

A TASTE OF BETTER THINGS

Mordecai Briemberg*

In July, 1969 the Political Science, Sociology and Anthropology (PSA) Department of Simon Fraser University (SFU) in British Columbia, at a public meeting of students, secretarial staff and faculty, adopted a "statement of principles". It is unusual for an academic department in a North American university to debate publicly and declare a statement of principles. The guiding orientation of a university department is something that is "understood" within the profession but not something that one speaks of frankly in public. Still more unusual, indeed unique, was the specific content of the PSA Department's statement.

Simon Fraser University is rapidly moving toward the multiversity, toward the imitation of an American model of education. We, faculty, students and staff of PSA, counterpose to this spectre the vision of a department grounded on the philosophy of participation and control from below and designed to serve the needs of the people of British Columbia.

1. Critical social science: We must tell the truth. We must tell the truth not only about what the powerful regard as useful but about important, controversial issues. We must shrink neither from the conclusions of our criticism nor from conflict with the powerful. We are social critics. We seek to

*Mordecai Briemberg was Chairman of the Political Science, Sociology and Anthropology (PSA) Department at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, British Columbia. As a result of the conflict outlined and analyzed in this article, Professor Briemberg has been removed from both his chairmanship and staff position.

Editorial Note: In an attempt to counteract numerous misconceptions concerning the PSA Department--its history, goals, and subsequent demise--we are presenting the viewpoint of one of its most active protagonists. There has been no deletion of names and/or charges from this article as it is felt that all are germane to a complete analysis of the conflict. More recent developments in this case include support for the PSA experiment and especially the scholarship of Dr. Kathleen Aberle by the Carstens-Nader Committee of the American Anthropological Association (see AA Newsletter, June, 1970) and the Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association (CSAA).

understand society in its totality and to reveal the relations and dynamic of that totality. We see within each social order the possibility of going beyond that social order. We identify, analyze and so help to overcome obstacles to the realization of human liberation.

2. Democratic control: We assemble in classes. We assemble in meetings. These are different settings but they cannot be isolated. Faculty power in decision-making complements faculty authoritarianism in the classroom. Parity in decision-making complements uninhibited intellectual discussion in the classroom. We affirm the principles of parity between students and faculty and openness in the meeting-room. We affirm the principle of uninhibited discussion in the classroom. We stand for a philosophy of education which counterposes dialogue to monologue and which counterposes open debate to the didactic delivery of information and opinion. We encourage cooperative struggles for truth and mutual criticism instead of the manipulation of exams and the competition for grades.
3. Community integration: The university is not neutral on social questions. The work of most social scientists serves the interests of the wealthy and powerful. We will contribute our energies to solve the problems of workers not the 'problem with workers', the problems of native peoples not the 'problem with native peoples', the problems of welfare recipients not the 'problem with welfare recipients', the problems of youth not the 'problem with youth'.

Today, the faculty and students who struggled to create and defend PSA are being purged. A PSA Department committed to the above statement of principles no longer exists. Repressive action by the administration, with the active collaboration of faculty and the Board of Governors, has reduced a vital entity to a manipulable calendar entry.

I

To understand the significance of the repression and purge of PSA, it is essential to know something of the evolution of the department. The statement of principles adopted in July, 1969 was a summation of the experiences of many previous months of struggle. It was also a guide for future activities. It was not the original program of a supposed secret conspiracy, though many at Simon Fraser University want to believe this. Fear has blinded them to a most significant feature of the department--the pattern of its change.

What follows is a sketch of that pattern, not a detailed history. The sole intent is to identify and describe the major trend of developments within the department.

When the university was founded in 1965, the decision was made to establish a combined department for the study and teaching of political science, sociology and anthropology. These three subjects, at least, were to be administered under a single Head. This was a small positive step toward the reintegration of the social sciences and away from the obfuscating specialization that characterizes academic "disciplines". With the administrative combination of political science, sociology and anthropology, there was the possibility of beginning to study and understand our world as a coherent totality. This possibility seemed the more real given the rhetoric of the "founding fathers" of the university, a rhetoric that eulogized the importance of teaching, of intimacy between faculty and students and experimentation; and given the reputation of the first Head of the PSA Department, appointed by the Board of Governors and the President of Simon Fraser University, Professor T. B. Bottomore. Bottomore is now identified by Time as one of the new statesmen of sociology. Bottomore came from England. He came to SFU with two other senior faculty, both from British universities, though without Bottomore's intellectual renown or interests. Almost all the faculty he recruited after he arrived at SFU came directly from U.S. universities, whether they were Canadian nationals, British nationals or United States nationals. Geography is significant as an indicator of social experience and consequently of orientation. While participatory politics revived in Britain with protests against the Suez invasion of 1956, the universities were not directly involved until after the student movement reached a crescendo in the U.S. in the middle 1960's. Bottomore left England before the rise of the student movement and came to Simon Fraser. A critic of mainstream American social science, he sought to recruit others who were critical without taking into account the context within which their cultural perspective had been developed. For his part, Bottomore had no comprehension of or rapport with the sense of urgency, the awareness of the intimacy of thought and action, that was beginning to permeate sectors of the American universities. For their part, students and faculty in North American universities, in an intellectual environment painfully prying itself loose from cold-war mythology, themselves conscious participants in the university conflicts of the middle 1960's, although severed from a critical tradition, received Bottomore as a

"Marxist"--because he translated Marx, because he wrote of class and class conflict as real phenomena. But Bottomore's interest in Marx was academic, even in part a product of fashion. He once said he had gone to France intending to do research on Durkheim but had changed his interests because French academics were debating Marx.

The result of all this was mutual misperception, a footnote in the sociology of knowledge. Faculty were attracted to Bottomore as a "Marxist"; Bottomore was attracted to faculty as detached critics, "new sociologists". Each was a projection of what the other wished and needed. Neither was what the other believed. In the beginning, within an administrative integration of the disciplines, an eclectic but predominantly critical orientation developed out of this recruitment pattern. But since immediate concerns with the struggle against the war in Vietnam, against racism, and against corruption of the universities were not confiscated from incoming faculty at the border, the criticism of the new faculty did not remain abstract, academic or detached. It was not long before the politeness of initial strangeness wore off and people were conscious of their misperceptions.

Bottomore was a partisan of senior faculty power who utilized the mechanisms of repressive tolerance. Above him, the Board of Governors saw little necessity for the appearance of tolerance and, below him, the new faculty and the students saw little virtue in repression. Pressured from both ends, a pressure aggravated by gratuitous insults from the Board, the apparently still secure faculty elitism of England appeared more and more attractive. In December, 1967, Bottomore resigned and took a position at Sussex University. On departing Bottomore dubbed as the new Head of PSA the senior faculty member he had originally hired to supervise the anthropology "section" of the department, Professor D. G. Bettison. An ex-colonial administrator without any notable academic reputation, Bettison did share Bottomore's commitment to faculty elitism and the hierarchy of seniority.

Shortly after being appointed Head, Bettison was given the task of conducting the university's first systematic witch-hunt of PSA faculty and teaching assistants. However eclectic, the critical orientation of PSA faculty, which failed to remain abstract and academic, was proving a thorn to those in power in B.C. and an embarrassment to the acquiescent within the university. Bettison was given the responsibility of exacting retribution for the accumulated grievances of the Bottomore era. And against the overwhelming opposition of the other faculty in the department, Bettison accepted this responsibility and proceeded to investigate the validity of such undetailed charges as, "one cannot pursue truth in the PSA Department". Bettison's authority within the department, already weak, now was completely undermined.

Perhaps Bettison could have survived the internal revolt had his superiors been in a position to back him. But they were not. Bettison's personal misfortune was to have become Head of PSA at the very time a university-wide struggle for faculty power against the first

President, the Board and some of the original Heads of departments was reaching its climax. This was a struggle of new ambitious and largely American faculty against the original largely Anglo-Saxon founding group, in miniature the history of Canada--from English to American imperialism, from royal charter to corporate capital. The first President came to the university from the Canadian civil service, weather bureau department. He had never been clear on which way the wind was blowing. In the coup he was replaced by an American labor economist, who as a student was on the regional executive NSA and who was later employed by the State Department in Europe. Neither the old regime nor the new entrepreneurs disagreed on the necessity for a witch-hunt of PSA. In effect the quarrel was over who would direct it. The purge itself was temporarily set aside in the battle for the heights.

To enhance the possibility of success, the new entrepreneurs democratized their slogans, making a rhetorical alliance of convenience with the students. But with success, faculty quickly turned against their erstwhile student allies to cut off any encroachments on faculty prerogatives. The battle for the reconcentration of power began.

Only in the PSA Department was the slogan of participation acted upon in good faith. Only here was the developing alliance of students and faculty sustained and deepened. With pressure from the top temporarily removed, institutional breakdown allowed for decentralized decision-making. In a situation of struggle against an appointed Head, faculty turned inward to examine their own relations of power. And with uncertainty and daring, they agreed in the summer of 1968 to establish a "parallel-parity" constitutional structure. To our knowledge, this was the first and still is the only (now historical) example in a university of such a decision-making arrangement.

In outline the parallel-parity structure meant that:

1. The department consisted of two plena, one for faculty, one for students. All faculty of whatever rank were members of the faculty plenum. Any student taking a course in the department (graduate or undergraduate) was a member of the student plenum.
2. All files and documents were open. All meetings were publicized in advance and open. Voting privileges were restricted to members, with each member having one vote. At the discretion of the membership, speaking privileges could be extended to non-members. Most decisions were by a majority vote (faculty required a 2/3 vote in favor of a nominee for chairman of the faculty plenum in order to ensure election; similarly, a 2/3 vote within faculty was required to approve a recommendation for a new appointment).
3. No decision of either plenum went into effect until that decision was agreed to by the other plenum. Where there was disagreement, bargaining between the two plena continued until a resolution was achieved.

4. Each plenum elected an executive and/or chairman for its own membership. All members of a plenum were eligible for those positions. Within the broad framework outlined here, each plenum formulated and adjusted its own more specific modus operandi.
5. Each plenum established a number of committees. The committees in both plena paralleled each other in function and were of equal size. Members were elected by and from the respective plena, again with every member being eligible for office. Thus, for example, there was a faculty budget committee and a student budget committee, a faculty curriculum committee and a student curriculum committee and so on for graduate admissions, graduate program, grievance, library, appointments, salary and promotions and tenure, teaching methods and grades. Both or either of the parallel committees could initiate a recommendation. The parallel faculty and student committees would first try to reach agreement on a proposal. The student committee would then recommend this proposal to the student plenum. The faculty committee would simultaneously recommend this proposal to the faculty plenum. But if the parallel committees could not reach agreement in the first instance, or if a plenum altered the recommendation of its committee, bargaining between the two plena was carried on until agreement was reached.
6. The participation of the secretarial staff was extensively discussed but never completely resolved. They never specified their own demands for participation. Formally, they had 50% membership only on the faculty/staff grievance committee as well as access to all information. In practice consultation was frequent and full, but with all the dangers of paternalism that "consultation" implies. Only in individual cases was paternalism transcended by both faculty, students and staff, but these cases were vitally important, given the normal sex and status barriers between women workers, largely male faculty and students.

Widely-held faculty stereotypes about student arrogance, vindictiveness, maliciousness and manipulation were not confirmed by the experience of parity in PSA. As stereotypes about students, they revealed more about faculty--the faculty's fear of students, their insecurity about their own competence and their ability to command respect without reliance on disproportionate power. It is precisely that fear and anxiety, so pervasive in the classroom, which undercuts the learning process. The parallel-parity structure equalized power in the meeting room, reduced fear and hostility, and thereby was also a step towards the freeing of the classroom for cooperative learning.

One of the momentous concomitants of the parallel-parity structure was the growth of departmental solidarity between students and faculty and the lessening of competition and defensiveness among the faculty. The attachment to a professional specialization, years of training, the accumulated capital which gives faculty the resources to trade a job at institution A for a job at institution B, this special nexus with the privilege of university status, haltingly was offered up for examination. The critical orientation of faculty began to

consolidate--not around the disciplines of political science, sociology and anthropology; still less around the "inter-disciplines" or the combined administration of three disciplines--but around the processes of capitalism, imperialism and revolution. A series of notable lectures and intensive seminars significantly contributed to this coherence. Among others, Harry Magdoff presented his analysis of the dynamics of imperialism; Ernest Mandel delineated contradictions within neo-capitalism and stressed the revolutionary capacity of the contemporary working class; Eric Wolf compared the revolutionary activities of peasants in different colonial societies; William Hinton reconsidered his earlier analysis of the 1949 Chinese revolution on the basis of the current Cultural Revolution; Mary Oppenheimer and Robert Fitch argued the importance of finance capital in the maintenance of the "military-industrial complex"; Grace Boggs and Jim Boggs made real the struggle of Blacks for community control of their schools in the U.S.A.; Marvin Harris debated Marx's contribution to anthropology; Herbert Marcuse spoke on the forces for and meaning of human liberation. In an uncoordinated way many existing courses paralleled these themes, already diverging considerably from traditional discipline definitions. Had the department survived longer, this lecture-seminar series, entitled Development and Underdevelopment after A. G. Frank's work, would undoubtedly have contributed to the closer coordination of such divergences.

Faculty also became conscious of conflicts between their attachment to professional specialization and their growing feeling of rootedness, a commitment to these people and this place. Faculty became conscious of a simple but consequential fact: we were people who worked at Simon Fraser University in a city called Vancouver, in the Province of British Columbia, Canada. Certainly Canada is not the outer limit of the forces that affect us. But, particularly prone to transience, as faculty are, they too often gaze at the horizon rather than the ground where they stand. Now the focus was shifting.

In the fall of 1968, our exploration of the question of "knowledge for whom?" assumed profundity. Earlier, with a distant gaze, we all had critically explored the sources of financing of research and direct affiliation with the State Department, Defense Department, intelligence agencies, or corporate foundations. Agreement was comparatively easy. Yet one may disavow repression and the obvious repressive agencies and still not commit one's energies to meeting the needs of the oppressed. It was this transition from disassociation to commitment, from the remote to the immediate, that many of us in the faculty were and still are making.

Over the year we accepted with increasing conviction the proposition that knowledge, like wealth and power, is unequally distributed, and that it is monopolized by those who oppress. In Martin Nicolaus' memorable image, social scientists stand with their palms up and their eyes down--palms up to take money from the powerful, eyes down to study the powerless in the interests of the sponsor, which may appear in as innocuous a guise as a university paycheque. To reverse the oppressive use of knowledge, we concluded we should stand in

solidarity with the dispossessed; our energies and skills should be devoted to exposing the levers and sources of power in the interest of their and our liberation. But to prize the cultivation of the necessary new skills and habits more than the hoarding of one's previous "training" and accumulated capital is initially very painful. In seeking the answer to the question "knowledge for whom?", rhetorical radicalism must itself be subjected to thorough, consistent and effective criticism. Theory and practice must fuse. Of all the changes undertaken, this was the most difficult, the most profound and still is the most tentative. We initiated a few research-organization projects: on the harmful consequences of rotating shift work and the dangers of particular kinds of chemical pollution, to aid a local pulp and paper union in its negotiations with management; on the interlocking control of the Vancouver ports, the profits accruing from the introduction of automation and the comparative cost of living increases, for the benefit of striking longshoremen.

In short, the statement of principles adopted in July, 1969 records stages of development. On the basis of a (rhetorical) commitment to experiment and a belief in (abstract) criticism in 1965, the department attracted and recruited an eclectic group of active critics who in 1968 achieved solidarity in the struggle for and establishment of an internally democratic structure, and in 1969 proceeded towards uniting their intellectual energies with the struggles of labor, tenants, women, native people and youth.

II

Why the repression of PSA? To many, the answer will already be evident. But let us first examine some standard complaints voiced by SFU faculty and administration and the local media. Firstly, it was asserted that PSA radicals intimidated a minority of their colleagues who disagreed with the direction in which the department was going. The pattern of change already outlined was the central tendency of evolution. Not everyone moved in this direction. Nor did all those who did, move at the same pace in precisely the same way. Tremendous latitude remained for individuals. No course syllabi were decreed at meetings. No one was compelled or forbidden to do particular research. Faculty who opposed parity were still recommended for tenure by the parallel faculty and student committees. Alternatives for dissenters were not bureaucratically or forcibly eliminated. What was changed was the context within which choices were made. Those who were used to deference may have found discussion of their privileges and assumptions "intimidating", and those who were uncertain that their reasons would convince others may have preferred to set limits to discussion or to have held them in secret. But what difference whether it be popes, kings, robber barons or faculty who seek deference and try to circumscribe discussion? One either acquiesces in the arbitrary exercise of power or one remains committed to the standard of reasoned argument among equals--even if it "intimidates" those who have grown to

expect deference. No worse "intimidation" was ever inflicted on any member of the department.

Secondly, the PSA Department was castigated for supposedly acting as though it were entirely autonomous from the university. At no point did the department claim autonomy, only the traditional right to formulate recommendations according to procedures it considered appropriate, then to forward these recommendations to higher university committees. Nor did the Dean, President or any other official, despite request, outline a single, openly debated and agreed upon university policy that the department violated.

Thirdly, it was openly whispered that the PSA Department encouraged the use of violence to bring about change within the university. This referred to a student occupation of the administration building in 1968 in protest against class and political discrimination in the university's admission policies. Despite the easy opportunity to end the occupation by agreeing simply to call a special meeting of the University Senate, the President decided to confirm his power by relying on the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to arrest and prosecute 114 students. PSA faculty were not actively involved either collectively or individually in the planning or conduct of the occupation. This is historical fact, though not a matter of pride. As for changes and policies introduced in PSA, these were done through committee discussions, open debate and voting. All administrations talk of encouraging peaceful change through rational debate. The evolution of PSA followed this route perfectly. In terms of their rhetoric, it should have been an administration's delight. Let alone violence, there were no petitions, there were no demonstrations, no civil disobedience.

Yet administrators, the Board and most faculty saw it as a nightmare. Why? Course content was relevant. The structure of the meeting-room and the classroom fostered satisfying communal relations, not frustrating status distinctions. PSA was an alternative to the nexus of power and manipulation that bound the administration and the preponderance of faculty to the students. As a result, relative to other departments, an increasing proportion of students enrolled in PSA courses. PSA also debunked the legitimating myth and challenged the power that bound the administration and the preponderance of faculty to corporate interests. President Strand, at different times, for it is best to space contradictory statements, succinctly summed both the myth and the reality of this nexus. According to the myth, "the university must remain neutral on social questions". In reality, "the social and economic system is capitalist and the university serves that system".

As a department of critical social science, PSA shattered the myth of neutrality, leaving administrators and many faculty embarrassed and resentful. Possibly this was tolerable. As a democratically organized department, PSA challenged faculty privileges and so earned faculty animosity, the animosity of recently-promoted foremen now in charge of the production of future pliant bureaucrats. This was hardly tolerable. As a department allying itself with the workers and oppressed of B.C. it threatened the real business of the businessmen-of-

the-Board. This was definitely intolerable.

The isolation of the PSA Department from the administration, the Board, and the overwhelming number of faculty thus was not a consequence of individual style, of tactics or mistakes, but resulted inevitably from a serious commitment to the department's three principles. The potential allies were students and the oppressed in the community. The partisans of PSA had two tasks: to realize the principles and so gain the solidarity of these potential allies; and to defend the existence of the department at whatever stage of the realization of its principles because its dynamic was progressive. At times, these were competing tasks. Fending off harassments diverted considerable energy from the task of reaching new people. At the same time, commitment to struggle against repression in the society as a whole takes on meaning only when one has to struggle on a daily basis for one's own freedom and right to exist. PSA never sought to escape from the necessity of struggle, to become an island or oasis, some secret ally of a distant front-line struggle. To have adopted this approach either would have been a cop-out or self-delusion. If any vital changes are being made, either within or outside the university structure, those who actively support that change will be under attack. The elites are connected, often personally, always by class interest. One need only examine the directorships of the Board of Governors to find that out.

The first and most persistent tactic of the administration, who was the main agent of all PSA's antagonists, was bureaucratic harassment. When Strand first came to power in the summer of 1968, he spoke in his acceptance speech of the "problem of the XYZ Department". The reference was unmistakable. As Chairman of the PSA Department, I was invited for long conversations with the President to talk about XY and Zee. Our conversations were conducted with full respect for conventional decorum and propriety. Throughout, Strand denied that he believed there was a problem, though others told him there was. Unfortunately, he refused to introduce me to these "others" and despite requests, neither they nor Strand ever provided a precise statement of the problem. After some time, and presumably because of my failure to confess to the essential sinfulness of the department, Strand ended these conversations, never to resume them. Subsequently, he worked through memoranda and his subordinates. Having rejected cooptation, he strove for fragmentation. There was the tactic of "attack and ignore". The department was accused of budgetary improprieties, audits were ordered but never carried out, further sanctions were threatened if unspecified events occurred; but there was no response whatsoever to the department's detailed explanations of budgetary practice; no response to the department's invitations for discussion; no response to the department's invitation of an independent investigation of our methods of bookkeeping by an accountant in the Bursar's Office, who found everything in order. Response would have entailed dropping the initial accusations. Then the tactic of the "squeeze" was employed. Recommendations from the department for new appointments were delayed until the recommended faculty took positions elsewhere, at more prestigious universities. There was a variation on the "Catch-22" tactic. The President asked me to explain to him a PSA advertisement

for new faculty which described the department as having a "radical orientation". This advertisement appeared in Canadian Dimension above another advertisement by the History Department of Sir George Williams University in Montreal which began with a quotation from Time magazine: "the most subversive department in North America". I went to the President's office prepared for a serious discussion of the role of values in the social sciences; I took copies of major articles on the subject to leave with the President for his consideration. The President treated the work of Gouldner, Chomsky, Mills, Baran and others with contempt, abruptly closed the conversation and said he would send me a memo asking for the explanation. I was given the distinct impression that an intellectual discussion of the problem of "values" and "objectivity" has no place in the business dealings between a President and the Chairman of a department. Subsequently, the department as a whole replied to the President with a brief explanatory memorandum. The President then concluded the incident with the complaint that PSA was unwilling to discuss his queries in any fullness.

All these and many more were attempts to fragment the solidarity of the department and to undercut commitment to its evolving program. These low-visibility attempts failed in their objective. There also appear to have been contingency plans for the division of PSA into three departments, as well as for the hiring of anthropologists, sociologists and political scientists by other departments as a complete replacement for PSA. But these plans all proceeded too slowly and ineffectively relative to the growing strength and "dangerous" pattern of development of the department. Out of failure and frustration, the administration changed its basic tactic to a direct, obvious and total attack on the department, its structure and personnel. The omen was a coffee conversation between myself, a student in the department and the Dean of Arts in May, 1969. Said the Dean, Dale Sullivan, with unforgettable and unusual directness: "We're going to get you in three months". Three months later, in July, the Dean and President imposed a trusteeship on the PSA Department.

The pretext for the trusteeship was the resignation of the department's Acting Chairman, Bob Wyllie. He had been elected for the summer term while I took a semester off for research. During this period, the elected PSA faculty promotions, tenure and renewal committee, though it complied perfectly with the composition specified in the relevant university regulations (Statement on Academic Freedom and Tenure), was rejected by a higher faculty-administration committee. The recommendations jointly agreed to by the parallel faculty and student committees were ruled irrelevant. In response to this anticipated harassment, two faculty, Wyllie and Don Barnett, proposed abandonment of parity to placate the administration and to gain acceptance of promotions, tenure, renewal recommendations. Barnett is a self-styled revolutionary. In his view students and other faculty are petit bourgeois. Since joining the department in September, he publicly argued that radicals should be conservative in the university in order to more effectively provide clandestine aid to third world liberation movements. He founded a student group to support the Angolan liberation movement and was subsequently expelled by the membership for his elitism

and manipulation. The majority of the department rejected the Barnett-Wyllie proposal. Wyllie resigned, stating that as "a matter of conscience" he could not represent the majority. The Dean refused to accept me back as Chairman, though my research leave was temporary and my legal term of office ran until September, 1970. With this flourish, Barnett and Wyllie temporarily withdrew to the wings until summoned during the strike by the administration to form an entirely scab department with Wyllie as Chairman and Barnett as eminence grise.

Without to this day providing a statement of reasons and supporting evidence for the imposition of the trusteeship, without specifying the conditions which were to be met in order to lift the trusteeship, an external administration was imposed on the department. The parallel-parity structure was eliminated by fiat. All administration of the department's affairs was transferred into the hands of five faculty from outside of PSA, with the Dean as Chairman. A notable liberal on campus refused to be coopted to legitimate the committee with his participation. But Professor T. B. Bottomore, absent for one year and a half, 6,000 miles removed, did accept. The name of Tom Bottomore initially mystified some, but the nature of his subsequent actions were too familiar to be mistaken.

Shortly after his acceptance of the position of trustee, Bottomore freely circulated to the faculty and the press of Vancouver a vitriolic attack on the majority of the department, calling them "fools" and "fanatics". At no time in his one year and a half absence from campus did he solicit views of the majority. At no time during the trusteeship did he even visit the campus. Participation abstractly praised in books, was condemned as impertinence on the private estate of the absentee trustee. Tom Bottomore subsequently became known to many at SFU as "Uncle Tom".

The trusteeship grossly mismanaged the affairs of the PSA Department. The use of office machinery for the reproduction of classroom materials was subjected to the Dean's censorship; secretarial staff were harassed and one resigned under the tension. But then the job of the trusteeship was to obstruct, not to expedite.

The second stage of the frontal attack was completed in August. In place of the PSA committee on tenure, promotions and renewal whose recommendations had been refused consideration, and in the place of persons familiar with and competent to judge the teaching, research and administrative performance of PSA faculty, professors outside the area of faculty work--from the Departments of Modern Languages, Chemistry, History, English and Commerce--were appointed by the Dean to recommend on renewal, promotion and tenure. There was only one collaborator from the PSA Department on the committee, Professor Somjee, an Anglophile Indian who, with Bottomore and Bettison, formed the original triumvirate. In the case of renewal and promotion the committee made recommendations to the Dean of Arts; in the case of tenure they made recommendations to a university-wide faculty committee which consisted of a chemist, a biologist, a physicist, a geographer, an economist, and a physical educationist--but no one from PSA.

On what basis were the recommendations made? Recommendations were not made on the basis of publications. Professor Kathleen Gough Aberle, an internationally renowned and prolific scholar, was refused tenure and any further contract renewal though only one of her articles, "New Proposals for Anthropologists", dealing with the problem of social responsibility, was even read. Recommendations were not made on the basis of teaching. There was no consultation with either students or faculty. Though in many cases complete strangers, and in one case entirely new to the campus, the committee members went so far as to refuse to meet with any PSA faculty. Nor did they write to any of the referees whom faculty had been required by the administration to list. The recommendations did not correlate with publication or teaching accomplishments as known by colleagues and students. But the recommendations did correlate with one aspect of faculty belief and action--commitment to the parallel-parity structure and the evolving program of the department. With the notable exception of Dr. D. C. Potter, who received tenure but later went on strike in defense of the department, positive commitment to the department's program correlates with negative recommendations.

According to university regulations, reasons for recommendations are to be given to the faculty member in writing to provide him with a basis for appeal, should he so wish. In almost all cases in PSA no statement of reasons was ever provided. Presumably it was thought less embarrassing to violate this regulation than to venture to elaborate a statement of reasons. Perhaps the self-interest of the committee members was best served by this judgment, for where they did attempt to provide "reasons", as in the case of Professor Kathleen Gough Aberle, it did prove most embarrassing. The committee stated it had "unresolvable doubts about her academic procedures"(?) and faculty who had no familiarity with and did not bother to read her work concluded with aplomb that she "lacked scholarly objectivity". In any case, even a full statement of reasons would have been of little practical use. Faculty were not allowed the time necessary to make an appeal. Between a Monday noon and a Wednesday morning, the recommendations were rushed through all the "appropriate channels" and an eager Board of Governors stamped them with the seal of good housekeeping. A Columbia University professor, one of many outraged intellectuals in England and America who protested these events, poignantly characterized the decisions as "intellectual vandalism". The sum effect was the phased firing of eight faculty, some to lose their jobs at the end of one year, others at the end of two.

III

Having achieved and experienced significant solidarity, would faculty, in the face of an all-out attack, now abandon each other and the department? Would they rationalize individual efforts to preserve jobs or would they fight collectively to defend the principles of the department? The majority of faculty on campus chose to fight to preserve

the department; a few oscillated; a minority clearly plumbed for their jobs. By direct assault, the administration achieved the division it had sought for so long.

Characteristic of the minority was the fact that they had not participated in the original PSA struggle to establish a parallel-parity structure, either because they joined the department after that time or because they had been away from the campus on research. One exceptional faculty member, Dr. Saghir Ahmad, joined the department on September 3rd, and committed himself with the majority in strike action on September 24th. Characteristic also was the fact that for the most part the minority had received favorable administrative decisions on renewal and tenure. Finally, the minority did not have any sense of rootedness that would bind them to the evolving interests of the majority. In these ways the minority can be called typical faculty: individualized, transient, without the transforming experience of any collective struggle. Like their peers at Simon Fraser and elsewhere, as expressed in the actions of the professional organization of Canadian faculty (C.A.U.T.), when faced with a choice between the threat to the "profession" of political purge and the threat to the "profession" of a radical restructuring of education, they chose complicity in the purge. There was the added benefit for the minority faction. The purge offered the bait of possessing, of running a department, their department. And so while the majority were fighting to defend the department against repression, the minority were making their deal with the repressive forces. During the struggle, Professor Herbert Adam, one of the main spokesmen for the minority, said he would leave the university if the majority of PSA faculty were successful in their defense of the department, but would remain if the administration won. Like Barnett, Adam is a self-proclaimed "Marxist". He came from Frankfurt and in interviews spoke as a member and friend of German SDS. After joining the department, he has referred to them only in the language of psychopathology, his major intellectual crutch.

The majority of PSA faculty deepened their commitment to a cooperative struggle with students. The administration having destroyed the parallel-parity structure of the department through the imposition of a trusteeship, students and faculty agreed to make decisions in a general plenary assembly, one man, one woman, one vote. Four simple and defensive demands were agreed to: (1) end the trusteeship and restore the democratic procedures, (2) rescind the decisions on tenure, promotion and renewal, (3) accept the PSA Department's own original (and modest) recommendations on tenure, promotion and renewal, (4) encourage rather than curtail decentralized educational experiment within the university. These were sent to the President with the important proviso that he either accept them or agree to conduct negotiations on these demands with a four-member (two faculty/ two student) PSA committee. If he rejected both alternatives, we declared our intention to go on strike in the PSA Department. The President then and henceforward refused to negotiate. He acknowledged that he viewed the struggle, a struggle he had initiated, as an "all-or-nothing-game".

PSA went on strike on September 24th. No one argued for

alternative strategies consonant with the maintenance of the department's principles. There were none. To have awaited passively while the professional association of faculty (C.A.U.T.) pondered the question would have been foolhardy. The "solution" the C.A.U.T. executive was groping for in order to promote its faltering reputation for effectiveness was to fragment the issues, avoid confrontation and legitimize the dissolution of PSA, sacrifice a few faculty and parity and herald the triumph of order and freedom on campus. Over 700 voted in favor of strike, 36 against, and a dozen abstained. Support for the strike grew rapidly throughout the student body of the university, and most encouragingly at the decentralized level of departmental student unions. It had started purposely as a departmental strike and as a consequence departmental unions flourished with a new-found vitality. History students went on strike. English students went on strike. Philosophy students went on strike. Endorsation of the demands and a call for the President to negotiate was a fairly common position throughout the student body.

The President and Deans at first resisted calling faculty meetings but then staged them. Faculty would assemble in a large classroom and, in the tradition of the university, students passively gathered to witness. Students then were ordered to leave, predictably refused and equally predictably the meeting was adjourned. Throughout the strike, faculty held not a single public discussion. All business was submitted to administration sponsored referenda. And the results, as under any regime, were what one expects from referenda--without debate--concurrence.

The strike of PSA faculty was anathema to the other faculty and to their professional organization. The C.A.U.T. declared that regardless of the legitimacy of our initial grievances they would do nothing to rectify them because we had gone on strike. Faculty were unwilling to see their true condition in the treatment of PSA faculty and were still worshipping the myths of independence and job-control, as though university teaching retained the attributes of a profession and had not acquired the characteristics of wage-labor. To strike was to challenge their status, the hallmark that separated "men of learning"(!) from the "unwashed of labor".

The President responded to the strike with a lock-out. After nine days, he suspended the striking faculty from all teaching and deprived them of their vote in referenda, committees or assemblies. He unilaterally cancelled all PSA classes where faculty had been on strike. About 1,500 students were affected. "Alternative" courses were hastily offered in other departments but extremely few students scabbed (transferred). They chose to sacrifice credits, bursaries and scholarships. The President then initiated immediate dismissal proceedings against the eight striking faculty. These are still continuing. He also launched a civil suit, claiming damages for the courses he had cancelled, from three faculty and eleven students. And from an anti-labor court system he obtained and served injunctions against all further strike activity--even the asking of people to support the strike--on penalty of contempt of court. Six months to one

year is the normal sentence.

The injunctions came near the end of the strike, at a point when active student support had already waned considerably. The injunction was not the decisive event in ending the strike after six weeks--probably the longest university strike in North America, except for San Francisco State. But the injunctions did highlight a fundamental weakness. Throughout the struggle, there was debate about the "meaning" of a university strike. Was it an attempt to "shut-down" the university, as in industrial strikes; to "open-up" the university as an expanded PSA Department; to "fuck-up" the university, by hit and run disruptions. The debate was not cogently or systematically conducted.

No single alternative was chosen; no coherent and integrated combination of the alternatives was presented. Action alternated from meeting to meeting and, in the confusion, wide spontaneous support remained unchanneled and inevitably drifted into despair. To shut the university down required the decision to qualitatively change from a department by department extension of the strike to a uniting on a university-wide basis of all who favored the strike. We relied too heavily on the departmental momentum and so did not advance to a shut-down decision. One reason for the inability to sustain a dual structure situation, a PSA-university, was the failure to have taken ourselves seriously enough prior to the strike. The spectre of reformism so haunts the student left in particular that as soon as parity had been formally achieved the debate moved not to the question of consolidation but on to the next revolutionary demand. Where the administration saw an intolerable threat to its power and planned counterattacks, the left on campus, fearing cooptation, minimized in their own thinking the gains already made. As for effective support from among the working class and other oppressed groups in the community, links were still too tentative, divisiveness promoted by the media still too prominent for us to gain support from an alliance. But since the strike and because of the strike, this alliance has become stronger. The administration, the preponderance of the faculty and the Board smashed the strike and with it the PSA Department. Having failed to accomplish this end quietly and efficiently, they were prepared to crudely blunder through.

IV

The PSA purge marks the decisive end of the rhetorical promise of Simon Fraser University, a promise that has been so attractive to so many. As a former trustee of PSA and now special assistant to the Dean of Arts "on curriculum reform and innovation" pathetically writes: "In the first place it is becoming quite evident that, wherever Simon Fraser stands in general among Canadian universities, it is not now in the vanguard of pedagogical and curricular innovation and experimentation in Canada, and may even be somewhere in the back row of universities on these terms." Should he be surprised, having himself risen to power on

the wreckage of PSA which was in the "vanguard of pedagogical and curricular innovation"? But one must expect more of newspeak from SFU. There is a liberal reputation to be rebuilt, a history to be rewritten. It is extremely unlikely this will be successful. The little Napoleons of SFU who try to recreate their past glory more likely will create a future farce. This is particularly true of scab-faculty in the PSA Department. They have just fired as teaching assistants the graduate students who supported the strike; they now bar all students from meetings and hold them in secret at private homes; they conduct business by referenda. They continually assert "we are now in power"--and look everywhere for their pound of flesh. They are proving themselves to the President and making sure of their new position. But soon they must attend to their image for they also fancy themselves "critics" and "radicals", one even a "revolutionary", a gaggle of Genoveses without comparable professional publications. What, for example, does Professor Don Barnett do when his university allies are supporters of neo-colonialism abroad and repression at home and his self-image is as patron of third world liberation movements? He and his cohorts must somehow convince others that a retreat to pure rhetoric, devoid of commitment to any action in one's own context, is a step forward to the transformation of society. Or they must follow the step backward line of argument. But how many steps backward before a single step forward?

The paradox is that without a vital PSA to cling to there is little glamor for house Marxists at SFU. Nor is there an enticement to emigre liberal intellectuals. The odd ones who were here are bailing out. The university is now a haven for those who enjoy provincial reactions, are comfortable with the ideology of the "silent majority".

Does this mean defeat? Defeat depends less on the outcome of particular dramatic battles than it does on the failure to continue serious struggle after necessarily sporadic direct confrontations. The entire trajectory of development of the PSA Department has been progressive, from the debunking of corporate ideology to the creation of internal democratic procedures to integration with current struggles of the working class and other oppressed groups in the Vancouver area. It is this last, tentative but nonetheless highest mark of the department's development which is the new beginning point of the post-strike struggle. The strike itself facilitated the formation of concrete links with the labor movement and other oppressed groups. Firstly, the principles of the PSA Department received much more publicity during the strike than they had before. This helped to break down some of our isolation from militants in other areas of struggle. Secondly, those who seriously struggle within the labor movement respect others who are willing to struggle for and not simply speak about a common cause. Moreover, as our fight was not one for privilege, our subsequent relationships have not been ones of patronage. Thirdly, we changed in the process of the strike. The necessity of concrete links with the labor movement was a realization that no longer came purely from rhetorical understanding but now grew out of the experience of struggle itself. An alliance with labor would have meant a different outcome for our strike as an alliance with students can change the outcome of labor strikes.

Since the strike, a group of students, staff and faculty, all of whom were activists in the PSA struggles, in alliance with trade union, unemployed, tenant, minority group and women militants, have established a Community Educational and Research Center in downtown Vancouver. It is not a free school, but an attempt to overcome work-study isolation. The Center is a place where people who are already immersed in day to day struggles with institutions--factories, bureaucracies--come in their non-working hours to discuss the problems that they have experienced earlier in the day and take back their ideas about these problems the next day. It is a place where militants in various sectors of the society can come together to consider their experiences and combine their knowledge without degeneration into sectarianism. It is a place where many basic research-organizing skills can be learnt and mastered by large numbers of people who are propagandized into believing these are esoteric and expert functions. It is part of the struggle to develop a consciousness of the historic battles of the people of British Columbia and Canada and a knowledge of current power constellations and mechanisms of the ruling class so that impending and continuing confrontations will result in quicker victory.

There is no reason any longer to regard Simon Fraser University as a refuge from repression. There is even more reason to come and remain in Vancouver.