

Arthur C. McFarland

Archival Audio

Recorded at the Conference on White Racism

held at the University of Notre Dame

20 April, 1969

Citation: University of Notre Dame Archives: **AUND B0391 - R2 - White Racism Conference Panel with Theodore Hesburgh, William Turner, Peter Michelson, Bernard Norling, Arthur McFarland - 1969/0420**

Transcript of Audio Clip

Moderator: Art McFarland.

Arthur McFarland: I just don't know what to say after all that because ... [referencing the previous speaker, a Notre Dame professor, who discussed race by way of meandering, esoteric academic speech].

...Ummm, first of all, I don't have any sociological or literary facts to back my...what I have to say tonight up. But as Brother Turner said, I do have experience. I am from the South and we're now in the North and now experiencing subtle or covert racism, whichever you wish to call it. We're not here to deal with what happened to the Greeks or anybody else outside confines of the United States. But here to deal with what's happening with Black people in America. This is what I was told this conference all about. Well, let me get in my paper.

[Laughter]

It was noted that the Kerner Commission did come up with a cause for racism, for the oppression of black people in this country and it said racial att- The racial attitude and behavior of white Americans

toward Black Americans is basically the cause of the oppression and subjugation of Black people. Racism is ingrained in both the institutional and social structures of this country. Our racist society is perpetuated by racist institutions, i.e. Notre Dame and others. These institutions perpetuate racism through their half benevolence, class stratifications and ideological imposition. Their basic purpose is, in reality, is the protection of the old order, the status quo. They serve to produce programmed whites who have been trained to oppress and exploit Black people and their own poor whites. They have also produced dehumanized Blacks who have been indoctrinated with the idea that assimilation, therefore, integration is the only way to make it in America. But I'm here to tell you that integration is gone. It has failed. It has been tried and has failed Black people.

Blacks are now hip to the fact that integration is just another one of the white man's schemes to preserve his dominance while seducing blacks to give up their identity and to copy the speech, manner, style, dress of whites, and to accept the myths, heroes and historical judgment of white America without reciprocity or without appreciation for or respect for Black experience. The days of the "showcase coon" are over – as quiet as is kept in as loud as I'm gonna say it.

Institutions have defined reality and shape and maimed the minds of Black people. They have produced a race of people who, for 350 years, have denied our history, except that of slavery, or culture, which you stole (that's white folks) and an identity which you view as totally irrelevant. You have taught us that everything Black is irrelevant. You had no– You had us believing that the more classical and the less Black we are, the better person. Instead of doing the boogaloo and the shing-a-ling we had to waltz to be cultured. [Laughter and applause.]

At Notre Dame, as at other institutions, the perspective of white professors produces the racist type attitudes, especially in the field of history. [Laughter and applause] Black people have never produced any "great men." In the field of literature, our writers are recognized as protest writers, and not artists. Our poets have no recognized works that can be termed great. So it is in the field of sociology and psychology. The perspective of whites has served the needs of a racist society.

And to think Notre Dame is a Christian institution, more than can be said of most other institutions. But, you know, Christianity has kept more people in fear, ignorance and suffering because of the church

than because of any other craze in the history of mankind. [Applause] More crimes have been committed in the name of God than in any other political or philosophical doctrine. [Applause] All that is to say even our Christian institutions are tools of the racist.

The Black educated class has finally awakened to the idea that education does not provide a protective shield from the abuses that all Black people suffer. They realize that there is a revolution (though it be mental) and progress in our society. They realize, too, that they have a role to play. They are Black first and their commitment is to Black people. The reality of it all is that if they are not prepared, as the institutions have sought to make them, then they will not fit into the community.

All students are "niggers", i.e. that the establishment treats students much the same as it treats "niggers." The main difference is that Black people are more aware of the shit that's been handed out to us while whites are still asleep in the bed of complacency and apathy. [Applause] But they better wake up before it's too late.

Racism must die, and that means destruction of the racist. We are engaged in a battle to save lives. It is your duty to work in saving your people. White people have had over 350 years to meditate and contemplate, [Laughter] to cease and desist, [Applause] and to chip away their oppression and exploitation of Black people, and with the racist institutions and above all, racist attitudes. Black people are now saying "Honky, your time is up. Dig it?"

[Thunderous applause]