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The Revolt of the College Intellectual

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college. It was impossible to drop him as editor, since this was the last issue of his editorial term. The *Phoenix*, however, was forced to suspend publication until such time as the Student Council could offer assurance that it would accept greater responsibility for editorial policy. The suspension lasted three weeks. The *Harvard Crimson* led a national assault of college journalists upon the Swarthmore administration for violating academic freedom, a position taken privately by several college presidents. Only the *Daily Pennsylvanian* had a word in defense of the administration. It said they viewed the editorial as a discredit to college journalism and as calling for disciplinary action.

The editorial did warrant the fears of its author, now a reputable sociologist, that it might be self-defeating as far as administrative policy was concerned, but many students applauded it as expressing their individual beliefs.

There are still conservatives who fear that the constant liberalizing of dormitory visiting hours may be carrying out the *Phoenix* editor's advice to adjust the changing sexual standards *sub rosa*. Such an experienced and wise psychoanalyst as Carl Binger, writing on "Emotional Disturbances Among College Women," says that educators should look the facts in the face:

If they relax parietal rules sufficiently to permit girls to go to boys' rooms and remain there until late, then they should realize what the consequences are likely to be.⁹

Professor Binger writes as one concerned with mental health rather than as a moralist, but he says he is not devaluating ideal goals, however remote or difficult to achieve.

There are no restrictions upon behavior involving cars, liquor, sex, and dress that the young intellectuals will not rationalize away. And it is not only those who pride themselves on being radical who reason thus. They are more and more representative of the majority of their generation, the high-minded idealistic youth interested in social justice, in a better world, in self-sacrifice for causes. They cannot be dis-

missed as merely irresponsible pleasure hunters, and they are distrustful of all "moralizing." They earnestly desire to see the college assume leadership in placing the social standards of behavior at least half a generation in advance of current mores. They identify Victorian and present standards as equally outmoded, and believe that instead of being influenced by adolescent emotional desires, they are the ones who are truly rational. Their insistence upon their point of view may not mark a change in the behavior of adolescents so much as a change in the attitude of their parents, whose general permissiveness has encouraged the belief that anything the younger generation insists upon will be the pattern of the future. Surely there is much in our society, in college and out, to justify such adolescent convictions. At present the students appeal to the "behavioral sciences," to psychology, sociology, and anthropology, in support of a relativistic point of view in morals and ethics; they assert that the "conservatism" of the college is in part due to the absence of sociology and anthropology from the curriculum. They are not yet acquainted with some of the very significant trends in sociological and anthropological thinking, and it may take some years for them to learn that the "behavioral sciences" may reach some conclusions that are not so different from some ancient insights, after all.

THE STUDENT BATTLE AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

In 1932 a Negro from a Philadelphia high school decided to apply to Swarthmore. He was a prominent athlete; had a good background in classics, his major interest; was president of Student Government and popular with his fellows; and, except for his color, was a logical candidate for an open scholarship. The admission of colored students had never been approved by the Board of Managers, and so the Admissions Committee referred the application to the Board. After a long discussion it decided by a large majority that Negro students could not yet be admitted to a coeducational college like

Swarthmore. Their admission would raise too many problems and create too many difficulties. There was general satisfaction at the happy solution presented by Dean Speight, just arrived from Dartmouth, when he got the boy accepted there with a large scholarship. A men's college seemed just the place for him. The question of admitting Negroes to Swarthmore did not become acute again until the year before John Nason's inauguration as president. In 1940 a Student Committee on Racial Relations was organized with the avowed purpose of bringing about the admission of Negro applicants. The students began with a program of recitals by Negro performers, and with exhibitions of Negro art, painting, and sculpture. They had a number of meetings with speakers furnished by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

When President Nason came into office, the students sent him a memorandum requesting him to begin his administration with active attempts to secure the admission of Negroes. Remembering some remarks of President Aydelotte about the danger of trying to fight all battles on all fronts at once, President Nason replied that the question seriously interested him, that he hoped to do something about it later, but that he could not tackle it immediately. Then the war came, and all of his efforts were absorbed just in keeping the school going on the year round basis that the war demanded. After about three years, as the course of the war led to more and more arguments about the future of oppressed minorities in the world, President Nason thought the time had come to raise the question again. He therefore presented to the Board of Managers the memorandum presented to him by the students; to his great delight and to the delight of the students, the Board by a very substantial majority passed a resolution changing the admission policy to permit the admission of students regardless of race, color, or creed. There was no great rush of Negro applicants, either qualified or unqualified. Probably the cost of going to college at Swarthmore made it out of the question for most applicants, and there were no scholarships specifically for Negro students. Gradually, how-

ever, there were from three to five Negro applicants a year, of whom two or three would turn out to be sufficiently well qualified to be admitted. The Admissions Committee felt that it would not be doing a Negro student a favor to admit him if his general record showed that his chances of graduation were very small. On the other hand, they did perceive that they often needed to recognize superior motivation in a student who had lacked earlier opportunities but who, by reason of great ambition and industry, wished to make the attempt to come to such a college as Swarthmore. From time to time the Student Race Relations Committee has written letters to schools in the South and sometimes to schools in other sections of the country that had a large proportion of Negro students, urging them to apply to Swarthmore.

Representatives of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People have talked to Negroes in southern schools about the advantages of coming north, and the Association has been able to raise a considerable amount of money to offer scholarships for this purpose. Some Swarthmore graduates have worked in this capacity, but they have not been able to interest many students in applying to Swarthmore. The small number has led some Swarthmore students to accuse the Admissions Committee of being especially restrictive about Negroes. This is not true. The committee has been inclined to give the benefit of the doubt as much to Negro applicants as it always has to the children of Quakers and alumni. The number of American Negroes has been supplemented over several years by about a dozen students who have come from Nigeria or the Gold Coast. Most of these students were graduates of English schools and have passed matriculation examinations for the English universities. On the whole, they have been very successful both academically and socially. There has been no attempt to limit the social activities of the colored students, and colored and white students have mingled freely at dances; inevitably, students have been drawn together across race lines, perhaps in the beginning by their idealism and their desire to show a complete absence of racial prejudice. It does not seem to be true, as has been some-

times alleged, that the attraction of the races for each other is entirely on the lower social levels. The colored males seem to have a decided attraction for the white girls, and a few white boys have selected colored girls as their partners, temporarily or permanently. The Student Race Relations Committee has attempted to see to it that there were no forms of discrimination in the village that would make it uncomfortable for students of the college of any race.

The most notable area of conflict has been in the barber shops. Two of the three barber shops in the village have declined to cut the hair of Negroes. They have said that their reason was a fear of losing patronage in the village and of not being able to get enough help in their shops. The students have attempted to boycott the shops that have not given haircuts to Negroes, but this boycott has not been notably successful. When appeals have been made to administrative officers of the college, they have been quite willing to say that the college hoped that no form of discrimination in the sale of goods or in providing services would exist as far as college students were concerned. The issue has seemed to be slightly academic, since the one shop that proclaims its willingness to cut the hair of Negroes has had virtually no colored customers. The owner of this shop said that he felt he was making something of a moral hero of himself in announcing that he would cut the hair of people of all races, only to be disappointed to find that no colored people came to him. This has not been a real problem in the village, for the few colored people living within its limits seem to prefer to go to barber shops in near-by towns where the prices are lower and they can find more people of their own kind. Student committees have also circulated questionnaires in the village to attempt to find out public sentiment in the matter, but for the most part these questionnaires have been worded so as to increase irritation. The college naturally hopes that this situation may be remedied, but since the numbers involved are so small, it is difficult to maintain public interest over any length of time and it does not seem likely that the barbers will change their customs in the immediate future.