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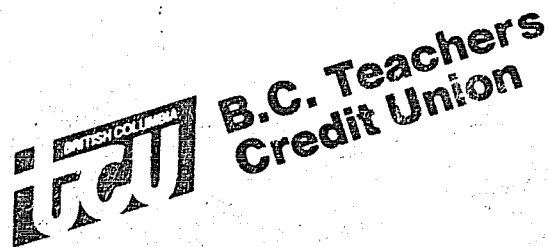
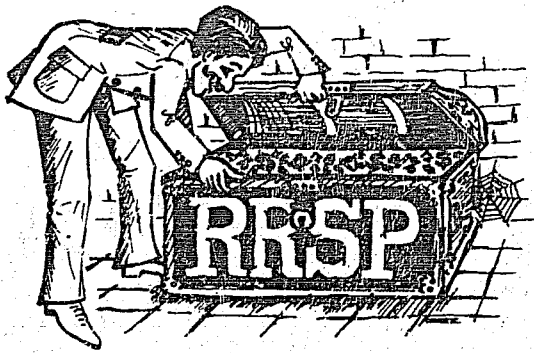
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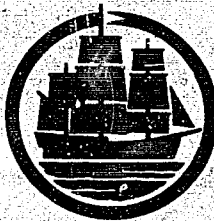
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Articles contained herein reflect the views of the authors and do not necessarily express official policy of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation.

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MULTICULTURALISM
IN THE CLASSROOM



A LITTLE LESS NAZI, A LITTLE MORE MULTICULTURAL

JOHN S. CHURCH

During the great depression of the 1930s — my formative years — I lived in the James Bay district of Victoria. My great grandparents on one side had emigrated from England to what is now British Columbia at the time of the gold rush. Slightly later, my grandparents on the other side had emigrated from Scotland. I grew up at a time of very limited opportunity in a peninsular area of a small city isolated on an island. My boyhood companions shared comparable kinds of personal histories. We never questioned the propriety of racial ghettos in that isolated outpost of empire.

In the late forties when I started to teach in Prince Rupert's secondary school, I sensed that I was not being adequate and fair to three Haida boys transplanted from Masset to my Grade 8 classroom of Scandinavian-ethnic children busy absorbing British Culture and history. When I went to Rupert's only movie theatre, I knew I was wrong when I sat in one area and the Indian people sat in their segregated area, but I still did it. And I only watched when the police ruthlessly rounded up the Indians who had managed to imbibe generously what was then branded as illegal liquor.

Immigrants from all continents have poured into our province during the last 30 years. They have transformed and enriched all our lives. They have contributed to our becoming a multicultural province. They have contributed to mitigating the horrible features of discrimination practised during my boyhood against the first Canadians and Canadians whose roots extended to Japan, China, India and Russia. However, we still have a long, long struggle to overcome racism and to become truly multicultural.

A little of that history, and the challenges, the opportunities and the potentialities, are outlined in the articles that follow. Mary Ashworth provides a brief history of the education of children of Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Doukhobor and East Indian ethnicity and concludes with the contribution of movements such as the women's liberation, the human rights and the BCTF to improve the welfare of children. Professor Adam reminds us that "a little Nazi can be detected in most of us" and develops six common fallacies that must be overcome if we are to improve race relations in Canada.

Elizabeth Aird emphasizes the importance of the role model of the teacher and the potential of the teacher with limited understanding to do lasting damage to the self esteem of the student. Vilma Dubé echoes the concern as she reports a secondary school situation in

which the students, unlike primary students, have become completely non-involved.

Lois Lawrence captures the excitement of the Castlegar community experience in promoting multicultural education. Sam Fillipoff emphasizes the need for total community involvement in ensuring that more than the values of the dominant culture are presented and examined. Kogila Adam-Moodley argues for "unspectacular inclusion" of minority groups to build the self-concept of each minority child. She concludes that "such an approach 'multiculturalizes' the core culture rather than preaching more respect for eternal outsiders." A student reminds us of the loneliness and distance of being an "eternal outsider" when the parents lack understanding and caring.

Ed May whimsically suggests that "multiculturalism has become Canada's fastest growing industry," then points out some of the glib practices carried out on the conference circuit and the myths that schools promote in their approaches to multicultural education. He concludes that all this avoids addressing the key issue that "every major Canadian institution is both racist and sexist . . ." The starkly clear message is to probe why our society is racist if we are to become genuinely multicultural.

Yvonne Zarowny emphasizes the need to become critically reflective about our own culture and society. When we do, we shall understand why public education is being systematically attacked, and why it is folly to rely solely on western, industrial, linear logic. At our own peril we shy away from examining and comparing our cultural assumptions.

Yes, because "a little Nazi can be detected" in some of us, we know that we still have massive obstacles to overcome in the "multiculturalizing" of the core culture. I believe that the B.C. I know in 1983 is an infinitely richer, more exciting, more vigorous society than the one I remember of 1933. I thank our newer citizens who have enriched our lives. I thank the authors whose articles will, I believe, increase our understanding and our empathies as we become a little less Nazi and a little more multicultural. ○

John S. Church is acting director of the BCTF's Professional Development Division. With this issue of the magazine he retires from BCTF service and from the magazine's editorial board. The editor gratefully acknowledges the valuable assistance he has received from John for many years.

A SECOND LOOK AT



A no-holds-barred look at what often passes for multiculturalism — what the author calls the pizza-perogie folkdance rut.

MULTICULTURALISM



EDWIN MAY

More than a decade has passed since the federal government announced a multicultural program for Canada. Born out of the necessity of a hard-pressed government to win the "ethnic vote," multiculturalism had a slow and controversial start. Now, after provincial participation, multiculturalism has become Canada's fastest growing industry.

Fueled by untold millions of tax dollars, multiculturalism has provided the excuse for a plethora of conferences, workshops, folk fests, committees, societies, publications and ethno-cultural directories. From these have come activities that go under the generic name of "programs," all allegedly designed to make Canadians like each other through learning about each other's "cultures."

The multicultural phenomenon has spawned a new sub-species, which has penetrated many of our cherished institutions. Graced with titles like co-ordinator, consultant and organizer, these instant "experts" in good neighborliness are drawn from the ranks of bureaucrats, academics, school teachers, organized labor and ethnic groups.

Apart from a penchant for mouthing sonorous platitudes about cultural diversity, these multicults share an interest in the movement's pivotal word, "funding." Indeed, many display an interest in multiculturalism only in proportion to the amount of funding they are able to pry loose from minor officials of the secretary of state's department. Some of the more enterprising and glib have developed slick

routines that they hustle for hundreds of dollars a performance. Some academics I have encountered, having established their bona fides as multicultural "experts" through the production of sundry "papers" or "studies" purporting to shed light on various "ethnic" groups, have developed a lucrative sideline working the multicultural circuit. The demand for star performer at conferences does not stop at academics, although the possession of a doctorate, no matter how anaemic, is an added recommendation. Media types, professional ethnics, politicians and entertainers are regulars on the circuit.

As with any growth industry, multiculturalism has its offshoots. The heritage language program, maintenance language program, ethnic studies program, cross-

cultural program, human rights program all vie for funding. For the winners there is the obligatory conference.

These conferences have a standard format: a keynote speaker; a collection of "workshops," which usually turn out to be lectures with a short question period; a motley of handouts; and a dinner of rubber chicken. All of this in the setting of a high-priced hotel. Another sub-species, the conference groupie, is one who has mastered the art of coaxing funding for conference attendance from school boards or government agencies. Conference groupies also show signs of caffeine poisoning.

Every multicultural conference must produce a clutch of recommendations. Couched in grand-sounding words, these resolutions are forgotten by the time the next conference starts up.

JARGON AND EUPHEMISMS

Out of all of this activity has come a new collection of jargon and euphemisms. Expressions like multicultural, culture, ethnicity, plural society, intercultural relations, visible minorities, attitudinal engineering are but a few samples of the assault on plain English. That these terms are only vaguely understood does not bother the multicults. Worse still, there is confusion about the issue of multicultural education. Or, as P. E. Carlson commented,

"Multicultural education, as described by many of its advocates, is a labyrinth of assertions and assumptions which need to be examined. To those who make the largest contributions to education — namely, individual teachers and students in specific communities — the assertions and assumptions often make little sense."

These assumptions have given rise to some identifiable approaches to multicultural education. Here are a few.

The philanthropic approach stems from a belief that a poor self-image, low expectations and high dropout rates among certain ethnic groups can be attributed to the "failure of the school system to meet the needs" of those particular minorities. Hence, the school must prepare teachers to assist such minorities. The development of such special programs as English as a second language, and provision of home-school workers, are two initiatives much favored by the philanthropists, or benign assimilationists.

Another approach is based on the belief that our school system is ethnocentric and ignores the cultural pluralism of Canadian society. To offset this emphasis on Anglo-Canadian perspectives, the argument goes, educators should encourage all students to develop a sense of their own cultural heri-

tage and an understanding of the cultures they encounter in their community. The cultural advocate, in urging the school to provide an environment in which students can celebrate their diversity, emphasizes the retention of separate ethnic institutions.

A third and closely related approach is that of the cultural pluralist, who believes that the school should be an agent for the preservation of cultural and ethnic diversity. By institutional adaptations, the school system can provide minority groups with opportunities for academic success. Hence, the advocacy of quota systems of teachers and administrators so that the school can reflect the ethnic composition of the clientele that it serves; ethnic studies courses; heritage language classes; minority involvement in the control of education. Proponents argue that the understanding and appreciation of one's own culture is a necessary prelude to the acceptance of the cultural diversity that is Canada.

After a decade of multiculturalism, a few of our most persistent myths are beginning to fade; Columbus discovering the New World; the two founding races notion, and so on. At the same time, new myths have rolled from the multicultural bandwagon. Some favorites:

- *Ethnics are people from Southern Europe, Asia, Africa or South America.* This myth denies the ethnicity of those who form the mainstream in Canadian society.

- *Physical appearance determines cultural grouping.* This myth ignores the dynamic nature of culture and the ability of people to adopt features of other cultures.

- *If only "they" could be like "us" there wouldn't be any problems.* Shades of the old "melting pot" myth.

- *Learning about "them" will bring tolerance.* This "learning" frequently centers on the past and avoids any understanding of the values, aspirations and problems of cultural minorities.

THE THREAT OF RACISM

Most persistent of all myths is the belief that we can somehow divorce multiculturalism from its *raison d'être* — the presence and the threat of racism in our society. "We have no problem here!" is a swelling chorus from the lips of the multicults, those who believe in multiculturalism for multiculturalism's sake. The word "racism" has been banned from their lexicon and has been replaced by a variety of euphemisms. I have witnessed some people showing signs of physical distress at the mention of "racism" and have been cautioned a thousand times not to speak about "it."

That every major Canadian institution is both racist and sexist is cheerfully ignored by the "we-have-no-problems" brigade.

Our parliament, legal-judicial system, and banking and financial systems are all dominated by one segment of the population. Our school system, which serves the needs of these institutions, perpetuates the same racist and sexist biases. Thus, the few women who have risen to positions of power within the school system represent mere tokenism, while the even fewer non-whites who have become decision-makers fit Hitler's notorious description — "black auxiliaries."

To have any validity, multicultural education must include an understanding of the social, economic and historical forces that give rise to racism and provide the reason for a multicultural policy. Failure to grapple with the challenges presented by an ethnically heterogeneous population can be dangerous. During the past year we have seen the alarming results of following a "we-have-no-problems" stance. Countries like Sweden, Denmark, Britain and Switzerland, all with long traditions of tolerance, all with significant immigrant populations, have been shaken by what the media call "racial disturbances."

Here in British Columbia we have some of the basic requirements for the development of a society that is truly egalitarian and a school system that recognizes the worth of every cultural group: we have a wonderful ethno-cultural mix, communities that are rich in tradition, bountiful cultural resources.

In short, we have no excuse to get stuck in the pizza-perogie folkdance rut. We have every incentive to promote true multiculturalism. ☉

Edwin May is the co-ordinator of the BCTF's race relations program.

CLASSIFIED ADS

There will be only one more issue of this magazine during this school year.

Anyone interested in placing a classified advertisement should note that the deadline for our receipt of the ad copy will be February 25.

Classified ads cost \$3.30 a line, minimum charge three lines. BCTF members receive a one-third discount. ☉

THE STRUGGLE TO COMBAT RACISM

Six fallacies are hindering our efforts to remove racism from schools and from society in general.

HERBERT ADAM

●Almost 150 years ago, at the beginning of the industrial revolution in England, Marx wrote his famous dictum that "the working class has no nationality."

His hope that the international solidarity of the universally exploited would escape the false consciousness of nationalist/racist beliefs has certainly been disproven by historic events.

A recent careful survey of British workers concludes that "75 per cent of our sample of white manual workers hold racist beliefs."

Although unions and labor parties have frequently been in the forefront of well-intended programs to combat racism, there is ample evidence of grass root resentment of foreign migrant workers in Western Europe, closed shop policies directed against blacks in some U.S. unions, and ominous rumblings of renewed racial antagonism in Canada as well.

Of course, we all know the history of

official discrimination against Native people and "Orientals," particularly in the Canadian West. In terms of racial harmony at present, B.C. and Vancouver, however, seem to be better off than Toronto, and Canada as a whole compares well with the bitterness of racial and communal strife elsewhere in the world.

However, as the reappearance of the Ku Klux Klan indicates, and other widely publicized subtle and less subtle acts of thuggery reveal, there is hardly any reason for complacency. As many psychological experiments have demonstrated,² a little Nazi can be detected in most of us.

Fascism in Germany cannot be explained as an historical accident. Nor was the systematically administered genocide due to a pathological state of mind of the people or their leader. The Nazis were not mad, cruel monsters — on the contrary they were ordinary, civilized, normal, cultured people — exposed, however, to

circumstances that brought out attitudes and behavior hitherto inconceivable.

Can we be sure to be immune if circumstances change? Can we really be certain that British race riots will not be repeated in Toronto and Vancouver, let alone that the National Front may take over a dilapidated Britain in due course?

The relative decency of Canada points to the most important universal cause of racism. Canada, and B.C. in particular, so far has been economically better off. However, with increased competition for scarce goods, particularly jobs and housing in a declining economy, scapegoating provides the easiest explanation. What should be accounted for in terms of economic crisis management is attributed to immigrants or minorities who are perceived as adding to indigenous unemployment, encroaching on neighborhoods in decay or who are blamed for social ills from declining school standards through soaring crime rates to the eclipse of traditional morals.

Indeed, certain immigrants tend to work harder, undercut wage rates or live in crowded houses — because they still have “to make it.” Their insecurity and lack of information adds to their docility. By comparing themselves with worse conditions in their country of origin and having our individual achievement mentality, many immigrants are initially reluctant to become involved in union activity or any collective or militant effort to improve conditions.

This often results in the classical situation of a split labor market.³ Employers benefit from cheap, docile labor compared with the organized, higher priced indigenous labor force, which resents the competition. This usually leads to policies of exclusion (such as restrictive immigration) or exclusivist policies of job reservation and color bars, as in South Africa.

The only way to prevent a split-labor market lies in the inclusion of the newcomers into organized labor, which must insist on equal pay for equal work in its own long-term interest.

APPEAL TO THE IRRATIONAL

Yet the economic explanation of racism amounts only to a partial understanding by highlighting the rational aspects of group competition. The success of a racist movement lies in its appeal to the irrational, ideological and psychological dimensions. When a society has been humiliated (such as Germany was in the treaty of Versailles) or lost its former power (such as imperial Britain) the agitator promises to restore the former identity. The downtrodden, hopeless masses now have a new cause to believe in. The weak, dependent and rejected can participate in an illusion of strength and superiority, similar to sport fanatics rejoicing in the victory of their teams.

The Rolling Stones' most successful hit — “I can't get no satisfaction” — echoes the psychological despondency of skinheads and punks who make “paki bashing” and the harassment of sexual minorities their way of asserting their self-worth. Racism boils down to having someone to kick below you when your own degradation leaves you few other options.

If this perspective on the causes of racism is accurate, it has crucial implications for those concerned with improving race relations in Canada. There exists many traps of conventional good will.

Rather than continue the “propaganda for tolerance” theme, it may be wise to focus on the false consciousness with which cross-cultural communication is so frequently practised. In this way we can avoid the naivete of do-gooders whose zeal

makes them unaware of the context and limitations of their well-intentioned activity. To this end, I should like to reflect on six common fallacies among those interested in combatting racism in Canada.

SIX COMMON FALLACIES

The most common myth could be labelled the (1) **communication fallacy**. Intercultural friction is presented as a problem of misunderstanding. Culturally biased perception is said to interfere with the common bond and natural harmony among the human species. With a bit more conscious effort to teach multicultural respect for and knowledge of difference, mutual tolerance will increase.

Glib academic entrepreneurs sell packages of cultural awareness to multinationals for their managers in Saudi Arabia as they offer similar solutions to school boards troubled by racial violence in British Columbia.

Pet recipes are frequently peddled by professional educators hard-pressed to come up with instant solutions to improve race relations. In this vein, three academics at UBC found that East Indians are often perceived as dirty and smelling. Therefore, they recommend to teachers:

“It may be that more positive attitudes toward East Indians would result if East Indians were brought into association with the word clean. That could be done by emphasizing that cleanliness is an important value in the East Indian community. Their religion requires them to bathe twice a day.”⁴

Such well-meaning advice, however, has severe limitations, besides unintentionally repeating the opposite stereotyping. East Indians, who are treated homogeneously here, belong to quite different religions, from various versions of Islam to Hinduism and Christianity. Just as religious diversity characterizes the heterogeneous community from four continents, so do various hygienic customs, as they do in any population. Why should they be glorified as clean in the fashion of detergent advertising? What is needed among students and teachers alike is not a reverse positive stereotyping but a critical capacity to differentiate, to perceive of differences in their historical origin and, above all, to live with and thrive on diversity.

The communication fallacy originates in a false notion of the origin of ethnic antagonism. One may refer to (2) **the prejudice fallacy** as to the optimism resulting from the under-estimation of hate toward out-groups.

How do we explain the hate of the Toronto policeman who reportedly re-

marked during a raid on gay clubs that he wished the showers were hooked up to gas? The sexual minority of harassed homosexuals is no economic threat to its persecutors. Nor were the German Jews, gypsies or mentally retarded any real threat to the Nazis, except in their imagination and propaganda.

If highly civilized communities can single out harmless minorities as scapegoats, their prejudice obviously must have much more universal origins than temporary material insecurity.

Evolutionary theorists have quite correctly pointed out that distrust of strangers proved a useful attitude in the evolutionary process. Ethnocentrism aided the cohesion of the group over its competitors. Nepotism then boils down to preferential kin selection,⁵ practised throughout history and everywhere in the contemporary world.



A common misconception in our country is that we are relatively free of racial antagonism. Far from it. If children of different racial backgrounds are to work together in

No one can rightly claim freedom from prejudice. Our species, like animals, has, for example, developed an elaborate ritual of greeting. With the handshake and embrace we indicate our friendly intentions to the stranger as we signal our submission with a bow. In this perspective, prejudice is a rational principle of survival rather than the height of irrationality. This may explain why both the Marxist appeals of international solidarity and the Christian notions of a brother or sisterhood of love among all humankind have so far proved a dismal failure.

On the other hand, the universal potential for ethnocentrism and resulting aggression are always activated by stress. Without a threatening outgroup, there is no ingroup. Sociobiologists who assert the innate, primordial nepotism frequently ignore that the glorification of the ingroup always depends

on the specific situation. Hostility feeds on anxiety. Ethnic sentiments intensify or fade quickly according to circumstances.

The primordialists are also left to explain the remarkable tolerance — the genuine spirit of love and compassion for cultural strangers — exhibited among large sections of people everywhere. Here child psychology and psychoanalytic theory has shed light on different predispositions.

If child-rearing practices allowed for the development of a secure identity, the person has learned to sublimate the inevitable repression involved in growing up.

If, on the other hand, authority was simply imposed without much explanation, if the child did not encounter caring adults in conflict with whom he could develop his or her own autonomous ego, the typical authoritarian personality syndrome was the outcome. Authoritarians hate in others what they have to suppress in themselves. They project their own desires into outgroups who therefore have to be punished for what the weak ego of the authoritarians do not allow them to express to themselves freely and without guilt.

It was not accidental that traditional anti-semitism always associated the victim with sexual transgressions. Similarly, folklore fantasy ascribes to American blacks, and indeed to outgroups everywhere, imaginary sexual powers.⁶

A related projection exists when we associate the Third World primarily with the imagery of disease and immigration with pollution. Our medical profession unconsciously even attributes the annual common cold to alien imports by calling the influenza A virus "Brazil" and "Bangkok," as distinct from the equally treacherous "Singapore" B virus. Who wants to come too close to strangers when they can expect to catch Hong Kong flu at the very least?

But associating disease with the outgroup has a long tradition. In France they call VD the English disease and in Italy the same affliction is popularly known as the French disease.

CANADIAN MISCONCEPTION

(3) A third common **Canadian misconception** suggests that this country is relatively free of racial antagonism. This self-righteous complacency is particularly prevalent among Anglo academics, who assert confidently that "race relations will not become, and should not be identified as, a serious and worrying issue at least in the near future."⁷ Another recent study found it "strange that Canadian social scientists in the area of intergroup relations did not find it (racism) worthy of investigation."⁸

Of the few Canadian studies on racial

attitudes, two recent examples may suffice to refute the common denial of racism:

In a survey on student attitudes toward civil liberties in the Greater Vancouver area, "sixty per cent agreed that Anglicans should be able to build a church but only 45 per cent agreed that Jehovah Witnesses and Hindus should have the same privilege."⁹ Eighty-three per cent of the respondents knew that a hotel owner could not refuse service to East Indians, but only 47 per cent agreed he should serve East Indians.

In a 1978 study, based on 652 random telephone interviews in Saskatoon, respondents were asked whether they thought Canada has been "harmed" by East Indians and Chinese coming to the country. 27 per cent believe that East Indians have harmed the country and 10 per cent said Chinese did so. Of the same respondents 27 per cent were opposed to Chinese immigrating to the country and 42 per cent were opposed to East Indians coming here.¹⁰

Rather than playing down such a reality as a temporary fate affecting all newcomers, it is of the utmost importance to bring this racism into the open and face it squarely. These are not isolated incidents for which the Ku Klux Klan can be blamed. The popular focus on the lunatic activities of such a fringe group as the Ku Klux Klan serves only to obfuscate this widespread racist sentiment. Dissociation from the Klan makes a similar attitude respectable, because it can pose as the non-extremist, reasonable middle ground. Anti-racist groups, that aim only at combatting the Klan, ignore this more respectable racism.

BLENDING-IN FALLACY

Another harmful strategy one may call the (4) "**blending-in fallacy**." If only Sikhs were to give up their turbans and Hindu women their bright saris, their acceptance by main-stream society would run much more smoothly. Make yourself a little bit more invisible and you cause fewer problems.

Of course, minorities of color will hardly succeed in bleaching their skins, regardless of the luring promises of the cosmetic industry. It is precisely this closure of exits out of collective fate that makes racism so offensive to its victims. Unlike class or religion, racialism excludes individual opting out through upward mobility or conversion or acquiring a new language or accent.

Moreover, the well-intended advice to "blend in" assumes that the victim of discrimination is the problem rather than those who can't stand the reminder of difference. By adhering to the misguided

harmony, as these two youngsters are doing, we must bring racism out into the open and confront it squarely.

advice to blend in, the victim denounces his or her cultural heritage; he or she undermines a crucial source of self-identity and self-respect and instead adopts an imposed definition of worthiness.

Moreover, by conforming to the dictates of the majority, the minority has by no means bought its safe acceptance. There could hardly have been a more well-adjusted and integrated community than the Jews of pre-Nazi Germany. Most were Germans in culture, military record and patriotism, let alone appearance. It was precisely because the Jewish minority had lost its distinct identity so successfully that its persecutors had to single them out by making them wear a star in public. The agitator had no difficulty in accusing the victims of two contradictory sins: of clannish exclusiveness on the one hand, and simultaneously attempting to sneak into the host society by cunningly acting as Germans.

The fifth fallacy you may call the (5) **universal ethnic theory**. In Canada, with the exception of the Native Indians, we are all ethnics. Whether of Scottish, Ukrainian or Jamaican descent, immigration into a foreign land put us or our ancestors all in a similar position. This perspective overlooks important differences between the European immigrants and the visible minorities. In the second generation, the Canadian-born son of the Ukrainian will have lost his accent and melted into the Canadian mix. The Jamaican's son, on the other hand, equally Canadian-born, will still stick out. People most likely will still ask him the offensive question: "Where did you come from?"

In other words, as Raymond Breton has perceptively noted, ethnicity can be, an asset or a liability. Bagpipes are played at official ceremonies; Jamaican steelbands are not. The one culture represents the Canadian power-elite, the other its exotic entertainment at the most.

(6) This perspective leads to the realization that while we celebrate *ideological* multiculturalism in Canada we do not practise what I call *structural multiculturalism*. Structural multiculturalism denotes the equal access to crucial resources and positions of power by all segments of Canadian society. Ideological multiculturalism focusses on different *lifestyles*; structural multiculturalism, on equal *life chances*.

By presenting an ideal — equal status for all cultural traditions as a reality — multiculturalism effectively conceals continuous discrimination. In true Canadian style, this exclusion is not even being realized, let alone becoming a controversial political issue.

So strong and self-confident is the Anglo conformity pressure — despite official multiculturalism — that it does not even

have to make concessions at a symbolic level. The streets in Vancouver's Chinatown bear the names of British explorers; one looks in vain for any monument or official acknowledgment of the Native Indian tradition. And a Vancouver school has yet to be named after one of the many heroes from non-Anglo communities. Such visible recognition of cultural difference influences the self-esteem of minorities, although their equal placement in positions of power and status remains ultimately more important.

On this scale, John Porter and Wallace Clement have shown that ethnics outside the two charter groups, with the exception of some persons of Jewish descent, are almost totally absent among the Canadian power elite. In fact, the official rhetorical multiculturalism masks and reinforces this inequality. The other ethnics are supposed to cherish a cultural heritage that is, by the retention of a non-official language alone, a handicap in the competition in the market place.

Moreover, these ill-equipped outsiders to the Anglo-French tradition face what my colleague Karl Peter has aptly termed "institutional intimidation." Visible minorities are customarily excluded from certain occupations and senior positions. In addition, the minorities aid this exclusion by their own internalized belief that certain jobs are outside their reach. This accounts for some remarkable discrepancies, even at the municipal level.

A 1977 report on minorities in the employment of the Vancouver City Council¹ concluded that visible racial minorities are grossly underrepresented. While constituting more than 10 per cent of the Vancouver population, only 4 out of 988 non-clerical employees of the sensitive Police Department were members of a racial minority group. Visible minority employees did not hold any of the 198 top management or administrative positions in the City of Vancouver workforce. The report recommends that a special effort to recruit minority members should be undertaken, cultural bias in recruitment tests be eliminated and awareness seminars for supervisory staff be initiated. Despite these laudable goals not much seems to have changed in the past four years in Vancouver.

Another crucial area of minority underrepresentation remains the teaching profession. One of the best opportunities for children to acquire different role models naturally is missed as long as most teachers are White Europeans and their training remains in the same tradition. As long as multicultural respect is not reinforced by structural equality, its preaching takes place in a social vacuum and misses its targets.

More than better knowledge and improved communication, it seems that the strengthening of the self-confidence of the stigmatized promises to be an urgent response to minority status. The feminist movement has given a hint as to how effectively inferiorization can be challenged by concentrating on psychological liberation from internalized subordination. Despite all the well-intentioned education of the majority, it is ultimately the minority ethnic who has to cope with a hostile environment. If he or she has been able to overcome the common symptoms of self-doubt and even self-hatred, the right strategies to deal with the rest will emerge inevitably. To plead for sympathy with the victims of hostility remains a futile hope for its abolition.

Strengthening the self-confidence of the minority can ultimately be achieved only by the minority itself. The majority could aid this crucial process by creating a supportive climate in which minorities feel free to express themselves. Opinion-makers, politicians, journalists, and academics in particular are called to speak out publicly against ethnic chauvinism. By not taking a stance and keeping silent in disgust, we guarantee that the sins of omission have similar effects as the commission of hostility.

The authoritarian is almost always a conformist. Authoritarianism as an attitude is different from authoritarian, discriminatory behavior. For this reason, the clear sanctions of enforceable human rights laws do make a difference in keeping the latent hostility in check from openly expressing itself. Once we allow the hidden antagonisms explicitly to poison the fragile inter-ethnic relations, we all become brutalized and thus victims of the hate of a minority.

Canada, more than other societies, still has a unique chance to avoid this trauma. Unlike other plural societies, Canada's bi-cultural tradition has become institutionalized, and so far prevents the bigots from enforcing conformity in the name of a homogeneous cultural tradition, as the Nazis did or as Enoch Powell advocates. Together with the large section of non-Anglo and non-French ethnics — the so-called third force — the absence of a clearly definable Canadian identity may well be an advantage for mutual tolerance. Any other course would tear the social fabric of a comparatively progressive society apart.

It is up to all of us, not just a few professional ethnics who benefit from government attention, to keep Canadian society in its traditional overall ethnic harmony, despite the occasional lapses. ○

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THE B.C. TEACHER, JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1983

Our Shameful Record

British Columbia has a sorry record in educating the children of minority groups.

MARY ASHWORTH

Education does not take place in a vacuum — as the events of the past twelve months in British Columbia clearly demonstrate.

A number of socio-political forces within the community impinge upon education from many directions, affecting what goes on in schools.

This is nothing new. Children have always been affected by the attitudes and actions of adults, but in this province over the last 100 years non-English-speaking children, whether born here or overseas, have suffered a number of indignities as a result of the clashes between ethnic and socio-economic cultures — clashes that were probably inevitable as the world moved from being a collection of villages to Marshall McLuhan's "global village."

The major forces that have affected the education of linguistically and culturally different children are as follows: religious, social, cultural, economic and political. These five forces run through the history of the education of Native Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Doukhobor and East Indian children in British Columbia; first one force dominates, then another.

NATIVE INDIAN CHILDREN

Religion played a major role in the education of Native children. As Father Carion, OMI, principal of Kamloops Industrial School, wrote in 1896, "The moral and religious training of the Indian children is the most important of all: without it, all other instruction would be of little use to them."¹

But while the children were learning a new religion with its attendant values and morals, they were losing their ancestral languages and cultures. The Superintendent of Indian Affairs in 1893 supported the establishment of boarding schools for Native children, which removed them from what he termed "the uncivilized life of the reserve." He wrote in his annual report, "It is therefore in the interests of the Indians that these institutions should be kept in an efficient state as it is in their success that the solution of the Indian problem lies."²

He gave his official blessing to an "English only" policy in residential schools claiming that "So long as he [the Indian] keeps his native tongue, so long will he remain a community apart."³ For many years to come Native children had no option but to

go to the school run by the religious order that had Christianized their community and to lose touch with their home language and culture.

CHINESE CHILDREN

Chinese children, whether born here or overseas, were affected by social, economic and political forces. The clash of two very different cultures, English-Canadian and Asian, was bound to cause trouble. Back in 1895 Matthew Macfie expressed a common concern of the white settlers when he wrote, "It is to be feared that these varieties of humanity do not occupy our soil and multiply their kind, in every instance, without detriment to that type which we desire should preponderate."⁴

This fear translated into 30 years of wrangling within the Victoria School Board as pressure was put on trustees to segregate Chinese children from white children.

"The intermingling of Chinese children with children of Occidental parentage in the classrooms and playgrounds of the public schools is being called into question," wrote the author of a section called "The World of Labour" in the *Victoria Colonist* in 1902,⁵ which was quickly followed by a petition to the Victoria School Board by the president of the Trades and Labour Council. "It is," he said, "our belief that separate buildings and playgrounds should be provided for these children, the unsanitary and other conditions of their homes being such as to afford quite sufficient reason for their being kept to themselves."⁶ His accusation regarding poor hygiene was never substantiated and was quietly dropped.

What labor really feared was the competition of cheap labor from the Asiatics who were paid less, not because they were poor workers, but because they were Asiatics. The battle to keep Chinese children out of the public schools culminated in a boycott of Victoria schools by the Chinese community during 1922-1923, an incident that assumed international proportions.

But the politicians had been busy, and in 1923 the federal government did what it had already done to the Japanese and East Indians; it cut off immigration from China. The Chinese children, however, remained quietly in their desks absorbing the education their culture taught them to revere. In time to come they, and particularly their children, would contribute much to the fabric of Canada.

JAPANESE CHILDREN

During the 1920s the number of Japanese-Canadian children in the schools increased steadily. While the immigration of males had been severely curtailed after the Vancouver riot of 1907, the immigration of

"picture brides" continued until 1928. The churches opened up kindergartens for the pre-schoolers to teach them English. "These little mites of four and five, that look as if they should be put back on the shelf of a doll shop," wrote one sentimental journalist in 1930, "attend the kindergarten conducted by the United Church. It takes every Japanese child before it can enter the public school, and it is here that they learn to play and get the first rudiments of the English language."⁷

For the teachers, the respect and care they gave the children was offset by the stigma some members of society placed on the work they did. But the biggest impact on the education of the Japanese-Canadian children came with the decision of the federal government to move the Japanese from the coast to the interior during World War II. The B.C. government would not take responsibility for educating the children, and it was some months before elementary school children received anything approaching adequate schooling, and had it not been for the churches, few of the older children would have received secondary school training.

DOUKHOBOR CHILDREN

The 1950s produced one of the saddest episodes in British Columbia's education history. One hundred seventy Doukhobor children were taken from their homes and placed in the old sanatorium buildings at New Denver to receive, whether they or their parents liked it or not, an education as prescribed by the provincial government. Years of strife in the Kootenays had led to this dramatic, but, some would say, avoidable step.

Over the years Canada has opened its doors to many religious groups who desired to remain apart from the mainstream of society and to bring up their children according to their own value systems. The Doukhobors found fault with certain aspects of the B.C. curriculum and some teaching methods. Being pacifists, they abhorred any form of glorification of war; being Russian, they wanted the Russian language taught, perhaps even used as the medium of instruction, in the schools their children attended. But their requests for change were not met.

Oppression encourages a fanatical response, and the acts of arson and public stripping by the Sons of Freedom in answer to what they saw as a denial by the government to let them practise their religion in their own way resulted in the apprehension of their children.

Some people condemned the government's action, claiming it had no right to coerce children into receiving an education

even if it appeared to be for their own good; others defended the action as a courageous rescue attempt. But what of the children? Some, once free, returned to the Doukhobor community and lived quietly; some left either to join another religion or to abhor all religion; for others, the experience had toughened them into zealots, and the 1970s witnessed a revival of trouble in the Kootenays and the subsequent committal of condemned arsonists to Agassiz prison.

EAST INDIAN CHILDREN

Until the late 1960s there were few East Indian children in the schools, not enough



At long last we are attempting to treat non-English-speaking children fairly, and trying to give them an education equal to

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to constitute a social "problem." Sadhu Singh Dhami enrolled in John Oliver High School in Vancouver in the spring of 1922. Fifty years later he wrote of his experience: "The first Sikh boy with long hair and turban to be seen in the area, I was received with a warmth of feeling which masked curiosity."⁸

The 1970s, however, were not so kind to some East Indians, who felt the brunt of a surge of racism in Canada's major cities. But, by this time, B.C.'s teachers, who had been reluctant to become involved on behalf of Asian children prior to the 1939-1945 war, were taking an active role in

combatting racism, and along with other organizations helped to cool what might have become a very ugly situation.

The last 30 years have seen the growth of forces within our society which have benefited children. The rise of the human rights movement and the women's liberation movement have, on the one hand, made it difficult for politicians or pressure groups to act overtly in ways that would harm children, and, on the other hand, opened up opportunities to young people that were not open to older generations.

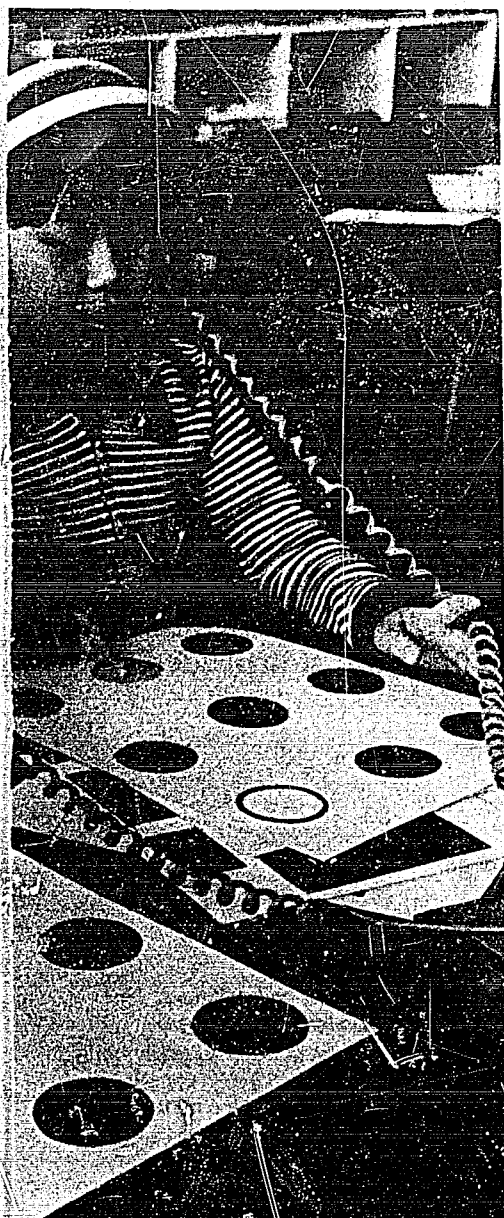
The promotion of multiculturalism in Canada has encouraged children and adults to take an interest in their roots and a pride in their heritage. The buoyant economy of the sixties and early seventies permitted school boards to increase their spending on special programs for non-English-speaking children in response to requests from teachers' organizations and other groups that spoke out on behalf of children who needed additional or different

education to allow them to take full advantage of what the schools had to offer.

The future is always unsure. If any one force becomes dominant in society, it has the power to affect for good or ill the education of any minority group, whether that group is a minority by reason of its ethnicity or its socio-economic status. In the game of "checks and balances" some group has to be the watchdog over the interests of children. Rosemary Brown wrote in 1979, "Teachers are now aware of the political role of education, and they are now ready to speak out against manipulation of the system by politicians and the community to enslave, exploit or deprive individuals and groups of the rights and opportunities which education can make available to them."⁹

In the climate that surrounds education today, children need their advocates. □

Mary Ashworth is a professor of education at UBC. References available on request.



that given Anglo-Saxon children, sadly, our treatment of "foreign" children in B.C. in the past was anything but fair.

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WE SHALL MISS THESE TEACHERS

In-Service

Dorothy Newton (Fletcher)

Retired

Alice M. Atkins
Muriel F. Banks
Harriet R. Bolt
Helen Brooks (Becker)
Dorothy Caron (Barr)
Margaret H. Carter
Isabella Conn (Main)
George H. Dipon
Lloyd W. Finden
Lucy E. Hindle
Rena MacArthur
William F. Maxwell
Margaretta S. Nash (Taylor)
Veda M. Papov
Louise M. A. Pitt (Simcock)
Ronald S. Price
Ruth S. Pringle
Laura A. Quayle (Bolt)
William A. Weaver
Ronald S. Williams

Last Taught In

Vancouver

Last Taught In

Belmont Park
Summerland
Cowichan
Victoria
Prince George
Vancouver
Lillooet
Vancouver
Prince George
Vancouver
Vancouver
Vancouver
Vancouver
Vancouver
Arrow Lakes
Kimberley
Langley
Surrey
Castlegar
Vancouver
Burnaby

Died

November 11, 1982

Died

October 31, 1982
October 24, 1982
October 9, 1982
November 29, 1982
September 30, 1982
October 6, 1982
October 14, 1982
November 5, 1982
October 28, 1982
October 9, 1982
November 28, 1982
November 1, 1982
September 26, 1982
October 22, 1982
June 8, 1982
November 11, 1982
October 24, 1982
October 31, 1982
October 9, 1982
October 20, 1982

INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

Racial prejudice is part and parcel of our curriculum, our textbooks and our hiring practices in education. And, tragically, some teachers have racist attitudes.

ELIZABETH AIRD

"There probably is no more subtle form of discrimination, none more pervasive, none more difficult to combat, than institutional discrimination. With its roots buried deep in Canadian social history, it makes many of our major institutions — notably our business and schools — operate to the detriment or exclusion of racial minorities."

Daniel G. Hill,
*Human Rights in Canada:
A Focus on Racism*

Scene One: A year-end staff party. The school's vice-principal is moving on the next year to become principal at a school that will be largely French immersion. She comments that she is thinking of taking French lessons during the summer, since she will be working at a frog school."

Scene Two: A staffroom at lunch time. One of the teachers says it might be nice to send out for food, and someone else suggests Chink food.

Scene Three: A meeting of the Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association, held to discuss the Vancouver School Board's recently approved anti-racism policy. During the course of the meeting, someone remarks that "a nigger is a nigger, after all." There is a black teacher at the meeting.

Gary Onstad doesn't think these stories are funny. Not that he doesn't have a sense of humor, mind you. It's just that, after years of fighting racism in the school system, he doesn't perceive words like "frog" as harmless jokes, but as sharp reminders that racism is alive and well in our schools.

"The implications of that are horrendous," says Onstad, a Burnaby C Secondary social studies teacher — former member of the Vancouver B School Trustees. "The thing that angers me most about it is that, dammit, teachers do play an important role in our society as role models for kids, and if teachers find that acceptable in their own private conversations, that rubs off."

Unfortunately, the racist attitudes of some teachers are only a small part of the story of institutional racism. Racial prejudice is part and parcel of our curriculum, our textbooks, and our hiring practices. Our school system, says former Ontario Human Rights Commissioner Daniel Hill, is a storehouse of outmoded attitudes toward other races. "Education in Canada is fundamentally based on the white, middle class, largely urban population's experience, culture and values. The models that teachers present to their students — indeed, the models personified by the teachers themselves — are seldom ones with which non-whites can identify. There is nothing in education for them, nothing that reflects the culture or heroes of their heritage, nothing that evokes their interest or self-respect."

Hill's contention has been borne out by various studies of textbooks. *Teaching Prejudice*, a 1971 study of 400 Ontario texts, showed that non-white groups were often described as bloodthirsty and primitive, and usually didn't even bother referring to the Asians, blacks and Native Indians who contributed to Canada's growth.

Here in B.C., a 1980 study done by UBC graduate students for the Human Rights Commission came up with similar findings. The researchers put together a list of two or three hundred words, and asked junior secondary school students whether they had positive or negative connotations. They then applied the list, which included words like "crafty," "feeble," "ferocious," and "hardworking," to a number of textbooks. In Irwin Clark's Jackdaw segment on Indians of Canada, for example, 55 per cent of the references to Indians were positive, 45 per cent negative. Positive

references to Europeans were measured at 77 per cent.

As subtle as such evidence of prejudice may be, at least it can be tracked down. There are even more insidious ways of perpetuating racial prejudice, among them a simple absence of information. Onstad uses the example of what he calls the "pemmican curriculum" to demonstrate how simple omission does lasting damage to the way Native Indians are perceived. "The kids study Native Indians time and time again throughout the curriculum in B.C., but there's no place in the curriculum for studying the position of Native people

"The ministry has done almost zip."

today — why alcoholism is so rampant, why so many of them are on welfare So the kids are studying teepees, but the reality they see in Burns Lake is Indians walking back and forth to the reservation because they don't have any transportation, Indians being 90 per cent unemployed. And they make their own assumptions — that there's something wrong with Indians, or they wouldn't be that way."

Why are Native children taught Greek and Roman mythology? Art More, supervisor of Indian Education at UBC, says this seems a pretty obvious question when he sits in on classes full of Native kids listening to their teacher chatter enthusiastically about Roman gods and goddesses. The students' own cultural mythology is never even mentioned, even though it's right there on the doorstep.

"The same goals can be achieved," says More, "but in a much more meaningful way, by at least recognizing the fact that Native people have one of the most complex and intricate mythologies." Instead of trying to make non-white kids adapt to the system, More suggests we take a look at changing the system.

So far the Ministry of Education has done nothing substantial in terms of overhauling the system, even though the textbooks are constantly being revised. The province's official line is that it will continue to "co-ordinate" the efforts of teachers and boards throughout the province, but most educators feel that's no more than a cover-up for an almost total lack of commitment. "The Ministry of Education has done almost zip in terms of the issue of racism or native

studies," says one. "They'll say, oh, we're willing to co-ordinate, but they've never hired anyone in there that I know of who is really committed, or has any reputation for getting things done or for advancing programs. And you know, that's their responsibility."

Ed May, BCTF race relations co-ordinator, wants local boards and teachers, in co-operation with community groups to put together multicultural programs. Instead of a central bureaucracy imposing materials, local people with knowledge of their community's needs are best able to promote multicultural education. This approach depends, of course, on local recognition that there is a need to get to work on the problem. And there's the rub. May says most teachers just don't want to get involved, perhaps because they already feel overwhelmed by the issues and responsibilities confronting them. Sam Fillipoff, the Vancouver School Board's consultant on race relations and multicultural education, sees a simple unwillingness on the part of many teachers to concern themselves with social issues.

Gary Onstad interprets many teachers' hesitation as fear, explaining that one of the main things that comes out at the Burnaby awareness workshops he conducts is an obvious discomfort with the whole issue of race relations. "What we've been trying to do," he says, "is to encourage them to take it on. The basic theme is that silence means consent, and if they remain silent, and kids look to them as role models, then kids are going to say it's okay to call somebody a Paki; it's okay to call somebody a Chink. When you're walking down the hall and you hear kids talking to each other making racist remarks, we're trying to get teachers to call kids on it, and say it's not acceptable."

Teachers are, however, cut from the same cloth as other mortals. "We have a lot of racists among teachers," says Ed May. "I've encountered some of the most outrageous remarks and comments made by teachers — prejudice toward certain groups, particularly East Indians and Native Indians."

And Onstad says that every workshop he has held has attracted a few teachers bound on playing the white supremacist. They bait the rest of the group, asking why "these people don't learn to speak English properly." Onstad says if he sits back long enough, other teachers will take the bigots on.

But it doesn't take a teacher who is a raving racist to do lasting damage to a child's self-esteem. The system's simple lack of positive reinforcement, combined with limited understanding on the part of many teachers, is often enough to destroy

some children. Art More says many Native children react at first by feeling they're no good. By the time they reach their teens this feeling may have grown to crisis proportions. "They're not sure that their cultural identity is what they want, because they've had such a long barrage of negative stuff." More suggests this is one of the reasons the suicide rate among young Indian adults is three times that of the non-native population.

Counselling is one area where a lack of sensitivity creates serious problems. A recent study of Punjabi students' attitudes toward counselling revealed that the kids felt shortchanged because of the color of their skin. Don Massey, a Vancouver School Board psychologist who worked on the study, says most of the Punjabi boys thought they were being channelled into occupational and vocational jobs rather than open-ended careers. "I can vouch for that myself," says Massey, who is East Indian.

"I was channelled in a similar manner, not maliciously, mind you. If the counsellors had had their way, I'd be a welder right now." The end result, says Massey, is a confused student who doesn't feel his or her family knows enough about North American culture to provide advice, yet who can't trust his or her counsellor.

SENSITIVE COUNSELLORS

Interestingly, the students don't seem to want counsellors of their own race, fearing they wouldn't be objective enough. What they do want, says Massey, are counsellors who are simply sensitive to their personal feelings and their cultural needs.

If the system is to be changed from the inside, students from minority groups will have to be actively encouraged to enter teaching themselves. Right now, according to Aziz Khaki, chairperson of Vancouver's Committee for Racial Justice and president of the Pacific Interfaith Council, even those minority group members who have trained as teachers feel shut out. "Most of them say, 'What the heck, even if we apply they are not going to hire us.'"

And Art More, discussing Native representation on teaching staffs, says the figures indicate there's something "pretty badly wrong." If native Indians were represented on teaching staffs throughout the province in the same proportion as they are in the student population, there would be about 1400 Native teachers. There are 80.

Teacher training and hiring is the most contentious issue in the battle against prejudice in the system. When the Toronto School Board issued a series of recommendations to counter racism in Toronto schools, nearly 90 per cent of the objections

they received centred on just one recommendation — affirmative action programs.

"We run into the same thing," says Ed May. "The moment you introduce the idea of opening up your hiring practices and hiring people strictly on the basis of qualifications and ability, and not on connections, then of course you threaten the system. You threaten the hierarchy that is well-developed — a hierarchy that unfortunately is dominated by white males. Women don't have much say in it, and of course, minorities don't even figure in it."

TEACHING SHUT TO MANY

Gary Onstad thinks minorities are being shut out of teaching just as women have traditionally been discriminated against, except that this time the old boy's network operates on the basis of race rather than sex. A non-white applicant won't stand much of a chance in an interview with a principal who thinks the world is populated by Chinks and Frogs. "How's that person going to react to a French Canadian coming into an interview with equal qualifications to an Anglo-Canadian? 'Who's going to get the job?'" asks Onstad, who as head of the Vancouver board's personnel committee, started investigating affirmative action programs and was one of the architects of a race relations policy that includes an equal opportunities clause.

The committee's investigation was backed by the board's official anti-discrimination recommendation: aimed at revamping not just hiring policies, but at changing everything from library materials to in-service programs to reflect the fact that we live in a multi-racial society. The Vancouver policy (printed elsewhere in this issue) is probably the single most important step that has been taken yet to counter racism in B.C. schools. At long last, it is down in black and white not only that

racism in education does exist, but that it will no longer be tolerated.

The new policy has been praised by minority groups. The Committee for Racial Justice's Aziz Khaki, for one, says he was impressed with the sincerity of the 1982 Vancouver School Board. Non-white parents are apparently breathing sighs of relief: within a week of the policy's approval, complaints about incidents of racial discrimination reportedly increased six or seven times. "Just passing the policy has caused a lot of people to get up the courage to get on the phone and say, 'Hey, this is happening here,'" says Onstad.

He thinks the Vancouver policy will have a domino effect throughout the province. "A lot of school trustees outside the Lower Mainland have told me they've been waiting for us to produce it, because they don't have the resources. I think a lot of other boards are going to get on the bandwagon and start taking on the issue a lot more."

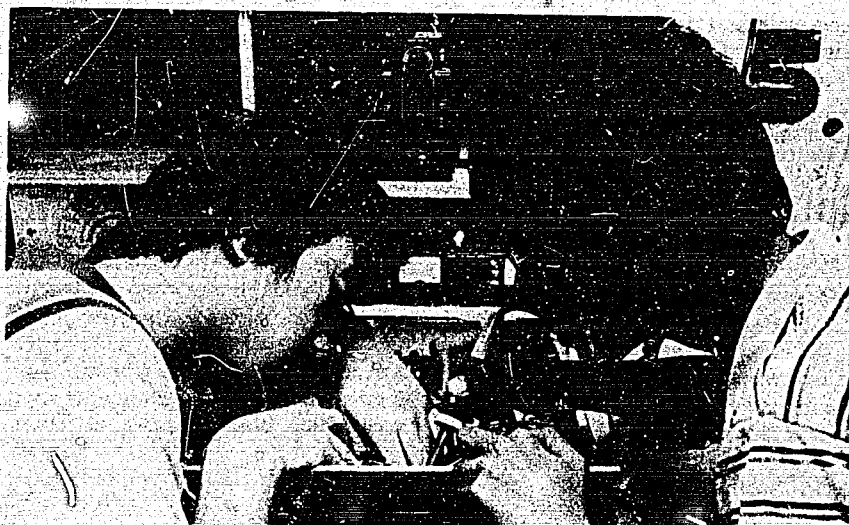
Bit by bit, Canadian education is becoming a mirror of what Canadian society is today, not what it was for our grandfathers. Five years ago, few educators even wanted to consider the possibility that racism existed in the system. Today, it's a known enemy and, in Vancouver and Toronto at least, teachers, parents, and students can fight it with official policy.

The BCTF and the Surrey and Vancouver school boards all have full-time people working on the problem. Non-white parents and students can turn to multicultural home-school workers to help them navigate the system. Universities are beginning to equip teachers with the skills they need to cope in a multi-racial classroom.

And teachers themselves, like it or not, are realizing that they will no longer be allowed the comfortable ignorance of racial prejudice. ○

Elizabeth Aird works in the Social Planning Department of Vancouver City Hall.

Vancouver is making a determined effort to stamp out racism in its schools, so that all students, regardless of race, creed or color, have equal access to all programs and an equal opportunity to a high quality education.



Just What Is Multicultural Education?

1

Multicultural education means different things to different people. This and the following article give two impressions of what it should be.

KOGILA ADAM-MOODLEY

●Some well-meaning educators frequently hold the view that introducing the subject of race and culture means creating dissonance in an otherwise co-operative, harmonious classroom in which everyone is equal.

Along these lines Robert Jeffcoate (1979) argues, as a child-centred progressivist, that it is not admissible to impose on children the imperative to respect other races and cultures. Children, he contends, ought to determine this for themselves and shape their own attitudes and opinions.

On the other hand, Lawrence Stenhouse's research findings in Britain on the problems and effects of teaching about race relations contradict Jeffcoate's position. Two teaching strategies were tested, namely the teacher as "neutral chairperson" and teacher as one directly involved in teaching race relations without disguising his or her opinions. Testing took place in 40 schools, and the result was that classes employing the "neutral chairperson" technique showed a marked increase in racist

attitudes as compared to the experimental groups. More precisely,

"... direct teaching resulted in a difference of 20% between the experimental and the control groups. That is, 60% of those who had some teaching about race relations became more tolerant while 40% became less tolerant. In the control groups over the same period, 60% became less tolerant compared with 40% who became more tolerant." (Times Educational Supplement, 7 October 1977: 64.)

This result suggests that the teacher, as a



The self-concept of a minority child is raised automatically by the unspectacular inclusion of the child in the mainstream culture, rather than making the child an exotic decoration.

role model and moulder of attitudes, should clearly spell out values of propriety in race relations.

In a slightly different vein, Maureen Stone (1981) maintains that it is the school that should bear responsibility for making equality of results a reality. According to Stone, schools that use progressive multicultural teaching compound the problem rather than help to solve it, despite benign intentions. In her view, schools attempt to explain away low performance of minority pupils with such psychological characteristics as low self esteem, rather than to work with appropriate teaching styles.

The contrasting positions taken by Jeffcoate, Stenhouse and Stone, while based in the British situation, have implications for some concerns that teachers in B.C. show about implementing multiculturalism.

Among these concerns, those frequently expressed are: What does multiculturalism entail? Does it involve transmission of information to children about their cultures so that they can feel proud about themselves? Given the multiplicity of cultural backgrounds in our classrooms, how realistic is this goal? Can one honestly expect teachers to become mini anthropologists?

If one dwells on the backgrounds of minority children, does one not do a disservice to other children? What about cultures that conflict with others? Could it not mean opening up a can of worms? Is multicultural content something we add on to the existing curriculum? Doesn't multiculturalism undermine a primary goal of education for competency?

Ultimately, for children to be successful, productive members of our society, they have to be able to function in "our" culture, so isn't multiculturalism counterproductive in the long run?

These frequently articulated ambivalences are legitimate questions indeed. It is necessary to work through these value-laden doubts to arrive at what multicultural education might be.

It may well be argued that it is unrealistic for teachers to be transmitters of information about specific cultures with the express purpose of perpetuating and retaining those cultures. Indeed, apart from possible frictions between contradictory cultural demands, this would be an impossible task in classrooms with a plural, heterogeneous population, not to speak of its dubious pedagogic implications.

Transmission of a specific culture is clearly the privilege and prerogative of parents and the community. Yet, having said this, we can't overlook the fact that teachers implicitly do transmit a Christian Canadian culture on an ongoing basis, affectionately referred to as "our" culture, and therefore are not entirely culturally neutral.

One might shift tack slightly, then, and pursue the path that one will teach about minority cultures with the aim of increasing understanding and developing inter-group tolerance in the classroom. Such information can be useful, if it is carefully handled, and if it takes into account prejudices rooted in a lack of understanding about cultures and the way in which stigmatized groups are treated daily in the world outside the classroom.

Blacks in the U.S. fall into this latter category. It is not lack of knowledge about their culture that is at stake, but their physical visibility that distinguishes them. Pupils would have to be made aware as to why visible minorities are singled out for unequal treatment, rather than asked to appreciate a different way of life.

What, then, does a truly multicultural education imply? First, a multicultural emphasis dwelling on cultural differences is inadequate if it does not take into account the racial and ethnic constraints that make "culture" problematic.

Second, to be effective multicultural education ought to be noticeably unspectacular. Tacking on of occasional ethnic celebrations, heroes, customs or foods, without being part of a regular all year round approach often only underlines the powerless position of the stigmatized groups by depicting them as "outside" the main curriculum. What is stressed here, then, is the need to transform the core culture by thematic inclusion of the Canadian mosaic.

Third, this need calls for knowledge of the historical backgrounds of different groups and their actual contributions toward the building of Canadian society.

Fourth, a vigilant look at all curriculum materials must check for bias, accuracy of representation, stereotyping and the like. These objectives combine well with the goal of cognitive competency and extend the world views of all children.

Furthermore, the self concept of the minority child is raised automatically by the unspectacular inclusion in mainstream culture rather than being its exotic decoration. At the same time, such an approach "multiculturalizes" the core culture rather than preaching more respect for eternal outsiders.○

Dr. Kogila Adam-Moodley is a professor of education at UBC.

A COMPUTER ISSUE

The September-October 1983 issue of this magazine will be devoted to the topic of the role of computers and other modern technology in education, with special emphasis on the response of the people in education to the advent of the technology.

Manuscripts for that issue are invited. Articles should be a maximum of 2,500 words long, and should employ an informal writing style.

Black and white photographs to illustrate that issue are also welcomed. We should like to borrow the photos, and return them when the issue has been published.

Unfortunately, our budget does not permit us to pay for submissions; we rely entirely on the good will of our contributors.

The deadline for submissions for the computer issue will be June 15.

Just What Is Multicultural Education?

2

**Another look at what multicultural
education should be.**

SAM FILLIPOFF

● Multicultural education deals with the varied cultures of our people. It seeks to interpret the culture, the heritage, the history, the beliefs and the values of the people within a community.

Our schools are multicultural in their student populations, so educators should teach and present instructional materials in such a way that the values of all the cultures are presented and examined, not just those of the dominant culture.

Teachers need to be aware of biases in instructional materials, and to be aware of their own cultural and professional biases in multicultural education. Failing this, mono-

cultural education will remain the norm, taught with biased materials and culturally insensitive teachers.

British and French, the two dominant ethnic groups, receive the most extensive attention in our schools. Their cultures are seen in the most positive perspectives and tend to determine a standard of measurement or evaluation for other cultures.

In Canada, all cultures are supposed to have equal status; no culture is to be placed in a superior position. But is this the case in our schools? When students are asked to do projects, sing songs, color pictures, write essays, construct models, dramatize events,

research biographies and all the other tasks the teachers assign, do the assignments reflect the multicultural composition of the class or the community? Unfortunately, the answer is often no.

This is so because, when issues or cultures other than English or French are studied, the groups are often seen to be in conflict with the dominant cultures. Sometimes minority cultures are stereotyped or romanticized and studied as cultural objects. This is not a dynamic and genuine approach to teaching multicultural values and issues. However, multicultural education can do away with these problems

because, at its best, such education addresses problems related to cultural bias and presuppositions, and to stereotyped roles and expectations. Multicultural education pays attention to content selected, to the emphasis and slant given it and to the time required to deliver it effectively. Multicultural education is not simply an added-on proposition; it is a process that examines and enriches every aspect of school curriculum and experience. Hence, it should be an integral element in public education.

There are several elements in public education about which some pertinent questions might be asked from a multicultural point of view. For example, schools are dependent on books. Where do our books originate? Whom are they about? Are there books in other languages? Most of our books should originate in Canada, written by and about Canadians. There should be more books from other cultures even in translated form. French, Russian, Scandinavian, Chinese and African authors should be in our libraries. How are the books selected? Parents should have an opportunity to influence the types of books they would like their children to read. Do the books contribute to a feeling of self-worth in all students? The books in our schools should reflect fully and accurately the reality of Canada's racial, religious and cultural diversity.

Language education is another related element of public education. Is the knowledge of a language other than English seen to be a deficiency? Surely, children who already speak, read or write an additional language have already demonstrated cognitive skills that need to be recognized and encouraged. Multicultural, multilingual education offers the best vehicle for minority students who experience difficulties in school.

Are children with non-anglicized names encouraged to change them? Is speaking a language other than English discouraged at school? Surely, children should be supported in their development of healthy self concepts and positive attitudes about their cultures and languages. Is instruction in other curricular areas being considered in a second language? Some other provinces have language immersion programs in languages other than English or French. Our federal government supports the establishment of heritage language public schools.

Art and music personify culture. Which cultures are represented in the art and music programs of our schools? The stories, images, songs and pictures evoked by art and music should fill our children with pride and love for humanity. Children's aspirations should be directed toward lofty ideals. Education should promote respect for human rights and freedoms by developing



Art and music personify culture. Are cultures other than our own represented in the art and music programs of our schools? Surely education should promote respect for all peoples.

understanding, tolerance and friendship among all people.

What holidays and traditions are regarded as most suitable for study in art and in song? Everyone's culturally significant days should be understood and recognized as legitimate.

What philosophies are studied? A recognition of philosophers from every continent would enable a school's instructional program to move beyond an ethnocentric selection of materials.

Multicultural education promotes a pluralistic notion of equality. Ethnic and racial groups should have the opportunity to develop their own identities, life-styles, languages as well as to study their own heritage on a basis of equality with the British and the French. No group should have cultural superiority.

When an individual is encouraged to respect his or her own culture, the resulting knowledge and self-respect should allow him or her to honor and respect what is different in a neighbor. A multicultural education transcends any one ethnic superiority and attitude by seeing that there are many different methods by which Canadians can contribute meaningfully to their society.

This implies that the language, the cultural experiences, the issues and values of the ethnic/racial group are accepted and incorporated in the school instructional program. The objective is to utilize the local diversity that exists, to build upon diverse interpretations and learning styles and to avoid building negative self images for children whose background is different from that of the dominant cultural group.

Multicultural education must have flexibility for local input. Program development

should incorporate community goals and concerns. This could be done by involving parents, students and community in the defining and writing of new curricula. How can this be achieved?

In its broadest sense education is carried out by many people: parents, teachers, clergy, authors, actors, advertisers, peers and many others. Each person has his or her influence in shaping our children's attitudes and values. We can begin by involving children in examining their own community, their own histories and that of their families. Stories could be written. Pictures could be painted. Photographs could be taken. Models could be built. Community resource people could be used. Children (with their teachers and parents) could be sent on exchanges to other areas and festivals. They could then become local experts on their visit, telling others of their experiences through the local media.

Festivals, conferences, celebrations outside the school can be organized and promoted — events that lead students to understand that beliefs and values change as groups borrow and exchange ideas. Events that demonstrate that culture is alive and contemporary. Multicultural celebrations would instill an appreciation of values studied in school, would develop pride in diverse heritage and would also work for a living interpretation of history. All these activities involve the community.

Multicultural education works best with total community involvement. We can each become involved in our own way. ○

Sam Fillipoff is the Vancouver School Board's consultant on race relations and multicultural education.

MY PARENTS

A SECONDARY STUDENT

My parents brought me to Canada from a country in Southern Europe. I was just a little kid then. My mother wanted to preserve me from the "bad influence" of Canadian society. But I wanted to become like my friends at school. Now my life is one long battle between my parents' ideas and my life at school. I wrote the following essay to express my feelings.

I have a horrible problem in my family. Every child in my family has suffered the nagging of my old-fashioned parents. They are extremely hard to get along with and they are the hardest on me because I am the last child.

Every morning I wake up to the sound of my parents complaining about something little I did days back. It makes me ill. I cannot eat, or do anything for that matter, in peace unless they are not at home. I have limited privileges because they are scared to let me out and they do not understand that they cannot keep me in the house for all my life. Sometimes I become very angry because of not being able to go out often enough. I would be satisfied with being able to go out once a week but they feel that twice a year is fairly reasonable.

Moreover, they tell me what to wear added to what to do. Obviously I do not listen because I would look like a girl from the

sixties if I did. Another thing that really bothers me is that I receive no encouragement whatsoever. Just because my two sisters before me did not go to university they think I am going to be just the same. Even when I come home with a report with four exceptionals and one very good they are not satisfied and want me to work harder.

Nothing is going right any more and the best thing I could do is stay out of their way, but that is hard when I have to be near them all of the time. I feel relieved on my way to school every morning knowing they will not be on my back for a few hours. Sometimes they make me go crazy (literally) and I tend to throw things around and punch things. I even assault my budgie and then regret it afterwards because she had nothing to do with it. Day in and day out the same things go on over and over and over○

RESOURCES FOR MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

●Your community is a rich source for materials, people and ideas with which to enrich your teaching. Here are a few leads from an unending list:

National Film Board of Canada,
1161 West Georgia Street,
Vancouver, B.C. V6E 3C4

(In addition to its general catalogue, it publishes a Multicultural Supplement. Some of the films are gems, but do preview them.)

P.E.M.C.
7351 Elmbridge Way,
Richmond, B.C. V6X 1B8

(Take some time to browse through this catalogue. You'll find enough material to get you started on many projects.)

BCTF Resources Centre,
2235 Burrard Street,
Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3H9

(Some good films, and also books for professional reading. And, check our Lesson Aids catalogue.)

Immigrant Services Centre,
8165 Main Street,
Vancouver, B.C. V5X 3L2

MOSAIC
1161 Commercial Drive,
Vancouver, B.C. V5L 3X3

S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
449 East Hastings,
Vancouver, B.C. V6A 1P9

Unicef of British Columbia,
739 West Hastings Street,
Vancouver, B.C. V6C 2N5

(All of these organizations are willing to assist you in many ways.)

Secretary of State,
102-1433 St. Paul Street,
Kelowna, B.C. V1Y 2E4
(There also are offices in Victoria, Vancouver and Prince George.)

Ed May,
BCTF,
2235 Burrard Street,
Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3H9
(And a team of local representatives who are only too willing to assist you with materials and ideas. Call the BCTF for your nearest contact person.)



The Vancouver School Board led the way in developing a race relations policy for its schools. The policy statement is working well.

Several incidents of racial tension have occurred in Vancouver schools over the past few years. The incidents have not occurred on a daily basis; nor have they happened at every school; but they have happened. Race-related fights have broken out, verbal abuse has been hurled at people of different races, and hate literature has been distributed outside school buildings.

The Vancouver School Board realized that it had an obligation to take strong action to resist all signs of racism in and around its schools. To this end, the following policy was passed last spring and a full-time consultant was hired to deal with race

relations. Efforts to combat racism are proceeding on many fronts in Vancouver schools. The board realizes that it will take years of concentrated effort to achieve a healthy multicultural environment but is convinced that the task is not an impossible one.

The 19 policy statements passed by the board are as follows:

1. That the board opposes and condemns any expression of racial/ethnic prejudice by its personnel, students and trustees.

2. That the board direct the superintendent, in co-operation with all employee, parent and student organizations and trustees, to devise guidelines for the implementation of the race relations policy, and that such guidelines be subject to periodic review.

3. That the superintendent communicate to all personnel and students the board's race relations policy and guidelines. This policy will be communicated to the entire school community: staff, students and parents. Methods will be devised at the school level whereby school personnel make employee, parent and student organizations

aware of the policy outlined, and of effective steps taken to implement it.

CURRICULUM & LEARNING RESOURCES

4. That the board direct the superintendent, in co-operation with the teachers' and administrators' associations and representatives of racial/ethnic groups, to establish a process for the review of learning resources in order to identify materials that contain racial/ethnic prejudice. Strategies will be developed to identify and to counter these prejudices and to present an accurate view of racial/ethnic groups.

5. That the board direct the superintendent to provide learning resources that represent the contributions of all racial/ethnic groups in our community, in consultation with these groups and through their particular perspective.

6. That the board, in consultation with appropriate racial/ethnic groups, support the practice of acquiring world literature in translation.

IN-SERVICE EDUCATION

7. That the board direct the superintendent to provide opportunities for in-service programs in human relations, racial/ethnic relations and human rights to all board employees to equip them with the skills necessary to relate knowledgeably and sensitively to people of different racial and ethnic origins. Such programs should be made available to entire school staffs at school-based professional development workshops. These programs could also be integrated into existing in-service and professional development programs. An evaluation of the content of such programs for practical classroom application should be included.

8. That the board direct the superintendent to advise the B.C. Human Rights Commission and other community and government organizations of the Vancouver

ver School Board's activities in the area of racial/ethnic relations and multicultural education. These groups should also be encouraged and invited to participate in discussion and in-service activities whenever possible.

HIRING AND PROMOTIONAL PRACTICES

9. That the Board affirm that it is an equal opportunity employer. Guidelines for hiring and promotion will be developed which reflect the policies of the board on racial/ethnic relations. These guidelines will encourage all racial/ethnic groups to apply.

10. That the board retain the Native Indian and Multicultural Workers program, and support in principle the hiring of additional workers to meet increasing school/community needs.

INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

11. That the board, as an indication of its commitment to community multicultural education, direct the superintendent, in co-operation with the universities, teachers' associations, governmental agencies, community ethnic groups and other appropriate people, to investigate the establishment of a multicultural services centre for the City of Vancouver.

12. That the board direct the superintendent, in consultation with the appropriate provincial and federal government ministries or agencies, to continue to support existing heritage language programs in Vancouver schools and to investigate procedures for establishing additional programs.

13. That the board direct the superintendent to encourage Vancouver schools to develop programs within and among schools to increase multicultural understanding. Such programs should involve all school personnel, as well as students and parents.

14. That the board direct the superintendent to have materials developed in languages other than English to explain the Vancouver public school system to parents and students. The materials should include information about such matters as:

- * goals
- * student placement procedures
- * role of parents
- * expectations for students
- * alternative programs
- * support services
- * evaluation and reporting procedures
- * role of school consultative committees

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

15. That wherever possible the board provide facilities, staff and resources to meet the needs of ESL students in their neighborhood schools.

16. That the board direct the superintendent to have programs developed to make available resources for continuing in-service opportunities for all teachers, to ensure that the needs of ESL students are recognized and met.

17. That the board direct the superintendent to continue to investigate means of obtaining legislative and economic support for the provision of ESL pre-school programs within the public schools.

18. That the board direct the superintendent to investigate the desirability of developing bilingual ESL programs.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

19. That the board direct the superintendent to retain the Advisory Committee on Race Relations, to provide guidance and counsel to the Vancouver School Board throughout the implementation of the race relations policies and guidelines. The advisory committee should meet no fewer than four times per school year and should be open to all racial/ethnic groups.



LA4090 Industrial Processes: An Integrated Lesson Plan in Science, Technology and Society by Steve Cardwell, 32 p. This unit was designed to fit the new Grade 10 science curriculum. It is based on the topic in Resource Management--Industrial Processes. The focus of the unit is on the smelting of aluminum. The lesson plans and topics included for further study provide a spectrum of teaching methods. **\$2.25**

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AND DID!

**Who would have thought that a
Castlegar multiculturalism
effort could have been this
successful?**

LOIS LAWRENCE

Something was happening in the school district next to ours.

We'd hardly put away the picnic baskets and figured out who was teaching what to whom for the year when posters appeared advertising an October conference on multiculturalism in Castlegar. The schedule of workshops looked terribly impressive: how could one decide on just three out of 30?

Rumor had it there would be limited room for teachers from districts outside Castlegar and five from our school alone were desperate to attend. We all went. In fact, each of us went to different sessions and still didn't cover all that was offered.

In Castlegar! I met several other Nelson District teachers there, especially in the gym where they were serving the most interesting and delicious samples of baked goods — favorites of people from a wide variety of cultures. Ah ... remember the burph! Remember the banquet that followed! For the rest of the school year people have been talking about that banquet. And the whole conference was only part of what went on in Castlegar last year.

How did it start? I've heard Sam Fillipoff tell the story a few times now. He tells it well — like the first chapter of a book he treasures. Sam is the Vancouver School Board's consultant on race relations and multicultural education. He has a special interest in the Castlegar district — his roots are there. He grew up and was educated there. He first experienced discrimination against the Doukhobor people there too. Now that he is working in the Vancouver area and has a post focussing on multicultural education, it is not surprising that he teamed up with Ed May, our BCTF race relations co-ordinator, to promote the Castlegar pilot project. Such an experiment could be initiated only by people dedicated to a cause and in positions to organize and keep the project going. In this case, it seems, the thrust came from these two teachers.

What interests me about the project, besides the fact that it occurred in the interior and focussed on a topic of which I was becoming acutely aware, is the way in which the planners were able to present a *concept* to a whole community through a series of carefully planned and appealingly presented activities and succeed in sparking immediate understanding of it.

CULTURAL PLURALISM

The objective was to promote recognition of cultural pluralism with no one culture's taking precedence over any other. We know it's high time to consider the needs and particular cultural conditions involved in the development of our students and in our history. Ed May and Sam

Fillipoff, with the support of the BCTF, Castlegar School Board, and Castlegar Teachers' Association, consequently travelled to Castlegar and met with groups of people, including what was to become the steering committee for the multi-cultural conference they were proposing that Castlegar district host in October 1981.

The composition of this committee reflects the thoughtful planning and the scope of the program. In addition to Ed and Sam it consisted of Mike Lauriente, director of

programs, in-service to teachers and the like. A few teachers began to plan to attend the national conference on multiculturalism to be held in Winnipeg.

Doug Pinkerton, who teaches secondary French, emerged as one of the enthusiastic local organizers. The Castlegar Russian teachers became involved as did other local groups. Sam Fillipoff continued to co-ordinate through meetings and correspondence.

The Castlegar Multicultural Conference



One of the real hits of the Castlegar program was the various ethnic foods people could sample. Here two Portuguese ladies prepare some of the foods of their homeland. The photo on the opposite page shows two of the senior students who helped to cater the different foods.

instruction, four elementary and secondary teachers, a school trustee, a representative of the Doukhobor Historical Society, as well as representatives of Selkirk College and David Thompson University Centre (Nelson). Community involvement was seen as a key factor in the development of multicultural awareness and much of the momentum to continue remains today with community groups affected by the pilot project.

While the October conference plans caught fire and went ahead throughout the summer and fall of 1981, provincial and local resources were being tapped and the community was being prepared. Government agencies were sought for supplementary funding, school staffs were kept informed, for some leadership would be required from teachers, publicity was begun, community and school facilities were lined up as were resource people for the workshops.

Meanwhile, attention was given to expanding support services already available within the Castlegar school system — English as a Second Language, counselling

took place on October 2, 1981 at Sir Stanley Humphries Secondary School as planned — *well-planned*. It was the first introduction for many of us to concepts leading to an understanding of the implications of multiculturalism in the classroom. While numerous workshops provided materials, programs and encouragement to teachers, helping us to assume a multicultural and often interdisciplinary teaching approach, I saw much of the learning occur *outside* the classrooms as we ran into colleagues in the hallways, washrooms and gym (remember, that's where the desserts were, along with book displays) and just checked out each other's motivations for attending the conference. New viewpoints and ideas were exchanged and it was there that we could find out where our ongoing support and encouragement for trying new strategies and programs would lie.

Members of the Castlegar community had a chance to become infused with this same enthusiasm for multiculturalism at the banquet that evening. News of the conference that had occurred reverberated through these valleys for weeks afterward,

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transmitted orally by those who had enjoyed the fabulous feast and entertainment. The planners had done so well to have the foresight to choose activities and events that brought people together under such enjoyable circumstances to introduce and spread the concept of multiculturalism.

The final step was to involve the students in this learning process. Back when the project was first brought to the steering committee in the form of a timetable, the idea of a student exchange was included. This idea found a keen organizer in the person of another Castlegar secondary teacher, Jeremy Palmer. I can hardly imagine the preparatory workload he must have assumed. Jeremy points out the support of Ed May, Sam Fillipoff, students, staff and the community for encouraging him from the beginning. I know only that when I arrived at the Sellkirk College cafeteria at noon on Friday, April 23, there was a line-up of friendly students saying such things as: "This multiculturalism is a whole new thing I never thought about before. It's really interesting."

I knew that once again, it was working; people were talking and the awareness was growing in a very painless way. The schedule of events had, to that point, merely involved introductions and a choice of seminars so it was obvious that the objectives of the pilot project were very quickly being realized among some 250 Castlegar students and 65 visitors representing six Vancouver secondary schools, two or three Surrey and Delta schools, and secondary schools from the Okanagan and East and West Kootenays. Funding for the exchange came largely from the Secretary of State in the form of a grant arranged by Ed May, as well as assistance from the local school boards.

Other activities included plays, visits to the local trade fair, a tour of the Doukhobor museum and exhibition centre and lots of discussion and socializing with one another. Simply from their first-hand observations that the Castlegar kids were not "hicks" and the Vancouver group were not perpetually "high on booze and drugs" or whatever, the students learned something immediate and lasting about stereotypes and prejudice that they otherwise might never have had occasion to consider. Besides exchanging points of view, they struck up friendships that continued and in some cases led to more visiting over the summer. Most encouragingly, they recognized the wealth of cultural backgrounds in their own community.

As Doug Pinkerton, who worked long and hard hours on the scene of the Castlegar Pilot Project, concludes, the aim of the challenging and interesting year was to

heighten awareness and this, in itself, is not measurable. But teachers in area schools can assure you that there is a greater awareness of multiculturalism as a result. Reading units are being enriched and Christmas concerts, for example, reflect our pluralistic cultural make-up.

Jeremy Palmer notes that classroom experiences are more enlightened as this awareness is brought to bear on the subject matter and such movements and issues as Amnesty International and disarmament are more clearly understood. Members of the community are more apt to be found in classrooms visiting and demonstrating ethnic skills. Videos and follow-up workshops are promised. Castlegar School District has hired two curriculum developers who have already completed a module on the Doukhobor heritage. At the final steering committee meeting in June there was a feeling of satisfaction and talk of multicultural events at 1982 Pro-D days and an Ethnic Week. More student exchanges are being planned in the Okanagan and Surrey Districts.

Many of us must wonder what it takes to pioneer in a new educational field and achieve such a resounding success in the

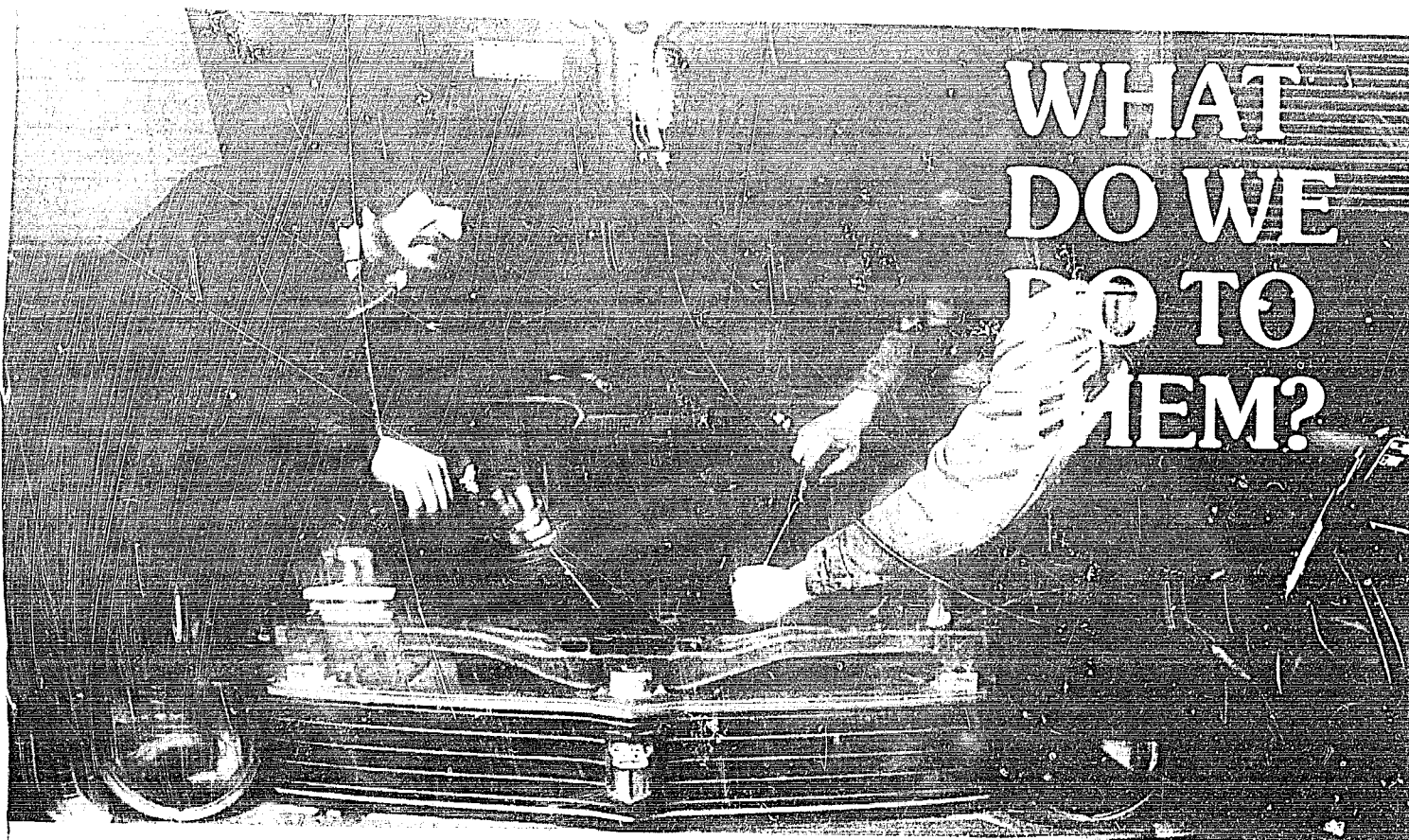
**Both the schools
and the
community
changed.**

first year. Having looked into the Castlegar experience as a teacher from a neighboring district, I see that a few components emerge clearly: enthusiastic, well-organized leadership in the form of local teachers who are still saying, "If anyone else wants to try this I'd be more than glad to help," despite their family commitments and the toll of a stressful autumn when their jobs were threatened by budget cuts; caring and energetic co-ordinators at the provincial level who can spark our imaginations and keep up the momentum after choosing the right projects to get the concept across; and most important, a glaring need at this time in particular, to really understand where one another comes from. ○

Lois Lawrence teaches in Brent Kennedy Elementary School in Nelson.

THE B.C. TEACHER, JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1983

WHAT DO WE DO TO THEM?



VILMA DUBÉ

The skills students have mastered and the knowledge they have acquired matter little if, somewhere along the line, their spark of human dignity has been stifled.

• The scene: A Grade 11 social studies class in our school district.

The teacher has invited a visitor from a third world region to lead a discussion in the class on the nature of the relationship between colonies or ex-colonies and metropolitan powers; the question of control of land and resources; global inequities.

The guest begins by asking students what they had for breakfast that morning and from what country those foods (or non-foods!) originated. The names of the products and their countries of origin are noted on the chalkboard. (Coffee, said one girl, comes from Nabob. Where is Nabob?)

A map of the world is consulted and students are led to observe that many of the products — oranges, tea, coffee, cocoa, sugar, bananas, grapefruit — come from the places that are referred to as "the South," the third world, the developing countries, etc. Despite the fact that students show little response the speaker goes on to point out that many of the people who produce those commodities live on incomes ranging from \$500 to \$2000 a year. "Would one of our farmers work for such money?" he asks. One or two answer in the negative.

Maybe, he says, you'll understand why so many people are poor even though they

work hard and produce if you place yourselves in the following scenario:

We are living on the prairies. One day a strange space-ship lands. Funny little people with antennae sticking out of their heads emerge with weird-looking instruments and proceed to reconnoitre. One instrument gives off a significant beep. They seem excited. They dig and unearth a dark green rock that they examine with great interest. It's what they are searching for.

They bring out of the ship more equipment and begin what looks like mining operations. They mow down the wheat. A group of earth people protest that they need the wheat for food and foreign exchange. The space people, who are able to communicate in our language, reply that from now on the wheat won't be necessary; the mineral wealth is far more valuable; it is needed on their planet; in return they will send food for the earth people.

The earth people say that they work to produce the wheat. What will they do now? No problem, say the space people. They will all be given jobs in

Still worried, a delegation of earth people approaches and says forcefully that the land is theirs and cannot be expropriated. They will call out their armed forces and repossess their land. The space people demonstrate their superior laser guns, which cause opponents to disintegrate into thin air without so much as a sound. The only sensible thing to do, they say, is to co-operate.

A few shrug their shoulders.

He is disappointed. He had obviously expected some show of anger or at least a spirited discussion. He is stumped. He had hoped to lead the students from that point of awareness to an empathy with the peoples of many third world regions who have been similarly dispossessed.

Having been present at this session, I was stunned at the massive non-involvement of 17- and 18-year-olds. As a Kindergarten teacher I felt certain that the children I taught would respond with more spirit to such a hypothetical situation.

With the secondary school students the visitor had put the scene in a national context, using the prairies and wheat production. I modified it for six-year-olds. I made the scene very local, right here on Vancouver Island. In brief it went something like this:

They go on to dig up a lovely vegetable garden nearby. The tomatoes are almost ripe and the cabbages

Before I could complete my scenario, the hands were going up. The rest of the session went something like this: (The dialogue is verbatim as Nancy recorded it.)

John: I would stop them.

Jesse. I would knock the dirt down and send them back.

Kimberley: I would go to the radio station and tell everybody: "There's Mars people here digging up ugly rocks and wrecking everything. Please all come in your cars and we can chase them into the sea."

Jerome: I would get my Mum and Dad to help break up the dam. I would get a lawnmower.

John: I would put mouse traps in the dirt.

Me: The space people have strange and powerful weapons. When they press the buttons we can't move.

Kimberley: I would do what they say and then I would turn around and dump the rocks. I mean I'll pretend to do what they want me to do.

Mrvoje: I would do something to the spaceship — cut the wires or something.

Desiree: I would get rocks and aim one at each head.

Jesse: I would get dynamite and blow them up.

John: I would wreck the controls so they can't send to their planet for more men and so they can't go back.

Louella: I would get a big fella to fight them — any big fella.

Kimberley: I'd dig a big hole in the ground and trap them. After we have beat them I would throw them in the water and teach them a lesson.

Hrvoje: I'd get the police and put them in jail.

Candy: I'd dynamite the rocks.

John: I'd sneak and get their weapons.

Jerome: When they're asleep I'd tie them up.

Louella: I would tell a sad lie: I'd tell them I had no food. I'd make them feel sorry for me. I'd tell a lie.

This discussion would have gone on and on if lack of time had not forced us to conclude the session. The children were bubbling over with ideas. Their blood was up! Nobody was going to get them!

An analysis of their responses will show

What do we do to students that, by the time they are 16, they couldn't even leave?

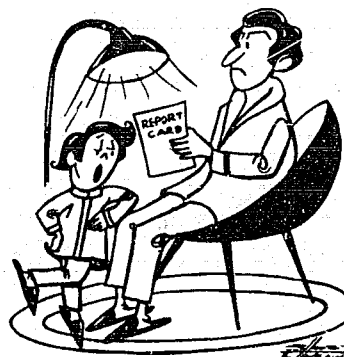
The question that I have to deal with is: If at age six our students have such a strong sense of who they are, what their rights are and what exploitation is, what do we do in the following years that by age 16 they are at the stage where they couldn't care less? Is that what our "education" does to our students? Does it really matter what skills they have mastered and what a storehouse of facts they have acquired if the spark of human dignity has been stifled somewhere along the way?

Of course, I may be reading more into this than I should. It is entirely possible that there is a very simple answer. Such as: If they had been told that they were going to be marked on their answers they would have allowed themselves to become involved in the process.

Does this make you feel any better?

It makes me feel worse. ☐

Vilma Dubé is on a leave of absence this year from the Nanaimo School District.



"Keep in mind it's always darkest just before the dawn."

Canadian, Know Thyself

**Studying other cultures without
examining our own could increase racial
tensions.**

YVONNE ZAROWNY

●Believe it or not, times of economic depression demand programs that *effectively* mitigate racial tension in our schools and in our society.

Because — like it or not — we still live in a very racist society here in B.C. Assuming we want to work toward a society in which human worth is an upheld value, we have to work hard, fast and doggedly to help prevent the frustration and anger of the growing unemployed and alienated from being vented along racial lines.

More than ever, in times of socio-economic depression, schools need to rise to the challenge of multicultural education. Public educators, though, need to gain a better grasp of just what multicultural education is — for it is not merely preaching the merits of various ethnic groups, or even discussing how nasty and dehumanizing racism is.

Multicultural education challenges every educator and every student to ferret out the cultural assumptions implicit in our society, then to come to terms with the fact that *we are all cultural beings*. Implied in this statement is the belief that coming to terms with others goes hand in hand with coming to terms with ourselves. But here in B.C., few of us know ourselves or our society.

By rising to the challenge of multicultural education, we educators can not only help mitigate the racism existent in our schools and in our society, but also help to provide the students with a basis from which to critically examine, reflect and know our own culture and society. From such a critical stance, students would be in a better position to consciously choose and work toward the type of society of which they are an integral part.

A big order, you say!

Right! We live in challenging times! Exciting times! Frightening times! Changing times! Consequently, there is no time like the present to dive in — or to wade in — to start laying the ground work for change conducive to the survival of the human family. We are confronted with a vital challenge, and educators in all discipline areas and at all levels of public education need to sit up and take notice.

What am I on about?

We educators in the public school system are under attack by our own government. So? How many educators in the public school system are aware that withdrawing public funds from schooling fits a pattern of western development? One of the conditions international lending institutions (including the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank) require for borrowing on resource-based economies dominated



People who know their cultural heritage, and can therefore converse about their assumptions, beliefs, and lifestyles, tend to be less racist than those who do not. And who would not want to know more about this appealing youngster?

by multinational corporations is a cutback of public spending on social services. Money, they say, is better spent on providing the infrastructure to exploit resources. Education is often one of the first services to go as funds are diverted into supplying ports, railroads, roads, and the like. Did you know that? If you did, you are among a very small minority of teachers in B.C.

What do such comments have to do with multicultural education and racism? Simple — any economic system (that is, a system for producing and distributing wealth) with its related social systems are integral parts of a culture. Similarly, the attitudes, values, systems of logic and perceptions that support an economic system pervade a culture.

Racism, unfortunately, is still a value and attitude that pervades our culture here in B.C. A function (not "the" function) of racism is economic.

Racist labels in B.C. have provided a rationale for gross exploitation of the worker while also serving to divide the workers. There was a time in B.C.'s history when it was common practice to pay an "Oriental" or "Asian" worker only half of a "white man's" wage for the same work. (Did you know that? If you did not, you are with the majority of B.C.'s teachers.)

In the early days of railroad construction and mining, such a practice obviously did neither the "Oriental" worker nor the "white" worker any good. However, few "whites" questioned the wage differential because of the *cultural assumption* of racial superiority. Their feelings of job insecurity and frustration were unfortunately focussed on the "Oriental" rather than on the people in their society who benefited from such an arrangement (Vancouver race riots of 1907). A false awareness about how their society functioned kept both groups of workers from perceiving their mutual exploitation.

Given our present economic situation in this province, it is gratifying that riots have not yet occurred. However, 1983 promises to be as bad as, if not worse than, 1982. News of more and/or extended shutdowns confront us each day. Can the relative peace last or will frustrated and alienated workers, particularly youths, start to release their anger on those who look different and/or act differently from themselves? Will frustrations vented at home be translated into verbal and physical attacks in the school or on the street?

As educators, we can do more than cross our fingers and hope.

But what can we do — and how? Do you, as a classroom teacher, have to take on the social and economic ills of B.C. as well as cope with cutbacks, attacks against your professional integrity and still work miracles with Johnny? Yes and no. No, you do not take on the social and economic ills of B.C. — unless, of course, you are a Socials 10 teacher. After all, such action in English class or science could be perceived as using your classroom for promoting a particular political doctrine.

The "yes" part is where multicultural education, racism, and socio/political economics come together for the classroom teacher. Bowers, in his tiny book, *Cultural Literacy for Freedom*, argues that the classroom should provide a "psychological moratorium" for students to haul out, question, examine, and test the cultural values and assumptions implicit, not only within themselves and society, but also within the course content and the way it is taught. The teacher assumes the role of guide and model in this process.

Here it is important to remember that all disciplines of inquiry are culturally based, and are based on culturally accepted assumptions about how the world works. This means mathematics, science, and com-

puters every bit as much as social studies, languages and art. One of the biggest myths pervading our present approach to schooling is that science and the scientific method are culturally unbiased. Science and math students need to know that these disciplines are rooted in a particular way of making sense of the world. What is the cultural heritage in western industrial society that holds up linear logic as *the* logic? What are the alternatives? What type of logic is assumed and developed with computers? With computer games? What cultural values are reinforced?

Obviously the questions are many. The point is that teachers of all disciplines can and should encourage their students to be aware of the cultural encapsulation that permeates all subject areas. In an age in which our society is changing so quickly, we have a moral responsibility to indicate to our students that how we do things is only one of many ways — and perhaps not even the "best" way. Such an approach would beg reflection and discussion of the criteria for determining "the best way."

One approach to multicultural education is to incorporate, throughout existing programs, examples of subjects being discussed based on a variety of cultural perceptions. This approach provides the student with a basis from which to examine and compare our own cultural assumptions, implicit in everything we do. It complements more standard approaches. A word of caution: when choosing examples, take care to choose ones that challenge the student to critical reflection on our society. Otherwise, this approach tends to reinforce an ethnocentric attitude toward our culture (our way is "best" — so there! Let's impose it on everyone else!)

Educating ourselves and our students to the fact that we are all cultural beings can be a big step toward eradicating racist attitudes and behavior in ourselves and in our students. Research has indicated that people who know their roots, their cultural heritage and are therefore in a position to engage in dialogue about their assumptions, beliefs, and lifestyles tend to be less racist than those who do not. Hence, my stress on our making explicit the cultural assumptions prevalent in B.C. culture in 1982.

Studying other cultures without an accompanying examination of our own culture risks increasing racial tensions or reducing a rich and dynamic lifestyle to the exotic and static. Both consequences are undesirable and tragic. ○

Yvonne Zarowny teaches in Qualicum Senior Secondary School.

THE B.C. TEACHER, JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1983



Top to bottom: Eager students completing an art design project; students working on cut paper sculptures; two students, typically sharing a desk, working on academic studies; members of a school choir, photographed following a performance by the choir for parents.

I TAUGHT — AND — LEARNED — IN GUYANA

Teaching in Guyana makes one realize that our survival depends on the co-operation of, and communication among, the various peoples of the world.

LAURA BIRTWHISTLE

From May to September 1981, I taught in Guyana as a Canadian Crossroads International volunteer. Canadian Crossroads is a volunteer, nonprofit organization whose goal is to foster greater cross-cultural awareness and understanding.

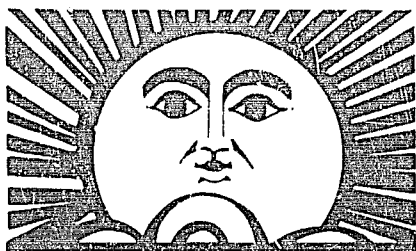
In the wake of nuclear war fears, overpopulation, food shortages, pollution, economic recession and many other challenges facing the world, it is becoming increasingly clear that our survival depends on the co-operation of, and communication among, the various countries of the world.

Through my overseas experience, I gained a deeper understanding of the struggles facing developing countries. I grew to understand the link between our North American lifestyle and living conditions in the third world, while maintaining an immense respect and appreciation for the unique culture in which I was immersed.

I was placed as a volunteer teacher at the

Linden Foundation High School in Linden, Guyana. Linden, a bauxite mining community with a population of approximately 60,000, lies 70 miles inland from the main coastal city of Georgetown. The Demerara River divides the town and provides a lush backdrop to the market stalls on the main street. During my stay I boarded with a local family. This provided an ample opportunity to meet people and make friends in the community and helped me to appreciate fully their lifestyle, their hardships, and their joys.

At the high school, I supplemented the school staff by teaching language arts, science, drama, music and art to students in the first and second forms. This would be approximately equivalent to British Columbia's Grades 8 and 9. I had to adapt my teaching methods to teaching large numbers of students with very few teaching resources other than textbooks and student



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notebooks. Because of a high noise level, I found it most effective to minimize teacher-focussed learning, assign students seatwork, and instruct individually or in small groups. Each class accommodated from 30 to 50 pupils. The children sat closely, two or three to a bench, but worked well together and helped each other along.

Secondary schools in Guyana commonly have more extensive facilities than primary schools. There are usually separate classrooms and smaller pupil-teacher ratios. In both primary and secondary schools, school supplies are not abundant. There are few of the luxuries common to Canadian schools, such as copy machines, cupboards full of assorted paper, extensive school libraries, or class sets of musical instruments. However, teachers, students and administrators compensate admirably. In one high school woodworking shop, I observed students industriously building school desks for local use. Teachers adapt to the supply deficiencies by using inexpensive supplements, or doing without. In art, for example, scraps of discard paper from the local bauxite mining operation became useful. Students brought coloring pencils, scissors, and scrap cloth from home. The headmistress made a huge quantity of glue out of hot water and starch. Throw away and found objects created the raw materials for many art projects.

In all subjects, the children responded with warmth and enthusiasm. They especially enjoyed participating in music, art and creative writing. My guitar and a selection of favorite folk songs became useful for teaching music, as well as conducting a school choir. The children had received, prior to this, only a limited exposure to the expressive arts subjects. In response to the enthusiasm demonstrated by teachers, students and the headmaster, I shared my professional expertise with them through discussions, workshops and demonstrations.

At the conclusion of the school term, parents were invited to the school to observe a display of the children's art and creative writing, listen to the choir, and watch a drama group perform.

In conjunction with the headmaster and headmistress, at their request, I observed and evaluated the lessons of other teachers. I offered encouragement as well as suggestions for improvement. Discussions on philosophies and approaches to teaching in Canada provided input for improvements and program implementations at the high school.

In Guyana, as in most other countries of the third world, trained teachers are in demand. Teachers must cope with crowded learning conditions, and an overall lack of resources and supplies. Compared to the salaries of Canadian teachers, their salaries

are low. Despite these difficulties, the teachers demonstrate an exceptional amount of love for children, warmth, enthusiasm and genuine concern for the progress of their students.

Many teachers begin, without training, as soon as they complete high school. Gradually, through efforts of school principals and government departments of education, more and more teachers are becoming trained. This is clearly an asset to the effectiveness of the education system.

It takes an additional measure of skill, training and patience to teach under less than ideal conditions. Professional training facilitates curriculum planning and the implementation of teaching methods geared to the specific needs of the developing country. It assists teachers to meet, under any conditions, the individual learning requirements of their students.

Every year Canadian teaching organizations send professionals to third world countries to conduct workshops in education for teachers. While in Guyana, I attended seminars of this nature in music education. Such education training programs are extremely beneficial. Teachers look forward to these opportunities for upgrading their skills. To achieve maximum effectiveness, the visiting Canadian instructors must be aware of conditions in the schools of their host countries. It is most beneficial to present materials and teaching techniques that can be adopted readily, and economically.

Humanity is experiencing technological developments that are rapidly changing the face of societies throughout the world. If students are to be adequately prepared to meet the challenge of the future, educators must be aware of the implications of such rapid changes. Children, all over the world, have a right to high quality educational opportunities. It is important that through those opportunities children develop an appreciation for their own culture as well as a respect of and understanding for others. As more students and teachers become aware of the human link between all nations, our world will become progressively closer to one world.

Emerson said, "Every man that I meet is in some way my superior in that I may learn from him." In the same way the nations and people of the world can learn from each other and grow together in meeting our basic needs and accomplishing our common goals. □

Laura Birtwhistle teaches at Manoah Steeles Elementary School in Richmond.

THE B.C. TEACHER, JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1983

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New Books...

GRACE E. FUNK

Opinions expressed in these reviews are those of the reviewers, and not necessarily those of the B.C. Teachers' Federation, the editor or the new books editor. Reviews are edited for clarity and length.

Addresses are given for publishers not listed in Books in Print, Canadian Publishers' Directory, or Books from British Columbia.



ACROSS THE DESK

☛ Thoughts to accompany a theme issue on multiculturalism.

Children of many races grow up together in Canada. So I looked through the pile of the latest Canadian children's books for some reflection of the fact, and I found evidence in Chinese, Indian, and French.

At the top of the list is *The Chinese Canadians* by Vancouver teacher Heather Harris and her friend Mary Sun (Nelson, 1982), part of the Multicultural Canada series. From lion-dancer cover to up-beat ending the book is a delight. It tells a sympathetic story of Chinese in Canada through four generations of a Chinese family illustrated by photographs old and new. Although hardship and discrimination are not glossed over, the book is made inviting by pages of information about Chinese culture, and suggested activities for sharing in it.

The Okanagan Indian Curriculum Project, a co-operative venture of seven Indian bands and six Okanagan school districts, has produced *Enwhistekwa — Walk in*

Water by Jeanette Armstrong (Raincoast Book Distribution, \$5.95) as part of a large set of materials being created for Social Studies K-11. *Enwhistekwa* is designed for Grade 5. The "story" is the life of an 11-year-old Okanagan Indian girl about 1860. Seasonal food gathering and life cycle activities are inserted into it; also a first, rather unpleasant, meeting with white man. The writing is awkward and in places faulty; the illustrations are unattractive. Valid material is surely needed on concepts of Indian culture, especially on the Interior Salish, but this book is a disappointment, compared to *From First Moon to End of Year* (Rosalia Scott, Guinness 1977) or *Lak-La-Hai-Ee* (Surtees and Lamont, Lamont-Surtees, 1974).

Kids Can Press has published two new bilingual books by Lesley Fairfield: *What's the Word? Cherchez le mot* and *Let's eat! Allons Manger!* (\$3.95). These are word books illustrated with amusing cartoons showing the words in action. They make young children of either language aware of the other. Of more interest to French immersion programs are the translations. I believe bilingual children benefit when the same title is available in two languages, emphasizing similarity rather than separateness.

Suzanne Martel's *The City Under Ground* is re-issued in a new paperback format in English by Douglas and McIntyre, who are also proposing to translate their excellent "How They Lived" series into French. Working with French bibliographies, one becomes aware of such series as Macdonald Educational or True Books translated into French. (Translations mean that the basic editorial work and the illustrations need be done only once). There is a fertile field, however, for translating from

French to English, to make some of the fine French-Canadian children's books available to Anglophones. One would like to see Suzanne Martel's *Titralak*, for instance, or more of the books of Cecile Gognon. One would like, also, to see more bilingual folktales such as the Kids Can Press Folktale Library, which includes 10 languages to date. Stories have a universal appeal; language need not be a barrier. Bilingual books and translations help to make cross-cultural connections.

Another aspect of Canadian mosaic is simply the name of author/editor Shelley Tanaka along with Ernie Coombs on *Mr. Dressup's book of things to make and do* (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1982, \$5.95). This lively collection of creative activities for young children has 5 sections, including toys, plants, and music. All Canada's children will enjoy them. O

BOOKS RECEIVED

Bestor, Dorothy. *Aside from teaching, What in the world can you do?: career strategies for Liberal Arts Graduates* rev. ed.. Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1982. 305 pp. paper, \$9.95. 0-295-95725-5. Order Douglas and McIntyre. Run down of various possible careers for Arts graduates and the entries to them. Special chapter for women. Ways of presentation, resumes, etc. Revision of 1977 edition. Job interviews to starting your own business; 800 case studies.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *The way of the masks* transl. by Sylvia Modelski. Vancouver, Douglas and McIntyre, 1982. 250 pp. hard, \$24.95. 0-88894-358-X. Scholarly anthropological study of Swaihwé masks

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linking them to the North West mythology, to the use of copper, and to conscious artistic style

Meek, Margaret. *Learning to Read*. London, The Bodley Head, 1982. 255 pp. hard, \$13.95. Order through Clarke, Irwin. Advice for parents of children from toddlers to teens (and, by implication, for teachers). Graded bibliographies of (mostly British) children's books.

Rich, John Martin. *Discipline and authority in school and family*. Toronto, Lexington Books (D. C. Heath), 1982. 200 pp. hard, \$28.75. 0-669-05168-3. Sociological exploration of the interactions among various kinds of authority, of autonomy, of family structure in the United States with emphasis on reducing violence and vandalism.

BILINGUAL RESOURCE CENTRES

A handbook for bilingual school resource centres. Richmond, British Columbia Ministry of Education Schools Department Programs Division Modern Language Services Branch, 1982. 100 pp. spiral 0-7719-8970-9. Inquire from Modern Languages Services Branch 200, 7900

Alderbridge Way, Richmond, B.C. V6X 2A5.

British Columbia students receiving their basic education wholly or partly in French have the same need of adequate library service as those students who are learning in English. The *Handbook* then, is intended to assist librarians serving French immersion and cadre pupils. Since most of the librarians are English-speaking, the *Handbook* is written in English.

Prepared by a committee of the B.C. School Librarians' Association of the BCTF under contract to the B.C. Ministry of Education, this brief document is unique in several ways. In the manner of its preparation it is certainly so. In the speed of its preparation, from concept to conclusion, it telescopes into a few months the process that for English language materials in B.C. took about 10 years.

Begun as a supplementary chapter to *Sources and Resources: a handbook for teacher-librarians*, the "French handbook" soon took on a life of its own, and while the Early and Late Immersion Bibliographies were yet in progress, they were being bypassed by the selection and acquisition information provided in the *Handbook*. The compilers assume basic competency in school librarianship (not necessarily in French) and some participation by district resource centres. They further assume that French and English language materials

should be treated equally in the school resource centre.

The *Handbook* is complete in itself. It deals with budget, selection and acquisition, cataloguing and library organization with reference to the special problems of French materials. For example, few French books are pre-processed or in library binding; many are in inferior binding; selection is much more limited; terminology differs. Almost half the manual is taken up by appendices of selection tools, sample order letters in French, sample catalogue cards, bibliographies and addresses. Of particular interest is a bibliography of study skills in French. The general bibliography and the list of addresses alone would be worth the cost of publication. (In the second printing, in October, these lists have been updated, and prices added.) The *Handbook* goes further and offers practical suggestions for Resource Centre programs as well. In short, here is everything the English-speaking librarian needs to provide library services without anxiety to French immersion and Program Cadre pupils. Emphasis is laid on imaginative flexibility and on school and staff decisions regarding the handling and use of material.

In format, the *Handbook* is well set up in spiral bound typescript, easily read, and well indexed. This indispensable tool is outstanding in the quality of its editing, its completeness and its currency.

—Grace E. Funk, Vernon

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Page, P. K. ed. *To say the least: Canadian poets from A to Z*. Toronto, Press Porcépic, 1979. 128 pp. paper. 0-88878-174-1.

To Say the Least is to say the most — or something like that — and saying a great deal in as few as four words is what this anthology is all about. Published almost four years ago, *To Say the Least* has earned a staying place in the ranks of what has been wryly noted as Canada's own literary genre, the anthology. The works of 102 poets appear in the book, and the poems are either by Canadians or have been published in Canada. No poem is more than 12 lines long.

P. K. Page, the editor, says in her introduction that the book began with three short poems that were "entirely memorable" and that she carried (I would guess lovingly) around in her head, a three that became six that became more and more, until there was a collection of small wonderful poems. She has arranged the poems, she says, "as a sculptor does to sense the form hidden in his material . . ." Consequently, there are no arbitrary sections or divisions to the book; rather, there are

poems divided from each other only by space and a tiny sketch of a branch. And although the editor suggests that the book be read from first to last as it was designed, I have found it more pleasurable every time I have picked it up, to browse.

If I am suggesting that the general appearance and tone of this volume is appropriate for Munchkins I am doing the book a terrible disservice. Indeed, it is the opposite. The poems range from crisp, biting images to gentle observations. There are a number of poems which will, I am sure, be known to readers of poetry already:

John Marshall's "Seymour Inlet Float Camp: Domestic Scene"

mother is sewing
father's
thumb back on

and Margaret Atwood's

you fit into me
like a hook into an eye
a fish hook
an open eye

There are others not as well known:
Elizabeth Gourlay's "Low Calorie"

I scatter more crumbs
for my black-capped chickadees
than you spread for me.

or Phyllis Gotlieb's

Tiretracks in snow
thread filet popcorn picot
lace on bobbin
wheeled roads unwinding
white swags complicate
crystalline simplicities as witness
in the pure fields: footprints
drop catspaw doilies trim
as a spinster's parlor, stars
turned antimacassars.

I think that most new readers of this book would begin, as Page herself did, by carrying small poems about in the mind to remember in those silent moments when there is time to hear them again. Too, as a teacher of a creative writing class in a secondary school, I have found that a short poem a day on the blackboard needs no long discussion or analysis, but serves the students well simply by being there.

And for an age group that generally thinks that poetry consists of lengthy generalizations about love and disillusionment, or brief statements along the lines of happiness-is-a-warm-blanket, here is evidence that a poet need not be obscure or longwinded, and that short poems can quicken the pulse as effectively as anything else.

— Judy Turner, Duncan

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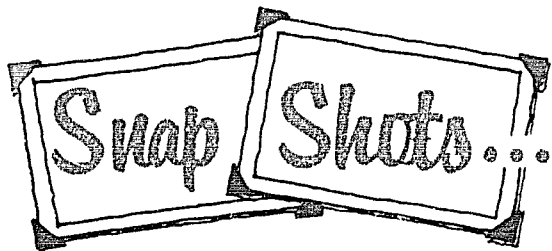
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GEOFF HARGREAVES



ONE MORE TIME

"Here we go again!" said Craig on the day after Labor Day.

"Yeah, one more time," I answered, with mixed feelings.

"What happened to your plans for Broadway?" he asked me, with a wink at Leonora, who had just joined us for coffee, while we waited for the first assembly of the school year.

"Oh, you know how it is," I said evasively, burying my nose in the mug.

You see, for the past six years I've been planning to leave teaching and make it big on the New York stage. Once when I was down with mumps, I got this absolutely sensational idea of making a musical out of Hegel's *Encyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundriss*. There'd be lots of catchy tunes and unforgettable characters like 'Logic,' 'Nature,' and 'Mind' in colorful costumes, tapdancing their way across the stage. I mean, it's never been done before, it's totally original — it just couldn't fail, could it?

"Yes, I know how it is," lamented Leonora. "I've been toying with the idea of opening a cosy little Italian restaurant down on the corner of James and the Trans Canada Highway — but I just didn't act early enough. By the time I'd decided to do it, a donut joint was already opening up there."

"How about you, Craig?" I asked.

"Great summer," he said, "really great! Went down to Nicaragua and Guatemala. Just loved the people."

"Bring lots of souvenirs back?" Leonora said.

"No. I didn't. And I regret it now. There's lots of really fine stuff there, well crafted and not expensive by our standards. It's a pity I didn't . . ."

Brnnng! the bell rang fiercely.

"Well, let's go to it," said Leonora.

* * * * *

The February rains were pouring down, and mists from the lake had once again enveloped the school. Staff members sat staring sullenly and mindlessly at their lunches like so many sick beasts.

"Something is expiring in me," said Leonora woefully.

"Me too," I said.

"Me too!" added Craig with feeling.

We both looked at him in surprise.

"You too?" I asked irritably, "bright, bouncy, insufferable you?"

"Me too," he conceded feebly. "I don't quite know what it is, but I feel as if I'm polishing the brass on the Titanic."

"You don't know!" said Leonora, amazed, for generally Craig knows everything and loves to inform you in scornful, savvy terms.

"I was reminiscing," he said, almost humbly. "Remembering all that Latin American capacity for enjoyment I saw in the summer, and then wondering which circle of Hell I'd gotten myself into here."

"I've been thinking about that little restaurant I let slip through my fingers last August," said Leonora. "I can just see the checkered table cloths and hear the laughter and smell the wine and herbs."

"Well, I don't know about you two," I said decisively, "but this is my last year of teaching. Come what may, I'm going to finish the script of my musical, and next September, it's the Big Apple for me."

"Oh, how wonderful!" said Leonora.

"Man, that's fantastic!" echoed Craig.

"It's just a matter of willpower," I explained.

"You're right," said Craig. "Remember all those artifacts I told you I didn't buy in Guatemala and Nicaragua, when I had the chance. Well, I've been thinking. Why don't I import them? I could set up a useful little business in that line. And think of all the fun I'd have touring those out-of-the-way places in search of new goods."

Leonora sighed. "Sure beats teaching *Of Mice and Men* for the fourteenth time to kids who never really get the point."

"Sure does," I said. "Well, let's act."

"Yes, let's act, Craig. Let's give our lives some direction."

* * * * *

September that year proved unseasonably cold and Craig already showed the first signs of flu.

"I wonder what the new principal will be like," said Leonora. "I've heard he's the epitome of unedifying ambition." She ripped the cellophane cover off her new daybook. "Used to be a journalist, they say. But made a jump into teaching. Since then he's done pretty well for himself, in a very short time."

"Plain lucky, probably," I said.

"I see you didn't make it to New York," sniffed Craig.

"Er, well, no," I said. "I got to thinking that I'd lose my dental coverage — and at my age, with my rotten teeth, that's quite a consideration."

"It certainly is," added Leonora, "especially when you've got three children, as I have. And when I looked into things, I found the restaurant business isn't what it was, what with tourism down and local people out of work. And the weekends — well, you just don't get weekends in the restaurant business."

"How about you, Craig? I asked. "What happened to your import business?"

"Well, I did actually get down to Latin America. Took the wife along too. Things were okay, till we hired a taxi one day to take us out to this remote village in the jungle, where the prices would be dirt-cheap, of course. The driver was so drunk he rolled the taxi into a swamp. Fortunately nobody was badly hurt. He said he'd take a short cut through the jungle and bring back another vehicle. But he never came back. We sat there for hours, waiting, drenched in slime and bitten by clouds of mosquitoes. When we heard gunfire in the distance, I said to my wife, "You know, honey, we could die right here, plastered with filth, mutilated by bandits, our bones never recovered. On the whole, I prefer teaching."

Leonora nodded sympathetically. "Let's go check out the new principal for ourselves," she said. O

Geoff Hargreaves, our regular columnist, teaches in Cowichan Senior Secondary School.

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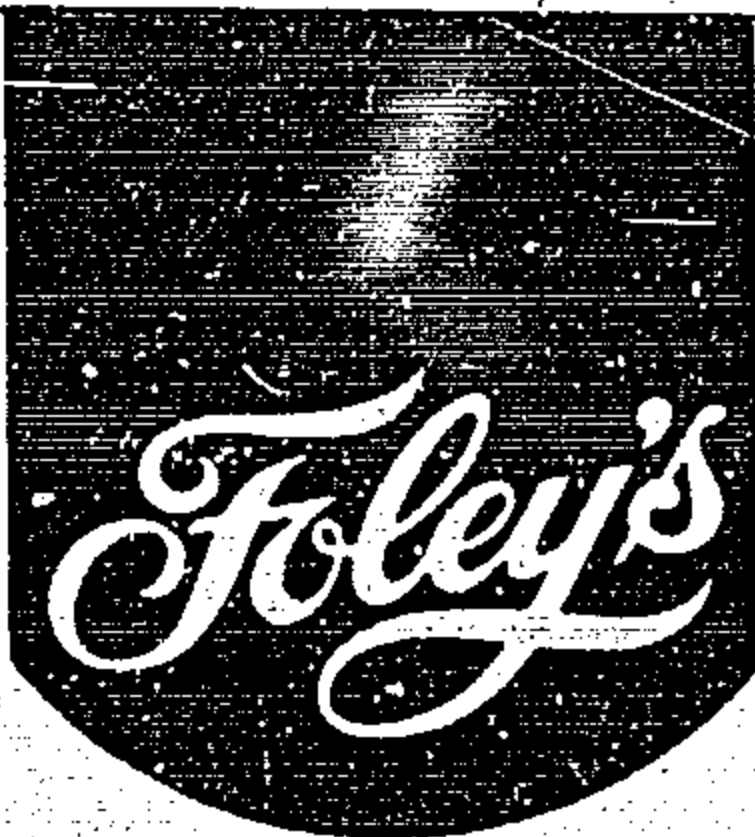
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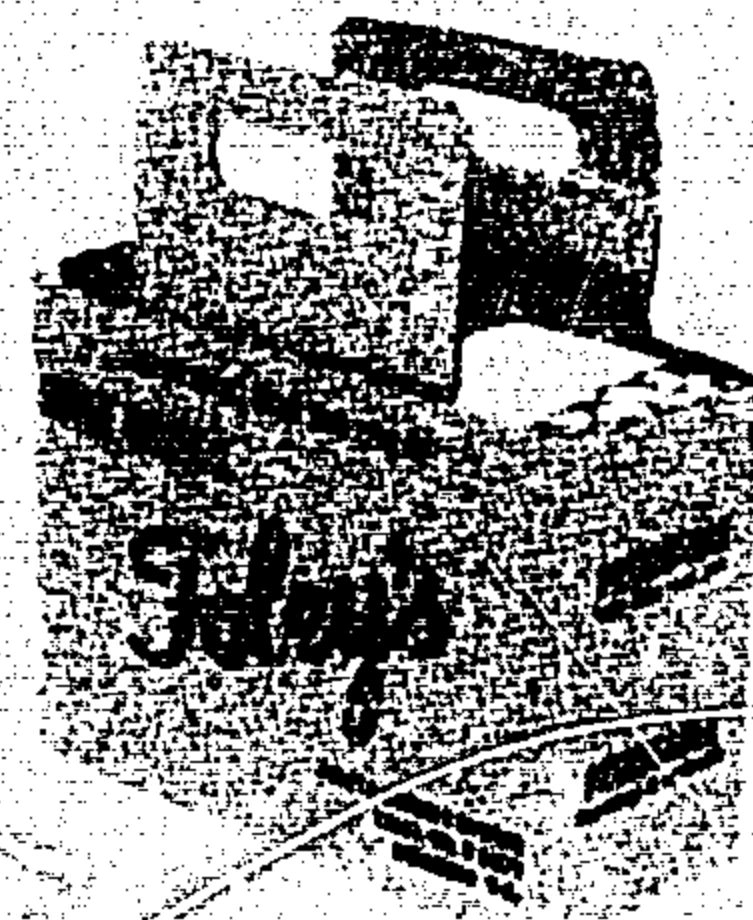
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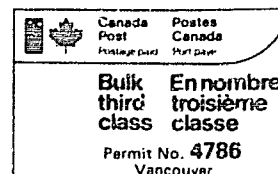
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