

-McNeil Views-

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struction it was an unwanted child, and the nation ignored it for a century while it grew up stunted, yet wise; subservient, yet nurturing a secret rebelliousness. Then the civil rights uprising brought the Black colleges into view—and now White America is beginning to encircle them with a fine net of benevolence, threatening to draw them into an American culture which, to many Negroes, seems desirable and repellent at the same time.

Under segregation, the problem of the colleges was survival. Now with the battle for integration won (at least legally), the peace negotiations bring a question: What are the terms? In his novel, *Home to Harlem*, Claude McKay an outstanding figure of the Harlem literary renaissance of the 1920's, spoke on this point. "We ought to get something new — we Negroes. But we get our education like—like our houses. When the whites move out of the old houses we move in and take possession of the old dead stuff. Dead stuff that this age has no use for." Yet the "dead stuff" of education means degrees, status, entrance into the professions. And for Blacks whose fathers picked tobacco and carried trays and whose mothers hands became hard washing other women's laundry, this is a huge achievement. Higher education, however, is always a gift for the few, and this is especially, poignantly true of Blacks in the United States. Whites outnumber Blacks in the population about ten to one, but in college they outnumber them about forty to one.

The North Carolina College campus for example is extraordinarily fragrant and lovely, with immaculate lawns and thick limbed trees. The dress is less casual than, less say, on Duke University's campus; the decorum is controlled. The average Negro student has always labored under the terrible weight of the admonition—delivered by the older and higher ups within the race—to "make a good impression" as if this were somehow the key to equal treatment.

The students are mostly from the rural areas of the State, from segregated schools, which have the lowest teacher salaries, the most out-of-date textbooks, the most crowded classrooms, the most shabby equipment in the world. Most of the students are badly prepared in their vocabulary, their reading ability and their study habits. A number are eager to make up for this and shoot ahead.

But this picture of the Negro college is false if it emphasizes differences instead of similarities between White and Black, homogeneity rather than variety among the Black Colleges. The fact is that the Black institutions vary highly as do their students. For instance, on a ranking by academic quality, I think Howard University, Fisk, Lincoln and Morehouse would be found in the upper tenth of all American institutions. And the poor Black state institutions share the bottom of the academic list with White institutions all over the nation. And yet, on the whole, Black Colleges are smaller in size and poorer in quality. The reasons are easily identifiable: segregation and a century of liv-

ing on financial crumbs. Most colleges have to scrounge desperately for money, but Black more than any. Black colleges are needed more desperately and are hardly likely to be integrated out of existence; however, more white students are enrolling, but only in a trickle. True, two institutions in West Virginia (Bluefield State and West Virginia State) now have a white majority, but this due to special conditions (convenient location for local whites, low tuition, and race prejudices never as virulent as in the Deep South). Integration will grow at Black colleges, but only slowly.

About some of the poor faculty members in the Black College, the only ones they should get rid of, they keep, and the ones they should keep they get rid of."

One response to the new interest in Black colleges, is that foundations are giving money. However, Black colleges still seem to get the picking after White institutions have been taken care of; the rich colleges get richer; and the poor relatively poorer.

The Black student too often is misguided by what he learns in college; and what he will face in reality. These students have heard many pretentious commencement day speakers talk about the purpose of education being to develop "values" in students, but what they find is a strong concern to produce "able, first class" young men and women who will score high on tests, enter leading universities, sionals. And while this is advantageous for the few, if unjoined to some larger concern it leaves too many people out.

Somehow, sometimes, accrediting associations grasped the idea that an easy way to judge the quality of a college is to count the Ph.D's on its faculty. This leads the harassed president of any poor college and thus most of the Black institutions to be more concerned with the degrees held by a potential teacher than with his or her teaching ability.

Presidential autocracy is quite evident among black colleges than ever before. Faculty and students have little to say in policy making. Common practices among black college presidents are: arbitrarily firing of faculty members who are overly critical; censoring student newspapers; reprimanding Student Government Association officers who protest campus policies.

One hopeful sign is that a new generation of black college presidents is beginning to appear — vigorous, forward looking men who were active in the civil rights movement.

There is too much wistful talk in education circles about how far black colleges must go to "catch up" with the rest. What is overlooked is that the black colleges have one supreme advantage over the others: They are the nearest this country has to a racial microcosm of the world outside the U. S.—a world largely non-white, developing, and filled with the tensions of the bourgeois emulation and radical protest. And with more white students and foreign students entering, black universities might become our first massively integrated, truly international educational centers.

-Black Studies-

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are too stupid to see the truth because if we were going to hurt you we would come with guns. Our function is to make the whites move into action to join with us to help civilize a barbaric country."

In the end the teacher pleaded Uncle: "It's really the white man's job to change white racist attitudes—not the black's."

The ABS is currently planning to open its Black College in September. The group has already won \$34,000 from the Catholic Church and is working on the Ford Foundation for an additional grant. "We hope to bring in top black teachers from around the country to help staff our college," says Lonnie Peaks, who is studying for a masters degree in Community Organization.

A four-year program will let students work toward a degree in black studies. "This makes sense—after all, Wayne is really our campus. It was built right out of the ghetto," say Peaks.

Students from other departments will be encouraged to enroll in Black College courses. Already the economics, social work, and education faculty have tentatively agreed to push the black courses. "We think courses on black culture will be a real asset to future teachers working in the ghetto," says Peaks.

So far the administration has been cooperative in working out class space for the new school: "Whenever they balk at one of our proposals," says Peaks, "We just say, 'Now look, you guys just had a riot here and none of us wants a new one, do we?'"



Allan Fannin, weaver of Brooklyn, with his display of woolens. Mr. Fannin lectured and conducted a workshop for students at NCC.

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