The Colleges In Crisis

PART III

Jones state of affairs is one of transition

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"As we describe, we bring into being."

In the light of this statement, I would like to discuss the state of affairs in Jones to be one of transition, rather than of crisis. We are concerned with the direction that we are headed and the way in which we are going to get there rather than with a complete re-definition or abolition of the College.

As was discussed at a recent College meeting, a structure for the College has been created, but we are now at the point when it is necessary to go beyond the structure itself, to make the College more than a mere residential unit.

Structure Exists
During the first formative years, it was at least expedient, if not necessary, to have few active and participating members, and they did their job well. The structure exists, but now we are faced with the question of the requirement for informed individual participation of all members of the College.

At the meeting, the members of Jones were asked if they were willing to make such a commitment of informed participation, and if so, to what extent and in what ways. Or on the other hand, if not, why not and what were the alternatives.

Not Like Graham
Unlike Billy Graham, no one had to leave her seat to make her Commitment to College and no pledge cards were passed among the assemblage but a sincere concern was there just the same.

At first, girls asked for definitions: why the meeting, who thought something was wrong, and what did they think was wrong; but then a subtle change occurred in the kinds of things being said.

Girls started volunteering definitions of what the college is and what it should be and somehow the answers began centering around the idea that there is no such thing as a college, there is nothing there to be in crisis, or to endure, or to be abolished. What was there were the feelings and interests and awareness of 170 girls who were willing to give and expecting to receive a tremendous variety of experiences from each other as a collective unit.

Become ‘We’
The officers were no longer martyrs who carried the burden of enlightenment and entertainment on their shoulder. The girls were no longer uninformed, ignorant insurgents. The group had suddenly become "we" rather than "we" and "they."

Residence rules, for at least that moment, became a matter of personal responsibility, rather than obstacles to be gotten around. After the meeting was adjourned, people sat around in groups and talked.

Ulcers Shared
What happened at that meeting? Certainly nothing concrete was accomplished insofar as speaker programs, dances or tutoring programs. But there was a change, a transition from a College which was the ulcer of the Cabinet and the Master to one which is everybody's ulcer.

The meeting was not the transition, but was merely symptomatic of a change. This change in attitude I think must precede any legislative re-definition of the Colleges by either the Colleges themselves, or by See OPPENHEIM on Page 6
(Continued from Page 3) the Administration. The job is not completed. It’s barely started, but at least we seem to be moving in the right direction.

This need was our major problem, but we’ll have other ones because a College isn’t a static creation but a group of individuals (girls, even) whose membership changes from year to year and whose demands change from day to day, so an effective college system will always be in a state of transition.