

FOR DISPLAY ONLY

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CURRENTS

READINGS IN RACE RELATIONS

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FOCUS ON
MINORITIES
IN THE
MEDIA

Published by THE URBAN ALLIANCE ON RACE RELATIONS



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Currents: Readings in Race Relations is the quarterly magazine of the Urban Alliance on Race Relations.

The Urban Alliance on Race Relations, formed in July 1975 "to promote a stable and healthy multiracial environment in the community," is a non-profit organization made up of volunteers from all sectors of the community.

The Urban Alliance on Race Relations is an educational agency and an advocate and intermediary for the visible minorities. It works toward encouraging better race relations, increased understanding and awareness among our multicultural, multiracial population through programmes of education directed at both the private and public sectors of the community. It is also focusing its efforts on the institutions of our society including educational systems, employment, government, media, legislation, police, social service agencies and human services, in order to reduce patterns of discrimination and inequality of opportunity which may exist within these institutions.

The work of the organization is carried out through working committees such as: Educational Institutions; Legislation; Media; Law Enforcement.

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THE BROADCAST MEDIA (television and radio) and the written media (newspapers and magazines) have become major transmitters of cultural standards, myths, values, roles and images, reaching people of every socio-economic level. The media set norms, create stereotypes, build leaders, set priorities and educate the general public. Because of such wide-ranging exposure, the written and electronic media have tremendous image-making impact. The mass media have become the principal means for entertainment and information dissemination, as well as having an increasing educational role.

The media are going to be even more influential, as they experience a technological explosion that will alter the way we receive information in the future more dramatically than has ever occurred in the past. Within the next few years, it is anticipated that every household will be able to receive up to 100 individual channels providing information, entertainment, shopping and banking services, and many other sources of convenience.

Where will the non-white community be when this information explosion hits with full impact? Will they, and other minorities, remain on the outside looking in at the stereotypical portrayals of themselves and the limited and one-sided reporting of issues of major concern to their participation in the economic and democratic processes of this country?

Good race relations in Canada depend on the creation of understanding between minorities and the majority community. The way the press and broadcasting media report issues pertaining to minorities and the extent to which minorities are given the opportunity to use these channels to obtain information, entertainment, education and cultural satisfaction is of crucial importance in achieving this understanding.

The best of these media do attempt to present accurate, fair, and balanced accounts of the news of the day, and of other information required to exist in a society as large and complex as ours. However, despite the dramatic changes in the composition of Canada's population and the tremendous diversity in the social and cultural life of the country that this has created, much of the media has still been reluctant in effectively representing this multiracial and multicultural community.

The lack of sensitivity and response by the mass media to the problems confronting the non-white community is an issue of major concern. Perhaps the most important fact about the media, is that there is very little exposure to non-white issues and concerns, which could have a positive impact on the self-concepts of non-whites and on the development of public awareness of the non-white community.

A recent example is the Harry Jerome Awards Banquet. In a letter to the three major Toronto newspapers deploring their lack of coverage of this event, Mavis E. Burke, Chairperson of the Ontario Advisory Council on Multiculturalism and Citizenship, described the banquet as having "all the ingredients (drama, human interest, uniqueness) necessary to make the news, not only in Metropolitan Toronto, but as an event of interest to all Canadians." Her letter also did not appear in any of the major newspapers.

Mass media are prominent as communicators of ideas and as an entertainment form. Just as they can show the landing on the moon in a fair and objective fashion, there is no reason to believe they cannot achieve equivalent standards of presentation when grappling with cultural and racial diversity. Because of the medium's capacity for fixing an image in the public mind, its responsibility for avoiding stereotypic and demeaning depictions becomes central to its role.

Mass media confer status on those individuals and groups they select for placement in the public eye, telling the viewer, or reader, who and what is important to know about, think about, and have feelings about. Those who are made visible through the media become worthy of attention and concern; those whom the media ignore remain invisible.

Many questions remain about the coverage of non-white issues and the involvement of non-whites in all aspects of media production and management. This issue of *Currents* discusses some of the concerns regarding media in Canada and their relationship to non-white minorities. It is hoped that further discussion will be initiated by the articles presented and that this discussion will lead to new opportunities for non-whites in Canada, throughout all levels of every communication medium.

Tim Rees

Non-White Entrepreneurs in Toronto

As a businessman, I would like to question the conclusions made by Darla Rhyne in her article, *Some Issues Facing Non-White Entrepreneurs in Toronto*. She fails to deal with the most significant form of discrimination in our society today – “systemic racial discrimination.” Ms. Rhyne notes that the major problems which non-whites have are: 1) the process of obtaining capital; 2) the familiarity with and use of government programmes. In a capitalistic system with a large government sector such as Canada’s, these two factors, capital and government assistance, are key elements why few non-whites go into business, why many fail and why minority-run businesses tend to be concentrated in less profitable sectors. By failing to consider the implications of systemic racial discrimination, she has invalidated her conclusion that “the racial element is not an important issue facing non-white entrepreneurs in Toronto.”

At a recent conference sponsored by the Urban Alliance on Race Relations, called “Minorities in the Workplace,” a workshop on small business included representatives from the Federal Business Development Bank, various other government agencies and several business people. It was evident from this workshop, that the lack of familiarity with government programmes is a very big problem for visible minorities, in that they have very little access to important information and capital assistance. Also, the perceived and actual inability to obtain capital is a major obstacle in starting or expanding a business. Considerable research needs to be done to find ways to overcome these problems.

Relationships of an investor or borrower with people who control capital are an important factor. Our institutions are generally isolated from the minority communities and have difficulty communicating with them. Rather than calling for less reliance on ethnic and minority networks, as Darla Rhyne suggests, I would strongly urge that more emphasis be given to these networks as they could be an important means for non-whites to make their voice heard by those in government and financial institutions. Such action

will also help visible minorities in dealing with problems which are particular to their community and will foster alliances with others who are attempting to overcome similar problems.

In the long term, visible minorities must strive for greater representation, in the government and private institutions which make decisions on important issues relating to capital, technology, assistance to business and public resources. Systemic problems, such as lack of access to capital, require that people who are concerned with these injustices find ways to organize and work co-operatively to overcome them.

David Walsh, M.B.A., F.R.I.

*President, Realco Property Limited
Toronto, Ontario*

NOTE: For three further articles on Minority Entrepreneurs, see pages 29 to 33.

Labour Movement Committed to Race Relations

It was with interest that I read the first issue of *CURRENTS* recently.

However, I must take exception to an inaccuracy in the article by Wilson Head, *Race Relations Today*. You state “more recently, and *partially as a result of federal financial support for race relations activities*, the Ontario Federation of Labour has demonstrated considerable interest in race relations.” You then mention the conferences.

The OFL’s “Racism Hurts Everyone” campaign had two phases. The first phase, the intent of which was to bring to the attention of the public the seriousness of racism, involved the production and air time for the TV ad, and production and distribution of posters and leaflets in quantity to all affiliates and labour councils. This was the most costly part of the programme and was totally carried by the OFL.

The second phase involved eight seminars across the province. To assist in financing these, we applied for and received a grant from the Ministry of State for Multiculturalism. With or without this grant, the OFL was committed to and would have proceeded with, these seminars.

We have also recently embarked on an extension of this programme, directed specifically at racism in the workplace. This will involve production of a series of practical fact sheets for dealing with racism at the workplace, as well as course content for labour schools, and training of instructors and unionists in the programme.

I do hope in future you will more accurately reflect the commitment, not only of resources, but of policy, programming and membership of the labour movement to the area of race relations.

Shelley Acheson,
Human Rights Director
Ontario Federation of Labour

Congratulations

I have just finished reading the first issue of **CURRENTS: Readings in Race Relations**. On behalf of the Ontario Advisory Council on Multiculturalism and Citizenship, may I congratulate the Urban Alliance on Race Relations for a most excellent publication.

Given the present mood of Canada, and Metro Toronto in particular, the birth of your publication could not have been more timely. I look forward to receiving the forthcoming issues and take this opportunity to wish **CURRENTS** every success in the years to come.

Mavis E. Burke,
Chairperson
Ontario Advisory Council on Multiculturalism
and Citizenship
Toronto, Ontario

Canada's Native People Forgotten

Congratulations on the publication of **CURRENTS**. I look forward to future issues to help me develop greater awareness of the nature of racism in Canada and thus a broader understanding of the problems of white racism that our two nations – and other white-dominated nations – share.

I am troubled, however, by a serious omission in the lead article, *Race Relations*

Today, of your first issue. The article claims to give "a brief historical overview of relations between the various racial and ethnic groups in Canadian society," yet fails to discuss relations between native peoples and white-dominated society.

Canada, like the United States, is a product of European colonialism. Our separate histories have in common the conquest and dispossession of, and the denial of sovereignty and self-determination to, the peoples and nations native to the land we call North America. Regardless of differing methods and approaches historically used in our two nations' dealing with Indian peoples, the basic pattern has been the same – native peoples' land, water, rights and sovereignty have consistently been – and continue to be – at the mercy of white (European) interests and power. The controversy over the further erosion of native peoples' rights and interests, under Canada's new constitution, is but one example of the continuing legacy of European colonial conquest and white racism that confronts native peoples on both sides of the Canadian-U.S. border.

How an article, claiming to present a historical overview of relations between racial and ethnic groups in Canada, could fail to discuss this original and continuing aspect of race relations and white racism, is beyond my understanding. I hope an upcoming **CURRENTS** will in part rectify this serious omission by providing space for Indian activists to present their views on historic and contemporary relations between native peoples and white-dominated society. Canadian and U.S. readers could learn much from such discussion.

Robert B. Moore, Ed.D.
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Visible Minorities and the Media

The minority viewpoint

Salome Bey

The media is the one institution at the epicentre of all our institutions, for it touches them all. The media is reflective of the society as a whole and therefore, can help us to make inroads into the dense undergrowth of benign or deliberate resistance, that continues to impede our progress to full acceptance in Canadian society.

In these final days of the twentieth century, television, more than any other medium, holds up the mirror in which Canadian society can see itself reflected. The television pictures are vital: they are in colour. Today 11 million television sets carry messages and reinforce the values of 24 million Canadians. According to the Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism in its 1977 annual report:

"The media constitute a potent weapon which can cut two ways. They can advance Canada's multicultural identity, but they can also subvert it by negating its legitimacy. With the advent of television and its use as a major audio-visual tool in message transmission, media inherited a prominence in the definition of social values. The earlier traditions of new transmission peppered with editorial comment evolved into mass messages. Viewer homogeneity became a profit-turning objective and, in the council's opinion, a glaring threat to the identity of entire nations, let alone ethnic groups within a nation."

Television messages are conveyed not only in advertisements, but also in news, soap operas, situation comedies and other programs. The messages go to make up the reflected Canadian society as a whole. The question you must ask yourself or ignore at your peril is this: Is the reflection accurate?

Who are the Canadians that form this mass audience?

Who we are

A look at the facts soon ignites the fuse of the myth that Canada is "The Great White North." There is, in fact, no such thing. What we have is a great, multicultural, multiracial nation.

Canada of the 1980s is a country where men and women and children of colour (red, black, brown and yellow) want to be seen and be reflected as a vibrant and valuable component of the cultural reality – in the arts, sciences, sports, academia, business...everywhere. Our people have brought with us the broad rich canvas of our native cultures as well as needed skills, great abilities and high expectations; expectations that have run headlong into the harsh realities, not of the Canadian winter, but of institutionalized indifference, insensitivity or ignorance, that dehumanizes many of us and our children.

This is potentially dangerous. If we are not accurately seen in the mirror that the media hold up to society, then, clearly, we are somehow not part of that society. For us, this is morally debilitating, immensely frustrating and wrong. This is why we want the kind of change which allows us equal access and opportunity in this society. Our young people are telling us that, one way or another, they are going to get it. If we ignore this message, we do so at our collective peril. History has already shown what happened in Watts and in Brixton and in Liberty City, when frustration and alienation built up, when opportunities were denied. It certainly does not have to happen here.

Good business

Studies in Australia and the U.S. confirm what we already know: certain cultural/racial groups have special consumer habits. The Australian study found that Mediterranean groups purchase far higher quantities of certain types of food (eg. breakfast foods) than other groups. U.S. research found that blacks spend more on footwear, specifically, and on clothes generally. (Recall, if you will, the sartorial fastidiousness of Sergeant Harris in the U.S. television show "Barney Miller.") We know that we do not buy very much suntan lotion, as the Black Performers chapter of ACTRA in Montreal points out so well. But we do use soap, deodorants and toothpaste. We do drive cars, live in houses, drink beer and are avid sports enthusiasts. Because many of us are highly skilled, we earn good salaries. Because many of us are newcomers, we need all kinds of goods and services which longer-established Canadians already have or do not need. This is good for business.

Moreover, several studies show that blacks are more likely to rely on television than whites. Black teenagers, in the U.S. for example, were found to be:

"Significantly more likely to purchase a product after seeing it advertised on television. They are more likely than whites to believe and like commercials. Moreover, they are more likely to pass on the good word to friends."

So your appeal to these groups has multiple impact. This is good business.

Add to this what the Joint Multicultural and Advertising Study has confirmed, that the majority of Canadian whites do not have negative attitudes to the presence of non-whites in advertisements. You wonder what it is that is holding back progress in this area.

It seems that in advertising, at least, we are caught in an Alice-in-Wonderland environment. Advertisers say they do not directly hire performers themselves, but that they leave it up to their agencies. The advertising agencies say they are guided by their clients' directions with regard to advertising content. The talent agencies say they only send whom the advertising agencies require. And so everybody plays this endless game of musical chairs in

which the only constant is that visible minority talent is left standing when everybody else is nicely seated. Does this sound fair to you? Does it sound like good business?

Red herrings – quotas

While I am on this subject let me deal with a few standard red herrings which are pulled out whenever this topic comes up. The first is: "Do you people wish quotas?", or "We can't represent everybody in advertisements." the Ontario government enquiry I mentioned earlier says it succinctly:

"Throughout our meetings with affected groups, we put forward the idea of assessing compliance with the Policy, by figuratively placing on a wall, all of the depictions of individuals in one year's advertising and communications. We suggested that if having done this, it could fairly be said 'that's Ontario,' the Policy objectives would have been met. We found widespread support for this approach."

If the same could be said over a year about Canadian advertising in general, that, "Yes, that's Canada," to this we would say, "Amen."

Availability of actors

Another popular red herring is "Yes, but is there sufficient non-white talent for advertisements?" Not only are there many highly competent professionals here in Canada, but what about the hundreds of others who had to leave for the United States and the many others who, although not listed on ACTRA's rolls, have the talent and only require the opportunity? Paul Siren of ACTRA and a number of talent agencies have vouched that visible minority talent is not a problem. Moreover I hope that ACTRA's offer of assistance to the government of Ontario, to extend permits to non-ACTRA visible minority performers which allow them to be hired for work, will be extended across the board to include all areas of advertisement.

Accents

In a country where we come from a multitude of backgrounds, another favourite is the problem of accents. The answer to this question is best explained by the excellent federal multicultural advertisement in which two children, one black and one white, are seen playing a piano and the voice over, clearly understood, marvellously resonant, has an unmistakable Caribbean nuance to it. I have yet to hear anyone complain about it. The issue of accents should simply be one of clarity and understanding.

Human rights considerations

Another standard red herring is that seeking out visible minority performers might create problems by violating existing human rights employment codes.

I believe that the Ontario Human Rights Commission has already adapted its codes to permit specific recruitments, which overcome the traditional imbalance in employment opportunities. I believe the Federal Human Rights Commission is also amenable to this policy.

Product images

And then there is the favourite concern put forward by our more cautious Canadian business and media executives, about people who may feel that their product image could suffer by any association with non-white models.

Well, there is no evidence of a backlash to this in the United States or Canada. In fact, a study in the *Journal of Marketing Research* as far back as May 1972, indicated that the use of blacks in television advertisements sells more products among black consumers and makes little difference to whites. The latter fact is clearly also true for Canadian white consumers according to the findings of the AAB/Multicultural research.

Let us be very clear about it: television is our genie of entertainment and our most powerful means of persuasion. Television commercials direct our daily lives. They tell us how to eat, how to dress, how to relate to

each other; they merchandise a view of life. A Columbia University study concludes that:

"There is really no question that advertising does affect learning attitudes and behaviour."

For many of us, especially children, most of what reaches our minds gets there through television. What is not on television is not perceived at all. Or else it is not perceived as real. Seeing is believing.

Depiction

Let us now go beyond advertising and look at general media portrayals. There are two things wrong with how we are depicted today. Either we tend to be depicted as oddities, victims or aggressors, or we are not depicted at all. A disaster in either case. Neither is true, but both encourage a certain type of perception that is nothing short of cultural destruction. Our children go to schools where, culturally and racially, whites have been dominant. At school they study together, they play together, and then they go home to their individual television sets. They spend more time assimilating via television than they do in classrooms or on playfields. When television says that visible minority children do not exist, that they are to be considered less than the "real" children who do appear on programmes and in advertisements, can you wonder at the results? Can you wonder that the "real" children hold the others in low esteem? Can you wonder that our children, rendered perpetually invisible by television, suffer from low self-esteem? Of course, there are some exceptions: recently, CBC, and over a longer period, TV Ontario, have both produced some excellent children's programmes.

Newsrooms

Our broadcast and print media newsrooms do not get a clean bill of health either. Non-whites are likely to have less good news reported because we're seldom represented in the newsrooms, and few white reporters tend to seek out positive feature stories in non-white communities. It's not that reporters are insensitive – most of them do sympathize with

the victims of prejudice – but they don't know their way around these communities and non-white activities are rarely considered majority concerns, not, at least, until they become a threat. It all adds up to a built-in exclusion of minority perspectives.

Moreover, too often the people who make up pages and write headlines are insensitive. By the juxtaposition of stories, or by sensational, and therefore inaccurate, headlines, they misrepresent us. A headline which proclaims, "*Blacks Riot in Brixton*," when the story under it is patently about demonstrations by British youth, *both black and white* – that headline has the effect of cementing perceptions and enforcing stereotypes. A recent story in a Toronto newspaper quoted an M.P.P. (out of context, apparently) who was warning of unrest in a mixed racial district – in that city. The story was placed directly beside another which basically promoted the Ku Klux Klan. The stories were separate events but the person responsible for arranging that page displayed an insensitivity which borders on criminal recklessness.

Government

Efforts have been made over the years to get the cultural diversity of this country recognized. A beginning was made in the sixties and early seventies following the recommendations of the Bilingual and Biculturalism Commission, which resulted in the establishment of an official multicultural policy for Canada. 1982 saw the inclusion of the Multiculturalism Clause – 27 in the new charter of rights and freedoms. Now the further dimension, "Multiculturalism," has become a reality. This is all to the good: "Multiculturalism" and its ministers have been attempting to do a good job with limited resources. But the

federal government must still bear responsibility for the institutional reticence that besets us. Multiculturalism still has not been given its rightful profile across the federal government institutions and agencies in this country. The composition of the various government boards and agencies continue largely to reflect the old, bilingual, bicultural thing. It is a sad fact that there is still not one single visible minority representative on the boards of the CBC, the CRTC or the Canada Council, to name three. Not one of us has been named to the Senate. Although we recognize that the CBC has been making some effort to reflect our multicultural and multiracial reality, it is clear that this organization has a long distance to go. In contrast to the CTV and Independent Television (ITV) in Britain, the CBC has not had a single visible minority broadcaster on high-profile national news or public affairs programmes since Adrienne Clarkson. Further, although the CBC has community relations apparatus to deal with its many publics, there is too great a tendency to rely on forums and seminars to do the job. This adds up to little more than window-dressing.

I believe everywhere in Canada cultural and media institutions must widen their horizons if we are to correct the situation.

To our mind, it doesn't require more funds in these times of serious economic problems, to change the status quo. What is needed is a change of mind-set by the decision-makers – in government, in business, in the media and in advertising – to think a little differently and to be more sensitive to change.

Salome Bey is a singer and actress. This article is drawn from her keynote address to the national conference on "Visible Minorities and the Media," held in Toronto, October 29-30, 1982, which was sponsored by the Multiculturalism Directorate, Secretary of State.

*Letters, articles, and visual images for publication in **CURRENTS** are welcomed*

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CULTURAL MINORITY GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

The following recommendations are not only those of Salome Bey but a synthesis of the many papers, briefs and presentations which have been made on this subject to various levels of government by non-white and other cultural minority groups, organizations and agencies. Researched by Ewart Walters.

ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY

1. The federal government should appoint competent visible minority persons to the boards of the CBC, Canada Council, NFB and as Commissioners of the CRTC.
2. The CBC should review its hiring practices to ensure visible minority employment and mobility within the corporation. This may require specific training and other special programmes, which can be carried out using existing recruitment and training resources.
3. The CAB, AAB, CCTA and other media institutions should institute a policy of recruiting competent, visible minority persons for employment within their member organizations.
4. In order to implement 2 and 3, the above organizations, if necessary with the co-operation of federal government employment programmes, should initiate pilot projects involving apprenticeships, internships and exchanges, so as to upgrade the skills and experience of visible minority persons so that they can compete equally for jobs which are traditionally scarce.
5. Federal-provincial funding agencies should provide resources for the compilation of talent inventories to provide information to

talent agencies, advertisers and advertising agencies on available visible minority talent in Canada.

6. Advertisers should voluntarily adopt a policy that all promotional material and advertising depict the multi-racial and multicultural identity of Canada.
7. The CBC should specifically seek out and include competent visible minority persons in their television journalism training programmes, with a view to hiring them in the presentation of national news and public affairs programmes.
8. ACTRA should extend its commitment on the provision of special permits for visible minority performers to enable visible minority non-members of ACTRA to qualify for employment opportunities.
9. The federal and the provincial Human Rights Commissions should follow the examples of the Ontario Human Rights Commission in placing specific recruitment of visible minority actors on special employment programmes, thus placing it outside the Code's proscription and within its protection.

DEPICTION AND BALANCE

10. Existing and future government cultural programmes should upgrade assistance to visible minority groups, to increase media awareness and skills of these groups via print, and audio-visual materials, workshops, forums and other interchanges.
11. The CRTC should improve its present public awareness programmes to better edu-

cate the visible minority public on interventions, appeals and licensing procedures.

12. The AAB, CAB and CBC as part of their annual awards system, should recognize programmes, stories and advertisements which promote good race relations and Canada's multicultural, multiracial identity.
13. The CBC should improve its community relations programme to make it more responsive to its publics, including visible minority groups. Specifically, it should serve to explain community concerns to appropriate CBC officials, as well as to explain the CBC to its publics more effectively.
14. As part of the above community outreach, the CBC should actively encourage, support and assist activities such as workshops and other creative encounters, which encourage visible minority professionals, writers, poets and producers to create for television and radio.
15. The NFB and Canada Council should actively encourage the production and dissemination of material by the increasing visible minority film and video makers.
16. The CBC and private media should use more programmes from visible minority film and video producers.

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

17. There is a need for ongoing content analysis and attitudinal research on Canadian television. Research must include how non-whites feel about their treatment on television.

18. The federal government must ensure that basic demographic and consumer information on non-whites is available to the Canadian public and its institutions.
19. Government funding agencies should provide more assistance to visible minority film and video producers for research and scripts for television and radio.
20. As a priority, federal and provincial funding agencies should assist visible minority groups (VMGs) to develop advocacy skills re: interventions, etc. for presentation to the CRTC and to the private sector broadcasters and the CBC.
21. The CBC, CAB and AAB should develop industry mechanisms, through which VMGs who feel that they have been misrepresented, or treated badly, could appeal to the industry.
22. Media institutions should develop voluntary guidelines and codes for their members, on how to depict non-white minorities and to avoid the stereotyping of VMGs.
23. Schools that train journalists, broadcasters, etc. should include course components on Canada's multiculturalism and multiracialism.

Typecasting

An Envious Goal for Minority Performers?

An interview with Jeff Henry, who has worked with black professional theatre groups in both Toronto and Montreal over the last 15 years.

Editor: *What is typecasting?*

Henry: Typecasting is where a performer is repeatedly playing a part calling for the same characteristics as those possessed by the performer. For example, Burt Reynolds, Clint Eastwood and John Wayne are typecast while actors like Dustin Hoffman aren't. For black performers it is a non-issue.

Black performers are repeatedly cast in the same type of role – the 'black' role, the stereotypical role. The problem then is stereotyping, not typecasting. The black performer is never able to develop his own abilities and characteristics beyond the colour of his skin.

Casting minorities in inferior, subservient roles and white males in superior roles has been the general rule in movies, television and theatre. Blacks are still playing the foot-shuffling Negro servant, the lovable but incompetent sidekick, the buffoon.

Editor: *What is the impact of this?*

Henry: Not only of course does it limit both the quantity and quality of work available to

black performers, but the stereotypical images are all caricatures of people who intrinsically lack something – who are only half human.

Even Indian children want to be like John Wayne instead of the bad Indians. Black kids don't want to grow up to be the Negro maid or janitor. They fantasize themselves to be the hero just as Anglo kids do. But the message to them is quite clear – to be successful you must fit the mold of the white Anglo-Saxon.

For whites, it breeds a false sense of superiority and justifies racial prejudice and discriminatory behaviour. If white people never see black people on TV, in the movies, on the stage, then they will feel they are the only ones that matter in this society. Thus, the process of programming racist attitudes is perpetuated.

The media and the theatrical entrepreneurs, who programme only that which is profitable, view their audiences as being extremely accepting of these stereotypical roles. Undoubtedly stereotypes sell. The public obviously wants to fantasize that they are all the tall, handsome, fair hero, or his woman.

For non-whites it breeds a sense of inferiority, shame in one's heritage and lower expectations of achievement. And we know that persons with a poor self-image are less likely to be high achievers.

Editor: *Do you think the position adopted by the media and the cultural industries is valid?*

Henry: Of course they have to make money, but from my experience they are operating under a false assumption in believing that the audience wants to watch only white performers, and will only accept non-white performers in roles that are subservient and have no authority. The audience is interested first and foremost in the quality of the production: that it is well-produced, well-rehearsed and in good taste. The colour of the performers has nothing to do with it.

Editor: *How do you compare the media situation in Canada with the U.S.?*

Henry: It has been interesting for me to observe the proportion of whites in the audience of black theatrical performances in the United States. It is significant. There appears to be a far greater awareness and interest by the media, and the ensuing publicity creates and fosters a bigger audience. Whereas in Canada, there appears to be a total indifference by the media to promoting black theatre. Perhaps this is because Americans accept the black population as very much an integral part of the American reality, while in Canada blacks are regarded as interlopers, as non-belongers. Black theatre is dismissed as part of the migrant culture.

I believe that white Canadians would patronize black theatre in greater numbers if the media were to give it the same exposure it gives to mainstream theatre.

I have been involved for a number of years in bringing the work of Caribbean playwrights to Toronto. These are plays that have been enthusiastically reviewed in other metropolitan centres throughout the United States

and have been major hits both there and in Britain. They have done badly in Toronto. Part of the reason for this is that the media hardly recognizes our existence, so we don't get coverage. Secondly, on the few occasions that we are reviewed, the theatre critics pan it, not for the quality of the production, but through a total misrepresentation of the content. Is this a reflection of Canadian attitudes towards minority culture – a resistance to accepting different perceptions, different values, different interpretations of reality?

If Canadians can struggle successfully through the many regional dialects and accents contained in the Royal Shakespeare Company's performance of *Nicholas Nickleby*, black theatre should equally resist the temptation to standardize and soften its presentation and lose its essential rhythm.

Editor: *What can be done to improve the situation?*

Henry: The media should provide the same treatment to black theatre as it does to the other alternative theatres. That means not only reviewing the performances but also by providing other forms of publicity such as doing background articles on the theatre group itself, the playwright, the performers, etc.

Black theatre itself must become far more aggressive in its marketing techniques. It must copy and compete with the sophisticated strategies employed by the major cultural institutions in the city for funds, for subscriptions, and for recognition.

And the community itself should be far more supportive of the non-white arts in general, and can be a significant pressure upon the media and the mainstream performing arts, to abandon their traditional hang-ups.

Join the fight against racism!
Join the Urban Alliance on Race Relations

The Invisible Visibles

Minorities in the media

Henry Gomez

As recently as ten years ago, Toronto was a city in which its inhabitants were proud to say, when speaking of racial unrest: "This is not the United States. This is Canada." They felt very smug indeed as they compared the bad old U.S. of A. with its history of racism and riots, to Canada the good.

Of course, Canada was lily-white then (that is if you excluded the native Indians, the blacks in Nova Scotia and the Orientals who remained quietly in their China towns or Japanese settlements). There were no large numbers of articulate blacks or other ethnic types (apart from the Jews who could either change their names or eradicate their accents) to challenge the dominant Waspish attitude, so things remained Kosher. A province like Ontario, and indeed the rest of Canada, could afford to be smug.

Ten years, one and a half million immigrants and many studies and surveys later show that the picture has changed. Dramatically! Canada opened its doors to many immigrants from Caribbean, Asian and other Third World countries, and most of them flocked to the large metropolitan areas. Toronto and its environs received about 58 percent of those who came to the province of Ontario.

The man in the street knows this. So do the federal and provincial governments, because they compile the statistics. But, do the people who control the media know this? If they do, (and they should, because there's money to be made on these immigrants), then why the insistence on portraying Toronto and other parts of Ontario as places where life continues to be "peaches and cream," with the occasional appearance of an "ethnic type." Have they put on blinders or do they live in their proverbial ivory towers? Furthermore, is their attitude the same as that of the white artist who proudly displays a white

painting on white canvas, with white highlights and shadows and calls it "Canada — an abstraction?"

In September 1981, the Honourable Jim Fleming, Minister of Multiculturalism addressed an Organization for Canadian Caribbean Initiatives seminar, at York University. He said: "The media mirrors the way minorities are perceived, plagued by stereotypes." He also said in part: "...there's a need to reinforce in the minds of all Canadians, a sense of unity, to promote better understanding and tolerance among all sectors of society."

In 1983, a person of African ancestry, or of another minority group may be heard to say: "Mirror, mirror on the wall, tell me do I exist at all?" The mirror, of course, is the media, polished and held up by the image-makers, be they advertisers, radio station owners, private and public television executives, producers, editors, writers or artistic directors. As a collective body they help to reinforce the artist's concept of Canada — it's white on white. No flies in the butter-milk.

An evening at home watching TV, a visit to our national theatres, or a casual leafing through of some of our magazines is all it takes to bring one face to face with the Canadian unreality — a country in which visible minorities don't drive cars, drink beer, travel, eat food, shop, or own houses. According to this mirror, they don't even interact with the rest of Canadian society.

Many meetings and discussions have taken place recently. They involved the Ad-Hoc Media Committee, the National Black Coalition of Canada (NBCC), the Advertising Advisory Board, the Black Performers Committee, ACTRA, the Federal and Provincial Governments, the Ontario Human Rights Commission and others. Both levels of government have set guidelines and set up task forces to monitor the use of visible

minorities in their own advertising. Commendable. But that's just what they are — guidelines.

Since visible minorities have increased their knowledge of how the media operate (especially the advertising industry), it's become increasingly difficult for the buck to be passed. But the word still comes down on the grapevine. "Don't send any ethnics, especially blacks." The few in the industry who try to question such a directive are easily held in line by the threat of lost business and the use

of the epithet "Nigger lover." The same holds true for stage, television, film and radio casting.

The image-makers still cannot see actors or models of visible minority groups as doctors, lawyers, police officers, businessmen, civil servants or even trades people participating fully in a Canadian society. They still believe that only the super-stars have saleability — hence, Oscar Peterson, Geoffrey Holder, Bill Cosby and Reggie Jackson.

That's why they often go through the motions. They invite visible minority actors or models to auditions, knowing that they have no intention of casting any of them in the available roles.



*Mirror, mirror on the wall,
tell me do I exist at all?*

sion of visible minorities unless they pool their resources and begin to boycott certain department stores and certain products. They should also use their resources to picket certain television stations for lack of affirmative action in the decision-making and creative areas of their operations. They may prod Eatons, The Bay, CTV, City TV and CBC to go beyond mere tokenism. It may convince them too that even in the Great White North, any other colour ink is better than red.

Henry Gomez is a Toronto actor whose work has been seen from Montreal to Calgary. He is a graduate of the Graduate Theatre Programme at York University.

They know it, and the actors and models know it. But the game goes on. What's to be done?

Legislation. Maybe. Maybe not. It worked in the United States, and it worked for Canadian content in radio programming. And contrary to predictions, people have not lost money.

Economics and embarrassment remain the only effective catalysts for change. The Chinese community proved this in dealing with CTV's W5. The image-makers will not respond positively to the inclu-

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The Selling of Race Relations

Will mass media public education advertising campaigns reduce racism?

Carol Tator

Increasingly, mass media advertising is being used as a means of improving race relations. In the last two years we have witnessed the launching of several major campaigns. The theme and approach used in each initiative has been essentially the same. The federal government has as its slogan "Together We Can Get It Right", the Ontario Human Rights Commission uses the motto "Working Together", and the City of Toronto suggests "Let's Work Together." The Ontario Federation of Labour employs a slightly different tone in its message "Racism Hurts Everyone."

The proliferation of advertising campaigns in the mass media, with their accompanying posters, brochures, and thirty-second spots on radio and TV, has involved the expenditure of literally hundreds of thousands of dollars; thus, utilizing major portions of relatively small budgets allocated to race relations.

Why have such significant resources been invested in these advertising campaigns? The programmes are based on the premise that public education is an effective tool in creating more positive racial attitudes. In turn, it is hoped that these changes in the public's perceptions and beliefs will result in behavioural change.

Another factor which explains the broad acceptance of this approach is the conflicting expectation that the elimination of racism constitutes a major responsibility of society and especially government, but actions taken must not encroach upon personal or institutional freedom. In other words, the public is willing to accept the attempts of these sectors to persuade or convince, but not to intervene or enforce. By using mass media advertising,

confrontation with those interests most likely to oppose more direct forms of government or societal intervention is avoided.

How effective have these lavish publicity campaigns been? As yet, no attempts have been made to measure or evaluate the impact of these initiatives. Evaluation of similar publicity programmes designed to change behaviour indicate that this approach is not very successful. Attitudinal change strategies tend to run away in a trickle of good intentions when you try to interpret them into effective programmes for action.

Impact

Most practitioners who have worked in this field for a number of years share the view that race relations cannot be promoted in the same way that one sells soap. It is far simpler to urge the public to change their loyalty to a brand of toothpaste, than it is to either modify perceptions, or alter behaviour towards racial minorities.

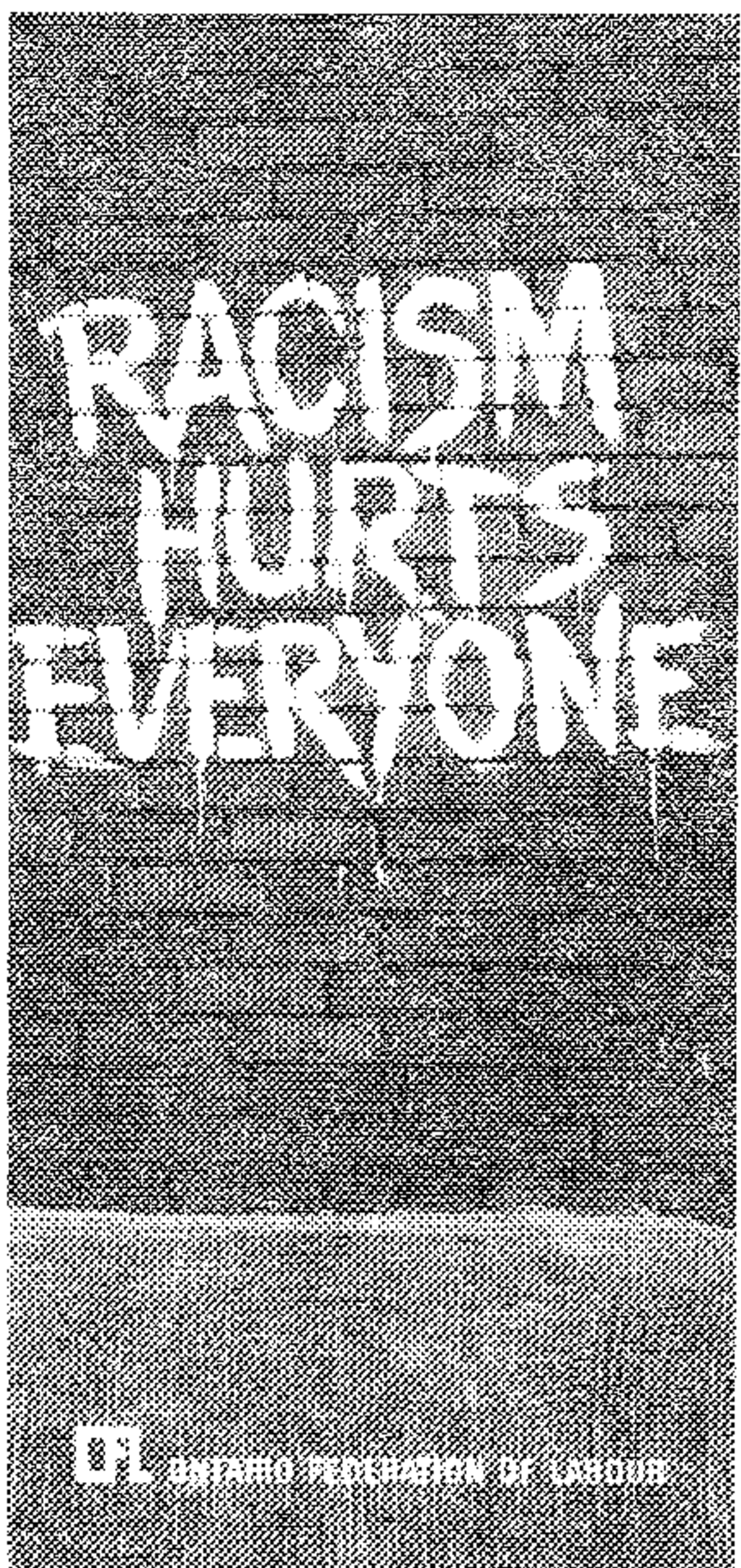
Social psychological research also demonstrates the futility of this approach. Several studies done in recent years indicate that attitude change, particularly past a certain age, is almost impossible to achieve, except under the most carefully controlled circumstances.

Most importantly, this focus on changing individual attitudes ignores the reality of institutional racism. For it is the acts of institutions, their laws, policies and practices which present the most serious barriers to racial minorities.

Practitioners working with the various systems such as employment, unions, education, police, social services and government

agencies, have found that people within these institutions are unaware that their operating techniques and their criteria for judgement are often racist in character. Those in upper levels of management are often unable to see that they are functionally discriminating every time they use culturally biased employment tests, and inflated job qualifications.

Regardless of how many ads are aired or brochures distributed, racism will remain deeply embedded in the social, economic and political structures of our society unless we seek other alternatives.



Appropriate Messages

If there is any constructive role for the mass media, it should be an ancillary function, and used in conjunction with the development of concrete programmes of action.

Advertising can be used as a vehicle for fulfilling the government's responsibility for disseminating to the public, information

about changes in its own laws and policies. For example, the media could play a part in promoting public awareness of new legislation such as the recent amendment to the Ontario Human Rights Code. The federal government could use the media to communicate data gleaned from research projects which have direct bearing on the creation of new programmes and initiatives. Advertising might also be used to remind the public of sanctions and deterrents which the government has the right to impose when laws are abused or ignored.

In the final analysis, the problems of racial prejudice and discrimination cannot be solved by good intentions or gentle persuasion. It will require the interaction and, at

times, the intervention of every major institution in our society.

To continue these advertising campaigns without more serious consideration of the issues we are raising, would be giving support to the cynic, who sees advertising simply as a means of placating those pressuring the government to take action.

Carol Tator is President of the Urban Alliance on Race Relations.



Two government directories of funding sources for community groups have recently been published.

- The first, by the federal government, entitled **Sources of Government of Canada Support to Voluntary Organizations**, summarizes the purpose of each programme, its basic eligibility requirements and total available funds. Copies (at \$7.00 each) may be ordered from the Publishing Centre, Supply and Services Canada, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S9.

- The second, by the Ontario Government, is a revised and expanded version of **Resources for Community Groups**. Not only does this directory identify potential sources of funds from all three levels of government, foundations, corporations and many others, but it also describes some of the pitfalls to avoid, and the tasks and responsibilities entailed, in successful fund-raising. Copies can be obtained from the Citizenship Development Branch, Ministry of Culture and Citizenship, 77 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Ontario M7A 2R9.

The Ethnic Media: A Mission or A Business

A look at the Toronto Black Press

Andrea Stevens

For any group, effective communication is essential to maintaining social awareness and social action for its continued growth. It must be able to communicate with both its members and with the larger society. In most groups the community newspaper serves this purpose. The paper reflects the group's aspirations, concerns and maturity and is both its voice and its critic. With the increased social awareness of the 1960s, Toronto's black community saw the need for a publication that accurately reflected its place in Canadian society...something the mainstream press seemed incapable of doing then and, to a great extent, now. *Contrast* newspaper, and later *Share*, were established as the answer to this need.

But these publications have a dual role. Their close ties to the black community and their responsibility to that community mean they must walk a fine line between advocacy and balanced journalism if they are to protect their credibility. To date, neither *Contrast* nor *Share* has been able to resolve this dilemma and in their continued struggle to serve the community they remain papers that are scanned and thrown away. Both papers seem to lack the money and the editorial direction that would make them the quality publications the community needs desperately.

Circulation

Contrast started in 1969 with 16 pages of news and information pertinent to Canada's black community, a staff of two and an initial circulation of 3,500, says publisher Al Hamilton. Its mandate...to communicate with all blacks regardless of place of origin, to hold a mirror to its own community and to improve communication between that com-

munity and the larger society. Today, the weekly tabloid is still printing an average of 16 pages with a core staff of five. After 13 years in existence it has never had its circulation audited so verified circulation data is not available to advertisers through Canadian Advertising Rates and Data, the recognized supplier of statistical data on publications for advertisers. Figures supplied by Hamilton show, however, that the paper grew to a circulation peak of 17,000 but has now dropped to 12,000.

When asked about the paper's limited growth to date, Hamilton counters that *Contrast* was never intended "to make a pile of money" but rather that its main goal was "to offer a community service." He adds that *Contrast's* pioneering role has opened the doors of advertising and journalism to many members of the black community, and that the publication's record speaks for itself. *Contrast*, he says, has the highest paid circulation in the black community and that must prove that the paper means something to the community. The only other regular weekly in the black community is distributed free, while *Contrast* charges 40 cents per copy, so Hamilton is technically correct.

The other weekly paper published regularly in the black community is *Share*. A much younger publication, *Share* was started in 1973 by Arnold Auguste, a former editor of *Contrast*, and Jules Elder, with 12 pages and a staff of two. Its mandate is to promote multiculturalism and racial harmony by making blacks and West Indians feel they belong in and can be successful in Canada. According to publisher Auguste, in the past five years *Share* has grown from an initial weekly circulation of 5,000 to the 30,000 listed in the 1982 edition of Canadian Advertising Rates and Data.

Advertising

As weekly community publications both papers are subject to market conditions that have inhibited their growth. According to Norm Johnson, a research officer with the Canadian Advertising Research Foundation, the advertising base for community papers is getting smaller as economic conditions in Canada worsen. He adds that such papers depend greatly on retail businesses within their area or community for up to 70 percent of their advertising revenue and these community businesses seldom have the money to advertise heavily.



In their role as voices for the black and West Indian community in the Metro Toronto area, *Contrast* and *Share* have had to share the advertising revenue generated by businesses within that community. Numbers supplied by the publishers of both papers show that they get 70 to 75 percent of their advertising revenue from the community. This means that they are dependent on an advertising base made up of small retail and service businesses with scarce advertising dollars. In general, these businesses do not consider advertising a priority and cannot afford to treat it as such. They are operating at a level where many barely manage to stay out of the red. Both papers are part of a cycle...these businesses need to advertise to be successful but cannot afford it. They often go under in tough economic times, narrowing the already small advertising base of the community publications. The publications are then forced to cut back in order to survive the economic downturn.

Since *Share* is a 'free' publication it is particularly dependent on advertising dollars. To cover its weekly operating costs the paper must sell approximately \$5,000 worth of advertising while *Contrast* needs about \$2,900.

Share charges a base price of 60 cents per line while *Contrast* charges 50 cents. Therefore, the lowest priced ad in *Contrast* is \$7 compared to \$8.40 in *Share*. It costs \$756 for a full page ad in *Share* while the same ad in *Contrast* would be between \$450 to \$600. The difference in advertising rates is due to several factors. *Share* publishes a larger number of papers...30,000 to *Contrast's* 12,000...and has to make enough from its advertising sales to cover its operating costs. Auguste explains that his paper has increased its rates because of increased demand. He puts printing costs at about half of *Share's* weekly operating budget. In addition, *Share* has more people on staff and pays higher salaries to its employees, says Auguste. Unlike *Contrast*, says Auguste, *Share* has never sought or received government grants and has never encouraged increased investment in the five years since its birth.

The Ethnic Market

Yet if both of these papers are to loosen the grip the community has on its fortunes they must seek advertising from the larger business sector. This is a solution that is difficult because of the way the ethnic market is perceived by many large advertisers.

Robert Oliver, president of the Advertising Standards Council, says many large advertisers look at ethnic papers for very special occasional advertising. He adds that even those advertisers who are interested in advertising in ethnic publications say they are unable to do so because of the lack of statistical data on both the ethnic market and the publications that serve it. Given the lack of data, Oliver says when the economic situation starts to deteriorate advertisers tend to put their money into advertising for the mass market.

However, lack of data may no longer be a problem for advertisers seeking to penetrate the ethnic market. Creative Concepts, a Montreal advertising company has branched out into the area of ethnic market research. The Multifax Research Corporation was set up early in 1982 to provide large corporate advertisers with concise and accurate data on advertising directed at the ethnic market through the use of ethnic community publica-

tions and ethnic talent.

Andy Godwin, an account executive with Creative Concepts, says that although advertisers will have to use both mainstream and ethnic press to penetrate the ethnic market, by directing only 10 percent of the advertising budget into ethnic publications, they can get double the return on their investment.

Creative Concepts found that advertisers' biggest complaint was the problem of identifying viable ethnic media in which to advertise, says Godwin, so Multifax dedicated its first six months in operation to researching the ethnic media in Canada. Multifax now has the most comprehensive data bank on ethnic publications in Canada, says Godwin. But it should also be noted that it is after all the only data bank on the ethnic press. Multifax is also in the process of compiling lifestyle and income data on Canada's ethnic population.

But the lack of accurate information about ethnic communities has not prevented some large advertisers from pursuing that market. For the black and West Indian community, Air Canada is one such advertiser.

Brock Stewart, Toronto area public affairs manager, says Air Canada does not need a great deal of statistical data on ethnic communities because of the nature of those communities. Ethnic communities are made up of immigrants with friends and relatives in their places of birth or family origin and this makes them an important market for the airline, says Stewart.

Multifax Corporation research shows that ethnic groups, other than French and English, make up over a third of Canada's population and close family ties within these groups makes for a great deal of travelling back and forth.

Air Canada has made a long-term commitment to advertising in *Contrast*, *Share* and other ethnic publications, says Terry Dichico, responsible for ethnic publications in Air Canada's Toronto office. She says Air Canada has contracts with both papers for one ad run every two weeks. *Contrast* has a contract for contra advertising...that is, the paper runs Air Canada ads in return for airline tickets valued at the cost of the ads. *Share* is paid cash for running Air Canada ads, says publisher Arnold Auguste. He adds that *Share* is not involved in

contra advertising of any kind because it needs its advertising revenue.

A Larger Audience

Share has been able to increase its advertising revenue largely through the success of its marketing strategy, says Auguste. The paper is distributed free of charge in an area bordered by Mississauga in the west and Pickering in the east, with its heaviest concentration in Toronto and Scarborough. *Contrast* is distributed in largely the same area with heavy concentration in Toronto.

Both papers are placed in community businesses and in areas with large black and West Indian populations. *Contrast* is also at Garfield outlets in major subway stations.

With their combined circulation of 42,000, these two weekly papers reach their targeted audience but with little penetration into the larger community. Both papers claim that each paper printed is read by approximately two and a half persons which puts readership total at more than 100,000 of the approximately 200,000 blacks and West Indians in the Toronto area. However, Multifax Corporation reports that only between 10 and 20 percent of the readership total for *Share* and *Contrast* is white, Canadian born.

An examination of advertising in both papers shows that *Share* has been more successful than *Contrast* in expanding into other ethnic communities. Auguste says his paper has consistently been getting advertising from businesses in the Greek and Italian communities as well as requests for the paper to be distributed in these communities.

According to editor Jules Elder, *Share* has been able to grow outside of its defined market because it has been able to build its own credibility. He adds that *Share* "is an advocate of the community's point of view but it is not a rabble-rouser...it has created for itself an image of journalistic responsibility that its advertisers can trust."

Hamilton maintains that *Contrast's* revenue has not been affected by its editorial policy. The paper has been in the forefront on such issues as police-community relations, racism in the mainstream media and the propriety of elected government officials visiting

South Africa. He says that *Contrast* has "gained support from advertisers through the stand it has taken on issues."

Hamilton cites the case of one advertiser, Knob Hill Farms, which stopped importing produce from South Africa and continued to advertise in *Contrast* after that paper took a stand against the continued practice of Canadian companies importing goods from South Africa. He adds that what has hurt his paper's fortunes is not its stand on issues, but rather the things written by "idiotic columnists." He says advertisers realize that they cannot control the editorial policy of any ethnic publication and so they don't try to.



Whether the cause of *Contrast*'s limited growth is its stand on issues, or irresponsible and inaccurate statements by its columnists, the paper's management cannot escape the reality of its situation. Making money may not be the paper's prime goal, but Hamilton cannot ignore the fact that meager resources have hampered his ability to effectively implement its mandate to hold a mirror to the community. *Contrast* has been forced to fill its pages with rewrites of material published elsewhere, press releases and pieces supplied free by individuals in the community. For event coverage it is dependent on young inexperienced writers since few experienced freelance writers are attracted to fees of between \$15 to \$25 per article.

Community Changes

The community has grown tremendously in the last 13 years yet *Contrast* still publishes the same number of pages — even after absorbing *The Islander*, and its price has increased from 15 cents to 40 cents. The paper has two major flaws that make it a big dis-

appointment to the black community. Editorially, *Contrast* still clings to the adversary stance of the 1960s...the proverbial us against them...and it is a stance that requires that we continually see ourselves as victims. The paper's readiness to do battle and to show up every injustice was a necessary part of our development but its management is naive to think that the community's perception of itself and its responses to problems have not changed in 20 years. *Contrast* refuses to see that the community has outgrown the responses of the sixties and may now be ready to critically examine itself and the institutions that serve it. At present the paper cannot afford the qualified personnel necessary to accurately document events and social trends that affect the community so it is content to spout off half-baked and sometimes inaccurate reports in the guise of serving the community.

Share on the other hand, shows a little more journalistic responsibility but its coverage is generally so superficial that it cannot fill the void left by *Contrast*. *Share* remains too hung up on being positive to come out with critical evaluations of community events as often as is necessary.

Share has grown in size and circulation but it too is being criticized. Both publications are running into problems not only on the question of business acumen but also in the area of service to the community. As the community matures it is starting to question whether these publications accurately reflect its point of view...whether they meet its needs and whether it should continue to give them its support.

Contrast and *Share* are dependent on the black community for their continued survival. The community has changed and with this maturity, is beginning to critically examine its institutions. *Contrast* and *Share* must begin the same process if they are to survive as balanced and effective voices of that community.

Andrea Stevens is a freelance writer and broadcaster living in Toronto.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Since the submission of this article, *Share* has moved to a twice-weekly publication, and the publisher of *Contrast* is now Mr. Denny Jolly.

CKFM

Anatomy of a positive response

Dennis Strong

In the history of social change, the greatest progress has frequently been instigated by inadvertent, often unpleasant incidents. July 31, 1982 may well represent such an epoch in the relations between the Toronto media and its black community.

Toronto is the business and communications centre of Canada. It is also the bastion of WASP conservatism. However, with the change in immigration policy in 1967, the number and type of visible minorities has increased at a rate which was alarming to those whose values and privileges are now being called into question. New human rights legislation was passed, complaints of discrimination increased and even acts of physical violence were reported. Bit by bit, tensions began to build.

The frustrations on both sides are predictable and understandable. People who have worked all of their lives to nurture and support a way of doing things that has been in place for a long time will resist and oppose groups which represent to them a requirement to change or do without the privileges of the old way.

Blacks are portrayed in the media, if at all, as a troublesome version of "the white man's burden," or as athletes and entertainment performers who want too much money. Corporate announcements of senior appointments scarcely ever show a black; billboards and commercials depicting the "Canadian lifestyle" contain few, if any, black faces; the Canada Council and other cultural funding entities pour monies into Stratford, the ballet, the opera, etc....to the comparative exclusion of forums of black expression. Discrimination is pervasive. Yet because of its subtle collusive nature, attempts to redress merely bring choruses of: "If they don't like it here, they can go back where they came from."

Enter CKFM, a lily-white FM station

ranked number one among Toronto FM listeners between the ages of 18 and 49. The station is owned by Standard Broadcasting, a subsidiary of Argus Corporation, whose directors include the cream of the "old boy" network. The station is the paragon of success and good corporate citizenship. CKFM sponsorship of charities such as the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (including a concertmaster's chair), the Hospital for Sick Children, Ronald McDonald House (to which it was the largest contributor) and its raising one-half million dollars for the Terry Fox Marathon, is legend. The station's manager, Bill Ballentine, has been voted Broadcaster of the Year by his peers; CKFM has been named FM Station of the Year and has also received the prestigious Armstrong Award for its specials on the FLQ. The programming of its music, news and current affairs is very middle-of-the-road (adult contemporary) and seemingly impervious to the drastic changes of "complexion" which have taken place in Toronto in the past 10 or 15 years. Ironically, the station's slogan is: "The Sound of Our Toronto." Indeed, its programming of the show "Toronto Alive," featuring jazz greats appearing in Toronto, was considered unique for commercial radio in North America.

Among its staff announcers was the late Phil McKellar, who had achieved international eminence as an authority on jazz after 34 years of association with the music and its artists. McKellar was a sought-after host and emcee for jazz concerts and presentations all over the city. He was the host of "All That Jazz," a weekly Sunday night jazz programme. It may be useful to point out that the "white sound" of Toronto's music programming in general has long been a bone of contention in the black community. The feeling is that white deejays are inappropriate as the sole interpreters of what is basically a form of black



Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation

Caribana 1982

cultural expression. This practice represents an all-too-familiar act of exploitation and the black community has been powerless to change it.

So it was that at approximately 8:10 A.M. on July 31, 1982, McKellar was overheard on-air to refer to the upcoming Caribana parade as "four million niggers jumping up and down."

Caribana is an annual event presented by the black (Caribbean) community. It is a week-long festivity and includes an enormous parade that winds along one of the city's main arteries. Over a period of 16 years, Caribana has grown into a major international event which attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors and millions of dollars of revenue to Toronto.

The timing of McKellar's racist comment could not have been more dramatic. It took him three weeks to apologize after the original broadcast. During that period, McKellar was incommunicado. The station said he was on holidays; the black community interpreted this as "hiding out" with the station's help.

Time and again, leaders of the black community had sought to galvanize the community around issues involving the media and wound up being isolated as "radicals." The very blatant racist nature of the comment and the feeling that CKFM was just hoping that the demands for redress would "blow over," caused a groundswell of support not only among blacks, but from other visible minorities and concerned whites as well. A meeting was held at the offices of Contrast, the black newspaper that broke the story to the community, and the Committee Against Racism Within the Media (CARM) was formed. Its mandate was to keep the issue alive and obtain satisfaction for the black community. A campaign was mounted which included flyers, pressure on other media, politicians and prospective employers of McKellar.

CARM demanded that McKellar be fired. CKFM removed him as staff announcer, had him apologize, but dug in its heels at firing him and at accepting responsibility. After the apology — aired at exactly the same time as the incident, as is the usual practice in such

cases — the community's persistence began to generate a sympathetic backlash on behalf of McKellar. The tone of this was: "The man has done a lot for blacks by playing jazz." "It wasn't on purpose and he has apologized; that should be enough." "It's not fair for a man to be labelled a racist and forfeit his career for one mistake." "They are definitely over-reacting."

The radio station and CARM jockeyed for position. McKellar himself, along with those in the media who sought to tell his side, fanned the flames. In an effort to defend himself against attack, he made more racist comments.

CKFM finally arranged a meeting in the black community which was attended by CARM, the Black press and other community members. There was tension and defensiveness, but feelings and information were at last being shared face-to-face. The station agreed to accept some responsibility by broadcasting an apology (read by the station manager, Bill Ballentine) for three consecutive days. CARM's position was that since *all* of their demands had not been met, they would organize picket lines at the radio station. This protest was also timed to coincide with a conference being convened by the Federal Minister of Multiculturalism around the grievances of visible minorities with the media. The scope of the incident had become international. Visiting, as well as local, musicians refused to appear on "Toronto Alive," a show hosted by McKellar; moderate participants at the federal conference successfully fought to include the cause celebre in the deliberations.

CKFM began to see that the issue would not just go away, though it was felt that capitulation to even the modified demand of McKellar's removal from jazz programming could not be permitted. The Canadian Radio-Television Telecommunications Committee (CRTC) asked CKFM to outline a response to the community's complaint alleging violation of the Broadcasting Act. Subsequently, the Ontario Human Rights Commission called a meeting under its mandate in race relations. It was at this meeting that the positive responses were set in motion. A broad cross-section of professionals with experience in the area of race relations and media advocacy, plus

representatives from CARM, Caribana and CKFM were invited. This group included representatives from a variety of visible minorities. CARM, after taking exception to the presence at the meeting of an individual with whom they had a grievance, made a statement and withdrew.

The station by this time had recognized that further action was necessary and that while inadvertent, there had been a lack of sensitivity on its part. As a result, a proposal was tabled by CKFM to hire a news reporter who would report on the "changing, exciting and sometimes turbulent face of race and cultural relations in the city." In addition, commentators and public affairs programmers would begin work on "new and special programmes to better reflect the concerns of the many and diverse cultures of Toronto. At the group's suggestion, a press release was circulated to all media. A prime time commentary by Jeremy Brown, a 17-year veteran at the station, decried prejudice and informed listeners of the commitments made at the meeting. The group was assured that work on all undertakings would begin immediately and that concerns about "tokenism" were unfounded.

The task that lay ahead from that point was laced with as many pitfalls as the phase just completed.

CKFM has, in effect, committed itself to a voluntary affirmative action programme at a time when the "old boy" network is publicly resisting government suggestions that the private sector needs to do this. With the help of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, the Metro Chairman's Committee on Multicultural Relations, and the North York Committee on Race Relations, the process of forming a community advisory board was begun. The membership includes a broad cross-section of the multicultural make-up of Toronto. Immediately, the group was astute enough to recognize that its value was in bringing a "community" perspective to the station and its key people. The group unanimously rejected any notion of screening or attempting to direct the station's actions.

The commitment to hire a "community" news reporter contained some very interesting twists. As the criteria for the position were being developed, it became apparent that a

background in journalism was essential. Of equal importance was experience in dealing with minority communities. This suggested that the most appropriate candidates would likely come from these communities. The "Catch-22" was that "major market" radio stations seldom, if ever, hired personnel without their having been "seasoned" by working on stations in small, outlying towns.

The likelihood of finding minority candidates with "seasoning" is remote. The station made the commitment to emphasize the two former qualifications. John McFadyen, the station's news director, and a former teacher, interviewed the candidates, made a choice, and designed an orientation and training programme that led to a fully "certified" radio news reporter.

At this juncture, it should be pointed out that there are a number of "wild cards" present in the scenario to be considered. Executives on all levels are evaluated by how well they can plan, budget and obtain a return on money and resources put at their disposal. The everyday activities of a company are geared to efficiently achieving the results that have been promised. The effect of an unexpected incident such as the one in this case, is to create tremendous tension internally. The fact that the black press editorially commended the station for its actions, and that letters of commendation have arrived at Standard Broadcasting citing Ballentine and the station for its leadership in race relations, are important elements in the support systems necessary to ensure continued progress.

The dialogue and interactions which are part of the advisory board process frequently have an organic effect in opening up resources and providing insights.

On January 26, 1983, Phil McKellar died suddenly of a heart attack. The very first

meeting of the newly formed advisory board was scheduled to take place at CKFM the next day. The telephone lines at the station, the black press and the other media, burned with angry calls denouncing both as having "hounded McKellar to death." Despite the fact that the station's staff were frantically fielding these calls and making funeral arrangements for a colleague, the meeting was held, all members attended, and at an emotionally charged gathering, the group coalesced and the task was begun.

Since that time, CKFM has included screening for negative racial stereotypes as part of its commercial acceptance criteria. Programme Director Jerry Good recently rejected two on that basis and suggested to other Programme Directors that they do the same. It has taken initiatives to make the station more open to community input by attending events, such as the Harry Jerome Awards, and by working to develop seminars and other educational forums of exchange. It is now in the process of designing and implementing internal training programmes for the station's managers, which will enable them to respond more positively to the opportunities inherent in Toronto's multicultural fact.

The value of studying this case is that, in a time when there is so much turmoil in Canadian race relations, positive models must be found to overcome the barriers to a harmonious society. The CKFM/black community story is an example of how we can all learn from our mistakes.

Risk is necessary to find new approaches, but the rewards can be commensurate with the risk.

Dennis Strong is an actor. He is presently Community Relations Consultant at CKFM, and formerly managed the careers of Salome Bey, Beverly Glenn-Copeland and Cecile Frenette.

— U.A.R.R. PUBLICATIONS —

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The Ad-Hoc Media Committee

A community response

In the inaugural meeting of the Canadian Advertising Foundation in Toronto in November, 1981, Jim Fleming, federal Minister of State for Multiculturalism, accused advertisers and their agencies of not portraying an accurate view of Canadian society.

In a no-holds-barred speech, Fleming denounced the lack of non-whites or visible minorities, especially in television commercials, and said that advertisers are offending Canada's growing ethnic population.

"I know how they feel," he said, "because they've told me. They feel cut off. Rejected. They feel they're not accepted or wanted in Canada. They're non-Canadians, throw-away people in a throw-away society. They feel put down, frustrated, resentful."

Fleming's speech, probably the strongest remarks ever made by an elected government official about the media and their depiction of non-whites, was the beginning of what was to become a new level of media advocacy among Toronto's non-white ethnic communities.

In that one speech, Fleming said everything non-whites had been saying for years, but now the messenger was not some "radical" faction of the community; it was a federal minister speaking on behalf of his constituents. About one month after Fleming's "well-received" speech, a meeting was held with the industry and representatives of Toronto's non-white communities. To suggest, however, that Fleming's bold words brought about this meeting and three subsequent meetings would be inaccurate. Certainly, the speech set the tone for the meeting but it was the actions of a dedicated group of people which brought, for the first time, the question of fair media representation into the board rooms of most of Canada's major advertisers and their agencies. The four sessions with companies such as Bell, General Foods, Avon, Warner-Lambert, Nabisco Foods, Alcan,

Towers and Metropolitan Life, brought the issue directly to the top management level of these companies.

The committee has continued its work and has met with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and some of its members are involved with an advisory board set up by a Toronto radio station.

Audikesavan Dharmalingam, executive director of the University Settlement House and a member of what was to become the Ad-Hoc Media Committee, says it was the first time a diverse group of people from Toronto's multi-ethnic population was able to work together effectively on a single issue.

The Ad-Hoc Media Committee grew out of a January, 1981 network building conference held in Toronto to bring five major ethnic groups together: the Black and East Indian communities, the Chinese and Japanese communities, and the Italian community. The conference was a forum for the sponsoring communities to discuss racism, policing and community relations, immigrant adjustment, education and the media.

Out of the recommendations of the two media workshops an ad-hoc group was established. Its first activity was a media seminar in June, 1981, on how to use the media more effectively. At that seminar, advertisers were invited to address the participants. However, video tapes of changes made in an Ontario government television commercial after members of the National Black Coalition of Canada met with a cabinet minister, had the greatest impact. It showed community members what could be accomplished through proper lobbying.

Former Advertising Advisory Board president Bob Oliver, who was invited to the seminar, promised to meet with non-white representatives to discuss what his industry could do to improve relations with the ethnic

communities.

Almost five months later, new AAB president Ken Barnes called the first meeting with 10 industry representatives and 10 community representatives. This and subsequent meetings were frank exchanges of opinions between both sides, which served to sensitize the industry to community concerns in a face-to-face confrontation. In some respects, the four meetings over a six-month period were successful but the true impact probably won't be felt for some time as similar meetings continue and the word filters down.

Some of the more immediate results of these sessions were new television commercials, including one by Nabisco showing non-whites in a natural family situation. The ad also crossed over the sex barrier as men were shown serving their children breakfast.

Part of the process with the advertising industry included meetings with the Ontario Cabinet Task Force on the Portrayal of Racial Diversity in Government Advertising and Communications, and federal government officials responsible for advertising. Both levels of government, after similar meetings with other groups and individuals have since developed guidelines for their ministries and departments to follow.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the Ad-Hoc Committee's work, besides the varying successes it has had in interfacing with "the other side," is that a diverse group of people from a variety of backgrounds were able to work closely together and have continued their advocacy role. "The group has a level of commitment which keeps it going," says Rosanna Scotti, director of multicultural relations for Metro Toronto and a member of the committee. "People will give up Sunday afternoons to meet because they have invested in it...they have strong convictions about the issues and they have seen results."

Scotti says the group's strength is that the other side is sensitized as a result of each meeting. "We are talking to a disparate group

of advertisers, dealing with a diverse group of people all saying the same thing. It's the collective approach as opposed to just individual ethnic groups," she says. The committee does not represent the community, the ethnic groups as such, but functions rather as an articulate and coherent group which speaks for the concerns of the community. Besides the collective voice of the group, Scotti says the committee is often well-informed of the issues before each meeting, "so we can speak on both an objective and emotional level when (we) talk about the lack of minorities in advertising."

Members of the committee include journalists, physicians, educators, and lawyers. Members bring to the group their experiences and professional standards. "There is a lot of mutual respect in the group," Scotti says. "People genuinely like and respect each other... differences of opinion are sorted out but never with jealousy or hard feelings."

"It's a totally horizontal group. No top-dogs. I think this keeps the other side off balance too. They never quite know who we are, what organization we belong to or where we're going to pop up next."

As an action-oriented, free-floating type of advocacy group whose members come from various organizations and communities, it is a unique form of community initiative. As an 'ad-hoc' group it has been able to focus its energies on the content and substance of the issues, unencumbered by the distractions of group structure and organizational problems and priorities. In its innovative approach to community networking, it has been able to mobilize quickly in response to crises, drawing upon expertise from a broad range of organizations and communities, and has been able to pursue its objectives in a confident, well-prepared and aggressive manner.

As member Jean Gammage stresses, "We've only just begun. Media is too powerful a tool for influence to either ignore it or allow it to ignore us."

*Have you sent your subscription to **CURRENTS** in yet?*

Portrayal of Non-Whites in Advertising

Earl Miller

Ontario Task Force on the Portrayal of Racial Diversity in Government Advertising and Communications. Report to the Cabinet Committee on Race Relations.

The Presence and Portrayal of Non-Whites in English Language Television Advertising in Canada. Secretary of State 1982.

McLuhan's famous epigram "the medium is the message" suggested a startling consequence of the electronic age: that for the viewer, the distinction between reality and the image on the screen was becoming increasingly blurred. For the huckster and the image-maker, "what is real is what you see," has become the psychological underpinning for public communications.

Wherever the line is drawn, between human experience and electronic imagery, we are deeply influenced by media portrayals. Just as important, we're affected by what we *don't* see. In a sense, what isn't communicated isn't fully validated as social reality.

Wherever the line is drawn between human experience and electronic imagery, we are deeply influenced by media portrayals. Just as important, we're affected by what we *don't* see. In a sense, what isn't communicated isn't fully validated as social reality.

It is significant then that Ontario, through its Cabinet Committee on Race Relations, and the federal government, through the Secretary of State, have examined how visible minorities are and aren't portrayed in advertising. Although the respective studies differ in purpose and scope, the findings are similar:

- both government and private sector advertising are not communicating the reality of the multiracial, multicultural society. The Secretary of State study analyzed 617 English-language television commercials

and found that visible minorities appeared in 10 percent of these ads, mostly in minor roles. White persons appeared in 99 percent of all television commercials;

- visible minorities in advertising are sometimes characterized in stereotyped roles;
- the under-representation of minorities is systemic and can be seen at every level of media portrayal regardless of the geographic region, client, timing of communication, product line, promotional objectives or target audience.

These studies support the historic argument by minorities that they are excluded from mass communications. This legacy of non-portrayal, ironically, has made minorities less visible as people who lead lives like other Canadians.

The evidence presented in these studies provides a persuasive signal that major readjustment in the communications industry is needed. However, neither the federal government, nor Ontario, seem willing to author a comprehensive shake-up. The Secretary of State report, while clear and informative, contains no policy guidelines. Instead, it has the detached quality of an independent research study. Its principal intention, in its own words, is as "a useful benchmark" providing "a common base of knowledge for...ongoing discussions." In short, it's a lobbying tool. It remains to be seen how Minister of State for Multiculturalism, Jim Fleming, proposes to lever the federal bureaucracy and the corporate world into a more responsive posture, without advertising guidelines or legislated incentives like contract compliance. The history of voluntary affirmative action in Canada invites considerable skepticism, about the potential which moral suasion has for changing media practices.

The Ontario Cabinet Committee on Race

Relations' report was prepared as the basis for a provincial policy to increase the portrayal of racial diversity in government advertising and communications. While the report cautiously sidesteps the issue of private sector reform, it's worth scrutinizing as an attempt to create more balance in Ontario's media approach. Over a year-and-a-half the Cabinet Committee Task Force: consulted minorities and their representative organizations; consolidated past reports; interviewed provincial communications directors; reviewed the Human Rights Code; consulted performers, media professionals and ACTRA; commissioned a market research study; and carried out a public opinion poll. This generated a statement which is a useful survey of the barriers which have contributed to the under-representation of minorities in advertising. In fact, it provides a revealing account of how the dynamics of exclusion operate in media communications systems.

Under-representation is the outcome of a chain reaction; each link in the communications process is instrumental and each disclaims responsibility for the final outcome. The client believes that the audience prefers to see white persons in promotional situations; the advertiser provides a promotional strategy tailored to the client's assumptions; the casting agent selects talent consistent with the advertiser's request; talent agents promote performers with a proven track record; and the union supports any of its qualified members who can find employment. The ultimate effect is that minority performers and their promoters are at an overwhelming disadvantage.

The Task Force is perceptive in noting the pivotal influence of industry assumptions. Market research, commissioned on behalf of the Cabinet Committee, provides a major opening. It demonstrates that "it is the mood of the commercial, rather than the colour of the actors, which determines its effectiveness." Audience testing showed no difference in reaction to identical commercials, one using visible minorities only and the other using visible minorities and white performers. An opinion poll also conducted for the Cabinet Committee found significant public support for the portrayal of racial and ethnic diversity in government advertising.



Photo: Zsuzsa Harsman

By discrediting much of the mythology associated with "what the public wants," the Task Force report undermines an ideological barrier which has worked against minorities in mass communications. In so doing, it renders a valuable service.

The acid test of this report, however, is as a workable guide for policy change in the provincial communications machinery. Ontario is a major consumer of media services. In 1980-81, billings for media purchases were in excess of \$25 million for the province's 39 ministries, agencies, boards, commissions and crown corporations. Ontario ranked sixth among top advertisers in 1981, spending more than General Motors. A shift toward employing more minorities in government communications could thus produce substantial benefits.

Yet, it is precisely in the area of policy implementation that the Task Force report is seriously flawed. A number of practical recommendations are made:

- a widespread internal and external commitment should be made that it is Government of Ontario policy to portray racial and



Photo: ZsuZsa Harsman

One of a series of wrappers for blood oranges imported by the private sector.

ethnic diversity in advertising and communications;

- because it is capable of doing so, the advertising industry should be instructed to use visible minority performers in the work it does for government;
- support for the policy on the portrayal of racial diversity, should be part of the performance reviews of advertising agencies and contract personnel that the government uses;
- senior communicators in all government departments should be responsible for implementing the policy on diversity.

These are the essential ingredients in a policy of reform. But they aren't enough to make it *effective*. A strong mechanism to communicate the policy, to provide technical support and to ensure compliance is required. The report recommends that the Task Force that developed the policy perform these vital functions and report its findings to the Cabinet Committee on Race Relations. This is a bizarre and disappointing gesture. The Task Force members are competent provincial civil servants, but they have full time management-level responsibilities in various provincial ministries. How can it be expected that they

would be able to influence policy in the sprawling expanse represented by dozens of provincial ministries, boards, commissions and crown corporations, as an ad hoc Task Force? The Cabinet Committee on Race Relations is itself an ephemeral body. A routine visit to the office of its Chairman produces no written evidence of its mandate, its policy principles, its priorities or its regular meeting times. It too is ad hoc. The machinery to back up the policy on diversity is clearly not intended to create change overnight. In fact it seems to be set up to fail. Not surprisingly, a radio commercial depicting

Charlie Chan was recently produced and aired by Wintario without previous detection by the watchdog body. The ad was later withdrawn in response to public protest.

There is clear evidence that before minorities can be portrayed in a balanced way through the media, governments must act. Both the public and private sectors need to be influenced. This can be done in specific ways through increased recruitment of minority performers, the establishment of measureable standards of achievement for the portrayal of diversity, sensitization of advertisers, technical assistance to producers, constructive dialogue with purchasers of advertising services and effective monitoring. Policies are useful, but they must be supported by an implementation structure with the capability for follow-up.

Regrettably it does not appear that major reform in the communications industry, to benefit minorities, is a government priority. However, as long as imagery replaces substance in measures to increase the media portrayal of diversity, the message is not one which will satisfy minorities or reflect their sense of reality.

Earl Miller is an urban planner in the City of Toronto.

Minority Business

The study *Visible Minority Business in Metropolitan Toronto*, commissioned by the Ontario Human Rights Commission and the summary in the Winter 1983 issue of *CURRENTS* by the author of the study, Dr. Darla Rhyne, has provoked considerable reaction. In continuing this important discussion, the following three articles clearly demonstrate the need to recognize and remedy the difficulties encountered by non-white entrepreneurs which appear to be far more serious than the Ontario Human Rights Commission study suggests.

In Toronto:



Further Comments

Frances Henry

Rhyne's article, *Some Issues Facing Non-White Entrepreneurs in Toronto*, raises more questions than it answers. The general findings are that entrepreneurs, including visible minority members, have had little difficulty in obtaining capital, although a few of the visible minority entrepreneurs thought that their applications were scrutinized more carefully and that they had to put up more collateral than persons from other ethnic groups. Similarly, problems associated with "suppliers, employees, customers and expanding the market"¹ were seen as common to all businesses and were not especially affected by race or racial discrimination.

These findings generally contradict the commonly held view, that visible minority business persons do experience far more difficulty in establishing and maintaining a business than do members of the majority population. The American evidence certainly supports the view, that access to capital is a major problem for Black entrepreneurs and there is no reason to believe that such access is easier to obtain in Canada.

The controversial study has already elicited a highly critical editorial in *Contrast*², as well as an accompanying article in which other entrepreneurs interviewed by the news-

paper maintained that minority business people face a considerable amount of racial discrimination. Reactions in other quarters have been equally critical. If the study is evaluated both methodologically and substantively, its problems can be put into perspective.

From a methodological perspective, the study relied on only 49 minority business people and only 12 entrepreneurs of British or European origins. (One immediately wonders why no Canadians were included in the study!) This small sample was used despite the fact that as of 1973-74 there were at least 213 West Indian owned businesses in Toronto and the number of South Asian businesses has increased substantially in the last few years. And one need only count the number of Chinese restaurants in the city, even excluding other Chinese operated businesses, to get an idea of how many are in Toronto. It is quite obvious that the small numbers sampled in the study can not offer a representative picture of business activity in the city. Although the author cautions that the findings are "not generalizable beyond the experiences of those interviewed," one must ask why a study based on such an inadequate sample could have been released in the first place. Since the article does not tell us how these small numbers were chosen — e.g., was there at least an attempt at random selection — it makes interpreting the results even more difficult.

Secondly, the entrepreneurs interviewed were "well established proprietors of small and medium sized firms." This suggests that only those successful at least to the point of remaining in business were included in the sample. No information on their earlier busi-



Photo: Zsuzsa Harsman

Daniel Choi is the owner of Daniel's Art Supplies.

ness experiences are included, so that we do not know if they had problems earlier in their careers, but were successful in overcoming them. While these methodological problems seriously undermine the validity of the findings, other more substantive criticisms are equally relevant.

Rhyne chose variables from among the six "main aspects of business activity" as defined by A.H. Cole in a book entitled *The Business System*. These six features of business activity may very well reflect the main concerns of mainstream or majority entrepreneurs, but for visible minority members who are for the most part immigrants to this society, other factors or issues may have even greater salience. Success or failure for minority people in business may well relate to many variables, other than those derived from the experiences of majority business people and used by Rhyne in this study.

Poole³, in a study of West Indian entrepreneurs in Toronto found that the key element was the degree to which the potential entrepreneur was able to use and manipulate

his or her kinship network. Poole's analysis, while it did not survey Chinese, Japanese or South Asians, did investigate all the West Indian owned businesses in Toronto in 1973-74. Their experience as immigrant entrepreneurs is probably very similar to the other visible minority groups included in Rhyne's small sample. Poole's analysis revealed a number of other significant factors which influence success or failure in business life. These included:

(1) West Indians were influenced or restricted by the currency regulations of their countries of origin which prevented the outflow of capital. This was particularly true of Jamaicans during the seventies when currency controls allowed only a modest \$200 to be taken out of the country. Thus, access to capital may in certain cases be controlled by the country of origin.

(2) Some West Indian entrepreneurs were successful because they maintained two business outlets, one in the West Indies and one in Canada. Maintaining connections in the West Indies was particularly important for those in the retail food and record importing business,

who must rely on local West Indian suppliers for their produce or records. Often, these local suppliers are kin. Thus, for immigrant entrepreneurs the problems with suppliers have to do with the effectiveness of their networks at home.

(3) The ability to acquire capital through the kin network, usually interest free or at very modest rates of interest, was instrumental to many in Poole's sample. Initial capitalization came from relatives and/or from the entrepreneur maintaining his or her job while the business was operated by relatives.

(4) Maintaining a business operation depended also on the use of unpaid spouses and other relatives for labour, as well as very long hours for the proprietors themselves. By using spouses, children and other relatives, the entrepreneur does not have to pay employees and the net profits of the business are used to maintain the family.

Poole concludes that, "access to capital,

(although he means here through the kin network rather than the bank) and maintenance of networks especially kin-based ones, were of overriding importance in the success of a business; factors of a changing market, location, seasonality and knowledge of business practices were of less importance."⁴ By relying on standard North American factors involved in business success such as those favoured by Cole, Rhyne's study neglects the very special circumstances that ethnic and immigrant people experience in becoming entrepreneurs.

Dr. Frances Henry is a Professor of Anthropology, York University.

1. D. Rhyne, *Some Factors Facing Non-White Entrepreneurs in Toronto*. Currents, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1983.
2. Contrast, January 28, 1983.
3. G. Poole, *Development in the West Indies and Migration to Canada*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Anthropology, McGill University, 1979.
4. Ibid.

In Britain:

Why So Few Black Businessmen?

This was the title of a British report¹ that examined the factors which inhibit the development of ethnic minority enterprises in Hackney, as well as in other parts of the Greater London area.

The major problem faced by black businesses, the study found, is that of capital formation and access to finance. Frequently, lack of personal financial resources of any kind means that black businesses are almost totally dependent on the traditional credit-giving institutions. The research found that communication between the banks and black businesspeople was poor, to the extent that 25 percent of those interviewed actually thought it was a matter of deliberate policy by the banks to impose restrictions on lending to black businesses.

The black businesspeople interviewed

had a relatively high level of education. Despite this, the study indicated that one of the major factors for the respondents' entry into business, was "the considerable need felt to escape from the racial discrimination and frustration that they have experienced in their previous employment."

Another factor which emerged was that very few black businessmen had had any in-depth management experience, and few had previously received expert business advice. Management training and specialist business advice geared to the needs of the minority entrepreneur were identified as priorities for future action. Many of the business people also found it difficult to secure adequate premises. There had been instances of racial intimidation and vandalism.

The Hackney report concludes, that if efforts were made to enable ethnic minority businesses to overcome the main obstacles to their economic development, such businesses would be in a position to make a more positive economic contribution to their local economies and to the wider national economy.

Another study done in the London Borough of Lambeth² confirmed these findings. This study indicated seven areas in



National Film Board

which non-white minority enterprises faced particular difficulties. These were: obtaining finance for start-up and intermediate loans; obtaining premises; lack of managerial experience; lack of knowledge of the assistance available to small businesses; racial prejudice, abuse and harassment; vandalism/burglary and

other security problems; and problems in dealing with the local municipal authority.

1. W.M. Kazuka, *Why so few Black Businessmen*. Hackney Council for Racial Equality, 1981
2. F. Leo, *Ethnic Minorities and Small Firms*. London Borough of Lambeth, 1981

In the USA:

Minority-owned Businesses



Problems and Solutions

In an attempt to attract non-whites into the economic mainstream, the United States government has sought to promote the creation and expansion of minority-owned businesses.¹

This goal has been pursued largely by adding minority components to existing public programmes and creating the Minority

Business Development Agency (MBDA). The programmes primarily have dealt with capital availability and technical assistance.

The Small Business Investment Corporation concept was extended to minorities, through Minority Enterprise Small Business Investment Corporations to obtain the necessary capital. These are essentially venture capital companies, funded by large companies to provide relatively small amounts of money to small businesses.

Limits on "majority" involvement in the "minority" firms and the risky nature of investment in small businesses, however, have rapidly depleted the ability to provide money through these firms.

Technical assistance has been provided through contracts granted to local consultants. These consultants provide assistance

in preparing applications for bank loans, designing control systems and bidding on government contracts.

Another programme is regional purchasing councils, in which representatives of large corporations seek to aid minority businesspeople in obtaining orders from the corporations.

Although the original intent of these government programmes was to increase the number of minority enterprises, both in the areas where they live and in the "larger community," studies have shown that minority-owned businesses are being established within non-white communities rather than in the general community.

There are, of course, obvious reasons for the concentration of minority firms in these communities: past discrimination has limited the choice of location of older firms and many minority firms are retail and service firms which base their business on being able to provide for the special needs and desires of the minority group.

If the above is true, then the likelihood of developing successful minority businesses is closely linked to the growth in the non-white market. These businesses are being asked to compete in a market with a below-average share of the nation's income. For most firms, this means that the chances for success are not good.

The minority business programmes have also been seen as a way to solve the unemployment problem in non-white communities. Minority businesses are therefore

asked to accept more risky locations in order to hire more non-white workers.

The political reality is that "majority" firms are likely to object to any government programmes, which subsidize competing non-white firms. They are more likely to support the financing of minority business development, if these firms are not seen as a direct threat to their own market.

But encouraging non-white firms to compete in the overall market is the only long-term avenue to guarantee success. Not only will the business have a better chance for success, the flow of profits to non-whites would help to reverse the flow of money out of their communities.

Many civil rights groups in the U.S. are turning to the private sector for self-reliance and economic development, because of the limited success of these special programmes and the growing government conservatism in economic and social matters. These groups are also seeking to have companies channel some of their profits into black communities through jobs and support of black-owned businesses.

While the shift in strategy has already resulted in some agreements with private firms, it is recognized that obtaining economic gains by dealing directly with business requires resources and sophistication in the process of negotiating and monitoring.

1. Richard E. Zeller, *Minority Economic Development and the Entrepreneur: Government Policies for the Location of Minority Businesses*. Florida State University, 1981.

UPDATE: MAY 27, 1983

The U.A.R.R. Responds to the Announcement of a Parliamentary Inquiry on Racism

It is not simply a matter of the growing number of incidents involving physical and mental harassment against visible minorities. Serious as these assaults are, they are merely symptoms of a much deeper malaise. Racism is embedded in the major institutions in our society which together shape and impact the lives of every single Canadian.

We therefore hope that this inquiry will focus on these powerful sectors including media, industry,

unions, police, social services, educational institutions and government itself. It is the policies and practices inherent in these institutions which create barriers and prevent racial minorities from achieving equality of opportunity in Canada.

Carol Tator
President
U.A.R.R.

Employment Agencies and Discrimination

A discussion paper

Wilson A. Head

The Ontario Ministry of Labour has recently (December 1982) released a discussion paper, *Employment Agencies and Discrimination*, for the purpose of obtaining comments from selected individuals and organizations on the problem of reducing or eliminating employment discrimination against minority groups in Ontario. The 25 page paper, plus an appendix of several pages, notes that this is the first review of the Ontario Employment Agencies Act since 1971.

The document contains an historical background of Ontario experience, including information on the origins, developments and regulations of employment agencies in the province. For example, the number of private agencies placing individuals in employment in Ontario increased from 41 in 1960-61 to 820 by March 1982. Of these, 95 percent placed applicants in "white collar" occupations only. The various Canadian provinces vary widely in their regulation of employment agencies. According to the discussion paper, there is no regulation at all in the four Atlantic provinces. However, all Canadian provinces and the federal government prohibit discrimination in employment under human rights legislation. Since the various commissions depend on investigating individual complaints regarding alleged discrimination, they are not very effective in preventing what is undoubtedly a serious problem. The Ministry admits that present procedures and sanctions are not very effective.

Five remedial measures are outlined in the paper. These include the education of employment agency staff; self-regulation by the agencies themselves; expanded record keeping; testing and licensing of employment counselors. The limitations of these suggestions are recognized, particularly since only

10 percent of the agencies in Ontario are members of the Association of Professional Placement Agencies. Second, current regulations for record keeping are clearly inadequate. Both the testing and licensing procedures could constitute an effective deterrent against discriminatory practices. However, effective deterrence would require the development of appropriate records which would be useful in documenting discriminatory acts.

In general, the discussion paper presents a fair and objective analysis of the problems, difficulties and advantages of the various proposals referred to above. Admittedly, it would be more difficult, and perhaps costly, if the agencies were required to greatly expand the number and types of information included in their placement and other records. But if the government is serious about discrimination against minority groups, then adequate record keeping must include relevant information from which evidence can be drawn. However, the suggestion, contained on page 23 of the report, that employment agencies obtain and record information on race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, sex, etc...is another matter. In addition to its other dangers, this requirement would be in clear violation of the Ontario Human Rights Code.

While the difficulties of obtaining relevant information regarding discrimination is recognized, other approaches may be equally effective and certainly much less objectionable. For example, one alternative proposal, as the discussion paper suggests, involves the ministry staff contacting a selected group of applicants obtained from the general files of the agency, and inquiring about their experiences as applicants. Their experiences could be compared with those of members of

the majority population.

A second possibility would involve selecting one or more time periods, and comparing experiences with those of the majority group applicants. An investigation and follow-up of unplaced applicants would also elicit relevant information concerning the experiences of white and non-white, or other minority group applicants.

The Ministry must be commended for recognizing and seeking public reactions to this very important policy issue. The paper provides a brief, but nevertheless valuable picture, of the need for careful thought and action. While its proposals for the licensing of counsellors, adequate and appropriate testing of applicants and staff training may have some

limited merit, they do not go far enough. Studies by the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and other groups, clearly indicate that many employers and the agencies who serve them are quite prepared to engage in discriminatory practices against minority groups, in spite of the provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code. Given these conditions, it should be obvious that only strong legislative sanctions, containing clear requirements for adequate record keeping, and proactive enforcement of its provisions, can succeed in removing the blot of employment discrimination from Ontario society.

Dr. Wilson A. Head is Past President of the National Black Coalition of Canada, and the Urban Alliance on Race Relations.

REVIEWS

Multiculturalism in the Workplace

The Role of Unions

Harish C. Jain

The following is extracted from the keynote address given by Professor Harish Jain to the Conference on Multiculturalism in the Workplace: Problems and Opportunities. This conference, held in Toronto on January 7 & 8, 1983, was sponsored by the Canadian Labour Congress, the Ontario Federation of Labour, and the Council of National Ethno-Cultural Organizations.

The labour movement continues to be one of the most potent forces in the campaign for effective human rights legislation in Canada. In 1935 the Jewish Labour Committee and the Canadian labour movement initiated both legislative and educational attacks on

discrimination.¹ The National Committee on Human Rights of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), for instance, set out the rationale for labour's concern with human rights: "Discrimination and prejudice split the union; they are a threat to unity. Discrimination and prejudice are in direct conflict with the underlying principles of the labour movement — which are brotherhood and equality. When some citizens are deprived of their rights, everyone's rights are threatened."

Similarly, the CLC passed an important Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) resolution in 1980. The Ontario Federation of Labour's anti-racism campaign throughout Ontario in 1982, in which I participated as a

speaker, was in keeping with this tradition. In recent years unions such as PSAC, CUPW, NUPGE and OPSEU have made impressive gains for minorities² and women in the workplace.

However, in Canada and in the U.S.A. both women and minorities are severely under-represented in leadership roles. Despite membership increases, women in general continue to play only a minor role in union governance, particularly at the national, regional and federation levels. Unfortunately, the statistics — Canada's CALURA reports and Labour Canada's *Directory of Labour Organizations in Canada* — do not report data on minorities (Jain & Sloane, 1981).

For several reasons, it is very important that minorities and women achieve a larger share of union officer positions. The new frontiers of union growth will be found in service, finance and trade, that is, professional and white-collar sectors, where there are large numbers of women and minorities. The appeal of unions to unorganized minorities and female employees would be greatly enhanced, if they saw that these unions had minority and female officers, that they could participate in

decision-making and that attention in bargaining would be directed towards issues of importance to them. Such issues include language training, accommodation of religious holidays, equal pay for work of equal value and paid maternity leave, etc. Moreover, a core of minority and female officers could be a major force in designing and pressing for legislation (such as mandatory affirmative action, including data collection for minority work force), which would help all minorities and women, both unionized and non-unionized. Finally, a large number of minority and female officers could also serve to increase majority white male union officers' awareness of the problems of racial and ethnic groups and the role of unions in resolving them (Andiappan & Chaison, 1982).

What about anti-discrimination and collective bargaining policies of trade unions? A study (1981) for the Canadian Human Rights Commission indicates that of the 77 unions with agreements covering employees under the federal jurisdiction, only 26 or 33 percent have some form of anti-discrimination clause in their constitutions; 14 of these are international unions and 12 national. I am not implying, however, that all other unions discriminate.

The study also reveals that of the 72 collective agreements examined, only 18, or 25 percent, had specific anti-discrimination provisions.

In my opinion, every contract should contain a non-discrimination clause. It can be used not only to re-inforce existing human rights legislation, but also to provide increased protection. For instance, a provision negotiated by the OPSEU and Legal Services Society (Ottawa-Carleton) states: "The employer and the union agree that there shall be no discrimination against any employee because of their race, creed, colour, sex, age, sexual orientation, marital status, including common-law relationships, nationality, ancestry, place of origin, or political affiliation, or whether he/she has children or physical hardships."

I think it is better to list the prohibited grounds for discrimination in the contract rather than to negotiate a non-discrimination clause with specific reference to the legisla-



Photo: Earl Dotter

tion. This allows the union to go beyond the enumerated prohibited grounds in the pertinent legislation.

A specific non-discrimination provision has other advantages as well. It allows violations of human rights to be pursued through the grievance procedure, which is often cheaper and faster than the legal process. Moreover, use of the grievance procedure does not preclude the use of the legal route if the outcome is unsatisfactory.

My main recommendations to local, national and international unions are these:

(1) Establish procedures to increase the representation of minorities and women in union leadership positions. Without greater representation of minorities and women at the executive level, race, national origin, and sex discrimination by an employer may continue largely unchallenged.

(2) Establish a compliance programme designed to uncover discriminatory provisions in the collective agreements, and discriminatory practices not covered by the agreements. Collective agreements should be specifically reviewed for provisions requiring the use of selection procedures that can adversely affect employment opportunities for women and minorities, such as education and weight and height restrictions that are unrelated to successful job performance.

(3) Remove discriminatory provisions and negotiate minority-oriented clauses. In these times of wage controls in the public sector and concession bargaining in the private sector, there is a discernable trend towards widened information sharing, company-wide quality of life and joint productivity committees, and profit-sharing arrangements (as in the case of GM and Ford; Canada Post boasts of having two union leaders on its 11 member board of directors). It might be possible to remove from agreements provisions which unions believe to be discriminatory and negotiate for provisions of interest to minorities, such as accommodation of religious holidays, affirmative action programmes, day care services, etc.

(4) Recruit minority group members into union membership through contact with their community leaders, organizations and educational institutions. The OFL campaign against

racism provides a good model for all unions to emulate in order to contact and reach minority groups. What is needed is active recruitment. Operation of hiring halls in the case of construction and other craft unions needs to be non-discriminatory as well.

(5) Monitor and be alert to discriminatory practices used in the selection of employees for promotion, transfer and training, and initiate collective bargaining to have such practices cease.

(6) Work with employers to establish and implement voluntary affirmative action plans and seek to include such plans in collective agreements. This will allow unions to establish both an institutional and information base, to secure non-discriminatory employee policies toward their bargaining unit members. For instance, the unions will have data on the race, sex, and national origin of bargaining unit members by job, department or wage level.

How can minorities and women benefit by joining unions?

Unions can be an effective device for raising the wages of minorities and women and for narrowing wage differentials. Ethnic minorities and women can benefit by joining unions in order to raise their wages and to reduce the earnings gap between the minority and majority, and females and males, (Jain & Sloane, 1981).

Encouragement of the unionization of minorities and women will have another effect. Unionization of part of the workforce fosters segmentation of the labour market and over-crowding into non-unionized jobs. Extending the benefits of unionization into the minority workforce may be a way of breaking up such segmentation, and improving the wages of minorities and women (Jain & Sloan, 1981).

If unionization of minorities and women is to expand and if that unionization is to be effective in representing women and minorities, then they must take a more active role in the management of the union, as indicated earlier. From 1970 to 1980 women constituted only 9 to 17 percent of the executive board members of unions, even

though they constituted 29 percent (in 1979) of all union membership (CALURA, annual reports). Obviously, any growth in female union membership would have to be accompanied by an increased role in running the unions; otherwise, it is unlikely that they would share in the benefits of unionization. I suspect the same is true for other minorities, even though no hard data is available on the extent of their executive board membership.

Other benefits of joining unions are the availability of grievance procedure, and fair treatment during probationary period, for example.

Minority group organizations can play a significant role in making their members aware of these benefits and their rights and responsibilities. Thus, unions and minorities can forge an alliance to their mutual benefit.

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1. This was preceded by store windows carrying signs such as "Irish need not apply." Discrimination against Jewish people was rampant. Japanese internment followed in 1942 in the name of wartime security. In 1895 the government of British

Columbia denied the right to vote to Chinese, Japanese and East Indians which automatically barred them from the federal franchise. This restriction was not lifted for Chinese and East Indians until 1947 and for Japanese until 1948.

2. What is a minority? According to Dworkin & Dworkin (1982) a minority group is characterized by four qualities: identifiability (sex, skin colour, eye structure, language or religion), differential power (more powerful group vs. a relatively less powerful group), differential and pejorative or discriminatory treatment (by the dominant majority), and group awareness (perception of common goals to be achieved through co-operation, rather than competition).

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Guides to Non-Discriminatory Communication

The predominantly Western European heritage of Canada is reflected in many aspects of daily living and inevitably, in communication. Communication has the power to reinforce bias. It not only expresses ideas and concepts, but also shapes thought. It reinforces stereotypes. When stereotypic words and images and culturally or racially biased standards appear, they actually perpetrate racial bias.

Stereotypes depriving persons from racial groups of their individuality and sense of self-worth, continue to be perpetuated through

the media. Minority cultures are not presented as being an integral part of Canadian society. The media does not reflect the past, present and emerging realities of Canada's heritage. Examples, illustrations, and the characterization of minorities lack sensitivity and accuracy in reflecting Canada's reality.

A number of guidebooks have been developed, some of which are listed below, which show some of the subtle and not so subtle ways in which words and images can reinforce racial stereotypes, as well as provid-

ing some guidelines by which they can be eliminated.

Without Bias: A Guidebook for Non-discriminatory Communication, is a 77-page paperback that has been compiled for use by all communicators — whether working with businesses, organizations, agencies, or the public media. The first part of the book suggests communication guidelines free of racial and ethnic bias. The second part highlights effects of sexist language and is followed by a discussion of concerns related to persons with handicaps. The fourth part goes beyond written word to visual media and the fifth covers communication in face-to-face meetings.

The following suggested guidelines, which can be applied to all media, from magazines for international audiences to inter-office memoranda, represent some of the issues that are described in this and other publications listed.

Be aware of words, images and situations which suggest that all or most members of a racial or ethnic group are the same.

Stereotypes may lead to assumptions that are unsupported and offensive. They cloud the fact that all attributes may be found in all groups and individuals. For instance, a writer unconsciously may assume that all minority employees or community members are "poor" or "deprived" when actually many are well off and highly educated, just as in the population at large.

For example, many Canadians assume Asians have no problems. Asians in Canada have been forced to form self-help organizations in their communities for survival and protection. Hence, the misconception that Asians "take care of their own." This assump-

tion deprives Asian Canadians of access to needed funds and services.

Avoid using qualifiers that reinforce racial and ethnic stereotypes.

A qualifier is information added that suggests an exception to the rule. For example, an account of an event might read, "The intelligent black students were guests as part of an orientation programme...." Under what circumstances would someone write, "The intelligent white students....?"

To determine whether or not a qualifier has been used, imagine a sentence with the word "white" in place of "black" or substitute an Anglo name for an Asian one. Bias is subtle. The more deeply it has been assimilated, the more difficult it is to uncover.

Avoid racial identification except when it is essential to communication.



Why identify by race? Few situations require it. For example, announcing the appointment of the company's first black executive vice-president might be appropriate in some circumstances, but don't continue to refer to race in subsequent articles unless such information is an important part of the message. Race need not be the hidden subject of every piece that happens

to include reference to a person of minority heritage.

In the guidelines provided in the code of conduct of the British National Union of Journalists it is stated unequivocally: "Only mention of someone's race or nationality if strictly relevant."¹

Avoid using ethnic clichés.

Too frequently, communicators reach to

make a connection that isn't appropriate or is merely trite. Do more homework. Don't let ethnic clichés substitute for in-depth material.

Slant eyes, buck teeth and yellow skin are exaggerations and distortions, and demeaning to Asians. Simultaneously, they can induce a perverted sense of superiority among those not so characterized. Ethnocentric humour is derisive, insensitive and resented by groups.

Terms such as Huns, Krauts, Frogs, Japs, Chinks, etc. are derogatory terms that evolved historically for the express purpose of instigating antagonisms and hatreds during wartime



and for economic and political expedience. Perpetuation of these terms only intensifies and further aggravates the divisiveness and polarity between people.

The media must avoid continuing to reinforce and perpetuate such distorted views of Blacks as happy-go-lucky, clowning, athletic, grinning, soulful; of Asians as sneaky, inscrutable, cunning; of Jews as greedy, smart, pushy, manipulative; and Anglo-Saxons as snobbish, stuffy, sanctimonious, reactionary.

Through superficial knowledge of an ethnic group, cultural differences alone are

emphasized, and people belonging to that group are viewed not as human beings, but merely possessors of negative or exotic qualities. Differences are exaggerated or distorted and myths are created.

Be aware of the possible negative implications of colour-symbolic words. Choose language and usage that do not offend people or reinforce bias.

In some instances the words "black" or "yellow" have, as the language evolved, become associated with the undesirable or negative. While some implications are less openly disparaging, others are extremely offensive to some people. For example, a "black reputation" or "yellow coward."

Be aware of language that, to some, has questionable ethnic connotations.

The fact that a word or phrase is not personally offensive to the communicator may not be an adequate test. Because our language has evolved from a Eurocentric, mostly white culture we see a cultural bias between, for example, a "heroic" cavalry charge and an Indian "massacre."

Avoid patronising and tokenism with regard to any racial or ethnic group.

Minorities should not be presented as if they are a burden to the rest of the world. Rarely are blacks or Asian volunteers, for example, depicted as ministering to old, ill or poor whites.

Non-white Canadians are often asked, "How long have you been here?" or told "You speak English very well." The assumption is that all non-whites are foreign-born, thus denying the history and contribution made by non-whites in Canada.

Grant equal respect to people in visual media, without regard to racial or ethnic group.

Avoid situations that consistently show members of any racial or ethnic group as superior or inferior. No matter how subtle, the implication is that certain racial or ethnic groups belong in particular roles, for example, Asians as loyal, subservient employees. Racial

or ethnic slurs used in cartoons are offensive to many people and are unacceptable put-downs for any audience.

Portray in visual media a balanced presentation of racial and ethnic groups.

The media in general, and the movie industry in particular, with an able assist from television broadcasts of movies (particularly old Hollywood movies) constantly portray racial and ethnic minorities in the most base and distorted characterizations. It is difficult to combat past stereotypes, if the most influential and pervasive medium of them all continues to feature movies which originated those stereotypes.

The distortions also help to create the attitudes that are the basis for discrimination. For instance, they can condition a supervisor to pass over a non-white in favour of an Anglo, because media stereotypes have taught the supervisor to expect neither too much initiative, nor too much resentment from his non-white employee. On the other hand, non-whites have been conditioned not to expect too much from employers. The prophecies fulfill themselves.

Even worse perhaps than racial and ethnic stereotyping of non-whites is the almost total lack of any images which might serve to reinforce positive attitudes — or any attitudes — about non-whites in Canada. For non-whites, watching the television screen is too often like looking into a mirror which returns no reflection. Without that reflection, there can be little affirmation of one's own existence.

Realistic communication should reflect the proportional makeup of the community, not an artificial one. By seeking out and including a visual balance of racial and ethnic groups at a wide range of job levels, the communicator may help to improve that makeup by encouraging persons to aspire to roles that have been previously out of reach.

Adhere to non-discriminatory writing principles in outlines, scripts and other language associated with visual media.

These publications provide a valuable contribution in demonstrating ways in which communicators can avoid endorsing, strengthening, or legitimizing racial bias and

prejudice; and provide some direction by which a balanced and accurate representation of all segments of Canadian society can be attained.

FURTHER READING:

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1. Clause 10 of the code of conduct of the British National Union of Journalists (approved 1975) enjoins journalists not to "originate material which encourages discrimination on grounds of race, colour, creed, gender or sexual orientation."

OTHER GUIDELINES INCLUDE:

- Resist the temptation to sensationalize issues which could harm race relations.
- Press for equal opportunities for employment of non-white staff, particularly in areas of extensive minority group settlement.
- Seek to achieve wider and better coverage of non-white affairs: social, cultural.
- Investigate the treatment of non-whites in education, employment and housing, and the activities of racial organizations.

LIFE ON TELEVISION:
Content Analyses of U.S. TV Drama
Bradley S. Greenberg
 Norwood, NJ: Abler, 1980 204 pages

Narrow, contagious and persistent

In most U.S. households, the television is on for over 6½ hours daily, according to the Nielsen Report on Television, 1981. What messages is it communicating? What themes and values are presented? How are women and minorities portrayed? Does life on television bear any relation to reality?

In order to answer questions like these, Bradley S. Greenberg, professor of communication at Michigan State University, undertook this detailed study of the content of fictional series on commercial TV. And despite its scholarly tone and the profusion of tables and statistics, the content of *Life on Television* is well worth everyone's study. Greenberg and his collaborators have documented the distorted "tunnel vision" of television over several recent seasons, and their findings are often a revelation.

For example, this book is one of the very few to examine Hispanic representation on television. Although Hispanics are rapidly becoming the largest minority in the United States, they're "hard to find" on television, Greenberg reports, and when located, they're male: "women are absent and insignificant." Blacks tend to be younger, funnier, less employed, and poorer than whites on the same show. Women in general are portrayed as dependent, particularly in Saturday morning programming. These programmes offered, "at least as heavy a dose of male dominance as found in the action/crime shows late at night."

Some of the other topics covered include trends in the portrayal of the elderly, sex-role portrayals and sex-typing of common behaviours, sexual intimacy during prime time, and trends in the use of alcohol and other substances on television. There is a list of refer-

ences and also author and subject indexes.

Greenberg concludes by describing television characterizations and interactions as "narrow, contagious, and persistent." He questions the effects of long-term exposure to such imagery, and compares a steady ingestion of standard TV fare to a steady diet of fast foods. Food for thought indeed.

WITH REASONABLE FORCE

*One of a series of programmes on
 CBC's "For the Record"*

Aired March 20, 1983

Writer: Brian Kit McLeod

Director: Peter Rowe

Executive Producer: Sam Levine

A good idea, poorly executed

SIU YING LEE

In the words of Thomas Griffith, writing in *TIME* magazine (September 6, 1982), "To culture critics denouncing TV's wasteland, the explanation is simple: whatever is aimed at mass audiences is inevitably broader, shallower and shoddier."

CBC's recent production, *With Reasonable Force*, fits this description and we could end the matter there. However, that would be unfair to the CBC and the film's producers and directors who have been responsible for some excellent programming and, more importantly, to its audience, mass or otherwise, which has the right to expect better.

Quite apart from its technical and dramatic deficiencies, the film's fatal flaw is that it fails miserably at its stated purpose: to reflect a "slice of reality." From the viewpoint of those who see media, particularly television, as a very powerful instrument for social change, the film is downright dangerous.

The producers have tackled a very sensitive and explosive issue — racism. However, if the rash of criticism from community groups is any indication, they dropped the bomb. What appears at first to be just another second rate CBC production has a more insidious effect. It elbows its way into an arena in which it has no appreciation, thrashes about



Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

widely, throwing clichés hither and yon and leaves the audience blinking.

The film purports to be a "docudrama"—a Doublespeak word meaning neither documentary nor drama—which is a correct appellation since it is indeed neither. Loosely based on a "real life" racist incident in Vancouver, *With Reasonable Force* takes the viewer through a never-never land in which everyone in the white community is a liberal-minded Good Samaritan and the only bigots are a couple of beer slinging punks and the Klu Klux Klan congregation whose most threatening action is to chant, "God give us a true white man." If this is a slice of reality, it is a thin slice indeed. It is simply too facile to blame racism on self-professed bigots. No attempt is made to explore the various forms of institutionalized racism that are far more insidious. Instead, we are left with a bumper

sticker slogan, "Stop racism today; kill a bigot."

The film itself fosters misunderstandings and reinforces stereotypes which are at the root of the problem it seeks to address. Instead of providing an insight into the cultural and social make-up of the Sikh community, the viewer is treated to charming homilies such as, "We are a warrior people," and "We will defend ourselves, as Sikhs have always done," and more gratingly, "That's what happens when you educate women; they become twice as stubborn as a goat and half as useful." Even playing Snakes and Ladders, the grandfather has to declare, "Once a warrior, always a warrior." This is all too reminiscent of "Confucius say." Both represent a blatant refusal by North American society to understand minority groups. By projecting onto such groups a mysterious, other-worldliness,

media allows the so-called "host society" to tolerate but ignore visible minorities. It would be unrealistic to expect that such distorted images be eradicated overnight; but, it is little enough to expect from a film that purports to expose racism by presenting a slice of reality.

Perhaps the producers saw themselves as *agents provocateurs*, acting as catalysts for intellectual debate. This would be fine if we lived in a Pollyanna world in which racism is a pristine after-dinner topic. However, if the producers had taken a (closer) look at the racial tension that sparked the incident which they docudramatized, they would have seen that it was only one symptom of a quiet desperation that eats away at the soul of a community. Nothing is served by polarizing the issue without adequate preparation of the audience. Unfortunately, our world is still a world in which there are those who would be Grand Wizards and those who would draw their sabres to protect a chicken coop. For them, the film was a call to arms. It is doubtful that the producers wanted to be quite so provocative.

Finally, the technical and dramatic

qualities of the film were second rate. The cardboard characters and stilted dialogue ("Does it rain in Vancouver?") are totally incredible. Lack of plot development is painfully obvious. After rejecting help from a Sikh vigilante group because "violence is not the answer," the heroine inexplicably buys a shotgun. The purchase is made immediately after she is refused a bank loan to buy 750 chickens(?). The KKK chant on a hillside and disappear until the lumberyard foreman, alias the Grand Wizard, replies to the observation that minorities are "running things around here" with "We'll see." The film then ends. More than just being an embarrassing effort, the poor production quality reinforces the image that minorities and their issues are second rate. They do not receive the same standard of care that is demanded of "mainstream" programming. We are expected to be grateful for small mercies because the issues are addressed at all. But, even in the world of the broad, the shallow and the shoddy, we can plead, if something is worth doing, it is worth doing well.

Hollywood Fair Share Project

Spurred on by the film industry's indifferent use of black actresses and actors, the NAACP has initiated the Hollywood Fair Share Project. Combining strategies of *protest* and *advocacy*, the NAACP has begun a series of meetings with the major film producers.

In its discussions, the NAACP, generally, focused on:

- Frequent negative stereotypical portrayal of blacks in motion picture feature films, as well as in television serials;
- Too few blacks used on-camera as actors and actresses and behind-camera as technicians and craftsmen;
- The dearth of employment opportunities available to blacks in the studios' other creative activities – including the acquisition, development and production of film properties – and in their non-creative, purely corporate activities;

- Absence of black participation on the studios' corporate boards;
- The nature of opportunities available to minority businesses at the studios.

These issues became agenda points for discussions held by the NAACP with the studios. They also largely form the basis of the Association's two agreements signed so far with the studios, the first with Walt Disney Productions, and the other with MGM/UA. In both agreements, the studios have made commitments to initiate or expand opportunities for minorities in the areas of:

- management & employment opportunities;
- minority business development;
- minority banking;
- philanthropic contributions;
- insurance, advertising and public relations;
- participation on the board of directors;
- film and television production.

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In the next issue:

RACE RELATIONS TRAINING

“Training” has been perhaps the major focus of efforts to reduce racism in Canada. This issue will explore the relevance and effectiveness of training programmes in dealing with the complex nature by which discrimination is expressed.