

ernment have created a much harder political edge to EDGE. The minutes of meetings reflect a growing emphasis on dealing with cutbacks and with the backlash against equity work. A presentation by Dr. Jane Kenway from Deakin University in Australia served to illustrate the international nature of educational restructuring and the de-emphasis on equity as a purpose of schooling. The October 1997 meeting focused on the equity dimensions of attacks against teachers and public education through Bill 160 and the types of strategies that are and can be used to defend the cause of social justice.

Gender is increasingly considered in ways which take race, class, and

sexual orientation into account, thus widening the ambit of EDGE's mandate and moving it from networking to a more conscious coalition politics. At the October 1995 meeting, Myra Novogrodsky and Vanessa Russell of the Toronto Board of Education presented a workshop entitled "Linking the Isms" which dealt with heterosexism, ableism, ageism, racism, ethnocentrism, classism, and religious persecution. Concerns for gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth, cutbacks in social services and their impact on single mothers, adult education and child care options, and anti-racist programming are now discussed regularly.

Ironically, changes in EDGE membership over the last 18 months also reflect the new anti-equity regime in Ontario in horribly concrete ways. The school boards' employment and educational equity officers, once active supporters of EDGE, have all but disappeared from the membership as a result of Bill 8, the 1995 legislation that axed employment equity programs. Attendance at meetings has dropped somewhat because boards, strapped for financial resources, are reluctant to pay for supply teachers, especially for equity functions when it is clear that equity is no longer a high priority with the Ministry of Education and Training. Finally, many EDGE members who have exercised leadership roles such as Dalton and Joe Wilson, EDGE co-founder, are finding it necessary to devote more and more of their time to the fight to save public education and this leaves less time for direct gender equity work. Nonetheless, they and their colleagues remain committed to the struggle for equity in the schools and continue to see EDGE as an important strategy for change.

The importance of organizing through EDGE was well-voiced by Karen Ball, a teacher activist who works at Oakridge Secondary School in London. She believes that,

The only way to be able to continue doing equity work is to know that other people are doing it as

well, and to find out how other people are dealing with the issues and the different strategies that they are using ... knowing that you're not alone ... and you don't have to feel like you're inventing the world by yourself every time. (Personal communication, April 16, 1996)

In other words, EDGE provides support to individual activists through developing a collective sense of purpose and possibility.

EDGE, then, provides the necessary link between teachers working away at gender in their classrooms and the wider community of like-minded government and board officials and consultants (however small that number is growing), education professors, students, social activists and others with a commitment to equity in education. It provides access to resources and to much-needed support but more importantly, it develops the sense of power born when individuals band together to take action in the cause of social justice.

To join EDGE contact Joe Wilson, c/o OSSTF Dist. 4, 427 William Street, London, Ontario, N6B3E1. Tel: (519) 642-7016. Fax: (519) 642-7905. Email: OSSTFD4@WWDC.COM

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LILA LERNER

I Am All

When we met
I was fragile

In the past the face
that mirrored wore
puzzlement

But now after you
your understanding
your faith in me

I hear clearly
I'm worthy of your trust
I'll be all that I can be

I am moon, I am the sun
I'm a forest, oceans steady
roaring hum

I am stars, consumed with light
I bring brilliance to the night

I am earth, am one with sky
I am the wind with voice I cry

All who roamed the earth before
I am as they, I am much more!

Lila Lerner is a retired grandmother in Willowdale, Ontario, who started writing in 1993.