From the Wreckage: A Reaching Out

About 60 unidentified blacks broke into two predominately white student dorms between 11 and 12 last night. The most vehement of the attacks took place at Delta Chi fraternity where furniture in room after room was smashed. A second attack took place at Lancaster House where, although the damage was not so great, three white students were injured.

Blacks termed the attacks reprisals for incidents between UConn black students and residents of the two white dorms. Those incidents are detailed in front-page news stories.

Black students informed The Campus shortly after 1 a.m. that there would be no more raids. They said that the attacks were a form of defense against white abuse towards blacks on the UConn campus.

The men of Lancaster House have drafted a statement of apology to the blacks, saying that the attack was originally provoked by white students from their house. In a document we cannot call less than intelligent and beautiful, Lancaster residents said, "Our feeling is that there is a greater need for understanding among all the people on this campus."

The blacks pledged that they would not provoke further incidents. While they warned that they would never again tolerate insults from whites, they also gave their assurance that there would be no unprovoked attacks from the blacks.

The members of Delta Chi fraternity did not make a statement last night. They were busy picking up the shattered remains of their living quarters and trying to understand what had happened. There were no threats of group retaliation from the fraternity men.

Editorials in this newspaper have questioned the fraternity system here. We do not feel that we attacked the system, but fraternity readers have felt so.

This semester is a time of strain and sorrow and unhappiness for men in the fraternity system, a strain and a sorrow and a sense of nothing in their background of orderly American life has prepared them for. We say now, with no reservations, that we extend our sympathies toward these men.

The pain and bewilderment they feel today are the result of a system of bigotry they did not create and were not taught to understand.

Our compassion goes out to persons involved on both sides. There rests with us now the dreadful feeling that this universality has not nearly passed through the crisis.

But if all groups involved act intelligently, there is the allimportant chance that more violence may be avoided.

The blacks, we repeat, have given their word not to attack white students unprovoked. We ask, in deep respect for the racial torment in which they and their parents and grandparents have been forced to live, that they give the white community at Storrs a fair chance to change.

We are not speaking of a slow change sometimes in the distant future; we are speaking of an immediate change in the behavior of which must be carried in the hearts of every student on this campus. White and black.

Without condemning violence as a means of survival, we must point out that it can also be a means of suicide.

To the fraternity men, whose lives have been overturned and whose homes have been invaded and smeared, we ask you to believe that we are not "against" you in this matter, that we do not take lightly the sanctity of your lives and homes and that we will never take them lightly.

Nor do we take our request lightly when we ask you not to hate. We do not think it will be easy for anyone in Delta Chi not to turn to hating. Indeed hating would be by far the easiest course; but all the finest and most noble actions of mankind, all those actions which give man dignity and the right to think of himself as made in the image of a divine Creator, all those actions which work toward final good rather than immediate revenge, all such actions do not follow an easy course.

This then we do ask you to do: to take the harder road, the road that may cumber the blood within you to take, the road some men may slander you as cowards for taking.

This then we do ask you to do, asking with all past recriminations pushed aside, and with all honor and respect for your dignity and your safety.

All human life is a reaching out into the unknown. In the painful morning aftermath of last night's wreckage, black men and white men at Storrs have one tiny hope.

Their hope is simply this: that in reaching in anger and despair and misunderstanding into the unknown, their separate hands may touch and that in this simple, human and incredibly painful touching, both sides may discover that they have touched the hand of God.