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New York, NY: The Council on Interracial Books for Children, Inc.,
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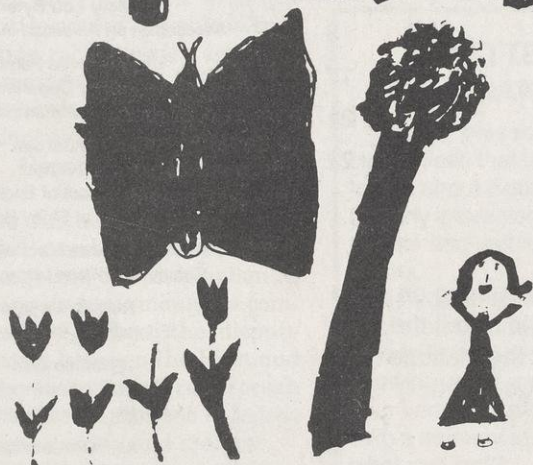
BULLETIN

VOLUME 14, NUMBER 6, 1983

ISSN 0146-5562

FREEZE THE WEAPONS

PLEASE!



Farnaz. H

Institute's Mission: Action for Peace and Justice

Basal Readers: Paltry Progress Pervades

"War Makes Men" Is Message from Comic Books

BULLETIN

VOLUME 14, NUMBER 6

1983

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The Institute for Peace and Justice, described in the article beginning on page 13, sponsored ArtPeace, an art event to educate young people about the nuclear freeze campaign. The illustration on the cover, which the Institute reproduced as a post card, was done by Farnaz Haghseta, age eight.

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Education Index

INTER-RACIAL 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. © 1983 by the Council on Interracial Books for Children, Inc. Institutional and contributing subscriptions are \$18 a year; individual subscriptions are \$12 a year; single copies are \$2.25 each for regular issues, \$3 each for special double issues plus 50¢ handling; bulk rates available upon request. A subscription form appears on the back cover.

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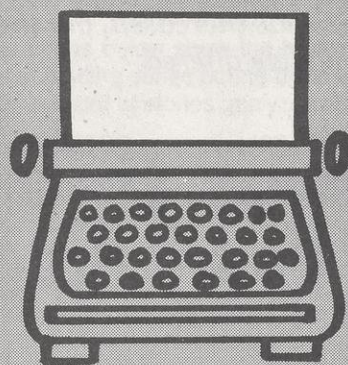
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EDITORIAL

On Beyond Jake: A Call to Dialog

For too many years children's rights advocates, First Amendment "purists," and social justice activists have battled within the American Library Association and elsewhere over the issue pinpointed in my previous editorial (Vol. 14, No. 5): whether children should be "protected" by library book and media selection policies that would keep inauthentic and stereotypic material out of juvenile circulating collections. Proponents say "Yes," arguing that pre-teen kids are not, in fact, "little adults" capable of critically evaluating racist, sexist, ageist or handicapist material, and that such items may do serious damage to children's self-identity, perhaps warping them for life. Opponents, on the other hand, maintain that children should enjoy the same, full access to library collections as adults and that invoking racism, sexism, ageism, or handicapism as selection criteria is tantamount to committing censorship. Often, the dispute becomes a contest between the First and Fourteenth Amendments: Free Speech vs. Equal Protection. And often it degenerates into name-calling and diatribe.

Believing that the issues are truly significant and that erstwhile combatants may—with good will—find some mutually common ground that does no violence to either First or Fourteenth Amendment rights, it seems appropriate to now issue a call for renewed dialog, which may freely take place in the *Bulletin*. And as a prelude to such dialog, here are several "propositions" to explore:

- There is an essential difference between material that attacks political,

economic and religious ideas or groups and material that attacks people on the basis of unchangeable, physical, non-ideological characteristics: age, gender, disability and ethnic/racial background.

- Children are more susceptible than teenagers or adults to identity-damaging stereotypes and group-defamation.

- Given the foregoing, library selection policies should explicitly deal with

ATTENTION: LIBRARIANS/TEACHERS

We are presently working on a special *Bulletin* that looks at children's materials about South Africa. We are particularly interested in what is available in school and public libraries and classrooms.

In addition to learning what—if any—books on that country are in circulation in your library, we are very interested in knowing what materials you carry in your vertical or pamphlet file. Would you take a moment to check and let us know what you find?

Similarly, we would like to hear from classroom teachers and other educators regarding any such materials they have on hand.

Thank you in advance for any assistance that you can give. (If you have suggestions or comments regarding the content of this special issue, which we hope to publish early next year, please let us know by December 15.)

the purpose, placement and supervised use of juvenile material that assaults or demeans persons or groups because of their immutable, involuntary characteristics.

Of course, none of this is quite as simple as it sounds. Proponents must demonstrate that stereotypic and defamatory material actually injures children. And they must establish at what age that sort of injury finally lessens. Similarly, intellectual freedom advocates need to consider if, indeed, a juvenile work that distorts the experience of a given ethnic or racial group, questions the humanity of young, older or disabled persons, or posits the superiority of men over women so violates Fourteenth Amendment strictures against denial of equal protection and due process that it just doesn't belong on the open shelves in a children's library collection. Further, they ought to seriously address the contention that one's changeable ideas or beliefs (e.g., atheism, capitalism) are intrinsically unlike a person's immutable attributes (e.g., race, sex).

We have been warring too long. And probably with the wrong adversaries. In a spirit of both intellectual freedom and child advocacy, let the dialog begin. . . —Sanford Berman, Hennepin County Library, Minnetonka, Minnesota.

We would like to present the dialog called for by Sanford Berman in a special issue of the *Bulletin*, and at that time offer differing viewpoints on the issues discussed above. We ask that suggestions and contributions for the content of that *Bulletin* be submitted as soon as possible to the CIBC, 1841 Broadway, New York, NY 10023.—Editors

A major study of new basal readers reveals that numerical representation of minorities and females has increased, but there has been little or no progress in role models offered

Basal Readers: Paltry Progress Pervades

By Gwyneth Britton and Margaret Lumpkin

Basal readers are used in 85-90 per cent of the public school classrooms as the basis for reading instruction in the first eight grades, and their importance is increasing as financial cutbacks force schools to rely more and more on "basic" texts. What do these readers teach children about themselves? About others? About options for their future?

We have been studying basal readers since 1972, looking at their depiction of people of color and women; recently we began to also look at their portrayal of older people, of people with disabilities and of one-parent families. For our sample, we have selected texts on the basis of availability and common usage in the U.S. public schools. In all, we have looked at a total of 17,694 stories¹ or chapters taken from 57 reading and literature series comprising over 681 books published between the years 1958 and 1982.

This article focuses on the more recent materials—a total of 2,972 stories taken from 77 books in seven series published between 1980 and 1982; the series are listed at the end of this article. (A comparison of the books published between 1958 and 1977 and the current books appears on page 5. More detailed information on the earlier texts appeared in our 1977 *Consumer's Guide to Sex, Race, and Career Bias in Public School Textbooks*, as well as in the October, 1977, *Reading Teacher*.)

We formulated analysis procedures in 1972 and have refined them throughout the study. In 1980 we began to include data about older people, people with disabilities and one-parent families. The analyses were completed by one researcher and a trained assistant who has participated in the study since 1972. The

consistency of the evaluative procedures has been periodically verified.

The procedures we have used are definable, objective procedures so that our findings cannot be discounted as a result of our own bias. In addition, the procedures are objective enough to be repeated by others with comparable results. This procedure has been used by other researchers who have examined bias in German and Mexican readers as well as by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, which examined library books for K-12 students.

We began by identifying the major character in each story—the person(s) around whom the plot centered or whose activity was essential to the plot. We categorized the major characters as Male, Female, Male/Female Shown Equally, Other. The first three categories are self-explanatory; the last—Other—was used when a story featured an inanimate object (such as microscopes), an abstract concept (democracy, for example) or groups (stories about people in other countries fall into this category). We determined "racial origin" on the basis of our perceptions of the major character's origin and used these classifications: Anglo, Black, Native American, Asian/Asian American and Hispanic. Occasionally, it was difficult to determine a character's race except to note that a person of color was being portrayed, and in these cases we listed the story in the category of Non-Identifiable Person of Color.

We recorded career options by gender and race, defining them generally as work providing financial support. (As will be noted, this led to the inclusion of some categories that are not usually con-

sidered careers—slave, queen and princess among them.) A career was recorded each time one appeared in an illustration or was mentioned in the narrative, with occupation titles taken from the text. Careers were assigned to the following categories: Anglo Male Career, Anglo Female Career, Male of Color Career, Female of Color Career and Neutral Career. "Neutral" careers, increasingly frequent, are those for which no gender is specified; for instance, the narrative might read, "The engineer studied the difficult problem," with neither the illustration nor the context identifying the engineer's gender or race.

Counting Careers

Whenever possible, we recorded a career for major characters and for all others mentioned in the narrative or shown in illustrations. If the same bus driver or scientist appeared several times, a count of "one" was recorded. However, if seven different bus drivers or scientists were shown in the same story, the career of bus driver or scientist was recorded seven times. If an illustration showed more than ten people in a particular role, a maximum frequency of ten was recorded. (For example, eighteen warriors in one illustration were recorded as "warriors 10.") The limit of ten was set to prevent the disproportionate representation of one career based on one story or sentence. When an indefinite number of people was referred to—"the waitresses who were serving breakfast," for example—a count of two was assigned. In some cases, no career could be identified for a character. Similarly, animals were not assigned career roles.

While reading texts are not intended

as vocational materials, students are regularly exposed to the occupational biases shown in these texts. Students are required to read from these texts and recognize them as authoritative sources. Often career education is specifically taught from a variety of sources (film, speakers, booklets, etc.), which do not have the authority of a single text. In addition, career education is often not taught until grade 5 or 6, if then. Hartley and Watson both found that by the time they reach age eight, both boys and girls already know what sex does what job!² No doubt, children also absorb another, similar lesson by that age—what race does what job.

Our findings follow.

In the 1980-82 books, males of all races appear as major characters in 35 per cent of the stories; females of all races appear in 20 per cent. Males and females appear as equals in 20 per cent of the works, with the remaining 25 per cent devoted to subjects defined as "other" (abstract concepts, inanimate objects, etc.). Upon comparing the number of male major characters (35 per cent) with that of females (20 per cent), it is clear that these new basal readers still reflect a sexist bias. They certainly do not reflect reality, in which females are 51.42 per cent of the population.

Of all stories that focus on people in the 1980-82 series, 20 per cent are about people of color. (In reality, people of color are 17 per cent of the U.S. population.) Although people of color seem to be adequately represented in terms of numbers, males appear in 60 per cent of the stories, females in only 40 per cent—still a sexist bias.

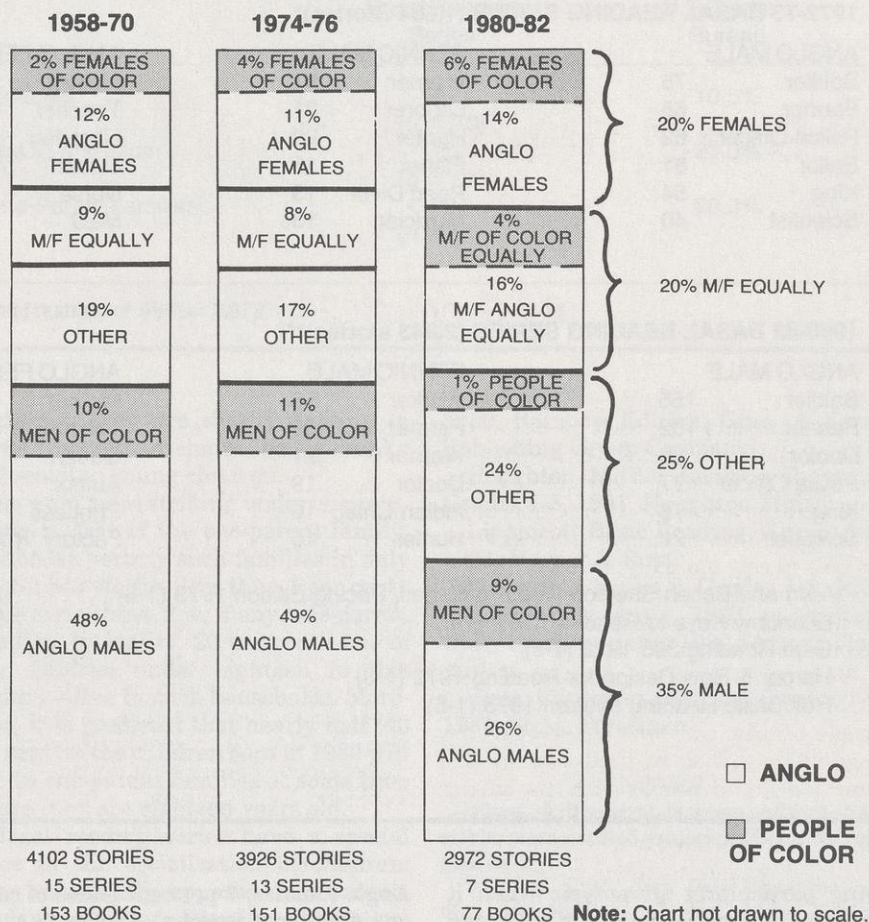
What Role Models Are Depicted?

One of our study's most provocative findings deals with the role models which provide children with career options. What role models are publishers providing for today's children?

Only a few studies have reported on the effect of the careers depicted in basal reading series. A study by Edward Hall suggests that children do learn about career models from such materials.³ The 1975 edition of *Dick and Jane as Victims* discussed the stereotypic models for skills, trades and professions in children's readers, and concluded that both boys and girls are consistently being "sold" sex-stereotyped information.⁴ Our study indicates that these new reading texts continue to severely limit young readers' choices and career aspirations,

Table 1: Major Characters by Gender and Race

The charts below show the breakdown of major characters by gender and race in basal reading series during three time periods: 1958-70, 1974-76 and 1980-82. The total number of stories analyzed was 17,694.



How do the new books compare to earlier series? As indicated in Table 1, the proportion of major character roles for females of all races has risen from 14 per cent in 1958-70 to 20 per cent in 1980-82, a gain that is still far from reality—women are 51.42 per cent of the U.S. population. The representation of minority women has risen from 2 per cent to 6 per cent of all females depicted, but still does not reflect reality, which is closer to 9 per cent.

The representation of males, however, shows a different pattern. The percentage of males increased from 58 per cent in 1958-70 to 60 per cent in 1974-76. After the publication of guidelines on sexism, male major characters decreased—from 60 per cent in 1974-76 to 35 per cent in 1980-82. The ratio of male major characters to female major characters has decreased from 4 males to 1 female to 1.75 to 1.

The percentage of males of color has been irregular during the different time periods, ranging from 10 per cent to 11 per cent and finally to 9 per cent in 1980-82. Females of color as major characters have increased—from 2 per cent to 6 per cent in 1980-82. The overall ratio of minority males to minority females has changed from 5 males to 1 female in 1958-70 to 1.5 to 1 in the 1980-82 era.

The category of Other, which includes inanimate objects, abstract concepts and cultural groups, increased from 19 per cent in 1958-70 to 25 per cent in 1980-82.

Males/Females Shown Equally for all races has risen from 9 per cent of the stories in 1958-70 to 20 per cent in 1980-82, a very encouraging trend. (It is interesting to note that many stories from earlier editions reappear in current books with the addition of a female in a male story or a male changed to a female character; for example, in one tale two brothers became a brother and sister.)

**Table 2: Ten-Year Comparison of the Top Six Ranked Careers
According to Gender and Race**

1972-73 BASAL READING SERIES (1,864 Stories)*

ANGLO MALE		ETHNIC MALE		ANGLO FEMALE		ETHNIC FEMALE	
Soldier	75	Warrior	97	Mother	435	Mother	84
Farmer	66	Laborer	21	Teacher	80	Librarian	13
Police Officer	62	Hunter	20	Librarian	23	Singer	5
Sailor	61	Fisher	15	Queen	14	Teacher	3
King	54	Pearl Diver	13	Nurse	11	Weaver	2
Scientist	40	Musician	13	Maid	11	Chemist	2
						Diver	2

1980-82 BASAL READING SERIES (2,843 stories)**

ANGLO MALE		ETHNIC MALE		ANGLO FEMALE		ETHNIC FEMALE	
Soldier	155	Worker	56	Mother	367	Mother	187
Farmer	102	Farmer	39	Teacher	78	Teacher	23
Doctor	89	Warrior	21	Queen	37	Slave	19
Police Officer	77	Doctor	19	Author	25	Worker	16
King	76	Indian Chief	18	Princess	17	Potter	9
Scientist	72	Hunter	15	Factory Worker	16	Artist	9

* Allyn and Bacon Sheldon Reading Series, Pacing Edition 1973 (1-6)
Economy Keys to Reading 1972 (1-8)
Ginn Reading 360 1973 (1-8)
Harper & Row Design for Reading 1972 (1-8)
Holt Basic Reading System 1973 (1-6)

** Addison-Wesley Reading Program 1982 (1-6)
Ginn Reading Program 1982 (1-8)
Ginn Reading Program, Rainbow 1980 (7-8)
Houghton Mifflin Reading Program 1981 (1-8)
Macmillan Series r 1980 (1-8)
Lippincott Basic Reading Series 1981 (1-6)
Scott, Foresman Reading 1981 (1-8)

being particularly stereotypic when it comes to options for people of color and females of all races.

When looking at the seven 1980-82 basal reading series, vast differences between the options portrayed for the sexes and races emerge. Of a total of 5,501 careers depicted, 64 per cent (3,538 careers) were attributed to Anglo males, while 14 per cent (746) of the careers were attributed to Anglo females. This is a ratio of 4.7 Anglo male careers for each Anglo female career. (We did not include full-time stay-at-home mothers as a career in this portion of the analysis because the U.S. Census Bureau does not recognize that category.) Males of color provided 17 per cent (926) of the career roles, while females of color provided 5 per cent (291) of the career roles (again, we excluded the full-time stay-at-home mothers). For people of color, three male careers are shown for each female career.

The 1981 U.S. Census Bureau defines the labor force as the civilian labor force plus the military. Of the total labor force, 51 per cent are Anglo males, 36 per cent

Anglo females, 7 per cent males of color and 6 per cent females of color. In these basal readers, Anglo males appear in 64 per cent of the career examples, a 13 per cent *overrepresentation*. At the same time, careers for Anglo females are grossly *underrepresented*. Instead of appearing as a realistic 36 per cent of the labor force (a percentage that is increasing), Anglo women are shown as only 14 per cent of the labor force.

People of Color in Labor Force

Instead of a realistic minority male labor force of 6 per cent, textbooks show such workers as 17 per cent of the total—an *overrepresentation* of 11 per cent. Women of color, like Anglo women, are also *underrepresented*.

Neutral career roles comprise some 493 of the examples (approximately 8 per cent). The increasing number of gender-free roles may be due to the demands by feminists for fuller representations, but given the disproportionate number of male models in these books—and

societal sexism—it is possible that children will perceive neutral references as male.

The nature of the career breakdown by sex and race is also of interest. As indicated on Table 2, the "careers" shown most frequently for Anglo males are, in descending order, soldier (155 examples), farmer (102), doctor (89), police officer (77), king (76) and scientist (72). This is an interesting mix of militaristic, authoritarian and unrealistic options.

Even though "soldier" was the most common career shown for Anglo males, few contemporary military careers were shown; most were historical—the cavalry chasing "Indians," colonial soldiers, revolutionary and Civil War battles, etc. The Houghton Mifflin series shows the largest number of military careers for Anglo males with stories being introduced at the third grade level and continuing through grade eight. Although almost 10 per cent of the military is female, these books do not show women in the military, although four series had stories about an Anglo woman

astronaut (cosmonaut, aquanaut or space settler).

The common role models shown for males of color differ from those of whites. They are worker (56 examples), farmer (39), warrior (21), "Indian chief" (18) and hunter (15). While farmer and doctor appear on both lists, it is significant to note that worker—which does not even appear as one of the frequent possibilities for whites—is the career most often shown for males of color. In addition, two careers—warrior and hunter—are hardly contemporary choices, nor is "Indian chief" a viable career for most children of color.⁵

The Census Bureau reports that Black and Hispanic enlisted men increased from 18.5 per cent in 1972 to over 30 per cent in 1980 (9 per cent of officers), yet soldier was not one of the five most common careers for minority males in the 1980-82 series. There were no minority male soldiers in half the series, and Black males were depicted more often as slaves and servants than as soldiers.

The most frequently shown possibilities for white women are mother (367 examples), teacher (78), queen (37), author (25), princess (17) and factory worker (16). These new books thus suggest the same old traditional, low-paying options—plus a heavy dose of royal job opportunities. For females of color, the choices are mother (187 examples), teacher (23), slave (19), worker (16), potter (9) and artist (9).

For information on how these books compare to earlier editions, see Table 2.

Monitoring Other Groups

Our current study also monitored the depiction of three other groups—disabled people, older people and one-parent families (Table 3).

In these series, individuals with disabilities are shown in 2 per cent of the stories (70), and many of these stories feature children with disabilities. Given that 10.5 per cent of all children ages three to twenty-five are disabled and that 17.2 per cent of the labor force between the ages of eighteen and forty-four is comprised of disabled workers, people with disabilities are greatly underrepresented (see Table 3).

Older people appear in 2 per cent (67) of the stories, although they actually number 21 per cent of the population (9.6 per cent between the ages of fifty-five and sixty-four, and 11.3 per cent older, according to the Census Bureau). In addition, the older people depicted are not

Table 3: Disabled, Older and One-Parent Families in 1980-82 Basal Reading Series

	1980-82 Basal Reading Series	1980 U.S. Census Bureau
Disabled	2% (n = 70)	10.5%
Age 55 and Older	2% (n = 67)	21.0%
One-Parent Families	< 1% (n = 22)	20.0%

Total number of stories: 2,972

achievers; they are shown walking in parks, rocking in chairs, being cranky and scolding young children.

An even more striking underrepresentation is that of the one-parent family. Textbooks portray such families in only 22 of 2,843 stories (less than 1 per cent). Some series have few, if any, one-parent families. In reality, 20 per cent—one of five children under eighteen in this country—live in such households. Moreover, it is predicted that nearly half (48 per cent) of the children born in 1980 will live in one-parent families at some time before they are eighteen years old.

Basal reading series have a special place in the socialization of children: They are officially approved instruments used in compulsory schooling at a critical period of development. They portray society's approved role models, career choices and the gender and race behaviors considered appropriate. They are a major source of both overt and subliminal conditioning of children, and the messages students are given at such an impressionable age are unrealistic, undemocratic and uninspiring. Images that limit options by race or sex must become unacceptable in textbooks. Otherwise, basal readers will continue to be straight jackets that limit individual development and preparation for life. □

CURRENT READING SERIES ANALYZED

Addison-Wesley Reading Program, Grades 1-6, 1982, Addison-Wesley.

Ginn Reading Program, Grades 1-8, 1982, Ginn (A Xerox Publishing Group Company).

Ginn Reading Program, Grades 7-8,

1980, Rainbow Edition, Ginn (A Xerox Publishing Group Company).

Houghton Mifflin Reading Program, Grades 1-8, 1981, Houghton Mifflin.

Lippincott Basic Reading, Grades 1-6, 1981, Harper & Row.

Macmillan Series r, Grades 1-8, 1980 (Macmillan Series r, 1983, is substantially the same as the 1980 edition), Macmillan.

Scott, Foresman Reading, Grades 1-8, 1981, Scott, Foresman.

NOTES

¹Plays, skill concept chapters and fact-sheet stories were counted as stories. Poetry was not analyzed.

²Hartley, Ruth. "Sex Role Pressures and the Socialization of the Male Child." *Psychological Reports*, 1959, V. 457, p. 268. Watson, Goodwin. "Psychological Aspects of Sex Roles." *Social Psychology: Issues and Insights*, 1966, p. 427.

³Hall, Edward. *The Silent Language*, Doubleday, 1959.

⁴Women on Words and Images, *Dick and Jane as Victims*, Princeton, N.J., 1975.

⁵The terms "warrior" and "soldier" were taken from the texts. It would seem that the distinction between the two is based primarily on color: whites, usually in Euro-American dress, are "soldiers"; people of color, usually in traditional dress, are "warriors."

About the Authors

GWYNETH BRITTON is a Professor of Reading Education at Oregon State University; MARGARET LUMPKIN is a Professor of Educational Foundations at the same institution. Since 1972, Drs. Britton and Lumpkin have collaborated on research and writing efforts dealing with race and sex equity issues, readability of reading textbooks, readability of standardized tests, and language simplifications as a Civil Rights concern.

"War Makes Men" Is Message from Comic Books

By Leonard Rifas

In the light of current events, it is instructive to look at U.S. war comics, which have consistently provided dramatic and "attractive" arguments in favor of war.

Although war comics are no longer as popular as they used to be, those being published today continue to repeat the same old message: War does have its good points. Even an overlay of "Make War No More" slogans, added since the Vietnam War, does not challenge the basic pro-war content. A study of more than 200 comic books published in the last 33 years reveals the following five-part case in favor of war:

War Makes Men: *A soldier's first experience of combat is an initiation rite in which a frightened boy becomes a confident, respected and contented man.* By breaking the paralyzing grip of their selfish fears, the soldiers become able to think and act freely to advance the group's goals. This experience unites them with a tight brotherhood of initiated buddies. Some stories show the need for military discipline to prepare boys to survive this initiation, but most present the boys undergoing a dramatic conversion in the midst of battle.

One variant of this stock plot is to show a soldier failing to overcome his fear. This often results in the death of his fellow soldiers, and the protagonist suffers guilt and ostracism. The soldier is then given a second chance, and he redeems himself in a later battle.

War Is Necessary: *As long as ruthless aggressors menace the world, we must be willing to fight.* This argument is usually taken for granted, but occasionally we see conscientious objectors challenging the morality of war. Our surprise wears off as the conscientious objector recog-

nizes the error of his ways and becomes an infantryman.

One plot device places the character with moral scruples on the battlefield as a medic. When he sees the enemy inhumanly attack a wounded U.S. soldier, he feels a new moral obligation—to fight. In other stories, the moral reservations are held not by a conscientious objector but by a reluctant soldier. The soldier overcomes his reluctance when he sees that the enemy is morally inferior or even subhuman.

War Defends Freedom and Democracy: *U.S. soldiers always fight for freedom and democracy and against tyranny and oppression.* In these comics, there are no political ambiguities. There is no middle ground. "Neutralists," like the conscientious objectors mentioned above, are soon shown the error of their ways. Why so many "hordes" of enemy soldiers are against freedom and democracy is not deeply explored. In general, the prop-

osition seems to be that U.S. soldiers fight to fulfill their civic responsibilities, but enemy soldiers fight only to express their hatred or their fanatical obedience or power-lust. A recent series called "The Mercenaries," which first appeared in the August, 1982, issue of *G.I. Combat*, glorifies three soldiers of fortune whose motivation is *money*. These mercenaries, however, manage to always end up on the side of freedom and democracy, and the trouble they have getting compensated for their labor makes them more sympathetic characters. (For example, an emerald they were promised as payment is shattered by a bullet during the fighting.)

War Improves Race Relations: *Fighting side by side with whites is a way for people of color to win whites' acceptance and approval.* A recent comic shows a stubborn white supremacist who finally admits that a Black man—an articulate former heavyweight boxing champion of the world who is unfailingly polite in the face of the supremacist's abuse and who risks his own life in battle to rescue the white supremacist—is his equal.

Another recent comic, however, shows a white supremacist refusing to acknowledge the bravery or equality of Blacks, even after a Black soldier tries to pull him out of the line of fire. A bullet hits the white supremacist, and from his hospital bed he continues to rave against the Black soldier.

In spite of the fact that people of color make up a disproportionately high percentage of U.S. combat troops, comics show U.S. military services as overwhelmingly white. Although it is now common to find one Black soldier in each comic book fighting unit, it is almost un-

IN SPECIAL FORCES, BILLY CLEEVE'S
DISCOVERED HOW IT FEELS TO BE A MAN!



"War Makes Men" is one of the most common messages in war comics. The example above, from a 1964 original, was reprinted in 1981.

heard of to find two. Moreover, the books' treatment of racism is exceedingly limited. The only "problem" that U.S. people of color seem to have is an occasional stubborn white who refuses to admit their worth. The basic message is that the battlefield offers an arena where men can prove themselves and thereby overcome prejudices against them. (Variations on this theme show a fat man, a white Southerner who is an "unreconstructed rebel" and an older man winning acceptance in combat.)

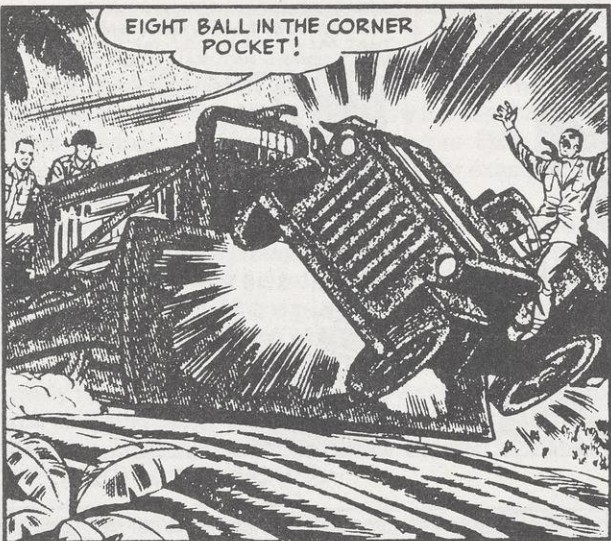
The treatment of different races in comics generally and in war comics in particular would require a whole series of articles. Suffice it to say, at this point, that although war comics attempt to depict U.S. troops that include every U.S. minority group except gay men, they still are far from bias-free (and their treatment of enemy troops is often blatantly racist).

War Is The Ultimate Sport: *Combat offers men opportunities to test their strength, endurance, intelligence, reflexes and resourcefulness—just as sports do.* The battlefield, like the sports field, provides opportunities for men to prove themselves. Sports metaphors abound in war comics. When one soldier overturns an enemy jeep, he exclaims, "Eight ball in the corner pocket!" As another blows up the enemy, he yells, "Right down the alley for a STRIKE!" Women and children are completely absent as the opposing teams of men struggle for yardage and body count.

In this "game," the risks are high. It is the only "game" in which men are allowed and encouraged to kill, and in it they face the greatest risk of being killed. These risks are presented as thrilling, and for most comic book soldiers, fighting becomes its own reward.

It is abundantly clear that these comic books overstate the attractiveness of war and downplay its gruesome, horrific and unsavory aspects in part because they isolate war from its social-political-economic context and cost. Comics routinely distort and invent historical events to demonstrate that the U.S. and its allies are always right and their enemies always evil. They barely hint at the cost of supporting this "sport" in dollars and in noncombatant blood. They ignore the threat that a large military establishment inevitably poses to the democracy it claims to defend.

People need to know the facts about war and militarism. Comic books *could* be an excellent tool for dramatizing these facts. □



War is portrayed as a game. The battlefield, like the sports field, provides men with the opportunity to prove themselves. Sports metaphors such as the two shown above are common in war comics, which ignore or down play the human costs of war.

Part II: A Review of Current War Comics

Since their heyday during the Korean War,¹ war comics have settled into a

¹There were war-related comics more than a decade earlier: during World War II, comics told kids how to spot spies and recycle scrap, gave information on the progress of the war and entertained readers with superhero attacks against the Japanese "rats." The conventions of the current war comic genre, however, were not really set until the early 1950s, the time of the Korean War.

small, relatively stable niche. The Vietnam War sparked a flurry of these titles in the early and mid-1960s, but comics such as *Jungle War Stories*, *Guerrilla Warfare*, *Tales of the Green Berets* and *Todd Holt Super Green Beret* proved to be as unpopular as the war they supported.

Today, only ten of the 155 titles from major companies are war comics, and six of these (published by Charlton Comics)



Comics present war as necessary; there are no political ambiguities. Sometimes soldiers who do not wish to fight are depicted, but as these examples indicate, the men are soon shown the error of their ways.



consist entirely of reprinted material.² Although current circulation figures are kept confidential, a spokesperson from D.C. Comics, an industry giant, has called war comics their "least successful genre." Retailers in San Francisco confirm that war comics sell poorly, although one retailer saw a recent surge of interest in war games, toys and comics. The small number of war titles is proof of weak circulation, as the industry is quick to multiply titles to saturate the demand for whatever genre is currently selling well. Moreover, less than 1 per cent of the 6,193 comic book fans and collectors in the 1983-4 *Fandom Directory* express an interest in war comics, and periodicals such as *The Comics Journal* and *The Comics Buyer's Guide* tend to ignore them.

Marvel's *G.I. Joe* is the only series that sells well, and its success is due in part to its tie-in with a TV program and a series of toy "action figures." In addition, it is the war comic that celebrates high-technology weaponry most enthusiastically, and it features an enemy—the faceless malevolent COBRA—that is completely fictitious and therefore safe to hate. In fact, *G.I. Joe* has more in common with the superhero and science fiction comics than with traditional war comics.

Current Contents

A look at the current (as of September) war comics is of interest. Available in San Francisco were *Blackhawk* (#266), *Sgt. Rock* (Vol. 32, #382), *G.I. Combat* (#261), *G.I. Joe* (Vol. 1, #19), *Fightin' Army* (Vol. 15, #166), *Attack* (Vol. 9, #43), *War* (Vol. 8, #42), *Battlefield Action* (Vol. 6, #83), *Fightin' Navy* (Vol. 13, #128) and *Fightin' Marines* (Vol. 18, #171). Of these, the first three titles are published by D.C. Comics and the fourth by Marvel Comics; the last six titles are published by Charlton. Most feature a regular cast of characters. *G.I. Joe* has a plot that continues from issue to issue.

Over half of the story pages are devoted to tales about U.S. soldiers fighting Nazis during World War II, a proportion that is typical of U.S. war comics since the 1960s. The space allotted to stories about World War I, Korea and Vietnam varies a great deal from month to month, but this is an unusual sample in that there are no Vietnam War

²Charlton's comics are counted here as "major" because of their widespread distribution through drugstores, supermarkets and newsstands.

stories. The content analysis for these ten comics is as follows.

World War II	
fighting Nazis	134 pages
fighting Japanese	25
COBRA (fictional enemy)	23
Korean War	22
Cuban-related	16
SE Asia	12
Formosa-Red China	7
Tripoli	5
Native Americans	
(Wounded Knee)	2
Equipment	
(tanks, fighter planes)	2
European Peasant Rebellions	
(16-17th century)	2
World War I	1
Unspecified	1

Some observations about these war comics:

- The Geneva Convention is mentioned in four stories. In three stories it is cited to demonstrate the moral superiority of the law-abiding U.S. soldiers over the Nazis. In *G.I. Joe*, however, the heroes violate and ridicule the Geneva Convention.

- Although over half of the stories are set against the backdrop of the Second World War, there are only a few brief references to the Russian front and, as is almost invariably the case, no Soviet soldiers or citizens are shown.

- *G.I. Combat* includes a typical scene in which a beautiful woman gratefully offers herself to her G.I. rescuer, and he politely refuses her advances. The only soldier who has sex with a woman in any of the books is actually a Nazi agent *disguised* as a U.S. soldier.

- "The Mercenaries" (a regular feature in *G.I. Combat*) gives the first episode of a three-part story. It involves a money-hungry gunrunner who sells "deadly" Southeast Asian cocaine to the PLO, which in turn supports a global network of terrorist organizations that includes the Sandinistas. The story suggests that at some unspecified point in history, the Vietnamese, Thai and Cambodian farmers who lived an idyllic life were terrorized by "pirates and mountain brigands" who forced them to grow "cocoa" leaves and opium instead of wheat.

- *Sgt. Rock* celebrates the F-111 whose "swing-wings can be pivoted in flight to adjust for maneuverability ... or for ultra-speed!" The fact that the F-111's swing-wing design resulted in an expensive plane that failed to meet its promoters' promises, performed poorly in combat and was therefore discontinued

Nuclear War

War comics generally *avoid* nuclear issues. Their favorite nuclear theme is atomic espionage, and occasionally they show the destruction of a secret uranium mine or nuclear arsenal. Nuclear themes are more likely to occur in the "fantasy" books; superheroes and science fiction comics, for example, are much more interested in nuclear weapons.

In the early 1950s, there was a small subgenre of atomic war comics which preached explicitly the need to prepare for fighting limited nuclear wars. Presentations of limited nuclear war turned out to be too emotionally charged and they disappeared. (The Nagasaki bombing was the subject of one short anti-war story in a war comic in the early 1950s. It was so well-done and unusual that comic fans still refer to it.)

The *avoidance* of nuclear issues is just one more indication that war comics are not really *about* war, as it exists now or even as it has been fought in the past. War comics are about the struggle between good and evil, selfishness and maturity, weakness and strength. Because nuclear weapons threaten to make the "game" of total war obsolete, their existence is ignored.

Women in War Comics

U.S. war comics depict a male world. Of the more than 200 comics studied, most had *no* women characters at all, although a few briefly showed women as nurses or secretaries: 63 of the stories, however, *did* feature women as major characters. A recent trend is to add a token woman to a fighting unit. This integration is also made historically retroactive, so that a series set during World War II now shows a tank crew that includes one woman and one Black and one Indian among the otherwise white male crew. In addition, women appear as reporters, dancers, entertainers, guerrilla leaders and resistance fighters.

Regardless of their loyalties or national origins, women are almost invariably superlatively beautiful. (For this information the reader is usually as indebted to the writer as to the artist.) Two exceptions occur in comics from the 1950s. One shows a fat woman rejected by the soldier she likes, although his buddies say she is a good kid. In another tale, the hero is attracted to a MASH nurse described as an "Amazon" who could play "fullback for the Green Bay Packers." The hero finds her big, strong body to be his ideal of womanly pulchritude.

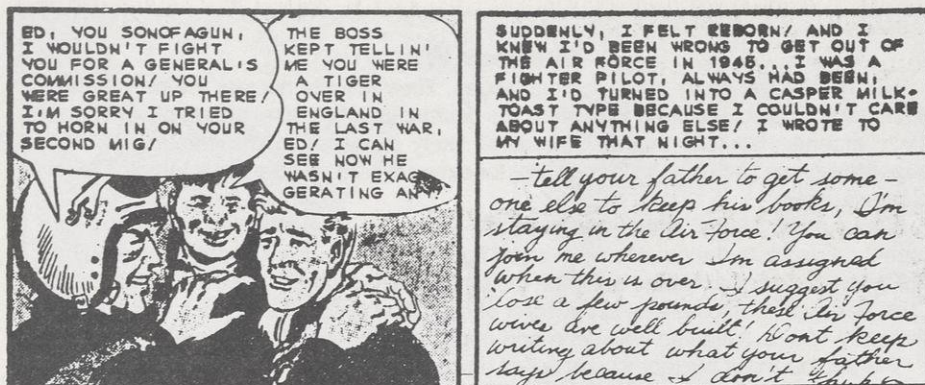
Women villains are usually independent but fantastically cruel and heartless. ("Good" women usually play a supporting role to male heroes.) Women are frequently shown to be inscrutable and dangerous, not hesitating to sacrifice even an unsuspecting brother, step-father or husband in order to advance their totalitarian causes. A soldier who helps a damsel in distress must always be alert to the possibility that he is being lured into a trap.

In almost half of the stories featuring women, the women's loyalties are either suspect or disguised. (Women are particularly well-represented in tales of espionage.) In a few stories, women change their loyalties, either through disillusionment with the enemy or after falling in love with a GI.

Romance between white GIs and women of color is shown more often than romance between white GIs and white women, whether from the U.S., Italy or France. (All German women are spies.) Women of color depicted in these romances include Vietnamese, Korean, Aztec, Chinese, Seminole, Tibetan and the daughter of a "cannibal chief" in the South Pacific. Often these women are strong leaders of guerrilla bands.

The practice of collecting young men into armies near the beginning of their active sexual lives, systematically breaking down their social conditioning to the point where they are ready to kill, and then sending them to foreign lands whose inhabitants they have been taught to disrespect has been a major source of violence against women for as long as there have been wars. However, U.S. war comics barely hint at the existence of rape or prostitution. In a few stories, women are prizes to be fought over, and in two stories, men of color offer women to whites for their military services. Both offers are refused.

In general, war comics take great pains to show that GIs are consistently courteous, charming and respectful to women ... and also righteously suspicious of them.



Yet another strip in which war is a benefit. In spite of the references to World War II and the gratuitous sexism, this is from a 1980 comic. Below, a strip that seems to reflect the old adage—in war, truth is the first casualty.

in 1973, is not mentioned. In general, war comics do not present any evidence of waste, incompetence or profiteering in the U.S. weapons industry.

• In the "G.I. Diplomacy" story in *Fightin' Army*, Fidel Castro orders the assassination of "Guitirriez," identified as "a former Cuban revolutionary" who had become "an avowed enemy" of the present Cuban dictator. Cuban agents kidnap Guitirriez in South America

and take him to the Cuban consulate. Although some South Americans "had grown used to thinking of the United States as a soft, rich nation," they are impressed when they see Guitirriez's three G.I. bodyguards shoot their way into the consulate and eventually rescue him. (Using real national leaders as war comic book characters is a common practice.)

• Sgt. Rock's "Battle Album" tells of

"the Battle [sic] of Wounded Knee": "In the attempt to capture [the "runaway" Indians], a slaughter followed! 25 troops and 146 Indians ... lay dead in the snow." This account reshapes reality: the Indians had already surrendered without resistance when they were massacred and at least some of the 25 dead troops had been hit by their own cross-fire.

• The Sgt. Rock "Battle Album" on 16-17th century mercenaries is unusual because it talks about the slaughter of civilian populations by soldiers who "fought and killed not for honor ... or home ... or country! Only for money!" It would be even more unusual to see a war comic talk about slaughter of civilians in the 20th century.

• All the war comics are 32 pages plus a wraparound cover except for *G.I. Combat*, which is 48 pages plus covers. *G.I. Joe* has 10 pages of ads, including those for two video games, Atari's "Battlezone" and Probe 2000's "War Room" ("Actual enemy nuclear attack on your most important cities and natural resources has begun. ... Only you can effectively repel the enemy attack."). *Blackhawk* and *Sgt. Rock* have 11 and 9 pages of ads respectively. Products advertised include the "Power Lord" doll, "Masters of the Universe" toy vehicles and Sgt. Rock toy soldiers. Each of the various books has 11 pages of ads. These include (take a deep breath) a muscle-building course which promises "a bone-crushing grip of steel"; a "Venus Love Goddess" statuette guaranteed to give the customer "enough inner-strength and power to control your love-life and lead it the way you really want to!"; "Mind-Read," so you can "crash the barrier to genuine person to person thought communication" and bring others "under your direct personal domination"; "Automatic Mind Command" (self-explanatory); diet pills ("you will lose up to 10 pounds the first 48 hours, up to 20 pounds the first seven days, and continue to lose 50, 70, 100 or more ugly pounds without going hungry for a minute"); weight gain tablets (because "skinny men and women are not attractive"); and reproduction German helmets, iron crosses and swastikas. □

About the Author

LEONARD RIFAS directs *EduComics*, which publishes information on social issues in comic book form. Among its publications is *I Saw It*, an autobiographical comic about one boy and his family's experience of nuclear war. For a list of its materials, write *EduComics*, Box 40246, San Francisco, CA 94140.



How the Institute for Peace and Justice in St. Louis moves its constituencies from awareness through concern to action

Institute's Mission: Action for Peace and Justice

By Jim and Kathy McGinnis

It has been a long way from an empty college lecture hall in 1970 to the Phil Donahue Show in early 1983. The Institute for Peace and Justice had its genesis, however, in that empty hall when Jim McGinnis, one of the co-authors of the following piece, was among four people attending a lecture on peace education at St. Louis University. Some 13 years later, the Institute that meeting inspired was the subject of a Phil Donahue show that reached some 15 million viewers.

The spring of 1970 was the culmination of a series of events that led to the creation of the Institute. When Martin Luther King Jr. had been assassinated two years earlier, Jim and Kathy McGinnis were living in Memphis. Jim was on active duty with the Tennessee National Guard, and both Jim and Kathy witnessed first hand the destructive effects of racism. Both count the events of that April as a major turning point in their lives. Then came the escalation of the war in Vietnam, the killings at Kent State and Jackson State, and the bombing of Cambodia. Jim became a conscientious objector, a decision based on religious conviction as well as a belief that to love one's country means challenging it when you believe it is wrong.

When the President of St. Louis University overrode the recommendation of his faculty advisory board to alter or terminate the University's ROTC program, Jim and several other faculty members designed a peace studies curriculum for the University and succeeded in convincing the University to accept the curriculum. Forty students registered that fall in the Institute's first course. The next year Kathy began teaching in those Institute courses aimed specifically at teachers.

Now separated from the University, the Institute's staff has grown and its in-

fluence, especially through the Parenting for Peace and Justice (PPJ) program, reaches around the world. Through teacher workshops; through the 75 local PPJ teams in the U.S., Canada and the Philippines; and through 15 national Christian denominations and other religious and secular groups, our work is touching the lives of countless others.

The Institute's constituencies now include public and parochial teachers, schools and school systems, college students and teachers and church-based adult education groups, as well as families. The Institute's services are based on a perspective that stresses "from awareness through concern to action."

Awareness. What are the realities of hunger, racism and sexism in human as well as economic terms? More important, what are the causes of these injustices and the connections between them? (That is, how do racism, sexism, militarism and poverty reinforce one another?) And what are the local, national and international dimensions of an issue like hunger? How do multinational corporations affect me? My community? My country? Third World countries? Awareness of these issues is the first step in working toward social justice. (For a fuller discussion of these questions, see *Bread and Justice: Toward a New International Economic Order*, listed on page 15.)

Concern. Clarity of analysis, even when coupled with concrete action suggestions, is not enough to lead to sustained action. The heart as well as the head must be educated. Peace educators must encourage and help develop the desire to act. This process, which—as Gandhi emphasized—is really a life-long "formation" program, involves at least

four components or principles. First, those we seek to motivate need to be touched by the lives and stories of the victims of injustice, not just presented with statistics. Secondly, people need to be inspired by those working for change and to see a variety of action possibilities fleshed out in the lives of such persons. Thirdly, we all need the support, challenge and accountability that a group/community can provide. Few of us can sustain a long-term commitment to social change on our own; sustained action is nurtured by solidarity. Fourthly, people of faith need to see the call to work for justice and peace as a call from their God. This involves many things, especially prayer and reflection on the basic written works (the Bible, Koran, Vedas, etc.) underlying religious faith. The more that these four ingredients are an integral part of our lives, the more likely we are to persevere and take risks on behalf of others.

For these reasons, the Institute's programs and resources incorporate a large personal dimension. *Solidarity with the People of Nicaragua and Peru*, for instance (see book list at the end of this article), offers North American youth, school, family and church groups an opportunity to "pair" with counterparts in Nicaragua and Peru. Much more than a "pen-pals" project, these pairings focus on supporting one another's efforts for justice and peace, with the North American group taking on some public education and political action responsibilities on behalf of their Nicaraguan or Peruvian partner. Slides, pictures and letters provide the personal element to nurture a commitment to sustained action.

Action. The kinds of action the Institute encourages through its educational programs can be divided into two types—

direct service ("works of mercy") and work for social change ("works of justice"). Direct service is, in essence, helping the victims of injustice meet immediate needs; social change actions aim at correcting conditions that victimize—and oppress—people.

Direct Service ("works of mercy"). The Institute helps elementary and secondary schools set up community service programs involving students in projects that include visiting nursing homes, mounting food drives for emergency food centers, writing letters to prisoners and serving meals to guests at Catholic Worker soup kitchens and houses of hospitality, where homeless people are given food and a place to stay. The *Solidarity with the People...* project mentioned above encourages collecting medical and educational supplies for a clinic in a Nicaraguan *barrio*.

Social Change ("works of justice"). This kind of action has always been the primary focus of the Institute, because we believe that works of mercy are important, but that *real* relief will only come about as the causes of injustice are challenged and changed. In order to do this, political decision-makers must hear from concerned people.

The Institute encourages political action primarily through public education, action programs, newsletters, special educational forums, TV and radio appearances. The Institute encourages its constituencies to consider the possibilities of nonviolent direct action (like tax resistance) and consults with religious institutions on issues like providing sanctuary for Central American refugees. Ronice Branding leads the Institute's efforts to involve its "shareholders" (financial supporters) in such efforts.

Economic institutions need to be constantly challenged by consumers and tax-payers to assess their responsibility for and involvement in injustice and militarism. With that in mind, the Institute has been the major group in St. Louis encouraging local participation in the Nestlé boycott, and it works on similar campaigns with other local and national groups (the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, the Midwest Coalition for Responsible Investment, the Latin American Interfaith Coalition in St. Louis, Clergy and Laity Concerned, the United Farm Workers, etc.). Fighting bank loans to South Africa and working for justice for migrant farm workers are two such activities. The Institute has developed an instrument for assessing a

Other Peace and Justice Centers

Center for Concern, 3700 13th St., N.E., Washington, DC 20017; (202) 635-2757.

Cornerstone, 940 Emerson, Denver, CO 81004; (303) 831-7692.

Eighth Day Center for Justice, 22 E. Van Buren, Chicago, IL 60605; (312) 427-4351.

Intercommunity Center for Justice and Peace, 20 Washington Sq. N., New York, NY 10011; (212) 475-6677.

Mennonite Central Committee, Peace Section, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA 17501; (717) 859-1151.

Peacemaking Project of United Presbyterian Church, 475 Riverside Dr., Rm. 1101, New York, NY 10115; (212) 870-3326.

Riverside Church Disarmament Program, 490 Riverside Dr., New York, NY 10027; (212) 749-7000.

United Church of Christ, Office for Church in Society, 110 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, DC 20002; (202) 543-1517.

bank's corporate responsibility record and the staff has been participating in nonviolent demonstrations and prayer vigils at the international headquarters of the General Dynamics Corporation in St. Louis, where corporate decisions on the Trident Submarine and Cruise Missile are made.

Concomitantly, the Institute both initiates and supports alternative institutions. Thus, it participates in and supports a neighborhood credit union, an alternative printing press and local food co-ops. In-house, the Institute, like a number of other peace and justice centers (see box), has developed a consensus decision-making model and determines salaries on the basis of need.

Religious Commitment

Basic to the religious commitment of the staff members of the Institute is a belief that religious institutions need to participate in institutional change and actively work to bring about justice and peace. Staff members teach at a Catholic and a Protestant seminary and have helped individual Catholic and Protestant churches and Roman Catholic religious communities set up affirmative action programs. In 1978, the Institute helped create the Midwest Coalition for Responsible Investment, through which religious communities use their status as shareholders to challenge corporate policies. Currently, the Institute is working with Catholic parishes and schools to implement the 1983 U.S. Catholic bishops' pastoral letter on peace, which condemns the waging of nuclear war and calls for peace education in families and

schools. The Institute has prepared materials and workshops to help parents and teachers see specific strategies to develop peace-making skills in children and to aid children and adults in questioning militarism. Strategies range from family letter-writing and participating in peace rallies to helping older children make conscientious decisions about military service.

Elementary and secondary teachers and administrators in public and parochial schools are assisted by the Institute in three major ways—in-service teacher-training workshops and courses, curriculum and resource development and consultations with administrators over institutional policy.

In addition to giving teacher workshops on such issues as world hunger and global awareness, racism and multicultural education, peace and nonviolent conflict resolution, Institute workshops also examine the *process* of education. This involves building an affirmative, cooperative classroom environment, teaching nonviolent communication and conflict resolution skills, and setting up shared or mutual decision-making models. Mary Jo Heman, a Dominican sister, spearheads these workshops with the aid of several consultants.

It is in the area of multicultural education that the Institute has done its most creative work. Using the resources of the Council on Interracial Books for Children (CIBC) as well as some prepared by the Institute staff members, Kathy McGinnis and Dorothy Solomon and a group of Black, Hispanic and Native American consultants have developed workshops that focus on identifying and countering racial stereotypes, on appreciating and celebrating racial and cultural differences, and on identifying and challenging practices and policies of institutional racism.

The Institute also works to develop teaching materials that can be used in both religious and secular school settings. Several of our materials are described at the end of this article. Joanne Koziatsek, the Institute's office manager, Bill Pierce and Susan Leet are primarily responsible for getting these and other resources to teachers and others who work with children and adults.

In addition, the Institute helps school systems design affirmative action and curriculum evaluation instruments, does "racial climate" studies and monitors desegregation efforts; it has carried out such tasks in several local school districts. And we have challenged the affir-

mative action practices of St. Louis area universities through letters of protest about practices that undermine affirmative action.

The Institute makes a special effort to offer families concrete ways of integrating peace and justice into daily family living. What we term "Parenting for Peace and Justice" (PPJ) ranges from promoting nonviolent conflict resolution skills and processes within the home itself and helping children deal with consumerism, peer pressure and violence to developing healthy racial attitudes and counteracting sex-role stereotyping. PPJ's basic concern is helping families find ways that parents and children can work together with other families for social change in their own neighborhoods as well as in the larger world.

The various PPJ programs are designed in such a way that leaders do not have to be experts in the issues or themes. The content is conveyed largely through audio-visuals, worksheets and group discussion, with the leaders serving as facilitators in a variety of settings or formats. These formats include weekend or week-long family camps, adult weekends, a series of evening sessions and leadership training weekends.

We use several CIBC filmstrips because they speak to children as well as adults and/or they make connections between the various issues we address. "Unlearning 'Indian' Stereotypes" (speaks to elementary grade children and connects stereotyping with injustice), "The Secret of Goodasme" (also connects racism and sexism), and "Childcare Shapes the Future" (connects sexism and militarism) have all been particularly helpful.

Reflecting Different Traditions

To date, all PPJ resources have had an explicitly Christian dimension. Rather than eliminate that dimension and present only materials that speak to all families, new PPJ resources are being developed to reflect a variety of religious and cultural traditions. For example, the PPJ filmstrip "Families in Search of Shalom" speaks most directly to white Christian families, so three new versions are now being produced—one in Spanish, a second that reflects the experience of African American families, and a third with an explicitly Jewish script.

The Parenting for Peace and Justice Network (PPJN), which provides family support, was formed in 1981. The basic goals of the Network reflect the overall

goals of the Institute:

- to analyze with families how they are affected by the materialism, individualism, racism, sexism, violence and militarism in the world around them;
- to suggest ways families can work together to affect these forces and discover alternative ways of living that are more simple and cooperative, nonviolent, multicultural, nonsexist, globally conscious, and prayerful;
- to link families and family support groups—locally, nationally, globally—so as to deepen commitment, provide support and challenge, and expand the possibilities of effective action at home as well as in the larger world;
- to integrate parenting for peace and justice into existing marriage and family enrichment programs, family religious education, and peace and justice programs;
- to train and service national, regional and local leaders in the use of the parenting for peace and justice resources and in their efforts to integrate these concerns into their ministry.

Linking families is the key, especially linking families locally by means of the family support groups, family camps and local events and groups. A quarterly PPJN Newsletter provides family action suggestions and resources and links families throughout the Network. The *Solidarity with the People...* project (see above) is one of several undertakings to link families globally.

The PPJ Network, coordinated by Kathy and Jim McGinnis, now links more than 75 U.S. and Canadian cities (and Manila in the Philippines, where interest first occurred through the involvement of one family), each with a local PPJ coordinator and/or local team doing PPJ presentations and programs, assisting family support groups and distributing the PPJ resources. In addition, 15 U.S. and Canadian Protestant and Roman Catholic denominations have made PPJ a part of their religious education, family life and social concerns programming. Representatives from these denominations, eight local coordinators and representatives from several other key constituencies form an Advisory Board that oversees the PPJ Network and program.

Whether the constituencies are educators, community people, religious leaders, children or families, the work of the Institute remains focused on helping people understand *why* injustice, violence and war exist and *what* each individual person can do about it. □

Institute Materials

The following resources are among those available from the Institute for

Peace and Justice, 4144 Lindell St., #400, St. Louis, MO 63108; write for a catalog listing all resources. (Unless otherwise noted, the materials are published and/or produced by the Institute.)

Bread and Justice: Toward a New International Economic Order (Paulist Press, 1979, \$6.50) by Jim McGinnis is a high school and college text on hunger that also serves as a resource for hunger action and adult education groups. Its unique contributions are its simplification of complex economic realities and the variety of its action suggestions for individuals and groups. A *Teacher's Manual* with classroom activities (\$8.50) and a set of three filmstrips (\$12 each) are also available.

Christian Parenting for Peace and Justice (Board of Discipleship, 1981, \$9) offers step-by-step activities and background information for adult education leaders.

Donahue Show Tape (\$15) presents the Donahue Show on parenting for peace. An expanded version (\$22) includes an overview of PPJ, the "Families in Search of Shalom" filmstrip (see below), a presentation on principles for family meetings and more.

Families in Search of Shalom (\$12 each, \$17 for all four versions) presents "the Biblical vision" underlying parenting for peace and justice. Three new adaptations speak explicitly to Jewish, Black American and Spanish-speaking families.

Education for Peace and Justice (\$28) was the first (1973) comprehensive teacher's manual in the U.S. on peace education. Now in its sixth edition, this four-volume set covers national, religious and global dimensions plus teacher background and readings.

Educators Acting for Peace (50¢) offers classroom strategies that focus on the hope that is part of working and praying for peace, implications for school policies, etc.

Parenting for Peace and Justice (Orbis, 1981, \$6.50) by Kathy and Jim McGinnis presents the experiences of their own family and 12 others in making peace and justice an integral part of family life.

Solidarity with the People of Nicaragua and Peru (\$5.50) suggests ways in which North American individuals and groups can support peace and justice in Nicaragua and Peru.

About the Authors

JIM MCGINNIS is Director of the Institute for Peace and Justice. He and KATHY MCGINNIS are co-directors of the Institute's Parenting for Peace and Justice Network.

Central America Update: School Teachers in El Salvador Face Reprisals and Terror

Delegates from the National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador recently completed a fact-finding trip to that country. Seven representatives of four unions—the National Education Association, the United Auto Workers, the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees—focused on Salvadoran trade unions, with a special look at the teachers' union, ANDES (Asociación Nacional de Educadores Salvadoreños).

The delegates, who state that they went to Central America believing that U.S. policy toward El Salvador was "misguided," report that they were "stunned by the human toll that policy has wrought." The group's report on its findings—"El Salvador: Labor, Terror and Peace"—is the basis for the following article. We publish it as a follow-up to the *Bulletin's* special issue on Central America (Vol. 13, Nos. 2 & 3).

Trade unions exist in El Salvador; the workplace abounds with the acronyms of labor organizations. There are traditional industrial trade unions in the cities and towns of El Salvador and peasant unions in the countryside. There are private sector unions and public sector unions. There are unions that reflect every hue in the Salvadoran political spectrum.

But there is no trade union freedom in El Salvador, no semblance of the rights we North American trade unionists consider fundamental to democracy. In El Salvador, we spoke to trade unionists whose wages had been frozen, whose meetings had been disrupted, whose offices had been bombed, whose bodies had been tortured, whose co-workers had been "disappeared"—and murdered.

It is important to note at the outset that Salvadoran trade unionists are not unfortunate neutrals caught in the crossfires of a war they do not understand. Salvadoran trade unionists have organized to fight for dignity and decency, which leads them to be considered "subversives"—and prime targets for right-wing repression, official and unofficial.

Trade unions in El Salvador enjoyed a brief and effective heyday. In the late 1970s, an explosion of popular political

activity reenergized a lackluster labor movement. Trade unions joined in militant "mass fronts" of peasants, students, and organized slumdwellers whose civil disobedience tactics won victories on everything from minimum wages to public services for El Salvador's working class ghettos.

The experience of the Salvadoran teachers' union, ANDES (Asociación Nacional de Educadores Salvadoreños), provides perhaps the clearest example of what happens today in El Salvador when an employees' organization aggressively attempts to defend its members' interests.

ANDES traces its history back to 1965 when El Salvador's teachers, outraged by a proposal to slash retirement benefits, staged an unprecedented protest march that drew most of the nation's 20,000 teachers. Three years later, the fledgling ANDES staged an even more historic 58-day national strike, which shook the nation. No labor group had ever mounted such a nation-wide action.

The impact of the teachers' strike was felt in nearly every Salvadoran village and town. Teachers took their case to their communities and set up meetings

with local *campesinos*—peasants—to explain why they were striking and to ask for support. For many peasants, these meetings represented the first time that an educated person in El Salvador had ever treated them as anything more than a "domesticated animal." El Salvador's oligarchy was predictably outraged by the whole affair. (Said one Salvadoran colonel: "The trouble all started with the 1968 teachers' strike.")

In a way, the "modern" era of Salvadoran repression may have started with that strike, too. In San Vicente province, a striking teacher was pulled from his home at night, ANDES reported, and assassinated by the National Guard.

During and immediately after the 1968 strike—and then during and after another national teachers' strike in 1971—repression took other forms. There were many arrests, pay cuts, and arbitrary transfers. Teachers' demonstrations were broken up by tear gas and gunfire. Despite the intimidation, teachers' activism continued throughout the 1970s as ANDES joined repeatedly with peasant, religious, workplace and the increasingly active "mass front" groups.

Finally, in 1979, the murders, as ANDES leaders put it, began "in earnest." Since 1979, 264 ANDES activists have been killed. Between January, 1980, and January, 1982, at least one teacher was assassinated every month for 25 consecutive months. After a five-month respite, the murders resumed. Three ANDES members were killed this past April.

Since 1979, 44 other ANDES members have been "disappeared." Thirty-two other ANDES members were relatively "lucky." They were only arrested as political prisoners (27 of these arrests came last summer). All the arrested are now out of prison and in hiding.

Incredibly, within this atmosphere of terror and death, ANDES still attempts to function as a union. ANDES remains a certified legal organization. It even has a public office in San Salvador. But ANDES officers seldom visit the office; they fear that if they did, they would be seized by Salvadoran security forces. The secretary-general of ANDES has been at

Teachers Target in Nicaragua

El Salvador is not the only Central American country in which teachers are a primary target. In Nicaragua, some 20,000 volunteer teachers working to improve national literacy have been among the first targets of the U.S.-supported "contras" attempting to overthrow the government. Since January, 1983, the "contras" have killed 37 volunteer teachers and kidnapped 64 more, taking them to Honduras where they are presumably murdered.

Many of these volunteers themselves became literate during the first Nicaragua Literacy Crusade which increased literacy from 48 per cent to over 87 per cent (see special issue of *Bulletin*, Vol. 12, No. 2). These volunteers—often as young as ten or eleven—are now involved in a new campaign which seeks to achieve basic education in math, history and science.

Continued on page 22

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

The Do-Something Day

written and illustrated by Joe Lasker.
Viking, 1982,
\$12.95, 32 pages, grades ps-3

This book conveys nostalgia and warmth for the days when big cities—like New York—had real neighborhood stores whose owners knew the area's residents and kept an eye on their children.

When Bernie wants to do something and no one in his family has time for him, he runs away. He helps the garage mechanic, the deli owner, the bakery owner, the fruit man, the shoe maker, the pet-store owner. Each gives Bernie a gift in return for his assistance. When Bernie decides to go home, he distributes the gifts to his welcoming family, keeping the pet-store owner's gift—a puppy—for himself. The story and illustrations are charming. [Lyla Hoffman]

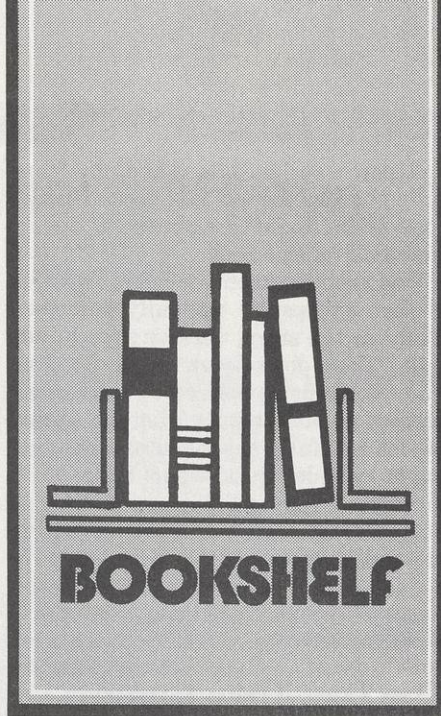
Angie and Me

by Rebecca C. Jones.
Macmillan, 1981,
\$7.95, 113 pages, grades 5-8

Angie and Me is a realistic and sensitive portrayal of a child who has an acquired disability.

Jenna Matthews has just learned that she has juvenile rheumatoid arthritis (JRA). Twelve years old and ready to begin a new school, Jenna faces many changes without the added pressures of adjusting to a disability. She experiences many unfamiliar reactions, including her own lack of awareness about the impact of JRA ("Nobody ever died of swollen knees"), rebellion against societal stereotypes ("I'm not crippled") and the general ignorance of others. But it is through Jenna's friendship with Angie, her terminally ill roommate, that Jenna learns to integrate her new lifestyle and self-image; Angie helps Jenna learn "to be Jenna Matthews. Not the crippled kid."

The book also deals with other important issues for children with disabilities,



including the impact of separation and the changes in relationships that result from extended hospitalization. The humiliation and helplessness that can take place in an aseptic professional environment are also noted. The author has done a commendable job of making her characters real though not always likeable. This book is highly recommended. [Caryl Dresher]

The Jewish Americans: A History in Their Own Words, 1650-1950

by Milton Meltzer.
T.Y. Crowell, 1982,
\$10.50, 176 pages, grades 5-up

This collection of documents—speeches, letters, interviews, diary excerpts and the like—focuses on the anonymous people whose lives constitute our history. Some "great names" are included (Emma Goldman and Lillian Wald among them), but most of the voices we hear are those of "ordinary" people, from the Jewish inhabitants of Nieuw Amsterdam petitioning for equal rights to a Holocaust survivor. A variety of perspectives on different issues is included.

Meltzer's general introduction and the brief pieces that precede each document provide a valuable framework for the book. This work would be an excellent addition to any library. [Ruth Charnes]

So What?

by Miriam Cohen,
illustrated by Lillian Hoban.
Greenwillow Books, 1982,
\$9.50, 32 pages, grades K-3

This book is asking for it, alas, with a title that sums up the story itself. A first grade boy learns from a Chicago schoolmate that he shouldn't be so uptight about not being as tall, popular, etc. as his peers. The basic message is anti-competitive; given the highly competitive environment of most schools and our society as a whole, this is a plus. The fact that our hero learns from an independent-minded female is a plus, also. But "anti-competitive" needs an alternative, positive expression—"pro-collective," if you like—and for this spirit, we look in vain here. Little Jim remains an isolated individual among his peers: less uptight, with a new confidence, yet still an island of his own feelings.

The indifference to false social values expressed in the "so what?" attitude may be a useful first step, and it is good to see Jim's insecurity replaced by a self-liberating confidence. Without other values to fill the void, however, we are left with only the flip side of competitiveness—a new, if more independent individualism. Behind the concept of "so what?" is an important point: that it is wrong to define human beings according to an accident of birth (in this case, Jim's height, but the point applies equally to sex or race). The author could and should have given much more. [Elizabeth Martinez]

Behind Barbed Wire: The Imprisonment of Japanese Americans during World War II

by Daniel S. Davis,
illustrated with photos.
Dutton, 1982,
\$12.95, 166 pages, grades 7-up

Behind Barbed Wire provides a detailed account of the imprisonment of Japanese Americans during World War II. The evacuation of persons of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast and their imprisonment in "relocation camps," lo-

cated in the most desolate areas of the country, is reported in a straightforward manner. The author does not hesitate to analyze the racism behind these events and he readily acknowledges that the camps were concentration camps.

The reader is also given a glimpse into camp life. The value conflicts created by the loyalty questionnaire, the camps' effect on Japanese immigrants and their American-born children, and the conflicts among the internees as well as between them and the camps' administrations dispell any notion that life in camp was pleasant and uneventful. Also included is a brief history of Japanese immigrants and current information on Japanese Americans. The author does attempt to avoid a "Horatio Alger" ending, and he discusses how Japanese Americans continue to face discrimination. He notes that this country's history has been marked by outbreaks of racism and similar internments could occur again; thus, it is important to remember the past so that we don't repeat it.

This book is a good resource; it offers an easy-to-read review of more in-depth accounts of this event which have been published (see, for example, *Farewell to Manzanar*, an autobiographical account). The photographs are an asset. Since terms such as "Oriental" vs. Asian American are not explained, and since the discussions on history, Japanese values and the psychological impact of camps on those imprisoned are brief, supplementary materials should be used by the teacher. [Gloria Kumagai]

What If They Knew?

by Patricia Hermes.

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980,
\$6.95 (hardcover), \$1.50 (paper), 121
pages, grades K-6

What If They Knew? is about friends who don't care "if you're different in some ways." The main character, a ten-year-old girl named Jeremy, has epilepsy. Jeremy is staying with her grandparents because her parents are away. She has told none of her new friends that she has epilepsy and she is afraid to go to a new school. (Jeremy does have a seizure in school—and when her friends find out, it doesn't affect their feelings for her.)

The jacket notes that the author had

epilepsy in childhood and kept it a "carefully guarded secret." Her special knowledge of the topic contributes to the authenticity of this book.

One problem with the book, however, is that epilepsy is not fully described. Early in the story, Jeremy says to herself: "They don't know what it's like. They don't have epilepsy." This might perplex a young reader. Her one seizure is also not fully described and children might wonder just what happens to Jeremy. All in all, however, *What If They Knew?* is a positive, well written tale. [Nina E. Yahr]

The Day They Came To Arrest the Book

by Nat Hentoff.

Delacorte, 1982,

\$19.95, 170 pages, grades 7-up

In a November, 1977, article in *School Library Journal* Nat Hentoff inveighs against literature that "stiffens into propaganda (no matter how nobly intended)." Judging by his newest book, however, he doesn't really mind one-sided message books as long as he can select the message.

The Day They Came to Arrest the Book, is purportedly about censorship in a high school. Hentoff's protagonist states: "Fiction is imagination. The novelist can suppose, and so he can get inside people's heads." Unfortunately, this novelist's "people" are one-dimensional characters spouting simplistic messages.

Hentoff presents his personal concepts of political liberalism and First Amendment absolutism through the events at fictional George Mason High School (George Mason, one of the drafters of the Declaration of Independence, fought for freedom of the press). Here censors of the left and right—feminists, Black militants and Moral Majority types—join in an attempt to "arrest" *Huck Finn* (i.e., remove it) from a high school history curriculum. In Hentoff's simplistic schema, characters who absolutely love and accept all books are "good." Characters who criticize books are "bad."

Also among the "good" are: the hero Barney Roth, editor of the school paper; Nora Baines, a social studies teacher who uses lots of supplementary reading,

including *Huck Finn*; Deidre Fitzgerald, the new librarian; Karen Salters, the ex-librarian who quit her job rather than accept the principal's censorious policies.

Among the worst "baddies" are: Michael Moore, the super-evil principal, who not only removes books from the library but has actually cut lascivious parts out of the Bible; Kate, a feminist student; and Gordon McLean, a Black militant student who, along with his father, institutes the attack on *Huck Finn*.

Hentoff uses little conversations and large debates to advance his ideas. A little conversation, for instance, shows that liberals trust children: Gordon McLean, the Black militant student, complains, "My parents don't trust me for a second." When Barney says his parents "take an interest, you know, but they're not all over me," Gordon answers:

"Barney, I'd like you to come home to dinner some night . . . and tell my folks just that. Just that one thing. You got to be near the top of the class, you're the editor of the paper, and you never get into hassles with any of the teachers or anybody else. So you are a walking advertisement for the freedom way of life."

Score 1 for the good guys.

Of the word "nigger" in *Huck Finn*, Barney informs us: "That's the way people talked then. Mark Twain is just showing the way it was." Another student adds, "Some people are too damn sensitive. Nobody's calling them that. The book was written a long time ago." So much for racism. Score 2.

A young Black student gets in his digs: "I do not believe that all of the people complaining about this book have read it all. If they had, and if they can read, they wouldn't have been saying what they said about it. Second, many of those complaining about this book say they want to protect me, as a black person, from certain words in this book. Well, it is too late to do that for me."

Score 3.

Words like "Ms." and "chairperson" produce "scores" too. When the villainous principal uses the address, "Ms. Baines," the good teacher reacts with: "If you're going to call me anything, Mr. Moore, please call me Miss. That other thing sounds as if you were a yardman asking me if there were any other chores for you to do." She tells her social studies class, "Just watch out that you don't fall into such deformities of language as

'clergyperson' or 'policeperson' or 'chairperson.' I will not accept such genderless abominations in any paper in this class." (Home run for Hentoff's team.)

Hentoff scores (sometimes with cheap shots) for his side, but doesn't let the other side get to first base. He obviously doesn't trust young people far enough to allow them to hear any of the real views of the opposition. This makes for a dull and witless book. [Albert V. Schwartz]

A Chair for My Mother

written and illustrated
by Vera B. Williams.
Greenwillow, 1982,
\$9.50, unpagged, grades p.s.-3

A Chair for My Mother is a sensitively written, beautifully illustrated story about a working-class family that is saving to buy a comfortable chair after a fire destroys their possessions. (Neighbors and extended family care enough to bring furniture to replace most of what was ruined in the fire, and relatives offer a place to live until an apartment becomes available.) The characters are sympathetically and believably portrayed, with a mother who is sometimes so tired she falls asleep at the kitchen table after a long work day.

The story is narrated by a young girl, perhaps seven or eight, who lives with her mother and grandmother. After school she helps her mother at the restaurant where she works, and together they fill a jar with coins, hoping to be able to afford a beautiful chair that will be a comfort to the grandmother in the daytime and the mother in the evening.

There is a gentle, loving quality to the relationships between the characters in this small family, especially as we see them counting coins together at the end of the day. The highlight of the story is, of course, when enough is saved to shop for the long-awaited chair, and the warm, cheerful illustrations contribute to the pleasure of watching the family try out all the chairs in the store.

Working-class children will recognize the joy of saving to buy something special; and those who are more affluent may be made aware that comfort is not always a matter of immediate gratification, but sometimes has to be worked and

waited for. All children will see a family and community of people who care about and support one another in hard times. [Leonore Gordon]

Something Special for Me

written and illustrated
by Vera B. Williams.
Greenwillow, 1983,
\$10.50, unpagged, grades p.s.-3

This sequel to *A Chair for My Mother* (see above) is about the same family, but this time the savings in the jar are going to provide a birthday present for the little girl, Rosa.

Once again, Williams portrays a close extended family, successfully countering the stereotypical image of either the "complete" nuclear family or the "broken," "fatherless" family.

The story is primarily about the choices Rosa faces as she shops for her birthday present. What comes through, above all, is the adventure of Rosa's special outing with her mother, and Rosa's ability to accept and enjoy the challenge of having only enough to buy one thing she wants, difficult as that choice is. Rosa finally decides on a gift she can share with the entire family, and it is clear that she relishes the prospect of doing so.

Again, the author succeeds in making the reader sensitive to the struggles and decisions inherent in being poor, while not romanticizing it (as some writers are prone to do). We look forward to more of her books. [Leonore Gordon]

The Best Way Out

by K. Follis Cheatham.
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982,
\$9.95, 168 pages, grades 12-up

The Best Way Out is a realistic, gritty, well-written and moving book. Its good descriptions and well-developed, non-stereotypic characters reveal critical issues in the lives of Black children who have been forced to desegregate white schools.

Haywood Romby is a "bus student." He resents that label and everything it represents. The bus symbolizes not a ride to

"better things," but a threat to the healthy identity of African American children. Teenage Haywood would have preferred to go to his local school among friends with whom he grew up, but the city closes it. He can't stand (and how could he be expected to?) the students who think they're better than the bus students and insensitive white teachers who have negative preconceptions about the intelligence of students from "the inner city." (The author makes it clear that such teachers usually mistake Black students' righteous anger and resentment about being uprooted and sent into a strange and openly hostile environment as a lack of intelligence and "motivation.")

The different threads of the story—the emergence of Haywood's artistic talents, his adjustment to the white school, his battle with depression, his development and coming to terms with his identity, the development of positive relationships within his family and outside his family—are handled well.

The descriptions of the Black students are especially good, and the friendship between Haywood and a poor white teenager who also rides the bus is well-done (their relationship is not marred by the paternalism so often found in books where Black and white characters are portrayed as friends).

Adults are also portrayed well. There is a Black female counselor who's testy and rigid, telling Black students they don't measure up when she's "forgotten her ancient properties," as Toni Morrison would say. To portray the counselor with sensitive, unapologetic clarity is a real accomplishment. The counselor is balanced by Ashley Bennett, another smart Black woman. She is supportive of the Black students, loving, no-nonsense; she sets standards, creates an environment of sensitive discipline and is a good program administrator. She symbolizes those things that the Black students miss *and need*, particularly in that setting.

Ashley Bennett gives a book by the talented, activist Black artist Benny Andrews to Haywood. It would have been nice to let readers know more about Andrews, but it is a real high point in the book and you will find many: the balance of male and female characters; a brief image of Haywood's older sister having her hair cornrowed by her boyfriend;

Haywood's neighbor Cletus, a loving elder-man who is a refuge and a rudder for him; Mildred, Haywood's step-mother, who's a quiet almost silent stream running through the book, nourishing life in the Romby house and overflowing—near the end—in a surprise, life- and family-saving flood.

The author validates African American life at its source—in the family and in the community. Haywood's major references, his support, his aspirations and the solutions to problems are rooted in the people he knows and in the institutions and/or agencies of his community. [Geraldine L. Wilson]

My Friend Has Four Parents

by Margaret O. Hyde.
McGraw-Hill, 1981,
\$8.95, 120 pages, grades 7–9

This boring book about divorce, which meanders through the issues of separation, loss and family reconstruction, will not appeal to its intended audience.

The author tries to present every aspect of divorce, including parental irresponsibility, manipulation of children and rivalry with the new parent, but this is done superficially. At no time are kids allowed to speak directly for themselves. Children of divorce are presented as cases, and the reader gets no sense of the emotions involved.

In several instances, the book raises issues that are potentially scary to children from divorced families—sexual abuse, kidnapping, custody fights—and leaves these issues unresolved. For example, the author advises children who are sexually abused by stepfathers to “discuss it with your own parent.” This is not an easy thing for a child to do!

On occasion, the language suggests a subtly negative judgment of divorced families, implying that there are “normal” roles in nuclear families, that there are “natural” parents, and that divorce is “bad luck.” The economic and emotional struggles of single parents are not validated, and there is no mention of the growing number of parents who, after marriage, discover that they are lesbian or gay.

The book reads like an article on “How Divorce Affects Children” in a psychol-

ogy journal. When I gave it to a twelve-year-old friend whose parents had separated, she left it unfinished, stating, “It’s dull . . . just facts. It says things like a robot. I want to know how kids *feel*.” I agree. A far better book on divorce, written by seventh and eighth graders, is *The Kids’ Book of Divorce* available from Stephen Greene Press, Fessenden Road at Indian Flat, P.O. Box 1000, Brattleboro, VT 05301 (\$9.95). [Jan M. Goodman]

Tomahawks and Trombones

by Barbara Mitchell,
illustrated by George Overlie.
Carolrhoda, 1982,
\$5.95, 56 pages, grades 1–4

The year is 1755. Because the Moravian town of Bethlehem, Pa., is under threat of “Indian attack,” the bishop decrees there will be no traditional trombone music for Christmas. On Christmas afternoon, however, four brave souls climb to a rooftop to play their trombones anyway. The sound strikes fear into the hearts of the lurking heathen. The people of Bethlehem are saved.

This is just a little book—less than 60 pages in a “beginner” format—but it is a graphic demonstration of how impossible it seems to be, for even the well-intentioned Anglo, to write something that does not carry the usual biases against Native Americans.

It does seem likely that the author meant well. She is careful to point out that Native people had good reason to turn against whites, citing the greed and destructiveness of the French and English settlers. Nevertheless, the Moravians are shown to be more peaceful and more civilized than their Delaware neighbors. Like animals, “Indians were crouched all along the creek bed,” waiting to attack. When they hear the trombones, they never consider that the music might be made by other people: “The Indians had never heard anything like it; . . . the Indians were frightened. ‘Music up in the sky!’ they said. ‘It must be the voice of the Moravians’ God! Surely He watches over this place.’” And so they go away.

The illustrations are nothing to write home about. The Moravians are drawn

with round, happy-looking faces, while the Indians are given harsh, threatening features, all exactly alike. Except for one picture, all the Indians are men, and they are always “painted,” no matter the situation. When they hear the music, they display a bug-eyed, gape-mouthed astonishment that is pure stereotypic caricature.

An Afterword states that “no one really knows” whether the music made the Indians go away, but, “according to legend,” a Delaware later told a Moravian woman that “it was the strange music up in the sky that made them lower their tomahawks.” Music has charms to soothe a savage breast? This is a story that could have been told without demeaning either of the peoples involved, and it is too bad that the author did not do so, since she writes unusually well for the beginning reader. [Doris Seale]

Last One Chosen

by Dorothy Hamilton,
illustrated by James L. Converse.
Herald Press (Scottsdale,
PA 15683), 1982,
\$3.50 (paper), 110 pages, grades 5–10

This quite forgettable book is about a disability that happens to be associated with a boy named Scott. The name of the disability is, in the words of one of the book’s ruder characters, “leadfoot,” or alternatively, “dragadog.” Scott’s supposedly more enlightened family calls it “lameness.” (Scott’s leg was injured in a farming accident.) Scott is constantly haunted by one recurring thought: “There’s no use to have people looking at this poor little lame kid.”

In one scene, kids are starting a ball game and Scott is watching and feeling lonely, “more left out than he had for a while.” When a teacher approaches and begins a conversation, Scott tells her that he might have an operation which may make things better for him. Rather than affirm Scott’s value as a person in the here and now, the teacher dwells on what it would be like in a hospital and promises to tutor Scott if needed.

The preoccupation of this book with lameness as the central aspect of Scott’s very being is in very poor handicapistic taste. [Kipp Watson]

"TABS: Aids for Ending Sexism in School" provides K-12 educators with **non-sexist teaching ideas**. A variety of posters and a quarterly magazine are among the resources available. For a catalog, write TABS, 744 Carroll St., Brooklyn, NY 11215.

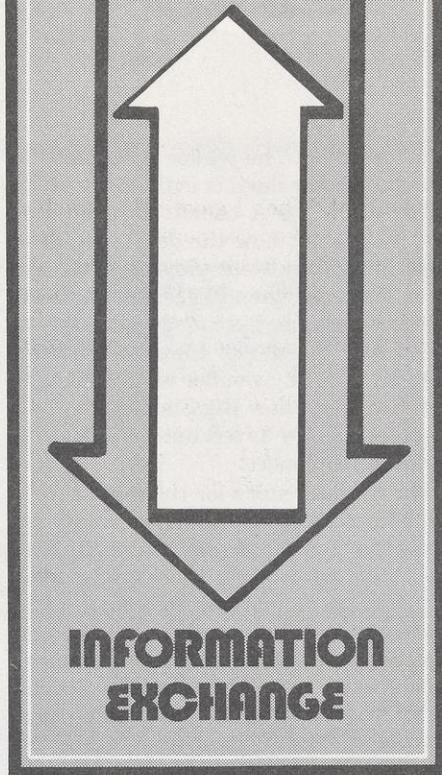
The Women's Information Exchange, a **feminist** information technology project, has created the National Women's Mailing List to enhance communication, outreach, networking and resource sharing on a regional and national level. Write the National Women's Mailing List, 1195 Valencia St., San Francisco, CA 94110.

Alternative Papers is a collection of over 200 articles from "**counter-culture**" newspapers. Articles cover a variety of topics: safety precautions at nuclear power facilities, U.S. complicity in South African apartheid, the myth of economic progress for people of color in the U.S., etc. The book is available in cloth (\$30.) or paper (\$14.95) plus \$1. postage from Temple University Press, Broad & Oxford Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19122.

Winning the Battle for Sex Education provides practical aids to help communities develop public school **sex education** courses to fit their specific needs. Designed for parents, administrators, teachers and others, this 60-page book is \$6. per copy (bulk rates available). Write SEICUS, 80 Fifth Ave., Suite 801, New York, NY 10011.

Third World aims to "provide alternative information on the **Third World**, promote awareness of the causes of underdevelopment and means to overcome it; [and] support cooperation among progressive sectors throughout the world." Subscriptions to the monthly are \$12 for 6 issues, \$20 for 12 issues. A Spanish edition is also available. Write the magazine at Apartado 20-572, Mexico 20, D.F.

M. Gentle Men for Gender Justice is a magazine with articles, resources and news of particular interest to **men who are feminists**. Subscriptions are \$8 for four issues in the U.S., \$10 for Canada or Mexico, \$12 for those who live abroad. Write the magazine at 306 N. Brooks St., Madison, WI 53715.



"**Fighting TV Stereotypes: An ACT Handbook**," from Action for Children's Television (ACT), details the ways in which children's TV programs reinforce stereotypes. The booklet also offers suggestions to help fight TV racism and sexism. Copies of the booklet are \$3.50 each from ACT on Stereotypes, 46 Austin St., Newtonville, MA 02160.

"**U.S. Progressive Periodicals Directory**" lists 380 national social justice periodicals categorized by subject. Information on each publication—address, editor and publisher, frequency and cost—is also given. A similar directory on Southern periodicals—"Southern Progressive Periodicals Directory"—is also available; it covers 130 newsletters, newspapers and magazines. Copies of the national edition are \$4 each; the Southern edition is \$2. Order from Progressive Education, P.O. Box 120574, Nashville, TN 37212.

"**Women in Libraries**" is the newsletter of the American Library Association Social Responsibility Round Table Feminist Task Force. A recent issue (Vol. 12, No. 3) looks at the standards set by the U.S. government, the largest single employer of librarians in the country. Subscriptions to the newsletter, published five times a year from September

to June, are \$4 for individuals, \$6 for institutions prepaid and \$8 for institutions invoiced. Send checks, payable to Women in Libraries, to Michelle Leber, 4927 Gadsen Dr., Fairfax, VA 22032.

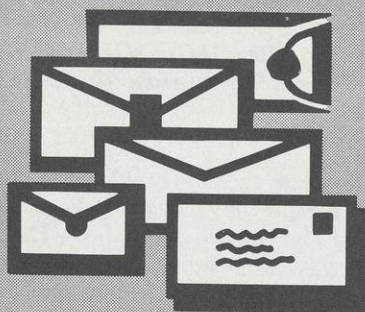
Two booklets on some problems faced by **older people** have recently been published. "The Unseen Alcoholics—The Elderly" discusses why drinking is a major problem among older people and how they can be helped. "Family Neglect and Abuse of the Aged: A Growing Concern" cites examples, discusses causes and explores ways to help victims and their families. Each booklet is 50¢ from the Public Affairs Committee, 381 Park Ave. S., New York, NY 10016.

The **Women's Educational Equity Act** Publishing Center has issued a 1983 catalog—"216 Resources for Educational Equity." Listed are materials for various curriculums, career development and staff development. Request the free catalog from WEEA Publishing Center, Educational Development Center, 55 Chapel St., Newton, MA 02160 or call toll free (800) 225-3088; in Massachusetts, call (617) 969-7100.

Women's issues are the focus of the December, 1982, issue of the *Wilson Library Bulletin*. Articles include "Librarians, Politics and the ERA," "The Struggle against Sex Discrimination" and "Fighting for Social Change: Library Women Enter the Eighties." Single copies are \$2.50; subscriptions are \$22/year. Write The H.W. Wilson Company, 950 University Ave., Bronx, NY 10452.

Women Library Workers is an organization working to end discrimination against **women in libraries** and librarianship. It publishes the *WLW Journal* with "news, views and reviews" on relevant issues. For a membership and subscription, send \$15 to WLW, 2027 Parker St., Berkeley, CA 94704.

"Pediatrics for Parents" provides information to help parents raise **healthy children**. The monthly newsletter covers such topics as nutrition and preventive medicine, and it notes resources. A yearly subscription is \$12. Write to Box 1069, Bangor, ME 04401.



LETTERS

Dear CIBC:

Had *Big Sixteen* not been published so close to the deadline for the *Bulletin*, Volume 14, Number 5, I assume it would have been given the same detailed analysis accorded *Jake and Honeybunch Go to Heaven* and *Shadow* in that issue. This is surely regrettable as I believe *Big Sixteen* is far more insidious and a more devastating affront to readers—especially African American children—than either *Jake* or *Shadow*.

In her review [of *Big Sixteen*] Geraldine Wilson clearly demonstrated how Ms. Calhoun shifted the Zora Neale Hurston retelling to blur the essential terror of the master/slave relationship. The reader is invited to believe that the Old Man and Big Sixteen are, if not full partners, certainly kindred spirits in the tasks assigned and accomplished.

This appearance of cooperation is most lethal when the illustrations are carefully analyzed. Ms. Wilson points out in her review how the racial coloring made by Trina Schart Hyman obliterates the significance of a Black man outwitting the white powers of heaven and hell. It was only because of this “putting one over” that Big Sixteen’s subsequent “looking for a place to go” had any redeeming value. In the original, Big Sixteen is a wandering hero; in the Calhoun/Hyman travesty he is merely a silly outsider ostracized because of the mighty masculine feats he accomplishes.

His major accomplishment is the killing of the devil. From Hyman’s illustrations what is *seen* is not only the killing of the devil but the killing of a black father/head of household—at the white

man’s bidding! The reader is expected to concur that the devil is evil, and that his death would be a benefit to everyone. But that is not how the devil’s children view him. They were playing, after all, as children do, when Big Sixteen arrives. Furthermore, they are made witnesses to the brutal murder of their own father. Can there be any wonder why the devil’s wife does not allow Big Sixteen into hell considering how he left her a widow with children to support!

The original story for the most part is color blind. A Black audience would assume the characters other than Big Sixteen were white. It is precisely because Big Sixteen is not intimidated by the powers of heaven or hell that confers on him heroic personal qualities commensurate with his physical skills. To the child viewer of the Calhoun/Hyman treatment, Big Sixteen can easily be seen as a bully who uses his powerful physical advantage to destroy a happy family. If there is any hero in the book, it is the devil’s wife, who appropriately tells Big Sixteen to “go start a hell of your own.” In the context of the history of Black oppression, Hyman has shown once again a Black father who cannot protect his own family.

Big Sixteen is a tragic mistake. This is a story that should never have been illustrated. Intended originally for adults, its power lies in the images created by the telling. What the listener brings to the telling is perhaps more important than what is given to the listener. However, it is primarily in the illustrations where *Big Sixteen* becomes a truly damaging mistake. Imagination is oblit-

erated; the viewer is told what to see. And what is seen? Old white men are clearly in charge, and the consequences of their decisions on earth impact even on heaven and hell. A Black man gains favor only by satisfying the white man’s ambitions. When it comes between a white man’s order and killing a Black father, there is no hesitation. Let welfare take care of the wife and kids!

Trina Schart Hyman’s decision to make heaven and hell Black has the effect of (1) obliterating the wit and wisdom of the original story, (2) puts the “hero” into situations that are not implied in the story and are anathema to the sensibilities of caring family-oriented people, and (3) diminishes the true significance of Big Sixteen’s chosen destiny as a wandering “light.” I do not want to believe that the illustrator who has given us so many fine picture books—and created the pleasing design and mood of *Cricket* magazine—intended these effects. If not, someone at Morrow should have seen the implications of Ms. Hyman’s design program and either demanded a shift or dropped the project. But given that Morrow published the book full of the caricatures, misrepresentations and odious messages that it has, one can only conclude that in *Big Sixteen* we are seeing a calculated effort to present a smilin’ nigger in service to white directions, and, no less, white publishers’ profits.

Richard Gaugert
Book Reviewer, “For Reading
Aloud. . .” KWMU Radio, St. Louis
Film Reviewer, *The Horn Book Magazine*

EL SALVADOR: Continued from page 16

the ANDES office only once so far this year.

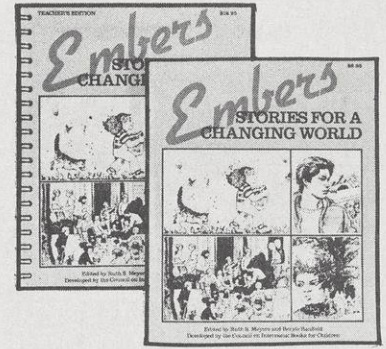
ANDES holds membership meetings and conventions, but the meeting places are never advertised or published—for fear of raids by the security forces in uniform or attacks by the civilian-clothed Death Squad.

What ANDES does advertise, in the only Salvadoran newspaper that will accept notices from trade union and human rights groups, is the time and date of negotiating meetings it still is able to schedule with the Ministry of Education. By making these meetings public, ANDES leaders feel they are forcing the Minister of Education to take open responsibility for their safety.

But ANDES leaders also take other precautions for these negotiating sessions with the Education Ministry. They carefully plan out secret entry and exit routes to each session and bring family members and friends to the Ministry to act as witnesses. Since none of these precautions guarantees safety, ANDES never sends its entire executive board to any of these negotiating sessions with the Ministry of Education. Should the worst happen, ANDES reasons, at least some leaders must remain free and alive.

The complete report is available for 20¢ from the National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador, Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, 15 Union Square W., New York, NY 10003.

EMBERS: STORIES FOR A CHANGING WORLD



A supplementary reader and reading program containing 28 selections of fiction, biography, poetry and history about people who overcame barriers based on sex, race or disability. For children eight to twelve years old. Developed by the Council on Interracial Books for Children for the Women's Educational Equity Program of the U.S. Department of Education.

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