DOCUMENT RESUME

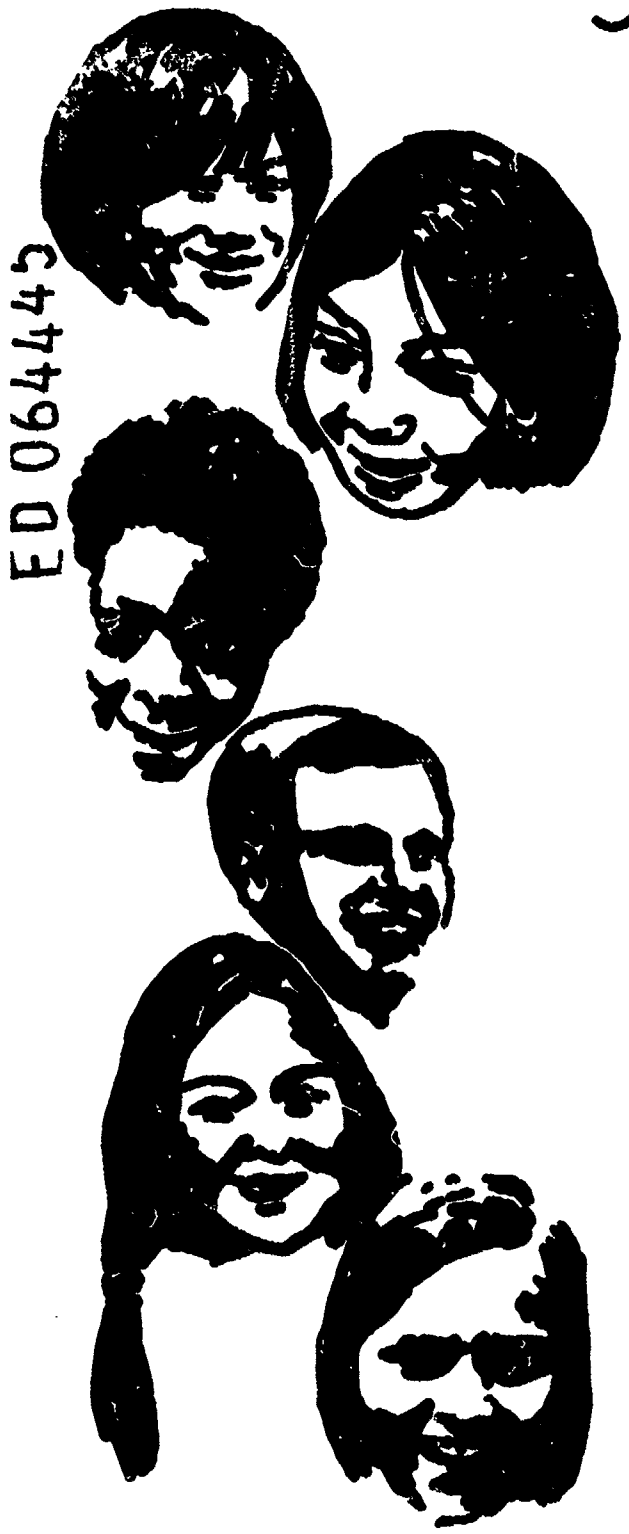
ED 064 445 UD 012 496

AUTHOR Noar, Gertrude
TITLE Sensitizing Teachers to Ethnic Groups.
INSTITUTION B'nai B'rith, New York, N.Y. Anti-Defamation League.
PUB DATE 71
NOTE 24p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS American Indians; Caucasians; Chinese Americans; Disadvantaged Groups; Environmental Influences; *Ethnic Groups; History; *Human Relations; Japanese Americans; Jews; Mexican Americans; Negroes; Puerto Ricans; Race Relations; Racial Differences; *Sensitivity Training; Social Differences; Socioeconomic Influences; *Teacher Guidance
IDENTIFIERS Asian Americans

ABSTRACT

This booklet on human relations attempts to convey to teachers the meaning and intent of "learning to live together." Separate sections deal with what teachers need to know about blacks, American Indians, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, the disadvantaged, Asian-Americans, Jews, and the many Caucasian ethnic groups. The focus in each race is on their history, social problems, differences within the race, and social differences due to past and present experiences, and in the case of the disadvantaged, on nutrition, environmental influences, and socioeconomic background. (Author/RJ)



SENSITIZING TEACHERS TO ETHNIC GROUPS

by Gertrude Noar for

The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith

Distributed by

Allyn and Bacon, Inc.

Publishers of

CONCEPTS AND INQUIRY:
The Educational Research Council
Social Science Program

SENSITIZING TEACHERS TO ETHNIC GROUPS

by Gertrude Noar

Former United States Attorney General, Ramsey Clark Jr., speaking on the CBS television program, "Face the Nation" May 23, 1971, said, "The most important lesson we have to learn in education, is to live together, not calculus." The Educational Research Council of America Social Science Program, *Concepts and Inquiry,* is in its essence, directed to that end insofar as it presents to children at every grade level, the stories of people who are different from each other but whose interdependence formed civilization as we know it today. The individuals and groups which are included are as dissimilar as the discoverers and explorers of this country are from the founders of the world's great religions; the Sumerians of the remote past from the Aborigines of the present living in Australia; the Puritans of colonial times from the citizens of modern industrial American cities like Pittsburgh, Pa. and Washington, D.C.

Whether or not children who study this curriculum learn to live together will depend not only on what the books say but more importantly on how the teachers implement the many suggestions in the Teachers' Guides for developing the pupils' powers of questioning, of reasoning, of analyzing, of seeking truth, of understanding values and value conflicts, and the motivations underlying human behavior. But of even greater importance in learning how to live together will be whether or not the teacher has learned it first.

Learning to live together will be the outcome of experiences which the teacher sets up for the children in their culturally and ethnically pluralistic classroom. The teacher's attitude toward the past and present people around the world who are described in the stories the children read in their books, will be important. Of even greater import, however, will be whether or not he is deeply committed to the value, the worth and dignity of every child in his classroom and whether or not he is dedicated to the doctrine of human and civil rights. How the teacher acts out his feelings, beliefs, and values will set the pattern for his pupils. They will follow his example as they live and learn together.

Possibly one of the most difficult tasks the teacher of this curriculum must accomplish is self confrontation with respect to his own private attitudes and values. Some may have to exchange long held myths and superstitions for truth about people. Some may find that they tend to think in stereotypes that require challenge and testing against the reality of individual differences. Prejudice, discrimination, rejection, exclusion on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, social class, and even mental ability have no place in the classroom.

The children's textbooks are physically beautiful, replete with reprints and pictures of some of the world's finest art works. They are undoubtedly

attractive to children. The curriculum is developed on the theory that instead of memorizing a specific body of knowledge, the developing child can, at any age, learn basic concepts and principles which represent the structure of knowledge. Thus relevant concepts recur at successive grade levels in different settings

The content consists of information, values, and principles drawn from all the disciplines concerned with people, their interrelationships, their age long struggle for freedom, and their progress toward a more perfect society. Included are Geography, History, Physical Science, Political Science, Economics, Philosophy, Religion, Psychology, Sociology and Anthropology in integrated units of learning that cut across subject matter lines. Basic concepts introduced in Kindergarten are broadened and deepened in successive grades. For example, children are constantly confronted with the fact that people have certain similar needs but that different societies develop culture differences as they strive to satisfy those needs. They learn that all behavior is caused and that values become the directives which determine the actions an individual or a group decides to take.

One objective reiterated in the Teachers' Guides is to "shape mature attitudes toward other people, toward authority, toward work, study, and play." Although very often the authors emphasize the quest for "tolerance" of differences, sensitive teachers should use this curriculum to move children from *tolerating* differences to seeing human differences as desirable, beautiful, and of great value. As the child matures he should move from ethnocentrism to full acceptance of the worth, dignity, and value of every human being regardless of differences in race, religion, ethnic origin, and social class.

Teachers must be especially sensitive to what the books say and do not say about the people who are now minority groups in our society. For example, there is danger in expecting Mexican Americans, Indians, and Blacks or any other minority group to learn only that they represent conquered peoples whose cultures were weak and inferior; that their ancestors had to adjust, accept, assimilate and become deculturated in order to be acculturated to the majority patterns. In fact, these children are in a double culture bind which creates deep value conflicts. Today, in our society, the minority groups are moving away from previous roles of inferiority, defeatism, and submission to restriction and segregation. They are rebelling against interference with the exercise of their inalienable rights. They are demanding first class citizenship and justice now.

Teachers are called upon to be sensitive to the emotional as well as the physical and mental needs of their pupils. Development of sensitivity depends to a considerable degree, upon knowledge of the environment in which a child has his being, of the social forces that impinge upon him, of the nature of his family life and important events in the history of his people. The Teachers' Guides contain a liberal education in Greek and Roman history, the Mayan civilization and the Aztecs, Buddhism and

the "early" or "ancient" Hebrews up to the time of Jesus. They include Japan, Mexico, England, and Samoa and describe a number of different kinds of American communities. What they do not contain is what the teachers need to know about American minority groups whose children are now in the schools hoping to learn how to live together. The teachers' need for that information is the *raison d'etre* for this supplement.

Some emotional needs are common to all human beings regardless of age or social class, race or religion, national origins or mental abilities. One, of great importance, is manifest in early infancy. It is the need to be accepted for oneself alone, as a human being, to be needed, to be wanted, to feel belongingness. When this need is not satisfied, when instead a person feels rejected, believes he is not wanted, not liked, he is likely to think that the reasons lie within himself and possibly are those things which he cannot change such as race or ethnic origins. Because everyone behaves the way he perceives himself to be, such a child may act out his feelings about himself in unacceptable ways. Some rejected children develop overall patterns of violent aggression. Others withdraw — become non-participant, apathetic or alienated. Some get physically sick with what doctors call psychosomatic illness.

The teacher communicates his feelings of acceptance or rejection to his pupils both verbally and nonverbally. His words, tone of voice, and inflection may say, "I don't like you and I wish you weren't here." The gestures used may say come or go away. Contact must be warm and reassuring, not hard or hurtful.

Minority group children suffer more than others from rejection in our society as well as in school. They believe that the dominant group is responsible for their past and present segregation, limitations, and restrictions. They are aware and resentful that society has not offered them equal opportunities, and that there is serious interference with the exercise of the human and civil rights to which they are entitled. The classroom teacher must know the reality of these experiences and, being sensitive to the injustices of the past and present, make every effort to assure the children that he does in truth want them in his room and intends to do whatever he can to make sure they learn.

Another basic need common to all children is the need to achieve, to accomplish, to experience success. Failure deprives them of the satisfaction of that need. Then some pupils fight back with patterns of violent aggression. Others withdraw; they stop trying and become non-learners. Some get physically sick. Success to the school child means, "I got it right!" Every child needs to get something right every day, to learn something and to know that his teacher is pleased with him. Success and praise are profoundly motivating. They turn children on. They free the energy needed to make an effort. They convince pupils that they can learn. Once a child perceives himself as able to learn, and knows the teacher cares, he usually does learn.

Lower economic-class children experience more failure in school than

do their middle-class peers. Their adults, often without employment and restricted to depressed neighborhoods, likewise experienced much failure. Many of them have deep feelings of hopelessness about the future. When those children come to what we now describe as middle-class schools, if many are made to feel ashamed of their neighborhoods, families, and backgrounds, they begin to doubt the sincerity and honesty of teachers (and others) who profess belief in the supreme worth and dignity of every human being. When they are deprived of equal educational and vocational opportunities, and cannot make any decisions about their futures, they reject teachers who talk about the democratic right of every person to become something of his own choosing. When they have no part in planning their daily work and can not say what they want to learn, they turn away from a society which professes belief in, but does not act out the principle that people have the right to participate in policy making when their own lives are involved.

Especially in the Social Studies classes which deal with the values and principles of democracy, teachers must be fair and just. They must provide opportunities for children to practice the democratic processes so they develop skills in planning, in evaluating, and in making decisions. They must avoid everything that tends to segregate, limit, or discriminate against any pupil.

What Do Teachers Need To Know About Blacks?

History

The black child cannot be comfortable and successful in the classroom unless his teacher is sensitive to what is special about his backgrounds, values and culture patterns, immediate environment and the specific influences presently impinging on him. Perhaps of greatest importance, because it is relatively new, is pride in blackness. The slogan "BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL" is wholesome insofar as it helps children to accept and like themselves and each other. At the same time teachers help all children to learn that beauty is more than skin deep. Pride in oneself and one's race is the essence of a positive self-concept without which an individual cannot find his identity and function effectively.

Racial pride is a product of racial history. The black child especially, but also the white child, needs to know black history. The teacher should endeavor to emphasize black history and to supplement the text. For example, the following facts should be included:

- A black man, Pedro Alonzo Nino, was the navigator of Columbus' ship, the NINA.

- Estevanico, an African, was the first non-Indian to explore portions of Arizona and New Mexico.
- A black man, Crispus Attucks, was the first one to die in the Boston massacre.
- DuSable, a black man, was the founder of Chicago and another was one of the founders of San Francisco.
- Benjamin Banneker, a black man, was one of the three commissioners who made the plans for Washington, D.C.
- The first open heart surgery was done by a black doctor, Daniel Hale Williams.
- A black man, Dr. Charles Drew, discovered blood plasma.
- Norbert Rillieux, a free Negro, invented the vacuum cup that revolutionized the sugar industry.
- The shoe lasting machine that revolutionized the shoe industry was invented by a black man, John Matzeiger.
- A black man, Matthew Henson, went with Peary to discover the North Pole.
- Black men fought in the Revolution, the War of 1812, the Spanish-American War, The Civil War, World Wars I and II, Korea, and are a disproportionately large part of our forces in Indo-China.
- Among the many great black authors and poets was Phyllis Wheatley, who wrote the second book of verse published by a woman in colonial America.
- Black men and women are and have been among the nation's great social leaders, congressmen, mayors, educators, doctors, lawyers, psychiatrists, musicians, artists.
- Robert Weaver, a black man, was the first Secretary of Urban Affairs.
- Justice Thurgood Marshall, a black man, is a member of the Supreme Court.
- Blacks are among the idols, heroes, role models of the young in modern music, dance, T.V., movies and sports.

Children need to learn not only the stories of the great black men and women who have contributed much to the development of American culture and wealth but also that blacks have been deprived of a corresponding share in the riches and opportunities of the nation. They need also to know the truth, as far as it can be learned, about slavery — in addition to the coverage in this curriculum. The facts should be available to them about what happened to their ancestors after the Civil War, about the validity of present protests against injustice and demands for civil and human rights.

The cry for relevance in curriculum is, in part, a reflection of the fact that most children turn off lessons about events and people far distant and remote in space and time because they are so preoccupied with problems of the immediate present.

Social Problems

In the black community, many children are exposed to the increasing demand of leaders and others for control over their own political, social, economic, and educational institutions. The classroom teacher, sensitive to the essential justice of this movement in a democratic society, will provide opportunities for pupils to discuss this whenever basic concepts, principles, and values of government and life are being studied. ("American Communities," grade 2, is an example.)

At the same time that black children hear their people demanding their rightful share in American government and life, they also hear talk of separation. The teacher who is sensitive to the despair which leads some to want to withdraw, will make sure that the pupils understand the futility and dangers inherent in separation and the necessity for resolutely moving forward toward full and effective integration. To do this, integration must be a fact in the school and the classroom.

Part of the reason for the separatist movement is the black's need for unity. In our society strength is developed through organization of those who have common bonds, common needs, and common goals. Instead of fearing, downgrading, and opposing black community organizations, sensitive teachers will make sure that pupils understand what they are all about. To help with this task, men and women from the community can be interviewed and invited in as speakers.

Differences Within the Race

Sensitivity to the needs of a minority group includes realization of the fact that within the group itself, people are not alike. The tendency to think about any group of people in generalized characterizations or stereotypes must be challenged and tested against the reality of individuals. In any classroom black children, for example, are likely to differ from each other in social class just as the white children do. Some may belong to families whose grandparents never were slaves, and/or who have been middle class, highly educated, and affluent for three or four generations. They will speak the same language as their white peers. Their habits of living, aspirations, attitudes, and value patterns, their food and dress preferences, and their levels of development in academic subjects will not differ from their white classmates.

In addition to intra-racial social class differences, cultural anthropologists say there are some 14 different Afro-American and 9 other non-Afro-American black ethnic sub-groups in the United States caused by differences in their national or regional origins. These groups differ more or

less in their behavior patterns, language and dialects (speak English, French or Spanish), aesthetic styles, folklore, religious beliefs and practices, family structures, food and clothing preferences.*

Social Differences Due to Past and Present Experiences

Restrictions, segregation, prejudice and bigotry have prevented a large percentage of the black people in this country from becoming socially mobile. Discrimination and inferior education have prevented them from moving out of poverty, limiting them to lower status and lower paid dead-end jobs and menial labor. Always the last to be hired and the first fired and, when no work is available, the unemployed, they are forced to go on welfare. In some families such depressing, destructive conditions have persisted for as many as three generations. Teachers must be sensitive to the serious effects these experiences have on the personality of men unable to fulfill the traditional role of provider and head of the household, who are often forced to leave the home, by the nature of the rules and regulations of the welfare department, before their families can get the help they need to sustain life.

Lower-class poverty-stricken blacks, whether in rural or urban localities, have had little chance to change traditional value and behavior patterns forced upon them during slavery and the reconstruction period. Since an adult can pass on to children only what he knows and believes, black children from these families are not likely to have quite the same values as middle-class age mates. For example, they may not place as high priority on legal marriage, private property, the accumulation of wealth through saving in order to provide an inheritance for the next generation. Because they experience only sub-standard housing in neighborhoods that receive less than their share of public services, the children are not likely to value order or know how to organize their belongings.

Because many poor, lower-class black adults have had limited and inferior education, they and their children may not value schooling. Especially teen-agers see no connection between what teachers expect them to learn and the reality of their own lives and future prospects. They have no faith in the teacher's prediction that more education will assure them better jobs. They tend to express disbelief in the basic democratic values and principles taught them in school.

Limitations imposed upon lower social class black adults have prevented many of them from learning to read and communicate with people who use standard English. The dialect, colloquial and idiomatic primary language they speak is what the child learns by the time he is three and therefore brings to school with him. This primary language becomes an identity label and a bond between him and the group to which he belongs. The teacher must see it not as "bad English" but as different. The children

*Charles A. Valentine, "Deficits, Differences and Bicultural Modes," *Harvard Educational Review*, May, 1971.

hear standard English on television and radio, in the movies and in school, so they understand it. They have difficulty, however, in learning to speak, read, and write it because it does not function for them in the home and neighborhood. By the time they reach grade six, however, after having had many experiences that have added new words to their vocabularies, the sensitive teacher can help them to know that standard English is an alternative which they must learn so they can choose to use it as a tool to accomplish specific personal, social, educational, and vocational objectives. A sensitive teacher, knowing that it is part of the child's self, will not call a child's primary language "bad" since to do so will tend to make him feel ashamed and unhappy about himself, his family, and his race. The teacher's negative attitude will confirm and support any feelings of inferiority he may have. A negative self-concept and negative teacher attitudes act together to inhibit learning.

Above all, in teaching black children, especially those who are economically deprived, teachers must guard against a tendency to regard the victim of prejudice and discrimination as defective. They have to keep in mind that deficiencies due to poverty, to a paucity of early childhood learning experiences, to differences in value priorities, to differences in learning styles do not constitute learning disabilities. Black children, like all others, learn much outside of school. Given good, positive, warm relations with sensitive teachers, suitable experiences in terms of individual needs and differences, and relevant content, they can and will learn what the school has to offer.

One more fact is of great importance. Black children are caught in a double value bind. The older members of many families still fear departing from the traditional role forced upon them in slavery: "do what you are told, defer to the white man, avoid being serious, hide your feelings." They tell the children how to "keep out of trouble." On the other hand, the younger adults and the college students have shed the old role. They tell the children how to stand up for their rights; that they must show the world they are equally able; they must learn all they can and demand their rightful place under the sun. Unless teachers are sensitive to the effects of this value conflict upon the children, they will be unable to understand some of the behavior patterns with which they have to deal.

What Do Teachers Need To Know About American Indians?

Much that has been said in the previous discussion of blacks applies equally to other minority groups insofar as they, too, are victims of prejudice, discrimination, limitation, restriction, segregation, and interference with the exercise of their inalienable human and civil rights. There are, however, elements peculiar to each minority group to which teachers must be sensitive.

The habit of thinking in stereotypes that often traps both students and teachers, is especially noticeable in connection with teaching about American Indians. Very often expressions like "dumb Indians," "drunken Indians," or "dirty Indians" reflect the kinds of stories children have heard or read. The teacher must be ready at all times to challenge such characterizations and tendency to name-calling. Discussion, independent learning projects, and "research" must reveal the truth about Indian history and especially about reservation conditions.

Language tends to be an acute problem to those children who at home hear and speak only the native tongue — whether it is Navajo, Hopi, Apache, Sioux or any other language belonging to any one of the numerous tribes living in every part of the United States. If at age six, a child knows no English words, the demand that he must speak only English in school, and the threat of punishment if he uses his native language to a classmate, may seriously inhibit his ability to learn. When the Indian child's primary language, which is part of his very self, is called "bad," pride and the positive self-image necessary for learning are destroyed. Their teachers must learn how to communicate with them and also how to teach English as a second language. Children are particularly delighted and feel especially accepted and of worth when their teachers speak to them in their native language and encourage them to teach their language to their non-Indian classmates.

Any child who speaks one language at home and must think, read, and talk another in school is bound to respond more slowly than white English-speaking peers of similar ability and mentality. If, then, the school is organized in a so-called mental ability multi-track system, Indian children, like other non-white, non-English-speaking children are bound to gravitate to the lower sections. There they often are inhibited in learning by negative attitudes of teachers (who prefer academically able pupils), irrelevant content, and loss of self pride.

Research summarized by John F. Bryde in an article, "A New Approach to Indian Education," which appeared in *Integrated Education,* Sept.-Oct., 1968, indicates that even if Indian children progress satisfactorily through grade 6, at grade 7 they begin to decline. As much as 60% drop out between grades 8 and 12. They are five months behind in grade 8 and from then on suffer feelings of rejection, depression, and anxiety. They tend to withdraw and become socially and emotionally alienated, even paranoid. They feel caught and carried along, powerless to do anything about their lives, they have no direction and are "lost." These feelings, which are the outcome of school experiences, create a crippling negative self-concept which interferes with learning.

Part of the problem lies in the teacher's lack of information about Indian value patterns and the nature of their value conflicts. For example, some do not necessarily like or want to participate in celebrations of Christian holidays. The white, middle-class system of rewards and punishments may not work with them. They may not be competitive in classroom

learning (though they are in sports), and do not like to be singled out for special praise or attention. They tend to care less than their white peers do about such rewards as high marks. They have a different orientation to time. Other matters, especially if they are connected with family or tribe, may take precedence over being on time for school and attending every day and all day. Those who are poor cannot be expected to accept readily middle-class ways of life that are largely dependent upon economic sufficiency, if their own homes or *hogans* are still quite primitive and the reservation or government subsidy provides only minimum essentials.

The average yearly income of the rural or reservation Indian family is about $1500. Very often the only satisfying meal those children get is that provided in the school at lunch time. In Tuba City, Arizona, where the writer visited several years ago, teachers reported that at the end of the summer vacation children returned to school scrawny and hungry. With second and third helpings at lunch, they soon begin to fill out again. In general, Indian communities have poor health conditions, a high rate of infant mortality, much tuberculosis, and disease and a shortened life span. Nevertheless they are a growing minority now numbering more than 600,000 people. Many, being unable to use their traditional ways of making a living, are in trouble because they have none other.

Most social studies curricula include a unit on Indians at about the third grade. Many of them tend to perpetuate stereotypes and myths and tell only a fraction of the truth about Indian experiences both before and after the coming of white men to these shores. It is important for teachers to remember that the Indians, unlike all other people here, did not come to join a "melting pot" or to find a better way of life, or to get away from segregation and restriction. They already had a democratic form of government.

Indian traditions are rooted in life on large land areas and a close relationship with the forces of nature: clouds, earth, and animal life. They worshipped The Great Spirit who created the land; the Sun who gave life to the plants and animals that provided them with food and clothing; the water and rain that made the plants and animals plentiful. It is fruitless for the teacher to try to replace these traditional value systems and culture patterns with those of the white middle classes. Moreover, the teacher is prohibited by law from attempting to act as a missionary to convert Indian children and teach them Christianity.

What the Indian child needs is help in examining his own unconscious value motivations in order to get self understanding and to discover his own identity. Then, perhaps, he will be able to harmonize the Indian and non-Indian systems. Above all, he needs to be helped to become more Indian rather than white. Where there are value conflicts, the minority group child must not be led to conclude that his are bad or less desirable.

Indian children are not likely to get the necessary sense of ethnic pride from the content of the usual American history school textbook in which,

too often, Indians are downgraded, and which deals mostly with the activities of early settlers against their own race. The books usually tell of "good puritans," disregarding their dealings in witchcraft, the massacres, and the other nefarious dealings with Indians. Along with the implication that in contrast to good Puritans, Indians were bad, children are led to believe that because they were not Christian, Indians had no God and no religion. The fact that some missionaries were directed on their trips to America to "convert or exterminate Indians" is omitted.

In a study of how Indians are treated in history textbooks, Virgil J. Vogel reported in an article, "The Indian in American History Textbooks," *Integrated Education*, Sept.-Oct., 1968, that falsities are created or perpetuated by four methods: obliteration, defamation, disembodiment, and disparagement. They are described as wild men, wild beasts, savage, brutish, a sub-human breed. They are said to be inferior, unadaptable, idle, shiftless, superstitious, and unreasonable. No mention is made of the fact that by the time white men came, the Indians had already domesticated more than 40 plants, had some 40 inventions to their credit, were great artists and craftsmen, had music, songs, dances, and poetry, used 150 medicines surgery and drugs, had discovered rubber, and invented the bulbed syringe. The mythical picture of them as cruel, primitive hunters and nomadic warriors must be replaced by the truth. Many tribes were farmers who lived in communities that had constitutions. They published books and newspapers, owned mills and shops and weaving looms. They raised horses and cattle.

The infamous story of how the whites dragged 125,000 Indians from their homes and deported them west of the Mississippi River is usually not reported. The bribery, intimidation, threats, force, misrepresentation, and fraud in the treaties that whites made with them are minimized. The history books fail to picture how they were hunted down like animals, with bounties offered for their scalps, bound as prisoners and confined to stockades to await deportation. No mention is made that a third died on the journey and that defiance met with massacre. The fact is forgotten that thousands were enslaved and shipped out to the Barbary States and West Indies. The books do not tell how children who spoke their Indian language in school were whipped and had their food rations cut off if they danced or did their handicraft. No mention is made of their bravery in battle and their victories in the 1790's.

Indians became wards of the United States government. All their lives are determined and directed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington. Mass relocation programs sent many of them to the cities where they became displaced persons living and working, for the most part, in depressed neighborhoods in an atmosphere of social breakdown. There many suffer from alcoholism, broken homes, social and cultural chaos. For some years "termination" programs have attempted to move them away from reservations and make them self-sustaining. In the Indian languages the equivalent words for terminate are "wipe out" and "kill off."

Sensitive teachers will learn how and when to tell the real story to both Indian and non-Indian children. They will understand that more is at stake than the study of past and distant civilizations. To be interested at all, Indian and other minority pupils need to know the history of their own racial, religious, and ethnic groups. Only when the child understands the origins of his traditions, values, and culture patterns, can he accept himself, find his own identity and develop the pride and positive self-image he must have in order to learn. A child who has not accomplished that task, who sees himself and his group as nooodies, who does not believe in his own ability to learn, becomes, in truth, "turned off." Psychological drop-out, that begins as early as grade three or four, is apparent by grade five, ends in physical drop-out as soon as the law allows or the school fails to investigate continuous absence.

Indian children should not be led to believe that in order to succeed in school and in life they must "become white," — must accept white middle-class values, must live and behave as middle-class white people do. Rather they need to be helped to know themselves, to keep the best of their own culture patterns, and, hopefully, in time, to blend them with the best of the patterns of the dominant group. Thus they may create new personality patterns richer than either of those from which they draw.

What Do Teachers Need To Know About Spanish-Speaking Children?

Mexican Americans

Mexican Americans, who comprise over 2% of the population of the United States are concentrated in the Southwestern states. However, in most of the larger cities in other states their numbers have steadily increased.

Spanish-speaking children have language problems similar to those previously described in connection with black and Indian children. They talk Spanish at home, often come to school at six without an English vocabulary, think in Spanish, and cherish the Spanish language as part of the self, the family, the traditions, and culture to which they belong. In the past, teachers were prone to forbid the use of their language in school, a practice which persists in some places but is increasingly frowned upon by educators.

Teachers and other educational leaders differ among themselves concerning how best to meet the language needs of Spanish-speaking children. Some want Spanish used by all teachers to teach them all their subjects. In that event English is to be taught as a second language. Others want the children to be required to learn English from the first grade on, and insist that all subjects be taught in English. In that case Spanish virtually becomes a "second" language which the children must

learn to read and write as well as speak. Condemning, forbidding, and punishing pupils who talk Spanish to each other is no longer tolerated.

Sensitive teachers will remember that struggling to use two languages at the same time tends to make a child's oral responses slower and to retard his progress in learning to read. Knowing this should help teachers to avoid prejudging Mexican-American pupils' mental abilities and rule out the use of multiple track systems of classifying pupils in which minority-group children inevitably gravitate to the lower sections. IQ scores on tests which use middle-class English and experiences more familiar to middle-class children have too little validity for measuring the Spanish-speaking Mexican-American child's intelligence

In past years as many as 80% of the Mexican-American children failed in the first grade! Their drop-out rate remains double that of Anglo-American children and usually begins as early as grade seven. While language is their most serious obstacle in school, their generally lower social class status and economic deprivation contribute to their difficulties.

Most of the Spanish-surname people trace their ancestry back to Mexico. Many are first generation in this country. Some, however, who are largely middle- or even upper-class people, trace their origins directly to Spain. Those families may, of course, have been here for many generations. Spanish people came with explorers like DeSoto and Magellan whose stories are in the Kindergarten and first grade books.

All Spanish-American families are proud of their heritage and cling to their traditional values and customs. They resent being omitted in American history textbooks. The children need to learn in school about Mexican contributions to civilization, and about past and contemporary great leaders, writers, artists, and musicians. Large numbers of Americans travel to Mexico every year to enjoy the beautiful people, country, ways of life and to buy the beautiful creative Mexican handicrafts.

Dr. Alex Mercure, Director of Home Education Livelihood Program, Albuquerque, New Mexico, itemizes the group characteristics which impinge on the school experience of Mexican-American children somewhat as follows:

- Their largely different, often extended but patriarchal family structure which provides strong control over children.
- A strong community identity and therefore strong interest in it.
- Very strong orientation toward the present, the immediate physical environment and nature.
- Little experience outside a relatively limited geographical area.
- Inability to comprehend the role they are expected to play in the school.
- Inadequate understanding by the child of his own background and how his values and culture differ from those he finds in the middle class white school.

Most of the Mexicans in the United States have come from rural backgrounds. They come in as laborers and continue to form a large part of the farm and migrant labor force especially in the Southwest. Their limited skills and migrant life serve to hinder both education and assimilation. With little command of English, their strong inter-personal bonds and ways of living foster the development of communities called *barrios* or *colonias* in which traditional Mexican culture and value patterns are reinforced. Those families that move into urban localities become acculturated more rapidly, but even there they tend to be more or less segregated either by choice or because of negative Anglo-American attitudes which restrict their access to some residence areas.

Traditionally, the Mexican family is the source of security and emotional satisfaction. Luis F. Hernandez in "A Forgotten American," a Resource Unit for Teachers, published by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, describes their value patterns as "directed toward tradition, fatalism, resignation, strong family ties, a high regard for authority, paternalism, personal relations, reluctance to change, present time orientation and a greater concern for being than for doing." Obviously that pattern results in much value conflict for the child caught between his strong ethnic loyalties and the demands of the school. The severity of the conflict varies with the degree of acculturation achieved by the child himself as well as by the family. The former often absorbs new ways faster than the adult.

Some of the behavior problems which give teachers concern are due to value conflicts and can be solved only when the teachers become aware of their causes. For example, the family comes first and so if the child is needed at home, he will arrive late to school or not attend at all. If the family needs money, the oldest boy may become truant or drop out entirely in order to earn it. If the mother goes to work, the oldest daughter must stay out of school to take over management of the household. Neither child nor parent understands or is interested in PTA and other organizations, so the student does not participate in extra-curricular activities and the parents do not come to "open house." Only if the father can be reached is there likely to be any change in a boy's unsatisfactory behavior.

Unlike the matriarchal family structure of lower-class blacks, the traditional Mexican-American pattern is patriarchal and often includes grandparents, uncles, and aunts. The father is there, he heads the family, is the ultimate authority and is expected to be the provider. He is a strong disciplinarian and uses physical punishment freely. Family life clearly differentiates the male and female roles. However, when necessity drives the mother out to work, her role at home begins to change and that adds to the disintegration of family life and consequent misbehavior and emotional disturbance in the children.

Mexican-American peoples, like Indians and blacks, are caught in a double value bind. As they become more acculturated than their parents,

they rebel at home. At the same time, their strong ethnic identification makes them also rebel at school against enforced Anglo-American middle-class requirements in which they are not interested and which they cannot fulfill. Rejection and failure which reinforce personal negative self-concepts, inhibit learning, contribute to emotional disturbances and finally drive the adolescent to drop out and possibly to delinquency.

Teachers need to be aware of individual differences due to the degree of acculturation achieved by each family. Hernandez, in the reference previously cited, describes these as follows:

1. More Anglo than Mexican — speak more English than Spanish.
2. More Mexican than Anglo — speak more Spanish than English.
3. Half and half — speak a hodge-podge called "pocho."
4. Mexican — speak no English.
5. Migrants — vary but are generally Mexican.

Student attitudes in group 1 are likely to be taciturn or laconic, not interested and lacking initiative. Many are not able to do grade-level work in reading, writing, and spelling. They do not see school work as relevant to their present needs or effective in preparing them to earn a living. Like the Indians, at the seventh grade their progress seems to stop and their achievements to decline along with a growing sense of hopelessness about the future. Those children who are half Mexican and half Anglo are presented with very serious problems of identification as they try to straddle the two culture patterns. They may try to form relationships in both groups but, meeting with rejection, feel they have no place at all and so join together in gangs. The Pachucos in Los Angeles who, a generation ago wore "zoot" suits, were such a gang.

Dr. Ulibarri describes the northern New Mexico rural community as "little more than a slum area . . . a place for the old, the very young, the weak, the disabled and the ignorant . . . in which only a few can make a decent living . . . (having) a few farmers, public school teachers, public workers and the unemployable . . . (there are) no recreational facilities except perhaps a dance hall which also serves as a theatre . . . no social or service organizations . . . one or two general stores and saloons . . . no resident priest or minister."*

Not all Mexican-American children are from such surroundings or lower-class families. Those who have attained higher socio-economic status, whose adults are well educated, have high aspiration levels. Their value patterns and ways of living are not significantly different from Anglo-American middle-class families. Their children are just as interested, creative, responsive, bright, and successful as their Anglo-American peers.

*From a paper, "The Spanish Speaking Youth: From the Farm to the City," delivered by Professor Horacio Ulibarri, New Mexico Highlands University, at the National Conference on Problems of Rural Youth in a Changing Environment.

Very often teacher attitudes determine the Mexican-American child's response and progress. What the child needs is to feel accepted, wanted, and that he belongs in the school and the classroom, and, of course, he needs to have some success experience every day. Teachers can meet these needs when they are dedicated to the fundamental values and principles of democracy; when they believe in the worth and dignity of every child and when they are determined to help all to fully exercise their human and civil rights.

Puerto Ricans

Puerto Ricans, also Spanish-speaking people, are a much smaller part of our total population, and are largely concentrated in eastern cities which provide easier access to the homeland, the island which the United States took from Spain in 1898, to provide a bastion for protection of the projected Panama Canal. They are also residents in all 50 states.

Puerto Ricans come to the cities from rural communities, for the most part, without preparation for the kinds of living facilities (bathrooms, electric lights, and appliances) and public services (garbage collection, sewers, and paved streets) which they are expected to use and respect. Little or nothing is done to orient them. They usually are relegated to the worst housing, get the lowest paid jobs, are exploited by unscrupulous landlords and easy-credit merchants and racketeers. They suffer from physical cold, emotional rejection, and some gang warfare. They are stereotyped, called by insulting names, restricted, and deprived of their rights as first-class citizens. Many people vent their fears and hatred on them because they are "colored," completely unaware of the fact that in Puerto Rico, where there is no color bar, racial mixture has resulted in people of the "full color range from rosy pink to ebony black."

Some Puerto Rican children, like those of all other ethnic groups, react to conditions of poverty, family breakdown, and social chaos with delinquent behavior. They may become ungovernable and truant. They may join their peers in gang activities and the use of drugs. However they are less likely to be involved in sex delinquency, burglary, and felonious assault.

The now familiar pattern of the double-bind affects these Spanish-speaking pupils as they try to find a way between "old-fogey parents" and the demands of modern youth. Teachers need to help them find role models among prominent Puerto Ricans of television, the theatre, opera, ballet, major league sports, musicians, and artists whose names are too numerous to include here.

Although Puerto Rican children learn English before coming here, most of them talk Spanish at home and to each other. They are, in fact, a truly bilingual people. Teachers must remember that bilingualism may retard learning to read. They also need to learn not to disparage but to capitalize on the child's second language.

Many families are large. Legal marriage is sometimes delayed until the

children are grown, but the common-law marriage is usually stable. Within the family, children find love, security, and strong traditions.

Puerto Ricans, like all other minority groups in this country are beginning to organize in order tc fight segregation and discrimination in school and society. They want teachers to motivate and counsel their able children to go to college in order to qualify in both professional and technical fields. They want school to provide them with information about their cultural heritage, traditions, and leaders. They want the next generation to become effective citizens dedicated to the values, principles, and practices of a truly democratic community.

What Do Teachers Need To Know About Disadvantaged Children?

Since a disproportionately large percentage of the non-white minority groups are in the lower social classes where income is low — often below subsistence level — the needs of economically deprived children have already been described. It is essential, however, to remind teachers that they must become sensitive to the handicaps with which such children, whether they are non-white or white, enter school.

Inadequate nutrition is a serious matter from which some children suffer even before birth. Then, as well as in childhood, lack of sufficient protein may cause irreversible brain damage. The statement, often made, that every one in this country has 3000 calories a day, relates to a goal or average. Hunger is a fact here as well as in other countries. Hungry children do not learn well. Sensitive teachers, remembering that not only do food preferences differ, but also that poverty limits the amounts and kinds of food a child is used to, will omit some of the activities suggested in the Teachers' Guide related to the unit on the family. For example, they will not ask economically disadvantaged children to bring to school pieces of tropical or sub-tropical fruit. Neither will they expose children to ridicule or pity by asking them to tell what they had for lunch or breakfast or dinner. To avoid such peer reactions, children sometimes carry empty lunch boxes to school.

Clothing is another item to consider in working with disadvantaged children. Often some of them have only what they wear to school. Parents struggle to dress them like their peers and to keep them clean. but daily baths and changes of underwear are not possible where there are no indoor facilities and no money for soap and towels and clothing. Teachers must go to the slum neighborhoods which exist in rural as well as urban communities, in order to see at first hand the environments which condition the lives of their pupils. When children have so little, teachers will omit such activities as "ask the children to decide whether Mary should wear her new shoes in the rain." Teachers will also need to examine their own attitudes about cleanliness.

Perhaps the most serious handicaps for these children, in terms of learning, are lacks of experiences and language. Sometimes they do not understand as many as half the words the teacher uses. They would do what the teacher wants if they knew what she meant. A teacher who asked the class to bring newspaper articles for study of current events, was surprised by a child who stayed after class to ask, "Just what is a newspaper article? I don't know what you mean." Economically deprived children need many and varied opportunities to learn through the use of all their senses, to develop vocabularies from their experiences, to learn by doing. Just listening to the teacher will not suffice, neither will heavy and too early use of number and word symbols.

It is advisable for teachers to know something about family structure. One in four marriages are broken; in some areas of the country, one in two. Those children, as well as children who live in matriarchal families, may not have daddies and some may have step mothers. In some families no one has to get up in the morning to go to work. Classroom discussion of family relationships must be governed by the realities of the children's lives. In many schools it would be inappropriate for teachers to direct children to question their fathers about where and how they work, and/or to use stories about cruel step mothers. Among the facts of life for some children are neglect and even abuse. The teacher who knows about her pupils will not subject them only or mostly to stories about happy affluent, complete middle-class family life. She will also remember that destructive human relationships at home and in school are among the most frequent causes of misbehavior and the greatest blocks to learning. Of course, teachers know that divorce, family breakdown, child neglect and abuse are not limited to the lower classes.

What Do Teachers Need To Know About Asian-American Children?

The minority group about which teachers have the least to say consists of Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, and others called collectively Orientals or Asian Americans. The children usually give teachers little concern because they seem to conform to the stereotype which describes them as quiet, well-behaved, respectful of adults and authority, clean and interested in learning. For the most part, teachers know little about what goes on in their communities that they rarely visit except as tourists to eat in the restaurants and buy souvenirs.

Where there are many Asian American young people, however, there are evidences of growing rebellion against old traditions, inequality of opportunities, and interference with their exercise of human and civil rights. On the west coast, for example, groups called Wah Ching, the Red Guards, and the Yellow Brotherhood engage in militant protest demonstrations, gang violence, and crime.

Teachers need to be informed about the history of Asian Americans in this country. Not only have they played significant roles in the development of the labor movement in Japan, the Indian Independence Movement, the Chinese Revolution, and Korean Independence, but also (along with Mexican Americans) have been active in labor strikes on our own west coast. "Yellow Power" groups are emerging, Asians are joining Third World Movements on college campuses and are active in anti-war movements across the nation.

Japanese children and their parents know what many Americans would prefer to forget, that many of their families were imprisoned and their property seized during World War II. The law permitting that action has not yet been repealed. There is now considerable action against the injustices committed against Asian Americans.

The coming of new groups of Asians will make it more and more important for teachers to be sensitive to the needs of the children who are so different in many respects from white middle-class Americans. Changes in ownership and the normal processes of business and industry in which many expected to find work now pose serious problems of unemployment for them.

Housing segregation which exists in all the large cities and many smaller ones has resulted in *de facto* segregation of the children in the schools. However, more positive attitudes toward them as well as their own traditions of very old civilizations and respect for disciplined study, seem to have made it easier for them to be successful in school. Nevertheless, they do continue to suffer from the way people in our society act out that complex of negative attitudes called racism. They have difficulty in getting advancement on the job, unequal access to what is termed the good social life, psychological oppression, omission from textbooks and literature courses, all of which contribute to formation of negative self-concepts and feelings of inferiority.

Many of the school children are the products of interracial marriages. Probably 100,000 soldiers brought home Japanese and Korean wives and many are now bringing back Vietnamese brides. Teachers will need to examine their own attitudes toward racial mixture and race differences. Once again they must remember the worth and dignity of every human being.

What Do Teachers Need To Know About Jews?

Judaism is a religion and the Jews are a religious-culture group, not a race. The large majority belong to the white race but there are also black and oriental Jews. There are Jewish communities in both Africa and Asia. About 6,000,000 Jews are scattered throughout the United States

with large concentrations in the largest cities. Jews were among the earliest settlers in this country — a group of 23 people came from Recife, Brazil, to New Amsterdam in 1654.

The influence of the Old Testament philosophy on the Founding Fathers and the strong Jewish belief in personal freedom is attested to by the inscription from the Book of Leviticus which was placed on the Liberty Bell: "Proclaim liberty throughout the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof." Jews served in the colonial armies and all the militias. In the Civil War, like all other Americans, they fought on both sides.

The story of the Jews, or "early Hebrews" as they are sometimes called, is obtained largely from the Bible and therefore omits much Jewish history. Moreover, texts are usually written from the Christian point of view and some of the statements give the children and their parents concern. For example, the Jews were *the first*, not just one of the first people to believe in one God. Teachers need not hesitate to say Jew, for the children and their parents are proud of their 4000-year heritage of education, culture, religion, democracy, and civilized life.

Jews were and are among the world's greatest composers, musicians, artists, authors, scientists, doctors, educators, philosophers, and social leaders. Jewish children want to know and they want their classmates to know that many of the stars of stage and screen (past and present) are Jews.

As for all other groups of people, there is a Jewish stereotype which contains both positive and negative elements and insulting names. Negative attitudes and hostile actions against Jews are called anti-Semitism. A sensitive teacher will always require pupils to test a stereotype against reality and will use name calling as an opportunity to discuss how to preserve the worth and dignity of every individual and to teach how prejudice gets in the way of learning that most important lesson: how to live together in peace.

Sometimes people attempt to establish interreligious acceptance and good will by repeated use of the term "Judeo-Christian." Unfortunately, this can obscure the existence of anti-Semitism and thus hide the fact that Jews were persecuted in past eras and in some countries. England and Spain, for example, even expelled them. Many Eastern European and Russian Jews came to this country to escape massacres known as pogroms.

The worst oppression that the Jews suffered was in Germany during World War II, when Adolf Hitler tried to annihilate all the Jews of Europe primarily by the use of gas chambers. He built concentration camps to separate them from other people and make it easier to exterminate them. In all, 6,000,000 Jews, including women and children, were tortured and killed. This was possible only because of the existence of anti-Semitism and it is a prime example of what hatred and prejudice can lead to.

Even before World War II, however, Jews in the large cities of the "old world" were segregated in sections that were known as ghettos. Unlike many of the minority-group ghettos in this country, not all the people were poverty-stricken or lower class. The people were engaged in all kinds of occupations. They had organized educational, recreational, political, social, and cultural activities, and many upper-class families lived in affluence. People who have lived in a European ghetto describe life there as being full of warmth and love linked to faith and decency, with a family feeling of unity that transcends everything and the highest good being worship of learning.

Waves of Jewish immigrants came to this country seeking equal opportunities and freedom from oppression. However, they had long years of struggle before they gained full first-class citizenship. Admissions to colleges and universities and professional schools were limited to relatively small quotas. Employment opportunities and promotions to high positions were also limited because of prejudice. What were called "restrictive covenants" were used by real estate agents to prevent Jewish families from living in certain residential areas.

Throughout their history, so full of persecution and denial, Jews dreamed of someday returning to the land of their forefathers and once again establishing their own nation. In 1948, just a few years after the great tragedy they experienced in World War II, the United Nations did establish Israel as a Jewish nation. Over 2,000,000 North African, Middle Eastern, and American Jews settled in Israel and developed it as a modern, democratic homeland. The Arab nations surround Israel and the constant threat of war in the Middle East gives the whole civilized world great concern. The Israelis, who are brave soldiers and exceedingly able pilots, won the remarkable Six Day War in 1967 but as yet, they have no guarantee of safety and peace.

Israel plays a central role in Jewish community life all over the world because of its religious significance, because it is a haven for persecuted Jews, and because it is a source of cultural inspiration. Jews are loyal citizens to the countries in which they live and they are very proud of Israel's accomplishments. Of course they are concerned about Israel's security.

Jews vary in the way they practice their religion just as Christians do who have many different churches. Orthodox Jews adhere strictly to traditional rites and rituals. Reform Jews are less traditional and Conservative Jews are midway between. The place for worship for all is the Synagogue, sometimes called the Temple.

Jewish children tend to be uncomfortable when the school devotes excessive time and energy to Christmas and Easter celebrations in which they do not wish to and must not be required to participate. Recognition of the most significant Jewish High Holy Days, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, helps the peer group to improve understandings and relationships across religious lines.

Anti-Semitism has not been eliminated in this country. Sensitive teachers will recognize its symptoms, examine their own attitudes, and do whatever is necessary to help children and adolescents learn that differences of religion, like differences of race, ethnic origins, and social class, are not valid reasons for rejection.

What About The Rest Of Us?

That is exactly what some of the many Caucasian ethnic groups in this country are asking. Teachers' sensitivities to the needs of their children will be sharpened by a look backwards.

People from every European country have come to America. Each ethnic group brought along its language, culture patterns, food and religious preferences. All wanted to become Americans knowing that here they could retain their religious affiliations and beliefs. The country wanted and needed them and established institutions to help them fulfill their ambitions and hopes. The overall social philosophy that guided progress was known as the "Melting Pot Theory." The idea was that differences should be minimized if not made to disappear altogether.

Chief among the institutions used to Americanize immigrants was the public school with its Americanization classes. The newcomers flocked into the schools where they learned to speak, read, and write English. There they also learned about capitalism — the American economic system based on competition. There they studied the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and the Bill of Rights. There they were encouraged to become socially mobile as they prepared for full and first-class citizenship. (It is essential to remember, however, during the course of that program black people were excluded from the institutions for acculturation, assimilation, and education.)

The children of all these different ethnic groups went to the public schools where they met others of different origins from themselves. Lines of separation tended to disappear as housing patterns tended to broaden. In succeeding generations, the young paid less attention to ethnic origins as they sought their mates. Today, teachers themselves and their pupils in many school communities, are proud to say they represent at least two different ethnic strains.

When more information and deeper insight into the nature of the human mind and personality began to accumulate, the nation's social philosophy began to change. The Melting Pot Theory was replaced by the theory of Cultural Pluralism. Teachers are now told that each person must find his own identity, accept his heritage, hold on to his traditional culture patterns, value his (and other peoples) differences, and make peace with himself. We believe that differences contribute strength and, when harmonized, create a beautiful pattern of life. We no longer make any

child feel ashamed of his ethnic origins. We encourage children and adults to associate across ethnic lines knowing that when they do so prejudices tend to disappear and that when people enlarge their circles of friends they lead more abundant and generous lives.

But now our pluralistic society is full of strife and anxiety. The so-called working class or blue collar workers, who are of many different ethnic backgrounds but tend to be in the same socio-economic class, feel that their well-being is threatened. They are disturbed by the growing burden of taxes, the deterioration of the cities, by their inability to cope with the rising costs of living, by loss of jobs, and by the feeling that they cannot control their own destiny. Some of them tend to attribute these threats to the rise of the non-white peoples in our society. They hear the demands for justice of organized groups, watch their demonstrations, and stand helpless when violence occurs. They feel that they, too, must organize to preserve their way of life, to make sure they get justice, and to force the establishment to recognize and meet their needs.

Across the country ethnic organizations are being formed and older social, cultural, and historical societies are taking on new life and new purposes. Among them are Italian, Polish, Armenian, Greek, German, and French societies, to name a few. They are finding new strength and joy in remembering and teaching their young their traditions, literature, songs, dances, and language. At the same time they are upholding and working to improve the American democratic way of life and government.

All of these movements in American society impinge upon the young and teachers must become sensitive to them. Teachers who grasp the meaning and intent of this publication may want to open or close the school day with their multi-ethnic classes of children, by singing together

"Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me."