

The Phoenix

SUPPLEMENT

JANUARY 15, 1969

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Phoenix is planning to run a full page of letters touching on any and all aspects of the "crisis." Letters should not be more than 200 words. They must be received by The Phoenix no later than Thursday evening. We urge every member of the college community to write a letter if he wishes to comment.

TUESDAY CLASSES MEET

Most classes which had not yet ended for the pre-exam reading period were held as scheduled yesterday. Despite the call for continued suspension of classes by the student plenum Monday night, attendance at many classes was between 50 to 75 per cent. At least one exam was given with all enrolled students present. Many professors gave their classes the choice of holding the class or discussing the campus crisis. In the introductory psychology course, for example, psychological aspects of the situation were discussed.

MODERATES HEAR SASS-FACULTY SPEAKERS

Sam Shepherd, '68, former president of SASS, spoke at length to the so-called moderate caucus at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday on SASS' clarified demands and the goals of the group's demands and action.

Toward the end of the meeting, faculty members Leon Bramson and Patrick Henry told how SASS-faculty discussions were proceeding, and asked the students to be patient.

The group, which dwindled during its three-hour meeting from 150 to about 50, also discussed the previous night's plenary session and heard several student calls for conciliation with the so-called radical caucus.

Shepherd began his remarks with some points on the lack of communications and cohesiveness within the student body. He said that he could not believe the extent of differences he observed within the student body during the plenary sessions. He suggested the moderates be more respectful of other white students' opinions when discussing with them.

On the matter of the present discrepancies between SASS demands and faculty resolutions, Shepherd offered several comments. The demands stated at the Monday night plenum were not escalations, he said, although he agreed they might have appeared so to some. He noted that several of them extended into an area the faculty had not yet really considered, namely, that of decision-making.

The faculty-approved Black representation on the Ad Hoc Black Admissions Committee does not, he said, seem to guarantee Black perspectives in decision-

making. He pointed out as an example that the Black students on the Black Studies Committee have constantly had to compromise their views in order to produce a document that would ultimately be acceptable to the faculty, which had review power over the committee report. The structure of the decision-making process influenced which perspectives prevailed on a matter intensely relevant to Black people, he explained.

Shepherd went on to explain the intent of the Black Interest Committee, and to squelch the "cultural veto rumor" (apparently referring to a comment made at the Monday evening plenum). He said the type of thing intended is, for example, that the Cooper and Collection committees designate certain deates and funds for programs chosen by SASS. The Black Interests Committee would "review" Black-related cultural programs and other events, and if its recommendations were not respected it would suggest action to SASS. But, Shepherd added, "SASS does not want a censorship or a veto of all cultural activities." "SASS wants to make its point of view known," he said, so that there would be no disruptions of the type that occurred last year around the Collection on South Africa, about which Blacks were not consulted. What SASS seeks through Black Interests Committee, said Shepherd, is a stable way of resolving such things without resort to action.

Regarding the role of white students in the present situation, Shepherd pointed to the difference between Swarthmore and other schools where Black students have recently taken action to support demands. At San Francisco State and Brandeis, he said the student body was split on support of the action. Here, he said, the basic reaction of the students was overwhelming support for SASS demands.

"I was up in the air for about 48 hours" said Shepherd of his relief and elation when he heard of the white students' vote of support, because he knew the Black students would not be isolated. He said he knew they would be less likely to have to withdraw from their action or to escalate tactics, neither of which would have been desirable, than if they had not received general student support.

When asked about the possible self-defeating nature of SASS' tactics in occupying the very office that would have to function smoothly if the demands were to be met, Shepherd defended the continued occupation as what anyone would see as the proper course. SASS, he said, is working for a principle, its right to self-definition and the integrity of Black perspective, and for a basic change in the process by which certain decisions are reached. Clearly that must weigh more heavily than a temporary delay in the admissions process, he added.

He said that in recent days SASS has been asked often about its tactics, has begun to see that white students many times did not perceive what SASS thought would be obvious, and has tried to explain its tactics to those students, expressing disappointment that this has to be done, but maintaining a willingness to do it. Shepherd added further that he expected SASS would be patient and tolerant of problems in implementing admissions policy where its occupation of the office has brought those problems about.

To a question about what would happen if the faculty did not respond satisfactorily to SASS, Shepherd said he thought that would not happen, and hoped not. He said the group had not decided what it would do in such a case, since the choices would be bleak either to abandon its principles or to escalate its tactics.

Following Shepherd's departure, the students remaining discussed the problems of whether or not to return to classes, the continuing explosiveness of the situation on campus, and the factioning and divisive talk and action in the student plenary sessions. There was also consideration of what action the students should take on the clarified SASS demands, and the standing disagreement between the faculty and SASS.

To shed light on the relation of students to that situation, Bramson and Henry reported on the steps being taken by the faculty. Bramson recognized that students felt a need to act. But, he urged, "The most important thing I can tell you is that in my opinion and that of other members of the faculty what is needed most is for time to elapse so that there can be a process of mutual clarification between SASS and the faculty." He assured the group that this was now happening.

The necessary clarifications are not small, but large, said Bramson, and can best be achieved in an intimate atmosphere. He urged that students avoid a "fantasy superstructure" that sees things as polarized. The best thing students can do, he added, is to let the clarification happen in an atmosphere devoid of bitterness, rancor, and escalation.

Henry described the "revolution" his feelings had gone through in the hours since SASS announced its points of rejection of the faculty action at the Monday night plenary session. Several students had previously described similarly how they had become less angry and disappointed at SASS and the radical group in the plenary meeting as they came to understand the clarified demands and their meaning to the white students.

Henry said he was still somewhat disappointed that SASS had not chosen to "trust us to mean what we said"; but he also recognized that "we aren't as far apart as we thought we were last night."

On possible student action at this point, he had two comments. First, that moderate students would do well to try to point out the closeness, and try to urge effective discussion. But he added that this did not mean requesting the faculty to go into continuous session. "Very few things could be more useless" (than continuous faculty meetings now), said Henry.

Furthermore, he said, small discussion groups of faculty, SASS members, and possibly students would not necessarily be useful to resolving the situation, since SASS speaks with a unified voice and would not like to express itself officially in so many groups.

SILENT MEETING AND WORKSHOPS

Following a one-hour Quaker-style silent meeting in Bond beginning at 1 p.m., two student groups met with SASS representatives in the lodges Tuesday afternoon for explanation and clarification of the full set of SASS demands. Bernard Greene and Mike Graves led the discussions, which were attended by approximately fifty people.

Topics discussed were (1) the apparent inconsistency between the various deadlines for the hiring of Black administrators, (2) the composition and review powers of the proposed Black Interest Committee, (3) the jurisdiction and composition nominating the proposed Black administrators, and (5) whether or not SASS' clarification constituted escalation of demands made previously. Graves and Greene emphatically answered the latter in the negative.

SASS-FACULTY MEETING REPORTED TO PLENARY SESSION

The student plenary session which was held last evening was shortened considerably in interest of more rest for its members and of less divisiveness and bitterness among them. However, they did hear significant statements on the part of SASS and the faculty communication committee and pass a resolution stating that the money saved from a general student fast be devoted to Black scholarships.

The meeting began with a statement by Mr. Urban of the faculty communications committee concerning the establishment at the request of Asmarom Legesse of increased communication with SASS in hopes of clarifying the SASS position on the faculty's proposals concerning their demands. President Smith, as announced in a statement passed out at the meeting, designated the faculty communications committee to act in this capacity. When this committee is satisfied that it fully understands the SASS position he will call a meeting of the faculty at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. Urban also reported that the faculty communications committee had met with Clinton Etheridge, Mike Graves, Don Mizell, and Sam Shepherd that afternoon and had discussed general issues "including attitudes toward acceptance of the Black perspective in the Swarthmore community and two-way information flow between SASS and the faculty." He concluded with an announcement that the parties concerned will meet this evening to discuss discrepancies between the SASS position and faculty resolutions.

Mike Graves then clarified SASS' position as stated in the previous plenary session. The following is an official condensation of his statement.

"1) Regarding the question of whether or not there has been an escalation of demands: We see the Black Dean of Students called for as a specification of our demand for a counselor and thus not as an escalation. His counseling function would be similar to that of Deans Barr and Lange. The date March 1 was specified to stress the need for immediate action by the faculty. In regard to the Black Interest Committee: the functions of this committee were discussed with the faculty. The statement of its functions is not an escalation in so far as it addresses SASS' demand for involvement in the decision-making process at all levels, this being the cultural level.

2) Regarding the question of whether or not SASS has demanded the right of censorship: the third and fourth duties of the Black Interest Committee shall be reworded to read:

'3) reviewing cultural programs at the College which pertain to Black people before they are presented, if the party making the presentation so wishes

'4) recommending actions to the SASS membership should its offer of review not be utilized.'

It is by no means implied that SASS shall exercise censorship. We merely wish to provide a committee which can be consulted to avoid incidents like that last year with Paul Leavin's play.

3) Regarding the question of whether or not SASS has demanded an institutionalized process for minority coercion: SASS' involvement in decision-making processes does not imply minority coercion but rather expresses Black self-determination. There has been a redefinition of SASS membership to include all Black people of the world (i.e. people at Swarthmore who are not students and interested people in surrounding communities, as well as Swarthmore students).

We wish to reassure the entire College community, however, that voting on those issues relating to College policy shall be restricted to Swarthmore Black students. SASS preserves its right to determine voting procedure on issues which do not involve college policy, e.g. whether or not a Black History Week should be held."

Sam Shepherd, Swarthmore alumnus and President of SASS last year, then read the following statement as a formal letter communicating SASS' thoughts to the faculty:

"To the Faculty and Administration of Swarthmore College:

We thank you for the hard work and sacrifice you put into your deliberations. We commend you for your responsiveness thus far in this situation. We do sincerely and earnestly believe, however, that a lasting, genuine settlement package—one which institutionalizes the Black perspective—has yet to be produced. We are, therefore, urging that the faculty reconvene in this crisis situation to focus attention on Black policy-making and Black decision-making issues yet unresolved. What we in SASS and, hopefully, you of the Swarthmore faculty and administration seek is a stable, viable mechanism for dealing with the Black perspective. As Black people, we cannot and will not accept a decision-making process that compromises the dignity of Black people and jeopardizes the integrity of the Black perspective. We wish to express the fact that we feel no animosity in registering our differences. We hope we can continue to deal with each other from a position of respect on both sides, showing emotion on neither side.

Swarthmore Afro-American Students' Society"

The letter will be distributed to the faculty as soon as possible. He also said that SASS realized that its statement at the previous plenary was unclear in certain respects and that SASS was at the moment reworking the statement.

Mr. Bramson then addressed the students expressing his feelings on what would best help solve the present solution. He felt that the community should "foster an atmosphere of tranquility where the necessary effects of discussion carried on by mandated representatives of the faculty and mandated representatives of SASS can be felt." Thus he urged students to attend class because "to create a background of crisis as the atmosphere for such a discussion is inimicable to the interests of SASS, the faculty and administration, and the student body." After a question concerning his knowledge of what the student body passed last night which served mainly to lighten some of the tension in the building, the meeting moved on to the business on the agenda which consisted of three issues: the student fast, and two questions concerning the issue of student power. The first passed unanimously and before the second could be brought up a motion was made to adjourn.

Chairman Ellen Schall then stated that she had received several suggestions as to the time for reconvening and that the student body should take a straw vote on which of the following should be the statement as to the time: Feb. 3, 10, or 17, when the coordinating committee decides, or when the faculty considers SASS' clarification and SASS then responds. The fourth of these was accepted and the students voted to adjourn.

RADICALS PLAN CONTINUING ACTION

The afternoon and evening radical caucuses focused on means of informing students of "the continuing crisis." "Some people are still under the impression that the faculty has been acting completely responsibly," Joe Horowitz argued. The caucus decided to hand out leaflets in front of classrooms and hold workshops and dorm meetings today. Leaflets will explain the reasons for boycotting classes and announce workshops at 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. in Bond. At the discretion of each dorm, dorm or hall meetings will be held tonight to discuss Black perspective as well as the crisis as it remains.

The meeting protested Mr. Bramson's speech at Tuesday's plenary session as a personal opinion and not an official statement. Tuggy Yourgrau emphasized that "we should not pull what the faculty pulled on us" and close meetings to outside opinion. A message was therefore sent to the faculty asking that faculty opinions should not be presented except in the form of proposals to be voted on by the plenum (as student opinions cannot). Only official statements should be accepted at the beginning of each session.

Alan Feldman suggested that the caucus begin forming its own propositions instead of passing proposals to be sent to the plenary sessions. "We should realize we are operating as the vanguard of student opinion." Lenny Nakamura stressed the possibility that the crisis may "destroy" Swarthmore. He emphasized the need for personal student-faculty communication to clear up such a fear.

Frank Ackerman '67 suggested that interested caucus members draw up position papers and present them to a caucus meeting Thursday. Vin Berg announced an open meeting of the Swarthmore Labor Committee at 1:30 today in the Student Council room for a discussion of Swarthmore's relation to the outside world in its policies relevant to "Black and white working people." Subi Sahgal announced that she will hold a workshop of all Asian students in Lodge 3 at 1:30 p.m. today.

SASS, FACULTY REPRESENTATIVES MEET

SASS representatives met with faculty-SASS liaison Legesse and the faculty communications committee until late last night. Mr. Piker called it a good meeting and said that the faculty members present were to write up a statement about the results of their discussion. The statement is to be reviewed by SASS this morning. After both groups have signed it, the statement will be forwarded to President Smith. In calling for the meeting of SASS representatives and the faculty committee, President Smith stated, "As soon as this Committee is satisfied that it fully understands SASS' position I shall then call a meeting of the Faculty at the earliest opportunity."

*

*

*

The organizational meeting for Honors has been postponed until 11 a.m. Thursday in the Meeting House.