

# Martin Jolts Campus With Last Hour Talk

by Don Braun

Under the rather thin cover of "his last hour on Earth," Dr. Martin, Professor of Philosophy at Bucknell, spoke out last Thursday night against segregation at the University. His lecture, which was delivered in Vaughan Literature Auditorium and drew a huge crowd of interested, sociable or otherwise curious students, was the first in a projected series of faculty "Last Hour Lectures" in which each professor will theoretically unburden himself of his most urgent reflections during his supposed last hour on the Earth.

## Full House

Speaking before a house crammed with people sitting in the aisles and standing in the exits, Prof. Martin struck directly at fraternities and sororities as the "heart of the issue" of discrimination against Negroes and Jews at Bucknell. Prof. Martin was not crusading for these two groups; the fact is simply that they are the two largest American minority groups applying to Bucknell (and other universities) today. Starting with the proposition that Bucknell is a fraternity-oriented school, Dr. Martin made it clear that qualified Negroes are extremely reluctant to come here. They discover easily beforehand that they will not be comfortable in the social atmosphere Bucknell provides.

The reasoning behind this truth is as simple as the truth itself. Since this is a fraternity school, Bucknell provides literally no social outlets for Negroes, who are only rarely accepted into fraternities and sororities. This automatic exclusion of Negroes from University social functions is not, however, an immutable, inevitable result of the mere existence of fraternity organizations. To add to Prof. Martin's argument it is also a result of the social inadequacies of the entire university: specifically, the non-existence of a student union.

## Bitter Truth

Dr. Martin added a second truth; bitter, and perhaps more stinging to human feelings than anything else in this controversy. Negroes tend to feel even more uncomfortable here, knowing that they are looked upon as "symbols" of the "liberality" of this institution. **Sure we have Negroes at Bucknell; look around real hard, you'll find a couple.**

It is justifiably necessary to find out who is to blame for the discriminatory practices of fraternities and sororities. In the majority of cases (and this leaves a few percentage points wide open) fraternity chapters and individual members are not to blame, Dr. Martin believes. It is, he said, the national offices, even though they may have made the gesture of abolishing certain clauses from national charters, which force chapter houses to exclude Negroes, or Jews or any other

group undesirable to the national officers.

This point was emphasized constantly by Prof. Martin, and if correctly interpreted, is considered by him to be the single most important factor in racial discrimination at Bucknell University.

How to bring Negroes to Bucknell? Dr. Martin has high hopes and plenty of plans for this. He devoted approximately the first ten minutes of his lecture to an explanation of an informal committee which he has set up with several other faculty members for the express purpose of integrating this campus. The "Martin Committee" has made three main proposals: (1) efforts be made by the SFC to improve the social atmosphere; (2) establishment of a number of scholarships designed specifically for Negroes; (3) raising of funds for these scholarships.

## Social Over Scholastic

Dr. Martin strongly emphasized the need for such scholarships, but this suggestion appeared second in importance to the improvement of the social attitudes and atmosphere at Bucknell.

This change of atmosphere could be accomplished in a number of ways, Dr. Martin suggested. He felt, however, that it is of the greatest importance for students to "keep at" fraternities and sororities to admit Negroes. Difficulty in accomplishing this stems from pressure from the chapter's national organizations.

Dr. Martin cited as an example an unnamed sorority at Bucknell which this semester pledged a Negro and subsequently received numerous phone calls from the national office, which had some free advice to offer.

Dr. Martin had his own advice to offer on this account. Sororities or fraternities in similar situations should attempt to hold sincere discussions with their national officers for the purpose of obtaining of-

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## ... Martin Lecture

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ficial sanction to pledge particular persons, or more ideally, to change the national's point of view. Should this fail, however, the chapter should break its national affiliation and become a local organization. What usually happens instead, Prof. Martin said, is that a few members withdraw from the chapter, but the majority remain.

### Scholarships Needed Now

Further outlining his plan, Dr. Martin strongly advised that scholarships for Negroes be established soon, hopefully guaranteeing aid in some amount for four years. His feeling is that even if the social situation is improved at Bucknell, there must still be additional incentive for Negroes to apply here. More than existing merely as an incentive, scholarship would be necessary aids to many Negroes whose families could not otherwise provide for college educations.

Dr. Martin made two major money raising suggestions: (1) the present senior class (and possibly future ones) could leave a sum of money to the Betty Ann Quinn Scholarship (Bucknell's only fund at present for Negro students); (2) Davis Gym skits, might be re-established as fund raising functions.

After speaking for approximately one-hour Dr. Martin opened what turned to be an illuminating and often humorous question and answer session.

### Lewisburg Segregated

Stepping away from the microphone, Prof. Martin traded ideas and comments with students brave enough to stand up in the middle of the throng and make themselves heard. In answer to a question concerning the effect of a segregated Lewisburg upon the campus, Prof. Martin replied that "Lewisburg is almost as segregated as Bucknell," but he held out hope that the problem would eventually be resolved. Mike Rudell, SFC President, asked how it would be possible to prove to the public that the campus "as a whole" had been improved socially.

Dr. Martin: "A hole in the ground?"

When the auditorium had quieted down, Dr. Martin stated that Bucknell had to "catch up with the world" in integrating with the Negro community. He outlined briefly how Bucknell might come in contact with Negro colleges.

Near the end of the session, a very sincere student registered a well-taken complaint. He felt that Dr. Martin's program for Bucknell, however informal, would make Negroes feel as uncomfortable, if not more so, than they do now. Thus, the University would be practicing "reverse discrimination," by "packing" the school with Negroes. They would feel, as the student put it, more like Ameri-

can Negroes instead of Negro Americans.

### Unconscious Segregation

Dr. Martin defined the parallel point of view of whites, that "if you're conscious of a Negro, you haven't made it, really." Consciousness and conspicuousness might be felt for some time by both sides respectively, Prof. Martin conceded, but by the time 200 Negroes had become a part of this college community, the two feelings should have all but ceased to exist. Perhaps by then Bucknell will conform more closely to Dr. Martin's directive, stated early in his speech, that whites should regard Negroes as individuals, not as stereotyped members of a class; that men should regard men as men.

"The Last Hour" ended 20 minutes overtime, understandable from the interest it generated. Future "Hours" will probably do as well, but there is some reason to believe that they may become "sounding off" points for professors, rather than hours of basic philosophy or There-Is-Still-Time-Brother-moralizing. This is fine, provided that the issues raised are as important as Dr. Martin's.

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