

Dr. Poddar sues University over non-renewal of contract

A YSU professor has filed suit charging the University with 1) refusing him a promotion because of his "race and national origin," 2) failing to renew his contract because of his protests regarding his denial of promotion, and his attempts to organize the faculty "to object to the unlawful employment practices" of the University, and 3) refusing to give him reasons for the non-renewal of his contract or a hearing at which he might challenge such reasons.

Dr. Bhagwati P.K. Poddar, assistant professor of sociology, filed a complaint in U.S. District Court in Cleveland yesterday, seeking a preliminary and permanent injunction restraining the University from releasing him.

The complaint further alleges that the University has acted in bad faith by appointing an ad hoc committee to investigate Dr. Poddar's case, because the "sole purpose of the ad hoc committee is to further discredit [Dr. Poddar's] reputation as a teacher and professor while pretending to uphold the concept of fair play and due process."

A native of India, Dr. Poddar is a naturalized U.S. citizen.

Dr. Poddar was hired by YSU in January, 1969. He was informed in June, 1970, that he would not be offered a contract for the 1971-72 academic year. Dr. Poddar is untenured.

Dr. A.L. Pugsley, University President, late yesterday declined to comment on the case, stating that

he had not been issued a copy of the complaint.

In another case involving the non-renewal of a contract of an untenured faculty member last year, the University maintained the position that written reasons were not to be given in such cases.

Dr. Poddar's complaint further alleges that the University's actions constitute a violation of his civil rights, have injured his "character and reputation as a professor," have deprived him of his "right of free speech and association," have deprived him of "rights without due process of law," and may injure his professional career.

The complaint requests that the University be restrained from

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Poddar

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suspending, dismissing, or disciplining Dr. Poddar, and requests that the ad hoc committee be restrained from inquiring into the case.

The complaint further requests that Dr. Poddar be informed of the reasons for the non-renewal of his contract, and that a hearing be held at which Dr. Poddar may present "evidence and witnesses on his behalf," and "confront and cross-examine witnesses" who offer evidence supporting the non-renewal of his contract.

Also requested in the complaint are a teaching position or its equivalent for Dr. Poddar during the 1971-72 academic year, pending the outcome of the case, and damages and costs in an unspecified amount.

Filed by Dr. Poddar's lawyer, Eugene Green, the complaint names as defendants Youngstown State University, Dr. Pugsley, and the officers of the Board of Trustees.