

Excalibur

Vol. 13 No. 2

York University Weekly Community Newspaper

Thursday, September 21, 1978



Gary Hershorn

Striking staffers on the lines Tuesday. As we go to press. (Tuesday midnight) the staff association and the administration aren't talking. It seems they may be trying to outlast each other.

However either side may make a new

proposal at any time, for all we know. Right now the two sides seem light years apart on the question of wages and fringe benefits. The staffers are determined to make some headway against inflation, while the administration claims there just isn't any money

to give the union the hike it wants. A lot may depend on student support for the strike and that's just getting underway. A student strike committee has been formed and its 50-odd members will have a literature table in Central Square for the duration of the strike.

Strikers picking up support

By Mark Monfette

The strike by almost 1,000 members of the York University Staff Association has won the unanimous support of all other university unions and several student councils.

Despite legal restrictions which forbid sympathy strikes, the other unions did what they could to show their solidarity. The following are the positions and actions which the various bodies have taken: **ATKINSON COLLEGE:** Almost half of Atkinson's full-time faculty staff agreed to postpone classes and schedule them at a later date. Daniel Drache, spokesman for the group, issued a statement claiming that the administration was "bargaining in bad faith since the management has refused to discuss job security issues and had set their four per cent wage offer before negotiations began." He further stated that it is the members "academic and professional responsibility to urge publicly the university resume negotiations immediately and to settle this dispute promptly, in a fair and equitable way towards its employees."

OSGOODE HALL: A group of eighteen full-time law faculty members urged the university to increase the four per cent wage increase ceiling on all employees by decreasing the maximum for faculty members to three per cent. (cont's on pg.2)

Staff strike could be a long haul

By Mark Monfette

On Monday afternoon the York University Staff Association voted in favour of strike action to back their demands for improved wages and job security by a margin of 571 (71.7 per cent to 222 (27.9 per cent).

The union members, prepared for a lengthy strike, left their offices and formed picket lines at each access route into York. The bookstore, post office, library and other union related services were forced to close. Traffic in and out of the university was stalled by the picketers, resulting in many drivers parking outside the grounds.

The strike vote followed the end of negotiations between the union and the administration, Saturday September 16 at 1 am.

The university conceded during negotiations that union members would not be required to do personal work for their supervisors and further proposed "negotiating concessions in the areas of overtime for holiday weekend rates," according to a statement released Monday by W.D. Farr, vice-president of employee and student relations.

But the two sides remain poles apart when it comes to the question of money. The university, pleading budget restraints, has offered the union a four per cent hike to cover wages and fringe benefits, while the union is asking for a 10.3 per cent wage hike, to keep up with inflation, and a further 6 per cent increase in fringe benefits.

While no one in either the staff association or the administration is willing to make any predictions, there is no sign of a resumption of talks and the strike could last several weeks.

Questioned about the length of the strike at a picket line on Tuesday, Lauma Avens, president of YUSA, said, "I don't know how

long it'll last. I think support for the strike is building in the York community. I feel it building every day more and more clearly."

Asked about the university's apparent inability to offer more than four per cent she replied, "Tell me about Windsor, that went out on strike and got nine per cent. Tell me about Laurentian that almost went out on strike and got six per cent."

Lee Lorch, a vice-president of YUFA, summed up the mood of the other unions when he said that the "Board of Governors can easily stop the downward slide of York to the bottom of the pay scale among all Ontario universities and has the responsibility to do so."

He stated that he was "most impressed by the dignity and purpose with which YUSA has been endeavoring to protect the welfare of its members, and the reputation of the university, by resisting shortsighted, administrative financial policy."

With regard to the monetary issue, the university maintains that, because of budget cut-backs and declining enrolment, they have little flexibility. Both President H. Ian MacDonald and Stan Fisher, director of communications, have reiterated that the university is not proud of its wage offer. Mr. Fisher claimed, however, that a YUSA settlement of ten per cent would put the university in serious financial difficulties.

"The university," he said, "is very concerned with the disadvantages of going into debt. It is not good for either the staff or the students."

Referring to the improbability of any change in the administrative offer, he said that "YUSA members are hoping for a white knight to come to their rescue. There will be no white knight."

The university has stated its willingness to re-open negotiations at any time, however. All other unions on campus, including the



Lauma Avens, YUSA President

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Graduate Assistants' Association, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, and the Faculty Association, have come out in strong support of the strike. Fifty per cent of Atkinson's full-time faculty have postponed their classes in sympathy with the union, and eighteen Osgoode Hall professors have volunteered to reduce their salaries by one per cent if the monies would be used to support non-faculty staff, particularly YUSA.

The YUSA strike has moved other faculty members to honor their picket lines and has caused administrative headaches as non-union staff refuse to perform the striking members' work.

Other contentious issues include the right of the university to contract out work performed by the YUSA members; the extent to which managerial personnel can perform union related work; the right of a union member to file a grievance if his workload is unreasonably increased; and the right of association members to honour campus union pickets without penalty.

As Excalibur goes to press (Tuesday 12 pm), the strike seems to be generally peaceful, though not without flareups.

Picketeer Linda Turnpenny, a student programs clerk, told Excalibur Tuesday afternoon that a car crossing the picket line swerved towards her suddenly on Monday afternoon, at the St. Lawrence and Keele-entrance.

There have been unconfirmed reports of a few minor altercations on the picket lines, but so far disturbances seem limited to the flaring tempers of motorists annoyed at delays in getting on and off campus.

On Tuesday, several picketers at the St. Lawrence entrance gave Metro police credit for advising them on how to keep things running smoothly.

"Political Leaders of Ontario"

The CYSF "Political Leaders of Ontario" forum, scheduled for noon today in Curtis Lecture Hall B, will not continue as planned if the strike is still on.

However, as we go to press, council president David Chodikoff is trying to reach guest speakers John Sweeney and Michael Cassidy to ask them to speak to the people on the picket lines. Contact CYSF at 667-2515

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