

Information for the Tribunal concerning the "Inch" affair

NOTE REF 121

At lunch time on 7th May 1968, I was informed that, as there were rumours circulating in the "Valley" that a body of students was coming to the lecture to be given by Dr. T. D. Inch in order to register its disapproval of chemical and germ warfare, the meeting was to be held in the Committee Room in Wivenhoe House in order to ensure that Dr. Inch could deliver his lecture, which would be of an academic nature.

At 4.30 pm on that day, I together with other members of the Department, made my way to the committee room. The Head Porter was standing outside the main doors of the room, presumably to keep a check on the people entering. At 4.30 pm. when there were approximately 30 people in the room and most of the seats were occupied, the Chairman of the Meeting, Dr. Tillett, addressed the meeting and introduced Dr. Inch. Dr. Inch then began to give his lecture. He had barely finished his introduction when the rear door of the room opened and more people, not belonging to the department, began to enter. Dr. Bowden told them that this was now a closed lecture for members of the Chemical Society, but the new arrivals continued to stream into the room, demanding that this was a University lecture as it had been publicized as open to visitors. Dr. Bowden stood down and people entered until all the seats were occupied and many students were standing in the gangways.

At this point another attempt was made to stop more people entering the room as it was full to capacity. These attempts were scorned by the people who had just entered and calls were made for the standing crowd to close up together in order to make room for more people. Eventually, everyone who wanted to be admitted, was in the room. I estimate that there were altogether 150 people in the room at this stage.

Dr. Bowden then addressed the meeting, which had at this point quietened down. He informed the new arrivals that they were present as guests of the Chemical Society. The Chairman then reintroduced Dr. Inch. As soon as Dr. Inch stood up, one of the newly admitted body of students stated that he and his colleagues were not going to allow Dr. Inch to give his lecture, but that they were going to conduct a war crimes tribunal. He was reading from a manuscript which as far as I can recall was identical to the one to be found distributed around the University on the following day. After some five minutes, he stopped reading and the interruption was continued by a girl standing near him.

From where I was sitting at the back of the room, I could see that the Chairman and Dr. Inch were talking to each other. Members of the Chemistry Department then collected by the rear door of the room and Dr. Inch made to move to leave by this door. A shout went up that "Dr. Inch is leaving" and complete disorder broke out. The "newly arrived" people fought to get out of the room by both doors and they were chanting "Close Patent Down". By the time I was able to leave the room by the main doors, I found the corridor leading down to the Chemistry

Department blocked and so I made my way via the "fire-escape" window of the TV room to the porters desk at Wivenhoe House, where I learnt that the police had been called. I there met Dr. Bowden, who was covered in a yellow powder. When the police arrived, Dr. Bowden took two of them to where Dr. Inch was being held.

The only other event which I saw, was a frenzied scuffle between members of the police force and students in the car park of Wivenhoe House.

This is an accurate account of the events as I saw them on the afternoon of Tuesday 7th May.

William D Capew

Research Officer.

Dept. of Chemistry.

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