

PRESS STATEMENT

October 14, 1976

Since April of 1975, the Colorado ACLU has been proceeding under the amended Freedom of Information Act to obtain surveillance documents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation concerning Prof. H. Bruce Franklin.

We are now making available to the press 194 pages of documents released by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

These documents detail a shocking story of harassment and massive surveillance directed at the distinguished professor.

The FBI's campaign against Franklin included:

1. Fabricating letters to be sent to and from Prof. Franklin;
2. Creating false rumors about Franklin to damage his professional and political reputation;
3. Using "cooperative news media sources" to have false and misleading information published about Franklin and then anonymously distributing copies to selected individuals for the purpose of getting him fired from his teaching position at Stanford, keeping him from getting a job after he had been fired, and generally "discrediting" and "neutralizing" him;
4. Monitoring the most private aspects of his life, including photographs of his wife and information on his children;

5. Spying on speeches he gave to respected academic forums; collecting copies of books and articles he has written; and

6. Soliciting the assistance of other government agencies in its campaign of harassment, including U. S. Customs, the Department of State and the Internal Revenue Service.

According to the documents, the surveillance began in 1966 due to Franklin's outspoken opposition to the Vietnam war, his so-called radical political views, and his participation in lawful protest activity.

Undercover FBI agents attended speeches, seminars and symposiums where Prof. Franklin spoke. Copies of articles and books written by Franklin on political, social and academic subjects were copied and made subject to the FBI investigation, with special reference to passages expressing political philosophy which the Agency found particularly offensive. Prof. Franklin's private life was spied on, including reports on his minor children and his wife. Prof. Franklin's travel abroad was monitored with the aid of the U.S. Customs and the Department of State. After Prof. Franklin resigned his commission as Captain in the Air Force Reserve in protest against the Vietnam War, the Air Force Office of Special Investigations was also monitoring Prof. Franklin's political activity.

After Prof. Franklin's private and professional life had been monitored and catalogued for two years, he became the object of an illegal campaign by the government known as COINTELPRO, an organized effort implemented by the FBI to "discredit" and "neutralize" Prof. Franklin and his political associations as part of a massive drive to subvert the so-called "New Left."

On December 31, 1968, the Director's office of the FBI requested its agents to gather any written or spoken material which could be used to publically discredit Prof. Franklin because of his "radical" position.

On February 19, 1969, the FBI furnished its own false and misleading version and compilation of Prof. Franklin's writings and statements to a "cooperative news media source" for publication. The FBI also requested its "news media source" to interview Franklin for what the FBI calls "further details," but what was in fact an attempt to lend credibility to the FBI's manufactured story.

On March 23, 1969, an article appeared in the San Francisco Examiner entitled "Leftists Lift Lid on Revolutionary Plans" which article followed closely the "story line" recommended by the FBI.

On May 14, 1969, the "Bureau" proposed a "pamphlet or brochure" showing Franklin's "subversive causes and affiliations" be sent anonymously to members of the Board of

Trustees of Stanford, where Prof. Franklin taught American Literature, to selected alumni, and other appropriate individuals, "including the Governor, senators and congressmen of California."

On May 20, 1969, the FBI Director's Office notes a second article appearing in the San Francisco Examiner on May 19, 1969, by the same "cooperative news media source" entitled "Militants' Aims Come Into Focus," and notes how the FBI is using the first Examiner article of March 23, 1969, to discredit Franklin by distributing it in the Palo Alto-Stanford area. The FBI then proposes sending this March 23, 1969, Examiner article, the follow-up article of May 19, 1969, and a "circular" to parents of Stanford students, selected alumni and Board of Trustee members "encouraging them to take positive action against such a person as Franklin who is an educator of their children and insist that Franklin be removed from his position at Stanford." Finally, the FBI suggests mailing the two articles and "circular" to "selected individuals having apparent influence over the Stanford staff and faculty, urging them to use this influence to rid Stanford of this menace"

In June of 1969, the two Examiner articles and circular were circulated by the FBI among "Board of Trustees at Stanford, selected alumni, and local political figures in Palo Alto-Stanford area" in an effort to bring attention to a distorted version of Franklin's revolutionary ideas.

After other efforts to "neutralize," "dupe," "discredit" and "disrupt" Franklin and his political associations, including a request for FBI reports from the Internal Revenue Service, the FBI monitored and reported Franklin's statements in his defense at the hearings before the Stanford Advisory Board regarding Prof. Franklin's continued employment at Stanford. The FBI even requested the identity of individuals who appeared as witnesses in behalf of Franklin at the Stanford hearing, and commenced a check into their political backgrounds.

Having achieved its goal of getting Franklin dismissed from his position of influence as a teacher at Stanford University, the FBI was not satisfied. It requested and received photographs of Franklin and his wife, copies of new books and articles he had authored, speeches he gave to University groups and respected academic forums, travel plans inside and outside the United States, and newspaper articles reporting Franklin's efforts to obtain employment at other universities. The Agency even manufactured a letter purportedly written by Prof. Franklin and addressed to Mr. James Burnham, a conservative journalist, in an effort to "encourage" Burnham to write critical articles on Franklin's political views and his association with radical political organizations.

Finally, we note that the San Francisco Examiner article of March 23, 1969, prepared by a "cooperative news media

source" at the behest of the FBI and forming an integral part of the FBI's plan of harassment, was sent to the Board of Regents of the University of Colorado from a California source, and made available to each Board member by the Board Secretary prior to their decision to reject Prof. Franklin's appointment at the University of Colorado.

These efforts by the FBI to destroy a man's livelihood and his dignity because his political views differ from those held by key members of the FBI, is despicable and smacks of the worst sort of secret police tactics. It is an affront to the American people to have stories manufactured in the newspapers by a Federal police agency and have members of governing boards of leading institutions unknowingly manipulated by surreptitious campaigns to "discredit" those the FBI disagrees with. We leave it to the "non-cooperative" media and the people to demand that the FBI cease tampering with the democratic process and that the FBI be held accountable when it engages in a clandestine campaign to strip a talented man of his livelihood and destroy his professional and private life.

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