

Dissent! —————

Why the Boycott?

The OTHER Side of the Issue:

To present all sides of important public questions, The Press publishes a wide variety of national columnists whose views frequently differ widely from our own. To get the same kind of extra viewpoint on local issues, The Press, in addition to its Public Pulse columns, will publish this column called 'Dissent!' It solicits opinions contrary to those expressed in The Press' own editorials.

(The Press opposed in its editorial page the school boycott on the ground that the children belonged in school and that it would tend to polarize the Board of Education and black community. The boycott now is ended. Here Mrs. Phyllis Scott, one of its leaders, explains her position and reactions.)

I have lost total respect for the American system, for the Grand Rapids Police Department and for any man, black or white, that allows himself to be used by the system to destroy the efforts of black people across the country to effect a change in the interest of a depressed people.

I feel that in the last few days I have lived in a police state. The inequalities of education for black children in the city of Grand Rapids so apparent that I sincerely feel black people cannot live another school year with it. Nor can black people across the United States accept any longer the total inequalities of white America.

The American system will not allow even a peaceful demonstration for change. They will use any means or methods to stop black people who cry injustice, whether peacefully or violently. Today in the city of Grand Rapids, the once "All America City," this was shown as it has been in Montgomery, Ala., as it is being shown today in Chicago, Ill.

My children appeared in school Monday, because I am, first of all, a mother.

I am willing now and in the future to pay any other price that must be paid, affecting only me, for the progress of black people not only in Grand Rapids, but across the country.

White jails, police dogs, hoses and death mean nothing to me in the struggle for equality.

May Grand Rapids people, both black and white, keep the black school boycott forever in mind that parents joined with other community people here in this city, trying to bring about a change in the most effective non-violent way possible, and were totally suppressed by a system that could only stop it by threats to parents.

And this is the society of America, and this is the mechanism used by whites to forever keep blacks down, regardless of how peacefully they attempt to bring about changes.

I want it publicly known that I will support every organization, every group, every person attempting to change a racist society for the equality of all black people.

We do not feel beaten.

MRS. PHYLLIS SCOTT