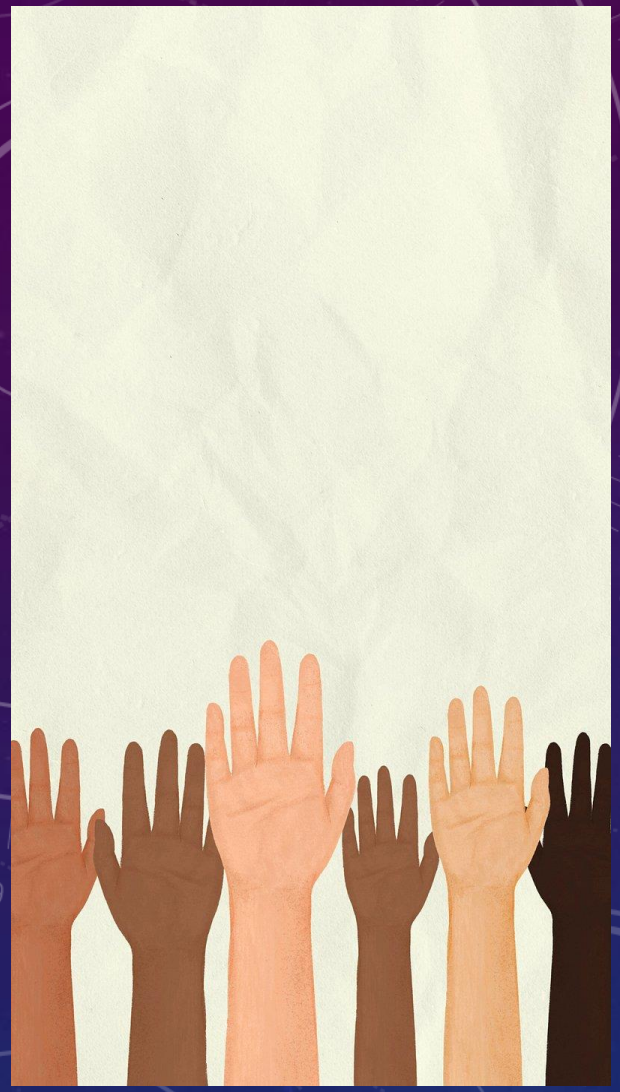


SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION:

THE EVOLVING CHALLENGE OF RACIAL INEQUALITY

WILMETTE INSTITUTE, MAY 30, 2025



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Overview questions

What were strategies for social transformation related to racial inequality 50 or 60 years go? What are prospects for today, 2025? How might we foresee social transformation that can bring about the unity of humanity, of all races, starting with this country and then the world?

Format: Overview, then Question and Answer

THE CIVIL RIGHTS ERA



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; Rosa Parks

Public domain photo

WHY DISCUSS SUCH QUESTIONS?

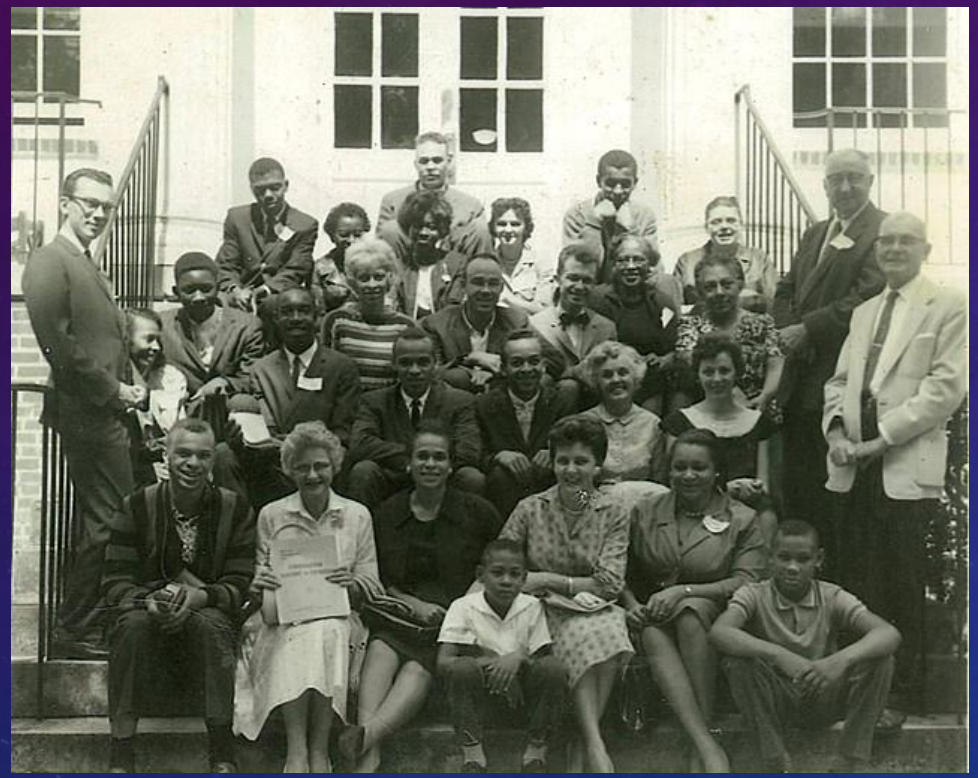
Every age hath its own problem, and every soul its particular aspiration. The remedy the world needeth in its present-day afflictions can never be the same as that which a subsequent age may require. Be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in, and center your deliberations on its exigencies and requirements.

-Baha'u'llah



Dad and Martin Luther King Jr

BAHA'IS CONTINUE WORK ON RACIAL UNITY



Greenville, SC Baha'is 1962

- O CHILDREN OF MEN! Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other. Ponder at all times in your hearts how ye were created. Since We have created you all from one same substance it is incumbent on you to be even as one soul, to walk with the same feet, eat with the same mouth and dwell in the same land, . . .
- Baha'u'llah

A MORE RECENT ERA



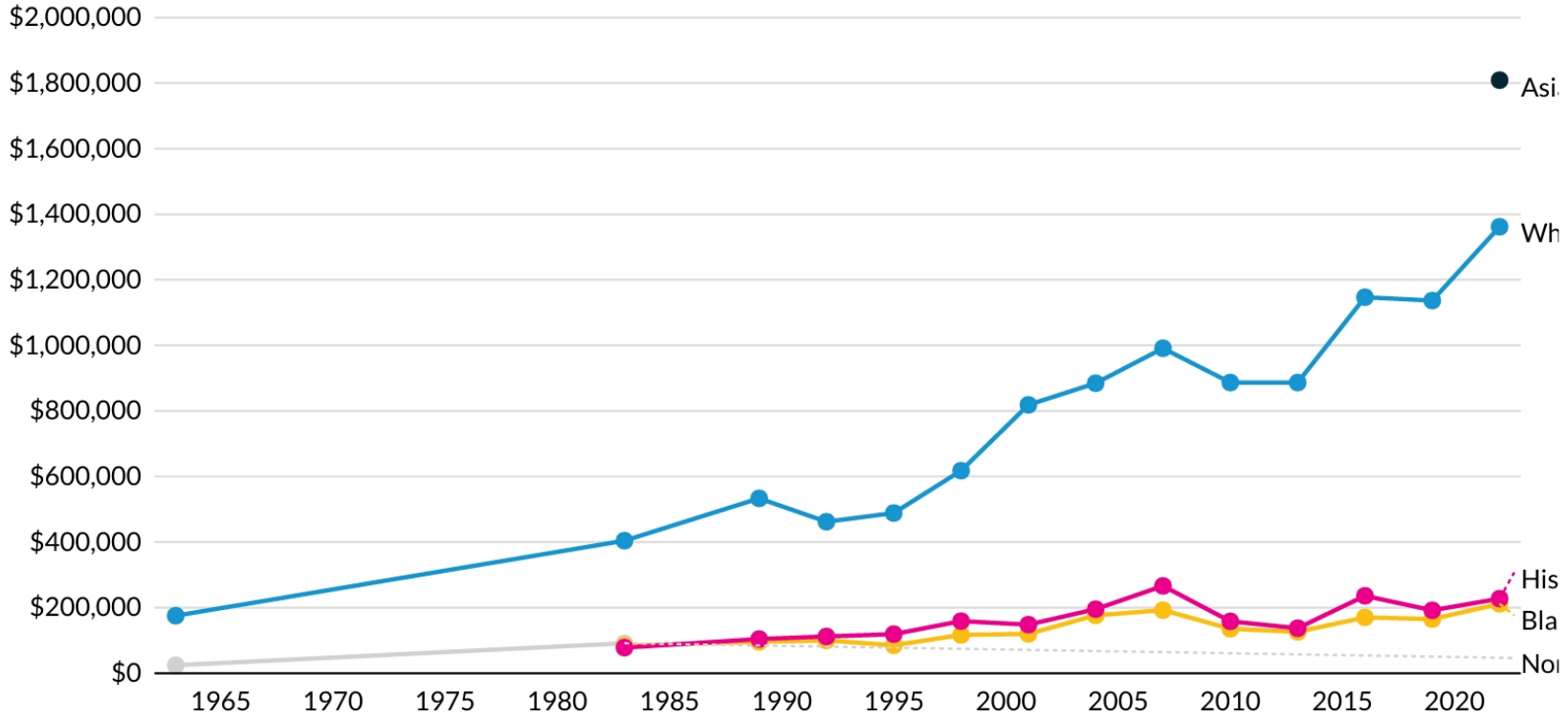


Flickr, The Commons

Nine Charts about Wealth Inequal
File C:/Users/Owner/OneDrive/Documents/Racial%20matters/Nine%20Charts%20about%20Wealth%20Inequality%20in%20America.pdf

Wealth gaps by race and ethnicity are large.

Average Family Wealth, by Race and Ethnicity, 1963–2022



Source: Urban Institute calculations from the Survey of Financial Characteristics of Consumers 1962, the Survey of Changes in Family Finances 1963, and the Survey of Consumer Finances 1983–2022.

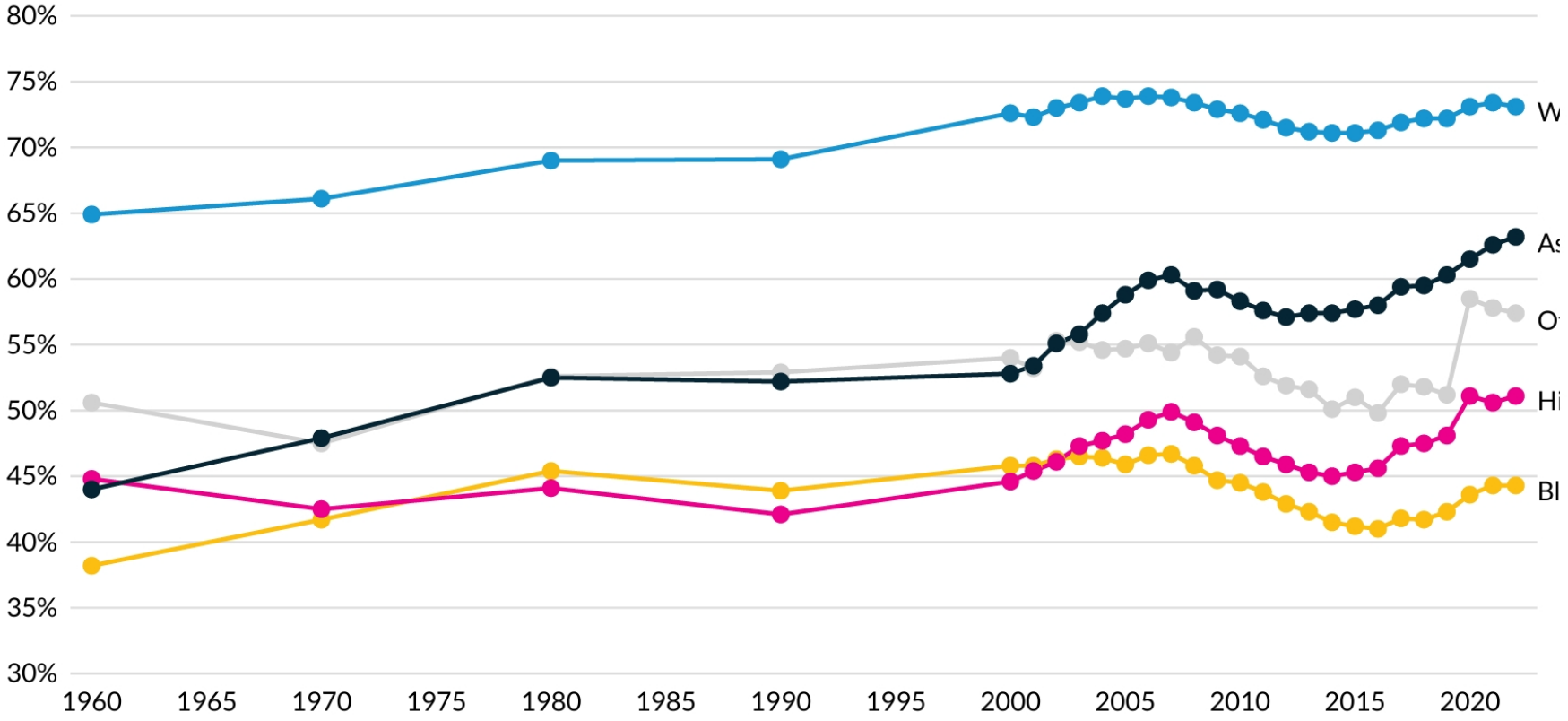
Notes: 2022 dollars. Until 1983, the surveys categorized all people of color as "nonwhite." The Survey of Consumer Finances began disaggregating data for Black and Hispanic families starting in 1983 and for Asian families starting in 2022. We used inflation adjustment factors from *Changes in U.S. Family Finances from 2019 to 2022: Evidence from the Survey of Consumer Finances*. No comparable data are available between 1963 and 1983.

Get the data • Download image

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Homeownership Rates, by Race and Ethnicity, 1960–2022



Source: Decennial census and the American Community Survey.

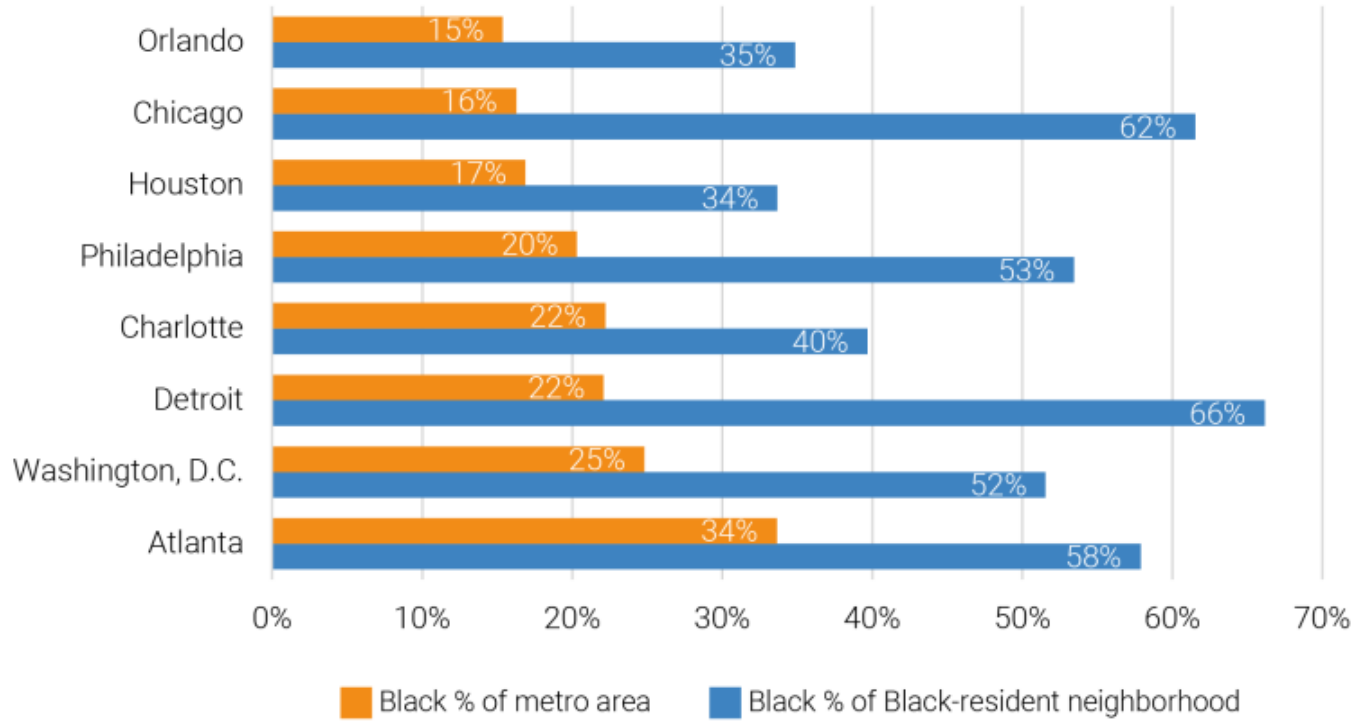
Notes: Data for 2020 should be interpreted with caution; because of restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic, survey results for that year may not have the same level of quality as those from other years. "Other" includes respondents who identified as non-Hispanic and another race or two or more races.

Get the data • Download image

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SEGREGATED NEIGHBORHOODS

Figure 3. Black percentages of metropolitan areas and neighborhoods of average Black residents
2015-2019



Source: William H. Frey analysis of 2015-2019 multiyear American Community Survey.

Metropolitan Policy Program at BROOKINGS

A GUIDING LETTER

A moment of historic portent has arrived for your nation as the conscience of its citizenry has stirred . . . .[with potential to free the US] from the pernicious effects of racial prejudice. . . . Sadly, however, your nation's history reveals that any significant progress toward racial equality has invariably been met by countervailing processes, overt or covert, that served to undermine the advances achieved and to reconstitute the forces of oppression by other means.

--Universal House of Justice, July 22, 2020



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A GUIDING LETTER CONTINUED

Racism is a profound deviation from the standard of true morality. It deprives a portion of humanity of the opportunity to cultivate and express the full range of their capability and to live a meaningful and flourishing life, while blighting the progress of the rest of humankind.

-Universal House of Justice, July 22, 2020



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BAHA'I FAITH CONTINUES RACIAL UNITY EFFORTS: "SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES"



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AND SETS IN MOTION CONSTRUCTIVE PROCESSES

The methods and instruments of the Plan allow every soul to contribute a share of what humanity needs in this day. Far from offering a temporary salve for the ills of the moment, the prosecution of the Plan is the means by which long-term, constructive processes, unfolding over generations, are being set in motion in every society.

--Universal House of Justice, Ridvan 2024



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SOCIAL ACTION & PARTICIPATION IN DISCOURSES OF SOCIETY



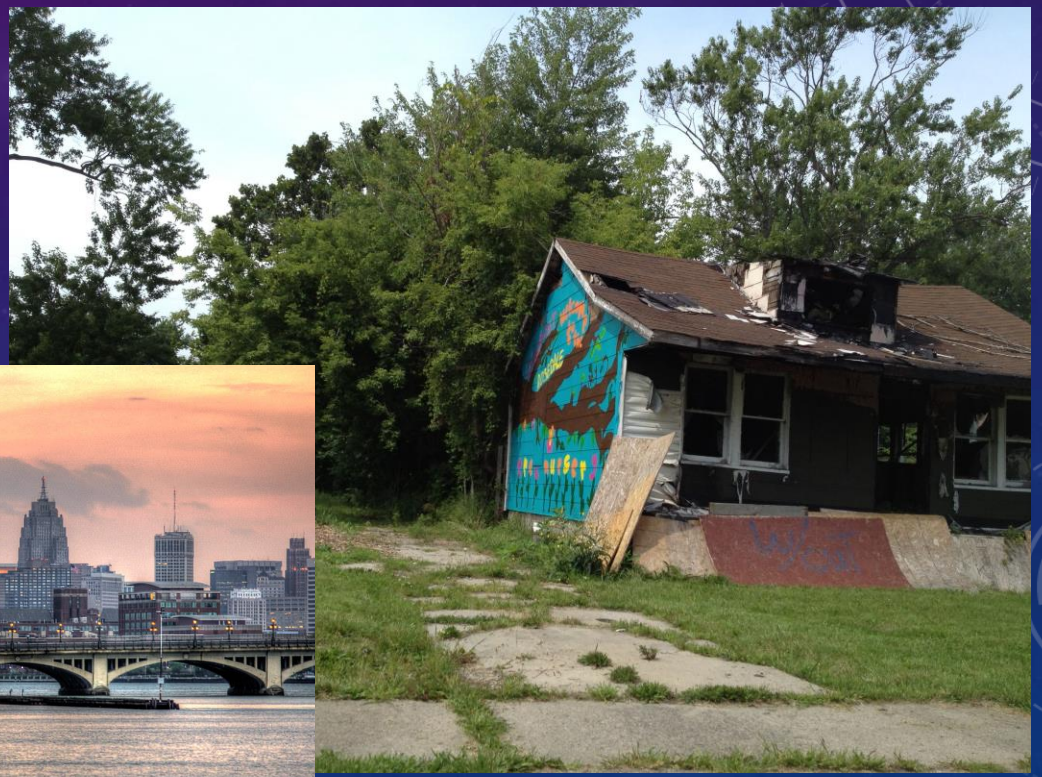
We wish to stress that, historically and now, social action and efforts to participate in the prevalent discourses of society have emerged not only in the context of growth, **but also as a result of individual Bahá'ís striving to contribute to society's progress in ways available to them.** As a personal response to Bahá'u'lláh's summons to work for the betterment of the world, believers have variously chosen to **adopt certain vocations a**nd have sought out opportunities to support the activities of like-minded groups and organizations. . . .

Universal House of Justice, December 30, 2021

IMPLICATIONS FOR A FIELD: URBAN PLANNING







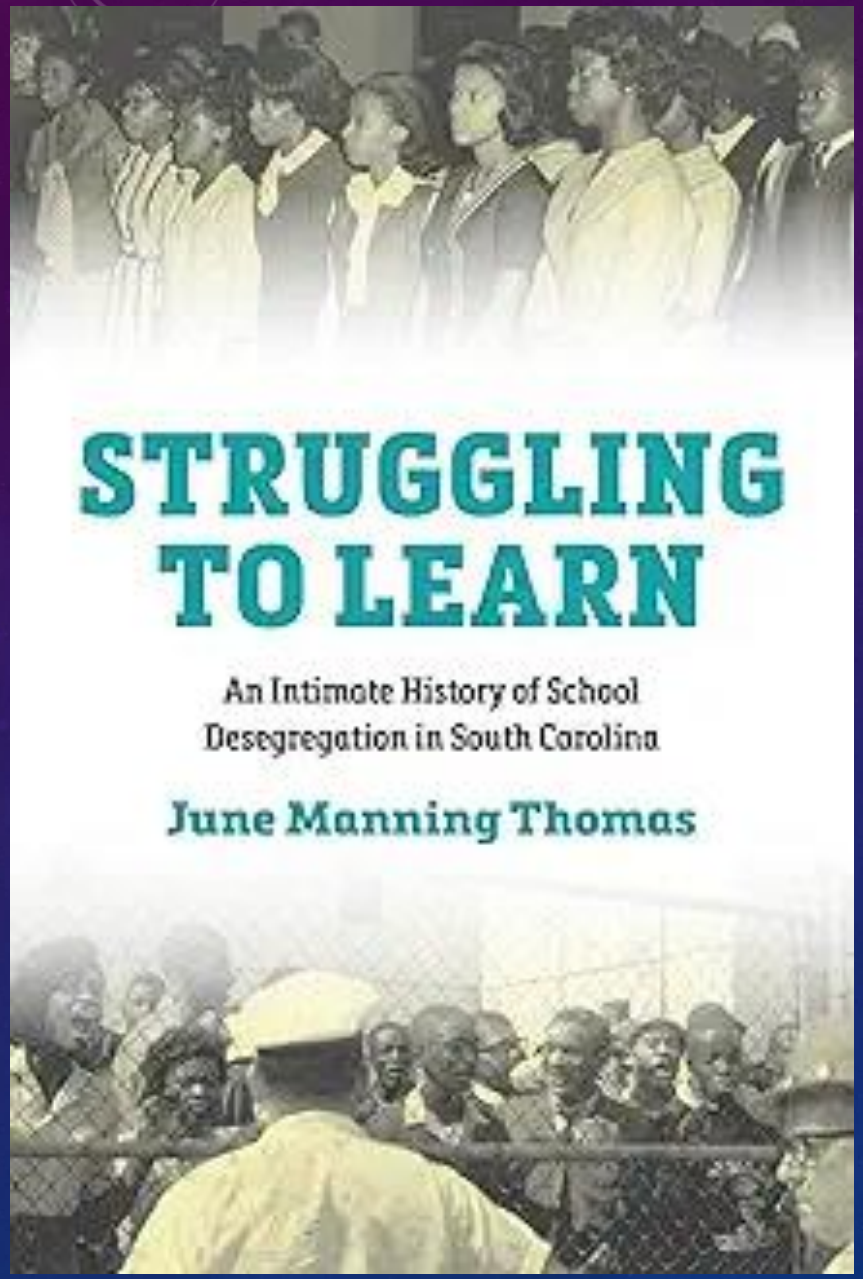
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ASSISTING NEIGHBORHOODS

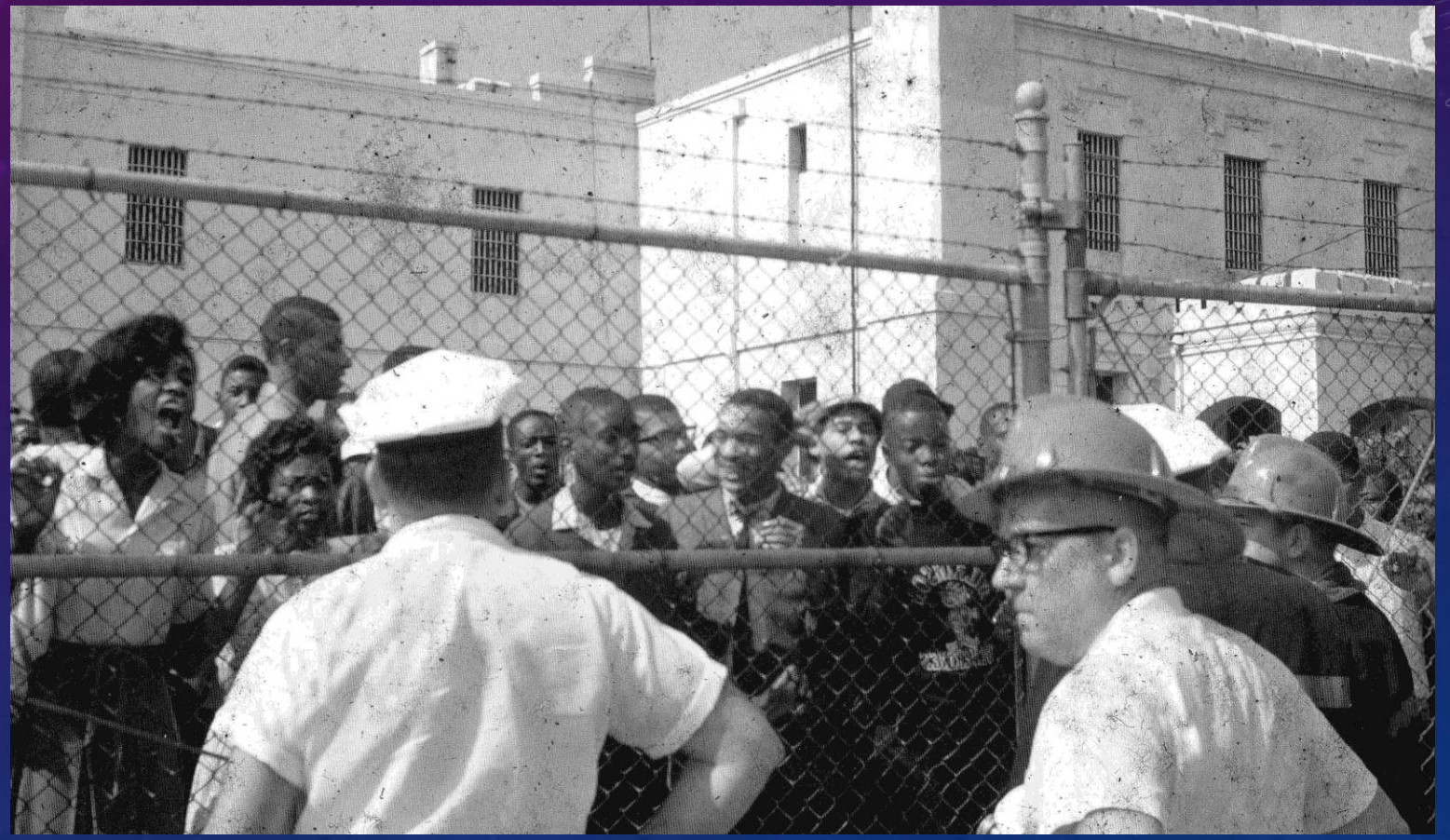


CIVIL RIGHTS RALLY, ORANGEBURG SOUTH CAROLINA




STRUGGLING TO LEARN
An Intimate History of School Desegregation in South Carolina
June Manning Thomas

ORANGEBURG MOVEMENT
AS MICROCOSM



Cecil Williams, Photographer

ORANGEBURG SCHOOL WARRIORS 1964

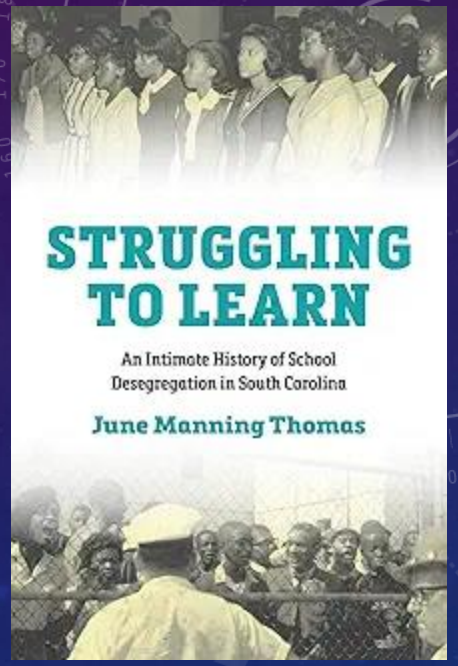
DESEGREGATION



Cecil Williams, photographer

ORANGEBURG SCHOOL WARRIORS 2022

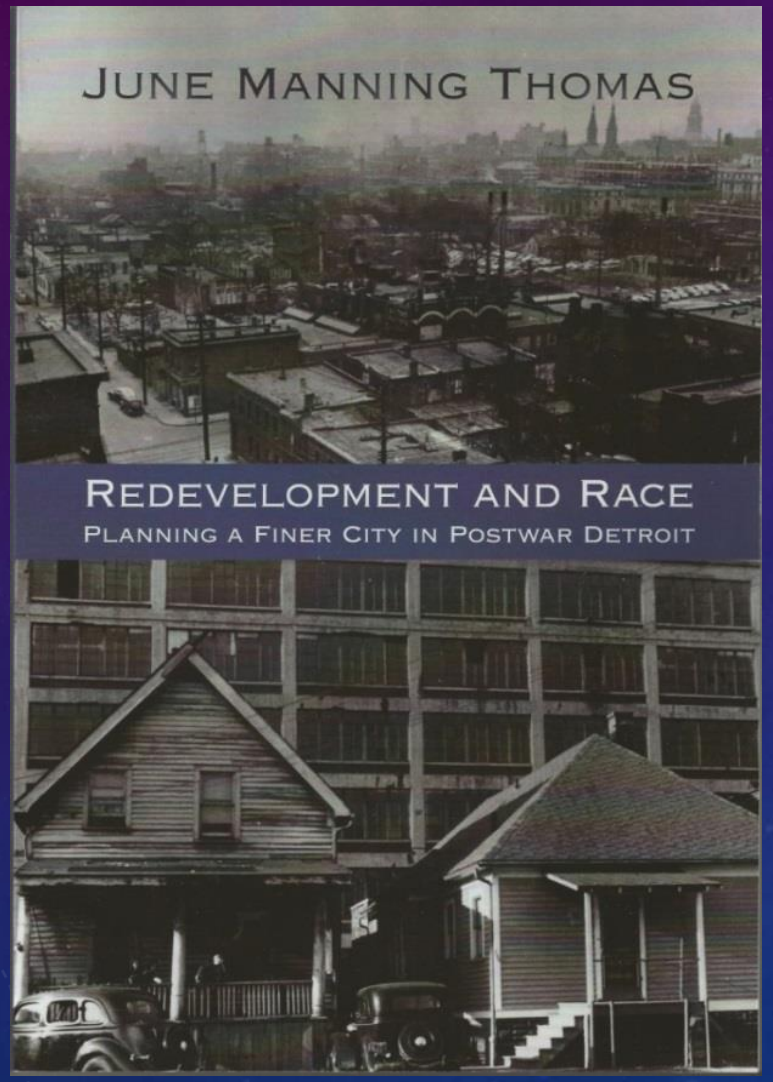


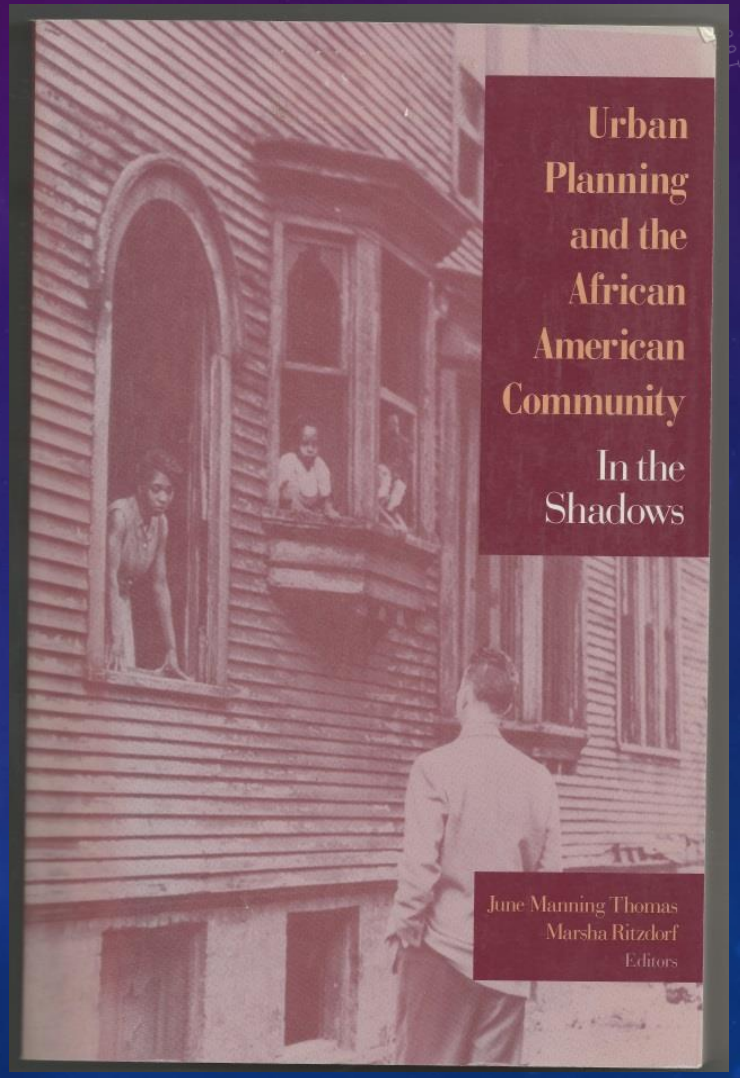


VISITING URBAN PLANNING STUDENTS GEORGIA TECH UNIV, 2023



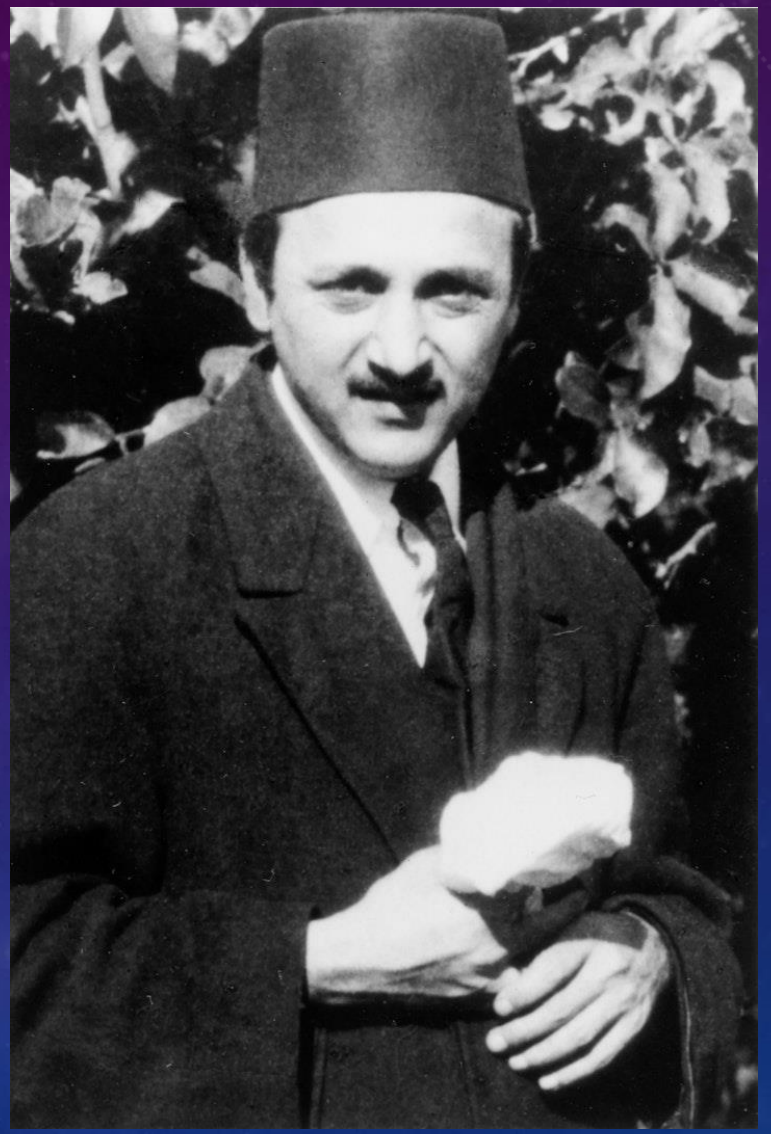
TWO BOOKS: URBAN PLANNING AND RACIAL JUSTICE

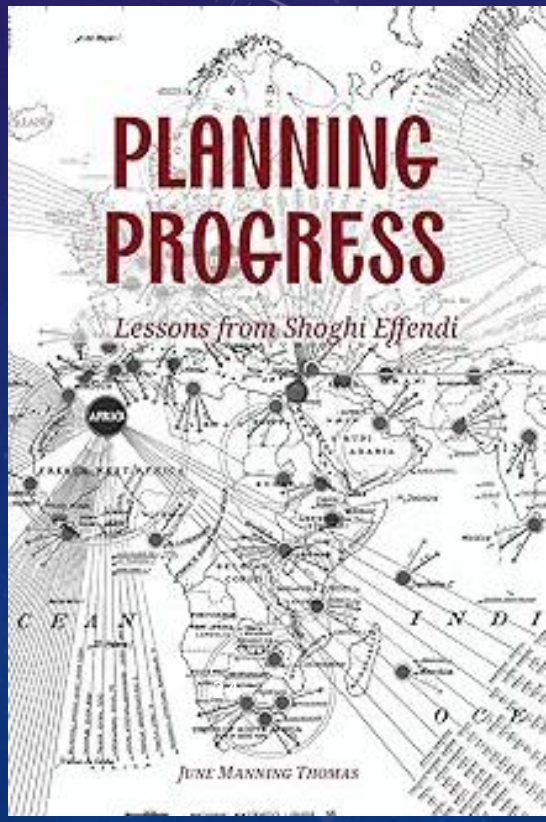




SHOGHI EFFENDI

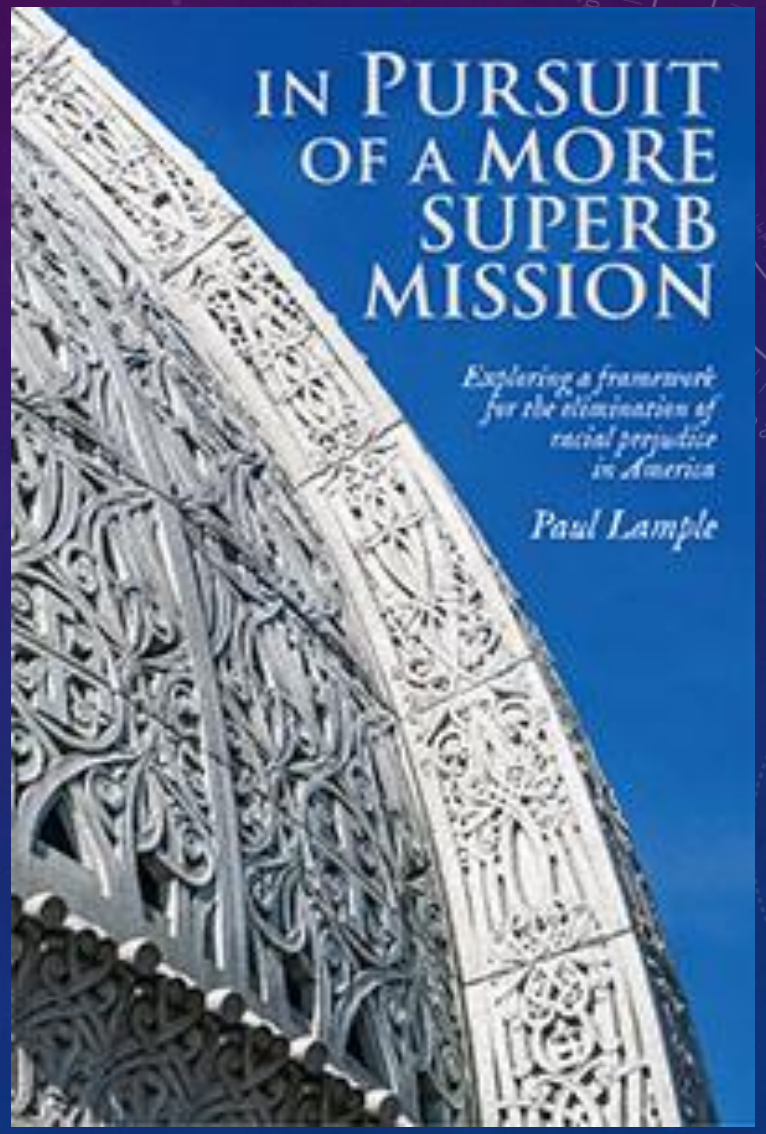
- Guardian of the Baha'i Faith
- Leader from early 1922 until his death in 1957
- Organizer and supporter of many successful global plans
- Spiritual leader, author, translator





A RECOMMENDED REFERENCE

- By Paul Lample
- Critiques the current debate over how to address racial inequality
- Offers one informed perspective, with substantial inclusion of selected guidance



A GIFT (FROM GRANDSON)

The believers must realize that the forces of prejudice are, along with so many other evil practices, growing at present stronger in the darkness surrounding humanity. The Bahá’ís must exercise not only tact and judgment, but courage and confidence in the aid of Bahá'u'lláh, which He will vouchsafe to those who attempt to live up to His teachings, in their whole approach to this racial question. Too much hesitance, too great timidity in the face of public opinion, can be just as bad as too much disregard of the actual situation and the problems it involves.

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, letter dated 12/23/41 to individual believer, attached to letter dated 2/4/85 on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States