These are teaching materials that accompany Adam Sanchez’s article “Teaching the Reconstruction Revolution” that was published in the spring 2022 issue of Rethinking Schools. www.rethinkingschools.org
Group #3

1. **Improvisation**: A group of freedmen and women who work for a railroad company attempt to negotiate over their wages with their boss. Before the war, the railroad company used enslaved labor and the boss is not used to paying workers. He demands workers sign a contract that offers them very little. Some workers, confident and determined not to work under conditions that feel to them like slavery, refuse to sign contracts for less than two dollars a day. They leave the boss’s office and try to convince other Black workers to stop working for little pay.

2. **Background**: A white person shoots a Black person during a fight at the local ferry (passenger boat) in broad daylight. The white sheriff refuses to arrest the murderer. **Improvisation**: The Black community gathers to discuss how to respond. There is a newly elected Black judge and they think if they can get the shooter arrested, they might get justice for the victim. Some propose that the community conduct a “citizen’s arrest.”

Group #4

1. **Background**: There are rumors that the Ku Klux Klan will attempt to ride through a majority Black town in South Carolina that has just elected a Black sheriff. **Improvisation**: The new sheriff holds a town hall meeting where freedmen and women and white Republicans discuss how to respond. Angry and defiant, they try to figure out how to prevent the Klan from riding through their town — and discuss how they will respond if the Klan shows up.

2. **Improvisation**: A Black family is discussing politics over dinner in Yazoo County, Mississippi. The wife is angry at her husband for taking off a badge she got him that indicates he is voting for Ulysses S. Grant, the Republican presidential candidate, in the 1868 elections. Her husband worries that he will be targeted by his employer and the KKK and refuses to wear it out of fear. The wife is frustrated by her husband’s fearfulness. She thinks Black people will never be free unless they start acting like it.

Group #5

1. **Background**: A Black man is thrown out of the first-class section of a railway car. **Improvisation**: Many in the Black community gather with white Republican leaders to complain and discuss how to respond. Many think that freedom should mean the freedom to sit in first-class or anywhere else, they debate how best to pressure the railway company to desegregate its railcars.

These are teaching materials that accompany Adam Sanchez’s article “Teaching the Reconstruction Revolution” that was published in the spring 2022 issue of Rethinking Schools. www.rethinkingschools.org
2. **Background**: In Louisiana, the new state constitution requires schools to be integrated. Under slavery, Black children were denied an education, but many poor whites could not afford schooling either. For many — both Black and white, this will be the first time sending their children to school. **Improvisation**: A Black family in New Orleans discusses sending their children to the newly integrated schools. They believe in integration and think that sending Black and white children to school together will help break down racial discrimination, but they also worry that the white children and parents will create a hostile environment that will make it difficult to learn.

**Group #6**

1. **Background**: A white mob in Marianna, Florida, threatens a white teacher teaching at a Black school. They threaten to shoot him if he does not promise to quit and close the school. **Improvisation**: The teacher and the parents of the schoolchildren gather at the school to discuss how to respond to the threats. Some believe the teacher should leave town, while others want to organize, with guns if necessary, to protect the teacher and the school.

2. **Background**: A ship has docked at a port town on the Georgia coast. The ship’s all-Black crew has charged the white captain with mistreating them, not properly feeding them, and threatening to shoot them when they confronted him about their mistreatment. When the ship arrives, the Black crew “arrests” the captain and brings him to the newly elected Black judge of the town. **Improvisation**: The judge conducts a hearing about what has occurred on the ship. He wants to send a message that white people can no longer abuse Black people with impunity. If found guilty, the judge is willing to sentence the ship’s captain to jail.

---

These are teaching materials that accompany Adam Sanchez’s article “Teaching the Reconstruction Revolution” that was published in the spring 2022 issue of *Rethinking Schools*. www.rethinkingschools.org
Teacher Notes for Reconstruction Improvisations

Group #1:

1. This scenario asks students to explore the lengths to which Black communities needed to go in order to get Black officials elected. This provides essential context for understanding the level of organization it took to get 1,500 Black people elected across the South during Reconstruction. As Steven Hahn writes in *A Nation Divided: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration*, “Elevating Black officeholders demanded the mobilization of entire communities.... They had to minimize the opportunities for bribery, manipulation, and intimidation. And they had to oversee the counting of ballots. Voting required, in essence, a military operation. Black voters needed to travel to the polling sites together in large numbers, for those who arrived individually or in small, unorganized groups could most readily be, as one east Texan put it, ‘intimidated [or] driven from the polls.’ Most often, they would mobilize and march.... When necessary or possible, they might be accompanied by armed guards on foot or horseback.... Facing particularly intense harassment during the fall of 1868, Abram Colby of Greene County, Georgia, organized his followers into companies and, on election day in November, marched company after company to the polls.”

2. In *Seizing Freedom: Slave Emancipation and Liberty for All*, David Roediger writes, “patterns emerged among domestic workers, with work in white households continuing but with employers ‘compelled to bargain and haggle’ as freedwomen asserted the right to quit and frequently opted for part-time waged household work in order to devote more time to labor serving their own families. One small but telling assertion was to refuse to labor outside one’s craft. Cooks who might be able to accomplish a day’s work in three hours attempted to avoid filling the rest of the day with cleaning, for example. Jubilee encouraged the revolutionary notion that ‘Every cook can govern’ and the practical one that, for her employer, she should only be required to cook. The ‘guiding assumption’ of freedpeople, historian Tera Hunter writes, was that ‘wage labor should not emulate slavery — especially in arbitrariness of time and tasks.’” Point out to students how revolutionary this is, even by today’s standards. I gave the example of our family friend who works as a nanny and is constantly asked to do dishes or fold laundry by her employer. She struggles to balance frequently having to assert what she was hired with the risks of confrontation with her employer.

Group #2:

1. The idea for this scenario comes from Michael Fitzgerald’s book *The Union League Movement in the Deep South*. He writes, “Freedmen often organized boycotts of offensive Conservative planters. Klan leader John Hunnicutt, for example, faced a concerted boycott because of his avowed killings of [Union] League activists. ‘It got so I could not hire a darkey at any price,’ Hunnicutt wrote. Another Democratic leader described similar problems in
Bullock County, and he was obliged to recruit labor in South Carolina. A Republican paper noted a boycott of objectionable planters in Greene County.” Teachers often highlight the ways that white supremacists used violence and intimidation to reestablish political control, but this improv highlights the ways that Black and white farm workers exerted their collective power to punish and extract concessions from white supremacist planters.

2. Writing about the general context of labor unrest including boycotts and strikes throughout the South, Michael Fitzgerald writes, “On another plantation, conflict grew out of a fight between the planter’s son and a Black child. When the case went to court and the Black child received a 40-day jail sentence, the freedmen called upon the [Union] League leaders to petition the military for relief. Soon the planter found that his freedmen were very ‘turbulent and disorderly,’ coming and going when they chose, working when they felt like it.” This improv brings out a couple of important themes to discuss with students. Ask them how common it is for kids to get in fights and how common it is for one of those kids to end up in jail for 40 days to draw out the injustice of the situation. And although in this particular historical moment, organization didn’t reach the point of an organized confrontation with the planter — it is not hard to imagine that happening. Ask students where the confidence to go on strike, not for higher wages or better working conditions, but for justice for the family of someone who has been wrongfully convicted, might come from.

Group #3:

1. Both Steven Hahn and Michael Fitzgerald give countless examples of Black workers in the South confronting their employers and negotiating for higher pay and better working conditions as a key feature of the revolutionary moment sweeping the South in the late 1860s and early 1870s. By fighting for better wages and working conditions, freedpeople were defining freedom on their own terms and attempting to distance it from slavery as much as possible. In this example, I decided to make the freedpeople railroad workers to remind students, in the words of historian William Loren Katz, that “slave labor did far more than bring in southern crops…. Slaves were lead miners… lumber workers… ironworkers…. They built southern canals, railroads, tunnels, ships, turnpikes and worked for gas and light companies.”

2. As Fitzgerald writes, “A quarrel at a local ferry ended with a white ‘accidentally’ shooting a freedman. The next day, a group of Blacks conducted an extralegal arrest of the perpetrator, whereupon they themselves were captured and 14 of them placed in jail. Freedmen in the region then became ‘much excited’ and threatened to ‘forcibly return their brethren.’ An actual armed clash took place before the affair was finally settled.” After students perform this scenario, I ask what they think gave freedmen the confidence to conduct a citizens’ arrest? The discussion usually reveals how unique the time period was — where Black people took action based on accumulated injustices and a new found confidence born of
the successes they had won. I added the dynamic of the Black judge so students could think through the ways that electing Black officials could have a dramatic effect on the kind of justice Black people received.

**Group #4:**
1. I created this scenario to highlight the potential power of what electing a Black sheriff could mean in this moment. Although fictional, the scenario is based off of the multiple attempts by Black people during Reconstruction to arm themselves and resist Klan attacks, some of which Steven Hahn details. “Black Union Leaguers in Darlington County, South Carolina, fearing Klan violence, gathered weapons, took control of a town, and threatened to burn it down in the event of attack. Near Macon, Mississippi, the combination of local outrages and the very bloody Meridian riot led Blacks to organize ‘secretly’ and ready themselves to ‘meet the mob.’”
2. Steven Hahn writes that the northern politician Albert T. Morgan, who worked closely with freedpeople in Yazoo County, Mississippi, told of a revealing episode during the election campaign of 1868 when Grant and Colfax badges became “the cause of domestic troubles almost without number.” If a freedman, having obtained one, lacked the courage to wear it at home or on the plantation in the presence of ‘ole marsa and missus’ or of ‘the overseer,’ Morgan remembered, ‘his wife would often take it from him and bravely wear it upon her own breast’ And if ‘the husband refused to surrender it’ or ‘hid it from her or locked it up,’ she might walk ‘as many as 20 or 30 miles’ to ‘buy, beg, or borrow one, and thus equipped return and wear it openly, in defiance of husband, master, mistress, or overseer.” This scenario helps students imagine the political power Black women exerted, despite not having formal voting rights. It also helps students understand how political actions may sometimes put people at risk and that made them — both during Reconstruction and today — a topic of family conversation.

**Group #5:**
1. This scenario comes from Lerone Bennett Jr.’s *Black Power U.S.A.* He quotes an anonymous white South Carolinian, writing in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1877, who said: “The Negroes, however, are permitted to, and frequently do, ride in first-class railway and in street railway cars. This liberty at first encountered much opposition from the railroad conductors and white passengers, and led to several fights, expulsions, lawsuits. But it is now so common as hardly to provoke a remark....” The scenario imagines one of these struggles — asking students to act out a community meeting that might lead to desegregation of the railway cars. You might point out to students that although we typically think of these struggles against desegregation happening in the 1960s, they also happened in the 1860s — in both the South and the North. It’s also important to note, as the quote above makes clear, in many places these struggles were successful. This belies the idea of steady American racial progress — that slavery was followed immediately by Jim Crow — and helps students understand the demise of Reconstruction as a counterrevolution.
2. Another example of pre-Jim Crow integration was New Orleans schools. The Reconstruction Constitutions written across the South in the late 1860s, mostly rejected segregation. As Bennett writes, “While most children attended segregated schools during Reconstruction, in some places there was dramatic progress. In fact, a larger proportion of the school population — at least one third — attended integrated schools in New Orleans between 1868 and 1877.”

Group #6:
1. In Eyewitness: A Living Documentary of the African American Contribution to American History, William Loren Katz quotes an 1868 letter by Brevet Captain C. M. Hamilton that describes how African Americans in Marianna, Florida, fought back against threats toward their school and white teacher. When an armed mob confronted the teacher outside of the school, “the freedmen promptly came to his aid, and the mob dispersed.” When the same mob threatened to destroy the school later that month, “the freedmen learning this, assembled at their… place of instruction in a condition of self defence…. Not less than forty colored men armed to protect themselves” prevented the mob from destroying the school. This scenario reveals both the lengths to which Black people had to go to receive and protect their right to an education that they had won during Reconstruction, but also how schools and teachers became a frequent target for white vigilante violence.

2. In Freedom’s Shore: Tunis Campbell and the Georgia Freedmen, Russell Duncan chronicles the incredible story of Tunis G. Campbell, a northern abolitionist who moved South after the war, helped to lead an independent Black community in the Georgia Sea Islands, and later established a base of Black power in McIntosh County. In 1868, Campbell was elected both to the Georgia State Senate and as the Justice of the Peace in Darien, Georgia. Duncan writes of one remarkable instance when, “an all-black crew charged English Captain J. Hatfield of the timber ship Mona with mistreating them by not properly feeding them. When they refused to obey orders on these grounds, Hatfield shot one of them. When the ship arrived in Darien two days later, the crew ‘arrested’ Hatfield and carried him to Campbell. After a hearing, Campbell jailed the captain for assault and battery with intent to kill.” This story illustrates how an elected Black judge could radically transform both expectations and realities of justice for Black people.
It had never happened before, and it has never happened since, in America.

Seeing it in the flesh James Sheppard Pike recoiled in horror. Black men proud in their skin, Black women scornful of fields and kitchens, both Black men and women assuming new roles that undermined basic assumptions of the white order. It was, Pike reported, a society “suddenly turned bottom-side up,” with the Black people on top and the white people on the bottom.

Nothing in Pike’s past life had prepared him for such a turnabout; nothing had prepared him for the spectacle of Black men sitting in the crimson plush Gothic seats of power with their feet on the rich mahogany tables. But where could he have prepared for what he saw now: Black people in charge, running things, and white people, “cowed and demoralized.” For people like Pike, it is always monstrous when the poor, the downtrodden, and the disinherited present their bills at the bar of history.

In a violently anti-Negro book, Pike wrote horrified at how “the dregs of the population habilitated in the robes of their intelligent predecessors.” It was “the slave rioting in the hall of his master, and putting his master under his feet.”

We know now that what white reporters saw in the South in the 1870s was distorted by the defective lenses of white supremacy. But the very violence of their language betrays the fact that they were looking at the beginning of a real revolution that fissured Southern society at every level. Let us go back in time to that brave Black world, supplementing the observations of biased whites with contemporary reports from Black participants, noting, as we travel, the changes Black power wrought in the everyday lives of the people.

The overwhelming majority of Black people still lived in one- and two-room huts and followed the sun, working from first light to dusk. For the many, life was still hard. But then life had always been hard, and now, for the first time, there was hope. They felt they were presiding at a new era in the history of man. They could see facts (Black governors, Black sheriffs) that justified the hardness and the sacrifices of their lives. Materially poor, they were spiritually rich, for there were no boundaries to their hope.

To the average Black man, Black power was a shield against hostile white power and a key to locked doors. It was a key, among other things, to manhood and womanhood. Shielded by power, both men and women demanded the respect due men and women. They refused to give way, give in, or take orders.

Black men were especially sensitive about the symbols of slavery, and refused to answer the old slave bells or work in gangs under an overseer. Certain symbols (hats, walking canes), which were forbidden in the slave era, now became positive symbols of manhood and womanhood. Clothing also served as an outward manifestation of a change in status, and Black men splurged on canes, scarves and swallow-tailed coats.

It was considered dishonorable for a Black man to let his women and children work in the fields. Reporting from South Carolina, Robert Somers wrote: “The Negro women are now almost wholly withdrawn from field labor [and the] children who were made available under slavery for industrial purposes are being more and more absorbed by the schools.”

Not only children but grown men and women were absorbed by the schools. The whole race, observers said, wanted to go to school. Reporters saw Black people
studying everywhere — on the wharves, in the fields, in the kitchen. It was not unusual to find three generations — a grandmother, a mother and a daughter — sitting on the same bench in the same classroom.

Because of Black power, Black people in many areas had better schools than white people. The Republican regimes were also very liberal in providing scholarships and free textbooks. [White journalist Charles] Nordhoff said “the colored people [of Louisiana] are generally better supplied than the whites with free schools.”

The new schools rapidly became major community centers rivaling the church in importance. Parents maintained a close watch over the curriculum and visited the schools often to hear their children read and recite. In many cases, Black people decided who could teach and what they could teach. Black men controlled the entire educational system of several Southern states, and on the local level real control was often invested in predominantly or wholly Black school boards. White teachers often had to pass a board of examiners composed wholly or in part of Blacks, and Black parents often exercised their right to veto native white Democrat teachers. Many Black parents demanded Black teachers for Black schools.

In New Orleans and other cities, Black and white children attended the same classes in the same schools. Black and white people also mingled in the bars, railroad cars, and places of public amusement. An anonymous white South Carolinian, writing in the Atlantic Monthly, said: “The Negroes, however, are permitted to, and frequently do, ride in first-class railway and in street railway cars. This liberty at first encountered much opposition from the railroad conductors and white passengers, and led to several fights, expulsions and lawsuits. But it is now so common as hardly to provoke remark....” There was also mingling in residential areas. Black men with money lived in “white” sections, and white politicians and white schoolteachers, male and female, often lived in Negro neighborhoods.

With the barriers down, there was considerable mingling and marrying at all levels of society. It was necessary for the Klan to whip some white women to keep them from Negro dances and to maim and murder some white men to keep them from legalizing their love for Black women. But in defiance of the law and the Klan, intermarriage continued. The most celebrated interracial marriage of this season occurred in Mississippi where Albert T. Morgan, the white state senator, crossed the color line and legalized his love for the stunningly beautiful Carrie Victoria Highgate, a Black teacher who had moved to the state from New York.

There was everywhere a sense of the opening of new possibilities. At the top level of the new society, all barriers crumbled in the crucible of power. The Black elite — wealthy professionals, politicians, and merchants — exchanged home visits with influential white politicians. They were in and out of the offices of the powerful and were forever rushing off to very important conferences in New York and Washington. The new men of power lived in the best sections of town and drove big landaus with blooded horses. The Black lieutenant governor of South Carolina had a white governess for his children, and other Black men of power were served ably by white servants and aides. By the mid 1870s, Black people were more secure in their new positions. They knew that they could operate the levers of power as well as white people. And with that new sense of power came a sharpening of racial consciousness and racial pride. One could see in almost every field, in almost every street, the dawning of a new sense of self-respect and peoplehood.
“A Society Turned Bottomside Up” by Steven Hahn
Adapted from A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration

The gallery of the U.S. Senate was crowded with spectators waiting to witness “the novel sight.” Two days earlier, the State of Mississippi had been officially restored to the Union, and now its Black Republican senator-elect Hiram R. Revels sat on a sofa as prospective colleagues debated his qualifications. Democrats insisted that, because of the Dred Scott decision, Revels had not been a citizen for nine years as required by the Constitution.

But others responded to such arguments with thunderous contempt, and when debate finally closed at five o’clock on the afternoon of February 25, 1870, 48 of the 56 senators present, ordered Revels sworn in. Revels then took the oath of office and walked to his seat becoming the first African American to serve in either chamber of the U.S. Congress. The seat had previously belonged to Jefferson Davis, the president of the Confederacy. Hiram Revel’s rise to power was a particularly dramatic symbol of the social and political revolution sweeping the country, but in state capitols like Jackson, Mississippi, the change was even more significant. Once the arena of the slaveholding elite, state legislatures across the South were now wholly dominated by the party that had waged war against the Confederacy. In Mississippi, 36 members of the new state Congress were Black.

Then there was South Carolina, where 75 of 125 seats in the house and 10 of 31 seats in the senate — fully 55 percent of the entire legislature — were occupied by Black Republicans who formerly had no political standing in the state. Reporting from South Carolina, northern journalist James Sheppard Pike could only see, “the spectacle of a society suddenly turned bottom-side up.”

Yet nowhere was "the spectacle" more compellingly in view than in the many small county seats that dotted the rural districts where former slaves composed the majority of the population. Once controlled by the slaveholding class, these small towns experienced political revolutions. Here, formerly enslaved people could now hold the official levers of power. The old rulers were absolutely horrified. As Georgia’s Black Republican leader Henry McNeal Turner explained, “They do not care so much about Congress admitting negroes to their halls… but they do not want the negroes over them at home.” Never before — and rarely again — in the history of the United States would such a substantial section of the working class have the opportunity to contest for power in the formal institutions of governance that affected their lives most directly. It proved to be a turbulent and telling experiment in the meaning of democracy.

At one time and place or another, a Black man occupied virtually every office available at the local level. Black men served as coroners, surveyors, treasurers, tax assessors and collectors, jailors, solicitors, registers of deeds, clerks of court, police officers and marshals, firefighters, and even mayors. But the greatest number served as members of county and city governing boards, as judges, as election officials, and as sheriffs and their deputies. In some locales, Blacks came to dominate the local governments. In others, a Black officeholder or two helped more numerous white Republican allies take the reins of power from the hands of the old elite.

The stakes were high. When Black people won, they passed laws; took care of roads and bridges; and controlled budgets. They issued warrants, made arrests, controlled weapons, and carried out foreclosures. They assessed property values and
collected taxes. They heard civil and criminal cases, selected jurors, and gave out punishments. They created school districts and distributed funds. And they supervised the voting process. Elevating Black officeholders demanded the mobilization of entire communities. African Americans and poor whites throughout the South were organized through the Union Leagues. The Union Leagues rapidly spread across the South after 1865. Through the Leagues, eligible voters were educated, candidates for office were trained and nominated and issues were debated. Perhaps most important, the Leagues provided protection.

Union League activists prepared most carefully for election day. They had to get their voters to the polls, at times over a distance of many miles, and make sure that those voters received the correct tickets. They had to minimize the opportunities for bribery, manipulation, and intimidation. And they had to oversee the counting of ballots. Voting required, in essence, a military operation. Black voters needed to travel to the polling sites together in large numbers, for those who arrived individually or in small, unorganized groups could most readily be, as one east Texan put it, “intimidated [or] driven from the polls.” Most often, they would mobilize and march. When necessary or possible, they might be accompanied by armed guards on foot or horseback. Facing particularly intense harassment during the fall of 1868, Abram Colby of Greene County, Georgia, organized his followers into companies and, on election day in November, marched company after company to the polls.

During Reconstruction, Black men held political office in every state of the former Confederacy. More than 100 won election or appointment to state-level government positions, ranging from superintendent of education, assistant commissioner of agriculture to treasurer, secretary of state, state supreme court justice, and lieutenant governor. One African American even sat briefly as the governor of Louisiana. A great many more — almost 800 — served in the state legislatures. But by far the largest number of Black officeholders were at the local level: in counties, cities, and districts. Blacks may have filled as many as 1,500 local offices throughout the South.

White conservatives of the time had a term for it: "Negro rule." Nothing seemed more menacing or illegitimate, nothing more vindictive or humiliating, than the installation in positions of official political power of former slaves. The ruled had become the rulers and the rulers, the ruled.

The emergence of genuine bases of Black power occurred in the very heart of what had been the Old Regime. Few places more clearly displayed the revolutionary repercussions of the moment than McIntosh County, Georgia. Home to some of the Old South’s wealthiest planter aristocrats, by the spring of 1868, Black men now served as county clerk, county ordinary, justice of the peace, constable, city marshal, and election registrar, and represented the county in the general assembly and state senate. Before long they would also serve as sheriff, deputy sheriff, coroner, election manager, and city alderman, not to mention as jurors and bailiffs. With the levers of local office in their grasp, Black Republicans, with the support of their white allies, moved to adjust the balances of power and shift important resources toward their communities. They generally raised taxes on large landowners, initiated beneficial building projects, established and aided charitable institutions, and provided for educational opportunities by constructing schools, hiring teachers, increasing salaries, and purchasing basic supplies. Even a white critic of “Negro rule” had to concede that many of these efforts were “extraordinarily successful.”
Good Morning Revolution
by Langston Hughes

Good-morning, Revolution:
You’re the very best friend
I ever had.
We gonna pal around together from
now on.
Say, listen, Revolution:
You know, the boss where I used to
work,
The guy that gimme the air to cut down
expenses,
He wrote a long letter to the papers
about you:
Said you was a trouble maker, a alien-
enemy,
In other words a son-of-a-bitch.
He called up the police
And told ‘em to watch out for a guy
Named Revolution.

You see,
The boss knows you’re my friend.
He sees us hangin’ out together.
He knows we’re hungry, and ragged,
And ain’t got a damn thing in this
world —
And are gonna do something about it.

The boss’s got all he needs, certainly,
Eats swell,
Owns a lotta houses,
Goes vacationin’,
Breaks strikes,
Runs politics, bribes police,
Pays off congress,
And struts all over the earth —

But me, I ain’t never had enough to eat.
Me, I ain’t never been warm in winter.
Me, I ain’t never known security —
All my life, been livin’ hand to mouth,
Hand to mouth.

Listen, Revolution,

We’re buddies, see —
Together,
We can take everything:
Factories, arsenals, houses, ships,
Railroads, forests, fields, orchards,
Bus lines, telegraphs, radios,
(Jesus! Raise hell with radios!)
Steel mills, coal mines, oil wells, gas,
All the tools of production,
(Great day in the morning!)
Everything —
And turn ‘em over to the people who
work.
Rule and run ‘em for us people who
work.

Boy! Them radios —
Broadcasting that very first morning to
USSR:
Another member the International
Soviet’s done come
Greetings to the Socialist Soviet
Republics
Hey you rising workers everywhere
greetings —
And we’ll sign it: Germany
Sign it: China
Sign it: Africa
Sign it: Poland
Sign it: Italy
Sign it: America
Sign it with my one name: Worker
On that day when no one will be
hungry, cold, oppressed,
Anywhere in the world again.

That’s our job!

I been starvin’ too long,
Ain’t you?

Let’s go, Revolution!

These are teaching materials that accompany Adam Sanchez’s article “Teaching the Reconstruction Revolution” that was published in the spring 2022 issue of Rethinking Schools.
www.rethinkingschools.org