

SIMON FRASER ON STRIKE

BURNABY (CUP) — A strike by students and most of the faculty of Simon Fraser University's political science, sociology and anthropology department moved into its second week Thursday amid mounting attempts by the administration to smash the strike.

The strike began Sept. 24 in protest against a move by university president Kenneth Strand to clamp down on Canada's only democratically-run department. Students and faculty in the PSA department sit as equals on all department decisions, including hiring, firing and tenure of staff.

CHOICE VETOED

During the summer Strand vetoed the student-faculty choice for department chairman, Mordecai Breimberg, and overrode the department's democratic channels by imposing a five-man trusteeship on the department.

One of the trusteeship's first moves was to refuse tenure to several PSA professors, despite favourable recommendations from the department. One of those refused tenure was anthropologist Kathleen Gough Aberle, who has published more than 30 articles and books, including an essay in *The Dissenting Academy*, and has an international reputation.

STRIKE DECISION

The decision to strike was made Sept. 16 at a four-hour plenary session. More than 400 students and faculty voted to merge as one decision-making body until the administration trusteeship was removed. Less than a dozen members of the

500-man department voted against the move.

EXAMINATION

The strike became inevitable when Strand failed to meet a PSA deadline for negotiations, and instead issued a letter condemning the strike proposal and the planned teach-in on democracy in the university.

Strand also refused to negotiate with the department over three recommendations of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, which was called into the crisis.

The CAUT recommended an examination and review of the relationship between departments and the university, the setting of guidelines for departmental autonomy, and suspension of the trusteeship during the review.

NO PICKET LINES

The strike itself has none of the conventional atmosphere of picket lines obstructions. A statement issued from the department Wednesday evening said, "This does not involve confrontation among students and faculty."

"The focus of the strike is not to stop others outside PSA from going on with a bureaucratic education; rather by developing active and relevant learning and research as counter-course."

Those involved in the strike propose to "show an alternative to Strand's university." They say "others will be attracted, not coerced, to the alternative."

Among the alternatives are groups forming to do critiques of texts and course content in the social sciences, research

into a housing crisis in the area (including bus tours of housing developments), and a woman's caucus discussing action and research around such issues as child care centres, free schools, and "the housewife as nigger."

WIDE SUPPORT

The PSA department's fight has received wide support among other departments. Only two professors among the 16 PSA faculty members are totally opposed to the strike, while the history department has declared itself in support of the struggle.

The Geography Students Union, the executive of the SFU alumni association, and four of six lay members of the SFU academic senate have indicated support for the department.

In a move to crush the strikers, Strand warned Sept. 24 that faculty and other teachers who did not teach could be fired for breach of contract.

COURT INJUNCTIONS?

The administration is also considering the possibility of a court injunction to keep professors who are dismissed off campus.

Most of the striking faculty have indicated they will report for duty, but have urged students to boycott classes instead. Students will not be prevented from attending classes, however.

One PSA teaching assistant suggested that strikers attempt to initiate discussion in the continuing classes, and ask the students to vote on whether or not the issue of the strike should be debated during the class.

One of the strikers' demands is reinstatement of four professors who were in effect fired when they were not granted tenure and their contracts were not renewed. In a letter to the department, Strand denied that any faculty had been fired.

"Failure to renew a contract of limited term or a decision not to grant tenure at the end of a probationary period does not constitute firing," he said.

Breimberg termed Strand's argument "cunning linguistics". "We're soon to be without jobs, but we haven't been fired."

OUTCOME VITAL

The outcome of the strike could decide the future direction of Canadian higher education.

By attempting to smash the PSA department, Strand in effect has indicated that he will not tolerate democratic departments at his university and crudity of Strand's move would indicate that he is under

pressure from outside bodies — business, the B.C. government and possibly other university administrations.

"SERVE THE PEOPLE"

Strand is undoubtedly fully aware of the implications of his move, and of the direction that the PSA department was going. The department's stated orientation was to "serve the people of B.C. rather than the corporation and government elites."

To this end the department had a standing offer to do research for workers, impoverished people and other oppressed groups that do not have access to research facilities. At present most of the university's research is done for groups that can pay — government, corporations, the military.

Strand has clearly indicated his position in favor of the latter, the PSA for the former.

Who wins could determine which policy other universities in Canada will follow.

STUDENTS MARCH

Thousands of university students across the country Wednesday blockaded U.S. border points to protest the American nuclear blast in the Aleutian Islands scheduled for Thursday.

The student council of St. Thomas University voted to hold a one-hour protest at the American border Wednesday, while students from the Saint John campus presented U.S. Consul-General Wesley Jorgenson with a 52-name petition protesting the blast.

The student council at the University of British Columbia initiated the idea of blockading the border

crossing points for one hour in protest against the American action, "and in concern over possible environmental poisoning, disruption of ecological balance and danger of seismic disaster."

The UBC council sent telegrams to most other universities in the country urging similar action.

Most of the protests were peaceful, but there were six arrests and four injuries as drivers attempted to push through masses of students at Windsor and Sarnia. The arrests at Windsor included two motorists and four students. One student had to be taken to hospital.

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But At U.N.B.....

UNB student council executive refused to take part in a nation-wide student protest against American plans to explode a small nuclear bomb in the Aleutians. Council president, Mike Start, said Wednesday that "Acting within a day to this request is a bit foolish".

"One exhibitionist show of force doesn't seem relevant," he said. "We'll write a letter to Victoria saying we will be willing to support them, but not as one day-a-week radicals." "We sympathize completely, but it doesn't seem to mean anything."

The council was reported drafting a letter of protest to the U.S. government.

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