation and discrimination. He presented cases of modern racism with the
murders of Emmitt Till, Mack Charles Parker, and Medgar Evers. Smith also delved into the blight of segregation on the Connecticut landscape. An African American minister from New Haven, Rev. William Philpot, owned a home on Andover Lake, but the other home owners denied him access to the lake. Use of the lake was a right that members of the Andover Lake Property Owners Association living on the lake granted, but not to Philpot. The association denied Philpot, who owned the property for eight years, membership four times. They later passed a bylaw requiring people turned down for membership to wait five years before reapplying. ALPOA also denied another African American, Rev. Eugene R. Wolfe, rights to the lake. The Courant reported that Wolfe sold his property to Philpot. Later the paper claimed that Philpot bought the property from a white Yale classmate. Even so, Lake Property owners were involved in other incidents. They ordered the son of James Tsuffis off the beach. The youngster was waiting for a friend to complete a Red Cross swimming lesson. The youngster's mother was an African American. A pattern of discrimination existed. The situation in Andover became so tense that Rev. Raymond H. Bradley of the Andover Congregational Church called a meeting to discuss the "racial bigotry" exhibited by ALPOA. After a five-year struggle, ALPOA amended its rules and removed the restrictions against Philpot's membership on June 30, 1968.

Smith's Kiwanis speech went so far as to question the notion that life in the North was better for African Americans than it was in the South. Smith said with an air of sarcasm: "Negroes have it better here. They saw a General Assembly pass a watered down housing act allowing 11 civil rights measures to die in committee." He also discussed incidents where members of the city council refused to act in the best interest of African American citizens. Smith was speaking about the Barbour Street controversy, where properties have been downgraded that should not have been. The NAACP and other groups wanted the number of apartments per acre reduced from fifty-three to twenty-nine. They feared that Hartford might experience violence similar to Birmingham because of overcrowding. He believed that many African Americans were not working because of the lack of opportunity. He included in his statement that equal education was sorely denied to African Americans in Hartford. In short, he urged the leaders in Hartford to push the city forward because time was running out.

Smith also affirmed that the Connecticut and Hartford NAACP would fight within the state to protest discrimination in hiring by Connecticut companies like UPS. According to the Urban League's William Brown, some UPS officials argued that white suburban housewives would refuse to receive a package from an African American UPS driver. The NAACP used the practice for years against stores such as F.W. Woolworth's. They practiced discrimination in the South, but protesters picketed stores in the integrated North. If UPS discriminated in Massachusetts, the NAACP would picket its offices in Connecticut. The same was true for discrimination in Connecticut.

By May 12, 1965, NAACP, NECAP, Urban League, and the Connecticut Race and Religion Action Commission initiated a three-day protest of UPS for discriminatory actions. Demonstrations, according to Wilber Smith, would occur throughout New England. Smith stated that if the three days of protest were unsuccessful, others would follow. Smith brought charges of discrimination against UPS before the state civil rights commission earlier on September 24, 1964. Along with NECAP and Connect-
icut Race and Religious Action Commission, the NAACP focused their attention on
the greater Hartford Chamber of Commerce. The groups wanted to force the chamber
to take action against alleged acts of discrimination. The groups held demonstrations
at Constitution Plaza. The first demonstrations led to the arrests of four people: Rev.
Charles Pendleton, Emanuel Williams, Gary Grimes, and Sylvia Govan. Pendleton was
a member of CRRAC, and Govan and Williams were NECAP members. Grimes
served as the president of the Hartford NAACP Youth Council. Wilber Smith of the
NAACP, Charles Turner of NECAP, Mark Rosenman from Brooklyn, Henry V.
Hurvitz from Hartford, Michelle Smith of NECAP, and Jane Karpe of NECAP were
among those arrested in the afternoon. Smith spoke with Arthur Wallace, UPS person-
nel manager about the company becoming an equal opportunity company. Smith
agreed to meet with Wallace only if Wallace sent a telegram outlining specific issues
to be discussed. Smith gave Wallace a deadline of 9 a.m. Friday. When the deadline
was not met, the groups began protests. Smith notified the police of the group’s inten-
tions, and he praised the police for the way they handled the demonstrations. Smith
said that the groups used the protests to prod the chamber to action, not to protest the
chamber. Smith also reported that a meeting was scheduled with the governor, and
that the Catholic Interracial Council would aid in the next round of protests. The
meeting with the governor was contingent upon confirmation from the governor that
the state discontinue using UPS for package delivery until the disputed charges were
remedied. State Purchasing Director William Finnegan said that the state issued the or-
der earlier. It would remain until a resolution came. James E. Bent, a former chamber
president, said that the organization could take no action against UPS. He feared in
doing so that the chamber could be sued by UPS. He said such action was “com-
pletely illegal and irresponsible.” In a reply to the Bent statement, a NAACP official
stated that “unofficial action could be taken which would not leave the chamber open
to a lawsuit.”

The NAACP, NECAP, and CRRAC unceasing pursued a remedy to the UPS hiring
practices. Other activists joined the protests and a group of North End businessmen
endorsed the pickets. On May 19, 1965, police arrested three young activists, Barbara
J. Reberio of the NAACP, David Bradshaw of NECAP, and Roger Winter of NECAP
for a sit-in at the offices of the Chamber of Commerce. Bradshaw, a student at the
University of Hartford, declined bond and spent the night in jail. While Wilber Smith
and Charles Turner praised early arrest procedures of the police, they criticized the
19th arrests. Smith and Turner said: “We feel your action at the Chamber of Com-
merce has betrayed our trust.” Police charged the three with disorderly conduct, while
a group of ten protesters who sat in front of trucks and in UPS hallways on May 14th
received a lesser offense. The groups also picketed in front of Korvette’s and Travel-
er’s Insurance for “visibility,” according to Smith. Smith also expected the national
organization to enter the fray with protests at the UPS Brooklyn office. He suggested
that people should refuse to accept flags purchased from the Hartford Times that are
delivered by UPS.

The two-week dispute between civil rights groups and UPS ended at a May 26th
meeting chaired by Human Rights Commissioner Collin Bennett. UPS spokesmen said
they would: “Set up human relations programs, make eight jobs immediately available
to minority groups and begin a special recruiting program for minority groups and
‘disadvantaged people’." The eight appointments included all job levels. Arthur Johnson of the Human Relations Commission said that the Urban League and Plans for Progress Unit would develop techniques for implementing the plan. UPS also dropped charges against 10 picketers arrested in demonstrations. While plans for implementation still needed to be worked out, civil rights groups saw the demonstrations as a success.\textsuperscript{117}

The vigilant activity of the civil rights groups continued. On the same day of the UPS concessions, marchers from throughout the state converged on Hartford to participate in a rally in support of federal civil rights legislation that was pending. Rally organizers initially expected over 10,000 people, the \textit{Courant} reported that the numbers were close to 1,000 people. As in many stages of the civil rights movement in Hartford, Wilber Smith was in the forefront. He served as the coordinator for the mile long march from the North End. Smith, Richard Battles, and other African American leaders joined with white leaders to urge the country to adopt new laws to end discrimination in the state and nation.\textsuperscript{118}

Under continued criticism from whites in the city and state, Hartford African American civil rights activists refused to end the push for change in Hartford. They used every tactic and agency in the state. The State Civil Rights Commission was a frequent aid for local leaders. Wilber Smith appeared before the commission so often in 1965 that one commissioner suggested a change in regulation for visitors at the August 12th meeting. Smith repeatedly charged that the commission should reconsider Humphrey \textit{v.} Housing Authority, a case the commission dismissed. Smith argued at the April 8th meeting that the commission and housing authority engaged in collusion because of the delay in handling the case.\textsuperscript{119}

By 1967, Hartford’s NAACP questioned the Hartford Board of Education about its slow movement to integrate Bulkley High School. NAACP members were particularly concerned by the Superintendent Medill Bair’s recommendation that a study be made on regionalization and annexation of local school districts. The Wilber Smith led contingent viewed such action as tokenism and failure to comply with findings that “racial segregation impairs learning abilities of children.” The initial integration would move only fifty children from Charter Oak Terrace to Bulkley. Bair’s measure would lengthen the time of integration. The Hartford NAACP also sent a copy of the letter to Dr. William Sanders of the State Board of Education.\textsuperscript{120} Such inactivity on the part of the local government in the eyes of the NAACP contributed to disenchantment.

The Connecticut State Conference of Branches NAACP set the tone for questioning inactivity. The state conference issued a resolution requesting that Governor Dempsey place a moratorium on school construction “throughout the state, unless the selection of sites for new schools, and/or additions to existing school buildings will provide for integrated education.”\textsuperscript{121} The state NAACP wanted action immediately.

A voluntary desegregation plan led to 266 African American inner city youths attending surrounding white suburban schools. Some of the suburban school districts and Hartford schools initiated action with “Project Concern.” By 1969, the number of African American children in the program reached 700 students. Funding for the program came from federal, state, and local sources; consequently, towns such as East Hartford made profits because empty seats in town classrooms were filled. Critics of the program labeled it as racial tokenism with a one way street of African American
children venturing to the suburbs; however, rarely did white students attend school in the inner city. Integration failed to transform curriculums in many schools and in some cases failed to produce academic excellence. Hartford was headed, as the Kerner Commission predicted, towards a segregated school system by the 1980s.

At the March 1, 1967 meeting of the Hartford Branch of the NAACP, members commended Dempsey for issuing the Fair Practices Code. According to the Hartford NAACP, the code represented the “greatest single progressive step ever taken by a Chief Executive of this state in the field of Human Liberties.” The issuance of the code and passage was a titanic struggle.

Hartford NAACP leaders found the city’s efforts at equal employment less than desirable in 1967; however, Hartford Director of Finance, John T. Walsh differed with this perception. He believed the city to be a leader in equality and justice. Under the leadership of Arthur Johnson of the Human Relations Commission, the city hired over two hundred individuals. Walsh and NAACP leaders commended the efforts. The NAACP strongly questioned Walsh’s belief with “special pride” that Hartford was a leader and forerunner in equality and justice. Leaders of the NAACP suggested that the city possibly was a leader in retrogression. On the work of Johnson, NAACP leader George Foster-Bey firmly established that the NAACP “in no way questioned the work record of Mr. Arthur Johnson of our Human Relations Commission.”

Hartford’s Human Relations Commission helped to create the Fair Employment Practices Clause. The city notified all businesses with contracts and those seeking contracts about the clause. Hartford NAACP Branch President, Wilber Smith, received notice of the procedure as early as October of 1966.

Johnson’s record included helping in the establishment by the CRT and the Human Relations Commission, co-op clubs for children under the age of 16. The young people would engage in light chores (cleaning litter around the Albany Avenue businesses) and recreational activity. Payment would be based on the time spent on club activity. The money could then be used to purchase school clothes. Johnson hoped that the pilot projects in the Main Street and Albany Avenue neighborhoods might expand to other areas of the city. By 1970 the HRC co-ops employed over 435 young in Hartford during the summer.

Foster-Bey still vehemently argued that Hartford failed to adequately support its edict against discrimination. Foster-Bey believed that assurances of greater successes rested on more personnel and funds for the HRC (Human Relations Commission). For some time, the immense work of the HRC fell to Johnson and one other person.

Foster-Bey and other NAACP leaders noted that if the city continued to state that it was fully implementing equal opportunity, the NAACP’s only alternative would be to “take action in ways that may not be fully acceptable.” NAACP board leaders desired action, not planning for action. The board also wanted the city to cancel the contracts for firms found practicing discrimination in investigations by the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Human Relations Commission.

In a bold move in December 1967, the NAACP requested information on firms with city contracts and urged removal of city leaders. They wanted a “list of all firms doing business with the city and public funds involved.” The organization also requested to know the “total number of employees for the firms and total of non-white employees for each.” They also urged Governor Dempsey to remove ex-Hartford
mayor, George G. Kinsella, as chairperson of the Hartford Manpower Development Advisory Council "by all legal means necessary." Foster-Bey stated that his organization would provide evidence justifying the removal of Kinsella. Dempsey's December 18, 1967 letter to the Hartford NAACP proposed a plan by the Governor to look into the matter of Kinsella being removed. Foster-Bey revealed his displeasure over the proposed report. He urged that the Hartford NAACP and governor's office compare their findings. Foster-Bey requested a reply within seven days of the governor receiving his letter. The Executive Committee of the Hartford NAACP voted on December 18, 1967 to involve federal officials if the governor's office failed to resolve the situation.

The Hartford NAACP became an agency of greater activism with more than words in the late 1960s. Along with making demands, leaders such as Wilber Smith and others marched on the offices of the Welfare Commissioner Bernard Shapiro. Local police arrested 17 of 75 protesters in September of 1966 for breach of peace and resisting arrest. In the circuit court trial, State Police Major Samuel Rome and Trooper Robert Rusmussen testified seeing Smith, Mary Harris (New Haven), and Carl Miller (New Haven) struggling with police and welfare department investigators. The ensuing scuffle led to Miller being bloodied. Rome responded that he was not sure if he caused the wounds with his blackjack. According to former Hartford Mayor Thirman Milner, Smith spoke with direct honesty that bothered many inside and outside of their struggle. Milner said of Smith during a memorial ceremony: "I don't think anybody could call him or herself a friend of Wilber's if you had not been cussed out by Wilber or chastised by Wilber." Connecticut's mainstream leaders were becoming by the late 1960s increasingly more confrontational and dismayed by city and statewide inactivity.

In other action, police arrested the NAACP's George Foster-Bey during the September 1967 disturbances on a charge of inciting a riot. Police arrested him after the disturbances that followed the march led by Black Caucus members. The local paper published the arrest for inciting a riot. Such past action by the press greatly disturb Arthur Green of the CCHRO. Smith and Foster-Bey angered a growing segment of white Hartford with their confrontational style. Whites in the city grew bitter. This bitterness occurred around the nation.

A Common Destiny: Blacks and American Society argues that Gunnar Myrdal's American Dilemma failed to "forecast" the depth of the bitterness of whites to African American equality. In the case of Hartford, some local whites became extremely bitter about NAACP activism. One person seemingly assumed that African Americans now were the major controllers of power in Connecticut. The white resident referred to the NAACP members as "bigots," who are race conscious. She was upset because the NAACP demanded the arrest of state officials for failure to supply data on the number of minority state employees. The citizen of Russian and Swedish descent sarcastically asked: "Am I supposed to ask to see how many Russians and Swedes are now employed by the State? And if none are I demand that you hire them?" She also asked that the governor not allow "Negroes" to harass everyone. She further stated: "It's disgusting how now they act like we are nothing but cattle and everytime they feel like it all they do is crack the bullwhip and every one jumps at their command. Tell them off and stop bowing to them." These statements are mild in comparison
to those that poured into the offices of government officials after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

By 1967 Hartford's civil rights activists became more confrontational and demanding. NECAP’s activism set off a wave of protests and marches. The marches culminated in John Barber’s, a perceived outsider to many in the mainstream community, attempting to lead a march into the mostly white South End. White pacifists marched along with the non-violent Barber contingent. The city’s leading newspaper called all involved in the march troublemakers. Hartford NAACP leaders were making bold demands and getting arrested in the streets and governmental offices. Their demands for integration and quality education went unheeded. Requests for better relationships with the police also went unanswered. From their letters to the governor, segments of mainstream Hartford failed to distinguish civil rights protests from riots.

Within the Hartford movement, nonviolent activists, who had once challenged less action-oriented leaders, now had new challenges for leadership in the Black Caucus. While Barber did not advocate that he was Hartford’s H. Rap Brown or Stokely Carmichael in 1967, Black Caucus members were seen as militant black power advocates.

Connecticut Life interviewed John Barber for its November 1967 issue. In answer to the question of whether or not he was bitter, he replied: “History has been rotten. I consider myself not bitter but truthful . . . I think there’s a real increase in the number of Negroes who now openly hate white people and manifest it in different ways.” Barber felt that running for office would prove non-beneficial because black people were lethargic about politics. To Barber the northern experience generated a “lot of Uncle Toms.” He believed that community activity, marches, demonstrations, and even riots accomplished more than politics. He saw churches as “very little good” because to him they did not identify with those most needy. Blacks needed power to determine their own destiny such as jobs and elected officials. He ended the interview with “. . . as I make strides toward what I want to be you better stay out of my way.”

In the midst of fighting for greater equality in Hartford, NAACP members continued to remember and support the struggles in the South. On April 2, 1967, the Hartford Branch of the NAACP sponsored a lecture by Dr. Aaron Henry, President of the Mississippi NAACP State Conference. Hartford Branch members wanted New Englanders to “see and hear first hand of the injustices continuing in our nation (Mississippi).” Hartford’s NAACP used his appearance as a way of recruiting membership. The program also had a more heart-wrenching goal of attracting donations for the family of Wharlest Jackson, Natchez, Mississippi NAACP Branch Treasurer. An unknown assassin planted a bomb that killed Jackson on February 27, 1967. Tragically, the price of freedom during the civil rights movement was too often death and violence.

Hartford’s African American neighborhoods experienced death and violence different from that of Mississippi. For three more years, the city would feel pain as riots, poverty, and death came. By 1969 twenty-five percent of Hartford’s citizens were on welfare rolls, while ninety percent of African Americans and Puerto Ricans lived in the ghetto. Freedom in the South and Connecticut, and the rest of the country was intertwined. Hartford’s African American activists knew this to be true because many had relatives in Albany, Birmingham, Americus, and Jackson. They also knew because
the "fire in the bones" told them that they deserved much more than welfare, ghettos, and unfulfilled promises.

NOTES

1 "Letter from Morris Silverman to Gov. Baldwin (August 2, 1943)," Gov. Baldwin Papers, RG-5, Box 463, IRC Folder, CSL Archives. See also "Letter from John H. Johnson (Negro Digest) to Governor Baldwin (August 10, 1943)," "Letter from Florida Club (Hartford) to Governor Baldwin (January 14, 1943)," and "Letter from James P. Gifford (Columbia University Law Professor) to Governor Baldwin (February 10, 1943) in Gov. Raymond Baldwin Papers, RG-5, Box 463-CSL Archives, IRC Folder.

2 Pamphlet "1943-1968 25th Anniversary of the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities," in Gov. John Dempsey Papers, RG-5, Box 236, Civil Rights Folder 3-CSL Archives. See also "Letter from John H. Johnson (Negro Digest) to Governor Baldwin (August 10, 1943)," "Letter from Florida Club (Hartford) to Governor Baldwin (January 14, 1943)," and "Letter from James P. Gifford (Columbia University Law Professor) to Governor Baldwin (February 10, 1943) in Gov. Raymond Baldwin Papers, RG-5, Box 463-CSL Archives, IRC Folder. See also Marion Hepburn Grant, In and About Hartford (Hartford: Connecticut Historical Society, 1978), 219.

3 "Letter from Colored Republicans State Organization (November 3, 1943) to Governor Raymond Baldwin" and "Letter from Rev. Robert Moody (Shiloh Baptist Church) from Governor's Executive Assistant (August 9, 1943)" in Governor Raymond Baldwin Papers, Hartford: CSL Archives, RG-5, Box 463, IRC Folder.

4 "Letter from Walter H. Gray (Sufragan Bishop) to Governor Raymond Baldwin (January 3, 1944)," in Governor Raymond Baldwin Papers, RG-5, Box 463, IRC, Hartford: CSL Archives.


7 "Negroes Told to Enlist All Law Agencies," Hartford Courant, January 15, 1943, p. 15.


13 Minutes of the Inter-Racial Commission, August 29, 1946, CCHRO Minutes Record, Manuscript Collection, Hartford: Connecticut Historical Society.


17 "Inter-Racial Commission Report from Frank Simpson (October 14, 1946) to Governor Raymond Baldwin," in Governor Raymond Baldwin Papers, Hartford: CSL Archives, RG-5, Box 463, 1943-46.


19 Minutes of the IRC, June 22, 1948.  

20 Minutes of IRC, August 18, 1948, CCHRO Minutes Record.  

21 Ibid. Minutes of the Inter-Racial Commission, February 27, 1946, March 5, 1947, June 22, 1948, and October 6, 1948. See also “Civil Rights Commission To Observe 20th Year,” Hartford Courant (October 23, 1963), p. 3.  


28 Ibid.  


30 Ibid.  


34 “NECAP Commanded By National Movement.”  


"Letter from Harry H. Matthews to Governor Dempsey (3/12/65)," Governor John Dempsey Papers, Hartford: Connecticut State Library Archives, RG-5, Box A-236, Folder 3, Civil Rights.

"Letter from Allen John Ferguson (NY) to Governor Dempsey (June 18, 1964)," Governor Dempsey Papers, Hartford: Connecticut State Library Archives, RG-5, Box A-236, Folder 3, Civil Rights, "Executive Secretary Civil Rights Department Thomas Henry to Allen Ferguson (June 29, 1964)," Governor John Dempsey Papers, Hartford: Connecticut State Library Archives, RG-5. Box A-236, Folder 3, Civil Rights.


Ibid., see also "Parents Return After Pleading For Rights Workers' Protection," Hartford Courant, July 3, 1964, p. 6.


Ibid.

Dittmer, pp. 276-79 and 396-97.

"Youth Should Go Home" and "Invaders of the South Must Blame Themselves," Hartford Courant [Letters to the Editor], July 5, 1964, p. 2.


David Holmberg, p. 1.

"Martin Luther King Slain: Tear Gas Used In Hartford," Hartford Courant, April 5, 1968, p. 1.


Ibid.


Ibid. See also Clayborne Carson, In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981, 1995), 163-64. This questioning of older black leaders increased during the late 1960s. On the national level, members of SNCC boldly stated their differences with Martin Luther King, Jr.


Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.


Ibid.


Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

"Malcolm X, killed 25 years ago was an influential force in state," Hartford Courant, February 21, 1990, pp. a1, a4.


Ibid.

Ibid.


"Time Running Out on Promises."


"Letter from Wilber G. Smith, Hartford NAACP President to Hartford Board of Education (September 7, 1967)," and “Letter from Wilber G. Smith to Dr. William Sanders (September 9, 1967), Education Commissioner” in Governor Dempsey Papers, Hartford: CSL Archives, RG-5, Box 276, NAACP Folder.


"Letter from Baptist Ministers Conference of Detroit and Vicinity to Dempsey (April 20, 1964),” Governor John Dempsey Papers, Hartford: CSL Archives, RG-5, Box A-236, Folder 3, Civil Rights. See also “Letter from Wilber G. Smith, President Hartford Branch NAACP to Gov. John Dempsey (March 2, 1967),” Governor Dempsey Papers, Hartford: CSL Archives, Box 276, NAACP Folder.

"Letter from John T. Walsh, Director of Finance — City of Hartford to George Foster-Bey, Chairman, NAACP Labor & Industries Committee and Governmental Agencies (September 6, 1967),” in Gov. Dempsey Papers, RG-5, Box 276, NAACP Folder.

"Letter from George Foster-Bey, Hartford NAACP — Labor and Industries — Governmental Agencies to John T. Walsh, Director of Finance — City of Hartford (September 28, 1967),” in Gov. Dempsey Papers, RG-5, Box 276, NAACP Folder.

"Letter from John T. Walsh, Director of Finance Hartford to Wilber G. Smith, Hartford NAACP Branch President,” October 6, 1966, Hartford: CSL Archives, John Dempsey Papers, RG-5, Box 276, NAACP File Folder.


"Ibid.

"Ibid.

"Ibid.


Conducted with Former Hartford Mayor Thirman Milner" by Stacey Close on 7/29/98 and "Interview Conducted with Arthur Johnson (former head of the Human Relations Commission)" Summer 1997.