

Project Development

Yakima Agency

Toppenish, Washington

June 27, 1963

Mr. R. D. Holtz
Area Director, Portland, Oregon
Attention: R. H. Balsiger

Dear Mr. Holtz:

The enclosed report was prepared by the Projects Development Officer. In its preparation he has discussed the subject with Branch Chiefs, articulate Yakimas, and other interested persons both within the Bureau and without. There has not been a study committee as such- and neither has there been a collection of all available information on the subject. These instructions have not been followed for the following reasons:

- A. Fear of dissent, widely conflicting opinions, and resultant sub-standard compromise for the sake of completing the report of handled by a committee.
- B. Good, objective reports written on this subject are few. Selected reports were reviewed with an attempt to overlook their subjective elements. Other reports were feared over-subjective for consideration in the report's preparation.

Thus, it was that a single individual might better assimilate information from informed and thoughtful individuals and prepare a subsequent report.

It should be noted that (although strongly insinuated in the report) that many suggestions have been "weeded out" since it was felt that they were well known to the Bureau. It is also important to recognize that the entire report assumes that the readers are at least equally as knowledgeable as the writer on the subjects elements and many times dismisses or covers an acculturation element or concept by a terse implication.

Sincerely,

Superintendent

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Jack Harbeston

PT:mmo

ACCULTURATION OF THE YAKIMAS -- Some motivational concepts and ideas

Introduction

This report will deviate from the original request distributed to all agencies on March 8, 1963. It will deviate because the instructions of this letter stimulate duplication of ideas and suggestions which should be well known to the level of personnel to which this report is being prepared. It is felt that re-echoing the obvious acculturation actions recognized as necessary to effectively transform the Indian society would be of little value. Therefore, an effort has been made to probe not the methodology of acculturation but rather the genesis of motivation.

It is well recognized and accepted that education is of primary importance as a motivational stimuli. The ramifications of serious educational effort provide a myriad of subsequent motivations. It is the initial step in self-improvement, the development of responsibility, and appreciation of the cultural environment. Likely, education is the essential key to acculturation of the Yakima Indian. But this is neither a suggestion or solution to the problems outlined by Commissioner Nash. The answer is much deeper - almost primitively basic and illusively obscure.

It is the intent of this report to try and get at the motivational trigger mechanism. It makes no suggestions except in conceptual ways and is intended only to present an example of how this problem might be appraised.

Some Concepts

Basically, the acculturation process is dependent upon an "imposition stage" whereby major efforts concentrate on transforming the thoughts, ideas and thinking of one group upon another- either singularly or en masse. It is the process of indoctrination whether the methods be starkly cruel or those of Madison Avenue.

The Bureau is dealing with an ethnic group that has social standards and values not understood by most outside its organization and some within. It is this value structure of the Yakima that must be selectively changed in the areas that impede his progress in assuming the responsibilities inherent in U.S. citizenship. These "imposed" societal standards are primarily materialistic, but, regardless of their superficiality are the essential motivating factors that develop responsible citizenry in this country. Unless we understand and accept from the very outset that one of the basic purposes and responsibilities of the Bureau's functions is to effect a change in the value standard of the American Indian from his to that of modern societies, it is purposeless to make an attempt at acculturation. This concept is not chauvinistic for it is recognized that our society adheres to many false standards. They are functional ones, however, and if the American Indian

is going to survive on his own, once his wardship is terminated, he must be led, I repeat, led to believe that our value spectrum is worth acceptance. *

Many things are known about the Yakima and other American Indians. Commissioner Nash's speech at the education conference gives an excellent appraisal. The important point in this report, however, is what we don't know. Why is the Indian culture so markedly different in idealism, social structure, and values as contrasted to our way of life. There are some obvious answers such as lack of education and a total overall economic underdevelopment, poor communications, kinship, religion etc., and these are the things most often thought of as suggestions for the acculturation process. The lack of success in employing actions of acculturation is closely related to a general inability to either comprehend how the American Indian thinks or fully appreciate his rationale in conjunction with an intolerant attitude regarding his value standards.

Perhaps a significant key to acculturation lies in the appreciation and acceptance of the fact that we do not fully comprehend the Yakimas' thoughts, ideals, aspirations - nor are we likely to with increased and concentrated effort. Quite likely the knowledge we now have is sufficient to devise methods that will change his way of thinking to ours. If this can be done, if the Indian thinking process can be altered to coincide with the majority of individuals in modern society, we are solving (or at least seeking a solution) the problem of primary and basic motivation. Desire for education and self improvement their ethical ramifications. A condition of inertia could naturally follow, for the inculcation of our thing may create an appreciation for our values, standards and a desire to obtain the commodities that this materialistic basis offers. Responsibility and societal growth are a potential and natural consequence.

The methods suggested for such a program are not the usual ones. Earlier, it was stated that indoctrination can oftentimes be quite methodical - even inhumane and cruel. This is a method employed (i.e. SCAP in Japan, Communism in Red China) and a very effective one and also expedient but there are better ways - much better ways - albeit extremely slow. It must be tactful, subtle, and have a small beginning. In fact, so tactful that the Indian himself is not actually aware of the transformation that is taking place. He must essentially unconsciously change and slowly transform from his culture into ours or else the program would fail. It requires intelligent planning and patience by the Bureau. The thesis of this report presents a possible means to achieve this end. It is very basic and extremely conceptual in nature but it is a germ of an idea. If it has merit perhaps a new assignment of Bureau efforts could be devoted to the development of human resources.

* It is recognized that this same general philosophy and program has long been known and partially applied by the Bureau. As the report unfolds, however, it will become apparent that the approach, to what is perhaps essentially the same end, is extremely different.

THE THESES

Since this report is being prepared by the Projects Development Branch it is logical that projects be considered as one of the basic tools for Indian Acculturation.

The following ideas developed as a result of conversations and discussion between Mr. Jack Harbeston, of Consulting Services Corporation, Seattle, Washington and myself. He has been kind enough to prepare this section on a development program.

A development program for the Yakimas

Preceding any discussion of a development program for the Yakimas, should be an examination of its possible repercussions,

If the desired result of a development program is the assimilation of the Yakimas into the general American culture, at the cost of gross distortion to the r own culture, then it follows that certain industries should be developed in an attempt to employ the Yakima Indian Labor force. Assuming (and this may be an unjustified assumption) that the Indians can be successfully employed and do assimilate the more desirable aspects of the American way of life, it then becomes necessary for the Bureau of Indian Affairs to assume responsibility for the extinction of a way of life known only to the Indians. It does not seem to be generally recognized that a forced assimilation in the ~~position of a~~ ~~semi-alien~~ ~~culture~~ of a semi-alien culture, is an

imposition on our part. This puts the American culture, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which is its implement, in the position of a ~~semi-alien~~ ~~culture~~ ~~semi-alien~~ subjugating nation. To point up the lack of communication between ourselves and the Indian, it is important to recognize that from our point of view, we are elevating these people from a "primitive way of life." Yet, from their point of view, what could be more primitive than our treatment of the Indians to date, and this as the final solution extinction of their way of life either directly, through a process of forced assimilation, or indirectly, through abandonment of the Yakima nation when they are unprepared to either govern or support themselves. It is ironic that we have geographically surrounded this reservation for many years, yet we are separated by vast cultural distances. And we do not yet have an adequate method to communicate with these people either individually or through a mass media.

I do not think it accurate to say the Yakima culture is lacking in many of the human values which we esteem as Americans--although we generally do not adhere to them in practice. Therefore, an ideal solution would be a program which would allow continuation of the culture through types of employment that would be acceptable to them and to us, and would encourage both a higher sense of responsibility (our definition of responsibility) and the inculcation of their own way of life (which is really their choice to make so far as it does not physically disturb citizens outside the reservation). It is our primary responsibility is to create an economic freedom for the Yakima Indians, then let us examine methods to produce this result, and, temporarily at least, set aside the problem of acculturation; and acculturation is only one of the alternatives and primarily a reflection of our concern over their "primitive way of life," rather than their economic freedom.

The object of this discussion, therefore, is to encourage a development program that would succeed within certain constraints, relative both to the Yakima culture and our own. This program would have to be scheduled over a 10 to 20 year period, and would have to recognize at least the following constraints:

1. The Yakimas' hostility to whites (and perhaps equally important mistrust of their own people).
2. Lack of communication between the Yakima nation and the U.S. government.
3. Unusual, by our standards, work habits of the Indians.
4. Limitations and advantages of physical resources available to the Indians.
- 5.- The Indians special personal and cultural pride.
6. The geographic location of the reservation relative to potential market areas and the fact that much of it is wilderness area.

A successful program to operate within all of the above constraints must have several component parts, each having a definite economic relationship to the other, each capable of paying its own way and each

oriented to a relatively small number of workers. The object is to appeal to a wide spectrum of job aptitudes and desires through a program of several planned and integrated projects, each contributing to a total development program resulting in a sustaining economy for the Yakima nation.

Summary

Indian motivation is one of the basic problems faced by the Bureau of Interior. It relates primarily to providing the necessary stimulation so that the Yakima Indian will desire to improve his level of education and in turn manifest a socially acceptable degree of self-sufficiency and responsibility.

The association between resources and motivation is basically this; that the resource base must be developed in such a way that the Yakima will take interest and pride in being a part of its overall economic opportunities. Once this pride is established, he is more likely to take an active part and come to realize that certain values (i.e. our materialistic ones primarily), are worthwhile. This type of resource development promises to develop a new sense of responsibility, initially unconscious to the Yakimas.

With resultant improvement of responsibility, he gains economically and is thus able to acquire commodities which have been unobtainable (or "unwanted") thus able to acquire commodities which have been unobtainable (or "unwanted") to him the past. Once obtained, a new value appreciation occurs and likely inspires a desire for additional commodities formerly out of reach. This is related once again to the responsibility he has assimilated as a result of pride developed in the enterprise and appreciation for what it brings. It is the first steps in acculturation.

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A transformation from enterprises that play upon the inherent pride of the Yakima to those of a more productive nature, will gradually evolve as value transformation occurs. As appreciation of these values develops, it will be apparent to those who acquire them that certain steps are necessary to improve their position. In order to acquire positions of more importance (essential to a new and imposed pride that has evolved-- albeit false) the Yakimas will realize that education, industriousness, and other means of self-improvement are basic criteria to achieve this. Thus, we may provide motivation for education through the slow and proper development of the resource base--the critical consideration here being sensitively relating resource development to the adaptation level of the Yakima people.

In order to achieve this, an enterprise must be found that is complimentary to the aboriginal way of life and culture which the Yakimas so strongly aspire to. It is not necessary to employ a great number, nor invest a great sum. It is essential, however, that the Yakimas accept it and that it succeeds. If such an enterprise is possible, a great deal of analysis is a necessary prerequisite for it not only opens the door to successful economical development, but most important, establishes a precedent whereby the Yakimas may gradually accept their responsibilities that are being imposed on them by society's government.

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CHARACTERISTICS OF THE YAKIMAS' RESERVATION CULTURE

Introduction

A significant number of Yakima Indians belong to an ill-defined or non-existent culture. By observing their habits, mannerisms, and speech, a near hopeless state of confusion is immediately apparent. It appears that there is still a sizeable and strong group that desperately clings to what is left of the past but reject, at every opportunity, the white man's influence--yet helplessly accepts a portion of our culture because of essential material needs. This is a group nearly classless; almost void of any cultural definition. They are naturally the older Yakimas and in numbers are not representative of Tribal cultural character. Their influence is unproportional, however, for they often rear the children and are predominant at the General Council.

Although this group does not characterize the Yakima Nation, a descriptive outline must include all aspects of their cultural condition because of their impact. A majority portion of the Yakimas have aligned themselves in varying degrees, with our social values and culture. Thus, only portions of the following description are applicable to the more modern group or the majority population. It is significant, however, that the "moderns" are less concerned and, as a result, less influential in developing reservation policy than the old school faction. Thus, in a practical (if not scientific sense, a description of Reservation culture follows ~~xx~~ that of the "old school"--the primary influence.

Descriptive outline of contemporary reservation culture

A. An overview of the Yakima culture

1. Very few of the real aboriginal traits persist with the exception of kinship, strong tribal or band factionalism, and the retention of ceremonial practices and observances to a degree

2. Although they manifest a nature and ethnic character obviously Indian much of the display, rituals, and religions or other social practices are not Yakima in origin or nature. Rather they are a ramification of out-

side and distant Indian influence and further complexed by partial assimilation of the white man's culture.

3. The illiteracy ratio remains excessively high and as a result many Reservation residents are unable to comprehend and take in tribal affairs. This obviously means poor communications and resultant mistrust of each other.

4. Obviously there is very little appreciation of the formal education system and its values. This is reflected in the quite recent Bureau investigation revealing an annual absence of 20 per cent by Yakimas--and a 70 per cent dropout before completing the 12th grade.

5. There exists a high percentage of fullbloods--and associated keen discriminatory attitude toward other ethnic groups and races.

6. It seems that there is an almost lethargic attitude toward material or intellectual self-improvement and little desire to adjust their outlook and values to coincide with the massive population forces surrounding them.

7. Those living on the Reservation have a strong affinity for the physical land within their domain and are reluctant to share it as exemplified by the Enrollment Act and objection to sale of allotted land to non-Indians.

8. The Yakimas are generally a very conservative group and don't seek rapid or drastic changes.

9. The Yakima psychology comprises much of the basis for their cultural condition. It accounts for the primary difficulties inherent in any program attempting to revise or modernize their culture into a more acceptable condition. Some of the more obvious factors of the Yakima psychology that retard acculturation are:

- a. Mistrust of whites--aided and abetted by political tribal elements--and also internal mistrust.
- b. A real sense of pride in their cultural history and heritage in an age that ignores it--although it is sometimes (and this is worse) humored.

10. Most of the older Yakima Indians and to a lesser degree the younger people still speak the Yakima language fluently. There is still need for an interpreter at meetings attended by older people.

B Economics of the culture.

1. Although most of them enjoy good health and are physically and mentally employable, they oftentimes refuse to apply for or accept local employment opportunities when they arise.

2. Their local employment opportunities are quite limited for the following reasons:

- a. There is a negative attitude existing among a great many employers in hiring the Indian.
- b. There is competition for employment from migratory labor.
- c. The Indian labor force is largely unskilled.

d. Few of the Indians find opportunities in the type of work for which they have inherent aptitudes and have a natural preference for fishing and gathering (sic) Those that do pursue occupations to their preference, such as commercial fishing, are often faced with uncertain means of subsistence. In contrast, few are willing to work in lumbering and agriculture where the bulk of opportunities exist.

e. There seems to be some weakness in the Indian's ability to coordinate alcohol and employment. As a result he is reputed as an unstable employee.

C Special Aspects

1. There has been a significant population ~~xxx~~ increase with little associated increase in economic improvement.

2. Little migration occurs due, in part, to the Enrollment Act--which precludes the enrollment of any Yakima child born off the Reservation.

3. As a partial result a high proportion of population is receiving Public Assistance.

4. The housing situation is characterized by:

- a. Overcrowding
- b. Lack of ownership.
- c. Lack of or inadequate sanitation facilities.
- d. Sub-standard structure construction, maintenance and furnishing!

5. Home environment is often characterized by parental apathy and as a result the opportunity for juvenile delinquency and school absence is great.

6. The aboriginal religions are often a conflicting element in acculturation for their festivals, etc. are extended and disrupt, for a period, employment and other social responsibilities.

7. Just as the Indian is hostile to the white, so the local white culture is obviously discriminative and prejudicial against the Indian.

8. Intermarriage is becoming increasingly common but, unfortunately, this often results in mating within or below their own economic and educational levels.

9. Generally they are not financially responsible to debtors.

D Tribal Government

1. There is a tendency to want to preserve the old "general Council" system. This is evident from discussions at the General Council to do away with elected officers, regular elections and the Tribal Council.

2. A majority of tribal government effort is devoted to insistence of the continuation of old treaty rights in spite of their non-conforming nature.

3. Tribal governing body is operating without formal constitutional by-laws.

4. Tribe refuses to accept constitutional by-laws because the fear it will make them subject to the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act.

5. Information concerning Tribal Council programs and resolutions are generally not made public. As a result the Council is under constant criticism.

6. The Tribe cooperates with the Bureau more than most tribes and expresses confidence in this Agency.