

Growth of Black Consciousness at Northwestern

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(Abstract)

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This paper represents an analysis of the development of race consciousness and the process of organization building among black students at Northwestern University prior to May 3, 1968. The conceptual focus is on the patterns of social relationships in which black students participated before attending Northwestern, the various relationships which developed on campus, and the interaction of these students with representatives of a rapidly changing black orientation in the larger society. The constraints of communion and segregation are distinguished from each other in interpreting the students' behavior. The interaction of blacks with whites in the context of black communion is demonstrated to be the root of growing race (black) consciousness.

Preface

On numerous campuses across the nation black students have organized to pursue a schedule of priorities separate from that of their white classmates. After whites, and in many cases blacks in the ghetto, have gotten over the initial surprise at this pattern it is frequently accepted or dismissed by the appropriate ideological label. Unfortunately, both those who favor and those who oppose such events generally discuss the particular occurrences without throwing much light on the change in behavior which has undoubtedly developed among the students involved. It is superficial to indicate that disillusionment or racism is the source of the militancy which is demonstrated in so many places in the nation. This pattern of events raises some interesting questions: (1) what are the expectations of blacks who come to a white college? (2) how do they fit into the social fabric of the particular campus? (3) what is the relationship of black students to nearby black communities? A further set of questions pertain to the process of radicalization of black students: (1) what are the stimuli to organization building? (2) what things do black students have in common as a basis for organizing other than overt discrimination against them by whites? (3) what are the types of organizations which blacks develop?

This paper addresses the questions above using a case study of one such student movement. The focus here is on the genesis of the student movement and the dynamics of change within it as it grows. For this reason, the narrative of events will end at that point just before the students took over a campus building to force a confrontation. The actual strategy of confrontation and negotiation belong to a different analysis.

While some of the details of this situation are unique and not generalizable to student movements in other situations, the analysis weaves about

three variables which are thought to be helpful in analyzing other situations of black student movements developing on white campuses. Those variables are segregation, communion, and race consciousness.

In such an analysis, it is difficult to explain conflict from the point of a protagonist without making the antagonist seem uniquely evil. Here black students are the protagonists and the university is the antagonist. The writer's subjective feelings will soon be evident if they are not at present. However, at this point it should be stated, that the writer does not have any reason to suspect that the villain (university) in this study is more villainous than other institutions which have found themselves in like circumstances. With this in mind it is hoped that constructive generalizations can be made from this study.

Introduction

This paper describes two years of change in the lives of black students, resulting from their encounter with Northwestern University. However, this event should be placed in the broader context of the university's historical pattern of dealing with blacks in general. For most of its existence, Northwestern operated without troublesome contact with black people. This is not to imply that there has been little contact between blacks and N.U. On the contrary, like many of the white and wealthy on the North Shore of Lake Michigan, Northwestern has made extensive use of cheap black labor. Blacks have worked as maids, kitchen help and garbage men on the university work crews. The use of blacks exclusively in menial positions is a part of the university's general practice of hiring for such jobs people who have few options for better employment. The buildings and grounds crew is almost entirely composed of first generation European immigrants, many of whom barely speak English. In view of their lack of middle class credentials and their difficulty in communicating in English, it is arguable that their jobs and salary represent a fair bargain for themselves as well as the university. However, within the buildings and grounds crew, blacks, generally better educated, are only allowed to perform the most menial tasks--like collecting garbage, or lifting heavy objects. Blacks are only used in positions where they take orders from whites, and perhaps give orders to other blacks. After their labor these blacks leave the vicinity of the campus to return to well-defined reservations in Chicago and West Evanston.

As the university was to admit in May, 1968, in an agreement with black students, previous generations of Northwestern students could be described

as white and upper middle class. Enrollment is small (7,000). It has been drawn overwhelmingly from the middle west. Alumni frequently point with pride to a tradition of fraternity parties, well-to-do pretty girls, and dynamic future professionals. Until 1966, a more consistently observed university tradition was the virtual absence of black students in the student body. Some of the characteristics of the campus race situation prior to 1966 demonstrate that the terms of black student interaction with the university paralleled those of the university with its black labor force.

The black student population at Northwestern University in 1965-66 academic year was 26 (Daily Northwestern, vol. 86, no. 75, 1966). This total included several commuters who were relatively invisible to other blacks, who were generally surprised that the count was as high as 26. The composition of this group was quite unlike that of a "normal" student distribution. During the five years up to and including 1965-1966, when the writer was an undergraduate there, the Northwestern University black population was comprised primarily of athletes. The proportion of athletes ranged from 65% to 75% during those years with the total ranging between 20 and 25 students. Among these students, the sex ratio was never less than 5 to 1. If two girls were admitted one year, then either one or none would be admitted the following year. Unlike the athletes, who represented the majority of the black students, the girls were always solidly middle class and had the financial resources with which to pay for their education. Discussions with blacks who attended the university before 1960, indicate similar distributions of black students.

Social life at N.U. meant fraternities and sororities. Despite the

fact that there existed thirty fraternities and eighteen sororities, with membership of well over half the campus, they had almost no impact on black social activities. To put it succinctly, the white fraternities generally did not seek black members. Token desegregation of the fraternities was accomplished in 1962. Between 1962 and 1966 eight Afro-Americans were admitted into three white fraternities; half of these students went into the two Jewish fraternities which already have a caste-like distinction from the gentile houses. Seven of the eight were star athletes and acknowledged celebrities even before they activated, hence the writer would argue that this represented white acceptance of the "super black" stereotype more than the reduction of white prejudice against blacks. Blacks who were athletes were not sought after with the same enthusiasm as was reserved for even third string white performers. An equally important factor in explaining which fraternities sought black athletes is the fact that each of those which did so ranked relatively low in WASP oriented prestige. In short, black students participated in the university on terms similar to those of the black working force: aside from attending classes and starring on the athletic field, they too, were expected to stay in their place.

Segregation and Communion

There are two analytical perspectives which describe different, but related dimensions of black student life on white campuses. First, the experience of black students on white campuses indicates that the frequency and mode of their interaction with whites is controlled and manipulated by whites. Looking at the situation which existed at Northwestern prior to 1966, the most obvious interpretation is that black students were subject to a version of segregation. As late as 1950, black students were not given

housing on campus. In that era, blacks, including all athletes, either commuted to campus from afar, or lived in the YMCA in the black section of Evanston. Until 1961, black students in dormitories were automatically assigned to room with other blacks; that is, until a white student questioned the randomness of this assignment in the school newspaper. These arrangements were imposed on black students by the white-run and oriented university.

The second and equally important perspective describes the social world which black students bring to the white campus. To properly discuss the experiences of these students in such a situation, indeed any people raised in a ghetto or colonized society, we must examine the history of social relationships which characterize their previous experience. By itself, the first perspective, segregation, serves to distort the perception of them as a social entity. It defines them wholly in terms of their interaction or lack of it with the oppressive group. On the other hand, the concept of communion (bund) describes the positive relationships which black students develop in black neighborhoods before venturing into white colleges, and upon which they rely in their interaction with each other and other blacks outside the campus.

Communion, as the concept will be used in this paper, will borrow heavily from the interpretation that Herman Schmalenbach (cf. Parsons, et al, 1961) gave it: "Emotional experiences are the very stuff of the relationship. They are, in fact, their basis....They are bound together by the feeling actually experienced. Indeed, each one is in rapport." Schmalenbach goes to great length to distinguish communion from Ferdinand Toennies' use (cf. Parsons, et.al., 1961) of community (gemeinschaft). He argues that the latter term attributes qualities of communion to social relations which have as their basis physical proximity and consanguinity. Toennies' examples of community are limited

to peasant and small-town families. Yet in more industrial societies it can be readily seen that attributes such as political or religious fervor, fraternal ties, nationality and so forth, can function as the basis of solidarity where neither family or village ties are held in common. On the other hand, residential proximity or common family ties does not always generate a strong sense of solidarity. The social experience of solidarity within a group can be related to individuals' experience in community, but in this instance community is but the prior ecological basis of a more conscious solidarity. Community necessarily conotes a small group situation. Communion is not limited by the objective conditions of its genesis. W.E.B. DuBois discovered this phenomenon among black people when he stayed at Fisk University from 1885 to 1888. DuBois (cf. Meier, 1963) was "thrilled and moved to tears," and recognized "something inherently and deeply my own" as a result of his association there with a "closed racial group with rites and loyalties, with a history, and a corporate future, with an art and a philosophy."

Northwestern black students came from black communities. The social experience of growing up in black families, attending black churches, and participating in black social life, developed a group who shared similar life styles, and a feeling of common experience and racial status. This feeling of common experience was re-inforced by their understanding of their status in the university. They consciously viewed their role of student-athletes as instrumental to gaining social mobility normally kept from blacks. In the white social environment, (music, dance, and world-view) they found little in common with the mode of social life they enjoyed among black people. Even those blacks in white fraternities placed more

emphasis on their interaction with other blacks than with their fraternity brothers. Campus social events open to all, such as dances and pop music concerts, were generally ignored by blacks. Prior to 1966, black students frequently left campus in the evenings and on weekends to recreate the types of social get-togethers which had characterized their lives before Northwestern. Of particular note, some blacks in Evanston generally extended an open invitation to their collegiate brethren when social events were given.

A particular focus of activity was the home of "Doc", jack of all trades, who devoted his spare time to recruiting black athletes for Northwestern. Motivated by a love of sports and convinced that a Northwestern degree meant a secure life, "Doc" offered his home and family as a "home away from home" to black athletes in a white environment. Almost any time of the day or night "Doc" opened his home to relaxing students, visiting parents, and crowds of young people. Athletes who decided to attend other schools, nevertheless frequently corresponded with "Doc" long after making that choice. "Doc" represented a point of contact whom black students utilized to escape much of the strain inherent in leaving the black community.

In addition to providing a social atmosphere of compensatory equilibrium, "Doc" functioned as an intermediary between the majority of black students (the athletes) and the operation of a certain facet of the university administration, the athletic department. "Doc" served to reduce instances of tension between the athletes and this center of authority, generally by molding the youths to a state of mind more conducive to the coaches' notions of personnel use. In accomplishing this, he often contrasted

the athlete's temporary dependence to the promise of graduation and a possible career in professional sports, if he, the student could adjust.

In short, before 1966, most blacks came to N.U. with a very instrumental set of mind, prepared to take what they could from university academic life. They sought little from a social life that was not intended for them. On the other hand, that social expression which they found gratifying necessitated their frequent interaction with persons in the black community. In "integrated" settings such as N.U., they relied on the ghetto to maintain a sense of social identity and communion.

Circumstances Surrounding the Change

Consider for a moment the circumstances surrounding a substantial increase in the number of black students at N.U. in September, 1966. By 1966, Northwestern was definitely committed to a major expansion of its physical plant as part of the Plan for the Seventies. This involved securing federal support in unprecedented amounts. It is significant to remember that thanks to the legislative rider that Adam Clayton Powell did so much to institutionalize, schools are unlikely to qualify for such money if it becomes blatantly evident that they are discriminatory on racial or religious grounds. It could not have helped the university's image when, in March, 1964, a Mrs. Prudence J. Scarritt told the Daily Northwestern that her job in the admissions office from September, 1959 to October, 1961 was to designate the religion and race of applicants.

In the nation at large, the pattern of ghetto rebellions had been set. Watts was recent and still major news. One of the reflex responses to these events was an effort to bring some blacks into the reward structures of the political and economic system. Several of the prestige schools, in whose

company Northwestern considers itself, had already embarked on limited programs of black enrollment. In 1966, Northwestern fell in line with the leading educational institutions by admitting sixty black undergraduates. Nothing in its past dealing with black athletes could have furnished the university with insight into this new situation.

Overview of 1966-1968--The Growth of Race Consciousness

Despite the favorable publicity which accrued to the university because of this gesture, this first crop of blacks experienced their first year in school as a disaster. At first, bouyed with the expectation of unique experiences in an enlightened and changing setting, many consciously strove to keep an "open mind" about whites. However, by the end of the academic year, they felt harrassed by beer cans thrown from fraternity windows and exploited by large loans they had to obtain from the university to pay their fees. Among the black students, hostile factions had formed and several spoke of transferring to other schools. The black homes of Evanston were not adequate to resolving the frustrations of so many.

Yet, a year later, in 1968, black students achieved a racial solidarity and sense of mastery which culminated in a move to command university compliance with a list of demands. The dynamic social changes which black students experienced and which they helped to produce explain much of the racial consciousness which developed among them during these two years. The further course of this paper is devoted to demonstrating the interaction of events with the black students' sense of communion in the context of white dominance to produce new behavior and values. The new behavior and values were ultimately demonstrated in the May 3, 1968 takeover of the

student finance building. This student act, preceded by months of appeals, petitions and finally demands to the university, represented the development of a new group and personal property called race consciousness. As used here, race consciousness will mean a person or group's commitment to action on behalf of his racial group aimed at overcoming another race. Institutions or persons, black or white, can all be perceived by those demonstrating race consciousness, to be extensions and media of the racial enemy. To have race consciousness is to demonstrate commitment to action against a racial enemy. Race consciousness varies in intensity within individuals and groups over time. Action generated by the norm of race consciousness can be, but is not necessarily, aimed at total revolution of the structural relations of dominance between races.

The Beginning - Fall 1966

The actual introduction of greater numbers of black students into the university began in the summer of 1966, as 37 blacks, all from Chicago, were brought to the campus for an intensive preparation for the Freshman year. Northwestern University Chicago Action Project or NUCAP recruited mostly working class and lower middle class youths with nearly an even sex ratio. The attitude of the program directors was one of disciplined concern for the students' progress. The atmosphere was competitive. Students realized that those who did not perform well in NUCAP would not be allowed to enroll in September. In addition to fast-paced courses in English, the physical sciences, and humanities, the program involved weekend trips to events considered to be of "cultural benefit." This included classical music concerts, major motion pictures and plays. As a small group, NUCAP experienced a full and complete social life. They gave parties

and dated each other, thoroughly enjoying their pre-college experience. This elite group was housed together, in the male and female dormitories respectively, but segregated from living among students attending summer school. The whites with whom they had the most interaction were those who worked in the NUCAP program. Understandably, these whites exhibited sincere interest in the welfare of the NUCAP students.

When Fall Quarter began, the 37 NUCAP students plus another 23 blacks from other parts of the nation approached their college careers with optimism. A small number of the males expected discrimination, but were convinced that "things are going to change around here." Almost all expressed the feeling that the university represented an intellectual environment of change wherein the rational disposition of students and faculty would lead to a recognition of the value of people with a unique subcultural background. Those students who were predisposed to look for discrimination were considered by most of the others to be inflexible and "not willing to meet whites half-way."

The institutions of the university began the quarter in a "business as usual fashion." The fraternity-sorority system recruited white Freshmen as usual. The first day on campus, four white girls were given new room assignments by the university because they refused to live with a black roommate. Blacks soon learned that prior to classes, some officials had asked white students who were to have black roommates, if they had any objections to this. Blacks had not been asked if they had objections to living with whites. The incident caused some bitter laughter among the blacks, but there was no similar expression of distaste for white roommates by blacks. Several of the more middle-class oriented blacks were convinced

that despite a bit of initial uneasiness, integration was desirable and would be a "broadening experience." Few questioned that intellectual involvement and social contact with whites would be mutually advantageous. On the other hand, certainly no one seemed to equate integration with the devaluation of cherished black styles of life. The mode of give and take involved in the process hadn't been anticipated.

The peculiar black approach to social dancing was asserted on weekends whenever a record player was available. Much to the surprise of white dormitory residents, blacks would assemble in a dormitory basement and dance to rhythm and blues records for hours without any sponsorship by a formal organization or without the formality of couple-dating. Some whites seemed disturbed by the spontaneity and size of such invasions, but there were no major efforts to evict the parties, which were thrown once or twice each weekend of Fall Quarter.

While these dances demonstrated some of the elements of communion, there was significant social differentiation among the blacks, in some ways working against a monolithic sense of solidarity. The blacks from Chicago generally mixed best with those whom they knew best--others from Chicago. Even more important in shaping interaction patterns was social class (life style) and gender. In particular, girls of highly pronounced middle class orientation gradually became inclined to express dissatisfaction with the ad hoc nature of the gatherings and the lack of new faces. A small faction of males who prided themselves as being earthly and less pretentious than those they labeled "black bourgeoisie" began to spend every weekend drinking heavily and purposely antagonizing those girls whom they defined as "stuck-up." In several instances, the social gatherings were minimally integrated by a

small clique of white girls who openly preferred the attention of black boys. Despite the resentment of most of the black girls and some of the black males, these white girls tended to behave very forwardly and danced with far less restraint than the one or two white boys who joined in. Indeed, a group I would call the "liberal clique" developed, composed primarily of these white girls and the segment of black boys who paired off with them in a dating relationship. There was very little overlap between these pronounced factions, the "liberals" and the former group, which I would label, the "earthy-boozers." This group, the acknowledged intellectuals of the black students, questioned the legitimacy of striving to behave like white students, yet it was obvious that in their raucous behavior they were strongly reacting to white styles of life rather than living out their own. These factions, "liberals" and "earthy-boozers," were extreme examples of an ambivalence which many others were beginning to feel. Their ambivalent reactions to the white social environment were inherent in the contradiction between the actual situation and the then popular notion held by many people that blacks and whites would appreciate the opportunity to interact with each other. In truth, blacks were a co-existing social entity which most whites preferred to ignore. The social institutions of the university operated well without them, giving large and expensive parties, frequently featuring black entertainers. The white world was the only real and desirable one. Black social life operated in dormitory lounges under the disapproving glare of whites. In the view of one of the university's black professors, the continued existence of black social life was pathological. For him, the significance of having blacks at N.U. was to facilitate their mixing with whites. It is understandable that in such a situation many blacks began

to question their lack of interaction with whites. Some began to interpret the frequent interaction of blacks with blacks as merely a representation of that which was imposed from without--segregation.

The Significance of Homecoming

The success of the Homecoming Dance was the one positive achievement of the 1967 Fall Quarter. The manner in which blacks responded to this campus event is revealing of the source and strength of social identity among them. As Homecoming approached, concern arose among the blacks, as to how they were going to celebrate the occasion. Specifically, with few exceptions, black students were worried that they did not have a very special party to attend after the football game on Saturday. Dances in dormitory basements were tolerable as a general practice, but Homecoming had a very special image for them and only a special dance in a special setting would be acceptable. Style was essential.

The black attitude toward a Homecoming celebration was quite distinct from that of white Northwestern students and transcended factional differences and regional origins among the blacks. An all school Homecoming Dance had been scheduled after the Friday night parade at a large Chicago hotel, complete with several rock and roll bands. However, among black students, even those who were most disturbed by the icy exclusion of blacks by whites never seemed to question that black students must throw their 'own thing.' Only a few blacks expressed a desire to attend the all school affair. In contrast, of the thirty or more oriental Hawaiian students who were enrolled in the university as Freshmen and Sophomores, there was no evidence of a comparable desire to participate in a unique ethnic expression of the

Homecoming celebration.

The 'style' in which the dance was carried out demonstrated significant factors upon which several future student organizers were to eventually capitalize. The unquestioning acceptance and preference by blacks for dances given by blacks, featuring soul (black) music and dance steps has already been indicated. Additionally, the dance attracted nearly all of the eighty black students, many of them with dates and guest couples from Chicago. That is to say, the event brought together a black community which transcended N.U. and black student populations at surrounding colleges. After two months in an environment characterized by superficial white acceptance and 'foreign' social standards, blacks were able to reaffirm their 'soul' for at least one night. It was more than coincidence that the feeling of intimacy among the students was associated with consciously renewing their bonds with members of the black community outside of the university. However, the possible significance of maintaining and emphasizing relationships with the broader black community was only vaguely seen by the students involved. At this time, no political implications were extracted from the social event. For that night, the communion of the gathering was sufficient.

Winter Quarter 1967--Afro-American Club

Early in 1967, two events came about: (1) the writer anticipating organizing activity among blacks, began to prepare a survey questionnaire directed at assessing black nationalist and integration sentiment among them. Before and during this quarter, I avoided advocacy in either direction in order to gain as clear a picture as possible of the students' reaction

to the white campus; (2) in mid-January, a black undergraduate announced through the Daily Northwestern that the Afro-American Culture Club would soon come into existence, open to all who wished to improve their understanding of black culture and promote "cultural exchange" between blacks and whites.

About forty or fifty black students attended the first meeting, pleased that something recognizing their existence was being held, yet unsure what was involved. It should be emphasized that this sort of gathering was fundamentally different from collective action to organize a dance. The initial elements of race consciousness, not just communion, were evident here in the willingness to come together to deal with a common problem. The following paragraphs will demonstrate that most of the blacks who attended this meeting did not come together to engage in an intimate exchange based on common life styles. With due regard to the confusion apparent at this meeting, the common focus for most blacks who attended was that whites constituted a problem for blacks.

About thirty white students attended and one of the speakers was a white history professor. Most of the whites sat near the front of the lecture hall. Many of the whites who attended, were a part of the 'liberal clique' and were quite enthusiastic about the event. The prominent themes voiced by speakers were cultural exchange, integrated social life and white ignorance of black achievements. Concrete activities rather than the philosophy of the organization were discussed, though the direction of the statements was in favor of an integrated group.

On the other hand, analysis of the questionnaire data secured from the blacks who attended this meeting revealed a desire to assert their "legitimacy"

to whites, as well as a strong preference for an all black organization "of some sort." It was not clear what this organization should be. The small group of blacks who lingered about after the first meeting likewise expressed reticence about the role of the whites in the new organization. Several openly expressed disgust at the presence of whites in the meeting. Significantly, few blacks voiced commitment to the organization. Most wanted to wait and see.

An illustration of the dilemma which confronted the Afro-American Culture Club came at a subsequent, but smaller meeting scheduled to draw up the constitution which would later be submitted to the general body. Four white girls and one black male volunteered for the constitution committee. Again no one volunteered to clarify the organization's philosophy. The white girls suggested interracial dances and discussions of black musicians. It was suggested by someone that bus tours of the ghetto be scheduled so that whites could be educated about black life in America. In all, no more than ten people came to this meeting and more than half were white. In effect, the organization was being run by whites and reflected the interests of white students.

The second, and last general meeting of the Afro-American Culture Club drew only thirty five or forty people with perhaps twenty five blacks. The agenda for the evening consisted of playing the record album "In White America." After the record ended, there was no discussion, the meeting merely ended. Most of the people assembled expected more and the disappointment was evident. No further meetings were called, although for the rest of the winter quarter, there were random suggestions that other meetings

should be scheduled.

By the end of Winter Quarter of their first year on campus, black students were clearly disillusioned with integration. The collapse of the Afro-American Culture Club was not due to apathy, but rather a reaction by blacks against an exploitative relationship with 'liberal whites.' While race consciousness was kindled in blacks by this unequal exchange, it should be kept in mind the collective context in which it took place. Those experiencing the disillusionment were more than individuals; as members of a communion their individual frustrations were experienced and informally interpreted among themselves as a blow to the group. At this point in their group development, few blacks were advocates of black nationalism. Except for the relatively few students who generally spent more time with whites than blacks, most students simply felt that it was not right for whites to run an organization that dealt with blacks. Though they all "knew" that integration was desirable, the fact remains that they resented the eagerness of whites to define what they, blacks, were about.

The experience of living with white roommates was also an unequal exchange (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Markley, 1968). Research data collected the same year by a graduate student in psychology support this. This research aimed at assessing the effect of black students on whites, additionally produced much data to indicate that black students were unenthusiastic and even a bit alienated by that experience. This researcher, true to his concern with the reactions of white students, played down the negative black evaluations, and emphasized the more positive white assessments of the experiment (unpublished critique of Markley by Ford, 1969). The white roommates generally reported that the

situation was enlightening.

Black students had many common problems, but searched in vain for the key of understanding which would explain their dilemma. They were deeply in debt to the university, and although the university handbook strongly discouraged Freshmen from working, it was the policy of the financial aid office to require NUCAP students to perform university busy work to pay back some of their loans. Several students who complained of undue hardship were reportedly advised of their dependent status. At least one student claimed that a university official remarked that in future recruiting efforts more attention would be given to recruiting distinctly middle class students who were expected to fit into the campus more readily. Black student frustrations were thought to be primarily a function of their cultural deficiencies. Although beset by common problems, black students had not yet come to see these burdens as systematically related to one another as expressive of the exploitative relationship between the university and themselves. A forum of communication had not developed in which blacks could evaluate their common relationship to (1) a financial aid and scholarship program which placed them in severe strain; (2) a student body which behaved variously toward them, affirming in most instances the stigma of being black and relatively poor. Several black graduate students, the writer included, felt the need for such a forum if the undergraduates were to gain a heightened understanding of their position in the university. It was suggested to undergraduates who were eligible, that they enroll in Sociology B01-0 Social Inequality, which would be offered in the Spring Quarter. This course offered blacks the potential to combine academic pursuits with a head on confrontation with the social reality of white

thoughts about race.

Spring Quarter 1967--Evidence of Transition

At registration, fifteen blacks selected the Sociology Department's B01-0 Social Inequality. In this class, a great deal of heated debate took place, involving black students and white students. In the early portion of the course, some black students held out hope that rational discussion and facts would bring about fundamental changes in the behavior and attitudes of white students (i.e. whites would come to share black perspectives on the race situation). As time went on, like the majority of blacks who had entered the course, these few had to settle for the small reward of scoring imaginary debating points over flimsily constructed, sometimes naive, frequently racist arguments of many white students. The effect on blacks was to communicate the great gap in race-related perspectives, knowledge, and group interest between educated blacks and whites. Within the organization of this class, black students grew in cohesion. A more pessimistic evaluation of white people in general continued to emerge among them.

While blacks were in the circumstance of this class, student politics and debate in the campus newspaper among faculty, students, and administrators concerning racial discrimination further alienated blacks. A student power theme barely carried the campus election for president of Student Senate. The major plank in the president's platform was a promise to use student pressure to fight racial and religious bias in (1) Evanston housing, (2) fraternity and sorority membership. The movement tried to pressure the university to take an effective corporate stance against discrimination in

the Evanston realty market. It also sought to have Student Senate investigate fraternity and sorority recruitment practices. In both efforts, heated controversy erupted as discrimination suddenly became the number one topic in the school newspaper. Administrators publicly empathized with the victims of racial bias, but regretted their inability to engage the corporate body in social activism. Throughout the month of April, whites (faculty, students and administrators) contested among themselves about the advisability of compelling fraternities to recruit in a non-discriminatory fashion. Significantly, some of the initiation of the student power movement came from white students who had supported the start of the Afro-American History Club in the previous quarter. While whites argued over the plight of blacks, ten to fifteen blacks, in conjunction with Chicago area fraternal alumni, petitioned the administration to permit reactivation of predominantly black fraternities and sororities on the N.U. campus. A Daily Northwestern editorial characterized this move as a "step backward." Aside from the merits of liberal and conservative arguments printed in the paper, the crucial consequence of such exchanges was to magnify black students' sensitivity to what might be termed "serving as the contested bone for two dogs." Liberal and conservative arguments both made them feel impotent. They felt acted upon.

The Social Inequality class became the public forum to discuss the most explosive incident of Spring Quarter. A black coed was stopped on the campus by four Phi Gamma Delta fraternity men in minstrel blackface. She was allegedly insulted, racially and sexually, and portions of her body touched. The University Disciplinary Council procrastinated in taking action to resolve the matter and even attempted to persuade the young lady to drop the matter. As it became obvious that the council was reluctant to

act, anger increased within the black student body. Windows were broken in the Phi Gamma Delta fraternity house, and there were rumors of race war between blacks and fraternities sympathetic to Phi Gamma Delta fraternity house. The controversy was hotly debated in Social Inequality, where certain white students, speaking very cautiously, presented the fraternity's position that the incident was not intentionally insulting or racist. A few whites attempted to find a middle ground by persuading the blacks that perhaps the incident had been blown out of proportion and that cooler heads could resolve this unfortunate misunderstanding. After a few pointed attacks on the logic or sincerity or the arguments that these whites presented, black students ceased active participation in the discussion. The discussion was continued by the pro-fraternity whites and liberal whites who still pursued "the truth" by attempting to discredit each other's argument. Black students maintained peripheral involvement by outbursts of cynical laughter directed at statements which characterized the incident as a "misunderstanding." Blacks had ceased to acknowledge the legitimacy of the notion that whites and blacks were separated by mere ignorance of the facts. The timidity of the discipline committee, and the attempt to placate blacks by some whites who claimed ignorance of the facts, had moved many of the blacks to conclude the absence of an underlying consensus between the races in regard to justice and honesty. Yet, the growing awareness of common understanding within the black group, and the simultaneously growing common definition of black-white relationships, still had not found expression in a formal black student organization. Fully recognizable race consciousness was now present in some blacks, but the organizational expression of it had not been developed.

A New Direction

In the middle of May, 1967, a meeting was held off campus in the black section of Evanston by about ten students who wished to discuss the obvious failure of the Afro-American Club and the broader question of whether whites should be a part of an organization nominally for blacks. "Black or not too black" that was the question. Of the ten, two were graduate students. Including these two, eight of the ten black students favored an all-black student organization. [Most of those who favored an all black organization felt that the current experiment of living with whites had been unfulfilling and a strain.] They felt that an organization which would be for blacks, but open to white students would not be able to settle on priorities equally important to both races. They did not feel that liberal whites genuinely perceived blacks as their equals, hence white students would always want to define issues and the ways of addressing those issues. Black girls also felt that the prime reason for the eagerness of white girls to join black activities was the chance to get at black males. They felt that white girls were brazen and promiscuous.

It was pointed out that it is difficult to pursue organizational objectives while the principal attraction for many is the salving of individual consciences. All of the students assembled felt that black students needed an organization in which they could examine the historical and current relationship of blacks to whites so as to better prepare themselves to operate in a racist society. One or two students felt that whites should be excluded from this type of organization because they were all racist in their suppositions about black people, therefore they had nothing of value to contribute to the organization. The others who voted

to exclude white students, justified it by pointing out that all special interest organizations select a minimally homogeneous population without having to justify this to outsiders. Indeed, they pointed out, Catholics do not clamor to join nominally Jewish organizations and white students do not attempt to run organizations for people of Chinese descent. Why should anyone presume the desirability or necessity of whites in a black organization? The latter argument was not countered by anyone, even the one student who was quite disturbed by the idea that whites would not be allowed to participate in such an organization. These then were the ideas which characterized race consciousness among some of the blacks.

The fact that only ten students were interested enough to attend this reasonably well publicized meeting was evidence of the disillusionment that most blacks felt about previous attempts to form an organization. School was nearly over for the year and very few wanted to risk another futile gesture when final examinations were near. Nevertheless, those who had attended the May meeting decided to act as an ad hoc committee to immediately initiate lectures and discussions which would appeal to the enlightenment of black students on campus. Through the professional contacts of a particular graduate student, two nationally prominent black educators came to Evanston to speak to Northwestern black students. Approximately thirty-five or forty students attended both of these lectures and discussions were held in black Evanston so that they wouldn't be bothered by persistent whites or the school administration. Students responded enthusiastically to the discussions and felt that black students needed many more gatherings with people who could inform them and help

them in their common struggle with other blacks against white racism.

The school year ended with a fragmented black student group. The ad hoc committee had not operated long enough to win the allegiance of most black students, though it was successful enough that many wanted to see more. No formal structure could be projected across the summer, yet it was obviously desirable to get beyond repeating the frustrations of the past year's organizing efforts. Without a doubt, black students wanted an organization which would be responsive to their needs. It was certain that like blacks around the country, they were re-evaluating their relationships with whites and equally important, with other black people. [Both an all-black group and an integrated group had been attempted, but the question still remained as to what kind of organization would be most acceptable to most black students. Further, it was not clear what objectives it would address.]

In retrospect, it is clear that communion and race consciousness offered two distinctly different potentials for purpose and organization. An organization solely designed to develop black social life would certainly have been popular among blacks. It would address an area of concern which is fundamental to the lives of all college youth, not just blacks. Its unique importance would be in addressing the solidarity of a significantly distinct population with highly ethnocentric social standards. In light of its central importance, it would be difficult to dismiss the social life question from the purview of future organizations.

Race consciousness, unlike communion, suggested potential for black student commitment to affect changes in their relationship to the university. It would encourage them to define their position in the university, so that

they could see their student behavior in broader, more meaningful references. The reference would be societal, pertaining to black communities throughout a white-run society. This orientation would suggest black student behavior aimed at diminishing the control of black circumstances by whites. Race consciousness necessarily implies political action.

Beginning of a Cadre--Summer 1967

In discussing the social dynamics of black students on white college campuses, the ghetto is the most important reference point from which to view black students' reaction to white racism. The second NUCAP summer program recruited thirty-four Chicago area blacks of a predominantly lower middle class background. On the surface, they seemed much better adjusted to the behavior patterns of middle class whites than the previous NUCAP group. They were generally quieter, complained less about intensive study and exhibited confidence in their acceptance by others. These superficial indices can be deceiving, as they were in this case.

Though middle class in behavior, the youths in NUCAP 1967 were very attuned to the mood of black youth in the ghetto. During the violent disruption of Detroit which occurred that same summer, NUCAP blacks gathered around the television for the 10 p.m. news and cheered the efforts of black rioters in Detroit. On the last night of the summer project, these students came together on the south end of the campus to announce their political inclination in bright paint. Using the "ROCK," a large stone on the south end of campus covered with innumerable layers of previous student announcements, the black students wrote: "BLACK POWER," "MALCOLM," "RAP," "DETROIT '67," "STOKELY IN '68."

During this same summer, FMO (For Members Only) was conceived by several black upperclassmen who were counselors in NUCAP and other summer programs at Northwestern. These upperclassmen examined the organizational attempts of the previous school year. All agreed that black students desperately wanted an organization which would serve their interest. Two of these three upperclassmen favored the principle of an all black organization, and the third saw the strategic value of it. The latter conceived of a black organization as a more effective lever by which blacks could eventually integrate into the white student body. With this in mind, he advocated forming a black-run organization which could better promote black music and social gatherings, thereby, hopefully encouraging white acceptance of black people. He looked forward to a time when such a black organization would be open to all, i.e. a time when it would cease to be black. This orientation represented a direct link to the thinking of those who attempted to form the Afro-American Culture Club. The continuity was also substantive, for it was this same individual who with four white girls attempted to draw up a constitution for the Club.

The other two individuals wanted to form an organization which would begin by structuring dances and social activities for black students. In addressing this important need, they felt they would also reinforce the already existing social expectations among black students and thereby lay the groundwork for an organization which could eventually focus primarily on the political education of blacks and their relationship to the university. The means whereby this transition could be accomplished were not clearly seen at this point, but the objective was desired and the social factors which made it conceivable were recognized. The antagonism

between this orientation and the basically integrationist approach did not pose a serious problem at this point because all three persons, operating in a vacuum, were agreed that the organization should begin with a completely black membership. The two who favored a nationalist or separate development approach were concerned to maintain this vacuum until such an organization could sufficiently socialize its black members so that the organization could not be co-opted by the university administration and sympathetic white liberals. For this reason, it was resolved that any black organization would have to meet in the black community of Evanston until such socialization or understanding was achieved. The three agreed to create the organization out of their own pockets and present it to Freshmen and returning upperclassmen who would then be encouraged to support and run it. It was agreed that the organization should be turned over to non-seniors as soon as possible to prevent an oligarchy based on class rank.

The approach of the climactic school year, 1967-68, was marked off from the preceding year by the formation of this self-elected cadre. The three were clearly agreed upon means, if not ends. Their most significant action was to examine the social relations characteristic of the black student population. Their decision was to build on the strengths, and inclinations of the students. They aimed to address matters which students defined as problems, using the given inclination of blacks to look to each other in interracial situations. In September, the NUCAP Freshmen of 1967 enthusiastically applied themselves to promoting the organization among other blacks, including upperclassmen.

Fall Quarter 1967

Each academic year is preceded by a week of orientation for Freshmen. During this week, university convocations and fraternity rushing compete for the Freshmen's time. In an ordinary orientation week, there is no opportunity for blacks to get to know each other. In September 1967, the organizers of FMO convened a special Black Student Orientation, off-campus in the Evanston black ghetto. The sixty or seventy Freshmen who came were greeted by ten or fifteen upperclassmen who spoke on various facets of student life at Northwestern and their relevance for blacks. Students were encouraged to participate in any Northwestern activity which interested them, but they were emphatically told of the necessity for black students to organize for their collective survival and growth in a hostile environment. The seven upperclassmen who sat on the panel before the audience were selected for their academic excellence and participation in various activities. In the classroom and in activities they had excelled in competition with whites, but it was they who willingly offered legitimacy to arguments for black collectivism and the hollow benefits of integration. The audience did not require much persuasion. They were generally favorably inclined to such an organization, but lacking precedent, they awaited the structure which would implement action.

A couple of weeks later, a For Black Only dance was given for all black students attending Northwestern and nearby Kendall College and National College of Education. Attendance was not only restricted to blacks; only blacks at these three institutions were allowed to attend. For this special occasion, the FMO leadership wished to use a social event to shape student awareness of a distinct and organizable black

college community with its base at Northwestern. FMO further publicized its existence at this gathering and solicited membership. In addition, it announced plans for a very special homecoming celebration. For those who during the summer had committed themselves to building FMO, the major purpose of the present party was to gain support for the organization through demonstrating its effectiveness. To allow just anyone from the Chicago and Evanston black communities to attend would have resulted in a more heterogeneous group. The political potential of the gathering would have been compromised. Unlike the Homecoming Dance of the previous year, there was a deliberate effort to use communion as a means as well as an end.

In the same vein, graduate student contacts with the Chicago black community brought the touring Ron Karenga to FMO a week later. Karenga's appearance was held off campus, as were all FMO meetings. Karenga's presentation was abrasive to some, entertaining to others, and politically educative to all. At the very least, black students were aware that they existed as a social entity. Even with the varying reactions to Karenga, the students as a group, had experienced a message which was peculiarly meant for them as a people. This event was another in a series of positive re-inforcements which were to characterize the Fall Quarter of 1967.

On the strength of a successful social program and exposure to several engaging speakers, the original founders of FMO decided there was enough student interest in the organization to warrant a popular election of officers. Several days after Homecoming, the three directors of the organization held elections to replace their self-appointed rule. The elections were eagerly received by the students who wanted to share in

the direction of the organization, which had heretofore functioned by the autocratic direction of the three founders. Two of the three did not run for office. The third member of the cadre chose to run for president and won that office. The cohesive force of the Freshmen class, based on the nucleus of the NUCAP group, was evident in the election of a Freshman girl to the position of vice-president.

In the president and vice-president were objectified the previously mentioned antagonism between the integrationist and the nationalist philosophies. It never became an issue which they had to fight over because of two factors: (1) everyone, including the vice-president initially looked to the president for leadership because he held that position and because he was a senior; (2) the first reason was soon eclipsed by the second--the president had to relinquish his position because his grades were suffering. Of the three or four weeks which marked the salience of the first factor, it should be emphasized that virtually no programs were attempted. The basic reason that nothing was attempted can be explained best by looking at the activities of the president to whom the other officers looked for direction. During the autocratic initial phase of development he had worked unceasingly to handle the finances and scheduling of FMO. It is doubtful that anyone worked more. Yet, virtually all of the policy decisions which were based on a racial philosophy came from the other two founders who were more definite and emphatic in what they thought the organization should be in order to address the needs of the students. The new president was unable to suggest programs and directions for the black student organization because he was unable to look beyond emphasizing black social life and the goal of making

the black social entity more attractive to whites. His ambivalence concerning integration versus nationalism was demonstrated succinctly by his organizational memberships. At the same time he functioned as a leader of FMO, he was treasurer of a predominantly Jewish fraternity. While he attempted to straddle these two commitments his grades dropped, and within FMO dissatisfaction grew because of his failure to perform and his obvious conflict of loyalties. When he voluntarily stepped down, the shy Freshman girl who was vice-president reluctantly took the reins and thereby resolved for the first time the issue of whether the organization would be nationalist or integrationist. Not only was she committed to an organization of blacks, by blacks, and for blacks, she also was sensitive to the need to involve more students in the tasks of FMO, and quickly found ways to democratize representation of the many students in the college community. Finally, and of immense importance, the new president conceived of FMO as a social and political instrument, incorporating emphasis on both communion and race consciousness. She wanted FMO to address the black students' desire for social solidarity, and at the same time, politically educate them to problems that blacks have with whites.

However, in November 1967, before the decisive change of command occurred, black students became embroiled in a crisis situation with Sigma Chi fraternity which demonstrated sources of leadership which only partially coincided with their elected officials. From the point of view of blacks, Sigma Chi was but another in a series of intimidations of blacks by whites. Blacks could list incidents of beer cans being thrown at black individuals, threats of violence against blacks by groups of white football players, and even automobiles had been driven at black secretaries crossing the street.

The Sigma Chi event was a group encounter for both the fraternity and FMO. Each was giving a party in close proximity to the other on the night the brawl erupted. Several blacks were invited into the fraternity party, but later they were forcibly ejected by fraternity members who didn't want them there. Then the fight quickly ensued. Campus police arrived, but the fighting wasn't stopped until the Evanston police came onto the campus to interrupt it. Blacks were convinced that campus police only sent for the municipal police when it appeared that blacks were doing well in the fight. In any case, the Evanston police arrived, beat and maced two individuals into submission, then arrested them. Both were black. The two of them were charged with mob action and placed under \$5,000 bond. Visitors to campus, they were relatives and friends of the students.

In a situation which demanded action, FMO lacked leadership and its structure was too heterogeneous, and consequently too unwieldy to respond swiftly. The conflict was more than a confrontation between campus organizations. It was inherently racial. Shortly after the end of the fight, a crowd of whites, including those from other fraternities, gathered near the Sigma Chi house, angry at what many of them seemed to interpret as an attack on the white community in general. Fortunately, they were dispersed before further violence developed. At a time when tension ran high within both racial groups, FMO was virtually inoperative. The anger and righteous indignation of blacks demanded some action aimed at helping those who had been beaten and thrown in jail. Blacks also wanted the university to discipline the fraternity for initiating the conflict.

Sunday, the day after the fight, blacks came together in Sargeant Hall dormitory to decide on a course of action. While the meeting was open for suggestions and discussion, the agenda and the articulation of the issues, were in fact dominated by several individuals who were not officers in FMO. More so than the majority of those who were assembled there, two of these students were marked by a deliberately thought-out position of race conscious nationalism which preceded and transcended the immediate stimulus. They had extensive experience in civil rights activities. They demonstrated a decisiveness of commitment which was bred from experience. This, combined with their sensitivity to the mood of the group, made it possible for them to organize and channel the race consciousness and anxiety generated by the event. Clearly, the support of students for these two individuals demonstrated crisis potential which was based on interaction patterns which utilized, but transcended the formal networks which FMO was attempting to construct. When the group felt threatened by racial enemies, the bonds of communion were supplemented by increased support for a more political expression of the group--race consciousness. This model of group response, the interaction of formal organization with more informal channels, and all rooted in communion, would assume even more significance during Spring Quarter of 1968.

At this meeting they decided to march to the university president's home to protest that they did not feel safe on campus. The tone of this protest derived from the argument that it is the responsibility of the university to protect the bodies of all of its students. The apparent reluctance of university officials to acknowledge previous black complaints of harrassment by white students made this an issue. They also wanted university

officials to exercise their considerable influence to reduce the exorbitant bail.

Approximately seventy black students filed out of that meeting to walk to the residence of the president. Their mood was confident. They were determined to go to the source of institutional power. Their quarrel was not just with the fraternity, but more importantly, with the university policy-makers who administered the institution with a callous disregard for the welfare of its black students. They were going to find out if the legitimate channels of grievance redress could be made to work for blacks. The quiet procession which walked to the president's home received neither sympathy nor action from him. He expressed displeasure that the large group had come to his home. He refused to talk with spokesmen for the group and ignored student advice that the racially tense matter required immediate attention. He advised them that they should confer with his immediate subordinate, the Dean of Students, whose responsibility it was to look into their (black students) problem. The indifference of the president was obvious to all. In consequence, the university took a decisive step in the direction of declaring itself a facet of the white racist enemy.

The following morning, Monday, was scheduled for the preliminary hearing for the two defendants. That morning, nearly eighty black students assembled in Scott Hall Grill. From there they marched to the court. They filled at least seventy per cent of the room and created a stir in the building because of their impressive numbers. Several high university officials appeared at the hearing and were noticeably shaken by the tremendous turnout of black students. Likewise, black students were

impressed by their own growing commitment to group interests. Bail was reduced to \$2,000 for the two defendants and black students raised enough money to bail them out. Still the university had not made any move to discipline the fraternity or to investigate the incident. Finals were approaching in seven days, but blacks realized that the university would not touch the affair unless they were made to do so.

In a meeting of all 120 blacks on campus, it was decided to present the university with a list of minimum demands which should be met within two days, or else. The "or else" was left vague for a couple of reasons. For one, any clearly defined threat could be countered; second, though every student was convinced that the demands were worthless without potential muscle, there was a large group of students, probably more than half, who were convinced that students would be unable to get the university to comply with the demands, one of which called for the immediate social suspension of Sigma Chi, pending an investigation of the matter. Also, there was the fear of suspension from school, loss of scholarship, and physical harm at the hands of police. Several of the most forceful negotiators spent six hours of the deadline day, wrestling with administration officials over the demands. Undoubtedly the mass meetings of blacks while this was going on, contributed to the image of a unified black front. Actually, this was only partially true at this point. During the negotiations, those who proposed stopping the regionally televised basketball game that evening, were aware that probably no more than forty or fifty students were willing to take this action.

The university, aware that there would be embarrassing action if they attempted to avoid making a decision, finally placed the fraternity and FMO on social suspension, pending an investigation. Without exposing the factions of militancy and fear within their ranks, blacks had learned that as a unified black front, they had power. As individuals, the university was willing to either ignore or coerce them, as it had frequently done before. Blacks began to believe that their enrollment in the university was based on the university's calculation of self interest in private and government funding and public relations. The Sigma Chi incident, which did not receive campus publicity until after Christmas, taught black students that Black Power was possible and fruitful.

Winter Quarter

An analysis of the events of Winter Quarter 1968 indicates that the preoccupations of black and white students were becoming more and more divergent. Throughout Winter Quarter, the most popular focus of white activists was the objective of living unit autonomy. Student leaders consistently pressured the university administration for the right to formulate the regulations which would apply to their living units. An allied objective which they pursued was a liberalization of the hours during which people of the opposite sex were able to visit in each others' rooms. Compared to the previous Spring Quarter, there was much less public passion displayed in crusading for the improved welfare of blacks, on campus or in the Evanston community. While there were always some whites to whom this remained an important issue, on the whole, a close reading of

the Daily Northwestern for this period indicates that other issues had become more significant for readers and newspaper staff alike.

When the whites did attend to black matters, blacks were quick to respond sharply. During Fall and Winter Quarters, several empathetic faculty invited black students to appear before groups of instructors to explain the plight of being black. By late in the Fall Quarter, blacks had begun to either refuse to participate or to request an honorarium, as is customarily given to speakers who reputedly have expertise in some area. Some English instructors were quick to use William Styron's version of the Nat Turner slave revolt as reading material expository of black motivations concerning whites and liberation. Blacks in and outside of the concerned classes were very upset by the use of such humiliating and inaccurate material.

In late January, the Daily Northwestern revealed that blacks had formed their own group. Interviewing the past and current presidents of FMO, the reporter noted the significantly different racial philosophies which characterized them. The newspaper expressed the distress of liberal whites that blacks seemed to them to have despaired of gaining white acceptance. The reporter saw black organizations as evidence of the failure of whites to accept blacks. Nowhere in his article did the reporter demonstrate that he was aware of solidarity (communion) among blacks and its rapidly growing concomitant, race consciousness. He only saw withdrawal on the part of blacks.

Black students were seeking and finding communion with other blacks throughout the nation as well as those from other societies. With this increased interaction, the race consciousness which was to make possible

their May confrontation with the university grew at a rapid pace. Chronologically, the first significant event of 1968 which figured in this development was the Symposium on Violence sponsored by Northwestern in late January. This four day event in January brought many prestigious persons, but undoubtedly the most memorable remarks were made by Eduardo Mondolane, Charles Hamilton, Vincent Harding, and Ernest Chambers, all black. They attracted the largest crowds, black and white, drew the most questions, and were best able to relate the discussion to the leading topic of audience interest: black and white relations. Mondolane, administrator of the revolution in Mozambique, here on a fund raising trip, was less direct in his condemnation of the U.S. Nevertheless, his obvious communion with the other black panelists was noticed by both blacks and whites in the audience. Chambers, an Omaha barber with rare intelligence and sharp words began his talk with a five minute tirade against the legitimacy of every American symbol of freedom and democracy. He labeled them all racist shams and listed numerous points to support his position. Whites sat in the audience stunned; blacks stood up and cheered. There were two audiences from then on: one black and one white.

After and before these public engagements, black speakers and students sought each other and conversed and shared a mutual bond. Black students not only learned new ideas, they also learned that black intellectuals, legitimized by the Establishment, if you will, spoke to them as racial brothers. This served as significant positive re-inforcement to black students that they were part of a racial movement which was larger than they themselves. The reaction of the Daily Northwestern front page

to the black-white drama during the Symposium proved instructive to black students who responded with rapier sharp critiques of the reporting. The most incisive critique of all pointed out those facts which the Daily chose to emphasize or ignore. The black writer pointed out that the white reporter was impressed with the fact that Mondolane had married a white American woman, and the writer suggested that whites found this reassuring. The writer further charged that the reporter refused to acknowledge the rationality of militant black American speakers like Chambers, and even ignored the amount of rapport between the African and the Afro-Americans. It is difficult to judge how this letter was received by whites, but it was enthusiastically supported and discussed in gatherings of blacks.

Following the symposium on violence, black students spent the following week travelling to Lake Forest College's presentation, "Soul Week." Perhaps thirty people traveled to the events of that week. This was about the beginning of February. Interest in themselves had been kindled and their interest spread to everything related to their people. Communion was intensifying.

In early February, those elements of the black student community who were anxious for action based on black (race) consciousness and a commitment to Black Power crystalized into a formal cadre. They were an elitist group in that they were self-elected or joined by invitation. They included some, but not all of the officers of FMO. They included almost all of those who exercised some leadership function during the Sigma Chi crisis. Finally, they included some of the ordinary members of FMO who wanted more than communion. In some aspects, this was the most crucial element in the

organization, the Afro-American Student Union or AASU. In the future mobilization of the total black student community for confronting the university, the overlap in membership between FMO and AASU provided dispersal of leadership throughout the ranks acting in concert. Nearly complete mobilization on the 120 black students would be accomplished because during that crucial situation members of AASU were part of the fabric of FMO and the black student community.

However, this subsequent development was somewhat fortuitous, and not part of the agenda of AASU members in early February. The organization was committed to serving the needs of blacks off-campus. This involved such things as delivering food and clothing to riot (rebellion) victims, raising money (from blacks and whites) to contribute to bail and funeral expenses for black activists, and the like. Before the Columbia students clashed with their university over its war research and ghetto expansion policies, AASU was attuned to the little reported fact that several black campuses in the South were occupied by heavily armed troops, that some campuses had closed down, that some black students had been shot down. AASU was characterized by a sense of racial mission. They felt solidarity with their racial brothers who were bearing the brunt of white actions.

The feeling had developed among AASU members that FMO should be supported for what it was able to do, communicate with a large network of black students. On the other hand, the members of AASU, who at the same time remained members and officers of FMO, felt that they needed a less structured and more mobile organization to do some of the immediate tasks which were available off campus. AASU was also distinct in appearance. The first women on campus to wear their hair in the Natural style were AASU members. These indications

of a more selective communion among some members of the black students to serve to generate some envy and distrust of AASU members by those not in their group. For instance, as long as girls who wore the Natural were in the minority, it was possible for some of those who altered the texture of their hair to feel threatened by the racial identification and to organize against those who wore the Natural. AASU members were called "Afro-Jets" by a small clique of girls. Others questioned the loyalty of AASU members to FMO. These worried that the elitist orientation of AASU members might detract from the growing efficacy of FMO. Fortunately, the impending struggle of blacks students with the Northwestern administration provided that common focus of commitment such that the in idious distinctions between the two organizations did not work to the detriment of the black student community.

During this same quarter, leaders of FMO and AASU began to collect grievances of black students in order to draw up a list of demands which would then be presented to the university administration. One of the central demands which was to emerge from this was the demand that blacks be given the choice of whether or not they would live with whites. (In fact, whites already had this option.) Blacks would demand that the university provide a living unit for those blacks who preferred to live with other blacks. Other demands would be for a definite commitment from the university to recruit more black students. In view of the university's reported intention to recruit more passive and more middle class blacks, black students would demand that at least 50% of the incoming students be from the inner city. They would demand that scholarship aid be increased across the board for blacks and that jobs be made optional for blacks. After two years of exposure

to curricula containing ethnocentric and racist biases, they would demand the university set up an Afro-American Studies Department. Riding the momentum generated by acceptance of racial communion, stimulated by crises and the development of a cadre, black students were moving to a more aggressive posture in pursuit of racially defined objectives.

Spring Quarter

The April 3 assassination by a white man of Dr. Martin Luther King, made a monumental, but differential impact on white and black Americans. Given the previous developments on campus, this phenomenon was observable in clear form at Northwestern. Student Senate was in a crucial discussion of the living unit autonomy question when word came that Dr. King had just been shot. After a brief moment of silence, the discussion resumed at the point at which it had been interrupted by the announcement. At the close of the session, the persons who had made the announcement denounced the body for its insensitivity to King's death. An embarrassed Student Senate hurriedly gave unanimous approval to a letter to be sent to the president and vice-president of the university urging that N.U. take a strong corporate stand for open occupancy legislation in Evanston. In the ensuing four weeks, several hundred white students expressed their grief and/or guilt by participating in open housing demonstrations in the city of Evanston. These demonstrations were organized and led by churchmen in Evanston.

While "recognized" leaders of both races spoke of King's death as a bereavement of mutual significance to all, it appears that the vast majority of black Americans could not accept this myth. The day following the shooting, a memorial service was conducted in the university chapel. The chaplain

attempted to get a black student to address the gathering, but the request was turned down. Blacks came together in their own meeting where they could express the welled up emotion they felt in communion with each other. Yet the growing race consciousness among them made it imperative they draw more from this event than the mere solidarity of grief. In death, even more than in life, King was more than a good man--King was a black man. He was a leader of the race. Northwestern blacks felt that way, as did the thousands of blacks who burned American cities in response to his death. The knowledge that they were separated from the numbers of their brothers and sisters in Evanston and nearby Chicago restrained most of them from any overt violence. Even during the temporary effort to withhold from the news information regarding the rebellions, black students knew that blacks in the nation's ghettos would respond to the racial enemy. They also realized that behind the facade of grief on the part of civic leaders, the military forces of the nation were poised to strike at all black uprisings, and thus all blacks were suspected as potential threats to whites.

Indeed the dominant white mood, on campus and in the community at large, was fear of what blacks might do. On the day of the funeral, in the middle of the week, Northwestern and Evanston merchants both closed their doors. Those white students who were hopeful that blacks would attend campus religious services on this day were disappointed. Rumors of what blacks were up to circulated among white students. Few whites left the campus for several days. Blacks walking into a crowded room could bring it to almost complete silence.

On the same day, black students left the campus to go to the black community in Evanston. There, in the community center, they held their own memorial service. A black minister from the community held services

for them. By this time, several days after the shooting, there were no tears, only determination and a martial spirit. They were joined here by African students as well. Neither culture, nor class was able to impinge on the solidarity and race consciousness which existed at this moment. Blacks spent the time before the arrival of the minister in defining the meaning of King's death. Blacks accepted King's death as evidence of the growing repression of blacks by all whites, conservatives, as well as liberals, whose ultimate concern was perceived to be for non-violence on the part of blacks. More than ever, black students felt that they would have to take the responsibility for changing their environment at Northwestern.

Here, even more than during the Sigma Chi crisis, race conscious members of AASU and FMO articulated and shaped group sentiments. They were the unchallenged leaders of the students. Overt coercion was unnecessary because of the legitimacy that the group gave them. In addition, the fact that they formed a large collegium (perhaps fifteen people), meant that it was less possible for those not in charge to feel that they were being manipulated for the purposes of a few. While some personalities were more magnetic than others in exercising leadership, a unique strength of the black student community at this stage of development was the relative absence of megalomania among the leaders. Different members of the collegium performed different tasks. As they would demonstrate in the taking over of a heavily guarded building one month later, leaders of the black students functioned in a well-integrated division of labor. The black student community was becoming completely organized for race conscious-oriented reform.

In late April, black students presented their demands to the administration. While blacks attempted to carry out these negotiations quietly, some third

party reportedly leaked their entire list of demands to the Daily Northwestern. Ironically, these demands of the university became known to whites on the campus on the same day that the vice-president announced that the university was granting living unit autonomy. The objectives of the white and black student movements matured within two weeks of each other. The remaining days before blacks took over the student finance building to force the university to act on the demands saw a series of public relations maneuvers by both university officials, and black students. The university projected a conciliatory image to the general student body while giving up nothing. Black students strove to keep the heat on the university by exposing the gap between the conciliatory image and concrete commitments addressed to the demands. The editorial voice of the Daily Northwestern rejected the legitimacy of those particular demands which appeared to emanate from the assumption that the goals of blacks and whites were at odds. They disagreed with the request for separate housing and the request that blacks be admitted by different criteria than those applicable to white students. The editorial suggested that these issues concerned the total university community and that white students ought to work with the university administration to fashion a compromise with blacks. According to the editorial, only the irrationality of confrontation was preventing "communication" i.e. conflict resolution. Little did the reporter realize that his limited use of the term communication prevented him from understanding the basis of the confrontation.

Epilogue

While this has been an analysis of change in the behavior of black students, there are some relative constants in the situation which should

not be overlooked. The one which has been discussed least in this paper is that manifestation of a racist society called segregation. It is that process whereby whites arrange the distribution of black bodies into ghettos. To the surprise of black students who enroll at white colleges, the same amount of racist control is exercised over the admission and processing of blacks as is exercised in other parts of the society. That is to say, often in integrated colleges they are still systematically recognized, excluded, and dealt with to their disadvantage.

The sense of communion which exists between blacks is frequently left out of discussions which attempt to assay the roots of black struggle. On the other hand when writers have written admiringly of the spirit or closeness among blacks, they have generally meant what we have called communion. It is certainly not monolithic enough to compel rigid conformity of behavior and goals, but it is an amazingly resilient base from which to build a group movement. Its strength is inherent in the fact that it is not merely a momentary reaction to oppression, but rather it is a historically generated positive identification between blacks to which they attach great significance. The rise of militance among black students cannot be divorced from the rise in militance in the nation's ghettos.

It has been the bond of communion between blacks in the ghettos and those in the colleges which has prompted these upwardly mobile blacks to echo the anger of those back home.

The most variable element in this analysis has been the degree of race consciousness demonstrated by black individuals and organizations at any given time. The essence of the behavior described as such, is the act of defining the racial enemy. This distinguishes race conscious

behavior from that merely characterized by communion. In the actual situation which has just been described, race consciousness grew out of the interaction of communion with events characteristic of a segregated society. The timing and degree of the growth in race consciousness among black students owes as much to the growth of race consciousness in the black ghettos as it does to the treatment they receive in schools.

Finally, the cohesiveness of black students in the Northwestern situation should not be misconstrued. While race consciousness was at peak for the group, it is also true that some had it more than others, and some hardly at all. Even when it is present, there can still be differences in specific objectives and goals between those who demonstrate it. For black students at Northwestern between 1966-68, race consciousness developed alongside of organizations which were able to channel it for the benefit of the black student community.

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