

From The Ivory Tower

BSU Charges Valid

By H. Bruce Franklin

When the statement of the Black Student Union defined the Stanford Board of Trustees as a symbol of racism and imperialism, the audience had a hard time accepting it the way it was said. Perhaps it would be clearer in the words of the enemy. The main issue within SRI was well defined by its own director eighteen years ago. Here is Jesse Hobson, Director of Stanford Research Institute in 1951, describing very eloquently what the issue really is:

This nation occupies 6% of the land area of the world, has 7% of the world's population, but it now produces 50% of the world's goods and possesses 67% of the world's wealth. Research must be the heart, the foundation, the lifeblood of our present defense economy if we are to maintain this position.

Now what this means is well-explained in the words of someone in the Academic Council meeting the morning of April 18. Speaking, ironically enough, in the name of the party of order, he said, referring to the sit-in, "I define coercion as any attempt by a minority to impose its will on the majority."

The fact of the matter is that the central coercive act in the world today is the coercive racism and imperialism of the ruling class—yes, those are the right words of this country on the peoples of the Third World abroad and at home and, less nakedly, over white working people of this country.

I know a lot of you may not believe that. There are many other definitions of the central problem of the world, and what we ought to face is that the concerns of

Stanford research and the concerns of the research at SRI are intimately connected and even some of the most seemingly harmless liberal forms of research at Stanford are part of this oppression and coercion of the peoples of the Third World.

Over-Population

I shall cite you as one example the new Malthusian theories that are coming out of Stanford University, telling us that the central problem of the world is over-population. This is another form of racism, and it subtly prepares our minds to accept genocide.

The question is not over-population. The question is the systematic looting of the resources of the entire world by the ruling class of this country, represented here most concretely by the Board of Trustees, and indirectly by many of their lackeys in the rest of the administrative and functional machinery of both Stanford University and SRI.

Third World Voice

Now when the Black Student Union suggested that Black people have some sort of say about the research being conducted at SRI, there was almost total silence among the people at Frost, except for a little tinge of approval and some grumbling and muttering and sounds that suggested that that was just ridiculous.

But we ought to recognize the basic coercion even in the way we sit at some gathering, with all of us so nice and white, with a few well-chosen exceptions, Hoover Tower symbolically staring at us in the background. Unless we do act, unless we do chose the sides of the majority that is being coerced, we are on the side of that

minority that is imposing its will on the majority.

And if we are going to fight, as I think we should fight, for the control over the research at Stanford Research Institute, the "we" that has to be doing that fighting must not be just Stanford students and faculty but must include those representatives of the Third World that we do have among us.

(H. Bruce Franklin is an associate professor of English—Ed.)