KATHLEEN GOUGH'S FIGHT AGAINST THE CONSEQUENCES OF CLASS AND IMPERIALISM ON CAMPUS[1]

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In 1961 the Kennedy Administration gave the green light to the CIA to reclaim Cuba by force for democratic capitalism's interests. The Bay of Pigs invasion which followed was a flop that subsequent administrations and the CIA could never abide. In October of 1962 the Kennedy Administration, smarting from its defeat at the Bay of Pigs, revealed that Soviet missiles were destined to be installed on launch pads in Cuba and effected a blockade of traffic destined for that island.

The "Cuban Missile Crisis," as it is known, generated small protests on several campuses, including Brandeis University where Kathleen Gough, an assistant professor there, was asked by students to give a speech at an open forum on campus.

Whereas the toppling of Arbenz's government in Guatemala and Mossadegh's government in Iran in the mid-1950s had created mild protests here and there in American universities, the Cuban missile blockade signalled a change in the size and number of political protests on several American campuses against the United States' imperialist military adventures. Even "free speech platforms," so common on campuses today, and professors willing to speak on controversial issues were few and far between three decades ago.

Kathleen Gough was sought out by students because of a speech she had given the previous year denouncing the above-ground testing of nuclear devices at the Nevada test site.

Kathleen complied and gave a speech lambasting the United States' government, expressing a hope that Cuba would successfully defend itself against an attack from the United States. She insisted that the United States was in violation of international law, and of Cuba's sovereignty, and threatened the world with a nuclear confrontation with the U.S.S.R. Kathleen Gough's protests of the blockade were based on scholarly critiques of Cuban political economic history and of the dictatorial regimes which had received

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succour and support from the United States. She sought fair treatment for Castro's socialist regime which had toppled Batista's dictatorship.

By 1962 it was apparent that United States policies in Latin America favoured oligarchies and dictatorships[2] over socialist governments or governments which raised the spectre of socialism. Thus, from 1959 the United States had sought to undermine Castro's Cuba by refusing to grant it aid, to grant it trade status or to recognize its legitimacy. The U.S.A's second big moment for the toppling of Castro's regime, the blockade, was not left to the CIA, but was delegated to the U.S. military and foreign affairs apparatus.

The protest of U.S. practices toward Cuba during the missile crisis must be put into perspective: it was small, but noticed. It preceded the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley by over a year,[3] and it preceded the electrifying University of Michigan teach-in on the Vietnam War by two years.[4] Protests of the Cuban blockade in 1962 were in step with civil rights demonstrations in the deep south, and were harbingers of campus protests of U.S. imperialist foreign policies for the next three decades.

Kathleen Gough's protests of United States' nuclear testing policies and its actions toward Cuba were regarded with repugnance by the Brandeis administration. She was called into the university president's office and upbraided. Kathleen was later given to understand that she had no future at Brandeis, but the president did not so inform her. Kathleen and her husband and colleague, David Aberle, decided to move from Brandeis. David was offered a position at the University of Oregon, which he accepted. There was no permanent ladder position available for Kathleen so she was made an "Honorary Research Associate."

Within a year after their arrival at Oregon, the United States, in violation of the Geneva Agreements and Accords, was hip-deep in open warfare against the revolutionary National Liberation Front insurgents and North Vietnamese troops. Kathleen worked informally with Students for Democratic Action, beginning in the spring of 1965. The student organization staged some small protest marches. The protest movement gained steam in the early winter of 1965 when Marshall Sahlins, then at the University of Michigan, called David Aberle and encouraged him to organize an all-day, all-night teach-in on the Vietnam War.

Kathleen joined David in an organization meeting of nearly a dozen faculty members, most of whom were already engaged in civil rights activities.[5] One of the people at the first meeting was Owen Dudley Edwards, who, as faculty advisor to Students for Democratic Action (SDA), had probably been the most active Oregon faculty member engaged in anti-Vietnam War activities. Kathleen also had contacts with SDA. Informed of the meeting by Kathleen, some of the students phoned during the first planning session to ask to participate. They were invited to the founding meeting and soon arrived. Their

early involvement initiated the relatively egalitarian relationships between faculty and student protesters reflected in the name selected that same evening: "The Faculty-Student Committee to Stop the War in Viet Nam," which began by planning and co-ordinating the Teach-In and went on to organize other protest meetings and to attempt to educate the campus, the wider Oregon community and Oregon's legislators and congressional representatives about the issues. (The Committee soon succeeded in getting Senator Wayne Morse to speak at the Teach-In.)

Kathleen knew no bounds to membership in the protest movement and argued persuasively to bring one and all to the battle, whether those persons were within or outside the university. As was her style, and David's as well, she pored over the history and ethnology of Southeast Asia, including Vietnam, and became expert in Viet Nam's pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial history. Her deep involvement in the anti-war movement kindled an interest in Viet Nam's civil war and in its revolutionary war against the United States and the United States' imperialist allies that never abated.

I met Kathleen during the fall of 1965, soon after my arrival in Eugene to begin a brief tenure on the faculty there. Working with Kathleen was a most interesting experience. During our "Faculty-Student Committee" meetings she usually chose to reason, when some of us chose to shout, although she, too, would shout when all else failed. Kathleen evaluated the suggestions of students and staff and working people from off-campus with the same care shown to suggestions of faculty. She was, however, well informed and passionate in her repudiation of the destruction of Vietnam, the Vietnamese people and the U.S. men conscripted to serve in imperialism's cause, so her positions were adamantly maintained when our most restrained colleagues sought to address issues of style rather than substance.

Although Kathleen had no appointment at Oregon other than Honorary Research Associate, she had a temporary teaching position in Anthropology for one quarter in spring of 1965, teaching Peoples of India. (I am indebted for this information to one of the graduate students who took the course: Sheldon Smith.) She was invited to teach again in the year 1966-67, but she advised the department chairman that she would not assign grades. Low grades could be a ticket to conscription, and she would have no part in contributing to an imperialist war in this fashion. The offer was withdrawn.

In retrospect, it seems to me that Kathleen Gough's style—openness to ideas, willingness to work with anyone, articulate even when fuelled by anger at the most recent reports of U.S. actions in Vietnam—influenced many faculty who were her associates on the "Faculty-Student Committee" in the mid-1960s.

In the following, I do not claim that Kathleen was responsible for all of the changes that came about among the relations of some faculty and students in

several departments at the University of Oregon, but many faculty were influenced by her opinion about grading in light of the war, even though few knew of her personal refusal to grade, which cost her a position, albeit temporary, on the faculty.

It is my recollection that within a year or two after joining the protest, a handful of professors—from distinguished seniors to fledgling juniors—addressed students on a first-name basis and expected to be addressed in a like fashion. Many questioned the value and the utility of grades, and not solely because low grades could be a ticket to war for struggling students.

Kathleen Gough was at the forefront of these changes. She was instrumental in causing faculty to analyze the power structure and protocol of the university and to work to alter both, and she caused faculty to recognize the responsibilities of intellectuals and to put their special knowledge and skills to use in ways many had not done previously. In short order, pockets within the University of Oregon—notably anthropology, political science, psychology, sociology, economics and biology—began to change as relations among faculty, students and staff became more open and departmental affairs more democratic. Each of those pockets, of course, had several faculty, students and occasionally staff involved in the movement.

After three years of protesting the war from her base in Eugene, Oregon, it was clear to Kathleen that no amount of collective action by anti-war forces in Eugene or elsewhere in the United States exercised much influence on Johnson Administration policies or that administration's resolve to carry those policies out. As I recall I said to Kathleen in the spring of 1967, on the basis of no evidence other than hope, that I saw some "light at the end of the tunnel." I felt rather foolish when she told me she didn't see that light.

Kathleen was fearful their son, Steve, would have to confront the draft in a very few years, and David and Kathleen feared that the immigration and naturalization bureau might seek to expel Kathleen, a British subject, because of her opposition to the war in Vietnam and other imperialist activities of the United States in the Dominican Republic and against Cuba.

In 1967, Kathleen and David left Oregon for professorships at Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia, respectively.

Simon Fraser University (SFU) was newly created in British Columbia by the Social Credit government. Kathleen, I think, assumed that the university was far more left-liberal in political persuasion than it was in fact. Kathleen was recruited to a multidisciplinary political science, sociology, anthropology department (PSA), a majority of whose 21 faculty members were leftists or left-liberals. They were the antithesis of conservatism in thought and in practice.

When Kathleen arrived in 1967, the faculty was in some turmoil over the Vietnam war, but the more important local issues were class conflict, labour

conditions, trade union concerns and international problems of imperialism and underdevelopment. Five SFU teaching assistants had participated in protest demonstrations over a freedom of press issue that was being played out in a local high school. The SFU Board of Governors fired them, prompting Tom Bottomore to resign his position of Dean of Arts because of the interference of the Board in academic matters, free speech and democratic process. The student association threatened to strike, prompting the Board of Governors to reinstate the teaching assistants. Bottomore requested to be reappointed as Dean, but the Board of Governors rejected his request.

The problems at SFU were sufficiently grave to summon the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) to the campus to investigate "faculty-administration problems and non-communication" (*The Peak* [June 21, 1971] 18[Special Issue]:4).[6] The CAUT investigators reported that administrators regularly interfered with faculty business, and that the Board of Governors frequently intervened in administrative decisions. The result was an undemocratic distribution of power that adversely affected the university.

During Kathleen's first year at SFU, she joined 14 of her colleagues (22 in all) in seeking to hire André Gunder Frank, then perhaps the best-known and most-often-cited political economist of dependency in the world. This appointment was opposed by some senior faculty on campus and brought a series of charges and countercharges.

In the spring of 1968, the stream of administrative interventions in affairs, normally regarded as within the domain of faculty, caused the CAUT to censure SFU for actions of its president and Board of Governors. SFU's president was put on indefinite leave of absence by the Board of Governors, but the Board refused to resign.

SFU students and faculty were exercised by far too many issues in 1968 to recount them all here, but undemocratic practices and violations of academic freedom were principal among them.

The majority of Kathleen's colleagues, with the approval of Simon Fraser's interim president, moved the department to structure itself in a fashion unlike any other on the campus, or perhaps any other campus for that matter. Kathleen's department specified three objectives it wished to achieve: (1) to teach radical understanding of social problems (radical was defined as determining the root or origin or ultimate source of a thing); (2) to change relationships within the department and between the department and the university; and (3) to relate to the struggles of oppressed people.

All three goals were achieved, but the second—restructuring the relations within the department and between the department and the university—was the department's undoing. In their new order, faculty formed one plenum, the graduate students and undergraduate students another. Each plenum could initiate policies, review tenure decisions and the like. Department meetings in

which administrative policy was established, degree requirements set, curriculum and grading policies fashioned and adopted, tenure and promotion cases discussed and recommendations forwarded to the administration were open to faculty and students—the decisions of each plenum on all issues were equal.

The new openness in the department and the parity between faculty and student plenums had fostered divisiveness among faculty over student participation in curricular and personnel issues and over a student initiative for student committees to evaluate disputes over grades. Kathleen recognized that her department's revolutionary organization were the seeds of its own destruction, reasoning that the university's administration could not tolerate its revolutionary structure. Stresses in the department did not arise with the new structure. A year earlier four archaeologists hived off from the department, in part because of turmoil within it.

A new president was appointed in the fall of 1968. He and his administration were especially displeased when decisions about promotions and tenure forwarded by the PSA department were found to include votes from students. The president demanded new votes which excluded student votes. The department demurred, informing the president that the recommendations had been passed by a majority of the faculty. The president placed the department in trusteeship, after which the dean of arts appointed his own tenure and renewal review committee, with only one representative from the department, a political scientist.

The recommendations from the dean's committee downgraded a number of recommendations from the previous departmental committee. The university Tenure and Promotions Committee downgraded a few more. The result was that in August, 10 out of 18 recommendations for PSA faculty were downgraded. Of this number, at least seven were self-identified radicals. Four, two of them well-established figures of whom Kathleen was one, were unequivocally refused tenure or renewal. Their present contracts were intended to be terminal. Three department members received conditional one-year renewals and three more were refused tenure or overdue promotions without definite notice to quit.

The trusteeship and the tenure recommendations led to a strike that began on September 24, 1969. It included eight department members, 12 graduate student teaching assistants and a great many students. Of the department members on strike, six, including Kathleen, had received unfavourable decisions from the University Committee. The University's response to the strike on October 3, 1969, was to suspend the eight strikers and set in motion the provisions of the university's Academic Freedom and Tenure procedures for dismissal. The strike was terminated by a Joint Strike Assembly on November 4.

In 1970, the 10 faculty who comprised the gutted department fired the 12 teaching assistants who had participated in the strike.

The University's procedures called for dismissal hearings by a three-person committee, one member chosen by the University, one by the defendant (or co-defendants) and one either by joint agreement of the first two members or, failing that, by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of British Columbia. Seven suspended faculty members, including Kathleen, chose to be heard by a single committee; the eighth went it alone. The faculty member who went it alone was reinstated in November, 1970, but was given notice of termination effective August 1972 after a negative review by the SFU tenure committee.

On July 24, 1970, the committee appointed for the seven found that there was no cause for dismissal. That committee had been denied access to certain documents and the opportunity to examine crucial administration witnesses. The president, whose actions had prevented a proper hearing, rejected the findings and called for a new dismissal hearing.

Although calling for new hearings, the president reinstated one of the seven whose contract was near expiration without such a hearing. Another of the seven strikers sought a separate hearing and was reinstated in June 14, 1971, but that person's contract was allowed to run out. Kathleen and another senior person refused new hearings. On June 17, 1971, the Board of Governors repudiated the dismissal section of the Academic Freedom and Tenure Brief. Either on June 17 or 18 the president dismissed the remaining three strikers. In sum, five individuals were dismissed outright, while in the three reinstated cases their contracts were allowed to expire.

Two other faculty members who sympathized with the strike eventually left when their contracts were not renewed, but neither of them had completed their doctorates.

On May 14, 1971, the CAUT censured the president and Board of Governors of Simon Fraser University for their summary dismissal of Kathleen Gough Aberle and a fellow professor and for the improper treatment of five others in disregard of academic due process and of the proper safeguards of academic appointments and tenure. Soon thereafter the Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association, the Canadian Political Science Association and the Committee on Socialist Studies endorsed the CAUT decision and censured the SFU president and Board of Governors. The American Anthropological Association and the American Sociological Association at their plenary sessions in 1971 also censured Simon Fraser University for the actions of its president and Board of Governors.

Some of the dismissed strikers allege that they were subsequently blacklisted by the SFU administration in the sense that SFU provided information to prospective employers intended to deny employment to the dismissed fac-

ulty. The blacklisted faculty sought CAUT assistance but, according to the affected faculty, CAUT officials said they did not know how to prevent it.

Not all of Kathleen's initiatives resulted in principled losses for her side. It is of more than passing interest that in 1989 Kathleen made contact with a Vietnamese scholar whom she had known previously. She invited him to travel to British Columbia, housed him and introduced him to Peter Boothroyd at the Centre for Human Settlements at the University of British Columbia. Kathleen was especially interested in forming a long-term research project to be conducted in 12 rice-growing villages she had studied in earlier visits to Vietnam.

The upshot is that several scholars at the University of British Columbia became interested in joint research projects with Viet Nam. Kathleen and her colleagues were successful in gaining the interest of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), which supplied some funds to embark on a series of joint projects with Vietnamese scholars that will continue for at least five years. The CIDA grant precipitated funding from the International Development Research Centre for research by the Vietnam National Centre for Social Sciences in co-operation with the University of British Columbia on the socio-economic impacts of Doi Moi, which advances Kathleen's interest in what was then being translated as "the New Thinking," but today is known in English as "Renovation."

Kathleen was felled by cancer before she could participate, but her efforts were honoured in Vietnam.

Notes

1. My thanks to my dear friend, David Aberle, for refreshing my memory about our Oregon past, for correcting some of my most egregious errors about Kathleen's (and her colleagues') struggles at Simon Fraser University and for keeping tightly buttoned lips when he wanted to make at least one more suggestion for a helpful change.
2. These were similar to the stable, "authoritarian" governments currently preferred by Jeane Kirkpatrick.
3. The Free Speech Movement at the University of California, Berkeley, is usually associated with one of its most vocal participants, Mario Savio.
4. The University of Michigan Teach-In is famous because it triggered similar teach-ins throughout universities and colleges across the United States, usually through direct solicitation and encouragement from Michigan professors to friends, former colleagues and former students located in universities across the nation.
5. Whereas I was elected as chair of the Faculty-Student Committee in the fall of 1965, I was teaching at Antioch College in the spring of that year, so I do not have a complete list of all faculty in attendance at the organization meeting. David Aberle recalls that he, Kathleen and Owen Dudley Edwards participated, as did Martin Acker from Social Work, George Streisinger from Microbiology, Robert Leeper from Psychology and several political scientists including Joel Fiszman, Lucien Marquis and Bob Agger.
6. *The Peak* is the student newspaper at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia.