



# Over Troubled Water

By BRUCE WRIGHT

## Bring Us Together

It has been the custom of my co-writer and I to concern ourselves with issues and problems affecting the Wesleyan Community exclusively. However, in considering at for this particular edition of bi-weekly indulgence, I feel that straying from the custom is in order.

On October 1, the long-awaited Report of the President's Commission on Campus Unrest was submitted on schedule and under-budget, to Mr. Nixon who graciously, though warily, accepted it. It was the purpose of the commission to investigate the tragic incidents of last May which took place on the campuses of Kent State University and Jackson State College. Mr. Nixon and his colleagues had feared that the report would be so dreadfully one-sided that it would seriously impair the Republican Party's chances at the polls in November. The document which he received was indeed extremely critical, but it was neither bitter nor irrational.

On the contrary, in the words of one of the Nation's largest weekly news magazines, the report was "earnest, soul-searching, eloquent at mo-

ments, emotional at others--and suited throughout to the counsel of a President who once asked Americans of every persuasion to lower their voices." The restrained, nonflamatory language of the Report, the over-all mood of the commission, and the open-minded conclusions which were reached make this document so beautiful and fair that it will probably be all but disregarded in a political era marked by blaring trumpets, noisy protesters, and an even noisier Vice-president.

What child has not come running home from school and either spitefully or emotionally reported to Mother that "Johnnie called me a so-and-so," or "Suzie called me a son-of-a-...?" And what mother has not philosophically repeated the familiar adage: Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me. So it is with children. But the mood of a nation is a far different thing: it is a delicate balance of majority and minority groups. The Scranton Commission feels that a deep, generational "crisis of understanding" has brought this country to the point of self-

destruction: "We believe it urgent that Americans of all conviction draw back from the brink . . . We must declare a national cease-fire . . . If this trend continues, if this crisis of understanding endures, the very survival of the nation will be threatened."

In the section concerning Kent State, the commission had some strong words for those students, and there were apparently many, who were acting in violation of the law. On the other hand, the report stated that "the 61 shots by 28 guardsmen certainly cannot be justified . . . The indiscriminate firing of rifles into a crowd of students and the deaths that followed were unnecessary, unwarranted, and inexcusable."

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## Senate Looks At High Court; Judicial Reforms Are Planned

With its second meeting of the year, October 12, the Senate plunged into the task of re-evaluating Constitutional provisions for the Supreme Court at Wesleyan. Bruce Wright, chairman of the Committee for Judicial Review, created by last year's Senate, presented a list of proposed Court changes.

A significant suggestion is that interested students submit applications for Supreme Court seats, which would be reviewed by the S.G.A. president, then a maximum of 12 candidates would be nominated by a two thirds majority vote by the Senate. (The present system calls for direct nominations by the Senators.) Under the new proposal, nominees would still be voted upon by the student body to complete a court of seven justices. Once a student is elected to the

Court, his term would last until graduation, but not exceed three years, as opposed to the present one-year term.

Further suggestions included specifications of six types of punishments the Court may enforce and time limits for trial dates and filing of applications. According to the proposal, trials must be set no less than five days and no more than ten days after filing an accusation. The proposal also exiges that written accusations must be filed within two days of the incident, and the accused must be notified within two days of the filing.

The Court proposals were sent to the Constitution Committee for review and clarification for one week, in accordance with the Constitution which states amendments must be sent to committee before the Senate may vote on it.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to discussion and suggestions concerning those students who cannot handle the responsibility of taking their trays to the disposal area after eating. Speaking for the student staff in the cafeteria, Dennis Hayek, Wyah Sasser, and Marshall Old explained that it is not the student workers' job to pick up trays left by other students, and, after an average of some 40 odd trays left per meal, the workers have been planning to "strike", to simply leave trays on the tables.

After many suggestings and much deliberation, the cafeteria student-staff agreed to wait one week before a "strike," after the Senate passed Dave Forest's motion that the sign presently in the cafeteria stating that violators will be prosecuted be put up.

## An Expressive Expression

### The "Do Your Own Thing" Doctrine

Popular sayings can change their meanings over a given time-span. The phrase "Do your own thing" is a case in point. When it first surfaced in the mid 1960's, it conveyed a requirement to respect a person's behavior choices within the very wide range of choices available in a free society. I also implied the individual's right to expect such respect from others. In its non-judgmental character, the saying did not originally carry the meaning of indifference or apathy. It meant, rather, a heightened regard for the individual and his clear right to choose from among a great variety of behavior options. In its original intent and shades of meaning, then, the saying was positive, healthy, and tended to advance individual freedom and human worth.

But in the past half-decade, other meanings have attached themselves to this saying. Pre-

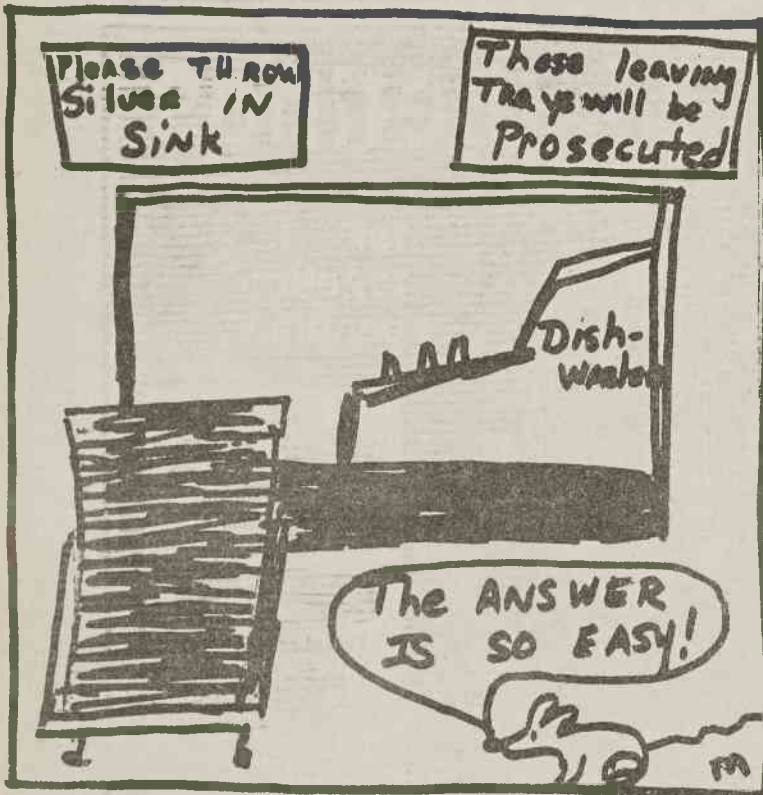
sent-day commentators may argue that the purity of the original thought has been compromised. The idea has become perverted. The clearing of the phrase is now a noisome, disruptive jangle. What has happened? The phrase as used now, in 1970, is often only an excuse for anti-social behavior. It implies license rather than responsible freedom. It demands unearned immunity from the judgment of others. It tends to justify a "don't get involved" stance and all other forms of apathy and callous disregard for the plight of others. It has been cited as a catch-phrase of self-centeredness and selfishness. In the thinking of many, it is no longer a laudable mandate.

Compare the "do your own thing" phrase in its present tainted meaning with our powerful phrase "Freedom with responsibility." They do not fit together very well. Why? I submit that freedom with responsibility is a valuable, workable principle only if the com-

munity attempting to apply this principle agreeing upon the necessity of concerning itself and dealing with those who, occasionally, frequently, or habitually, are irresponsible. This is a vital tough negative part of the responsibility. It necessarily calls for judgment of and action toward the lapses of responsibility which may occur in the community. And herein lies the problem in our community.

We are all somewhat disinclined in these days to judge our peers. We do not like to be criticized and hence we refrain from being critical of others. We want to be left alone and are more than willing to leave others alone. But --if we follow through on this course, our community breaks down. We are confronted with the problems and difficulties which touch all of us when social controls are not applied or are ineffectively applied to behavior such as stealing books, assuming possession of college-owned flags, failure to

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## The Decree

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