

11 Negro Staff Members Quit N.E.T. 'Black Journal' Program

By ROBERT E. DALLOS

Eleven members of the staff of "Black Journal," a monthly program presented on the National Educational Television network, said yesterday they had resigned because "N.E.T. has deceived the black community by advertising the program series as being 'by, for and of' the black community." The program is seen here on WNDT-TV (Channel 13.)

N.E.T. said last night the 11 were all but one of the black staff of the magazine format program, which had its premiere on June 12.

The resigning staff members complained that they were given no editorial control over the program's content or production. They demanded that N.E.T. appoint a black executive producer, so that the program could reflect a "black perspective." The executive producer of the series now is Alvin H. Perlmutter, who is white.

Five at News Conference

Of the 11 who signed a letter of resignation last Thursday, five appeared yesterday at a news conference in the apartment of Kent Garrett, one of the group, at 118 West 21st Street. Mr. Garrett is a producer on the program.

In a prepared statement read by Sheila Smith, a researcher for "Black Journal," the group said it resigned a day after the third program in the series. Announcement was not made until yesterday, the group said, because negotiations had been going on since Tuesday with N.E.T.

N.E.T. said late yesterday that it had offered terms to settle the dispute, and that the group had accepted them as late as Monday evening.

In its formal statement, the group said that on May 28 we held a meeting with N.E.T. on this matter (before the first show). That meeting addressed itself to the discrepancy of the by, for and of phrase and to the imbalance of white versus black produced segments on that, the first show.

Hypocrisy is Charged

"It was said by N.E.T. at that time," the statement continued, "that the 'by, for and of' phrase would be rectified as far as further releases and advertisements were concerned. As for the question of black versus white production segments goes, nothing has been changed. Therefore, we, not only as black professionals but also mainly because we are black people, feel that N.E.T. has been hypocritical in its presentation of 'Black Journal' to the viewing public, especial-

ly to the black viewing public." St. Claire Bourne, an associate producer, said that what was involved was not "tokenism" but "frontism," explaining that the staff felt it was being used as a front in perpetuating the idea that Negroes controlled the program.

But, Mr. Garrett said, of six film segments in the Aug. 14 program, five were produced by White people.

Editor Sought as Chief

The black group said it favored the appointment of Lou Potter, who has been serving as editor of the program, as executive producer. Mr. Potter, an employe of N.E.T. before the birth of "Black Journal," was the only black full-time staff member of the program not to resign. The others had all been hired for the series.

In a statement issued yesterday, N.E.T. said that Mr. Potter "was promoted from N.E.T.'s information services only last December. He has not had sufficient experience to assume at this time the role of executive producer, a most complicated organizational job ranging from budget control to the last details of scenic design."

N.E.T. said it had agreed on Monday to put Mr. Potter in control of the production unit with the title of executive editor, and that the title of executive producer would be abolished. Mr. Perlmutter, N.E.T. said, would serve as a consultant for the September program.

The Sept. 11 program is the fourth and last scheduled with current N.E.T. funds of \$400,000. N.E.T. is seeking funds to continue the project.

N.E.T. said that the group agreed on Monday night to the compromise offer but "reversed itself yesterday and demanded a black executive producer for the program and rejected the idea of any consultant."

Two black producers suggested by the group were not available, N.E.T. said. They are Bill Branch and Bill Greaves, independent TV producers.

Mr. Garret said yesterday that "right now, it's cool at all the networks to have black shows, but we're at the stage where blacks will have to have control."

Others in the resigning group were Lou House, master of ceremonies; Charles Hobson, producer; Shep Hunter, associate producer; Ed McCallister, editor; Peggy Pinn, project coordinator; Dana Goins, secretary; Madeline Anderson, editor; and Horace Jenkins, producer.