

Dave Kitts “John Brown Society Forms” – Vol. II No. 11 pg. 9, May 13, 1969

(Editor's note: The following article, an analysis by a John Brown Society member, is concerned with one of the most important developments to recently occur at Ball state. The formation of the Society is one of few attempts of the radical/liberal community to face the issues of racism and black self-determination in a viable, meaningful manner.)

The John Brown Society is a group' of people dedicated to work, truth, and black liberation. Although it has numerous functions, the two most important are (1.) to institute a continuing discussion of the nature, meaning and goals of the black liberation movement on college campuses and (2.) to act as a reconstructionary arm of the black liberation movement on college campuses and Black Student Union in terms of physical support, polemic aid, finances, facilities, communication, and propagandizing. The ultimate goal of the John Brown Society is to help create a society where different races of people can exist harmoniously in TOTAL equality.

Education of whites about the nature, meaning, and goal of the black liberation movement may seem trivial but, the success that the John Brown Society and similar organizations have with this function could very well determine whether America has a peaceful revolution or a bloodbath in the next three to five years; maybe even sooner. It is a common fear of white people that the black people will run the country if black liberation is achieved. This false fear has caused a noticeable backlash "from individual white people. If the John Brown Society can convince the individuals of the white society that these fears have been created by the mass media of the power elite then it seems very likely that change will come peacefully. On the other hand, if the John Brown Society fails to convince the whites that the lower and middle class white society has been used by a ruling class of individuals to maintain the status of the power elite, then America will be painted red with blood from a guerrilla war which will either destroy or permanently damage both white and black societies in America. The black people have decided to make themselves free; it is now the white people's choice whether or not the black people will have to resort to violence to achieve black liberation.

The second function is noteworthy because it involves a technique which is relatively new in American politics. This technique, a coalition between completely black forces and predominately white forces, is being practiced now by black students and SDS on college campuses. In a coalition such as this the black students instigate change in university police, but, have available the extra resources of the white coalitionary force whenever necessary. The main difference between the white forces is that SDS is an independent arm with its own dynamic and goals, whereas, the John Brown Society is a coordinate arm of the Black Student Union with black liberation as its only goal. (Also, the mass media hasn't had a chance to intentionally distort the intent of the John Brown Society as they have obviously done to SDS.) Furthermore, in order for this coalition to be successful some of the white liberals in the John Brown Society are going to have to accept the fact that the blacks must lead the movement and the whites can only assist the movement. White supremacy in the coalition must be avoided at all costs or the purpose of the coalition will be destroyed.

Although the John Brown Society is still in its organizational stage, in the future it should be a very important force in reconstructing the educational system at Ball State. The organizers of the John Brown Society are very articulate and capable of their positions. In contrast to the majority of white people, these people not only practice brotherhood, but, they also stress the importance of getting organized before taking any action. With this capable leadership working for constructive change, it only seems logical that the students, faculty, and administration of Ball State should support the John Brown Society. The time has come for white people to worry less about their stupid status and more about their human values.