

Rival Emotions Spur UW Fights

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Growing tensions between students were the primary factors Wednesday in the several brief outbreaks of violence on the University of Wisconsin campus.

And, in most clashes, emotional and personal conflicts, not arguments over black student demands, were the spark for the flurries of fist-swinging and name-calling.

IN ONE CASE, an incident on the mall in front of the Social Science Building, the presence of police was a contributing factor to a physical confrontation. But even on that occasion police reaction resulted after about 15 patrolmen found themselves in the midst of two hostile student groups engaged in a shoving match.

Tensions between students

had surfaced Tuesday afternoon, when Douglas Ostrand, a freshman from Ft. Atkinson and vice-chairman of the campus chapter of the Young Americans for Freedom (YAF), began distributing anti-strike literature outside the Commerce Building.

The YAF handouts claimed that blacks and their supporters were denying students their right to attend class. Two black students and several white supporters gathered around Ostrand, heatedly claiming that no one was being prevented from doing so.

"LISTEN, JACK, I don't dig what you're passing out here," one of the blacks said. He then seized the remaining handouts from Ostrand and handed them to a white supporter.

Wednesday morning Ostrand

and about 30 supporters returned with more handouts and waited in front of Bascom Hall as about 1,500 black and white strikers moved up Bascom Hill from a rally in the Memorial Union.

This YAF group was bolstered by about 20 members of Sigma Epsilon Phi fraternity and some University football players, including Ken Criter, Tom McCauley, and Wally Schoessow.

Shortly after noon a small group of blacks began tearing down anti-strike signs taped to the base of the Abraham Lincoln statue.

"WE HAVEN'T torn down your signs," Ostrand protested in vain.

About this time a group of about 100 anti-strikers formed to crash blockades set up in front of Bascom Hall and the Social Science Building. The group now wore blue armbands with the letter "H" on them, signifying S. I. Hayakawa, the president of San Francisco State College who recently took a hard line against student strikers at that school.

The group penetrated the Bascom Hall pickets without incident, emerged from the rear of the building, and headed for Social Science, chanting, "Join Us, Go To Class."

THE GROUP went headlong into a crowd of about 250 strikers and some 50 policemen trying to keep the building open. In the ensuing confusion about 15 police were backed up against the building.

At this point the police reacted by forcefully clearing the immediate 40 by 40 foot area. Several strikers were shoved to the ground, starting a chain reaction of shouting, flying snowballs, and trampled protesters. Many students were forced off a four foot ledge in front of the building.

Order was quickly restored and there were conflicting rumors of people being injured.

NEWS OF this incident spread quickly, and about 30 minutes later black and white strikers were engaged in an emotional debate with YAF supporters over who was responsible for the fray.

The argument soon gave way to several brief tussles, prompted by obscene name-calling and challenges to "go settle this whole mess down by the lake, away from the pigs."

Criter and Schoessow, whose face was stained with blood

from a cut over his eye, hotly argued with several blacks, including track stars Mike Butler and Rickey Poole. No punches were thrown here, but Criter was later involved with some blacks in a brief fight on Observatory Dr. next to Bascom Hall.

THIS CLASH, like the rest, ended when shouts that "the cops are coming" were heard.

As soon as one fight ended another would begin, despite attempts by the majority on both sides to calm people down. One student emerged with a badly bloodied face from what turned out to be the last battle of the afternoon.

At this point, about 3 p.m., a black leader dispersed the crowd of some 1,000 protesters and onlookers who had gathered in front of Bascom and were drawn by the fights to Observatory Dr.

Later Wednesday Criter said he regretted the incidents and was hoping to contact black leaders Wednesday night to avoid similar problems today.

SPOKESMEN for the strikers and Ostrand both said the violence was not the intent of the majority of either group. They also said that although the fights began with arguments over strikers' tactics, actual fist-swinging resulted from heated name-calling and personal disagreements between individuals.

A YAF rally for 8 p.m. Wednesday was canceled to avoid possible conflicts with strikers, who held a 6:30 p.m. rally on the Library Mall.

Ostrand did not specify what tactics the YAF and their supporters would take today, but he did say "we'll be on the Hill in the morning and will do what we can to help people get into class."