

SENATE WHITE PAPER

On Monday, May 13, The Student Senate voted its intention to withhold its Constitutional power of financial review in the case of BSO funding. This White Paper will seek to review the history of the negotiations between BSO and the administration; and, in the hope of carrying the issue to the student body at large, will present essays propounding each side of opinion on the issue.

As a way of a history--on May 6 the Black Student Organization presented a list of four demands to President Hicks. The President's response, representing an endorsed document of the Coordinating Committee (a group of administrators, faculty, and two students) was presented to the BSO on May 9. The demands and responses were posted May 10, along with BSO's statement of rejection. A release to Kalamazoo College dated May 9 stated that the members of the BSO "accept the attempt at meeting the demands concerning (1) faculty, administration, and curriculum improvements and (2) visiting lecturers and chapel speakers (demands 2 and 3)." However, they "reject the attempt at meeting the demands concerning (1) BSO financing and (2) the Higher Education Committee proposal, pending further negotiations with the appointed BSO representatives (demands 1 and 4)." The BSO has stated that the very nature of the demands require nothing less than total acceptance.

The BSO has requested a yearly allotment of \$1500.00 to be in no way controlled or reviewed by anyone outside of the organization. This demand will necessitate an alteration of school policy; presumably the Business Office and the Student Body Constitution make implicit the understanding that some organization will review all monies distributed to student organizations, of which the BSO is one. The issue lies in whether the campus community may abdicate its power of review in the case of the BSO.

Underlying the current issue is a more basic question of the definition of a college. At this time there are two alternatives. First, "K" may regard itself as a microcosm of the American scene. In this case, the campus becomes a battleground for national issues, and we assume that our actions and attitudes reflect and effect the country. The BSO issue becomes one of black community against white community involving all aspects of the racial situation. As a second alternative "K" may consider itself an academic community, of and for the students. The dual role of citizen and student and the issues concerning the two roles must be kept separate. As a primary non-voting, non-self-supporting, temporary community, we may logically regard this as a student rather than racial problem --part of campus rather than national affairs.

Accepting the first alternative, the BSO demand should be met--as a continuation of national attitudes and policy. Under the second alternative, however, the demand must be rejected as it now stands for these reasons:

BSO has requested and received recognition as an official campus organization. They should, therefore, be expected to follow outlined procedures, through customary channels. Presently, organizations requesting an allotment from the fund of student fees sends a budget to Student Senate for reviewal. BSO proposed to by-pass Senate, sending their requests directly to the administration, thereby eliminating student control of student money.

Along this same line, current policy is to grant or allot money on the condition that it is not to be donated with any political connection or sent to persons or organization of political involvement. Implied in this statement is the feeling that student fees should be employed in a manner most beneficial to the campus community. Furthermore, this money is paid by parents under the assumption that it will be used for student activities in a sense wider than that limited to black students alone.

In essence then, we are setting a precedent. A group which has closed its membership, closed its meetings and intends to keep the proceedings secret is demanding a yearly donation from the white power structure it rejects. The problem becomes again one of reverse discrimination, an unethical means to an ethical end. Must students be forced to accept these actions under the guise of liberalism and involvement? Is Kalamazoo an extension-typical of the national community or is it an educational community where problems are defined and re-

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solved in the interest of students. The "uniqueness" of the organization is obvious, but is it relevant? We must evaluate the demand for finances not with regard for "blackness" but for the campus community.

The BSO is demanding a total of \$3000.00 from the college. They demand \$600.00 for use at the present time, \$1500.00 for the 1968-1969 school year, and \$900.00 for the use of the Higher Education Committee. The purpose of the Higher Education Committee (demand 4) is "to inform non-white students about higher educational opportunities...\$500.00 will be used to organize and maintain an information center office and file that would record the progress of the committee's endeavors, and finance the in-residence committee members who will travel to other near-by locations performing the duties of the off-campus members." \$50.00 each will be required by off-campus students (approx. 8) to cover correspondence and light traveling expenses. Off-campus members will "establish contacts with non-white students in their area," and "distribute information about higher education requirements."

BSO is demanding that the \$2100.00 come directly from campus funding. This implies that there be no one outside of BSO who would say how or how not the money would be spent. To receive funds without the usual campus organization restrictions is just one aspect of the organization's uniqueness. The purpose of the BSO, as stated in its constitution, shows that it is not solely a campus organization; It is solely a Black, or non-white organization. Can there be any dispute when this point is projected: the black man knows best what and how to accomplish for his fellow black man. (Stanley Nowman stressed this at last Thursday night's chapel.)

This altering of regular channels may be viewed by some as special treatment. Discrimination in this country against the Blacks has gone on for nearly four centuries - it is deeply rooted. This statement has been repeated time and time again but the fact that its reality is not accepted by a majority of the white community is witness to how deeply rooted is our system of inequality. It will therefore take firm, compensatory action to correct this wrong in our society. The Blacks have too long been denied the privilege of first-class citizenship for a few, well-intended words to suddenly make everything right. Since the Blacks were forced into this situation by Whites using unethical means, one should not be overly concerned about using unconventional means to help rectify the situation - especially when many are going to use the excuse that ethical means must be used in an attempt to maintain the status quo.

Noticeably, many of the national questions and arguments are being raised in this issue. The college cannot be considered an isolated community. The problems of the nation and the world around us are very real, and we are a very real part of that nation and world. Neither can the college be a static reflection of general society - it should provide an atmosphere in which various changes and improvements can be experimented with.

Students are people, and thus they reflect the society from which they come. Hopefully, however, we do exhibit a higher level of constructive intellectual activity than most of the rest of society. Thus, we should be able to construct workable solutions to at least some of the many problems that exist in society today. While we are often somewhat estranged from society, we, after leaving school, become more directly involved with the society. And, since we are some of its more intelligent members, we have the greatest opportunity to provide leadership. We engage in the exchange of ideas and in some separation from society to obtain fresh viewpoints; but we cannot relinquish our relationship with society. Intellectual or "academic" pursuits become meaningless if one cannot ultimately relate them to the society in which one lives.

How would the BSO Demands affect the entire Kalamazoo College community? Demand 2 would broaden the academic program "to include adequate emphasis upon the contributions of the non-white peoples through-out the world by increasing the number of non-white administrators and faculty members on this campus." Demand 3 strives to expose K students to more than "the one side of the cultural coin in the united states." Both Demands are in full accordance with the Kalamazoo student's desire for a truly liberal arts education and his search to bring new ideas and dimensions to the campus.

Demand 4 refers to a letter from the Higher Education Committee of BSO which states: "We of the BSO understand that the educational institutions of the United States are not designed to meet the needs of non-whites. We feel that it is necessary for non-whites to unite and supplement the education our people receive. We want to foster an education that will develop a spirituality within our existence--a spirituality that will serve as a premise for the destruction of psychologically demeaning aspects of the educational training non-white people with whom we come in contact are exposed to." It has been stated many times that the history of the Black man has been obscured by our white educational system. Again, this is a reality that has not been accepted by the White community. This has resulted not only in a deprivation of educational fulfillment to the Blacks in

our country, but also in a departure from a more complete history of the world and the United States. Can any educational system afford to overlook the truth in any dimension? The answer to this question will also answer, in part, the question "How would the Demands affect the entire college community?" as it meets the purpose of the BSO as stated in its Constitution: "to learn more about ourselves and relate our experiences to the black community as a whole."

Finally, it should be evident that funding is a critical symbol that emerges as a result of the system. The critical issue is people: what the expectations of people are of themselves and others, and how people respect themselves and others. The system has created the values by which we judge people, but hopefully it has not caused a total stifling of a person's right to his identity. The Demands of the Black Student Organization are a major concern of our entire college community and must not be rejected on the grounds that they deviate from traditional procedures. In such an important matter we cannot place so much emphasis on upholding the traditional means.