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WHAT A SHAMBLES !

Silwood Incident

RCS UNION'S Country House Ball held at Silwood Park, the College Field Station, last Friday was marred by an unpleasant incident which may, if tempers do not soon cool, have far-reaching repercussions as regards the future of this annual event.

The incident occurred when some of the Silwood Park students appeared in jeans'n jumpers at what was a formal dinner-jacket occasion and, without having tickets, attempted to buy drinks at the bar. It was their contention that since the bar is run strictly as a private club and that any extension applies to the club and not to the function for which the extension was applied for, then they, it seemed, were entitled to buy drinks at the bar.

It was RCSU's contention that since the Silwood students were without tickets and improperly dressed, then they had no right to be at the function which had cost those present £8 for a double ticket. It is understood that the students later left feeling very disgruntled after mention was made of some 'heavies' possibly being called upon to 'bounce' them.

Legally, the situation is

confused and is best considered in terms of other College facilities. If the Country House has the same status as, for example, the College Block JCR, then it is bookable and whilst remaining a student area it is at the disposal of whoever books the facility. If however, the House has the status of, say, the Union Bar, then whilst it is possible to hold a function there, no student can be barred from using that facility.

Whatever happens, it is clear that the incident has created a great deal of ill-feeling on both sides. A lack of communication and maybe just one stray remark set the scene for the incident. One can only hope that the two sides can get together and talk the thing out. Clearly, much greater liaison and co-operation will be required in future years if the Annual Silwood Ball is to run smoothly - and if, indeed, it is to run at all.

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Scene in RATT on Wednesday

RATT (Room At The Top), the half-completed set of Union Committee rooms at the top of Union building is in a mess and no work has been done on it since January, it was recently revealed.

Contractual work began last summer on RATT to convert the large draughty room into an eminently more useful set of committee rooms using partitions. The contracting firm, Norwood Steel, apparently stopped early this year and nobody seems to know why. At the moment, building materials are scattered all over one section of the place; there are

doors without locks; some doors have been hung very badly; and other doors have yet to be hung. To use a euphemism, the Union is "perturbed" about all this.

Over in College Block, there appears to be some confusion as to whose responsibility it is to ensure RATT's completion, but the general feeling is that the contractors, Norwood Steel, have let us down very badly. It appears that a week last Wednesday, a spokesman for the firm said that he was given to understand that the job had been completed. *That person, is clearly in for a surprise.*

Tom Shearer, the College's site superintendent, told FELIX that despite having a great deal of work on at the moment he intends to chase the matter up fully.

Parking Problem

FOLLOWING COMPLAINTS that certain student motorists possessing parking permits for the Southside area were unable to park there, FELIX decided to investigate the matter.

Over a period of five days, the forty-odd parking places in front of Southside were statistically checked to see how many actually displayed the official parking permit.

For the first four days (Monday to Thursday) the pattern consistently showed about 50% of the vehicles displaying permits and 50% without. It was after this time that the College Parking Committee met to discuss these very statistics

which had been gleaned and concluded that the Parking Warden would have to tighten up on illegally parked cars. That Friday no statistics were taken, but the following Monday showed a marked improvement with less than 30% of the vehicles without a permit (including two diplomatic cars from the Libyan Embassy no less).

When asked to comment John

Fuller, the Parking Warden, said that in a lot of cases, for example when parents come to visit a student who is sick and in hall, he has to exercise a lot of discretion. He also made the point that by maintaining a lot of spare places for permit holders who *might* want to use the space allocated to them, non-college motorists would

(Turn to page 2)

EDITORIAL

Michael Williams

THE INCIDENT which occurred at Silwood Park last Friday (see page one) highlights the extreme vulnerability of the arrangement which existed between the Ball organisers and the Warden of Silwood. It appears that in the past, a certain amount of tact & discretion sprinkled with luck saw the function through to its finish. But last Friday for a brief moment, luck was elsewhere and the tact & discretion had, on the one side, been stretched by the previous twelve hours hard grind in setting the event up, and on the other, lost in the seams of the casual attire.

When matters began to come adrift there were no rules, regulations, strict understandings for anyone to consult as a means of arbitration. Was the Country House strictly and unequivocally booked, or did RCSU just have the use of it? Maybe it is time the Warden of Silwood clarified the matter.

Meanwhile, the cankerous destruction called "ill-feeling" seems to be demanding redress on behalf of the Silwood students. But it is to Silwood's credit that the hard-liners who are determined to "give RCS a kick up the a---" at almost any cost are in a minority - vengeful motivations never could quite be correlated to mature attitudes.

Dick Cook, the Silwood Park Students Committee Chairman, has made it clear that discussion and close co-operation is now essential if this kind of thing is to be avoided in future years. I'll say 'aye' to that - and the sooner the better.



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IF ONLY

Jill McNaughtan

AS THE USK Rep. I feel duty bound to write about USK feeble effort for FELIX. However, where to start and what to say when I eventually manage to, is another matter!

Perhaps I could interest you in the fact that USK has virtually ceased to exist? (Hey, but that can't be right. It would mean that

I am out of a job!) Back to more serious things though; after only two weeks or so as the IF Rep, I was summonsed to a meeting in the depths of Queen Elizabeth College, to be told that homely, little USK was doomed to be swallowed up into the impersonality (not to mention crudeness) of Catbums. Well really? How can I follow that?

As far as IF is concerned, it is quite a sore point. We knew USK. (If we didn't, we should have!) We knew the colleges which were part of USK (well, most of them...) but CATBUMS? How many of us feel that being part of an area which stretches out as far as Brunel and Middlesex Poly, will really do us much good? Unfortunately, as a relatively unimportant secretarial college, which is only 200 strong, there is not a lot we can do about it! USK (which for those who haven't got the faintest idea what I am talking about, stands for University/Union of South Kensington) meant that our college was invited to other larger colleges' Ents functions. I would like to know how many people from South Ken are going to make their way out to the wilds of the West of London

for a Saturday night bop or whatever, to take advantage of the CATBUMS plan. (And I thought it was a well known fact that the larger an organisation becomes, the more inefficient it becomes too). In fact, it seems that the London Student Organisation, to whom we owe the great alteration, is only interested in the politics of the matter and then only so that when they decide that there is to be trouble, a larger area is involved.

But I think I have said enough (ie I have put my foot right in it). Perhaps it is a good job that USK is being done away with, as my political views were not entirely in accordance with those required. For example, the NUS and LSO (not the London Symphony Orchestra) called for Students "to work in the Labour Movement Campaign" AGAINST the Common Market, which I think as Bilingual Secretary-Birds, we should be supporting.

As to my redundancy on the IF Exec, I think I'll just have to quietly busy myself with paper/T-shirt selling and hope no one notices that I haven't a great deal to do...!

Parking Problem (continued from page 1)

snap up the places in deference to the students whilst he was attending to other duties. In other words he was prepared to fill the spare places with known students rather than run the risk of outsiders grabbing them.

Countering that argument, Jacqui Gerrard, the IC Union Hon. Secretary felt that for the warden to use his discretion in certain cases is fine, provided that no official parking-permit holder is prevented from parking and this is what has indeed happened recently.

Clearly the only true monitor with which to gauge this situation is the number of complaints from parking-permit holders who are unable to park. If these are no complaints, then things are fine; if not, then something has to be done about it.

Any students finding themselves in the position where they hold an official parking permit and yet are unable to park in the area allocated should contact the Hon. Secretary (Int. 3915/2232) immediately.

WHAT ABOUT THE CIA?
Talk with Philip A Gee, Author of the Book
"Inside the Company, CIA Diary"
Today at 18:30 Hours
Lecture Theatre C, Mech. Eng. (Room 542)
Latin American Society I.C.

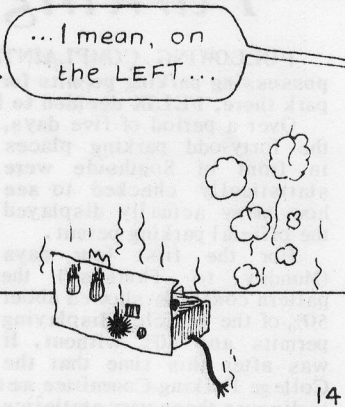
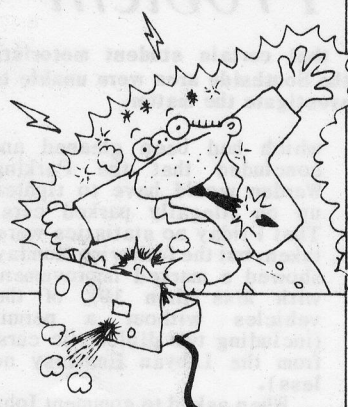
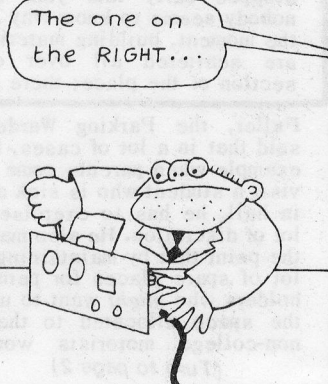
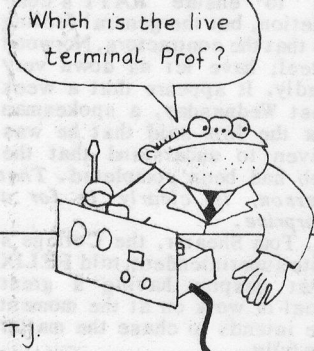
IC BANGLADESH SOCIETY
presents
SATYAJIT RAY'S
"Pather Panchali"
(with English Subtitles)
and
"Children of Fire"
(documentary)
on Friday 23rd May, 7.00pm
AT: GREAT HALL.



IC UNION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
May 22nd at 1pm in the Concert Hall Agenda includes the policy statement, Colours, Union General Awards and Union places in Hall.

POLICY STATEMENT: Copies of the amendment sheet to the March Policy Statement are now available from the ICU Office.

PROF. BREMSSTRAHLUNG



T.J.

PRECJ PJCE

THE ANNOUNCEMENT of the level of student maintenance grant for next year is likely to be made any time within the next week. There is a great deal of speculation and anxiety, not only from students but from College authorities as well. The rumour that the grant would go up to £750 (a 24% rise) apparently sent a number of Vice-Chancellors and Hall Wardens reaching for their phones in consternation, because such a level would be clearly inadequate in meeting the economic charges for hall rents and catering that they wish to charge.

"The familiar cycle of the grant being reduced in real value, the increasing hardship caused by means testing and discretionary awards and other anomalies begins to repeat itself."

One thing is clear: the full claim is not going to be met, nor are the anomalies going to be abolished. The familiar cycle of the grant being reduced in real value, the increasing hardship caused by means testing and discretionary awards and other anomalies begins to repeat itself. It is dubious whether the increase will put us up to a similar level (in real terms, as that of October 1974; with the increases in refectory prices and hall rents forecast, an inexorably declining standard of living for next session's students is inevitable.

The recent activities of the Association of University Teachers shows that we are not alone in this. The staggering decline in university lecturers' real incomes, both in absolute terms and in comparison to Civil Service salaries is a matter of grave concern to all of us. The fact that teachers are leaving the universities for better-paid jobs points to the probability of reduced staff-student ratios (already affected by the decision not to fill certain posts which fall vacant) and a falling standard of education.

"What response will students and lecturers give to this situation? The answer is becoming more and more clear: militancy and disruption."

What response will students and lecturers give to this situation? The answer is becoming more and more clear: militancy and disruption. The policies of the present Government are driving even self-styled "moderates" to direct action. Witness the pledge of the Liberals elected at Lancaster to maintain the campaign in defence of the rent strike instigated by the Left, and to call for further occupations if the University does not budge. Witness the consistent UGMs of 1500 students or more at Warwick, calling for maintenance of the occupation there; in spite of the Left's misgivings, and in spite of impending examinations. Add to that the new tone of the hitherto super-moderate "professional" association, the AUT, now willing to contemplate, disrupting examinations.

It is crucial that this new wave of militancy should be seen in context. No-one seriously believes that an economic crisis will be solved by cutting back on educational expenditure. In fact, when those cuts begin to bite into the quality and standard of education, they become counterproductive by reducing the stock of skilled manpower which is essential to Britain's economy. Many people in education now recognise that

they are fighting to maintain standards; from this point there can be no shrinking because further cuts mean the destruction of the whole system.

"Comprehensive secondary education is well on its way to collapse through lack of finance; other sectors, such as adult education are not too far behind."

Comprehensive secondary education is well on its way to collapse through lack of finance; other sectors such as adult education are not too far behind. There is talk of an anti-university lobby in Government; this may well be True (though I am sceptical). However, we can only win the struggle for a decent education system by uniting with all other sectors; education as a whole must be argued for, and fought for in every way, including direct action.

"Women's inequality is fundamentally a function of an unequal society, and it is until our own social relations are changed that women will cease to occupy an inferior position?"

The visit of Germaine Greer to IC, at the RCSU Annual Dinner proved to be an enlightening one. I have never been a great admirer of Dr Greer, not because I am apposed to equality between sexes, but because I believe that she has often trivialised the entire question and failed to link it to the central conflicts within our society at the present time. Women's inequality is fundamentally a function of an unequal society, and it is not until our own social relations are changed that women will cease to occupy an inferior position.

Nevertheless, there are many aspects of social equality which can be fought for, and these include equal pay, working conditions and so on. The outstanding

Trevor Phillips

example at the present time is that of the right of women to have abortions performed. Dr Greer delineated the factors involved eloquently and accurately and I would not even attempt to reproduce her exposition. But it is clear that the proposals of James White, MP, would drive many women back to the "back-street" abortionists, and cause an immense amount of suffering. Fundamentally, Mr White seeks to limit the right of the woman to terminate her pregnancy, on flimsy and in places false grounds. It will not stop abuses; it will encourage them. Mr White's dubious brand of morality would drive us back into the pre-1967 days, in spite of the fact that the Lane Committee on Abuses of the 1967 Act, (set up on the instigation of Mr White and his friends) emphatically endorsed the 1967 Act.

"...the proposals of James White, MP, would drive many women back to the 'back-street' abortionists, and cause an immense amount of suffering."

I would urge everyone to help in defeating this regressive and appalling piece of legislation, by signing the petitions being circulated and writing to your MP and the Select Committee.

The AGM on May 22nd sees the award of Union General Awards. (It is also my last General Meeting. Sob, sob.) UGA's are theoretically the Union's highest distinction, and are decided upon by the President. Despite my disapproval of such awards, I will be giving out a number, not just for hard work (or else a large number of people would qualify) but for particular contributions made to the life of the Union over the past year. I would welcome written suggestions from any member of the Union.

REVIEWS

RECORDS

Hic

Rock Flashbacks - Lifetime (Polydor)

On approaching an album featuring 4 class musicians with solid pedigrees and 2 outstanding talents there is reason for some anticipatory lip-smacking, whilst keeping in mind that 25% of the troops comprise Mr computer-guitar himself. Indeed, for sheer manic musical power this quartet take a lot of beating.

Initial impressions are not good as the leader "one word" moves into the eerie vocals and mindless cacophony of "a famous blues". Extremely classy rhythmic backing to all the nonsense provides glimmers of hope but Tony Williams quality drumming is constantly splintered by the extreme boorishness of John McLaughlin's guitar work. Technique for techniques sake is dull and he leaves Williams and Larry Young on organ to

carry the songs along with anything approaching conviction and direction. Jack Bruce's bass remains largely inaudible - he's light years from home with these 1000-note-a-minute-or-die musicians.

Most impressive piece on the album is John Cothane's "Big Nick" a nice fusion of brain power and immaculate timing, followed by "Vuelta Abajo" which although well deranged makes a pleasant change in that there is at least a discernible beat which all four musicians try to adhere to a good example of imaginations working along their own lines within the framework of a strong melody. Recommended only for deeply-studious jazzers.

Jim Gilstrap: Swing Your Daddy (Warner Bros.)

Old sounds are becoming increasingly popular as if the modern stuff has little to say and this single typifies what record companies seem to think it's all about. It's the wunkiest deal since the Urchies - wimpish crooning dirge fronting some moronic doo-wop support. Could be a hit in these days of cost-effective musak barrages and sha na na outbreaks. For resilient listeners there's part 2 on the other side.

Gil Jockstrap go home.

Lancaster.. Could it happen here?

AS THE conflict between the University authorities and the Students' Union at Lancaster crystallises into its wider perspective which closely allies itself with the "irresistible force meeting an immovable object" paradox, it becomes worthwhile to examine the current issues which are now being tossed from hand to hand like grenades and relate to their association with many of the historical aspects of the University and the growth of the Union there.

"The seeds of this conflict were sown in the past and the almost traditional lack of detente."

The seeds of this conflict were sown in the past and the almost traditional lack of detente between the University and the Union ensured that those seeds matured into a serious conflict of ideas.

First let us look at the University itself. Only circumstantial evidence exists which supports the view that "Big Business" has a decisive say in the way the University is run, viz., the proliferation of business departments which are now to be merged into a huge block paid for by private enterprise. This is hardly conclusive proof. But consider further that the claim of "all the academic staff are now yes-men" does appear to have some kind of basis in the fact that in 1972 several outspoken junior academics were sacked from the English Department; the Biology Department used to have three members of ASTMS — it now has none; the head of the Sociology Department, John Wakeford (who held radical views), was replaced by someone less controversial. The latter event provoked a great deal of letter writing (to no avail) but no militancy.

"...(the University's Vice-Chancellor) has remained adamant in his refusal to recognise the Lancaster Union's elected leadership."

It is at this point that the student left-wing will stand up and say that this "emasculatation of the academic staff into yes-men" was a necessary condition for financial investment by business interests who did not want any kind of controversy to interfere with what they were doing. But again, the evidence is inconclusive.

Now let us consider the development of the Students' Union at Lancaster. Originally there existed a peculiar federal system of Junior Common Rooms which elected their own representatives to sit on the sovereign body, the Student Representative Council which took all the important decisions on behalf of the Union's membership. Federation meetings (ie meetings which were open to all students) had no power and were only able effectively to recommend decisions to the SRC. *In other words, the Council had all the powers (and more) that UGM's currently have.*

This anachronistic representational democracy inevitably gave way to direct democracy with campus-wide ballots and the creation of a Union Executive which is mandated by Union General Meetings. This move was extremely significant since it introduced the concept of collective responsibility.

It was the beginning of the road leading to the current conflict when Charles Carter, the University's Vice-Chancellor (the equivalent of IC's Rector) stated that he found the changes in the Union's structure "totally unacceptable". Having adopted such an uncompromising attitude, he has remained adamant in his refusal to recognise the Lancaster Union's elected leadership. It is this that I personally see as the tap root of the current situation.

"Yet all the current signs ...seem to indicate that the University is determined to 'settle this nonsense once and for all' on their own terms."

The rest of the story has been essentially a series of provocations and escalations for which neither side have been altogether blameless.

This kind of breakdown in communication, this lack of detente responsible for a large number of disputes developing into strikes during the early days of organised trade unionism. Confrontations were consistently exacerbatory whilst talks and negotiations always proved to be the first step to a solution. Yet all the current signs associated with the Lancaster dispute seem to indicate that the University is determined to "settle this nonsense once and for all" on their own terms.

So let us now examine just what the "nonsense" is.

A student at Cartmal College (Lancaster has an inter-collegiate system), following the Union's policy went on rent strike in opposition to the Government's cuts in Educational expenditure. He also applied for a financial hardship grant. He was refused one because he was on rent strike. An EGM was called to discuss the matter and as a result there followed an occupation of the University administration building. The policy was twice re-affirmed by UGM's attended by over 1300 students and participated in by several hundreds throughout its twelve-day period.

"Thus we have the pattern of escalation: a series of mutual provocations..."

After the eviction by the Police, thirty-three students (including the entire union executive) were singled out for disciplinary action to be dealt with by a special tribunal. Such a tribunal could only be set up by a meeting of the University Senate which duly met. There does appear to be some evidence to support the view that the Senate meeting was in fact unconstitutional because the student representatives were barred from

AS THE situation at Lancaster University huddles and bubbles, MIKE WILLIAMS outlines the background and gives his own analysis of the dispute.

attending. The students therefore felt entitled to label the tribunal a "kangaroo court"; the Union refused to recognise the tribunal and as a result, the matter appeared to be concluded with a heavy batch of expulsions, again including the entire union executive.

"The solution is deceptively simple: One goes right back to the tap root, the breakdown in communications, the lack of detente."

Thus we have the pattern of escalation: a series of mutual provocations: (1) the Union goes on rent strike, thus provoking the University; (ii) the University refuses a student a hardship grant, thus provoking the Union; (iii) the Union decides on an occupation, thus provoking the University; (iv) the University gets the Police to evict the students and then sets up a "kangaroo court", thus provoking the Union; (v) the Union retaliates by refusing to recognise the authority of the tribunal, thus provoking the University; (vi) the University finally expels some students, thus provoking the Union. God, what a total mess! Where does one go from there? The solution is deceptively simple: One goes right back to the tap root, the breakdown in communications, the lack of detente.

The argument now impinges itself squarely on Vice-Chancellor Charles Carter and his hitherto uncompromising attitude in refusing to recognise the Union's elected leadership. The only truly purposeful solution to the Lancaster dispute can be a diplomatic one. A crushing defeat or a stunning victory for either side will set an incredibly dangerous precedent.

"Indeed, the Governors at Lancaster may eventually determine that (the Vice-Chancellor's) removal would be the only alternative to closing the University."

If the students at Lancaster decide that their VC is taking a bit too much advice from the business interests which are present on the campus, then the Union might conceivably see a route to success by directing a campaign not against the University authorities, but against the overt prejudices of a much more vulnerable target: Charles Carter. Indeed the Governors at Lancaster may eventually determine that his removal would be the only alternative to closing the University. It's now up to the Lancaster VC.

Now the question which this article asks is: "Could it happen here?" The answer in my view is: "Currently, no." At present IC/ICU relations serve as an almost impeccable model for other institutions of higher education as far as detente goes. It is a tribute to the individuals and personalities involved that things have stayed that way for so long. *But it remains a pity that such an example cannot rub off on Lancaster.*