

# ELIMINATE THIS DISCRIMINATION

by George Diefenbach

**Discrimination!**—The word has been shouted so long and loud of late that many are now willing to do anything just to stop its echo. Some feel that the word is a sacred cow and that to bring it to the lips of the masses can do no good. Others feel it suggests a bandwagon fad which will soon pass; still others are completely numb to any effect the word may or might hold to himself and his society.

Many of you remember "discrimination" in connection with much talk and many letters "suggesting" that the admissions department strike from the admission form questions concerning race and religion. I have even heard comment that such an action would "automatically raise the entire university above reproach on the discrimination issue". There have been accusations towards group and individuals alike with the pointed finger again shouting "discrimination"; and there have been suggestions that a statement of Bucknell's policy by someone speaking for the administration could, again automatically, clear the entire campus of these accusations. Finally, there has been feeling that simply by bringing more Negro students to the university we can proudly declare that B. U. is free of prejudice.

Let's not be ridiculous. It's easy to see that the success of any or all of these movements is not in itself an ultimate goal. These are merely steps toward an end, and that end is the elimination of prejudice and discrimination in any of the subtle forms it may take. To expect a realization of this end overnight is equally ridiculous, therefore we can work only toward these component steps. This all is quite a large order and will necessarily take time, but it is necessary to recognize the end before one can believe in or appreciate the means toward that end.

Let's understand, that the purpose of these movements is not to embarrass any individual or group of individuals through "rigged" demonstrations. Likewise, they are not aimed at cornering anyone for the purpose of individual revenge. The worth of removing the photograph and religion clause would show that Bucknell is willing to act officially in taking a step to remove doubt that it has any but the best intentions. A statement of policy in perhaps defining "Christian Tradition" would do even more.

THURSDAY, MARCH 23, 1961.

## ... Discrimination

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How? Before I answer let's consider a few facts.

We must keep in mind that Bucknell is a private institution and that it may, despite the precedent shown by similar universities, run the university as it pleases. It may choose whom it wishes to accept and whom it wishes not to allow through its doors. With some exceptions, it must answer to no one outside of itself. We may here ask ourselves this question: **Are There Any Reasons Why Bucknell Should NOT Discriminate** even if it did so desire?

To answer this we need only inspect the function of a university even as defined in the statement of objectives from the Bucknell catalog (page 8. It defines Bucknell as "committed . . . to provide means and opportunity for the intellectual development of (the student)." It goes on to state that "Bucknell is dedicated to the cause of free and responsible inquiry and to seeking the truth wherever it may be found." Now I ask, how would it be possible for one to go about seeking the truth within an environment characterized by ignorant prejudice? Certainly it is obvious we have a paradox. If it is not impossible, it is at best very awkward and not the least conducive to the "intellectual development" of a student within the university. Therefore, it is easy to see that the role of a university demands a practice of non-discrimination which morally overrides its rights

With this stipulation defined we may then ask: **Is There Discrimination At Bucknell?** At this point we're repeating a question which some of you have already considered. One member of the Bucknell family has taken the time and effort to list numerous factual reasons why he believes there is no discrimination here. His reasons are good and I truly agree with him—there is no discrimination—to a defining limit of the word. Beyond this, however, I believe discrimination exists. Perhaps we should call it **subtle** discrimination for it is nothing which can be pinpointed in the active form; it is, likewise, nothing which can be cured by simply revising the admissions policy, or stating the university policy, or by bringing more negroes to the Bucknell campus. It is, rather, an **atmosphere** which seems to hover over the campus, an atmosphere composed of a fear to act because logic and truth are overshadowed by ignorance of the facts; an atmosphere of innate prejudices—again a fault of ignorance; an atmosphere of general complacency which is a plague in itself. No one can plead complete innocence in any of these areas; but still we can act to try to eradicate this atmosphere and therefore discrimination itself.

If each would make the effort to realize and try to correct his own attitude of prejudice, a big step would be taken toward restoring "Christian Tradition" to its original definition. "What's the connection?", you may ask. How could the university define the phrase as applied to their objectives when they have no assurance that this definition would be enforced by the members of the Bucknell family? How can they state a policy of non-discrimination knowing discrimination exists in the dorms and classrooms—subtle discrimination? How can we even invite Negro students here where it is not certain that they will be accepted into the Bucknell social circle?

The movements asking action from the administration must be accompanied by action from the students and faculty. Declare how you feel! Know why you feel the way you do. Then act according to your beliefs. Let's get busy, I'm also tired of hearing this word "discrimination".