

THE BRUCE FRANKLIN CASE (CHRONOLOGY)

The attempt by Stanford University to strip Professor H. Bruce Franklin of his tenure and dismiss him from the faculty represents a serious attack on academic freedom and a threat to divergent thought and intellectual activity in the academic community...If successful, it could undermine the principle of tenure in colleges and universities across the country and set a precedent for getting rid of professors whose political advocacy and opinions as citizens are unpopular and offensive to members of the society.

Since 1964 Professor Franklin has publicly argued and worked against the war in Vietnam. The Stanford Administration, which for years has been under alumni and community pressure to fire Professor Franklin because of his long-standing activist position to the war and his avowedly revolutionary Marxist-Leninist principles, seeks to abrogate his tenure by charging him with "activities which have constituted a substantial and manifest neglect of duty and a substantial impairment of his performance of his appropriate functions within this university community." These are grounds for dismissal in the Stanford "Statement of Policy on Appointment and Tenure."

None of the specific allegations lodged against him, however, has anything to do with his performance as a scholar (he is a nationally recognized authority on Melville and on utopian and science fiction) or teacher, his classroom behavior his work in his department or the other activities which are generally considered normal duties and appropriate functions within an academic community. In these areas he has performed effectively since receiving tenure in 1965. In fact, just last year, the full Professors in his Department voted without dissent to recommend him to a full Professorship, a proposal turned down by the Administration.

The Administration has temporarily barred and wishes permanently to bar Professor Franklin from the classroom, and cancel his courses, because of extra-curricular conduct which is either legal, or if illegal, should properly be a matter for civil jurisdiction. Professor Franklin's current suspension and possible dismissal have not brought and will not bring peace to the troubled campus community, but they have meant and will mean that his particular Marxist-Leninist interpretation of literature, which he has presented in free and open courses, will no longer be available, since no one else in the English Department is disposed or qualified to present it.

Regardless of what one thinks about Professor Franklin, the effective suppression in the academic curriculum of a legitimate, coherent, intellectually important, if controversial, approach to a recognized subject ought to be a cause for dismay. Even more crucial and ominous are the possible consequences of this action; if the clause covering grounds for abrogating tenure--"manifest neglect of duty or personal conduct substantially impairing the individual's performance of his appropriate functions within the University community"--can be interpreted so broadly and loosely, there can be no guarantee even by the best-willed spokesman for the administration that a similar threat to the principles of tenure and academic freedom will not occur again. This point is particularly crucial in a time when the April 8, 1971, statement by Deputy Secretary of Defense, David Packard, (formerly a leading member of the Stanford Board of Trustees) that pacifist and anti-war leaders should be regarded by the establishment as "deadly enemies," indicates the growing political repression on the universities.

The chronology of events in Bruce Franklin's case is as follows:

Jan. 11-- About 150 people, Franklin among them, heckle Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge at his opening address to a three-day conference on the U. N. sponsored