

Between Mutuality and Diversity: The Project in Intergroup Education and the Discourse of National Unity in Post World War II America

By Brian R. Sevier

Democracy rests upon brotherhood. Justice, amity, understanding, and cooperation throughout our nation are cornerstones of democracy even as they are requirements for brotherhood. With them we can maintain our national unity and keep the teamwork needed in peace as in war.—Harry Truman (“Tolerance Awards,” 1946).

Look around and see friends and neighbors all joined in a common cause for the defense of this country. There is no quarrel between them. It is possible here. There are no hyphens among us now.—Fiorelli LaGuardia (“Unity,” 1947).

In considering these quotes it might be possible, if we ignored the names of the deceased political leaders who spoke them, to imagine them uttered recently. Their references to a common cause, democracy, and unity echo the “united we stand” political rhetoric espoused by contemporary leaders and promulgated on bumper stickers, billboards, and public service announcements

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in the post September 11th era. Yet these quotes are not of our time. The words of President Truman and New York Mayor LaGuardia hark back to the years following World War II when social and political circumstances prompted widespread concern over national unity. Race riots, Cold War politics, and the United States' image as a newly minted super power were just some of the events/exigencies that precipitated a renewed sense of urgency regarding national unity in the post-war years. This push for unity reverberated beyond the political arena involving numerous community organizations, churches, and public schools in efforts to boost American citizens' sense of connectedness with one another. The Project in Intergroup Education, an educational effort that originated in this context, asked teachers to create curricula with the concomitant goals of teaching tolerance and increasing national unity.

From 1945-1951, the Project in Intergroup Education, with the support of various universities, offered teacher in-services and summer workshops designed to help teachers create localized and specific curricula focused on eliminating discrimination in their schools, communities and, ultimately, society at large (Taba, Brady, & Robinson, 1952). Arguably this country's most ambitious effort of its kind in terms of scope and scale, the Project's central staff coordinated field visits to public schools and school districts, managed in-service training and summer workshops, and published numerous documents on intergroup education.¹ As Project director Hilda Taba understood it, "intergroup conflict" within the larger population not only signified clear disruptions in American unity but also established schools and education as possible remedies for these national woes (Taba, 1948).

With supervision from the American Council on Education (ACE) and funding from the National Conference of Christians and Jews (NCCJ), a total of 260 teachers from thirteen different states and eighteen school districts participated in the Project (Taba, 1948).² Consistent with the Project's progressive educational philosophy that privileged the situated and contextual nature of classroom learning, these teachers wrote their own intergroup textbooks and units for use within their unique classrooms (ibid, pp. 10-12). In fact, these teacher-created documents allow us to juxtapose the intergroup curricula of teachers against the vision of intergroup education promulgated by the leaders of the Project within the post-WWII milieu.

In this article I posit a dual argument. First, I contend that the post-WWII discourse of national unity pushed intolerance to the forefront of the domestic agenda linking its elimination with social cohesion while simultaneously advancing assimilationist and meritocratic beliefs about *the* American experience. Here, I utilize the writings of Project creators/leaders to illustrate the ways in which they understood the amelioration of intolerance as integral to the safety and image of America and as inseparable from the purpose of strengthening national unity. Second, I argue that the curricular work of the teachers involved in the Project allow us a historically rare opportunity to understand how educators mediated the content of intergroup education. The freedom Project teachers experienced to act as both intergroup-curriculum creators and implementers allows us to glimpse the ways in which they reproduced *and* challenged beliefs about assimilation,

intolerance, and the curricular treatment(s) of diverse populations in American society.

The terms intergroup and intercultural education refer to a movement that originated in the years between WWI and WWII and achieved the height of its popularity and influence in the years following the end of the Second World War (see for example, Banks, 2005, 1996; Collins, 1999; Montalto, 1982; Olneck, 1990; Perlstein, 1999). Generally speaking, intercultural/intergroup education denotes efforts among educators to bring issues of cultural diversity, intolerance, and bigotry against minorities into schools and classrooms.³ The existing body of scholarship on the intergroup/intercultural education has provided significant insights into the history and importance of the movement writ large.

Daniel Perlstein's (1999) *American Dilemmas: Education, Social Science, and the Limits of Liberalism*, for example, argues that, on the whole, intergroup education embodied a kind of race-blind liberalism that effectively worked against cultural pluralism. In fact, Perlstein links contemporary manifestations of educational conservatism to the ideals of intergroup education. Michael R. Olneck's (1990) *The Recurring Dream: Symbolism and Ideology in Intercultural and Multicultural Education* also emphasizes the retrogressive nature of intergroup education connecting its lack of emphasis on pluralism to contemporary educational practices, namely (conservative) multicultural education, that likewise advances assimilationist tropes that depict cultural differences as becoming less apparent or significant as individuals "melt" into the American culture. Finally, intergroup education's relevance for contemporary multicultural educators also surfaces within the scholarship of Cherry Banks. Like Perlstein and Olneck, Banks' (1996) work considers intergroup education as a movement, one that "represented a significant effort on the part of these educators to improve human relations" (p. 251). Banks tempers this analysis by emphasizing that intergroup education projects tended to focus on "celebrating" minorities in relation to the ways in which their heroes, holidays, food, and celebrations added to this country's cultural amalgamation while they avoided more critical analyses of institutional/structural forms of prejudice and racism in U.S. society.

Focusing on the organizational and structural components of intergroup education, the term "public meanings" invoked by Olneck (1990) probably best sums up the understanding and knowledge this body of scholarship provides. The existing research delineates the normative, authoritative, and promulgated understandings of diversity, pluralism, and assimilation within the history of intergroup education as a movement and its relationship to current attempts at multicultural education. This scholarship does leave room, however, for consideration of the specifics of the Project in Intergroup Education, its overt connections to the larger social/political discourse of unity and particular ways in which its teachers operationalized them in their creation of intergroup curricula. Attention to discourse, in fact, allows for the analysis of the importance of context with respect to the Project's organizational values and for the examination of how curricular/classroom enactment of

intergroup education coincided with and/or countered the ideals of national unity. I begin, then, with a discussion of the specifics of the framework I utilize.

Using Discourse To Frame the Context and Content of the Project in Intergroup Education

In the post World War II era, many political and social leaders were convinced that the solution to America's problems lay in the facilitation of a national identity that expressed a "more inclusive vision of national unity" (Wilson, 1948, p. 3). This construction or reconstruction of national identity entailed and embraced a context-specific discourse. As historian John Tosh (1984) asserts, "If nations are forever being constructed anew or 'invented', it is discourse in the broadest sense that accomplishes this-through the elaboration of cultural symbols and the celebration of a highly selective reading of the national past" (p. 185).

Discourse, as utilized in this study, incorporates both spoken and written forms that have ideological and material consequences (Johannesson, 1998) Discourses arise within particular circumstances and serve as legitimating principles for both the construction of knowledge and the practices and actions of individuals (Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998) To be sure, the discourse of national unity was contextually bounded. It resulted from social and historical processes that sought to organize ideas about Americanness and the American experience in ways that embodied particular assumptions about both diversity and mutuality (Bederman, 1995; Fields, 1995). Framing the study in this manner allows us to respect the importance of context in assessing the reasons why the particular discourse of national unity arose during this time and its consequences for educational endeavors such as the Project in Intergroup Education.

This use of discourse is consistent with cultural histories that define the discursive field in terms of power and constraints on power. Discourse, in this sense, embodies both prescriptive and descriptive aspects (see Cohen, 1999; Parkeson & Parkeson, 2001; Popkewitz, Franklin, & Pereyra, 2001). National unity in the post war era not only described attempts to define a unified America, but also prescribed a certain set of beliefs about what it meant to be an American. Central to this duality is the requisite public nature of a particular discourse (Foucault, 1972; Tosh, 1984). National unity certainly fulfilled this requirement. Dissemination of the discourse of national unity occurred via the political rhetoric contained in federal and state civil rights reports of the time and by means of educational endeavors such as the Project in Intergroup Education. At the organizational level, the Project at once embodied and furthered particular beliefs about the unifying elements of American national identity.

This conceptualization, however, does not imply a simple binary ascription of a given discourse as inherently liberating or inherently dangerous. The power of a discourse is not absolute; all discourses are subject to counterhegemonic assault (Foucault, 1972). People do resist, though their efforts at resistance may or may not rearrange social relations or even find articulation as resistance. (Davidson, 1996).

Indeed, true to the liberatory/reproductive possibilities that the focus on discourse allows, the curricular work of teachers involved in the Project in Intergroup Education conveys both alignment with and challenges to the discourse of national unity. This framework, then, permits examination of both structural and practical aspects of the Project in Intergroup Education; it facilitates an analysis of macro-level Project beliefs and classroom practices of individual Project teachers.

Context(s), Unity and the Justification of the Project

Beginning in the early 1940s, the ACE was heavily involved in intergroup education. This involvement consisted mostly of textbook surveys that looked at representations of minorities and quantitative studies of college students' beliefs about intergroup relations (see Quillen, 1943; Zook, 1944a, 1945, 1948a, 1948b). Through these efforts, the ACE was attempting to indirectly influence the instructional practices in schools by pushing for textbooks that would better depict the histories and experiences of minority groups in America and by coordinating teacher in-service training in teaching "democratic human relations" (VanTil & Taba, 1945, p. 2). Following the war, however, the ACE's educational efforts shifted toward more explicit attempts to assist in the creation of actual k-12 curricula (Taba et al, 1952). Council president George Zook's presidential address of 1945 indicates that the ACE had fully embraced the notion that public schools were the place to begin to eliminate discrimination in American society. As Zook (1945) told it:

Educators of this country are willing and anxious to discharge their responsibilities in the elimination of discrimination and intolerance if only the public will give them the opportunity. Educators know the endless possibilities of individuals as individuals; they believe in the dignity and integrity of individuals...Give us, therefore the opportunity to fulfill our responsibility and I believe we would give you and the country a pleasant surprise. (p. 1)

Indeed, toward the end of this speech Zook suggested that the ACE would be willing, given adequate funding, to coordinate efforts to involve teachers in the creation of intergroup education curricula (ibid).

In response to this challenge, the NCCJ supplied over one hundred thousand dollars in 1945, "for two year support of intergroup education projects in cooperating school systems, under the direction of Hilda Taba" ("Council at Work," 1945, p. 360). Taba, who had already conducted intergroup education workshops at Harvard University and contributed to Social Studies Yearbooks on the subject, seemed a logical choice for the job (Powers, 1999). A short review of Taba's work reveals the inseparability between her involvement with intergroup education and her beliefs about progressive education. Her interpretation of progressive education contained elements of both child-centered and social reconstructionist tenets (see for example, Taba, 1932, 1962). As a member of the Progressive Education

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Association from the 1920s Taba believed that children could only learn the subject matter if it had meaning for them in relation to their own life (Bowers, 1970; Washburn, 1952). She brought this belief to the Project and in one of the Project's earliest publications, *Curriculum in Intergroup Education* (1949) suggested that the idea that "curriculum and instruction should be related to the needs of pupils is an old and accepted one" (p. 2). Taba (1932), however, distanced herself from pure manifestations of child-centered education. She believed that progressive education did not simply require teachers to follow the "whims" of children but rather that they organize educational experiences that would guide students toward "coherent knowledge, responsible utilization of the principles of thought, an intelligent treatment of data, and an appreciation of important values" (p. 252). In short, it was the responsibility of the teacher to provide the necessary experiences that would build on student knowledge and help them better understand their world.

This emphasis on establishing student values signified the other component of Taba's progressivism, social change. Taba's work with prominent social reconstructionists, however, did not result in a belief in the schools' role in the creation of an altogether new social order. Nor did she divorce her child-centered beliefs from her take on progressive education's role in social change. In fact, Taba (1962) self-consciously brought these two aspects together with her endorsement of what she termed the "community-centered school" (p. 27). In her most widely-cited work, *Curriculum Development*, Taba discussed the false dichotomy set up by child-centered and social reconstructionist progressives regarding the child-oriented versus community-oriented curricula (ibid). In the text Taba insists that the origins and philosophy of progressive education permit no such distinction. Children's experiences and backgrounds must be taken into consideration when attempting to educate about the responsibilities of living within a community. For Taba the child-in-community was the central organizing theme in progressive education, one that echoed her mentor John Dewey's (1916) assertion that, "the growth of the child in the direction of social capacity and service, his larger and more vital union with life, becomes the unifying aim and discipline" (p. 103). Accordingly, Taba (1962) argued "We [progressive educators] have to furnish children with an opportunity to cultivate their ways of living together" (p. 215).

As we shall see, the relationship that Taba and Project leaders established between intergroup education and the amelioration of social tensions in the post-war era reflected this vision of social change. Transformation, if not complete reconstruction of the social environment, required that people learn how to get along and treat each other as equals. Indeed one of the first publications issued by the central staff of the Project in *Intergroup Education* establishes the necessity of social transformation warning readers that the world is uneasy, that we are in the midst of an era of tensions and conflict, and that threats to our national unity are everywhere (Committee on the Study of Teaching Materials [CSTM], 1950). In fact, these omnipresent threats are capable of destroying our very way of life. Ominous words to be sure. What did they have to do with the elimination of prejudice and

discrimination and the work of the Project in Intergroup Education? As it turns out the answer to that question is quite simply, plenty.

Racial Tensions and the Safety of Post WWII America

During the early 1940s, there were several highly visible conflicts between diverse populations in urban areas. In New York City alone there were over thirty thousand reported interfaith and interracial conflicts of a “serious nature” during the year 1944 (“Steps Urged,” 1946). Cities in Texas, Michigan, Illinois, and California reported alarming numbers of conflicts as well.⁴ Of course, all of these conflicts have unique origins and consequences. Nevertheless, as an aggregate, they convey a distinct sense of the extent of the animosity that was present amongst diverse groups in this country toward the end of the war.

There was, however, another social aspect to the origins of post-war racial tension that became significant for the Project. This argument added a key affective component, focusing on the consequences of the alleged “gain in status” that accrued for minorities during the war.⁵ The leaders of the Project in Intergroup Education believed that the increased status of minorities after the war could facilitate intergroup tensions, contending that this sense of status did more than just cause minority populations to reject Anglo domination; it gave them hope for equality within American society. Taba and other Project organizers argued that for minorities, “New aspirations developed with regard to employment, housing opportunities, political and civic participation, and social acceptance” (Taba et al, 1952, p.14). The very real inequities of post-war America, however, did not bode well for these aspirations as prejudice and discrimination showed little signs of abatement. The result of the difference between expectations and reality undoubtedly was and would continue to be social unrest. And this unrest had ramifications for the U.S. beyond domestic concerns.

Intergroup Education and Unity Against a Global Backdrop

Ultimately, the implications and omnipresence of these intergroup problems resonated for Project leaders in global/political ways. They understood the internal security threats posed by racial violence and discriminatory employment practices in relation to the damage they posed for the image of the United States in the post-WWII era. This potential damage arose out of the growing awareness of the discrepancies between the professed democracy of American society and the inequalities that existed for minorities in this country.⁶ Indeed, the ever-increasing visibility of the insurgent civil rights movement got the attention of the leaders of the Project. They, in fact, used these civil rights efforts to call attention to the global consequences of America’s social inequities. Accordingly, Project leaders contended:

Our problem of race relations causes many groups to view our (American) protestations of democracy with skepticism...There is a need, both philosophical and political, for re-examination of our own historic commitments and the degree of their present realization. (CSTM, 1950, p. 7)

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ACE President George Zook (1948b), in fact, offered this assessment of the global implications of American forms of discrimination:

In your city or in your county there may be Jews; or first and second generation Italians; or persons of Mexican birth or parentage; nearly all have Negroes as well as Whites; and, of course, there are Catholics as well as Protestants. Every single one of these minority groups in our population has its roots in other lands. You cannot possibly discriminate against any one of them without arousing animosities and tensions against the United States in some other quarter of the globe. (p.8)

Unfortunately, as Project leaders saw things, at precisely the moment when the need was greatest for what they termed “magnificent unity,” America’s failure to effect harmonious relationships and to defend democratic principles was most apparent. (CSTM, 1950, p. 9). Project leaders openly expressed the need to become involved in restoring “our common unity” because, as they saw it, nothing short of “the American way of life” was at stake (ibid).

Containment and Unity

As reflected in Project literature, political leaders at every level understood the meaning of social events of the post-war period in terms of their political ramifications.⁷ Naturally, the comprehension of extant social tensions and their consequences was most acute within the federal government. For President Truman, the solution to post-war social dilemmas ultimately lay in the politics of international and domestic forms of containment. Because Truman conceived of the world as neatly divided into two parts, one based on freedom and the other based on oppression, he had to unequivocally position the United States in the former part and not the latter and depict the United States as a country possessed of a certain degree of social cohesion. But as we have seen, social conflicts within the U.S. rendered this unified front unconvincing. Thus, on December 5, 1946 President Truman authorized the creation of the President’s Committee on Civil Rights (Wilson, 1948). Ostensibly, this committee had the responsibility of documenting ways to improve civil rights at federal, state, and local levels. While this documentation potentially offered hopes for diminishing racial violence and for shoring up the United States’ civil rights image following the war, it also advanced a particular vision of what allegedly unified the nation. In 1948 the President’s Committee on Civil Rights released *To Secure These Rights* a report on the state of civil rights within America (ibid). This national-level report on civil rights had local/city-based counterparts such as Denver’s *A Report on Minorities in Denver with Recommendations by the Mayor’s Interim Survey Committee on Human Relations*, Los Angeles County’s *Report by Los Angeles’ Committee on Human Relations*, Milwaukee’s *Human Relations Committee, A Guide to Understanding Race and Human Relations*, Minnesota’s, *Race Relations in Minnesota*, and others (Lytle, 1946; Milwaukee Human Relations Committee, 1947; Roberts, 1948; Rucker, 1949).

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Together *To Secure These Rights* (Wilson, 1948) and these local “civil rights” documents endorse particular assumptions about *the* American experience. In these civil rights reports, four different yet related themes materialize as essentially American: the significance of the individual, the immigrant experience, prejudice as an aberration, and America’s legacy of human rights. Together they embody a discourse of unity bringing together issues of discrimination with allegedly shared experiences of all Americans. Importantly, we see these themes emerge in the organizational literature of the Project in Intergroup Education. Indeed, each of the communities listed above had at least one school district involved in the Project.

The Significance of the Individual

“The central theme in our American heritage is the importance of the individual person” (Wilson, 1948, p. 1). These words begin the Truman Committee’s report. Though it may seem odd, the centrality of the individual posited within this report is the primary unifying force for all Americans. This heightened sense of individuality also serves as a reference point in comparison with other nations. Accordingly, American individuality stands in stark contrast to the aristocratic and caste-driven societies outside the U.S. Here, the accident of birth, skin color, and/or religious preference limits no one. In this country, “each member of society is limited only by the skills and energies he brings to the opportunities equally offered to all Americans” (ibid).

The significance of the individual in American society assumes priority within the pages of the Project literature as well. One of the early Project publications offers this quote, “Worth of the individual citizen is the cardinal tenet of the American philosophy of democracy” (CSTM, 1950, p. 17). To be sure, this line is eerily similar to the opening declaration of the president’s committee. Project leaders also connected “the extraordinary mobility of American life,” to national unity, asserting the value of the individual and individual achievement as key to American social cohesion, the cornerstone of national unity (ibid, p. 37). Interestingly, both Project literature and civil rights reports portray the individual nature of Americans as an outgrowth of the immigrant experience, the next unifying American experience.

The Immigrant Experience

Appearing more than any other theme within these reports is the depiction of America as a nation of immigrants. Primarily, civil rights reports of the era depict America as a country defined by successive waves of immigrants. Discussion of native peoples does not appear in relation to this topic. Rather, the authors overwhelmingly place emphasis on the similarities between so-called “old” and “new” immigrants. Accordingly, the reports lump together the immigrant experiences of

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Italians, Irish, Africans, Mexicans, and so on regardless of generation and/or time of arrival (Roberts, 1948; Rucker, 1949).

A few important experiences are common to each immigrant group. First, each group experiences prejudice and discrimination as “new” arrivals. The Presidential Committee report (Wilson, 1948) contends each successive wave of immigrants suffers through prejudice and discrimination and that all members of practically every group have had their freedoms curtailed at some point (p. xi). Discrimination, the report argued, happens to everyone:

The fact that the forebears of some of us arrived later than those of others, the fact that some of us lived in separate groups, and the fact that some of us have different customs and religious beliefs, or different skin colors, have too often been seized upon as justification for discrimination. (ibid, p. 14)

In addition to sharing discrimination, each immigrant group inevitably experiences success. The American meritocracy ultimately rewards the hard work of each immigrant group.

Material published by the organizing committee for the Project for Intergroup Education likewise perpetuates the idea of America as a nation of immigrants and as a place where hard work results in success (Taba, 1948; Taba & Elkins, 1950). The idea that discrimination and prejudice affect all immigrants also surfaces quite frequently in Project literature. Accordingly, each influx of immigrants tends to hold prejudicial beliefs regarding the subsequent immigrants. Project leaders argued that:

Irish Americans came in time, for example to look down upon Scandinavian-Americans; Scandinavian-Americans upon Italian-Americans; they upon Mexican-Americans and so on. The groups which came earliest have tended to rise in the social scale despite the fact that they were themselves scorned when they first arrived. (CSTM, 1950, p. 89)

This pecking-order discrimination eventually diminishes and yields to the success of a given immigrant group. Just like the waves of immigrants that preceded them each immigrant group will, in turn, invariably overcome hardships, lose their ties to other nations/cultures, and emerge as American individuals united in their quest for success. Assimilation, in other words, happens.

America’s Legacy of Human Rights

Consistent with the depiction of the meritocratic success of all Americans, civil rights reports of the 1940s unabashedly portray America as a country defined by its historic and contemporary commitment to fairness and equality. This legacy of human rights not only defines America historically and presently, but has also earned the nation a global reputation for providing all people regardless of race, class, or religion the opportunities necessary for success. In the President’s report (Wilson, 1948), we are told that as Americans, “We have a great heritage of freedom and equality for all men, sometimes called, ‘the American Way’” (p. 3). The report defines freedom

and equality in terms that stress the ability of Americans to succeed and to dissent. That is, America makes all kinds of opportunities available and allows all people the freedom to express themselves. These attributes of American society, of course, offer stark contrast to communist and totalitarian rule. Within a Cold War climate, then, American heritage of freedom and equality has given us prestige among the nations of the world and a strong feeling of national pride at home (ibid, p. 9).

For Project leaders, the obvious freedoms and equality within American society have resulted in a “magnificent reservoir of good will” (CSTM, 1950, p. 7). America unquestionably allows for the social mobility for all of its citizens regardless of “race and color and origin” (ibid). As in the civil rights reports, Project leaders depict opportunity and equality as fundamental to America since the country’s inception. Thus, according to the discourse, the overwhelming history of people in America is a history of freedom from persecution and prejudice (Wilson, 1948, p. 9; Taba, 1948, p. 46).

The Aberration of Discrimination

So, how do these civil rights reports and the Project explain the manifestations of racial violence and the evidence of discrimination in post-war America? Somewhat paradoxically, they assert that, while on the whole the history of America exemplifies freedom, there have been times when discrimination has interfered with human rights in this country. The era following World War II was apparently one of those times. Herbert Seamans (1946), president of the NCCJ—a primary funding source for the Project in Intergroup Education—argued,

We have taken our diversity for granted and until recent years have not considered it a matter for serious study. Our peoples have been able to live together fairly satisfactorily without giving much thought to the understandings and relationships required if “liberty and justice for all” are to become realities for every group. (p. 87)

And recall the reservoir of good will that Project leaders contended America had in relation to its human rights record. According to Project Leaders, there were “serious leaks in that reservoir.” (CSTM, 1950, p. 7). In keeping with this aquatic analogy, these moments of aberrant interracial and/or interethnic tensions run counter to the “fluidity” of harmonious intergroup relations that characterized America’s past (ibid, p. 9).

The civil rights reports of the time likewise depict the history of American human rights as, unfortunately, marred by times when the “gulf between ideals and practice has been wide”(Wilson, 1948, p. 9). *To Secure These Rights*, for example, allows for the existence of “human rights problems” such as slavery, while simultaneously endorsing notions of the inherent commitment to equality within American society (ibid). Indeed, the very justification for the existence of these civil rights reports underscored the post-war era as one of those aberrant periods when the gulf was particularly wide.

Ultimately, the discourse of national unity within the post WWII context ac-

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accomplished two significant things. First, as we have already seen, it selectively re-inscribed a progressive and egalitarian American past. Second, it skillfully acknowledged discrimination as part of American culture while simultaneously emphasizing the transitory nature of intolerance. Civil rights reports portrayed Americans united through struggle and discrimination, through a history of and belief in the importance of equality, and through faith in the ultimate rewards of hard work. In fact, the public nature of this paradoxical take on discrimination was key to the creation of the Project. The political context of the post-war era pushed issues of discrimination to the forefront of the American agenda. At the same time civil rights reports were promoting larger narratives about the idyllic and progressive history of America, however, the post-war context establishing the need to *expedite* the elimination of prejudice for minority groups. Project leaders understood that the political milieu demanded action. This action required curricula, curricula produced by Project teachers. The specifics of how these teachers operationalized the coupling of assimilationist notions of unity and the elimination of intolerance at the curricular level is where we now turn.

Teacher-Created Project Curricula

The political context of the post-war era pushed issues of discrimination to the forefront of the American agenda and, notwithstanding meritocratic myths regarding the eventual triumph of all minority groups, demanded an expeditious end to intolerance. Enter the Project in Intergroup Education. Project leaders instigated the creation of this intergroup education effort based on their belief that the cleavages in U.S. society could find solution in educational practices that challenged prevailing (negative) perceptions of minority groups and established the equality of all Americans. Therefore, this historical moment actually permitted Project teachers to create educational materials designed to end intolerance. Importantly, the contextual demands for national unity implicated classroom teachers as *the* key to social change.

Bob Stevens was once such teacher. An agriculture teacher and part-time coach at Jefferson High School in Los Angeles, California, Bob attended his first intergroup education workshop sponsored by the Project in Intergroup Education in 1947 (Robert Stevens, personal communication, June 9, 2001). In the years following World War II, L.A.'s changing demographics had ramifications within schools and between schools. At Jefferson, a still largely Anglo school, the few African American students in the student body experienced incidences of verbal and physical abuse. In addition, as a part time coach, Bob Stevens worked with students who perpetuated intergroup hostilities in their inter-school interactions. Many of the Anglo football players, for example, would refuse to play in games that pitted their school against African American schools. "Hey, I don't want to tackle Blacks," they would tell Stevens (*ibid*). Indeed, some of these students even refused to travel to games played at "all-Black" high schools.

For Stevens and his fellow teachers these and other incidences prompted their

involvement with the Project. They wanted intergroup education curricula to allow students to understand the similarities that they shared with members of minority groups, to illuminate the discrepancies between Anglo and minority communities, and to enable them to comprehend the harmful effects of intolerance. Moreover, the teachers at Jefferson High School wanted to create these curricula.

Project leaders positioned classroom teachers, like those at Jefferson, as the most important source for the development of intergroup curricula.⁸ This view resonated with progressive educational philosophies that established the importance of the individual student and his/her experiences. Teachers were the only pedagogical connection to the individual child. Only the teacher had the sustained interactions necessary to research and create curricula designed to meet their students' needs. Not surprisingly, Project philosophies vis-à-vis the role and responsibilities of teachers drew progressive-minded educators to this particular intergroup education endeavor. Indeed, Elizabeth Brady—a Project teacher and eventual central staff member—asserted that the Project's espoused beliefs about the importance of teachers and the immediacy of the classroom made her years with the Project the most significant time in her educational career (Elizabeth Brady, personal communication, June 11, 2001).

The Project in Intergroup Education embodied an unfailing confidence about teachers' willingness to incorporate intergroup education techniques of their own making. Imposed curricula, according to Project leaders, were less likely to be utilized than instructional practices that each teacher determined to be salient with respect to their individual classrooms. They contended:

Teaching is too busy an occupation to afford the luxury of studying things that are not of immediate practical concern. When people complain that teachers are not interested in research, this usually indicates a situation where teachers are asked to study problems that someone else thinks are important. (Taba & Noel, 1957, p. 2)

Beyond curricular materials, however, Project leaders also expected teachers to author journal articles and texts devoted to intergroup education. For many teachers these demands were not prohibitively onerous. Teachers participated in Project workshops at the University of Chicago, Mills College in Oakland, California, Pennsylvania State University, University of Miami, University of Southern California, Teachers College (Columbia University), University of Texas, Austin, Rutgers University, and University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (Project in Intergroup Education, 1945a, 1945b, 1946, 1947, 1948a, 1948b).

Assimilationist Conceptions of National Unity

The Project's emphasis on the teacher established its uniqueness as an in-service program; it allowed teachers a rare experience of creative and instructional freedom (see also Cuban, 1993; Rousmaniere, 1997). Importantly, Project leaders' respect for teachers' ability to determine their own intergroup curricula extended to the ultimate goal of intergroup education itself. Even Project director Hilda

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Taba refused to explicitly delineate this goal for teachers. As one Project leader, Elizabeth Brady (1996), recalled:

A major point of difference in the 1940s had to do with the underlying assumptions about the future of the United States. At that time, many citizens and public figures took pride in what is often called the “melting pot” theory...certainly an assimilationist view. At the time, I recall Hilda (Taba) remarking that she would not presume to say in what direction we should go as a nation of people. (p. 65)

Still, some teacher-created intergroup curricula did embody dominant post WWII beliefs about American unity. Much of the curricular products of participating teachers reified the discourse of national unity defined in the pages of the civil rights reports of the time and the assimilationist underpinnings of the literature produced at the Project’s organizational level. As we shall see, for some teachers distinctions of race, class, culture, ethnicity, religion, urban dwellers, and so on constituted one category: the newcomer group. Their curricular products depicted America as a nation of “newcomer” immigrants who would eventually find acceptance and success and defined differences between Americans exclusively in terms of the negative effects of discrimination.

The Progress of the (Immigrant) Newcomer

Within the post-war discourse of national unity, the mythology of the immigrant portrayed both the difficulties and successes that diverse groups faced in this country. Accordingly, the typical immigrant eventually sloughed off his “foreign” ways, and became acculturated as an American taking full advantage of the meritocratic social system. In addition, American unity privileged the experience of the individual in American society. Consistent with these tenets of unity, Project literature advanced the similarity of all ethnic, racial, religious, and others groups; they were all composed of individuals.

Using the term “newcomer” to define all members of minority groups, the work of some participating teachers advances a particular argument as to the hardships encountered by minorities in this country. For instance, teachers used students’ familial histories to illuminate the immigrant experience as generalizable and universal for all Americans. Participating teacher Deborah Elkins’ unit *Our Families Come to America* is illustrative here (Taba & Elkins, 1950, p. 148). In her eighth-grade classroom, Elkins used this unit to develop student awareness of America as a land of immigrants (ibid, p. 149). The unit began with investigations of familial backgrounds as Elkins asked her students to create interview questions that would uncover the reasons why their family members emigrated from their home countries and reveal the quality of their experiences in America.

In general, the students reported that their ancestors, mostly of European background, came to America, “To have a better life than they did” (ibid, p. 151). But it was the difficulties these immigrants faced that formed the crux of this instructional unit. The middle-class students in Elkins’ room brought in numerous stories that

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delineated the arduous life of the newcomer. They told of grandparents and great grandparents forced to engage in menial factory, railroad, and sweatshop work and to live in undesirable conditions. Elkins summarized these stories in this manner:

Children reported that the women had to work, but even so there was not enough money to keep the family going. The newcomers went to night school to learn how to speak English. Others described the crowded, inadequate housing conditions, the pinch-penny saving for years, and the purchase at long last of a house of their own. (ibid, p. 153)

Beyond these struggles, the newcomers also had to deal with the hostilities of the “old inhabitants.” Because of their differences, the students noted, some Americans treated their ancestors very harshly. However, many also noted the kindness of some established Americans who, “helped the family learn English and told them where to shop” (ibid).

After the collection of these data, Elkins used the students’ work to draw parallels to newcomers in contemporary 1940s America. These newcomers included African-Americans and Latinos. Though these groups had been in the country for quite some time, Elkins used post-war population shifts to justify their status as newcomers. In addition, she used the stories of the students’ families to assert the same linear and progressive trajectory that would play out for them. She informed her students that it was only a matter of time before other minorities/newcomers achieved the American Dream. This success story was an eventuality even for urban African American assuring her students that:

Each new group of immigrants is forced to live in the slums. After years of hard work at menial tasks they save some money and move out. Newer groups replace them in those slums which worsen year by year. The Negroes have not yet had a chance to move out. (ibid, p. 152)

Undoubtedly, given the right amount of time and individual labor; the “chance” for African Americans would come. Race, culture, ethnicity did not figure in this conception of the American experience. All newcomers would achieve.

Difference as a Negative Consequence of Aberrant Discrimination

To be sure, Project leaders intended intergroup education to emphasize the humanness of all individuals regardless of differences in skin color linguistic background, religious preference, etc. They did, however, establish some differences within society. These differences were manifest in the discrepancies between Anglo communities, families, and schools and those of minority populations. Consistent with the discourse of a unified American experience that emphasized the temporal nature of discrimination, these *negative* differences, the only ones of consequence, resulted from particular socio-economic circumstances and needed expeditious remedy within the post-war context.

A second-grade unit created by teacher Florence Hudson (1948) at Penn School

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in Minneapolis, Minnesota, demonstrates this conceptualization of difference. In the unit, *How Much Grass*, Hudson asked her students to compare the amount of grass on their front lawns to those of people residing in different parts of the city (ibid, pp. 265-268). The creation of the unit arose out of a question that Hudson asked her students to consider in their diaries: Why do your parents work? Hudson hoped to get students to consider their parent's occupations and the social existence they enjoyed as a result. Surprisingly, one of the students responded, "Our parents want to give us grass" (ibid, p. 266). Hudson seized upon this question to allow her students to understand "grass as a measure of economic position" (ibid).

In terms of the disparities in resources, the title, *How Much Grass*, was fairly self-evident. Hudson began by asking students to, "Count how many steps it takes you to get from one side of your lawn to the other" (ibid). Then, after the class of 34 upper-middle-class students discovered that they each had relatively the same amount of grass, Hudson asked them to consider the reasons why. Once the students had concluded, "Our fathers have about the same amount of money," Hudson gave them another assignment. "When you go out riding this weekend," she stated, "see if you can find some houses where there isn't as much grass as you have" (ibid). Not surprisingly, the students found that houses in one part of the city had much less grass: the "Negro" section.

How Much Grass also asked the students to imagine how their lives might change if their family had the amount of grass typical of the African American families in the community. Appropriate to their age, the students noted the kind of play activities and behaviors that would change. As one student observed, "Some of the houses are right on the sidewalk" (ibid, p. 268). Playing in the front yard would be impossible. Other students noted the kinds of family functions that often take place in the yard. Social interactions such as holiday parties and neighborhood get-togethers would be less enjoyable, the students asserted, if no front yard existed. Hudson's discussion with the children brought out another difference, the students thought that lack of grass would significantly and harmfully alter family and community behaviors.

In educating for tolerance and acceptance teacher participants often depicted differences between majority and minority groups as a negative consequence of exclusion. Importantly, and in line with the aberrant nature of discrimination posited within the discourse of unity, the significance of even these differences would lessen as soon as intolerance eventually gave way to the kind of equity that exemplified America's legacy of human rights.

Challenges to Assimilationist Conceptions of National Unity

Given the post-war context and the Project leaders' acceptance of the universal American experience espoused in the dominant discourse of unity, it is hardly surprising that some Project teachers embraced assimilationist tenets of national unity. Yet the fact that Hilda Taba and Project leaders avoided overt declarations regarding

the ultimate goal of intergroup education gave teachers considerable interpretive freedom. In contrast to Taba's reticence about asserting the assimilationist future of America, for example, this interpretive freedom allowed participating teacher Katherine Kenehan to declare, "America is not a "melting pot" but a nation of many cultural strains. It is better when people do not become too much alike" (Kenehan, 1947, p. 160). Moreover, this freedom coupled with the latitude they experienced in terms of curricular creation enabled teachers to construct unique instructional texts and practices that challenged prevailing tenets of the discourse of national unity.

Some teacher-created curricula, for example, examined America's legacy of racism, advanced the positive aspects of diversity and difference, or attempted to cast difference as something that did not result from intolerance or as representative of a negative by-product of discrimination. These teachers attempted to connect the American experience with cultural diversity; their curricular work stressed the need to celebrate and maintain difference.

America's History of Racism

The curricular work of Project teacher Margaret Heaton (1946), for example, did not focus solely on the "progress" of African Americans in this country. Instead, Heaton allowed her students to contrast the portrayals of African Americans in popular media against the experiences of guest speakers and the content of African American historical texts. Accordingly, in the first part of this social studies unit, Heaton asked her students to examine the "commonly accepted concepts of Negro life and history," as portrayed in two seminal films, *Gone With the Wind* and *Birth of a Nation* (ibid, p. 322). Heaton and her students discovered several themes that emerged within the films. Among these were:

1. The plantation Negro as content with his lot, devoted to his White folks, not very intelligent, lacking in initiative and responsibility, etc.
2. The Negro of Reconstruction as a grabbing animal threatening White womanhood.
3. The "gallantry" of Southern manhood in general and of the Ku Klux Klan in particular.
4. The whole tradition of the South-plantations, lavish living, magnolias-as "Gracious living." (ibid)

Heaton then asked her student to compare these representations of the history of African Americans against works of non-fiction written by African American historians. And, for the final part of the unit, Heaton invited an African American history professor, Dr. Butler A. Jones, to speak with her class about the realities of slavery and the lynching campaigns mounted by groups such as the KKK. Heaton allowed her students to experience alternative versions of the history of African Americans outside of dominant classroom materials (ibid, p. 323).

Throughout the unit, Heaton kept the focus on the comparison of historical

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versions of African American experience as depicted by Anglos and by African Americans. Heaton asked students to consider why stereotypes existed and who would benefit from idealized depictions of the past and/or villainous caricatures of African Americans. The unit's historical examination of racism, slavery, and the violence committed against African Americans effectively established the unique experiences of this group of "newcomers." Moreover, Heaton's use of popular media to demonstrate the persistence of racism against and stereotypical beliefs about African Americans departed from Project emphases on meritocracy, progress, and the equality of all group experiences in this country.

A participating teacher at Prescott Junior High School in Oakland allowed her students a similar glimpse at the history of American racism. Within a social studies unit entitled, *Learning About People*, this eighth-grade teacher not only asked her students to write the stories of their families but also to describe how they felt about being an American (Taba, Brady, Robinson, & Dalton, 1949, 118-126). Two African American students provided compelling testimonies of the experiences of their relatives. Both documented the slavery and violence in their family histories. One student wrote:

My great grandmother who was a slave met my great-grandfather, also a slave on the plantation. She was picking cotton and could not lift the heavy bag. My great grandfather saw her, so he left his bag on the ground and picked hers up. Then they were freed and got married and came to the North to live and bought a farm. A few years later his farm stock made such a noise that he went to investigate one night. One of the thieves shot him. My great grandmother had to rear her family alone. (ibid, p. 119)

These investigations may have cast difference in negative terms, but these teachers also brought race to the foreground as a primary factor in both the existence and persistence of discrimination. This curricular work did not ignore skin color or equate the intolerance experienced by non-Anglo groups with those of every other social, immigrant, and/or newcomer group. Clearly, some of the participating teachers in the Project in Intergroup Education made explicit the connection between race and the persistence of unequal treatment: not all groups in American society reaped the rewards of the alleged meritocracy posited in the discourse of unity.

The Value of Difference

In another significant challenge to the discourse, some Project teachers attempted to consider difference in terms of the positive things that diversity brought to American society. Ruth Hardiman and her fellow teachers at Gilpin Elementary in Denver Co., for example, developed instructional units designed not only to increase Anglo awareness of the unique aspects of Mexican and Spanish culture but also to allow Latino students to "develop pride in their own culture" (Bostwick, 1948, p. 7). To be sure, these instructional materials focused primarily on Latino arts, music, and food. Nevertheless, these nascent attempts to celebrate differences did represent at least a

step toward pluralism. In fact, Hardiman and her fellow teachers established other school programs that went beyond these fairly superficial appreciations.

In addition to the units, the teachers at Gilpin set up a Spanish Club that had both social and instructional purposes. The club functioned socially as a place where all the Spanish-speaking students could meet. Because these students were included in classrooms regardless of their English-language proficiency, the club represented a place where they could congregate (*ibid*). Instructionally speaking, the club also reinforced Spanish language skills. For Hardiman and the teachers at Gilpin, the maintenance and improvement of the Latino students' Spanish-language skills was an instructional priority. The Spanish club had two bilingual faculty mentors who helped the club members in "learning the pronunciation and meaning of Spanish words, and reading in Spanish" (*ibid*, p. 9). As Hardiman reported, "cases of discrimination" were often the topic of discussion (*ibid*). Teachers then brought these instances to the attention of the particular classroom and students involved. The students, then, took responsibility for remedying the problem. Gilpin teachers, however, did not seek to help Latino students shed their cultural/linguistic differences in order to find acceptance. Rather, they attempted to help the entire student body appreciate difference and to consider the effects of discrimination.

Some participating teachers also attempted to help students value their own cultural backgrounds and/or the cultural differences in their classroom. For example, Edith Steele (1949), a high school teacher in South Bend Indiana, attempted to bring her students' familial/cultural experiences into the classroom via parent presentations, student research projects, and thematic cultural units. Steele hoped to get each student to see that, "Cultures are different, and no one can say that his is right and yours is wrong" (*ibid*, p. 185). Embracing a more nuanced view of culture, Steele assured her students of Serbian, Italian, Hungarian, Polish, and German descent that the U.S. was a multi-group society made of people with divergent, "patterns of action, speech, beliefs, and traditions" (*ibid*). More importantly, she emphasized that these differences actually constituted America. In terms of the results of this classroom work, Steele concluded:

I have had students tell me that they used to discourage their parents' coming to school functions where they would meet the teachers because they were ashamed of the language differences and foreign background of their parents. Instead, the student now takes pride and realizes that the parents' culture is worthwhile. (*ibid*, p. 186)

Clearly, the focus on difference as a negative consequence of discrimination was not a component of all intergroup education practices.

Even teachers in decidedly less diverse environments attempted to enable students to appreciate difference as central to American society. Teachers at Collinwood High, a predominantly Anglo-European school in Cleveland, Ohio, attempted to bring in guest speakers that would not only talk about their experiences with discrimination and prejudice but also their unique cultural backgrounds (Erickson, 1947). The school invited Emma Clement, the first African American woman to be

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named “Mother of the Year,” as their first guest speaker. Clement not only gave the students a glimpse of historical and contemporary treatment of African American women, she also conveyed the long-standing importance of family, community, and church within the African American community. Importantly, Clement stressed the importance of passing down ancestral histories of both the brutality of slavery and the continued struggle for freedom (ibid, p. 6).

Some Project teachers, then, attempted to cast difference in positive terms and not simply as a manifestation or negative by-product of discrimination. Indeed, they connected the American experience with cultural diversity; their curricular work stressed the need to maintain difference. Though no doubt varied in this articulation of a pluralist vision, some teachers’ conceptions of intergroup education clearly diverged from assimilationist assumptions within the discourse of national unity.

Conclusions:

Mutuality and Diversity and the Discourse of National Unity

At the end of World War II, political leaders began to focus on the global image of the United States as the moral and rational leader. Social unrest between minority and dominant groups, however, severely tarnished this image. Urban conflagrations signified tensions between groups within American society and highlighted the disparities and inequalities between dominant and non-dominant groups. U.S. claims of democracy and equality within its borders had decidedly less legitimacy in light of these tensions. Moreover, the attention that civil rights leaders focused on social inequities further undermined the U.S. as the would-be leader of the free world. Out of this context arose a discourse of national unity that not only called attention to existing inequalities but also promulgated a vision of America as a historically democratic and egalitarian nation. In a socio-political context imbued with fear the discourse promoted traditional assumptions about America while simultaneously foregrounding the need to eliminate intolerance and discrimination.

The leaders and organizing staff of the Project in Intergroup Education also understood the context of post war America in terms of fear. This context provided the justification for their attempts to bring issues of intolerance into public school classrooms. The need for and corresponding discourse of national unity underscored these efforts and provided the conceptual basis for the essential Americanness around which all citizens could unite. At the organizational level, Project leaders embraced an American identity that reified individuality, immigrant mythology, America’s egalitarian legacy, and discrimination as historical aberration. Together, these attributes of unity outlined a decidedly assimilationist take on American society. Tolerance, the main goal of intergroup education, was ultimately necessary in order to help all minority groups achieve in the manner of the dominant group.

The discourse of national unity, however, was not totalizing in its effect on

classroom material. The latitude allowed teachers with respect to creating their own unique versions of intergroup curricula complicates any assessment of their work. Teacher-created material did not simply transgress all conventional or traditional beliefs about the social world of America or the histories/experiences of those outside the dominant group. For every transformative aspect, the curricular products of teachers involved in the Project in Intergroup Education also embodied tradition. Yet the dualities, contradictions, and struggles exhibited in the work of the leaders and teachers of the Project in Intergroup Education tell us much about the relationship between schools and American diversity. Definitive judgment of the Project as either assimilationist or pluralist misses the point. Categorical dismissal of this in-service program as wholly assimilationist would effectively conceal the efforts of Project leaders and teachers to challenge prevailing texts and their attempts to bring issues of discrimination and intolerance to public school classrooms. Likewise, unequivocal praise of the Project in Intergroup Education as entirely pluralist or even transformative would mask the idealization of the middle-class, the assumptions of American meritocracy, and the focus on the negativity of differences between dominant and minority groups within intergroup curricula. In fact, the history of the Project in Intergroup Education reveals that addressing or attempting to address diversity in classroom curricula is a messy, complicated, and surprising process. Importantly, the context and content of the Project in Intergroup Education has implications for today.

In the post September 11th world, as political leaders appeal time and again to national unity, Americans confront another historical moment in which its definition is a noticeable and ever-present topic of national debate (“Nation Challenged,” 2001; “After Attacks,” 2001). Indeed, in a New York Times article in the fall of 2001, Gregory Rodriguez addressed this issue:

Since the 1970s, multiculturalism helped nurture an unprecedented level of public tolerance of ethnic and racial differences and new respect for hyphenated identities...Now, however, after the attacks, not only is the drive for unity bound to tilt the nation’s ethnic balance back in favor of the American side of the hyphen, it could permanently undermine the more extreme forms of multiculturalism. In the worst-case scenario, it could also dampen the nation’s recent appreciation of diversity. (p. 25)

As in the time of the Project, schools and education will no doubt be implicated in these renewed attempts to unify America and present a cohesive national image. Yet historians caution that contemporary events are never mere replications of historical occurrences. The context of the 1940s differs greatly from today.

Still, though the history of the Project and its teacher-created curricula may not find direct correspondence with our educational or political world, its history forces us to inquire as to the kinds of beliefs about America and Americans that schools will promulgate in light of contemporary demands for unity. The content of school curricula will be a crucial concern. At a recent meeting of the American Educational Research Association, educational scholar Gloria Ladson-Billings

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(2002) hinted at these concerns. In this time of unrest, she stated, the standardization of school curricula is simultaneously greater than ever. Standardized measures of achievement and rigid testing schedules are ubiquitous in most states. There is even talk of a national educational achievement test. We can only wonder at the implication of this simultaneous push for standardization *and* unity.

Juxtaposing the Project in Intergroup Education against today's political context and the devaluation/de-skilling of teachers raises several questions. Who will define the essential American experiences/beliefs that allegedly unite us? How will teachers understand and be permitted to operationalize their understandings of unity? How will the increasingly standardized curricula of public schools depict the American experience? Will traditional concepts trump more critical examinations of America society? Perhaps only the temporal distance of historical inquiry will enable us to comprehend how teachers in our time interpreted calls for national unity and the role of schools in presenting the diversity and mutuality of experiences within American society.

Notes

¹ The central staff of the Project in Intergroup Education included; Hilda Taba, Robert Havighurst, Margaret Heaton, Marie Hughes, Helen Jennings Hall, Elizabeth Brady, Deborah Elkins, Francis Marburg, Herbert Walther, and John Robinson. In addition, each publication also listed several other participating staff members (For a detailed list see Taba, Brady, & Robinson, 1952).

² For a complete list of the multitude of intergroup education organizations. (See American Council on Race Relations, *Directory of Agencies in Intergroup Education* [ACCR] 1948).

³ I use the term minorities in this paper because that is the way in which populations outside of the dominant culture are referred to in the published works of intergroup education leaders. These leaders used the term to describe any non-Anglo-Saxon middle class person. Thus, Jewish people were considered minorities alongside African Americans, Latinos, and so on.

⁴ References to both L.A.'s "Zoot Suit" riot and the Detroit Riot surface within Project literature, suggesting their concerns with myriad Anglo-minority relations. (See Brown, 1944; White, 1991).

⁵ Project leaders believed that the alleged improved status of African-Americans, Latinos, and other minority groups resulted from a variety of factors. Chief among these, leaders claimed, were the renewed allegiance that they felt toward the United States as a result of their involvement in the war effort, and their improved financial condition as beneficiaries of the wartime boom in factory and blue-collar occupations (see Taba, et al, 1952).

⁶ In support of this view, Project leaders frequently cited social critics of the time, including Gunnar Myrdal's (1944), *An American Dilemma* and Carey McWilliams's (1943), *Brothers Under the Skin*. (See, for example, Taba, 1948, Committee on the Study of Teaching Materials in Intergroup Relations, 1950; Taba, et al, 1952).

⁷ Following the riots of 1943, then Attorney General Francis Biddle (in Berry, 1994) made several very public speeches that underscored the Roosevelt Administration's concerns over racial discrimination. In those speeches, the Attorney General not only expressed fears over the recurrence of racial unrest but also his beliefs about the need to solve the "contra-

diction between our profession of faith in democracy and our acts” (p.133).

⁸ In the initial phases of the Project in Intergroup Education, the central staff created a set of criteria for teachers who wished to be involved. According to the guidelines published in the first report of the activities of the Project, there were three main criteria for interested teachers. First, they had to work in schools situated in communities with heterogeneous racial, religious or ethnic populations, which presented a variety of difficulties in democratic human relations. Second, the entire teaching staff at a given school had to express a sincere desire to participate. Finally, the school administrator had to be willing to develop programs in intergroup education and had to evince adequate leadership capabilities (see Taba, 1949, p. 3).

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