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The H. Bruce Franklin Case

# Stanford Cracks Down on

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## Leftist Disruption

Stanford, Calif.:—In what is certain to become a precedent setting action for educational institutions plagued by leftist violence, a Stanford University faculty board has recommended that a tenured professor be fired for his role in inciting campus disruptions. By a vote of 5 to 2, the board urged Stanford President Richard Lyman to dismiss English Prof. H. Bruce Franklin for his involvement in the violence which hit the university last February in the wake of student protests over American intervention in Laos.

Lyman accepted the recommendation and if the university's broad of trustees goes along—which seems highly likely—Franklin will become one of the few tenured faculty members in America to have been dismissed from a major university.

Franklin's active role as a leader of radical students at Stanford has been a source of distress and embarrassment for the university for a number of years. A self-proclaimed Maoist, he originally won his academic reputation as an expert on the works of Herman Melville and in the field of science fiction. Since gaining tenure during the mid-1960s, Franklin, who is 37, has moved progressively left to the point where he has become a leader of a local revolutionary group known as Venceremos. A conglomeration of white and Chicano radicals,

Venceremos has as its symbol the AK-47 rifle.

The faculty advisory recommendation came after almost two months of six-day-a-week hearings on charges against Franklin in which 100 witnesses were called and one million words of testimony recorded. Specifically, Franklin was accused of being a major force in the disruption of a speech by Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge in January 1971, inciting the student occupation of the university's computer center in February, urging defiance of a police order to disperse from the center and, on the same day, calling a night time rally to commit violent acts.

At the conclusion of the rally a dozen members of the libertarian-conservative Free Campus Movement, who had been observing the gathering, were surrounded by a group of 30 to 40 leftists and subsequently beaten. Three FCMers had to be taken to Stanford Hospital for treatment.

Later that night, a group of conservative students standing in front of the FCM headquarters was the target of six .45 caliber bullets fired by an unknown gunman. Two students were hit by the bullets and one had to be hospitalized. The shootings climaxed four days of arson, false fire alarms, fire-bombing, window-breaking and general disruption

of the university in which Franklin played an integral part.

The faculty tribunal exonerated Franklin in the Lodge incident, but a majority of the board considered him to be guilty of the other charges.

With respect to the computer center occupation, the faculty decision said, "The board is strongly persuaded that given the context of the speech, Franklin did intentionally incite and urge persons ... to occupy the center illegally." In reference to the evening rally and the violence which followed, the board noted that he had urged small groups of radicals to engage in the methods of "a people's war" in order to provoke retaliation from the police.

Franklin, who, at the hearings, had conducted his own defense from a table displaying large pictures of Mao, Marx, Lenin and Stalin, immediately denounced the decision of the faculty board as the work of "liberal fascists." At a press conference he said he was not surprised with the decision and claimed that there were lies on every page of the report.

Throughout the press conference, Franklin's wife Jane stood by him holding a U.S. Army carbine in her hands. The gun was there, according to him, "because of our analysis that that is where political power comes from."

Other reaction to the possibility of Franklin's ouster was predictable.

A group of 150 radical students and nonstudents staged demonstrations, occupied Memorial Church and threatened further violence if the controversial English professor is not reinstated. Leftist theologian Robert MacAfee Brown, who was one of two dissenting votes on the advisory board, contended that his loss would damage Stanford "in the form of corrosive effects on aca-

democratic freedom, and... in terms of lost challenge and the subtle inhibition of dissent.

"The majority of the board members did not view Franklin's indictment to violence as merely an issue of free speech or academic freedom. They noted that 'Professor Franklin engages in a pattern of conduct that constitutes a continual challenge to the institution; he states that he wishes to encourage violent and coercive actions; but, at the same time, not to risk the loss of his position at the university. He views the university as a central agent in domestic repression and in an imperialistic foreign policy.'"

Franklin, who, in his checkered past, was once an intelligence officer for the Strategic Air Command, was not at all repentant about the censure he had received from his professorial colleagues. In fact, he expressed the hope that students would react violently to the announcement of his impending dismissal from Stanford. "We don't think," he said, "any tactic would be going too far."

Clearly the Franklin case is a landmark event in the battle to curtail campus violence. Whereas formerly university officials had been understandably reluctant to move against militant professors in the blurry area where academic freedom borders on illegal activity, the Stanford decision points out that there are limits to dissent. It affirms the rights of the academic community against those who would use tenure as sanctuary to destroy society and the university.

While Franklin's dismissal could well become a *cause célèbre* for some radicals and far-left liberals, hopefully it will become a signal to other colleges ripped apart by violence that they too can deal with criminal dissent fairly and eventually return to their education mission.