

Chapel 18's second letter to President Strider

(As printed in the Colby Echo: March 6, 1970)

March 3, 1970

The document that you addressed to us has been received, and, with the members of the Student Organization for Black Unity, its implications have been explored. We now have a few comments to make to you

Since you realized that there is no need to relate to us "the accomplishments of the past few years" it would save us all a great deal of time if you'd concern yourselves with the necessities of the future. If you are to fully recognize the situation as it now stands it will be necessary that you alter your way of thinking in terms of dealing with student rights. Obviously, we would not now be in the CHAPEL if we were confident in the administrative mechanisms that you have instituted to bring about change. Thus, we are not interested in the Commission that the Board of Trustees is now forming in order to "establish priorities and hopefully bring results." For we know where the priorities lie and we know that hope is all too often hollow. Therefore, if you insist upon hoping for the results that we now realize that the "high priority" that the offices of Admissions and Financial Aid have given the objectives of Black students is just not high enough.

We are also at odds in terms of your seeing our demands as "complex problems." There is nothing at all complex about the five demands. The complexity lies in your inability to free yourselves from the administrative paternalism and red tape which might unduly complicate a matter that is quite simple. You must also realize that our actions, thus far, have been abundantly conducive to coming to terms in "an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual respects." Once again, let us be frank in informing you of the improbability of the atmosphere becoming any more conducive to coming to terms than it is now. Although you say the college can respond better to requests and proposals, the fact remains that the proposals which were outlined last year in "Proposals For a New Colby" were not considered by the Constitutional Convention. Hence, the college has given us no alternative but to issue demands. We are now convinced that this college is at a stage where demands will serve more readily as a mechanism for opening doors than for closing them.

If you are unable to engage in "the most useful kinds of discussion under the present circumstances" then it appears that we are not going to be able to discuss this matter. The perpetration of racism "occasions disruption" of normal human development. Therefore, we feel justified in obstructing the normal use of Lorimer Chapel. Hence, the matter of illegal trespass in the Chapel is pitifully irrelevant when compared to the matter of man's illegal trespass against human dignity.

The institution of our goals is our primary concern; but we will under no circumstances leave the Chapel in order to discuss these goals. If we were at all concerned with the so-called notoriety of our actions then we would not have occupied a building as strategically non-functional as the Chapel. Notoriety is not our purpose and appearances are not our concerns. Thus, it would be to your advantage to concern yourselves less with how this situation now appears and more with how it should be resolved.

Once again, let us reiterate that our demand are so ridiculously reasonable that we feel insulted by the type of vague administrative irrelevancies embodied in your letter. We are confident that your next reply will address itself directly to the matter at hand. It would be in the best interest of all concerned to institute these demands while there is still time.

Student Organization for Black Unity

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