

FBI memos reveal campaign to get Franklin fired

By Herb Borock

Nearly five years after Stanford's Board of Trustees fired English Professor H. Bruce Franklin, the Federal Bureau of Investigation has released documents that reveal that the FBI anonymously mailed copies of news clippings and circulars about Franklin to the trustees to encourage them "to take some positive action against such a person as FRANKLIN . . . and insist that FRANKLIN be removed from his position at Stanford."

The FBI mailing occurred in June 1969, a year-and-a-half before Stanford President Richard Lyman initiated the year-long disciplinary proceedings against Franklin. The mailing included copies of documents bearing the return address of the Young Americans for Freedom chapter on campus.

Other FBI memos show that the FBI used San Francisco Examiner reporter Ed Montgomery to create the articles the FBI later mailed to the trustees, investigated witnesses who appeared on Franklin's behalf during his disciplinary hearing before Stanford's Faculty Advisory Board, and obtained his copy of Franklin's opening statement before the Advisory Board from the Stanford Chaparral, "a quasi-official humor magazine."

The FBI began its surveillance

of Franklin in 1966 following his outspoken opposition to the Vietnam War, his membership in the Stanford Committee for Peace in Vietnam ("a student-professor pacifist-type organization"), and his participation in lawful protest activities against a napalm plant in Redwood City. On March 9, 1967 the FBI's San Francisco field office recom-

FBI memo: 'Franklin . . . represents one of the most militant radical extremists on American campuses . . .'

mended that Franklin be included in Section A of the Reserve Index, an administrative aid maintained by the FBI to monitor persons who would be of importance to the FBI in the event of a national emergency.

The FBI's Reserve Index included all individuals known to have affiliation or sympathy with the Communist Party and

persons in some way associated with revolutionary groups other than the Communist Party. The FBI's Manual of Instructions indicated that Section A of the Reserve Index was to be composed of persons who met the Reserve Index criteria and who were educators, labor officials, entertainers, media personalities, lawyers, doctors, scientists, and other potentially influential persons.

Security Index

By May 1968 Franklin's name had been moved from the Reserve Index to the Security Index. This meant that during a national emergency, Franklin would be apprehended and detained under the provisions of the Emergency Detention Act as a person dangerous to U.S. internal security. The Security Index classification meant that Franklin was included in Priority One of the Priority Apprehension Program, since he was employed by Stanford University, a facility designated vital to the national defense by the Department of Defense.

The FBI initially included Franklin in their Reserve Index and Security Index despite the fact that he had never been arrested or charged with any crime. The FBI's May 6, 1969 quarterly report on Franklin noted that he had been acquitted the previous month of charges

stemming from a demonstration the previous November, but recommended keeping Franklin in the Security Index because "he is reportedly one of the founders of the RU [Revolutionary Union], a Marxist-Leninist organization, that adheres to the policies of Mao Tse-tung."

On May 14, 1969, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover wrote his San Francisco office that "Franklin, in his position as Associate Professor of English at Stanford University, represents

' . . . rid Stanford of this menace to the democratic future . . .'

one of the most militant radical extremists on American campuses, and his background has been well documented publicly."

Revolutionary objectives

One of the public documents Hoover referred to was a March 23, 1969 article by Ed Montgomery in the San Francisco Sunday Examiner & Chronicle that claimed to describe Franklin's revolutionary objectives. Hoover couldn't have been surprised when he read that article, since he had requested that such an

article be written.

In February 1969 Hoover suggested that a "cooperative news media source" interview Franklin about his relationship with "his 'close associate' who lived in China and a 'young friend' who had served in the Red Guard." Montgomery subsequently interviewed Franklin, and his March 23 article identified the "close associate" as William Howard Hinton, and the "young friend" as Christopher Milton.

Hoover proposed on May 11, 1969 that a pamphlet about Franklin be prepared and "be anonymously posted to all members of the Board of Trustees of Stanford, to selected alumni, and other appropriate

By Bill Evers

The revelation over two years ago in the Stanford Daily that the FBI had been harassing a radical Stanford English professor is corroborated in newly available documents.

The April 30, 1974 story said that a censored FBI memorandum that had just been released showed that the FBI had in December 1970 considered implementing a disruption plan directed against the political activities of since-fired English

individuals including the governor, senators and congressmen of California."

The San Francisco office replied on May 20 that "a circular made from duplicating MONTGOMERY'S article . . . is being distributed in the Palo Alto-Stanford area." The circular advised that additional copies could be obtained from P.O. Box 3597, Stanford, California, which the FBI noted "is a Box on the Stanford University campus utilized by the Young Americans for Freedom."

Menace

The local FBI requested authority to distribute copies of both the March 23 article and another Montgomery article that appeared incidentally on May

29, four days after Hoover's request for a pamphlet or brochure on Franklin. The two articles would be mailed to "selected individuals having apparent influence over the Stanford staff and faculty, urging them to use this influence to rid Stanford of this menace to the democratic future of their children."

Apparently Hoover approved the mailing. On October 21, 1969 the San Francisco office reported that since June 1969 both Montgomery articles had been sent to the trustees, selected alumni and local political figures. Again the FBI noted that the mailing "appears to have its origin with . . . the Young Americans for Freedom."

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'Daily' analysis proven right

Prof. H. Bruce Franklin

Documents obtained from the FBI since December 1975 by the Colorado chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union in response to requests made under the federal Freedom of Information Act now confirm the Daily's story.

The 1974 story had been sparked by a discovery by Leonard Siegel, a member of the Pacific Studies Center research group in Redwood City. Siegel told the Daily that while examining a set of recently released FBI documents, he realized that the topic of one of them was probably Franklin.

The documents had been released during March 1974 in heavily censored form by the Justice Department as a result of a Freedom of Information suit brought by NBC reporter Carl Stern.

The discovery in 1974 that an FBI disruption plan had been proposed with Franklin as its target was early evidence of systematic government harassment of Franklin. The extent of that harassment is only now apparent.

The pertinent FBI memo concerned a "disruption technique" which the FBI planned to use in December 1970 against Franklin "with the objective of neutralizing" the Revolutionary Union (now the Revolutionary Communist Party), a nationwide Maoist group.

The group which left the Revolutionary Union with Franklin immediately joined with a group of Chicago Maoists to form the now-defunct Venceremos organization, which was active on the San Francisco Peninsula from January 1971 through September 1973.

Franklin dismissal

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The FBI's May 20 memo requested "authority to prepare additional Xerox copies of the enclosed 3/29/69 circular and attach it to Xerox copies of the ED MONTGOMERY article dated 3/19/69." (Emphasis added.) The word "additional" indicates that the FBI participated in the preparation of the original circular. In a recent interview with the *Stanford Daily*, Harvey Hukari — 1969 chairman of the Stanford YAF group, now regional director for the Republican National Committee — said that he "never gave any approval" at the time for the FBI's use of the YAF post office box as a return address. He said YAF did not participate in the FBI mailings, and he said he planned to consult with the ACLU to see if he had grounds for a lawsuit.

The FBI was aware that their anonymous mailing had "little effect with the Trustees as FRANKLIN continues as Assistant (sic) Professor in the English Department and is still active in RL activities." Throughout 1970 they devised a number of so-called "counter-intelligence" operations with the objective of "neutralizing" Franklin and the RL. By the end of 1970 the FBI had not been successful.

However, early in 1971 Stan-

ford filed charges before the Faculty Advisory Board to fire Franklin for his alleged role in demonstrations against Henry Cabot Lodge and the U.S. invasion of Laos. We don't know whether the Advisory Board members received the FBI mailings or were influenced by anyone who did. But the FBI mailed Montgomery's articles to the trustees, who made the decision to fire Franklin.

On November 17, 1971 Hoover told the San Francisco BI office that four persons (including anti-war activist and former Stanford student Lenny Singell) had appeared as witnesses for Franklin.

For the past four years the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has been representing Franklin in his attempt to be reinstated at Stanford with back pay. The ACLU may be able to use the FBI memos to question the trustees about how they arrived at their decision to fire Franklin. Stanford is preparing to answer such questions. Bob Beyers, director of Stanford's News and Publications Service, has requested a copy of the FBI documents Franklin released to the press.

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—DANA DAVIS by Joe Bo. 7/21

H. Bruce Franklin