

## HISTORY OF THE STRIKE

During the afternoon of Friday July 23<sup>rd</sup> (1971), 3,000 students and staff of the University of Queensland held a mass meeting in the refectory and decided to go on strike for the duration of the Springbok Tour, and to convert the University into a centre of anti-racist activity and propaganda, as the only reasonable response to the Tour, South African and Australian racism, and the State of Emergency in the face of the denial of even limited rights of protest by the large scale systematic police action of that week, and in particular at the Tower Mill on Thursday night. It was decided also to call on the Trade Unions and other Australian Universities to join the strike. Whatever the fate of the action decided by the meeting, that vote was a historic one both for this university and for universities in Australia.

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*This history is dedicated to King Yippie, Will Steer, (P.O.A.) and his dog 'Bark', without whose constant help, encouragement, advice and sheer presence we might have succeeded.*

## CHRONOLOGY

The strike was most directly catalysed by the police action at the Tower Mill, an action whose brutality, and systematic brutality, left little doubt in the minds of anyone who experienced it or witnessed it as to what the State of Emergency meant for the rights of dissent in the State of Queensland in 1971. The mechanics for maintaining '*law and order*', as conceived by the authorities in this State and as practiced in that darkened park under the Tower Mill could obviously include death. This was in marked contrast to assurances given by Commissioner Whitrod the previous Friday.

The declaration of the strike was also the crystallisation of moods and analyses which had been gradually intensifying since the arrival of the Springboks in Australia and during the history of their Tour of the country. Before tracing the history of the strike, therefore, the background to that Friday meeting should be sketched.

Firstly radical activity during the year: this has not been a year of burgeoning widespread activism. Probably the organisational high-point was the successful Revue, *I Hear What You Say*. (It is perhaps fitting that the opening night of this political satire was the opening night of another — The Queensland State of Emergency — an action which could only be explained by Peter Wertheim's belief that the Einsteinian theory of '*the elasticity of time*' allows Queensland to remain in the nineteenth century).

The moratorium in June (30<sup>th</sup>) saw respectable numbers marching but there was not the pre-moratorium campus activity of last year. The discipline issue arising from the disruption of a psychology lecture had not created widespread interest, and the outcome of the R.A.T. (Radical Activist Ticket) candidates in the union elections was yet to be seen. Probably the most significant developments of this year had been the growth of a Women's Lib. movement, and the Nader-type P.I.R.G. (Public Interest Research Group) which emphasized action group activity in Departments, alternative public interest oriented courses etc., and was critical of the ideological emphasis and content of the existing New Left movements.

So the strike was not the logical development of radical activity. Nor was it that of the Anti-Apartheid Movement which began its public activities on campus with the well-attended and well received refectory meeting addressed by former Wallaby, Tony Abrahams, and Black African, Sekai Holland, during the South African Surfing Tour. They argued strongly that the tours should be stopped, and that anti-tour protests should also be anti-Australian racism protest. On the evening of that meeting on May 14 an anti-apartheid movement was formed which sought both to combat the tours, and racism in Australia. In practise however, the emphasis remained on the former, and on propagandising the issues. There was no widespread movement at the time of the arrival of the Springboks.

It is worth mentioning some of the forces against any widespread activity. Probably the most potent (apart from traditional student/staff apathy and the traditional Administration discouragement of any wide spread organisational form of dissent) was the end-of-term examinations scheduled for the period of the Springbok Tour. Groups such as the Democratic Club also propagandised about the '*undemocratic*' nature of the forms of dissent envisaged, arguing strongly for '*business as usual*', but there was no obvious widespread agreement with their analysis.

The week between the Declaration and the calling of the University strike has been covered in the previous Semper. It was one of gradually increasing momentum, disappointing though that was in the fact of the gravity of the issues and of the very muted expression of '*concern*' from the '*official*' representatives of the University. It was a development from an initial reaction of and disbelief through a tentative call for a strike on Friday 16th to the first real public campus response, a teach-in on '*the incompetence of the Queensland Government*' which was held on Monday 19th.

Needless to say, the Friday Refectory meeting was emotionally charged. After accounts of Thursday night by many of the participants, and analyses of the significance of it all, the strike motion was passed.

That Friday meeting (July 23<sup>rd</sup>) was a stunning experience for just about everyone there — a feeling that some emotional "membrane" which had previously contained response here, had been ruptured. Something big had happened, an '*impossible*' step taken — the feeling that somehow this campus would never be the same again.

It was a breakthrough from the original only nominal response to a strike-call earlier. Dan had originally spoken to the meeting with the intention of suggesting strike action, with a later call for a strike, probably on Monday. However, after this suggestion there were calls for '*strike now*', with an obvious mass approval. The strike motion was put, and overwhelmingly passed. Then came the question, what does it mean, what do we do now? How many realised the implications? It was suggested then that Strike Committees be set up, including a committee to look after the Refec. These were then elected, and began operating immediately.

The Friday mass meeting deputised a number of representatives, including two staff members, to go to the Administration for two purposes: to notify them of the strike and of the reasons for it; and to ask the vice-chancellor to call on the rest of the university to join the strikers in solidarity.

Professor Cowen apparently had not heard of the Thursday night events (July 22<sup>nd</sup>), and some time was spent detailing the '*allegations*'. He suggested that he could push for an '*independent*' and '*judicious*' inquiry if preliminary investigations suggested that one was warranted. He appeared genuinely concerned about the police action. By the end of the meeting he had arranged for '*independent and reliable*' observers to have a room at the Tower Mill Motel, to enter the Outer at the Springboks match, generally to receive police protection while '*observing*'.

In his attitude to the strike the most positive feature was that he did not seem seriously to consider the immediate use of police to evict students from the Union complex. He also stated again his own opposition to apartheid and the Springbok tour, and he recognised the fact that strike action is sanctioned among large sections of the community.

The Vice-Chancellor however declined to address the Refectory meeting with respect to their strike action and their rights in future demonstrations, (after this had been suggested with the argument that his presence could help de-escalate the possibility of further violence). He preferred to use his personal and official influence with Commissioner Whitrod to protect students. He refused to join the strike itself or to call on members of the University to join it. He spoke of '*the whole university*', its '*consensus*', and the '*welfare of all the students in this university*', without recognising that these are largely mythical quantities, attained by voting in the hierarchical Professorial Board, Students' Union, etc., and he did not recognise the fact that more students voted at the Friday meeting than in the last union general election. In a public address the following Thursday Prof. Cowen was to further his analysis of the strike — the fact that such a large number of students and staff were involved could be explained by the manipulation of the mass of '*moderate*' students by a small band of dedicated revolutionaries, who were not primarily interested in using the strike as a force against racism, but '*as part of a plan to bring down this university*'. If his analysis was correct it was not a very flattering assessment of the intelligence of the '*moderate*' student, whom he regards as the lifeblood of the university.

Professor Cowen also refused to call on departments to organise meetings to discuss the strike, the reasons behind it, and the hopes of strikers that the various departments would incorporate the study of racism as it affected their fields. He also regarded the best avenue for establishing '*just what happened*' as contacting the Premier, Mr. Whitrod, and Mr. Hodges, despite the fact that their credibility had been drastically reduced by the events of the previous two days.

Further debate continued, with the arrival of three members of the Union Exec. plus Ken Berry, on the constitutionality of the strike takeover of the Union premises. There were implied threats that the Administration would consider withdrawing money grants to the Union and repossessing the buildings if the constitution was violated. It became quite clear (though it was hardly surprising) during that meeting which way the Admin was going, with respect to the first major step at this university towards a unified moral stand against social and moral aberrations, and towards a self-management, problem-oriented, free research university. The lines which were drawn tentatively during that lengthy meeting would become unmistakably clear during the following week.

Police again had a field day at the Tower Mill (July 24<sup>th</sup>). After another police charge, eleven arrests resulted and several injuries. Including some bone fractures and a seriously injured eye. Disguised police were in the crowd and picked off specific people for arrest as demonstrators fled. Although this police action was again systematically brutal it was apparent that it was against Mr. Whitrod's wishes, and several cases of individual police concern over the violence and its results (helping injured people etc.) were noted.

Monday morning was intensely active. The leaflets prepared by a round-the-clock efforts over the weekend were distributed by exhausted strike workers. Classrooms were picketed 'On Strike' signs had been posed throughout the university. Various Department staff meetings were held to decide Departmental action in the strike. Department strike action committees met to formulate plans for transforming the strike from a withdrawal of intellectual labour to an active use of that labour in the fight against racism.

It has been decided to publish two daily leaflets — **Memoranda** which published daily news of the activities of the various strike committees and **Strike News** which published the results of central mass meetings etc.

**Memoranda II** on Monday began:

As long as this university continues in its present vein, then it is in support of Australian racism. When it starts seriously to debate the issue, and participate in social action consequent to such discussions, it is beginning to fulfill a valid intellectual role. This should be the motive at the heart of the strike.

The mass meeting in the Great Court (July 26<sup>th</sup>) began with considerable tension. This was the time when we would discover if the Friday meeting reflected a serious mass desire to strike against the issues, or if it had been only a momentary wave of moral indignation against an incident of police brutality.

Of the 5,000 people present, after speeches by Senator Georges, Dan O'Neill, Pastor Don Brady, and Len Watson, about 4,000 voted that:

*We, the students, staff, workers and concerned persons here assembled declare that we are now on strike for the duration of the Springbok's tour, and that this university is a centre for the discussion of and action against racism, but we are opposed to any interference with the activities of members of the university who do not accept the idea of strike action.*

Thus the strike had been further endorsed. There were significant currents of opposition, however. While the meeting was in progress, leaflets advertising the results of that morning's Professorial Board meeting were distributed. The Board's unanimous decision had been:

*While recognising the intensity of feeling among staff and students who have claimed that they are on strike, the Board considers that University staff have responsibilities to the many students who do not wish to take part in the strike and recommends that all staff continue to observe these responsibilities.*

The Vice-Chancellor added his personal support of this decision, and further urged all staff to carry on with *'their classes and other duties within the university'* . . . *'there is abundant opportunity for discussion and expression of opinions on these matters within the university, but that this does not call for interruption of the normal activities of the university'*.

Thus the "official University" spelled out its conception of staff rights of conscientious decision, and of education as timetable curricular education. It did not recognise either that the strike activities could perform a vital educational role, or that *'normal'* university activities could or should include forceful action against patently abnormal societal conditions, or that these abnormalities could be reflected within the university itself.

At the Great Court meeting, similar arguments were advanced by the Staff Association President Mr. Fielding and others, and Professor Bass outlined his view of the relation of the University to society a dichotomous relationship between the academic enclave which was not directly interested in or affected by the society, and that society as the *'outside'*.

The spirit of the strike motion, which was passed overwhelmingly, was however that the University should have a vital concern with the *'outside'*, and that *'normal'* activities had to be stopped to make a stand on the issues, and to take action against the university's complicity in those abnormalities, specifically in this case against the university's inadequate or non-existent response to the issue of racism. This spirit, if implemented, would lead to a radical revision of structures and control of departments and courses to grapple adequately with the problems of racism. Among those who voted however there were obviously greatly varying differences in acceptance of, or consciousness of these implications.

At a later stage of the meeting (about 3 p.m.) when the numbers present were about 1500 a number of other motions were passed. The concept of interference was defined as not including picketing outside lectures and academic buildings, silent vigils in protest against racism during lectures, or non-violent direct action against *'racist companies like Comalco or against autocratically appointed disciplinary boards'*.

The meeting also affirmed that Dan tried to get discussion of this amendment when Mr. Fairbank's moved his amendment using the word *'interference'*.

The meeting also narrowly (720/680) passed a motion which was to lead to one of the most controversial issues of the strike. Dave Luck had passed a motion (which failed) which sought to affirm the authority of the Union

Executive to have full authority to administer Union facilities during the strike. The following motion affirmed the setting up of a six-man Union Strike Executive which was to have authority over the use of Union facilities for strike purposes, provided that this Executive negotiates with the Union Executive about the repositioning of essential Union functions.

This decision led to a confrontation with the Union Executive almost immediately after the meeting, and a statement which was not to be resolved until the end of the week. Four members of the Strike Committee Executive went to negotiate with the Union Executive in the President's Office, and became embroiled in an abortive meeting in an atmosphere of abuse and near hysteria (from individual members of the Union executive). When it became clear that nothing could be achieved in that atmosphere it was decided by both sides to renegotiate at 8 p.m.

A general strike committee meeting was then held to consider the situation. It was decided then that rather than make an issue over the question of ultimate authority of Union facilities (so as to maximise the effort in the anti-racist aspect of the strike) the Strike Executive should seek to operate as a joint authority with the Union Executive to supervise the use of those elements of Union facilities needed for the strike (namely typewriters, phones, printery and paper, on a 24 hour basis — all to be paid for). It was affirmed however that the committee could not consider negotiations if these conditions, which were regarded as essential for the continuance of the strike, were not met. It was regarded that any attempt by the Union Executive to block these minimal requirements would mean that they would be largely responsible for the consequences of any attempt to evict strikers.

While these decisions were being made it was discovered that two members of the meeting had decided, without the approval of the meeting, to negotiate unilaterally with the Union Executive for use of the facilities. When this negotiation was revealed it was censured as an act of irresponsibility to the general strike committee.

The members of the Union Strike Executive went at 8 p.m. for their meeting with the Union Executive, only to find that the Executive had already met (or rather 4 members had met and without notifying Bruce Shaw), and these Executive members had decided that they would allow the gestetner and a telephone to be taken from Union Office, to the J.D. Story Room, and that there was no further room for negotiation. They had broken their earlier agreement to hold the 8 p.m. negotiating meeting. The President was absolute that there was no further room for agreement and had no apologies about the breaking of the earlier agreement. He regarded any argument that this presentation of nonnegotiable decisions created a dangerous impasse, as a form of unreasonable black mail, and that the Executive did not recognise that mass meeting decisions held any legitimacy, although he regarded himself as personally on strike.

When this position was relayed back to the general strike committee it was decided that it had been forced into a position of necessary compromise which it should accept rather than risking any action which might result in police entry onto campus, an action which could prejudice or confuse the established issues of the strike. It was regarded that there were still sufficient facilities for the continuance of the strike.

On Tuesday morning, after another all-night preparation, another series of leaflets appeared. **Memoranda III** advertised action committee meetings in nine departments, a number of department anti-racist projects underway, and six departments out on strike. Seminars were arranged in several departments. The delegates to the other universities left with pamphlets.

Tuesday was however to be the low point in the week. First a concerted effort by the Administration to play down the effectiveness of the strike and to assert that '*business was as usual*' was partly effective through the morning's press. The Southern press carried the same message at the same time as the Queensland delegates were gaining widespread southern University support. This considerably confused southern University action.

Another setback, at least in terms of mass support for the anti-racist strike, occurred during the lunch-time mass meeting. It had been decided by the strike committee the previous evening to call a meeting from 12 till 1 p.m. to discuss the discipline issue arising from the psychology class 'disruption' (the Disciplinary Board was meeting during that day) and to call for a vote of support for a march to the Admin building (Brian Laver argued for an occupation of the building). After a debate with a strong ideological and abusive element, a vote was taken on whether or not the meeting endorsed the idea of a march, and an obvious majority voted no. It was clear that this majority while supporting the strike, saw the discipline issue as either unrelated or as distinct to that of the anti-racist movement. Alienation was further increased when the chairman declared a 'yes' vote. Amid widespread protest and further abuse, a call was made for the 'yes' and the 'no' sections to separate. The 'no' majority was approximately two thirds. With the meeting now physically split, a caricature of the solidarity of the previous mass meetings, further factional abuse ensued, and it was obvious that those who saw the discipline issue as irrelevant to the strike felt outraged at what they felt was manipulation. Brian Laver then declared that the mass strike was useless as it was obviously not a struggle for socialism, and called for those who wished it so to leave with him and hold a meeting devoted to that issue in the refectory. A small number left and Phil

Richardson and others made an appeal for the meeting to reunite in solidarity and to continue the anti-racist strike activities. This happened, but by now many had left.

The rest of the meeting was devoted to a call for volunteers to picket the Adelaide Hotel (racial discrimination) and to have their faces painted black for a new concept in demonstrations a black-samba demo. Morale gradually was regained and eventually about 150 'niggers' set off for a song and dance routine through the city.

The response to that demo was interesting. There was little of the traditional public hostility towards demonstrators more bewilderment to amused curiosity. The police who followed were obviously at a loss as to what to make of it all. There were no arrests apart from Dan O'Neill in the "Regatta Hotel" incident, when he was charged with '*disorderly conduct*' for drinking in black face. After the incident Dan's drinking companions returned, after removing make up, and were served. The arrest had been televised by the A.B.C., and that evening, the A.B.C. announced. '*Dan O'Neill arrested for disorderly conduct at hotel. Film will follow*'. The film, which would have shown just how disorderly Dan's conduct had been, was however not shown. Why? The early edition of Tuesday's Telegraph carried a front page story that Cabinet had met and was considering extending the State of Emergency to the University to '*clean up the campus*'. A later edition however carried a denial of this by Sir Gordon Chalk. Nevertheless this explicit indication that such action was entirely possible greatly increased tension on campus.

At 5 o'clock Tuesday afternoon there was a Senate-Student Liaison Committee meeting. There was no serious discussion about the issues involved in the strike committee's use of Union facilities and in the possible consequences of attempts to evict strikers from the J.D. Story Room. Discussion was limited to statements about the constitutionality of the issue, and Prof. Cowen assured the President of the Union that the Administration would fully back any action that the Executive saw fit. The Registrar gave a report of '*the state of the university*' to the meeting, a report which painted a picture of a university practically '*as normal*'. He had gained reports of lecture attendances and staff activity etc. from Heads of Departments (who more qualified to give an accurate picture of strike activity in the Departments?). It contained no information on mass meeting numbers or decisions. The report was vaguely similar to the American's use of body counts to prove that the Tet Offensive was a failure for the Viet Cong.

Meanwhile, back in the J.D. Story Room . . . the strike committee was discussing Dave Luck's instruction to leave the room (in the Student Union building) by 10 p.m. He offered instead the 24 hour use of a room, under the Schonell Theatre. It was argued by the meeting that this was unacceptable as it meant that the printing facilities and information centre would then be in too obscure a position as a strike centre, that it would be removed from the rooms upstairs in the Union Complex which were also essential to the strike, and that it was far too cold for those who had to work through the night. Mr. Luck and the Executive declined to negotiate on the issue or to argue the reasons for their decision. It was another ultimatum. Finally he advanced the deadline to 9 a.m. Wednesday, at which time the strike committee must vacate the rooms to allow cleaners to shampoo the carpet for a union council meeting on Thursday night.

After this issue the meeting (about 150) set out to discuss strike tactics for Wednesday. It was decided that a systematic, disciplined, non-violent programme be devised along the following lines: Each morning, groups of students, if possible with faces painted black, should attend any lectures being held in the normal time slots, and if these classes had been turned over to the discussion of the relevant issues that these students should join in discussing these issues. If they should be '*business as usual*' classes then the following tactic be adopted:

(i) sit in the class in an orderly manner

(ii) either before or shortly after the class begins, ask politely whether the class can be given over to the discussion of racism or the State of Emergency.

(iii) this would be put not only to the lecturer but to the class as a whole for a majority vote

(iv) a completely non-violent and non-aggressive attitude should be maintained throughout.

(v) if discussion could not be gained, even on the refusal to discuss, then walk quietly to the front of the lecture and stand in line without obstructing the direct line of vision of either lecturer or class.

(vi) stand throughout the lecture in silent vigil in protest about the issues involved, if possible while reading books about the issues involved.

This tactic was to prove particularly effective, and should be seriously considered in future such actions. Even classes which went on as normal, at the end of the lecture large numbers of the students came forward to join in debate on the issues. There was little of the aggressiveness displayed in earlier attempts to address classes. The only limitation was that a large

number of classes could not be visited.

Wednesday was "injunction day". As the class picket plan began, the Union President and Manager took the names of 133 people using the J.D. Story Room after the Manager had issued a directive to leave. No further action resulted at that stage. It was not until that afternoon that it was learned that Court injunctions had been taken out against the "St. Lucia 133".

As well as the picketing of classes, Wednesday was the first day of an organised central seminar programme. A *'teach-in'* was scheduled from 3 p.m. till midnight. Over a thousand people attended, until it had to be called off when the injunction crisis developed that evening.

There were drastically reduced numbers of students at the University that day, but the lunch-time forum was surprisingly well attended (about 1500). That meeting voted overwhelmingly that Professor Cowen should address a mass meeting by Friday to clarify the situation following the rumours about imminent police action on campus.

That afternoon a meeting of the Staff Association was held to discuss a motion by two History Department lecturers (reflecting a very different conception of education and the lecturer's role) *"that this Association considers that the events of the last week have rendered normal operations of the university impossible . . . Education cannot effectively be carried on when a significant number of students see themselves as the victims of a systematic persecution . . . Under these conditions an attempt to carry on business as usual is a denial of our responsibility as educators"*. The motion called for a suspension of business as usual until the State of Emergency was rescinded. The motion was lost (approx. 120/60). It was decided alternatively to place a full-page protest in the Courier Mail.

Meanwhile back in the J.D. Story Room . . . (while a meeting of part-time students rejected a censure of the strike in a Refec. meeting) a packed meeting argued about what to do in the face of injunctions. It was argued strongly by some staff members that ignoring the injunctions would be taken as a serious contempt of court and could lead to extended jail sentences (Dr. Gerber) and that it was likely that police would come on to campus through the night to arrest offenders (Paul Wilson). It was finally decided by 20 of the injunctees however, to remain in occupation and risk jail sentences, rather than the collapse of strike activities, and by about 150 others to remain in occupation and risk police action (which was not likely to be gentle). The night passed in paranoid speculation about the extent of likely police brutality, about what to do if they came, and by continual acts of outrage by Will Steer (e.g. turning on the fans at 3 a.m.) who sought to *'keep everyone on their toes'*. Finally the gathering either collapsed in sleep, or prepared Thursday's pamphlets.

Thursday morning came and no police, and strike activity continued, *'business as usual'*. Pamphleting continued along with another day's seminar programme. The significant event of the day was the 1 p.m. Great Court meeting which the Vice-Chancellor had decided to address (after an earlier decision not to, relayed through his assistant Bob Wensley on Wednesday night it is not clear why he changed his mind) .

The Vice Chancellor's Statement could have been sub-titled 'Now Hear What I Say'. It was read to an assembly of five to six thousand people, and began by an objection to the word 'deadline' in the request for a statement, then outlined the Government's disapproval of the strike and this *'rightly'* so considering its investment in the university. He then affirmed that the Government was not considering extending the state of emergency to campus. He also outlined the attempts he had made personally to have the original Declaration revoked. He outlined his objections to apartheid and the tour and was warmly applauded by a large section who was however less responsive to his conception of legitimate dissent as only silent peaceful protest and staying away from the matches.

He made clear his objections to strike disruption of the educational processes of normal class schedules, and asserted that *'there is abundant opportunity for staff and students on a voluntary basis to discuss and act on matters concerning race and aboriginal affairs'*, and that he *'did not agree that unnormal activities for any reason that I have been informed of should be impeded during term time'*. He also defined *'strike'* for staff, as the withholding of normal teaching responsibilities leading to loss of pay. These narrow definitions of course education as time-table education and of the staff-student relationship and the avoidance of the charge that the university, as an institution, was complicit in societal racism, were not however as serious as his unsubstantiated charges (in marked contrast to his insistence on carefully documented evidence of police brutality before making statements) that this strike is being used by some as part of a plan to *'bring down this university . . . They are revolutionaries . . . I am utterly and implacably opposed to them . . . you (moderate students) should ask yourselves whether you are being manipulated.'* He disregarded the angry insistence of Dan O'Neill that he substantiate his claims. He went on to strongly criticise outsiders (and in particular Senator Georges) for *"stirring a mass meeting at a disturbing and emotional time . . . he acted unwisely in speaking the way he did . . ."* (How else but in a stirring way could a person speak at such a time?) Professor Cowen added that the Senate *"would use our legal power to exclude"* non-parliamentary, non-students who acted in the above manner. He concluded by urging *'constructive action'* (he did not recognise any constructive action in the strike), by urging an avoidance of

polarisation (apparently the '*manipulators*' are the only source of polarisation), and condemned those at the university '*who have no respect for the institution*' (radical criticism of the existing institution, and activism, automatically implies disrespect for the concept of a university?) He finally stated the truism '*the dialogue of the deaf is pointless*', with which many of those who are not represented on the Professorial Board or Senate would totally agree. Perhaps this is a possible source of future harmony. While the implicit illiberality of much of the content of the speech was disturbing it at least cleared up some of the illusory '*responsive Administration liberality*' ideology of the '*I hear what you say*' era.

But what was more disturbing was that the Vice-Chancellor refused to remain to debate the issues, or to substantiate his charges. This certainly swung the attitudes of a significant section of the meeting who had in fact appeared quite sympathetic to the content of the speech. A vote was taken as to whether or not Prof. Cowen should return to debate the issue, and was passed overwhelmingly. Prof. Presley was delegated to ask Prof. Cowen to return, and come back with the information that he was-unable to return because of a prior engagement.

It's interesting to compare the tone of this speech with that of an American liberal counterpart, Kingman Brewster, President of Yale, in his talk to an Alumni Day, entitled "The Moral Erosion of Our Nation". As with Professor Cowen's this talk insists that, while recognising the terrible tension between the '*imperative of university morality, and the imperative of university neutrality*', institutional neutrality must be maintained. However he emphasizes that those in positions of public and private leadership must speak out for the private conscience on public matters.

He concludes '*All of us must speak out when we believe that national and personal moral self-respect are threatened by apathy of indifference. Universities, their students, faculties and graduates have an obligation to prevent the moral cooling of America*'.

That is a very different emphasis to the expression of an abhorrence of apartheid in the context of a denouncement of the organised expression of that abhorrence on this university. It's also worth noting here the comment of an American lecturer when I asked him what he thought of the strike movement in comparison with American movement. He said that he was impressed by its comparative restraint and responsibility.

After that a number of other motions were passed on the usual issues. The evidence that the strike was not finished but was in fact spreading into the departments (e.g. staff rooms in five departments had been offered for full-time strike activity) was presented. Detailed refutations of the substance of the Vice-Chancellors statement were also presented particularly against the charges that a power hungry and manipulative elite were using the strike, and that they sought only to destroy the university. The extensive, specifically anti-racist work done through the strike was the most powerful evidence.

On Thursday night Union Council met, and after a lengthy discussion voted (19-10) to support the strike, that the President should make facilities available, that the Strike Committee should recognise the authority of the Executive, that the J.D. Story Room be made available subject to negotiation over cleaning etc. (Passed 11-10) and that the injunctions be withdrawn. A vote of censure of the Executive for its handling of the situation was lost (18-9), and of support for these actions was passed (22-10). Nevertheless the Union wrangle was finished — apparently.

The Strike Committee met simultaneously and decided that '*so far we have spent our time in the J.D. Story Room arguing about how to stay in the J.D. Story Room*' and so decided to transform the strike from the previously necessary initiatory and defensive mass meeting, nature of the first week to '*Phase II*', with an emphasis on the constructive aspects of the strike. Central seminars, and departmental action work as well as the evolving of long term anti-racist organisational forms etc. had to be concentrated upon. Particularly important was to get Aboriginal studies incorporated in the departments, and that this treatment should not be in the vein of the '*social problems*' of '*our*' Aborigines. It was important to bring in Aboriginal lecturers to speak about their problems, and their culture. An August vacation national conference on racism was also planned, with invitations to interstate speakers. This conference was to consist of seminars, and the formulation of organisational plans to combat Australian racism. A series of central activities for the last week of term was also planned. On Friday another extensive programme of seminars was held, as well as the traditional leafleting, picketing, etc. In the refectory at 1 p.m., a fake '*Moderate Student against the Strike*' meeting was held. The moderate student, "Don English", claimed that he had joined that strike organisation enthusiastically because of the value of the issue, but that after hearing Professor Cowen's speech he had begun having serious doubts about the true nature of the movement. Sure enough, after an intensive 24 hour of soul searching and investigation had discovered that there was in fact a manipulative group using students and the strike for their own ends, and not all concerned about racism. '*I see now how wrong I was*'. He had discovered that this group had connections with the Communist Party, had received huge sums of money and '*paid outside agitators*' (members of the P.O.A. Union), and that there were three separate plans ('A', 'B', & 'C') for getting police on campus. He added that he had headed the suggestion to take the mass meeting out the Great Court, and concluded '*It is about time*

that we begin to listen to voices urging balance and calm'. He was too fearful for his safety to reveal 'the list', but another student did, revealing ten top radical agitators. These comrades then in turn confessed their manipulative ways; their connections with outside organisations (e.g. the Outer Mongolia Peasants International) publicly purged themselves of these sins, and successively revealed the chain of manipulation.

Finally the horrible truth was revealed. It was Will Steer who was the arch manipulator. Then another more sinister truth was revealed . . . Will Steer's dog was in fact manipulating him. 'Bark', a white, dog had no interest in combatting racism, and had in fact, at the right moment, pissed on the carpet and set in motion the chain of events leading to the injunctions and the possibilities of police on campus (carpet had to be shampooed etc.). He then planned to use the chaos to ride to absolute power in true Napoleonic fashion. 'Bark' was leading the first significant movement on this campus for white dog power! Bark had Will Steer on a leash!

After yet another hassle involving yet another Union Exec. ultimatum (surprising after Union Council decisions), a decision about the use of Union facilities acceptable to both sides, was finally reached. This time two members of the Executive actually entered the meeting and attempted for the first time to argue their case. It was found that all arguments could be met. The injunction crisis was finally over. It need never have arisen.

Friday finished with another black face demo in town, and a free 'Strike Union Night'. A packed Relax Block grooved with Capertillar, Chain, and Yeti Street Theatre. It was the end of Phase I.

On Saturday (August 1<sup>st</sup>) there was a silent vigil picket of the relatively poorly attended Springbok test match. No incidents, and effective in its own quiet way, as spectators filed past the vigil group. The picket group sang Kum-bi-yah, creating quite a public impression. The next week was one of action committee meetings, more seminars, and pamphletting, and a small number of forums, as Phase II went into action. A badly attended forum meeting on Monday discussed plans for Tuesday's (August 4<sup>th</sup>) Toowoomba Bok match, and Women's Lib. held a seminar on 'Sexism and Racism'.

A Central Action Committee, set up to coordinate department committee activities, met. On Tuesday (August 4<sup>th</sup>) about 80 demonstrators set off for a picnic in Toowoomba. At the match they were continually hounded, verbally and physically, by spectators. Eventually one student, Brian Tovey, was punched badly, breaking his nose. The police stood by and watched. Senior officers of the police claimed 'I haven't seen any violence'. Apparently not all violence is illegal. The conclusion of one participant was that, particularly in view of the stringently non-violent and non-provocative response of the demonstrators, the Toowoomba incidents could only be seen as the passive version of police behaviour in Brisbane. They had achieved the same objective, intimidation of dissent, by omission. It was even considered by some that the greatest safety would be ensured by going on to the field and being arrested. The crowning insult was the arrest of 55 year old, mild-mannered, 'Bishop' Will Steer for 'obscene language' ('Vort Sark Boks'). In his court case the next day, after Will had to be taken from Court twice for insisting on a trial by jury for such a scandalous charge (against all his principles), he finally pleaded 'positively, sweetly, and charmingly, not guilty your Honour', to the Magistrate's great relief.

Wednesday was 'P.I.R.G. Day'. The Public Interest Research Group held a teach-in on 'Some Scenarios for Alternate Action'. It was held partly to give people who had seen the functioning of the Department Action Committees as a priority. From 50 to 100 people joined in seminars given by a number of lecturers on alternative structures and approaches to scholarship. The only other event to note that day was the arrival of the Aboriginal 'journey for justice' at the Town Hall. They had walked from Sydney to publicise the issue of Aboriginal land rights.

Thursday was declared 'Black Day' (August 5<sup>th</sup>). A widespread campaign to raise \$10,000 for Tribal Council for specific projects by collections in classrooms and from lecturers, was held. By the end of the day approximately \$3,000 had been raised. At 1 p.m. on 'Black Day' a mass meeting was addressed by Det. Sergeant Bob Walker of the Licensing Squad. He claimed that there was no doubt that there had been widespread police violence and breaches of legality, and that the Police Union meeting which had voted no confidence in Mr. Whitrod had been unconstitutionally run, and manipulated by the 'larrikin' element of the force, the same element which had been responsible for police violence. Mrs. Bevan, former critic of students, also addressed the meeting on problems of communication with the public, and affirmed that she now firmly agreed with the aims of student protest, and was sickened by the fact that they had become the 'chopping block' of society. She was warmly received.

On Friday night, the Strike was formally declared closed at a 'High Tea' ceremony in the J.D. Story Room after receiving the permission of the 'Transcendental Lord of Strikes and Other Disruptive Activities'. Against intensive lobbying from supporters of Women's Lib., and by a narrow majority, the movement was officially named 'Gobbets Against Racism'. The Strike was over, as the Last Post was played on a trumpet. The Kup Mari on Saturday night, the first campus social gathering here between Aborigines and white students, initiated the August Vacation Programme.



## CONCLUSIONS

The first conclusion is that it is quite expensive to put on a University strike in 1971. Nevertheless, contributions are generous.

*Can the strike be explained? It cannot be explained satisfactorily in a mechanical-causal sense. (The causes of the strike were A & B & . . .) Rather it was a 'mutative' leap which took even the most optimistic by surprise. The Friday decision represented a coming together of a large number of factors including the free decision by a very large number of people that this was the only reasonable way in the prevailing conditions that one's dignity could be maintained let alone the only way to fight racism. Similarly the activity of the two to five hundred people engaged in an organisational sense seemed to generate its own energy. These terms seems a little euphoric now, yet at the time they seemed the only reasonable descriptive terms.*

*How does the 'manipulator' model explain such enthusiastic cohesive response? No. Individual leaders were acting more as spokesmen, people who could most effectively articulate a common experience, rather than individuals manipulating a passive crowd. It must also be remembered that many people refused to be 'manipulated' when attempts were made to introduce issues which were believed by them to be too distinct from the anti-racist issue.*

*Determining whether or not the strike was a success depends on the criteria by which one makes the judgment, but the only really valid criteria are historical. In the history of the university no such widespread and extended activity has ever occurred before but it is impossible of course to make as yet a retrospective historical judgment on the long-term significance. One can note only that although it was not a success in the sense of a large number of staff declaring themselves officially on strike, or that a majority of full-time students voted for the strike, or that a majority of those who voted became actively involved in an organisational sense, nevertheless four to five thousand students and staff voted for a strike (more than have voted before for anything including Union elections, on an issue here) that over 200 staff declared their support in writing, that 1000-1500 became involved to the extent of continuously attending mass meetings and seminars in the first week, that about 500 became involved at an organisation level, and that about 200 devoted themselves to full-time organisational work and commitment. (Probably more would have become involved if the central programme could have been initiated immediately — an important lesson).*

Nothing like that has happened before, and only cynics or optimists (depending on one's position) would deny that it was not of large-scale significance. Although there has been an inevitable falling back, it is not a return to an old position. Apart from the precedent of widespread response at this University, the most heartening aspect of the strike was the rapidity with which it became transformed to the combatting of Australian racism, and the extent of that involvement. That this direction of the strike involved extensive participation by Aboriginals, and that close and lasting contacts were established (e.g. the results of the August Vac. seminars), constituted the core of its lasting value. For most people it was the first personal and organisational contact with black people, and constituted quite a transformation because of that. It was also good that it was an honest contact and that sources of tension were not glossed over (e.g. the 'Black militant'/'White liberal racist' syndrome, and Women's Lib. reactions to some Aboriginal (and white leftist) attitudes to women).

That constructive action by large numbers of people of widely ranging political opinion working together constituted the core of the strike is too obvious to deny. Denial of this by some circles is more a reflection on their own position than a damaging criticism of the strike. That the Vice Chancellor, who represents a significant range of opinion (particularly 'establishment' opinion) did make these criticisms in the face of the evidence, made clearer to a large number of 'moderate students' (e.g. at the Thursday meeting) the structural forces against change at the university. This alienation extended to a significant number of staff. Although the Staff Association played a very conservative role, a considerable degree of dissatisfaction with the Association was registered in votes there. Many staff I have spoken to since have expressed this dissatisfaction, and an alternative Association (which also does not include the 'bosses') is a strong possibility at some time in the future.

In addition to this transformation of attitudes within the University, the police actions against the large numbers of people (again including many 'moderates') was something of an enlightenment to many. The existential confrontation involved in such clashes is a traditional source of radicalisation, and for many students I have spoken to it provided the first real moment when they were forced to find a societal explanation for such blatant denial of the rights of dissent. This confusion was well expressed by one law student I spoke to after the Saturday night Tower Mill incident. Though still a firm believer in the fundamental soundness of our system of democracy, he was asking: "*How can they get away with this; it's so illegal.*" The honest attempt to find an explanation for such discrepancies as that between the Premier's bland approval of all police action taken, and the experience of that action, leads to radical changes in attitudes and analyses.

The obvious conflict between the demands of widely felt moral urgency and '*legality*' also led many to a rethinking of the relationship between the two, and to changed priorities. The conflict that developed over the use of the Union facilities, essential for the continuance of the strike, and the Administration's insistence that the only issue to be considered in that conflict was the constitutionality of the question, was a caricature of the morality / legality problem. '*Legality*' was seen by many as, to a large degree, a selective protection of status quos, and a mechanism defending those people from real moral encounter.

A related question is that of the legitimacy of mass meeting decisions when these are in conflict with established hierarchies in this case the Admin, Professorial Board, and Staff Association as well the Students' Union Executive. There is no simple answer. The defects of the annually elected (not to mention the nonelected) hierarchies were obvious during the strike. So too were some of the defects of the mass meeting procedure. Several times decisions were made at mass meetings which were to be binding on its representatives, and yet these conditions had to be considerably modified in practice (e.g. in '*negotiations*' with the Union Executive).

Another problem is ensuring responsibility of elected representatives. In several cases representatives did not fulfill obligations (e.g. only about half of those delegated to negotiate with Professor Cowen when the strike began remained to continue negotiations. There was also no system of liaison at that time between the representatives and the mass meeting). The commitment of responsibility to mass meetings was also subverted on several occasions by individuals who acted unilaterally without consultation with the meeting. These actions are understandable in the urgency of some of the situations, and yet they were breaches of responsibility. These questions must be settled satisfactorily by those who take the idea of '*dual power*' seriously, and who wish it to be taken seriously by large numbers. Nevertheless this conception was greatly advanced during the strike, along with new conceptions of '*legitimacy*'.

The old and hackneyed question of violence also played a prominent part in those few weeks. The crudities of police behaviour, impressive by its systematic activity in Brisbane, and by its inactivity in Toowoomba, particularly in its contrast with the obscenity of government and press charges of demonstrator violence (and preoccupation with that issue) led many to, and confirmed in others, the view that violence is an institutionalised element of state policy justified by the myth of the inevitable violence of dissent. Some saw disturbing more covert parallels with the treatment of dissent on this campus.

In contrast, the concept of non-violence in the Gandhian and Martin Luther King sense of it as a positive transcendence of violence rather than an avoidance of it, gained considerable credibility as an ideal for many, while for others it was seen as a most effective tactic. The stringent non-violence of the Toowoomba demonstrators was the most public example, but it was also a powerful element in campus strategy. For example, at the Strike Committee meeting which decided on the tactic of silent vigils in classrooms, after a discussion of the Gandhian concept of '*SATYAGRAHA*' (or positive non-violence) and its implications, decided that those entering classrooms to speak should not only do so in a way to avoid physical confrontation, but also so that as completely a non-aggressive attitude as possible should be maintained. The response in classes where this was carried out was impressive. Silent vigils throughout a scheduled class usually resulted in extended and willing discussion of the issues at the end of that class. Though this form of action, particularly in relation to established structures, is not an absolute alternative to confrontation, it obviously has a more important role than it has had in the past. The unaggressive public response to the '*black*' demos should also be noted.

Alternative concepts of education also became, for the first time, a mass issue at this university. This has been noted earlier, but it should be added that while the contradiction of the timetable lecture system were most widely felt in the humanities, there was a significant response from the scientific and more technical disciplines. The response of faculties like Engineering, Architecture, Med. II etc. showed a widespread concern with the social responsibilities of those disciplines, and an awareness that education is not simply a narrow intellectual process. The educational content (particularly education in its broadest sense) of the movement in an institution whose '*business*' (as they say) is education, leads to a questioning of the appropriateness of the word "*strike*" for such an activity.

Little needs to be said of press coverage and the Administration's use of the Press, except that in individual cases quite fair reportage was given. This was largely the result of having an official press group and of the presence of several sympathetic journalists who were interested to find out '*what was really going on*'. Obviously editorial policy remains a powerful limitation, but it is a pity when individual journalists became the victims (though some deserve it) of blanket outrage at media distortion. The news blackout in the south also raises disturbing questions about political and other pressures on press agencies. P.I.R.G. is at present doing a detailed analysis of Press coverage as well as its business and organisational links, and this will be published later.

To what extent is there a discrepancy between the strike response, and the results of the Union elections? In those elections the R.A.T. candidates were decisively defeated (there was a fairly constant 2:1 vote against them). It

would appear a discrepancy at first, and yet when one analyses the support for the strike it was not really so. As noted earlier there was a large section of students who supported the strike but who consciously identified as '*moderate*' students. For them strike support was not synonymous with radical activism. This was clear for instance at the Tuesday mass meeting when the discipline issue came up. About two thirds voted for the strike but against the inclusion of discipline into the issues of the strike. Probably more voted R.A.T. than would have before the strike, but explicit radical activism at least of the R.A.T. form, is certainly not a majority mood among those interested enough to vote (it must be remembered however that part-time students also vote). It is true to argue however that 1000-1200 students voting for a radical ticket is a real force.

Finally, a most significant development during the strike was the change in outlook and approach of much of '*the movement*'. Central to this was a revised conception of the relationship between theory and practice, in the first extended testing of theory in action here. The argument, put forward, mainly by the Revolutionary Socialist Party spokesmen, that we must first establish our theory and then engage in action, and that all actions should be specifically directed towards attaining the goal of self-management, was decisively rejected in favour of a far more pragmatic and dialectical conception of theory/action and of ways of attaining goals. Once it had been decided that the strike was primarily about racism that remained the priority and tactical decisions were made which preserved a unity across a wide range of political opinion (from revolutionary socialists to explicit '*reformists*') and which were made with the primary aim of keeping an anti-racist strike alive. Differing beliefs about the societal causes of and vested interest in racism, and of the structural vested interest opposing the anti-racist movement because it was a mass movement, meant differing conceptions of the direction that movement should take. Yet there was enough common ground to preserve unity while arguing these broader questions, and traditional tensions within the movement, and between it and the uncommitted, were largely transcended, partly through a realisation of the falseness of seeing distinctions as dichotomies. Although the original mass meeting decision contained definite statements on the necessity for direct control of Union facilities, once the Union wrangle began it was soon decided not to make this the issue, but rather to compromise and negotiate with the Union Executive as the constitutional authority in order to keep the strike going and to minimise its diversion into an explicit power struggle. Perhaps if this had been more evident in the original mass decisions, the spirit of negotiation might have been stronger among the Union Executive. As it happened however, the Executive refused to negotiate with the Strike movement after the first weekend, and instead made a rather childish stand on authority and issued a series of non-negotiable ultimatums. To keep the strike going effectively there was no alternative but to occupy '*illegally*' the J.D. Story Room. The childishness of the Union stand was revealed, for instance, in the hysterical and falsified descriptions of events by one Executive member in literature distributed to part-time students, and in the attempts by the President and President-elect to justify their stand at Friday's Strike Committee meeting. I do not claim that theirs was the sole responsibility for the time wasting hassles, for they too were in a harrowing position but I assert that it was fundamentally theirs.

It is interesting to speculate also on the role of the Admin, (itself the object of pressure from the Government), in the development of this stalemate. After an originally relatively liberal decision on the use of Union facilities over the first weekend, there began a successive limitation on the use of those facilities, after the President and Executive had received '*responsible*' advice from above. The farce reached its climax in the injunctions issued, with the threat of police action, and the later obvious unwillingness to carry through this threat. It must also be asserted that there was no widespread joy at this prospect by the Strike Committee, although most believed that it was very important that this threat could not be allowed to break the strike, and 20 of the injunctees were prepared to risk jail. It was also seen that the positive effect of police action would be an escalation of the strike here, and in the South. Nevertheless it was not preferred.

I would argue then that, apart from its anti-racist achievements, the most beneficial results of the strike was the transformation of the '*movement*' (the Dialectic at work again?). It remains to be seen how permanent this transformation will be. Certainly tensions remain. Nevertheless, the experience of each other's common humanity by large numbers of people both within the movement (through engagement in a common endeavour, and through facing together, voluntarily, periods of extreme stress), and with the Aboriginal people (again personal contact in a common experience), and between those actively involved and those merely showing their support, has been a unique, and I believe lasting unifying achievement. May the impressive spontaneous organisation and direction, and the '*quantum leap*' of energy and humanity generated in The Great Strike of '71 be continued, and repeated in the next crunch. That's all.

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It is hoped that a book about the strike and its implications will be published. Therefore we would appreciate any additions or corrections to any of this material, as well as any articles which people would like to have considered for inclusion. The following have so far been planned:

(1) History of the strike

(2) Comparative analysis with Australian, American, and British University movements

(3) A detailed analysis of media coverage of the strike and tours

(4) An analysis of racism in Queensland and Australia.

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## THE DEPARTMENTS

There was an impressive central support of the strike, and activity, at this level. The aim of '*taking the strike into the departments*' was also realised to a considerable extent, and it is at this level that the long-term effects of the strike are most likely to be felt. Unfortunately this element of the strike was only partly realised, mainly because this central organisation was unnecessarily and interminably involved in the Union problem and other pointless wrangles. From the information to hand at this stage, the following Department activity can be sketched.

### Economics and Commerce

A meeting of 700-900 staff and students on the first Monday of the strike voted to:

1. condemn the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Act, and South African racial policies (6 against);
2. condemn the state of emergency (10 against);
3. condemn police action against demonstrators in the past week (15 against);
4. strike until Thursday 29th and then to review the situation (70% for, 30% against).

An Action Committee began work on a number of projects including:

- (a) the drafting of a scheme for elected representatives of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders to replace the Act;
- (b) an assessment of the costs/benefits of the State of Emergency;
- (c) the development of an alternative course on Social Problems;
- (d) the development of a permanent tutorial system for black Australians;
- (e) an attempt to get Dave Crawford's proposed '*Business and Environment*' course accepted in the Commerce Department;
- (f) an investigation of the ownership and control of Australian mass media, and of the role of advertising in creating distorted value systems;
- (g) an investigation of job opportunities and training for Aborigines and Islanders,
- (h) an investigation of racist control of school textbooks, leading to proposals for changes;
- (i) an investigation to specify Australian companies involved in racist practices.

### Architecture

An Action Committee formed a number of subcommittees to liaise with the central Strike Committee, and with a number of Aboriginal groups and projects. The projects begun included:

- (a) a research and design programme on housing, and urban problems of aborigines, and specifically to design low-cost housing, and redesigning The Open Door. This project was in conjunction with Len Watson of Tribal Council.
- (b) an investigation of housing, hostels, clinics, preschools etc. for Aborigines
- (c) a delegation sent to Tully to investigate housing there;
- (d) the organisation of a Kup Murri on the first Thursday night, in liaison with Aborigines and Islanders;
- (e) liaison with Dr. Coombs on Aboriginal problems.

Work on these projects is proceeding.

### Social Work

On Friday, four staff declared themselves on strike, and the Social Work

Association (professional social workers) decided to strike if a day of general university strike were called. The Action Committee later formed programmed a series of seminars on racism to be held through the strike (e.g. on '*Prejudice*', and '*Aboriginal Child Health*').

A number of projects on the social problems of Aborigines and Islanders were started, and are continuing.

## **Medicine II**

In conjunction with the Anti-Racist Committee, they are drawing up a plan to examine the nutrition and health of the Aborigines in poverty in Brisbane, and are planning to put pressure on the Maternal and Child Welfare system to realise their inadequacies in the treatment of malnutrition among Aboriginal children.

## **Medicine I**

Students held a meeting on the first Monday and endorsed the declaration signed by the 200 staff members, called on staff to rearrange lectures for the strike, and condemned the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Act. The meeting did not vote to go on strike however.

## **Education**

A meeting of 80 students on the first Monday voted unanimously to condemn the Act and South African racial policies. The vote for a strike passed (37 for, 8 against, 15 abstentions). Staff however decided not to strike, and only one member was sympathetic to the idea of turning over scheduled classes to a discussion of the issues. A number of seminars on aboriginal education and other issues were arranged between students and staff. In conjunction with the Central Strike Committee, the leafleting of the major high schools, informing students of the issues of the strike and suggesting school discussion groups, was also organised. This leaflet also advertised a meeting at the university to form a union of high school students, teachers and teacher trainees. This meeting was attended by 40 students from 11 schools as well as some teachers and trainees, and after a day's discussion formulated plans for school discussion groups etc. Research into the treatment of Aborigines and their culture in school text books was also begun. This would be done in conjunction with aborigines. A series of seminars to familiarise teachers with these issues was also suggested.

## **External Studies**

On Friday, five staff went on strike, and four sent a telegram to Mr. Whitrod calling for a policy statement on police action against demonstrators, in the perspective of his declining credibility. (These staff sent a later letter to the Commissioner on Monday after his position had become clearer on Saturday night. A reply was received during the week thanking them for their reconsideration, and emphasizing the difficulties of attempts to rapidly change police attitudes). The External Studies Department is also preparing a booklet about the strike, written by staff members, and to be sent to External Students.

## **Engineering**

During the first strike week, a meeting of 500 students and staff condemned the Act, South African racial policies, and the State of Emergency, and decided to attempt to raise money by the '*cheap labour*' plan outlined earlier, on a Sunday and Monday, thus allowing students who wished to study on Monday a chance to participate on the weekend. An impressive \$1,500 was raised. A meeting of Engineering staff supported the strike (50/45) and the rights of individual students and staff to strike, and to donate three day's salary to ABSCHOL and other aboriginal organisations.

## **Law**

As mentioned earlier, the Law Department decided to suspend lectures on the Thursday and the Friday of the mass meeting. Although this decision was later rescinded, and classes were held as normal through the strike with '*good*' attendances, there was a good response for the '*legal observer*' scheme, and a report, including the evidence of over 60 Statutory Declarations, is being prepared and will be handed to the Vice-Chancellor as evidence for a judicial enquiry. No projects on '*Law and Aborigines*' have yet been started.

## **Anthropology and Sociology**

On Friday 23, a strong statement deploring police brutality, the State of Emergency, and calling its revocation along with that of the Tour, was signed by nearly all staff including the Head. However, by Tuesday this

mood had been somewhat modified. A Sociology Action Group pamphlet described the Tuesday student/staff meeting as having watered down the original thrust of strike action. The meeting voted for a return to class schedules, but with classes to be given over to discussion of the issues if the class so desired.

## History

A meeting of staff on Monday morning decided that they could not, in conscience, cross picket lines to give classes, and that they would donate at least one day's pay to some Aboriginal organisation. Three members decided that they would cross pickets to give classes if any students desired them. Another meeting was held on Wednesday afternoon to discuss a motion to return to '*business as usual*'. Strong feelings were aroused against the suggestions that: the consideration of possible action by university authorities, or the government, should be an overriding factor; that there was no educational value in the strike; that educational values should be set by a narrow timetable conception (rather, it was argued, education centrally involves a feeling of trust and common endeavour between student and teacher); that the department as such should not show collective moral concern; and that staff diversion of normal timetables to other activities while still receiving pay, constituted hypocrisy. These conceptions of the educational process, and of staff rights, should be compared carefully with those of the Administration. Finally it was decided that staff, individually, should decide what they should do. Many decided to return to lectures, to ask the classes if they wanted the classes cancelled, turned over to a discussion of the issues, or held as scheduled.

A History Action Group, formed at a meeting of 100 staff and students on the first Tuesday morning, decided to strike, condemned the police actions, the Act, South African racial policies, and decided to begin an investigation of the treatment of racism and authoritarianism in the department, and to investigate department structures. A picket timetable was also drawn up.

## English

The English Department Committee met on Monday 26 and decided to support the rights of staff to suspend lectures during the Queensland tour, or to convert classes to a discussion of the issues (passed 28/15). It decided unanimously that no sanctions would be applied to striking students; to donate three days of pay to ABSCHOL; and to endorse the strike (in the sense of cessation of scheduled curricular teaching (20/12)).

A meeting of the English Co-ordinating Committee on Wednesday 28, arranged a seminar on the study of black literature in the context of English studies, and to hold a Thursday afternoon session on the drama and literature in the context of English studies, and to hold a Thursday afternoon session on the drama and literature of Black writers in the Abel Smith Theatre. The Action Committee met throughout the strike.

## Vetinary Science

A meeting of students decided that they could not strike because of workloads, though they supported the strike, and decided instead to raise money for a full-page ad. in the Old. Country Life. On Friday, half of the staff of the Vet. Science library decided to strike.

## Psychology

A Monday meeting of 200 staff and students voted in overwhelming support of the strike, and began a campaign to give the Brisbane public information on the Act. A committee was set up to plan a series of alternative lectures during the strike.

## Government

On Tuesday 27, a meeting of 120 staff and students voted to support strike action, an Action Committee was formed to begin research into the treatment of racism in courses, and alternative structuring of the department.

## French

The French Consultative Committee reached the following decisions: no action was to be taken against strikers or non-strikers, the rights of staff who cancelled classes or diverted them would be respected, and the Committee expressed sympathy with striking students.

## Science

A Tuesday 27 meeting of 350 students and staff endorsed Monday's mass meeting decision to strike, and requested the donation of staff, wages, both

voluntarily given, and retained by the Admin. from striking staff, to National Tribal Council.

## Chemistry

Seventy students and staff voted on Tuesday 27 to suspend lectures and exams so as to organise anti-racist activities (39/25).

## Zoology

On Monday, 2 staff and 7 demonstrators had declared themselves on strike. A programme of seminars was organised.

## Botany

Three post-graduate students on strike on Monday 26, no reports in yet.

## General

The Registrar's survey of Departments on Tuesday 27 revealed that at that stage sixteen full-time and eight part-time remained on strike without pay. Three members of Library staff were on strike. A number of other departments are known to have had strike activity, but there has not been sufficient time to collect the information. It would be appreciated if any extra information was sent in to Semper office.

## Elsewhere

On Friday afternoon (23rd) the Thatcher Library declared itself on strike, and 33 of the staff of the Main Library were on strike on Monday, so that tending services were cancelled for the day and it closed at 5 p.m. The University Bookshop had six staff go out on strike on Friday afternoon. On Tuesday night Union College declared its support for the strike and formed an Action Committee to co-ordinate with the Strike Committee. Eighty dollars was raised.

Christian groups on campus met on several occasions, and at the first meeting, of 80 people, declared their support for the strike, and arranged several seminars. One of these was with the Rev. Scott McPheat who spoke after his fact finding mission to South Africa. Attempts were also made to have racism discussed in lectures in the Divinity School, and in outside Churches, but the response there was not enthusiastic.

Finally the Aboriginal organisation on campus were particularly active in organization and leafleting. In addition to the work by the Anti-Racist Committee, Abschol pushed to have anti-racist motions included in all departments meetings, published approximately 30,000 pamphlets, organized several seminars, and organised 50 volunteer tutors for Aboriginal children. In addition, at the end of the strike they had collected \$4,500 for distribution to Abschol and Tribal Council \$3,500 from staff donations, and \$1,500 from the Engineering students).

Outside the University Kelvin Grove Teachers College had a meeting (150) which voted support of the strike, and messages of support were sent from the Institute of Technology and from Mt. Gravatt Teacher's College.

## Other Universities

Strong support was also received from many of the other universities. At Adelaide University, 1500 students voted almost unanimously to support the strike, and 500 students marched to the Qld. Tourist Bureau and signed a condemnation on a '*Sunny Queensland*' Paster. Armidale University students voted to strike for two days in solidarity. At Monash, 1000 pledged strike action solidarity. (In Melbourne also, "*Seamen of the Yarra River*" sent a message of congratulations and solidarity for our '*magnificent struggle against racism*'). At N.S.W. University, the official ratification by the Students Representative Council (600/200) was to strike for one day in solidarity. Collections of money were sent to the strike fund. At Sydney a meeting of 200 called a token strike for one day. At Newcastle, 750 students declared solidarity with the strike action. At Flinders, 250 students condemned the government's recent policies and the Tour, expressed support for strike action in a demonstration at the Qld. Tourist Bureau, and called for a strike till the end of the Tour. At Tasmania a meeting gave full support and solidarity with the strike. Four hundred students at La Trobe began strike action in solidarity and began anti-racist activities. In addition a majority of the universities pledged a strike indefinitely if police were called on to the Queensland campus. That action, which appeared imminent at the one stage, would probably have triggered the first Australia-wide student movement. As noted before, the virtual media blackout on strike news in Southern states confused the issue considerably.

*A potted history to help in following the events described in the article:*

**May 14: ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT** forms after a forum held in the refectory addressed by former Wallaby, Tony Abrahams, and Black African, Sekkai Holland, during the South African Surfing Tour. They argued strongly that such tours should be stopped, and that anti-tour protests should also be a focus for highlighting racism in Australian.

**Monday June 28: PSYCHOLOGY LECTURE DISRUPTED** during Third Moratorium campaign, confrontation with UQ Administration officials resulted in 12 students facing disciplinary charges.

**June 30: THIRD MORATORIUM** - Large march from campus - rally at Roma Street where revolutionary position stated - mass march through city by over 5,000 demonstrators.

**Wednesday July 14: STATE OF EMERGENCY** declared by Qld. State Government covering Springbok Tour. The legislation gave police carte blanche to counter the actions of the trade unions and protestors.

**July 14: UQ REVIEW** - Opening night of *I HEAR WHAT YOU SAY* at the Schonell Theatre.

**Monday July 19: UQ TEACH-IN** on the State of Emergency

**Wednesday July 21: "State of Emergency" DEMONSTRATION** - 1000 marched from the university to Parliament House, violent clashes with police who used "excessive" force - TV cameramen and press photographers were harassed by police and had their film confiscated. Thirty-six arrests.

**Thursday July 22:** Springboks rugby team arrived in Brisbane and are accommodated at the Tower Mill Motel, Wickham Terrace, Spring Hill.

**Thursday July 22: TOWER MILL DEMONSTRATION & POLICE CHARGE** - 300 demonstrators, 500 police - police charged demonstrators, widespread beatings, many injured, 18 arrests - battle inside Trades Hall.

**Friday July 23: UQ STRIKE** - 3,000 students at the University of Queensland voted to go on strike as a political protest against racism and the State of Emergency. There was widely felt condemnation of the violent police tactics used the night before.

**Friday July 23: TOWER MILL DEMONSTRATION** - second demonstration at the Tower Mill. This time protesters significantly outnumbered the police and the protest was peaceful.

**Saturday July 24: SPRINGBOK vs. WALLABYS RUGBY MATCH** - the drama surrounding the lead up to the game kept the crowds away in droves. Only about 6,000 attended instead of the anticipated 30,000 full house. State Government had moved the match from Ballymore Park (the main Rugby field) to the Brisbane Exhibition Grounds, where excessive security-fencing was erected.

**Saturday July 24: VICTORIA PARK** - with the oval at the Exhibition Grounds ringed by barbed wire, protesters decided instead to launch a demonstration in nearby Victoria Park. About 2,000 people turned up faced by 900 police. Led by Labor Senator George Georges, the marchers then went down Fortitude Valley and staged a rare sit-down in Queen Street. Violence was minimal during the day as march leaders, including Labor MP Bill Hayden, urged caution.

**Saturday July 24: TOWER MILL DEMONSTRATION** - third demonstration at the Tower Mill. About a thousand gathered at the Tower Mill that evening. Police Commissioner Ray Whitrod was there personally to command his forces. Whitrod ordered that the roadway be kept clear, but when the lines of police moved forward, they charged the demonstrators once again defying Whitrod's orders. More injuries, some serious, and 11 arrests.

**Sunday July 25:** Refec. Strike Meeting

**Monday July 26: MASS MEETING GREAT COURT** - UQ Strike escalates - speeches by Senator George Georges, Dan O'Neill, Pastor Don Brady, and Len Watson - 4,000 of 5,000 (80%) at meeting voted to support the strike - clash begins with Student Union executives over the use of Union facilities during the strike.

**July 26&28: NEW RADICAL FILM FESTIVAL** at Rialto Theatre.

**Tuesday July 27: DISCIPLINARY HEARINGS** re disrupted psychology lecture (June 28) - 12 were disciplined (included 6 expulsions and 3 court actions). This forced a division vote at the Strike forum 2/3 against supporting disciplined students.

**Tuesday July 27: BLACK FACES DEMONSTRATION** - 150 march to town; protests at Adelaide Hotel and Regatta Hotel - Dan O'Neill arrested.

Student Union president (David Luck) gives deadline for strike activists to evacuate Union rooms (July 28) in order to shampoo carpet.



**Thursday July 29: MEETING IN GREAT COURT** – Vice Chancellor Zelman Cowan reads statement condemning the Strike and refuses to answer questions afterwards. The general resolve to continue the Strike was reaffirmed.

**Sunday August 1: SILENT VIGIL** held at Springbok rugby match.

**Wednesday August 4: TOOWOOMBA SPRINGBOK MATCH** – 80 demonstrators, hostile crowd, spectators attack demonstrators while police look on, injuries (broken nose) - one arrest.

**Thursday August 5: 'BLACK DAY'** – Mass collection on campus raising \$3,000 for Tribal Council.

**Friday August 6: STRIKE ENDS** - the Strike was formally declared closed at a '*High Tea*' ceremony in the J.D. Story Room - the *Last Post* was played on a trumpet.

**Saturday August 7: KUP MURRI** with food cooked underground was the first campus social gathering between Aborigines and students. (*Kup Murri* is a traditional style of Aboriginal cooking of meats and vegetables using hot rocks with everything buried underground.)