The charge by Rabbi Benjamin Schultz that of the 700 members of the Brooklyn College staff there are 18 with Communist connections was described on Monday morning by President Harry D. Gideonse as being largely a rehash of the findings of the Rapp-Coudert Legislative investigation of a dozen years ago. "The evidence at the time" Pres. Gideonse stated "was deemed to be inadequate to warrant legal action" and he pointed out that the document submitted by Rabbi Schultz adds nothing that would warrant legal action at this time.

"I have explicitly and frequently stated that I would welcome the cooperation of any agency that might be able to supply data which would be legally valid" the Brooklyn College head pointed out. He underscored his conviction that allegation is insufficient as a basis either in a legal hearing under court jurisdiction or under the provisions of the tenure law which protects appointees on the college staff.

Dr. Gideonse also pointed out that while in the document on the teachers originally investigated at the time of the Rapp-Coudert inquiry the statement is made that they refused to testify, the covering letter explicitly states that "it is pertinent to mention that they testified later". They testified, Dr. Gideonse pointed out, when it was judicially established that a sub-committee of one member of the legislative committee could take testimony.

The statement by President Gideonse follows:
"We have almost 700 members in the various staffs of Brooklyn College. Rabbi Schultz's "research" refers to 18 of them. The "pro-communist listings" are largely the result of a rehash of material covered in the index of the report of the Rapp-Coudert investigation which was conducted a dozen years ago. Fifteen of the eighteen teachers mentioned were examined by the Rapp-Coudert Committee. The evidence at the time was deemed to be inadequate to warrant legal action, and Rabbi Schultz offers no significant corroborative evidence. We are governed by the New York State tenure law which calls for rigorous conditions of due process, and cases which were not deemed legally sufficient for action by the Rapp-Coudert Committee are unlikely to stand up under the courts' interpretations of the tenure law or under the ruling of the State Commissioner of Education. In the defense of American institutions we should make it clear that we understand their nature.

"I have explicitly and frequently stated my criticism of communist abuse of free institutions, including public education. We have always welcomed the cooperation of any organization that might be able to supply data which would be legally valid. The activity of the Joint Committee Against Communism, has - to put it very mildly - not been characterised by the care and caution which it would be reasonable to expect from folks who expect others to act in a responsible and official capacity. Their present summary of data would not constitute a valid basis for action under the statutes and official rulings that govern us. The list includes Prof. Belle Zeller, but when the same committee protested the promotion of Dr. Zeller last fall it gave information to the public press that could be easily refuted by checking the record of the Rapp-Coudert investigation itself."
"When the committee was formally invited, before the Board of Higher Education approved Dr. Zeller's promotion, to submit its information no data were submitted. The current press release simply repeats the same discredited material. The statement that Prof. Zeller refused to testify eleven years ago is easily refuted by the official record which shows that she did testify as soon as the legal authority of the legislative committee had been clarified. The record also shows that the Board of Higher Education, following a lengthy and searching investigation, unanimously approved Dr. Zeller's promotion to the rank of associate professor on January 1, 1944. No new evidence has been presented in the press release from Rabbi Schultz.

"Some of the material in the current statement contradicts itself. In the case of several of these teachers it is stated in the study of their records that they refused to testify before the Rapp-Coudert committee, but the covering letter explicitly states that 'it is pertinent to mention that they testified later.' If they did testify after the judicial clearance of testimony before a sub-committee of one member, why mention the fact at all?

"In the 'research' material cited in the cases of the three individuals who were not - as far as I know - questioned in the Rapp-Coudert investigation it can be learned that one of the 'pro-communist listings' states that this teacher participated in a conference on unemployment insurance seventeen years ago. The colleague in question is a specialist in economics and since the United States government and the State of New York now have unemployment insurance on the books it might be concluded that the members of the Congress and of the New York State Legislature are even more guilty of questionable practice. Should we laugh or should we weep at such an exhibition of political and social illiteracy."
"If attendance at a meeting on unemployment insurance, held seventeen years ago, is enough to include a name on Rabbi Schultz's summary of 'pro-communist listings' what shall we conclude about Sen. Wagner, Pres. Roosevelt and Gov. Dewey, who actually put such legislation on the statute books. If it suffices to prove 'pro-communist' tendencies to cite 'intention to attend' a meeting in the purposes of which Communists found themselves in agreement with Democrats and Republicans, shall we then conclude that Winston Churchill is pro-communist because he attended a meeting at Yalta sponsored by the Soviet Government and attended by Stalin himself?

"Another colleague taught a course in Child Development - a course recommended by the Mayor's Committee on the Care of Young Children - several years ago in a school which has been clearly identified as communist-related although it is admitted that in earlier years it was an effective 'transmission belt' for contact with people who had no communist affiliations. In the third case the 'research' has revealed the 'subversive' fact that the teacher signed a statement critical of neutrality legislation in 1937 and one calling for a boycott of Japanese trade in 1938. Whatever we may think today of the source of these statements, it remains true that many American citizens of unquestioned patriotic values shared these views at the time. Valid corroborative evidence is not cited in either of these cases. It is also stated that the last individual was a member, fifteen years ago, of an organization which is now recognized as communist-infiltrated, but this teacher's record also shows - and this is not cited by Rabbi Schultz - that he moved to dissolve the organization early in World War II when its infiltration became clear - and this occurred more than eleven years ago.

"Careless and irresponsible use of data of this sort actually hampers the activities of those of us who have been consistently and continuously concerned with combatting communist abuse of free institutions."