

[ca. 1967]

ERNEST MAZEY, OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION, VISITS NMU
COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM
Northern Michigan University, Marquette, Michigan
November 3, 1967

The decision of Northern Michigan University's administration to give Dr. Robert F. McClellan a terminal contract is "one of the most flagrant violations of due process and academic freedom" that the American Civil Liberties Union has ever encountered, according to Ernest Mazey, Executive Director of the Michigan Chapter of that organization.

Mazey spoke the evening of Nov. 1 to members of the Marquette Committee for the Defense of Academic Freedom. He came to Marquette after seeing newspaper reports of the University's action and at the request of several NMU faculty members. At that meeting, and at a press conference the following morning, Mazey made the following comments on the situation.

I THE ISSUE

An instructor should be hired or fired "on the basis of his competency in the classroom," Mazey pointed out. Dr. McClellan's classroom performance has never been in question; Dr. Anthony Forbes, his Department Chairman until this year, called McClellan "a fine scholar and a brilliant teacher." The University's main reasons pertained to activities outside the classroom; but, according to Mazey, it is not only a professor's right to engage in such actions, "the teacher has a moral responsibility ... to participate in community affairs."

II ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY THE ACLU

Mazey said, "an out-of-court settlement of the McClellan case is our main objective." But if the University does not agree to a settlement the ACLU will be ready to go to court by Dec 7. "The ACLU will immediately request a court restraining order," he stated, "and formal suit will be filed a short time later." The charges would concern violations of the rights to free speech and due process, since the University's procedures were "improper under law"; furthermore, "libel with malice" will be charged in connection with accusations Johnson read over television.

III STUDENT AND FACULTY PROTESTS

Activities of CDAF thus far include: picketing of University services, peaceful demonstrations and rallies, faculty-student teach-outs, and various boycotts of formal classes. Mazey said the faculty has acted with "admirable restraint... under considerable provocation" and, "as far as (the Administration) warning the students that they are 'destroying the University,' it's a case of the pot calling the kettle black. The sole responsibility for this critical situation rests with the administration - it is they who can make or destroy the University."

SUPPORT OUR CAUSE BY SENDING LETTERS OF PROTEST TO ROMNEY. CONTRIBUTIONS FOR LEGAL DEFENSE ARE URGENTLY NEEDED AND WILL BE GREATLY APPRECIATED. SEND THEM TO: CDAF, STUDENT GOVERNMENT OFFICE, NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY, MARQUETTE, MICHIGAN