

Panel accuses education of institutional racism

By PATTI MINTON
Of the Emerald

"If you loot one store and burn two, how many do you have left?" Jokingly, Nathan Hare, editor of Black Scholar and former director of Black Studies at San Francisco State, proposed this question as an ideal one for a relevant and non-racist elementary math class.

Hare was one of seven panelists who discussed "Racism and Education" yesterday morning at the ASUO-sponsored Racism Symposium.

Also on the panel were Harry Edwards, assistant Professor of sociology at the University of California at Berkeley, Art Pearl, professor of education at the University, Dennis Banks of the Native American Indian Movement, Brown Berets Prime Minister David Sanchez and Bob Morales, student representative for the High School Equivalency Program (HEP).

Edwards opened discussion by accusing the educational system of preparing persons solely for jobs. "The richest schools in any university are Medical and Business," he pointed out.

He emphasized that the focus of education must change from "making a living to learning to live together."

"Dow Chemical, General Motors and DuPont are going to have to put money into other types of programs," he said. "Only the technically skilled are prepared, and some of them are catching hell," he added, referring to the aerospace industry.

Dennis Banks continued by saying "Education has failed miserably with the Indian student. It is destroying Indian students' minds at a very early age."

"I have failed to see where the system has told the truth," he added. "Education is an institution which prevents self-determination—at this point it must change or be destroyed."

Banks related his experiences in Bureau of Indian Affairs schools and remarked, "Somewhere along the line I was taught to be ashamed of my own heritage. I was compelled to hate my own people," he said.

Banks characterized the American government as "blind and deaf."

"What the government cannot commit itself to do is end racism," he commented. Like all the panel members, Banks agreed with Edwards' statement that education's focus is toward more and better jobs, more money and better hours. All asserted that the educational system must change.

Bob Morales called education an "intellectualized version of racism."

He suggested killing all government funded programs at the University and starting a third world. He also recommended having a one-year moratorium on education, six months of which would be spent letting the student catch up and six months of which would be devoted to dealing exclusively with people of all colors.

Banks summed up the discussion on a hopeful note. "Through sensitive universities, some answers (for racism) can come about."

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Through the educational process, students are "forced to learn that Africa is a backward nation," said Banks. But, he added, the difference between the U.S. and Africa is that African 'reservations' are where they keep animals, and here they are set up for people. I would seriously question as to which is the backward nation," he said.

Calling for minorities to fight against oppression, he said "Blacks, Reds and Chicanos have fully realized that to seize the opportunity we must seize total control of our communities and we must not stop fighting."

Banks said the fight must continue until a Black, a Mexican American and an Indian have each been elected to the presidency of the United States.

However, Banks emphasized that he didn't want any part of a nation that condones racial discrimination. "We were the first people here, but are the last citizens," he said.

Calling the audience from the auditorium bleachers to the floor close to the mikes, Benton began saying "You, who are sitting here on the floor, are demonstrating what the Indian people have been trying to say to invaders—'Walk with me and I will walk with you.'"

"This nation was built on equality, justice, freedom for all. But, do we have it? We've never had it. But, we can, if we sit and work together like now," he said.

However, the present educational system hasn't taught Whites much about Indians, said Benton. "You've been living on our land for 350 years and still don't know anything about us."

Whenever Whites go to a reservation they want to talk with Indians, eat with them, and "put on a little beadwork. But you know what they do at night? They go to the nearest motel. They won't live with us," he said.

"When the white man came here he was running from oppression—he was looking for

freedom, but didn't give it," he said.

Benton, concluding with a "prayer" thanking the White man's god for oppressors, told the audience, "When you leave here don't walk by the Blacks like you don't know them; don't walk by the Chicanos like they're nothing; don't look at the Indian's like they're nobody, because you're sitting on their land."

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