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CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER SPEAKS OUT --- James Farmer, national director of the Congress of Racial Equality, addresses a capacity audience at Bucknell. (See other photos on Page 10.)

Civil Rights Leader Attracts SRO Crowd, Denounces Violence

BY DAVID FELCHER

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A Standing-Room-Only crowd filled the annex of Bucknell's Davis Gymnasium Monday night to hear James Farmer, national director of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), speak on "The Civil Rights Revolution in America."

Farmer, a national leader in the civil rights movement, was brought to the university by the Bucknell Student Forum and the Equal Opportunities Committee. He opened his speech by straightforwardly citing the "the greatest movement in America today is the struggle for equality," and "the Civil Rights Revolution is --- in reality --- a continuation of the basic premise of the American Revolution: to establish the principle of liberty."

He then chronicled the history of minority group struggles for equal recognition, both moral and practical, by referring to the struggle for women's rights, and the labor movement. His comment here was that "the civil rights movement today is where labor was in the 1930's," and he drew analogies to the picketing and sometimes violence of both movements. "The Civil Rights Act is our movement's Wagner Act," he noted.

Bringing his speech up to the present, Farmer gave the history of today's Civil Rights Revolution. He reports three main conditions to be giving impetus to the enormous change in the psychology of the American Negro today:

The first is World War II. The fact that the government gave no heed to color when calling upon volunteers to risk their lives to uphold freedom spurred many Negroes to ask themselves "Why?"

"They were fighting against Master Race theory, and many of them did not know which way to turn their rifles," said Farmer.

The second is increasing education. "Many Negro youngsters are well aware of the power of education in today's world, and as a result, more and more are finishing high school and seeking higher education," Negro college youth are at the center of much civil rights

activity, he commented.

The third, and perhaps most important in the long run in regard to the Negro's changing concept of himself, is the increasingly significant role played by Africa in world affairs. "Many Negroes now assert, where they formerly hid, their blackness. It is becoming fashionable to refer to oneself in many circles as an Afro-American," Farmer pointed out, "The old grinning, scratching, shiftless Uncle Tom image is rapidly vanishing." He indicated a surge of interest in African culture and history.

"Suddenly, a people without a past are finding that they have plenty to be proud of," Farmer asserted. "People are standing taller --- ten feet taller."

Farmer continued by delineating the code of his organization --- non-violence. "We are wholeheartedly dedicated to non-violence at CORE, and the record speaks for itself.

"The most important action we take is political action," he strongly emphasized, "the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party is very significant in this respect. These are ordinary people, not a select group of intellectuals, who have dramatized the new awareness of southern Negroes, and who have shown that they cannot understand why there were not be intimidated any longer."

Inevitably, Farmer came around to discussing the recent riot problem --- last summer in New York, Rochester and Newark, and this summer in Los Angeles.

"I categorically oppose all riots," he stressed, "but I honestly cannot understand why there were none sooner and why there were so few." To elaborate, he contrasted the rising expectations of Negroes all over the country with the nonexistent or at best minimal steps forward in civil liberties.

"There is a growing frustration afoot --- in spite of all this talk about 'Freedom Now,' very few Negroes see any changes around them, and this is especially true in the northern ghetto areas.

"The Civil Rights and Voter Rights Acts spoke to southern Negroes, and still they haven't experienced any improvement of their life condition, and they're going north. But the northern Negro finds himself the first laid-off by automation, and, as a result, the average Negro income is 52 per cent that of whites -- and the gap is widening."

His concluding remarks centered around the issue of responsibility. Farmer asked that the Federal government allot 15-25 billion dollars to help reeducate deprived Negroes as part of the War on Poverty, "It is very much the white man's responsibility, as well as the black man's."

"The greatest crime of all is silence," he concluded. "On this issue there can be no bystanders --- you must take a side."

After the speech there was a stimulating question and answer period, which was followed by a reception in Hunt Hall Living Room which lasted until midnight.

Farmer commented after the speech that "The audience was intelligent and attentive; I was glad to have had this opportunity."