

Students Attend National Conference

(Editor's Note--Following is a report on the highlights of an intercollegiate conference held at Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey on February 11. The report on the topic, "Where are we headed--A World of Unrest," was composed by three Senate delegates: Stuart Bluestone and David Chanin '68, and Michael Cleary '69.)

The Fairleigh-Dickenson conference was dedicated to an increased awareness of the problems of the world around us and how they relate to the undergraduate. The speakers, James Farmer, Victor Reisel, Vance Packard, Lt. Gen. Lewis Hershey, and Jean Shepherd, represented an older generation who had been through the significant struggles of the past decades and so had a relevant and vital message for the hundreds of student leaders gathered, from U.C.L.A. to Harvard. The speakers addressed themselves to the question, "Where are we headed?" and their responses were as varied as the background of the individuals.

In general, they all agreed that the contemporary world was in vast social and political upheaval, as a result of changes in population and technology. They also agreed that the world was controlled by large interdependent power blocs of big government, labor, industry, and multiversity. They also saw great opportunity for the individual if he is capable of understanding these forces and controlling them. They indicated a contingent faith in the individual students of our generation, and the possibility, but not certainty of their ability to plan and control society, to effect vast changes, and to decide what will be built and what will be destroyed.

Victor Reisel, nationally syndicated columnist covering labor since the 1930's, urged college students to recognize the campus-ignored force of organized labor. He said that the "drumbeat of the future" is labor in an economic, political fight for survival. He felt labor was the prime force of today, citing Harold Wilson, George Brown, Willy Brandt, Arthur Goldberg and events in the U.S., Europe, and Red China to illustrate his point. He outlined the three major thrusts of organized labor in the last century and characterized the present movement as the thrust of the "Nothing-Sacred Strike" of government white collar workers, with little class struggle. He felt that this new movement would have the most vast political and social effects. Mr. Reisel dramatized his message through his own person. Blinded in an acid-throwing attack by a racketeer he was exposing in his column in 1956, he continued to write and has become the foremost labor columnist in our country. His dynamic and humorous delivery was an inspiration to all the delegates.

James Farmer is an eloquent and powerful spokesman for the civil rights movement in America. He described the current debate in the Negro community on the question "What does it mean to be Black and American?" Farmer felt the need was to merge these two selves into one dignified human being within white society. His solution was his particular kind of black power, a combination of political power and an educated self image. He agreed that the middle class Negro has gained from the civil rights struggle but that the poor Negro has suffered more. He urged the students to forget the connotations of "black" with evil and "power" with violence. He asked his audience to understand the black power movement as another instance of the old American ideal of power

politics coupled with the creation of a positive image of the Negro (in the eyes of Negroes) as a prerequisite for any meaningful integration. He insisted that Negroes must negotiate for their rights from a position of political and psychological strength.

Lt. Gen. Lewis Hershey discussed the draft system in a standard representation of government policies. He received mixed reactions. Some felt he was a dynamic, capable grandfather image while others dismissed his remarks as insignificant restatements of government policy. The General did note that there would be significant changes in the draft system within the next few years.

Vance Packard, best-selling author of incisive investigations on trends in contemporary society that endanger individual liberty, discussed the technological upheaval and the changing character of American society. He said that with the rise in standard of living and the rise in population has come the undermining of basic values and the creation of a wasteful society. Advertising is developing us into hedonistic, narcissistic, impulsive people, with infantile needs and aggressions. He concluded by reaffirming his faith in basic American ideals of inventiveness and human spirit, and by encouraging a sense of morals, personal fulfillment and the need for responsibility.

Jean Shepherd, the witty radio personality and social commentator put the whole conference in perspective by responding to the question, "Where are we headed?" by describing someone he knew of in New Jersey who was headed for Howard Johnson's and then to a drive in movie with his date. Shepherd discussed the relationship of our dream world to the reality of our life. The student delegates left the conference unsure where the dream began and reality left off.