

HALF MOON YOUNG PEOPLE'S THEATRE

DEAR SURAIYA.....LOVE REHANA

A theatre-in-education programme for top
Junior School children: 9 to 10 years.
Summer Term 1988

The play was devised by members of the
Company. Performances were followed by
discussion workshops.

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Ailsa Fairley | : Sharon |
| Lee Halliday | : Rehana & Ms.Braithwaite |
| Luna Rahman | : Suraiya |
| Andrew Sinclair | : Mr Sadeque |
| Sandra Vacciana | : Irene |

Also: reporters, tea pickers, tea garden clerks,
school children, customers, policemen,
demonstrators.

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Directed by | Deborah Bestwick |
| Project Adviser | Shah Ahmed Sadeque |
| Designed by | Mark Salkild |
| Teacher's Pack | Norman Goodman |



SPECIAL THANKS

We are extremely grateful to Dan Jones for his help, advice and enthusiastic support throughout the preparation of this programme. Also, many thanks for his generous offer to illustrate parts of the Pack.

Many thanks, also, to Caroline Adams for her interest and especially for writing "Champa's Story" for the Pack.

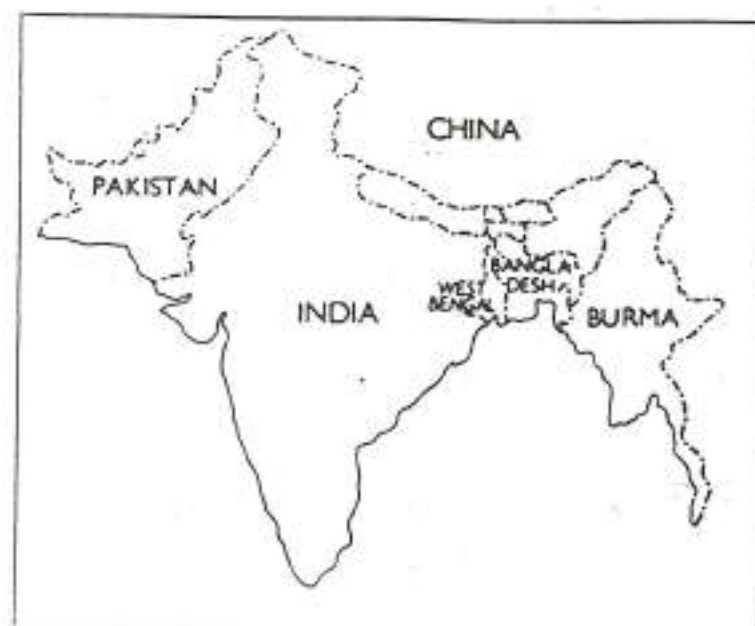


Where the mind is without fear and
the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken
up into fragments by narrow
domestic walls;
Where words come out from the
depth of truth
Where the clear stream of reason has
not lost its way
into the dreary desert sand of
dead habit.....
Into that heaven of freedom,
my Father,
let my country awake.

Rabindranath Tagore's words come from
a different time and context. Yet the
context and time could be now.



BANGLADESH AND WEST BENGAL



Scale

0 50 100 150 200 Miles

- International boundary
- - - State boundary
- District boundary



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The Company

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Any discussion about bilingualism should not be about its relative merits and demerits. The fundamental question is what the issue of bilingualism represents, which is a challenge to racism and, in relation to theatre, to Eurocentrism.

.... Jatinder Verma : Introductory Paper to "A Meeting of Mother-Tongues, Bilingualism, Theatre & School" ILA 1987

....the realisation that children from other backgrounds often have access to rich and varied cultures very different from their own (i.e. the educationalists etc.) is likely to greatly enhance understanding and appreciation of these children and their ability to learn.

.... Viv Edwards: "Language Variation in the Multicultural Classroom" 1987

.....all children should have the opportunity to learn how other languages work and be encouraged to take an interest in and be informed about the languages spoken by their peers and neighbours.

....from Education Officer's Report to Education Committee: ILA 1982

Part I

QUOTE.....
.....UNQUOTE

.... if we are really committed to a multicultural, multiracial and multilingual society we should be fostering an environment which enables bilingual children to continue, if they wish, to make links and contacts across communities, rather than the one way journey away from their parents.the education system must make the bilingual options available and allow parents & children to choose their own future development.

.... "Mother-Tongue: Politics & Practice" : Issues in Race & Education" No. 35 1987

Whereas learning a foreign language and even one or two dead ones as well has always been the sine qua non of a "good" education, and whereas each child who picks up fluent French and Italian, say, because her father has been posted abroad is likely to be thought fortunate, at an advantage, and even "finished", a child with two or three non-European languages, in some of which she may be literate, could be regarded as quite literally languageless when she arrives in an English school where "not a word of English" can often imply "not a word".

.... Jane Miller: a Paper in "The School in a Multicultural Society" : James & Jeffcoate 1987

Whereas the ability to speak French or German is a highly prized commodity, bilingualism in the British ethnic-minority children is frequently ignored and undervalued.

.... Viv Edwards: "Language Variation in the Multicultural Classroom" : 1982



BILINGUAL EXPERIENCES.....OTHER VOICES

Isaac Rosenberg and Joseph Leftwich both grew up in Stepney. Isaac, arguably the greatest of the "First War Poets", had Yiddish as his first language. His great friend Joseph was also a poet and an outstanding translator of Yiddish, his first language. Chris Searle asked Joseph if he had any words for the new generation of bilingual children now living in East London:

I believe in learning. I believe that everything we learn is valuable. I also believe that each language gives a distinct flavour to life and learning, that it gives an added richness to what you teach and learn through it, that it makes for greater individuality. So people should be multilingual, particularly if their mother-language is part of their heartblood, part of their soul. This language; its words are something that have been born within and need to be brought out otherwise they will lay like a heavy load on the chest, giving us nothing but just weighing us down. I always knew that the language I was born into must be used, must be polished, must be heart-spoken, must contribute to a great all-round wealth of cultures. (1980)

From "All Our Words" : Chris Searle

Dr. Lawrence Carrington, of the University of the West Indies, speaking about Creole. The context is different - the time of the expansion of education in Grenada from 1979 to the tragic events that led to the US invasion in Oct. 1983 - but Dr. Carrington's comments are relevant to bilingualism in general:

.....throughout the centuries our people had the idea that in order to think you needed to have English because that ,they thought, was the language of thought. It is NOT the language of thought. Every language is the language of thought - thought takes place in all languages.

If you can achieve, therefore, a popular recognition of Creole as independent, a popular recognition of the validity of the language as a communication medium.....then what you do is you create a greater incentive on the part of the average citizen to use his language for reflection of the type which he had thought previously only possible in English.

When you do that, what you do is create a whole person, because s/he can now react in his heart in the way in which s/he can express her/himself to another person. When we create this whole person, we allow her/him to be free of the conflicts that diminish her/his expressiveness when s/he comes to use the new language like English or Spanish. In the new language s/he now has a whole set of already assimilated notions, of already integrated views which s/he starts now to push through the new medium. That is what gives her/him true communication possibility with people outside, without her/him having to use English in order to



prove she/he can use it. S/he's using it because s/he has something to say, in any language available to her/him.

see "Words Unchained: Language and Revolution in Grenada" : Chris Searle 1984

But...some echoes from the past, perhaps still being heard.....

Whoever knows English has a ready access to all the vast intellectual wealth which all the wisest nations of the earth have created and hoarded in the course of ninety generations. The dialects commonly spoken among the natives of India contain neither literary nor scientific information..... A single shelf of a good library is worth the whole native literature of India.

....Thomas B. Macaulay in his 1835 Report on introducing English education into India.

It must always be the drive of a government to render its dominions as far as possible homogenous. Sooner or later the difference of language between Wales and England will probably be effaced...an event which is socially and politically desirable.

....Matthew Arnold in his 1855 Report when a school inspector. His Report played its part in what led eventually to the speaking of Welsh by teachers and children being forbidden.



Introduction

Over the past three years there have been a number of strands in the Half Moon Young People's Theatre's work which have come together in this bilingual theatre-in-education programme. These strands were, with a few bilingual exceptions, generally projects in English but with a multicultural focus. It was the ILEA-backed "A MEETING OF MOTHER TONGUES: BILINGUALISM, THEATRE AND SCHOOL" which sharpened that focus further and following that the Company decided that we must include languages other than English in our work. We also decided that it is important to reiterate our commitment to the community where we are based (i.e. Tower Hamlets) and therefore future work should include Sylheti and Bengali, those languages being spoken by the largest minority group in the Borough; languages which are spoken by approximately 40% of the Borough's school population. Another impetus behind this programme was the Company's desire to continue to do work which has a clear anti-racist focus. Many schools have evolved both anti-racist and equal opportunities strategies and curricula. We hope that "DEAR SURAIYA.....LOVE REHANA" will contribute to this work.

Important resources in our early reading were "Supporting Children's Bilingualism" and "Languages and Dialects of London Schoolchildren" (Rosen & Burgess). It was the arguments in the former and many of the findings and arguments in the latter that helped inform our understanding of why supporting bilingualism is important. The diagrammatic summary from "Supporting Children's Bilingualism" is reproduced here to give an indication (for those teachers who might not know the document) of one of our starting-points.

Bilingualism, Theatre and School

At the beginning we saw the aims of this bilingual theatre-in-education programme to be:

- i) to enable children to feel strong in their own culture by hearing the language through which that culture is expressed given value and to support the self-esteem of the children;
- ii) to give all children an experience of bilingual theatre and to increase language awareness and awareness of cultural diversity;
- iii) to challenge the assumption that all communication to be of value must be transacted in English;
- iv) to give full access to the play to those children who are not yet proficient in English and to support their learning;



- v) to support the links between school, family and community;
- vi) and to give support to a school's equal opportunities and anti-racist policies.

We wanted a context in which Sylheti and English would be used "naturally" in "real" situations which would grab and hold the interest of the age group which is the target of the programme. We believe that it is important that the play be accessible and directly meaningful to ALL children and to have characters to make the play personal in different ways for as many children as possible. We thought hard about how to avoid falling into the trap of making the Sylheti just incidental. We were sensitive to anything that would carry any associations of "exoticism" or appear to be used only for "curiosity value". We hope the play relates to some of the experiences of ALL the children who see it whilst at the same time extending their knowledge and experience.

Language is very important to a person; it is something to be proud of; something deeply part of a person's cultural identity. Yet, except for a very few local education authorities, there is hardly any official acknowledgement of the most fundamental asset of a child's learning - the language that is vitally part of who s/he is and who s/he will become. It is vitally important, too, that ALL children have an understanding and awareness of this.

The Half Moon YPT is strongly aware that we work predominantly in schools which have many (and some, wholly) multilingual children. They come from communities which are bi- and multilingual and which are likely to remain so.

We are also aware that the children attend schools which, again with notable exceptions, are mono-lingual.

We hope that "DEAR SURAIYA....LOVE REHANA" 'দ্রিয় পুরা ইয়া... ইতি জোয়ার ই তেবান চরহানা' will contribute to the work that schools are already doing to support what for many children is their first language and to re-inforce their pride in their language. Another hope is that the play will arouse the interest of other children in the class who might belong to the "majority" culture and that this interest will deepen respect for that language and other languages that might be spoken in the class.

The play is in the English and Sylheti languages. But it is possible that different forms of English might be used. We hope that the fact these two languages are used will not suggest that we seek to exclude the many other languages that London schoolchildren bring to school. We hope that experiencing the play will arouse in the children an interest in those languages. We hope, too, that teachers will see opportunities to take bi-and multilingual work further. Maybe the play might give the children ideas for using the languages in the classroom for their own drama and playmaking.

We hope that the play will help in extending the children's understanding of the world. By showing the parity of languages, perhaps a better world-view will emerge and the potential for relating to other cultures will be taken a further step on.



The play has been devised so that the story is communicated in various ways. Words are central, but different theatre skills are used to show meaning in addition to the use of language. We hope that the play will go some way in showing that language does not have to keep people apart. So much of history is to do with peoples being separated, being oppressed, being suppressed and part of all that has often been to deny people their language and culture or to belittle it or give it inferior status. (Note Thomas Arnold's and Macaulay's words on the "Quotes" page.)

The play, perhaps, will show that there does not need to be this barrier. Of course the barrier is there if one knows nothing about those other languages and that barrier will remain if one does nothing about that ignorance. We hope that the play will contribute towards schools' programmes which seek to integrate bilingual work with the mainstream classroom activities.

We don't need reminding that arguments are voiced very stridently about "ethnic minority children" having to learn English: "after all, they have to live here.....etc". "They have to know English in the outside world." By doing the play bilingually is not to deny the importance of learning English and being fully competent in English. We want to show that being able to speak languages other than English should not be seen as something "odd" or "obstructive" that has to be eradicated or minimised in order that children learn English more quickly. It is something that ought to be fully acknowledged, celebrated, known about, shared, enjoyed, respected.

Children must be helped to develop their command of English, but there is increasing evidence to show that this is not best served by ignoring the children's existing language competence. This evidence is wide and various and includes studies done with many different linguistic and cultural groups, including studies about language and class; the effects of dialect forms on learning in addition to an increasing volume of study on bi- and multilingualism and its importance to the education of bi- and multilingual children.

We hope that the play will contribute to giving a further boost to those activities already part of the school curriculum which acknowledge the variety of language and dialects that are present in schools. We believe that activities which are shown to value language and cultural diversity, if devised sensitively and carefully, will not cause separation and division (as critics of anti-racist curricula argue) but could be, because better understanding will result, another strategy for unity.

Take a child who is deeply intelligent and who is proceeding through school using English, his second language. At a certain stage in his development he shows signs of being lost, lack-a-true identity of who he really is and where he has come from. His first language, in this case Bengali, becomes his starting-point for these discoveries, giving him a certain mental stability which allows him to bring out the much greater potential inside him.

....Mahmood Rahman: teacher, quoted in
"All Our Words" :Chris Searle 1986



WHY SUPPORT BILINGUALISM ?

Benefits for *all children*:

- 1 Supports confidence in own language repertoire
- 2 Increases language awareness
- 3 Contributes to combating racism
- 4 Increases awareness of cultural diversity
- 5 Increases communication between different cultural groups

Benefits for *bilingual children*:

- 1 Support for learning
- 2 Aiding intellectual / cognitive development
- 3 Supporting self-esteem / confidence in own ethnicity
- 4 Supporting relationship with family and community
- 5 Extending vocational and life options

BASIC PRINCIPLES

- 1 Equality of opportunity
- 2 Developing skills and talents that children bring to school
- 3 Responding positively to a multicultural society

Benefits for *the teacher and the school*:

- 1 Increases knowledge of and relationship with individual pupils
- 2 Recognition of pupils' family / community as a resource
- 3 Increases teacher awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity
- 4 Strengthens school / community links
- 5 Contributes to multicultural ethos of the school





The decision to do a T.I.E. programme which was bilingual was made right from the start. The subject for the programme was discussed over a long period of time. It was reading "TEA & JUSTICE" that really set us thinking and from that the story in DEAR SURAIYA... LOVE REHANA took shape.

From reading Dan Jones' book we learned of the campaigning charity, War on Want's part in the Campaign for Tea Workers' Rights; also about Tower Hamlets International Solidarity's part and also of Bangladesh International Action Group's part. The Campaign was set up in 1986 to co-ordinate pressure to improve the tea workers' situation. Teachers will have received a copy of the War on Want "Tea Workers of Bangladesh" leaflet, which gives a stark presentation of that situation.

The Campaign grew out of the realities of the lives of the poorest and most exploited tea workers in the world - as recently as 1986 they earned 22p per day - 30% below the national minimum wage in Bangladesh. There is clear evidence that the British Tea Companies (which still dominate the tea trade there) do not comply with the 1977 Tea Plantation Labour Rules which state that companies must provide clean water, sanitation, decent housing, education and health services.

Any show of union action on the estates has been met with riot sticks, bullets, sackings and the framing of union leaders (such as Dr. Eklasur Rahman) on trumped up charges.

The British taxpayer has contributed, through Overseas Development Aid £23 million to the Tea Garden Rehabilitation Programme (to which the EEC has also contributed). This Aid has certainly helped the owners but very little has found its way to improving the conditions for the tea workers and their families. One of the crucial aims of the Campaign has been to put pressure on the donors of aid to insist on workers' rights having some priority in tea garden development - at least to get the companies in receipt of Aid to comply with the Tea Plantation Labour Rules.

The Tea Workers' Campaign is not only a British-based campaign. It is also very active in Bangladesh, where many lawyers, trade unionists, academics and student organisations are involved. For example, as eminent lawyer in Dhaka is looking at all the appropriate legislation under which legal action might be taken on the workers' behalf under Bangladesh Law. One of the most appropriate areas might be to take legal action against companies that default under the Labour Rules. Another move might be against companies who have attacked Freedom of Association and the workers' rights to organise.

Individual union activists have been victimised - including Dr. Rahman and 12 colleagues. They were framed by tea garden managers on Finlay estates on a totally fraudulent kidnap and murder charge. The "murdered" man is very much alive and has never been kidnapped! To take out a counter charge of conspiracy against the managers would be very expensive. The raising of funds is another important aim of the Campaign.

Additional information about the Campaign can be got from the various organisations involved. Addresses are listed under Contacts.

THE CAMPAIGN & "DEAR SURAIYA....LOVE REHANA" Although much of the social and political implications of the Campaign will be out-



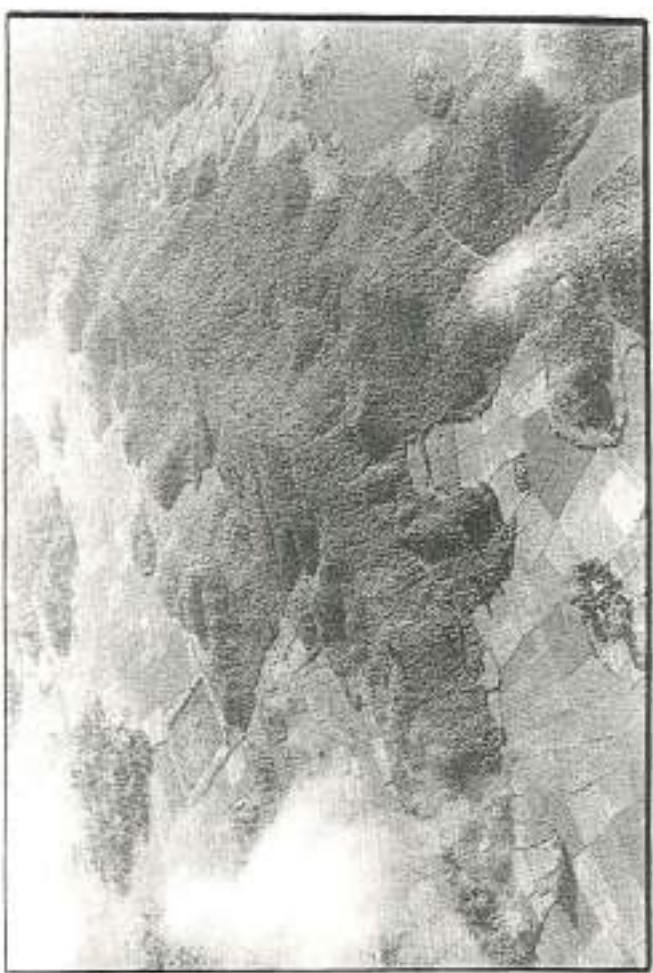
side of the experience of the children, we believe strongly that the story will capture their interest and involve them both emotionally and intellectually. There are moral issues of right and wrong which will have meaning for them. It will be up to teachers to detect those areas of the play which really bring responses from the children and then to consider ways of how to take these responses further.

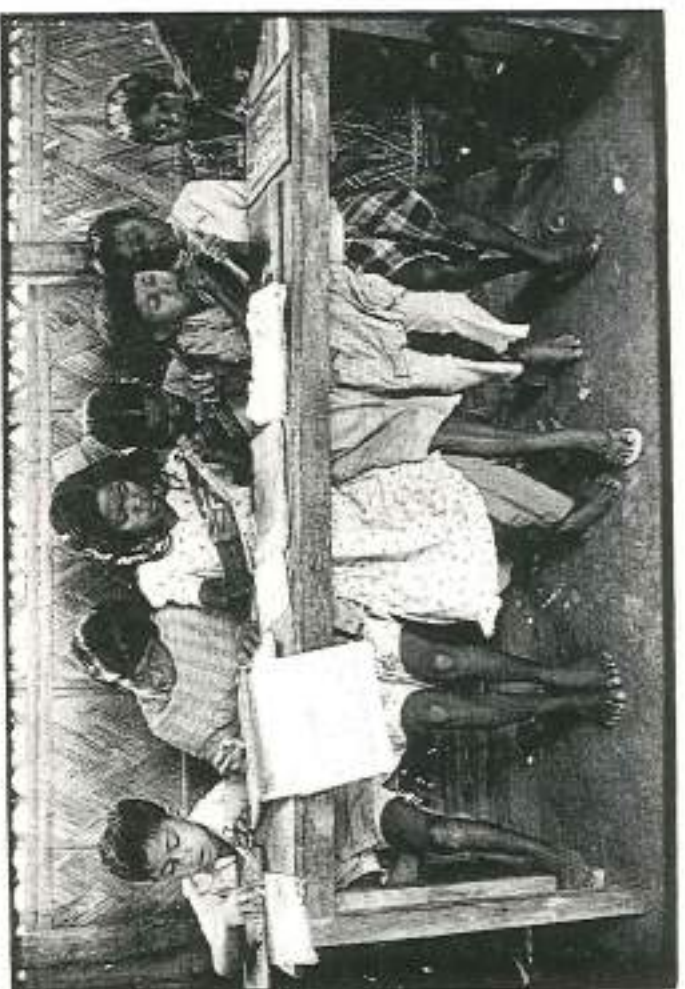
It is clear that children are interested in current events, "adult" campaigns etc. Subjects may appear to be "above their heads" - yet children have the knack of asking very pertinent questions when something catches their interest.

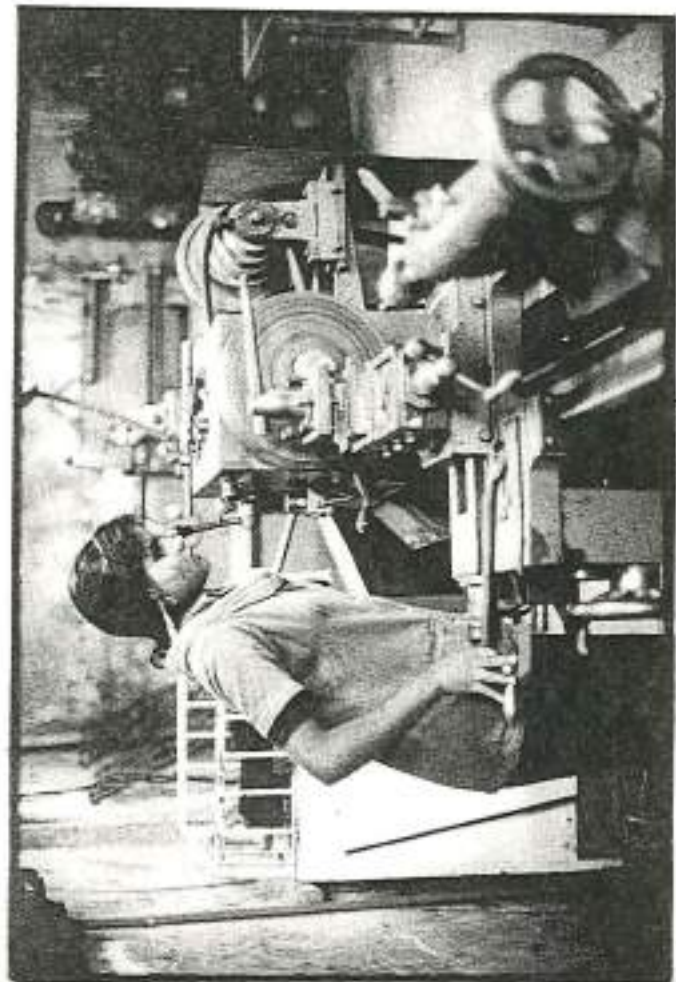
We do not think it unlikely that children would be at a demonstration - hence Suraiya and her friend Sharon are present at the demonstration outside the AGM in Glasgow, as they might well be since Suraiya's dad is involved in the Campaign and Irene (Sharon's mum) is clearly sympathetic. It is very likely that some of the children of Bangladeshi parents in Tower Hamlets schools will have been aware of the recent Homeless Families Campaign. Other children may remember when parents demonstrated to oppose the use of their children's school for a N.F. meeting. Also, last year the HMYPT presented a programme that told the story of the Hackney campaign which tried to stop the deportation of two children who attended a Hackney Infants' School. Finally, the action by local parents to oppose the abolition of the ILEA will have involved many children.

Fine issues of Law, the intricacies of economics or the making of profits at the expense of the workers etc - these may be beyond their understanding, but children are not incapable of understanding when something is deeply wrong; when something is unfair. They may have minimal powers in society but that does not stop them being involved.









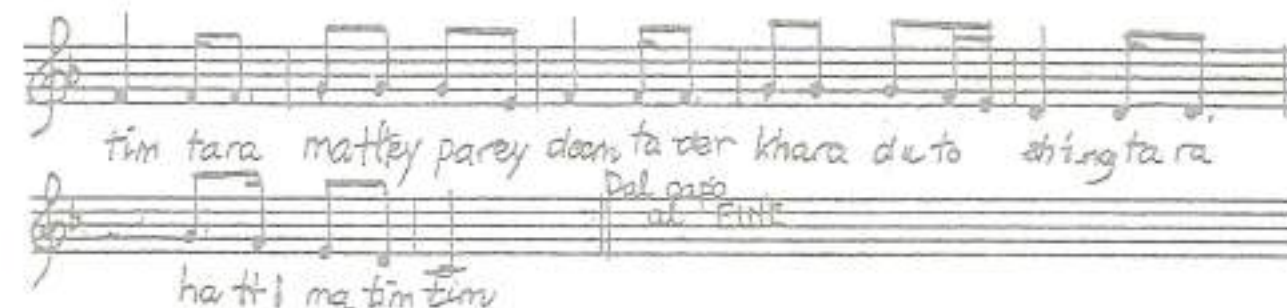
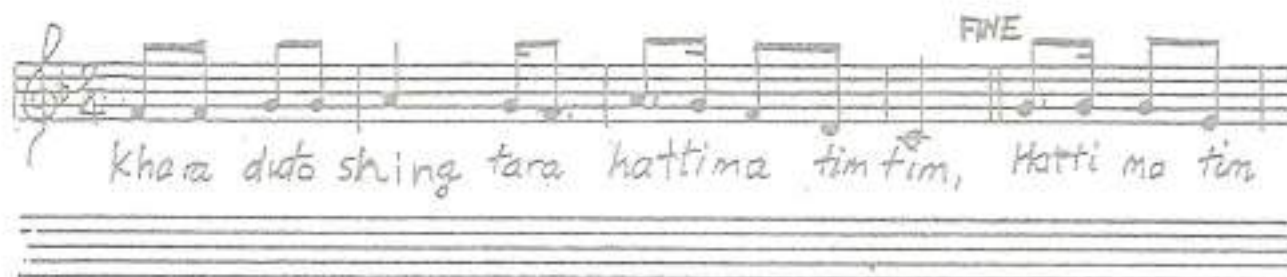
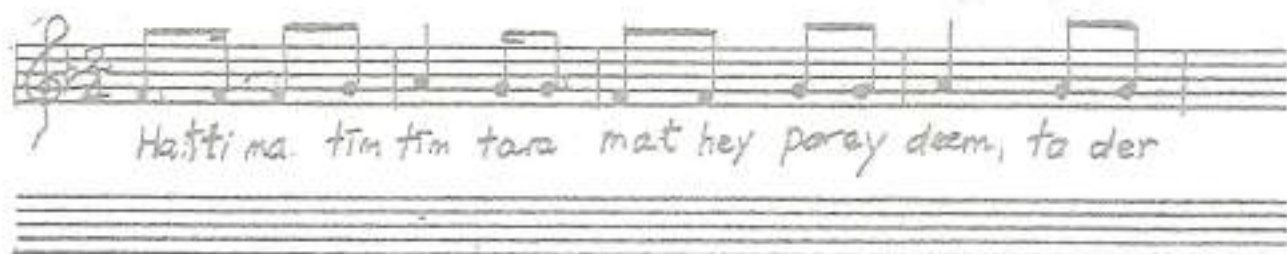
HATTI MA TIM TIM..... হাটিমা টিম টিম.....

We considered a number of Bengali songs when trying to find one to use in the play. Both Luna and Mithu mentioned "Hatti Ma Tim Tim" as one they knew and which was very traditional and would probably be known to many Bangladeshi children. It was interesting, therefore, on looking through "SONGS, RHYMES AND TUNES" by Pratibha Chaudhuri to find this song included there.

Mithu taught the Company the movements, which he says are also traditionally taught with the song.

Teachers might like to use the song with their classes, so we have included it here. (For details of Pratibha Chaudhuri's book see the Resources page at the back of this Pack.)

What songs do the children know? Do they know any songs that they can teach each other? Does anyone have someone in the family who knows any traditional songs - could it be recorded?



The song is about some very strange animals. They have long, pointed horns and they lay their eggs in the fields!



আমরা সবাই রাজা

আমরা সবাই রাজা আমরাই রাজার রাজত্ব,-
নইলে হোদের রাজার জন্যে মিসব কি ভুলে,

আমরা মা খুশি তাই করি, তবু তাঁর খুশিওই চরি,
আমরা নই বাঁধা নই দানের রাজার মনের দামত্ব,-
নইলে হোদের রাজার জন্যে মিসব কি ভুলে,

রাজা হবারে ঘন স্বাধ, হে স্বাধ আপনি ফিরে পান,
হোদের খাটে করে রাখেনি তকুত কোন সময়ে,-
নইলে হোদের রাজার জন্যে মিসব কি ভুলে,

আমরা ঘন আপন স্বত্ব, হোদের মিসব গাঁরি পথ,
হোরা স্বরব মা তকুত বিফলতার বিনয় আদর্শ,-
নইলে হোদের রাজার জন্যে মিসব কি ভুলে,

"We're all kings"

The message in this song is that people have potential to do things for themselves, especially if they work to take charge of their lives.

The song is about equal strengths, equal abilities to achieve things for themselves.

In one reference to the song being sung, the translation is given as: "We are kings. We are all kings, if we take charge of our own lives."



EDUCATION

One of the legal responsibilities of the Tea Companies is the provision of schooling for all the workers' children between the ages of 6 and 11. Children must achieve a certain standard of literacy before than can attend the Government Primary Schools.

The record of the companies meeting their responsibility is very poor. Faruq Faisal, a Bangladeshi journalist, writes: "There is a school of sorts on every estate. The single teacher is usually a clerical worker who takes on the job on a part-time basis after he has finished his work in the estate office. For an hour or so each day he takes care of the education of all pupils in all classes."

Dan Jones, in TEA AND JUSTICE (see the resources page) writes of an estate school he visited: "The teacher, a company clerk, opened the small building for two hours day, from 4 to 6 p.m.....(he) presided over the noisy chaos of some 100 children, most of whom would leave before the end of their first year as illiterate and innumerate as their parents....Management has no interest in education, apparently preferring an illiterate and innumerate workforce."

This negative attitude is being tackled by a number of charitable organisations and campaigning groups. One local project in sylhet is the "school under the sky" in Kasdobir. (The Pack includes a story by Caroline Adams, called "Champa's Story" which tells a lot about this school and life for a child of a family of tea-pickers.)

Another project (although not a tea estate project) which shows what people will do for themselves to provide education that is relevant and which is also flexible to meet the particular demands of the community, is GONO PATSHALA. (We acknowledge War on Want's "Dhaka to Dundee" pack for this information)

Gono Patshala – the People's School

INTRODUCTION

Before you read about the Gono Patshala, it is important for you to know something about the education system in Bangladesh.

The British colonialists set up schools whilst they ruled India, but these were not the kind needed after independence was won in 1947. When Bangladesh was part of Pakistan, its government spent more money on universities and colleges (higher education) than on primary schools. But the big problem is that eight out of ten primary school children drop out of school, so more attention should be paid to primary education.

Because children drop out of school so early, there are very few people who are literate (can read and write) in Bangladesh. According to government figures, the literacy rate is 34% for men and 20% for women. Far fewer people who live in rural areas than city dwellers can read or write.

Children do not finish primary school for many reasons. One is that they are needed to help the family survive. They must do many important domestic jobs such as collecting firewood, fetching water, washing



clothes and looking after younger children. They also have to earn money, which they do by looking after animals for the landowners, running errands for traders, and being servants to richer people.

Another reason is that most people are poor and cannot afford the school uniforms, books and lunches which must be paid for. A third reason is that with the exception of reading, writing and maths, the subjects taught in school are not helpful to village children.

GONO PATSHALA

The People's School was set up in 1976. At first it taught mainly about health, but it soon added many other subjects. It tries to serve many of the needs of the rural poor. Most important, it makes education fit in with all the jobs that children have to do, and it teaches things that are important and necessary for the children to know.

The Gono Patshala has two locations, one in Savar and one in Bhatshala. Over 300 children now attend. All the children come from families who own no land or only a tiny plot.

All but one of the teachers are women. This helps to show the children that women can do important jobs, and it helps to make women more independent.

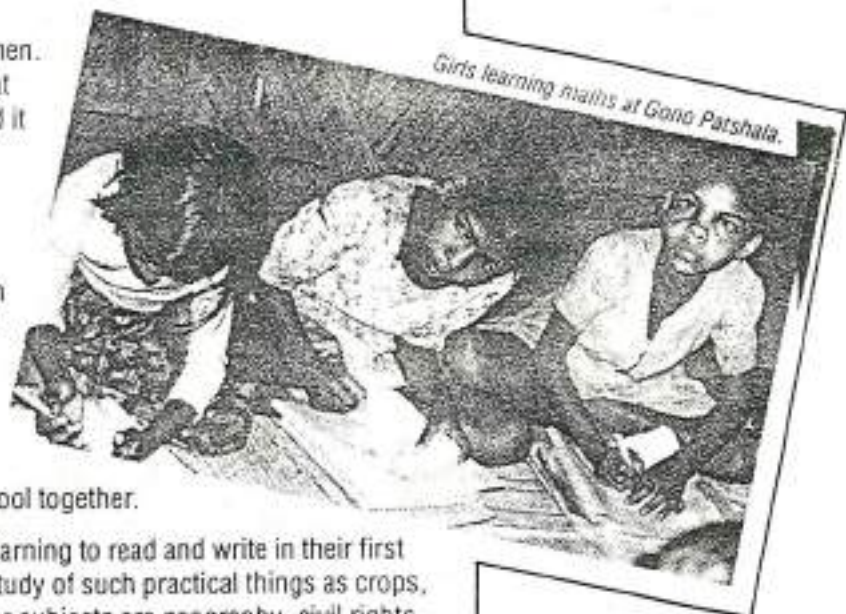
SCHOOL LIFE

The school understands how much families need their children's help. Sometimes at harvest or planting time the whole class will go to a field and help the children working there to finish more quickly. Then they all return to school together.

The students spend a lot of time learning to read and write in their first two years. Then they take up the study of such practical things as crops, health care and climate. Their other subjects are geography, civil rights and history. They also get the chance to study music and dance and take part in physical education classes.

The children take tests and regular exams under the Mutual Exam System. In this system, the children set themselves the questions. The older students set the exam papers for classes 1 and 2. The children mark each other's papers, which also go to the teacher for final marking. The teacher then talks to the children about their work one at a time. The older and more advanced students teach the morning lessons and so they also learn at the same time. Lessons for classes 3 to 5 take place after lunch, when the younger children have returned to the village. Lesson times are flexible, depending on the jobs that the students need to do.

The Gono Patshala is also trying to help the villagers become literate. Once a week all the students visit a village to teach reading and writing, especially to women and children who have dropped out of school. Students also run literacy classes in the evenings for older villagers who are not free in the day.



Girls learning maths at Gono Patshala.



Using the Kasdobir story and the Gono Patshala information, teachers might think it useful to do an exercise which looks at different ways of learning. Thinking about what it is important to learn. Do we have to learn exactly the same things as children in another part of the world? What might be important for us to learn? What might it be important, say, for a child at a tea garden school to learn? Are ~~these~~ things that are important to learn no matter where we live?

Teachers who have visited schools abroad may have their own ideas for an exercise such as this; they may also have their own resources. But telling "Champa's Story" and talking about Gono Patshala could lead to the children talking about some of the following questions:

- Are there any good points....bad points? What are they?
- Are there more good points than bad?
- What would you like to change or add?
- Would you like to attend such a school?
- How does our school differ from them?

Perhaps the children could be shown the picture of the children at Gono Patshala tending their garden.

- Do you think this is important education?
- What are they learning?

Some primary schools may have gardens which the children care for. Discussion could bring this in.

Schools regularly become involved in projects, visits, field trips which take children out of the classroom. Children could recall these and discuss what was important about doing these activities etc.

Co-operative vocational training at Gono Patshala.



ACHIEVEMENTS

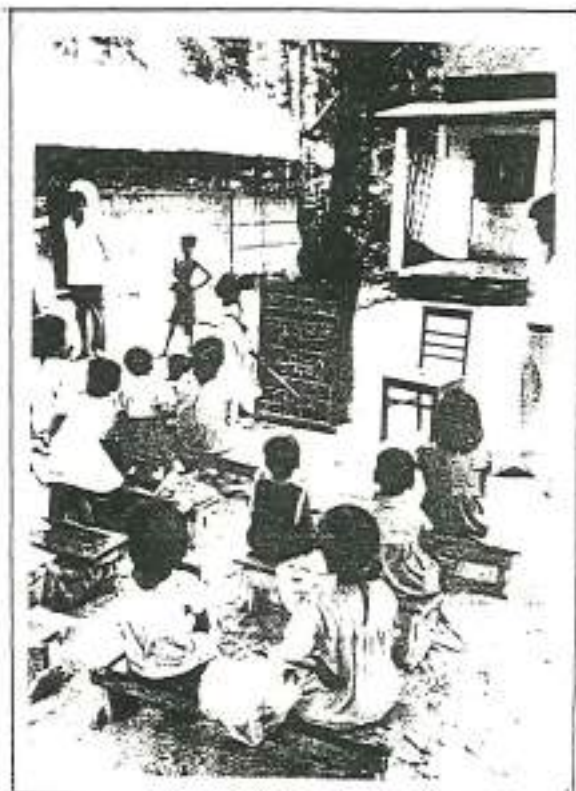
In the Gono Patshala at Savar, the drop-out rate was 6.8% in 1983/84. This was down from 32% in 1981/82. It is amazing in contrast to the 80% drop-out rate in government schools. This excellent record has been achieved because the school is based on the real, everyday lives of the ordinary village people.

Even so, the teachers have a constant battle to persuade families to allow children to remain in school.

Another achievement of The People's School is that it is helping children to go on to secondary school. Those who do so can work at the Gono Patshala at weekends to earn money for books.

The People's School is one example of a development project which is working to overcome the social and economic causes of poverty in Bangladesh.





"School under the Trees" - Gachtolla School

Photographs: Janette Gibney



PHOTOGRAPHS

There are numerous reproductions of photographs in the pack. Pictures could be selected as the basis for talk and written work.

- EXAMPLE 1: using some of the pictures showing work. The children could be in small groups, each with a set of pictures. Questions such as the following could initiate discussion.
- (i) what is going on in the picture?
 - (ii) is the job (or something like it) done in Britain?
 - (iii) do you think it looks hard or easy?
 - (iv) is it important work? why?
 - (v) do you know anyone who does work like this?
 - (vi) is there anything in the picture that surprises you?

The group could make up their own questions about the pictures. Who can answer them?

- EXAMPLE 2 : Cut out and mount some of the pictures - without captions. The children could write their own titles, captions or sentences and place their examples with the picture. They could be asked to say why they wrote what they did. If there are any contrasting titles/captions these could be talked about.

- EXAMPLE 3/: Teachers could devise their own questions about some of the pictures in order to get the children to get into a picture more deeply. Or to concentrate on a particular aspect of the picture to encourage their thinking more creatively.



DRAMA

Drama can be used to teach issues. Drama allows children to feel as well as think. A drama exercise could help them to feel what it is like to carry a basket filled with newly-picked leaves - weighing 25 kg.

Drama is an active rather than passive way of learning. This puts a lot of responsibility on the children to come up with ideas of their own.

The teacher could give a few guidelines which could be enough to lead a group to devise their own drama. Here the children might then bring in issues most related to themselves as well as make connections with what they have learned from the play.

Teachers may want to suggest that the children work in their first language, in English or bilingually.

Scenes from the play which the children might want to explore in drama:

- (i) a weighing scene in which the pickers try to make sure that the clerk is not tricking them by not weighing their baskets properly .
- (ii) a tea picker is being told off because she has not picked 25 kg. She tries to explain why.
- (iii) a tea picker arrives late, for an important reason, and tries to make the clerk understand and other tea pickers join in.
- (iv) a scene about trying to get a better water supply
- (v) a scene when some tea workers go to the manager to say they want a school for their children.
- (vi) scenes to use "When in Rome do as the Romans do" to show if it a good thing or a bad thing.

FEELINGS

To help children think about the effects of events on people. This exercise could help encourage empathy.

Accompanying this page is a "FEELINGS SHEET". Let the children talk about what they think people would have felt about each event listed in the left-hand column. Give them time to fully understand what each event means.

The list could be reproduced on a large chart or groups could have their own copy of the sheet. Either working as a whole class or in groups, let the children join the event to the appropriate feeling(s) with a coloured arrow. There can be more than one feeling for each event, so each feeling can be used more than once. There are no right and wrong answers.

As well as discussing their FEELINGS it is very important
that the children also discuss their REASONS for the feelings



FEELINGS SHEET

The weighing clerk is cheating you.

HAPPINESS

Visitors who come to the tea garden say you talk funny.

ANGER

A new tube-well is put in near your hut.

JOY

Medicine for your baby costs more than you can afford.

FEAR

The Tea Company puts up new signs. But they are printed in English.

HATE

The manager has a big garden in front of his bungalow.

DISAPPOINTMENT

The water from the round well is making your family ill.

UNSURE

You and your friends join a demonstration and you are all beaten with heavy sticks.

NOT
INTERESTED

There is no doctor or nurse where you live.

The tea company is beginning to build brick houses.

The price of rice goes up in the tea-garden shop.



CHANGES : what I would do.....

This is a "make-believe" situation.

You work in a tea-garden. You and your friends would like to change many things if you had the chance.

The Manager has a large amount of money which can be spent on changes in the tea-garden.

Some of the changes could be:

- building brick houses
- paying for a nurse for the tea-garden workers
- having more tube-wells
- building a creche and paying for a worker
- paying for more teachers so that classes can be smaller
- building a tennis court for the manager's bungalow
- buying a tractor
- giving some land so that tea-workers can grow some of their own food
- painting the outside of the manager's bungalow
- putting up the wages of the tea-workers

It you could make 5 changes which would they be? Place them in order of most important change first.

Things to think about: who will the change help?
what could be affected by your change?
which changes aren't really necessary?
which are the changes you aren't sure about?

IN REAL LIFE: Do you think, in real life, that the tea-workers would have any say in these changes? Why?

In real life who do you think would decide about these changes?

If they wanted some of these changes to happen, what could the tea-workers do for themselves?

"CHANGE CARDS" are printed on the next two pages. They could be cut out and mounted onto card so that the children could use them, interchange them, reject etc. until they come to their decisions.



building brick
houses

paying for a
nurse for the
tea-garden
workers

buying
a tractor

having more
tube-wells

painting the
outside of the
manager's
bungalow



THE TEA PACKET GAME

Divide the class into 6 sets, Each has its own label:

1. supermarket owners
2. owners of the company that sells the tea to the supermarkets
3. owners of the company that packages the tea
4. the owners of the ships that bring the tea to Britain
5. the owners of the tea garden in Sylhet
6. the tea-pickers

Each group is given a packet of tea. They are told that it costs 20p.

Tell the groups that they have to decide how much (of the 20p) they think THEY are entitled to. They have to have their reason for their decision,.

Give them about 5 minutes to decide this.

They come back together again and they have to explain to everyone else why they think they should get the amount they have decided on.

Have a chart ready, showing the six different "interested parties". Draw two columns. In col. one write in the amount each claims. When the list is complete, total the amounts to show the full cost of the packet of tea.

Then in col. two write in the true situation:

- | | |
|---|----|
| 1 | 7p |
| 2 | 3p |
| 3 | 2p |
| 4 | 3p |
| 5 | 3p |
| 6 | 2p |

The differences between the claims of the groups could be looked at. This could be the basis of a discussion: why such differences? Who gets paid the lowest? Other questions will occur to the teacher. The children may well have questions of their own. The discussion might broaden out to consider other common food items.





Part 3

THE LANGUAGE COLLECTION

Speaking another language is not hard - but you have to be ready to have a go, make mistakes and have fun. Millions of people in Britain speak more than one language. Many have learned to speak another language. Some have done so because they wanted to learn. Others have learned because they had to.

SOME ACTIVITIES

1. Who do you know that can speak other languages than English? Make a WORD COLLECTION. The collection could be of words for common things. How many different languages can you collect? Where is the country where each language is spoken as the main language?
The lists could be of such words as mother, father, house, car, baby, school, red, cat, laugh, blue .

2. How many stamps from different countries can you bring into class?
Get some postcards and stick the stamps on them. If you can, make a drawing about something to do with the country the stamp is from. See if you can find out some words in the language of that country and write them on your postcard. Put up a display of the different cards.

3. Charts can be made to expand language awareness by making Numbering Charts/Colour charts/Days of the Week Charts etc. using the languages of the classroom.

4. Languages, accents and dialects.

Children may already have enjoyed visits from storytellers who tell their stories using different languages and language forms. This is something that could be extended using the resources within the school and the community - especially to hear some of the variants within Britain.

How often are teachers asked "Where do you come from?" when an accent sounds unfamiliar? In the writer's experience - often! But how often is that genuine curiosity taken up in class? Extending the question to take in the range of accent, language and dialect available in the classroom?

In Tower Hamlets (and in most other Boroughs) there are

shows the meaning of each name.

| | | |
|---------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| AMANDA | Latin | Lovable |
| WAYNE | Old English | wagon-maker |
| SADIQUE | Bengali | friend |
| PHILIP | Greek | lover of horses |
| LUNA | Bengali | moon |
| TAMANA | Bengali | hope |
| ANGELA | Greek | messenger |
| SHOBURJ | Bengali | green |
| DONNA | Italian | lady |
| MICHAEL | Hebrew | who is like God? |
| SHAMSUM | Bengali | light of the sun |
| SHAPLA | Bengali | water-lily |
| NEIL | Gaelic (Irish & Scottish) | champion |

What first names are their in your class? Make a chart of the names. Find out which languages they come from. Also, if you can, find out the meanings. (A library will often have books about names which could help you.)

What first names are there in your family? How many can you remember of ALL your family and relations? Where do some of the names come from?



LANGUAGES ARE WICKED!

Languages come from people
TALKING.

Sometimes people have found that they wanted
to say something but they didn't have a word
for it in their language.

What did they do?

Sometimes they INVENTED a new word.

Sometimes they BORROWED one from another language.

People still do that now when they want a new word for something.

LOOK AT THESE LISTS OF WORDS:

| | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|---------------|
| anorak | | cot | pyjamas |
| balcony | café | hamburger | sugar |
| bamboo | caravan | karate | tea |
| bungalow | chocolate | mattress | yoghurt zebra |

Do you know them all? Do you use them? Are they English words?

How do you KNOW?

Some of you might say : "Because we use these words".

But the truth is that they all come from different languages.
The English language has BORROWED them. In fact - the English
language has TAKEN them!

Get a large Dictionary. See if you can find the languages that
English has taken these words from.

To help, here are the languages the words belong to. But they are
jumbled up.

HELLO! WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

It may already be a common occurrence for teachers and pupils to greet each other in English and in other languages present in the class. But it could be a new experience for some children and their teachers.

This is a simple exercise, but it could be an effective way of opening out the children's world view that little bit more.

Here are some examples of an exchange of greetings which have been translated into a range of languages. In those cases where the language uses a different style of alphabet, an approximate English pronunciation is given.

What about a chart illustrating two or three examples? The children could be asked to add examples from languages spoken in class, in school. Children may also know people outside of school who speak other languages.

The basic exchange is:

| | | |
|-------------|---|--------------------------------|
| 1st speaker | : | Hello. |
| 2nd speaker | : | Hello. What's your name? |
| 3rd Speaker | : | I'm (name) . What's your name? |

Danish

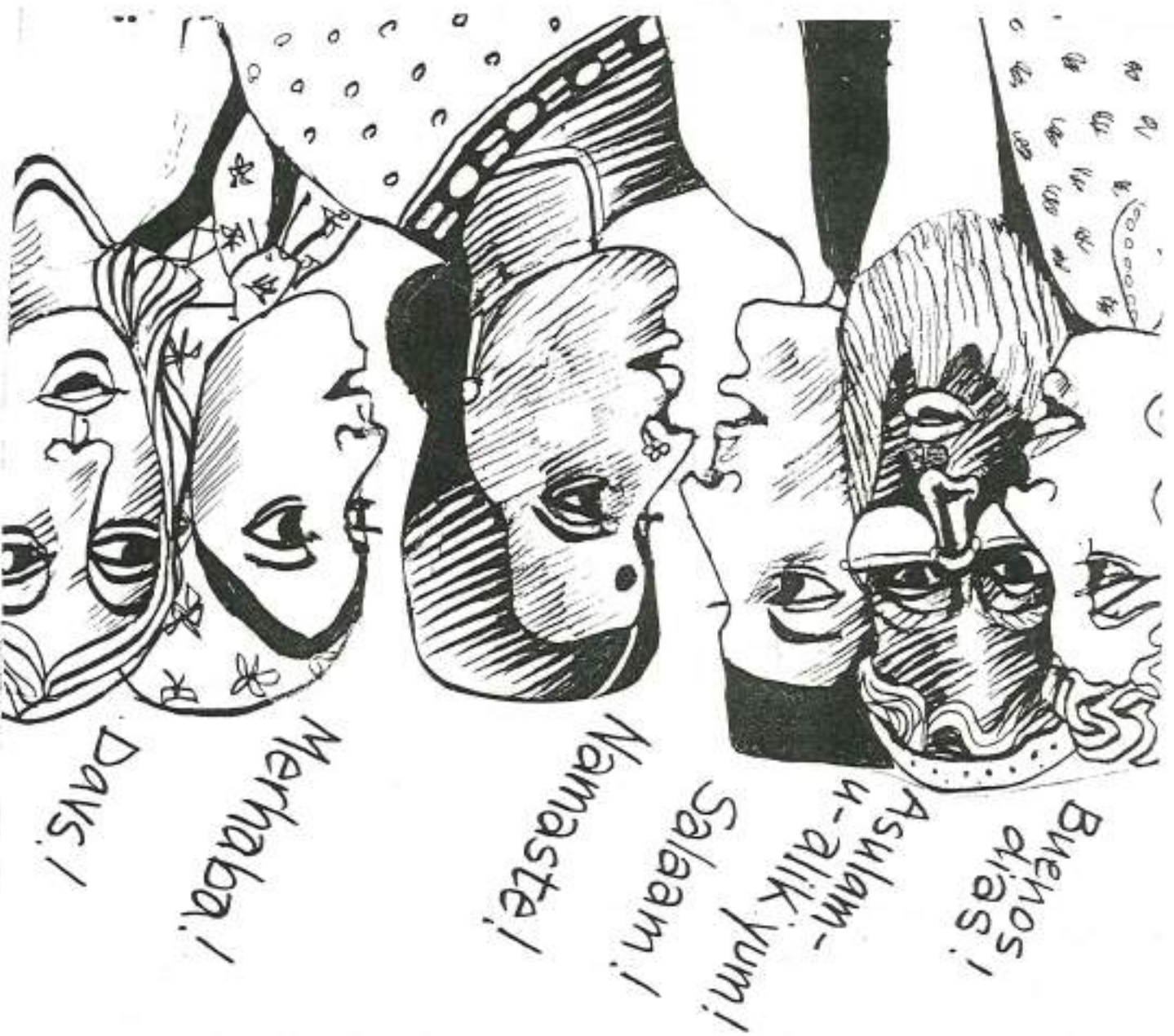
1st: Davs (pron. Dow)
2nd: Davs. Hvad hedder du?
(Dow. Vuth hither doo?)
1st: Jeg hedder Vibeke. Hvad hedder du?
(Yai hither Veebikker. Vuth hither doo?)

Farsi (spoken in Iran)

1st: Salam.
2nd: Salam. Nam ē shoma chi ē?
1st: Nam ē man Hassan ē. Nam ē shomache ē?

Turkish

1st: Merhaba.
2nd: Merhaba. Isminiz nedir.
1st: Benim ismim Zeynep. Sizininki nedir?



AN EXAMPLE OF BILINGUAL DRAMA IN THE CLASSROOM

"World Tales" by Idries Shah is a fascinating book full of information about the remarkable coincidences of stories told in all ages, in all places. One story, which was shown to belong to story lores of India, Arabia, Italy, Germany, Persia and England, is the story that Chaucer used in his "Pardoner's Tale" - the story of the three friends whose greed is so self-consuming that they, on finding a horde of money, rather than share it, plan to outwit each other and all die in the process.

In "Looking into Language" a teacher, Lorna Greenland, describes how one of her pupils, whose parents came from Pakistan, told the class his version of the story. It was suggested that they acted it out, and it was suggested that the class might like to act it in Urdu. This was enthusiastically taken up and the boy who had originally told the story wrote a script in Urdu. Another suggestion was that the play also be performed in English for the benefit of other children who spoke other languages in addition to English. In the project the play was performed twice by two different casts and members of the Urdu cast explained to the audience why they were performing in Urdu as well as in English.

Lorna Greenland says: "The simple drama enabled these children to recall and communicate parts of their experience they MAY WELL LEARN TO SUPPRESS IN AN INDIFFERENT OR HOSTILE CLIMATE".

This first bilingual project led to further productions and it was found that in rehearsal the performers would move spontaneously from their first language to English and vice-versa - so drama was becoming truly bilingual.

Teachers might be interested in using this very dramatic, and lurid, story with their own classes. We have reproduced Shafquat's Urdu version, an English version and a Bengali version. Teachers will have ideas of their own of how to use the story with its moral lesson. Another project could be to think about alternative ways the friends could have acted. Perhaps a way of showing an alternative to greed.

* * * * *

FRIENDS AND THE HIDDEN MONEY

STORYTELLER: Three young friends are walking in the countryside. As they walk they see an old bag under a tree.

1st Friend: No. We'll get rid of him and share it between us.
I have a knife and so have you. Let's hide in the bushes and wait for him.

storyteller: The second friend is on his way to town. He is

thinking.....

2nd Friend: I want all the money. I don't want to share it.

How can I get it? There are two of them. I know what to do. I won't fight them. I'll use a poison drug. I'll go and get some now.

He goes out and after a little pause he comes back again.

I'll put this drug in the sherbet. They won't know.

He does this and then goes back to the tree.

I wonder where.....

At once the other two jump out from behind the bushes. They stab him and he falls. They drag him behind the bushes. They come back and pick up the food and sherbet.

1st Friend: Now for the sherbet! I'm very thirsty. Here's one

for you.

3rd Friend: Thanks. (He drinks) Oh, it tastes good.....Aaaaarg;

They both drink the sherbet and after a few seconds begin to groan and stagger about then they fall.

STORYTELLER: Because these friends were so greedy, they all died.

What about the money? Ah, well. That is still

hidden in the bushes for someone else to find.

বন্ধু এবং সুকানো ঢাকা

তিন বন্ধু একটি সন্ধ্যার পথ দিয়ে হেঁটে যাচ্ছিল।
তারা একটি সন্ধ্যার মতো একটি সুকানো থানি
দেখতে পায়।

প্রথম বন্ধু: ও দেখ একটি সুকানো থানি, জানি
ওটার ভিতরে কি আছে?

দ্বিতীয় বন্ধু: আসি ওটা নিয়ে আসব।

তৃতীয় বন্ধু: আমরা ওটা খুঁজব দেখি ভিতরে
কি আছে।

সবাই একসঙ্গে: ও সুকানো ঢাকা, অনেক সুকানো
সুন্দর সুন্দর ঢাকা।

প্রথম বন্ধু: বন্ধুরা চম আশ্রয় ঢাকা হলে
নিশ্চয় হবে।

দ্বিতীয় বন্ধু: নিশ্চয় হবে?

তৃতীয় বন্ধু: আমরা এই ঢাকা সুকানো নিশ্চয়
হবে।



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দ্বিতীয় বন্ধু: আমি সব টাকা চাই, আমি সে শুলো
ভাঙ্গা ভাঙ্গি করতে চাই না, কিন্তু আমি
টাকা শুলো পাত্তা পাবি? ওহা দু'জন!
আমি জানি কি করতে হবে, আমি তাদের
সঙ্গে সাক্ষাৎ করব না, আমি তাদের কে
যিখ খাইকে বেঁধে রাখব। আমি এখনই
কিছু বিষ কিনে নিয়ে আসব।
(সে চলে যায় এবং কিছুক্ষণ পর ফিরে
আসে)

আমি এই মারবতের অর্থে বিখ্যাত
হব, ওহা বুঝতেই পারব না।

(সে মারবতের অর্থে বিখ্যাত হওয়ার
নীচে তার বন্ধুদের কাছে ফিরে আসে)

আমি চাচ্ছি..... (অন্যে অন্য
অন্য দুই বন্ধু তাদের ভিতর থেকে
বেরিয়ে এসে তাদের দু'জি দিয়ে আশ্রয়
ফিরে এবং সে আশ্রয় পাত্তা যায়।
দুই বন্ধু ছিল তাদের টেনে নিয়ে
আমাদের ভিতর লুকিয়ে রাখা
ওহা খাবার এবং মারবত হতে
হবে।



ମାତ୍ର ୧୦ ଟଙ୍କା ମଧ୍ୟରେ ୧୦୦ ଟଙ୍କା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଲାଭ କରିବାକୁ ସମର୍ଥନ ଦିଆଯାଏ ।

موت اور دولت

ایک دفعہ کا ذکر ہے۔ تین آدمی پہاڑی پر چڑھ رہے تھے۔ انہوں نے ایک صندوق درخت کے نیچے دیکھا۔

پہلا آدمی:- وہ دیکھو وہاں ایک صندوق پڑا ہے۔ پتہ نہیں اس کے اندر کیا ہے؟
دوسرا آدمی:- میں لے آتا ہوں۔

تیسرا آدمی:- چلو۔ اسے کھولتے ہیں اور دیکھتے ہیں اس کے اندر کیا ہے؟

تینوں آدمی:- ارے اس میں تو روپیے ہیں اور خوب ساری روپیے!

پہلا آدمی:- اچھا یا رو! یہ تو بناؤ اب یہ رقم لیکر چلتی ہے یا نہیں؟

دوسرا آدمی:- ہاں بھی لیکر چلتی تو ضرور ہے لیکن لیکر جائیں گے کہاں؟

پہلا آدمی:- میرے گھر چلو۔ ہم اسے وہاں تقسیم کر دیں گے۔

تیسرا آدمی:- اندھیرا ہونے تک ہمیں انتظار کرنا چاہیے۔

دوسرا آدمی:- ہاں۔ کوئی آدمی ہمیں دیکھ نہ پائے۔

پہلا آدمی:- رات ہونے تک ہمیں انتظار کرنا چاہیے۔ لیکن مجھے تو بڑے زور

کی بھوس لگتی ہے۔ ہمیں کچھ کھانے پینے کی چیزوں کی ضرورت ہے۔ شہر کی طرف کھانے

پینے کی چیزوں کیلئے کونا جائے گا؟

دوسرا آدمی اچھے کچھ پیسے دو۔ میں جاؤں گا۔ (پیسے لیکر وہ بازار کی طرف

جاتا ہے)

پہلا آدمی:- کیا ہمیں اس روپیے میں سے اُسے بھی کچھ دینا ہوگا؟

تیسرا آدمی:- نہیں ہرگز نہیں۔ ہم اُسے مار ڈالیں گے اور یہ ساری دولت آپس میں تقسیم

کر لیں گے۔ میرے پاس ایک پاقوبہ اور تمہارے پاس ہیں۔ آؤ یہ پیسے جھاڑیوں میں چھپا

دیں اور خود بھی چھپ کر اس کا انتظار کریں۔

دوسرا آدمی:- (شہر کی طرف جاتے ہوئے) مجھے ساری رقم چاہیے۔ کیوں نہیں؟ لیکن میں

اُسے کیسے لے سکتا ہوں۔ وہ دو ہیں اور میں اکیلا۔ ظاہر ہے میں اُن سے لڑ نہیں سکتا۔ میں

زبردست ہوں گا۔ زبردست شربت میں ملا دوں گا اور وہ کھانا خربہ کر اور شربت میں زہر

ملا کر پہاڑی پر پہنچتا ہے) تعجب ہے وہ دونوں ہیں کہاں؟ (اُس کے دونوں دوست

Water - resource for life

The story of the bottle of well-water from a well on one of the tea gardens being presented by Dr. Eklasur Rahman to Sir Colin Campbell, Chairman of Finlay & Co. at the company AGM is true. It was a powerful and vivid demonstration to bring onto the Agenda the appalling conditions with which thousands of tea workers have to live. In a letter to Sir Colin Campbell, Dr. Rahman said:

Plantation owners must provide clean water.....
However Finlay's wells are often built of mud and the water supply is frequently unfit for human consumption. As a result (your workers) are constantly vulnerable to diseases. Your company has built a few wells of brick and painted DRINKING WATER on them in English.....Your workers cannot read."

Water and sanitation are referred to in the play. In 1988 we are approaching the closing years of what the United Nations resolved would be "THE WATER DECADE". The aim is to see that by the end of Water Decade safe water and sanitation would be available to everyone worldwide.

Water as a topic is well-established and many varied resources have been produced for classroom use. Many teachers may well have taken Water as a topic and produced their own resources. Perhaps seeing the play might be the impetus to considering water again as a topic - perhaps approaching it from a different perspective; letting the project take on a world perspective to help children to develop their understanding of water being our most precious resource; a vital and basic need.

Teachers might like to consider how the topic would lend itself to a bilingual/multilingual approach.

UNICEF publish a pack which treats "Water" under six key themes: Water can mean: LIFE, HEALTH, FOOD, POWER, DANGER, FUN.

One school's approach was to look at our different needs for water: physiological, domestic, agricultural, industrial, its part in health, hygiene and sanitation, storage of water and supply, droughts and floods, use of water in ceremonies.

These two approaches provide opportunities to acknowledge the similarities worldwide in respect of these needs, and the similar and differing responses to them.

RESOURCES: (if not listed here, addresses are shown at the end of the Pack)

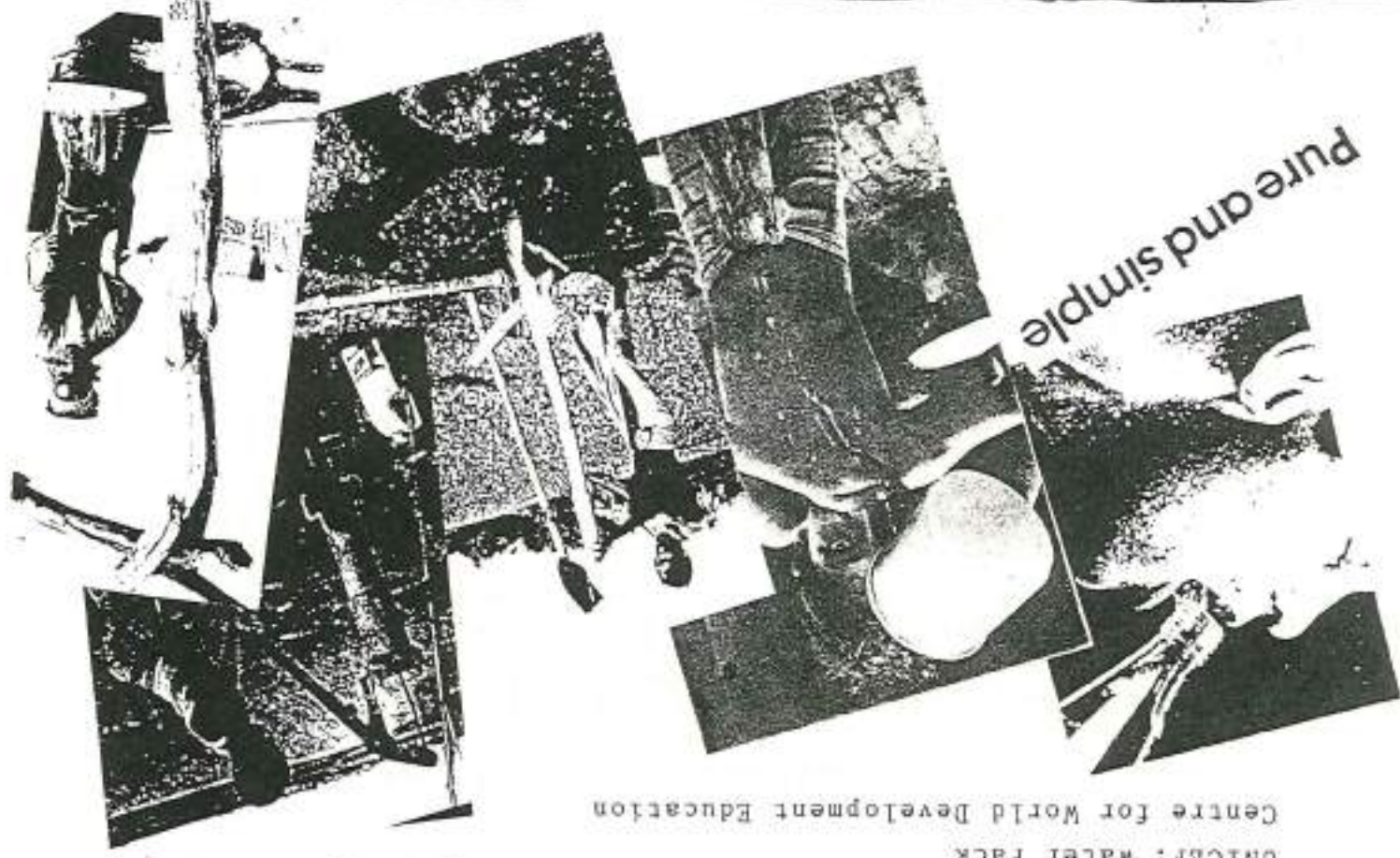
Christian Aid

Oxfam

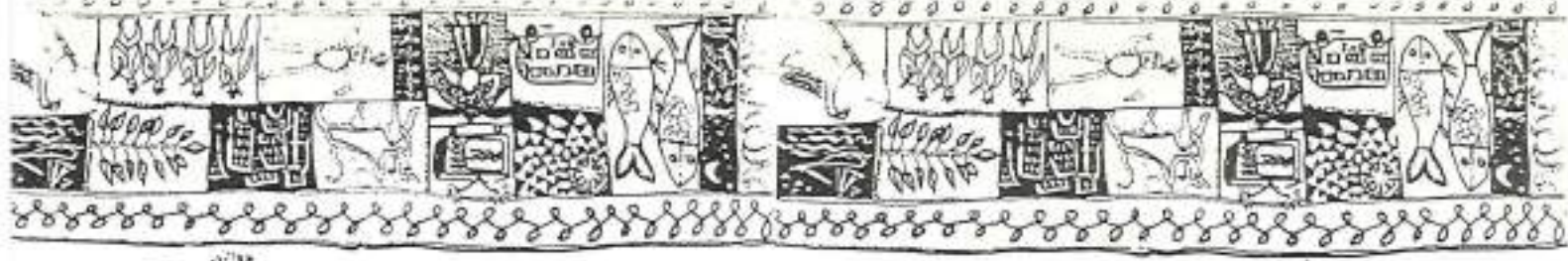
War on Want

Thames Water Educational Aids: Public Relations Dept., New River Head
Rosebery Av., Eclir ATP.
World Water Decade: Chart from Pictorial Charts Education Trust
UNICEF: Water Pack

Centre for World Development Education



Pure and simple



Part 4



my baby sister. I did have another sister too but she was ill and she died. We live in the tea workers' village at the Manchura Tea Garden, about three miles away from my school.

I walk to school every morning with my friends, and home again afterwards. At our school there are so many students that we have two sessions. Our session starts at one o'clock.

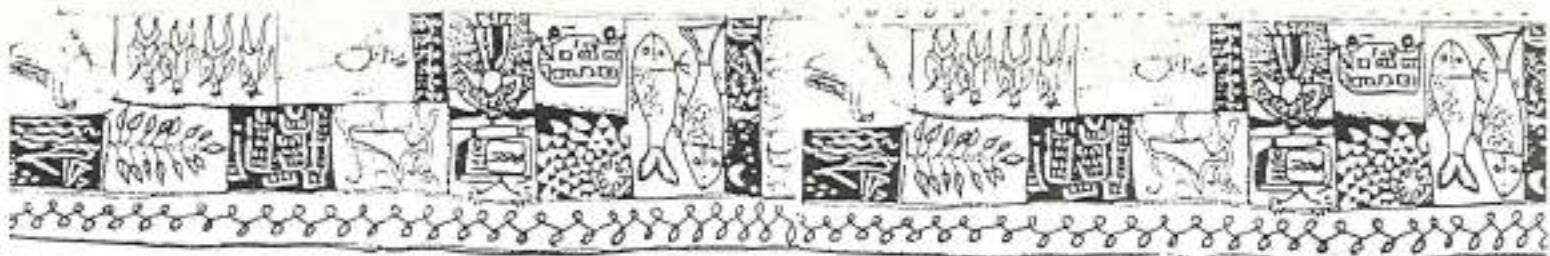
When we walk to school in the hot months the sun is very strong and we walk under a big black umbrella. Four of us can get under the shade of the umbrella if we are careful.

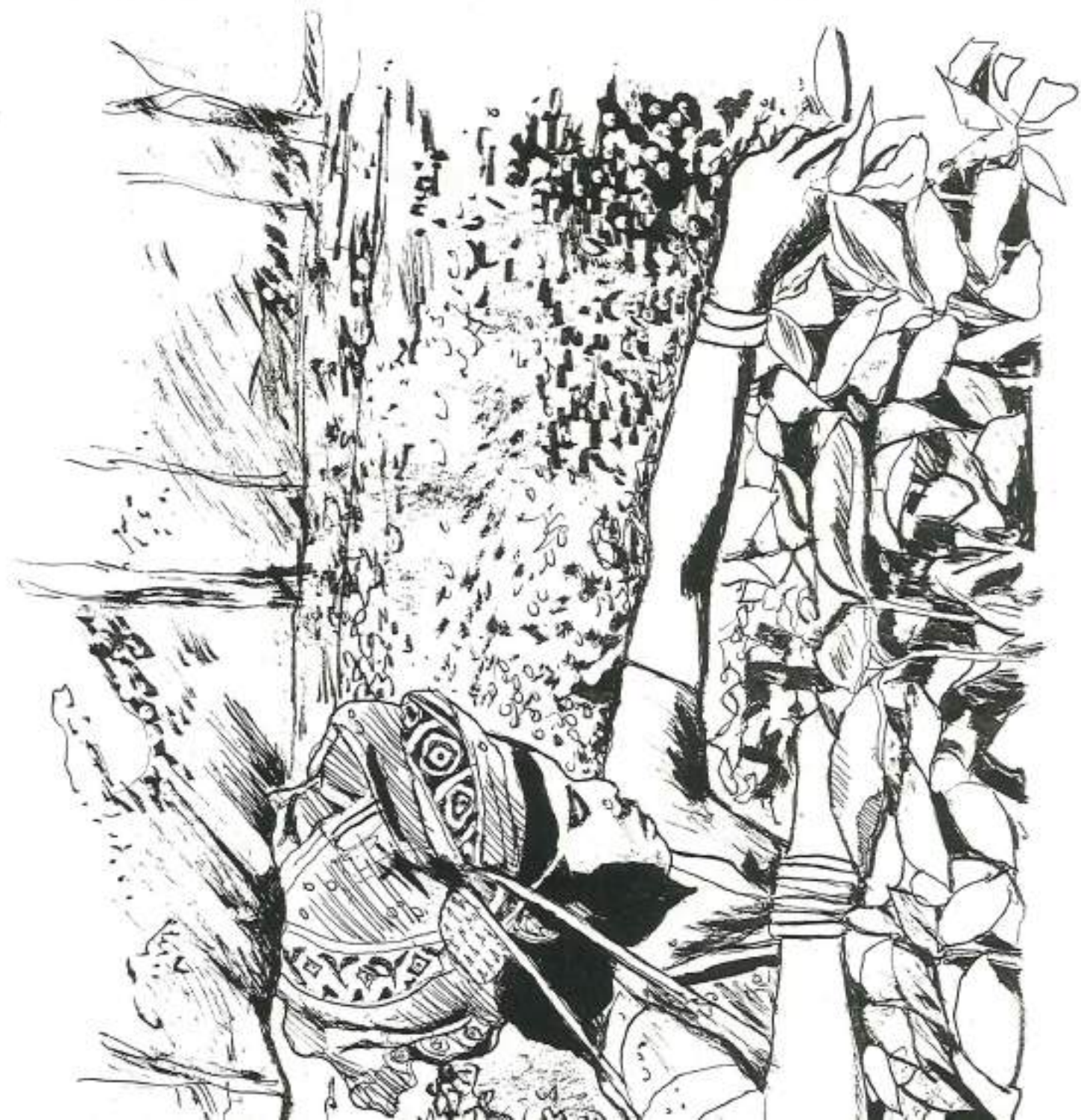
Of course, in the rainy season we need the umbrella too, but it can't really keep us dry and we are often quite cold and wet when we get to school and sometimes our uniforms get muddy.

Our uniform is very smart. The girls wear dark green skirts or salwar kameez and the boys wear dark green trousers. We all wear white shirts. Our uniforms are made in the sewing centre behind the school by some ladies who are learning sewing. They might start a tailors' shop of their own when they have learned enough.

Our school is the only Government Primary School in our area where the students wear a uniform. I know because we sometimes go to big functions with other schoolchildren. Our School Chairman, Harun Sahib, said we should have uniform because then there would be no difference between the rich children and the poor children in our school and that is true. Everybody is the same in our school, Hindu or Muslim, rich or poor. We are all brothers and sisters and we learn together.

I know how special this is because I am one of the poor ones. My mother and father and my big brothers work in the tea garden. My brothers are 11 and 13 but they have never been to school. My father and my mother have never been to school either. I am the first one in my family to go to school and





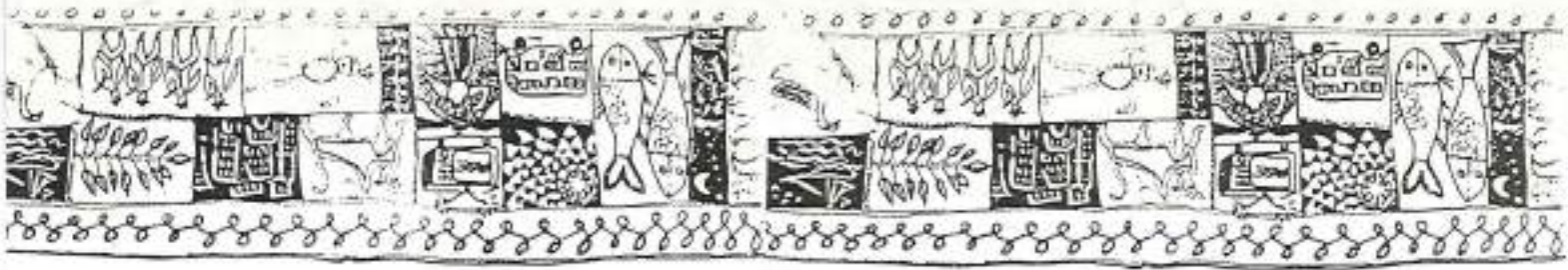
meant as a place to enjoy yourself. Not for the workers anyway. It is a place for very hard work. You have to get up very early in the morning and work hard all day, picking the leaves off the tea bushes, but you never get enough money to have good food and clothes.

We live in a very pretty little house, made of matted (earth). It has a thatched roof, and we grow pumpkins and urt (beans) which climb up over the roof. We have a very small garden by our house where we grow potatoes and sag (spinach greens) and a tiny bit of rice, but it is not enough to feed our family, and we don't always have enough to eat.

In the hot season our house is lovely because it is cool although, of course, we don't have a fan like they do in the town. But in the rainy season it gets very wet and the walls sometimes let in the rain. In the winter it is very cold at night because Sylhet is a hilly place and we don't have enough quilts to keep really warm..

Quilts, called jeps, are made from cotton from the silk cotton tree and are sold in the market. They are very warm but they cost too much for our family, so we mostly have quilts made from old saris, stitched together with embroidery. They are called kanthas. They look nice but they are not really warm enough in the winter. In the tea garden there are lots of snakes! cobras and other dangerous ones. Sometimes they bite the tea-pickers and they die. In the rainy season snakes and scorpions try to come into the houses and we have to be careful.

Last year there was a tiger in our tea garden. I didn't see it, but it came down from the jungle in the hills and frightened a woman outside her house. I think it might have been an old, hungry tiger, because tigers don't usually come where people are.



When my grandfather was a little boy there were lots of tigers in Sylhet, and wild elephants too, but now there are more people and less jungle, so they don't come.

There is still one elephant, though. He lives near our tea garden and his driver rides him into the town when people want to move big things, like heavy trees. He can move a great big tree really easily. His name is Shahjahan and he is a very big elephant. Once my older brother had a ride on him, sitting on his neck, behind his ears. His driver tells the elephant where to go by touching his neck with his feet. Shahjahan understands everything his driver tells him to do.

My Family

I haven't told you much about my family and why we live in the tea garden. It's a very old history and I don't really know it properly, but this is what my grandfather told me.

Long ago, nearly 150 years ago, the British people found tea growing in Sylhet near to Manichura. They were very pleased because they thought tea only grew in China, which is a long way away. So they planted more tea bushes and made Manichura and other tea gardens.

Then they needed people to pick the leaves, but the people who lived in Sylhet were too busy growing their own food to go and work for someone else. So the owners sent messengers to other parts of India to find people who would come.

My grandfather's grandfather and grandmother came here from a place called Orissa in India. They came because they didn't have their own land to grow food and they were hungry. They thought a tea garden sounded a nice place. I don't know where they lived but it was by the sea and there was a very big temple there. They used to speak another language, but now we all speak Bangla.

School

my father must send us all. My father said that my brothers couldn't go because they had to work, but I could go and try to learn. But he said that if I didn't learn, I would have to stop. I was so happy.

The school opened the next day. It is not like an ordinary school. We call it GACHTOLLA School. That means "school under the trees". The children sit under a big jackfruit tree outside my uncle's house. (Do you know jackfruit? It is a very big and very sweet fruit.)

The students sit on big mats made of woven grass. They can smell the flowers and see the butterflies. They have slates and little slate pencils to write with.

When I started in the school, my teachers were Bukht-da from our village and Rohim-bhai from town. They were very kind. They wrote all our names in a big book and everyday they used to mark if we had come to school. They taught us to write Bangla alphabet first, like

this **খ খ খ খ খ খ খ খ খ খ খ খ খ খ খ খ**

and all the other letters. Then they taught us to write our names and little sentences. Then, quite quickly, we found that we could write and read.

When the cold season came Harun Sahib had a meeting with our parents and told them that some of us were ready to go to Khasdobir Government School and asked if we could go. He said that they should pay for our uniforms and our books.

My father said that he would like me to go but he couldn't manage much money. But Harun Sahib said that didn't matter; he must pay what he could and the school committee would pay the rest. He said that the school has lots of friends who help with the money for books and uniforms. I think this is because the school is very good.

So my father said I could go and last year, in January, I became a student of Khasdobir Government Primary School. I have passed my first year examination and now I am in class two.

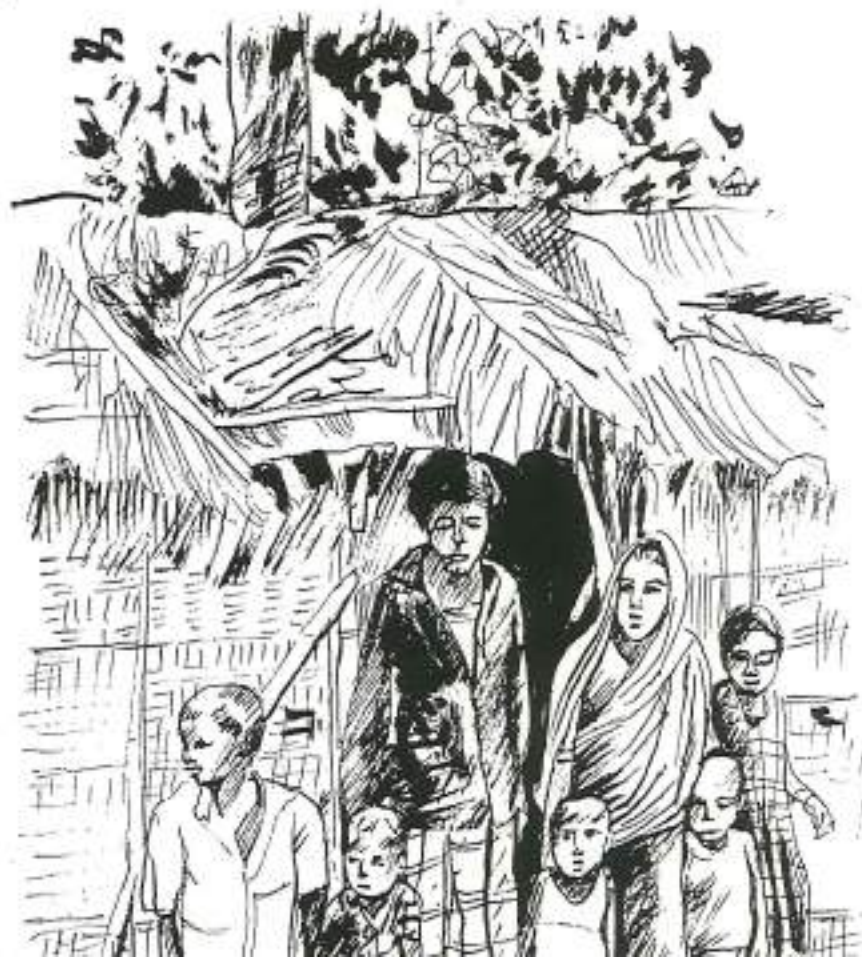


I like my lessons, but I like it better when we have a function and we learn songs and dances to show our parents and friends. I am good at singing and dancing, and my teacher is giving me some extra lessons, because she is a well-known singer.

I hope that if I can study well enough and pass all my exams I will go to the High School when I am older, and perhaps even to college.

So now you know all about me and my school.

Perhaps you will come and visit us one day. If you do, I will make a garland of flowers, red hibiscus and white champa and put it round your neck to welcome you.



Education & Bilingual Resources:

Supporting Children's Bilingualism : David Houlton & Richard Willey
(Schools Council Programme 4)
Language & Dialects of London Schoolchildren : Harold Rosen & Tony Burgess (Ward Lock Educational)
The Languages Book : Mike Raleigh, Jane Miller, Michael Simons
(ILEA English Centre)

Stories in the Multilingual Primary Classroom : ILEA Centre for Learning Resources

A Meeting of Mother-tongues: Bilingualism, Theatre and School
(ILEA Drama Inspectorate, County Hall)
Looking into Language Diversity in the Classroom : Audrey Gregory & Norah Woodland (Trentham Books)

Songs, Rhymes & Tunes : Pratibha Chaudhuri (avail. from
5 Melcome Gdns., Kenton, Middx., HA3 9RH)
£2.50 (or £3.95 with tape)
Cafe : Collection of photographs of East London Cafes: Cheryl A. Aaron

Across Seven Seas and Thirteen Rivers: Life Studies of Pioneer
Sythet Settlers in Britain: comp. & Edit. by Caroline Adams (THAP)

CONTACTS

Bangladesh International Action Group (BIAG) PO Box 94, London N5 1UN
War on Want 37/39 Great Guildford St., SE1 0ES

Oxfam Youth & Education Dept. 274 Banbury Rd., Oxford, OX2 7DZ.
(tel. 0865-56777)
Christian Aid: Children's Education Dept. PO Box 100, London SE1 7RT
(tel. 620-4444)

The Centre for World Development Education: publishes a catalogue
with wide selection of materials: Regents College, Regent's Park, NW1
(tel. 487-5474)

UNICEF: 55 Lincoln's Inn Fields, WC2A 3NB (tel. 405-5592)
Tradecraft: Kingsway, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE11 0NE (tel.
091-487-3191)

Although compiled with older children in mind, the pack produced by
WAR ON WANT Campaigns Ltd. "DHAKA TO DUNDEE: Bangladesh & Britain in
an unequal world" is an excellent resource.

Acknowledgments

The Half Moon Young People's Theatre would like to thank the many people who have made available their time, help, advice, information - all of which was so essential to us in the preparation of this theatre-in-education programme.

Thanks to:

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The many people at the end of telephones whose names we did not always have: workers at Tower Hamlets International Solidarity Campaign, Bangladesh International Action Group, War on Want, Christian Aid, Oxfam, Scottish War on Want.

IN CONCLUSION

Examples of bilingual theatre are rare but productions do happen. Schools are developing bilingual drama and youth theatres are exploring forms of theatre using the languages in the groups. But bilingual theatre-in-education is still very new. Therefore the HMYPT is anxious to receive feedback, assessments, comments etc. about DEAR SURAIYA.....LOVE REHANA.

We particularly welcome reports from teachers -especially on the style of presentation, choice of subject, their observations of their children's responses both during the performance and in any follow up.

Also, we would be delighted to receive work done by the children. If work would be difficult to send, but is in the form of a display or



| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Performer | Lee Halliday |
| Director : Youth Theatres | Steve Harris |
| Designer | Mark Salikid |
| Performer | Andrew Sinclair |
| Resident Writer | Nick Stafford |
| Performer | Sandra Vacciana |
| Administrator | Alex Zeman |
| <hr/> | |
| Part-time Youth Theatre Tutors | |
| <hr/> | |
| Josette Bushell-Mingo | |
| Luiz Deran-Deslongrais | |
| Alan Forest | |
| Elizabeth Lynch | |
| Merle Nestfield | |