
CURRENTS

READINGS IN RACE RELATIONS

SUMMER 1984

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ADVOCACY AND
THE MEDIA

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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: Education Institutions; Legislation; Media; Law Enforcement.

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Advocacy and Race Relations

For many people there is an uneasiness in linking the term "advocacy" to race relations. Such apprehension appears to be based upon the analysis that the only way to improve race relations in this country is by pursuing a consensus strategy in which all conflict and controversy must be kept to an absolute minimum.

The recently published Government response to "Equality Now", the report of the Special Parliamentary Committee on the Participation of Visible Minorities, appeared to adopt this position by having as its central theme, "a persuasive approach".

This approach seems to make the assumption that racism and inequality are just a haunting remnant of our flawed past and that continuing progress and movement to a new future will result in the fading away of past injustices.

There is also in this approach a tendency to equate improved race relations with racial peace and harmony. Unfortunately the pursuit of racial harmony means no more than the absence of racial conflict and certainly does not address itself to the eradication of racial inequality.

If racial discrimination is not to be tolerated in society, we are surely obligated to pursue vigorous and unequivocal *coercive* action. The analogy of crime has been used as an activity that we will not tolerate and as such we certainly do not limit ourselves to merely pleading with criminals for more understanding so that they will not be so active!

Rather than dismiss, marginalize and delegitimize advocacy activities in race relations as merely an exercise in negative protest by a few self-selected propagandist pressure groups, this issue of Currents is an attempt to begin to assess the most effective strategies and avenues to effect meaningful change in the decision-making processes of our major institutions. Meaningful change requires having an impact on the nature and extent of discriminatory practices. Such change can either provide the legislative framework which effectively reduces discriminatory practices. Or they may more diffusely contribute to the popularisation of a non-racist culture; or more particularly, they may successfully defend and protect the rights of individuals against discrimination. Advocacy activities in race relations require the implementation of concerted action to confront racism as it occurs in its various forms within the workplace, social groups and in communities and society at large.

Advocacy Activities

Advocacy activities then, have as their purpose the meeting of visible minority group needs, defending visible minorities against discrimination, and combatting institutional racism and equalizing the opportunity levels of all visible minorities.

The types of activities can vary according to an individual's or group's ability to influence decisions. The types of advocacy strategies that can be and have been pursued in race relations in Canada can

perhaps be grouped under the following:

- Protest and defend activities that are intended to expose and oppose racism. This includes such activities as marches, rallies, demonstrations and public meetings.
- Identifying and promoting the special needs of visible minority groups. This includes research and the collection and dissemination of information in the form of studies, reports, briefs and submissions.
- Programme and policy development. Such positive action entails developing specific responses to meeting special needs.
- Liaison with formal institutions on issues relating to the provision of services, resource allocation, etc.

This issue of *Currents*, in looking particularly at the media and advertising industries, describes a number of advocacy strategies that have been pursued that incorporate in varying ways all of these strategies.

Much of community activity has of course been directed at seeking government intervention. The importance of government is that it alone possesses and can pursue unique and distinctive advocacy strategies. These include the capacity for changing legislation, for making structural changes in its operation, for allocating greater resources through policy and programme changes, as well as playing a leadership role in promoting racial equality.

Elections

Clearly then government is a major focus of attention, and perhaps one of the most important individual advocacy strategies is participation in the electoral process.

Participation in elections is beneficial to race relations because it provides an opportunity for visible minorities to articulate their needs and express their views on various policies put forward by the political parties.

Having said that however, what is the causal relationship between votes cast and public policy? The little research that has been done on this question seems to suggest that the influence of electoral politics on government policies may not be as great as perhaps we would like to believe.

The experience of the Special Parliamentary Committee process gives one the uncomfortable feeling that the attempt to involve minorities occurs at a stage too far removed from the positions where power is actually held and that, once more, the appeal to the community only results in the avoidance of real issues, of conflict and change.

Subjects or Participants?

There was an unprecedented interest in the 'ethnic vote' during the recent federal election. The ethnic minority vote is in a particularly influential position because these communities are not randomly distributed throughout the country. Their relative concentration in some centres means they are in a position to influence voting strength and the outcome of elections.

However minority participation without education is in itself insufficient. This was evidenced in a number of examples leading up to the recent federal election where the 'ethnic vote' was being subject to being coopted and misused. The example in some Toronto constituencies of stacking nomination meetings with roving ethnic voting blocs is a travesty of the meaning of political participation.

Such activities encourage the critics of multiculturalism policies who feel that such policies have encouraged the notion of Canadian society on the one hand and the existence of ethnic groups as something independent of their society on the other. Outsiders in their own home, they have been given a "subject" rather than a "participant" orientation. Minority involvement in the federal election seemed to be less a process of encouraging active participation in Canadian society and more the use of minorities as mere objects to be manipulated and subjects for debate.

Politics of Empowerment

Negative experiences of the political process can only engender feelings of political powerlessness and distrust. It is therefore vitally important that the victims of racial prejudice and discrimination are prevented from becoming so disenchanted, so scarred that they will not have the long-range optimism necessary for an enduring commitment to our political institutions.

To conclude on a positive interpretation however, it might be said that the federal election was the starting point — the tremors have started in the coming of political age of minorities. No matter how clumsily the 'ethnic vote' was used, it was a way of bringing people into the political process who had previously been disengaged and powerless.

Growing political involvement is a step toward empowerment. Minorities must not be diverted from the protracted and at times limited results of the political process. But rather than trying to herd the ethnic vote, more consideration should be given to motivation and education. Political power will only increase with an expansion of political consciousness.

TIM REES

Immigrant Women

Congratulations for your issue on visible minority women. It was a telling and shocking account of the socio-economic disadvantages suffered by minority women.

One theme that could and should have been addressed by your journal is one dealing with "immigrant women". This is an issue which requires further consciousness-raising to explore the political and ideological motivation behind the popular use of such term.

Indeed, the label "immigrant women" is too liberally applied to minority or ethnic women who are Canadian even by birth. It served primarily to stigmatize and to institutionally marginalize many women who are made to suffer a double jeopardy based on racism and sexism. It helps make them feel subordinate and excluded from mainstream society as "eternal immigrants" who do not deserve full Canadian citizenship rights and privileges. Consequently, it subjects minority women to exploitation and discrimination, racial, sexual or otherwise, because by its nature, it forces upon these women a kind of deviant and marginal mentality of I-don't-belong which over time becomes self-stigmatization and self-oppression.

Minority women have long struggled for due recognition and respect. Since the women's movement became a political force that changes our national agenda, and since the multiculturalism policy was declared back in 1971, minority women have been forgotten by a predominantly white-middle class feminist faction and by a mostly male-dominated minority faction. They do not seem to be part of the "minorities" or the "women" category targeted for affirmative action programs. None of the federal Multiculturalism Ministers has been a woman. The federal (and many provincial) advisory councils on the status of women is lily-white, and research on minority women non-existent. The Parliamentary Committee on Visible Minorities did not have one single woman M.P. on it, even though there are 15 women in the House of Commons (excluding the Hon. Jeanne Sauvé, who was Speaker at the time).

In Quebec, the situation is worse. Because of a

widespread mentality that all non-French Canadian and non-whites are "immigrants" (or Néo-Québécois), minority women here are further marginalized. Like its federal counterparts, the provincial government here organized in 1982 a conference on and for "immigrant women", which had among its participants many women who are

Canadian-born and who have lived here for many decades. Minority organizations obediently organize "immigrant women's" committees in order to receive provincial funds, even if the programs in question have more to do with racial discrimination and sex discrimination than with immigration or adaptation.

It is my fundamental belief that once an immigrant receives his or her Canadian citizenship after three years of permanent residence in Canada, he or she officially becomes a Canadian. As such, she or he has all the rights and responsibilities associated with a Canadian citizenship. Society has a duty to treat its citizens with such respect and fairness, for collectively, we all have much to gain if our common welfare and richness are fully developed.

There lies our challenge as minority and women's rights activists. We must assume the duty to ensure that minority women are equipped with adequate skills and knowledge to fully participate in society (are you listening, minority and women's organizations?). As long as minority women are labelled and treated as "immigrant women", the process of marginalization is only perpetuated, and they will continue to be assigned to the fringes of existence.

I am a man, and a minority man on top of that. All this debate was not made out of any intellectual exercise in feminism or in male chauvinism. Being a minority rights activist, I have experienced and fought against racial discrimination. Having an aging mother, two sisters in the labor force and a niece growing up non-white in this white society, I have also known what sexual discrimination means. I will fight to the end to ensure that this will be a world where they are judged not by their sex or by their skin color but by the content of their character.

I hope these ideas would help readers of *Currents* more aware of the situation of minority women in our society.

FO NIEMI, MONTREAL

Minorities Have Power

Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut

on Accepting the Urban Alliance - Race Relations Award

The Race Relations Award has been established by the Urban Alliance on Race Relations to honour people in the community who have contributed in a significant way to the betterment of human rights and race relations in Canada.

The inaugural award honoured Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut who has been variously described as a scholar, sportsman, artist, sculptor ... leader, columnist, teacher, writer, preacher ... public servant, statesman and community spokesman. He has devoted most of his life to the promotion of human rights and race relations.

The following is Gunther Plaut's acceptance speech given at the Award Dinner held on March 31, 1984 in Toronto.

It is in the nature of an occasion such as this, that I should be, at least in part, personal in my remarks. I would like to tell you where I came from, and then go on to share with you my vision of where we are and where we might be going.

Fifty years ago, I lived in Germany. I was finishing my law career and ready to submit my doctoral thesis, a final act, for the Nazis had written an effective end to my career. I was not only a person without a country, I was also a person without a profession or job.

I lived in a country that had an essentially homogenous population. There was only one miniscule ethnic minority, which comprised a bare 1% of the population. I belong to that single minority, the Jews who, try as they might, could not merge into the populace at large. They were held up to constant ignominy and eventually suffered persecution, expulsion and extinction. I grew up as a member of that ethnic persecuted minority. I was part of the invisible minority; but

the Nazis put a star on us to make us visible and ready for discrimination. I lived - as a Barbadian phrased it - in the castle of my skin. I suppose that my whole belief structure and my social imperatives have derived from that experience.

I saw a world divided into good and evil. It was a simple philosophy. Amongst the good people were those who voted for peace and democracy. Needless to say, we were on the side of the good. On the other side were the Nazis who tried to destroy us and everything that belonged to German culture; who spent huge amounts of money in order to prepare for the next war; and there were those who accepted war itself as the culmination of their personal dreams. No, there was no problem for the young growing man to distinguish between who was good, and who was evil. It was with this simple philosophy that I came to the new world - to America first, to the land of opportunity, and I knew that in this land, the good far outweighed the evil.

A Continent of Opportunity

It *was* a land of opportunity, even for the young immigrant who came with 40¢ in his pocket, and a high school acquaintance with the English language. This would be my continent of opportunity. It took a while for me to find out that this opportunity might exist for me and many others, but not for everyone, that there were millions of people to whom the door was literally closed, that racism was built into the very fabric of this society. Blacks, Orientals and Native people were the prime targets. All of them were weighted down with stereotypes: Blacks were lazy, Natives were alcoholics, and Orientals were devious. Jews were also on the list of racial stereotyping; we were clannish, we were clever, and we were Christ killers.

I was very new in America, and I accepted almost everything, even that undercurrent of anti-semitism that I found, for in comparison to what I had left, it was like nothing. Opportunities did exist. So I plunged from the beginning into the political mainstream of the land, bringing to it my liberal background and convictions nurtured on the social and ideological battlefields of the old country. I demonstrated against fascists' involvement in the Spanish Civil War and picketed Dow Chemical because it provided the wherewithal to the fascists. I was slated to address a student rally even with my poor English, and participated in planning for the meeting – only to find out that all our meetings and all our plans were worthless, for there were other people who ran the show. They got their word from far away in Moscow, and even in the heart of America, in Cincinnati, Ohio, I found myself a potential target of their policies. That was my first brush with realities that could not be seen but were real. Nonetheless, I opened my eyes and looked about.

My wife and I discovered that there were two Chicagos where we lived in our first pulpit assignment, that of the Whites and that of the Blacks. The two met rarely; the ghetto on the south side was real and to break out of it was in those days a rarity, and for most an impossibility.

I joined the army to fight the Nazis – and found the army to be lily-white, except for a few Black regiments. Throughout my service of three years, I never served in the same group with Black soldiers, who were *allowed to die* for their country, but were denied a fair and equal share in molding its policies.

I found that even in my infantry unit, there was considerable sympathy for the Germans, for their orderliness, for their bureaucratic efficiency, for the fact that Germans had cold and hot running water in their houses, which, compared to what we had found in France, was clearly a sign of cultural superiority. That sentiment prevailed until we opened the first concentration camp. Then we saw another reality, hidden away from the world, disbelieved at first, and now revealed in its utter depravity. We saw the ultimate inhumanity of human beings. We found thousands of corpses unburied, the remainder starved and at the edge of death. I, the starry-eyed optimist, was once again confronted with the realities of life and swore an oath to myself that the rest of my efforts would be dedicated to securing not only for my own people, but for human beings everywhere, a decent and fair break in life.

I was fortunate, for my next post in the United States brought me to Minnesota, a state of free-wheeling and open idealism, with men like Hubert Humphrey, Eugene McCarthy and Fritz Mondale, who charted a new course for us and opened up the doors of opportunity for everyone.

Canada

And then I came to Canada. The civil rights and anti-Vietnam battles were raging in the United States, but human problems do not know of national borders; they have a habit of spilling over. Thus, in a natural way, I brought the prophets of American Black liberation to my congregation in Toronto: Martin Luther King and Coretta, Ralph Abernathy, the leaders of the Urban League, and Harry Belafonte. At the time of Selma, Alabama, we marched with 400 clergy from First Metropolitan Church to the American Consulate. At Maple Leaf Gardens, we picketed against the appearance of Governor George Wallace. (May I say in retrospect that one of the greatest victories of my rabbinate was to move the members of my congregation to picket the Gardens, and to stand at Yonge and Carlton Streets and collect money for the Martin Luther King Fund).

It was at that time that we began to think about Canada as a land that was not exempt from racial prejudice, that had all too long been held in the fetters of old privilege. It was this same land in which Jewish refugees could rarely gain admittance, when even one Jew was considered too many. For it was only a few decades before that

Jews and Greeks could not get insurance in this city; and that Jews could not obtain residency in any hospital, however excellent their medical record. There were many areas of the city in which they could not rent or buy, until the late and beloved Keiller McKay came along with his famous decision, opening up the city to all its inhabitants. Here, as in so many other parts of the world, Jews were bellwethers of progress. Where they could cut a swath into the thorny bushes of prejudice, others could follow. Bora Laskin was the prime example. But let me say with as much emphasis as I can: now that Jews have largely made it, many of them have forgotten how it was once for them, and are no longer ready to battle for the rights and privileges of all. This remains our task as it is the task of every citizen, a social challenge, and a religious obligation for Jews as for everyone else.

Sad to say, that while we *seem* to have made it, there are still segments of the Canadian population that view us with the eyes of yesterday, who mouth such epithets as Zionism is racism, and mean thereby to put the tag of prejudice on Jews instead of on themselves. There are those, like a certain teacher in Alberta, who deny that what I saw with my own eyes ever took place. Here in the city of Toronto, at High Holy Day Services, from the latter years of my rabbinate until today, police are present to protect the worshippers. To be sure, we have learned to handle it, we have long experience, and it is my faith and my belief that Canada can handle it, too, if only it wants to.

Racism

So I have come full circle to a few remarks on where we are today. I make these remarks in a personal capacity and not as a member of the Human Rights Commission. It has been my privilege to have served it for six years – rich and fruitful years, no so much as in what I have accomplished, but rather in what I have learned.

Above all, I have learned racism exists and is well in Canada, and is real. No, it is not of the Nazi type, nor of the U.S. variety. But it is real for all too many – from Natives to Blacks, to people of Asian background. We are fortunate that here in the city we have no permanent ghettos of any significant kind nor large tenement districts that have deteriorated. We are fortunate because the temper of the whole community is good. There is widespread decency. The majority of Ontarians do believe that good citizenship requires one to

be tolerant and fair. But while racism is not usually in the open, old stereotypes still abound. A few years ago we tried to persuade executives of advertising agencies to give a fair break to people of visible minorities, even though Americans have already shown that it is good business, not bad business to do so. Slowly, all too slowly, breakthroughs are at last occurring in Canada as well, but there are still many who are unconvinced, and who do not think that discrimination is a real threat to our society.

Whose Responsibility?

It is my unshakeable conviction that Canada will never reach its full potential until we draw all of our citizens into the vortex of its opportunities – for their sake, and even more so for ours. I believe education for good citizenship is just as important as, if not more important than, the knowledge of algebra. I see a great deal of goodwill, but I do not see visible minorities in highly visible positions of government, to say nothing of industry and commerce. Everyone is hesitant to use the term affirmative action, but the time to bite the bullet is now, before discontent becomes a cancer in our society. I believe the control of hate literature and systemic discrimination is more important than the rigorous control of parking regulations. I applaud the Commons' Special Committee on Visible Minorities for its forthright support of this principle, for its many important recommendations and especially its call for compensating our Japanese citizens for the wrong done to them in World War II. And, I applaud Mr. Lawlor's report on group defamation made to Mr. McMurtry.

It is the responsibility of government and its agencies to procure opportunities for all, *but it is also the minorities themselves that must resolve to use their will and at the same time, their political, economic and social power to achieve their aims.* For one insidious effect of racism is that those who are discriminated against have a tendency to internalize it: if others treat me as inferior, I must be; if others deprive me of power, I must be powerless. That is true in politics above all. Minorities have power if they would only use it. It is the very essence of democracy that every group fights for what it believes is best for itself and the country. If that is true for farmers or for labour, if that is true for Westerners or for Maritimers, it must be true for people of any minority who want to push for true equality of opportunity. It is good

for them, it is important for them that they do so with all the strength of which they are capable. For when we do this, we are fighting for Canada. The strength of Canada is its people, not the wealth of its resources; it is human beings above all.

This is a good country. Law is held in high esteem; we have a Charter of Rights and Freedoms; we have a Human Rights Code in our

province; and we have people who believe that these rights are the foundation of our society. So let us devote our energy to making these rights real for all people. Prejudice against a single person diminishes us all. We are in truth one family, and as one family we must care for each other and work for each other.

RABBI W. GUNTHER PLAUT

Urban Alliance Race Relations Award Medal

Designed by: Irene Chu

The ultimate goal in race relations – to achieve racial equality and harmony – is depicted in the medal by the symbols of 16 men and women encircling the Maple Leaf. The number represents the 16 points on the compass thus reflecting the cosmopolitan make-up of the people of Canada. The choice of 8 men and 8 women of equal status emphasizes our effort towards equality between men and women as well as equality among all races.

Race relations work has never been smooth, nor easy; it takes courage, patience and unwavering determination to overcome the many hurdles and obstacles that lie in the path towards racial harmony. The many difficulties and hardships are represented here by the angles and edges on the outside of the medal.

At the centre is our National Emblem – the Maple Leaf – around which all Canadians gather and rally expressing our aspirations that Canada be a leader in Race Relations.



"Here's The News" *

Hamlin Grange

That one statement has become an integral part of our vocabulary and our psyche. It holds a note of finality and, for some people, self-evident truth. For better or for worse, we have come to believe in and depend upon the people who deliver the news. A growing number of us, however, are having doubts about accuracy and fairness of news gathering and delivery. This is particularly true in the area of race relations and news concerning non-whites in Canada.

It was no surprise then that the working session was an opportunity for participants to vent their frustrations at the resource people — Ray Gardner of the Toronto Star and John McFadyen of radio station CKFM. The exercise, however, was useful because it provided a necessary forum that eventually "both sides" agreed is needed and should be fostered.

Specific strategies were identified that media and the non-white community can do to alleviate the problem. Interestingly enough both sides are not that far apart. The media want to treat people fairly; after all, it's poor business to deliberately offend an audience. The community also wants the same thing. Where they part company, at times, is how to accomplish the task.

Advisory groups can be helpful to media outlets. Not only do they provide the media an accessible pulse to the community but they also bring the community into the newsrooms. As sophisticated as we may be as users of the media, most of us don't know how it works. In fact, people within the media are sometimes just as baffled. Unfortunately advisory groups are often established to deal with a crisis. Media should be approached during "good times" to set up such groups.

Regulatory bodies like the Ontario Press Council are good access points that the community can use. There was a suggestion that a meeting be held with the Press Council to discuss appoint-

ments to the board and other issues. Again, the time to do this is before a crisis develops.

As with any process there are certain buzz words that crop up; one of them is "sensitization." Sensitivity training has been called for on numerous occasions for media employees. The problem is, an agreement can't be reached on exactly what they should be sensitized about and how it should be done. Generally, the media think they are pretty sensitive to issues. That may be so, but they visually tend to be overly sensitive whenever they are out under the microscope. They simply don't like that. After all, they say, we don't make the news, we reporters are notorious for being "observers" rather than active participants. Things don't happen to us, they say, they happen to the people we report about.

Some media prefer the "big stick" approach with internal enforcement of policies and guidelines. The community on the other hand prefers a more formal and structured approach with specific staff training development at all levels of a corporation. This is an impasse that must be bridged if constructive dialogue is to begin.

That dialogue, however, must be with as broad a cross-section of the media as possible. Too often we use our "friends" in the media as resource people. They may be helpful but they are often times the converted and we don't get the strident views from the detractors. I believe that is crucial in any real attempt to advocate against the media. We must approach those in the media we see as diametrically opposed to our views and get them into the process. Again I suggest this should happen before a crisis develops and both sides feel threatened by the process.

Hamlin Grange is a reporter with Global T.V. and Vice-President of the Urban Alliance on Race Relations.

* The following two articles review workshops looking at strategies by which minorities can effect the decision-making process in the mass media and advertising industries. These workshops were part of a special conference, "Minorities in the Media: Advocacy Strategies" sponsored by the Urban Alliance on Race Relations, and the Ad Hoc Media Committee, December 3, 1983.

Visible Minorities in Advertising

Susan Eng

"One of the most powerful instruments in communicating attitudes and influencing behavior is the media. Advertising, in particular, has been described as one of the most pervasive forms of communication in our society." So began yet another multiculturalism conference. It does not matter which conference. Unfortunately, pious rhetoric is endemic in such quarters. What we hoped to achieve with the "Advocacy in the Media" conference was to leave the rhetoric behind and concentrate on examining particular concerns and developing the skills necessary to remedy the problems.

The approach was to identify the problems by examining current advertising in the print and broadcast media, to suggest remedies in terms of specific changes, to identify the change agents and more important, to identify their interests and finally, to develop strategies to stimulate needed change.

Identifying the problems is not as easy a task as it might seem. In fact, if recognition is half the solution, it is the larger half. The examples and case studies can be divided into three main categories — those which show no representation of visible minorities, those which misrepresent or represent visible minorities in stereotypical roles and those which provide appropriate representation.

Ads with Inadequate Representation

Ads showing no visible minorities illicit the usual response. Many people, both whites and non-whites, would see nothing wrong with them. However, if a white person were shown an ad from *Ebony* magazine that uses only Black actors, the immediate comment would be that the viewer did not feel included. This was the exact point made to the advertising industry in our meetings with them, namely, that what has been the norm has blithely excluded an increasingly larger segment of their potential market. To the extent that

advertising purports to represent "real life" or to encourage certain lifestyles, the message to visible minorities can be interpreted as, "You don't belong!"

The inability of advertisers to understand the issue was evident in the saga of the Ontario government's Energy ads. In response to the criticism that there was a lack of visible minorities in the "Conserve it, Preserve it" commercials, the Ministry of Energy prepared a new commercial using non-white actors but in the final print, only their hands were visible or they were seated in the back of the bus (ahem) where they could not be distinguished. After another round of talks, the same film was used. However, a few minor editing changes revealed the Asian woman attached to the hands and the Black person in the bus was seen getting aboard. When congratulations were offered to the actors who appeared in the final print, they advised that they had been involved in the original filming. Clearly, deliberate editing decisions had been made to exclude the visible minorities.

Stereotypical or Negative Representation

Negative stereotyping is more obvious. The proverb-slashing Charlie Chan in the Wintario radio commercials was an easy target. The commercial was part of a "Great Detectives" series and featured the Hollywood Chinese accent and dialogue that is unmistakably identified with Charlie Chan. No one would seriously deny that the Charlie Chan caricature ridiculed and belittled Chinese North Americans. Nor, on the other hand, is it an excuse to say that the advertiser was merely using an historical image. A progressive society learns from its mistakes.

The commercial was first brought to our attention by the Toronto radio station, CKFM, which had decided not to air the commercial because it was offensive and, after some publicity surround-