



## Source 5

**Extracts from a report on race relations in the city of Chicago, 2 October 1957**  
(Catalogue ref: FO 371/126719)

### Questions

1. What happened in Calumet Park?
2. What reasons were given for not reporting these events in the press?
3. What information does this source provide about the extent of racism experienced by black communities in America in 1957?
4. If you were to investigate what happened in Chicago, what other sources might help you?



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## Source 5

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British Consulate General,  
720 N. Michigan Avenue,  
Chicago 11,  
Illinois

October 2, 1957

Sir:

The City of Chicago has a Department called the Commission on Human Relations which deals particularly with racial relations between white people and negroes. The Commission, which is a branch of the Administration under the direction of the Mayor, publishes reports about once a month on racial conditions in Chicago. These are confidential to the recipients and for various reasons are practically never mentioned in the Press. They show regularly and consistently a story of racial troubles in mixed areas. The latest report which I have just received covers the period from July 21 to August 4. This report follows the usual pattern, but in view of the recent trouble in Arkansas and the impression given by many newspapers in the north, including those of Chicago, that this is purely a southern problem which does not exist here, I thought it might interest your Excellency to have a summary of this latest report by the Commission.

3. On Saturday, July 28, another negro group numbering about 100 had a picnic in Calumet Park. As in the previous week, they were attacked by about 100 white people who threw stones, bottles, etc. and also physically attacked the men, women and children. The police sent for reinforcements. According to the report of the police sergeant who was in charge of the detachment, the white mob finally increased to about 5,000 or 6,000. As squad cars entered the Park they were stoned by the white group. Further squad cars were sent and the police formed a wedge to break through the white crowd to reach the picnickers. Some of the police officers were shoved and stoned. The negroes were taken out of the Park in the police cars. The white crowd then turned on the automobiles which had been left in the Park by the negroes and damage was done to at least 14 of them. According to the sergeant's report, at least 23 negroes were taken to hospital and five white men were arrested.

10. As far as I know, not a line about any of this trouble has appeared in any of the Chicago newspapers. The Executive Director of the Commission on Human Relations told me that this was because the newspapers had decided that publication of this kind of news might merely inflame further trouble. I also think that it is to some extent a holier-than-thou attitude on the part of the newspapers who spend a great deal of energy on criticizing the south for their attitude to negroes.