

Racial controversy at Sir George eases as black leaves campus

MONTREAL (CUPI-MDQS) — Half a year of racial controversy and student politicking at Sir George Williams University ended suddenly last week when Ken Bentley, ex-president of the disbanded student association, dropped charges of racism against the administration.

The black student leader also announced that he would return to his home in Guyana within two days.

Bentley's decision was prompted by a clipping from a Montreal Star article on his last press conference, which he received in the mail Feb. 2.

The clipping was marked with numerous racist threats. "You black bastard, you stink. Get the hell out of this white country," read the blue-ink scrawls.

"I'm shattered," says Bentley. "I'm going through the system and still being threatened."

Since his election last March, Bentley has been in constant conflict with the Sir George administration and the students' legislative council.

Attacks on his budget and other financial matters plagued his executive during the summer months. In September, the council passed a vote of non-confidence in him. At the end of the month, Bentley's failure to meet the academic standards set for the president by the constitution forced him to resign.

Three days later, the board of governors abolished the council and the constitution, placing the students' association in trusteeship under which it still remains.

Throughout the months of conflict that followed, Bentley received racist threats and warnings. He was assaulted once.

Two weeks ago, Bentley called a press conference to outline "some of the racist administrative ploys", used against himself and the student council, which he hoped to expose shortly in court.

He claimed he had several documents which would incriminate numerous people in an "excellent plan to rid the students' association of Bentley." One report purportedly reveals that the white executive vice-president was to receive "a splendid recommendation to get into law school" if he helped to dump Bentley.

"Today," declared Bentley, "the principal views a black student as a potential threat to the welfare and good name of this university."

"A black president is not allowed the same privileges as a white president," he continued, noting that after his resignation he had not been allowed to pay tuition fees while a

white president did it five years ago.

Bentley also pointed out that his financial difficulties in bringing his

case to court would be compounded by the university's attempt to put off the trial "for two more years".

The whole court issue was dropped last week, however, as Bentley decided to return home.

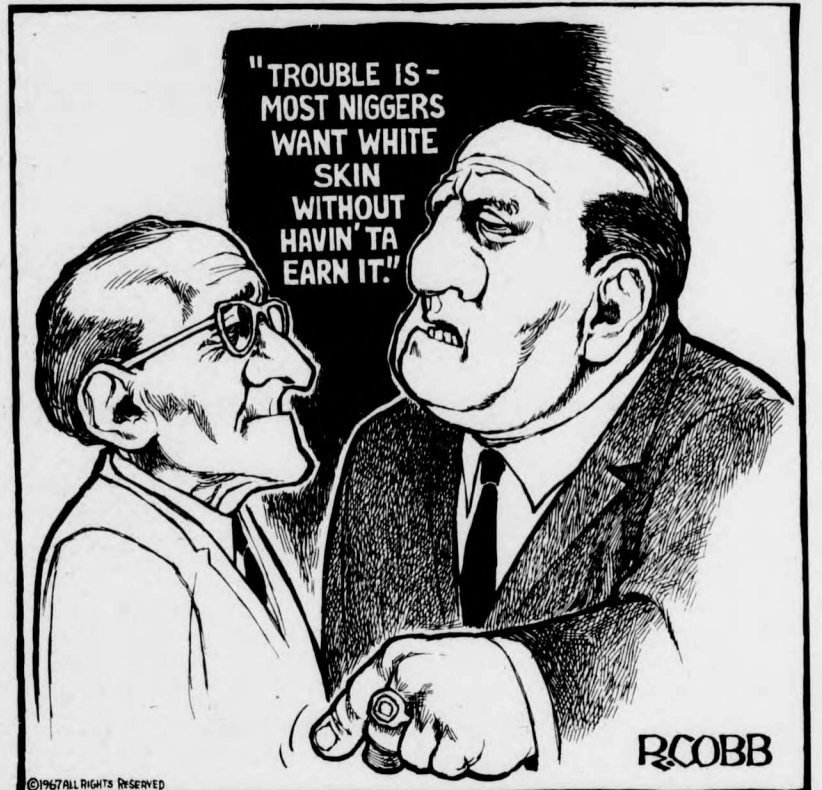
At that time he expressed his bewilderment at the continuance of the racist threats even after he had opted for "the due process of law".

"I got screwed. I'm going through the system. What the hell are they scared of? I'm not mobilizing people and telling them 'burn, burn, burn'. Maybe that's what should have been done. That's the only thing they understand."

What Sir George will do with its student politics in the future is not yet clear, but the issue of racism is far from over.

During the Bentley crisis, ugly reminders of the computer affair of 1969 resurfaced with the trial of black militant Martin Bracey and two former Sir George students.

Throughout the trial the defendants, supporters of Le Parti Communiste du Quebec (Marxist-Leniniste), refused to recognize the validity of the "bourgeois courts".



"This is a racist and a fascist court. There is no intention of seeking truth from facts," declared one of the defendants who charged that the courts were only sup-

pressing the students' attempts to fight racism at Sir George.

Martin Bracey was sentenced to five years, plus two and a half years for contempt of court.

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