

# "LAW OR MOB LAW?" ASKS PROFESSOR RICE

WESLEYAN OFFICIAL UPHOLDS  
COURT, AND SCORES THOSE  
WHO HELP PAY RIOTERS'  
FINES.

Professor William North Rice, of Wesleyan University, in an article issued today under his signature, captioned "Law Or Mob Law?" deprecates the action of those citizens who have "assumed a share of responsibility for the offense" by subscribing to a fund to help pay the fines against the young men found guilty by the court in the now famous Herrmann episode. Professor Rice commends the action of Judge Edlin in his disposition of the case, saying that the conduct of the court has been an honor to the city. He also points out the fact that the counsel for the young men has not seen fit to take an appeal, seems to be an indication that there is no ground for such action. The statement of Professor Rice in full follows:

"Among the wise and noble messages of President Wilson to the people of the United States, one of the wisest and noblest is his recent appeal to his countrymen to avoid mob violence in every form. He justly characterizes mob rule as 'a blow at the heart of ordered law and humane justice.' We are striving to secure for all mankind the blessings of liberty under the protection of law; and the anarchy of Russia under the bolsheviki is no better than the autocracy of the kaiser.

"The warning of the president is most needful in the present time when the calmest minds are stirred by the strong passions aroused by the infamous crimes of the German government. In a mood of patriotic excitement it is an easy thing for thoughtless young men to find vent for their righteous wrath against the kaiser by subjecting some person of German birth; suspected of being less enthusiastic in his loyalty than we could desire, to insult and to injury in person or property. But thus to punish a man without trial is an outrage against the spirit of our institutions. Those who perpetrate such actions and those who would tolerate them, are breaking down that shield of righteous law under which alone our liberty is protected.

"In the recent case in Middletown, the persons charged with violence to the house and the person of a citizen of German birth, had a fair trial and were defended by able counsel. The fact that their counsel has not seen fit to take an appeal seems to be an indication that there is no ground for an appeal. The language of Judge Edlin in rendering his decision seems to me altogether commendable. His suspension of the jail sentence shows a disposition to treat the thoughtless young men as leniently as possible. The conduct of the court has been altogether an honor to the city.

"I cannot help feeling, therefore, that those citizens who have tried to make heroes and martyrs of the young culprits, and have assumed a share of responsibility for the offense by contributing to the payment of the fines, however generous may be their motives, have made a dreadful mistake.

"Our government is competent to detect and punish all disloyal conduct by appropriate judicial procedure. Shall we be law-abiding citizens? Or shall we allow and encourage excited youths to punish without trial persons against whom they may have suspicion? The question which I placed as the title of this note is a momentous one, fragrant with measureless consequences of good or evil—'Law Or Mob Law?'"