

IF I HAD MY WAY

Race Studies — for Citizenship

by S. H. HARTSHORNE

IT is almost impossible to imagine what one would do in an educational situation "if I had my way", hedged in as we are by educational impracticabilities, rules and regulations. I therefore propose to allow "my way" to be controlled by some of these immovable and sometimes admittedly justifiable limitations. There are, however, certain conditions that seem to me essential to the treatment of a subject if it is deemed important enough to be made compulsory in the school curriculum.

The first of these is that a sufficient minimum number of periods must be allowed, to preserve continuity, to allow time for practical illustration by way of films, library work and expeditions, and to allow time for research work at home. At present Race Studies is given one period per week and there is no allocation on the official homework timetable.

Secondly, it is important that it should be clearly established that the syllabus cannot be "covered" except in a very superficial way. This leads to the amassing of details unrelated to the situation in which we find ourselves and to the subject as a whole. It is therefore necessary to select the sections that are important, of interest and worth doing thoroughly.

Thirdly, it should be categorically established that Race Studies is worthy of an honourable place in our school curriculum and that it is an important tool in the creation of a whole citizen in our particular society. It must therefore not be fobbed off on to the willing (or perhaps unwilling) horse, irrespective of his interest or ability to cope with the subject or his capacity to inspire the desired attitude towards it.

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Granted these conditions I would aim at taking full advantage of the fact that this is not a matriculation subject and that there is no urgent need to "stuff" facts into receptive minds for reproduction in a test paper. I would attempt rather to arouse interest and to give time to discussion and research so that there would be real understanding and an enlarging of the pupils' mental equipment. I would aim at showing the pupils the people around them as individuals in situations comparable to their own, at creating an attitude of human interest in them coupled as far as possible with a scientific, as against an egocentric, approach to their ways of life.

Finally, I would attempt to give them an understanding of the workings of a multi-racial society and the opportunity of thinking on the basis of established facts rather than of traditional or pre-conceived opinions.

How would I set about achieving these aims?

The scheme of work should allow scope, where the class has the ability, for the development of special interest; e.g. art forms of the indigenous peoples (Std. VII), social relationships and the effect of Western Civilisation on the kinship group (Std. VIII). Evaluation of the pupils' achievement should be based on this type of work rather than on tests. Practical work should form an important part of the syllabus. This could take the form of reference to books for the purpose of establishing facts, visits to Bantu schools, residential areas and social centres, the showing of films and film-strips. I would use a text-book only where it fits into the general framework of the topics selected for treatment and where it provides information which can form the basis for discussion.

Complete re-arrangement of the Std. VIII syllabus would be necessary, with the emphasis on how "the other three-quarters" live now, how they react to the impact of Western Civilisation and why this reaction takes the form it does.

For this is necessary a basic knowledge of traditional modes of living and of the conditions that have been imposed on the people by a dominant Western industrial economy, system of law, political organisation and moral codes. This can be done without excluding important knowledge of administrative and legislative developments laid down in the syllabus. If this approach were to

be adopted, the existing Std. VIII text-books could be used only in a very limited way.

I realise that a great deal of this is idealistic but as one who has taught this subject since its introduction in the schools I know that the few pupils with whom this ideal even approaches achievement make its teaching a worthwhile and rewarding task.

IF I HAD MY WAY

Race Studies — for Understanding

by M. J. MALAN

IN a multi-racial South Africa it is necessary that all of us should have an objective and factual basis from which to review the problems of our society. It is difficult to break down prejudice and preconceived ideas held by individuals, but Race Studies should give pupils a knowledge of what constitutes *race* in the biological sense and *culture* in the anthropological. Through the three-year course stress should be laid on what are inborn characteristics of man, and what are acquired characteristics, in the hope that this scientific attitude may be the basis of future thinking on racial questions.

The Std. VI syllabus should start with the origin of man in Africa and the development of the main race groups in the world. Emphasis should be on the common origin and development of one species — *Homo sapiens* — before the physical differences between Caucasoids, Negroids and Mongoloids are discussed. Examples should be taken from the races found in South Africa today, and some indication should be given of how these races arrived in this country.

When pupils have become thoroughly familiar with the idea of inborn characteristics and their variations, the idea of acquired culture should be introduced, through the study of a particular Bantu tribe and our own European social group.

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The similarity of the culture patterns should be stressed as this forms the basis of Std. VII work.

Std. VII should deal with the fundamental patterns of culture to be found in all human societies and with the similarities and differences of the cultures found in South Africa today — from the stone age culture of the Bushmen to the Western civilisation of the European and the eastern civilisation of the Indian.

An attempt should be made to show that different races may have similar cultures and that environment and culture are inter-related.

Std. VII should try to make the pupil realise the interplay of the various cultures in the South African Scene today. The ideas of rural and urban communities, communal and capitalistic economic systems should be discussed. The industrial revolution taking place in South Africa at the moment should be dealt with as it affects all members of all races. The rise of African nationalism and freedom must also be made clear and the problems of racial psychology should be discussed with the A-stream in brief outline.

The policies of separate development of the different races in South Africa and that of integration should be explained.

This is an ambitious programme of study and must be modified to suit the abilities of the pupils. A-stream can attempt to learn far more theoretical knowledge than C-stream. I should encourage teachers to approach the subject from the angle of the Social Anthropologist and use the current text book merely to illustrate race characteristics and special social customs.