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# *CURRENTS*

*READINGS IN RACE RELATIONS*

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FOCUS ON  
HUMAN RIGHTS  
IN B.C.  
RACE RELATIONS  
TRAINING

*Published by THE URBAN ALLIANCE ON RACE RELATIONS*



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The Urban Alliance on Race Relations, formed in July 1975 "to promote a stable and healthy multiracial environment in the community," is a non-profit organization made up of volunteers from all sectors of the community.

The Urban Alliance on Race Relations is an educational agency and an advocate and intermediary for the visible minorities. It works toward encouraging better race relations, increased understanding and awareness among our multicultural, multiracial population through programmes of education directed at both the private and public sectors of the community. It is also focusing its efforts on the institutions of our society including educational systems, employment, government, media, legislation, police, social service agencies and human services, in order to reduce patterns of discrimination and inequality of opportunity which may exist within these institutions.

The work of the organization is carried out through working committees such as: Educational Institutions; Legislation; Media; Law Enforcement.

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**O**NE OF THE MOST SERIOUS and disturbing threats to improved race relations in this country is the proposed new human rights legislation that has been introduced by the provincial government of British Columbia. In the opening article, Professor Bill Black of the B.C. Civil Liberties Association briefly summarizes and compares the provisions of the new Bill with existing legislation. The dismantling of the existing Human Rights Code of British Columbia may not only have dire consequences for residents of that province but is of deep concern to all Canadians.

The rest of this issue is devoted largely to the topic of training in race relations and how such training has been applied within a variety of institutional settings. A rather large proportion of the articles are from authorities outside the country, particularly Britain. The reason for this is not so much perhaps a quantitative lack of activity in Canada, but, with a few outstanding exceptions, the quality and rigorous evaluation of the effectiveness of training programmes in Canada is by and large sadly lacking.

Race relations training is only one of a variety of change strategies available in reducing racial discrimination in Canada. Organizational change efforts, community development programmes, new legislation and judicial policies, alterations of political and institutional structures and procedures, and transformation of our economy are but examples of the wide range of other important strategies that are available.

### **The Nature of Racism**

A basic goal of all race relations training is the reduction or eradication of racism. The term "racism" is used by various people in a variety of ways. It can be defined perhaps within the following five broad forms of evidence:

**Effects or Outcomes** – as evidenced in the unequal distribution of economic, political and social resources or rewards to racial groups.

**Personal Acts or Behaviours** – as evidenced in individual performance that creates disadvantaged or lesser privileges or rewards for some people, or that leads them to be discriminated against.

**Personal Attitudes or Values** – as evidenced in public opinion polls or surveys.

**Institutional Procedures** – as evidenced in racially discriminatory mechanisms that provide differential advantage and privilege to people of different races.

**Cultural Values or Norms** – as evidenced in symbol systems such as language, or the value frameworks or fashions that are more highly cherished by one group than another.

These five alternative but non-exclusive forms of evidence or definitions help distinguish between *individual racism* and *institutional racism*. They also distinguish between cultural or *attitudinal racism*.

### **Racism and Training**

The training programmes that have been attempted in Canada in response to dealing with these various expressions of racism, have been equally varied.

These alternative training approaches vary in their objectives of increasing new levels of information, to new attitudes, to new forms of social and institutional behaviour. It is a complex field and can be tackled at any number of levels – from the personal, to the community, to the national and institutional levels.

In addition to the obvious decisions that have to be made in terms of level of impact (i.e. personal or institutional), any agency embarking upon a training programme has to clearly distinguish and decide upon the appropriate educational, attitudinal, behavioural or institutional change strategies that should be pursued to achieve realistic programme objectives.

"Training" in all its various interpretations has been perhaps the major focus of efforts to reduce racism over the last decade or so in Canada. Have we become overly dependent on training with its emphasis on behavioural change as the panacea to cure all our social problems? How relevant is such training in dealing with systemic forms of discrimination? How can training programmes be made more effective and relevant to reducing the complex nature by which discrimination is expressed in Canada today?

With the evident need and increasing demand for various forms of race relations training, a variety of responses have been made by various departments and levels of government as well as by innumerable individuals and organizations in the private and voluntary sector.

With a general tendency to rush to respond in a crisis-oriented manner have we taken enough time to reflect on what we mean by race relations training, and have we adequately evaluated the effectiveness of our activities? Without common definitions, and without an understanding of the implications of such definitions, and without an understanding of the implications of such definitions in terms of developing pragmatic courses of action, many of our well intentioned efforts have been and will continue to be dissipated in ineffectual and uncoordinated activity based on poorly conceived objectives.

### **New Initiatives**

In recognition of these inadequacies, it is of interest to note some promising recent developments in Toronto. The Urban Alliance on Race Relations is presently seeking funding in order to collect, document and disseminate race relations training programmes that have been implemented in Canada and elsewhere. From the compilation of this body of information it is the intent to attempt to develop an analysis and evaluation guidelines of race relations training. A second major initiative is a process of extensive discussion between several voluntary and public organizations to explore the feasibility of establishing a Canadian Race Relations Training Institute. In strengthening the level of expertise necessary to reduce racial discrimination in Canada, the purpose will be to improve the understanding and skills of practitioners in the field of race relations.

Training is not a glamorous topic where overnight results can be expected. It is a complex, time-consuming and often tedious process. But as Nadine Peppard emphasizes in her article reviewing the British situation, which to a surprising extent seems to describe so precisely the present Canadian state of affairs, it is an area where we can no longer afford to be amateurs.

*Tim Rees*

# ***Human Rights in British Columbia***

*Bill Black*

Bill 27, the Human Rights Act of 1983 makes major changes in the enforcement of human rights. This summary compares the provisions of the Bill with the existing Human Rights Code of British Columbia.

## **Elimination of Reasonable Cause Provisions**

The effect of eliminating reasonable cause is to remove protection against discrimination due to grounds such as age (except for those between 45 and 65), sexual orientation, language ability, and any other ground not explicitly named.

There is also a serious question whether discrimination based on pregnancy is covered.

## **Proof of Intent to Discriminate**

Bill 27 will cover only intentional discrimination. Policies having a discriminatory effect would not be covered. For example, height and weight restrictions would no longer be considered sex discrimination unless it could be proved the purpose was to exclude women. Similarly, the absence of a ramp would not be discrimination against those in wheelchairs unless intent could be proved; and a requirement that employees be clean-shaven would not be discrimination against those whose religion requires otherwise.

## **Discriminatory Advertisements and Application Forms**

The section of the existing Code prohibiting discriminatory advertisements and application forms is not included in Bill 27. Therefore, it would be no violation for newspapers to divide advertisements into "help wanted - men" and "help wanted - women" columns, or even "help wanted - whites" for that matter.

## **Enforcement Agencies**

The Human Rights Commission and Human Rights Branch is abolished. The new Council of Human Rights is established with more restricted functions and with no explicit provision for staff. Educational programmes apparently are ended. With the fewest possible exceptions, there is no remedy available under the Human Rights Act or Charter of Rights for matters that would normally be handled by the Human Rights Branch under the Human Rights Code of B.C.

## **Complaints**

Complaints of violations will be filed with the Council, which will be in charge of investigating them and decide whether they should proceed. As is presently the case, unsettled cases will be referred to the Minister of Labour who will decide whether to appoint a Board of Inquiry. The following summarizes some of the changes that have been made within this framework:

- Complaints must be filed by the person discriminated against; community groups and the enforcement agency can no longer commence complaints.
- Council of Human Rights can dismiss a complaint before any investigation if it is deemed frivolous, vexatious, in bad faith or could "more appropriately be dealt with under another Act." The last provision could require that all other possibilities, such as labour grievance arbitrations, be completed before a human rights investigation would even commence.
- After investigation, Council can discontinue complaint at its discretion. The Bill provides no guidelines regarding discontinuance.
- Human rights agencies apparently will no longer appear at boards of inquiry to assist the complainant. Complainants will have to

supply and presumably pay for their own lawyer, or argue the case themselves.

- Boards of inquiry can no longer award damages for humiliation, or loss of self-respect caused by the discrimination. Damages will be awarded only for out-of-pocket loss. For example, if racial minorities were excluded from a restaurant in an insulting fashion, the board could award no damages at all since there would be no out-of-pocket expenses.
- There is no right of appeal from the decision of a board of inquiry for either side, though the proceedings could sometimes be challenged under the Judicial Review Procedure Act.

#### **Criminal Penalty**

The right to lay criminal charges in court for violations of the Act does not exist. Therefore, if the Minister refused a board of inquiry, as he/she has the right to do, there is no alternative way of proceeding.

#### **Protection of those with Physical and Mental Disabilities**

The Bill gives explicit protection to peo-

ple with physical and mental disabilities. In cases involving the sale or rental of property, protection is strengthened. However, in cases involving public facilities and employment, the practical effect will likely give less protection than was given by the reasonable cause provisions of the existing Code. Therefore, although it looks as if these groups benefit from the Bill, the net effect may well be to lessen protection.

#### **Conclusion**

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the Bill is designed to make it much more difficult to bring a human rights complaint and to strictly limit the function of human rights agencies. Taken together, the changes mean that only clear cases brought by people with enough financial resources to take a case forward on their own are likely to succeed, and even they are subject to the discretion of both the Council and the Minister to discontinue a case without a hearing.

*Professor Bill Black is Director of the B.C. Civil Liberties Association.*

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## ***Parliamentary Committee on the Participation of Visible Minorities***

The Parliamentary Committee is proceeding with its cross-country series of public hearings in search of constructive programmes to promote harmonious race relations. Although the Committee has made it clear it does not want to hear the problems—it already knows them—early indications of the briefs submitted indicate that it has no choice. This is as it should be. New and innovative policies and programmes are seldom initiatives developed in a vacuum, but are usually responses to identified problems. How a “problem” is defined is suggestive of how it is understood and is the starting point for studying the response.

The terms of reference of the Committee appear to suggest a rather limited perception

of what the “problem” is. Racism is not only the result of pathologically prejudiced individuals, it is not only the result of an occasional accident or by-product of cultural differences, nor is it the result of competition for scarce resources. It is built into the structural systems and cultural networks of society.

The underlying theme of the brief by the Urban Alliance on Race Relations to the Parliamentary Committee emphasized that racism has become deeply embedded in the history and practice of almost every major institution and in the very modes of governance. The flowers are tainted because the roots are poisoned. Progress can come only if we dig deeply and not merely snip.

# Race Relations Training Today

Nadine Peppard

*Over the last ten to fifteen years, successive Governments have accepted the facts of widespread racial discrimination and disadvantage and legislated accordingly. It is surprising however, to find that the field of race relations training remains largely unexplored and that not only is there no universally recognized body of information or of expertise in the techniques of race relations training, but that little thought has been given to what the objectives of such training should be.*

## False Premises

To date, when objectives of training in race relations are formulated, they tend to derive from two basic premises, inter-related and pragmatic in concept. One is that only people in practitioner services (e.g. teachers, police officers, social workers, etc.) who work in areas of ethnic minority settlement and come into daily contact with minority group people need to be trained. The other, which follows logically from the first, is that the purpose of such training is to equip staff to "understand" minority communities better and thus to be able to deal more effectively with them. In other words, "we" are being trained to deal with "them." An acceptance of these premises also lends credence to the idea that there is a definable body of information which can be transmitted in the traditional way to those who "need" it. This in turn tempts the organizers of heavily-loaded training schedules to assume that only a few sessions are necessary in which to transmit it (by lectures and handouts) and thus to put it well down the list of priorities. The narrowness of this concept effectively rules out a study of the complexities of personal and group attitudes and the ways in which a society needs to

adapt to the change from a homogeneous one to a multiethnic, multicultural one. Inevitably, it provides a most inadequate basis for the training content, throwing the emphasis on information-giving on the cultural and religious backgrounds of the minorities, Government policies and few practical problems which appear to be capable of an easy solution. Acceptance of this inadequate basis for training is further strengthened by the very limited number of minority community people found at present in services like the police, probation and education services, in that there are not sufficient minority community participants in the courses to demonstrate the false basis of this approach, or to present an effective challenge to it.

A recognition of the fundamental defect in this thinking has been demonstrated by the education services in their approach, comparatively recently adopted, and illustrated by its terminology. Most educationists have now abandoned the familiar reference to "the education of immigrant children" in their policy statements and substituted "education for a multiracial (or multicultural) society". This introduces the concept that it is not just a question of how to teach immigrant children, or the children of immigrants, but of how to teach all the children in a way appropriate for a multiracial society. The main changes that this has brought about are firstly, the recognition of their worth and importance and secondly, the initiation of some school projects specifically designed to reduce prejudice and inculcate more tolerant attitudes (referred to in greater detail later). In other services also, during the last few years, increasing attention has been paid in training courses to the general question of attitudes and the psychology of prejudice. It is this area that is the most difficult to deal with, however, and



many trainers still prefer to stay on what appears to be the safer ground of information-giving on such subjects as statistics, cultural backgrounds, Government policy and the practical problems encountered by the particular occupational group. This practice continues in spite of the fact that experience indicates that information-giving sessions themselves frequently give rise to heated discussion and expressions of irrational prejudice with which the trainer may well not be equipped to deal.

## Objectives

What, then, should be the objectives of race relations training? Tempting though it might be, to offer as the objective something on the lines of inducing understanding and self-awareness, it has to be recognized that this is a theoretical approach suited to the realms of philosophical and academic discussion, rather than to the specific question of training staff in a variety of professions and occupations. If we are concerned with producing practical results in particular professional settings, the objective of the training must be not only to try to bring about greater understanding of the issues, but to relate that understanding to the professional worlds of those being trained. This objective needs also to be on very broad lines in order to provide a common denominator for various categories of staff. It might be, for example, "to enable staff to carry out their particular duties with equity and with maximum efficiency." Simple as it sounds, this very practical objective has wide implications in terms of the attitudes which underlie behaviours.

Experience suggests that the training would need to comprise a "common core" of aspects of race relations, to which would be added others related to the work tasks of the particular group of trainees. The "common core" should include an examination of the nature of the multiracial society, the giving of historical and cultural background information, a consideration of the psychological factors in personal and group attitudes and a description of Government race relations policy. The more specifically job-related parts of the training would include a study of factors par-

ticularly relevant in given fields (e.g. education, social work), a study of the way in which institutional racism can, even unintentionally, become established in the trainees' own particular field and, finally, some training for the "racial dimension" of the professionalism required of staff in the particular category involved. It is the last which, being less capable of easy definition, requires the most careful study. A practical analysis of what is required clearly shows that those attitudes or beliefs which underlie actual behaviour must be seen as the heart of the matter and that to construct a training scheme which tries to ignore them is to beg the question.

## Current methods

Race relations training is not given on a continuing or comprehensive basis. It does not influence the initial or in-service training in a wide range of professions and occupations where it is badly needed. It tends to appear in training courses of various types merely as the subject of one or two sessions, if at all. It is not followed through as a continuing course subject, nor is it included in compulsory qualifying tests at the end of the course. Within this limited compass, the race relations training methods in current use might be thought of as divided into three broad categories: the didactic, lecture-and-discussion method (with or without visual aids), the groupwork approach and the experiential approach. These last two categories are by their nature often interrelated.

## Didactic approach

The didactic approach is the one most commonly used, even though experience very strongly suggests that, as adopted at present in adult in-service training, it is often counter-productive. There have been a number of evaluation studies of this method, mostly in the field of education. For example, Miller's experiment in a London College of Further Education in 1969 produced evidence of reinforcement of an increase in prejudiced attitudes among white day-release apprentices who had a course of lectures and discussions. This fairly common experience is explained

by the American psychologist W. McGuire<sup>1</sup> in terms of his "innoculation theory" of resistance to attitudinal change. The postulates that giving students weakened forms of an argument may induce a reaction to that argument in terms of increased prejudice. A more recent and more extensive study undertaken as part of a large-scale British Curriculum research project<sup>2</sup>, is reported by Bagley and Verma<sup>3</sup> as producing rather more encouraging results. They say that, even taking into account that a number of the wide range of variables involved are still to be considered, the results show that "for the present there seems to be no indication, contrary to earlier fears, that teaching about race relations in British secondary schools will have adverse effects, and some indication that such teaching may well be beneficial in reducing prejudice."

This cautious note of approval bears out the experience of many organizers of courses, that some lecture and discussion sessions given by particular speakers, in particular circumstances, can be eminently successful if success is judged in terms of giving people new insights and the desire to pursue the subject further in their own way. The factors which lead to this result, rather than to the more negative one so often encountered are elusive and difficult to define or tabulate. They are concerned mainly with the personality and persuasiveness of the lecturer, and can include also the attitude of the students to the course, personal experiences they have had and so on. Verma and Bagley comment, for example, that Miller's research project "suggested that the group norms supporting the initially high level of prejudice of the apprentices were strengthened by intellectual arguments from an instructor perceived as external to the group and ignorant of the social realities as they affected group members."<sup>4</sup> This is a common experience and is closely linked with the practical dilemma of whether to use ethnic minority or white speakers, and whether they should be outside speakers or internal instructors. For the foreseeable future, in the absence of a large enough cadre of internal instructors with sufficient knowledge of the subject, it will be necessary for organizers of in-service training

to use outside speakers to a considerable extent.

## Groupwork approach

The groupwork approach is different from the didactic approach both in the mechanics and in the techniques used. The mechanics of it – the establishment of small groups and an informal atmosphere – and the techniques may be any of a wide variety, including discussion controlled by a group leader, unstructured discussion (including T-group methods), the use of films and case studies, role-playing and role-reversal, the organization of training games, group projects and so on. Most of these techniques have their origins in management training and are designed not so much to give information as to assist managers in keeping a workforce running smoothly and productively and in avoiding administrative and managerial errors of judgement. Although the emphasis they place on problems of communication, individual and group attitudes and so on can be helpful, they do not generally take into account, for example, the principles and practice required to eliminate racial discrimination, conscious or unconscious, or to promote equal opportunity. Moreover, the majority of management trainers will as yet have had no race relations training themselves, so will not be equipped to incorporate it fully into their courses. Good management practice can provide something of a safeguard, but its "racial dimension" is a long way from being developed or even properly understood.

As has been said earlier, considerable experience of this kind of training exists in the industrial field, but few groups or individuals have as yet attempted to apply the techniques in the field of race.

"Sensitivity training," "attitudinal training," "consciousness-raising" or "awareness training," which is the preferred description in the U.S., is essentially a part of groupwork and bears no relation to the didactic approach (though it is of course possible to have useful lectures on the psychology of prejudice, to set people thinking). The need for it is widely accepted in the U.S. and it is a standard aspect of training at all levels. Some particularly in-

