

Black or White: Racism in Colleges

by Lisa Findley

"Perhaps it's O.K. to pretend that the racist snake is dead and not affecting students. Same as it is to believe in the tooth fairy. Nevertheless, we all know the facts of life," remarked Chalmers Archer, Jr., a professor of student development, in a letter to the editor of The Chronicle of Higher Education.

Racism is an issue on virtually every American university and college campus.

"The National Institute Against Prejudice and Violence reported racial incidents at 115 campuses in 1989, and its updates continue to catalogue abuses," according to an article by Alexander Cockburn in last May's issue of New Statesman & Society.

Cockburn displayed some examples of the incidents occurring in his article:

Last February a student at Brown University, Douglas Hann, was expelled "under hate speech provisions after he shouted, 'Fucking niggers...What are you, a faggot?...Fucking Jew'; told a black woman, 'My parents own your people'; and had to be restrained from provoking a fight.

"In December 1987 some Asian-American women at the University of Connecticut were spat upon by football players shouting 'Oriental Faggots.'"

And, "at the University of Massachusetts in 1986 a white mob of 3000 chased and beat up anyone in its path who happened to be black."

Unfortunately, these are just a few examples of the many racial uprisings occurring on American university and college campuses.

One needs to look back on a bit of history concerning racism and segregation to see exactly where America is moving in terms of these issues.

As stated in the article "The New Segregation on Campus" by Dinesh D'Souza in the Winter 1991 issue of American Scholar:

First was the ground-breaking Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. Board of Education* on May 17, 1954, where children of minorities were given the right to an education.

By the mid-60's, Martin Luther King, Jr. made racism socially and politically disreputable. The nation seemed committed to integrating minorities into every aspect of American life.

Yet, the article continues, as America enters the last decade of the twentieth century, social pressures are actively promoting racial and ethnic isolation in many areas "threatening to reverse the trend of the past several decades.

"Paradoxically, nowhere is the new segregation more evident than in that seemingly most progressive of institu-

tions, the American university."

Archer proposed solutions to this problem in his letter to the editor of The Chronicle. He stated, "What we need to do is explore ways to make things better, not unfairly criticize our students' attitudes." His proposals were to:

1.) "Provide better preparation and stronger foundation courses at early levels, along with courses in race relations and women's rights.

2.) "Promote an understanding of the fundamental reforms and institutional changes needed in American higher education.

3.) "Promote opportunities to discuss ways to eliminate structural barriers.

4.) "Promote multicultural and balanced academic programs.

5.) "Explore the many components and interrelationships that contribute to program excellence.

6.) "Study current information and research findings for possible solutions.

7.) "Strive for innovative ideas that help institutions increase success in recruiting, retaining, and educating black students."

If Archer's proposals were to be accepted and followed by American colleges and universities, there would be nowhere to move but upward in terms of racial acceptance.

"It is no exaggeration to say that many colleges are divided into sharply distinct ethnic subcultures - a black culture, a Hispanic culture, an Asian culture, and a (residual) white culture," stated D'Souza.

Though Salem College is not a strong example of these subcultures, it is evident. Many sit within their groups at virtually every meal and social function, thus distinguishing themselves from the rest of the student body.

Though no violent acts have occurred as do on many campuses, attitudes towards racism are a primary difference between Northern and Southern students at Salem.

Recent conversations with students from both areas indicated a variety of views.

One conversation presented opposing views. Janet Welte, a New Jersey native, and Candy Bass, a North Carolinian, discussed the differences they see with racism:

Bass' automatic response to the subject of racism was that "we are a lot more prejudiced toward black people and foreigners coming in. We are."

Welte expressed a different view toward the subject. She said that it wasn't so much that southerners are more prejudiced but that "Northerners are more hypocrites. A lot of them will say they aren't prejudiced yet they get upset when a black family moves into the neighborhood."

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The Oracle

by Dr. Catherine Holderness

I have spent the past several days reading "Women's Lib" books. Let me quote one, "In every way, women and the rest of society should be ready now for fair consideration of the question. The militant mood, aggressively feminine or aggressively masculine as regards the so called women's movement, has passed with most thoughtful people." Text from the 1980's? Possibly the 1970's? Try 1927. The quote is from OCCUPATIONS FOR WOMEN: a study Made for the Southern Woman's Alliance (p. xiii.)

That's right, 1927. The book describes occupational and wage discrimination against women, and then continues with strategies for women who do want careers. So how far have we come, baby? Not that far. Men with a high school diploma earn about the same as women with a Bachelor's Degree. And women still dominate the low paying occupations identified in 1927. And women still are our children's primary caretakers.

I would suggest that the Women's

Movement has come a long way, though, in the 1970's we were breaking into law, medicine, and business in a big way. But we were busy proving that we could compete with men on their terms. We were making the mistake Americans often make (as De'Tocqueville noted), that of equating equality with sameness. Or perhaps it was simply necessary to wear severe little suits, pumps, and those terrible silk bow ties to get the job and respect we wanted.

And women were afraid that going to a woman's college might somehow make them seem inferior to women who competed at a co-ed school. Not so, on Thursday of this week Salem will host 50 successful, energetic, and informed Alumanae. These women have made it in what they have chosen to do and they have chosen a wide variety of things. So, it may be that women can be different and be equal (or superior) to men. And that a Salem education does more than prepare you to compete - it prepares you to lead! And proudly so.

First Annual IRS Mixer was a Success

by Banner Gregory

Big 3+3 sponsored the first IRS mixer on April tenth. The theme was country western, and all who attended definitely looked their best. Dean Dollar Band played some real boot-kickin' country

music and kept the small enthusiastic crowd yeee-hawin' throughout the night. Given the small attendance, a good ole' time was had by everyone who came on down to the Salem Commons!

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