

the image of the Asiatic immigrant is not much different from which originated in the sensational press of the early 20th century; the Spanish-speaking immigrant groups are virtually ignored in our textbooks; our students find it difficult to get an adequate picture of Jewish life in America today from our textbooks. Rarely do we find a suitable discussion of anti-Semitism in our culture.

Realistic and accurate description and analysis of the pluralistic nature of American society, its achievements and current problems, is imperative at this critical moment of our history. Without such description and analysis, the image of the unassimilable "outsider" becomes the unconscious basis for prejudice and discrimination. Inadequate text materials are psychologically damaging to children of minority groups who find it impossible to identify themselves with individuals or groups in their books. Moreover, our national unity and our "world image" are deeply involved in the elimination of all forms of discrimination. Law may bar the overt forms, but only education with appropriate instructional materials and procedures can cope with the subtle forms.

The New York City school system, therefore, is requesting its textbooks appraisal committees in History, Government, Problems of Democracy, Social Studies, Geography, and in any other curriculum areas where these considerations are relevant, to apply our existing criteria even more rigorously in the evaluation of textbooks and other instructional materials submitted by publishers for listing and relisting. Thus, in addition to applying our general evaluation criteria, our committees will ask the following questions:

1. How adequate is the space and treatment given to the roles of various minority groups in our culture?
2. Do the illustrations, both photographs and sketches, reflect the pluralistic nature of our society?
3. Does the treatment reflect the findings of recent historical scholarship?
4. Does the treatment avoid reality by ignoring or glossing over the present-day tensions of intergroup relations, and the efforts made to relieve those tensions?
5. Does it help to promote the goal of a pluralistic society, free from the social ills of discrimination and prejudice in such areas as education, employment, and housing?

The Superintendent of Schools will recommend only those instructional materials which are in accord with the stated educational objectives of the Board of Education. This action is not an attempt at censorship or dictation. It is a response to community expectations that the textbooks we approve for use in our schools will reflect our educational objectives, as set forth in the course of study and curriculum bulletins issued by the Board of Education.

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MAY 1, 1964.

To the publishers of text materials for the schools.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: On October 4, 1962, publishers were notified that the New York City schools would approve for future use only those instructional materials in appropriate curriculum areas which presented a comprehensive, historically accurate and satisfactory picture of civil rights and the status of minorities.

In a Policy Statement on the Treatment of Minorities in Textbooks, the Superintendent of Schools indicated that he would recommend only those instructional materials which were in accord with the stated educational objectives of the Board of Education. These objectives include a realistic and sympathetic account, both in text and illustrations, of the role of minority groups in our culture, past and present. Within the last year, two meetings have been held with publishers at which this matter has been discussed.

The Office of Textbooks and Supplies, in the last year particularly, has been engaged in an increasingly intensive program of applying these criteria in the evaluation of *new* social studies textbooks, as well as in the re-evaluation of instructional materials in this curriculum area submitted for *renewed* listing after the expiration of a five-year contract period. While progress has been made, a number of books in both categories have been denied listing in our approved list of textbooks. These rejected books do not present a fair and adequate picture of the role and status of minorities in our history based on the findings of contemporary historical scholarship.

There is also the problem of the re-evaluation of books already listed and currently in use in the schools. Many of these are in need of up-dating and revision in order to help the pupil to understand civil rights issues from an historical and contemporary viewpoint.