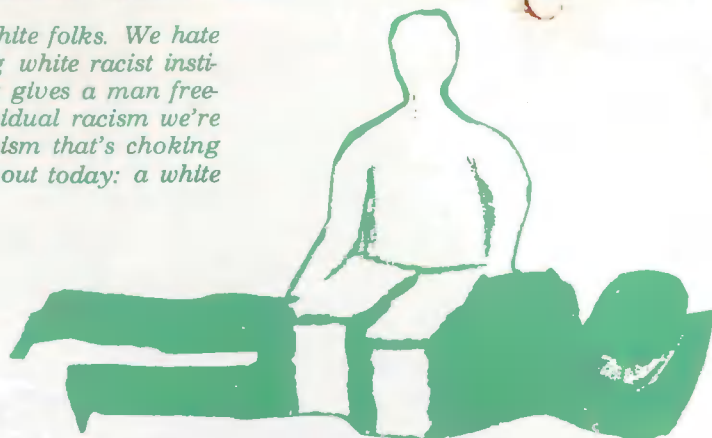


SOME THOUGHT-PROVOKING, MOCK-HUMOROUS DEFINITIONS*

"Basically Black folks in America do not hate white folks. We hate this stinking white racist system with these stinking white racist institutions, not you. The United States Constitution that gives a man freedom of expression gives you a right to hate me. Individual racism we're not worried about. It's this damn institutionalized racism that's choking us to death. Here's what Black folks is talking about today: a white racist system that keeps me locked in a Black ghetto all my life so I've got to develop a different culture to survive with the rats and the roaches. And when I break out and come to your institutions, you ask me the wrong tests. You don't ask me about the ghetto. You ask me about the Eiffel Tower."

—Dick Gregory, *THE LIGHT SIDE: THE DARK SIDE*, Poppy Industries album. 1969



- BLACK IS** being told you must "earn" the rights that the U. S. Constitution guarantees to all Americans.
- BLACK IS** going to court to be judged by a jury of your peers and finding that all your peers look bleached.
- INDIAN IS** watching John Wayne defeat 50 "savage redskins" with a single-shot pistol on the late, late show.
- INDIAN IS** learning in school that your country was "discovered" by Christopher Columbus.
- CHICANO IS** learning in school that the pioneers "settled" the West 200 years after your ancestors were living there.
- PUERTO RICAN IS** wondering why white tourists get brown on your island's beaches while you get pale in a mainland ghetto.
- A RACIST, SOUTHERN STYLE**, is someone who allows Blacks to live close as long as they don't get "uppity."
- A RACIST, NORTHERN STYLE**, is someone who allows Blacks to get "uppity" as long as they don't live close.

- ASSIGNMENT**
- 1—Find the accusations implicit in each of the above "definitions." What kinds of racism are being ridiculed?
 - 2—Make up your own definitions of racism beginning with:
BLACK IS. WHITE IS.

* Definitions collected from minority sources. For additional definitions see:
BLACK IS, by Turner Brown, Jr., 1969; *WHITE IS*, Preston Wilcox, Editor, 1970. Grove Press.

additional copies available at a nominal charge from

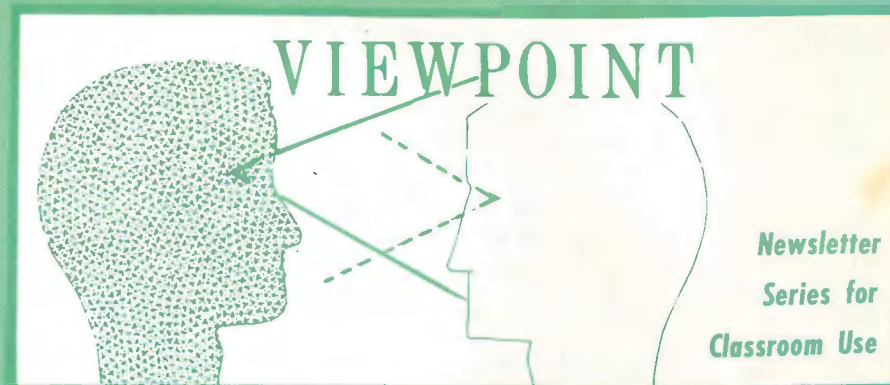
**Racism/Sexism
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(212) 757-5339

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C.I.B.C. April, 1980

A CONTEMPORARY GLOSSARY



Definitions of Racism

PREJUDICE "Unfavorable opinion or feeling formed beforehand without knowledge, thought or reason."
—from RANDOM HOUSE DICTIONARY. 1967

RACISM "Any attitude, action or institutional structure which subordinates a person or group because of their color . . . Racism is not just a matter of attitudes: actions and institutional structures can also be a form of racism."
—from RACISM IN AMERICA AND HOW TO COMBAT IT, U. S. Commission on Civil Rights. 1970

AND

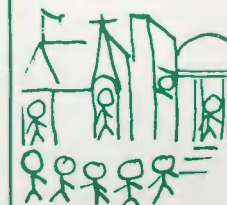
"Racism is different from racial prejudice, hatred, or discrimination. Racism involves having the power to carry out systematic discriminatory practices through the major institutions of our society."
—from WHAT CURRICULUM LEADERS CAN DO ABOUT RACISM, by Dr. Delmo Della-Dora, New Detroit, Inc. 1970

WHITE RACISM

"Power + Prejudice = Racism."
—from DEVELOPING NEW PERSPECTIVES ON RACE, by Pat A. Bidol

"In the United States at present, only whites can be racists, since whites dominate and control the institutions that create and enforce American cultural norms and values . . . blacks and other Third World peoples do not have access to the power to enforce any prejudices they may have, so they cannot, by definition, be racists."
—from EDUCATION & RACISM, National Education Association. 1973

"Racism and white racism mean the same thing, if we are referring to practices of major institutions and dominant societal patterns in the United States today . . . White people are in the majority in the country . . . Thus, government, business, industry, unions, churches, educational and other institutions are almost always dominated by white people. When you combine power with racial discrimination, the result is racism."
—from WHAT CURRICULUM LEADERS CAN DO ABOUT RACISM



INSTITUTIONS

"Are fairly stable social arrangements and practices through which collective actions are taken." (Examples of institutions are government, business, unions, schools, churches, courts and police.)

INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

"Institutions have great power to reward and penalize. They reward by providing career opportunities for some people and foreclosing them for others. They reward as well by the way social goods are distributed—by deciding who receives training and skills, medical care, formal education, political influence, moral support and self-respect, productive employment, fair treatment by the law, decent housing, self-confidence and the promise of a secure future for self and children."

"One of the clearest indicators of institutional racism is the exclusion of black members of society from positions of control and leadership."

—from INSTITUTIONAL RACISM IN AMERICA, Knowles & Prewitt, Prentice-Hall. 1969

"Some of the most conspicuous examples of (institutional racism) are in housing patterns; segregated schools; discriminatory employment and promotion policies; segregated churches; white control of newspapers, radio and TV; routes selected for construction of expressways or freeways; and textbooks which ignore or distort the role of black people."

—from WHAT CURRICULUM LEADERS CAN DO ABOUT RACISM

INDIVIDUAL VS. INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

"Racism is both overt and covert. It takes two closely-related forms: individual whites acting against individual blacks, and acts by the total white community against the black community. We call these individual racism and institutional racism. The first consists of overt acts by individuals, which cause death, injury or the violent destruction of property. This type can be recorded by television cameras; it can frequently be observed in the process of commission. The second type is less overt, far more subtle, less identifiable in terms of specific individuals committing the acts. But it is no less destructive of human life. The second type originates in the operation of established and respected forces in the society, and thus receives far less public condemnation than the first.

"When white terrorists bomb a black church and kill five black children, that is an act of individual racism, widely deplored by most segments of society. But when in that same city—Birmingham, Alabama—five hundred black babies die each year because of the lack of proper food, clothing, shelter and proper medical facilities, and thousands more are destroyed or maimed physically, emotionally, and intellectually because of conditions of poverty and discrimination in the black community, that is a function of institutional racism."

—from BLACK POWER, by S. Carmichael & C. Hamilton, Vintage. 1967

ETHNOCENTRISM

"A tendency to view alien cultures with disfavor and a resulting sense of inherent superiority."

—from WEBSTER'S 3rd INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY

CULTURAL RACISM

"When whites use power to perpetuate their cultural heritage and impose it upon others, while at the same time destroying the culture of ethnic minorities."

—from TEACHING ETHNIC STUDIES, National Council for Social Studies. 1973

Power + Ethnocentrism = Cultural Racism



HISTORY OF RACISM

"Representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned among the several states . . . according to their respective numbers which shall be determined by adding the whole number of free persons . . . three-fifths of all other persons (slaves) . . . and excluding Indians not taxed."

— U. S. Constitution, approved 1778

This is the "3/5 clause" (Article 1-Section 2) which defined the Black slave as property and equal to three-fifths of a man. Despite the assertion of the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal," the Constitution denied the slave his human rights. His Indian brother was written out of the Constitution, too. This clause legalized institutional racism for almost 100 years, until the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the Constitution defined the Black man as an equal.

(Sources: Eyewitness: The Negro in American History, by William Loren Katz. Pittman Publishing, 1968; Thomas Boylston Adams, president of the Massachusetts Historical Society. NY Times, 11/25/71.)

PATERNALISTIC RACISM

Whites, alone, set standards to which all peoples are expected to conform. These standards and decisions are made with the best of intentions, but they perpetuate the assumption of white superiority.

— excerpted from DEVELOPING NEW PERSPECTIVES ON RACE

A RACIST SOCIETY

"Is one in which social policies, procedures, decisions, habits and acts do in fact subjugate a race of people and permit another race to maintain control over them . . . No society will distribute social benefits in a perfectly equitable way. But no society need use race as a criterion to determine who will be rewarded and who punished. Any nation which permits race to affect those who benefit from social policies is racist."

— from INSTITUTIONAL RACISM IN AMERICA

WHO IS A RACIST?

"All white individuals in our society are racists. Even if whites are totally free from all conscious racial prejudices, they remain racists, for they receive benefits distributed by a white racist society through its institutions. Our institutional and cultural processes are so arranged as to automatically benefit whites, just because they are white.

"It is essential for whites to recognize that they receive most of these racist benefits automatically, unconsciously, and unintentionally."

— from EDUCATION & RACISM, National Education Association. 1973

EXAMPLES OF RACISM

1. Teacher to Indian and/or Chicano child: "For your own good, you will be punished if I ever hear you using any language but English in class."

2. A store clerk suspects that Black children in his store want to steal candy, but that white children want to buy candy. He treats the Black children as probable delinquents and the white children as probable customers.

3. A suburban community passes a zoning law prohibiting low-cost multiple dwelling housing. Its official reason is to prevent overcrowding, but the effect is to prevent minorities from moving to areas where industry is expanding and jobs are available.

4. A Black and a white family both move and enroll their children in a desegregated school. Previous school records have not yet arrived. The guidance counselor puts the white child into an upper "track" class and the Black child in one of the low "track" classes.

5. A Louisiana state representative recently opposed proposals to eliminate racial labels on blood plasma in his state's hospitals. He ignored the fact that Dr. Charles Drew, a Black surgeon, perfected the modern blood bank system.

6. Textbooks which teach: that Columbus "discovered" America . . . The pioneers "settled" the West . . . and have a chapter on "The Black Problem," "The Indian Problem," but never on "The White Problem."

ASSIGNMENT

Cite instances of individual and institutional racism—both overt and hidden—that you have experienced or observed in your community, school and home.

"UNFAMILIAR QUOTATIONS"

"Concerning the killing of . . . Indians, where blood is once begun to be shed, it is seldom stanch'd off a long time after."

— John Robinson, spiritual leader of the Pilgrims, 1623

This was the Pilgrim leader's warning when he learned that Miles Standish and a half-dozen men from the Plymouth Colony lured some of the local Indians into their stockade and murdered two chiefs, hung another and shot or hacked to death three more. No white man had been attacked by any Indian. The alleged reason for the massacre was a plot suspected against the Plymouth settlement. It is a plot whose existence is claimed only by the testimony of those who committed the murders. They called it a preventive action, and historians have defined it that way rather than as an early act of individual and savage racism.

