

**MONTREAL REGIONAL COMMITTEE**  
**NATIONAL CONGRESS OF BLACK WOMEN**



**Report**  
**EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE**  
**October 16, 17, 18, 1981**  
**Université du Québec à Montréal**

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TO: Mr. Lawrence Sitahal,  
Executive Director  
Negro Community Centre, Inc.,  
2035 Coursol Street,  
Montreal, Que.  
H3J 1C3

Dear Mr. Sitahal:

Many thanks to you and to members of your staff for the generous assistance extended to us throughout the planning of this Conference.

The Montreal Regional Committee/  
National Congress of Black Women

This Conference was made possible by grants from:

The Federal Government – Secretary of State, Multicultural Branch

The Quebec Government – Minister of Cultural Communities and Immigration.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Objectives of Conference
- 2.. President's Address of Welcome
3. Keynote Speaker: Dr. Beryle Banfield,  
  
Curriculum Vitae  
  
Dr. Beryle Banfield's Speech
4. Workshops:  
  
Explanation of Workshops  
  
Workshop Resolutions
  - a) Physical Handicaps, Exposé
  - b) Alienation Parent/Child
  - c) Pictorial Manifestations
  - d) Attitudes of Teachers
  - e) Behaviour Modification, Psychological Testing
5. Declaration of the Minister of Education of Québec
6. List of organizations represented
7. Program
8. Resolutions adopted at the Winnipeg conference on multiculturalism in education

## OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Conference were aimed at sensitizing the general public (Black and White) i.e. parents and children, students and teachers, governmental and para-public organizations, to the racism and sexism found in the textbooks used in our school system, to develop solutions to these problems and to use our collective strength to bring about constructive social change.

## PRESIDENT'S WELCOME ADDRESS

Honoured guests, ladies and gentlemen, brothers and sisters, my name is Vera Jackson, President of the Montreal Regional Committee, National Congress of Black Women.

The Montreal Regional Committee was formed in 1974, after the Second National Congress of Black Women, and has as its mandate the betterment of the lives of Black Women and by extension the Black family. The Montreal Regional Committee has continued to be involved in community concerns, not the least being the presentation, in 1978, of a brief to the Multiculturalism Department. This paper questions the effectiveness of the country's present practice of Multiculturalism to bring about true understanding among the different peoples of Canada.

Our keynote speaker, Dr. Beryle Banfield, will enlighten us as to sexism and racism in school texts and set the tone for tomorrow's workshops.

I should like to note some examples of racism and sexism which have come to our attention within recent times. The *Tin Tin* series used in the teaching of French is an example. Our examination of these texts confirms the use of stereotypical images of women and non-white peoples. Africans are depicted as cannibals dressed in grass skirts, brandishing spears, their hair in top knots and bones through their noses. When such caricatures are presented as factual representations of a people, then a disservice has been done to all students.

Is not education the teaching and learnings of truths – the dispelling of myths and misinformation? Consider if carpenters were taught that it's o.k. to use a measurement of 10½" or 14" to a foot. What consternation would ensue when the funny shaped objects were finally produced? Would not the educational system move quickly to ensure that all were taught to use a uniform 12" measurement for one foot! Yet we still have *Tin Tin*. Institutionalized racism is fostered and bolstered by the educational system.

In Quebec we are told we have a government of the people which knows the nature of racism. Anytime a Quebecois can write a book entitled, "*The White Niggers of America*", we can be sure he knows the nature of racism. When the Parti Quebecois Energy and Resources Minister can liken the situation of French in Quebec to the plight of pre-independence Black Zimbabweans, and when a Quebec Liberal Party member can assure

a caller on a radio show that all people in the U.S. are not born equal – “Just ask the coloured people in the U.S.”, we can be satisfied that our leaders know the nature of racism. But wait! An article in the Gazette of August 4th, 1981, quotes M. Eric Goudreau, Directeur du Secretariat des Affaires Gouvernemental et Milieu Amerindien. After explaining that Indian children should remain on reserves till age thirteen or fourteen before going to integrated schools with White people, he states, “A White who sees a pretty fourteen year old Indian girl who is starting to have firm breasts, who knows how to talk and who is proud of herself, he isn't likely to despise her.” Do I have to say I find this both sexist and racist.

Recently, the police department, in an effort to better its service to all citizens by recruiting non-francophones into the ranks, circulated an invitation to youths of various ethnic backgrounds – *whose mother tongue was neither French or English*, to consider becoming policemen. Tell me, where does that leave the Black community?

But, I should not be too surprised at these contradictions. The pamphlet entitled *Quebecers Each and Every One*, in which the Quebec government's plan of action for cultural communities is outlined, contains no recognition of the presence and contributions of the English speaking Black community as a cultural group. In fact, I could find no reference to us at all. If we are not here, then how can those in authority know in what manner the educational and other systems do not present a true and positive image of our people. It is time that we and they realize we are here and represent 80% of Quebec's Black community.

It is time that they, and we, “Got That Mirror Straight”.

# KEYNOTE SPEAKER

## CURRICULUM VITAE

Dr. Beryle Banfield is President of the Council of Inter-racial Books for Children and Co-Director of Creative Approaches to Instructional Resources, an organization which provides consultant services to school systems. Dr. Banfield has had twenty-five years of experience in public education in New York City serving on every level from teacher to city wide administrator. She teaches Cultural Foundations of Education at Bank Street College of Education in New York City and is associated with the Metro-Center of New York University where she is involved in the development of multicultural curriculum. She is also managing the development of anti-sexist, anti-racist mini models of basal readers under a grant from the Women's Educational Equity Act.

Dr. Banfield lectures and writes extensively on racism and sexism in educational materials and serves as consultant in this area both throughout the United States and in other countries. A curriculum specialist, her particular field of expertise is African and Afro-American history and she directed two on site curriculum development projects in West Africa. Since 1979, she has served as consultant in multicultural education to the National Teachers Corps in the United States.

Her doctorate from Teacher's College-Columbia University is in the area of Curriculum and Teaching.

## DR. BERYLE BANFIELD'S ADDRESS

I'd like to beg your indulgence on another matter and express my personal gratification at being here. First, as a person from the United States who is estatic at the opportunity of touching bases with Black sisters and Black brothers in the country that shares our continent. I do hope that this will be the beginning of close contact and networking between our groups in the United States. Also, on a personal note, it is very exciting to me to touch bases with people with whom I share a common West Indian heritage. I am grateful for the privilege of being here. Thank you for having asked me.

Now to the business of the evening – Racism and Sexism in Educational Materials. It shall be my task, for the minutes I share with you, to indicate the reasons for these manifestations in childrens' materials – how they may be detected and most important of all, how they may be counteracted. We have no time to waste because the African continent now looms large in world consciousness, and it behooves us to prepare the children of African descent to look at that Continent in the proper light so that they may properly assess their future in terms of the future of the African continent and the contributions they may make, both on that Continent and away from it, towards the greatness which we see that Continent is going to assume. Let me first start with a set of basic assumptions.

**Assumption No. 1** – Education in any society is at the service of that society. It is a mechanism for perpetuating the values of that society.

**Assumption No. 2** – Education also serves as a sorting device. It determines a person's place in a society – who will rule; who will manage; who will be ruled; who will be dominated.

**Assumption No. 3** – Every aspect of the educational institution is pressed into service to perpetuate these values in all its aspects. Therefore, educational materials may become tools of oppression against those whom it has already been decided will not be rulers, will not be managers, but will be dominated.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the history of the United States and in some of the European powers. As I look at the evolution of children's literature, both in the United States, in Canada and in Europe, I am amazed to find the striking parallels. It is not generally recognized how much of children's literature and how much of our educational materials carry the political doctrines that expound domination and oppression either by race or by sex.

Many of us have grown up with Robert Louis Stevenson's "A Garden of Verses". How many of us recognize how we were conditioned by such verses as "Oh, Little Eskimo" or "Heathen Chineese, don't you wish that you were me?" Of course, it never occurred to many of us that the "me" did not mean people of colour. "You have curious things to eat, while I am fed on proper meat." Perfect preparation for colonial domination. How many of us when we begin to say nursery rhymes to our children (as many of us have), recognize that we are preparing them to accept domination on the basis of sex when we talk about Little Jack Horner who says "What a big boy am I", and compare him with Little Miss Muffet who got frightened away by a spider. These are subtleties of which we may not be aware.

When we look at the Rudyard Kipling stories, the Just So Stories, the Dr. Doolittle stories, which perpetuate and reinforce the stereotype of the bumbling, stupid African, we do not recognize that those works have a place in the oppression of peoples and were indeed expressions of a political line of thought.

It is no coincidence that these works emerged at a time when the political doctrines were "Manifest Destiny", "the White man's burden" and "Social Darwinism" or "the survival of the fittest", so when you deal with children's educational materials, you are dealing with materials that express political doctrines for political purposes.

Let me take an example that is common to all of the countries – the question of slavery and the way the person of African descent is depicted. I know that many of you have shared the experiences that I have had of seeing children of African descent cringe at the mention of Africa or at the use of the word "Black!" You have seen them gasp in disbelief when you attempt to couple Black with a positive attribute, such as "Black is Beautiful". Indeed, it was my response to this kind of reaction that led me to the writing of African materials for children. For how has the African been portrayed? If at all, the part of the African is described in terms of culpability.

You are now beginning to read of the Africans – quote-unquote "who sold their own". But are you reading about the large amount of money earned by Queen Elizabeth and many of the crowned heads of Europe as a result of the slave trade? Do you read about King Jaja of Nigeria who tried to stop the infamous trade and was silenced by British warships for his audacity? .

Let me enumerate five criteria, if you will. Five criteria which you should apply. Then let me examine each one of these in detail. I trust that I shall be sufficiently informative so that you may be able to apply this particular bit of information in your workshops tomorrow.

1. Examination of the historical background – the errors of omission and the errors of commission.
2. The Characterizations.
3. The Treatment of Culture and Tradition
4. Language and Terminology
5. Illustrations

#### **1. Examination of the Historical Background — The Errors of Omission and The Errors of Commission**

In the area of historical background or historical perspective, the most common error is that of omission. We just aren't there. When I say we are not there, I am not talking about long laundry lists of great men and women of colour who made great contributions, important as those are. What I am talking about is the failure to examine the impact of Black folk upon the area and upon the history of their time. I am talking about a failure to examine how they shaped the history just by being there. How, for instance, Toussaint L'Ouverture of Haiti influenced the whole history of South America by giving asylum to Simon Bolivar, the liberator, and teaching him the art of guerrilla warfare; the impact of Black people upon their immediate area and upon the history of the world. I am talking about the failure to examine the tensions that existed between slave woman and slave mistress at a particular time in history. I am talking about the failure to examine how the slaves used their terrain and developed mechanisms to effect their own liberation in many instances – *examples of omission*.

Errors of commission or distortion of history: Here again I see the greatest example of these is the failure to examine how the slaves themselves responded to the institutions of

slavery wherever it occurred. The mechanisms they developed, for instance, in the United States, in South America, in the Caribbean for their own liberation, their response to it; how they developed their particular culture which in turn acted upon the culture of the colonizing or enslaving power; distortions of the life of the African continent where we all had our origin. Perhaps the most damaging distortion in terms of its effect upon Black children and upon White children is the negation of the whole society that was built in the several areas of the African continent; the types of cultures that came with those who came on the slave ships, whether they landed in the Caribbean or in other areas, and the impact of those cultures upon the cultures that existed when they met.

## 2. Characterizations

Characterizations are important because here we find the most subtle type of racism and sexism emerging. If I tick them off you would recognize them; the "noble Black", the one who sacrifices for the master, who is loyal unto death, viz-a-viz Robinson Crusoe, or to indicate a more recent American novel, *The Cai*. Of course, I know that you see American movies here and I know you see those 1940 reruns just the way we do in the States. I know you see the big buxom earth mother who is "gonna perfect her little lamb with the last breath in her old Black body". I know that you see it – stereotypic characterization.

The Black woman, and this runs through the literature in whatever language she is presented, fits into one of five stereotypes. She's either sexy or promiscuous; or she is the bullying, dominating matriarch; or she is a wise earth mammy, counselling everybody, mistress of all she surveys as long as what she surveys remains in the kitchen. Of course, we have the tragic octoroon, the lovely fair maiden with one drop of that cursed blood, who will, of course, like Pocahontas and all the rest (oh, this extends to Asian women too) fall madly in love with a handsome stranger who is blond with silky hair and who is willing to throw aside family, kith and kin for the love of this woman.

I know as I'm talking you can spot the books in which this appears. These are the basic stereotypes. Then, of course, you have the contented slave. Contented in slavery and wretched in freedom – case in point, our Uncle Remus. Terrific misreading of what the folktales that Uncle Remus purportedly retold, actually accomplished in the life of the slave. I'm going to discuss that with you later on.

Now quite often, and this is appearing now and you'll see it on TV, you will have a situation in which let's say the new boy comes into the town. He is the only one and he is going to integrate the school. He starts school in September, he goes all the way through the school term and nobody talks to him. He can speak French, he can speak English, but he's not welcome. Nobody wants him, but he can play ball, so he finds a ball and he plays all by himself in the yard. Then there's going to be a big game between two high schools, right? The star forward, or the star centre, or the star guard, you name it, the star lacrosse player, gets hurt the day of the big game and somebody remembers he can play. I know you know what's going to happen. They go and get him, he's a good sport you know, so he comes. After that nothing is too good for Charlie. Guess who's coming to dinner?

Now on the surface that sounds like a wonderful story, virtue conquers all, Charlie wins the game. He's a hero and doesn't that put the Black child in a wonderful light? I say no, because the message that is being sent is that you have got to be superior to be accepted on equal terms. Where I come from we call that the superspade syndrome or the

Sidney Poitier syndrome. Guess who's coming to dinner! Those are very subtle and dangerous situations. Either you give up life, or you suffer, or you excel spectacularly.

Then, we have the situation, and here again this is world wide, where the family of colour is riddled with pathology. You name it everything exists: Daddy drinks and doesn't bring the money home; Mama is lazy; sister likes to hang out with men; but there's this little flower who, somehow, likes to go to school and likes to read and is discovered by a person of the dominant group. It may be a Librarian, it may be a Teacher, it may be the White Shadow, but the person is there, comes in, takes control and everything is alright.

Now on the surface – fine. Here is a White friend who is marvelous and to whom the person can turn. That's another version of colonialism; the missionary complex. All that that is saying is, that the persons of colour lack the ability to make the decisions about the critical issues that effect their lives. If you go back through history you will find that that excuse was given when Europeans went over to bring the benefits of civilization to the heathen countries. It's the same thing in a more subtle form. Watch for that if you will.

### **3. Culture and Tradition**

Here again, if I were a child in school and I were exposed only to Asian cultures (let me deal with Asian culture just for a while), through the books that I know you have in libraries here (I know I've seen them in Germany and I know I've seen them in England), I would grow up believing that Chinese culture consists of a continual procession of dragon festivals and kite flying. You go back and look. It's always the New Year's Eve or the New Year's Day. The objects are always rice bowls and of course the haircut is always a bowl haircut. Yet you will find nowhere mentioned in those books any discussion of the role of the dragon in a Chinese festival, or why kite flying is important, or any other information which would enable you to understand how these customs mesh and mesh a people together, and give meaning to their lives.

Similarly it's impossible I think, for children looking at pictures we have of native American men not to believe that we probably have the only natural grown centaurs in the world. Because here again, the native American is portrayed as what? – practically glued to the back of a horse. If he's not on the back of a horse he has a tomahawk in his hands. That particular mode of characterization fails to explain that the use of a machette is important in some native American cultures and that the horse was important in some native American cultures. I know those of you here who get the books, also know about the rain dances, right? and the smoke signals, but you do not know what they mean, how they developed and why they exist. That, we say, is treating the customs of a people as exotica and trivia.

I remember reading among all the Twins books (you remember the little Dutch Twins) about the little Eskimo Twins, and I formed my conception of Eskimo life – Inuit life – from that particular set of twins. Not once was there any illumination of a particular custom, why it was important. Not once was there any explanation that certain types of Eskimo, Inuit people live in different kinds of houses and even at different times of the year. But we grew up with this exotic picture of the culture of a people. Information must be given about the rationale for these cultures. Otherwise what you get is a series of ethnic festivals, when you want to have a multi-cultural experience, in which people do dances whose meanings they do not understand, and they eat foods whose role they do not understand within the culture.

That's all well and good, but I know someone who submits that all that approach does is create fat kids who can dance. Culture and tradition being treated as "exotica".

#### **4. Language and Terminology**

Now I understand that you don't have the English, the quote, unquote, "Black English" complication that we have: that in your area it's the West Indian dialect that's the subject of controversy. But I have it, my friends say that I am trilingual because I also have a Bajan dialect that I use quite frequently. The point is that the language of a people, whatever it is, has to be treated with dignity and respect. Most of the languages you will find have a rhythm, a cadence, and an imagery that is rich and can be built upon. To reduce it on the printed page to a set of unintelligible words of gibberish is an insult to the people. It is a way of diminishing and demeaning people.

I know that you have had over here "Uncle Tom's Cabin", you have Souder over here, you have Rudyard Kipling over here. Their representation of the speech is ludicrous, comical and used to indicate that the person using it is contemptible. Now, let me give you an example of the speech of an unlettered person who never went to school a day in her life, but who in her speech represents the imagery, cadence and power that I'm talking about. As the Congress of Black Women you should know this powerful figure in all our history – I'm talking about Harriet Tubman. When Harriet Tubman described the Civil War this is the way she described it:

And then we heard the thunder and those were the big guns  
And then we heard the rain and those were the drops of blood falling.  
And when we went to git the harvest, it was dead men that we reaped.

Power, imagery and cadence present in every speech whether it's the Jamaica Creole, or the Bajan dialect or whatever, it is there and it should be respected for what it is. Any attempt to derogate it in the written word must be taken as an evidence of racism.

#### **5. Illustrations**

Now illustrations, I've seen some horrible ones out there. I've seen the Little Black Sambo types on your display and I've seen the Tin Tin. But there are other subtle things. Look for your placement of your characters. Whose down front in the position of power? Who is in an active role? Who is grinning? And who is being forceful and in a position of command? Also beware of what I call the cookie cutter jobs. All of the kids come out alike, then someone remembers "Oh", paint job and you have satisfied your requirement.

Also watch for the stereotypic representations of Asian women with the slant eyes and the knot hairdo; the Asian men with the buck teeth, the spectacles, the queue and the ever present kimono. Watch the treatment of the native American. Watch those warbonnets particularly as in most instances, they show warbonnets on people who are dressed in the dress of another area. Complete misconception and misrepresentation. Watch for the portrayal of authentic features particularly when dealing with those peoples of African descent. There are artists who have learned how to draw realistic representations of Black people.

Those are the five criteria. Now that you know about them what are you going to do about them? Its fine that we can go through the books and point out the instances of racism.

That is fine. But those books are going to stay there. Nine times out of ten you're not going to be able to get the school board to remove them. You are not going to get them replaced. What you have to do is develop the skill to use those destructive materials in constructive ways, which means that you and I have to inform ourselves about the correct aspect of history and give that information to the children. It means that we have to be able to plug that information in every curricular area.

If the child is studying opera, the child has to know that a Black Pushkin was responsible for two of the most powerful and dramatic operas – Boris Godounov and Eugène Oneguine: the Black presence in opera. If studying South America, again he has to know about the relationship of Toussaint L'Ouverture to the South American liberation movement. As the child begins to study literature, that child has to know and be aware of not one Dumas but three: Grandfather, Father and Son. One, the most important general in Napoleon's army; the other, the toast of Paris, exciting writer; the third, the author of the romance, "*La Dame aux Camélias*", which has also been translated into opera. We have to know that.

We have to tell the children what the stereotypes are, how they were developed and why they are used. The child has to be able to make the connection between stereotypes and the fact that certain people are in low-paying, low-skilled, dead end jobs. The child has to come to know that this is the reason these materials are in the textbooks – that they have a purpose. What you will be doing is actually providing a higher type of education because the child will begin to develop the skills of critical thinking. The child will also begin to search out the information.

Again you have to know not only the heroes, you have to know what Black people did in a certain area of Canada. Why an area has changed because Black people were there. What they did there. You have to know the stuff of the culture. Start with the African background and begin to demolish those stereotypes. Begin to demolish the myths about those disabilities under which we are supposed to labour because we are people of African descent.

Case in point, so often we are supposed to suffer from an inherent dislike of education. From day one that a child walks into school, how easy it is to acquaint that child with the African proverb "Not to know is bad. Not to wish to know is worse. Lack of knowledge is darker than night." You've already begun to give a different picture. "Little by little grow the bananas"; "If you watch the pot your food will not burn". "Application to work!" Application to work." Then you tie that up with some of the great sayings of some of our great people; "You cannot teach a man to read and write and have him remain a slave"; to instill the desire for education. You begin to counteract this stereotype.

I think that possibly I have talked long enough, but I do want to leave you with this one very sobering thought:—

Public education here and in the United States is going to come under attack in many ways. The resources are going to be scarcer and scarcer and as opposing groups begin to compete for increasingly scarce resources, you are going to find a resurgence of the stereotypes and racist attitudes. We are once more seeing racist materials coming out of the presses.

We must be alert, we must be vigilant, we must be responsible. It may already be too late for some of us, but we do have a responsibility to see that the youngsters who are coming are equipped with the kinds of feelings about themselves, their heritage and their place in the world that will make them able to compete in the twenty-first century.

# WORKSHOPS

# EXPLANATION OF WORKSHOPS

## 1. **Physical Handicaps, Exposés**

Discussion of problems that could affect the learning process, e.g. Hearing, Nutrition, Eyesight, Sickle Cell Anemia, Dystexia, etc., problems that could affect the children's ability to concentrate and take part in school activities.

Study of the differences between the Canadian and West Indian Education Systems and their consequences.

## 2. **Alienation Parent/Child**

Study of the environment (home, parental contributions, admission by parents of their limitations), understanding the affects of influences outside the home.

## 3. **Pictorial Manifestations**

Study of racism/sexism in electronic and print media.

## 4. **Attitude of Teachers**

Appreciation of cultural differences, self-analysis on the part of teachers, limitations of psychological tests.

## 5. **Behaviour Modifications, Psychological Testing**

Study of the consequences of behavioural and psychological testing of immigrant children

**WORKSHOP:                   PHYSICAL HANDICAPS/EXPOSE**

**ANIMATORS:               Ms. Sadie Thompson  
                                  Dr Leo Bertley**

**Physical Handicaps**

This workshop dealt specifically with the Sickle Cell Anemia child and family.

*It is recommended* that the Black Community should participate more fully in:  
Programmes, the screening and testing of the family members for sickle cell e.g.  
prenatal diagnosis.

Educational programmes dealing with the disease process and treatment.

Support of the Association in funding campaigns and personal involvement.

Monitoring the performance of Black children in schools and be aware of the counselling given Black students e.g., vocational counselling as modeling.

West Indian educational system vs Canadian educational system.

**Exposé**

Some of the problems discussed and recommendations put forth dealt with the following.

1. The placement of students in grades according to age and not ability; problem – student frustration and performance in school declines. Culture shock; the students inability to deal with a new culture in terms of discipline, teacher – child relationship.

To deal with these problems it was felt that the Black Community needed to present a unified front to the Canadian Society: that this common front must be the goal of the Black Community.

To accomplish this goal; *It is recommended* that the Black Community convene a conference in "Self-Awareness" aimed at looking at ourselves and the problem of our divisiveness including the crucial question of leadership.

2. The lack of hard data on important aspects of life in the Black Community has emerged as a real need. It is important that Blacks have concrete data to substantiate the facts on problems discussed.

*It is recommended* that immediate steps be taken to formulate a committee that would advance itself to this urgent need.

Example – Drop out rate of students: new immigrant vs Canadian Blacks – Secondary School and CEGEP.

- Professional vs vocational choices
- Drug use and abuse among teenagers.

3. The Black Community must become more politically aware of its role in the Canadian Society.

*It is therefore recommended* that the Black Community become politically involved in the System and tap those resources available. The Black population must begin to support, according to their financial status, programmes in the Black Community. We use the System but aim for independence because of the support from the Community.

4. The Canadian Society is programmed to believe that Black students are non-productive and non-achievers.

*It is recommended* that the Black Community sensitize the Canadian Society to the realization:

- a. That stereotyping of Black students is wrong.
- b. That harbouring of these stereotype images makes it impossible for children to succeed.
- c. That the Black Community expects an immediate alleviation of this problem.

How this can be done:

- Parent participation in student education.
- Attend parent-teacher meetings.
- Monitor child performance; know the counsellor, school nurse, home room teacher
- Know the institutional forms of racism in the school system and present a common front in support of student educational needs.

**WORKSHOP:** ALIENATION: PARENT/CHILD  
**ANIMATOR:** Mr. Anthony Bailey  
**RESOURCE PERSONS:** Dr. Juanita Westmoreland-Traoré  
Dr. June James  
Dr. Dorothy Wills

WHEREAS certain patterns of parenting such as the directive and authoritative methods contribute to parent/child alienation in the Canadian society;

WHEREAS the spirit of Bill 24, the Youth Protection Act, will find the authoritarian approach reprehensible such that it may result in the loss of the child from the nuclear family;

WHEREAS alternate forms of parenting such as that which foster open and frank discussions are more conducive to growth and development;

BE IT RESOLVED: 1. That the Montreal Regional Committee/National Congress of Black Women make available to Black parents in need of new direction in parenting skills, the opportunities for learning new methods of parenting and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: 2. That the Committee encourage and prepare parents for greater participation in their children's educational process.

WHEREAS communication and listening skills are an integral part of family interaction;

WHEREAS a breakdown in communication is generally the result of a lack of listening skills;

WHEREAS in order to solve problems and make decisions which effect the entire family, communication and listening skills are imperative,

BE IT RESOLVED: 1. That greater facility in communication and listening skills be made possible through the use of counselling and skillbuilding sessions, in order that problem solving and decision making be effected in an atmosphere of mutual respect within the family unit.

The Committee requests:

1. that the government make available funds to *Black* historians and researchers to document, publicize and disseminate works of the history, culture and contribution of African and Third World peoples;
2. that the contributions of African peoples to World History and development be meaningfully reflected in the general school curriculum as well as in all forms of communication media;
3. that the government take direction from cultural communities to revise didactic and teacher's training materials, as well as guidance policies in an effort to eliminate all forms of racism and sexism and that the government appoint, at decisional levels in the educational system, a significant number of persons from the Black Community.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That a communiqué be drawn up as a result of this conference and circulated not only to the Press and other organizations, but especially to necessary governmental levels.

**WORKSHOP:****PICTORIAL MANIFESTATIONS****RESOURCE PERSONS:** Mrs. Iris McCracken  
Dr. Carrie Best

WHEREAS, we are concerned with the self-images that our children adopt through the pervasive influences of the media; and mindful of the negative effects the various aspects the media have on creating psychologically destructive images on all Black people; and being aware that we as a people sometimes unwittingly support and accept and by extension reinforce the suppression of our place in the multicultural makeup of Canada; and are aware of our responsibility for the development of the minds and futures of our children;

**BE IT RESOLVED:**

1. That the Montreal Regional Committee – NCBW work towards preparing and distributing material which would serve as a guide to television watching for our children; and to sensitize ourselves to the harmful effects certain television portrayals have on the self-images of Black people, especially children.
2. That regular discussion groups sponsored by either the Committee or other Black organizations, associations or individuals be held to foster idea exchanges and to critically analyze current publications, movies, television and other media presentations to assess the impact and the short and long-term effects of white media presentations on Black Canadians.
3. That we work towards obtaining firm commitments of individuals and groups towards developing our own publishing systems to ensure control and expressions of our own points of view to counteract the misguided perspectives of other publications; and that we as a people singly, or in groups, provide the necessary financial aid and distribution methods to assist aspiring Black writers to have their works published.
4. That being aware of the need to support our own newspapers and other publications and to ensure their continuance, the Committee affirm its support of these publications by sending letters of encouragement and support, and remain in contact with these publications as logical avenues of dissemination of information about Black people.
5. That the Committee send a letter to the Federal and Provincial governments demanding that all government publications, advertising, brochures and other media output factually, fairly and adequately portray Black people as an integral part of the Canadian mosaic with knowledge and references to the current size of the Black population and its contribution to the development of the Canadian society.
6. That the Committee denounce the use of defamatory material in school textbooks by demanding Black representation in textbook selection.
7. That the Committee send a telegram to Camille Laurin demanding the immediate withdrawal of the school text *La Lecture Sous Toutes Ses Formes*, in which two objectionable stories portraying Black appear: "Les Yeux Bleus" and "Un Sauvetage Inattendu".
8. That the Committee send a letter of complaint to the CBC concerning this network's racist hiring practices and its omission of Blacks in its programming.

**WORKSHOP: ATTITUDE OF TEACHERS**

**RESOURCE PERSONS:** Ms. Gwen Lord  
Ms. Beryl Jones  
Mrs. Jean Augustine

WHEREAS, racism, overtly and covertly is increasing in schools;

WHEREAS, we are now living in a multicultural society where it is not appropriate to exclusively use Eurocentric values and morés; and

WHEREAS, a re-examination of teachers' attitudes and values is essential for effective teaching in a multicultural classroom;

- BE IT RESOLVED:
1. That personnel practices (teacher placement and selection – teaching training systems) include specific courses dealing with multicultural education.
  2. That curriculum policies and the selection and use of educational materials be examined with a view to eliminating all forms of racism, and that, therefore, teachers be sensitized to the needs of Black students.
  3. That history and culture of Black people be included in the regular curriculum.
  4. That the provision of funds for the purchase of teaching materials be supplied to replace present racist materials.

**WORKSHOP:**

**BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION/PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING**

**ANIMATOR:**

Mr. Winston Nicholls

**RESOURCE PERSONS:**

Dr. Juanita Chambers

Dr. Alwyn Spence

Mr. Dalmain Pitt

**BE IT RESOLVED:**

1. That I.Q. Tests be used as an evaluative tool and not as a means of labelling.
2. That tests be used to reflect some of the strengths of the client.
3. That testing be used only in conjunction with other methods of assessment and evaluation.
4. That, in the case of immigrant children, I.Q. tests not be given until a minimum period of two years has passed in order to allow for a period of acclimatization.
5. That the helping professions be encouraged and supported by the non-professional population in order to create an alliance between professionals and their clients.
6. That whenever behaviour modification and testing schedules are used, parents be made fully aware of the goals so that they may concur or disagree.

Translation of Presse Communiqué  
The Minister of Education  
Québec, 25 November 1981

### **Minister Condemns Racism in Textbook**

In keeping with his efforts to remove every trace of racism from the Province's school books, Quebec's Minister of Education, Dr Camille Laurin, has promised that the next edition of the text: "La Lecture sous toutes ses Formes", due to appear in June 1982, will be free of any racist content.

As a result of representations made by the Congress of Black Women, Dr Laurin specifically condemned two chapters of the book which is used in third year classes. The chapters in question are entitled "Les Yeux Bleus" (Blue Eyes") and "Un Sauvetage Inattendu" ("An Unexpected Rescue").

In addition, the Minister rejected the cautionary leaflet which the publisher has been including in recent editions of the text. This is probably the latter's clumsy way of cushioning the shock being felt by the Black Community.

To prevent any recurrence of such a situation, Dr Laurin wants to see established, as soon as possible, a system for screening all the pedagogical materials now being prepared by the Ministry of Education. Such a system would, in his opinion, ensure that these materials will be devoid of any offensive content, especially of a racist or sexist nature. Furthermore, before it is implemented, this system of evaluation will be submitted to all Quebec's ethnic minorities for their approval, and scrutinized with the participation of those groups who have been the victims of discrimination in the past.

The Minister, therefore, urges all school boards and all teachers to exercise vigilance regarding the use of this book. Affirming his abhorrence of every kind of racism, Dr Laurin said: "It will give me great pleasure when we have removed every vestige of racism from our school books, whether this racism be verbal or pictorial – and when we have eradicated it from our educational practices as well".

# PROGRAM

## **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16th, 1981**

- 4:00 p.m. REGISTRATION
- 7:00 p.m. Welcoming Remarks  
*Keynote Speech*  
Guest Speaker: Dr. Beryle Banfield, President,  
The Council on Interracial Books  
for Children's Bulletin, Inc.
- 9:00 p.m. Art & Book Exhibition
- 10:00 p.m. Letters of Support

## **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17th, 1981**

- 8:30 a.m. Registration, coffee
- 9:00 a.m. Opening Remarks
- 9:15 a.m. Workshops
- 10:45 a.m. Coffee Break
- 11:00 a.m. Workshops
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch
- 1:30 p.m. Film – "Myself/Yourself, "See Me Yah"
- 2:00 p.m. Workshops
- 3:35 p.m. Coffee Break
- 4:00 p.m. Summing up of proceedings

## **SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18th, 1981**

- 8:30 a.m. Opening Remarks
- 8:45 a.m. Plenary Sessions – Workshop Resolutions
- 9:45 a.m. Coffee Break
- 10:00 a.m. Plenary Session – Workshop Resolutions
- 11:30 a.m. Film
- 12:30 p.m. Closing Remarks

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## List of Organizations Represented

Afro-Asian Foundation of Canada

Black Is

Black Theatre Workshop Inc.

Canadian Sickle Cell Anemia Association

Centre des Services Sociaux-Metropolitain Montréal

Centre Social d'Aide aux Immigrants

Coloured Women's Club

Concordia University

Concordia University – Students' Association

Conseil du Statut de la Femme

Edward Murphy School

Grenada Nationals Association of Montreal, Inc.

Laurentide School

La Ligue des Femmes du Québec

Maison d'Haiti

Ministère Communauté Culturelles et Immigration, Québec

Ministry of Culture and Recreation (Newcomer Services Branch),  
Ontario

Negro Community Centre

Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission

Pierrefonds Comprehensive High School

Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal

Quebec Board of Black Educators

Quebec Human Rights Commission

University of the West Indies, Trinidad

Vanier College

**RESOLUTION ADOPTED AT THE  
WINNIPEG CONFERENCE  
ON MULTICULTURALISM IN EDUCATION:**

WHEREAS most social science research shows that children's social attitudes are formed not so much by actual contact with people of other races, but by contact with the prevailing attitudes in their communities about other races;

WHEREAS attitudes about the images of people of other races are conveyed not only through books but also through films, T.V., radio, advertisements, games, toys, etc.;

WHEREAS books tend to project the views, perspectives and historical interpretations of the nominating racial group;

WHEREAS Racism in books is not just a problem of blatant portrayals of one race as inferior and the other as superior but also is a distorted interpretation of the historical roots of the present condition of oppression;

WHEREAS Racism in books distorts the social reality for children of both the dominant and oppressed groups;

**BE IT RESOLVED:**

THAT the Ministries of Education immediately withdraw textbooks portraying a negative image of Blacks e.g., in Québec and Ontario the textbook "La lecture sous toutes ses formes" which carries two racist stories – "Un sauvetage inattendu" and "Les yeux bleus".

THAT the Ministries of Education solicit and obtain input from ethnic minority groups to develop reading lists of textbooks by ethnic authors which correct the historical distortions of ethnic groups.

THAT Teacher Training Systems include specific multicultural education courses which should be mandatory.

THAT Evaluative Committees for didactic material in the schools be composed of representatives from ethnic minority groups who would screen new books destined for use in the Education System and who would also review and remove books already in use in the schools that carry negative images of ethnic minorities.

NOVEMBER 11th - 14th, 1981