pride never seen as keys to solving minority problems

by william haney

thunder reporter

negroes and mexican-american students have been answering the challenges put by their brothers all over the country, and are beginning to over-come centuries-old patterns of sub-mission, to take pride in their traditions, and to assert their collective power to compel solutions to the problems of discrimination.

this is the clear message that emerged from monday's marathon teach-in on minority problems in houston, the first teach-in ever held at rice.

the teach-in, organized by an informal group of rice students including peter holdings, put bryan, le schneider, and chris geyer, was a far-ranging and sometimes free-wheeling exploration of the attitudes of minority groups in houston, the problems that face them, and what is being done locally to solve these problems.

intended to stimulate interest among the rice community in the problems of race and poverty in this area, the teach-in drew crowds ranging from hundreds for parts of the afternoon session to almost the capacity of the chemistry lecture hall at the evening session. about half the audience was from rice.

self-identity

a recurring theme, not only of the speakers and panelists but of audience members who spoke and asked questions from the floor, was the lack of self-identity of members of minority groups.

theying him away from his native culture in africa and maintaining him in a position of ignorance and inferiority in this country has deprived the negro of his past and family, according to the reverend earl allen, director of the wesley foundation at texas southern university.

asserting that 99 per cent of all whites really think that negroes are inferior, dean kenneth tallie of the tsu law school said that too many negroes have brought the idea, actor oliver o'connor, of the alley, spoke of the "ghetto mentality" of minority groups who are "welfare poor" from not standing on their own feet.

foster pride

the black power movement has some merit in fostering pride in blackness and a sense of purpose, said dean tallie, adding that he considered the movement a tactical mistake because of american prejudices against orientations power-seeking.

judge alfred hernandez, national president of the league of united latin american citizens (lulac), said that a major concern among his fellow mexican-americans is to overcome the damage to their self-respect caused by the stigma of "mes-

this, by means of emphasizing their mexican cultural heritage and becoming fluent in spanish (as distinguished from the tex-

mex argot spoken by most mexican-americans), as well as english.

spirited exchange

afternoon and evening panels considered the problems of education, housing, employment, and the power structure. the most spirited moments of the day occurred when c.o. mann, a john birch society coordinator for the free-speech area including texas, spoke on the education panel.

his assertion that there is no such thing as a group prob-

lem, because only individuals can have problems, and that the
government should not interfere because "government is com-
mision," was met with such fury that panelists believe in force," pecked sharp reactions from members of the audience.

generally, the other panelists and participants with the moderation, tsu professor of education earl rand, that the education gap in houston is not being closed; that money alone can accomplish little; and that there must be a reorganization of the way of matching teachers with pupils, and pupils with each other.

housing

members of the housing panel split on the question of open housing laws, but all seemed to agree with oliver o'connor's statement of the need for bet-

ter housing for minority groups.

shum housing is a lucrative field for those who want to make a lot of money without regard to the method, because, as vsta volunteer waring fitzke, speaking from the audi-

cences, pointed out, nothing is accomplished in the property; the rent is almost clear profit for the landlord.

panelist gordon nelson, of the houston apartment owners' association, suggested that the problem of low cost housing could be partially met if the fha would turn over to the houston housing authority all the repossessed apartment units in houston, to be used for sub-

sidized housing. until negroes rid themselves of their "ghetto mentality," however, said o'connor, any new housing will merely become "instant slums.

employment

in the field of employment, the need for programs to prepare negroes and other mi-

norities to fill jobs from which their inferior educations and de-

prive backgrounds would other-

wise bar them, and an end to discriminatory hiring practices.

according to gus taylor, personnel director for the office of economic opportunity, the major barrier to the latter objective is the labor unions, which often have the bargaining-

rights for industries and are resistant to open their ranks to negroes.

all the panelists agreed that the current tight labor market makes the job situation less severe than it would otherwise be.

Growing Power

the final panel, on the power structure, gave evidence of the growing consciousness among members of minority groups of their own power, and their growing determination to use it. the presence on the panel of newly elected sncc chairman curtis graves, a negro and lauro hernandez, a latinx american, were mute testimony to this fact.

they cited the recent march on austin in demand of a state minimum wage law. o'connor said the white backlash is a sign of the effectiveness of the minority's new exercise of power, but "you can't have a social revolution without stepping on some toes.

benighted school board

the question that hung over all the speakers and panel was that of watts—could it happen here? rep. graves described the situation as a "sleeping hand grenade" that could go off at any time.

earlier, dean tallie had said that if houston became a watts it would be because of the obstructionist policies of that benighted, outrageous school board," which he said