

PBE Black Power Presentation Termed 'A Sobering Experience'

by JEFF CHOKEL

The gap between white and black may not have narrowed, but its existence was clearly demonstrated to first-year students last week as the Business School broke 60 years of tradition to present an all-day Black Power program.

The concentrated program, the first of its kind since the Business School was established in 1908, dramatized the hopes, fears, and frustrations of the black community. Through film presentations, speeches and dialogue, six leading members of that community avoided how it should be in favoring of emphasizing how it is.

SOBERING DAY

For a predominantly white first-year MBA audience generally seeking a way to correct past and present racial injustices, the experience was a sobering one. Most students felt a renewed urgency to help solve the black man's problems, but became even more uncertain about how to do so.

Questions were raised by black militants and moderates alike, but they were left to be answered by the individual. One student seeking direction summed up the feelings of his classmates when he complained at the end of the day, "We don't have anything to hang onto."

If there was indeed nothing plainly visible for the white student to "hang onto," the attitudes of the visitors offered plenty of reasons why the search for something to do to improve the situation should be redoubled.

Leroy Boston, a member of the Boston Black Steering Committee of the United Front, told one section of students, "We want the kinds of freedom that human beings are supposed to have." When questioned how far he was willing to go to get that freedom, he replied, "The formula for survival is survival by any means necessary."

Mr. Boston did not see the chances of survival very much enhanced by working with the white community. "We are a captive nation in a foreignland," he said, "and there's no one to speak for us but us."

NO PATERNALISM

Bertram Lee, a less militant but equally concerned member of the black community who is vice-president of EG&G Roxbury, Inc., indicated that a white businessman will not be able to make his contribution to racial equality as easily as he has in the past.

"We're not denying whites the opportunity to help," Mr. Lee commented, "but we're changing the rules by which you work. No longer will you come in and lead us by the hand in your paternalistic way."

"I don't know where we're going," he continued, "but what blacks are saying is we're going to have more of a piece of the action."

"COLLECT THE FRUIT"

John S. Young, former chairman of the Boston chapter of CORE, expressed a similar viewpoint. "The man who shakes the tree should collect the fruit," he pointed out.

Mr. Young suggested that students could begin helping the black man by "getting involved in the struggle." He recommended that white students join Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and that black students join the Black Panther Party.

This suggestion failed to win much favor with first-year students, but another more general one was offered by George C. Lodge, associate professor at HBS and initiator of the Black Power Day program.

NEED BLACK POWER

"It's more important than ever and increasingly difficult for whites to use their talent and

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Faculty Feature

Kilbridge Sees Need For U

ED. NOTE: The HARBUS has started a series of articles on HBS Faculty involvement in urban action and urban studies. Our first general article summarized what we found to be

a surprising amount of activity among the Faculty. Reader interest in this subject runs high, we have discovered, and so we follow up promptly with this first interview of professors engaged

Lodge Finds Business is Aware

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skill to close the gap," he observed. "Yet to do so requires giving every conceivable support to black enterprise, black movements, and black leaders. In short, black power.

"This is the only route to black confidence and black participation in society."

Professor Lodge, who teaches Section D in PBE, offered some proof that students were becoming more willing to do what they could. He compared this year's reaction to the program with reactions to occasional visits by black power advocates in the past and noted "a deeper concern towards issues." He observed, "The old criteria no longer quite satisfy the students who face increased complexities about questions of purpose."

BUSINESS MORE AWARE

He added that business in general "is much more aware of the size and difficulty of the problems in the ghetto."

Professor Lodge pointed out, however, that black leaders are changing attitudes, too. He added that Bryant Rollins, president of the New Urban League, was more openly militant when he spoke before an HBS class last year.

"This year," he said, "Mr. Rollins was much more concerned with ideology, the value of white society and intellectual academic discourse, and much more pessimistic."

Professor Lodge warned students not to take resignation and a decline in violence as a sign that black people are satisfied.