

# ONE VIEWPOINT

by Ed Friedman

The controversy over segregation in Bucknell fraternities appears at last to have borne fruit. Last week the inter-fraternity council passed a resolution recommending that those fraternities which have restrictive clauses in their charters should "work within their national fraternity organizations for the elimination of such restrictive clauses at the earliest convenient date."

This statement is significant because it shows a willingness on the part of the fraternities to end segregation. But there is another part of the resolution that is perhaps more significant. The I. F. C. gave its opinion that fraternity membership requirements based upon race, creed, or color are inconsistent with the standards of the University, and with the true spirit of brotherhood which must be fostered among college men if there is to be any hope of understanding among men and nations."

Certainly few will disagree with this opinion. No one will doubt that restrictive clauses are inconsistent with the standards of the University. But if such is the case, why has the University permitted segregation to exist for so long? Why has not the administration—as the faculty has considered suggesting to them—demanded that the fraternities either eliminate these restrictive clauses in the charters or eliminate the charters?

Two principal reasons are given: one is that an end to segregation must come from the fraternities themselves; they must want to end segregation. One cannot legislate morals. The second reason given is that since the administration has allowed, if not encouraged, fraternities to invest heavily in the construction of houses, it would be unethical, and perhaps illegal, for the administration to tell the organizations that they would have to conform to certain rules or else abandon the houses.

The first reason is no longer valid. For if the above resolution really verbalizes the sentiments of the fraternities and is not merely an excuse to avert possible pressure from the faculty, then the administration can no longer say that the fraternities do not wish to end segregation. In fact, they and the administration are on the same side of the question; and if after giving evidence of attempting to abolish segregation, the fraternities show no progress, then the failure must be blamed largely upon the national organizations.

Having taken the initiative, the fraternities should be encouraged by the administration. Then, if the local chapters find that after a period of two or three years the national organizations are too big an obstacle to overcome, it would appear to be the duty of the Bucknell Administration to provide the chapters with an excuse through which they can gain what they avowedly want.

For once the fraternities have admitted that they want to abolish segregation clauses, then the administration need worry no longer that it is forcing the local chapters to do something of which they are not in favor. Rather the administration is supplying the fraternities with a forceful means of appealing to the national organizations to grant them what they want.

The second reason advanced by some supporters of the ~~status quo is~~ also specious. If one agrees with it, then one has said that the University should value the morals involved in a business agreement more than the morals for which the University was instituted. And yet there is no moral compunction involved in the business agreement. A perusal of Theiss' **History of Bucknell** will show clearly that fraternity houses are to be considered dormitories and subject to the rules of the University. The University can regulate drinking and coeducational activities in the fraternity houses. Why can it not make rules as to who is to live in these dormitories?

In resolving that segregation clauses be abolished, the Bucknell fraternities are attempting to support ideals for which Bucknell stands. It remains to be seen whether the faculty will suggest that some action be taken to support these ideals. But it is the administration which has not only the legal power, but which, by the nature of its being a symbol of the college, has the highest moral obligation of the three groups to abolish the restrictive clauses that are "inconsistent with the standards of the University."