

Afro-Americans would be a more accurate description of them, just as Italian, Irish or German extraction, Irish-Americans, or German-American Hong Kong

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To me, college life in America was certainly one of the happiest in a student's life. There were rules of behavior to follow and they were enforced for the good of all. There was law and order. Boys and girls were clean-cut inside and out. What happened to transform so many youngsters into ugly, unkempt, dirty, hobo-like characters clamoring for personal freedom in behavior and expression that

Attention of: Mr. Robert M. Browning,
Chairman, Board of Managers
Mr. Edward K. Cratsley,
Acting President

Gentlemen:

This situation is not peculiar to our own country, it Thank you for your circular letter of the 12th of February 1969 informing the Alumni, Parents of Swarthmore students, and the Friends of Swarthmore, of events that occurred at the college during the few weeks preceding the letter. college property against the recognized authority empowered to care and manage I have lived for many years among people the color of whose skin differ from mine and I have often wondered why the world's races were classified as white, black, yellow and red. standards of admission of Swarthmore should be lowered for the benefit of any There are any number of members of the white race whose skin is certainly not white and the same thing can be said about those labelled black, yellow and red, so why employ such inadequately descriptive terms?

Afro-Americans students should be given the opportunity. In the four pages of your circular letter you have used the word black some fifty three times. I don't know whether those students are "black" but I am doubtful that the average so-called "black" or so-called "negro" whose skin is the color of coffee with cream is happy at being labelled either "black" or "negro", notwithstanding what he or she might claim. These words have been unfortunately too often used pejoratively in the past for these people to desire being identified by them.

R. B. Landis

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Afro-Americans would be a more accurate description of them, just as we call those of Italian, Irish or German extraction Italian-Americans, Irish-Americans, or German-Americans.

To me, college life in America as I have known it, was certainly one of the happiest periods in a student's life. There were rules of behavior to follow and they were enforced for the good of all. There was law and order. Boys and girls were clean-cut inside and out. What has happened to transform so many youngsters into ugly, unkempt, dirty, hobo-like characters clamoring for personal freedom in behavior and expression that must lead to chaos? I have answered that question to my own satisfaction: Parents, teachers in grade schools and college authorities have chosen to surrender their time-honoured prerogatives as disciplinarians. They have abdicated as mentors and preceptors of youth in their desire for peace; instead they have unwittingly fostered unrest if not anarchy.

This situation is not peculiar to our own country, it seems to be world-wide. There is only one remedy and it is a return to discipline and firmness.

Where students of whatever race stage sit-ins and demonstrations on school and college property against the recognized authority empowered to care and manage it, they should be evicted summarily and the leaders of the movement expelled.

I do not believe that the standards of admission of Swarthmore should be lowered for the benefit of any students of whatever race or creed. I further believe that a college like a club supported by private means should have the right of choosing its students among those who can meet its standards.

Afro-Americans students should be given the opportunity to study at Swarthmore on the same basis as its other students. America, as a whole, is trying to atone for an insensate and often cruel discrimination shown in the past, and still persisting in many parts of our country, against her unfortunate Afro-American minority, but this should not be taken in consideration by the committee on admissions.

Very truly yours,

R. B. Landis

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March 31, 1969

Dear Bob:

Your letter addressed to Robert Browning and Ed Cratsley has been received. They have asked if I would answer it and I seized the opportunity because I think the two of us know each other fairly well.

Swarthmore College has lived through a very complex situation and I am sure it will have more in the years to come. The College stayed peaceful and constructive and the Faculty acted in reflection on problems which it had already identified and set for itself. They reached solutions because they thought they were right. They kept their heads, stayed fair and harmonious. Courtney Smith was clear and fair in his leadership. He was never to the very last a man to be put off or confused by problems no matter how difficult they were.

The Faculty, Board and most of the students were united in believing that the Admissions Office sit-in, though orderly, was unrepresentative of "Swarthmore's way", since force however orderly is antithetical to the reasonable methods Swarthmore has always stood for.

I would like to answer several statements you made in your letter. As I said before the world is changing and everything is complex. Individuals with black skins want to be called "black" not "negro". I have taken several black students with me, along with whites, to talk to alumni groups about the situation. The blacks of the United States today have a definite idea of integration. They want to be called blacks, want to respect themselves which they should, want to bring out the best in themselves, and they want the whites to respect them. I think, too, they want to respect the whites but they are not in favor for the integration that the Supreme Court of the United States was talking about several years ago. I agree with you that Afro-American would be a more accurate description and they call the organization here Swarthmore Afro-American Society.

There is no one who agrees more about your description for individuals who are unkempt and dirty. I just returned last week from two days in Cambridge and I came back to Swarthmore

feeling that our students were not as bad as those I saw at Harvard and Radcliffe. However, please do not think we do not have people with long hair and moustaches. One thing I do think, however, is that our students do wash and are clean.

I think you are absolutely right - that the fault lies mainly with parents. I had one alumnus of Swarthmore, a girl who had graduated from George School years ago, come in to see me just last week with her son and daughter. The daughter is applying to Swarthmore and I hope she comes. The boy attends Williams College. His hair was long and his mother asked me if I would tell him to cut it. My reply was that you are his mother, you give the orders. I am quite ready to say that when students come to College they should be treated as young men and women. If they have not learned what is right by then, I don't think the college can help much. It is a job for parents.

The standards for admission to Swarthmore will not be lowered. I do not think the Afro-Americans in their request really meant that we should take "risk students". What they were talking about were students we feel confident could do the work but did not show up well on certain test scores caused by the kind of education they received in elementary and secondary schools, and yes because of their meager backgrounds. I think you realize that Swarthmore has always taken students of this caliber. We have accepted sons and daughters of alumni and sons and daughters of the Society of Friends whom we thought would have trouble getting through. Many of them were successful and some, of course, failed. I think ^{you} feel assured that the Faculty, Board and the students themselves do not want the standards lowered.

You know the Class of 1925 will have its 45th reunion this June. We are reuniting with the Classes of 1923 and 1924 and you will be receiving notices about it before too long. It would be great if you could come to Swarthmore this June. I would love to see you.

In closing may I say that the College in the years to come can be a stronger college; however, it will only become stronger if all its constituencies - Board, Faculty, students and alumni - support it both spiritually and financially. We need your help now more than ever.

Best wishes to you.

Truly yours,

Joseph B. Shane
Vice President

Mr. Robert B. Landis
P.O. Box 15983
Hong Kong