



The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens

LAMPOONING INJUSTICE: PAUL CONRAD'S PERSPECTIVE ON CIVIL RIGHTS



Grade 11

United States History and Geography:
Continuity and Change in the Twentieth Century

I. Introduction

The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens is a rich depository of government records, diaries and journals, maps, ephemera, and a wide variety of other documents. The Huntington recently acquired political cartoons by Paul Conrad, one of America's most renowned cartoonists, which offer unique perspectives on contemporary issues. The vast collection includes most of Conrad's cartoons from 1959 to the 1990s; a number of which focus on events in the civil rights movement. This lesson explores some aspects of the civil rights movement through an analysis of several cartoons drawn for the *Los Angeles Times* during this pivotal period in United States History. It is intended as a supplement to a more in-depth study of the movement.

II. Objectives

- ◆ To assess the power of political cartoons.
- ◆ To examine the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka*.
- ◆ To analyze cartoons reflecting on the desegregation of public education.
- ◆ To chronicle pivotal events in the African American civil rights movement.
- ◆ To examine unresolved issues of school integration.

III. History-Social Science Standards Addressed

Content Standard

11.10 (2) Examine and analyze the key events, policies, and court cases in the evolution of civil rights, including . . . *Brown v. Board of Education*. . . .

(6) Analyze the passage and effects of civil rights and voting rights legislation (e.g., 1964 Civil Rights Act, Voting Rights Act of 1965). . . .

Analysis Skill Standards

- Students compare the present with the past, evaluating the consequences of past events and decisions and determining the lessons that were learned. (Chronological and Spatial Thinking)
- Students distinguish valid arguments from fallacious arguments in historical interpretations. (Historical Research, Evidence, and Point of View)
- Students construct and test hypotheses; collect, evaluate, and employ information from multiple primary and secondary sources; and apply it in oral and written presentations. (Historical Research, Evidence, and Point of View)
- Students understand the meaning, implication, and impact of historical events and recognize that events could have taken other directions. (Historical Interpretation)

IV. Background Information

Paul Conrad, a graduate of the University of Iowa with a degree in art, began his career as a political cartoonist with the *Denver Post*. He joined the staff of the *Los Angeles Times* in 1964 and for the next 30 years, his cartoons were a regular feature of the editorial page of the *Los Angeles Times* and syndicated to more than 100 newspapers around the nation. Conrad won a number of prestigious awards for his political cartoons including three Pulitzer prizes and four Robert F. Kennedy Awards for editorial cartooning. The subjects of some of Conrad's cartoons, however, offered no accolades and resented being lampooned by this noted syndicated cartoonist. President Richard Nixon, often the subject of Conrad's drawings during the Watergate era, placed him on the infamous "enemies list." California governor Ronald Reagan, on an almost daily basis called the publisher of the *Los Angeles Times* to complain about Conrad's latest drawing.

Conrad, struck by the disparity between the races in the United States, used his skills as a cartoonist to dramatize the events of the civil rights movement. Alarmed by the slow progress in achieving a truly desegregated school system, Conrad often harkened back to the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, using it as a theme for cartoons throughout his career, including a cartoon drawn in 1996, two years after his retirement from the *Los Angeles Times*.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Caricatures are often the truest history of the times." Conrad's drawings over the past 40 years at the *Denver Post* and the *Los Angeles Times* are a powerful record of key issues that have confronted our nation in the second half of the twentieth century.

V. Materials Needed

Class set copies of the following:

Student Handout 1: Cartoon Analysis Worksheet

Document A: "Nothing new to report again today, Mr. Hoover."

Document B: The Southern Manifesto

Group set copies of the following:

Document C: "Tell me again how different things are gonna be with Warren off the Supreme Court"

Document D: Administration Line (untitled cartoon)

Document E: "I'm hijacking the bus! . . . Take us back to 1954!"

Document F: "One nation divisible . . ."

VI. Lesson Activities

1. Introduce the lesson by having students as a class examine Conrad's editorial cartoon that appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* on June 13, 1969, entitled "Nothing new to report again today, Mr. Hoover." Divide the class into four groups and give each group a copy of **Student Handout 1**, "Cartoon Analysis Worksheet," and **Document A**, "Nothing new to report again today, Mr. Hoover." Have students, within their groups, work through the cartoon analysis worksheet and provide a summary of their findings for the class. Students should be aware that Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated on April 4, 1968. They should also be aware that J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, had kept wire-tapes on King for years and suspected that the civil rights movement was nothing more than a front for Communists. As a class, discuss how Conrad chose to illustrate Hoover's paranoia.

- What is the message that the cartoonist wishes to portray?
- What symbols did Conrad use in the cartoon?
- How effective is the cartoon?
- What emotions does the cartoon evoke today, a generation after it was first published?

Explain to the class that this lesson will focus on several other Conrad cartoons dealing with the civil rights movement. They should use the Cartoon Analysis Worksheet in examining each of the cartoons.

2. Review textbook readings on the events leading to the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Students should be familiar with the high court's 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision. You may wish to have students read Justice John Marshall Harlan's dissent in the *Plessy* case. Students should be aware that a series of court rulings prior to the *Brown* decision opened the way for this landmark decision (e.g., principally two 1950 Court decisions in *Sweatt v. Painter* and *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Board of Regents* that sealed the fate of Jim Crow and the separate but equal ruling of *Plessy v. Ferguson*). Have several students review the *Brown* decision online at The National Center for Public Policy Research website (<http://www.nationalcenter.org/brown.html>) and prepare an oral report examining the issues in the case and the reasoning behind the unanimous decision of the Court. (Five separate school segregation cases from the District of Columbia, Delaware, Virginia, South Carolina, and Kansas were before the Court. These cases were consolidated and appeared alphabetically on the Court's docket with *Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas*, being the first.) The report should also focus on the 1955 decision rearguing the *Brown* decision on the question of relief. This unanimous decision is commonly known as *Brown II* has been widely criticized as lacking the moral imperative of the first decision offering no guidance other than calling for desegregation ". . . with all deliberate speed" leaving interpretation open.
3. Following a discussion of the *Brown* case, have students read **Document B**, The Southern Manifesto, signed by 19 Senators and 81 members of the House of Representatives.
 - Why did the signers of the Manifesto regard the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* as an abuse of judicial power?
 - Why do the signers of the document believe that the Fourteenth Amendment does not apply in this case?
 - Why do they believe that the 1896 *Plessy* ruling should have guided the Court's ruling in the *Brown* case?

After discussing the Southern Manifesto, write a brief editorial either supporting or rejecting the point of view expressed by Southern legislators. Include a political cartoon to accompany the editorial.

4. Reassemble the class into the previously divided four groups and give each group a different Conrad cartoon, **Documents C, D, E, and F**. Have each group use clues from the cartoon to investigate issues to which Conrad alludes. Allow time for research and group discussion of the assigned cartoon. Have each group explain the issues that formed the basis of the Conrad cartoon. You may wish to make transparencies of these cartoons for projection during the group reports.

- Group 1 should focus on the Burger Court (Warren G. Burger) and recognize that the school integration decisions of the Warren Court were not overturned.
 - Groups 2 and 3 should examine President Richard Nixon's "Southern Strategy" as a means of "going slow" on school integration as a way of building a solid Republican majority in the South.
 - Group 4 should examine the slow process of school integration as late as 1972.
5. Have selected students read a synopsis of Civil Rights Acts of 1957 and 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and prepare a short report for the class on the documents. The complete text is also available online. Discuss the differences in the Civil Rights Acts of 1957 and 1964. You may wish to have students read an account of the 1960 Civil Rights Act and the political maneuvering that ultimately weaken the bill to make it virtually ineffective (<http://www.africanamericans.com/CivilRightsActof1960.htm>).
- 1957 Civil Rights Act
http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/1957_civil_rights_act.htm
(full text: <http://www.nv.cc.va.us/home/nvsageh/Hist122/Part4/CRact57.htm>)
 - 1964 Civil Rights Act
http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/1964_civil_rights_act.htm
(full text: <http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/laws/majorlaw/civilr19.htm>)
 - 1965 Voting Rights Act
http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/1965_voting_rights_act.htm
(full text: http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting/intro/intro_b.htm)

Use the following questions to promote class discussion on these civil rights bills:

- What events precipitated stronger civil rights legislation in 1964 and 1965?
 - How did the 1964 and 1965 acts strengthen the federal government's role in promoting civil rights?
 - To what extent did the civil rights acts of 1957, 1964, and 1965 repress state's rights and alter the federal system established by the Constitution?
 - In your opinion, were these acts necessary? Explain.
6. Have students draw political cartoons reflecting their views on any one of these three civil rights acts. Discuss how cartoons draw attention to issues and marshal public opinion to support a cause.

Extension Activities

1. Research one of the pivotal battles in the struggle for civil rights (e.g., integration of Central High School, Little Rock, Arkansas, 1957; burning of a bus carrying Freedom Riders outside Anniston, Alabama on Mother's Day, 1961; integration of the University of Mississippi, 1962; use of police dogs and fire hoses in Birmingham, 1963; Bloody Sunday at the Edmund Pettus Bridge, Selma, Alabama, 1965; school bussing in Boston, 1974). Draw a political cartoon illustrating the event and display the cartoon along with an eyewitness account.
2. Write an account explaining how the achievements of the African American civil rights movement influenced the quests of American Indians, Asian Americans, and Hispanic Americans for civil rights and equal opportunities.
3. Research the American Indian Movement (AIM) of the 1960s and 1970s. Analyze Conrad's November 12, 1972 cartoon "If you don't like it here, why don't you people go back where you came from!"



- How does Conrad use the "Love America or Leave It" slogan of the 1970s as a basis for the cartoon?
- What is the point Conrad is making?
- Do you think the cartoonist has conveyed a clear message?
- How would you have drawn the cartoon differently?

Source: Conrad Collection, The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, July-Dec 1972.

Cartoon Analysis Worksheet

Visuals	Words (not all cartoons includes words)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ List the objects or people you see in the cartoon. ♦ What symbols, if any, are used in the cartoon? ♦ What do you think each symbol means? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Identify the cartoon caption or title. ♦ Does the cartoonist use words or phrases to identify objects or people within the cartoon? ♦ What words or phrases in the cartoon appear to be the most significant?

1. What is your first impression of the cartoon?

2. List the adjectives that describe the emotions portrayed in the cartoon.

3. Describe the action taking place in the cartoon.

4. Explain how the words in the cartoon clarify the symbols.

5. Explain the message of the cartoon.

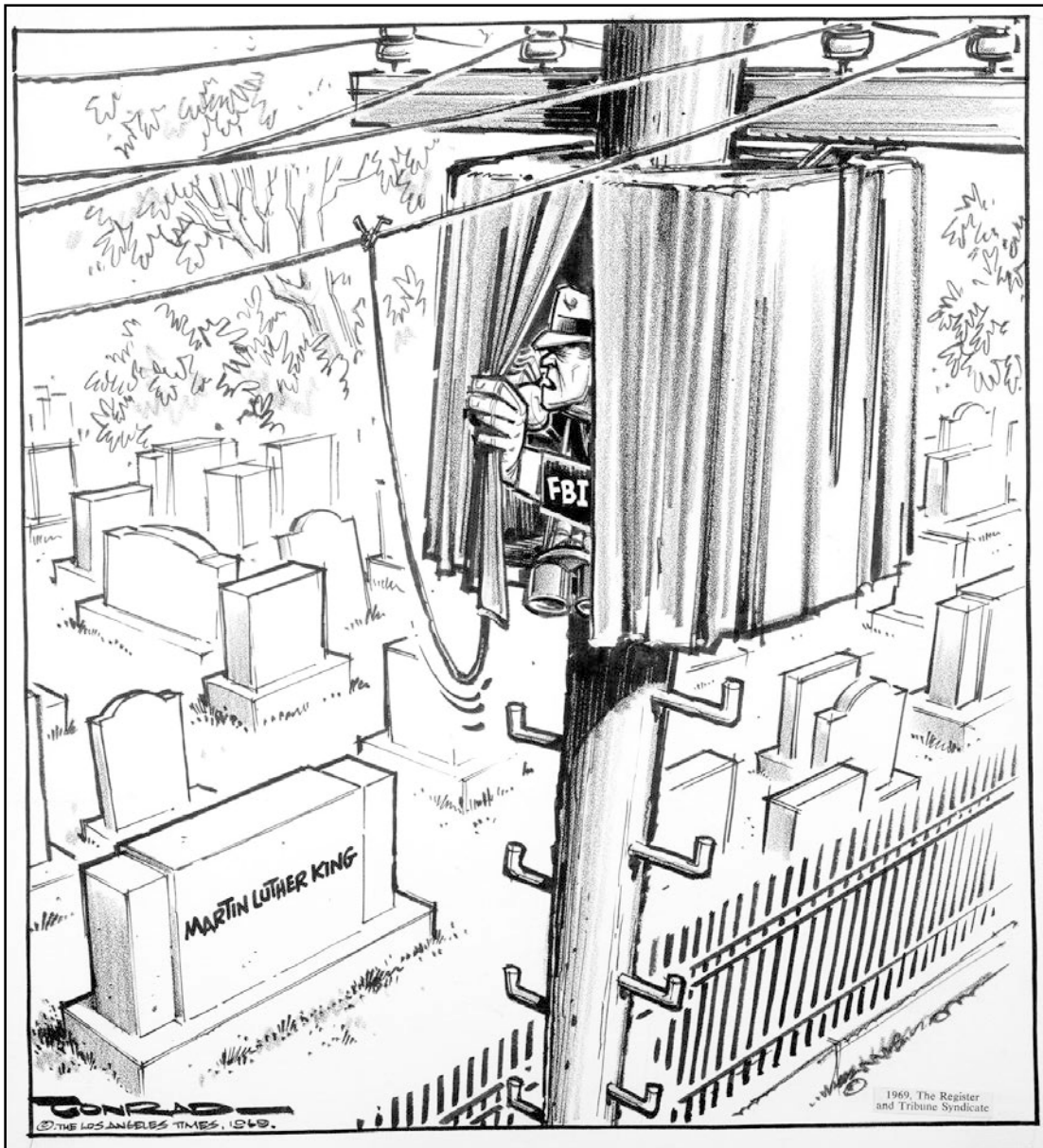
6. What special interest groups would agree/disagree with the cartoon's message? Why?

7. Has your first impression of the cartoon changed after analysis? If so, what caused the change?

Adapted from U.S. National Archives & Records Administration's Cartoon Analysis Worksheet,
http://www.archives.gov/digital_classroom/lessons/analysis_worksheets/cartoon.html

"Nothing new to report again today, Mr. Hoover"

Paul Conrad, *Los Angeles Times*, June 13, 1969



Source: Conrad Collection, The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, April-October 1969.

The Southern Manifesto

Nineteen Senators and 81 Representatives from the South expressed their opposition to the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* in a manifesto read into the Congressional Record on March 12, 1956.

We regard the decision of the Supreme Court in the school cases as a clear abuse of judicial power. It climaxes a trend in the Federal judiciary undertaking to legislate, in derogation of the authority of Congress, and to encroach upon the reserved rights of the States and the people.

The original Constitution does not mention education. Neither does the 14th amendment nor any other amendment. The debates preceding the submission of the 14th amendment clearly show that there was no intent that it should affect the systems of education maintained by the States.

The very Congress which proposed the amendment subsequently provided for segregated schools in the District of Columbia.

When the amendment was adopted, in 1868, there were 37 States of the Union. Every one of the 26 States that had any substantial racial differences among its people either approved the operation of segregated schools already in existence or subsequently established such schools by action of the same lawmaking body which considered the 14th amendment.

Though there has been no constitutional amendment or act of Congress changing this established legal principle almost a century old, the Supreme Court of the United States, with no legal basis for such action, undertook to exercise their naked judicial power and substituted their personal political and social ideas for the established law of the land.

This unwarranted exercise of power by the Court, contrary to the Constitution, is creating chaos and confusion in the States principally affected. It is destroying the amicable relations between the white and Negro races that have been created through 90 years of patient effort by the good people of both races. It has planted hatred and suspicion where there has been heretofore friendship and understanding.

With the gravest concern for the explosive and dangerous condition created by this decision and inflamed by outside meddlers:

- We reaffirm our reliance on the Constitution as the fundamental law of the land.
- We decry the Supreme Court's encroachments on rights reserved to the States and to the people, contrary to established law and to the Constitution.

- We commend the motives of those States which have declared the intention to resist forced integration by any lawful means.
- We appeal to the States and people who are not directly affected by these decisions to consider the constitutional principles involved against the time when they too, on issues vital to them may be the victims of judicial encroachment.

Even though we constitute a minority in the present Congress, we have full faith that a majority of the American people believe in the dual system of government which has enabled us to achieve our greatness and will in time demand that the reserved rights of the States and of the people be made secure against judicial usurpation.

We pledge ourselves to use all lawful means to bring about a reversal of this decision which is contrary to the Constitution and to prevent the use of force in its implementation.

In this trying period, as we all seek to right this wrong, we appeal to our people not to be provoked by the agitators and troublemakers invading our States and to scrupulously refrain from disorder and lawless acts.

Source: Congressional Record, 84th Congress Second Session, Vol. 102, Part 4 (March 12, 1956)

**“Tell me again how different things are gonna be
with Warren off the Supreme Court”**

November 16, 1969



Source: Conrad Collection, The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, November 1969–May 1970

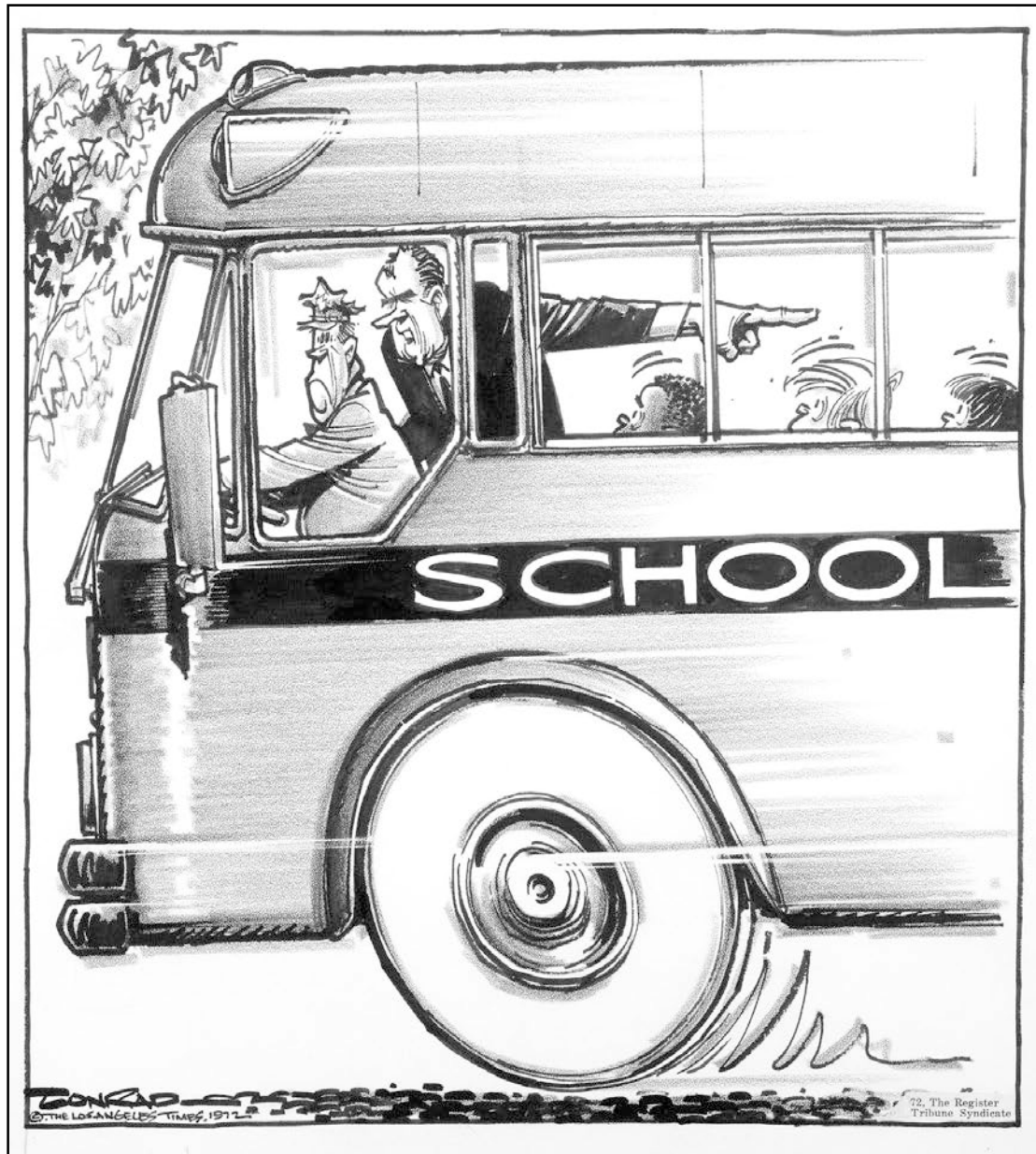
Administration Line
(untitled cartoon, February 15, 1970)



Source: Conrad Collection, The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, 1968-May 1970.

"I'm hijacking the bus! ...Take us back to 1954!"

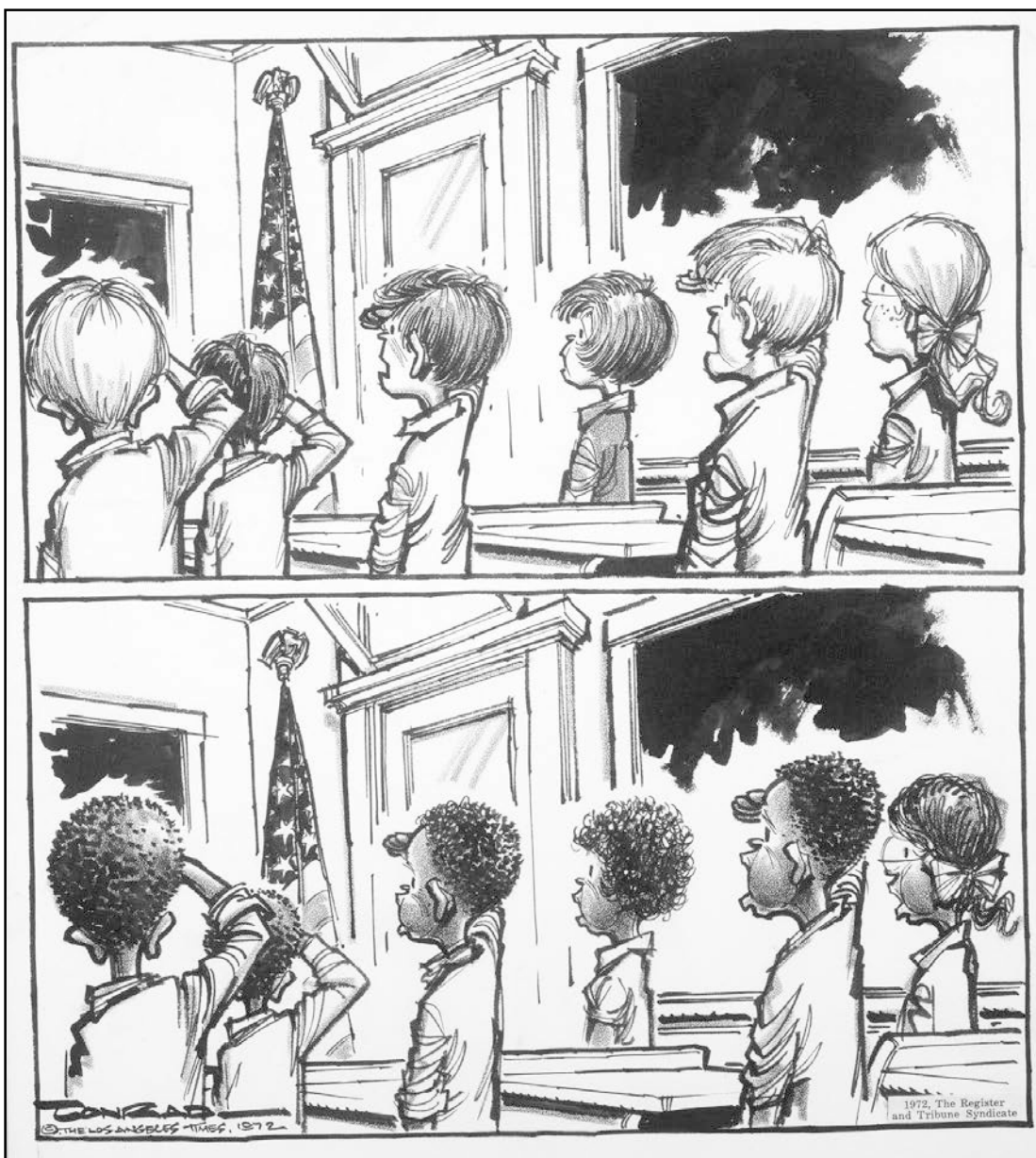
March 17, 1972



Source: Conrad Collection, The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, January-June 1972.

"One nation divisible..."

March 21, 1972



Source: Conrad Collection, The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, Jan- June 1972.

Selected Bibliography

Print Resources

Conrad, Paul. *ConArtist*. Los Angeles: Los Angeles Times, 1993.

A collection of 300 Conrad cartoons assembled by decades from the sixties to the nineties.

_____. *Drawing the Line: The Collected Works of America's Premier Political Cartoonist*. Los Angeles: Los Angeles Times, 1999.

The cartoons featured in this collection begin with the Clinton impeachment and go back in time examining key issues in the Bush, Reagan, Carter, Nixon administrations.

_____. *Pro and Conrad*. San Rafael, CA: NEFF-Kane, 1979.

A provocative look at contemporary issues through 179 cartoons drawn for the *Los Angeles Times*.

Fauver, Bill, and Jim Ruderman. *Stride Toward Freedom: The Aftermath of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. Los Angeles: National Center for History in the Schools, 2001.

This teaching unit explores the Brown case, public reaction to the decision, and its effect on the civil rights movement.

Hampton, Henry, and Steve Fayer. *Voices of Freedom: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s through the 1980s*. New York: Bantam Books, 1990.

The text includes nearly 1,000 short interviews with men, women, and children—black and white—who participated in the civil rights movement. The book was prepared as a companion to the prize-winning PBS series *Eyes on the Prize*.

McWhorter, Diane. *Carry Me Home: Birmingham, Alabama—The Climactic Battle of the Civil Rights Revolution*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001.

A case study of the civil rights movement in Birmingham with inside accounts of the struggle that pitted Police Commissioner Bull Connor and Governor George Wallace against black ministers Fred Shuttlesworth and Martin Luther King, Jr., among others.

Moore, Charles, and Michael S. Durham. *Powerful Days: The Civil Rights Photography of Charles Moore*. New York: Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 1991.

A photographic history of the civil rights movement in the South from 1958 to 1965.

Webb, Sheyann, and Rachel West Nelson. *Selma, Lord, Selma: Girlhood Memories of the Civil-Rights Days*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1980.

A firsthand account of the events that led to Bloody Sunday at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in 1965 as told by two girls, aged eight and nine, who took part in demonstrations to protest discriminatory voting laws.

The Way Editorial Cartoons Work. Fort Atkinson, WI: MindSparks, 1995.

Six lessons built around four political cartoons that help students analyze political cartoons. The lessons focus on the use of symbols, the interaction of words and symbols, and stereotyping.