

Philip Rosen. *The Neglected Dimension: Ethnicity in American Life*. (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980) xii, 260 pp., \$12.95, \$6.95 paper.

This book was initiated by the National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs with funding from the Ford Foundation and the U.S. Office of Education. It clearly states and carries out its purpose, i.e., alteration of the ordinary high school curriculum to reflect the diversity of the American ethnic heritage. Throughout the text the richness and significance of that diversity is highlighted, emphasizing several times in skillful and simple language that to be a hyphenated American is un-American. The author has gone to great lengths to include writing from a wide variety of ethnic groups in his selections; any student reading them should be able to identify himself or herself as a part of some ethnic group.

Unlike many texts written by people who have not been in a high school classroom since their own graduation, this is obviously the product of a practicing teacher. Rosen has included participatory exercises throughout the material that can easily be accomplished in a class period and should get the class moving in tackling ethnicity as a topic. The readings are also short and thus could be adapted for use at several grade and ability levels, although parts of the text may be a bit complex for less able students.

A major criticism of the book is its rigidity. As a teacher who believes a text should be used as a supplement rather than as the core of any course, I wish for more flexibility. It assumes that a course will be designed completely around it, making it less valuable to a teacher wishing to enhance a course or to use only a few units. In these days of budget cutting, creative teachers interested in ethnicity have to find ingenious ways to work ethnic study units into traditional U.S. history or social studies courses.

The text needs an accompanying workbook. Current instructions require a student to write in the book itself; few public school systems could afford its annual replacement. The book is also visually unappealing, with small photos which are often out of focus. Finally, the text would be difficult to use in a rural, or one-school town and it is often just these communities which could most benefit from exposure to such material.

Overall, the text does what it intends. A student in a class in which the book is used should be convinced that "individual choice is greatly influenced by subtle ethnic factors operating both consciously and subconsciously on people." The selections underscore the fact that most school books neglect the impact of immigration on American life except for token treatment: "These texts suggest that everything important in the American past has been said and done by white, English-speaking, old-stock Americans."

Students are encouraged to examine books, newspapers, class name rosters, their neighborhoods, and politics for evidence of ethnicity and parallel institutions. The text begins and ends with a useful values questionnaire which should help them clarify their own perceptions. In summary, Rosen's work is a worthwhile addition to a social studies teacher's collection and an excellent resource for an urban school wishing to develop a course in ethnicity. For smaller systems, I recommend it only as an aid from which to glean ideas about combatting the white-dominated texts still being published.

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