

The Two Nations At Wesleyan University: The two nations at Wesleyan University

By RICHARD J. MARGOLIS

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At left, the "black table" in Wesleyan's freshman dining hall; above, a Malcolm X poster in a dormitory window. Whites and blacks not only have stopped eating together at Wesleyan (which leads the league in integration efforts), apparently they've all but stopped speaking. No one on the Connecticut campus has any illusions left; some see reason for hope in that.

The Two Nations At Wesleyan University

By RICHARD J. MARGOLIS

"What atonement would the God of Justice demand for the robbery of black people's labor, their lives, their true identities, their culture, their history . . .?"

—"THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MALCOLM X" (1965).

"I came to America to convert the Indians; but oh! who shall convert me?"

—"THE JOURNAL OF JOHN WESLEY" (1738).

MIDDLETOWN, Conn.

THE old John Wesley House, a splendid campus landmark with white Ionic columns, turned into the Malcolm X House one sunny day last April. Overnight it became a

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conspicuous presence on the startled New England landscape. The sky did not fall and the earth did not tremble; neither did the alumni withdraw their support. But Wesleyan, a small, estimable, historically white university in Middletown, would never be the same. "We have passed the point of no return," says a Wesleyan administrator. "The blacks are here in force and they are here to stay."

The first black who came to Wesleyan was Charles B. Ray, and he did not stay. He departed in 1832, soon after fellow students passed a resolution describing his presence there as "inexpedient." Ray's white friends deplored his banishment even while conceding it was "the wisest course." They wished him Godspeed.

After the Civil War, Wesleyan and

the rest of the North discovered tokenism, and from time to time a few Negroes slipped through the academic mesh. Such lackluster integration as there was continued for a century. Then, in 1965, the present drama began to unfold when Wesleyan enrolled 14 black freshmen. More came the next year, and more the next. This year blacks and "other minorities" (mostly Puerto Ricans) make up 12 per cent of Wesleyan's 1,400 students and 20 per cent of the freshman class.

COMPARED with most other traditionally white universities, these figures are exceptionally high. Black enrollments at Yale and Harvard, for instance, are below 5 per cent, which suggests that in the intercollegiate-interracial sweepstakes Wesleyan is several lengths ahead. But the track

has been treacherously mined and the finish line is nowhere in sight.

Nearly all of Wesleyan's glib and early assumptions about black-white integration—having to do both with its necessity and its ease of attainment—have by now gone the way of the John Wesley House, onto history's discard pile. "At first we thought all we had to do was recruit black students," notes Edwin D. Etherington, who in 1967 forsook the presidency of the American Stock Exchange for that of Wesleyan. "Now we know we have to do much more."

"Much more" has meant the appointment of 23 blacks to positions on the staff and faculty, and the establishment last spring of an Afro-American Institute in cooperation with the Martin Luther King Center in Atlanta. The institute, known to

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blacks as Ujamaa ("family" in Swahili), has its headquarters in the Malcolm X House and is the vital center of Wesleyan's black community. Designed in large measure by the black students, Ujamaa sponsors two courses in black history and culture and promotes such endeavors as an arts festival and a black repertory theater.

In times of racial crisis, which are frequent, Ujamaa's Central Committee is the blacks' chief spokesman and bargaining agent. Its pronouncements are a cheerless form of invective, full of phrases like "racist institution" and "white swine." As a white English teacher has observed, the pronouncements "are the language of escalation. They have to be deciphered rather like statements from the Kremlin."

Membership in Ujamaa is open to all blacks in the vicinity, including Middletown blacks who would otherwise have no connection with the university. They thus constitute a "family" within the academic community that shelters them, but their loyalty to that community has been spotty to say the least.

ALL this has been allowed to occur, say administrators, in a sincere effort to satisfy black needs, and no one at North College—the school's administration building—is underestimating those needs. That particular mistake is already history.

"Back in 1965," explains Edgar W. Beckham, an associate provost and one of Wesleyan's few black alumni (class of '58), "we believed in what you might call automatic assimilation. We thought the black students would mysteriously merge into the white landscape. That might have worked in my day—there were so few of us, and Stokely hadn't shouted 'Black Power' yet—but it won't work today."

When Wesleyan's first sizable group of blacks was graduated last spring, their black brothers presented them with a plaque: "To the Vanguard Class of 1969." As Beckham explains, "Those guys had gone through their own special hell. The other blacks showed they understood." Their special hell, it would seem, was less a consequence of white prejudice than of white indifference; or, more precisely, of white determination to ignore blackness.

The blacks came to Wesleyan not knowing exactly what to expect; but they assumed, somewhat contradic-

torily, that they were entering a white paradise and also that they would be accepted—but not discriminated against—as blacks. They were wrong on both scores. "The whites were very condescending to us," a black student recalls. "They wanted us to pretend they were just like them." Most of the blacks played this game at first, on the historic premise that whites possessed all the secrets of superior life. Then, as the black student explains, "We began to see that the whites weren't supermen. They were just ordinary cats with ordinary hang-ups. That's when we stopped assimilating."

In pursuit of assimilation, school officials had carefully dispersed black students throughout all the dormitories and had provided each black with a white roommate. "The official policy was to keep us [blacks] apart," recalls Edwin C. Sanders Jr., a large black man from "the vanguard class" who is now co-director of Wesleyan's Afro-American Institute. "But it didn't take long for us to find each other."

The blacks soon learned to brandish their blackness. They cultivated Afro hairstyles, donned dashikis and sat at a "black table" in the dining hall. "I enjoyed shocking the whites," remembers Randy Miller, a senior this year. "Every morning I'd write out another quotation from Malcolm X or Stokely and nail it to my door. I had to show them who I was."

But most of the white students failed to get the message, and before long black gestures were yielding to black protest. A turning point came in December, 1967, at a Wilson Pickett "soul" concert which black students had arranged. Some of the more carefree whites in the audience shouted, hooted, made lavish use of the word "nigger" and, in a final act of gallantry, took off their pants. To everyone's surprise, the blacks protested. Thirty-seven of them signed a letter to *The Argus*, Wesleyan's student newspaper, deploring "the display of pale pink asses in the presence of our Black sisters." (Although Wesleyan went coeducational last year only a few of its girl students are black. Most of the "Black sisters" came from Middletown and cities nearby.) The letter concluded with what, in the fullness of time, turned out to be a typical threat: "The lid blew off, Baby. We're burning and we hope that the flame doesn't reach you."

It was the first time the

blacks had ever spoken to Wesleyan with a single voice, and the voice stung. President Etherington issued a public apology. "The most disturbing thing about the evening," he declared, "was the undertone of racist slurs, punctuated by specific words and gestures." An *Argus* editorial dismissed the incident as the mere hijinks of "upper-class party boys of certain fraternities," but no one could entirely forget the show of black solidarity which the incident had inspired.

A YEAR later, on the anniversary of Malcolm X's death, the blacks consolidated their gains by briefly taking over Fisk Hall, the school's main classroom building. "We seek to publicly memorialize . . . the death of a great American and a Black saint, Malcolm X," the demonstrators announced. Earlier the faculty had rejected (by a vote of 60 to 47) a black request to cancel classes on that day. But by midday of the take-over, Etherington was reminding teachers that although they had voted against suspension of all classes, individual teachers could do whatever they wished. As one professor remarked later, "It was tantamount to an order." By 2 P.M. Wesleyan was shut down.

In this way the blacks gradually compelled Wesleyan to put away childish thoughts of assimilation and to see through a glass darkly. The white missionaries were being converted. Yet aspects of the old dream have lingered. "We must learn to be comfortable with each other at Wesleyan," says Beckham, who, as a kind of ideological middleman between the blacks and the administration, knows the meaning of discomfort. And Etherington, a patient man, speaks wistfully of "many races, one community," a new dream for Wesleyan.

ON the other hand, many white students remain infected with a tired old racism, and many black students respond with a fierce new separatism. The 1968 edition of *Olla Podrida*, Wesleyan's yearbook, contained hundreds of photographs depicting life at Wesleyan but only three that included black students. The blacks responded one night by burning four copies of *Olla Podrida* on the steps of North College. It was, they declared, "an outrageous, unforgivable insult to all Black people".

"Unforgivable" is the key
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word here, for it reflects a rising suspicion among blacks at Wesleyan that white people are beyond both pardon and salvation. As the suspicion grows, the goal of "many races, one community" fades. Matters have reached a point where Edwin Sanders, much of whose thinking was shaped as a student at Wesleyan, can look forward to a day when Wesleyan's enrollment is 90 per cent black. "I'll keep 10 per cent," he explains, "just to remember that the white folks still exist. I haven't found the button yet that will get rid of them."

These two contending visions, then, are what the struggle is all about at Wesleyan, as it is elsewhere in America, and the antagonisms they generate are never far below the surface. Ujamaa and the Malcolm X House—Wesleyan's crowning atonements to date—have come to symbolize both pride and prejudice. To blacks they are a safe haven and also a luminous proof of black power and dignity; to many whites they are a social irritant at best and a sinister sanctuary at worst. "Everybody knows they're hiding guns in there," comments an editor of *The Argus*, "but nobody's got the guts to go in and search." As an afterthought he adds, "Of course, we'd never print that. We have to live with each other, you know."

AS soon as Worth Hayes set foot in the Hartford air terminal last August, he knew he was entering a new world, a world disturbingly unlike the black ghetto in St. Louis where he had grown up. "People were talking kind of proper," he recalls. "It was like a foreign language. I had a hard time understanding them." Hayes, one of 51 entering black freshmen in a class of 338, was groping toward Wesleyan; and Wesleyan, which had recruited Hayes with uncommon ardor and now awaited him with uncommon anxiety, was groping toward expiation, after more than 130 years of ethnic vanities. The whole unlikely experiment would depend largely on efforts by both parties to decipher each other's language.

Hayes, a tall, slim youth with a modest bush haircut, is typical of the kind of blacks Wesleyan is now attracting—bright, ambitious, shabbily educated and chock-full of "overall personal strength"—the quality Wesleyan admissions officers look for in black applicants. He was anxious to get to Wesleyan, but when he finally sat down in his dormitory room, he had trouble un-

packing. "It was the dresser," he says. "I never had my own dresser before. I kept looking at it, wondering how do you space out the clothes."

Back home in St. Louis, he never had to wonder. He slept in a narrow corridor off the living room and shared a dresser with his brothers and sisters. Hayes's father is a hod carrier, hard-working and steady on the job; but the job does not pay enough and Hayes has had to work most of his life, starting as a newsboy when he was 10, then moving on to after-school jobs in supermarkets, restaurants and factory warehouses. "I worked at least 20 hours every week all through school," he says. "Maybe that's why I only got a B average."

EARLY in his senior year at Soldan public high school (3,100 blacks, two whites) Hayes began investigating colleges. "I've wanted to go to college ever since I was a little kid. My older brother, he graduated from high school but he never went to college. Now he's working 60 hours a week in a car wash." Hayes spent study-hall periods waiting to talk to his counselor about college, but his counselor had 499 other students to see and he never got around to Hayes. So Hayes wrote to colleges on his own, getting the names from brochures in the counselor's anteroom. "I'd never heard of most of them," he says. "They were just names to me."

Eventually he applied to 10 "names," including Harvard, Dartmouth, Wesleyan and the University of Missouri. He was not hopeful. "I knew I'd messed up my S.A.T.'s [Student Aptitude Tests]. I just can't put myself in a mood to take a test. I tense up and black out."

But Hayes was operating in an applicant's market; competition among colleges for promising black students was stiff, and there was a growing



Junior Tom Morse:
"We need a black-white
Emily Post."



Associate Provost Edgar Beckham: "Automatic assimilation won't work."

consensus that such traditional measuring sticks as S.A.T. scores and class rank were irrelevant to applicants from the ghetto. Wesleyan, pursuing these new tenets of enlightenment, accepts one-third of its black applicants and only one-fourth of its white applicants, although black S.A.T. scores are 130 points lower, on average, than white scores. (A perfect score is 800.)

In any case, Hayes was accepted by nine of the 10 colleges, and Harvard—the sole holdout—might have accepted him, too, had not Hayes picked Wesleyan before Harvard made up its mind. The way Hayes chose Wesleyan tells us much about both. He had decided on an Eastern college—"I'd heard they were better"—which narrowed the choice to Dartmouth and Wesleyan. Since he knew little about either school, he was delighted when Dartmouth invited him to an open house in a St. Louis suburb.

The catered affair took place at the home of a wealthy Dartmouth alumnus. "It was one of those big places," says Hayes, "with a circular driveway and Cadillacs, and servants all over the place. Most of the servants were black; they were the only black people in the place, except me and one or two other guys. I decided not to go to Dartmouth. I didn't want to be bought off."

A FEW weeks later Harold Murphy, a black senior at Wesleyan, came to St. Louis, his hometown, and telephoned Hayes. Murphy, who is majoring in social psychology, was in St. Louis on official university business—to sell Hayes and other black students in the area on the advantages of Wesleyan. "Our black students make the best recruiters of black prospects," notes William Roberts, an assistant dean of admissions. "We've learned to depend on them."

Hayes met Murphy, and

asked him the question every black hopeful asks a brother who has experienced the white world: "What's it like out there?" Murphy's response was hardly a blanket endorsement, but he convinced Hayes that life was bearable at Wesleyan because a genuine black community existed there. "The black recruiter's pitch is very simple," observes Roberts: "'Look, man, if you're going to a honkie school, go to Wesleyan.'"

So Hayes went to Wesleyan, knowing he would not be alone, and not too afraid, in this world he'd never made. Along with most of the other black freshmen, Hayes arrived three weeks before classes were to start, because Wesleyan, in its eagerness to satisfy black needs, was preparing to "orient" them all. This proved to be a devious undertaking—or, in the opinion of a white professor, "an absolute disaster"—but it did serve to acquaint Hayes and his brothers with two incendiary forces on campus: black militancy and white obtuseness.

MOST of the entering black freshmen were exposed to two kinds of orientation. One was the conventionally bland buffet of campus tours and welcoming speeches dished out to all freshmen regardless of race. (As we shall see, one of the speeches was not so bland.) The other was a week-long concoction designed as "a training experience in contract-building" between white faculty members and black freshmen and upperclassmen. It was given the innocuous rubric of "Me, My Goals and Wesleyan," but as at least one participating professor has observed, "It could as easily have been called 'Me, the Gallows and Wesleyan.' Somebody up there wanted to hang us."

"Me, My Goals and Wesleyan" was planned by Beckham with the help of a consulting firm, Systems for Change, Inc., a firm in Trenton, N. J., which specializes in mounting and producing confrontations. ("Don't say 'encounter,'" a company spokesman admonished. "That's not our bag.") This particular confrontation was aimed at giving black students a sense of where they were headed at Wesleyan, and at giving white faculty members a chance to probe their own dark misgivings. As the firm's president, Barry A. Passet, explains, the program was to be an adventure in diplomacy, with the two groups behaving rather like two opposing delegations at the United Nations. During the

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 first few days of orientation, each group would meet in private sessions and work out its strategies for later negotiations. The next three days would be spent at the bargaining table in head-to-head confrontation. Out of this adversary process were to come—for members of both sides—"self insight," "awareness of goals" and, inevitably, "more open channels of communication."

From the beginning the channels of communication were badly clogged. Ten faculty members volunteered for the program, though none had any precise notions of what they were getting into. "I'm afraid we were less than candid in our call for volunteers," Passett concedes. "No doubt most of them thought they were being asked to participate in a conventional orientation program."

Jeffrey E. Butler, a professor of history and one of the 10 volunteers, puts it another way. "We were intentionally misled," he says. "Passett admitted afterward that he didn't tell the whole story because he was afraid he wouldn't get any volunteers."

AT the first session the professors were introduced to their "trainer," a young psychologist assigned by Systems for Change to lead discussions among the faculty. Faculty recollections of this session, admittedly blurred, go something like this:

"I thought this was an orientation session," one of the teachers said. "I don't see any students."

"You'll meet them later," the trainer said. "First we have to deal with the problems right in this room." The teachers were genuinely astonished; they wanted to know what problems he had in mind. "Well," said the trainer, using his best nondirective approach, "how do you feel about the black students?" Everyone said they felt just fine.

"I've heard it said that the faculty here is encapsulated," the trainer went on. "Does anyone want to comment on that?"

On the second day the faculty took a vote and agreed to dismiss the trainer.

On the third day, by pre-arrangement, the faculty members knocked on the door to the black caucus room, hoping to get in. There was no answer. The blacks had spent the night sitting-in at the headquarters of Teen-agers Organized for Productive Service (T.O.P.S.), a black anti-poverty group in Middletown. There'd been a rumor that T.O.P.S. was going to be



Graduate Edwin Sanders: He looks to a 90-percent black Wesleyan.

closed down; hence the protest, and no meeting with the faculty that morning. The rumor about T.O.P.S. proved to be unfounded. (In its written evaluation, Systems for Change made much of this: "The trainers used the incident and the students' over-reaction to lead into skills-training on rational problem-solving"—like checking out rumors.)

That afternoon Jeffrey Butler, representing his group, again knocked at the black door. This time two blacks came out and told Butler their group wasn't ready yet. "Look here," said Butler, "this is absurd." A discussion ensued. The faculty members, it developed, preferred to meet in small groups, "so that everyone has a chance to be heard." This looked to the blacks like white casuistry: divide and rule. To the teachers it looked like sound pedagogy: divide and reason. To an outsider it looked like both; Solomon would have been overwhelmed at Wesleyan.

EVENTUALLY the two groups did meet, and it is not clear what followed. According to Passett's evaluative report, the professors behaved badly—that is, like professors. They indulged in such dubious gambits as "donnish" humor, "intellectual 'put-downs'" and "incessant verbiage." According to an administration official, "The faculty copped out."

And according to some of the faculty, the discussions were insulting. "The blacks began by demanding that we accept the proposition that Wesleyan is a racist institution," says Jeffrey Butler. "I told them that was rubbish. If it were a racist institution they wouldn't be here."

This line of reasoning, notes Jonathan Collett, an assistant professor of English who participated in the sessions, seemed to suggest to the blacks that they were expected to be grateful to Wesleyan for admitting them.

Their reaction was described by still another faculty participant. "The blacks," he said colorfully, "turned livid with rage."

In fairness, many of the black freshmen said later that they had found the program helpful; it had given them more confidence in their ability to handle both Wesleyan and themselves. Such gains were not to be undervalued. Classes were scheduled to begin Sept. 17 and, precisely because of the questions which "Me, My Goals and Wesleyan" had tried to raise, the blacks would need all the confidence they could muster. The administration had not intended to hang the faculty, but it had hoped to rouse some of its members into examining these hard racial dilemmas of the classroom.

A DISTINGUISHED professor in the social sciences pounds his palm with the bowl of his pipe and glares across the desk at his visitor. "Look," he says, "I'm not a racist. I'm simply saying we have a lot of very badly qualified students here, and we don't know how to cope with them. The danger is that our standards are diluted for the sake of getting black students through the curriculum." He relights his pipe. "No, it's not a danger, it's a problem that's already with us. Everybody on campus knows which are the 'gut' departments for blacks. Some of my colleagues give a ludicrously high proportion of A's to black students."

Some blacks would be surprised to hear they are getting A's. It is a commonplace among black students that "Wesleyan lets you in so they can flunk you out," and the claim contains a kernel of truth; according to Robert L. Kirkpatrick Jr., dean of admissions, black students do flunk out of Wesleyan at a somewhat higher rate than white students.

Wesleyan administrators are reluctant to examine the blacks' academic performance or to portray it as a special problem. But while denying the problem, they hunt for solutions. Thus far these solutions have been genuine but discouraging.

Back in 1965, the school sent entering black freshmen to various summer "compensatory-education programs," sponsored by preparatory schools or by other colleges, which alleged to impart such basic academic skills as English composition and algebra. But the programs did not teach and the students did not learn. Moreover, according to a recent report by Harold Davis, a black assistant dean

of admissions, compensatory education was "offensive and degrading" to the black students. Davis, who was graduated from Wesleyan last year, was himself a beneficiary, or victim, of these programs. "The fact that special attention had been directed toward them (the black students)," he concludes, "gave them a sense of not being able to perform the work Wesleyan demanded."

In 1967 Wesleyan abandoned compulsory compensatory education. Only the premedical students now are offered a summer program, including short courses in the basic sciences. The rest must depend on voluntary tutorials offered by teachers or upperclassmen to anyone requesting extra help. The school also permits students in danger of sinking under too heavy a load to space out their course-work over a five-year period.

In this way Wesleyan has sought to give blacks sufficient academic support without smothering them in "special attention." It is a delicate balance, and maintaining it has probably improved the black student's chances of "making it" at Wesleyan.

But at the same time, efforts such as these have done nothing to improve relations between the faculty and the blacks, and relations have been deteriorating. "We can see signs of a liberal backlash among the faculty," notes John Maguire, an associate professor of religion who, along with Beckham, was one of a small cabal of reformers responsible for Wesleyan's social awakening five years ago. "Some of my colleagues deplore black incivility," Maguire continues. "They prefer the old Victorian virtues. Well, it's true the black do rage around a lot, but that's not the real point. The blacks aren't challenging Wesleyan's manners, they are challenging Wesleyan's morals, its whole system of social values."

Last October, shortly before Vietnam Moratorium Day, the faculty met to debate a resolution calling for U.S. with-



Senior Jonathan Berg: A wrong word led to trouble.

drawal from Vietnam. A professor, speaking against the resolution, complained, "We wouldn't even be discussing Vietnam today if we hadn't started with this black thing." (The resolution was passed by a small majority.)

The logic may have been murky but the message was clear: blacks were luring Wesleyan away from traditional academic pursuits and into such questionable concerns as war and peace. A list of other concerns into which blacks have lured Wesleyan would include: the school's relationship to the Middletown ghetto, hiring practices by construction firms under contract to Wesleyan, and the school's investments in South Africa. "The blacks have been a fantastic leavening in the loaf," says Beckham. "They're creating a shift away from insular scholarship toward social action."

But the shift has been far from automatic; there are doubtless many teachers who would rather publish than picket. "My black students keep asking me what I've done to fight racism at Wesleyan," a teacher notes irritably. "I wasn't hired to fight racism. I was hired to teach." That, no doubt, was what the unhappy trainer meant by "encapsulated."

To many black students, the teacher is Wesleyan's *bête blanche*. "They never make a human effort," complains Harold Murphy, the junior who talked Hayes into coming to Wesleyan. "Once I asked a professor to define probability for me. He took me on a 45-minute trip, and when he got done I still didn't know the meaning of probability. He wasn't teaching, man; he was just proving how much he knew."

Such complaints, of course, are voiced on all campuses by all races; but they run deeper with black students. Blacks complain that professors don't know their names—"They call us 'you'"—and don't treat them with respect. "If I try to say something in class," a black freshman observes, "the teacher, he'll get to smiling and walk over to my seat. It seems like he's surprised I can talk."

"Most of the white teachers here don't know how to teach blacks," says Dwight Green, a black senior who plans to go on to law school. "Maybe they can't teach anybody. Up until we got here they never had to try." But some professors are trying. They are scanning their course syllabi for signs of "ethnocentric bias," and they are adding black content to their lectures—"Baldwin and Wright mixed in with Dostoevski and



Senior Dwight Green: "Most white teachers here don't know how to teach blacks."

Joyce," as Jonathan Collett says. In some music courses blacks are calling for African music to replace the "honkie music" of Bach, Mozart and Stravinsky. As a music teacher has quipped, "We're facing up to a Bach-lash."

THERE is, in fact, a desperate search for "black relevance" going on in Wesleyan classrooms—a response, in part, to black charges that Wesleyan teachers indulge in "colonization of the mind." But whatever pleases the black students seems to irritate the whites.

Last spring a visiting black drama professor, Dean Douglas Johnson, kicked his white students out of a course devoted to black drama. His explanation was interesting. "The whites could not participate in the lab sessions," he said, because they didn't understand the black world that was being dramatized. Instead, "they became observers. This served the archetype of the white man looking at the darkies." Whatever the merits of Johnson's case, white students reacted huffily. In a letter to The Argus, 16 whites accused him of "black racism." To be white at Wesleyan, they complained, "is to be a second-class citizen."

Increasingly nowadays, to be white at Wesleyan is to be angry and afraid. At the general orientation session for freshman last fall Dwight Green made a speech which he called "Faggots, Masturbators and Whites." The blacks, most of whom sat in one corner of the room, applauded; the startled whites received the speech in silence. As one of them, a product of an all-white public school system on Long Island, recalls, "I walked out of there thinking there'd be a riot that night for sure."

It is a measure of Wesleyan's frustration that white students sensed peril where

none existed, and that black students, wrapped up in their own grievances, failed to recognize white fears. "That white-fear stuff is just a cop-out," Green said later. "It takes racists off the hook. There was no reason for anybody to get hung up on the speech. I was using those terms as metaphors." At Wesleyan it is easier to mix metaphors than races.

ALL this heightens the black man's sense of alienation. From his first day on campus, he feels himself struggling among the scions of wealthy whites who cannot possibly understand his black world. The written personality test he is made to take asks, among other things, whether he prefers theater to travel. "Man, that test wasn't written for me!" he says to himself. On the same day an ingenuous white freshman, anxious to make a black friend, poses the inevitable question: "How does it really feel to be a Negro?" And that weekend he may learn that some of his white dormitory mates—the ones who had been especially friendly—have buzzed off to Smith College without asking him to come along. "They drink your wine and smoke your pot, but when it's time to meet some girls, they're gone."

"What we need around here," says Tom Morse, a white junior from Rochester, N. Y., "is a black-white Emily Post, an etiquette for the races." Morse says he learned "good racial manners" the hard way. One day while talking with some black friends he lapsed into his W. C. Fields imitation. "That's right, my boy," he said in his best nasal drawl. The black faces froze. Later his black roommate told Morse what he had done. "You called us 'boy,'" he said. "You insulted your friends."

Last spring, in the wake of the black takeover of Fisk Hall, Morse organized the Student Action Movement (S.A.M.), an organization dedicated to stamping out white racism at Wesleyan. "I know a lot of guys around here," he says, "who say 'black' out loud and 'nigger' inside. The brothers aren't fooled; they've been around." White response to S.A.M., which claims about 50 members, has not been cheering. "Most of them look upon us as a bunch of guilty white liberals," Morse says. "White students generally don't worry about these things. They live from one football game to the next." If so, Wesleyan's Homecoming weekend last November, which featured both the last

football game of the season and its first threat of organized racial violence, must have been annoying.

BY half-time on Nov. 8 Wesleyan was in danger of suffering two defeats: in the stadium Williams was leading, 14-6; elsewhere the racists, both white and black, seemed to be carrying the day. Two dormitory incidents had heated up emotions to a point where Etherington had felt compelled to cancel the Homecoming dance and to get a court order enjoining members of Ujamaa from disrupting "athletic, social or academic events" that weekend.

As the fans munched hot dogs and awaited the second half, a voice boomed over the public-address system. "Wesleyan is a white racist institution," intoned Bernard Freamon, a black senior from Newark and a spokesman for Ujamaa. Etherington had given him permission to tell the blacks' side of the story. As Freamon finished, the fans gave forth with a wild cheer—their team had come back on the field. (It went on to win, 18-17.)

The story Freamon might have told began early this fall with a rash of burglaries in the dormitories. White students suspected three or four blacks who had been seen frequently wandering through the corridors of several dorms. One night a white student, hearing a knock at his door, and suspecting larcenous intentions, decided not to answer. The door opened and two blacks appeared. "Sorry," one of them said, "we thought this was the bathroom."

The white student made a sarcastic remark about the difficulties of finding clearly labeled bathroom doors. More words led to a fight with one of the black students, during which the other black, George Walker, pulled a knife—not to attack, he said later, but to prevent other whites who had rushed to the scene from interceding. It turned out that Walker was one of "the San Francisco five"—alleged Black Panthers from Wesleyan whom San Francisco police had arrested last spring and charged with illegal possession of weapons.

Thirteen days after the fight, Wesleyan's five-man Student Judiciary Board (S.J.B.—four whites, one black) put Walker and his friend on strict disciplinary probation, meaning that any further trouble would lead to automatic expulsion. At the same time S.J.B. issued an "official warning" to the white student, noting that his language may have been belligerent.

The decision triggered the

next disaster. On Nov. 4, Jonathan Berg, a white senior from New Jersey, wrote a fiery letter to The Argus in which he called the S.J.B. ruling on the white student "just incredible" and called Walker "a common criminal" and "a punk." In black argot, and unknown to Berg, "punk" means homosexual. That night about a dozen blacks went to Berg's room and threatened him with physical harm if he did not retract his statement. The next night Walker paid another call on Berg, found him taking a shower, and beat him up. Walker was accompanied by Kerry Holman, a black junior from Washington, D.C., who also goes by the name of Kwasi Kibuyu.

66Solomon

would have been overwhelmed

at Wesleyan.99

At midnight Berg called both the police and David W. Adamany, a young associate professor of government who is also dean of students. Adamany, deciding to short-circuit S.J.B.'s creaky judicial machinery, promptly expelled Walker and suspended Holman.

The next night (two days before Homecoming) Ujamaa held a mass meeting attended by many blacks from Middletown. Ujamaa's newly elected Central Committee, which some white observers think represents "only the radical wing," had drawn up three demands to be made to Wesleyan: fire Adamany, restore Holman to full student status; and set up a separate, all-black student judiciary board to rule on cases involving black students. The meeting endorsed the proposals.

By 11 A. M. the next day spokesmen for Ujamaa were in Etherington's office listing their demands and giving him until 1 P. M. to decide, or else "suffer the very serious consequences." Etherington waited until 5 P. M. He then told the blacks he would neither dismiss Adamany nor approve an all-black judiciary; on the other hand, he had already reinstated Holman and turned his case over to S.J.B. (Holman is still at Wesleyan.)

MEANWHILE, alumni bent on a jolly reunion were beginning to stream onto campus, and rumors of disruption

were everywhere. Etherington, fearing the worst, then canceled the Saturday night Homecoming dance and got the injunction from Circuit Court Judge Aaron Palmer—the same judge who will preside over the coming Black Panther trial in New Haven—aimed at keeping the peace. In a way it worked—there was no violence that Homecoming weekend; but the action may have severed the gossamer tie of trust between Etherington and the blacks. By citing all members of Ujamaa, the injunction implied, as one black faculty member put it, that "all blacks were potential criminals." If it was true that some black moderates were trying

to rein in the "radical" Central Committee, the injunction could hardly have strengthened their hand. "The injunction may have lowered the level of trust," Etherington concedes, "but it raised the level of reality."

In any case, the violence did not end there. On Nov. 19 a large fire at the door to Jonathan Berg's bedroom forced that unhappy letter-writer to jump to safety from his second-story window. Witnesses said it was a gasoline fire and that it had been started by two blacks. Middletown police promptly arrested Harold Williams, a black sophomore from New Haven and one of "the San Francisco five" apprehended last spring. Earlier that day Williams had been dropped as a student from Wesleyan for academic reasons. He faces charges of arson, but he is out on bail now, and the bail was supplied by a joint faculty-student fund, with both whites and blacks contributing. Many races, one community.

In early December shots were fired—aimed apparently, at Rhamim Khabib, a black administrator. While entertaining three other blacks in his apartment one night, Khabib received a spurious phone call; the telephone was near a window, and soon after Khabib hung up bullets shattered the glass. No one was hit. Friends of Khabib speculated that the shooting was

the work of white high-school students in Middletown. Weeks earlier Khabib had angered many whites by interceding in a controversial disciplinary case involving a black high-school student.

THIS incident was followed by a series of anonymous phone calls to the Wesleyan switchboard warning that bombs had been planted in various places on the campus, including the basement of the Malcolm X House. No bombs have been found, but by now many blacks are convinced there is a white conspiracy afoot to destroy Ujamaa.

Suspicion, in fact, has been increasing on both sides. When police, in response to the bomb scare at the Malcolm X House, limited their search to the basement, they were rebuked by both whites and blacks. The latter wanted the police to find a white bomb; the former, a black arsenal. Neither group doubted that its quarry existed somewhere in the Malcolm X House.

What worries some observers is that the search for guns and bombs precludes the search for understanding. It is clearly too late at Wesleyan for anything but understanding, yet with rare exceptions white students and black students do not even talk to each other. When Worth Hayes first got to Wesleyan he risked an occasional dinner with white friends and resented pressures from his brothers to keep him at "the black table." Nowadays there is no need for pressure; Hayes is content to associate with blacks only.

Similarly, a black artists' exhibition at the Malcolm X House, putatively open to everyone, has attracted few white students. Classroom announcements urging students

to attend have been greeted with snickers from whites who view Malcolm X House less as a gallery than a fortress. "If the white man stays in his cocoon," says Hayes, "he'll never understand the black man."

But cocoons come in several colors at Wesleyan, as they do elsewhere in America. The blacks have their Ujamaa; the white have their centuries-old brotherhood of inherited wealth and power, the same brotherhood that expelled Charles B. Ray from Wesleyan in 1832; and the school's handful of Puerto Rican students have their newly formed Latin Leadership Conference, which specifically excludes Mexican-Americans.

If the analogy with cocoons means anything, it means that sooner or later they must give way to a freer, more mature form of living. That is what Wesleyan has been groping toward since 1965—"an experiment in hope," John Maguire calls it—and if moving ahead seems difficult, the alternative of turning back seems downright disastrous. "I am not discouraged," says Etherington. "We came out of this with a good deal of strength. Both our white students and our black students have a sharper awareness of each other's problems."

In the final analysis, only the students can insure the success of Wesleyan's experiment in hope, and they will not speed the day by giving aid and comfort to the armies of the night.

"It is no longer a choice now between violence and nonviolence," Martin Luther King told a Wesleyan audience at the 1964 commencement exercises. "It is either nonviolence or nonexistence." ■