

STAT210 (Mining the History of Holyoke)

Carlos Vega Archive Report

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1 Introduction

Carlos Alberto Vega was born in Quito, Ecuador in 1950 and immigrated to Holyoke, Massachusetts with his family at the age of five. From his arrival in Holyoke in 1956 until his death in 2012, Vega established himself as one of the city's most tireless and influential community activists. Throughout his 56 years as a resident of Holyoke, Vega immersed himself in fighting

for causes such as racial justice, affordable housing, voting rights, education, and the overall socioeconomic development of the greater Holyoke area, particularly for the growing local Hispanic/Latinx and Black communities that still have a significant presence in the city today. He was greatly involved in and helped lead several nonprofit and grassroots organizations dedicated to social services and political action which still exist, including Nueva Esperanza, a community development corporation that promotes improvements in housing, economics, education, and health and human services.

Due to Vega's significant impact on the cultural and political history on the city of Holyoke, I am interested in analyzing materials from the Carlos Vega Collection of Latino History in Holyoke, which is currently stored in the archives at the Wistariahurst Museum. More information about the collection can be found in the official finding aid on the Wistariahurst website (*Carlos Vega Collection of Latino History in Holyoke* Collection 2011.1.2, Wistariahurst Museum, Holyoke, Mass.). While the archive contains extensive administrative records, letters, memorabilia, and other material collected by Vega between the years of 1958-2012 (43 boxes of material), this project focuses on exploring the early years of Vega's career as a budding activist while he was still in school (namely material from boxes 24, 13, and 14).

In particular, this project aims to make accessible the radical underground student newspaper, *Oracle* (later renamed *Breakthru* in September 1969), which Vega founded, edited, and published during his time at Holyoke High School from 1965-1969 before the paper was banned by the school district following his graduation. The themes of the content published by a young Vega in *Oracle* reflect his early passion for the social causes that he advocated for extensively later in his career, including calls for anti-war protests, cross-racial solidarity, and civil rights directed towards his peers at Holyoke High, Holyoke Community College, and beyond. Ultimately, I hope to provide more detailed insight into Vega's early career as an activist and recognize his contributions to the Holyoke community while also contributing to information about the rich history of social movements in the city of Holyoke from the past half century.

In addition, I also transcribed select excerpts of newsletters authored by Vega from his time at Holyoke Community College while working as an editor for the student newspaper *The Phoenix* from 1969-71. Finally, I transcribed a 1984 issue of *The Community Builder*, a community newsletter published quarterly by staff at Nueva Esperanza in both English and Spanish after Vega helped co-found it in 1982. The transcription process consists of using a technology called optical character recognition (OCR) from the tesseract package in R to convert the original scans of the physical newsletter into text files and then correcting any mistakes in the raw text files by hand one by one. The process is documented in the 'ocr' file located in the 'resources' folder of the Github repo.

In Section 2, a completed example transcription of a 1969 issue of *Oracle* titled 'Students United' is displayed alongside screenshots of the original physical newsletter, including hand-drawn illustrations by Vega. The section also includes a function that can be used to automatically count the total number of transcribed newsletters in the repository.



Figure 1: Carlos Vega Collection of Latino History Located at Wistariahurst Museum

In Section 3, some basic text analysis is performed on the cleaned text transcriptions of the newsletters to reveal more details about the contents of the various newsletters of interest, namely looking at the most common word usage and topic modeling across issues. Some useful functions for extracting the text from the txt files for analysis are also included in this section.

The compiled materials from this project, including the scans, raw, and edited text files as well as a spreadsheet organizing the newsletters according to the official finding aid's organizational system, can be found in the public Vega Newsletters Github repo ("Carlos Vega Newsletters Github Repository" 2023). Special thanks to Penni and the wonderful staff at the Wistari-ahurst Museum in Holyoke for their assistance with curating and scanning the materials for this project.

Below is an excerpt from the October 1969 issue of Holyoke Community College's *The Phoenix* where Vega was interviewed about his role in running *Oracle/Breakthru*. The excerpt reflects Vega's determined activist spirit and passion for community organizing and inspiring his peers as a young student.

"Carlos Vega, a freshman at HCC and member of the Phoenix staff, is editor of the newspaper Breakthru.

Breakthru, originally the Holyoke High School underground paper called Free Purple, later called the Oracle, was founded at the high school, 'Because of an infringement of freedom of speech by the high school administration.' If the high school administration did not agree with the official school paper, the Herald, they would censor it," stated Vega.

'Free Purple folded because students became tired of reading redundant articles. So I was asked to take over,' stated Vega.

The paper is put out by a staff of seven people, all from Holyoke, and has a circulation of about five hundred. 'We received a letter from a student in New York and a congratulatory letter from William Dwight, editor of the Holyoke Transcript,' Vega stated further, 'but we still can't sell Breakthru at Holyoke High; we have to sell it outside.'

At the present time Breakthru is a small, four-page publication. 'We hope to expand to six pages and instead of using sellers we would like to get the paper into different stores in the city. I hope to get it into [the] HCC bookstore,' Vega said.

When asked why he joined the Phoenix staff if he had his own paper, Vega replied, 'To do something for the school, I mean I'm here for two years. I have heard there is a lot of apathy here and I don't want to be a part of it. Students can do a lot if they get together.'

2 Newsletters

This function can be used and adapted for future use to count the number of newsletters in the ‘newsletters’ folder of the repository. Currently, there are 17 different newsletters, with 13 of those being completely transcribed and cleaned.

```
length(list.dirs("../newsletters", recursive = FALSE))
```

```
[1] 17
```

2.1 1969 ISSUE #1 - “STUDENTS UNITE”

The example below displays one of the earliest issues of *Oracle* (what I believe is the third or fourth issue) in its edited format. Before Vega renamed the newspaper to *Breakthru*, there were no dates or issue numbers associated with *Oracle* so I have arranged them in what I believe is roughly the chronological order, but it appears that all of the newsletters were published between 1968 and March 1970 during Vega’s senior year as well as for a few months following his graduation.

The original newsletter image is first displayed followed by the digitized text version and can be referred to by section and issue number using the table of contents.

See Section 5 for side-by-side transcriptions of *The Phoenix* and *The Community Builder*.

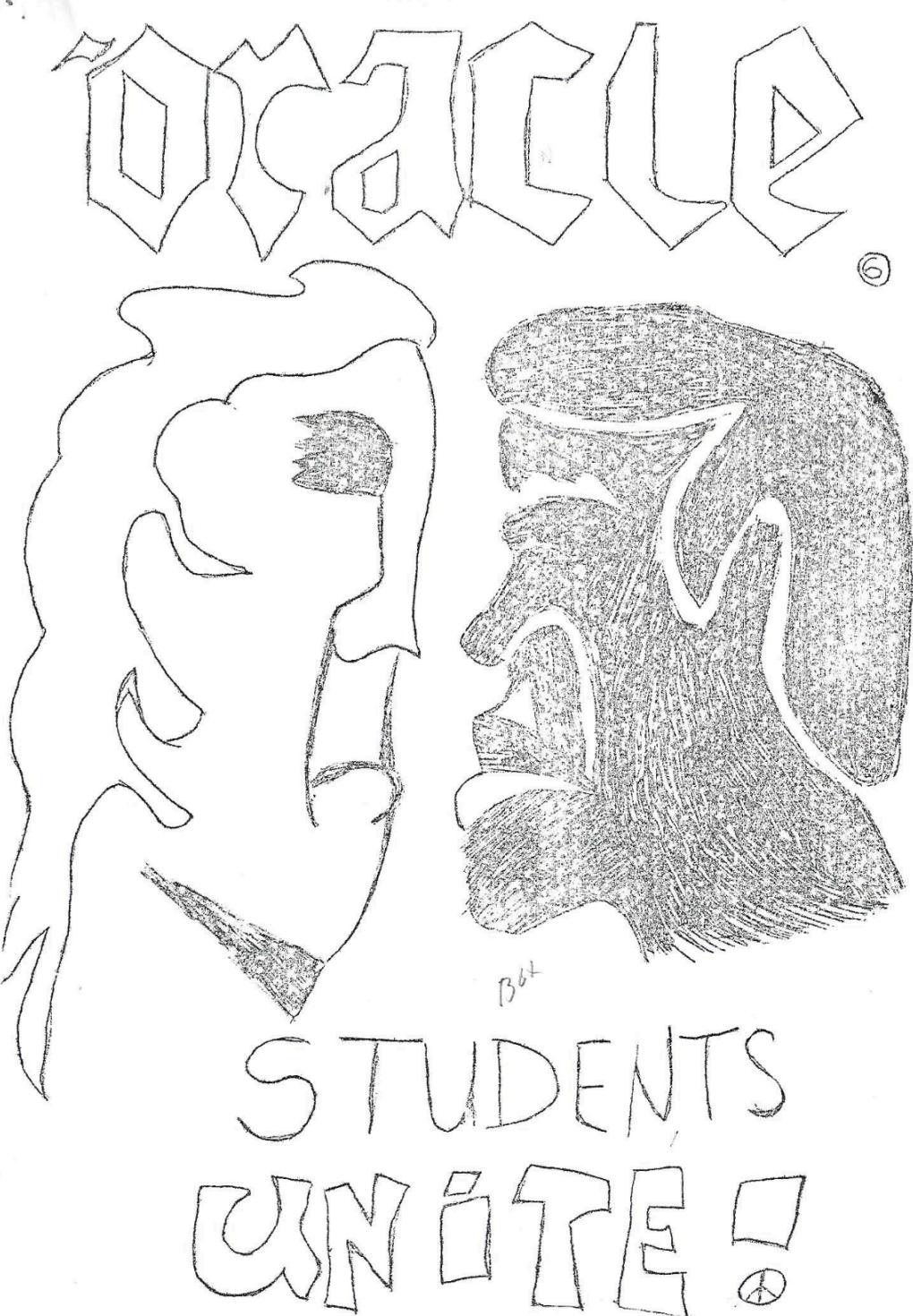


Figure 2: Cover Page

EDITORIAL

In the past year many high school students have begun to realize what this world is like, the injustices inflicted on man by his own brothers. In growing aware, they have become active in denouncing their inadquate administrative heads. They want a voice in the forming of school policies. They are tired of puppet student governments. The administration's ignorance and stubbornness breed these revolts.

Underground papers, like this and some more radical, have sprung from one part of this country to the other in high schools. Why? Dissatisfaction with the rules that try to rule us our lives, bodies, and souls; awareness of the malfunctioning courses and teachers that in no way serve our need of preparing us for the world; dress codes which have nothing to do with the institution's business--education.

This assault on the white power structure is being carried out from two fronts: the white radicals and revolutionaries coming from "middle" class families who are seeking a new mold of life, and the black militants who seek their share of the "good" life that this country's technological advancement can provide. Both parties have goals, and different factions within each movement might have different solutions for solving problems, but they both seek change and both are willin' to fight and die for it.

Most of the BLACK militants are together in their strive against "whitey". This is not true in the white radical movement. The blacks are full time revolutionaries while many whites are willing to throw a few bricks through windows thunghome and listen to music. These whites must organize and join forces with the blacks.

The trouble with this high school is that you people are not together. You don't care what is happening--you are plastic--you wear can't

this new garb without knowing its implications. You who wear "balls" and all these "groovy" minis preserve a vacuum in your heads. Complete apathy. You would rather talk about who had whom last night, who is going with whom--etc. etc. Gossip, nothing but Gossip. Who is "Che"? Cleaver? Newton? Hayden? Subene? Hoffman? Gregory? YOU DON'T KNOW! These men are shaping this country, this world.

Get off your asses and let your minds become AWARE.

Editor: Carlos Vega

Assistant Editor: Carolyn Hester

Staff Writers: Bill Gorlin

Dave Potvin

Lora Westbrook

Gary Kaulmeyer

SMOTHERS BROTHERS CANCELLED

The Smothers Brothers vs. CBS fight over taste and censorship has ended. Friday, the Columbia Broadcasting System announced the cancellation of the Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour for next season.

The president of CBS-TV, Robert Wood, said the Smothers Brothers had consistently failed to deliver tapes of the program to the network in time for review by network executives and local stations.

The real reason one of TV's favorite shows was dumped was because the Smothers Brothers told the truth and CBS was afraid to show it. Another factor was the pressure exerted on TV networks by the Government to self-censor their shows before they decide it's their duty to protect the public from the truth.

Is the U.S. Government trying to compete with Russia's fascist ways of suppression of free speech and freedom of the press? It's ironic that at the same time the Smothers Brothers are fired Russia is threatening Czechoslovakia with more troops if they don't administer self-censorship.

It is our hope that another network will hire the Smothers Brothers so they can continue to tell the truth next year. What will happen, though, if this network does not bend under the Govt's. pressure? Will the U.S. send occupying troops in?

Figure 3: Issue #1 Pages 1-2

2.1.0.1 EDITORIAL

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The trouble with this high school is that you people are not together. You don't care what is happening—you are plastic—you wear this new garb without knowing its implications. You who wear "bells" and all these "groovy" minies preserve a vacuum in your heads. Complete apathy. You would rather talk about who had whom last night, who is going with whom—etc. etc. etc. Gossip, nothing but GOSSIP. Who is "Che"? Cleaver? Newton? Hayden? Rubens? Hoffman? Gregory? YOU DON'T KNOW! These men are shaping this country, this world.

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It is our hope that another network will hire the Smothers Brothers so they can continue to tell the truth next year. What will happen, though, if this network does not bend under the Govt's. pressure? Will the U.S. send occupying troops in?

In continuing with our policy of suggesting reforms, we bring you part two.

The intelligence of a student is often brought forth by a good teacher. A poor teacher, however, can stifle any spark of intelligence or creativity in a child.

A poor teacher, often an elderly one, is a waste of the students' time. The teacher who sits at his desk and spends the year reading to his students benefits no one, and often creates a feeling of hostility and frustration on the part of the class.

The excellent teacher, on the other hand, who urges his students to think, to create, who shows that learning does not have to be a dull, slow process, is seldom confronted with undisciplined students or students who fall asleep at their desks.

Undoubtedly, a good teacher is more difficult to find, but, the work of one good teacher is more valuable than the work of twenty dull, uninspired teachers.

Students don't generally object to working if he feels the work is worth while. He does object to writing out the questions and answers at the end of the chapter.

A system should be set up to filter out the poor teachers--for the benefit of the students.

If students complain to the office about a specific teacher, a Guidance Counsellor should take it upon himself to sit in on a few classes to determine whether the complaint is legitimate.

The staff of the ORACLE believes that the idea of tenure should be abolished, and laws protecting ALL teachers from being fired for liberal teaching methods and liberal ideas should be set up. As it now stands, now teachers are afraid to "stray from the beaten path" for fear of their job. Older teachers, on the other hand, are sure of their jobs and grow lax.

THE STAFF

Supershow Part 2

The audience really came alive for Sam and Dave, who turned out to be sorta the stars of the show. Before Sam and Dave came out, their band, the Sensational Soul Brothers, entertained us. That consisted of 4 sax's, 4 trumpets, 2 trombones, 1 lead guitar, 1 bass, 1 organ, and 2 drums. Each musician showed himself a virtuoso of his instrument while doing instrumental versions of "Hey Jude", an "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy!"

Sam and Dave came on stage to an electric standing ovation. They were very strutting in their leather-like suits (of which the jackets, ties, and half the shirts came off before the end of the set). The audience kept a constant hand clap during a medley a most of their hits. Though I don't dig prearranged things, I had to be impressed by the band's showmanship. Throughout their fancy dance steps they were in complete control of the music.

Sam and Dave were met by applause as they went into one of their biggest hits- "Hold On, I'm Coming". After this they did "Land of 1000 Dances" with the audience giving oral response to the main-wail part of the song.

The audience exploded when they started their biggest hit- "Soul Man" which sounded even better in person.

Saying that Sam and Dave have soul is an understatement. Besides having it they also transmit it. You could see this just by observing the audience. Even the straightest people couldn't stay still while listening to them. They were moving in their seats, clapping, their hands and/or stamping their feet.

Sam and Dave left to their second standing ovation which they heartily deserved.

Dave Potvin

NEXT ISSUE--Part III reviews the James Cotton Blues Band and reports the hassle over the time the audience has to leave.

"Can history produce an instance of rebellion so honorably conducted? God forbid we should ever be twenty years without such a rebellion. The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time, with the blood of patriots and tyrants."

Thomas Jefferson

Figure 4: Issue #1 Pages 3-4

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Sam and Dave were met by applause as they went into one of their biggest hits- “Hold On, I’m Coming”. After this they did “Land of 1000 Dances” with the audience givin oral response to the moan-wail part of the song.

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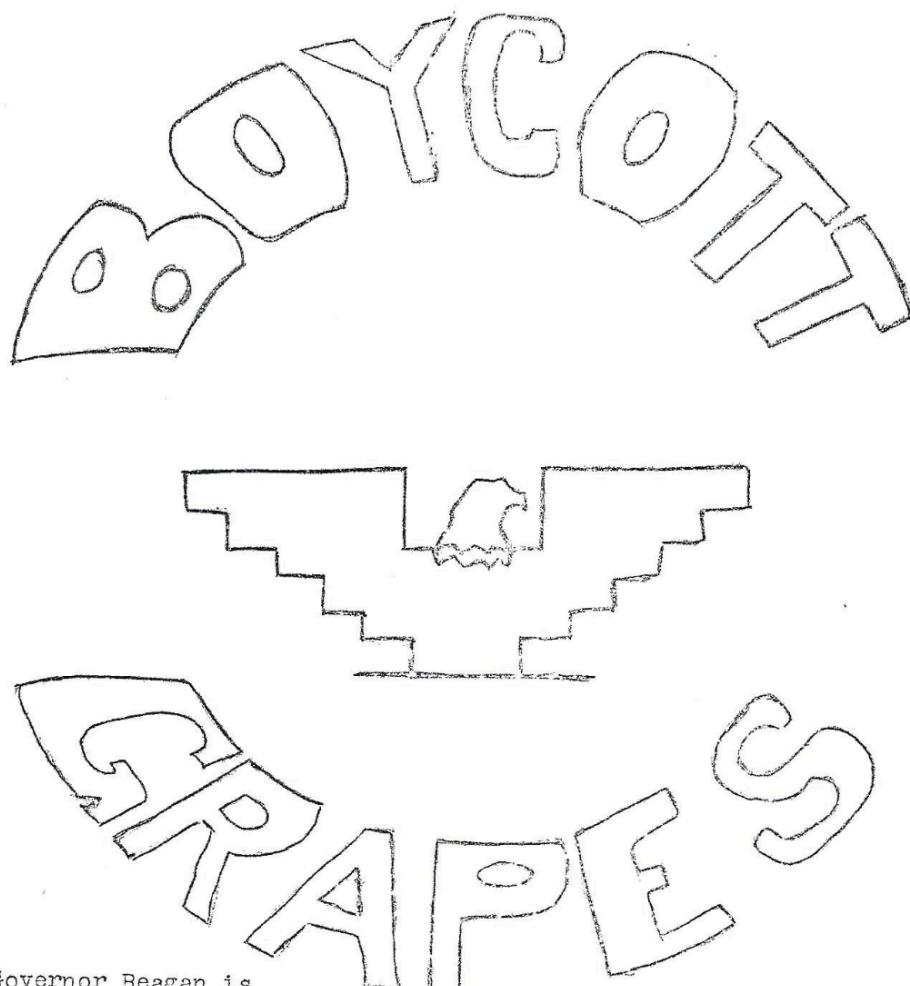
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- Thomas Jefferson



Governor Reagan is
opposed to the grape pickers
union. Being on the side of the
growers he has become one of the most
hated men of the cause.

HELP STOP TYRANNY * BOYCOTT CALIFORNIA GRAPE\$

if there's no label on the grape packages DON'T BUY THEM !

Figure 5: Issue #1 Page 5

In 1940, when France fell to the Germans, the French Government capitulated in favor of the Vichy Government under Marshall Pétain.

/ On the day after France signed the Armistice with Germany, General Charles de Gaulle announced the formation of a French National Committee pledged to the continuation of the war. He set up a Government-in-Exile in London. In doing this, de Gaulle was denouncing the legitimate government of his country. He claimed that he had the right to do this because he was representing the desires of the people of France. By his actions, he is saying that if a government goes against, or betrays the wants of the people, another government should be set up.

The United States' Declaration of Independence states that if a government violates the rights of man, he not only has the right, but the obligation to overthrow that government and set up one more desirable to the people.

Carolyn Hester

About War--

I've done a lot of thinking about "the war." (I guess you could call it dreaming). I'm on neither the pro nor con of any war. It's a rotten way of settling things and always has been. The trouble is, people are too damn stubborn. They don't apply logic at all and are tremendously selfish. If only all people- ALL PEOPLE EVERYWHERE* could be more giving and try for once to do some good for someone else or for some other country, instead of thinking only of themselves, we might have a little of this "peace" that I hear everyone talking about.

A dream?-yes, that's certainly what it is. To come true?-No, I doubt it. People just weren't meant to be that way. So I guess there'll always be selfishness, jealousy, stubborness, and war,

Figure 6: Issue #1 Page 6

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But that's the way things were meant. We've just got to try. It's all we can do and then maybe there'll be a change for the good. If only wetry.
A.S.

Horrors 1969 part 2:

The San Francisco Presidio (America's Devil's Island) The inhumane treatment received by American soldiers in some military stockades in the United States is beyond your imagination. We will give you a few examples and let you react.

The stockades standard capacity is 88 men, with an emergency capacity of between 115 and 150. Under regulations this emergency capacity cannot be tolerated for more than 7 days. The stockade has held an excess of 115 prisoners since August 22, 1968.

Overflowing latrines spill human excrement on the floor, which has no drain.

Prisoners are frequently forced to relieve themselves on the floor of their cells and their excrement or urine is allowed to remain on the cell floor for a considerable period of time.

Prisoners in the segregation cells have been refused permission to brush their teeth, bathe, or change their clothes for periods up to a week.

The heating in these cells is inadequate and to punish recalcitrant prisoners, guards take the prisoner's clothes and blankets from him and throw water on his naked body. At times urine has been substituted for water.

The average age of the prisoners is 19 to 20.

Most prisoners are on AWOL charges.

Even if these men were hardened felons their treatment and living conditions would still constitute cruel and unusual punishment.

(cont.)

"Punishment is accomplished by deasement and dehumanization, and no single institution is as accomplished in the art of dehumanization as the military.

(information from *Muckrakers Guide*)

Rough beasts, war is not healthy for children and other living things Let's be born again. Let's go out of our minds to get back in. We have all died, haven't we?

Guess who died, the beginning of tomorrow. Guerrilla warfare has begun. The streets belong to the people. We will become warriors and see if our city is still here. Let's tune in to find out what went wrong today.

So much for the problem. What's the solution? Power, violence, noise, numbers, animalism, vulgarity, and pure madness.

Kim Fowley

CENSORSHIP?

Should we remain with a system that allows the censor to have control over the people? Why should one small group of people force their puritanical, cut-moded ideas on a generation of new thinkers?

As the Supreme Court has not been able to define pornography, there are no rules for the censors to follow. Censorship is therefore left purely to the discretion of the individual censor. These censors are not associated with us and therefore know nothing about what is relevant to us.

Literature is a form of expression, meant to be read. The individual moral and religious upbringing should dictate his choice of reading and viewing matter. To some people, the validity of a certain piece of literature may be questionable, however, to another it may be very valid. No one person has the right to force this morality on other individuals.

A system for movies that is used now is a good way of allowing the movie-goer to know what type of movie is being shown. This system employ letters to show the type of movie: "G" general audience, "R" restricted to certain audiences, "M" suggested for mature audiences, etc. A similar system should be applied to books, plays, and magazines.

All censorship by a select group has to be eliminated. In Sweden, where there is no censorship, the buying of objectionable literature is very low. When this is done in America, there will be a great upsurge in

Figure 7: Issue #1 Pages 7-8

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Censorship cont.

the sales of this type of literature, but it will die down to the point of placing a great number of "dirty" magazines out of business. Half the reason people buy these is because they are illegal and are frowned upon.

The Staff

Before the revolution comes
men will parley and bullshit
parley and bullshit
parley and bullshit
before the revolution comes
men will sit and watch TV with
chicken
hanging from their mouths
with chicken hanging from their
mouths
before the revolution comes
men will watch riots on TV
will watch TV
before the revolution comes
men will laugh and sing
will laugh and sing
before the revolution comes
the pigs will be the master
the pigs will be the master
all before the revolution comes

when the revolution comes
men will fight and die
will fight and die
when the revolution comes
be prepared to eat cockroaches and
rats
cockroaches and rats
when the revolution comes
many asses will be hung
many will be hung
when the revolution comes
men will cry and blood will flow
blood will flow
when the revolution comes
the pigs will die
the pigs will die
when the revolution comes

after the revolution comes
the streets will belong to the
people
the people will be the streets
after the revolution comes
men will parley and bullshit?
parley and bullshit?
parley and bullshit?
after the revolution comes

H. H. S. '69

TAKE YOUR CLOTHES OFF WHEN YOU
DANCE
There will come a time when every-
body
Who is lonely will be free...
TO SONG & DANCE & LOVE
There will come a time when every
evil.
That we know will be an evil
THAT WE CAN RISE ABOVE
Who cares if hair is long or short
Or sprayed or partly grayed
WE KNOW THAT HAIR AIN'T
WHERE IT'S AT
(there will come a time when you
won't
even be ashamed if you are fat!)
WAH WAH. WAH WAH
There will come a time when every-
body
Who is lonely will be free
TO SING & DANCE & LOVE (dance and
love)
There will come a time when every
evil
That we know will be an evil
THAT WE CAN RISE ABOVE (rise above)
Who cares if you're so poor you
can't afford
To buy a pair of Mad A Go-Go
stretch elastic pants
THERE WILL COME A TIME
WHEN YOU CAN EVEN
TAKE YOUR CLOTHES OFF WHEN
YOU DANCE

The Mothers

Listen to

WMAS-FM

94.7



Beautiful
Radio

Figure 8: Issue #1 Page 9

Censorship cont.

the sales of this type of literature, but it will die down to the point of placing a great number of “dirty” magazines out of business. Half the reason people buy these is because they are illegal and are frowned upon.

- The Staff

2.1.0.6 Poetry

Before the revolution comes
men will parley and bullshit
parley and bullshit
parley and bullshit
before the revolution comes
men will sit and watch TV with
chicken
hanging from their mouths
with chicken hanging from their
mouths
before the revolution comes
men will watch riots on TV
will watch TV
before the revolution comes
men will laugh and sing
will laugh and sing
before the revolution comes
the pigs will be the master
the pigs will be the master
all before the revolution comes
when the revolution comes
men will fight and die
will fight and die
when the revolution comes
be prepared to eat cockroaches and
rats
cockroaches and rats
when the revolution comes
many asses will be hung
many will be hung
when the revolution comes
men will cry and blood will flow

blood will flow
when the revolution comes
the pigs will die
the pigs will die
when the revolution cones
after the revolution comes
the streets will belong to the
people
the people will be the streets
after the revolution comes
men will parley and bullshit?
parley and bullshit?
parley and bullshit?
after the revolution comes

- H. H. S. '69

TAKE YOUR CLOTHES OFF WHEN YOU
DANCE
There will come a time when every-
body
Who is lonely will be free...
TO SONG & DANCE & LOVE
There will come a time when every
evil
That we know will be an evil
THAT WE CAN RISE ABOVE
Who cares if hair is long or short
Or sprayed or partly grayed
WE KNOW THAT HATE AIN'T
WHERE IT'S AT
(there will come a time when you
won't
even be ashamed if you are fat!)
WAH WAH. VAH WAH
There will come a time when every-
body
Who is lonely will be free
TO SING & DANCE & LOVE (dance and
love)
There will come a time when every
evil

That we know will be an evil
THAT WE CAN RISE ABOVE (rise above)
Who cares if you're so poor you
 can't afford
To buy a pair of Mad A Go-Go
stretch elastic pants
THERE WILL COME A TIME
WHEN YOU CAN EVEN
TAKE YOUR CLOTHES OFF WHEN
YOU DANCE

- The Mothers

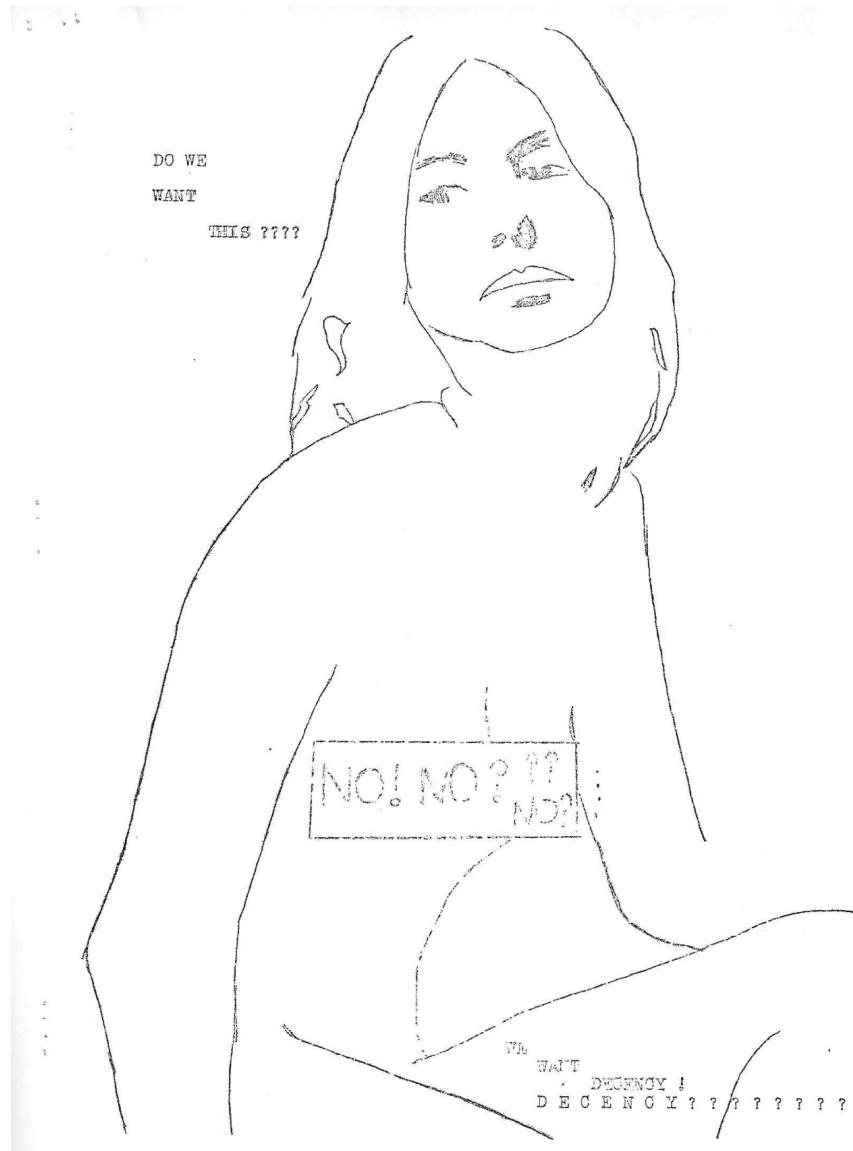


Figure 9: Issue #1 Back Cover

3 Text Analysis

In this section, text analysis techniques will be used to delve further into the specific content of the various newsletters stored in the Carlos Vega archive and how they differ across issues and years.

3.1 Extracting Text from txt files

The function below can be used to automatically iterate through all of the files labeled with the “clean.txt” extension in the “newsletters” folder of the repository. The cleaned text itself can then be extracted from the files and be used to create a dataframe for further text analysis.

```
newsletters <- "../newsletters"
folders <- list.files(newsletters)
ds <- tibble(folders)

process_folder <- function(folder_name, prefix = newsletters, pattern = "clean.txt") {
  full_path <- paste0(prefix, "/", folder_name)
  files <- list.files(full_path, pattern = pattern)
  full_files <- paste0(full_path, "/", files)
  return(tibble(file_path=full_files))
}

#storing file paths
res <- tibble(file_path = NULL)
for (i in 1:length(folders)) {
  res <- bind_rows(res, process_folder(folders[i]))
}

res <- res %>% filter(grepl("txt", file_path))
```

3.2 Word Usage

Below are three word clouds that display the most common words used in *Oracle/Breakthru*, *The Phoenix*, and *The Community Builder*, respectively.

Figure 10 shows the top 60 words across ten different issues of *Oracle/Breakthru* published from 1968-1969 that appear across multiple issues and reflect some of the most pressing concerns that young people in Holyoke and America experienced during the late 1960s. Some of the most common words include “students,” “war,” “government,” “Vietnam,” and “education.”



Figure 10: Word cloud of the Top 60 most common words in Oracle/Breakthru (1968-1969).



Figure 11: Word cloud of the Top 50 most common words in The Phoenix (1969-1970).

Figure 11 displays the top 50 most common words in excerpts related to/written by Vega in an October 1969 and March 1970 issue of Holyoke Community College's *The Phoenix*. During this time, Vega continued to challenge administration policies that he found outdated and unjust and helped to organize student protests and moratoriums. The article authored by Vega in the 1970 issue in particular discusses HCC student efforts to invite Jerry Rubin, a radical social activist and anti-war movement leader, to campus as a guest speaker despite refusal from the President of the college at the time.



Figure 12: Word cloud of the Top 50 most common English words in January 1984 Issue of The Community Builder

Figure 12 displays the top 50 most common words used in a January 1984 issue of Nueva Esperanza's *The Community Builder*. Frequently used words like "housing," "shortage," "community," and "subsidies" stand out. Based off these newsletters from the period shortly after Vega co-founded the organization, Nueva Esperanza at the time aimed mainly to provide safe and affordable housing for low-income residents in South Holyoke, a former industrial center, and later expanded to support people across the city in broader ways through social justice and cultural education, which they continue to do today for the Puerto Rican and Afro-Caribbean communities in Holyoke. This wordcloud reflects Vega's shifting focus towards more local and regional social action initiatives during the 1980s and for the rest of his career, as his influence in Holyoke as an activist and advocate for minority and low income residents of Holyoke continued to grow.

Figure 13 displays the top ten most commonly used bigrams, or two-word phrases, used in *Oracle/Breakthru*. Words like “dress code,” “black power,” and “Vietnam War” demonstrate the range of topics covered in the high school newspaper, from policy-related issues at Holyoke High to national and international issues of civil rights and militarism. Much of the paper’s goal was directed towards “educating” their classmates about worldwide issues that were not taught to them at school by their teachers.

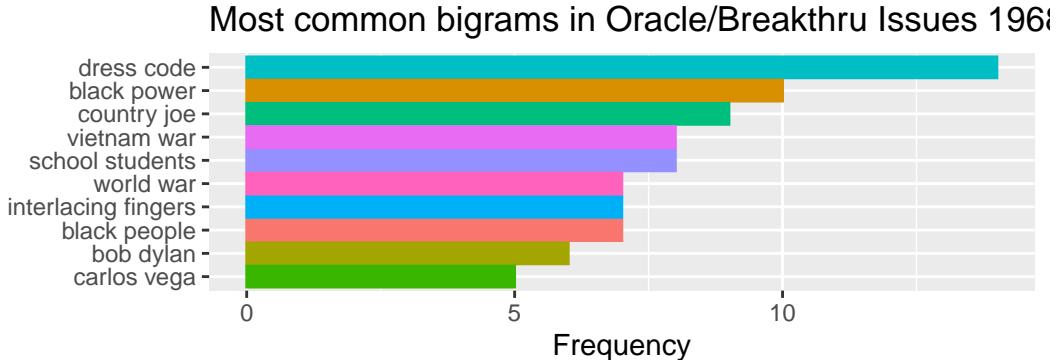


Figure 13: Most common bigrams across ten issues of Oracle/Breakthru 1968-1969

3.3 Topic Modeling using Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA)

Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) is a topic modeling technique that utilizes a probabilistic model to uncover hidden topics within a large body of text. It is a generative statistical model that works by assuming that each document is a mixture of topics, and each topic is a probability distribution over words. The goal is to uncover these latent topics by analyzing word frequency patterns across several documents.

Here, we are performing LDA on all of the English-language newsletters. Based off of the size of the dataset, as well as the beta values of the most common words across topics, I chose an LDA model with 3 topics. Since most of the text comes from *Oracle/Breakthru*, there is some noticeable overlap between topics in models with greater than 3 topics so that it becomes difficult to distinguish between the different topics. A 3 topic model captures the majority of different subjects covered while still capturing words with distinct beta values.

Based on the most common words in each topic from Figure 14, we can roughly define the 3 topics as follows:

- **Topic 1:** Civil Rights Movement + Education
- **Topic 2:** Vietnam War + U.S. Government
- **Topic 3:** Local School Policies / Issues with Administration / Student Protests

The most common words are assigned using beta values. Beta is a parameter that controls the topic-word distribution. Specifically, beta represents the prior belief about the probability of a word belonging to a topic, while gamma represents the prior belief about the probability of a document belonging to a topic. A higher beta value shows that the topics are more tightly focused around a smaller set of words, while a lower beta value allows for more diversity in the words that appear within each topic. Based on the beta values of the topics, topic 1 and topic 2 have a slightly more diverse set of frequently used words compared to topic 3.

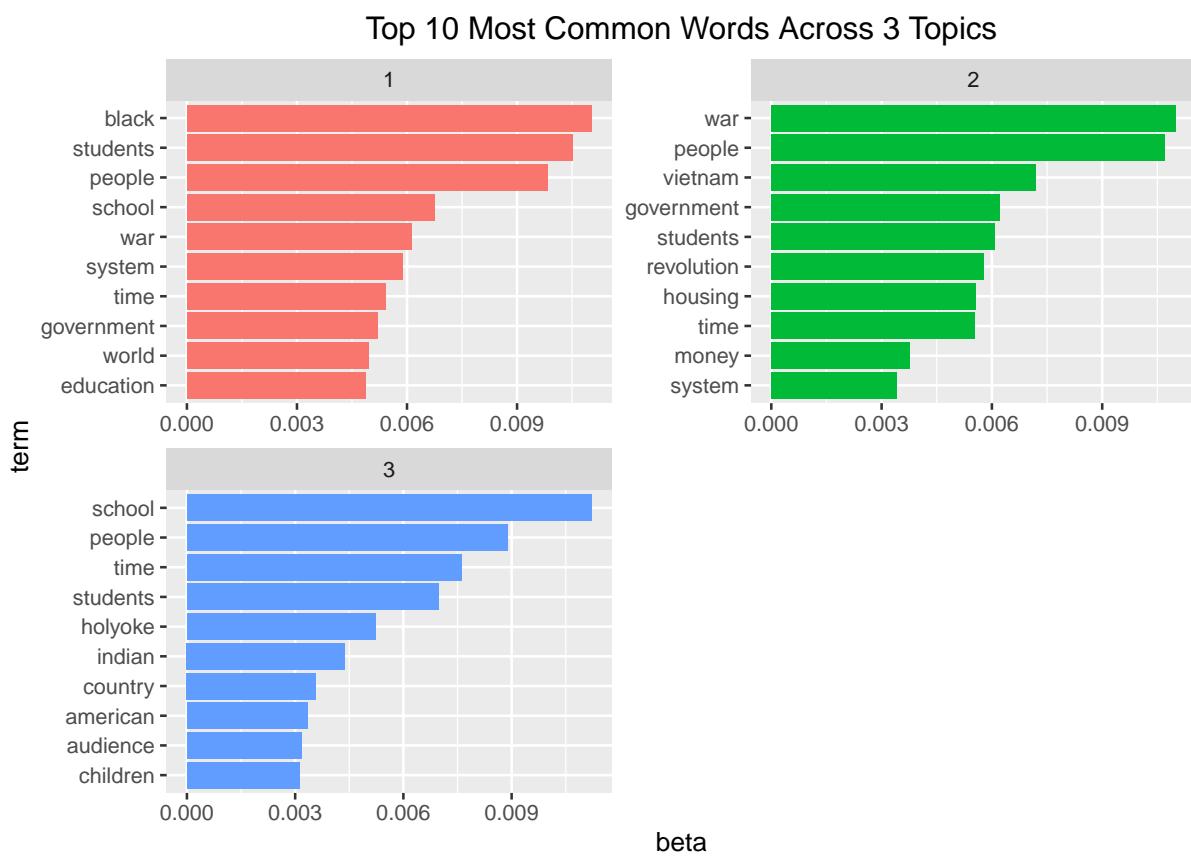


Figure 14: Most common words in each topic

document	topic	gamma
../newsletters/B24_F13_ORACLE_black_power/B24_F13_ORACLE_black_power_col_09.txt_clean.txt	1	0.9996
../newsletters/B24_F13_ORACLE_black_power/B24_F13_ORACLE_black_power_col_09.txt_clean.txt	2	0.0002
../newsletters/B24_F13_ORACLE_black_power/B24_F13_ORACLE_black_power_col_09.txt_clean.txt	3	0.0002

To check for the relevance of the topic names we assigned and examine the contents of these topics closer, I used a random number generator to select paragraphs from the sections with the highest gamma values for each of the 3 topics.

3.3.0.1 Topic 1

The selected section for Topic 1 above, taken from an issue of *Oracle* titled “Black Power,” discusses the disproportionate impact of the military draft on Black Americans due to the poor

education and civil liberties afforded to Black people both during and after the Civil Rights Movement. We can also see from the gamma values that the section is most relevant to Topic 1 compared to much lower values for Topics 2 and 3.

3.3.0.2 Topic 2

```
[1] "list(\"possessions.\\"\\\"\\\"You don't drop bombs on people whose hearts you"
[2] "are trying to win. He ended on Vietnam by saying \"the American people"
[3] "know something has gone wrong.\"\\n\\tOn the movement he said,"
[4] "\"Springfield (and area) must start their own movement.....We are"
[5] "determined to move, not just talk... the struggle will not be"
[6] "simple.\"\\n\\tDave Dellinger, editor of the LIBERATOR and leader of the"
[7] "National Mobilization Committee (NMC) to end the War in Vietnam, spoke"
[8] "next. He is one of the eight indicted for the Chicago riots. On"
[9] "Vietnam, he said, \"\\\"The U.S. has lost the war, what they are trying to"
[10] "do is bomb and shell Vietnam in order to exhort a \"Korean\" settlement"
[11] "in Paris.\"\\\" He added, \"They are trying to make us believe that the end"
[12] "of the war is near." He gave us an insight into the living habits of"
[13] "the Viet Cong, \"\\\"They live far underground and get air through"
[14] "straws.\"\\\" Concerning the Paris Peace talks, he said, \"There are only"
[15] "two things we have to negotiate: \\n\\t1. how long will it take to get"
[16] "out, and\\n\\t2. how much will the government pay Vietnam in"
[17] "indemnity.\"\\nHe urged us to keep the heat on the war issue. \"This is the"
[18] "government's Achilles heel,' he said, \"\\\"deaths on both sides are"
[19] "tremendous.\"\\n\\tHe concluded on the war by giving an insight into the"
[20] "history of Vietnam. \"Ho Chi Minh fought with the U.S in WWII to bring"
[21] "about an end to colonialism, but the U.S. government did not help to"
[22] "end French colonialism and later became involved (with the great"
[23] "assistance of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles). Dellinger"
[24] "said, \"The war is not the product of one individual, (ex-President"
[25] "Johnson), the war went through five administrations, from Truman to"
[26] "Nixon; the war is the product of the system.\"\\n\\tConcerning the 21"
[27] "Black Panthers arrested in New York for conspiring to blow up"
[28] "Department stores, he said, \"It's a clear frame-up,\" Dellinger was with"
[29] "Bobby Seale, Black Panther Minister of Organizing, when they heard of"
[30] "the 21. Dellinger quoted Scale as saying, \"\\\"That's the last place we'd"
[31] "blow up, our people are there.\"\\\"\\n\\tConcerning his indictment for the"
[32] "Chicago riots, he said, \"The Government has done us a favor; in trying"
[33] "to break the movement, they have lumped us together. Our defense will"
[34] "be called the 'conspiracy' and we want everyone to join us." He went on"
[35] "to say, \"\\\"The government indicted 8 policemen to even everything off,\""
[36] "the policemen are being used to cover up for the real criminals: Daley"
```

document	topic	gamma
../newsletters/B24_F15_ORACLE_Nixon&Reagan/B24_F15_ORACLE_Nixon&Reagan_col_03.txt_clean.txt	1	0.0002
../newsletters/B24_F15_ORACLE_Nixon&Reagan/B24_F15_ORACLE_Nixon&Reagan_col_03.txt_clean.txt	2	0.9997
../newsletters/B24_F15_ORACLE_Nixon&Reagan/B24_F15_ORACLE_Nixon&Reagan_col_03.txt_clean.txt	3	0.0002

```
[37] "and the Democratic machine.\\"\\n\\nNEXT ISSUE: Roxeanne Dunbar, Marge"
[38] "Swann, MDS leader, and the open microphone\\n\\n\\n\\n\"")
[39] ".../newsletters/B24_F15_ORACLE_Nixon&Reagan/B24_F15_ORACLE_Nixon&Reagan_col_03.txt_clean.
```

The excerpt above has a high gamma value of 0.9997 for Topic 2 and is taken from an issue of *Oracle* titled “Nixon & Reagan.” The section contains a recap of a local student peace rally held in protest of the Vietnam War and discusses the U.S. military’s failing efforts in Vietnam, encouraging students to continue supporting the anti-war movement.

3.3.0.3 Topic 3

```
[1] "list(\"Letter to the Editor\\n\\nWhat are we afraid of? Why won't we speak"
[2] "out against the policy makers of the school? All who are dissatisfied"
[3] "with the present policies of this school should be willing to do"
[4] "something to change them.\\n\\nAs an individual, you can do nothing."
[5] "United we can accomplish substantial gains. Would you like to wear your"
[6] "hair long? Wear it. Why should boys have a limitation on the length of"
[7] "their hair when girls do not. Do you want to smoke cigarettes in"
[8] "school? Do it. Why should teachers have the privilege of a smoking"
[9] "room? Why should they have the right while students"
[10] "are\\nsuspended?\\n\\nThese are just a few of the many things that can and"
[11] "must be changed. The only way to accomplish these changes is by a mass"
[12] "effort.If there were 10 to 16 hundred students who showed their"
[13] "dissatisfaction by walking out, the administration would have no"
[14] "alternative but to listen. If we can get ourselves together we will be"
[15] "able to choose the freedoms that we are supposed to have and shake off"
[16] "the rule of a dictator and his puppets.\\n\\n\\t\\t\\t\\t\\t\\t- John"
[17] "Ferriter\\n\\n*****"
[18] "best stimulus for running ahead is to have something we must run"
[19] "from.\\n\\n\\\"MORE\\\" is as effective a revolutionary slogan as was ever"
[20] "invented by doctrinaires of discontent, The Americas, who cannot learn"
[21] "to want what he has, is a permanent revolutionary. He glories in"
[22] "change, has faith in that which he has not yet, and is ready to give"
[23] "his life for it.\\n\\nA SOCIAL order is stable as long as it can give"
[24] "scope to talent and youth. Youth itself is a talent -- a perishable"
[25] "talent.\\n\\n\\t\\t\\t\\t\\t- Eric Hoffer, The PASSIONATE STATE of"
[26] "MIND\\n\\n\\n\"")
[27] ".../newsletters/B24_F13_ORACLE_black_power/B24_F13_ORACLE_black_power_col_06.txt_clean.
```

document	topic	gamma
../newsletters/B24_F13_ORACLE_black_power/B24_F13_ORACLE_black_power_col_06.txt_clean.txt	1	0.0003
../newsletters/B24_F13_ORACLE_black_power/B24_F13_ORACLE_black_power_col_06.txt_clean.txt	2	0.0003
../newsletters/B24_F13_ORACLE_black_power/B24_F13_ORACLE_black_power_col_06.txt_clean.txt	3	0.9994

The section above is another excerpt from the *Oracle* issue titled “Black Power” and has a high gamma value of 0.9994 for Topic 3. The section contains a Letter to the Editor calling for students at Holyoke High School students to protest against unjust administration policies, such as the dress code and smoking policy, telling their peers to “shake off the rule of a dictator and his puppets.” The section also includes a quote from Eric Hoffer’s *The Passionate State of Mind* that calls for a youth revolution.

3.3.0.4 Topics Distribution

Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3
44	34	39

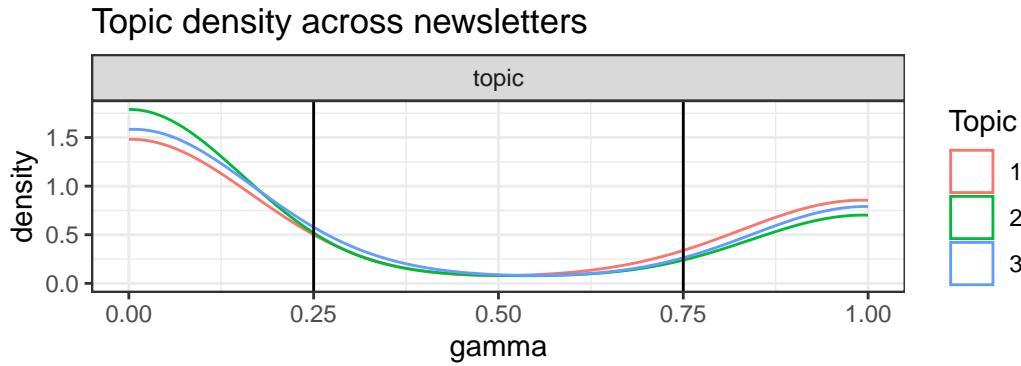


Figure 15: Topic density across newsletters written in English

Based off Figure 15, there is a roughly even distribution of topics throughout the newsletters in the dataset, although Topic 2 (Vietnam War) is the least common with 34 documents being assigned to Topic 2 and Topic 1 (Civil Rights + Education) is the most common with 44 documents. This may be because some excerpts mentioning the Vietnam War are also closely tied to the other two topics, especially civil rights. Additionally, the majority of the newsletter sections are topic specific. This is demonstrated by the relatively low density for $0.25 < \text{gamma} < 0.75$ and relatively higher density for $\text{gamma} < 0.25$ and $\text{gamma} > 0.75$.

4 Conclusion

A first-generation Ecuadorian-American immigrant, Carlos Vega was one of the most influential and dedicated social activists in the history of the city of Holyoke. This project provides but

a small curated glimpse into the early phase of Vega's career as a young student through the community newsletters that he helped publish, where the seeds of his accomplished future career as a community leader and organizer could already be seen through his passion for issues like civil rights, education, peace movements, and housing.

In addition to this report, the organized folders for each newsletter with the original scans, raw text files, and cleaned text transcriptions have been made public on the online Github repo and accessible for future reference as well as a spreadsheet catalog of all the newsletters that can be used to refer back to the official finding aid. Future projects should look to finish cleaning the remaining transcriptions and begin transcribing more of the other newsletters in the archive that I did not cover in my analysis. It is my hope that this project can lay the groundwork for the further digitization, distribution, and exploration of more materials from the extensive Carlos Vega Collection of Latino History in Holyoke, and that his legacy as a changemaker can continue to be recognized and honored for years to come.

5 Appendix

This appendix includes a side-by-side transcription of an excerpt from *The Phoenix* during Vega's time there as an assistant editor while attending Holyoke Community College, as well as an excerpt from the Spanish and English translations of the 1984 issue of Nueva Esperanza's quarterly newsletter *The Community Builder*, although Vega did not personally contribute to the publishing of the latter.

5.1 3/13/1970 Issue of *The Phoenix*

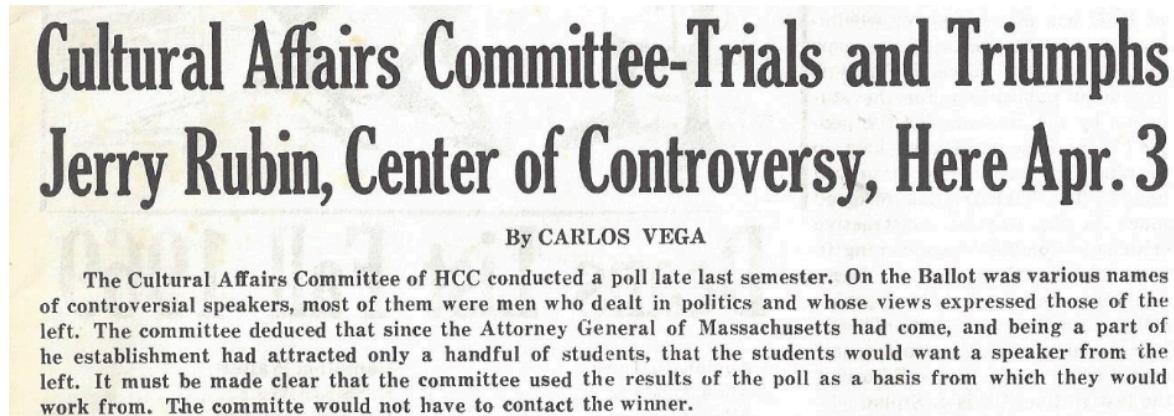


Figure 16: Front page of March 1970 Issue of The Phoenix

Letters were sent to agents who could book the speakers, the committee then waited for replies.

They received a call from the Conspiracy Office in Chicago in early Jan. The prices for their speakers were the lowest that the committee had found. So they contacted Jerry Rubin for Feb. 20. 1970.

Members of the committee went to inquire about a place to hold the assembly. Dean Butler informed them that Mr. Scallon was the man in charge of booking the High School Auditorium. Butler also told them that the only person who could sign a contract was President Frost. He was of course wrong. He had signed contracts before.

The committee members then went to President Frost. He, by that time had heard thru "the

The committee was also informed that their actions were not in order. That they had to work with the Faculty Cultural Affairs Committee. Neither Claude Chapdalene or Dr. Sajkovic, the "Chairman" of the Faculty committee know about this. None of the other faculty members knew either. But the administration dug up a list.

A special meeting was announced by President Frost. Members of the Faculty and Student Cultural Affairs Committee were asked to come. At this meeting it was decided that there was a Faculty Cultural Committee and that the student and faculty factions had to work together. It was also revealed that the only reason President Frost would not sign the Jerry Rubin contract was that he personally did not want him. The committee

were committee members then went to President Frost. He, by that time had heard thru "the grapevine" that the committee wanted Jerry Rubin. He was under the impression that "Only a very small part of the student body wanted him to speak. His answer was, NO!! I do not want that man here. He would disgrace the school."

Frost would not sign the Jerry Rubin contract was that he personally did not want him. The committee then decided that Jerry Rubin should be allowed to speak.

The decision was given to President Frost, he said that he would have to think about it first.

Knowing that the President would not change his mind easily,

Continued on page 4, column 5

Figure 17: Front page of March 1970 Issue of The Phoenix

**Cultural Affairs Committee-Trials and Triumph
Jerry Rubin, Center of Controversy, Here Apr. 3
By CARLOS VEGA**

The Cultural Affairs Committee of HCC conducted a poll late last semester. On the Ballot was various names of controversial speakers, most of them were men who dealt in politics and whose views expressed those of the left. The committee deduced that since the Attorney General of Massachusetts had come, and being a part of the establishment had attracted only a handful of students, that the students would want a speaker from the left. It must be made clear that the committee used the results of the poll as a basis from which they would work from. The committee would not have to contact the winner.

Letters were sent to agents who could book the speakers, the committee then waited for replies.

They received a call from the Conspiracy Office in Chicago in early Jan. The prices for their speakers were the lowest that the committee had found. So they contacted Jerry Rubin for Feb. 20. 1970.

Members of the committee went to inquire about a place to hold the assembly. Dean Butler informed them that Mr. Scallon was the man in charge of booking the High School Auditorium. Butler also told them that the only person who could sign a contract was President Frost. He was of course wrong. He had signed contracts before.

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The committee was also informed that their actions were not in order. That they had to work with the Faculty Cultural Affairs Committee. Neither Claude Chapdalene or Dr. Sajkovic, the "Chairman" of the Faculty committee knew about this. None of the other faculty members knew either. But the administration dug up a list.

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The decision was given to President Frost, he said that he would have to think about it first. Knowing that the President would not change his mind easily,

Continued on page 4, column 5

5.2 January 1984 Issue of *The Community Builder*

5.2.1 Spanish Translation:

Poniendo al Dia

En diciembre, Nueva Esperanza recibió noticias que la Solicitud Preliminar con la agencia de "Massachusetts Housing Finance" (MHFA) sobre su primer proyecto, 550 de las calles South Summer y Hamilton, está en la categoría de acción oficial. ¿Qué significa esto?

El proceso de solicitar un préstamo para construcción de MHFA envuelve varias etapas. La rendición de una Solicitud Preliminar es la primera. Un repaso acertado por el Comité de "Collateral Securities" y la Junta Directiva completa de MHFA otorga a la solicitud la posición de acción oficial. Después de otro repaso, un compromiso del préstamo se establece. La última etapa se llama el cierre final.

El trabajo de la agencia solicitante, en este caso, Nueva Esperanza, no termina con la rendición de la Solicitud Preliminar. Por todo el proceso, se requieren varias clases de constancia. Para estar en la posición de acción oficial, se necesita la preparación de 33 documentos diferentes. Antes del cierre final, 38 papeles informativos se presentarán a MHFA. La adquisición de algunos de estos documentos muy a menudo envuelve la provisión de información adicional.

Lo siguiente contiene ejemplos de los documentos requisitos:

- * una descripción de la propiedad y constatación de posesión
- * un certificado de topógrafo o inspector
- * un permiso de vivienda
- * los planos, las especificaciones, y el horario del edificio
- * un contrato para construcción
- * un plan para seleccionar a inquilinos
- * un plan para la administración del edificio
- * una declaración de acción afirmativa.

Nueva Esperanza ha llevado a cabo con éxito los requisitos para la condición de acción oficial y espera el compromiso del préstamo de MHFA en enero. El cierre final del préstamo probablemente sucedera a principios de la primavera.

(Desde la página 8)

* Alternativas a subsidios, tales como asignaciones o bonos no son menos costosas. (Hay cierta cantidad de inversión requisita para resolver la escasez a pesar de la forma del programa.)

La ciudad de Holyoke no necesita una moratoria en vivienda subvencionada. Para tratar de la verdadera escasez de vivienda dentro de sus límites, tiene que hacer dos cosas. Primero, la ciudad tiene que usar y fomentar empresas cooperativas entre programas federales, estatales y ciudadanos, el sector privado, y residentes de los vecindarios. Segundo, tiene que asociarse con los grupos y gobiernos locales que cabillean al gobierno federal para que asuma su parte de la responsabilidad para realizar la meta de 1949 para "vivienda decente...para cada familia americana."

El Constructor de la Comunidad está publicado trimestralmente por Nueva Esperanza, una corporación de desarrollo de la comunidad ubicada en Holyoke, Massachusetts. Traductor: Nora Shea Editor: Kathy Kroll

Figure 18: Page 2 of Jan 1984 Issue of The Community Builder

Poniendo al Dia

En diciembre, Nueva Esperanza recibió noticias que la Solicitud Preliminar con la agencia de “Massachusetts Housing Finance” (MHFA) sobre su primer proyecto, 550 de las calles South Summer y Hamilton, está en la categoría de acción oficial. ¿Que significa esto?

El proceso de solicitar un préstamo para construcción de MHFA envuelve varias etapas. La rendición de una Solicitud Preliminar es la primera. Un repaso acertado por el Comité de “Collateral Securities” y la Junta Directiva completa de MHFA otorga a la solicitud la posición de acción oficial. Después de otro repaso, un compromiso del préstamo se establece. La última etapa se llama el cierre final.

El trabajo de la agencia solicitante, en este caso, Nueva Esperanza, no termina con la rendición de la Solicitud Preliminar. Por todo el proceso, se requieren varias clases de constancia. Para estar en la posición de acción oficial, se necesita la preparación de 33 documentos diferentes. Antes del cierre final, 38 papeles informativos se presentarán a MHFA. La adquisición de algunos de estos documentos muy a menudo envuelve la provisión de información adicional.

Lo siguiente contiene ejemplos de los documentos requisitos:

- * una descripción de la propiedad y constatación de posesión
- * un certificado de topógrafo o inspector
- * un permiso de vivienda
- * los planos, las especificaciones, y el horario del edificio
- * un contrato para construcción
- * un plan para seleccionar a inquilinos
- * un plan para la administración del edificio
- * una declaración de acción afirmativa.

Nueva Esperanza ha llevado a cabo con éxito los requisitos para la condición de acción oficial y espera el compromiso del préstamo de YHFA en enero. El cierre final del préstamo probablemente sucederá a principios de la primavera.

(Desde la página 8)

* Alternativas a subsidios, tales como asignaciones o bonos no son menos costosas. (Hay cierta cantidad de inversión requisita para resolver la escasez a pesar de la forma del programa.)

La ciudad de Holyoke no necesita una moratoria en vivienda subvencionada. Para tratar de la verdadera escasez de vivienda dentro de sus límites, tiene que hacer dos cosas. Primero, la ciudad tiene que usar y fomentar empresas cooperativas entre programas federales, estatales y ciudadanos, el sector privado, y residentes de los vecindarios. Segundo, tiene que asociarse con los grupos y gobiernos locales que cabildean al gobierno federal para que asuma su parte de la responsabilidad para realizar la meta de 1949 para “vivienda decente...para cada familia americana.”

El Constructor de la Comunidad está publicado trimestralmente por Nueva Esperanza, una corporación de desarrollo de la comunidad ubicada en Holyoke, Massachusetts.

Traductor: Nora Shea Editor: Kathy Kroll

5.2.2 English Translation

Update

Nueva Esperanza received word in December that the Preliminary Application with the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) on its first project, 550 South Sumner and 12 Hamilton Streets, received Official Action Status. What does this mean?

The process of applying for a construction loan from MHFA has a number of steps to it. The submission of a Preliminary Application is the first. A successful review by the Collateral Securities Committee and the full MHFA Board gives the application Official Action Status. After another review a Loan Commitment is made. The last step is called Final Closing.

The work of the applying agency, in this case Nueva Esperanza, does not end with the submission of the Preliminary Application. All along the process, various types of documentation are required. To receive Official Action Status, 33 different documents needed to be prepared. Before Final Closing another 38 pieces of information will be submitted to MHFA. Obtaining some of these documents often involves the provision of other information.

Samples of the required documents are as follows:

- * a description of the property and evidence of ownership
- * a surveyor's certificate
- * building permits
- * a construction contract
- * a tenant selection plan
- * a building management plan
- * a statement of affirmative action.

Nueva Esperanza has successfully completed the requirements for Official Action Status and expects Loan Commitment from MHFA in January. Final Closing on the loan will probably happen early in the spring.

The Community Builder is published quarterly by Nueva Esperanza, Inc., a community development corporation in Holyoke, Massachusetts. Translation into Spanish for this issue was done by Nora Shea. Editor: Kathy Kroll

Figure 19: Page 3 of Jan 1984 Issue of The Community Builder

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