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Racial Protest At NMU

Organized racial protest, which has created monumental problems on campuses throughout the nation, came finally to Northern Michigan University Monday night. It came as a surprise, although perhaps it shouldn't have been surprising. For the past several years, Northern has had a growing enrollment of black students. Its Job Corps Center for Women, the only one on a college campus anywhere, has enrolled a large proportion of black trainees. Almost inevitably, the students and the trainees were targets of prejudice in subtle, if not overt, manners. This, coupled with a

national trend of protest, sometimes almost for the sake of protest, created a condition that could foster the sort of behavior that occurred Monday.

The protest came in the form of a strange demonstration in which perhaps 150 black students, men and women, seated themselves on the floor of the fieldhouse court to prevent a basketball game between NMU and Pan American College from being played. Black leaders said the demonstration was triggered by an assortment of grievances Negro students held against the university.

The demonstration resulted in cancellation of the game between Northern and the team from Edinburg in the far southern tip of Texas, near the Mexican border. This brought understandable disappointment to the estimated 4,000 persons in the stands, but they reacted with an admirable restraint that probably prevented a regrettable display from becoming a violent and ugly episode.

The display was regrettable because its motivation was confused and questionable and its execution deplorably misbegotten.

The motivation was never quite clear except insofar as it was part of the national unrest of blacks chaffing at the injustices they have suffered over the years. Various black students assumed the role of spokesmen for the group, indicating that the protest was not well organized or at least that leadership was not clearly defined. These spokesmen gave varying reasons for the demonstration. Many of the demands put forth were impractical, unreasonable or downright impossible of fulfillment.

For instance, one demand called for more black people in key campus positions. It was pointed out by Dr. John X. Jamrich, university president who reflected commendable control in dealing with a very difficult situation, that blacks already are well-represented in key campus positions. In fact, a case could be made that they are over-represented. Blacks comprise only three per cent of the campus students' population, but they make up 25 per cent of the Student Senate.

Another demand insisted on more black faculty members. Northern has never shown any prejudice against Negro professors. A Negro, Dr. David Dickson, one of the university's first deans, later became a vice president of the university. Dr. Jamrich has said that the university has sought to hire as many black faculty members as it can, although it is difficult to reason why race should be a qualification for academic usefulness.

It was the execution of the demonstration, however, that was totally incomprehensible. It followed a day in which university officials had met with black students in a sincere attempt to smooth over differences. Then, after the "sit-in" had begun, an offer was made by university officials to meet with the dissident group immediately following the game, but this was rejected. The group's spokesmen demanded an immediate redress of their alleged grievances, something that certainly was beyond the realm of logic or decency. To his great credit, Dr. Jamrich adamantly refused to make this concession, and the demonstration went forward to its bleak climax.

Throughout modern history, blacks have been the victims of unconscionable prejudice. They more than any others have borne the brunt of man's inhumanity to man. Their drive for equality is not only understandable, but its success is imperative if the United States is to escape the terrible consequences of apartheid.

The question is not whether the drive for equality should be pursued but what form it shall take. In the present instance, much more can be accomplished through negotiations than through demonstrations of the kind witnessed this week. It is no more just for a minority to deprive a majority of its rights than it is for a majority to suppress a minority.

Timely Quotes

When someone is spending millions on a film, I don't think it's too much to ask you to take your clothes off. It's not like asking you to change your religion or anything — Genevieve Waite, South African actress, on nudity in her new film.

Too many Americans think of refugees as only those who have fled Communist regimes. — Sadruddin Aga Khan, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The whites are not interested in our art unless it's chauvinistic. They want us to paint the spades-in-a-cornfield type of thing. — Peter Bradley, a painter, on the absence of Negro artists in the Whitney Museum's exhibition on the 1930s in America.

We look upon this as a legislative distortion of history, a watering down of our national heritage and an accommodation to our economic system — the almighty dollar if you will — at the expense of historical fact. — William C. Doyle, national commander of the American Legion, criticizing the transfer of national holidays to uniform Monday observance.

Other bitter days and other battles still lie ahead. I cannot emphasize strongly enough that we have not attained peace — only the possibility of peace. — President Johnson.

All negotiations require determination, patience and, above, all attempts to understand the other fellow's point of view. Patience isn't one of my long suits. — W. Averell Harriman, chief U. S. negotiator at Paris.

People think I'm on a woman's crusade. I'm not. People think I'm looking for publicity. That's not it either . . . I just want to ride horses. — Penny Ann Early, whose licensing as a jockey caused a boycott by male jockeys at Churchill Downs, Louisville, Ky.

We have nothing to show but a fleet of cars that won't run and a flock of potential passengers who no longer take the project seriously. — Sen. Gordon Allott, R-Colo., criticizing the delay in the government's Washington-to-New York high-speed train project.

Educated Catholics are not going to pay any attention to this statement. If they did, we'd be back in the Dark Ages. — The Rev. Robert Johann, Jesuit philosopher, on Pope Paul's encyclical banning artificial birth control.

The younger have shouted that the war is immoral. The older have tolerated it as inescapable. The same division as before is dealing with the inner city, racial inequity and international conflict. The issue of which shall prevail — the moral imperative or the practical accommodation — must be resolved in favor of the moral, in action as well as affirmation. Unless we do so, we shall not bridge the gap between us and our sons, nor will we be fully at one with our own selves. Their lives may be at stake — and certainly our happiness. — Dr. K. Roald Bergethon, president of Lafayette College.

It goes on all the time. The Russians have left their own territorial waters and they are out in the ocean. I think "nuisance" is the right word . . . They don't stop us from doing anything we want to do, but they are just a damned nuisance. — Admiral Sir John Bush, commander-in-chief of Allied Eastern Atlantic and Channel naval forces, on Russian spy ships which shadow Western ships.