Corporations around the world continue to profit from the Columbus myth. Over the last several months we have seen the "discovery" theme used to sell a huge variety of products. What a tremendous task we have as educators to undo the Columbus myths! Most biographies for children and textbooks portray Columbus as courageous, brave, superhuman. His journeys were a great adventure. "But behind this romanticized portrayal is a gruesome reality. For Columbus, land was real estate and it didn't matter that other people were already living there; if he "discovered" it, he took it. If he needed guides or translators, he kidnapped them. If his men wanted women, he captured sex slaves. If the indigenous people resisted, he countered with vicious dogs, hangings and mutilations." (from Once Upon a Genocide: Christopher Columbus in Children's Literature, by Bill Bigelow, in Rethinking Columbus) Most textbooks fail even to mention the plight of Native people as a result of Columbus' exploits.

And now, our children have been barraged by endless advertising and the quincentennial media blitz.

Educators Against Racism and Apartheid urges you to help expose and combat the Columbus myth in all of its forms - literature, textbooks, the media, and advertising.

(continued on the next page)
Traditionally social studies teachers have been given the responsibility to deal with the topic of explorers. However, if we think of exploration in terms of invasion of populated lands, there are many new issues involved. Who were the people already living in an area? What was their culture - music, dance, art, stories? What scientific knowledge did they develop? What systems of government did they have? What economic systems did they have? How was this affected by the arrival of the “explorers?” What is happening today to the land of indigenous people in the name of development? These and other issues can be raised by math, science, literature, art, dance, language, and other teachers.

Activities:

Math: Calculate the difference in the Indian population in each area between 1492 and 1992.

Research/critical thinking:

Work in small groups to research the causes of the massive decline in population in North America and the Caribbean.

What is genocide?

Was the colonization of North America and the Caribbean a form of genocide?

Music/poetry/art:

Interview teachers and parents to find out songs and poems they learned in school about Columbus. (For example, "In 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue...")

What art lessons did they do in school on Columbus day? What was the message of each song, poem or art activity? Did they represent facts or myths about Columbus and the indigenous people? (You may want to look in poetry anthologies or song books.)

Compile an annotated booklet of these songs and poems.

Write your own songs, poems, and art about Columbus.

Annotate these to explain how they present more accurate information. Then add them to your booklet. Distribute your booklet in your school and community.

Resources:

**Columbus Didn’t Discover Us**

Cristóbal Colón: 500 Años Después

Rent or purchase these videos.

Turning Tide Productions

PO box 864

Wendell, MA 01379

(508) 544-8313


"1492-1992: Exploring the Past to Discover the Present", The Quincentennial Education Project. Resources for K-12. Lutheran-episcopal Student Center, Univ. of Minnesota. 317 17th Ave. SE Minneapolis, MN 55414. (612) 627-9445


Paul Robeson’s Comments About Little Rock

The most important part of the Little Rock story was not what Governor Faubus and the local mobs did, nor was it what President Eisenhower was moved to do: the important thing was that nine Negro youngsters, backed by their parents, the Negro community and its leadership, resolved to claim their right to attend Central High School. The magnificent courage and dignity these young people displayed in making that claim won the admiration of the American public. Their action did more to win the sympathy and support of democratic-minded white people than all the speeches about “tolerance” that have ever been made.

Little Rock was but one of the first skirmishes in the battle to end Jim Crow schools; much greater tests of our determination will soon be at hand. The desegregation of public education is as yet only in the first stages and the hard core of resistance has not been met. But there is no turning back, and the necessity to prepare ourselves for the struggles that lie ahead is urgent...

What power do we ourselves have? We have the power of numbers, the power of organization, and the power of spirit...

Indeed, the law itself will move a hundred times quicker whenever it is apparent that the power of our numbers has been called forth. (from Here I Stand, by Paul Robeson. Beacon Press. Boston. 1972. p. 92-93)

Critical thinking:
Discuss this statement by Paul Robeson.
What are Jim Crow schools?
What did Paul Robeson believe was the most significant aspect of the Little Rock story?
Paul Robeson’s life was a tribute to this philosophy. You may want to read more about him or see movies in which he starred.
Does Paul Robeson’s thinking have any relevance to your personal philosophy?

Action:
What is the status of school desegregation in your city or district?
Is your school segregated?
What state or local legislative or court actions have been taken to desegregate the schools? Perhaps you can attend hearings. Have laws been implemented?
What civic organizations are involved?
Work with local groups to develop a desegregation plan.
Is your school segregated because of tracking? Work with union, parent, and community groups to eliminate tracking of students.

This activity is from the draft of Activity Guide For Combating Racism, by members of Educators Against Racism and Apartheid. the Guide focuses on institutional racism. If you want to field test this guide for parents and teachers, please contact Paula Rogovin Bower. 625 Linden Ave. Teaneck, NJ 07666 or call (201) 836-6644.
Support S. Resolution 301

Resolution 301 marks the first time that the U.S. Congress has addressed apartheid's violence. It was introduced by Senator Paul Simon (D-Illinois), Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Massachusetts), and Senator Claiborne Pell (D-Rhode Island). President Bush has consistently refused to condemn apartheid's violence.

Educators Against Racism and Apartheid urges you to mobilize your class or entire school to support this legislation immediately!

Senate Resolution 301

Relating to ongoing violence connected with apartheid in South Africa.

Whereas more than 11,000 people have died in SA as a result of political violence since 1984, and more than one-half of these have died since the release of Nelson Mandela from prison in 1990...

(two more whereas)

Resolved, that (a) the Senate hereby -

1. notes with dismay the killings in SA and condemns this senseless violence; and

2. urges the Government of SA to take effective steps to end the violence and protect all SA citizens regardless of race, color, or creed.

(b) It is the sense of the Senate that the President should prepare and transmit to a Senate report on -

1. the nature of the violence in SA and the role that the various participants are playing in the ongoing violence; and

2. the impact of this violence on SA’s transition to democracy.

ACTIVITIES

Social studies: How does a bill get introduced in Congress? What is the process?

Contact the Washington Office On Africa, 110 Maryland Ave, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002. (202) 546-7961 for their excellent materials about this topic. Their pamphlets include: How bills are introduced, lobbying tips, how to arrange and conduct a meeting with a member of Congress, how to write to members of Congress.

Or contact: Office for Church in Society, United Church of Christ, 110 Maryland Ave. N.E. Washington, DC 20002 for pamphlets on writing to and visiting members of Congress.

Critical thinking: Send for the 14 minute video STOP THE VIOLENCE, Globalvision with The Africa Fund, 1992. This documentary exposes the role of the SA police and hit squads. $20. Also send for STOP THE VIOLENCE posters ($1) and pamphlets (10¢) - bulk rates available. The Africa Fund. 195 Broadway, New York, NY 10038, (212) 962-1210. After discussing the video, discuss why it is important for the U.S. government to get involved.

After discussing the video, is it or is it not important for the U.S. government to get involved?

1. APARTHEID'S VIOLENCE

Send for Apartheid Is Wrong: A Curriculum For Young People, by Paula Rogovin Bower, produced by Educators Against Racism and Apartheid. 164-04 Goethals Ave. Jamaica, NY 11432. $17 + $5 postage and handling. Make checks payable to Educators Against Apartheid. This multi-disciplinary, hands-on, up-to-date curriculum is for grades 1-12 as well as adults.

Apartheid is still alive and kicking. The violence has replaced the "whites only" signs as a tool of oppression against the black majority. It is essential that teachers continue to bring this issue into the classroom.

Critical thinking: Clip articles about violence in the United States and in South Africa.

Why are both societies racked with violence against people of color?

What is racism? What is apartheid?
So tell me, who discovered what?
He thought he was in a different spot.
Columbus was lost, the Caribs were not;
They were already here. CHORUS

By Nancy Schimmel 1991, Sing Out, Feb/March, 1992

Columbus knew the world was round
So he looked for the East while westward bound,
But he didn't find what he thought he found,
And someone was already here. CHORUS

It isn't like it was empty space,
Caribs met him face to face.
Could anyone discover the place
When someone was already here? CHORUS

So tell me, who discovered what?
He thought he was in a different spot.
Columbus was lost, the Caribs were not;
They were already here. CHORUS

CHORUS
The Inuit and Cherokee.
The Aztec and Menominee
The Onandaga and the Cree, (clap, clap)
But someone was already here.

African National Congress Support Conference
November 13-15, New York City

Attacks against the ANC by the South African regime and Inkatha have been increasing dramatically. Between July, 1990 and April, 1992 there have been 261 attacks on township residents by thugs which has resulted in 1,207 deaths and 3,697 injuries.

The ANC has exposed two intelligence operations being pursued against it by the racist regime. The first, Operation Springbok, is designed to create conditions which would prevent the ANC from forming a government on its own. The second, Operation Thunderstorm, is designed to weaken the ANC physically through violence and create a climate of uncertainty.

In light of this situation the ANC has appealed to "all South Africans to unite in a broad movement for democracy, peace and justice now." and to the international community for material support including assistance from the United Nations Security Council.

Please:
Write to your city and state lawmakers to KEEP SANCTIONS IN PLACE.
Plan to bring your coworkers and students to the ANC Support Conference in November. For info. contact ANC Support Conference, c/o District 65-UAW, 13 Astor Place, New York, 10003 or call (212) 673-5120, ext. 390.

KEEP THE PRESSURE ON!!
Racism in Education

Little Rock

Aim: Young people will examine the history and significance of the effort to desegregate the schools in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Introduction: In 1954 the Supreme Court declared segregation in public schools to be unconstitutional. It ruled that all school segregation laws were invalid and that therefore "all provisions of federal, state, or local law requiring or permitting such discrimination must yield to this principle." In 1956, the NAACP in Arkansas filed suit in Federal Court against the Little Rock district on behalf of thirty-three Black parents for immediate integration to state in grades one through twelve. The court ruled that the school board acted in good faith in scheduling integration to start in September of 1957. The NAACP appealed, calling for immediate integration. The Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the lower court and ordered the school board to put its plan into effect as of September, 1957.

Nine students were selected to enter Central High School. Segregationists, in collusion with the Governor, the police, and the National Guard tried to prevent the young people from attending Central High. Eventually federal troops were ordered in to protect the students.

What happened at Little Rock had a tremendous impact on the struggle for desegregation around the country. The students, all of whom had volunteered to attend Central High School, served as an inspiration to people in the civil rights movement. Their actions led to a period of intense struggles such as the Freedom Rides, lunch-counter sit-ins, boycotts, and other actions.

Activities:
Reading/ critical thinking: Read The Long Shadow of Little Rock, a memoir by Daisy Bates. The University of Arkansas Press. Fayetteville, 1987. This is a very moving history of the desegregation of Central High School.
Discuss the book in small groups.
What was the role of the police, the National Guard, the governor, the school administration, the Federal govt, civic groups, families, religious leaders, and other individuals?
Is the story of Little Rock still relevant?
From whose point of view was this history written?
Seek out other versions of that same history. Compare versions of the Little Rock story in textbooks, encyclopedias, and other books.
For each, try to determine the point of view of the author.
Does the author's background make a difference in the way the story of Little Rock is told?

Writing/ critical thinking: What would happen in Central High School were in your city, if the court ordered a segregated school in your city to admit students of another race? What would be the response from the Governor, elected officials, civic and religious groups, YOU, YOUR FAMILY, and YOUR FRIENDS?
Would YOU be one of the volunteers?
Write your story.

Drama: Role play the Little Rock story. Switch roles so that each person can role play the part of the nine young people. Discuss thoughts and feelings.
Perhaps a few people will draft a script, and your play can be videoed or performed at several schools or at special events in your community.

Social studies: Work in groups to interview teachers, parents, or community residents who were involved in the civil rights movement of the 1950's and 1960's. This could make an exciting and historically valuable video for a local cable network.
Clay House Project in Namibia

For science teachers and activists:

**THE NAMIBIAN** newspaper reported on March 5, 1992 that more than R210 000 was presented to a low-cost housing project by the Danish Embassy in an effort to ease Namibia's extremely serious housing shortage.

The Clay House project aims to provide good quality, affordable homes for people, using ancient but largely forgotten building techniques. A squatters community at Henties Bay and Windhoek/Katutura have expressed interest in the clay house project. The Henties Bay community is in close proximity to the Omaruru River's large reserves of clay.

Building materials at present are extremely expensive, as 85% are imported from South Africa, whereas clay is readily available in Namibia. A spokesperson said that clay houses should not be seen in a primitive context of "mud huts." They are quality buildings.

1. Namibia is in great need of material aid. If your union, religious, or community group would like to contribute, please contact the Namibian Embassy.
2. You may want to explore the concept of clay as a building material in your science class. What is clay? Where is it found? How has clay been used as a building material?
3. Take a field trip to dig for clay. Bake your own bricks in a kiln. Construct small model clay homes.

Please lobby your Congressional Reps. for drought relief aid for Southern Africa!

---

**Welcome Sipho!**

Have a great year in school! We are happy for you and your mom!

Love,

Members of EARA

---

**James H. Bell**

1943-1992

James H. Bell died on April 1, 1992 after a year-long battle with lung cancer. Jim Bell, a long-time anti-apartheid activist, was the Political Action Director of District 65 UAW and President of the New York chapter of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists. Jim also coordinated Nelson Mandela's historic New York tour. We will miss him dearly.

---

Educators Against Racism and Apartheid - Board of Directors: Paula Rogovin Bower, Arthur Colen, Joyce Duncan, Joseph Edelman, Pam McCarthy-Bamba, Rebekah Richie-Pagan, Carole Storch-Dladla, Claudia Zaslavsky.

---

**Are YOU a member of Educators Against Racism And Apartheid?**

Many thanks to people who renewed their EARA membership this summer. EARA Membership Coordinator Carole Storch Dladla urges everyone receiving this newsletter to send in their membership contribution of $10. Printing and postage costs are high. Your financial support is essential.

___ I would like to join Educators Against Racism and Apartheid. ($10.)

___ I would like to make a contribution to help EARA expand its outreach.

Please make checks payable to Educators Against Racism and Apartheid. Send to 164-04 Goethals Avenue, Jamaica, NY 11432

NAME________________________ADDRESS________________________CITY_______STATE_____

ZIP______PHONE(______)____SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION__________________________

---

Boycott Kellogg's and Shell Products. Apartheid KILLS!
Just say NO to racism and apartheid!