

Civil rights activist campaigns against 'racist' immigration bill

By Paul Ertelt
Of the Emerald

Civil libertarian Frank Wilkinson estimates the FBI has spent \$17 million since it began its surveillance of him 42 years ago.

"And I'm worth every penny of it," says the 70-year-old executive director emeritus of the National Committee Against Repressive Legislation. Wilkinson was in Eugene this week to speak against the Simpson/Mazoli immigration bill, which he says is racist legislation that will make it difficult for any Hispanic-American to get a job.

Wilkinson discussed this issue in front of about 25 people on campus Tuesday, choosing Eugene as his forum because it



Frank Wilkinson

is the home of Rep. Jim Weaver, D-Ore., a supporter of the bill. Wilkinson believes he can alter Weaver's position.

Because the immigration bill carries penalties for employers who hire "undocumented

workers," Wilkinson fears that employers will refuse to hire Hispanics for fear they might be illegal aliens.

The Democratic-controlled House of Representatives passed the measure June 20 and is expected to vote on an amended version sometime this summer.

Wilkinson also opposes the package of anti-crime bills recently passed by the Senate. Those bills, which must be approved by the House, are an assault on the Bill of Rights, he says.

The crime bills place limits on writs of habeas corpus, petitions which seek the prompt release of persons under custody. The proposed laws also allow for preventive detention of "dangerous" persons and establish federal death penalties.

Wilkinson is a veteran of battles against what he considers attacks on basic freedoms. In 1961 he spent 90 days in jail for refusing, on First Amendment grounds, to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee.

"The greatest right of the First Amendment is not the freedom of speech, but the freedom to be silent," he says.

Wilkinson says his most important battle was his opposition to HUAC, which was abolished in 1974. NCARL is a political information organization that was founded in 1961 by constitutional scholar Alexander Meikeljohn and civil libertarian Aubrey Williams. Although the organization often works in conjunction with the American Civil Liberties Union, it does not engage in litigation.

Wilkinson, who was born in Michigan and raised in Beverly Hills, Calif., says he was politically conservative when he was young and had planned to become a Methodist minister.

After his graduation from UCLA, his parents sent him to the Holy Land. There he got a view of the world that changed the direction of his life, he says.

"On Christmas Eve, there were so many beggars outside the site where they say Christ was born, I could not go into the Church of the Nativity," he says.

Returning to Los Angeles, Wilkinson met the Rev. Thomas J. O'Dwyer, director of charities for the Catholic archdiocese. O'Dwyer told Wilkinson "you did not have to go so far" to see human suffering.

"He drove me eight miles from my home to the ghetto of Watts," Wilkinson says. "There, conditions were equal to or worse than what I had seen in the Holy Land."

That same day, Wilkinson worked with O'Dwyer promoting construction of low-rent, integrated housing projects. In 1942 he joined the Los Angeles Housing Authority and managed an integrated project in Watts, but he was fired from that post when he refused to testify before the California Legislature.

It was during the 1940s that the FBI first became interested in Wilkinson, although he was not involved in any criminal activity. Wilkinson attributes this interest to then-FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover's dislike for integration.

Professor to teach in Europe

Allan Winkler, a University associate professor of history, has been named the first occupant of the John Adams Professorship in American Studies at the University of Amsterdam where he will teach and lecture the 1984-85 academic year.

Supported by a Distinguished Scholar Grant provided by the Netherlands America Commission for Educational Exchange, Winkler will teach a basic survey course in American history and a seminar on recent American topics. He also will lecture throughout the Netherlands and Europe.

An expert in post-World War II American history, Winkler graduated magna cum laude from Harvard University and earned his master's and doctoral degrees at Columbia and

Yale Universities, respectively. He held the Bicentennial Chair in American Studies at Helsinki University in Finland during 1978-79, and joined the University of Oregon faculty in 1979.

Winkler is the author of "The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information, 1942-45," and is completing work on three other books.

This summer, Winkler is using a University Faculty Research Award to study American atomic energy policy since 1960. He also is serving on a faculty committee overseeing the development of an American studies program which, if approved by the Oregon State Board of Higher Education, would begin in the fall of 1986.

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