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New York, NY: The Council on Interracial Books for Children, Inc.,
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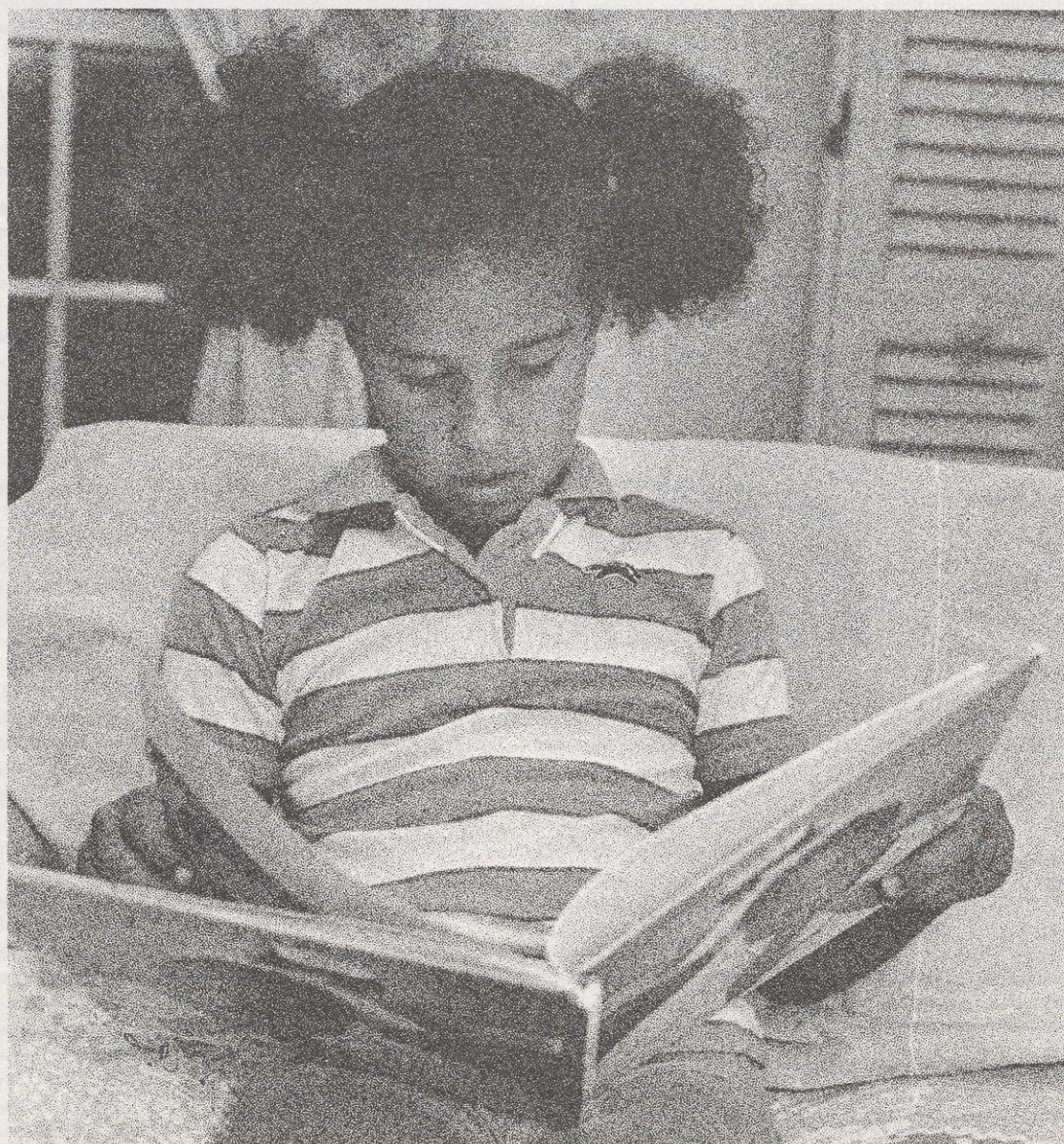
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INTER RACIAL BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

BULLETIN

VOLUME 16, NUMBER 7, 1985

ISSN 0146-5562



Children's Books on African American Themes

BULLETIN

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Photo by Hildegard Adler

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Library Literature

The Bulletin is available in microform from University Microfilms International at 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106 or 18 Bedford Row, London, WC1R 4EJ, England. (Single back copies should, however, be ordered from the Council.)

INTERRACIAL BOOKS FOR CHILDREN BULLETIN is published eight times a year by the Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1841 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023. © 1985 by the Council on Interracial Books for Children, Inc. In the U.S., institutional and contributing subscriptions are \$18 a year; individual subscriptions are \$12 a year; single copies are \$2.50 each for regular issues, \$3.50 each for special double issues plus 50¢ handling; bulk rates available upon request. For rates outside the U.S., see back cover. A subscription form appears on the back cover.

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20th Anniversary Year



The National Women's History Project: (L.-R.) Molly Murphy MacGregor, Bette Morgan, Mary Ruthsdotter, Maria Cuevas (Photo: Lori Rodrigues)

Providing Materials, Vision and Inspiration . . .

In 1977 when we began to search for materials to promote the multicultural study of women's lives, we looked to the Council on Interracial Books for Children. You not only provided essential guidelines and materials, most importantly you provided vision and inspiration.

We're sure that our organization is not the only one to benefit from your pioneering work combatting race and sex bias in children's books. Many of the other groups which we routinely work with in this shared effort for equity concur that CIBC has set the standard for excellence in this area. We appreciate your work tremendously.

On behalf of the National Women's History Project, we congratulate the CIBC on its 20th anniversary. We are stronger and better able to do our work because of the ongoing work of the Council.

Molly Murphy MacGregor
Executive Director
National Women's History Project

Successful Efforts Praised . . .

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Council on Interracial Books for Children, I would like to congratulate you for your successful efforts to increase public awareness of problems of racism and sexism as they appear in books written for children.

We are becoming increasingly aware of the problems associated with the production of children's textbooks and feel that the work your organization has done has established a model for the industry and those in education most concerned with the free exchange of ideas and information. Our children need to see justice in the works prepared for them in schools and your agency has done a great deal to insure that all children will continue to benefit.

Terry L. Baker
Associate Dean
School of Education
Hofstra University



Excellent Resources . . .

On behalf of Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., I would like to extend sincere congratulations to the Council on Interracial Books for Children on the occasion of its 20th anniversary.

The excellent resources provided by the Council have been of invaluable help to the national Girl Scout organization as we strive to meet our corporate goal of developing projects and materials to eliminate racism in all its forms. In addition, your ongoing support of our mutual goals has been deeply appreciated.

All of us at Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. look forward to continued collaboration between your fine organization and our own.

Frances Hesselbein
National Executive Director
Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.

Books on African American Themes: A Recommended Book List

By Beryle Banfield

During the late 1960s and 70s, the demands raised by Civil Rights groups for a more equitable representation of the life, history and culture of African Americans created a climate that publishers could not afford to ignore. As a result, we saw a significant increase in the publication of works by African American authors.*

Many of these authors wrote out of love and concern for the Black child and sensitivity to the literary and emotional needs of *all* children. They created a substantial body of work of superior literary quality to supplement that produced by older, established writers such as Arna Bontemps, Langston Hughes and Shirley Graham.

The eighties have been characterized by a greatly lessened emphasis and interest in Civil Rights, as well as determined moves by many governmental bodies to wipe out the hard-won gains of the Civil Rights era. Unfortunately, publishers have responded by failing to encourage the development of new African American writers, failing to publish new works by established authors and, equally troublesome, allowing works of recognized literary merit to go out of print. (This has been particularly distressing in the case of materials — such as the Crowell biographies — which were developed to provide information on African American heroes for younger readers. Fortunately, some of the Crowell biographies now appear under the Harper & Row imprint.)

The selected bibliography below contains many books that are now out-of-print. Some, like Langston Hughes' *The*

Dream Keeper, June Jordan's *Who Look at Me*, Countee Cullen's *The Lost Zoo* and the biographies by Shirley Graham, can rightfully be called classics. (The writer, who is fortunate to have these in her possession, can attest to the enthusiasm with which teachers and students respond to these materials.) Fortunately, these out-of-print materials can

be obtained from many libraries and second-hand bookshops. Interested parents and teachers may want to contact the original publishers, indicating their interest in having the materials available once more.

Note: The grade levels given are only suggestive, as materials may appeal to children on many different levels and some children enjoy having books that they cannot read themselves read aloud.

A Steady Decline

Rudine Sims, in an insightful essay entitled, "Children's Books about Blacks: A Mid-Eighties Status Report" (*Children's Literature Review*, Vol. 8, edited by Gary Senick; Gale Research), reports:

"Since the mid-70's, the number of available children's books dealing with Black life has declined steadily. *The Black Experience in Children's Books*, a comprehensive bibliography published about every five years that lists in-print children's books about Blacks, reflects some dramatic statistics: the 1974 edition listed approximately 950 titles, but the 1984 edition cites only about 450 books. Approximately 100 of the books in this latest edition are titles newly published between 1979 and 1984, and only 80 of the new books published between 1980 and 1983 — an average of 20 per year — focus on American Blacks. If publishers release approximately 2,000 new children's books each year, as the bibliography's compiler, Barbara Rollock, notes, only about 1 per cent of the children's books published in the first half of the 80's focused on [the] Black experience in the United States."

African American History

100 Years of Negro Freedom by Arna Bontemps. Greenwood, 1980, gr. 7-up, o.p. Extremely well-written history of African Americans since Reconstruction.

Black Power U.S.A. The Human Side of Reconstruction 1867-1877 by Lerone Bennett, Jr. Johnson, 1964, gr. 8-12, o.p. An exceptionally fine resource that sets forth with brilliant clarity the issues involved in that important period of African American history.

To Be a Slave by Julius Lester, illustrated by Tom Feelings. Dial, 1968, gr. 3-6. Well-selected first-hand accounts of the slavery experience.

African and Caribbean Folktales

The Adventures of Spider by Joyce Arkhurst, illustrated by Jerry Pinkney. Little, Brown, 1964, gr. k-3. Retelling of six tales about Anansi, the trickster-hero of Asante folktales.

Beat the Story-Drum, Pum-Pum written and illustrated by Ashley Bryan. Atheneum, 1980, gr. k-4. Selection of African folktales in which the author is careful to maintain the rhythm and flavor of the originals.

The Dancing Granny written and illustrated by Ashley Bryan. Atheneum, 1977, gr. 2-4. Retelling of a West Indian

*We also saw a spate of books on Black themes that were not written by African Americans. These were, to put it kindly, often far from authentic — but that's the topic of another article.

folktale in which granny's dancing skill enables her to outwit Anansi, the trickster-hero.

The Days When the Animals Talked (Black American Folktales and How They Came to Be) by William J. Faulkner. Follett, 1972, gr. 2-6, o.p. Lively retelling of African American folktales.

The Knee-High Man and Other Tales by Julius Lester, illustrated by Ralph Pinto. Dial, 1972, gr. 2-4. A retelling of animal tales from the repertoire of African American stories.

The Ox of the Wonderful Horns and Other African Folktales written and illustrated by Ashley Bryan. Atheneum, 1971, gr. 4-6. Good selection of five African tales retold and attractively illustrated.

The Third Gift by Jan Carew, illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon. Little, Brown, 1974, gr. k-3. Beautifully written tale about the Juba people and how they came to realize what one should value most in life.

The African Connection

Africa Dream by Eloise Greenfield, illustrated by Carole Byard. Harper & Row, 1977, gr. k-3. Through her dream, a young child is made aware of her African roots. Sensitive drawings complement the mood of the text.

Black Child by Peter Magubane. Knopf, 1982, all grs. A selection of pictures by the South African photographer which dramatically captures the painful impact of apartheid on Black children of South Africa.

Jambo Means Hello: Swahili Alphabet Book by Muriel Feelings, illustrated by Tom Feelings. Dial, 1974, gr. k-2. Text and attractive pictures provide an excellent introduction to an important section of the African continent.

Moja Means One: Swahili Counting Book by Muriel Feelings, illustrated by Tom Feelings. Dial, 1971, gr. k-2. Handsomely produced volume which introduces the Swahili words for numbers.

Playtime in Africa by Efua Sutherland. Atheneum, 1962, gr. k-2, o.p. The simple but lyrical text by the noted African writer, coupled with the excellent photographs by Willis Bell, makes this a fine introduction to childhood activities in Africa.

Biography/Autobiography

Booker T. Washington: Educator of Hand, Head and Heart by Shirley Graham. Messner, 1955, gr. 6-up, o.p. Excellent biography of one of the most



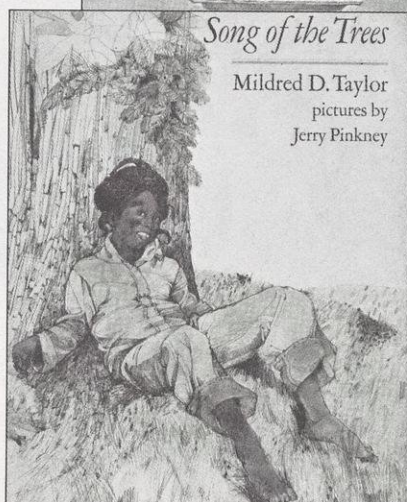
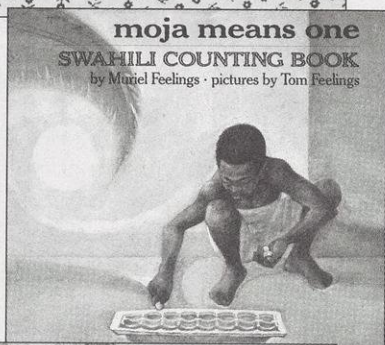
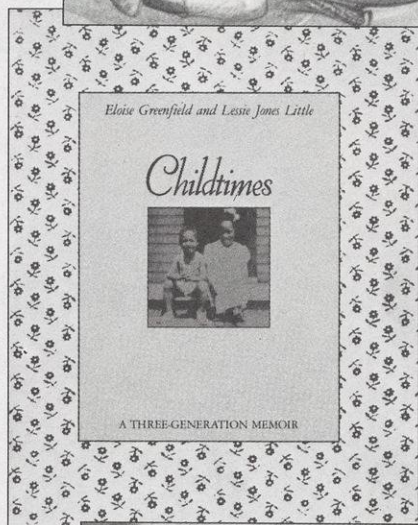
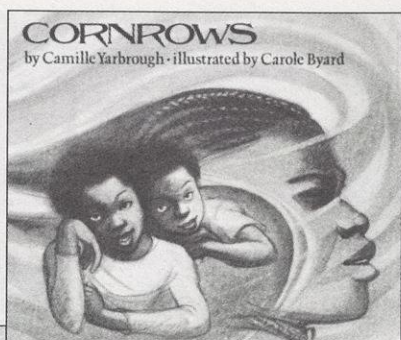
Hildegard Adler

powerful African American leaders of his time.

Childtimes: A Three Generation Memoir by Eloise Greenfield and Lessie Jones Little with materials by Pattie Ridley Jones, illustrated by Jerry Pinkney, plus family photographs. Crowell, 1979, gr. 5-up. Eloise Greenfield, her mother and grandmother dem-

onstrate the continuity of the African American family through the experiences of three strong, loving and talented women.

Don't Ride the Bus on Monday: The Rosa Parks Story by Louise Meriwether, illustrated by David Scott Brown. Prentice-Hall, 1973, gr. 4-6. Biography of the "Mother of the Civil Rights Movement."



Among the books recommended in the accompanying article are (top to bottom) *Cornrows*, *Childtimes*, *Moja Means One* and *Song of the Trees*.

Fannie Lou Hamer by June Jordan, illustrated by Albert Williams. Crowell, 1972, gr. 3-4, o.p. Moving biography of the leader of the 1962 Mississippi voter registration drive.

Frederick Douglass: Slave-Fighter-Freeman by Arna Bontemps, illustrated by Harper Johnson. Knopf, 1959, gr. 5-7, o.p. Well-written biography highlighting dramatic aspects of this freedom fighter's life.

The Freedom Ship of Robert Smalls by Louise Meriwether. Prentice-Hall, 1971, gr. 4-5, o.p. Largely pictorial presentation of the successful escape of slaves during the Civil War.

Great Gittin' Up Morning by John O. Killens. Doubleday, 1972, gr. 8-12, o.p. Dramatic presentation of the life of Denmark Vesey and the factors which contributed to his development as a leader of a slave rebellion.

Great Negroes Past and Present by Russell Adams, illustrated by Eugene Winslow. Afro-Am (910 S. Michigan, Suite 556, Chicago, IL 60605), 1964, gr. 6-up. Excellent basic reference containing brief biographies of African Americans who were important as educators, writers, scientists, soldiers, freedom fighters, etc.

Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad by Ann Petry. Crowell, 1955, gr. 6-up. Excellent portrayal of this remarkable woman which clearly demonstrates the qualities that made her successful in her daring exploits.

The Heart Man: Dr. Daniel Hale Williams by Louise Meriwether, illustrated by Floyd Sewell. Prentice-Hall, 1972, gr. 4-5, o.p. Simple biography of the African American surgeon who made medical history.

James Weldon Johnson by Ophelia Settle Egypt. Harper & Row, 1974, gr. 3-4. Simple biography detailing the life of this poet, scholar and organization leader.

Jean Baptiste Pointe De Sable, Founder of Chicago by Shirley Graham. Messner, 1953, gr. 8-12, o.p. Detailed presentation that places the founder of Chicago squarely in the context of U.S. history.

Langston Hughes, American Poet by Alice Walker. Harper & Row, 1974, gr. 3-4. Unusually interesting biography of the influential and prolific African American poet.

Make a Joyful Noise Unto the Lord! The Life of Mahalia Jackson, Queen of Gospel Singers by Jesse Jackson. Crowell, 1974, gr. 5-up. Excellent portrayal of the difficulties faced by this

great artist and the special qualities that enabled her to achieve success.

Pioneers in Protest by Lerone Bennett, Jr. Johnson, 1968, gr. 8-up, o.p. Interestingly written, detailed biographies of leaders of Black protest movements, many of whom have not been discussed elsewhere.

Ray Charles by Sharon Bell Mathis, illustrated by George Ford. Harper & Row, 1973, gr. 3-up. Simple biography written especially for young readers.

Somebody's Angel Child: The Story of Bessie Smith by Carmen Moore, illustrated with photographs. Crowell, 1969, gr. 5-up, o.p. A sensitive, beautifully written portrayal of the life of the great blues singer.

The Story of Phillis Wheatley by Shirley Graham. Messner, 1949, gr. 8-12, o.p. Well-drawn portrait of the young slave woman who achieved fame as a poet during the Revolutionary period.

W.E.B. DuBois: A Biography by Virginia Hamilton. Harper & Row, 1972, gr. 6-up. Exceptionally fine biography of the brilliant African American scholar.

Fiction

Abby by Jeannette Franklin Caines, illustrated by Steven Kellogg. Harper & Row, 1973, gr. k-2. An adopted sister is accepted into a family with love.

Cornrows by Camille Yarbrough, illustrated by Carole Byard. Putnam, 1979, all grs. An exceptionally fine poetic rendition of aspects of African American life, history and culture, using the device of cornrows.

Darlene by Eloise Greenfield, illustrated by George Ford. Methuen, 1980, gr. k-2. A disabled girl enters into the fun activities while on a visit to her uncle and cousin.

Fast Sam, Cool Clyde, and Stuff by Walter Dean Myers. Viking, 1975, gr. 6-8. A warm realistic story of urban youths who share good times and bad and give each other strength and support.

The House of Dies Drear! by Virginia Hamilton. Macmillan, 1968, gr. 5-up. A suspense-filled story centered on a house that was once a station on the Underground Railroad but is now the home of an African American professor and his family.

The Hundred Penny Box by Sharon Bell Mathis, illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon. Viking, 1975, gr. 3-4. A young boy develops a warm and loving relationship with his great, great, aunt who is one hundred years old.

Let the Circle Be Unbroken by Mildred Taylor. Dial, 1981, gr. 7-up. The Logan

family continues to stand together and support each other against the pressures of racism. Powerfully written.

Listen for the Fig Tree by Sharon Bell Mathis. Viking, 1974, gr. 7-up. A realistic portrayal of city life in which Muffin, the blind hero, demonstrates the strength and understanding that helps many African American families to survive.

The Magical Adventures of Pretty Pearl by Virginia Hamilton. Harper & Row, 1983, gr. 6-up. Highly original fantasy in which a young African god returns to an outlyer African American community to test her magical powers.

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred D. Taylor. Dial, 1976, grs. 6-8. Sequel to *Song of the Trees*. The Logan family grows stronger as they continue to battle racial injustice in the South.

Shawn Goes to School by Petronella Breinburg, illustrated by Errol Floyd. Harper & Row, 1973, gr. k-2. A young boy's experiences on his first day in school. Beautifully illustrated.

She Come Bringing Me That Little Baby Girl by Eloise Greenfield, illustrated by John Steptoe. Harper & Row, 1974, gr. k-3. Wise family handling changes a boy's disappointment at not having a baby brother into love and admiration for his new sister.

Song of the Trees by Mildred D. Taylor, illustrated by Jerry Pinkney. Dial, 1973, gr. 4-6. Powerful and gripping story of one family's courageous stand against racist practices in the South during the Depression.

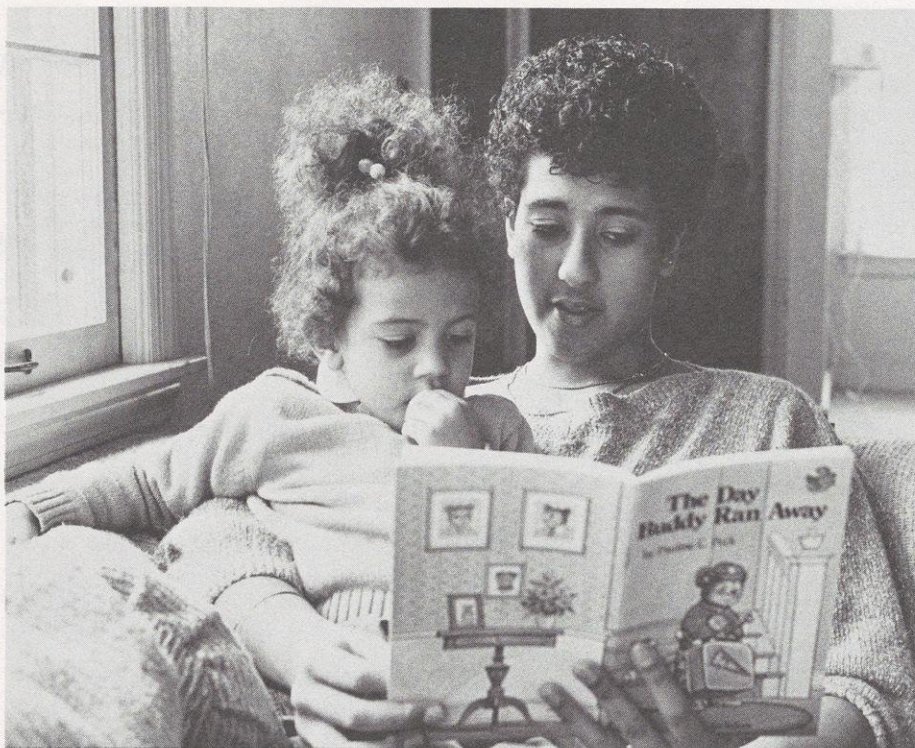
Stevie written and illustrated by John Steptoe. Harper & Row, 1969, gr. k-3. Stevie eventually wins the heart of the small boy with whose family he boards.

Tituba of Salem Village by Ann Petry. Harper & Row, 1964, gr. 7-11. The story of Tituba, a slave from Barbados, and the courageous way in which she responded to the Salem witch trials.

Where Does the Day Go? by Walter Dean Myers, illustrated by Leo Carty. Parents, 1969, gr. k-3, o.p. A father explains the difference between night and day to his young son.

Window Wishing by Jeannette Caines, illustrated by Kevin Brooks. Harper & Row, 1980, gr. k-3. Two children enjoy their summer visits with their unorthodox grandmother, who takes them fishing, and window wishing.

Zeely by Virginia Hamilton, illustrated by Symeon Shimin. Macmillan, 1967, gr. 5-9. Because of her resemblance to a Watusi queen, Zeely becomes a role model for a young African American girl.



Hildegard Adler

We Are Travelling Backwards ...

I first started writing for young people during the late Sixties. I hoped then that both the publishing industry and the public were beginning to respond to the need for multi-ethnic materials. This was not the case. The industry was responding to the marketing opportunities afforded by the political activity of the times. The public, in general, was responding passively to the new materials available. Now that the political atmosphere has been neutralized by a conservative administration, publishing has looked elsewhere for its profits and there seems to be little public reaction to the decreasing availability of multi-ethnic books. In short, we seem to have travelled backwards in time.

The nation is experiencing an increased separation of middle-class white children from other groups by zoning restrictions and the growing private school system. Instead of a coming together we are seeing greater social and psychological distancing between races. The concurrent increase in the number of Blacks who are in the mainstream of white American culture is numerically insignificant compared to those who are not. Insignificant, too, are the personal successes of a handful of ethnic writers, myself included. —Walter Dean Myers, author of *Fast Sam*, *Cool Clyde & Stuff*, *The Young Landlords* and other titles

The Constant Struggle

In the history of this country African Americans have always had to wage a constant fight to obtain any measure of freedom and equality. ... Then struggle to hold on to it ... or see it slowly taken away from us, and its meaning eroded. This racism is also institutional and therefore includes the world of book publishing.

The pressure of the 1950-60's civil rights battle and the direct action of the Black rebellions across this country caused the United States government to launch a massive anti-poverty program and fund the school libraries to buy books on "minorities." The publishers saw a profit in this. Moralistic reasons were subordinate to that fact. In the 1970's the conservative Nixon government dropped that funding. The publishers' profit motive was removed and the basic white bias about Black people not reading or buying books, especially Black books (always the underlined rationale for not promoting these books outside of the government-funded library sales), reared its head. But long before that and because of that attitude, Black books started going out of print,

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even Black children's books, so today's situation is no surprise. Band-aids do not cure open sores, they only cover them up, so they cannot be seen—for a while.

Only by constantly facing the truth of this country's past injustices to the Blacks and the poor and the underprivileged and by the involvement of the whole society working together to alleviate the reasons why—can there be a final social cure.

But can this solution take place in the stifling, stunted atmosphere of deep-rooted values that still believe in and project—first of all—the dictum of *profits over people*?—Tom Feelings, illustrator of *Jambo Means Hello*, *Moja Means One* and other titles

“I Have Been Most Fortunate ...”

I know that as a writer I have been most fortunate. I have an excellent publisher and my books, all about the Logan family of Mississippi, were first published during a period when people were ready to accept and to learn about such a family.

In 1974 a story I submitted to the Council on Interracial Books' contest for minority writers won in the AfroAmerican category. Through that contest I met several publishers interested in publishing the story. I chose Dial Books. In 1975 the story was published as *Song of the Trees* by Dial. *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* (1976) and *Let the Circle Be Unbroken* (1981) were also published by Dial. With each of these books, the Dial editors and staff have been most caring, encouraging and enthusiastic about my work. I believe that they believe in my work as much as I do and, to me, that is very important. I could not have asked for a finer publishing relationship.

As for the sales of my books, I have again been fortunate. *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* is nearing 100,000 copies sold in hardcover in the United States and now has 710,000 paperback copies in print in the United States. *Let the Circle Be Unbroken* has sold approximately 25,000 copies in hardcover and has 76,000 paperback copies in print in the United States. *Song of the Trees*, though not matching copies sold of the other books, continues to sell well in both hardcover and paperback. The books have been translated into 16 languages and will soon be published in the U.S.S.R.

Although sales figures are to some degree indicative of a book's appeal, I find letters from people who have read my books to be even more so. I must admit that I am pleased, but also am somewhat amazed that the story of the Logan family of Mississippi has touched so many different people in special ways. Letters have come from people of all races and people from many countries who have identified with the Logan family. Letters have come from children and adults, from prison inmates and religious leaders, from people of many different walks of life. Each letter has been special to me, but one of the most special is a letter from a Zulu girl in South Africa who had somehow gotten a copy of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. She said the Logan story gave her hope.

One of the things I hoped I could accomplish when I began writing about the Logan family was that readers would walk in their shoes, that they would care about them, and would feel what they felt. I am very grateful that so many readers have done so.—Mildred D. Taylor, author of *Song of the Trees* and other titles

The New Benign Neglect

There appears to be less interest on the part of publishers in books that help Black children positively reinforce their sense of identity. The new Benign Neglect seems to have something to do with the mood of selfishness pervading America today, which has spawned the wish that minorities and their demands would simply disappear. It has also spawned an insistence on Big Bucks — mass-market best-sellers. Minorities are not the mass market, though we do constitute large groups.

At the same time, there seems to be a greater need than ever for such literature, as I find I am encountering many young Blacks who (in their minds) are racially rootless and culturally confused. There are many young Blacks with a void where their identities should be, among them students I encounter who are racially and culturally adrift, not knowing where to identify, not knowing that they really have no choice. And, saddest of all, not knowing, as do those of us who lived and worked in the Sixties, that to be Black is a proud and glorious, a warm and enriching thing. Before another Lost Generation grows up, I say, please keep the good books in print — and keep the new ones coming! — Kristin Hunter, author of *Guests in the Promised Land*, *Soul Brothers* & *Sister Lou* and other titles

Poetry

American Negro Poetry by Arna Bontemps, ed. Hill & Wang, 1963, gr. 7-up, o.p. A representative collection of the work of African American poets from the 1700's to the 1960's. Includes biographical sketches.

Bronzeville Boys and Girls by Gwendolyn Brooks, illustrated by Ronnie Solbert. Harper & Row, 1956, gr. 3-6. Verses for younger children that deal with many of their everyday experiences.

Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar by Paul Laurence Dunbar. Dodd, 1938, gr. 7-up, o.p. Lyric and dialect poetry of the acclaimed poet.

The Dream Keeper and Other Poems by Langston Hughes, illustrated by Helen Sewell. Knopf, 1937, gr. 2-6, o.p. A selection of lyric poems especially suited for children in elementary grades.

God's Trombones by James Weldon Johnson, illustrated by Aaron Douglas. Viking, 1927, gr. 6-up, o.p. Seven sermons modelled after the imagery and delivery of African American preachers and presented in verse form.

Golden Slippers by Arna Bontemps (compiler), illustrated by Henrietta Bruce Sharon. Harper, 1941, gr. k-6, o.p. Representative collection of works by African American poets who wrote in different styles.

Honey, I Love by Eloise Greenfield, illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon. Harper & Row, 1978, all grs. Sixteen poems about serious aspects of love expressed in the rhythmic and idiomatic language of African Americans.

I Greet the Dawn by Paul Laurence Dunbar, illustrated by Ashley Bryan. Atheneum, 1978, gr. 4-up, o.p. A collection of verses written by the poet in standard English.

The Lost Zoo by Countee Cullen and Christopher Cat, illustrated by Joseph Lou. Follett, 1940, gr. 2-6, o.p. Imaginative poems describing the animals who, through some fault of their own, failed to get on board Noah's Ark.

Who Look At Me by June Jordan. Crowell, 1969, all grs., o.p. A powerful, poetic rendering of the Black Experience in the United States from slavery to modern times. Well-selected paintings which document that experience complement the text. □

About the Author

BERYLE BANFIELD is a curriculum developer specializing in the area of African and African American history. Dr. Banfield is also president of the Council on Interracial Books for Children.

Choosing good books on African American themes requires sensitive criteria and considerable information on the life, history and culture of peoples of African descent

Guidelines for Choosing Books on African American Themes

By Beryle Banfield

Selecting good books on African American themes is not an easy task. Accepting the challenge of selecting materials that will enhance the self-image of the African American child and present an accurate portrayal of peoples of African descent for all children means also accepting the responsibility to become well informed in certain critical areas.

It is, of course, important to use sensitive and meaningful criteria in selecting books. It is also important to acquire information that will result in the effective use of such criteria. Some key points:

- Acquire information (a long but eminently rewarding process) on the life, history and culture of peoples of African American descent. This will enable you to select books that are accurate, free of errors and omissions. Distinguished scholars such as Lerone Bennett Jr., John Henrik Clark, John Hope Franklin, Benjamin Quarles and others have produced important reference works. Paula Giddings, Inez Reidy, Joyce Ladner, Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott and Barbara Smith have provided impressive accounts of the lives and histories of African American women.

- Become aware of the stereotypes both in blatant and subtle forms that commonly appear in books about African Americans. The common stereotypes identified by Sterling Brown (the Contented Slave, the Comic Negro, etc.) appear all too often in children's literature. Become familiar with these and other stereotypes and learn to recognize them as they appear in children's literature in subtle forms. The guidelines that follow address this issue; regular reading of the articles and reviews in this *Bulletin* will also prove valuable.

- Become knowledgeable about the ways children's literature has both mis-

interpreted and distorted African American folklore and, not incidentally, held African Americans up to ridicule. (See, for instance, "The Black Experience Through White Eyes," Vol. 14, No. 5.)

- Consider your own perspective; make sure it's not being colored by the attitudes of the society in which we live. When in doubt, consult the works of African American scholars and writers; the articles and reviews in this *Bulletin* can provide assistance.

- Become informed about publishers' track records. (Some children's trade book publishers consistently produce high-quality material.) Similarly, become informed about children's book authors' previous works. Regular reading of *Bulletin* reviews with an eye to this information will be helpful.

- Recognize that good books on African American themes are crucial to the healthy development of *all* children. The importance of such books for Black children is clear, but it is not so commonly recognized that such materials are of importance to other children, who are equally at risk from the deleterious effects of the racism perpetuated in trade and textbooks. Publishers often say that the market for books on Black themes is too small to support such publications, as if only African American children will find such materials of value, and librarians justify all-white collections on similar grounds. Research, however, supports the importance of sound multicultural materials for all children. (See, for example, "How Books Influence Children: What the Research Shows," Vol. 11, No. 6.) European-American children in particular are often reared in an atmosphere conducive to the development of feelings of superiority based on race; this is poor preparation for life in a

rapidly shrinking world in which most inhabitants are people of color.

- Don't be daunted, even though book selection can be a difficult task. The list of recommended books that begins on page 4 will assist in the development of a core collection. The guidelines that follow will enable you to add to it. You will be surprised how much your knowledge will be expanded and your experience enriched as you become more familiar with the richness of the life, history and culture of African Americans.

The Author

For Textbooks:

- What credentials does the author possess in terms of recognized scholarship?

- Has the author previously published works on African American life, history and culture? If so, how have these works been received by Africans, African Americans and other peoples of African descent?

- What is the author's orientation? Does the author present a Eurocentric point of view or one that reflects an African or African American perspective?

- Does the author make use of new information and new insights about African and African American life and culture?

For Tradebooks:

- What is the author's orientation? Does the author present a Eurocentric point of view or one that reflects an African or African American perspective?

- Is the author one who has developed a set "formula" for writing children's books, changing only names and locale to suggest ethnic identification?

- What is the author's purpose in writing the book? Is it written out of love and

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Send to Interracial Books for Children Bulletin, 1841 Broadway, New York, NY 10023.

concern for the child of African descent? Is it the author's intent to celebrate positive aspects of interpersonal relationships among peoples of African descent?

The Publisher

- What has been the publisher's previous history? Does the firm have a reputation for consistently publishing books of superior quality and sound scholarship or has the company consistently published racist and sexist materials?
- Has the company developed guidelines for the preparation of materials free of racism and sexism?

The Treatment of the Black Experience

- Does the book illuminate critical aspects of the Black experience? Does it, for example, depict positive and warm family relationships; Black responses to various forms of oppression; the development of customs, traditions and institutions; supportive relationships among various members of the Black community; the role of Black women?
- Will the material and its presentation contribute to the development of a positive self-concept by the child of African descent?
- Will the material and its presentation contribute to the development of a feeling of respect for African Americans?
- Are the illustrations the only clue that the story is supposed to be about African Americans and other peoples of African descent or is there unity between the content and the illustrations, with cultural clues provided in the forms of foods, hairstyles, home decorations, customs, etc.?

Historical Background

- Does the book discuss the vital role played by African Americans in the development of the United States and their impact on U.S. life, history and culture (e.g., the skills in agriculture and iron working brought by the Africans and their impact on the rice economy of South Carolina and the architectural styles of New Orleans and Charleston)?
- Does the book omit or distort the African background of African Americans?
- Are the societies and institutions developed by Africans prior to European contact discussed? Does it, for instance, discuss the societies, kingdoms and empires that developed in such places as Zimbabwe, Azania (Republic of South Africa), Nigeria and Mali?
- Does the book present the role of Af-

rican women in developing their societies and institutions?

- Does the text have a Eurocentric perspective of African and African American history, presenting events only in terms of their impact on whites?
- Is the impact of peoples of African descent on world history and culture recognized? Does the text note, for instance, the role of Toussaint Louverture* in leading the successful Haitian revolution and its impact on the United States? Does it note the influence of the Dumas—father and son—and Pushkin on literature and opera?
- Does the text glorify the plantation system as beneficial to African Americans and the colonial experience as beneficial to Africans?
- Is the role of African American women in shaping U.S. history and in building African American institutions discussed? Does the book recognize, for example, the role of African American women in the slave economy of the United States, in developing a strong club movement, in developing fraternal and self-help organizations?

Culture and Custom

- Are the culture, values, belief systems and customs of African Americans presented and evaluated from an African or African American perspective or from a Eurocentric point of view?
- Are the customs and traditions of Africans and African Americans presented as exotica?

Characterization

- Are Africans incorrectly portrayed as persons devoid of skills and in need of instruction by whites?
- Are African Americans presented as incapable of making decisions or effecting change in the critical areas of their lives without white intervention or advice?
- Does language reinforce stereotypes—"happy-go-lucky," "rhythmic," "culturally deprived," etc.?
- Are African Americans incorrectly portrayed as persons who accept their inferior position in American society (e.g., the docile, contented slave)?
- Are African Americans portrayed as responsible for their own oppressed state? (The "blaming the victim" syndrome.)
- Must African Americans be indi-

*This spelling is correct; L'Ouverture, which is commonly seen, is a Gallicized version of his name.



Hildegard Adler

viduals of superior attainment in one field who must demonstrate this superiority in order to win acceptance by whites? (The "super-Black" syndrome.)

- Is there an acceptance of only those individuals who are judged as "suitable" African American heroes (e.g., Martin Luther King, Jr. and not Malcolm X)?

- Is there sex-role stereotyping (Black matriarch, emasculated male)?

- Are African American families depicted as riddled with social pathology due to their inadequacies?

Language and Terminology

- Is there use of racist terminology (primitive, Bushman, kaffir, Hottentot, pagan, hut, pygmy, jungle)?

- Is African American speech depicted in a manner which destroys the cadence, imagery and rhythm of the speech and degrades the individual being portrayed?

Illustrations

- Is a "tint job" or color wash used to denote African Americans without regard for distinguishing features or characteristics?

- Do drawings distort the features and characteristics of African Americans?

- Are African Americans portrayed in a stereotypic manner (dress, occupation, relationship to majority group members)?

- Are African American boys and girls, men and women, depicted in stereotypic occupational or social roles?

- Do political cartoons ridicule African Americans as helpless and confused about current issues? □

The preceding guidelines were adapted from *Black Focus on Multicultural Education* by Beryle Banfield, E.W. Blyden Press, 1978.

About the Author

BERYLE BANFIELD is a curriculum developer specializing in the area of African and African American history. Dr. Banfield is also president of the Council on Interracial Books for Children.

The owner of a North Carolina bookstore that focuses on literature by and about African Americans discusses the many needs she serves

Changing the Status Quo: A North Carolina Bookstore Meets the Needs of the Black Community

By Angela R. Simpson

People in North Carolina who like to read are lucky. There are two bookstores in North Carolina that specialize in literature by and about African Americans. One is in Charlotte and the other is in Durham. Most states have none or one at best. Theoretically, they shouldn't be needed at all. If "regular" bookstores attempted to meet the needs of Black people, my store would never survive, probably never exist.

I love this example. Go into most white-owned bookstores and you can find all kinds of cookbooks — French, German, Japanese, Mexican, Chinese ... need I go on? You can even find Russian cookbooks and they are supposed to be the boogey-man! But, ask for an African or Caribbean cookbook and you will get a polite, "I'm sorry ma'am." Well, I'm not sorry, I'm somewhat glad because it gives me the opportunity to exercise a sense of freedom for my captured spirit.

That's the kind of spirit that is totally dedicated, undaunted and determined, not because of the character of the store owner, although that is important, too. But, when you are angered that your own children do not have an opportunity to see positive reflections of themselves in literature, when it unnerves you to realize that your people know nothing of their history or their past except slavery, when you see the story of people of color being virtually ignored by schools, churches (including Black churches) and businesses, when you get frustrated seeing people glued to a television that sends messages of inferiority and ignorance into our households — then you have a captured spirit. You are committed to changing the status quo. You have no choice.

I am of African descent and own a 14-month-old bookstore in Charlotte, N.C.

that specializes in Black literature. I call it UnderCover Book Source because that reflects how Black literature is hidden from the general public. To say I have no competition is a gross understatement. There is nothing close to what I have but at least a 150-mile radius of the city. That is a shame, especially considering the fact that Charlotte alone has more than 113,000 Black people.

Although Black literature is a scarce resource, it is not a business that turns a big profit. Still, the "downs" are low but the "ups" are higher. For instance, dealing with small publishers and other small bookstores may limit your flow of inventory, but it builds a strong network. We must wash each other's back. Large distributors (*i.e.*, Baker and Taylor, Ingram) simply do not adequately accommodate the needs of Black bookstores.

I have noticed that each bookstore of this type has its own specialty — usually, a clear reflection of the owner. The store may concentrate on nationalism, Islam, Africa, esoteric books, health, novels — but there are still several "must haves" that we all have in common. It is very important to have a positive environment that is significantly different from white-owned bookstores. Even white customers come into Black bookstores to find a culturally African environment.

And, of course, our most valued asset is our clientele. My customers are a small but very loyal group. They are mainly Black, middle-aged, blue-collar men. The disenchanted. The frustrated. They are the ones with a thirst for knowledge because there are few options for them. They pay my rent and look after the store as if it were their own. It is. Black women buy children's books,

cards and jewelry. One of my main concerns is trying to convince Black women to stimulate their own minds. They are victims, too.

Other problems (and, yes, there are many that are unique to this business) include people who feel that by promoting self-knowledge you are also promoting hate. That is ridiculous. Also, a Black bookstore owner must deal with several religious affiliations simultaneously, or, at least, I do. I make sure to have Bibles and Qurans. Books on Hebrew-Israelites and Rastafarians. Every aspect of the Black community must be respected. It is my responsibility to expose as much as I can and let people make their own decisions. That is the essence of knowledge. On the other hand, people expect me to have every book that was ever written by or about Black people, even out-of-print books. Not only that, they think I should have read them all, too. That's just too much to ask.

Something else makes this job difficult, but interesting. People are looking for someone to talk to. They don't realize that there are other things you must do besides ringing the cash register. But, because this need exists we must accommodate it. Sometimes the talking is welcomed because I need a break from the stress and hustle of running a business. Sometimes the talking slurps up valuable time like a sponge. However, Black people are in distress and some outlet is needed. I, too, need a listening ear sometimes.

Ultimately, I would like to see hundreds of bookstores like mine. I would like to be able to travel to every major city and find at least one. I would like accurate information about people of color to be taught in all schools and churches. I would especially like to see people desig-

nate at least one hour per day to reading. It not only helps them but it sets a good example for our children.

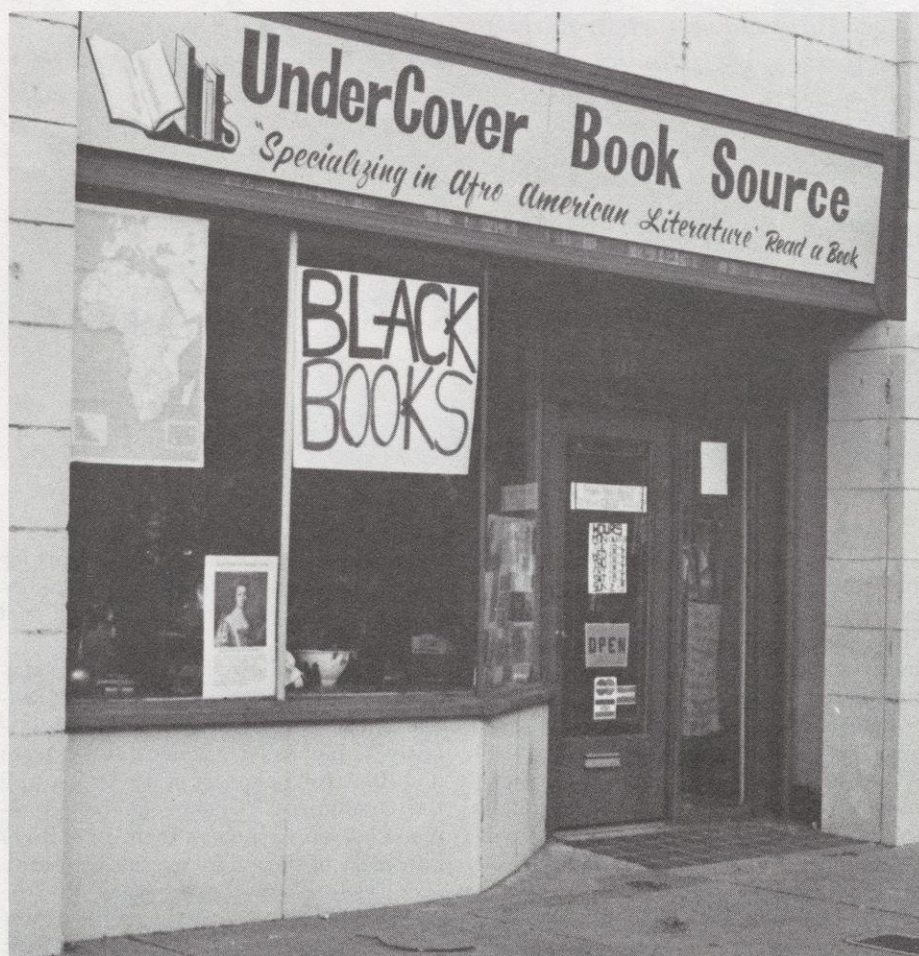
Children love books and reading. I have found that children from toddlers on up to ten are very interested in books. They will come into the store with their parents and sit on the floor in front of the children's section and just explore all kinds of books and information that the schools are not offering. Coloring books are very popular. Learning books for preschoolers simply fly off the shelves.

The most popular children's books are *Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions* by Margaret Musgrove (Dial); *Black Fairy Tales* by Terry Berger (Atheneum); *Black Mother Goose* arranged by Elizabeth Murphy Oliver (Theo. Guas, P.O. Box 1168, Brooklyn, NY 11202); *Brown Spices ABC Book* by Annie and Julee (Brown Spices Publishing Co.; see page 17); *Color Me Brown* by Lucille Giles (Johnson), a coloring book featuring famous Black people; *I Am the Darker Brother: An Anthology of Modern Poems by Black Americans* edited by Arnold Adoff (Macmillan); *Shining Legacy* by Nkechi Taifa (House of Songhay II Publishing Co., P.O. Box 6403, Washington, DC 20009); *Your History* by J.A. Rogers (Helga Rogers); Golden Legacy comics (Baylor Publishing Co., P.O. Box 47105, Seattle, WA 98146); and all of Mildred Taylor's books.

I have also noticed that by age eleven the enthusiasm for books slows down. Because of this I have had to further develop my inventory of books for ages ten to teen. These children enjoy mysteries and books about children their own age. They also tell me they enjoy romance novels. Children often beg their parents for a book. For those parents who cannot afford it and for children who come in alone, I make sure to have some inexpensive books that I can give them. It doesn't break me financially and it assures me that at least a few of our future leaders will have some knowledge of self.

Watching Those Dollars

And, of course, watching those dollars is essential. Most bookstores of this type must also sell jewelry, incense, perfume oils, buttons and other side items just to survive. Such things also help to develop the atmosphere; they are something else I use to draw people in. I have a corkboard for business cards of Black-owned and operated enterprises. Several of these business owners are my customers; I want them to know that I am con-



The UnderCover Bookstore in Charlotte, N.C. (Photo: Lord Ajmer)

cerned about the survival of their business, too.

I schedule various events of interest to the community. Last spring and early summer, the store sponsored a Saturday morning children's hour, which is resuming this fall. Films on Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X have been shown and Alvin Poussaint visited the store to autograph his book, *Black Child Care* (Simon & Schuster). Some Hebrew-Israelites from Atlanta showed a video and discussed their religion. Discussions on Pan-African women and their role in society have been held, and a singles group started in the store. Another Charlotte woman conducted a three-day workshop for teenage girls and a two-day seminar on Emergency Childbirth.

Since the store opened I have sent out three newsletters about activities in the store and new items; I also try to promote a positive attitude toward all Black businesses. The newsletter goes to people who have visited the store or patronized it in some way.

Because of the shortage of Black

bookstores, another lucrative service I offer is mail-order. I have a free catalog so that people from out of town, day-care centers, schools and elsewhere are aware of what I offer. (*Bulletin* readers can obtain a copy by writing UnderCover Book Source, 115 East Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28203.)

With the support of community organizations, churches, schools and other institutions Black bookstores can thrive. With each other's help we can make it. We don't compete against each other — we compete against ignorance.

One of my favorite customers summed up my services one day, saying "Whether you want to be or not, Angela, you are our psychologist, counselor, example, listener, and teacher . . . and that's all there is to it."

Only a captured spirit would welcome so much responsibility. □

About the Author

ANGELA R. SIMPSON, owner of *UnderCover Book Source*, received a B.A. in Economics from Spelman College.

Liberation Bookstore, a Harlem institution for 18 years, specializes in works on African and African American history and culture

Liberation Bookstore: A Community Institution

By Beryle Banfield

"To survive 18 years with a name like Liberation Bookstore is in itself an accomplishment," states Una Mulzac. "In spite of all the efforts to discourage me, I was determined to succeed under that name."

Indeed, Mulzac has done more than survive. The bookstore she owns and operates in the heart of the Harlem community has been described by one guide as stocking "one of the city's largest selection of books on Afro-American and African history and culture." Mulzac also stocks works that deal with the African experience in Latin America, Asia and the Caribbean and maintains an impressive section on the arts (including literature, drama and music) and a large juvenile collection. Many rare and out of print books can be found here. In addition, there are many periodicals, journals and pamphlets that present various aspects of literature and politics of the Black Experience.

Looking back over those 18 years of accomplishment, Mulzac quickly cites the problems encountered when she decided to open Liberation Bookstore. Racism and sexism were major hurdles. "I couldn't get credit," Mulzac notes. "Publishers assumed I was a poor credit risk. I was a Black woman based in Harlem. And of course, there was the name 'Liberation.' When I called to place an order, a clerk at a large publishing firm actually asked, what are you trying to liberate?"

"Liberation," as it is affectionately called by its many patrons, opened on September 9, 1967. Mulzac had recently returned from Guyana, where she had successfully operated a bookstore for four years. "Angola, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe were all fighting for their liberation at that time," she recalls. "I chose

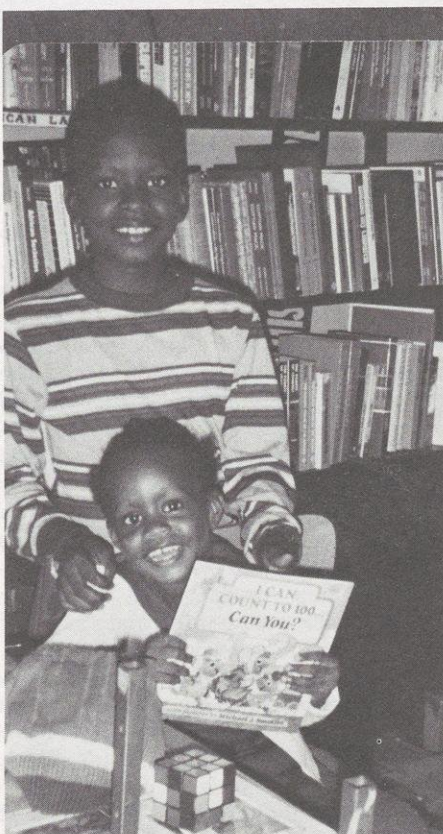
the name Liberation to show support for these liberation movements. To me, liberation also meant 'liberation of the mind.'"

When asked how she managed to succeed in a business where the rate of failure is so high, Mulzac replies unhesitatingly, "I had self-confidence, self-esteem and the strong support of my family and the community." When the banks refused her an expansion loan, in spite of five years of successful operation, family

members pooled their resources to provide the necessary funds. There were also those who Mulzac calls "the pillars of the store who held it together to make sure it succeeded." With great warmth she describes teachers in Black studies programs in the community's schools and colleges who felt it their responsibility to place all of their book orders with Liberation. (Mulzac supplied the hard work and determination. For the first years of her operation, she worked ten hours a day, six days a week, working alone. On Sundays, she frequently carted books to community events and exhibits.)

From her opening day, when she celebrated by serving apple juice to local residents, Mulzac and Liberation have been actively involved in the community. (Her name was already well-known and respected in the Harlem community. Her father, Hugh N. Mulzac, captain of the Liberty ship Booker T. Washington, was the first African American to command a Liberty ship during World War II.) Mulzac's choice of a location deep within the Harlem community was deliberate. From the very start, she emphasizes, "I made it my business to know the community. Then I could provide the kind of service the community needed." As a result, Liberation is more than a bookstore; it is a center of community activity where the store's motto — "If You Don't Know, Learn, If You Do Know, Teach" — is taken seriously.

Mulzac also conducts a substantial mail order business and is currently at work on her 1986 catalog, which will be supplied free upon request. (Write Liberation Bookstore, 421 Lenox Ave., New York, NY 10037.) Ever alert to the needs of her customers, Mulzac constantly notes which books are in greater de-



Two young readers in the Liberation Bookstore.

mand. Among the "best sellers" in the children's division are *Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions* by Margaret Musgrove (Dial); *Jambo Means Hello* and *Moja Means One* by Muriel Feelings with illustrations by Tom Feelings (both Dial); *Abby* by Jeannette Caines (Harper & Row); *Honey, I Love* by Eloise Greenfield (Harper & Row); and *Cornrows* by Camille Yarbrough (Putnam).

Authors, artists and poets can frequently be found browsing among the numerous volumes and chatting with customers about their works and the works of others. Most recently, Liberation was the center of community efforts in support of the first African American to seek nomination for the post of District Attorney. In short, Liberation has become a community institution.

To celebrate Liberation's 15th anniversary, its customers honored Mulzac with a heartwarming reception and presented her with a plaque which she proudly displays in the store. In addition to citing her for achievement, the inscription also urges Mulzac to "continue to make Liberation Bookstore an outstanding center of education and infor-



Una Mulzac (r.), owner of the Liberation Bookstore in Harlem, assists a customer.

mation for the Black community." Among the numerous awards she has received is one from the Harlem Y.M.C.A. citing her for "outstanding entrepreneurship and uncommon business acumen." Mulzac is confidently planning the celebration of Liberation's twentieth year. "This time, I'll be the one to give the party," she announces. "It'll be my

way of saying "Thank you" to the community for its wholehearted support." □

About the Author

BERYLE BANFIELD is a curriculum developer specializing in the area of African and African American history. Dr. Banfield is also president of the Council on Interracial Books for Children.

Resources

Bookstores

The following bookstores specialize in materials on African American themes.

African Caribbean Bookstore, 2052 E. 71st St., Chicago, IL 60649; (312) 288-0880.

Afro in Books and Things, 5575 N.W. 7th Ave., Miami, FL 33127.

All African People's Books, P.O. Box 4036, Newark, NJ 07114.

Liberation Bookstore, 421 Lenox Ave., New York, NY 10037.

Marcus Books, 1712 Fillmore St., San Francisco, CA 94115.

Pyramid Bookstore, 2849 Georgia Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20001; (202) 328-0190.

Savana Books, 72 Chestnut St., Cambridge, MA 02139; (617) 876-7665.

Shrine of the Black Madonna, 13535 Livernois Ave., Detroit, MI 48238; (313) 491-0777.

UnderCover Book Source, 115 East Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28203; (704) 376-7209.

Book Publishers

The following is a list of book publishers that feature books on Black themes. We welcome readers' sugges-

tions for additions to this list.

Afro Am Publishing Inc., 910 South Michigan, Suite 556, Chicago, IL 60605; (312) 922-1147.

Ashley Books, Inc., Box 768, Port Washington, NY 11050; (516) 883-2221. Billie Young, President.

Associated Publishers, 1401 14th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20005; (202) 667-2822. Leanna Miller, Managing Director.

E.W. Blyden Press, P.O. Box 621, New York, NY 10021; (212) 222-6000. A. Faulkner Watts, President.

Detroit Black Writers' Guild, 5326 33rd St., Detroit, MI 48210; (313) 898-7629.

DuSable Museum of African American History Press, 740 East 56th Place, Chicago, IL 60637; (312) 947-0600. Amina Dickerson, President.

Howard University Press, 2900 Van Ness St., N.W., Washington, DC 20008; (202) 686-6696. Charles F. Harris, Executive Director.

Third World Press, 7524 South Cottage Grove, Chicago, IL 60619; (312) 651-0700. Haki Madhubuti, Director.

Zamani Productions, 31 West 31 St., New York, NY 10001; (212) 695-5569.

Self-Publishers

Despairing of ever getting their work published by commercial publishers, several young African Americans have recently begun to publish their own materials. Two such are Darla Davenport-Powell and Julee Dickerson Thompson, both of Washington, D.C.

Davenport-Powell has produced *Here Comes Niya*, a picture book for preschoolers through first grade illustrated by Maurice M. Jenkins. The loving relationships between the toddler Niya and her mother and father are effectively portrayed through a simple text and brilliant crayon illustrations. Price: \$6.95, book only; \$9.95, book plus tape of song, "Here Comes Niya" (postage included). Order from Ms. Davenport-Powell, 2315 Green Street, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20020.

Dickerson Thompson's product is the *Brown Spices ABC Book*, a coloring book which presents the letters of the alphabet using the names of children of color throughout the world (see p. 17). Price: \$1.75 plus \$1 postage and handling. Order from Brown Spices Publishing Co., P.O. Box 29397, Washington, D.C. 20017-0397.

In the BOOKSHELF, a regular *Bulletin* department, all books that relate to minority themes are evaluated by members of the minority group depicted.—Editors.

Strikemakers and Strikebreakers

by Sidney Lens.
Lodestar/Dutton, 1985,
\$14.95, 176 pages, grades 7-12

This short story of organized labor—colonial times to the present—explains the reasons for strikes, types of strikes, owners' reactions to strikes, and the pro-business role of government in strikes. Lens raises questions about present union leadership and discusses the management push for concessions today, Reagan's anti-union activities, and the effects the multi-nationals' search for cheap overseas labor has on union organizing.

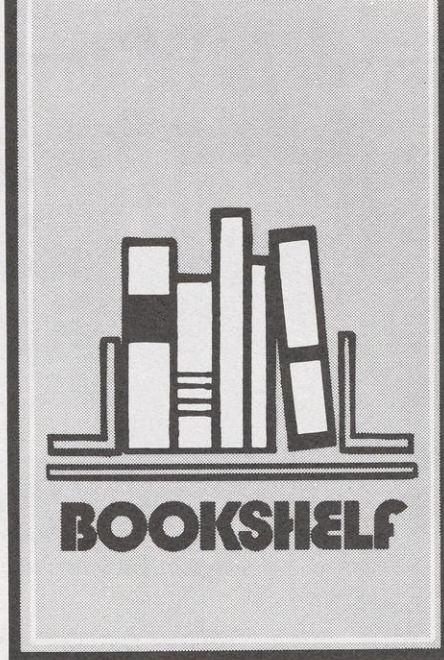
The information is of great interest to this reviewer (who grew up in the excitement of labor's struggles during the late 1930's and early 1940's and fantasized about leading strikes), though the book may overwhelm many young readers today. More vitality and human interest stories might have juiced up this volume, but it still will prove an eye-opener to serious students.

The book also provides vital material for any classroom teacher who wants to supplement the anti-labor bias of textbooks or to expose the anti-labor actions of government. Some of the information about child labor is sure to spark reader interest and spur class discussion. For instance: "On July 3, 1835, children at a Paterson, New Jersey textile mill went on strike to have their hours reduced to 64 a week." Or:

As late as 1910, 2 million children were still working. Their average pay in the clothing industry was \$2 a week, and in the glass and silk industries less than \$3 a week. . . . In 1914, thirty-five thousand were killed on the job and seven hundred thousand injured.

Though there is some mention of racism in unions, more could have been included on workers of color and their particular plights, as well as their particular reactions to those plights.

There have been so many valiant labor role models out there. The shortage of



young people's books on labor issues—both fiction and non-fiction—is a major failure of educators, publishers and authors. The book helps fill an important need. [Lyla Hoffman]

I Know How You Feel, Because This Happened to Me: A Handbook for Kids with a Parent in Prison

by Louise Rosenkrantz.
Prison MATCH (1515 Webster St., #403,
Oakland, CA 94612), 1984,
\$3.50 (paper), 24 pages, grades 5-up

A much-needed handbook has finally arrived. It addresses the feelings of confusion, shame and loneliness felt by children whose parent or parents are in prison. The psychological approach reassures the children that they are not alone in their situation and that their feelings—be they anger, fear or whatever—are okay. The handbook was "written for kids ages eight to eighteen" and has many reassuring photographs of children of different races who are sons or daughters of prisoners.

If there is to be a second edition of this handbook, I would strongly urge that the connections between racism and the color of inmates be addressed. Such information would help children understand that all parents do not face equal

odds in life. Helping children of color to understand racism is one way to help them cope with life. In addition, the light italic type used throughout the booklet when children are being quoted is very difficult to read. [Lyla Hoffman]

Revolution in Central America

by Glenn Alan Cheney.
Franklin Watts, 1984,
\$9.90, 96 pages, grades 7-up

This book is almost as full of anti-Communist and pro-U.S. bias as the White House, even though the jacket calls it a "balanced" view.

The book *does* contain facts missing from both the popular press and textbooks, and for that, the author is to be commended. The flaw is that his style, language and emphasis often minimize the impact of the information. For instance, the author writes of the State Department's "proof" of Soviet and Cuban military support in Nicaragua. Two paragraphs later we read that the report was problematic and not totally accurate. The impression remains, however, that destabilization efforts are justified. Similarly, Cheney's presentation of the situation in El Salvador notes that poverty is appalling and that three-fourths of the children are malnourished, but he immediately details the government's proposed three-stage land reform, even though very little of stage one was ever implemented. We are left thinking that the government tried, but things just didn't work out.

The text reveals Cheney's anti-Communist bias. Soviet-backed Communist influences are "creeping" toward the U.S. border, members of Congress are afraid of "losing" Central America to a Communist take-over; we've "lost" Nicaragua to the Soviets and so on and so forth. Any Soviet influence is seen as dangerous and evil, although the role of the U.S. in Central American struggles is never questioned. According to Cheney, it's the responsibility of the U.S. to find solutions to Central America's problems, and he even states why: the U.S. might lose its access to sea routes in the area, to Latin America's rich natural resources, and to the easy markets for U.S. goods. The solutions proposed

within Central America itself are never discussed.

Like many social studies textbooks, this book uses the "natural disaster" approach to history. Things simply happen, apparently without human choice or influence. "El Salvador converted its economy," Cheney writes; "El Salvador began growing coffee." The oligarchy and foreign powers who determined this change are not identified, and therefore its effect on the peasants cannot be blamed on anyone.

Poverty and brutality have been the results of U.S. domination in the area, but Cheney ignores this essential dynamic. Students need to learn about the fear and distrust Central American people have of U.S. systems, especially democracy (as Reagan defines it) and capitalism, but this book will not help.

One last argument with Cheney's use of words: we're *all* Americans — from northern Canada to Tierra del Fuego. We who are citizens of the country which plays the role of neighborhood bully need to recognize the absurdity of discussing the "American" role in El Salvador — or anywhere else, for that matter. [Sylvia Stalker]

Brown Spices ABC Book: A Great Coloring Book for Boys and Girls!!

by Annie and Julee.

Brown Spices Publishing Co. (P.O.
Box 29397, Washington, DC
20017-0397), 1984,
\$1.75 plus \$1 postage/handling,
unpaged, p.s.-up

Julee Dickerson-Thompson and her mother Annie Dickerson make Brown Spice Dolls (imaginative African, Caribbean and African American soft-sculpture dolls). The dolls—both male and female—come in a range of skin colors and are dressed to reflect the work and life styles of Africans on that continent and throughout the diaspora. Important use is made of the creative names of Africans and Caribbeans, a process that has become almost poetic art among Black folk in the U.S.

This creative team has collaborated on a wonderful coloring book. Each page features an engaging sister and brother

who tell *where they live* and *what they and/or their family members do*, with the children's names and the italicized items all starting with the same letter. The book is imaginative and well-researched; the activities and the dress of the people shown for each country are authentic. The adults do a range of work—fisherman, university professor, dentist, musician, midwife—and the book also celebrates the intellectual and leadership capacity of women, traditional in some areas of the African world.

"My name is Gniuri, my sister's name is Gavevi. We live in Ghana and we like to play games." [The children, dressed appropriately, are shown playing the Ghanaian version of Oware, a math game widely played in Africa.]

"My name is Olani, my brother's name is Obika. We live in Oakland and our daddy makes oils." [In most African American communities, the preparation and sale of oils has become a viable business and institution.]

Information is given about the location of some, but not all, of the less well-known places. In the reprint—for we should buy out this printing—I'd suggest referencing all the places or providing a map showing all of the places mentioned. A bright youngster of eight who looked at the book wanted to know where Oakland was, and though he figured out that Zaire was in Africa, he wanted to know *where* in Africa.

This coloring book celebrates the unity of Black families and of the African

world—North, South, East and West of Africa, the Caribbean, the United States and, bravo!, the Fiji Islands and Puerto Rico. We look forward next time to B for Brazil to represent the African presence in South America and maybe N for Nicaragua or P for Panama to include our presence in Central America.

Pre-school teachers could have a ball coloring the book themselves so that youngsters would have a well-done, attractive picture book. At five or six, the children can do it for themselves. This is a strong curriculum resource. Love it! [Geraldine L. Wilson]

The Secret Worry

by Elissa P. Benedek, M.D.,
illustrated by Patricia Rosamilia.
Human Science Press, 1984,
\$12.95, unpagged, grades 1-6

The Secret Worry is a contrived effort to teach children that there are "worry doctors" (psychotherapists) who can make "secret worries" go away through talk and play. While this may be a legitimate concept to teach children, this book suggests that children's worries are entirely *internal* and that solutions require no participation or change on the part of those in the *external* environment.

In this story, a white, seemingly suburban, young girl has a "secret worry" that apparently has nothing to do with a problematic situation or relationship such as parents, poverty, alcoholism in the family, moving to a new neighborhood or sexual abuse. The protagonist's problem is left deliberately vague, and the family and school both seem pleasant enough, at least from the illustrations. The parents are not involved in the therapy, as far as one can tell, and the problem is gone at the end of the book, simply as a result of play therapy.

As a therapist and ex-teacher, this reviewer has observed that children's "worries" are rarely isolated from their environments. In fact, children often feel that they are somehow to blame for any external difficulties in their lives, and a book like this could confirm a child's belief that they are at fault for their own unhappiness. While therapy certainly often helps a child to feel more empowered, the change process often requires the participation of significant others in



that child's world, and a recognition that the outside world has impacted on that child in some crucial way that has resulted in the need for therapy.

The Secret Worry is essentially a sales pitch for therapy, with no other significant message for a child. [Leonore Gordon]

Town & Country

written and illustrated by Alice and Martin Provensen.

Crown, 1984,

\$9.95, unpagged, grades p.s.-3

The jacket bills *Town and Country* as a book that "introduces children to the sights, sounds and good times to be found wherever one may live in America."

We begin by taking a close look at a big city — a crowded port, busy railroads, the general hustle and bustle. The text explains that big city populations include white people, Black people, brown people. Unfortunately, though, the book not only goes no further — it goes backwards. Its main failure is that the illustrations, which are lavish, depict various groups in horrendously stereotypical ways: an East Indian wears turban and jodhpurs; an Italian is dressed as a waiter, an Asian wears clog-like shoes, etc. Moreover, all the various groups are shown running "native" restaurants. (Two notable exceptions: there is no kosher food store — though one is mentioned in the text — nor a Black-run one. There *is* a "Seoul Food" store, thereby providing the double opportunity to take note of Koreans, albeit restaurant-operating ones, and point up the omission of Blacks.) A similar sensitivity regarding cultural issues is evident in the book's depiction of a "San Gennario" — rather than San Gennaro — festival.

The countryside, on the other hand, is depicted as populated only by whites. To be sure, the illustrations are technically skillful (as are those on big-city living). But by putting such bucolic scenes off-limits to all but whites, the artists miss an opportunity to show country life as it really is.

In short, the book makes two offensive points: ethnic groups in cities stick to cooking, and they are banned from country living. Definitely not a book to be recommended. [Emily Leinster]

Zan Hagen's Marathon

by R.R. Knudson.

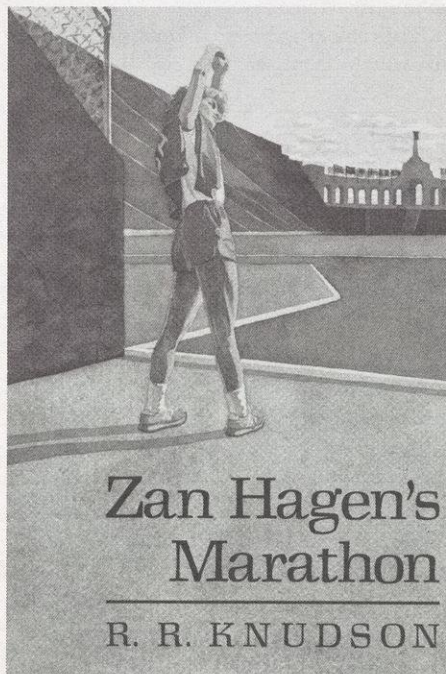
Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1984,

\$10.95, 183 pages, grades 5-up

This is Knudson's fifth novel about Zan Hagen, girl athlete extraordinaire. In previous books Zan has competed in football, basketball and track; now she takes on the Olympic marathon.

When Zan gets intrigued by long distance racing and by the idea of competing against runners from all over the world, her natural athletic ability and a love of running help her through the required training, but her fierce, win-at-all-costs attitude is almost her undoing. Throughout most of the book she views all competitors as enemies; she is even unwilling to shake hands at the end of a race.

As her Olympic dream grows more real, Zan becomes obsessed with a runner from China, rumored to be the fastest woman marathoner alive. Song Mai, the Chinese runner, is introduced as "the great doll of China" on page seven, but her name isn't given until page 83. This emphasizes and reinforces Zan's xenophobic view of the world. All other countries are her (and the U.S.'s) enemy in the quest for Olympic gold, and Song Mai represents the faceless foreigners Zan is trying to annihilate.



As the book progresses, Zan slowly (*very* slowly) progresses from competition to cooperation, but the transition is not easy. Zan's friends reinforce her go-for-gold fervor and only her history teacher tries to get Zan past her own nationalism and individualism to larger goals of cooperation, sister/brotherhood and peace.

Zan does make it to the Olympics, where she finally meets Song Mai. (When Zan states, "I don't have friends when I'm training," Song Mai replies, "What is sport unless it brings friendships?") Through their personal interaction Zan's attitude begins to change, and the book ends at the approach to the marathon finish line, with Zan and Song Mai running together.

Knudson writes about sports with excitement and authority. It is also exciting (and exasperating) to watch Zan's painfully slow progress toward cooperation. Unfortunately, given prevalent U.S. attitudes, the slowness is, I think, realistic. However, Zan's racist statements (*i.e.*, referring to China as "China, chop fooie" and "China, huge and crimson" and to Song Mai as the Dragon Lady) go unchallenged by anyone except the history teacher, and even she appears to chalk Zan's words up to an overly competitive sporting spirit. (There is also a reference to Song Mai's injured knee being wrapped up in dog skin soaked in herbs; even if that is a Chinese remedy, it is such an unusual one that the stereotype of the Chinese as utterly "exotic" is reinforced.)

Despite the book's problems, its message is an optimistic one. I hope that teenagers reading *Zan Hagen's Marathon* will not take Zan's ignorance at face value, but instead will see the theme of "friendship first, competition second" that this book finally embodies. [Christine Jenkins]

Women Astronauts Aboard the Space Shuttle

by Mary Virginia Fox.

Messner, 1984,

\$9.79, 160 pages, grades 7-up

This book describes the June, 1983, space shuttle flight with particular emphasis on the experiences of Dr. Sally

Ride. It also includes brief biographies of the eight women astronauts, their recruitment and training, and their feelings about participation in the space program.

Obviously, the women are portrayed in a positive light, as possible role models. Values such as non-conformism, independence and diligence are emphasized, but modesty and teamwork are also stressed. All of the women excelled in school and in their professions, but most express surprise over the "fuss" that's made over them and all consider fame to be a "nuisance." Similarly, all are anxious to be thought of as "astronauts," rather than as "women astronauts." This sounds fine at first, but, after a while, the plea, "Oh, don't, for heaven's sake, think of me as a *woman*!" has a rather unhealthy ring to it. At one point, referring to the emphasis placed on her gender, Ride remarks, "Maybe it's too bad we're not any further along than this." That might be true, but it is still an accomplishment for a woman to "break into" a male-dominated field.

There seems to be a certain paranoia about being associated with the feminist movement. "I notice," remarks Margaret Rhea Seddon, "that the women chosen are all very successful in their fields without being militant women's libbers or overly masculine." The author herself also uses the term "women's libbers" in a pejorative sense. Shannon Lucid "chuckles" as she recalls being unable to find an airline that would hire her as a commercial pilot (one wonders how hard she laughed at the time), and Mary Cleave met "a wall of resentment" while working with an otherwise all-male crew of sanitation inspectors. (None of the eight seem to recall encountering any other resistance in their pursuit of male-dominated careers.) Finally, one begins to suspect that these women fear the term "women's libber" more than death in space.

This attitude borders on the homophobic: it is really the female version of the old-style astronaut image. These "gals" have the right stuff: they wear lipstick and go to PTA meetings when not training for space travel or going after another Ph.D. There are no people of color (we might assume that this is NASA's problem, rather than the author's), and no disabled or older characters are portrayed.

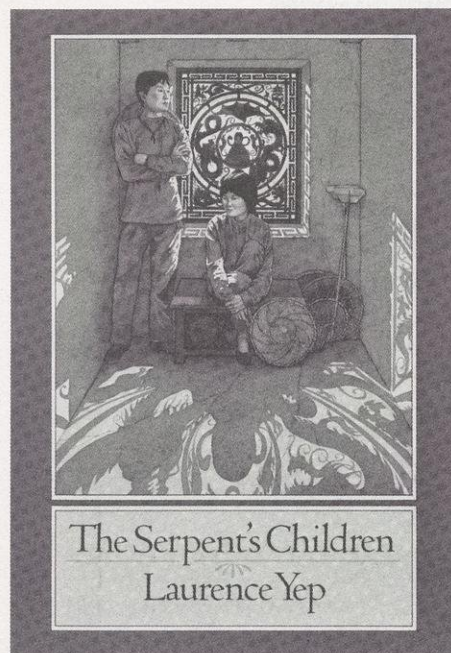
The best part of the book is the description of the shuttle flight. The author answers all of our questions about what the experience is like: space food, space bathrooms, and, yes, even space tampons are described in detail. Upon finishing the book, the reader should have a clear idea about what it takes to be a U.S. astronaut. [Tracy Dalton]

The Serpent's Children

by Laurence Yep.
Harper & Row, 1984,
\$12.95, 277 pages, grades 7-up

Cassia and her younger brother, Foxfire, are called "the serpent's children" because of a legend that they are descended from a serpent who lived for a time on earth as a woman. Other villagers attribute their unconventional behavior to this "serpent's blood."

Their mother dies while their father is off fighting against the "demon" British, and Cassia and Foxfire must put aside their bickering and sibling rivalry to stay together. Together they resist the good intentions of relatives who hope to improve Cassia's chances of marriage by bringing a matchmaker to bind her feet. When Cassia expresses surprise at her brother's support, he replies, "You're not much, but you are my sister, after all."



After her father returns home with a wounded leg, Cassia faces different problems. Father wants to train Foxfire as a fighter to carry on the work of freeing China from the Manchu rulers, despite the fact that Cassia has more ability, but Foxfire dreams of going to America. Bandits harass the village and famine ravages the land. Cassia draws strength from the legend of the serpent, who "never gives up, whether she's fighting a war or loving someone."

In his Afterword, author Yep says that he began his research for this book to discover his identity as a Chinese. In the process, he learned that the Chinese people are not the "homogeneous whole" embodied in the stereotype that "all Chinese look alike." This book will help readers, young and old, counter stereotypic views of the Chinese. The characters are real people, and both Cassia and Foxfire are positive, non-sexist heroes. [Alice N. Nash]

Sally Ride, America's First Woman in Space

by Carolyn Blacknall.
Dillon, 1984,
\$8.95, 64 pages, grades 3-up

Sally Ride, America's First Woman in Space is part of the Dillon Press "Taking Part" series of biographies for young readers. In describing Ride's unconventional life and career, the author exposes young readers to the problems inherent in making difficult choices and the rewards of following one's own path.

Described as "a challenger of life," Ride's story begins with her unusual upbringing. Her family, we are told, "ate dinner when they wanted, and they could have a whole dinner of nuts and cheese and crackers." Ride's parents did not put a great deal of emphasis on tidiness or household chores; the children were encouraged to "explore," and the family spent a good deal of time traveling abroad. Sally Ride was encouraged to pursue her interests in sports and science.

The choices Ride has made have not all been so clear cut as "shall I become a scientist?" Her decisions *not* to pursue a career as a professional tennis player and *not* to have children are also dis-

cussed. And, in college, Ride discovers that there is "more to life than just math and science," and she takes some courses in Shakespeare, discovering the value of diversity and variety.

Ride seems an excellent role model, and the author, herself an Operations Integration Officer with NASA, is straightforward in her effort to encourage girls to pursue interests in science. The book should appeal to boys as well.

There are no older people, people with disabilities or people of color; it would seem that NASA does not employ any members of these groups in key positions. The author does provide excellent descriptions of space travel and the book is illustrated with a number of photographs. This is informative reading. [Tracy Dalton]

In Kindling Flame: The Story of Hannah Senesh, 1921-1944

by Linda Atkinson.
Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 1985,
\$13.50, 214 pages, grades 6-up

Hannah Senesh, a twenty-three-year-old Jewish poet and resistance fighter, was only one of 550,000 Hungarian Jews murdered by the Nazis between March, 1944, and May, 1945. She embodied a passionate spirit of resistance shared by many European Jews at that time, but only recently begun to be acknowledged. It is the strength of *In Kindling Flame* that Senesh is presented as special — certainly she was a leader — but not alone.

Hannah grew up in an assimilated Jewish home in Budapest. She and her family coped with anti-Jewish regulations by both fighting and working around them. She loved school, but when her classmates nominated her for Literary Society secretary, girls in the class above objected because she was Jewish. This rejection affected her deeply.

In her last year of school (1938-39), Hannah discovered Zionism. Terribly worried about events in Europe, and burning to do something significant with her life, Hannah emigrated to Palestine in 1939. After two years of agricultural training, she joined a kibbutz but was unhappy there, torn between feeling she

was wasting her life and wanting to be a good kibbutz member.

When the British called for volunteers to join the Palmach, the striking unit of the unofficial Jewish army, Hannah again found a purpose. In 1943, she was chosen for a special mission — to be dropped behind enemy lines in Europe to help captured Allied airmen escape. The mission's second priority — second according to the British, if not to the Jewish soldiers — was to help organize Jewish resistance fighters. Hannah was captured and killed, but not before she inspired others.

In Kindling Flame starts slowly but picks up. Atkinson has skillfully woven together historical information with Hannah's diaries, letters and poems, as well as others' letters and conversations. A few minor complaints: the author omits any reference to Hannah's Jewish education, though we know she had some and valued it, without being religious, because of occasional Biblical or historical allusions in her diaries. We are also told the kibbutzniks had Saturday off, as if Saturday could be Tuesday, missing a chance to learn that even in a non-religious kibbutz, the Jewish Sabbath was the day of rest. A more substantial omission in the background information is of any mention of those often invisible victims of Nazi insanity — the ones who have no one to speak for them and must always be included: homosexuals, gypsies, the institutionalized.

Nonetheless, this is an inspiring story of a young woman's heroism and a welcome addition to the literature of Jewish resistance. [Susan Wizowaty]

American Indian Myths and Legends

selected and edited by
Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz,
illustrated by Richard Erdoes.
Pantheon, 1984,
\$19.95, 521 pages, grades 6-up

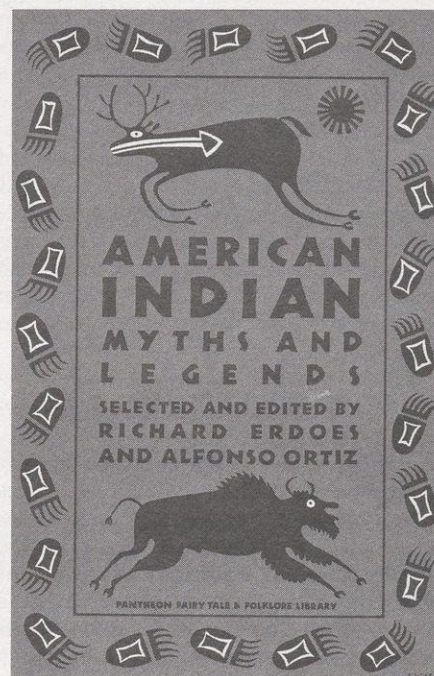
This anthology of 166 legends and myths from many Native American peoples is organized around ten themes (tales of human creation, tales of world creation, tales of the sun, moon and stars, etc.) but the authors make it clear that these are arbitrary categories. They also relate how the legends were collected and indi-

cate the source of each selection; sometimes there is background information about the collector.

A valuable part of the book is the Introduction and Commentary that precedes each section. The reader becomes aware of the many and diverse groups that are called "Indian." The authors show the similarities and differences in the myths and their relationship to geography, climate and historical events.

The book also gives a clear message that Native Americans are people still living today with a valuable culture. The authors say: "Some [legends] have been told for thousands of years and they are still being told and retold and reshaped and refitted to meet their audience's changing needs, even created anew out of a contemporary man's or woman's vision."

This is a book that would appeal to adults as well as young people. Though the book's size may be formidable to younger children, many of the legends could be read to them. Since few people seem to be aware of Indian literature, this would be a valuable book for school and public libraries. The collection also would be appreciated by the serious student of mythology and Indian history. The illustrations by Richard Erdoes, based on images found in Indian art, are most appealing and enhance the book. [Janice C. Warner]



Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women's Lives

by Cynthia Enloe.

South End Press (302 Columbus Ave., Boston, MA 02116), 1983, \$8. (paper), 262 pages

How the military powers that were and are used and use women to meet their needs is the subject of this book. The author's object is to show that all military uses of women—as prostitutes, army wives, nurses, diverse workers, revolutionaries or soldiers—serve to maintain patriarchal control and to hamper social justice. While Enloe makes her case adequately, she offers few suggestions for women to organize and resist militaristic subjugation.

The South African Churches in a Revolutionary Situation

by Marjorie Hope and James Young. Orbis, 1981, \$9.95 (paper), 268 pages

Marjorie Hope and James Young, both Quakers and sociologists at Wilmington (Ohio) College, give us a vivid and accurate account of the political role played by South Africa's many churches since the first Dutch settlement in 1652. Taking each religious group in turn, from Dutch Reformed through Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Lutheran, Quaker and Catholic to the African independent churches, they zero in on church positions vis-à-vis Black/white membership and the government's apartheid policies. They provide colorful profiles on prominent church figures, among them Anglican Bishop Desmond Tutu and Quaker Hendrik van der Merwe, and they detail the heroic stands many have taken. (They also pay tribute to the Christian Institute, the South African Council of Churches, Steve Biko's Black Consciousness Movement and the African National Congress for their courage and their commitment to non-violence.)

The writers stress "the religious justification" Afrikaners offer for apartheid and point to the interlocking grip the Nationalist Party and the Dutch Reformed Church hold on the country's reins. However, they also see hope in the real fissures which have developed re-



Hits & Misses reviews material intended to assist adults working with children in the classroom, the library and at home. Professional literature, parenting materials and other resources are reviewed.

cently in that group. Their scorecard for other South African churches shows considerable ambiguity, acts of courage as well as cowardice. In sum, they feel that the churches have been a force both for and against change.

This book, which can be used by advanced secondary students, is an invaluable resource for all adults who wish to be informed about current developments in one of the world's most combustible spots. [Richard O. Ulin]

The Use and Abuse of History or How the Past Is Taught

by Marc Ferro. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984, \$28.95, 257 pages

"Our image of other peoples, or of ourselves for that matter, reflects the history we are taught as children," writes French historian Ferro in the Preface to this far-ranging book. Ferro examines textbooks and other educational media from the United States, South Africa, the Soviet Union, Trinidad, India, Iran, Poland, Australia, Japan and China. Most of his findings will not surprise *Bulletin* readers, who are aware of some of the omissions, biased selections, distortions and stereotypes in U.S. history books. But even if not surprising, Ferro's book is informative and useful in teaching

students how authors' perspectives and purposes influence educational materials.

The book is particularly informative to anyone not fully familiar with world history—and that covers most U.S. readers because Ferro states the truth in saying, "The Americans lead the field in ignorance of the outside world." However, many of these ignorant readers are not likely to be attracted by Ferro's style of presenting some of that history, although the problem may be in the translation. (The book was first published in French in 1981.) Another roadblock is the book design, which does not clearly delineate the constant switches from textbook quotations to Ferro's comments. But history teachers should find the book useful despite these faults, despite Ferro's embarrassingly inept summary of parts of U.S. history, and even despite the misspellings of many names of Black Americans and the changing of author Frances FitzGerald to a "he."

The book's Conclusion offers wise words to illuminate the direction in which thoughtful teachers might experiment. This section of the book, plus the many examples of how religion, nationality, ideology and power dictate the content of teaching about the past, make this a worthwhile purchase for educational institutions.

Disability in Modern Children's Literature

by John Quicke. Brookline Books (29 Ware St., Cambridge, MA 02138), 1985, \$17.95, 170 pages

Disability in Modern Children's Literature presents an insightful analysis of the portrayal of adults and children with disabilities. However, a serious drawback is that most of the books examined are British and hence generally unavailable and unfamiliar to U.S. librarians, teachers and readers.

Dividing the discussion into key topics, including analysis of relationships between disabled and non-disabled siblings, male and female, children and disabled adults, the author has selected books to illustrate both positive and negative portrayals in all of the topic areas. A strong advocate of "integration," the British counterpart of the U.S. "mainstreaming" of children with disabilities, Quicke rightfully acknowl-

edges the impact literature has in children's perceptions of their world. Although many books mentioned were unfamiliar to this reviewer, Quicke's analysis appears to be sensitive and insightful. He appears rightfully leery of medico-educational labeling and presents a consciousness of class awareness rarely seen.

One disturbing point. While Quicke acknowledges the stereotype of a higher than average "mortality rate" among characters with disabilities, he appears to be inconsistent in his criticism of authors who "kill off" disabled characters. Case in point: While Quicke is critical of Rodowski's *What About Me?*, he is less quick to condemn Sallis' handling of the disabled woman's death in *Sweet Frankie* (a.k.a. *Only Love*, see Vol. 12, No. 2). Is one death more acceptable than another?

All in all, however, this book deserves a place in any reference library. The author's overall sensitivity and awareness, in addition to an excellent section on "Choosing and Using the Literature," compensate for a slow read and minor lapses. [Emily Strauss Watson]

Love Medicine

by Louise Erdich.

Holt, 1984,

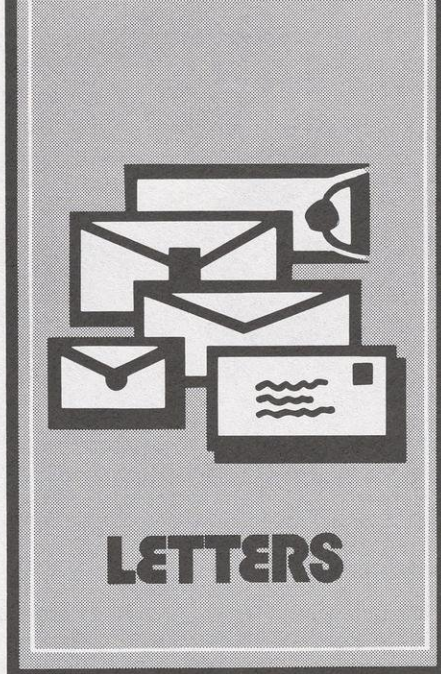
\$13.95, 272 pages

We seem to be enjoying a modest flowering of newly published works by Native American women. Among the best is this novel by a young Chippewa woman.

No book that I have seen recently has been published to such disparate reviews. *Newsweek* magazine found it "self-consciously literary," cited Erdich's "inexperience as a storyteller," and said it wasn't a novel, anyway. The National Book Critics Circle gave *Love Medicine* its 1984 Award for fiction.

Erdich's story, set in North Dakota, is of the interwoven lives of two Chippewa families, the Kashpaws and the Larmartines, over a 50-year period. And, *Newsweek* to the contrary, the writing has power and beauty that fully justify the title. Not since Leslie Silko's *Ceremony* has there been a book that says so clearly what life is like, right now, for so many of us, with some of the why; *Love Medicine* may be even better. Sometimes it made me laugh, sometimes cry; at least once, it scared me out of my wits.

Highly, highly recommended. [Doris Seale]



The Author of a Children's Book Responds ...

Dear CIBC:

I was distressed about the review of my book, *Henry's Tower*, that you published in the "Bookshelf Column" (Vol. 16, Nos. 2 & 3). Firstly, my last name was misspelled—Roger is not very close to Rosen. Secondly, I feel Leonore Gordon did not grasp the central point of the book. *Henry's Tower* was written to address a topic which has been lacking in children's literature, i.e., the emotional impact of disturbed parents on their children. It was written to open doors of dialogue in discussion with adults about the impact of emotionally disturbed parents (in this case resulting from war) on children. It was written to show how children can begin to understand and cope with such a devastating trauma.

The book is being used in bibliotherapy with children of disturbed parents. To illustrate this I am enclosing a letter from a child psychologist who found the book extremely helpful in working with a child of a psychotic mother. I have numerous letters like this on file.

Francelia Butler, Ph.D. (Editor-in-Chief, *Children's Literature*), stated in her reaction to *Henry's Tower*, "To my knowledge there is no children's book on this topic which is so pertinent to children whose fathers fought in Vietnam. This book is an important statement on a current and timeless problem." Numerous parents, particularly spouses of Viet-

nam vets, have found the book useful in helping their children understand and cope with their father's emotional difficulties, particularly anger.

Time and love are well-known healing agents, not "magical solutions" as Leonore Gordon suggests. This is particularly true when fathers have mental difficulties and will not seek treatment (this is the case in the story and often the case in reality). Children and their mothers are left to try and cope with the distressing circumstance. Henry's idea of adding licorice to his mother's time and love is his own attempt at reaching out to his father, knowing that this is something his father had shared with him in the past. It has a very special meaning to Henry and to his father. It is not a "sanitized" and "passive solution" as the review indicates, but rather Henry's active way of coping with a very upsetting situation. It allows Henry to overcome some of his fear regarding his father. It represents a tenuous bond: Henry's ongoing connection with his disturbed father.

Being a conscientious objector to war, I was dismayed to read in the review Leonore Gordon's criticism of how "*Henry's Tower* misses a prime opportunity to teach children about war's cost" and that "there are also anti-war groups struggling to convince the public and lawmakers of peaceful alternatives to war." Again, I want to suggest that she missed the point of the book. It was not to address war or alternatives to war, which is an excellent idea for a future children's book. But, rather, *Henry's Tower* was written to do exactly what Leonore Gordon states the book's text does: "beautifully describes the bewilderment and rage of a child with a disturbed parent." However, she states further that "the tale's resolution is totally inadequate." The essence of this book is that there are no magical resolutions to such problems. Therefore, her reading of the book — that Henry is supposed to magically solve his father's problem through time, love and licorice — is a *misreading*. *Henry's Tower* deals with a difficult topic that in reality often has no magical solution. However, the opportunity for a child who lives and suffers such a reality to know that he or she is not alone is healing in and of itself.

David H. Rosen, M.D.

Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Medicine

University of Rochester Medical Center

Rochester, New York

Two audio-visual training kits for early childhood staff, parents and teachers; each program presents the problems, relevant research and simple-to-follow strategies

CHILDCARE SHAPES THE FUTURE ...



Anti-Racist Strategies

The first part of the learning kit on *racism* presents research findings relevant to racism and young children; common ways racism surfaces in childcare situations; how racism specifically affects Afro-American, Asian American and Latino children; how racism and classism often converge, destroying the chances of very young children; the role of print and electronic media in forming children's racial attitudes; and how racism destroys the quality of life in the U.S.

The second part offers specific strategies for adults to help all children become consciously anti-racist—secure in, and proud of, their heritage. There are also techniques for helping children of color learn to cope with racism when it crops up in their lives and for helping white children overcome racist behaviors. Suggestions for anti-racist role models, environments and resources are included.

"Fills a longstanding need. In clear, uncomplicated language and pictures, it points up the pitfalls of racism confronting young children and offers suggestions for overcoming this blight on their lives." Priscilla Pemberton, Early Childhood Consultant (formerly at Bank Street).

Contains: 2 sound-color filmstrips or 2 slideshows with automatic and manual cassettes; 94 frames and 108

frames, each 15 minutes; includes 3 booklets of readings, facts, research, resources and curriculum activities, LC 83-730389.

Cost per set of filmstrips is \$45.

Cost for set of slideshows \$55.

Anti-Sexist Strategies

This learning kit on *sexism* contains two filmstrips. The first filmstrip presents research findings on differing adult treatment of girls and boys; conscious and unconscious ways in which adults mold children to fit societal sex-roles; the harm of fixed sex-roles to children's full development; the special harm of "masculine" behaviors to our society and planet; and anti-sexist childcare goals.

The second filmstrip offers ten strategies for anti-sexist childcare. These strategies, with examples of each, go far beyond the usual rules for establishing a "non-sexist" environment. Rather, they explore methods of helping children to become aware of various forms of sexism and to become strong enough to resist pressures for conformity by peers, TV and storybooks.

"Through the use of these filmstrips adults can begin to question some of their attitudes and learn ways in which to eliminate sexual stereotyping from schools, day-care centers and playgroups." Linda Lusskin, Mt. Pleasant School, Livingston, N.J., *School Library Journal*.

Contains: 2 sound-color filmstrips and 2 automatic and manual cassettes. The first strip is 93 frames and 12 minutes, the second is 118 frames and 15 minutes. A booklet is included with scripts, research studies and recommended reading, plus an 8-page Report Card. LC 81-730652.

Cost for set of filmstrips is \$45. (Slideshow not available.)

Send check or purchase order to
The CIBC Resource Center for Educators
1841 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023

For a free catalog listing anti-racist, anti-sexist materials, write the CIBC at the address given above.

Cooperative Children's Book Center
4290 Helen C. White Hall
600 North Park Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53706

What Is the Council on Interracial Books for Children?

CIBC is a non-profit organization founded by writers, librarians, teachers and parents in 1966. It promotes anti-racist and anti-sexist children's literature and teaching materials in the following ways: (1) by publishing the *Interracial Books for Children BULLETIN*, which regularly analyzes learning materials for stereotypes and other forms of bias, recommends new books and provides consciousness-raising articles and alternative resources; (2) by operating the Racism and Sexism Resource Center for Educators, which publishes reference books, lesson plans and audio-visual material designed to challenge and counteract stereotypes and to develop pluralism in schools and in society; and (3) by conducting workshops on racism and sexism awareness for librarians, teachers and parents. For more information about CIBC and a free catalog of its Resource Center materials, write us at 1841 Broadway, New York, NY 10023.

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Council on Interracial Books for Children, Inc.
1841 Broadway
New York, NY 10023

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