

The black Students at Michigan State would like to inform white students at Michigan State University that the occupation of Wilson's cafeteria was a necessary move. Black Students did not occupy Wilson with the intention of inconveniencing any white students. However, black Students cannot tolerate racist action any longer. White students shouldn't either. Therefore read the issues involved before you make any value judgements. Then give us your support in what ever manner you deem necessary.

Caution: Do not let any racist individuals lead you to believe that Black Students are attacking white students. Although many white students will have to eat in other halls, black students must remain in Wilson until the University resolves this situation. It is the white ruling class who must be held responsible by both Black and white students.

TO INFORM THE WHITE STUDENT BODY

The Black students at Michigan State University will occupy Wilson Cafeteria until an open session can be structured for 3:00 Thursday, May 1, 1969. The occupation of Wilson cafeteria took place after the Black Students' Alliance was contacted about the harassment of five Black Employees in Wilson's food Service Department by the managers at Wilson.

The Black Workers harassed Were:

1. Carolyn Hatcher
2. John Williams
3. Joleen Shane
4. Wilma Phelps
5. Roxie Triplett

The managers are: Joe Tranthan
Elaine Mischler

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THE CASE AT HAND

Carolyn Hatcher - Salad woman - was hired from O.J.T., Joel Ferguson helped her get the job. On 2 occasions she has been called in by Joe Tranthan, Food manager and has had threats raised about her job. Tranthan stated that she is working below standards. However, she feels she is doing a good job, so much, that she has worked 2 days all by herself when other girls have been off. It is evident that management has shown preferential treatment among certain staff members when they are assigned "days off". No definite day given for Carolyn, who is the sole support of 6 children. She cannot plan a business activity day, because of the uncertainties which exist. Tranthan is recognized as a liar, a two-faced, double-dealing, coniving individual who constantly holds the threat and fear of the job over black employees. He has suggested that Carolyn transfer to the Custodial staff, but white employees whose work performance does not measure up to Carolyn's are over-looked.

Noreen Reoser - white - threw a knife at a supervisor 2 years ago and recently spit on a supervisor and called him a pig, and she still works in the salad department. Carolyn's 6 month probation will soon be up May 15th and Tranthan said he would have the last word. Joe Tranthan is the problem, for he antagonizes and constantly pits staff members against one another. He does not have the trust of staff for "when he pats you on the back - he's got a knife in his hand." I see this clearly as a racist thing and something is going to be done about it.

Carolyn is dedicated to her job, and even when she strained her wrist and back lifting crates of lettuce, she did not go home.

Joleen Shane - Supports 2 children and comes from O.J.T., has worked 3 years for the university! Miss Elaine Mischler - mgr. Wilson Cafeteria refuses to hear staff members out and gives them no opportunity or self expression - very authoritarian. Joleen accused Miss Mischler of being prejudiced against blacks and she acknowledged it.

Nana Stinson - bake shope (white) swore at her and this is not to be taken lightly in the future. Nana is somewhat unstable (mentally).

Wilma Phelps (white) is supportive of black people and is fed up with their treatment at Wilson. She has to support a boy and her job is threatened by Tranthan. She was recently disciplined for refusing to do work in a specified manner. They refuse to give her a hearing and gave her 4 days off without pay. I recommend that this sanction be removed from her record because of the racist attitude that prevails in Wilson.

Roxey Triplett - Cook - Wilson Hall. This Black woman has been the target for much abuse during the 7 years of her employment at M.S.U. She was misused. She went on pregnancy leave, and when she came back she had to start at the lowest pay rate after having 2 years of service. Taylor Groves cook supervisor is constantly gossiping and causing friction among black staff and is always critical of their output. White administrators in Wilson evidently are operating under an old stereotype that Negroes (Black) are lazy, happy-go-lucky people. Taylor Groves "speaks with a forked tongue" and is a man of many faces. He too, pits Blacks against Blacks by gossiping about them -running them down. He seems to me to be somewhat unstable!

Emily Smith (White) Line Supervisor wanted to have a meeting to resolve these issues. She wrote a paper supporting Carolyn-- Where is this paper? What did it entail?

Virginia Miller (White) is an instigator for Joe. She gets things started and is always threatening to pull people's cards. She is too authority oriented to "supervise".

John Williams (Black freight elevator operator) threatened by Jim Strickland who said he would "kick him in his ass". Jim denied this but Joe Thranthan heard him but there is no doubt in my mind he will support Jim. Another example of white attitudes about blacks.

It is evident that the following white supervisory personnel consisting of: Jim Strakloy, Elaine Mischler, Joe Tranthan have shown definite tendencies of racism in the above cases. Management needs to look seriously at this problem. No one should have to live in fear of a job. I am recommending that Management make a concerted effort to cease and desist from these practices and further propose that they open positions for Black supervisors in the kitchen and diningroom, and reception areas in our dorms. Also, open job opportunities for black students

Don E. Coleman

DEC/SJM:jdwr

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Open Letter to the University Community

The East Wilson Hall General Council, after extensive consultation with the men of East Wilson, finds it essential to express the opinions of the majority of the residents concerning recent events in our hall. At this time, we make few definitive statements; we ask many questions. The hard fact is that neither we, nor the men we represent know what happened in Wilson Hall. The hearing of April 29 was, as we understood it, designed to determine what happened; the committee that made that determination has announced recommendations, but not findings. Conflicting reports are rampant. We wish to announce our position on those few things we know, and request answers about the many things we do not know.

1. The Council expresses its sincere appreciation of the efforts of President Adams and the other University administrators to resolve the situation in Wilson Hall. These men spent long hours in Wilson talking to students; their obviously sincere desire to understand the position of all parties did much to reduce tensions.

2. The Council wishes to thank the management personnel and residents of Case, Holden and Wonders Halls for their efficient and courteous service to Wilson residents. Monday night in particular, these people reacted remarkably well on very short notice. We apologize for the actions of a few Wilson students who took

advantage of the situation to eat the same meal at each of three halls.

3. The Council unanimously re-affirms its position of a year ago endorsing the philosophy of the Black Students Alliance and the specific indictments of University practices made at that time. Copies of this statement are available. We firmly support disciplinary action against, or termination of, University personnel who have engaged in demonstrably racist practices.

4. The Council remains unenlightened concerning the degree of racism in Wilson cafeteria. Many residents of East Wilson Hall have indicated a reluctance to accept the recommendations of the Committee as entirely valid, because they are unaware of the factual findings on which those recommendations are based.

Mrs. Hatcher, Mrs. Shane, Mrs. Triplett and Mrs. Phelps, made certain statements; Mr. Trantham and Miss Mishler denied those statements. The vast majority of East Wilson residents have not worked in the kitchen and have no way to judge these statements except their predisposition to believe one side or the other. East Wilson residents looked to the Committee to pronounce judgment on these issues; the Committee chose only to make recommendations. The Committee's recommendations would be better accepted by East Wilson residents if the Committee made public the factual findings upon which its recommendations are based. In particular, we request of the Committee:

- a. Its findings on each allegation in the seven specific charges.
- b. Its general findings on the extent of racism in the Wilson Cafeteria.

5. The Council recognized the right of demonstration, and indeed, at times the necessity of demonstrations. However, we believe that as a general rule, demonstrations should be designed so as not to penalize third party bystanders, e.g. - students who were unaware of any racist practices by managers they did not hire and were not in position to observe at work. Nonetheless, extreme situations may sometimes justify somewhat more extreme solutions. Men in the hall are asking if this was such a situation. We recognize the deep frustration that can build up in the face of repeatedly unsuccessful efforts to eradicate racism in an institutions. We are aware of the fate of last spring's requests - while some progress has been made, several of those requests are sputtering in tokenism, or are buried in committee files. In short, while we are apposed in principle to such tactics as the seizure, we recognize the possibility that no other recourse was available. We must ask the Committee for its factual findings: To what extent were other channels utilized, exhausted, or demonstrably ineffective?

6. The Council relays a number of questions which East Wilson residents have raised concerning the hearing procedures. The hearing of April 29 involved on one hand the source of livelihood for several employees and their children; on the other, the careers of two administrators. A hearing of this significance should be conducted with the utmost concern for legitimacy and for fair play on both sides. East Wilson residents would more readily accept the validity of the Committee's recommendations if answers were available to the following questions:

To President Adams:

On what basis were the Committee members chosen?

To Co-Chairman Dickerson and Vance:

- a. Was the effectiveness of the hearing affected by the loose structure and informal atmosphere?
- b. Was the effectiveness of the hearing affected by the short notice to all participants?
- c. Why were other employees not called as witnesses to help illuminate the contradictions between the testimony of the two sides?

To the Committee:

- a. Was there information not brought out at the hearing that was considered in reaching the Committee's recommendations?
- b. Why were the views of Wilson residents not sought and considered by the Committee?

To Mr. Coleman:

Please elaborate publicly on the conclusions and statements in your testimony at the hearing.

7. The Council requests that Information Services and State News publicly clarify the lack of damages to the Wilson Cafeteria. It appears to the Council, upon inspection of the cafeteria and kitchen, that some of the media have seriously distorted the extent of damage.

8. The Council requests that Management inform the men of East Wilson of Miss Mishler's and Mr. Trantham's new assignments.

9. The Council expresses its concern over statements such as those made by Dr. Greene that, "Where racism is found in a component of this University, we will close that component down." Our concern is not with the sentiment expressed, but with its acceptance within the university community. We sincerely hope that each component of the University, especially each individual, will honestly evaluate its actions and, more important, its attitudes with regard to race relations.

We hope that the dialogue resulting from this particular situation will serve to open channels so that no individual need ever again consider it necessary to shut a component down.