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An Old Struggle

The New Negro on Campus by Raymond Wolters

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seems quixotic, since discrimination against women would appear to be a barrier to such recruitment. *The Invisible Woman* is Ms. Abramson's response to such criticism. It is written in the hope of increasing her colleagues' sensitivity to the problems of sex discrimination. The book's commitment to rational persuasion reflects the most admirable aspect of academic tradition. Here indeed is proof—if proof is necessary—of the injustice that deprived Ms. Abramson of her job, and her students of an apparently original, enthusiastic, and admirable teacher.

—Gloria Levitas

GLORIA LEVITAS teaches anthropology at Queens College of the City University of New York and is coeditor with Helen Safa of *Social Problems in Corporate America* (Harper & Row).

An Old Struggle

The New Negro On Campus by Raymond Wolters. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 350 pages, \$15.

Raymond Wolters has written a book that is at once readable, scholarly, and needed. In *The New Negro On Campus* he paints a graceful portrait of the black college and its rites of passage. It is a landscape populated with the usual assortment of fools and villains, do-gooders and nay-sayers. Then, as now, if an angel or hero happened on the scene he was presumed a fool, and if he endured was dubbed a knave.

Black colleges and institutions of higher learning began after the end of the Civil War. They had been created to educate the minds and civilize the instincts of at least a portion of the four million uneducated blacks loosed from slavery without property or prospects and dumped willy-nilly into the American dream. By 1900, 2,000 of them had been trained in the classics and mathematics. However, with the end of Reconstruction, black institutions were made to retreat from this fine beginning.

The South felt that such education was wasted—peacock feathers on a crow. They commissioned studies that proved blacks were happiest when living at subsistence levels and were undisturbed by thoughts of progress. Notions of social equality made blacks unfit for the work God

had ordained as their lot. Moreover, too much education tended to disturb good relations between the races. Philanthropists, the churches, and the government concurred, and the downgrading of black higher education began with the new century.

This downgrading or vocationalization was not all-inclusive but did make its presence felt on most black campuses. In time some of the institutions provided separate and segregated facilities on campus. This was especially damaging to student-teacher relationships, given the fact that the majority of staff was white. As the twenties began, the student population had changed. No longer were they newly freed slaves thankful for small favors and uncritical of administrative policies. Increasingly they were demanding a voice in college affairs. They were also demanding greater black participation at all levels of faculty, administration, and other areas of support. Naturally, their opinions were met with resistance. They were to find that hell hath no fury like that of a savior scorned.

Philosophically, the opposing views of W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington formed the basic dialog of black higher education. Washington was a strict accommodationist. The founder of Tuskegee used this path to the power and prestige afforded by white philanthropy. He said those things that white society wished to hear and so became an excellent example of "the white folk's nigger." He set the pattern, which others have followed, of becoming a leader of his people whose basic endorsement and underwriting comes as the result of white acclamation and publicity.

So it was that Tuskegee became the capital of black America, and business and philanthropy and government consulted Booker T. before any blacks were appointed or promoted. Any black who dared to raise a dissident voice or who threatened the status quo or protested too much the pattern of racial injustice came to know the power Booker T. could exercise against him.

Even DuBois came a cropper when he openly opposed Washington and then asked for government funds to maintain one of his projects. Booker T. was a jealous god who taught blacks to accept what whites were

willing to offer. He taught them the joys of being "humble, patient, hard-working laborers" destined to follow the dictates of their white employers.

DuBois differed from Booker T. in being an elitist, an intellectual gadfly. A product of Fisk who later matriculated at Harvard, DuBois expressed his often sharp-tongued views from his editorial desk at *Crisis*, the house journal of the NAACP. In these days his style if not his content would seem quaint. Yet, no matter how arcane his use of adjectives, his opinions were true to the mark. He was one black Brahmin who knew his past, who knew the soul and potential of his people, and who did not allow his white skin to make any shade of difference in his black life. DuBois lent himself and his talents in every major struggle for ideological latitude, freedom of expression, and pursuit of the educational ideal that swept the black campus in that decade.

Still, none of the gains that did come would have been possible without the manifestation of what Alain Locke was to describe as the New Negro. It would be gratuitous to pretend that blacks of the period were any less inclined than whites to swallow the philosophical bait glorified by the conventional intelligence. Locke was therefore able to say, "The Negro mind reaches out as yet to nothing but American wants, American ideals...." Blacks did not doubt that the white world was moving in the right direction. They only wanted to be part of the movement. Few questioned the destination.

Once again it was the extraordinary force of an ordinary group of black people who wanted the things they saw as ordinary or normal in the everyday lives of whites to be ordinary and normal in their own lives. These were the people who challenged the system, these the ordinary ones.

In the mindless pursuit of happiness, blacks and whites, Americans all, have long been integrated. We must not, therefore, mistake enlightened self-interest for heroism. The New Negro came on the scene wishing, naturally enough, to acquire things material. The campus was the proving ground of a neo-middle-class scuffle for prestige. "They wanted to be doctors and lawyers—doctors mostly—professions which they re-

ferred to as 'rackets.' There was money in them, and they were motivated by the desire to possess, as indeed they put it, yellow money, yellow cars, and yellow women." Strictly as a sentiment, the statement is at one with that of any white American booster—yesterday or today.

The New Negro was obviously not superhuman. He idealized the same tawdry temptations and fragile pretensions that affected the rest of society. More than most he believed in the rightness of America. Therefore, he was heroic in the defense of its ideals. It is the triumphant and age-old story of survival.

—Douglas O'Connor

DOUGLAS O'CONNOR was formerly a dean of Bernard Baruch College of the City University of New York and is currently a free-lance writer based in New York City.

Splits

The Divided Academy: Professors and Politics by Everett Carl Ladd, Jr., and Seymour Martin Lipset. New York: McGraw-Hill, 407 pages, \$17.50.

The Divided Academy, a massive statistical study of academics' political opinions, presents information from more than 60,000 professors who responded to the Carnegie Commission's Survey of Student and Faculty Opinion in 1969 and to the supplementary survey conducted by the authors in 1972. As might be expected, the politics of intellectuals turn out to be consistently more liberal and ideological than those of the general public, whether the issue is Presidential politics, Vietnam, marijuana, or black rights. All of this tends to confirm rather than challenge the usual expectations, but as the title indicates there is also a significant core of conservative opinion on campus. One fifth of the professoriate voted for Goldwater in 1964 and some 45 percent of professors voted for Nixon in 1972, at a time when Republican strategists had written off the campus as a hopelessly liberal enclave.

If the political opinions of the professoriate are predictable, the sources of these opinions, the causes of the divided academy, have some unexpected origins. The class theory of

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