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Newspaper Article, White Power Strengthens, Black Power in the South, May 7, 1968

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White Power

Black Power

ATLANTA (CPS)---Although black college campuses have become the center of the black power movement, the predominately white campuses in the South are producing their share of black militants.

In fact, some black students are predicting that many of the future leaders of the black power movement will come from white, rather than black, campuses. They claim this new trend is inevitable unless white students and administrators establish a far different atmosphere for black students.

Presently, black students on white campuses face endless examples of discrimination, and many are subscribing to the theory that white racism is a fact of life and nothing can be done about it. If blacks and whites cannot live together in harmony and without prejudice in an academic community, these students say, then there is little hope that black people will ever achieve equality in the "real world."

The mere presence of black students at white institutions of higher education in the South is still a relatively new phenomenon. The total number of blacks on white campuses is always small, generally less than one per cent. Nevertheless, white administrators in the South are exerting little, if any, effort to attract more blacks to their schools.

When black students were first admitted to white colleges and universities in the South, many thought they had achieved a major victory in their fight for equality. But the blacks have found that the mere fact that they are permitted to walk across the campus and attend classes is insignificant. In most cases, the blacks simply have not been accepted, and they are totally isolated from the mainstream of campus life. The general attitude of most white students seems to be, "We won't bother you if you don't bother us."

The result has been that many black students who entered white colleges and universities with hopes of achieving true integration, at least temporarily, are no longer striving to become a part of the white culture. Instead, they are turning their efforts to activities which promote the goals and concepts of the black power movement.

One black student at Florida State University recently expressed it this way, "When I first came here, I wanted to be white. I believed that integration was possible and that's why I came to a white school. Now, I don't want to be a part of your (the white) culture, and I'm not sure what I think about integration any more. Most black students who attend white schools are now proud that they are black, and they want to have their own culture.

Another Florida State student said, "When I first came here I was conservative. Now I consider myself a militant. This place has made me that way. I haven't worked at it." Many other black students on white campuses said during interviews recently that they have become militant and have changed their goals as a result of their attendance at white schools.

These students can cite end-

Power Strengthens Power In The South

by Walter Grant
College Press Service

less reasons to explain why they have been forced into militancy on white campuses alone. They generally start at the beginning. They remember, for example, that the first Negro to enroll at the University of Alabama in February, 1956 was suspended after three days of rioting and cross-burnings. They remember that Gov. George Wallace personally interfered when Negroes again tried to enroll at Alabama in June, 1963. And they remember that it took thousands of federal troops and United States marshals to enroll James Meredith at the University of Mississippi during the fall of 1962.

The first Negroes to attend white campuses in the South were faced with open hostility almost daily. And although most overt acts of animosity have died down, numerous incidents still occur, constantly reminding the blacks of where they stand.

At Mississippi State University, for example, a political science professor asks test questions about the "nigger amendments" to the U. S. Constitution. In classroom discussions, he frequently used the word "nigger," despite the presence of black students in his class.

At the University of Mississippi, a large cross was burned this semester in front of a dormitory housing several black men. Alongside the cross was a dummy with a Ku Klux Klan hood. When black students at Ole Miss held a demonstration following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., about 150 whites followed them, shouting slogans with racial overtones.

A professor at the University of Florida sums up the atmosphere there by telling of a white woman working in an administrative office who was fired last

year, the day after she married a Negro.

Specific incidents such as these however, are merely representative of the general atmosphere on white campuses in the South. Although most white students may not realize it, this atmosphere is evident to the blacks in many other, more subtle ways. Some of the examples mentioned time and time again in interviews with black students throughout the South include:

--In the classroom, black students on several campuses think whites try to avoid sitting next to them. Ernest Watson, a black student at the University of Mississippi, says, "If there's only one vacant seat in the classroom, and it's next to a Negro, nine out of ten whites will sit on the floor."

--Black students on most campuses say if they are assigned to a dormitory room with a white student, the white student will move out. Blacks also have problems finding off-campus housing because of the discriminatory practices of most white landlords. At Florida State University, students have formed a Negro fraternity, but they haven't been able to buy a fraternity house in the white neighborhoods near the campus.

--Few white schools in the South have blacks on their athletic teams. The Southeastern Conference has just recently been integrated, but a majority of the varsity football and basketball teams still are all white. At athletic events, white students wave the Rebel flag and sing "Dixie." To the blacks, this is a direct slap in the face.

--Many blacks think they have been discriminated against by professors in the classroom. "I can prove that I've been shafted by a couple of white professors,"