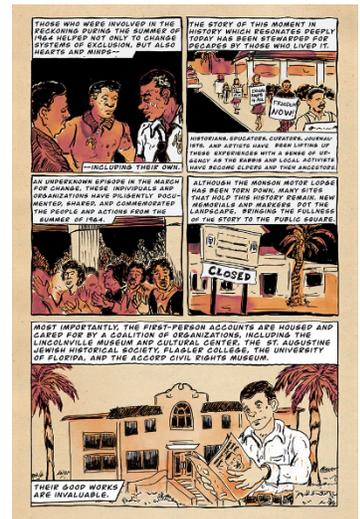
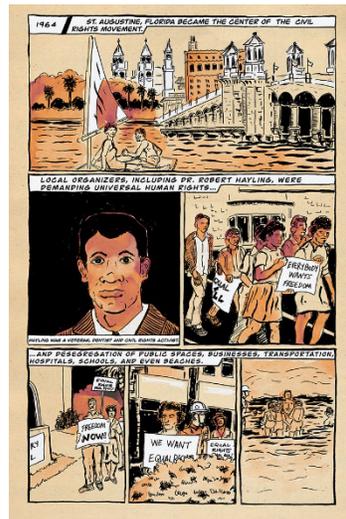
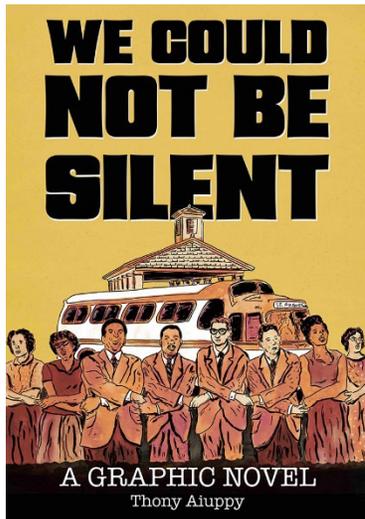


## WE COULD NOT BE SILENT

Commemorating a Remarkable Act of Solidarity at a Critical Moment in History



What unfolded over three days in June 1964 changed the course of our nation's history and contributed to the passage of the Civil Rights Act. During this era, Black residents and their allies in St. Augustine were fighting to desegregate private and public spaces — hotels, lunch counters, pools, and even public beaches. By the time Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. arrived to work alongside local movement leaders, the atmosphere was marked by hostility and violence.

Seeing the need to shine a brighter national spotlight on the injustice occurring in the city, Dr. King wrote to Rabbi Israel Dresner, a former Freedom Rider, calling for his support. Rabbi Dresner, joined by 15 other rabbis and one layperson, traveled to St. Augustine to stand in solidarity with the Black community.

While jailed for their participation, the rabbis penned a powerful letter to their congregations, bearing witness to what they saw and explaining why they had come. They grounded their commitment in history:

*"We came as Jews who remember the millions of faceless people who stood quietly, watching the smoke rise from Hitler's crematoria. We came because we know that, second only to silence, the greatest danger to man is loss of faith in man's capacity to act."*

The forces at play during that turbulent time have not disappeared. As certain groups grow louder and more emboldened in their displays of hate, it becomes even more urgent to recognize the power of community, solidarity, and moral courage — and to let history remind us of the people we aspire to be.

A phrase written by the rabbis nearly sixty years ago still echoes today: *"Silence has become the unpardonable sin of our time."*

*We Could Not Be Silent* is a graphic novel adaptation of a 2023 JFCS exhibit. This traveling exhibit is made up of nineteen 24"x36" panels.

The *Resist Hate, Repair the World* current programming and exhibits are made possible through generous grants from The Theodore and Pauline Cohen Charitable Trust, Henri Landwirth Family Advised Fund, Henri Landwirth and Family Advised Fund, Glenn and Lisa Ullmann Advised Fund, and



Companies, organizations, community centers, churches, civic groups, and others who wish to host an exhibit, please contact Melissa Williams at [mgwilliams@jfcsjax.org](mailto:mgwilliams@jfcsjax.org)