The Dark Side of the Cathedral of Learning: The Turner Case
by Richard P. Mulcahy

On June 30, 1934, Dr. Ralph Turner, professor of history at the University of Pittsburgh, did not expect to become embroiled in a controversy involving basic issues of academic freedom and due process, but his dismissal that day produced a case that rapidly escalated to involve local and state political leaders and the national office of the American Association of University Professors. At its heart were fundamental problems with the administration of the university, particularly in Dr. John G. Bowman’s concept of his role and prerogatives as chancellor.

That morning, Dr. John Oliver, chairman of the Department of History, told Turner that he had been dismissed from the university’s faculty with a year’s salary. Shocked, Turner pressed Oliver for further information, since his contract had just been renewed the month before. Oliver told Turner that if he wanted more information, he would have to speak with the dean of the college, Dr. Lee P. Sieg. Sieg was hardly more informative. He told Turner that his outside activities had resulted in severe criticism for the university, but refused to be more specific. He told Turner that if he wanted the full story, he would have to see Chancellor Bowman. Turner made an appointment, and on July 5th, he went to the chancellor’s office in the unfinished Cathedral of Learning.

The confrontation between these two men made a sharp contrast. Bowman looked every inch the ethereal college professor. He was a tall, thin, and shy man with grey hair and pince-nez, bearing a strong resemblance to Woodrow Wilson. Turner was a much younger and thickset man with broad shoulders, who resembled more the popular image of an iron puddler than a college professor. Turner told the A.A.U.P. investigating committee later how the interview went.

He asked what had happened between May 9 (when his contract
was renewed) and June 30 to cause his dismissal. Bowman responded, "Absolutely nothing." Turner pressed Bowman for reasons for his firing. Bowman told him that the university could carry on its policy better with him away from it. "There is discontent in the community." When Turner asked Dr. Bowman what he meant, the chancellor said that members of the Board of Trustees were discontented. Turner then asked, "Among what other groups in the community is there discontent?" In response Dr. Bowman tried to defuse the situation. In a conciliatory manner, he asked to treat Turner as a friend, but Turner rebuffed the chancellor's overture. "No, Dr. Bowman, this is official. Dr. Oliver and Dean Sieg referred me to you for an official explanation and I want it." He did not get it.1

Turner's firing reflected Bowman's values. Bowman, a highly conservative man, mirrored in his attitudes the desires of the university's Board of Trustees. The university's self-perpetuating board was made up almost entirely of members of the city's elite, who controlled Pittsburgh economically and, until just previously, politically. With the exception of two members, all of the trustees were listed in the city's upper class directories.2 What Bowman, and the men he repre-


The Bowman Files are part of the holdings of the University of Pittsburgh Archives, Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh. Since it has been more than 25 years since Dr. Bowman stepped down as chancellor, there are no restrictions on the files, and they are fully open for research.

2 This is borne out by checking the list of board members given in the university's General Catalog with the Pittsburgh Blue Book and the Pittsburgh Social Register. There are some difficulties here since the General Catalog was put out yearly, whereas the collection of the upper class registers in Hillman Library is episodic. However, for these purposes, proximate dates will suffice.

Of the twenty-eight trustees listed in the General Catalog for 1912-1913, twenty were listed in the Blue Book for that year. The Social Register for that year was unavailable. Of the thirty trustees on the board in 1934, when Turner was dismissed, twenty-six were listed in the Blue Book for 1932, seventeen were listed in the Social Register for the same year. These figures held constant for the 1939-1940 board, so that again twenty-six were listed in the Blue Book for 1940, and seventeen were listed in the Social Register for the same year. These figures were again repeated for the 1949-1950 board. For the board which sat in 1960-1961, the number of board members listed in the upper class directories did go down, but the members who were listed in the Blue Book for 1960 were still a strong majority. On this board, out of twenty-nine trustees, nineteen were listed in the 1960 Blue Book, and fourteen were listed in the Social Register for the same year.

What also should be noted are the surnames which repeat. Among these are: Mellon, Scaife, Follansbee, Lockhart, Falk, and Heinz. The names which appear consistently from 1913 to 1961 are: Mellon, Scaife, Follansbee, and
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presented, wanted was a university which produced graduates who respected authority, the economic status quo, and deferential social relationships. Turner's teachings and activities outside the university were the antithesis of this.

Turner had been born on a farm near Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He received both his bachelor's and Master of Arts degrees from the University of Iowa. After finishing at Iowa, he taught at Cedar Rapids High School for two years. Turner went on for his doctorate at Columbia University, and joined the University of Pittsburgh faculty in 1925. He was an active scholar. Aside from journal articles, he published a textbook, *America in Civilization*, in 1925, and a biography of James S. Buckingham, which was an edited version of his Ph.D. dissertation, in 1933. He became popular with his students, most of whom regarded him as a challenging and dynamic teacher.3

In the city itself, Turner made a name for himself as a social activist because of his work for the Pennsylvania Security League. The P.S.L. was an alliance of civic, religious, and labor organizations that actively agitated for the passage of a comprehensive program of social legislation for Pennsylvania. Formed after the stock market crash in 1929, the league had been instrumental in gaining popular support for Governor Gifford Pinchot's Little New Deal. Turner ultimately became state chairman of the league.

Under his initiative, the league expanded its activities including publication in 1933 of a statewide blacklist of legislators who voted against liberal measures. This caused considerable resentment against Turner. Turner left the league, however, when questioned by Deans Sieg and James Steele Gow whether he intended to follow a political or a scholarly career. Gow told him the administration felt that he was not "a big enough man to follow both careers." Because of the uni-

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3 Proceedings Before a Committee of the House of Representatives to Investigate the University of Pittsburgh (hereafter cited as Proceedings), vol. 3, 377.

The Proceedings is the multi-volume transcript of the testimony given during the investigation of the university in April and May 1935 by the state house's Committee on Appropriations. The transcript is full and complete. However, it was never handled by the state printing office. Rather, it is in typescript and so lacks an issue date and reference numbers, as well as an index or table of contents. Hillman Library has two sets of this transcript.

versity's concern, Turner agreed to end his political activities. During this particular interview, Dean Sieg asked Turner if he had been aware that some political leaders considered running him for mayor of Pittsburgh on a third-party ticket. Turner claimed to be unaware of this activity by his local allies.4

Because of his local popularity, his dismissal from the university received considerable publicity when the story broke on July 5, 1934. Many labor leaders and liberal politicians were indignant. David Lawrence immediately called for an investigation of the university by the state legislature. Both Governor Pinchot and Pittsburgh Congressman Henry Ellenbogen lent their support to Turner. In a letter to Chancellor Bowman, Pinchot said Turner's dismissal was an example of the way the purposes of the university had been perverted to meet the desires of a small group of men. Pinchot went on to say that if the chancellor wanted the university to cater to Pittsburgh's wealthy class, these people should finance the university, and relieve the state of the burden. Although the university was not state-related, it was receiving a grant from the state every year that amounted to a quarter of its operating budget. In closing, the governor said, "By becoming a professor in the University of Pittsburgh, an American does not lose his rights either as an American or a Pennsylvanian."

Congressman Ellenbogen, who had ensured Civil Works Administration funds for completion of the Cathedral's facade, was more caustic. In a letter, the congressman demanded that the chancellor explain why Turner was dismissed. Dr. Bowman complied with the request, and sent an open letter to the congressman, saying Turner had been let go because he displayed a flippant attitude towards religion in his classroom.5 Governor Pinchot, among others, found the explanation weak and told Dr. Bowman that he did not believe it. At the same time, the governor said the university would be investigated during the next legislative session if necessary.6

The only major political leader who supported Dr. Bowman was Mayor William N. McNair. In a statement to the Pittsburgh Sun-

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The Telegraph, the mayor damned the "socialistic and communistic professors" found in American universities. He went on to say, "They ought to get rid of a lot more of them. It was a fine thing to fire Dr. Turner." McNair was clearly responding to Lawrence’s support of Turner. Over the previous year and a half, McNair and Lawrence’s Democratic organization had broken because of the mayor’s eccentric behavior and defiance of the organization while in office. McNair’s disagreement with Lawrence over the Turner matter was part of their struggle, and the mayor went to great lengths to make the point. In an insulting letter which he sent to Lawrence, McNair referred to Turner as a "pink professor" just like Roosevelt’s "brain trusters," supported by the tax dollars of "real Americans." Saying Turner should have been fired years before and ought to be watched by the secret service, McNair told Lawrence, "Keep out of the Turner deal unless you support his dismissal." 7

The Pittsburgh Press, the then-current liberal newspaper, staunchly supported Turner. As soon as the news of the dismissal became public, the paper ran an editorial entitled "Triumph and Tragedy." In it, the Press called for Bowman’s resignation. It argued that although the university had benefited materially by Bowman’s administration, it had experienced intellectual shrinkage. The editors concluded:

\[...\] and so, as the material structure grew the soul was lost. ... A university cannot function on the same ethical principles of a chamber of commerce. Real knowledge is the product of thought — the sort of thought that is inspired in students by men who themselves think different things, and who enjoy intellectual liberty. 8

The other newspapers in the city, the Sun-Telegraph and the Post-Gazette, did not express any editorial opinions at this point. This is surprising since the Sun-Telegraph, as part of the Hearst chain, disapproved of radicals of any kind. While remaining editorially silent, the Sun-Telegraph slanted the story in more subtle ways. In its July 6, 1934, edition, while covering the case, the paper ran a very unflattering picture of Turner. 9

Dr. Bowman had become the university’s chancellor in 1921. His credentials were impressive. Like Turner, he came from Iowa and had done his undergraduate and graduate work at the University of Iowa. He was the recipient of several honorary doctorates. In addition, Dr. Bowman had served as the secretary of the Carnegie Foundation.

7 Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph, July 6, 1934; Bowman Files, F.F. 136, Mayor William McNair to David Lawrence, July 6, 1934.
8 Pittsburgh Press, July 9, 1934.
9 Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph, July 6, 1934.
director of the American College of Surgeons, and president of the University of Iowa.\textsuperscript{10}

Despite Dr. Bowman's quiet, charming appearance, he had a reputation as a ruthless and highly autocratic administrator. When he assumed the chancellorship in 1921, the university was in difficulty. Its physical plant was undersized, and it was deeply in debt. To remedy the problem, the chancellor initiated a cost cutting program which included the dismissal of faculty. Dr. Bowman based dismissal on personal wealth or alternative support options, instead of scholarly performance. According to Dr. Bowman, this was the most humane option open to him. At the same time, however, the new chancellor unilaterally abrogated the university's by-laws on academic tenure. These by-laws had been established by Dr. Bowman's predecessor, Chancellor Samuel B. McCormick, in 1919, and spelled out exact regulations dealing with academic rank and tenure, and it provided precise guidelines on the dismissal of faculty members and faculty rights of appeal to the Board of Trustees. As written, these by-laws compared favorably with the statement on academic freedom and tenure of the national organization of the A.A.U.P. Dr. Bowman replaced the by-laws with a system of single-year contracts.\textsuperscript{11}

Dr. Bowman's other autocratic actions included issuing an edict against smoking on campus, forbidding any talk about Coal and Iron Police brutality or the poor living conditions of Pennsylvania coal miners, and resisting any faculty involvement in administrative matters. He placed the student newspaper, the Pitt Weekly, under strict censorship and ordered a humorous student newspaper known as the Pitt Panther closed down, since he felt it was tasteless.\textsuperscript{12} While these actions affected mostly students, Dr. Bowman was equally as demanding with the university's faculty.

In the testimony he gave during a state investigation, the chancellor outlined his views on academic freedom. He believed the parents who sent their children to the university expected such values as loyalty

\textsuperscript{10} University of Pittsburgh General Catalog, 1934, 1-5; Proceedings, vol. 5, 763.


\textsuperscript{12} Raymond F. Howes, Low Point at Pitt: A Study of the Loss of Academic Integrity (Riverside, Calif.: printed privately in a limited edition of 200 copies), 4, 11.
to the government and respect for authority to be taught. A professor's
duty, therefore, meant avoiding anything which negated these values.
Older, seasoned professors understood this, but younger, less experi-
enced men should learn caution:

I think at least it was very bad taste for a young man to go out from the
University of Pittsburgh, where the feeling ran high in the community, and
involve the university in that discussion [a taxi strike]. Very bad taste; and
I don't like that and a young man attempting that too many times would be
a common nuisance and I would ask him to get out.

One former professor at the university said the chancellor's aversion
to faculty concern over controversial matters included discussions of
free trade, confiscation of wealth, or enforcing anti-trust laws.  
These were not the only criteria Dr. Bowman used to judge faculty. He also evaluated personal style. Little things, such as whether a man's
necktie matched his suit, or if he wore a hat, were important factors in
his eyes. To Dr. Bowman, personal taste reflected profoundly on an
individual's personality.

The backdrop to all of this was the chancellor's campaign to build
and complete the Cathedral of Learning. While Dr. Bowman saw the
Cathedral as a symbol of the university's future, the trustees were
not enthusiastic about the project when he first presented it. They did
not want the university to take on the high costs the project would
require. Dr. Bowman nevertheless went ahead with raising the funds
needed to buy the land and to construct the building. With initial costs
covered by personal subscription and grants, the Cathedral's construc-
tion began in 1926. Work ceased in 1929 when individual pledges stopped, and later campaigns fell short of their goals. Incomplete, the
Cathedral lacked floors and the facade for its first three stories. Eventually, the facade was completed through a Civil Works Admin-
istration grant in 1932. Finishing the Cathedral became Bowman's pri-
mary goal, and he directed all of the university's resources into it. He
staged periodic "Complete the Cathedral" campaigns, the first of
which included an appeal to Pittsburgh school children to donate a
dime and buy a brick for it.

For many observers, Bowman's attitudes towards academic freedom
and his desire to finish the Cathedral became fused. These people be-
lieved the chancellor repressed academic freedom and kept the faculty
out of social issues since he feared offending his millionaire trustees.

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14 Bowman Files, F.F. 139, Statement on the Testimony of Ralph E. Turner by
Dean J. S. Gow.
If this happened, the Cathedral project would be jeopardized. If these opinions were correct to a point. Because of the chancellor's conservative outlook, he would probably have sought to keep his faculty out of such issues, well apart from the Cathedral project. However, completing the Cathedral heightened Dr. Bowman's attitudes and made him even more sensitive. The combination meant trouble.

Problems at the University of Pittsburgh had been reported since 1925. In that year, the national office of the American Association of University Professors learned that the chancellor had asked the entire physics staff to resign. Concerned about the story, the president of the A.A.U.P.'s national organization wrote to the chancellor requesting an explanation. Dr. Bowman complied, saying the department was factionalized; disturbed by the situation, he ordered an end to the infighting, saying any man could resign if he was upset. This explanation satisfied the association's president and he dropped the matter.

A greater furor arose four years later. The Liberal Club had scheduled a meeting at which Professor Harry Elmer Barnes would speak about Thomas Mooney and Warren K. Billings. Their case was one of the major liberal causes of the 1920s. Both men were radical labor leaders who had been accused of throwing a bomb at a California police parade. Later, the principal witnesses for the prosecution admitted that their testimonies were false. This convinced the judge who presided at the trial that a miscarriage of justice had occurred. Yet the authorities in California had neither freed the men, nor moved for a retrial. Professor Barnes, a nationally known and distinguished historian of the progressive school, had taken up their cause.

The university's administration had granted permission for the club to hold the meeting. The club had printed handbills saying the meeting's purpose was to demand the release of the two labor leaders. Because of the handbill's wording, the administration withdrew its permission to hold the meeting, saying the club was engaging in propaganda activities. The club's leaders held it anyway, and were ordered off university property twice. Finally, the club held its meeting in a parking lot, with Professor Barnes speaking from a car's running board. On April 24, 1929, the administration ordered the club to dis-

band. The club's leaders defied the order, and three of them were expelled: William Albertson, Arthur McDonald, and Frederick Woltman, who was a graduate assistant in philosophy.17

A controversy immediately developed. Many letters from across the country demanded that the chancellor explain his actions and denounced him and his behavior. Among the parties who intervened was the national organization of the A.A.U.P. It looked into the matter because of Woltman's dismissal, since it had been informed that he was a faculty member rather than a graduate assistant. According to the A.A.U.P.'s findings, the club did behave in an insubordinate manner, but the punishment was too harsh. The A.A.U.P. recommended that Dr. Bowman consult the faculty more often, and take it into his confidence. By doing this, further such incidents could be avoided.18

This was not the end of the matter, however. Arthur McDonald sued the university for his reinstatement, on the grounds the chancellor did not have the authority to dismiss him summarily. Henry Ellenbogen, solicitor for the Pittsburgh A.C.L.U., took the case and used this argument in a letter to Dr. Bowman. Dr. Bowman easily dispatched the case. On June 7, Albertson and McDonald appeared with Ellenbogen before a special meeting of the trustees. The board gave retroactive and unanimous approval to Bowman's action.19

Dr. Bowman was further supported by the "better elements" in the city. Letters of congratulations came in from such individuals as Samuel Harden Church, President of the Carnegie Institute, Franklin Briggs, Superintendent of the Thorn Hill School, and the Reverend A. G. Maclennan of the Shadyside United Presbyterian Church. One enthusiastic supporter, the Reverend G. E. Powell, had this to say:

Go to it! The people are with you in safeguarding our young people at the University from the vices of Communism, agnosticism, radicalism, and a host of "otherisms." . . . Hip-hip-hip-oooooooorrrrrr-aaaaaaaaaaaa!!!!!!!%%% $$$$$$$# # # # & & % % % ! ! ! ! (Don't yez hear me holler?), Yours, Loyally and lovingly [signed] G. E. Powell

Of the letters opposing his actions, only the A.A.U.P.'s report upset Dr. Bowman since he felt it was biased.20

20 Bowman Files, F.F. 133, Samuel Harden Church to Chancellor Bowman, May
Contemporary with the Liberal Club case were problems with faculty members whose outside activities the chancellor disliked. An economics professor, Colston E. Warne, was harassed over his views and statements on the inhumanity of the Pennsylvania coal industry. The administration told Warne that unless he discontinued his "propaganda" activities, which were "out of touch with the spirit of Pittsburgh," he would "have no place at the University." In another case, Dr. Ellison Chalmers had involved himself in a taxi strike in the city. Bowman found this upsetting and admitted during the state investigation of the university he had given Chalmers a traveling fellowship to get rid of him.  

Dr. Bowman had the support of the trustees. He administered the university according to his standards, with their consent. But his behavior eventually produced a major crisis: the Turner case. Why did Bowman dismiss Turner, especially when he had just renewed Turner's contract that May? There is little concrete evidence that Turner was antireligious in his classes at the university. According to William F. Buckley, he did have this reputation years later when he was on the Yale faculty. After Turner was dismissed, some of his former students signed affidavits about the issue. One, filed by Charles A. Rucks, stated that Turner compared baptism to hog wallow, and that he could turn a staunch Catholic boy into an agnostic in two years. Turner denied during the state's investigation of the university that he ever said such a thing. As part of its case, the university produced a set of notes on a lecture Turner gave on January 18, 1930, entitled "Why Religion?" The address was antireligious, and Turner stated the notes gave a fair rendering of what he had said. But the lecture had been part of a series on religion sponsored by the Y.W.C.A., who asked Turner to present the antireligious side.  

Turner may have made snide comments about religion in his classes. Dr. Oliver said he received many verbal complaints about such com-
ments in the four to five years before his dismissal. The university also solicited the assistance of various city clergymen to make the charge stick. In a memo to Dr. Bowman, dated August 16, 1934, a close associate of the chancellor wrote that some of the city’s clergymen had been contacted and were willing to help. They secured statements from parishioners who had studied under Turner and encouraged their colleagues to write letters of complaint. Dr. Bowman had claimed before this date that he already had stacks of letters complaining about Turner from parents and clergymen.\(^\text{23}\)

If antireligious attitudes were an insufficient (and by most modern standards, inadmissible) reason for Turner’s dismissal, what was? Turner believed its roots lay in a faculty petition he signed and delivered to Bowman. Signed by fifteen faculty members, the petition asked the chancellor to reconsider his actions concerning the Liberal Club. According to Turner, this made him a “marked man,” and all of the faculty who signed it eventually lost their jobs. Turner may have believed this to be true, but the state committee which investigated the university found that only two had been fired.\(^\text{24}\)

The petition alone may not have marked Turner, but there were other incidents over the course of fourteen months, from February 1933 to April 1934, that did. The first has been mentioned: Turner’s work for the Pennsylvania Security League. Turner joined it in February 1933, and left it in the late spring of the same year. When he dismissed Turner, Dr. Bowman said he had not been aware of Turner’s social activism. Yet he testified during the state investigation that he did not care for groups such as the P.S.L., and discouraged faculty members from joining them since he felt they interfered with class work. Since the chancellor wanted the faculty to avoid controversial social and community issues, Turner’s work for the P.S.L. could not please him.\(^\text{25}\)

The second incident also took place in February 1933. A group of students asked Turner to preside over a meeting of the Friends of the Soviet Union. Turner agreed but could not actually attend. A number of handbills announcing the meeting, which listed Dr. Ralph Turner of the University of Pittsburgh as presiding officer, were nevertheless printed and distributed. The local branch of the Sons of the American

\(^{23}\) Bowman Files, F.F. 76, handwritten excerpt from Dr. Oliver’s testimony from the Proceedings; F.F. 136, memo to Chancellor Bowman from Carlton G. Ketchum, Aug. 16, 1934.


Revolution protested to Dr. Bowman. The administration admonished Turner to be more careful, since "fellow traveler" organizations tried to legitimize themselves by using university professors as fronts. Later, Turner encountered Dr. Bowman and apologized for the incident, saying he had not wanted to do the university any harm and had only agreed to do it as a personal favor. Bowman said to forget it, but indicated to Turner it had caused him great trouble.26

The third incident was the most crucial. After Turner left the P.S.L., he promised to refrain from similar involvements. During the following school year he lived up to this promise. Then on April 24, 1934, he delivered a paper entitled "History in the Making in Western Pennsylvania" to the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. He was highly critical of laissez-faire liberalism, and also spoke about the political and economic control of Pittsburgh and the surrounding area by the local business elite. His talk was not well received, and several important people who attended the meeting complained about it, including former Governor John S. Fisher. Unfortunately, the incident coincided with one of the chancellor's "Complete the Cathedral" campaigns.27

Turner's dismissal came two months later. According to Dr. Bowman, he decided to dismiss Turner in March, but waited in order to avoid the bad publicity it would cause so as to protect the Cathedral drive. Therefore, he renewed Turner's contract in May, and the dismissal came after the drive was over. Dr. Bowman claimed that he had presented these plans to the trustees during their March meeting, but no official records or minutes were kept of the meeting.28

All of these factors suggest that Turner's dismissal concerned his social and political views at least as much as his religious attitudes. Too much happened that involved Turner in those fourteen months for Dr. Bowman to ignore. He became impatient with Turner, and the April paper was the last straw. Because of the trouble it caused, Bowman believed Turner was a nuisance and dismissed him.

The Board of Trustees gave the chancellor full support. One trustee, in a letter to the chancellor, said he had complete confidence in Dr. Bowman. He had not heard any criticism of the chancellor from any-

one he could respect. He also used his influence to assure that the chancellor received a fair hearing. In a letter to the Post-Gazette, which he asked not to be printed, he said the paper had supported the university in the past and should do so now. Going further he said,

I feel strongly that Dr. Bowman's judgment in the present matter can be trusted much better than the wild claims of labor leaders or others attempting to make political capital out of the issue.

The Post-Gazette did not make any editorial comments at this point, but later consistently sided with Dr. Bowman.29

Not long after the Turner matter began, the national organization of the A.A.U.P. decided to investigate and asked Dr. Bowman for his cooperation. The chancellor did cooperate, but asked the association not to place Dr. George Sabine on the investigating committee. Sabine had been on the committee which looked into the Liberal Club case, and Dr. Bowman felt he was prejudiced. The A.A.U.P. complied, and the committee consisted of Drs. Ralph E. Himstead, A. B. Wolfe, and James B. Bullett. The committee's task was to look into both Turner's case and the state of tenure policy at the university. The committee met from August 9 to November 5, 1934, and it claimed in its report that relations between it and Dr. Bowman had been "most cordial." 30

Cordiality aside, the report found for Turner. It said the committee found no basis to support the charge of Turner's flippancy towards religion. As for tenure and the faculty, the report pointed out that the turnover in faculty at the university under Bowman's administration had become "alarmingly large." In the preceding five years, eighty-four professors had voluntarily left the university. In the same years, twenty-five professors were dismissed for various reasons, including economy. Many of these people had taught at the university for a number of years. The report said the faculty was gripped in fear.31

The committee also commented on Dr. Bowman. Although it said the chancellor was a personally charming and retiring man, it claimed his emphasis on the Cathedral project bordered on obsession. Describing this, the committee said in its original unedited report,

In the world of the existing Pittsburgh with its extremes of riches and poverty, its unrelieved dirtiness and ugliness, its ruthless materialism and

29 Bowman Files, F.F. 136, Alan M. Scaife to Chancellor Bowman, July 9, 1934; Alan M. Scaife to the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, July 9, 1934.
individualism, its irrepressible industrial conflicts, its lack of any integrating principle other than the sign of a dollar, the Chancellor moves with one driving motive: to wring from the community the money essential to the development and support of the kind of university which his mind conceives as the ideal for this particular city.

This statement was dropped from the final version of the report which appeared in the A.A.U.P.’s Bulletin in March 1935.12

Dr. Bowman was openly hostile to the report. The A.A.U.P.’s national organization sent him and Turner unedited copies of the report as a courtesy, to offer the opportunity to make factual corrections. When Dr. Bowman received his, the association stated specifically that the report’s contents were confidential until the association published the final version in its Bulletin. Dr. Bowman wrote the association about the report, and upbraided it for casting aspersions on the university and the city. As for the association’s request that the unedited report be kept in confidence, Dr. Bowman said,

I am not aware of any mandate from your body to this respect. I refer it in plain duty to our executive committee, together with a copy of the letter. As for the contents of the report being confidential, therefore such an injunction is necessarily without force.

Dr. Bowman released the unedited report to the newspapers. All three of the city’s major papers carried the story.13

The Press and the Post-Gazette editorialized about the report. The Press praised it as insightful in its dissection of Dr. Bowman’s personality. The Post-Gazette said the report openly insulted the city. Making a complex reference to Shakespeare’s Much Ado About Nothing, the paper concluded the committee “did not need anybody to write them down as asses, they did the job themselves to perfection.” 14

The situation at the University of Pittsburgh troubled the A.A.U.P. It voted unanimously at its national meeting to place the university on its “black list” or list of ineligible institutions on December 31, 1935, despite an appeal to reconsider by Dr. Marion McKay, the association’s chapter president at the university. The university tried to minimize the importance of the action. When questioned about the university’s inclusion on the black list, Dr. Bowman said, “What of

"Ineligibility." It said only 10% of the faculty belonged to the association, and ineligibility meant only that new members could not join the university's chapter.35

Although the black listing damaged the university's standing in the long run, it could be dismissed at the time as a minor problem. The state legislature's decision to investigate the university was harder to ignore, since the legislature provided part of the university's funding. There had been rumblings about this in Harrisburg when the Turner case began. Soon after the opening of the legislature's 1935-1937 session, Representative Eugene Eberharter introduced a resolution on February 19, 1935, which was adopted in March. Eberharter told the newspapers his motive: before the university received any more funds, he wanted conditions there examined. Hearings held by the Committee on Appropriations took place in Pittsburgh between April 5 and May 11, 1935. At the hearings, witnesses were examined by J. Alfred Wilner for the "Liberal Group," a coalition of anti-Bowman forces, and Charles F. C. Arensberg for the university.36

The committee criticized the university in its report. It agreed with the A.A.U.P.'s estimation of the university's handling of the Liberal Club incident, but it could not arrive at a final decision on the Turner matter. The testimony simply conflicted too much. The committee did say that in at least two cases academic freedom had been violated by the administration, but other cases presented before the committee were too muddled for it to make a clear decision. The report most criticized the university for its lack of a tenure policy and its system of electing members to its Board of Trustees. It called for two changes: the reinstatement of the 1919 tenure rules, and the end of the self-perpetuating system of election to the Board of Trustees. The committee recommended that ten of the trustees be elected directly from and by the alumni, and five be appointed by the governor. Dr. Bowman finally accepted a modified version of this plan in 1937 in which all fifteen would be elected by the alumni.37

Governor George H. Earle, who had succeeded Pinchot, had to place considerable pressure on Dr. Bowman to accept the change. Simply, the governor presented the chancellor with two choices: either accept the proposed reform, or lose the state funding for the university. At first, Dr. Bowman's refusal was fully supported by the board, but

36 Legislative Report, 5; Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph, Feb. 21, 1935.
37 Legislative Report, 22-23, 24-25.
when finally confronted with reality, the board and Dr. Bowman re-
lented.\textsuperscript{38} By this time, however, the worst damage had been done. The university had received a huge amount of bad publicity because of the Turner case, the black listing, and related matters.

When the Turner matter exploded, the people who opposed Dr. Bowman had hoped that the case would be an axial point for the university. Uppermost in the minds of such people as Governors Pinchot and Earle, and David Lawrence was the reduction of the influence of the city’s elite on university policy. The way to do this seemed clear enough: democratize the selection process for half the trustees. This was a reform which failed. Although Dr. Bowman and the board bowed to the governor’s wishes, by the 1960s the composition of the board had not changed substantially. The majority of the trustees were still listed in the city’s upper class directories and were either related to people who sat on the board in 1934 or were even the same people.\textsuperscript{39} This is probably the result of alumni apathy concerning board elections and the possibly prohibitive effort of running for a trusteeship.

Nonetheless, the Turner case did have its positive effects. It underscored to Dr. Bowman that he was not omnipotent. It made clear to him and future chancellors that faculty rights to free expression and academic freedom had to be respected. A professor could not be dismissed simply because his views were unpopular with certain people. Although the Turner case was a painful matter for the university and hurt the university in the years immediately following the case, it did settle the issue of academic freedom and tenure. Thus, the case was a positive good for the university in the long run. During the succeeding Fitzgerald administration, the university was removed from the A.A.U.P.’s blacklist (1947).\textsuperscript{40} The faculty was also given a greater voice in the university’s administration. Rufus Fitzgerald’s repair of the wreckage caused by the Turner case created the foundation from which a fine institution of higher learning could ultimately be built.

\textsuperscript{38} The New York Times, Dec. 9, 1936, Feb. 18, 1937.
\textsuperscript{39} See footnote 2.
\textsuperscript{40} Pittsburgh Press, July 14, 1947.