

SOMETHING TO BE THANKFUL FOR

On Oct. 6, Professor Harry Slochower of Brooklyn College was dismissed from the faculty by the New York City Board of Higher Education. He was relieved because he had refused to answer questions put to him by the McCarran investigating committee.

On Monday, Professor Edwin Burgum of New York University was suspended from the faculty by Chancellor Harry Heald because he had refused to testify before the same committee.

WE ARE THANKFUL it didn't happen here.

WE ARE THANKFUL Professors Heimlich and Finley were given, and are still being given, a chance to defend themselves.

WE ARE THANKFUL the hysteria that seems to have gripped New York educators has taken no foothold at Rutgers.

WE ARE THANKFUL President Jones convened a special Board of Review to consider the case.

WE ARE THANKFUL the Board has recommended further investigation by a board of faculty members.

WE ARE THANKFUL THESE MEN WERE NOT ADJUDGED GUILTY BEFORE THEY HAD A CHANCE TO PROVE THEIR INNOCENCE.

Brooklyn College and New York University have no such things to be thankful for.

Professor Slochower requested the Board to delay any action until they had a chance to fully examine his political and cultural record at a hearing where the charges against him would be openly stated. He said he would gladly answer any and all questions asked him at a hearing of the Board.

He was denied this request.

Professor Slochower hit the nail right on its ugly head with a statement of farewell to the students of Brooklyn College. His words are so potent that we quote portions of that note here:

"...This much is clear: I was not dismissed for anything I had done. I was not even charged with having held un-American views. I was sacrificed to a formula, rigidly and mechanically applied ...

"As I view the whole procedure, including the Board's perfunctory 'hearing,' I cannot but conclude that neither President Gideonse (of Brooklyn College) nor the Board members are active agents. For, behind the authoritarian blunder or the polite mask, I recognized a great fear ... Hence, the eagerness to show that they were ready, even readier than the McCarran committee, to destroy a whole lifetime of preparation. It took less than two weeks for a group of frightened people to dismiss me ..."

"They merely acted like mannequins performing in a coordinated totalitarian mode, disregarding all questions of content, of human motivation ...

"This is not a farewell. I am not thinking of the possibility that the courts will reverse the present, outrageous ruling. I have something more basic in mind. The critical and spiritual approach which I tried to communicate to you is not merely mine. It stems from and springs up wherever there is a genuine search for what may liberate the powers which slumber in man. They lie hidden in all, particularly those who are young of spirit.

"It has ever been the despair of the dark forces that no matter how much they destroy, there ever circulates new, fresh blood ... The more raw, the more monstrous or the more formalistic these forces operate, the more they need to awaken the living conscience and power of man.

"This ever-renewed conscience of the young is a guarantee that such outrage, whether manifested in open terror or hidden behind a rigidly applied formula, will not remain victorious. I am 52, but somehow I feel much younger now after what has happened. In this sense as well, I shall stay with you."