

Cool Colleges

Two Liberal Schools
Decide Campus Turmoil
Was Worth the Trouble

Brandeis, Swarthmore Say
Reforms Were Overdue;
Close Ranks After Crisis

But Stiffer Resistance Seen

By ELLIOT CARLSON

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

WALTHAM, Mass.—Professor Robert Manners' pet project has been torpedoed. But he isn't really angry.

Mr. Manners, a Brandeis University anthropologist, had for years been trying to enlist support for an experimental course called "Ideology and Action in the Black Community." Students were to design the course completely.

Last year, he finally got students to participate. But then turmoil came to Brandeis. Black students seized the university's communication center in a dispute with the administration. Later, they decided to boycott any course on black problems conducted by a white man—like Mr. Manners. The course collapsed.

But the professor insists he isn't irritated. "Sure, I'm disappointed," says Mr. Manners, who sports a snappy goatee. "But these tactics do get things done."

That kind of attitude toward campus ferment isn't at all unusual at this small liberal college, where a startling number of faculty members, administration officials and students believe that turmoil has produced unexpected dividends.

Bitterness in the West

Elsewhere, it hasn't been thus. Clashes at such big schools as San Francisco State and the University of California at Berkeley have bitterly fragmented students, faculty and alumni. The Brandeis crisis seems to have unified these groups behind the school despite some professorial bickering. A case in point: In a post-crisis drive Brandeis alumni in a few weeks over-pledged a fund-raising goal of \$100,000 set for all 1969. The school estimates that additional contributions may double that amount.

The black students' revolt manifestly mobilized a great deal of white support. "The effect of the seizure was increased recognition of the legitimacy of black demands," says Eric Yoffie, president of the student council. But at the same time, he asserts, "Brandeis wasn't radicalized—students wanted to preserve the university."

During the 11-day crisis, professors de-
plored the use of cooperation

3/09

During the 11-day crisis, professors deplored the use of coercion in an academic setting. But, importantly, they refused to ask that police be called. With student prodding, they also approved formation of an Afro-American Studies department and speeded other concessions. Administrators say these concessions had been in the works, but were more than a year distant.

Authorities trace the relatively benign results of agitation at Brandeis to the singular nature of the small school, where long-standing liberal proclivities give demonstrators a built-in advantage. At the same time, they say, the manageable size of the university (2,100 undergraduates, 75% of whom are Jewish), enables the total community to be intensely involved for a short period of time to settle conflicts. Thus disputes take on the aura of family squabbles rather than confrontations between implacable power blocs.

Swarthmore, Too

Another small school where differences seem to have been resolved with the same unusual good will is Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pa., with 1,030 students. There, black students extracted concessions after seizing the administration offices in January. Faculty members met in almost continuous session for three days, and finally agreed to raise Negro enrollment. They also agreed to accept a number of "risk" black students who wouldn't ordinarily qualify for admission.

"Black students made gains inside the power structure," says Robert Savage, an assistant professor of biology. "We'll now have to be considerably aware of the sensitivities of blacks in our decision-making."

But though the two schools have avoided the violence that has torn larger institutions, they haven't emerged altogether unscathed. And there is concern for the future. Tensions continue at both campuses. Earlier this month 125 white students staged a sit-in at Brandeis to protest alleged slowness in implementing black demands. Many Brandeis professors who earlier backed Negro proposals now say they will resist provocative tactics in the future.

An unexpected tragedy affected all the participants' attitudes during the Swarthmore negotiations. Courtney Smith, the school's highly regarded president of 15 years, died of a heart attack in the midst of the crisis. Some signs of "backlash" appeared among alumni. One disturbed graduate wrote to a local newspaper that the president's death was a "black lynching." Others threatened to end their support of the school on grounds that it had "coddled" militants.

Contributions Booming

But administrators now say ill will is ebbing at Swarthmore. Younger faculty members say the crisis has spurred long-overdue reforms. Alumni donations are running about \$18,700 ahead of last year. "We're getting support from people we haven't heard from in years," says Joseph Shane, vice president for alumni affairs. "They want to show us they're behind the school."

The continuing alumni support sets Brandeis and Swarthmore off from other schools that have experienced turmoil. A survey of about 20 schools conducted by the Council for Financial Aid to Education following outbreaks of violence earlier this year found that alumni giving generally was running behind last year's levels.

Many Brandeis alumni, in contrast, believe the school didn't go far enough toward making concessions to the discontented students. They have pledged to raise money for a scholarship to honor the late black radical Malcolm X.

Both Brandeis and Swarthmore are noted for high academic standards as well as liberal

Cool Colleges: Two Liberal Schools Decide the Turmoil Was Worth It

Continued From Page One

ism. At Brandeis, more than four fifths of the male graduates and three fifths of the women go on to graduate school. Brandeis has room for only one of every six applicants seeking admission. Swarthmore, founded 105 years ago by the Society of Friends, has a long tradition of academic excellence as well as social concern.

By the liberal standards of Brandeis and Swarthmore, the provocative moves of black students—while upsetting to many—weren't considered especially rash. Indeed, some white students defend the militancy. "Black students did absolutely no damage to the admissions office—they know that destructiveness isn't the Swarthmore way," says a student at the Pennsylvania school. A pretty coed remarks, "The blacks even vacuumed the office floor before leaving and left the place cleaner than when they took it over."

John Braxton, president of the Swarthmore student council, makes a fine distinction. "The blacks used force, but it was a very nonviolent use of force," he says. Mr. Braxton says he now understands what the charge of white "racism" means—that Negroes are stared at in the college cafeteria and frequently asked to show their identification cards by campus security guards.

As at Brandeis, Swarthmore students supported black demands without becoming alienated from the college authorities. Students praise the administration's decision not to use force, but they also say that a closely knit academic community generates reasonableness. "Before anything started, I was opposed to direct action on a campus like Swarthmore's," says a junior in political science. "But afterwards I saw that black demands were justified. The takeover was valid if for no other reason than that it got results."

But the same student quickly cautions, "Now there's a feeling that the blacks have had their inning, and the sympathy they've

created would evaporate if the same tactic was used again."

At both schools there are signs of stiffening resistance among professors, with moderates less inclined to tolerate disruptive moves in the future. "For a few days forces representing the outside world marched in, and it was all very educating," says Alex Weingrod, chairman of Brandeis' anthropology department. "But a school like ours can't stand these crises for very long."

The Brandeis faculty is said to be split between "doves" urging additional concessions to Negro students and "hawks" urging a stronger stand by the administration. "People have become hostile and suspicious toward each other," observes a professor of romance languages.

At Swarthmore, some faculty and administration officials fear that agitation has eroded the school's Quaker tradition of resolving conflicts calmly through discussion. "We used to think we could talk our way through any crisis," says Susan Cobbs, dean of the college. "Now we realize we've failed."

But some younger faculty members say the historical concern with "consensus" made the administration slow-moving on what they considered to be needed reforms. Voting often was eschewed at faculty meetings, on grounds that it was divisive, and many decisions resulted from vague agreements, the young men say. "In practice this meant the administration and the older faculty dominated the campus," grumbles one young man.

"You're going to see more groups on campus asserting themselves," this faculty member says. He notes the formation of a group called the Black Interest Committee to represent Negro students' cultural interests. And student representatives elected by their fellow students are going to participate in the choice of a new Swarthmore president.