

From the New Deal to the Green New Deal

Stories of Crisis and Possibility

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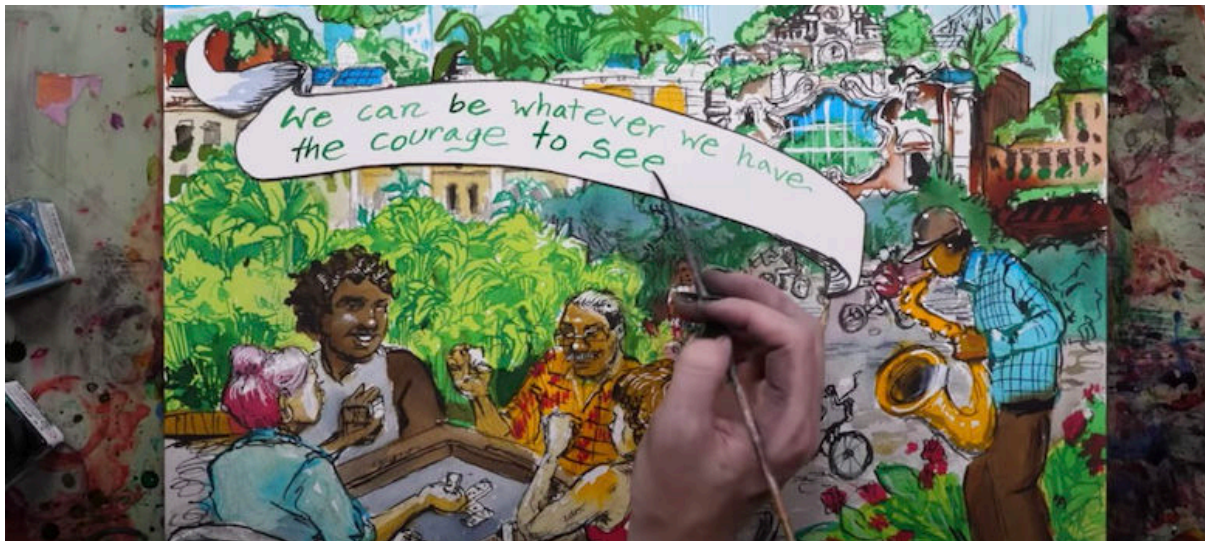


Illustration by Molly Crabapple

Still from *A Message from the Future* with a quote by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

IN 2018, THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL on Climate Change determined that global emissions need to be halved in less than 12 years or we will face catastrophically worsening drought, floods, extreme heat, and incalculable suffering. This fact has been repeated by those in the Climate Justice Movement so many times it can feel like screaming into the void. And yet it must be repeated because it is true and urgent. Slashing global emissions in this decade is a necessity, but it will take enormous pressure from below to demand that transformative policies are enacted by the world's most powerful governments. We need action and action now.

Terrifying scenarios of a scorching future cannot alone propel us forward. We need to be energized and sustained not only by the harm we seek

to prevent, but by the beautiful possibilities on the carbon-free horizon. The brilliance of Molly Crabapple's and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's short film, *A Message from the Future*, is that it introduces the Green New Deal as a possible path toward a hopeful and humane future, not just an escape plan from a dystopian one. But to get there — to universal health care, a federal jobs guarantee, a transformed energy infrastructure, and an economy where the labor movement is powerful and care work is predominant — we need action and action now.

As K-12 educators already trying to tackle climate justice in our classrooms, we need no convincing about the wisdom of teaching the Green New Deal (GND). But given that the GND is not a single policy or even platform, but



*Top: Dovey Johnson Roundtree, Ella Baker, Fred Ross
Bottom: Louise Stokes (with husband Charles and baby), Sylvia Woods, Woody Guthrie*

a still-developing vision of transformation, what should that teaching look like? In developing this lesson — part of a suite of lessons we are creating — we were clear that we wanted to invite students to be engaged as architects of that vision, not just observers. We wanted students to be able to make judgments about and share opinions on the collection of policies needed to prevent climate disaster and secure a more just future.

The GND is ambitious. That makes it easy for protectors of the status quo to dismiss it as impractical, impossible, pie in the sky. Without concrete historical parallels to refer to, we were concerned that our students' imaginations would fall prey to cynicism or defeatism. So we turned to the obvious place: the original New Deal, from which the GND of course takes its name. It was in Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1933 inaugural speech that he accurately described what the people, experiencing the emergency of the Great Depression, expected from him: "action and action now."

In this lesson, students learn about the ambitious and multifaceted plan of "action and action now" through the stories of a wide variety of people who interacted with New Deal policies. Some of the people students will meet are:

- Viola B. Muse, hired as part of the "Negro Unit" of the Federal Writers Project to document the stories of the last living formerly enslaved people in Florida;
- Martina Curl, an artist hired to paint murals around Oregon by the Federal Art Project;
- Fred Ross, hired by the Farm Security Administration to manage a camp in California for migrant workers fleeing the dust bowl and unemployment;
- James Lowe, hired by the Civilian Conservation Corps to do forestry work in rural Pennsylvania;
- and Emma Tiller, a sharecropper in Texas who benefited from the Works Progress

Administration's jobs program even while criticizing FDR's agricultural policies.

We hoped these glimpses of the New Deal would equip our students, when it came time to talk about the Green New Deal, with historical precedents to dream big, and with plenty of practical ideas about how to transform those dreams into policies.

This lesson is not meant to hold up the 1930s as a When America Was Great moment. We are clear-eyed about the New Deal: Its housing policies exacerbated and deepened segregation and the racial wealth gap; many of its provisions left out agricultural or domestic workers — and therefore the majority of Black workers in the United States; although the Indian Reorganization Act halted some of the most genocidal policies toward Native people, many other natural resource-related projects — like dam building — ignored treaties and destroyed ways of life; and it was during the New Deal that the Roosevelt administration oversaw the mass deportation of hundreds of thousands of Mexicans and Mexican Americans. The New Deal, like the country from which it sprang, was poisoned by white supremacy. A number of the roles in the mixer speak to their exclusion from New Deal programs or about its shortcomings.

And yet the New Deal was a time when the people of the United States demanded the government respond to their needs and suffering. It was a time when the government did respond — quickly and tangibly — to the emergency of the moment. And it was a moment that some truly progressive ideas were given a chance — if only briefly — to take flight. We agree with Naomi Klein, who has written that the New Deal “remains a useful touchstone for showing how every sector of life, from forestry to education to arts to housing to electrification, can be transformed under the umbrella of a single, society-wide mission.”

A Green New Deal is possible, and indeed in many respects is already underway. It is not the only big and righteous idea dismissed as impossible even as it was already coming into fruition. When the immediate emancipation of 4 million enslaved people seemed like a remote political possibility, enslaved people were *already* freeing



Photo by Becker1999 via Flickr

Green New Deal rally in Detroit ahead of the Democratic Party presidential primary debate on July 31, 2019.

themselves, their allies were *already* conducting the underground railroad, and abolitionists were *already* taking every possible opportunity to make slavery untenable, to create the crisis that would serve as an opportunity for lasting change. That is what we hope to communicate to our students: We make the impossible possible by acting, by organizing, by doing. The example of the New Deal can help students imagine — and then enact — a bridge over the gaping chasm between an unsustainable now and a habitable and humane future.

Materials Needed for In-Person Instruction

- A copy of one mixer role for every student in class.
- Blank nametags, enough for every student in class.
- Copies of “The People of the New Deal: Questions” — enough for every student in class.
- 5” x 7” blank cards; one for every student in class.
- Crayons, colored pencils, or markers for students to share.

Materials Needed for Remote Instruction

- Roles and role assignment template and questions for remote instruction. You can find links to these materials on the last page of the lesson.
- Padlet, Jamboard, Google Slides, or something similar for sharing postcards.

Suggested Procedure

Note: Although we are writing this during the pandemic, when many students are still learning online, we look forward to a return to face-to-face classrooms. In these instructions, we assume in-person teaching, but included some ideas for teaching remotely. For more ideas on remote teaching, see “[Teaching ZEP Lessons Remotely: Recommitting to the Why — if Not the How — of Our Pedagogy.](#)”

1. Ask students what they know about the New Deal programs during the Great Depression. Do they have a favorable impression, unfavorable impression? Why? Ask students: What was “new” about the New Deal? Have they heard about the Green New Deal? If so, ask students to share some of their thoughts or impressions.
2. Tell students that in this mixer activity, they are going to represent real people who were affected by different New Deal programs. In the activity, they will circulate in the classroom or in breakout rooms to “meet” different individuals and to learn about their lives and the New Deal programs that they experienced.
3. Distribute one role to each student in class. There are 20 roles, and so it is likely that some students will receive the same role. That will not be a problem in the activity should you have fewer than 20 students in class. To help students absorb details of their character, ask them to underline or otherwise mark-up their role sheet to highlight points that they think are especially important. (For remote instruction, ask students to make a copy of their role so that they can

write directly on the document.) Begin with role No. 1, and distribute these in order. For remote instruction, you can pre-assign roles to students using the role assignment template. Tell students that all of these roles reflect the stories of real people. In some instances, the roles incorporate the individuals’ actual words, based on interviews they gave or articles they wrote. In writing these, we took some license in drawing together stories from multiple sources into one person’s role.

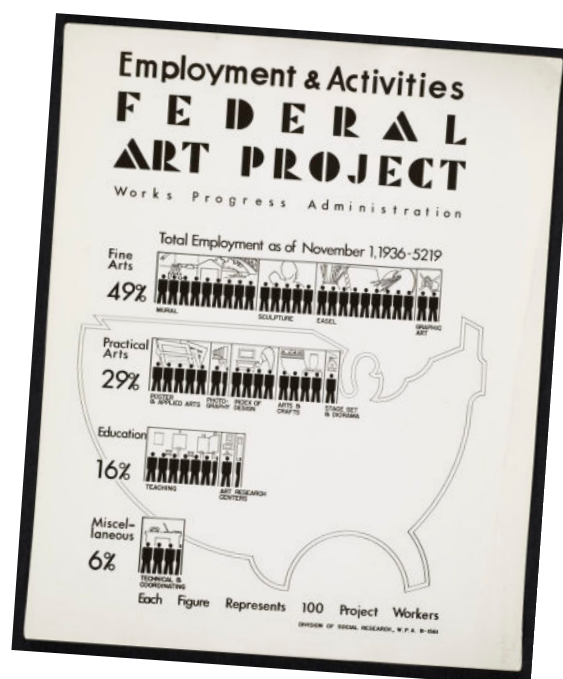
In our experience, mixers such as this one are pedagogically powerful, but their success requires planning and care. Before teaching this activity, we encourage you to read the Zinn Education Project’s “How to — and How Not to — Teach Role Plays,” to determine whether you want to teach this activity and how you might adapt it for your classroom (<https://www.zinnproject.org/news/how-to-teach-role-plays>).

4. The roles are not all uniform in length, and it is ideal if students have an opportunity to read their roles at least a couple of times, in order to attempt to “become” their individual with as much fidelity as possible. We recommend that you allow sufficient time for this portion of the activity. To help students absorb details of their role, ask them to underline or otherwise mark-up their role sheet to highlight points that they think are especially important. (For remote instruction, ask students to make a copy of their role so that they can write directly on the document.) Ask students to turn over their roles and to write out the three or four things that they think are the most significant aspects of their lives. You might ask them to write down something that they admire about this person.
5. Ask students to fill out their nametag with the name of the individual they will be portraying. For remote instruction, it is helpful if students have screen-naming privileges so that they can rename themselves. This saves

critical time in breakout rooms, so that students do not have to spell out names for each other.

6. Distribute the “People of the New Deal: Questions” handout. For remote teachers, these questions are on the same document as the role. Review the questions as a whole class. Ask students to put a check next to any question that applies to them, and that they will be able to help someone else answer about them, as they meet others.
7. Tell students that as they circulate in the class meeting one another in role, it is helpful if they speak in the “I” voice, as if they were this individual. There is some controversy among educators about the ethics of asking students to speak in someone else’s voice, especially when crossing racial, class, or gender boundaries. Our invitation to students is one of “social imagination”; we ask students to attempt to step inside another person’s life, to “walk in their shoes,” to speak in their voice, and it is just that: an attempt. We can never “become” another human being, no matter how many details we know about their life — but we can *reach* for empathy; we can show our respect for other people, their struggles, hopes, fears, and accomplishments. Speaking in the “I” voice is a gesture of solidarity, of compassion. And in our experience, this approach helps students internalize their own assigned individual more effectively and retain more of what they hear from others in the activity. That said, should you or your students feel uncomfortable with this approach, the activity will still work by referring to one’s character in the third person.

Some other things to keep in mind for a successful mixer activity: Tell students at the outset that in their effort to speak in the voice of their assigned individual, they should not adopt an accent or to otherwise try to imitate how they imagine their individual might talk; they should simply speak in their own voice. Students should use another individual to answer only one of the questions on



the handout, even though sometimes an individual would be able to answer several questions. The idea is for a pair of students to have a substantial — but relatively brief — conversation about one of the questions and then to move on to meet another individual. Obviously, if one student is wandering around without another student to speak with, a pair of students should invite them in. However, students should not be allowed to group up to answer questions collectively, as invariably someone will simply become a spectator; this is an activity in which everyone speaks. In a large class, it is possible that students will “meet themselves.” If that happens, tell students to move along to find another individual. Finally, emphasize that this is a verbal activity, so they should tell their story to others, but not give their role to others to read.

If you are teaching remotely, these meetings will take place in breakout rooms. We have found the sweet spot for remote mixers is three students per room, for five to six minutes, with at least three rotations.

8. It is always hard to know how much time to allow for a mixer activity. Generally, in the neighborhood of half an hour, but

in circulating through the class with your students — and, better yet, playing a role yourself! — you will get a sense for when to wrap things up. There are only seven actual questions — for the eighth question, students must step out of their role to discuss — so students will not be able to meet everyone in the mixer. It's important that they get to question No. 8, so as you see other students discussing that question, you should consider urging the entire class to move on to discuss that one in pairs.

9. Ask students to return to their seats or bring students back to the main virtual classroom and invite them to write a bit on the activity. Some questions you might consider giving to them:

- Whose story in the mixer made the biggest impression on you? Why?
- What inspires you about the original New Deal programs?
- Think about your conversation for question No. 8. What New Deal programs would you like to see today?
- What problems did you notice in the original New Deal that you would not want to see repeated today?
- What questions do you have about the New Deal, based on your conversations?
- What do you think is the single biggest “lesson” from the New Deal that we can learn for thinking about a “Green New Deal” today?

10. Discuss these as a whole class. Since students met a different assortment of characters, and therefore learned about different New Deal programs, this is a critical place to encourage students to be specific in their discussion of the policies they encountered. For example, a student might respond to the question about problems they noticed with “A lot of the New Deal programs were racist!” We encourage you to follow-up with “Can you give an

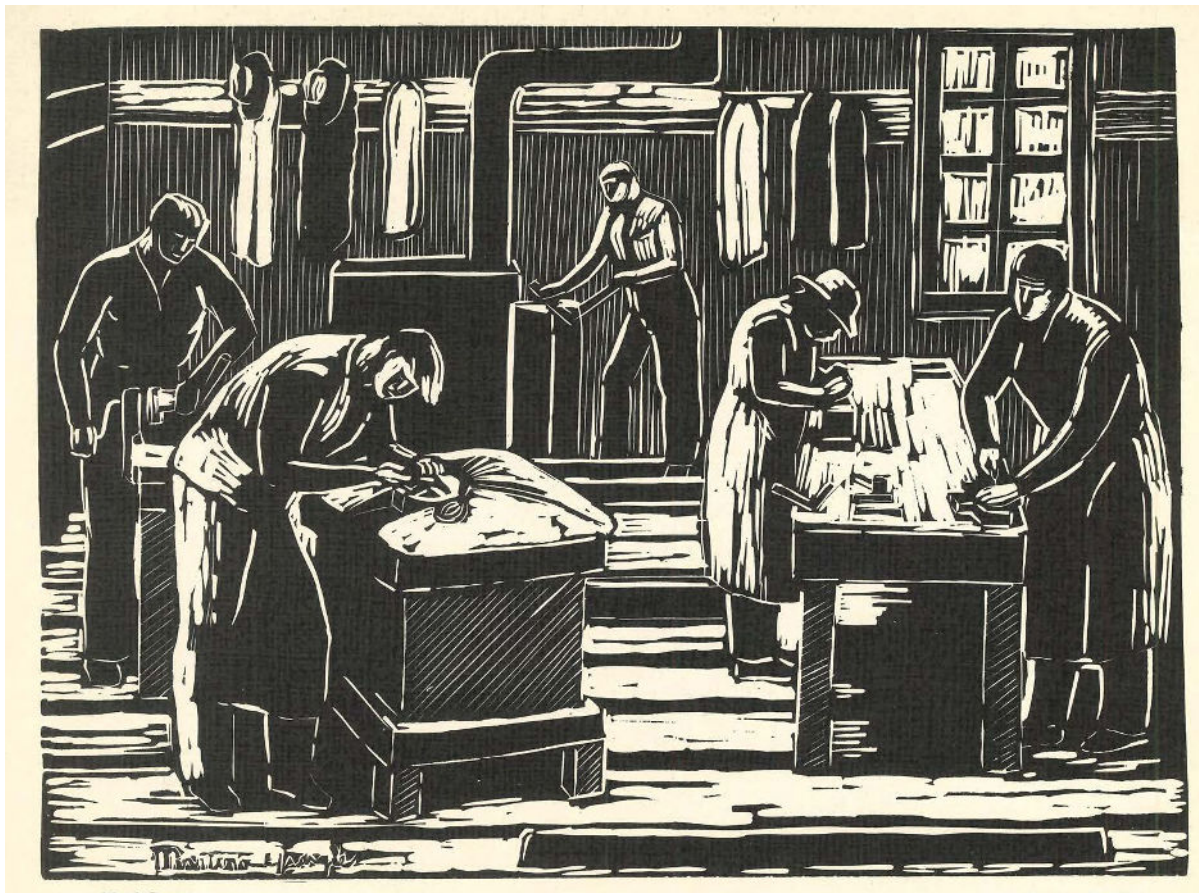


Seattle Times Archive

Jesse Jackson, right, the “mayor” of Hooverville, and Ruben Washington make plans to dig ditches to drain water from the streets in the settlement on January 13, 1935.

example of one of those policies?” In this way, the knowledge surfaced by the mixer is democratized and students will be better prepared for the discussions and activities that follow.

11. Distribute a blank 5” x 7” card to each student. Ask them to distill what they learned about the New Deal into one “lesson” to pass on to the future — a “postcard to the future.” This could be a paragraph, or simply a slogan, phrase, or even a word. Ask students to write the lesson on their card and to illustrate it. (Provide crayons, colored pencils, or markers.) Illustrations needn’t be realistic. But they could be. Students might illustrate some New Deal accomplishment that they were inspired by in the mixer activity — the collective work of the CCC, the farmers’ defiance in the “penny auctions,” the murals of the Federal Art Project. The “postcards” could seek simply to evoke a feeling or mood — hope, possibility, transformation. The aim is for students to attempt to capture something fundamental and lasting to pass along to those in the future, working to create a Green New Deal.



Works Progress Administration (WPA) via Oregon State Archives, public domain

Wood Carvers by Martina Gangle Curl.

For remote instruction, students could use materials they have at home to draw, paint, and color a “postcard,” and take a picture of it to share electronically. They could also use digital drawing tools, though far fewer students will be adept with these. Finally, students might pull from an assortment of online sources to create a digital collage.

One caveat here, lest it seem that the punchline of the lesson is to enlist student support for a particular piece of legislation. First, the Green New Deal, as proposed by New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Massachusetts Sen. Edward Markey, is not actually a piece of legislation; it is aspirational, a House Resolution, framing the needed work ahead. And, as we suggest in the introduction above, the Green New Deal is not a “thing” we are waiting for, but a network of initiatives and activism already underway. No doubt, the premise of this lesson is that

our society — our world — needs revolutionary changes if civilization is to survive. This should no longer be controversial. This is not just the starting point for this lesson; it should be the starting point for the entire school curriculum.

12. While students complete their “Postcards to the Future,” put up large poster paper around the classroom, enough of these so that two or three students can affix their postcards to the poster paper. When students have completed their postcards ask them to attach these with tape or a glue stick to one of the posters around the classroom. For remote instruction, you can create a digital gallery using Google Slides, Padlet, or Jamboard.
13. In a gallery walk, ask students to wander the classroom (or digital gallery) and look at the postcards to the future. Ask them to notice what they love and to write comments on the posters, and to comment on people’s

comments if they like. They can also raise questions and make connections between the postcards — e.g., “This card reminds me of . . .” You might give students a target — say 10 comments — so they have a sense of your expectations. Students should sign their comments.

14. At the conclusion of the gallery walk, ask students to return to their seats and to write about the “collective text”: What are some of the big ideas that they came away with from the postcards to the future? What are the lessons for the Green New Deal? After students have completed these, have a full-class conversation about what they noticed.

By the way, the postcards from the future activity is not original, and there are a number of versions of this. We first heard of this from McDaniel (formerly Madison) High School teacher Treothe Bullock, a longtime member of the Portland Public Schools Climate Justice Committee. ❖

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[zinnedproject.org/share-your-story](https://www.zinnedproject.org/share-your-story)

People of the New Deal: Questions

1. Find someone who benefited from a New Deal program. Who is the person and how did they benefit?
2. Find someone who experienced some kind of racial or gender discrimination in a New Deal program that they were either a part of or excluded from. Who is the person, what kind of discrimination did they experience?
3. Find someone who was able to help people as a result of a New Deal program. Who is the person and how were they able to help people?
4. Find someone who did “cultural work” as a result of a New Deal program — for example in art, history, storytelling, or music. Who is the person, what kind of cultural work did they do?
5. Find someone whose life was changed by their participation in a New Deal program. Who is the person and how was their life changed?
6. Find a young person who benefited from a New Deal program. Who is the person and how did they benefit?
7. Find someone who may have benefited from a New Deal program, but has an idea on how these programs could have been improved. Who is the person, what is their idea?
8. After you have answered these questions, find someone, and step out of your role. Based on the conversations you had with other people involved in the original New Deal, what lessons can be learned for a “Green New Deal” today? Come up with as many as you can think of.

Mixer Roles

1.

Viola B. Muse
Negro Unit
Federal Writers Project
Works Progress Administration
Jacksonville, Florida

I was born in Alabama in 1890. When I was a young woman, I married John P. Muse, a lawyer in the LaVilla area of Jacksonville, Florida. I moved to Florida, and became a hairdresser. My goodness, coming from Alabama, I had never seen a place like LaVilla. People called it the Harlem of the South, because we had so many theatres, hotels, restaurants, and jazz clubs. Of course, because of Florida's Jim Crow laws, these were all segregated; Black people were not allowed in the places for white people unless they were there to work, but LaVilla was wonderful. I loved being a hairdresser, because I was interested in art, and doing ladies' hair was my art. I also loved to talk with people, and ask questions, and hear about their lives, and I got to do that all day long. Sometimes I'd go home and write down stories I heard from people, just because I found them so interesting. But then the Great Depression hit and I was out of a job.

Sometime after that I heard about the Federal Writers Project, which gave jobs to out-of-work writers to interview people about their lives and to write them down. I was not a professional writer, but I was a good writer, and I was hired in 1936 for this program. Of course, just like in the rest of Florida, and around the South, this was segregated, too, and so I was put in what they called the Negro Unit. In the Federal Writers Project, I had two big assignments. One was to interview people who had been enslaved. The other was to document lots of the amazing Black artists around Florida. This was a dream job for me — and it was so important. Without the interviews of people who had lived in slavery, their stories would have been lost forever, but we were able to tell the world about their lives.

I interviewed one man, "Father" Charles Coates, who was 108 years old when we spoke. But as I wrote at the time, Mr. Coates "still possesses a keen and unbroken memory of happenings during slavery and early reconstruction of our country." These people who'd lived in slavery told me vivid stories about their joys and sorrows — in such detail that I felt like I was looking at a painting. I also got to interview artists of all kinds. One man I interviewed was a cigar-maker who built miniature ships. The only taxidermist in the whole city of Jacksonville was a Black man who lived in LaVilla, and I interviewed him and wrote his story. I even went to the LaVilla Park School and collected some of the drawings and poetry that the 6th graders created. How fortunate I was that the Federal Writers Project hired us to do this work!

Of course, all the editors were white, and they sometimes changed the words we wrote down, and they never let us in their editors' meetings — which were only for white people. But despite the racism we suffered, I know that the work we did telling the stories of Black people and our community was a gift to the world.

2.

Martina Curl Federal Art Project Portland, Oregon

I was born in Woodland, Washington, to a migrant family in 1906. Like many immigrants, we were poor, and I began work as a fruit picker with my mother at age 8. Though the work was tedious, and my back ached and hands cramped far too much for an 8-year-old, I liked farmwork — the trees, the animals, the people — they all enchanted me. I loved living so close to nature — the first blooms of trilliums, Johnny-jump-ups, lady's slippers, spring beauties, and roses seemed to me the most delightful of treasures. Life was hard for my mother, who in addition to farmwork worked as a domestic — washing clothes, sewing, that kind of thing. Though she was often exhausted, my mother was honest, kind, and strong, and she instilled in me a deep love for the underdog — for those who work hard and take little. When I was 14, I moved to Portland, Oregon, to live with my grandmother, work as a housekeeper for a local family, and attend Franklin High School.

The beauty of the natural world never left me, and I fell in love with painting and drawing. I wanted to earn my living doing what I loved, and spent years after high school working and saving to attend the Museum Art School. When I arrived, I felt out of place. My peers were wealthy and spent summers painting landscapes on luxurious vacations, while I was picking fruit with my mother from sun-up to sundown. Four years of working nights, weekends, and summers to support my education wore me down, and ultimately prevented me from finishing school. I felt depleted and discouraged — sure that I would never be able to support myself and my son with art.

When a pamphlet introduced me to socialism — the dream of a world in which working-class people were treated as equals — I was hooked. My art began to reflect this, and I became heavily involved in the communist movement — fighting for social security, strong unions, and fair labor laws. In 1936, I applied for a job with the Federal Art Project, the ambitious wing of the massive New Deal program: the Works Progress Administration (WPA). From 1936 to 1942, I received a \$90-a-month stipend to create paintings and murals around Oregon. The Federal Art Project exemplified the world we were fighting for: one of economic equality, beauty, and justice.

3.

Ella Baker
Workers Education Project
Harlem, New York

I'm a young Black woman who recently moved to Harlem, New York, from the Jim Crow South. I thought my prestigious college degree from Shaw University would land me a job as a professor or even a doctor. But it was the middle of the Great Depression — when nearly one-quarter of all adults could not find a job and when the lines for food banks stretched blocks. It was an impossible time to find a job. Especially as a Black woman.

My college diploma could not overcome Jim Crow discrimination in the North. I was even denied a job addressing envelopes! Eventually I started waitressing part time, the only job I could find. The work was hard, low-paying, and unfulfilling.

The Great Depression left me with more questions than answers about racism and capitalism. I wanted to learn as much as I could about the world and about politics, so I spent my idle time attending public lectures and public forums. I spent much of my time at the Harlem library and Harlem YMCA. My passion for learning led me to help establish the Negro History Club and Young People's Forum, and join the Adult Education Committee. When I wasn't waitressing, I led workshops on socialism, sponsored forums about lynching, and hosted debates about segregation and colonialism. This work taught me that education can make a difference in people's lives and lead to social change. But while this work fulfilled me, it didn't put food on the table. I lived paycheck to paycheck, barely getting by.

That all changed in 1936 when a friend told me about the Workers Education Project (WEP). The WEP was part of the larger New Deal program called the Works Progress Administration that hired many educated young adults with teaching skills, particularly young Black women like me. I understood that my job was not just to teach people that education is good for its own sake. Instead, I saw education was a tool that can lead people to act for justice in our community. So we held classes in churches that helped people understand why there is so much poverty in so rich a country as the United States. And we held classes in union halls that taught workers about unsafe working conditions and how to go on strike for better pay. I especially wanted to make sure Black women were not excluded from our classes, so I organized classes in majority-Black neighborhoods and worksites. After all, what good is education if it doesn't give people the skills they need to address problems in their own lives?

4.

Fred Ross
Farm Security Administration
Arvin Migratory Labor Camp
Near Bakersfield, California

I am manager of the Arvin Migratory Labor Camp. The camp is one of 19 migrant camps set up by the Farm Security Administration (FSA), a New Deal program to provide safe and decent housing to poor Dust Bowl migrants moving into California from Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas, and Missouri seeking jobs.

I'm the first to admit that my path to what I call relief work is a bit odd. I grew up in a sheltered and segregated whites-only community in Los Angeles. I attended one of the most prestigious colleges around — University of Southern California. Although millions lost jobs across the country and Mexican farmworkers were violently deported from my community, I didn't think there was much wrong with anything. I wasn't so interested in history or politics. That is, not until I myself had a hard time getting a job after graduating college. I eventually got a job as a relief worker at a farmworker migrant camp through the FSA. I spent my days hanging around poor farmworkers, handing out food, resolving conflicts between residents, and making a decent wage. More importantly, I listened and learned from them about what was wrong in this country.

I learned that the Arvin Camp was at the heart of a long struggle between farmworkers and the farm bosses. I saw farmworkers being cheated out of wages. I watched farmworkers and union organizers go on strike to fight for higher wages and decent housing. And I saw farmworkers bravely defend themselves from police and hired mobs who broke strikes with bats and bullets.

I was told that my job was to remain neutral between the farmworkers union and the farm bosses. But in the face of so much poverty and injustice, I simply couldn't sit idly by any longer. I invited union organizers to come meet with farmworkers so they could learn how to solve their problems out in the fields. I defied my bosses and joined and organized strike committees to support the striking farmworkers. And when a group of Mexican farmworkers came to the camp needing safe shelter, I defied the whites-only order and desegregated the camp. My experience as the manager of the FSA camp radicalized me — opened my eyes to injustices others faced that my own personal experience shielded me from. And it taught me that problems faced by farmworkers were caused by the rotten economic system and racial segregation that made farmworkers powerless and made growers powerful.

5.

Pablo Diaz Albertt
Civilian Conservation Corps
Libby, Montana

I'm a lucky man. I was living in New York City, depressed. I had walked the streets so long seeking a decent job. But then I heard about the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the New Deal program to give jobs to unemployed men and put them to work in our country's state and national parks. I was accepted and they sent me by train to Libby, Montana, where I now live in Camp F-44. Wow. The majestic Rocky Mountains, covered with shining white blankets on top — the melody of the brooks and the beautiful Western sunset. I work on a CCC forestry project. The work is hard. I help saw down large trees to thin the forest for better growth, and I build roads to aid foresters in their fight against fire. Let me tell you, this work has made me a lot stronger. I have become more solid; it's changed me for the better. Not to mention that they feed us three hot meals a day — they even bring it in to us when we are out in the woods, away from camp. And being with so many people from around the country: I learned things I never knew. Hundreds of thousands of men have jobs, thanks to the CCC. This government program pays me enough so that I have some spending money, and I send home to my family about 80 percent of what I make. This is no handout. I work hard. The CCC gave me dignified work that helps people and nature. As I say, I am one lucky man.

Helen Olson

**Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) Camp
Arcola, Pennsylvania**

In 1931, when I was 14, I had to quit school and go to work. I worked until this past January of 1934, when the firm I worked for moved part of their mill south. I was laid off. When people think about “the unemployed,” they often think of men. But women were often too ashamed to admit they were unemployed and starving. A famous writer, Meridel Le Sueur, wrote: “A woman will shut herself up in a room until it is taken away from her and eat a cracker a day and be quiet as a mouse so there are no social statistics concerning her.”

My first knowledge about Camp Arcola was when our relief visitor came to our house and asked me if I’d like to go to a resident school. He told me that the government was signing up women to participate in over 100 centers around the country, for six- to eight-week periods. These camps were run by a government agency called FERA, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. I couldn’t make up my mind until I went to the meeting at Pottsville, Pennsylvania, and met Miss Segelbaum. She told us a lot of things we would learn, such as swimming, dramatics, sewing, and working in the kitchen. I thought that maybe learning to live in a group and associating with different people would help me get work.

When I got to Camp Arcola, I had different meetings and the committees and all the interest groups. We learn much more than girls who just sit around the house and are out of work. I learn a lot about waitress work and other things, too. I have gained more confidence in myself by speaking in front of a group and have also learned how to adjust myself to a new environment.

At the camp, a cooperative store was organized, and I was elected manager. I like the idea of cooperative living. The committees are very well organized, and the council selected by the girls are doing a very good job. Although we were told that it was a camp where we make our own rules and regulations, I myself believed that the director would make the rules, and we would have to obey them. I was pleased to find that we could set up our own government and also really have a chance at cooperative living.

Some men call this camp a “She-She-She” camp, making fun of the fact that we are all young women, and the men’s camps are considered the “real” CCC — Civilian Conservation Corps — camps. It’s true that the men get to do more than the women, but this camp has changed my life — for the better.

Jesse Jackson
Hooverville
Seattle

I am the mayor of Hooverville, a town on Seattle's waterfront. Well, I am not an official mayor because Hooverville is not an official town, but I do my best to offer the folks I live with advice and help them settle their disputes, so that's what they call me — the mayor. I used to be a lumberjack, but like most everyone who lives here, I am unemployed. Without jobs, we cannot afford rent, and so we settled here, on this area of the waterfront that wasn't being used. It started as a joke to call it after the president, Herbert Hoover, who had the gall to claim, "We in America today are nearer to the final triumph over poverty than ever before in the history of any land." But the name stuck. We built our own shelters with the spare lumber, metal sheeting, and nails and screws we could salvage from around the city.

At the start, in 1931, our encampment was constantly harassed — by police, or health officials condemning our homes as "unfit for human habitation." But when Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected, we saw a change. City officials asked to meet with us. We elected a little council of members to attend the meeting — two whites, two Blacks, and two Filipinos, since we were a diverse bunch. At that meeting, the city agreed to let us stay until more suitable housing was available. After that, we started to hear about FDR's New Deal; I was hopeful that it might help guys like us — nope. The Federal Housing Authority made it easier to get loans to buy a home — but if you're unemployed or Black, you're not eligible; the Housing Act of 1937 was supposed to do more for the poor by building public housing. Here in Seattle, the Housing Authority built Yesler Terrace for low-income people. But there was a catch. Not only were there not nearly enough units to house all of Seattle's poor and houseless, you had to be a citizen, and it was only for families. Most of us are single and many of us are immigrants. Now the war is here, and all the New Deal housing money is going to build barracks for people working in the war industries. And the City Council voted to bulldoze our Hooverville, my home of the last 10 years.

Louise Stokes
Outhwaite Homes Estates
Public Housing
Cleveland

I was born in rural Georgia, one of 11 children who did what we could to help our parents make ends meet in the segregated South. Like tens of thousands of other Black people, I moved north in search of greater freedom and more opportunity. Since I already had a sister in Cleveland, that's where I ended up. Like most of the African American women I knew, I worked as a domestic, cleaning private clubs and hotels. When the Great Depression hit, I found myself widowed with two boys — Carl and Louis — little work, and even less money. Luckily, I got on the list to move into the Outhwaite Homes Estates, a brand-new public housing development that was created as part of President Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration. I guess the idea was that public housing was a win-win: You could put unemployed people back to work in the building trades and give working-class people good homes afterward. Rent was \$4.78 per month, still a lot of money for someone who was paid only pennies for washing floors, but doable. The housing complex was nice, but it changed the neighborhood. Central neighborhood used to be mixed; there were Black people like us, but also Italian and Eastern European immigrants — and the kids all went to school together. But when the public housing was built, it was segregated. The government said it wouldn't pay for the project unless there were two, one for whites and one for Blacks. The white project was nicer than ours, with a community center, playgrounds, green spaces, and decorated with murals. In the end, the projects turned our integrated neighborhood into a segregated one.

9.

Woody Guthrie
Singer/songwriter
Bonneville Power Administration
Pacific Northwest

In the spring of 1941, I was 28 years old. I was a singer and a songwriter — but I was also unemployed. The U.S. Department of the Interior’s Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) hired me to write songs on the benefits of building dams to produce cheap electricity. A government paycheck to travel around beautiful places and write songs? Sign me up!

I saw the Columbia River from every cliff, mountain, tree, and post from which it could be seen. In 30 days, I made up 26 songs about the federal dams and about the workers, and these songs were recorded by the BPA in Portland, Oregon. The records were played in all sorts and sizes of meetings where people bought bonds to bring the power lines over the fields and hills to their little places.

They drove me all over the Northwest. I walked out of every one of these mountain towns drawing pictures in my mind and listening to poems and songs and words come faster to my ears than I could ever get them wrote down. The Pacific Northwest has got mineral mountains and chemical deserts. It’s got rough run canyons and sawblade snowcaps. It’s got ridges of nine kinds of brown, hills of six colors of green, ridges five shades of shadows, and stickers the eight tones of hell.

Growing up, I spent a lot of time in the Dustbowl of Oklahoma and Texas. When I saw the rivers, forests, and high deserts of the Northwest, it was like a vision of paradise. I saw the Grand Coulee Dam as the creation of the common man to harness the river for the common good — work for the jobless, power to ease household tasks, power to strengthen Uncle Sam in his fight against world fascism.

In my most famous song, “Roll on, Columbia,” I wrote:

Roll on, Columbia, roll on.
Your power is turning our darkness to dawn.

But I didn’t write about just the dams in the Northwest, I also wrote about the people, the migrant workers. In my song “Pastures of Plenty,” I wrote:

It’s a mighty hard row that my poor hands have hoed
My poor feet have traveled a hot dusty road
Out of your Dust Bowl and Westward we rolled
And your deserts were hot and your mountains were cold

I worked in your orchards of peaches and prunes
I slept on the ground in the light of the moon
On the edge of the city you’ll see us and then
We come with the dust and we go with the wind

It’s always we rambled, that river and I
All along your green valley, I will work till I die
My land I’ll defend with my life if it be
Cause my pastures of plenty must always be free

I appreciate the government for hiring this unemployed folksinger to see the country and sing about its beauty — and how its mighty rivers could be a force for freedom.

10.

Emma Tiller
Works Progress Administration
West Texas

This wasn't the first "great" depression we'd suffered. In 1914 we almost starved to death when the boll weevil destroyed my father's small farm in west Texas. Those worms came down like showers and left us with nothing. By the 1930s, we didn't own any land anymore; my husband and I were sharecroppers. I picked cotton, but since that brought only about 35 cents for every 100 pounds, I worked in white people's homes too. They'd give us their old clothes and shoes, and sometimes the scraps left over after slaughtering a hog. When the farmers were all out of food, the government came and gave us a coupon that'd allow you to stand in line and pick up food for the week. But in my small town, there were only five of us Black people in that line and the rest were white. They'd serve all the white people, but not us. We'd just wait and wait. You'd get nothing, or maybe some spoiled meat.

When President Franklin Roosevelt started his Works Progress Administration (WPA), people got jobs. Both Black people and white people got jobs and stopped showing up in the relief line. The only people left in the line after that were the disabled or families that had no men to work. People like to feel independent in the way they earn their own living. That's why everyone was so eager to sign up for the WPA. What bothered me about Roosevelt, though, was when they came out with this plan that you had to plow up and destroy a certain amount of your crop — especially cotton. I didn't understand because that was perfectly good cotton. They did the same thing with cattle. I guess there was drought and the farmers didn't have enough to feed the cattle, so the government just killed them by the hundreds. When I listened to those cows groan and carry on, to me it sounded like a war, like I had finally seen how horrible war was. I thought, "Why do we have to have wars at all?" I shed a lot of tears listening to the moaning of those cows.

Sylvia Woods
United Auto Workers
Chicago

I grew up in New Orleans, a racist city. As a little Black girl, when I walked to school, I would go by some parks where only white children were allowed on the play equipment. There were swings in the park and, oh, I so much wanted to just stop and swing a little while. At school we were supposed to line up every morning and sing the “Star Spangled Banner.” I refused to sing it because it included the words, “land of the free and home of the brave.” They punished me, but my father had always told me to stick up for myself and for what is right. I was just 10 years old, but I knew we weren’t free.

My mother worked in white people’s homes for \$2 a day. That was not a life I wanted. My boyfriend Henry and I got married when I was pretty young. He moved up to Chicago to get a good job, and when he found one, he sent me a train ticket. We were in the North, but racism was everywhere. I tried to get a job at Bendix Aviation, making parts for airplanes. Instead, they offered me a job cleaning the bathrooms. No thank you. But then a friend helped me get a job on the assembly line there, making carburetors.

One of the famous New Deal laws during that time was called the National Labor Relations Act, also known as the Wagner Act, passed in 1935. This law required most private employers to recognize and negotiate with unions when workers organized. It was a good law — although it excluded domestic and agricultural workers. Some people credit the Wagner Act with starting unions. But laws don’t start unions; workers start unions.

Out of about 3,000 workers at Bendix, only 25 percent were Black people. The union — the United Auto Workers (UAW) — was mostly white people. The first meeting I went to I was the only Black person. But I was elected a union steward, responsible for organizing both Blacks and whites into the union. When we had enough people signed up, we notified the Labor Relations Board, and they held an election and the union won. It was good to have the government say to the company: The workers want this union, you have to negotiate with them.

The UAW is the first place I knew that white people and Black people started to work together. There was this racist white guy from the South. We called him Tennessee. He was fired unfairly, and the union helped him get his job back. Well, that guy became one of the best union members in the shop. We threw a party one night, and he came — this Southerner who didn’t want a Black person to do anything — he brought his wife and children. I danced with him that night. It was really something.

Bernard Due
Rural Electrification Administration
York, Nebraska

Most of my life, we lived without electricity. Everyone we knew did — that was just farm life. We'd wake in the dark, light a kerosene lantern, and head out to the stables to milk the cows by hand. Practically all my memories of my mama are of her scrubbing clothes on the washboard, or of chopping logs to feed the wood range. It's not just that we couldn't afford electricity (though being without it definitely limited what we could produce on our farm), but even if we could, the power companies didn't wanna go through the trouble of stringing those wires all the way out to rural farms. It just wasn't profitable — and to them, making money was all that mattered.

But in May 1935, things started to look up for us. President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order No. 7037 establishing the Rural Electrification Administration (REA). Now, it wasn't exactly his idea, so don't go giving him all the credit. In fact, our very own senator here in Nebraska, George W. Norris, really pushed those folks in Washington to include us in some of these New Deal gains. A year later, Congress passed the Rural Electrification Act, which offered loans to utility companies that provided electricity to rural areas. Those big companies still didn't have much interest in stringing up those wires, but it didn't matter, because these loans allowed farmer-based electric cooperatives (groups of farmers joining together) to make rural electrification a reality.

These cooperatives' goal wasn't to make profit — it was to get electricity out to farms — and it worked. By 1953, more than 90 percent of U.S. farms had electricity, mostly supplied by not-for-profit electric cooperatives. Now we've been able to put in an irrigation pump and have a good many acres under irrigation, which has produced more hay for us. Not to mention how nice it is to have lights in the house, to take a shower with hot water, and cook our meals on an electric stove. We did the work of electrifying our communities, but we couldn't have done it without the help of the REA. Sometimes, you need someone lookin' out for you.

13.

Oscar Heline
Northwest Iowa

The struggles we farmers had to go through are almost unbelievable. We became desperate. It got so neighbor wouldn't buy from neighbor because we knew the farmer didn't get any of the money — it all went to creditors. First, they take your farm, then they take your livestock, then your machinery. Even your household goods. And they'd move you right off the land. So we organized ourselves.

When the banks would hold the auction to sell the foreclosed farm, we'd all show up — and bring our friends and relatives, too — and make sure no one bid more than a couple of pennies. If you weren't out there with us, you weren't a friend and we'd treat you like a foe. So people were too afraid to bid more than a penny. In fact, these became famous as "Penny Auctions." We'd get the deed to the farm, and give it back to the owner.

But that didn't help with prices. We couldn't give away corn. It was literally being burned for fuel since it was cheaper than coal. In South Dakota, just west of here, the county elevator listed corn at minus 3 cents — minus three cents a bushel. If a farmer wanted to sell a bushel of corn, they had to pay 3 cents!

It was Henry Wallace, President Franklin Roosevelt's secretary of agriculture, who saved us, put us back on our feet. He understood our problems. When we went to visit him, he told us he didn't want to write the law — he wanted the farmers themselves to write it. "I will work with you," he said, "but you're the people suffering. It must be your program."

We got farm loans and new money was put into the farmers' hands. It makes me weep when I think about it now — it was a whole transformation of attitude, of common sense. The government did all sorts of things for farmers during that crisis — they paid some of us not to farm or to destroy some of our crops, to dampen supply, so prices would rise; they bought our goods and used them for food pantries and CCC camps; they made it so our survival was not at the whim of the bankers and the "market."

It's a strange thing how quickly people forget the help we got from the government. People say, "We don't need the government! Individuals should take care of themselves!" But who bailed us out in the 1930s? It was the federal government.

14.

Jorge Medina
Arizona

I know we Mexicans are not the only ones suffering right now. But sometimes, it feels like white people think we deserve to suffer, just because we're not citizens. I was born in Mexico in 1906; I was still a teenager when an enganchista, a labor contractor who worked for a U.S. corporation, said I could earn up to \$5 a day up north. I ended up in Arizona, with a job doing building maintenance and groundskeeping at the University of Arizona. I met my wife the year after I arrived; she was born in Arizona, but her family is from the same part of Mexico as mine.

Once the Great Depression hit, the government started passing all kinds of laws saying jobs could only go to "native-born" or naturalized citizens. I was fired. Even though she is a citizen, my wife was fired too. She couldn't produce a birth certificate and that was that. President Roosevelt created jobs programs to put the unemployed back to work — like the Works Progress Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps — but they too are only open to citizens. Now I am hearing about deportations, hundreds and hundreds of them happening daily. I just heard about a mother and father who were caught in an immigration raid and deported, leaving four young children (all U.S. citizens) to fend for themselves.

Even if the government doesn't force us to leave, the violence might. Last night some men in the barrio were talking about what happened in Terre Haute, Indiana. Mexican railroad workers were attacked by a white mob; they were given an ultimatum: quit their jobs immediately or be killed. Let me tell you something: Suddenly everyone seems to care a lot whether or not we Mexicans have a little piece of paper saying we're citizens. But nobody cared about that back in 1919 when those big wigs strolled into my town in Mexico to lure me north with their promises, paid for my transport to the United States, and helped me land a job here.

15.

Akinabh Burbank
Navajo Nation
Valley Store, Arizona

First they came for our goats; then our horses, sheep, and cattle. I can still hardly believe they took our livestock, took them away!

I heard a rumor that a new Indian commissioner met with our people, the Diné of the great Navajo Nation. He promised change. Unlike past Indian commissioners, John Collier knew our history, seemed to respect our ways of life, and would end the United States' long war against our people. There was talk of an "Indian New Deal."

Then came the order.

Agents from the so-called Soil Conservation Service came and said that we need to sell our livestock: our goats, horses, sheep, and cattle. They said that there were too many animals on our land. They said that our goats damaged the grazing areas, that our cattle carved too many trails where the grass should grow, and that there was not enough water for our sheep and horses. We knew that this wasn't a very good reason. We Diné knew that our earth, and the climate, was changing. But our livestock were not the problem. It was a time of drought. Without more rain, the grass would not grow and the soil would turn to dust and blow away. Besides, if livestock was a problem, why didn't the Soil Conservation Service stop the white men from grazing lands next to our reservation? I hear rumors that they don't even care about our grasses and soil. They care about our lands because when our soil is washed by rain, it fills up the rivers with silt. Too much silt can harm dams. And they're building the biggest dam ever — the Hoover Dam — downriver from us.

But what could we say? Nothing really. What could people say when they are conditioned to follow orders? After years of white men rule, we had to follow orders. Few tried to object or question what was happening. I and other women signed petitions. And some of our people met with Eleanor Roosevelt to ask that the United States not take away our livestock. But Collier, Roosevelt, or any of the white men in charge did not seem to care or regret what happened to our livestock.

We had been given an order and we were expected to obey; therefore, we couldn't claim anything for us anymore. A family with 100 sheep, goats, and horses would be allowed to keep only 30. They brought a man who told us that we would make more money if we sold our sheep and took their wage jobs. I feel it was a shame that this happened to us. We had been given an order and we were expected to obey; therefore, we couldn't claim anything to us anymore. Our livestock, and even our own children, didn't belong to us anymore. We are like captives.

16.

Dr. Lewis Andreas
Federal Surplus Relief Corporation (FSRC)
Chicago

In the early 1930s I helped found Chicago's first medical clinic. We were a group of doctors and nurses who pooled our services, treating patients for low fees or even for free. During that time, people starved on the street and streetcars. I do believe if something like the New Deal hadn't happened, people would have become violent. President Herbert Hoover callously declared, "No one is actually starving," but every day someone would faint on the streetcar. They'd bring him in; we knew what it was. Hunger. When he regained consciousness, we'd give him something to eat.

The situation was infuriating because the farms were destroying wheat and meat that they couldn't sell, and people were literally fainting from hunger on the streetcar! There was plenty of food, but the people who needed it were going hungry. So President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Federal Surplus Relief Corporation (FSRC), to purchase farmers' goods and transfer them to the needy. The food — pork, beef, grains, and a wide variety of fruits and vegetables — ended up reaching people directly through a whole bunch of different local agencies and charities, and it was used to feed the men working in the Civilian Conservation Corps — a jobs program for the unemployed. Like I said, I am a doctor. I think any country that doesn't provide for its citizens' basic needs — like health care and food, isn't gonna last very long. Nor should it.

Caridad Fuentes
Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration
Puerto Rico

When the Great Depression arrived in Puerto Rico, I was already homeless and facing overlapping crises. First there was the crisis of 1898, when the United States colonized us. Puerto Rico became a “territory” and more than half of our arable land was gobbled up by rich U.S. businessmen. Next came two hurricanes: San Felipe II in 1928 and San Ciprian in 1932. These massive storms left hundreds dead, thousands injured, and tens of thousands, like me, homeless. Schools were already scarce before the storms, but with 40,000 buildings destroyed by the hurricanes, few children were getting an education. That was where Black Tuesday found my nation — a devastated island facing further devastation.

Now, I am not a big fan of the United States ruling my nation, but when the Roosevelt administration passed and implemented the Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, for the first time I felt the United States did something helpful rather than exploitative. The \$80 million sent by the federal government’s New Deal initiative put Puerto Rican architects, engineers, and builders — not rich U.S. businessmen — in charge of designing and constructing storm-resistant public housing, schools, and other infrastructure projects — like bringing electricity to many parts of the island. These projects put hundreds of thousands of unemployed Puerto Ricans to work and made the island a fairer, healthier, safer place to live. I was able to move into El Falansterio, a new public housing complex here in San Juan, for only \$15 per month. It had a patio, a community center (with ping-pong!), a kindergarten, a small library, and a full-time maintenance and janitorial crew. I was able to go to school and become a teacher, and now I work in one of the new schools built with PRRA money.

18.

Dovey Johnson Roundtree
National Youth Administration
Atlanta

I was born in Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1914, and learned to make my way in the world from my grandmother, who like generations of Black folk before her, taught me “how to make a way out of no way.” The Great Depression was so hard for working-class families like mine, and even though we were forced to move from house to house, barely able to pay rent, my mother and grandmother always expected me to do well in school and go to college. And not just any college — Mama set her sights on Spelman College, an elite school attended mostly by girls from wealthy Black families in Atlanta. When Mama and I visited Spelman for the first time in 1934, and I saw the white-columned buildings and lush green lawns, it was hard to believe that I could end up at such a place, having started my education at a rickety old schoolhouse in Charlotte.

My grandmother had warned me that Atlanta was a kind of racial hell, and when the white woman that I cleaned and nannied for accused me of stealing, I found myself out of work and unable to cover the cost of tuition at Spelman. With so many other people out of work, it was hard to find a job, so I was grateful to be hired through the National Youth Administration (NYA), to work as a lab assistant in the Biology Department at Spelman. The NYA was a New Deal program created in 1935 that provided work study and job training for millions of young people like me across the country who had fallen on hard times. Thanks to the NYA, dozens of other students at Spelman, and thousands across the country, were also earning money that helped them stay in school, by teaching classes to youth in the community, working in libraries, and other work that benefited the broader communities we lived in.

The NYA was segregated like most other New Deal programs, but it was unique in that the \$17.50 per month I earned in the lab at Spelman was similar to what white youth were paid for their work.

James Lowe
Civilian Conservation Corps
Rural Pennsylvania

The U.S. government hired me to be part of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) to do conservation work in the forests. I work in rural Pennsylvania, not far from Maryland and West Virginia. I admit, when I first got here, I had never really been in nature, and it scared me. I'd never even seen a deer. The place was crazy with bushes and thorns. Some of the people I worked with — who also came from big cities, like me — went on a rampage, killing garter, black, and meadow snakes and other wildlife around our work site. These critters were harmless, but what did we know? We were ignorant about nature. I knew nothing about the value of our forests and why so much care should be taken of them. But in the CCC, they taught us. They brought in foresters to teach us about the woods, and to recognize different kinds of trees and plants. They even provided us a beautiful, big library, with a fireplace and rocking chairs. They had all kinds of books about the forests and nature, and 45 different magazines. I learned so much — about soil erosion, restoration, protection of the forests, the natural history of trees. And they even had classes we could volunteer to take. Almost everyone in my camp took at least one class. They also brought in people who taught classes in automobile repair, carpentry, and masonry. But the most popular class was forestry — so we could learn about where we were and what we were doing. I have learned how to work with my hands. Hard work. But this is not just chopping wood and digging holes. This is physical work that takes brains. The CCC changed my life.

Nettie Silverbrook
Emergency Education Program
New York City

People like us don't usually get an education. I tell people I went "through" high school, but not with other kids. See, my mother scrubbed the high school building every night and I used to help her.

I didn't know how to feel when a lady came to the local YWCA and said I could go to school over the summer at a fancy college outside of the city. She told me that the Bryn Mawr Summer School for Women Workers in Industry was meant to give me a chance to experience the college education that most rich girls were getting these days. I was excited, but also felt guilty — why didn't all of us have this same chance?


That summer — 1928 — changed my life. We were immigrants (like me), but also Black girls from the South, and white farmers from the West, all poor, all learning together — to read and write, but also about history and literature and the rights we had under the law. I was high and happy about all the new knowledge but also furious that all people didn't get access to places like Bryn Mawr.

When I left that summer, I decided adult education was what I wanted to do with my life. I got my chance when the Great Depression hit and Congress passed a law creating the Emergency Education Program (EEP) as part of the New Deal. The government hired 200,000 out-of-work teachers, administrators, and secretaries to carry out a whole bunch of different education programs. The first priority was the 8 to 10 percent of the U.S. adult population who couldn't read or write. But there were also programs for the blind (teaching braille), naturalization classes to help immigrants get their citizenship, and workers' education, which was what I did.

Too often, workers — whether in the factory or the field or the mine — don't know enough to advocate for themselves and their rights. More education alone won't stop bosses from exploiting workers, but it helps. So we hold classes at night in public school buildings, or in migrant camps, churches, union halls, or Salvation Army shelters. Workers' education is here to teach the truth about our economic system, our government, laws, customs, and traditions. Workers' education gives that which no other education institution gave poor people like me, and which we cannot obtain anywhere else. There is a lot of concern across the nation right now about getting the unemployed back to work. Our job is to make sure when they do get jobs, they're armed with knowledge.

Use the online role assignment template for remote instruction.

Click [here](#) to make a copy of the Google Doc, pictured below, with links to the online materials. Copy the Google Doc “Role Assignments for Remote Instruction Template,” enter your students’ names in the left column, and the class will be able to access their roles online by clicking on the linked names to the right.



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A collaboration between Rethinking Schools and Teaching for Change.

**From the New Deal to the Green New Deal:
Stories of Crisis and Possibility**

By Suzanna Kassouf, Matt Reed, Tim Swinehart, Ursula Wolfe-Rocca, and Bill Bigelow

Role Assignments for Remote Instruction Template

Teacher Instructions: Assign your students roles and groups by entering each of their names into the left-hand column. Delete these instructions, delete “for Remote Instruction Template,” and share this sheet with your students. The question sheet for this lesson is on the second page of each role.

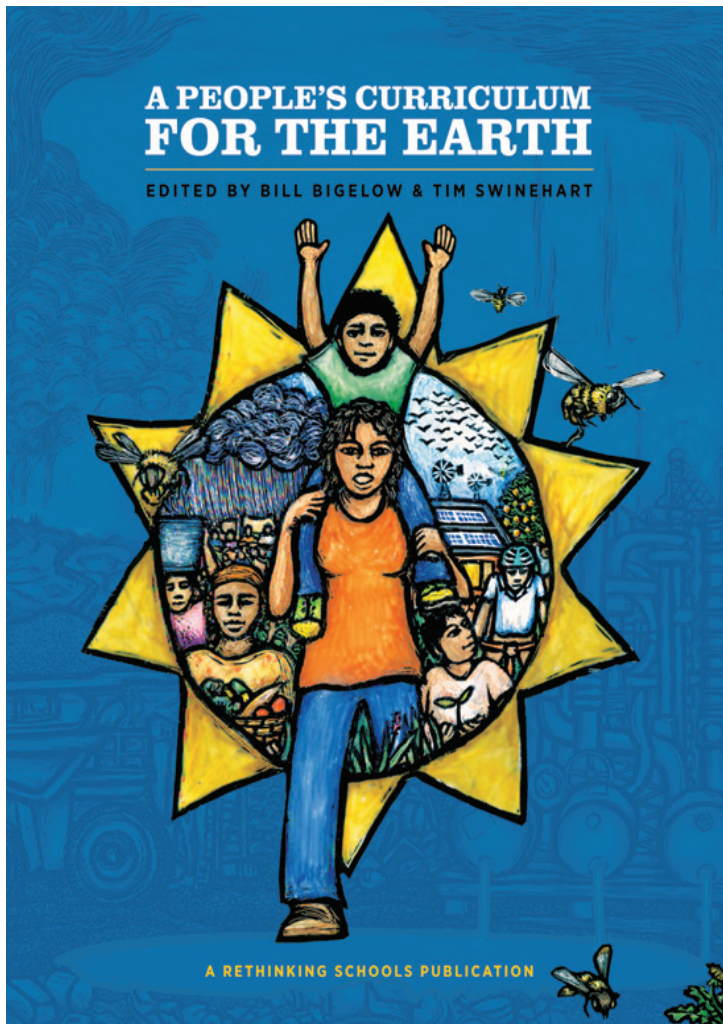
Students' Names	Link to Role Assignment
	Dr. Lewis Andreas
	Caridad Fuentes
	Viola B. Muse
	Dovey Johnson Roundtree
	Martina Curl
	Ella Baker
	Fred Ross
	Pablo Diaz Albertt
	James Lowe
	Helen Olson
	Jesse Jackson
	Louise Stokes
	Woody Guthrie
	Emma Tiller
	Sylvia Woods
	Bernard Due
	Nettie Silverbrook
	Oscar Helene
	Jorge Medina
	Akinabh Burbank

Role Assignments for the lesson From the New Deal to the Green New Deal: Stories of Crisis and Possibility
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Then, share the specific materials you want to use with your students for synchronous or asynchronous learning.

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