

6941 Morgan Avenue South,
Minneapolis, Minn.,
January 15, 1969

Dr. Courtney Smith,
President, Swarthmore College,
Swarthmore, Pa.

Dear Dr. Smith:

I have been shocked by the conduct of Negro students at Swarthmore in pressing their "demands" upon the college, and I am dismayed at the reported timid reaction of college authorities to such boorish and indefensible behavior.

In my opinion no student at a private college has the right to use force to protest against college policies. A student at a private institution is admitted on the school's terms, which are clear to him at the time of enrollment. If he is later dissatisfied he has the right to make his dissatisfactions known in a civilized manner. Uncivilized, rude, or violent behavior should not be tolerated.

For the college to yield to force on the part of student dissidents immediately compromises the moral position of the college. It thereby tacitly admits that its policies are not the best it can devise but are subject to re-shaping under pressure from special interests. This means the authority of the college in matters which are properly its own concern. It rewards and encourages the perpetrators of violence. It is an offense to those students who adhere to accepted standards of behavior.

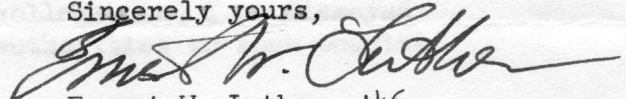
What possible justification can there be for yielding to the demands of the Negro dissidents? Has not Swarthmore's admissions policy been enlightened and non-discriminatory? Is not every student selected without prejudice as to race, color, or religion? For the college to give special consideration to Negroes qua Negroes is surely discrimination in reverse. Is it not a contradiction of the principle of racial equality to make that equality dependent on a particular black/white ratio? Is not the separate teaching of Negro subjects indefensible from the point of view of educational balance and perspective? What difference is there, in principle, between some of the more extreme demands of the Negro groups in their emphasis on racial history and the racial distortions the Nazis introduced into their educational system? It is only a matter of several steps from an exaggerated emphasis on race to a permanent alienation - not a reconciliation - of these dissident elements in our society.

I am of the opinion that Swarthmore College owes no apology to the Negro for his present condition in society and that it ought not to accede to any unreasonable demands that may be made upon it. While I am sympathetic with the desire of the Negro to improve his lot, I cannot condone violence as a means to this end. It is in the nature of every minority to have to have to come to terms with the larger society of which it is a part - it cannot be the other way around. Negroes have to choose either to make this adjustment or, if they wish to remain aloof, of suffering the slings and arrows of an intolerant majority. Let us by all means work to abolish

injustice and intolerance, but let us not bend over backwards to appease Negro extremists who employ violence to attain special racial privileges for themselves.

The Negro students who have occupied the Admissions Office and disrupted college activity ought to be summarily suspended, in my judgment, until they are ready to discuss their grievances with the Administration in a rational, intelligent, and civilized way.

Sincerely yours,



Ernest W. Luther '46

c.c. Mr. Frederick Hargadon