

# Blacks, whites blame Ferris regime

By WILLIAM CONNELLAN

Detroit News Lansing Bureau

BIG RAPIDS, Mich. — "The kids on this campus are just one step away from total war."

These words were spoken by a black student at Ferris State College.

They were echoed across campus by both blacks and whites yesterday as the school picked up the debris from its second major racial confrontation in three months.

Everybody was willing to

tell his story after 12 persons — nine Negroes and three whites — were arrested following a three-hour brawl between black and white students.

White students said the blame lay with black students and a "wishy-washy" college administration.

**BLACK STUDENTS** charged that whites and "do-nothing" administration break of violence.

It resulted in \$4,000 damage

to dormitories and untold damage to 35 cars smashed in the fighting.

The administration praised the vast majority of Ferris students for restraint, and said the problem was a hard core of troublemakers, black and white.

"I was quite proud of the campus in general because there were far fewer participants and far fewer spectators than the last time around," President Victor F. Spathelf said.

"There's a repetitive hard-core group of black and white, and I don't know exactly how to deal with it."

Spathelf said the atmosphere on campus recently "has been the best it's been in a long time."

"It's very evident to me that people have been trying to work together," he said.

"The tragedy is that a thoughtless triggering incident set this off again."

The incident Spathelf was referring to was the publica-

tion last Thursday of a mimeographed dormitory newspaper which carried a signed article accusing black students of "eating like pigs."

**THE PAPER** was immediately suppressed and the student who published it dismissed from school, but it started a series of incidents between black blacks and whites that evening.

According to reports, several black students searching out the author beatup three

white students in a dormitory, including one who had a Confederate flag in his room.

One black student talking on the telephone was also reportedly hit in the back with a bottle thrown by a white student.

These incidents (the stories are generally agreed on by black and white student leaders) set the stage for the brawl early yesterday morning.

It started in Pickell Hall where a group of Negro and white students became involved in an argument following initiation ceremonies in one of the black fraternities.

Black students charged that whites in Pickell refused admittance to three blacks who lived in the dorm and started yelling "niggers" as the blacks left to get help.

**JOHNSON WAS** one of two nonstudents arrested. The other was John D. Miller, 17864 Fleming, Detroit. Both are former Ferris students.

White students arrested were: Timothy R. Baker, of Kalamazoo; Gregory A. Granger, of Shelby; and William C. White, of Cadillac.

Other black students arrested were: William W. Howell, of 301 East Wilson, Pontiac; William E. Kilgore, of Lansing; William E. Kilgore, of Grand Rapids; Jack Estes, of Flint; Michael J. Gibson, of 8074 Bryden, Detroit, and Benjamin Harris, of 21340 Majestic, Ferndale.

The black students all face probable expulsion from school. They were on "strict disciplinary probation" for their involvement in the take-over of the Starr Educational Center March 3.

They were arrested on criminal reentry charges which were later dropped, but the students were informed that if they took part in any more disruptive activities, they would be "booted out of school."

That take-over was preceded by a fight between 200 black and white students FUEB, 1/7, the first time in the current national flurry of campus unrest that students were pitted against each other rather than against the administration.

**WHITE STUDENTS** say this never happened, but that black students started harassing them after they refused to let the students in the back door of the dorm.

Fighting broke out when about 50 black students returned 20 minutes later.

Several windows were smashed and furniture in the lounge was torn up before the fighting moved into the parking lot where the cars were smashed.

Outmanned campus security officers and city police stood helplessly by as students armed with clubs, pop bottles and sticks slugged it out.

State Police were finally called in to quell the disturbance about 2:30 a.m., two hours after the initial confrontation.

The 64-man squad of state troopers arrested 13 persons and dispersed the crowd.

One later released and the other 12 face charges of unlawful assembly.

Maximum penalty is five years in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

Black student leaders accused State Police of arresting blacks while ignoring white students involved.

"They knew who they were out to get," said Edward Johnston, one of those arrested.

"They were yelling out names and going after them. Louie Stone (former campus NAACP president) and I were leaving the scene and they ran past other kids yelling 'There's Johnston and Stone'."