

CHAPTER 1

ON HATE AND SOCIAL EDUCATION

In the desert
I saw a creature, naked, bestial,
Who, squatting upon the ground,
Held his heart in his hand,
And ate of it,
I said, "Is it good, friend?"
"It is bitter—bitter," he answered,
"But I like it
Because it is bitter,
And because it is my heart."
—Stephen Crane

In the past five thousand years, much of humankind has progressed from the hunting and gathering stage to an age of space exploration, from using onions and abracadabra to using electrocardiographs and chemotherapy. We also have become more efficient in expressing and acting upon our fears, prejudices, and rivalries. The subspecies *homo sapiens sapiens* has replaced stones and clubs, spears and arrows, with gas chambers and thermonuclear devices designed for total annihilation.¹ But whether one is killed by a stone, potassium cyanide, or a nuclear device is of little consequence. Death is finality.

Today racial and ethnic prejudices, discrimination, scapegoating, and other forms of aggression continue to characterize the human experience. The irony of history has been the failure of so many to realize, as did Stephen Crane in the above poem, that the destruction of other humans is a form of suicide at the subspecies level.

Social and behavioral scientists attempt to examine and explain these self-destructive experiences with heuristic models based upon inferences of statistical probability drawn from many examples. Poets and novelists observe the same social phenomena, but their reflections, based more upon introspection and personal encounters, attempt to create an emotional and intellectual experience for the individual reader and the larger society.

In education, social studies instruction became one logical component of the curriculum for the study and examination of critical social issues with a goal, among others, of creating humane and intelligent decision makers. Yet, on the whole, some of the very basic roots of social, political, and economic conflicts have been continually ignored within many social studies curricula. All too often, children receive instruction on the story of humankind without addressing the fears, hatreds, and frustrations that often underlie the causes of conflict at personal and group levels. If social studies education is to contribute toward improving interpersonal and intergroup relations, the learning experiences of students must somehow penetrate the superficiality of the content in current curricula. It should seek to explicate the root causes of social conflict.

There is no one intersection of time and geographical place where hate prejudice and racism dominate the history of humankind. These phenomena are intricately woven into the tapestry of the human experience. The lives of Leizer Richtol, Eugene Williams, and others illustrate these phenomena. Their stories provide the backdrop to our treatment of the ever present, ever raging violence that teachers must somehow address. And address it they must, if we are to achieve a more civilized and humane world.

Before the Holocaust

The Ukrainian village of Pyasechno was part of Russia until after World War I. During the war it was taken by the Germans and eventually turned over to Poland. It was a small village with about seventy-five families. The houses were simple, made of wood, and usually consisted of a kitchen, two small bedrooms, and a living room that was used as a sleeping area as well. Here in Pyasechno resided young Leizer Richtol with his mother, sister, and grandmother.

Like so many others in the early twentieth century, Leizer Richtol's father, Aaron, had left his family behind in Russia as he attempted to establish himself in America. Finally, in 1914, the young Leizer, his mother, Chia, and three-year-old sister, Leba-Devorah, obtained their ship cards and were preparing to join Aaron in a world far beyond their imaginations. But the cousins, Kaiser Wilhelm II and Tsar Nicholas II, had other ambitions, and their war interfered with the Richtol family's plans.

The Night of Bayonets

For two more years, as the war raged on the Eastern front, the Richtols remained in Pyasechno. On the evening of Wednesday, February 2, 1916, eleven-year-old Leizer, his mother, and Leba-Devorah were in their frame home entertaining relatives and guests. The events of the night were a living nightmare to Leizer and remain to this day indelibly etched in his memory.

At night, soldiers would come, stalking and attacking villages and homes. On this night, they came to Pyasechno and stormed into our home. All told, we were twelve that night. The soldiers tied our hands and ravaged the house, taking what food and other items they thought useful. They were careful not to shoot us because it might arouse the authorities. Instead, they ran their bayonets through my little sister, mother, relatives, and guests. I could hear whimpering, cries, and screams. Suddenly, there was a sting and the hurt of a bayonet cutting into my side, another stab entered my back, and another, and again until I had received six wounds. I began gasping for air. A bayonet had penetrated one of my lungs.

As we lay bleeding, the soldiers threw straw onto the floor and set fire to the house. They left. My grandmother, my mother, Chia, and sister, Leba-Devorah, died that night. Three generations murdered in an instant that seemed like forever.

Cousin Label managed to free himself from the bonds. Noticing that I was alive, he untied me. The flames licked upward over the furniture and wall, blocking our passage to the door, so we escaped out the window. Label managed to assist six others out. Some died later from their wounds.

A Ukrainian peasant, our neighbor, took us in, and it was not long before the police arrived. But before their arrival, I remember the peasant's son standing over me taunting, "You are going to die, and I shall have those fine shoes you are wearing." After the police came, we were taken to the hospital in Kovel [30 kilometers south-east of Pyasechno] and treated for our wounds.²

According to Leizer Richtol, "The police were Germans. The killers were Russians. In those days the German authorities protected us. They were good to us." German forces had invaded this area and had set up a temporary military government until a Polish civilian government could be established. Nevertheless, small bands of Russian soldiers and stragglers behind German lines preyed upon Jews—objects of hate.

Following an investigation, the German authorities learned that the Richtols' neighbor had collaborated with the Russians and encouraged them to attack the Richtol house. Three of the Russians were captured, brought to trial, and found guilty of murder. Leizer reflected, "I was able to witness their execution. As the firing squad's volley echoed in the cold air, there was no feeling, no joy. Their execution did not and could not return my sister and mother."

As the ravages of World War I continued, Leizer and his cousin moved to Chevel, just a few kilometers west of Pyasechno. There they remained with Leizer's uncle. By 1919, the civil war or counter-revolution between the communists and the anti-communists was flaring in Russia, and in this year alone, Jews were the target of 1,326 pogroms in the Ukraine.³ Thousands of men, women, and children were indiscriminately murdered in their homes or as they fled. Murdered—not because they were communists or anti-communists—but because they were members of the Mosaic faith, pariahs among Christians in Eastern Europe.

That is how it was, before the world had heard of concentration camps, gassings, and ovens. The hate and violence directed against Jews during this period was rooted in centuries of anti-Semitism. The same sets of prejudices and stereotypes that led to the murders of these people in the Ukraine would spawn the Holocaust. The Holocaust was not an anomaly—not a quirk that appeared and passed in the history of Europe. It followed in logical sequence from a history of hate prejudice and persecution.

After the Holocaust

World War II had just ended, and the world was shocked, no, horrified, as the camps of Belsen, Buchenwald, Flossenbergl, Mathausen, Natzweiler, Neuengamme, Ravensbruck, Dachau, Treblinka, Maidanek, and Sachsenhausen were opened. The mass murder of six million Jews, as well as six million other nationals and ethnic minorities, seemed almost unimaginable. Near the town of Oswiecim (Auschwitz), Poland, alone, more than three million Jewish children, women, and men had been murdered—systematically exterminated. One might suppose that such murder—such hate would have been cause for a world to hang its head in shame. However, this was not so.

On July 4, 1946, in the city of Kielce, less than ninety miles from Auschwitz, a rumor is spread by nine-year-old Henryk Blaszc-

zyka. He claims he saw Jews kill fifteen Christian children and that he, himself, had been held captive but was able to escape. The murders allegedly were for ritual purposes—the age-old blood libel that had haunted Jews in the Middle Ages. Police are called to investigate while the townspeople are steaming with hate and delirious for revenge.⁴

Before the police can dispel the false rumor, Jews are attacked with knives and clubs. Eventually, the young Henryk will admit that he was told by a Polish peasant to spread the rumor, but it comes too late for the forty-one men, women, and children murdered—this, less than eighteen months after Auschwitz has been liberated. The massacre at Kielce is not an isolated event. Sporadic anti-Semitic outbursts occur throughout Eastern Europe during this post-Holocaust period.⁵

More than fifty years later, and across the Atlantic, the blood libel cropped up in America in the form of a flier. (See the following page.) It did not result in mass demonstrations or murders, and this must be an encouraging sign. But the fact that it did appear at all should signal a warning that racial and ethnic hate prejudices are no less a critical issue today than twenty, fifty, or one hundred years ago. The roots of prejudice endure from generation to generation, across cultures and national borders. The United States is no exception.

The American Dilemma

Leizer Richtol survived the pogroms and slaughter before the Holocaust. After making his way back to Kovel, where he remained for another year, he managed at age sixteen to arrive in America in late 1921. While trying to survive in eastern Europe, he had no knowledge of the racial and ethnic hatreds permeating the United States. He only knew what he had heard people say, that it was a place where one could be free and safe. Indeed, this is the same image that the majority of Americans have been taught and have shared since the founding of the nation.

In this bastion of Western democracy, it is difficult to conceive of a people dedicated to the propositions of equality and human dignity on one hand, and actively engaged in genocidal acts and inhuman indignities on the other. Yet, this is exactly what Gunnar Myrdal perceived as the “American Dilemma”.

The “American Dilemma” . . . is the ever-raging conflict between, on the one hand, the valuations preserved on the general plane

WHERE ARE OUR Missing Children?

"Each year, 50,000 Children are Murdered within 48 hours of abduction." (*Major City Police Dept.*) This amounts to 137 children per day in America.

"If a Jew does not drink every year the blood of a non-Jewish man, then he will be damned for eternity." — (*National Review, March 8, 1985.*)

"As the blood is drained into cups, the Jewish leaders raise the cups and drink from them, while the Gentile Child slowly expires in an atmosphere of unrelieved horror." (*History of the Jews, Mullins.*)

"I believe our Children are being Sacrificed in Ritual Murder." — (*Chief of Detectives, Metropolitan County Sheriff's Dept.*)

WHERE ARE OUR Missing Children?



JEWISH RITUAL MURDER

Flier accusing Jews of ritual murder, St. Cloud, Minnesota area, circa 1990.

which we shall call the American Creed, where the American thinks, talks, and acts under the influence of high national and Christian percepts, and, on the other hand, the valuations on specific planes of individual and group living, where personal and local interest; economic, social, and sexual jealousies; considerations of community prestige and conformity; group prejudices against particular persons or types of people; and all sorts of miscellaneous wants, impulses, and habits dominate his outlook.⁶

Racism and other prejudices combined with greed to virtually destroy Native American nations and establish one of the most ex-

ecrable forms of captivity—chattel slavery. Some can attempt to explain away the earlier acts committed against Indians as events which must be set in the perspective of the time and beliefs of a people who did not understand the unity of the human species. Certainly much has changed since 1872, when, for example, Francis Walker, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, described his policy regarding the treatment of American Indians. According to Walker,

There is no question of national dignity, be it remembered, involved in the treatment of savages by a civilized power. With wild men, as with wild beasts, the question whether in a given situation one shall fight, coax, or run, is a question merely of what is easiest and safest.

No one certainly will rejoice more heartily than the present Commissioner when the Indians of this country cease to be in a position to dictate, in any form or degree, to the Government; when, in fact, the last hostile tribe becomes reduced to the condition of suppliants for charity. This is the only hope of salvation for the aborigines of the continent. If they stand up against the progress of civilization and industry, they must be relentlessly crushed. . . . They must yield or perish; and there is something that savors of providential mercy in the rapidity with which their fate advances upon them . . .

Whenever the time shall come that the roving tribes are reduced to a condition of complete dependence and submission, the plan to be adopted in dealing with them must be substantially that which is now being pursued in the case of the more tractable and friendly Indians . . . This is the true permanent policy of the Government.⁷

Such a policy statement, along with massacres of American Indians, can be neatly set aside by explanations that the white dominant group really did not understand the Native American. But how do we explain the textbook account of the Osage Indians published in 1967, some ninety-five years after the Walker policy?

They were said to be greasy, and disgusting objects with dirty buffalo robes thrown over their shoulders. The women, if possible, were more filthy and disgusting than the men. The Indians never cleaned their food before cooking and eating it. Wild game would often be cooked and eaten with the blood and dirt of the hunt still upon it.⁸

Nor can we dismiss the constant racial and ethnic violence which has persisted throughout the twentieth century. The events of today or any day, for that matter, are rooted in the events of the past. In order to develop a perspective of the intense hostility encompassing race relations in America, it is necessary to examine the history of racial violence. Yet when we merely look at the statistics of murders, riots, and lynchings since the Civil War, they fail, as statistics often do, to describe what racial violence means at a personal level. Therefore, notwithstanding that to describe all of the events in detail would be too much to ask, I shall provide a select few for purposes of illustration. These accounts may provide a better insight in helping us realize more fully from where we have come in the arena of intergroup relations.

Racial Conflict Across America

CROSSING THE LINE

It is Sunday, July 27, 1919. While Leizer Richtol is struggling to remain alive and join his father in America, a black youth, seventeen-year-old Eugene Williams, is trying to keep cool on a hot and muggy Chicago summer afternoon. For Eugene and others in the Midwest metropolis, Lake Michigan is a recreational oasis. Eugene enters the lake from the 29th Street beach at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Although he swims opposite the "white" section of the beach, he is not concerned. He is some distance from any white bathers, and no one seems to mind. What Eugene does not know is that four black youths have crossed the imaginary line into white territory on the beach.⁹

White bathers immediately order the youths to return to their "Negro" section. The youngsters retreat, only to return shortly in greater numbers and accompanied by adults. The two races clash, first limiting their violence to verbal threats, then escalating with volleys of stones. As one group attacks, the other retreats and then counterattacks. Some of the stones are pitched beyond the beach, and Eugene, now apparently aware of a bad situation, begins to swim further out into the lake to avoid being pelted. He grabs onto a railroad tie floating in the lake. A white youth enters the water and begins swimming toward him. Eugene lets go of the drifting wood, takes a few strokes, and disappears beneath the surface.

Although a coroner's jury will eventually determine that the youth had drowned out of "fear" of swimming toward the shore, a

rumor spreads among blacks at the scene that a white man had stoned Eugene and caused his death. Immediately, black bystanders accuse a white man of hitting Eugene with a stone. A policeman, called to the scene, refuses to arrest the accused, and for about two hours, the situation remains tense but not violent. The rumor regarding the alleged stoning of Eugene and the refusal of the officer to arrest the accused now spreads throughout the nearby black neighborhood, bringing more people to the scene. At about this time, the officer arrests a black man on the complaint of a white. Infuriated blacks immediately attack the officer; shots are fired by James Crawford, a black, who is then felled by the return fire of a black police officer. Fights break out along the beach and rumors spread among both racial groups. Indiscriminate attacks by both whites and blacks break out along Chicago's south side and continue into the early morning hours.¹⁰

By 3 A.M. five whites have been stabbed, and one has been shot. Seven blacks have received knife wounds, and four are shot. Full-scale rioting continues throughout Monday and Tuesday. The rioting spreads from South Chicago to the predominantly Italian west side. By Wednesday, the death toll reaches thirty-one, with 500 wounded; 6,000 soldiers of the state militia are called into action to quell the riot.¹¹ Before the rioting ends on Saturday, August 2, thirty-eight people are killed, 537 hurt, and 1,000 of Chicago's citizens are left homeless by fires.¹² All for crossing an imaginary color line.

Immediately following the Chicago riot, described by John Hope Franklin as "the nation's worst race war"¹³ to that date, rioting broke out in Knoxville, Tennessee; Omaha, Nebraska; and Elaine, Arkansas. The Knoxville and Omaha riots included lynchings, which have played a major role in the history of American race relations.

THE OMAHA RIOT

Will Brown, black and forty-five years old, is arrested for allegedly assaulting a white, nineteen-year-old woman, Agnes Lobeck. Brown is placed in the county jail, located on the top floor of the Douglas County courthouse in Omaha.¹⁴ On the afternoon of Sunday, September 28, 1919, a number of white citizens appear at the courthouse to demand that Brown be turned over to them. Omaha's mayor, E. P. Smith, had rushed to the scene at the first sign of trouble and is in the courthouse as the crowd's number increases to five thousand. While Mayor Smith and County Sheriff Michael Clark

discuss the situation, some whites break into stores, stealing weapons and explosives. Others stop a streetcar and drag blacks onto the pavement where they are beaten. Rumors begin to spread, and one rumor that Dean Ringer, the police commissioner, had shot a young child, so excites the crowd that some take off to the commissioner's home with yells to lynch the commissioner.¹⁵

At 10 P.M., the mayor exits the building and begins to appeal for calm. Before he can back away, Smith is seized and dragged down the street. Amidst cries of, "Give us the key to the jail," "If we can't get the nigger, we'll lynch you," "He's no better than the nigger," and, "He's a nigger lover," some members of the mob place a rope around the mayor's neck and hoist him on a streetcar pole. As blood begins to exude from Mayor Smith's mouth, police arrive and cut the rope. Smith falls to the ground and is carried to a patrol car. He is rushed to the home of a surgeon. Contrary to early reports that he had been killed, Smith survives the attempted lynching.¹⁶

At about the same time that members of the crowd had taken the mayor, someone had pitched a fire bomb through a window of the courthouse. This was followed by cans of gasoline. Within minutes, the first four floors of the building are ablaze. The police retreat to the fifth floor as rioters enter the building. When some of the crowd try following the police, the officers open fire, causing a momentary retreat.

During this respite and with the fire still not under control, panicky prisoners attempt to throw the accused Brown to the mob. The police restrain this attempt. For an hour the situation is one of continued mob cries and sporadic shooting from both sides. Firemen are unable to battle the flames due to threats and attacks. Then at about 11 P.M., a small band of rioters manages to climb into the building through a window and reach the fourth floor. At this time, they storm the stairwell to the fifth, and someone, either a fellow prisoner or guard, shoves Brown toward the attackers who pull him outside.¹⁷

By the time the mob gets its first view of Brown, he is entirely naked. He is grabbed and dragged across the street from the courthouse. Someone places a rope around his neck, and he is hung from a lamp post. Just as he is hoisted up, shots are fired into Brown's body. The shooting continues for some time until the body has been riddled by over one thousand bullets and shotgun pellets. Not content with the hanging and shooting, the mob cuts Brown's body down from the post and his remains are burned. With only the torso remaining, they then string it up to a streetcar pole where it is

left.¹⁸ The next day, federal troops are called into Omaha and much of the rejoicing over the lynching among many participants turns to fear as arrests are made and more threatened.¹⁹

The events leading to this lynching and the lynching itself were not extraordinary. As noted earlier, the Omaha lynch riot was only one of several which took place during the late summer and fall of 1919. On October 6, 1919, two black men, Jack Gordon and Will Brown, were burned at the stake and riddled with bullets near Lincolnton, Georgia. Following the burning, leaders of the mob insisted that the lynching in no way reflected hostility toward other blacks in the community.²⁰

Since the Civil War, there have been approximately five thousand lynchings across the country.²¹ Many of these have been community affairs; others have been by small bands of individuals or hate groups. The Omaha riot and lynching was not dissimilar from many of these.

TURBULENT SIXTIES

By the middle of the twentieth century, the struggle for racial and ethnic equality became known as the civil rights movement. The Supreme Court decision in *Brown versus Board of Education* (May 17, 1954), the Montgomery bus boycott in December of 1954, and other subsequent Supreme Court rulings and demonstrations thrust the American Dilemma before the public. It could no longer be ignored. The civil rights movement reached its climax on Tuesday, August 27, 1963, with the March on Washington. Blacks, Whites, Hispanics, Native Americans, Protestants, Catholics, Jews, the poor and the wealthy—more than two hundred thousand attended, demonstrated, and heard the address of Dr. Martin Luther King. As Dr. King stood before the Lincoln Memorial, he delivered the famous “I have a Dream” speech. It is interesting to note, however, that he did not begin with “I have a dream,” As can be seen below, he stated, “I *still* have a dream.” One cannot help but to reflect upon the effects of what seemed to be a protracted and often frustrating effort to achieve equality.

I say to you today, my friends, though, even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. . . .

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia sons of former slaves and sons of former slave owners will be able to sit

down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even in the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

•••

When we allow freedom to ring—when we let it ring from every city and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the Negro spiritual, "Free at last, Free at last, Great God a' mighty. We are free at last."²²

For millions of Americans, Dr. King's words were a source of inspiration. For others, they were a source of increased bitterness. Among some of the latter, the expression "Martin Lucifer King" was used to describe the civil rights leader. Even twenty-five years later, pejorative references to King can still be found. In the *Aryan Territorial Alliance News Letter*, Dr. King is referred as ". . . the big black nigger."²³

But racist reaction did not need to wait twenty-five years. Less than three weeks after the March on Washington, on the morning of Sunday, September 15, children at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, were just completing their Sunday school lesson when an explosion ripped through the classroom. Windows blew out, parts of walls and ceiling tore away, and chairs and tables went flying in every direction. Parents and friends rushed to aid those who had been in the wake of the blast. There the lifeless bodies of four young black girls were found. At least fifteen others had been hurt.²⁴ Fourteen years later, on Monday, September 26, 1977, Robert Chambliss, a former Ku Klux Klan member, was charged with the bombing and was subsequently convicted on four counts of first degree murder.²⁵

The year following Dr. King's "I have a Dream" address, Congress enacted the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that prohibited various forms of discrimination. In the same year, urban violence erupted in at least seven cities—New York, Rochester, Jersey City, Paterson, Elizabeth, Chicago (Dixmoor), and Philadelphia. Five people were killed, 952 injured, and 2,484 arrested. Over 1,000 stores were damaged.²⁶

The Watts Riot. In Los Angeles on another hot summer's night, August 11, 1965, Lee Minikus of the California Highway Patrol arrests Marquette Frye for driving recklessly and under the influence

of alcohol. While Ronald, Marquette's brother, fetches his mother in order that she might claim the car, Minikus is joined by another patrolman. When Ronald and his mother return to the scene, Mrs. Frye chastises Marquette for drinking. At this moment, Marquette becomes hostile and resists arrest. Ronald joins his brother in resisting the officers. Now, Mrs. Frye, who a moment earlier had expressed disdain for Marquette's behavior, jumps on an officer's back. The scuffle ends with the arrest of all three Fries.²⁷

By 7:25, twenty minutes after Marquette's arrest, 1,000 or so citizens of the black area of Watts converge on the scene. As the police prepare to leave, someone spits on one of the officers. The officer moves in amongst the crowd; there is name-calling, threats, shoving, and pushing. A woman and a man are arrested. Again the police attempt to leave, but now one stone, then another, is hurled, rumors spread, and rioting ensues.²⁸ At riot's end, the results of Watts were similar to that of the Chicago riot forty-six years earlier. Thirty-four persons were killed, 1,032 reported being injured, and 600 buildings had been damaged by fire—200 totally.²⁹

Newark, Detroit and the Nation. In the summer of 1967, rioting occurred in numerous cities throughout the United States. In Newark, New Jersey, 23 persons were killed during the rioting. Of these twenty-one were black, six were women, and two were children.³⁰ In Detroit, rioting resulted in 43 deaths.³¹ Thirty-three were black and ten white. The deaths in Newark and Detroit accounted for approximately eighty percent of the fatalities from riots. As violence erupted throughout the United States, President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed a commission to investigate the civil unrest. Two days later, on July 29, he issued Executive Order 11365 directing the Commission to carry out its task and to report its findings.

The *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (also referred to as the Kerner Commission report) listed 164 disturbances during this hot summer of Sixty-seven.³² Following an exhaustive investigation, the Commission stated in its summary:

This is our basic conclusion: Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal.³³

Almost a decade earlier, the Commission on Civil Rights (originally set up by President Harry S. Truman in 1948) had reported:

What is involved here is the ancient warning against the division of society into *Two Cities*. America . . . must succeed

where others have failed. It can do this not only by resolving to end discrimination but also by creating through works of faith in freedom a clear and present vision of the City of Man, the one city of free and equal man envisioned by the Constitution.³⁴

The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders concluded with an excerpt from one of its early witnesses, Kenneth B. Clark:

I read that report . . . of the 1919 riot in Chicago and it is as if I were reading the report of the investigating committee on the Harlem riot of '35, the report of the McCone Commission on the Watts riot.

I must again say in candor to you members of the Commission—it is a kind of Alice in Wonderland—with the same moving picture re-shown over and over again, the same analysis, the same recommendations, and the same inaction.³⁵

Then in its own words, the Commission finishes its report with the following:

These words come to our minds as we conclude this Report. . . . we have uncovered no startling truths, no unique insights, no simple solutions. The destruction and the bitterness of racial disorder, the harsh polemics of black revolution and white repression have been seen and heard before in this country.

It is now time to end the destruction and the violence, not only in the streets of the ghetto but in the lives of people.³⁶

The decade of the sixties witnessed more civil rights legislation than at any time since the end of slavery. But this period of turmoil also included the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, and Robert Kennedy, as well as numerous racial riots, murders, and bombings. The friction created by the American Dilemma seemed to be overshadowed by other events. King, the main civil rights leader, was dead, and his assassination began a chain of events that led to the decline of the movement. With the advent of the seventies, public attention was focused elsewhere, on Vietnam and Watergate. As the decade of the eighties approached, the stigma of having lost a war, international terrorism, hostage taking, inflation, and a recession dominated the national scene. Racial violence occurred intermittently but not on the same scale as during the sixties.

A Kinder, Gentler America

Except for an occasional riot, the American public was virtually unaware of continued racial and ethnic murders, beatings, vandalism, and cross-burnings. When George Bush became President in 1989, he spoke of a kinder, gentler America. In this final year of the eighties, anti-racial and anti-ethnic prejudices accounted for no less than eight murders, eight bombings, eight arsons, 51 assaults (at least 20 by Skinheads), 30 cross-burnings, and over 110 acts of vandalism.³⁷ Of these, only two killings made national news and raised the hue and cry of increasing racial hatreds. These were the black powder-pipe bombing deaths of U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals Judge, Robert S. Vance in Mountain Brook, Alabama, on Saturday, December 16th, and Robert Robinson, a black attorney and alderman in Savannah, Georgia, on the following Monday.

Finally, on Wednesday, April 29, 1992, south central Los Angeles exploded into the worst rioting that had occurred since the sixties. The spark that ignited this riot was the acquittal of four Los Angeles police officers who had been charged with beating Rodney King. King had led police on a high speed chase. Upon apprehending him, King was not only beaten excessively, but someone actually taped the beating on a home video camera. When word of the acquittals was publicized, violence erupted in the south central area of Los Angeles.

The pattern was somewhat similar to riots of the past in terms of looting, burning, and fatalities. The rioters appeared to consist primarily of Latinos and blacks. Vengeance was exacted upon Korean store owners, whites, and other Latinos. A major target, at least verbally, was the police. By the time the riot was quelled approximately forty-five individuals had been killed and between 1500 and 2000 wounded. More than 1,200 businesses were destroyed.³⁸ Looters carried clothing, furniture, food, and anything else that they desired.

Since a number of looters (as many as four in five according to some estimates³⁹) came from other areas of the city, and a number of whites appeared among them, the rioting appeared to be less racial. The fact is that racial and ethnic hatreds and its long range effects were indeed at the core of much of the violence. The violence was not limited to south central Los Angeles. Fires, rioting, and robberies spread to Hollywood, Beverly Hills, Westwood, and Koreatown. In downtown Los Angeles, violent demonstrations also occurred at the city hall and police headquarters. Beyond

Los Angeles, violence broke out in Las Vegas, Atlanta, and other cities.

One important aspect of the Rodney King case and riots is how Americans responded to both the verdict and the violence. Most Americans regardless of race and ethnicity indicated that the verdict of acquittal was a miscarriage of justice. But the responses of blacks were mainly emotional and tended toward overgeneralizing. Norman Amaker, a professor of law at Loyola University (Chicago), may have epitomized the feelings of many blacks and other minorities when he commented: "African-Americans will draw from this the lesson we've always known. Our lives aren't worth shit."⁴⁰ On the other hand, Roy Innis, Chairman of the Congress of Racial Equality stated,

I don't believe that this one incident—the beating of Rodney King in Los Angeles and the miscarriage of justice . . . will turn back the real social revolution that we should be so proud of . . . I'm convinced that the romance America had with overt racism is over. . . . The justice system has protected and shielded us from the worst effects of prejudice and hate in the '50s and '60s. The judiciary has been the bulwark of black freedom in this country. Black America, and the rest of America, needs to hear from honest black leaders who will not attempt to alibi for the pillagers.⁴¹

Although Innis's remarks may appear more rational, he seemed to represent a minority view within the black leadership as well as the rank and file. Resentment and racial hatreds seem to have a stranglehold on race and ethnic relations in America, and violence continues through to the present. Could this be the kinder, more gentle world of which Mr. Bush spoke?

Let America Be America Again

Approximately 3,000 years ago, Koheleth wrote, "That which was, will be, and that what was done, it will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun."⁴² In 1938, Langston Hughes wrote:

Let America be America again
Let it be the dream it used to be.
Let it be the pioneer on the plain
Seeking a home where he himself is free.

(America was never America to me)

•••

O' let my land be a land where Liberty
Is crowned with no false patriotic wreath,
But opportunity is real, and life is free,
Equality in the air we breathe.

(There's never been equality for me,
Nor freedom in this "homeland of the free.")

Say who are you that mumbles in the dark?
And who are you that draws your veil across the stars?

I am the poor white, fooled and pushed apart,
I am the Negro bearing slavery's scars.
I am the red man driven from the land,
I am the immigrant clutching the hope I seek—
And finding only the same old stupid plan.
Of dog eat dog, of mighty crush the weak.

•••

Let America be America again—
The land that never has been yet—
And yet must be—the land where every man is free.⁴³

America, a nation struggling to be free, and yet, somehow tied to an unforgiving past, a confused presence, and an uncertain future. All because of an imaginary line? Because of rumor, a spat? Or is it because of what we find in the hearts, minds, and hands of people regardless of when and where they are?

The roots of hate extend deep, round about the sinew and marrow of mankind—from the villages of Poland and Russia to the major cities and hamlets of America, from the now-vacated concentration camps of Europe to—it seems—every inhabited place on this planet. The legacy of the twentieth century will be whatever people select—from advanced technologies to landing men on the moon and beyond. But no civilized people can ignore the fact that genocide is a concept coined in this century. Now there is a label by which to categorize the mass murders of the Armenians, Jews, Kampuchians, and others—whose death tolls defy comprehension. A civilized people cannot ignore the groundswell of prejudice and the need to reduce these hatreds.

Any attempt to resolve the problems of prejudice and its manifestations—acts of bigotry—will require a thorough and somewhat painful exploration into the nature of prejudice and racial and

ethnic violence—past and present, near and far. And perhaps most painful of all, it will require a look at who and what we are, as a society, as individuals, and as teachers. If this is not done, then surely there will be “nothing new under the sun,” and we shall continue to be faced with “the same old stupid plan of dog eat dog, of mighty crush the weak.”

Teaching About Hate

Some Missing Pages of History. Racial and ethnic prejudices and hatreds are deeply rooted in the American experience. To a large extent, these prejudices, hatreds, and acts of discrimination and violence form some of the missing pages of our history texts.

In 1629, the Massachusetts Bay Charter provided the framework for a colony which was to discriminate on the basis of religion.⁴⁴ In 1647, the colony prohibited Catholics from settling in Massachusetts Bay and called for the execution of any Jesuit who, once having been ousted, should return.⁴⁵ On the other hand, in predominantly Catholic Maryland, the Toleration Act of 1649 provided freedom of religion to all Christians,

noe pson or psons whatsoever within this Province . . . belonging professing to believe in Jesus Christ, shall from henceforth bee any waies troubled, Molested, or discountenanced for or in respect of his or her religion nor in the free exercise thereof . . . thereunto belonging nor any way compelled to the beleife or exercise of any other Religion against his or her consent, . . .⁴⁶

Nevertheless, this act was repealed after the colony became predominantly Protestant. Rights of Catholics were eventually restored, and only Jews and Unitarians were left without civil rights until the Blasphemy Act extended protection to all Christians.⁴⁷ It was not until 1826 that Jews were enfranchised.⁴⁸

Historical figures, indeed American heroes, whom school children are taught to admire, held strong racial and ethnic prejudices. Inventor Samuel F. B. Morse became a staunch anti-Catholic and proposed that, to stem the threat of foreign Catholic immigrants, a law be passed that “No foreigner . . . ever be entitled to the right of suffrage.”⁴⁹ Concerning American Indians, Teddy Roosevelt remarked, “I don’t go so far as to think that the only good Indians are dead Indians, but I believe that nine out of every ten are, and I

shouldn't like to inquire too closely into the case of the tenth." Then he added, "The most vicious cowboy has more moral principle than the average Indian."⁵⁰

Before becoming president, Woodrow Wilson cautioned against diluting the white race in America by allowing southern and eastern Europeans into the United States.⁵¹ Later as president, Wilson was invited to a private showing of *Birth of a Nation*, possibly the most racist anti-black film ever produced—depicting blacks as over-sexed savages and the Ku Klux Klan as the savior of white civilization and women. After the showing, he reportedly commented, "It's like writing history with lightning, my only regret is that it is all so terribly true."⁵²

During the early 1940s, Earl Warren, who, as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, was to become the target of racists and segregationists, sounded the alarm of having Japanese-Americans on the western coast of the United States. Years later, Warren conceded, "I have since deeply regretted the removal order and my own testimony advocating it. . . . It was wrong to react so impulsively. . . . It demonstrates the cruelty of war when fear, get-tough military psychology, propaganda, and racial antagonism combine with one's responsibility for public security to produce such acts."⁵³ At this juncture, we well may ask how many children have been given the opportunity to learn about the treatment of Japanese Americans and to reflect upon the guilt expressed by such as Warren? Furthermore, how can children be expected not to repeat past mistakes and injustices if they are not privy to them?

In addition to neglecting these facts, most history texts fail to provide any comprehensive treatment of the social history of the United States. As the United States heads toward its third century, in all likelihood we can expect history textbooks to become more encyclopedic regarding details of earlier events and problems. Furthermore, given the commercial nature of texts, it is not surprising that they ignore less favorable aspects of the American experience. Few, if any nations, find it appealing to hang out their unsightly past. Consequently, when social problems are examined by students, it will be left to their teachers to compile, construct, and execute appropriate curricula on these issues.

PREJUDICE AND THE SOCIAL STUDIES

Indoctrination versus Freedom of Choice. Teaching about prejudice brings two goals to mind. One includes having students learn

concepts and facts regarding prejudice and its effects. The other goal includes reducing prejudiced attitudes and changing behavior in a positive direction with regard to minorities or other groups. This latter goal implies a possible change in values and attitudes. In a multiethnic, democratic society, the teaching of values and attitudes presents a dilemma. It is a dilemma between the individual's right to have and maintain a set of personal values, regardless of social acceptance and expectations, and those values which society supports. The following is an attempt to identify this dilemma and to see how social studies educators have attempted to come to grips with it.

A primary role of education in any society is the socialization of children. This is nothing more nor less than indoctrination—a term which many American teachers associate with autocratic or totalitarian regimes. But the fact is that all societies indoctrinate. As Marion J. Rice notes,

All societies indoctrinate—both in and out of school. This is the process of socialization. Socialization is prerequisite for an individual to live in a society; the vast majority of individuals must agree upon the rules and observe them or there would be no society. Undoubtedly there are many changes which need to be made in American society. But public schools are held in trust for all citizens, not just for the advocates of the status quo or of reform.⁵⁴

In a homogeneous folkculture, there is no dilemma on what should be included in the educational curriculum for children. The members of such societies share the same *Weltansehen*, and divergence from the norm is controlled by a variety of social pressures placed upon the individual. Furthermore, contact with the outside world or with other cultures is often highly superficial and diffusion of cultural traits into the society are carefully screened. Finally, folkcultures are maintained by the lack of social change. The folkculture in its purest form is so alien to Americans that life within such a culture is almost inconceivable.

In a multicultural, democratic society there is a constant dilemma as to what children should learn and how they should be socialized. The dilemma would not be as acute if the society were democratic but not multiethnic, or if it were multiethnic but not democratic. An autocratic state can resolve the problem of diverse values and customs among different ethnic or racial groups by segregation and other acts of discrimination. A democratic society