

Introduction

In response to the rising tide of racial incidents on college campuses, the National Association for Ethnic Studies has elected to devote this special issue of *Explorations in Ethnic Studies* to this topic. Hundreds of institutions of all sizes have experienced these ugly and embarrassing incidents.

A number of basic issues and problems related to this topic warrant immediate intellectual scrutiny and decisive action. Although no single theory can explain the causes behind the dramatic resurgence of overt racism on college campuses, the scholars and administrators featured in this special issue offer a variety of scholarly observations, analyses, and recommendations. While speaking to the Pasadena, California, NAACP, John Brooks Slaughter, President of Occidental College, made the following observations:

During the past year, some 200 **reported** cases of racial confrontations have taken place at colleges and universities. Only the most optimistic person would believe that the total number of such incidents is close to that figure. These have taken many forms. They include clashes between African-American and Anglo students at Stanford, Berkeley and UCLA; confrontations between Jewish and African-American students at Maryland following the presence on that campus of controversial personalities such as Kwami Toure and Mordecai Levy; harassment of a black cadet at the Citadel in South Carolina, and countless other cases that have filled newspapers across the country. The alarming rise in racial violence on campuses and the equally alarming revitalization of the white supremacist movements exemplified by the Nazi-like behavior of Skinhead gangs has not escaped notice. In a similar vein, the election to the Louisiana State Legislature of David Duke, the former Grand Wizard of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, sends a signal that the gains of the 1960s and 1970s toward racial harmony are ended. Yes, racism and bigotry are back on campus with a vengeance. We can ask any of those black students who were chased and beaten at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, who were taunted with defamatory posters at Penn State and Stanford, who were subjected to racist jokes on the University of Michigan radio station or who were presented with a "mock slave auction" at the University of Wisconsin. Or we can ask the Jewish students who have had swastikas painted on their dormitory doors on campuses across the country from Harvard to Occidental. Or ask the Latino students at UCLA about their reaction to the film "Animal Attraction" which was produced by a UCLA graduate student with the support of many of his faculty members and which insensitively portrayed Mexican Americans in a very negative light. We cannot afford to be discouraged, although there is much that is discouraging. We cannot let acts of violence and brutality cause us to lose sight of the benefits to be gained by joining together to create harmony from the jangling discord around us. We cannot let our national policies be set by personalities like Jesse Helms while we stand by silently. We cannot let the goals of brotherhood and justice be torn asunder by those who believe that any race has an inalienable right to control the lives of another. As Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "We must work unceasingly to lift this

nation that we love to a higher destiny, to a new plateau of compassion, to a more noble expression of humaneness. We must use time creatively in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right."

In "The Monster in Our House: Racial Incidents on College Campuses," Farrell J. Webb explores the relationship between the institution and the new student body; he examines the motivation behind some of the recent racial attacks, and he examines the structural features of higher education that have allowed for growing racial and ethnic tension on college campuses. Phyllis G. Ray and Adolph Simmons, Jr., provide an exploratory analysis of black-white perceptions in the south vis-a-vis racism on college campuses. Monica L. Jackson explores the phenomenon of overt and subtle racism on campus as "status politics." She identifies the manifestations of "symbolic" and "competitive" racism on college campuses today and she provides recommendations for their eradication. Robin P. Clair and Michael J. McGoun compare the college students' views today on neighborhood integration to those reported by W.I. Gordon in a 1965 study. In the article "College Students' Attitudes on Neighborhood Integration: From the Classroom to the Community and Back Again," Clair and McGoun provide a unique pedagogical model that is designed to help college students achieve a greater degree of acceptance and sophistication in understanding racial integration of neighborhoods. The "learn by doing" approach which characterizes this model has significant potential in terms of using curricular activities as a means of attacking campus racism.

In the final article, "The University as a Pluralistic System: the Case of Minority Faculty Recruitment and Retention," Albert Ramirez presents a conceptual model that can be used in analyzing the university system as it relates to the issue of minority recruitment and retention. A university cannot legitimately claim to be a "university" unless it has an ethnically diverse faculty. Many scholars and administrators believe that an ethnically diverse faculty neutralizes racism on the campus, and colleges and universities have launched aggressive programs to recruit and retain minority faculty.

The issues and problems related to racism on the campus are complex and difficult to diagnose and solve. There are many socio-economic, psychological, political, and philosophical variables which influence those who resort to abhorrent racial behavior. Nevertheless, these issues must be pursued with compassion and intellectual rigor. At the very least, this special issue of *Explorations in Ethnic Studies* will spearhead positive change in the total campus environment.

—James H. Williams
Guest Editor