

FINAL REPORT  
ON THE ASPIRATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS  
OF THE QUEBEC BLACK COMMUNITY  
WITH REGARD TO EDUCATION

*submitted by*

*The Black Community  
Work Group on Education*

*to the*

*Comité d'étude sur les Affaires  
Interconfessionnelles et Interculturelles  
du Conseil supérieur de l'éducation*

*Montreal, July 1978*

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## INTRODUCTION

### Our Concept of a multicultural society

The concept of multiculturalism conjures up the image of interaction among different ethnic groups, who share the same geographic region and a complex fabric of social institutions created to respond to the needs of these groups. A multicultural society reflects varied migration trends from different parts of the world: recent or long term migration, based on reasons as varied as the improvement of economic status to the search for political asylum. Inevitably, immigrants bring with them their total life experiences which represent their culture in the broadest sense of the term. It is the simultaneous and dynamic presence of these different "cultures" which gives birth to a multicultural society. However the different elements which make up this new society, arriving with their own distinct experiences, have each been socialized according to the norms of the society from which they originate. They face the problem of socialization and resocialization of their children within a new framework. It is at the school that the process of "sorting selection" for the future begins, accompanied by the usual labelling. As this labelling is often decisive for the future of the youth, it is imperative that school authorities attempt to adequately prepare all those who must participate in the development of useful and productive future citizens of the society and that they restrict the use of unproductive labels which hinder the positive growth and development of the young people entrusted to their care.

### The Mandate of CoAII

The double mandate of CoAII includes the cultural aspect of education which aims toward positive integration of the ethnic groups in the Quebec school system. As a result of this mandate, the Black Community Work Group was created in order to:

1. Inform the CoAII of the expectations and aspirations of the Black community of Quebec.
2. To keep the CoAII abreast of the major anxieties and concerns of the Black community of Quebec
3. To present conclusions and recommendations in the form of a report.

We feel that we could not inform the CoAII of the expectations of the Black community without exploring the history and development of this community in the province, so as to present their anxieties and concerns in a contextual format. Finally, we will situate the conclusions and recommendations in the reality that we will have described.



ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS	Kdg.		Grade I		Grade II		Grade III		Grade IV		Grade V		Grade VI		Sec. I		Total		Grand Total
	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	
Montreal West High	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	6	7
Ahuntsic	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	2	-	4	2	6
Algonquin	4	4	5	3	4	2	6	4	8	3	5	5	1	5	3	3	36	29	65
Bancroft	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	4
Bannantyne	2	-	1	1	4	2	4	4	3	-	1	-	4	1	3	-	22	8	30
Barclay	3	-	1	1	-	5	2	2	2	1	1	2	5	5	-	-	14	16	30
Bedford	2	7	10	3	3	9	4	10	8	5	9	7	7	10	-	-	43	51	94
Beechwood	1	-	-	1	-	-	2	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	2	7
Bronx Park	-	2	3	2	-	3	4	3	2	1	2	2	2	1	-	-	13	14	27
Cedarcrest	1	2	1	1	-	-	1	2	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	5	6	11
Central Park	-	-	5	2	1	2	1	1	2	5	2	1	4	3	-	-	15	14	29
Connaught	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	1	1	-	1	1	-	-	3	4	7
Coronation	16	13	16	18	16	14	23	21	20	17	15	11	14	17	-	-	120	111	231
Courtland Park	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1
Dalkeith	2	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	3	-	6	2	2	4	-	1	14	9	23
Devonshire	-	1	1	1	2	2	1	-	2	-	1	1	2	2	-	-	9	7	16
Dorval Gardens	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	2
Edward VII	-	1	1	1	-	2	1	-	-	-	4	2	1	3	-	-	7	9	16
Eliz. Ballantyne	2	-	-	1	2	-	1	1	2	3	-	1	-	3	-	-	7	9	16
Elmgrove	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	4	4
Guy Drummond	3	1	1	3	1	5	2	5	5	3	6	3	-	-	-	-	18	20	38
Hampstead	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	1	1	3	-	-	2	8	10
Herbert Purcell	-	1	2	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	-	-	-	-	5	6	11
Herbert Symonds	4	6	10	7	10	8	5	7	9	9	16	10	7	6	7	7	68	60	128
Iona Avenue	1	5	6	6	4	3	5	5	2	8	3	7	4	4	3	3	28	41	69
Keith	11	7	3	1	7	8	8	9	15	10	9	8	15	11	-	-	68	54	122
Lachine Rapids	1	-	1	1	1	1	2	1	6	5	2	3	3	9	-	-	16	20	36
Laurentide	5	2	5	4	2	6	3	3	6	4	3	6	2	2	-	-	26	27	53
Maisonneuve	1	-	3	-	1	-	1	-	3	2	1	2	2	2	2	-	14	6	20



ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS	Kdg.		Grade I		Grade II		Grade III		Grade IV		Grade V		Grade VI		Sec. I		Total		Grand Total
	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	
Maple Hill	1	-	-	2	1	1	1	1	2	-	-	1	-	1	-	2	5	8	13
Meadowbrook	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	3	2	5
Montreal East	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	6
Morison	4	-	3	3	5	3	3	3	4	-	2	1	2	3	-	-	23	13	36
Mountrose	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-	3	2	2	1	2	-	1	-	12	3	15
Nesbitt	2	-	1	1	-	2	2	2	2	2	-	-	2	2	1	1	10	10	20
Ogilvie	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	2	-	2	1	-	1	6	5	11
Parkdale	1	-	3	1	4	2	1	1	6	3	5	3	7	-	-	-	27	10	37
Peace Centennial	1	3	1	3	5	8	2	3	7	2	8	5	6	9	7	2	37	35	72
Riverview	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	4	5
Rosedale	2	2	6	2	-	1	1	1	3	1	-	2	-	1	-	2	12	12	24
Roslyn	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	4	3	7
Roxboro	-	-	-	2	-	-	3	-	1	2	-	1	1	1	-	-	5	6	11
Royal Arthur	11	8	8	12	10	12	18	12	13	13	6	13	21	26	11	15	98	111	209
Russell	-	1	2	1	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	3	2	9	5	14
Sinclair Laird	2	-	2	-	-	1	-	3	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	6	6	12
Stonecroft	-	-	1	-	1	2	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	3	7
Strathcona Academy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	9	9	11	10	21
Summerlea	2	-	1	-	2	1	-	-	-	1	1	1	2	-	-	-	8	3	11
Surrey Gardens	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
Van Horne	2	5	2	6	7	9	8	12	13	9	11	6	8	6	-	-	51	53	104
Wentworth	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	2
Westbrook	-	1	5	1	2	-	1	2	1	4	1	2	1	1	-	-	11	11	22
Westminster	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	3	5
Westmount Park	1	3	-	4	1	-	3	1	5	4	1	7	4	5	-	-	15	24	39
Westpark	1	-	1	-	2	-	3	-	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	9	2	11



ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS	Kdg.		Grade I		Grade II		Grade III		Grade IV		Grade V		Grade VI		Sec. I		Total		Grand Total
	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	
Willington	5	6	6	9	5	3	4	4	2	2	2	7	5	1	4	2	33	34	67
Woodland	-	1	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-	1	1	1	2	2	4	9	13
TOTAL ELEMENTARY	97	86	123	111	109	126	134	131	172	135	136	131	145	158	*61	*59	916	878	1794
TOTAL HIGH																	571	736	1307
GRAND TOTAL																	1487	1614	3101

\*The totals for Secondary I are included in the high school total

Lorne and Kensington elementary schools did not supply figures.

April 1977



ÉTUDIANTS HAITIENS INSCRITS DANS LES ÉCOLES DE LA C.E.C.M.

RELEVÉ DES CINQ RÉGIONS (\*)

NOTES	AGE																TOTAL	IMMIGRANTS		RETARD SCOLAIRE nombre d'élèves
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19+		reçus	non-reçus	
Pré-maternelle	22																22	21	1	-
Maternelle		139	17														156	152	4	12
Attente			11	1													12	11	1	1
1ère année			137	51	9	1		1			1						200	190	10	63
2e année			5	70	61	14	3	2									155	141	14	80
3e année				9	70	50	21	6	2								158	143	15	79
Soutient						1	5	7	4	2							19	18	1	18
4e année				2	39	56	51	13	7	2							170	157	13	73
5e année					1	6	49	42	23	5		1					127	114	13	71
6e année							7	31	41	24	3	1		1	1		109	88	21	71
Appoint										9	7						16	14	2	16
Sec. I							1	5	37	34	41	18	5				131	110	21	98
Sec. II									8	16	44	38	20	4	1		151	112	19	107
Sec. III										4	19	40	47	20	3	1	134	104	30	111
Sec. IV											1	15	22	32	26	12	108	83	28	92
Sec. V												6	8	40	41	37	132	104	28	118
Professionnel court suppl.																4	4	4	-	4
TOTAL	22	139	165	133	180	128	137	107	112	96	116	119	102	97	72	54	1784	1566	218	1013

(\*) Nous n'avons pas jugé nécessaire d'annexer à ce travail les tableaux dressés par la C.E.C.M. pour chacune de ces cinq régions, le tableau que nous reproduisons ici, constituant un relevé global.

N.B. En Haïti, la durée du cours primaire, aboutissant au Certificat d'études primaires est de 7 ans.  
 Au Québec, elle est de 6 ans.  
 En Haïti, la durée du cours secondaire, aboutissant au baccalauréat 1ère partie (rhéto) et au baccalauréat 2ième partie (philo) est de 7 ans.  
 Au Québec, elle est de 5 ans, plus deux années d'études collégiales.



## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### The Arrival of people of African origin

Thornhill (1977) summarizes the history of Canadians of African descent as follows: Black people did not arrive in Canada only yesterday. The first Black person to set foot on Canadian soil was Mathieu Da Costa, linguist and interpreter, who was part of the Poutrincourt-Champlain expedition. He went to Nova Scotia and served as an interpreter for Champlain, since he knew the language of the Mic Mac Indians. This was obviously not his first visit to the New World. Of good education, baptised in the Christian faith, he became a member of the first Canadian social club "The Order of Good Cheer". The Kirk brothers, on their part, brought a Black slave from Madagascar with them to Quebec. He was later sold to a well-placed man, Olivier Tardif, who, in his turn, made a gift of him to the Couillard family. This slave, as well as a young Indian, were among the first students of the Jesuit College founded by Father LeJeune. He took the name of Olivier LeJeune (1629-54) at his baptism. This "domestic servant" died at the age of 25 and it is not known whether he was a slave or free man. On May 1, 1689, Louis XIV gave New France permission to engage in the slave trade, which continued until its abolition by the Imperial Parliament in 1834. On the night of April 11, 1734, Marie-Joseph-Angélique, servant to the widow of the rich merchant Defrancheville, launched a statement against slavery. She set fire to the residence of her mistress located at the time on St. Paul St. in "Old Montreal". Among the 40 buildings destroyed were the Hotel-Dieu, a convent and a church. She was later burned at the stake for her act of defiance. Some eminent persons of the time were also slave-owners: James McGill, Marguerite Bourgeois, three Catholic Bishops of New France, the Baron of Longueuil, the Reverend James Lyon, first Minister of the Presbyterian sect in Nova Scotia, and the Reverend David Delisle, Episcopal rector of Montreal (who purchased a slave in 1781 for the sum of 20 pounds). There is also proof that people of African descent participated in the development of Canada as entrepreneurs, businessmen, guides, interpreters, explorers, domestics, cooks, etc.

If slaves and the children of slaves made up the majority of Quebec's first Black residents, there were also Black citizens who had never been deprived of their freedom. In 1788, around 42,000 Loyalists sought refuge in Canada. Twelve per cent of them were of African origin and the majority of them settled in the Maritimes, while the others colonized the areas now known as Quebec and Ontario. Another group who contributed to the growth of the Black population were the Maroons (escaped rebelling slaves). Six hundred of them were exiled from Jamaica to Halifax in 1796. But the majority of them left Canada in August 1800 for Sierra Leone.

As well, refugees of 1812 arrived in Canada, and approximately 2,000 settled in the Atlantic region. Elsewhere Underground Railroad(1)passengers came to add to the Black Canadian population. Most of them settled in Ontario

(1) UNDERGROUND RAILROAD: The secret network of roads, contact people etc. by which Black slaves escaped from the Southern U.S. and slavery to the Northern States and Canada.



and during the 1850's there were 75,000 Blacks in a total Ontario population of 953,000. Several hundred people of African origin made their lives in Victoria, British Columbia. The gold rush attracted large numbers of people, from the Caribbean, Central and South America and even from Africa. In 1838 the Black population of Canada was estimated at 100,000 people. In 1930, however, 40,000 of them had to leave for the United States, fleeing discrimination.

Meanwhile in the decades of 1880-90 and 1890-1900, immigrants coming from the United States settled around the urban centres of Montreal and Toronto, attracted by the work generated by the construction of the railway lines. Towards 1900, the government launched an appeal for European and American immigrants. However the Black Americans were wrong to think that this appeal was directed at them. They were quickly dissuaded from their plans. Moreover, in 1912 a Bill which would have effectively banned Black immigration had to be blocked. As a direct result, today 80% of the Black population of Canada is of Caribbean origin. Nevertheless it was not until after the second World War that immigration from the Caribbean reached an impressive level. For all the governments, from the government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier (in 1897) to that of Louis St-Laurent (in 1957) erected enough barriers to limit the number of non-White immigrants to Canada.

During the decade of 1950, a new programme was launched - designed to bring domestics to work in the wealthy homes of Canada. The governmental authorities bonded these young women, imported from the Caribbean and specially trained them in order to do domestic work in the homes of well-to-do Canadian families. These women later brought their men - husbands, fiancés or suitors - in order to start a family. The only jobs available to these newcomers were as railway porters, factory workers or domestics.

An important barrage of publicity was conducted on the immigration question during the following years. At the same time, in 1962, the Conservative government developed new regulations. An increase in the number of immigrants to Canada was the result. The formerly rigid immigration laws were relaxed and encouraged the settlement of an ever greater number of immigrant workers. As we emphasized at the outset, it is in large part the children of these immigrants and their positive integration into the Quebec school system, which raises the major anxieties treated in the study. One can easily observe the real problems linked to the fact of their being born and raised in a minority situation, in which "significant others" do not represent or reflect a cross-section of socio-economic conditions or more precisely are symbols of victimization by social discrimination, their progress is constantly impeded by racism, oppression and absence of opportunity. This complex problem and the negative fall-out which accompanies it will be the object of a more detailed study in another section of the report.



## THE BLACK STUDENT POPULATION OF QUEBEC

### Introduction

Black people represent approximately 1% of the total population of Canada. Caribbean people, those persons who are descended from the inhabitants of the chain of islands in the Caribbean sea, bordered on the north by the Bahamas and on the south by Trinidad, make up approximately 70% of the Black population. The other 30% is made up of Black people of Canadian origin, Americans, Africans and South Americans.

The examination of the differences between Canadian Blacks and Caribbean people living in Canada must consider the physical environment in which each group has spent their formative years, and the attitudes of each society toward its members. This contextual approach will permit us later to evaluate the real or imaginary influence of the environment on the fundamental attitudes of individuals - particularly in the area of self-concept - on educational and occupational aspirations, as well as on their performance in the Quebec school system. We have pointed out that Black Canadians on the one hand, and other peoples of African descent dispersed by slavery on the other hand, although generally considered homogeneous in their "Blackness", are in fact different with regard to their respective realities and philosophies of life. This requires explanation. Here is an example that will help us understand the trauma that affects Caribbean people transplanted to Canada. The evaluation of an adult of Caribbean origin of his situation in Canada 20 years after the transplant follows:

*"Within that period, I have been alternately amazed and confounded; elated and dismayed; enlightened, confused, and yet never really changed."*

Many factors combine to weave the complex web of adaptation problems for Caribbean people. They include among other things:

- a) models of socialization - particularly different in criteria for the respect and good manners; timidity and reserve considered good behaviour in the Caribbean may be passed over as shyness or lack of intelligence in Canada;
- b) recreational activities - variations in the form of music and dance;
- c) food - variation in type and preparation of food;
- d) urbanisation - the passage from a generally rural environment in the Caribbean to an impersonal, noisy urban environment accentuates the alienation of new arrivals;



- e) climate - accentuates the problem because, in addition to being new, it molds the way of life so differently.
- f) the passage from majority to minority status;
- g) often the change of socio-economic status.

The difficulties in adjustment are unknown to the Black Canadian or at least felt to a lesser degree. But his differing experience is not less traumatic in other respects. Robin Winks (1971) has already laconically noted this in the following citation:

*"The Negro Canadian thought he had no national heritage to fall back on for self-identification. Unknown, unobserved, unwanted, the Negro in Canada seemed content to wait for other times and other men to do him justice. Paradoxically, until he did that which white ethnic groups had always expected of him --- embrace his Negritude --- he would remain to most Canadians an invisible man."*

If Caribbean and Canadian Blacks have a common origin, they have each had shaped their respective philosophies differently. At the end of 40 years of forced separation, the products of this migration find themselves with dissimilar attitudes even though the similarities between the two groups are on the whole greater than the differences. The distinction that we are drawing is entirely guided by technical motives for analyses which we hope to detail and explain in order to arrive at a precise, unambiguous diagnosis. We feel that this distinction is explained in large part by the fact that one group has developed in a society in which Blacks are the majority (the Caribbean Blacks) while the other has always been a minority within a white majority (the Canadian Blacks).

The role of an individual in a given society, his attitudes and his psychological stability depend to a large extent on the relationship that exists between his ethnic group and the society. The Caribbean people in their society are surrounded by Black professionals who serve as significant role models and represent symbols of success, capable of inspiring the young. The Caribbean students feel that the school is their school just as the country is theirs. As well, they cannot prevent themselves from identifying with their place of birth, even after emigration, joining national associations in Canada and refusing to allow themselves to be swept along by the wave of acculturation and assimilation...

The different roads travelled by these two groups explain the difference in their adaptation to the Quebec school system. Moreover it points to different solutions to the problems of Black students.



### The Black Child of Old Line Canadian Families and the Schools

On an article in the book Must School Fail? edited by Niall Burne and Jack Quarter, Jules Olivier reveals many of the problems such a child faces in the school system. His point of view easily applies to the present situation in Quebec. He states, in essence, that the average Black child could no longer listen to the numerous, incessant voices stating loudly and softly that Blacks are intellectually, emotionally, physically and morally inferior without concluding after a certain length of time that maybe "Black is bad". Moreover, it would seem difficult for the Black man to escape the conclusion that possibly he is of an evil nature inasmuch as the social order from top to bottom seems rigged against him. How can he ever preserve a true self-image? The breakdown of the Black personality under the pressure of stereotyping is certainly not inevitable but unfortunately occurs more often than not.

On the other hand, the school system offers no program capable of counterbalancing such effects.

The perspective of limited available social and economic opportunities and the fact that he cannot find himself in the system permits the growth of a profound sense of alienation. It is not surprising to find the concept of "image transfer" used as a mechanism of self-defense in reaction.

Image transfer is a mechanism whereby the individual raises his self-concept by modelling himself on another person.

The use of image transfer (in moderation) can be useful and stimulating and frequently produces excellent results. This phenomenon plays an important role for all because the development of self-awareness appears to be directly related to the inculcation of values. The Black person received unreal, illusory and goading stimuli.

The young Black person gorges himself on Tarzan films while identifying with the character of the same name. He would not know how to be anything else, because the Blacks are depicted as stupid idiots. The young Black girl will, in her turn, vainly try to make herself into Cinderella, Snow White, or Sleeping Beauty. The absence of heroes and heroines with which to identify validly is accompanied by a lack of easily accessible professionals and para-professionals of his race. The role models presented to him basically transmit a negative image of himself. One completely stigmatizing example for the Black man is the missionary's Africa with the biased image of Blacks that is presented. The supposedly realistic descriptions of the living conditions of Black people outside of Canada gives a false view of the Black reality abroad and, still worse, this distortion is systematically devalued by North-American society. The narcissism necessary to the adolescent



(not to speak of the indispensable self-acceptance and self-esteem) takes a hard blow from all of this with dire consequences.

### The Black Immigrant Child and the Schools

Upon his arrival the immigrant child is placed in the public school closest to his home. Everyone recognizes that a new school creates a climate of tension in most individuals. This problem is amplified when the physical exterior is different ... therefore visible! You present a contrast - whether you want to or not. This becomes particularly depressing for the individual who is experiencing culture shock at the same time, caused by separation from his family, his relatives and friends in a school system which is different and specific to the English Protestant sector.

Moreover, this disoriented student is normally placed on the basis of age, which is certainly not without advantages inasmuch as the child must theoretically grow with his age peers. The main disadvantage is that the system from which he comes uses criteria of academic competence for placement purposes. Therefore a fifteen year old can be found at the elementary level while a twelve year old may be in the third year of secondary school. Imagine our fifteen year old teenager placed at his age level, well beyond his academic capacity. His problem of adaptation is doubled with an insurmountable task of catching up - and he will soon present behaviour problems without anyone knowing why. On his part, our twelve year old is no more satisfied. No longer challenged with new work, he loses his taste for work. He may then play truant, loitering in shopping centres and around municipal pools.

What can be said about aptitude and intelligence testing, except that they present even more problems than classification by age. The administration of such tests - which were developed for a particular population - to an immigrant from a different culture who is still in cultural shock cannot furnish any results capable of approaching a realistic evaluation. The supposed objectivity of these tests has been seriously attacked recently with the tests being accused of underrating children of less privileged classes within Quebec. What can be expected when they are used for immigrant children from a different cultural reality? Caribbean parents often have the tendency to rely on the school for the education of their children, naively expecting everything to work out smoothly (D'Oyley).

An important but frequently neglected problem is the language factor, which is described in the research of Joti Bhatnagar (1969). In a comparative study of English written by Jamaican and English children, Craig (1963) notes superior results in the English sample. Here is a case of the mother tongue being similar to the "host" (target) language but spoken differently. Bhatnagar concludes that it is generally much more difficult to rectify the deficiencies of children who speak a "dialectical" English, than to prepare programs for those who have total or partial deficiency, because of their confidence in the knowledge of the language that has already been acquired.



Finally how can the numerous problems caused by the separation of families, particularly of mother and children, be silently overlooked. Very often she will have emigrated first and prepared the home for the reunification of the family.

Beserve (1976) and Da Costa (1976) are of the opinion that the reunifications often do not meet expectations. Da Costa emphasizes this importance of preparing parents to face the changes that usually take place in the children following the original separation.

Some of the problems to which we have alluded in this section will be examined more carefully in the following section on the problems of adaptation of new immigrants.



## ADAPTATION PROBLEMS OF NEW IMMIGRANTS

### Introduction

The particular objective of this section is to introduce problems of adaptation experienced by Caribbean children. It is to be hoped that this type of information will facilitate the job of teachers and administrators, involved in the search of solutions to the particular situation of these children in Quebec.

### Caribbean society and the colour-based class system

The Caribbean societies have been traditionally divided into three classes, essentially reflecting a hierarchy based on colour. At the top we find a group composed mainly of Whites. Blacks have been found about exclusively in the middle and at the bottom of the ladder (Smith 1961; Henriques 1961, 1968; Nettledord 1970). An infinitesimal proportion of this population were upper class and adopted as their own the manners and customs of the European metropolitan middle classes. The rest of the population - the majority, developed a popular culture characterized by wide borrowing from the West African societies. (Smith 1965).

It must be noted that economic development, political maturity and "social responsibility", by a series of measures and social involvement, brought about a sort of "revolution", so that Blacks are now in the forefront of the Caribbean political scene. The rapid upheavals in the social and political realms contributed to some modification of the notion of colour class, which lost importance in favour of education and wealth. From this point skin colour became a negligible factor in interpersonal relations.

### Family relations

Family life in the Caribbean working class is characterized by a strong attachment to family ties, transcending the immediate family to include grandparents, father, mother, sons, sons-in-law, adopted children, uncles, aunts, etc. (Smith 1956, Clarke 1957). All children, adopted or not, are treated equally. It is to be noted that the situation is different for the wealthy classes of society.

### Educational practices

The masses place great importance on politeness in the education of the child. Physical punishment is widespread and children are submitted to it from an early age (Clarke 1957). Very early they are required to help in a variety of domestic tasks. The division of labour is according to sex, with the cooking and washing done by the girls, while the boys perform tasks such as getting water and caring for animals. Parents believe that children must please them and earn their affection by good behaviour. They must feel guilty



when they do not behave according to the rules, apologize sincerely and ask for forgiveness for mistakes that they make (Fitz Herbert 1968).

### Education in the Caribbean

The system of education in the Caribbean is based on that of the European metropolitan centres. For example, Figueroa (1971) remarks that in the English West Indies, with the exception of some innovations, everything happens as it does in England. On the whole, course content tends to be based strongly on the humanities and social sciences. The schools are often mixed and the law requiring compulsory instruction is not applied.

The few resources available, particularly space, result in crowding in many sectors. Trained teachers are scarce and the number of students per class is high. Teaching is given generally in magistral fashion (which usually implies a lecture by the teacher followed by a question and answer period). The pupil is required to reproduce the answer correctly even if he doesn't understand anything at all. One can imagine that such methods give few occasions and little encouragement to the pupil to think for himself and to form his own opinions.

The pupil is under strict discipline with the threat of punishment if he does not follow orders or learn what is required. There is insistence on conformity and passive conformism. In many country schools physical punishment is used exclusively. Whether in the form of a threat or directly, physical punishment is recognized by parents and teachers as the only effective means of punishment (this opinion is being contested now).

### Linguistic problems

Jones (1966) points out that the overlapping of elements of patois/dialects and everyday or standard English constitutes the greatest single problem which Caribbean students face in the learning of the English language. This obstacle is aggravated by the fact that with grammar lessons having been given in the language of Shakespeare, the children have never been shown the difference between the two forms of the same language (Fitz Herbert 1968). The result is a confused situation in which students converse with their teachers in the language accepted in their milieu, while they are punished when they use the same language in their written work.

Jones (1966) notes as well that the problem is complicated by the addition of "complex sociological factors". In actual fact, patois is considered to be a form of expression void of quality and associated with a lack of instruction and inferior social status. Fitz Herbert (1968) and Morrish (1971) point out that the children of workers use dialectical English almost exclusively in everyday life and do not speak standard English unless under duress, as in the classroom or in addressing individuals of a higher social class than their own.



We have just dealt with the problem of the English West Indies. We know that the problem is more or less the same in the French West Indies. Thus immigrants of Haitian origin are generally considered francophone when, in many cases, they do not even speak French, and, in any case, the mother tongue of Haitians is Creole.

### Conclusion

In concluding this section, it is important to note that most parents, especially working class parents, see education as a means of climbing the social ladder and thereby gaining a better life. They have great "academic" aspirations for their children. A study by Wills (1978) on students participating in the special "Da Costa Hall" summer programme (summer 1977) attests to this. Here are the results:

According to the study of Dorothy Wills (1), most of the students in the sample (there were 325 students in the Da Costa Hall school) planned to complete secondary school (86.5%). The rest (13.6%) did not know. No significant difference was found between the answers of Black students of Canadian and West Indian origin. Those who wanted to quit cited three reasons: a) to seek a job; b) the desire for independence and self-sufficiency; c) poor grades. 68.9% were definitely committed to full-time post-secondary studies.

Those who were quitting would change their minds under two conditions: a) the insistence of their parents, b) to advance in their work. The majority of post-secondary students expected their parents to contribute at least one quarter of the expenses. Three quarters of them expected to make ends meet with summer jobs while the majority planned to apply for bursaries and loans.

When questioned about their parents' desire to see them complete high school, 87.7% answered in the affirmative while 9.1% could not say (no significant difference between students of Canadian and West Indian origin).

More than half (67.1%) of those who planned advanced studies said that their parents wished to see them enrolled full-time. Here, there was no significant difference between the groups. In the same vein, according to 61.9%, the parents would choose Cegep, 21.4%, university, and 4.8% technical school.

The aspirations of not only the Black child but of the parent are easily brought out in this study, supporting the hypotheses which we have already advanced concerning the educational system and parental expectations.

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(1) See below p. 24.



In an unpublished master's thesis, Ramsaran Ramharack (1976) proposed a three-point study.

1. To compare the academic results of Blacks of Canadian origin with those of English-speaking Caribbean immigrants.
2. To examine whether there is a relationship between self-concept and academic results .
3. To determine whether differences in self-concept exist and if they do exist to look at the possible relationship between these differences and academic results.

The immigrants obtained a higher score according to two measures of self-concept that were used and, contrary to expectations, the difference appeared significant in only one case.

The hypotheses of "similarities in I.Q." in the two groups proved well founded. In self-concept and academic achievement, test results in Reading and Mathematics did not go in the expected direction. In fact, in comparison to Black Canadian students, the immigrants were shown to be an average of one year behind in reading. The hypotheses had been that the immigrants, having a measurably higher self-concept would demonstrate higher academic performance. This was not proven. On the other hand, sexual differentiation had no influence on the results.

In conclusion, the studies of Ramharack (1976) and Wills (1978) allow us to see that the groups differ in culture, attitudes and self-concept which implies a variety of approaches to treat multiple problems which we will examine in our final recommendations.



## DA COSTA HALL: PIONEER PROGRAM IN EDUCATION OF BLACKS

Origin and development of the program

Many factors mitigated against the educational development of Black people in Canada: the social structure and the school system, negative attitudes towards Blacks, low family incomes, overcrowded homes and lack of job opportunities. All this has contributed to the building of poor self-concept, accompanied by limited educational aspirations and very low achievement levels for a great number of Black students in Canadian schools. The degree of alienation of these students, resulting from the fact that their parents are considered second-class citizens isolated from the rest of society, can well be imagined. It was necessary to find solutions that would restore dignity and pride to this segment of society.

Recent literature deals with studies undertaken on both the theoretical and practical level in the field of immigrant education in Toronto (D'oyley 1976). Parents, professionals, progressive groups, informed of the results of these studies, did not fail to pinpoint what they perceived as slothfulness and weakness in the quality of the School Board's response. They now feel that to undertake even more research would be the equivalent of a conspiracy to maintain these children in a state of alienation.

In Montreal, a concrete, although partial, solution to these types of problems, was set up in the anglophone sector.

Many Black students were dropping out of the public school system before graduating from High School. The prevailing assumption supported by a study by Bertley (1970) was that teachers and administrators were clearly communicating to conscientious students, that they should not even aspire to University; they were simply being channelled into the Technical-Vocational courses. The Da Costa Hall summer program was therefore instituted to salvage drop-out, academic under-achievers, unmotivated and badly streamed students. As we have previously started to explain, the aim was to salvage these students from the morass of their despair, in order to prepare them where necessary to enter CEGEP, University and professional careers.

Through this process the organizers wanted to insure a controlled psychological environment for the students which would permit them to encourage the students to develop their potential and organize a tutorial system after the formal lectures, while providing the peoples with positive role models. This would enable them to feel more comfortable with and better about themselves and would cause them to have higher educational ambitions. It was hoped that this racially homogeneous grouping would reduce negative "vibrations facilitate peer relationships and positively influence their self-concept and all



that goes with it. One positive element was the introduction of a course on the history of the Black race. Not so long ago, in fact, Blacks were either left aside or presented as savages in school textbooks.

Set up in 1970, Da Costa Hall now exists as a regular school. Its present students do not necessarily have scholastic difficulties, but, rather, are sent there to fully develop their self-confidence, given that they are in a minority situation all year.

#### Planning and administration of the program

The program is planned and administered by the Quebec Board of Black Educators (QBBE). This Board, formed in 1970 to safeguard the interests of Anglophone Black students in Quebec, has proportional representation from existing groups. This permits it to be well-informed of the needs and problems of the student population. The majority of its members are both teachers and parents. It is therefore an ideal situation to evaluate the integration of immigrants and the adjustment of non-immigrants in the schools.

Among other things, the Board has taken note of the absence of adequate reading material for, by, and about Blacks in the schools and of the necessity to place texts related to the daily activities, recreation and language of the group. The Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal (PSBGM) has taken these remarks into account and has made it a duty to place Black and Caribbean literature in the libraries of these schools with an important concentration of these students.

Among its accomplishments, the recruitment of a Black liaison officer by the PSBGM, must be emphasized. The term designates an officer who is given the responsibility of exposing the problems of Black students to the teachers, and of explaining to their parents the complexities of the Quebec school system, helping them to understand the importance of actively participating in the process of their children's course selection.

#### The Development of the Da Costa Hall Program

Last summer (1977) the program began on July 5 with 305 students, two administrators, 13 teachers and one secretary. It took place on the Lafontaine Campus of Dawson College on Sherbrooke Street. Funds came from the Quebec Ministry of Education.

Qualified Black teachers and administrators who work in the school system during the academic year are usually employed.

Gifted students are accepted as well as students who are behind in their studies.



The parents represent a cross-section, from blue collar to professional. The student population comes from various schools in the anglophone sector and is composed of immigrants and non-immigrants, directly proportional to their numbers in the community.

#### Courses and Course content

On the whole, the norms of the Ministry of Education are respected. As a tool to raise self-concept, a course has been added in Black history, linked with two experimental courses on the evolution of Black music and the sociology of the family. Students, who were previously not informed in these areas, were very satisfied with these courses.

#### A study of "self-concept" and educational aspirations of Black youth in the Costa Hall Programme, Summer 1977

The study by Wills, from which certain conclusions have already been mentioned above, consisted of research on the possible differences in self-concept between immigrant and non-immigrant students, and if these differences were shown to exist, a study of the relationship between them and the differences that might be found in the level of educational and professional aspirations.

The study proposed to first assemble all the data on the population registered on July 5, 1977. Nevertheless, only 75 of those who finished the course completed our questionnaires at the beginning and end of the program. Only their answers were included for purposes of evaluation of the results and the hypotheses. This process, according to Wills, had the advantage of a more representative sampling of the average student in the system, considering that it eliminated those, who, for one reason or another, would not complete the questionnaire.

A second advantage was the homogeneity thus obtained. Sixty-eight of the subjects were of Caribbean parentage. Moreover, the distribution of the final sample nearly approached the distribution of immigrant children and Canadian children of West Indian parentage.

Only thirty-eight in the group live with their father and mother. The rest are with one-parent families, adoptive parents, or more or less distant relatives. Thus many factors linked to the family were not taken into consideration. The study, however, brought out a point that seems worthy of mention: the mother's job. The children of mothers who held prestigious positions showed more self-confidence and had higher ambitions than the other children.



The students generally aim high in regards to education and, the more recent the immigration (2 years and less) the higher their aspirations. In addition, those who are not born in Canada have higher aspirations than the Blacks of old line Canadian origin, according to the Weidman scale. An important fact to note is that, using the Tennessee self-concept scale, it was possible to verify the hypothesis that Black students of Canadian origin would experience greatest transformation in self-concept. Nevertheless, it is enough to note that it was not due to the frequency of interaction, measured by the level of relationships among peers, students and teachers. On this subject, it was noted that the frequency of interaction was markedly less in our sample than in the schools normally attended by the students. From this fact, it was hypothesized that the important element in the interaction variable was quality rather than the quantity. This could easily form the basis for future research.

Broadly, results obtained, although not statistically significant at the 05 level, supported our beginning hypotheses in most cases.

Here is a summary of the hypotheses and results:



HYPOTHESES

1. The higher the self concept of pupils, the higher their level of educational and occupational aspirations.
2. Black students of Caribbean origin have a higher self-concept than those of Canadian origin; and recent immigrant students have a higher self-concept than those long-term immigrants students. Consequently, the level of education and professional aspirations would be as follows: recent immigrants > longer-term immigrants > Canadian origin.
3. The self-concept for the whole group is higher in T-2 than in T-1. (1) Moreover, within each group, the degree of elevation is positively related to the level of interaction among peers, between teachers and students and with course content.
4. An increase in educational ambitions is directly related to improved self-concept.
5. Even without considering self-concept, it can be said that recent immigrants have higher educational aspirations than long-term immigrants and those of Canadian origin.
6. Whether or not 'self-concept' is taken into account, the level of educational aspirations is higher for the whole group in T-2 than in T-1. Moreover within each group the level varies positively with the level of interaction with peers, between teachers and students and with course content.

TEST RESULTS

1. On the whole, they all had high ambitions. Nevertheless, it was possible to establish a positive relationship between self-concept and students' ambitions.
2. On the whole, hypothesis upheld.
3. The general spirit of this hypothesis was confirmed. It would be necessary to reformulate the first part as follows: The self-concept of the group is closer to the norm in T-2 than in T-1. As for the second part no relationship was found between self-concept and the three variables as expected. Nevertheless, it is apparent that the quality of interaction should be taken into consideration.
4. Hypothesis supported. Tests were for the most part significant. Still, it would have been better to reformulate it to say "the more self-concept approaches the norm, the higher are the aspirations..."
5. Hypothesis supported.
6. Hypothesis supported with same comments as in 3.

(1) T-1: first administration of test  
T-2: second administration of test



Another important finding was that the self-concept measure at the end of the program was positively correlated with significance at the .05 level, with the educational aims of the students. It would be important to fully pursue the analysis in this direction.

Compared to other variables such as age, sex, origin, socio-economic status, immigrant status appears to be the most important variable differentiating the three groups: recent immigrants, long-term immigrants, Blacks of Canadian origin. This carries important implications for the interpretation and generalization of research in the field of minority and immigrant education in Canada. Most studies focus their attention on ethnic origin. Following our study, it can well be asked whether the variable of immigration is not more important than the variable of ethnicity. The same goes for a certain level of "self-concept" in relation to minority status which is linked to the opportunity structure at the level of Canadian society as a whole.

In summary, although our study is only preliminary and exploratory, the results obtained are encouraging enough for us to recommend the investment of greater research efforts along the same lines as well as the use of varied qualitative and quantitative methods in the collection of data.

It is surely possible to foresee and suggest certain policy lines. Nevertheless, because of the limited scope of our work, we will not risk making specific recommendations at this point.

N.B. Information on the QBBE and the Da Costa Hall Program were obtained through the courtesy and cooperation of Mattison Hall, co-administrator of the 1977 summer program, of Eric Mansfield, exexutive secretary of the QBBE, and Ashton Lewis, president of the Board, had previously accorded permission to proceed with this study.



## PRINCIPAL CONCERNS

### Language and the immigrant child

Inasmuch as an immigrant child cannot begin to function in the school system if he does not speak the language of the milieu, and because communication problems are so evident, the researchers were interested in the linguistic difficulties of the newly arrived student. A study by the Toronto Board of Education (1965) revealed that 40% of its students spoke a language other than English (exclusively or alternately) in the home. On his part, Goldman (1973) classified the linguistic difficulties of immigrant students into three categories:

- a) Total absence of the language, affecting children who speak or write only the foreign language, and having about no knowledge of the new language before their arrival in the country. The younger the child, the greater are his chances of learning, especially if he is not confined within his own ethnic group.
- b) Partial knowledge of the language, affecting those children who speak the language of instruction more or less well but who generally converse in another language at home. The writing of the mother tongue is often, but not always, based on the Roman alphabet.
- c) Obstacles caused by a dialect: that is found where the mother tongue of the child is the same as the "new" language, but is spoken in a different dialect. This can sometimes involve a "sub-language", such as a type of English or French jargon which, mixed in its turn with Caribbean Creole, nearly becomes another language. One can wonder whether such "dialects" might be used as a medium of instruction in the schools...

On the whole, it would appear more difficult to effectively remedy the linguistic problems of the children in this last group (because they believe that they have mastered the "new language") than those that are related to total or partial deficiency of the the language.

The Gendron Commission (1972) uses the expression "new Canadian" to explain cultural and linguistic factors. This expression is used to designate Canadians of other than British or French origin. The Commission considers that each newly arriving person should be considered a "new Canadian" until he acquires Canadian citizenship. Once a citizen, he becomes simply a Canadian. An appropriate definition should consider, on the one hand, linguistic and cultural factors, and on the other, the effective length of residence.



Immigrant children would include therefore:

- a) those born abroad of immigrant parents or children, one of whose parents emigrated to Canada during the last 10 years;
- b) those whose mother tongue is other than standard English or French.

This definition would include a large majority of Black Caribbean children, including naturally, those of Haitian origin.

Language handicaps seem to be a major obstacle to scholastic achievement for the immigrant child. We have gone from a total absence of language learning programmes (the child having to acquire the host language only through immersion in the milieu) to standard ESL programs. It is now necessary to accentuate the organized development of these programs so that they can respond to the specific needs of different immigrant groups.

#### Group influence on the school-age child

In the normal development process, the child is progressively socialized by his parents, according to their socio-economic status in society. At first completely dependent upon his parents for the satisfaction of his basic needs, he progressively broadens his scope of interpersonal relations, extending to his brothers and sisters and ultimately his peers, who gradually acquire an importance of the first order. His peers are generally people of the same age, from the same milieu, molded by similar experiences, whose aspirations (social and educational) do not greatly differ.

The peer group influence begins at about age six and attains its peak in adolescence (between 17 and 18 years) before maturity. To be identified with a group is a normal phenomenon for each child, its influence being distinctly greater than that of the parents at a certain age. Parental values are therefore devalued in favor of the group's values (parents being considered "old fashioned" and not "with it").

The fundamental role played by peers in the emotional and psychological equilibrium of the child, makes identification with a peer group and, moreover, a positive peer group, indispensable. In effect, the child is literally subject to the influence of the peer group, whether this influence be positive or negative, unless there is an effective aid to help him oppose this irresistible pressure.

The Black child sometimes suffers from not being able to identify with a peer group due to the lack of human resources; he must therefore identify with other students with whom he has nothing more in common than attendance at the same courses. For this child, the peer group unfortunately becomes a negative experience. In this painful situation he sees his image brutally



rejected by those with whom he hopes to identify and who do not recognize him as one of "Them" (Cooley's reflecting mirror theory).

For other Black children, it is possible to identify with multiracial peer groups, with certain aspects being equal i.e. socio-economic status, age etc... Nevertheless, even in this case, it is necessary to see reflected a positive image of oneself. This is very difficult for a multiracial group in North American society because of the social confusion engendered by the pernicious ideas of racial superiority.

Consequently, the positive effects of beneficial peer group relations are not usually experienced by Black children, who must compensate for this inadequacy with strong parental influence, with positive relations, with stimulating role models, or with close sibling relationships.

The school system, by wilfully neglecting the positive role played by Blacks in the Founding and Building up of North America, has scarcely helped the Black child find his rightful place. As well, it has compromised the development of a positive relationship between this child and his peer group, a stage necessary for growing up.

#### The teacher-student relationship and its influence on academic success

As the individual grows, new relations develop between himself and others. These relationships, more or less psychologically and intellectually stimulating and charged with varying degrees of emotion, will not all last a long time. Nevertheless, each one adds its own particular colour to life.

In this respect, the teacher-student relationship is very important in spite of its limited duration (teachers are changed from year to year). The relationship draws its importance from the fact that it undeniably affects the student, even determining his motivation, and consequently his academic performance. In reality, this relationship should be primarily professional with little reciprocity. The role of the teacher should be to stimulate the student to think, to learn, and to assimilate not only the academic subject material, but values as well. Moreover, he should inspire him to work by instilling in him good habits as well as the desire to learn more. His own habits of punctuality, professional conscientiousness and grooming are as much signs that transmit messages (non-verbal but effective) to the student and encourage him to follow his example. At a certain age, the teacher constitutes the model to imitate. How many children literally idolize their teacher, hoping to be like him and planning to teach later on?



One consequence of this state of affairs is that the attitudes of the teacher, what he says and does, become Gospel Truth. In the same way that the parents cannot make mistakes for the child of a certain age, later it is the teacher that cannot be wrong. How many times has a child supported a statement with this peremptory phrase, the ultimate argument: "My teacher said so!" Q.E.D. It is just this which makes the attitudes and behaviour of teachers so important with young impressionable minds. If a teacher has racial, religious, sexist, political or ethnic "preferences" (and consequently reservations), the student will soon get the message, whether verbally transmitted or not. The result: this biased vision undermines the student's personality by giving him a sense of inferiority with the inevitable negative consequences for academic achievement, for educational and professional aspirations and for social behaviour.

Sometimes, when a teacher hopes for only mediocre results from a student, that student's performance will be affected. And when a teacher seems to have developed little hope in the future of a student, he will progressively lose all motivation.

A positive teacher-student relationship is part of the educational process, because there is a tendency to learn more from someone who appears to wish one well or, at least, seems neutral and impartial. People only do their best in a milieu where equality of opportunity prevails without intimidation, where they can reasonably hope to be evaluated on the basis of their true worth. If this is not the case, they feel underrated, they react in proportion to what is expected of them, without motivation and they do not push themselves towards a reward which they know to be illusory in a context of prejudice.

Studies by Spence (1976) and Wills (1978) on the Montreal school population show that students work better and think about continuing their studies, with a positive teacher-student relationship that transcends the simple presentation of course content, to include the field of extra-curricular activities, when there is a personal interest of the teacher in his students.

Sometimes students have academic difficulties due to emotional problems or learning problems. A beneficial student-teacher relationship could remedy this by referring these students to guidance counsellors, in the school or via school to community organizations. The needs of these young people would be met and their equilibrium re-established. Because of the fundamental importance of the teacher in the life of the child, all teachers should be sensitized to the particular needs of Black children.

In conclusion, if a teacher conveys a verbal or non-verbal message (via paralinguistic cues) indicating that he feels a child is incapable of academic success, without regard to his I.Q., this child will not know how to go beyond the limits that have thus been set for him to realize his real potential, unless another teacher gives him another opportunity. The question is not only an administrative one of choice of teachers, but it



also concerns the university, responsible for the professional training of future teachers. All the problems discussed in this section are everyday experiences in our community, and student teachers should be prepared for them.

### The self-concept of Black student and the possible implications for guidance counsellors

There are several definitions of self-concept, but in 1902 Cooley introduced the idea of "a reflecting mirror" (to which we previously referred) thus explaining the fact that an individual perceives himself as he is perceived by others. Consequently, if the social image of an individual is debased, that individual will learn to accept himself through the devalued perception. Self-image is learned by each person through personal experiences with others and with the reality of the outside world. This concept has a major influence on human behaviour.

Sclare stated in 1952 that racial discrimination is an element in character formation and that overcoming aggressive impulses poses a serious problem for many Black students. So many restrictions are placed on them that simple survival requires more sensitivity from them than from White men. The social environment unquestionably plays a fundamental role in the formation of attitudes, and the behaviour of the individual. Blacks are poorly placed in this regard because they seem to face a hostile and malevolent environment.

Nevertheless, although the research of the 50's and early 60's seemed to show a negative self-image among Black people, this tendency has gradually changed and, today, more and more appear to have a positive self-image.

Thus Spence (1976), in a study on Black students in Canadian high schools, concluded that most of these students had a positive self-image. The study revealed some interesting things, for example, that young Black girls demonstrated a better self-concept than the boys. This is significant because we live in a society dominated by males, and takes on more meaning when it is realized that Africa is also dominated by males.

If Black people must find means to effectively raise their self-concept, ethnic identity is indubitably an important element in this search. The struggle for identity among North American Blacks (and, from this point of view, all minorities in the world) is a manifestation of efforts to acquire a heightened self-concept. Counsellors and teachers should encourage such efforts, not only for the good of the Black student, but also to increase the efficiency of the school system. It therefore becomes doubly important for Black professionals to become "visible" in the community, thus overcoming the disadvantages of the minority status of Blacks in Canada.



Caribbean students, making up a sample in a study by Spence were shown to be generally in favour of counselling. One of them cited the same argument as Heine (1950), wondering if it was not applicable to Caribbean people (to help in their integration into the new milieu via the counselling services). Nevertheless, the counsellors were thus seen as sponsors and not as collaborators. And while they generally prefer the role of collaboration, their effectiveness might be greater if they accepted the role of sponsor as well. And why not consider the possibility of plural roles used more advantageously and alternately at the appropriate time.

With Canadian Blacks, the better their self-image, the less valuable were the counselling services for them. Literature and research results have show unequivocally that Black students do not feel at ease in the counselling model developed for White students. Moreover, expecting traditional counsellors to effectively help Black students would seem to be asking too much of them. Consequently, it becomes imperative to change the counselling programs presently offered so that counsellors are better prepared to offer their services to minority students, Blacks and others, or, so that Black and other minority counsellors be used to respond to these real but still unmet needs.



## THE EXPERIENCE OF BLACKS WITH THE SCHOOL COMMISSIONS

### Evaluation and Counselling of Haitian Immigrant Students in the Montreal Catholic School Commission (MCSC)

#### I The Ravary Report

In the francophone sector, the symptoms of poor scholastic adjustment have been felt even more strongly in recent years. Here also, attempts have been made to "get to the bottom of things". In 1976, Tardieu-Dehoux was already dealing with the problem (1). The report entitled "The situation of Haitian students in the MCSC schools", commonly known as the "Ravary Report" was presented by the Director of Research Services, Mr. Viateur Ravary, to the commissioners of the MCSC in May 1977. This report, which was intended to be descriptive, attempted to draft immediate solutions to the problems experienced by immigrants, especially Haitian students. It was perceived as the answer to all the problems of the "venus d'ailleurs" (those from abroad) which would permit continued and effective integration (assimilation understood) of young students in difficulty into the Quebec system.

At first glance, the report is to be commended for trying to go further than quick judgment and categorization of the problems raised. Mr. Ravary does note that the Haitian clientèle have distinctive characteristics other than the common denominator of being behind scholastically. He also attempts to get to the origins of the problem by considering the situation of education in Haiti. We deplore the fact that this hasty incomplete reference was tinged with condescending paternalism, but the essential fact is that an attempt was made to seek the source of the malaise, a logical step since one cannot pretend to cure an illness without a foregoing diagnosis.

Yet, the report is deceptive... It leaps immediately to recuperation measures without further investigation. We would rather probe and understand than patch. The Ravary report proposes a skillful, technical and pedagogically near perfect patch-up. We would like to believe in it. We could almost trust it providing we forget that human young are also social beings and that the young Haitian does not escape this rule.

We feel that the roots of the problem must be sought in the unfortunate adaptation of Haitian youth to Quebec society. And this inadaptation, due in large part to the young people's feeling of not belonging, has repercussions within the school. In our opinion it would have been more valuable to seek the causes of this non-identification and attempt to remedy them. To be at ease with oneself has always been the indispensable precondition to success in anything. The poor scholastic performance of the Haitian children cannot be attributed solely to differences between the Haitian and Quebec

(1) Charles Tardieu-Dehoux, L'évaluation et l'orientation des étudiants immigrants haïtiens à Montréal. Montréal: Université Concordia, 1977.



school systems. The approach pursued in the Ravary report isolates the individual and antiseptically treats this newly created fiction - the student detached from the child.

Certainly, the technique is important and we do not underestimate the importance of academic achievement. But it is merely the clumsy translation of a state of being (we are tempted to say ill-being). The school authorities and among others, the MCSC, have adopted an ostrich position for a long time. Will they now be content to further refine this policy by extracting the visible and superficial difficulties of the young immigrants (and resort once more to the model of "normal" learning) and by quickly shutting the cover of Pandora's box. As long as there is not courage enough to question opportunities available to Black Youth for positive valuation and identification and harmonious integration and as long as we are content to give surprising but paternalist verdicts on the "incidents" that they represent, the basic problems will persist.

But the Ravary report does have other merit which was not taken note of at first glance, which we appreciate. It will provoke healthier and more generalized discussion of these problems, basic to child and to the society, and will thus add to a better overall understanding. The office of the Haitian Christian Community of Montreal, conscious of the impact of the adaptation problem on the development of these youth, anxious to foster the total development of these youth, anxious to encourage the total development of this important sector of the Haitian community, constantly approached by parents and youth workers in private conversations and public meetings, after several contacts with the members of Jarry-Viau branch of the CSSSM, decided to gather more precise data on the subject.

## II The Survey of the Haitian Christian Community of Montreal on Haitian School Children in Montreal

Upon the suggestion of the CSSSM, the office of CCHM submitted a research project to the Local Initiatives Program (LIP) which was accepted for sponsorship by the Federal member of the Papineau riding (Montreal).

The office had planned to carry out a vast quantitative survey to be analyzed by computer, but due to the restrictive conditions imposed by L.I.P., they had to be content with a qualitative survey. This type of survey seemed to them to be better adapted to a milieu which is less familiar with the demands of modern technology and easily distracted by too rigid methods. The qualitative survey would allow the obtention of more detailed and subtle data, more apt to reveal the specific situation of the Haitian milieu.



Through undirected interviews with the principal intervenors in the lives of the Haitian school children in Montreal, an attempt was made to discern the daily life of these youth and to draw up an inventory of problems which they confront. The task was to arrive at an overall view of the situation of these students in order to develop a rationale for intervention in this field and to clear the ground for more effective action by the person who would eventually be responsible for the file.

For the interviews, the office of the CCHM contacted school principals, teachers, counsellors, social workers, and pastoral animators in several schools presently involved with the daily problems of these youth, without forgetting the Haitian parents and the students themselves.

For statistical information, officials of the MCSC were consulted because this is the Board with the largest number of Haitian students in Montreal. In effect, of a total of approximately 2,500 Haitian students, 1,561 attend MCSC schools.

The statistical analysis of the MCSC (see table in annex) elicited the following observations: in addition the students registered in regular courses, the tables include those registered in Adult Education. This involved two different realities: consequently these two categories were separated. By subtracting the adults from the 1,784 Haitians registered in the MCSC for the school year 1976-77, the figure of 1,561 was obtained - giving the following table:

Number of Haitian students in the MCSC	1,561	
Number of Haitian students academically behind	790	50%
Number of Haitian students academically behind by one year	459	29%
Number of Haitian students academically behind by more than one year	331	21%

The figures do not say much, nevertheless: besides the measurement of scholastic slowness and the geographic division, the essential factor is missing. For, in the Quebec school system, sector and level count. It is these two variables that would permit us to really situate the child and unfortunately the table does not mention them.

Those responsible for the survey used the Ravary report as well.

The interviews, covering 13 schools, were divided as follows:



People interviewed

1) <u>Position</u>	2) <u>Number</u>
MCSC External Relations Official	1
MCSC Regional Director for Region II	1
MCSC Official responsible for welcoming classes	2
School principals	8
Teachers	10
Counsellors	6
Social workers	9
Pastoral Animators	10
Parents	10
Students (boys and girls 7-18 years)	28
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	Total: 81

The survey was able to uncover four main sources of problems for the Haitian students:

- a. The differences between the Haitian and Quebec school systems.
- b. The classification process.
- c. The language question and welcoming classes.
- d. Culture shock.

It is unpleasant to hear a Quebec school principal say that *"the little Haitians are the children who integrate least easily at the primary level, and especially at the secondary level"*. Still, in all the interviews, school principals, teachers, social workers, functionaries of the MCSC all used the same language. One social worker even said:

*"Children belonging to other ethnic groups adapt much more easily to the Quebec school system than the young Haitians, whose adaptation is slower and more difficult."*

And a pastoral animator in another school revealed:

*"The Haitian group is slower, less dynamic than the other groups."*



If it was difficult to receive these observations with levity, it was necessary, rather than become alarmed, to understand the why and wherefore of this situation. From the interviews and reports, it came out that not all Haitian children had difficulty in school. In fact, children born in Quebec or children who arrived before school age or children who had attended school for only two or three years got along as well as their White classmates. But it was especially those who had studied four years or more in Haiti and particularly those who had begun secondary school who had difficulty integrating into the Quebec school system.

The problems encountered by these youth occur mainly at the level of adaptation and stem from in the four factors mentioned above.

#### A. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE HAITIAN AND QUEBEC SCHOOL SYSTEMS

During one interview, a social worker justly remarked:

*"To say that the adaptation of young immigrant students to the Quebec school system happens easily is going too far, because the adaptation of students to a different school system, in a different milieu, is always very difficult."*

If we compare the Haitian school system to the Quebec school system, we note that there are differences in more than one respect. Let us consider six (6) of these points of divergence:

1)	<u>HAITI</u>	<u>QUEBEC</u>
	<i>Behind in science and mathematics</i>	<i>Greatly advanced in science and mathematics</i>

A Haitian teacher at Paul Gérin-Lajoie school emphasized that the Haitian school system is quite behind in the teaching of science and mathematics while in Quebec great importance is accorded these subjects. In the majority of Haitian schools, modern mathematics is not taught, and in final grades, integral and differential calculus is not taught. In contrast to the situation in Quebec, biology is scarcely considered an important subject. Languages are taught on a grammatical and lexicological base, so much so that the student is never in a position to speak them. Moreover, great importance is attached to subjects such as Greek, Latin, History and general geography, while here these subjects are neglected.

Therefore, it is easy to understand the complaints of teachers and principals in the interviews about the deficiencies of the Haitian students in science and mathematics:

*"On certain subjects, they have difficulty in functioning: they fail in math and science"*

confirms the Guidance counsellor in Emile-Nelligan school.



Even the students are conscious of this fact. One of them says:

*"The math program here is very advanced, much more advanced than in Haiti".*

Another continues:

*"It is only now, thanks to laboratory experiments, that I am beginning to understand chemistry and physics."*

2) Haiti

*PASSIVE STUDENTS*

*Research done by the teacher*

*LECTURE COURSES*

*Important place to memorization of lessons*

Quebec

*ACTIVE STUDENTS*

*Research carried out by students*

*FEW LECTURE COURSES*

*Few lessons to memorize*

Another Haitian teacher explained that the student in Quebec has research to do and makes up a certain number of cards from notes of lecture courses, which occupy a minor place among the other courses where the student is primarily involved in practical work. As we have already emphasized in Haiti, and in the Caribbean in general, the student has no research to do and nearly all the courses are lectures. In Quebec little importance is given to memorization, because the student learns from his research and practical work, while in Haiti much more importance is placed on memorization.

Testimony of a Haitian student:

*"I did not like school in Haiti because I had too many lessons to learn by heart. I did not learn much because I was horrified by this way of doing things. Here, more emphasis is on understanding and that is better."*

In the same vein, another affirms:

*"In Haiti, you are made to learn all subjects by heart. It is cramming that is only good for exams. Here, on the contrary, you are not buried in notes."*

Even parents observe the following:

*"In Haiti, my daughter was always studying lessons. Here, on the contrary, she only does homework."*



Such a situation is far from reassuring to all Haitian parents, many of whom have remained attached to the system in their country. Among the students themselves, some fans of lessons and homework that were given in Haiti experience a sort of nostalgia:

*"The absence of lessons and lack of homework has made me somewhat uneasy."*

confesses one of them.

3) Haiti

*Mother tongue: Creole,  
different from the  
language of instruction:  
French*

*Emphasis placed on grammar  
and written language*

Quebec

*Mother tongue identical to  
the language of instruction*

*Emphasis placed on oral expression*

4) Haiti

*Marking system:  
average 5*

Quebec

*Different marking system*

Used to obtaining an average of 5, which is satisfactory in Haiti, the student tends to overrate himself when he is given a mark of 7. It follows that this student is liable to rest on his laurels and even to let things go.

5) Haiti

*Strict discipline.  
Severe teachers.*

Quebec

*Great permissiveness.  
Flexible teachers*

According to the principal of Jean-Jacques Ollier school:

*"If Haitian youth are in a class with a liberal teacher, they become very unruly. If, on the contrary, the teacher is strict, they are calmer."*

Another teacher remarked that the young Haitians needed to feel the presence of authority in order to behave better. He adds:

*"Each year I proceed this way and it has always worked. They react more quickly than even the Canadian students."*

The parents are also aware of their children's habit of obeying authority. Also some asked the principal of Jean-Jacques school to apply strict



discipline in the classroom, but discipline that does not exist in Canadian schools.

If it is easy to understand that from early childhood, it is necessary to teach the young good behaviour, not through fear of a higher authority, but simply because an orderly and disciplined climate is necessary to work and develop better, it is nevertheless difficult to conceive that a child or adolescent can create the atmosphere himself without being in a framework. The Haitian student, recently from an environment of strict discipline, finds himself disoriented by this great permissiveness and tends to abuse it.

6) Haiti

*A student can be found  
in any class at any age.  
Repeating system.  
Absence of "streams".*

Quebec

*The student must complete his  
primary and secondary studies  
between the ages of 6 and 17.  
For each class there is a  
corresponding age.  
Absence of repeating system,  
replaced by the "stream"  
system: enriched, regular and  
slow or remedial.*

The usual age of school entry in Haiti is around six years, although certain children, especially in the cities and privileged areas, can begin at the age of 4. Nevertheless, because of the at times lackadaisical keeping of records (e.g. birth) by state authorities, and other difficulties, it is not unusual for a child to begin classes towards the age of 9 or 10. Thus due to a late start, even a brilliant student may find himself in elementary school at age 16.

The Haitian system still allows repeating. A student can therefore repeat a class for having been sick or for not obtaining the required grades in the basic subjects; and the proportion of repeating students is large. In spite of elimination along the way, academic delays increase from primary to secondary. (1)

In the Quebec school system which sees that at a certain age a child is in a certain class, progress is assured by streaming:

The enriched stream deals with the "cream", grouping all the "good elements" and preparing them for university.

The regular stream groups together the "average elements".

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(1) Tables tracing the evolution of class sizes in Haiti, but not of the numbers academically behind may be found in Pour une réforme de l'éducation en Haiti, Joseph P. MOROSE, Fribourg (Suisse), 1970, as well as in Problèmes d'alphabétisation en Haiti, Paul DEJEAN, Paris, 1963) (photocopied report).



The Slow or Remedial stream is especially made up of those not retained by selection. They find themselves in "short vocational" classes and are restricted to learning some sort of trade or, more likely, elementary notions of cabinet-making, mechanics, electricity, etc.

In the MCSC the Slow or Remedial stream contains most of the children classified as being scholastically behind, and, therefore, many Haitian youth.

These differences that have been summarized between the Haitian and Quebec school systems would lead us to believe that, for the young Haitian, accustomed to a Haitian school and parachuted into the Quebec school, the shock must be especially painful. Would it not be correct to ask if the student might have adapted more easily if he had evolved under optimal conditions in Haiti?

In fact, in Haiti the school situation is not a secret. Foreign organizations are well aware of what happens in Haiti in this area as in many others (ex.: Ravary Report, MCSC).

#### B) CLASSIFICATION PROCESS

If it is undeniable that the Haitian school system is obsolete in relation to various systems in the Western countries and dangerously elitist, it must still be recognized that this system has produced elements of value that can be found almost all over the world in all disciplines. Even here in Quebec, according to certain responsible people at the college and university levels, the success rate of Haitian students (who did their secondary school in Haiti) is above average. The fact that the Haitian system is deficient is not a sufficient explanation for the nearly total failure of young Haitian students parachuted into the Quebec school system. Other factors must undoubtedly intervene in the explanation of this failure. Let us ask about the classification process of the MCSC, and as a corollary, about the level of motivation in each system.

It has been previously observed that many Haitian students are placed in slow and special classes, sometimes in spite of a brilliant performance in their studies in Haiti. This may be attributed to the fact that classification is according to the child's age and not his capacity. This problem has already been previously mentioned. In addition, the general bias against Black people's aptitudes which is "revealed" by intelligence tests, appears to us to be highly contestable. Moreover, it is taken for granted in the MCSC that the Haitian children speak French, whereas, in many cases, it would have been desirable for them to be referred to welcoming classes.

One is forced to observe that everything combines to place these Haitian students at an impasse, unless the school principals agree, in the interest



of the students, to rigorously apply the resolutions passed by the Executive Council of the MCSC at its regular meeting on May 10, 1977:

"... It is resolved to recommend to the Council of commissioners:

1. to ENCOURAGE the MCSC services and all its educational officers to be understanding and welcoming towards immigrant students;
2. to ACCEPT that, within regular norms, the administration of each elementary and secondary school apply the dispositions provided in the collective agreements and organize part-time recuperation classes according to the need;
3. to ASK the regions to organize week-end courses for Haitian and other immigrant students experiencing learning difficulties;
4. to ASK the regions to organize summer courses for immigrant students, and, if necessary, for other students who are behind academically in:
  - . French language
  - . Mathematics
  - . English (second language)
  - . History (Quebec institutions)
5. to ASK the Adult Education service to welcome those immigrants who are no longer of school age;
6. to ACCEPT that schools' special projects necessitating additional teaching, professional or technical personnel, are presented by the regions to meet special needs resulting from pedagogical deficiencies, be carried out to the extent that they are accepted by the M.E.Q." (1).

These resolutions, based on the CCHM report, reflect a certain broadness of vision. It is unfortunate, however, that too much latitude in the application of these resolutions was left to the school principals. It is also regrettable that no one thought of making some exceptions to the rule of classification by age with regard to the Haitian youth. The MCSC should have been able to bend these norms from the pedagogical and psychological points of view, so that, in certain cases, a 16 year old child could be in the same class as a 14 year old.

Apart from pedagogical delays and deficiencies in certain subjects, the most important criteria for placing a child in the *basic stream* is *verbal fluency*. This led to the treatment of the linguistic question and

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(1) M.E.Q.: Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec



welcoming classes in this study.

C. THE LINGUISTIC PROBLEM AND WELCOMING CLASSES

The mother tongue of the young Haitian is Creole; but paradoxically, the language of instruction in Haiti is French. Thus it happens that the young Haitian student learns to read and write in French but experiences great difficulty in expressing himself orally in this language or in formulating questions coherently. It must be admitted that outside of classrooms, the student in Haiti is rarely placed in the situation of speaking French, even at the university level. This is probably one of the most tragic and fatal errors of the Haitian authorities: to persist in considering French as the language of the country (1) while 95% of the population speaks only Creole. It is this phenomenon which Yves DEJEAN justly qualified as *francofolie* in his book: Dilemme en Haiti : français en péril (2) or (Haitian Dilemma - French in peril or French peril?):

*"Demesuar Delorme wrote at the end of the 19th Century with pride: "This country speaks French." This lie has been repeated and intensified with impunity since then. The impulse is "francofolie".*

*"Why say that Haitian people are French-speaking rather than Spanish-speaking or English-speaking? There are more Haitians that speak English (more than 200,000 in the Bahamas and the United States) and who speak Spanish (200,000 in Cuba and the Dominican Republic) than who speak French. I do not call speaking French: reading, writing or uttering a few French phrases.*

Unfortunately, many people think that because the Haitian children understand and pronounce a few rudimentary French phrases, they can therefore understand and speak well enough not to be entitled to the welcoming classes; most school principals, teachers, social workers and even, in confusion, the Haitian students themselves are conscious of the problem. To illustrate what we are saying here, these are the words of one student:

*"At the beginning I had great difficulty in expressing myself in French and also in understanding Québécois speech."*

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- (1) Even if French was not legislated as the official language of Haiti until the 1918 constitution. (See: Paul DEJEAN, op. cit., p. 45).
  - (2) Editions Connaissance d'Haiti, Inc. Collection "Aujourd'hui" (E), N.Y. 1975. See also the same author: Comment écrire le créole d'Haiti, doctoral thesis in linguistics (University of Bloomington, Indiana, U.S.A.), August 1977, esp. Chap. V.



Another student confides:

*"Sometimes, among Haitians, we speak Creole at school. It is much easier. But the principal's office notified my mother, who then forbade me (to speak it)."*

The Principal of Jean-Jacques Ollier School:

*"Some young Haitians speak French perfectly well, but most of the time they speak only Creole or a mixture of French and Creole. Fortunately we have one teacher who spent two years in Haiti. She serves as an interpreter between the Administration, the young Haitian and his parents."*

According to one teacher:

*"Most of the time, the Haitian students of the secondary school get along as well as not in French, especially in composition and comprehension, but not in oral expression. Certain do not even understand French and, last year, it was necessary to seek the services of a psychologist to administer a test to one of them."*

One social worker who seems to have grasped the question quite well has this reflection:

*"The Haitian children, considered francophone, do not attend welcoming classes. But we do know that many Haitian children do not speak French upon their arrival. Although the policy of the MCSC is strict at this level, we were still able to have some Haitian children admitted to the welcoming classes at the beginning of the year. They have not yet returned to Lambert-Closse school, which shows that they really needed them; and in spite of everything, at the MCSC, the belief that Haitian children speak French has not changed, therefore, they cannot be admitted to welcoming classes."*

Other examples of this type could be cited which prove that, generally, the young Haitian does not speak French or, at least, experiences great difficulty in speaking it, unless he comes from a bourgeois family where French is "de rigueur". This point did not escape a pastoral animator at Ecole Emile-Nelligan who:

*"noticed that there were two social groups within the school, two groups very distant from each other. I became aware of this", he says, "the day that an intercom message was broadcast in Creole. One small group showed its displeasure because the message was broadcast in a vernacular language."*



We have seen how difficult it is to remedy linguistic problems of children who must handle another language similar to the first language (3 deficiency categories).

Therefore, it would be necessary for the MCSC to envisage a system of welcoming classes for the Haitian students, but special welcoming classes. These students have already spent several years studying in French; they understand the language a little, but they do not speak it fluently. To automatically accept a young Haitian, purely and simply as franco-phone, may be flattering his vanity at first, but very quickly, his real deficiencies will handicap him. Placing him with others who have never studied French risks slowing him down considerably. The ideal would be to place him in a special welcoming class where the poverty of oral expression and deficiencies in certain subjects would be accounted for. Because even if the MCSC is in no way responsible for the fact that Haitians are Creole-speaking, it nevertheless has a moral obligation to correctly integrate them in the French school system by allowing them to enjoy the same privileges which they accord to other immigrant children who speak a language other than French.

In the light of these facts, it can be better understood how it is that the Haitian group could be considered the one that adapts least easily to the Quebec school system. They come from a country in which a deficient school system reflects the generalized bankruptcy of an entire political system. This is not the case for all the other immigrant groups.

The young Haitians transplanted to Quebec are still, unlike other immigrants, victims of a classification process and a linguistic arbitrariness which force them into slow and special classes, by removing any possibility of access to welcoming classes; and, we must admit, the chances of catching up are very low.

This already difficult situation is aggravated by a group of other problems which confront the uprooted immigrant and cause what is known as *culture shock*.

#### D. CULTURE SHOCK

Under the label of *culture shock* can be included all of the difficulties in adaptation that accompany arrival in a foreign country. Most of the time, it is a renunciation of many of the values and nearly all of the habits acquired at every level. For many people it is usually the loss of their cultural identity, in order to live like the others. This is surely the tragic side of immigration. Conscious people try to adopt the best of the host country and keep the best of their old way of life.



And how many adults can boast of having perfectly succeeded in such a complex blending. Therefore, how can we not understand the young immigrant school child, unable to proportion the two cultures for a harmonious adaptation.

At school, the young Haitian appears uprooted, still filled with homesickness. One of them confided during an interview:

*"I remember Champ-de-Mars, the sea, and especially my aunt. I would like to return because it's beautiful. I am a bit homesick".*

Most of the time the Haitian is taken as quarrelsome in school. He is constantly fighting with his classmates by whom he is not well-regarded. Nearly all of them confirm that fairly often the others have told them things like what follows:

*"The children call me anything that comes to their heads: fugitive from the planet of apes, chocolate! They pull my hair and hit me. In order to avoid being crushed I have to retaliate."*

Very often, these fights go beyond the framework of the school. The children complain to their parents, who react by complaining to the Administration about what they feel is a manifestation of racism. If certain principals refuse to see the racism when it is obvious, fortunately, others recognize it. Thus, a social worker related this fact:

*"At Emile Nelligan School, a child in the short vocational course had a class in carpentry. He complained to the Administration and wanted to change his option. After doing some research, the Administration discovered that the source of the problems of this child was the teacher. And it was necessary to change teacher for the child."*

This case of racism coming from a teacher is not unique. One student confirms that having been hit by a teacher, he complained to the Administration. Furious the teacher said:

*"I should not have dirtied my hands."*

Another student recounts:

*"I have a teacher that I do not like because if I do not understand and I ask for explanations, she answers that she cannot explain the same thing twice and it's up to me to listen. Funny thing, she only does that to me and I'm the only Black person in the class."*



In such circumstances, it should not be surprising that the young Haitians within a class and even within the school tend to group together to play and talk, sometimes have a hostile attitude towards the teachers. In addition to the difficulties due to the differences between the school systems, to the classification process and to culture shock (aggravated by the fact that they belong to what is called "visible immigration") there are for the Haitian students the rigors of a climate for which they were not made. One social worker told us:

*"Generally, when it gets very cold, the Haitian child is not dressed warmly enough or is overdressed, which leads the other children to make fun of him. To counteract this inconvenience, I sometimes contact the parents to teach them what to do. Apart from the problem of adaptation to the climate, the Haitian child is given certain responsibilities because both parents work. For example - cooking, looking after a younger brother, etc."*

On the human plane, the Haitian child comes from a country where he socialized only with people of his own race. Now he is plunged into a White society where, for the first time, he is conscious of being the exception. He realizes very quickly that the doors in this society are closed in many respects. He feels isolated, and is, in fact, to the extent that his immediate environment (classmates, teachers) rejects him.

This isolation also extends to the family situation. Often, the parents precede the child overseas; he remains separated from them during a period of up to ten years. When he sets foot on the foreign soil, they face him - strangers - who are nevertheless his biological parents. It is therefore very difficult to re-establish the previous relationship. Moreover, the absence of the extended family (uncles, aunts, cousins, etc.) disturbs the emotional equilibrium of the child, requiring him to be happy with the reduced North American family.

Finally, this child is deprived of vital space: in Haiti, he passed his spare time in all sorts of outdoor activities. When he returned home, it was to find a house with doors and windows open, while, here, he feels like a prisoner within the four walls of a completely closed apartment where he must avoid noisy activities. It brings to an end games in the open air; it brings to an end outside community life; it means the sudden appearance on his horizon of a little screen that he will adopt as an inseparable companion.

In brief, the survey carried out by the CCHM supports in nearly all respects the general observations made about the school situation of Blacks in Canada: problems of non-identification, culture shock, linguistic problems.



### The Experiences of Blacks with the School Boards PSBGM

The PSBGM, one of the largest Boards on the island of Montreal, has an important minority of anglophone Black students. Until 1969, there were many complaints about the treatment to which these students were subjected. A group of concerned parents and teachers established a group called the Quebec Board of Black Educators Inc. whose object was to find solutions to the situation.

Their first step was to obtain an interview with the Board's representatives, during which they exposed the following complaints of the community:

- a) Dissatisfaction with the more or less systematic placement of Black students into dead-end courses - i.e. technical or vocational, presumably because they could not go any further.
- b) The lack of Black teachers in schools with a large concentration of these students.
- c) The lack of Black administrators in the Board itself.
- d) The use within the classroom of texts portraying deprecating, even insulting literature about Blacks. (For more information, consult the detailed list of the appendix). These preliminary talks were the prelude to the establishment of a long relationship between the two groups.

At first, the Board required documented proof of all allegations. They were submitted an almost endless list of names of qualified Black teachers who were refused jobs. Cases of students placed in classes for retarded or emotionally disturbed children were presented. After an investigation, these cases were resolved to the satisfaction of everyone. Following labourious discussions and recommendations, the positions of "Black liaison officer" and "Greek liaison officer" were created. These two officials work for the amelioration of conditions in their respective communities (see the job description in the Annex). This act attests to the fact that different ethnic groups can experience similar problems, differing only in degree and intensity. At present, many other corrections have been made. Books dealing particularly with Black people can now be found in the libraries as well as others including stories in which the children can see themselves reflected. (We hope that this will continue.)

There were several training sessions in the schools led jointly by QBBE and certain people recommended by them. Placement is carried out more positively. There is a Black psychologist who serves as a role model for the Black children. Black children, still under the effects of culture shock are no longer subjected to testing. The Liaison Officer makes himself available to handle the problems of the children with the school, parents and teachers.



A certain number of Black administrators were appointed, two vice-principals and three school principals. To the extent that things are progressing, the QBBE maintains vigilance to avoid having the rights of these children eroded and to ensure that positive recommendations be made to confront these problems and to eradicate them when they appear.

In 1970, a parity committee was established, made up of members of the PSBGM and the QBBE; it continues to meet to discuss problems of the Black community.

Briefly, we have exposed here the relationship between the PSBGM and the Black community. Structures to surmount the difficulties encountered by Black people in the system were established. Solutions were found in an atmosphere of respect and understanding. Frustrations gave way to tolerance while honest attempts were made to respond to grievances. We are led to believe in the possibility of not having to negotiate in like manner with each school board of the province. To this effect, we would suggest that global solutions be envisaged at the level of the Ministry of Education so that these children of Quebec can all learn in a climate of respect and dignity

#### Jérôme-LeRoyer School Commission

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry School of the Jérôme LeRoyer School Commission has a fairly large number of Haitian students. This relatively recent situation, which is the same in certain schools of the MCSC, is a pre-occupation of the school authorities as it is accompanied by unrest.

From the beginning of the 1976-77 school year the Haitian youth quickly faced a variety of problems. From the administration's point of view it would probably be more accurate to say that they cause three categories of problems:

- 1) With the teachers: In addition to scholastic difficulties, discipline problems arose: the Haitian students amused themselves by making fun of the teachers in Creole, refused to comply with usual requirements (homework and lessons) and inexorably became problem cases. Confronted with closed, hostile expressions, quick to hide behind outrageous banners of racism, many of their teachers seemed to be totally helpless.
- 2) With the building caretakers: To gain respect for themselves, the Haitian youth literally terrorized the caretakers, going so far as to hit one them.



- 3) Among themselves: To assure perfect group cohesion, leaders suddenly appeared who maintained their position through daily increasing intimidation. Those who left the group were violently repressed, sometimes in provoked pitched battles.

In short the Haitian school population was disrupting. The school authorities were concerned about these new, different, closed students, but did not succeed in reaching them, either at school or by meetings with phantom parents (too busy working or doubting the worth of fruitless meetings with the teachers).

The fact was that these noisy, awkward manifestations were only the visible consequences of the painful inadaptation of the Haitian adolescents. Transplanted onto Canadian soil, drowned in a White majority whom they knew to be hostile (traumatizing incidents experienced by them or told them by their parents and others - stories about immigration, employers, etc.). these uprooted, surprised youth, erected a Black-White barrier for their own protection. The White society in which they found themselves could hardly seem stimulating to them, especially when learning and pedagogical difficulties seemed to systematically devalue them. To escape what appeared to be a negation of their values, the youth instinctively oriented themselves towards a highly controlled organization which gave them security vis à vis the others.

But this refuge turned out to be uncomfortable, not only because of the constant, effective marginalization it engendered, but also because of the internal functioning which faithfully and painfully reproduced the dictatorial structures familiar to Haitian adolescents. This group, which could have been profitable, consecrated the leadership to a few insecure elements who based their domination on bribery and intimidation. Moreover, the marginalization of the group facilitated the perpetuation of myths. Constant unreasoned fear of any symbol of authority (school, administration in their case), regulatory organizations of established structures, immigration officials, police, always further shortened the dead-end. Haitian values themselves were unfortunately distorted, conveying sordid and frightening stories.

Two words can summarize the state of mind of these youth, two words which served as the name of one of the group's subdivisions: "Ghetto Gang".

Be that as it may, at the end of the school year 1976-77, the school authorities appealed specifically to one Haitian teacher and, generally, to all Haitian teachers in the school. In addition, two White teachers spontaneously offered to do their part in the work which had begun. The Remedial contribution of the school was realized in one hour of time devoted to "recuperation" work with the Haitian students by the teacher responsible



(we'll call him P.) and by the effective support of the two White teachers. Needless to say, this hour was insufficient. In any case, how could a human problem as vast as an entire race be circumscribed within the regular school hours. But the need was there. And this generously allocated hour was the indispensable pretext...

This "descent into Hell", as this experience was supposed to be, did not run completely smoothly. It was a question of finding an opening which would appeal to the Haitian group in order to realize the four objectives P. had fixed for himself:

- 1) to break down the myths and suspiciousness of the group;
- 2) to develop a welcoming and confident attitude;
- 3) to inform, open a window on the world;
- 4) to give recognition to a culture with which the young feel an overwhelming need to identify.

Frequent, open meetings allowed P. to opt for most immediate means to give confidence back to the youth. They loved to dance, doubtlessly because this allowed them to channel their energy and show off their talents at the same time (real talents for most of them).

Before opting for this activity, P. experienced a certain hesitancy: would he not fall into the social trap of a destructive conformity to stereotypes? It is striking how much White society generally confines Black adolescents to a gesticulating and squealing category. Did the choice of dancing not signal the death of all attempts of amelioration? This hesitancy was quickly rejected. In the name of all these children who asked for help, was it again necessary to let it be stopped by a Western pre-conception (probably grown out of self-defensive reflex of their own values) which devalues without real justification? Consequently, three dance groups were set up: the Ghetto Gang (inevitably reminiscent) and the "Noir Pâle" (pale Black) (who had accepted a White in the group) which were modern dance groups and the "Nan Ginin", a Haitian folkloric group. Through this framework of extra-curricula activities, the youth were brought into an awareness of themselves, their enormous potential and their cultural values. They wanted to express this transformation, or rather, this new and marvellous awareness. The Haitian milieu was really having fun. And the evening of the show (which they had requested feared and in which they were persuaded to believe) they were able to renew their friendship with the world. That evening a great thrill went through the auditorium...



But the activity itself was only a means, a pretext, which continues elsewhere and was effective. As well, the youth went to dance for sick children in Rivière-des-Prairies Hospital, spontaneously. The social integration of these children continues. Showing more and more curiosity about Haitian culture, some joined cultural centres outside the school. All or nearly all today feel concerned about the collective We. An effective identification has been made and social integration has begun. It would be risky to predict that they will not meet other impediments. But, at least, these youth have a positive self-image. Should we attribute this entirely to their experience this year? It is difficult to judge the effective impact of the experience on the youth and the inevitable maturation which took place in the meantime. With the help of age and corresponding maturation, would they not have adapted to their milieu anyway? No one knows. Whatever the case, this new awareness had a decidedly favourable effect on their academic results. Unfortunately no statistical study has been made for the simple reason that the experiment attempted was not for research ends, but for motives of survival. Nevertheless, a notable improvement was felt by the principal of the school in the area of general behaviour of the Haitian youth, to such an extent that a renewal of the experiment is being considered.

This experience was therefore positive. But it is one! With 100 Haitian students, out of 2,000 registered in Montreal and vicinity, this is quite a small number. The problem remains fundamental. But if it is primarily social at the level of the subjects affected, it remains economic at the level of the authorities. One can become indignant about the disparity between the availability of resources which the school wishes to accord, the available volunteer potential (monopolized by other essential needs - hunger, unemployment) and the total amount necessary to satisfy the needs of our youth. What should we expect from the future if the given problem remains constant? Will youth have to demonstrate as noisily as at Saint-Exupéry, at the risk of losing everything, in order to have their expectations answered?



## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Introduction

Education is an institution extremely dependent upon society. The attitudes, perception and values disseminated have a decisive influence on the educational field. It is very important that students from "visible ethnic minorities" receive adequate support from the social environment in order to be able to develop their talents and abilities and to gain the motivation necessary for success. Consequently, it is incumbent upon us to work actively to influence the thinking of the large community, to counteract existing prejudices. This is valid for Black people as well as for other "visible minorities" who traditionally have had to fight hard to make their way through the bustle of Quebec urban society. We are conscious of the fact that our demands for flexibility and innovation in existing institutions are being made in the context of inflation where austerity is being emphasized. Nevertheless, the larger society should consider that the costs of programs of institutional adjustment are short term, principally because there is a tendency to slow down the arrival of new members to the society. It will be necessary to emphasize the benefits the majority receives from the presence of minorities, in certain intergroup exchange projects. Consequently, in search of the greater good of all, we can call to the attention of the Ministry of Education the following recommendations, which are to be seen as a stage useful to the ironing out of the problems raised.

We recommend the creation of an Office of Ethnic Services within the Ministry of Education, administered by a coordinator of Ethnic Services. The purpose of the recommendation is not to introduce a new course or a new program, rather, it aims at a new approach which would seek to understand the ethnicity and culture of all members of Quebec society and, more specifically, to encourage cultural exchanges between the different ethnic groups. (1) These exchanges are essential and prerequisite to any significant change, because real understanding is necessary for those whose influence, authority and power come into play to bring about the required changes or to effectively remedy the existing situation. The creation of this Office of Ethnic Services would therefore lead to a study of cultural groups, their origin, their characteristics, etc... The positive utilisation of individual and group differences will probably bring about a multiracial approach in education, and a commitment to equality and fraternity essential to social justice which is implicit in democracy. This type of innovation will probably motivate our efforts for correction and compensation of the situation of those whose needs are a priority. And it will certainly lead to

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(1) Persons belonging to ethnic minorities have the right to maintain and to advance their own cultural life with other members of their group. Article 43, La Charte des droits et libertés de la personne du Québec, Loi 50, Québec, June 1975.



- 1) To promote the representativity of ethnic groups at the level of school boards, administrators, professionals, teachers and support personnel.
- 2) To include in professional training programs a course in multi-ethnic and multicultural pedagogy which counteracts the negative effects of ethnocentricity, on the one hand, and, on the other, accredited courses in "Black Studies" (the Ministry of Education shall ask for the collaboration of the Black community).
- 3) Systematic elimination of books, texts, and of audio-visual material which portray racist values (direct or indirect) from the libraries and schools.
- 4) Precise directives from the Ministry of Education to assure the introduction (in cooperation with the Black community) to school private, municipal and government libraries, of books written by and about Black scholars and writers, in order to help readers understand that, contrary to the history traditionally taught, the Black race has made a contribution to human progress.
- 5) To take steps so that current attempts to put the history of Quebec into a proper perspective with respect to the debased image of the Native Peoples, continue, and also deal with the case of Black people in the history of Quebec.
- 6) The employment of welcoming classes in greater conformity with the particular needs of each milieu.

As can be observed, the task is difficult. But, at the end of this shines the hope of a more integrated and therefore harmonious society. It is pleasing to think of a better way of life, renewed and satisfactory for all. Quebec society has a great potential for a living humanism, rich and diverse, like the ethnic groups that make it up. It would suffice to encourage these vibrant forces to make us wiser, more humane and more tolerant, in short, more democratic. This liberation by mutual respect could only make us grow.



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APPENDIX I

Black Community Task Force on  
Education  
c/o Superior Council of Education  
600 Fullum St., 10th floor  
Montreal

July 4, 1978.

Dear Sir/Madam,

On April 25, 1978, the Minister of Education held public hearings on the Green Paper on Elementary and Secondary Education in Quebec. On this occasion, a brief representing the specific interest of our community and prepared by the Black Community Task Force on Education was presented to the Minister, Mr Jacques Yvan Morin.

The very importance of the issues raised in these documents aroused a general interest in the community. Consequently the members of Task Force have decided to forward copies of the brief to those persons who have been working towards the same goals and have shown a marked interest.

It is our hope that this document will contribute to the debate on Education in our Community.

Members of the Black Community  
Task Force on Education.



Groupe de travail sur l'éducation de  
la Communauté noire,  
a/s Conseil supérieur de l'éducation,  
600, rue Fullum, 10e étage,  
Montréal.

Le 4 juillet 1978.

Mademoiselle,  
Madame,  
Monsieur,

Le 25 avril dernier, à l'occasion des audiences publiques sur le Livre vert sur l'enseignement primaire et secondaire au Québec, un mémoire a été présenté au Ministre de l'Éducation, Monsieur Jacques Yvan Morin. Ce mémoire, d'un intérêt particulier pour notre communauté, avait été préparé par le Groupe de travail sur l'éducation de la Communauté noire.

Face à l'importance des points soulevés et à l'intérêt suscité par ce document, les membres du Groupe de travail ont jugé bon de faire parvenir des copies à tous ceux qui de près ou de loin participent déjà à notre travail ainsi qu'à toutes les personnes susceptibles de s'y intéresser.

Les membres du Groupe de travail croient que cela permettra la poursuite du débat sur l'éducation dans notre communauté.

Les Membres du Groupe de travail sur  
l'éducation de la Communauté noire.



(Not translated)

MEMOIRE SUR LE LIVRE VERT  
présenté au Ministre de l'Éducation

par

Le Groupe de Travail sur  
l'éducation de la Communauté noire

Montréal-Québec  
avril 1978



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LE GROUPE DE TRAVAIL  
SUR L'EDUCATION DE LA COMMUNAUTE NOIRE

INTRODUCTION

Le Groupe de Travail sur l'Education de la Communauté Noire est un comité formé en septembre 1977 sur la demande du Conseil supérieur de l'éducation afin de lui faire part des attentes et aspirations de la Communauté Noire dans l'éducation. On retrouve chez les membres du Comité une bonne représentativité des divers organismes qui oeuvrent au sein de la Communauté Noire, et anglophones et francophones.

Le Groupe de Travail sur l'Education de la Communauté Noire se doit de faire part de ses commentaires sur le Livre vert au ministre de l'Education et est content d'avoir cette occasion de se prononcer sur ce projet d'éducation. Nous avons jugé bon de faire une présentation à part, en dehors du Conseil supérieur car s'il y a des groupes qui ont tendance d'accepter le Livre vert dans son ensemble, il nous est irrécusable. D'ailleurs, dans la présentation globale de toutes les minorités que représente le Conseil supérieur, il va sans dire que les préoccupations particulières de notre communauté perdront inévitablement de leur dimension.

Ce n'est pas par pur hasard que les Noirs forment partie du Québec. Nous avons été présents ici, à côté de et aussi longtemps que les "groupes fondateurs". Voilà un fait réel que la société québécoise a traditionnellement su nier et que le Livre vert ne reconnaît pas. Nous sommes des Québécois "invisibles". Le Livre vert ne nous accorde pas la reconnaissance ni l'importance dans le Livre vert donné à d'autres groupes du Québec.



## PRESENTATION PICTORIALE

Dans l'édition reliée du Livre vert, il y a 13 images sur la page couverture dont 5 sont reprises à l'intérieur. Ces images totalisent 34 visages identifiables qui représentent 19 figures masculines, 14 figures féminines et 1 non-identifiable clairement. Toutes ces images présentent des faces de type caucasien pur alors que la population scolaire au Québec a un pourcentage de pas moins de 17% de non-caucasiens. Cette non-représentativité pictoriale devrait être vue tout au moins comme le symptôme de la non-sensibilisation des responsables de l'éducation aux différences - et le droit d'être différent - de la population scolaire. Cependant, lorsque nous faisons la lecture attentive du document, on réalise la marginalisation et le paternalisme quand ce n'est tout simplement pas de la discrimination pure et simple; nous nous voyons obligés de conclure à autre chose qu'à un simple oubli: c'est l'expression d'une forme de racisme non-violent, d'un racisme par le silence, par l'exclusion - donc d'un racisme qui ne peut être que des plus pernicieux et redoutable pour l'humanité.

Actuellement, dans la très grande majorité des pays à démographie ethnique similaire à celle du Québec, on accorde une attention toute particulière à la présence pictoriale de tous les groupes en présence à cause notamment de l'importance des caractéristiques propres, et non à cause de l'influence de ces phénomènes sur la création des concepts du soi et de ses rapports avec l'apprentissage.



STRUCTURES ELITISTES ET INEGALITAIRES

C'est un fait connu que la raison d'être de toute école est celle du processus de socialisation des jeunes en leur transmettant les valeurs et les normes de la société. Nous savons que notre minorité est traditionnellement vue comme des intrus et des immigrants récemment reçus. Il est temps de reconnaître et d'accepter les Noirs québécois. Nous savons que le rendement scolaire de nos enfants dans le système présent est loin d'être satisfaisant. Et c'est pourquoi nous ne saurons pas appuyer l'affirmation que "le bilan de l'école primaire au Québec est favorable... et "qu'uniquement" l'école secondaire exige des renouveaux et des redressements". Les problèmes du secondaire ont leur source au primaire. De nombreuses structures élitistes et inégalitaires assurent ce pauvre rendement de la part de nos étudiants. Or le Livre vert ne remet pas en question et ne mentionne aucunement ces structures. Le "streaming" au niveau élémentaire est accepté comme un fait accompli au niveau secondaire. Le Livre vert ne s'interroge pas sur la dépersonnalisation de l'école. Une absence totale de volonté ou politique de changement nous frappe. Les deux hypothèses pour le primaire sont décidées sans égard au "turnover" fréquent et constant des enseignants à l'élémentaire. Pendant que nous reconnaissons la nécessité pour les conventions collectives qui garantissent aux enseignants des conditions de travail justes et équitables, il faut quand même être conscients que c'est à la fois un mécanisme qui peut accomoder le racisme et aboutir à une exonération facile du lésant.



## ASPECTS LINGUISTIQUES

Au chapitre de la langue, le Livre vert en plus d'aller contre les courants les plus récents de la science de l'éducation va à l'encontre des "principes d'une politique de la langue" élaborés dans le Livre blanc déposé en avril 1977 par le ministre d'Etat au Développement culturel détruit certains espoirs suscités par certaines déclarations du ministre de l'Education en juin 1977.

Tout d'abord, le Livre vert tend un piège en ne définissant pas ce qu'il entend par "langue maternelle". Les objectifs de formation, tel que présentés pour l'élémentaire (2.33) et le secondaire (3.73) entretiennent cette confusion puisque rien ne précise que les auteurs du Livre vert définissent péremptoirement comme langue maternelle l'anglais pour une catégorie de gens et le français pour les autres. En effet, il faut bien lire et relire les objectifs définis pour le "français langue seconde" et l'anglais langue seconde d'une part et d'autre part passer à la loupe les remarques à la répartition des matières (3.61) pour réaliser définitivement que les auteurs du Livre vert ont tout à coup arrêté que la langue maternelle de plus de 15% de la population québécoise ne répond plus aux critères du bon sens, confirmés par les sciences de la linguistique et de l'éducation, c'est-à-dire la première langue apprise, et intériorisée et renforcée par le milieu familial et social immédiat. Pour l'avancement du débat, il faut bien spécifier qu'il y a une coupure nette entre langue maternelle et langue d'instruction.

Partant d'un point de vue purement pédagogique, il est essentiel de reconnaître que le point de départ ne sera pas le même pour un enfant dont la langue maternelle est effectivement le français et l'enfant dont la langue maternelle véritable est autre que le français.



Les programmes scolaires quand ils placent ainsi des enfants différents sur la même ligne de départ créent de toute pièce les échecs et les inadaptations. Aussi, il n'est donc pas étonnant que les enfants d'origines autres que caucasienne constituent la majorité dans les classes spéciales. Les recherches les plus récentes un peu partout à travers le monde (USA, Guadeloupe, Haïti, Israël, Angleterre, France, Guinée, Bissau, Brésil, etc.) ont démontré sans l'ombre d'un doute la place prépondérante que l'on doit accorder à la langue maternelle. Dans les pays capitalistes où l'on retrouve des concentrations de travailleurs d'origines ethniques et linguistiques différentes, de plus en plus de travaux de recherche relient étroitement la non valorisation de la langue maternelle généralement accompagnée d'un rejet de la culture des étudiants par les milieux scolaires aux abandons massifs de ceux-ci précédés ou pas d'échecs académiques ainsi qu'au rejet du milieu scolaire par ces étudiants. De telles attitudes, quand elles ne conduisent pas tout droit à la délinquance produisent tout simplement une main-d'oeuvre sous-qualifiée et ce sans rapport aucun avec les capacités véritables des individus.

La loi 101 en définissant prudemment et courageusement la langue d'instruction (art. 51 à 59) ne s'était nullement aventurée à réglementer la langue maternelle, mais bien la langue officielle, le Livre vert pêche donc par un excès de zèle qui de plus contredit totalement les déclarations courageuses également du Livre blanc, déclarations qui reprises à maintes occasions par le ministre de l'Education avaient suscité certains espoirs:

*On doit déplorer le peu de soutien offert jusqu'à maintenant par le Gouvernement québécois aux efforts de nos compatriotes de différentes origines ethniques pour conserver leur langue et leur culture d'origine. Cela est particulièrement vrai dans le cas de groupes numériquement importants que les Québécois d'origine italienne, juive et grecque. (Livre blanc)*



Ce genre de position s'appuyait sur une véritable reconnaissance de la composition pluri-ethnique du Québec.

*... d'autres minorités existent au Québec. En bien des cas, elles réunissent un nombre imposant de personnes et de groupes dont l'originalité et la vitalité ne peuvent être mises en doute. Dans sa volonté de restaurer une vie sociale commune en français, le Gouvernement du Québec ne désire aucunement amoindrir l'apport de ces cultures. (Livre blanc)*

Et le gouvernement rejetait du coup les solutions simplistes et assimilationnistes:

*La nécessité pour les francophones de se préoccuper constamment de leur survie culturelle, leur propre infériorité économique et politique ont eu pour conséquence de les porter à négliger les efforts déployés par leurs compatriotes italiens, juifs, grecs et autres pour conserver leur langue maternelle et leurs valeurs culturelles. Le modèle du "melting pot" illustré par la société américaine est, de nos jours, heureusement de plus en plus contesté. L'assimilation à la vapeur de tous les nouveaux immigrants, au point qu'en une ou deux générations ils ont perdu toute attache avec leur pays d'origine n'est pas un objectif souhaitable. Une société qui permet à ses groupes minoritaires de conserver leur langue et leur culture est une société plus riche et probablement plus équilibrée. Cela pourrait être le cas du Québec.*

Il nous semble important de souligner pour tous que nous affirmons avec les Québécois d'origine française la volonté de dignité du peuple québécois dont nous sommes. Cependant, comme le devine le Livre blanc, s'il est question pour les francophones d'origines de revaloriser leur langue et leur culture, il en est de même pour les québécois d'origines ethniques différentes puisque le Québec n'est pas un bloc monolithique.



STEREOTYPES, INTOLERANCE CULTURELLE ET RACISME VEHICULE PAR L'ECOLE

Il est vraiment étonnant que devant la conjoncture actuelle quand de maints groupes s'interrogent sur le racisme et le sexisme véhiculés par le milieu scolaire - (manuels, films, orientation, counselling, loisirs) - que le Livre vert les passe sous silence. Nous constatons que le Livre vert ne reflète pas la réalité ethnique du Québec, même au plan pictorial comme déjà signalé. Parmi toutes les images qui se trouvent dans l'édition reliée, l'absence d'une minorité non-blanche nous ferait croire que le Québec est absolument blanc. Le Livre vert ne remet nulle part en question les rôles traditionnels stéréotypés attribués et joués par toutes les minorités ethniques et particulièrement la minorité noire - dont ces rôles se manifestent aujourd'hui par la basse position socio-économique à laquelle est relégué le groupe. Le Livre vert propose le traitement de l'histoire du Québec à fond; mais quelles provisions sont faites pour assurer l'évaluation et la correction de la perspective historique déjà enseignée, et pour garantir la valorisation des groupes minoritaires qui y ont été stigmatisés soit par l'exclusion ou par un traitement biaisé. Quelle mention le Livre vert fait-il des valeurs qu'il propose privilégier?



### ETHNOCENTRISME ET CHAUVINISME CULTURELS

Certes, une certaine fierté nationale est excellente pour la santé d'une nation. Mais aucunement l'éducation; des matières comme la géographie et l'histoire devraient-elles être étroitement détournées de leur raison d'être. De loin ou de près, nous ne pouvons que constater que les programmes d'histoire et de géographie tels que proposés sont presque exclusivement orientés sur l'étude des pays blancs européens, alors que le Livre vert s'adresse nécessairement à une clientèle multi-ethnique et multi-culturelle. Les élèves n'auront pas l'occasion d'apprendre les richesses culturelles d'autres civilisations anciennes: asiatique, africaine, indienne; ils n'auront pas l'occasion de développer l'ouverture d'esprit nécessaire pour vivre et s'adapter dans une société pluraliste, dans un monde de plus en plus interdépendant. Aussi, au niveau de la confessionnalité le Livre vert ne remet même pas en question l'école confessionnelle. Au contraire, le Livre vert affirme que l'école restera confessionnelle. Pour l'élève noir de l'école catholique, des cours pourraient lui être disponibles qui auront un contenu culturel. Cependant, ce n'est pas un droit assuré. L'étudiant noir catholique sera obligé de choisir entre étudier le dogme catholique, ou étudier des origines et valeurs ethniques. Or, ce dernier ne traitera pas nécessairement de sa propre culture. L'élève de l'école protestante n'aura pas le cours de formation personnelle et sociale, et le cours de la langue et la culture d'origine reste très hypothétique. Est-ce à dire que l'étudiant protestant n'a pas besoin de l'éducation culturelle?

Le Livre vert propose pour certains groupes des études de la langue et la culture d'origine. De nombreuses études ayant démontré que les Blancs du Québec sont plus réticents à accepter d'autres groupes minoritaires que les minorités à accepter les Blancs, il nous semble donc que les Blancs ont autant besoin d'un programme d'intégration culturelle.

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### INTEGRATION MULTI-ETHNIQUE

Une autre manifestation du courant discriminatoire que soutient le Livre vert est l'attitude paternaliste envers les 17% et plus de la population québécoise que représentent les différents groupes ethniques autres que franco et anglo québécois. Le Livre vert propose à l'intérieur d'un bloc de matières, "Formation personnelle et sociale", un projet de contenu susceptible de favoriser une formation multi-ethnique. Mais on voit très bien qu'un véritable effort n'a pas été fait pour donner à ce genre de formation l'importance que lui confère la composition démographique multiculturelle du Québec pays d'immigration et d'émigration.

Tout d'abord du point de vue quantitatif la place accordée à cette formation laisse à désirer. A l'élémentaire, la formation personnelle et sociale est répartie sur 150/minutes semaine (2.71). De plus, à l'intérieur de ces 150 minutes, il faut assurer la transmission de notions aussi fondamentales que la connaissance du milieu, que l'initiation pratique et expérimentale à la vie sociale et qu'à l'initiation à la sexualité. C'est donc dire qu'il reste vraiment peu de place d'abord à l'enfant de l'ethnie différente pour apprendre à se connaître lui et sa culture et ensuite à l'enfant québécois pour apprendre à connaître son compagnon autrement que par stéréotypes. A l'école secondaire, les choses sont encore plus difficiles puisqu'on alloue qu'une seule période par semaine à la "Formation personnelle et sociale" et qu'à l'intérieur de cette seule et unique période, il faut assurer "l'initiation à l'économie, à la santé, à l'éducation sexuelle, au civisme et, pour certains groupes, à la langue et à la culture d'origine" (3.61), (souligné par nous).

Ainsi, on laisse d'une part planer une incertitude puisque l'initiation à la langue et à la culture d'origine ne fait l'objet d'aucune garantie. C'est tout au plus une pieuse possibilité qui pourra être facilement écartée à la moindre petite difficulté d'implantation, d'autant plus que la façon vague de le présenter porte déjà les germes de l'échec...



Histoire de se donner bonne conscience et de pouvoir dire plus tard "Vous voyez! Nous avons essayé... C'est irréaliste!" D'autre part, on impose à l'étudiant un choix qui n'en est pas un. Le Livre vert offre donc aux groupes ethniques et culturels le choix de la méthode d'extinction de la langue et de la culture d'origines, rien de plus.

Les auteurs du Livre vert sont si peu soucieux de cette dimension de la réalité québécoise qu'ils transposent dans leur document public tout leur mépris et leurs préjugés - ne serait-ce qu'au niveau de l'inconscient, et notre obligation de les combattre ne disparaîtrait pas pour autant! - qui se traduisent notamment par le rejet qu'ils font au nom de tous les québécois de tout intérêt d'apprendre à connaître la langue et la culture chacun des unes et des autres ethnies en présence. Les auteurs du Livre vert en spécifiant "pour certains groupes"... "langue (...) et (...) culture d'origine" décident en effet que les groupes ethniques autres que franco et anglo québécois sont fermés sur eux-mêmes, ne sont pas intéressés aux autres ethnies et que les franco et anglo québécois, pour leur part, ne sont pas intéressés à la langue et à la culture d'origine des autres québécois.

Il suffit de signaler que le bloc "Formation personnelle et sociale" n'existe pas dans les écoles protestantes et qu'il "peut" être remplacé par un programme d'enseignement de la langue et de la culture d'origine autres que françaises et anglaises (3.61) pour faire éclater toutes les contradictions et le peu de sérieux mis à préparer cette partie. D'abord l'existence du programme est laissé à la bonne grâce de nul ne sait qui; ensuite la restriction "pour certains groupes" disparaît. L'ambiguïté du projet ne fait qu'augmenter.

Disons simplement pour terminer que le programme de formation multi-culturel reste à construire et qu'il ne pourra se faire qu'après la destruction complète des propositions piégées du Livre vert. Il ne pourrait en être autrement.



Pour éviter de tomber dans le même genre de piège, cependant, il est essentiel d'élaborer avant tout des objectifs précis qui serviront à évaluer toute nouvelle proposition:

*Etant donné la composition multi-ethnique  
au Québec et son contexte démographique et  
économique axé sur l'immigration, l'école  
doit fournir à tous les citoyens des ins-  
truments de compréhension, d'échange, d'in-  
terconnaissance et de solidarité entre  
toutes les ethnies en présence.*



## PROJET EDUCATIF

Le projet éducatif proposé par le Livre vert nous apparaît comme une hypothèse de travail intéressante et positive. Cependant, ce projet éducatif qui régionalise la responsabilité de l'école et devrait lui permettre de mieux remplir sa "mission" en lui fournissant les appareils administratifs et matériels requis, ce projet éducatif n'est réalisable que s'il s'insère à l'intérieur d'un plus large projet éducatif, celui-ci à l'échelle du Québec. Malheureusement, le Livre vert s'est contenté de toucher à certains aspects plutôt restreints. Même s'il a maintes fois souligné l'urgent besoin d'objectifs précis et clairs au niveau de l'école, nous n'avons pas retrouvé ces objectifs nationaux qui ont seuls la capacité d'orienter les objectifs particuliers et régionaux des écoles. A la décharge du Livre vert, il nous faut aussi dire que le débat est amorcé, dans certains milieux comme celui que nous représentons avec un retard dû en partie aux conditions objectives du milieu de vie et de travail et en partie à la place que les autorités scolaires lui ont faite jusqu'à présent. Il ne faudrait surtout pas que le débat soit refermé hâtivement.

Pour que le Projet Educatif soit possible et viable pour notre communauté, comme pour toutes les communautés ethniques non-majoritaires, il faudrait assez de souplesse pour permettre à des groupes numériquement faibles dans une région de pouvoir participer pleinement selon ses préoccupations et ses besoins, sans pour autant restreindre ceux des autres groupes en présence. De plus, il faudrait que les autorités responsables de l'éducation acceptent de considérer les conditions véritables des familles intéressées de façon à ce que les projets éducatifs ne soient pas l'occasion de renforcer les disparités entre les écoles des milieux à forte concentration de travailleurs d'origines ethniques diverses et les écoles des quartiers des milieux plus "favorisés". A cela vient généralement s'ajouter une connaissance limitée des structures de l'école, rendant la participation effective des parents inefficace et plus que souvent impossible.



Enfin, il faudrait prévoir la possibilité pour certains étudiants de choisir leur école non en fonction du quartier et de la confessionnalité, mais en fonction justement du "Projet éducatif" qui répondrait le mieux à ses intérêts et à ses capacités et à son identité propre.



MONTREAL STAR, Wednesday, April 26, 1978.

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**MSO: Guest artists impressive**

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**Jazz: Two performers offer contrast**

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**Showbiz: Canada lowers culture curtain**

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School reform hearings

# *Blacks feel unwanted, spokesmen tell Morin*

By HILDA KEARNS

Whether they are born here or not, the province's 80,000 blacks are never allowed to feel like real Quebecers, according to Charles Tardieu-Dehoux, a member of Montreal's black community.

He and Esmeralda Thornhill brought this point home to Education Minister Jacques-Yvan Morin in impeccable French yesterday, saying Quebec's school system reinforces the image of blacks as foreigners with no real roots in Quebec.

They pointed out that the very cover of the government's green paper, suggesting reforms to elementary and secondary schooling, has pictures of 13 children on its cover and more inside, and not one is black.

But even more serious, the two noted in two separate briefs to Mr. Morin's public hearings on the education green paper, there is no mention of their existence in the 147-page document.

In fact, there is no mention at all of the 1.7 per cent of Quebec's population that is non-Caucasian. And no effort is promised to cure the ills of which the blacks are usually victims in the school system.

In his brief Mr. Tardieu-Dehoux took exception to the green paper's assumption that little or no reform is needed at the elementary level.

"It's at the primary level that all the inequalities in the system are created," he said, and whatever problems emerge in high school have their beginnings there.

Ms. Thornhill presented the second brief which the two wrote on behalf of the task force set up by the Superior Council of Education to assess the needs and aspirations of the black community in education.

It pointed out that while blacks have been in Quebec as long as the two founding groups, they are made to feel like "invisible" Quebecers because their presence is never acknowledged by those who are not black.

In response, Mr. Morin said his government already has a policy to teach the languages of origin of different ethnic groups, and that he saw no reason why this could not include the teaching of Creole as sought by Mr. Tardieu-Dehoux on behalf of Haitians.



He acknowledged that in its present form the green paper appeared to display an insensitivity to the needs of blacks by not making any specific reference to them and by using white children in all of its illustrations.

"But there is no intention to discriminate, and I thank you for bringing it to my attention.

Ms. Thornhill said that "consciously or not, the harm has been done."

In the brief she presented, Ms. Thornhill noted that racism and sexism start in the school, and yet there is no mention of it in the green paper.

Later, in an interview, the two singled out "streaming" of students in elementary schooling as one of the means used by the school system to stereotype blacks.

At an early age, they said, blacks are grouped with low achievers, and are never allowed to escape that stigma as they move through the school system.

Because of the indifference of school authorities, Mr. Tardieu-Dehoux said, racial frictions among students — and between students and school administrators — are reaching alarming proportions.

He said he has been thwarted in his efforts to assess the real problems facing young Haitians because school authorities refuse to provide him with statistics.

"One study showed that 85 per cent of Haitian students were having problems of one kind or another, but we were unable to get to the root of the problems."



Charles Tardieu-Dehoux

Ms. Thornhill, a teacher who has taught in Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal and Montreal Catholic School Commission schools, criticized teachers for having low expectations for black students.

Ms. Thornhill, who also works with the Human Rights Commission, said that more concrete recommendations on needed changes to the school system will be included in the report of the task force of which she and Mr. Tardieu-Dehoux are members.

Staff photo by Allan Leishman



Esmeralda Thornhill: School system reinforces image of blacks as foreigners.



## EDITORIALS

# Tolerance starts at home

Racism, like sexism and most other forms of bias, is often acquired during childhood. A special responsibility thus lies on the schools to guard against conditions which might, however subtly and unconsciously, encourage such attitudes.

Many of the estimated 80,000 blacks in Quebec feel that the Ministry of Education should be much more sensitive to this problem. Recent reports by members of a task force to the Ministry's Superior Council of Education argue cogently that schools tend to reinforce the notion that blacks somehow aren't part of Quebec.

The ministry's green paper on education reform released earlier this year typifies the problem: of the 13 children whose pictures appear on the document's outside cover, all are white. And on the 147 pages inside there is not one mention of blacks — or other non-whites — and their needs.

The authors of the reports, who are black, also argue that the schools tend to stereotype blacks as being low achievers; as early as elementary school teachers often exhibit low expectations for black children, and it is an atti-

tude which can be tragically self-fulfilling

Fortunately, Education Minister Jacques-Yvan Morin seems receptive to this kind of criticism. "There is no intent to discriminate, and I thank you for bringing (the problem) to my attention," he told the authors, Charles Tardieu-Dehoux and Esmeralda Thornhill, at hearings on the green paper

But the problem, while it may be particularly intense for blacks and other non-whites, extends to all minorities. The anglo-saxons — being the most populous, prosperous and physically like the French majority — are the best able to defend themselves against the widespread notion, promoted by some of Mr. Morin's cabinet colleagues, that minorities are alien to Quebec.

But it is not just the French who must be more tolerant (and there are growing indications that they are). Anglo-saxons who in recent years have felt discriminated against for their background are in good position to understand the kind of attitude — many times worse — non-whites are subjected to. They too, should show more tolerance of others



## APPENDIX V

### Black Liaison Officer

#### A. Role

- a) Help in the placement of those Black students enrolled in the school system for less than a year as well those students who need to be placed in special classes.
- b) Help solve certain problems between Black students and the School.
- c) Provide the link between home and school in certain situations notably, placement, discipline, tardiness, absenteeism etc.
- d) Assist teachers in evaluating these students who can benefit from special tutorial programs.
- e) Serve as consultant to other professionals in the areas of evaluation, placement in special classes, and programming of school and community resources.
- f) Serve as consultant to the Social Welfare Court.
- g) Assist in organizing community services for Black children. Inform their parents on every aspect related to education and community services.
- h) Obtain reference materials for teachers for Black Studies Programs.
- i) Develop a Black Studies course in collaboration with the instructional services.

#### B. Region I Schools with High Concentration of Black students

- High School:
- a) Dunton
  - b) Malcolm Campbell
  - c) Mount Royal
  - d) St-Laurent
  - e) Sir Winston Churchill

- Elementary:
- f) Algonquin
  - g) Dunrae Gardens
  - h) Laurentide
  - i) Maisonneuve
  - j) Manson
  - k) Parkdale
  - l) Westbrook



C. Work Schedule and Time Table

(approximately 25% of time allotted to Region I)

a) a.m. School visits

b) p.m. on call (at office)