

From: Colin Rogers

T of E Ref 20

University of Essex Union

Robin Dixon,
Secretary,
Tribunal of Enquiry.

Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, Essex
Telephone: Colchester 5141

23rd May, 1968

Dear Robin,

Enclosed please find my account of the incidents of May 7th, plus a personal statement which I would like the Committee to consider as part of my ~~own~~ evidence to it. I should point out that my further co-operation with the Committee depend on the first point in the statement being satisfied.

I should be glad if you would indicate to the Committee and its Tribunal (which incidentally means or implies three members!) that I will be very willing to co-operate in any way possible if I am sure that the Committee is not acting under any sort of restrictions other than those required by law and that it does not intend to allow itself to be used for the purposes of retrospective legislation. That apart, I wish you and it luck - its taken me six hours to write a report so Dog only knows how long it will take them !

Yours sincerely,

Colin Rogers

Account of incidents on 7th May, 1968

Colin Rogers

At about 4.10 pm on 7th May, I was with a group of students outside the Students' Council offices, most of whom were intending to go to the lecture to be given by Dr T.D. Inch from Porton Down, as was I. At that point we were told by a student ~~that the students in~~ ^{the Chemistry Dept.} had been called to a meeting in the teaching labs in Wivenhoe House and had been told by ~~the~~ members of the Chemistry Dept. staff that they were expecting a demonstration and that any students who wished to go to the lecture should meet in the lab at 4.25. The students were told that they would be ~~taken~~ from there to the room where the lecture was to be held.

I was extremely annoyed when I heard this. I was intending to go to Dr. Inch's lecture in order to ask him to defend himself on the moral principles of his work and I knew that many other students intended to do the same. The meeting had been widely advertised through the University Newsletter as being open to visitors; anyway, since the lecture was being held by the Chemistry Society and since any member of the University may join any Society, I was quite prepared to join in order to attend what I considered to be an important function. It seemed to me that this was a deliberate attempt by the Chemistry staff to prevent anyone other than chemistry students attending the lecture and this seemed contrary to the purpose of a University. I, and other students tried to contact others who we knew were ~~intending~~ to go to the lecture in order to tell them that it would now be held in Wivenhoe House. By about 4.25 people were starting to leave the Valley for Wivenhoe House and I followed. Before I left I asked one student if he would go to LTB 2 where the lecture should have been held, to tell people that the lecture had been moved. As I was leaving the Square I met a student who informed me that a member of the Chemistry staff had said that the lecture would be held in the Committee Room in Wivenhoe House.

When I arrived at Wivenhoe House, I went to the Committee Room of the first ~~floor~~ floor. There were about thirty students standing in the common room and more entered with and behind me. The people in front of me were arguing with Mr. Davis the Chief of Staff, and a small ugly man with ~~a~~ grey hair cut in a sort of crewcut - the latter I now know to be called Bowden. These two were preventing us from entering the room, physically blocking the door. I remembered that there was a side entrance to the room from the Bar and made my way back through the Bar to that side door. Finding it open, I called to the other people, by now numbering around 80-90, and we entered the room.

Inside there were about 20 people - Dr Inch had, it appeared, already begun his lecture. As I entered I heard Dr. Tillett, who was standing by the door, say "Please remember that you are here as guests of the Chemistry Department." I and others protested at this, since the lecture had been organised by the Chemistry ~~Department~~ Society, which is financed partly by the Students' Council. Dr. Tillett's reply was to the effect that the lecture was now being sponsored by the Chemistry Department. The room was filling up and I stood at the back with a large group of other students. Dr. Tillett said something about having to start the lecture again and introduced Dr. Inch. ~~xx~~

As Dr. Inch began to speak, a student standing near me began to heckle him by reading from an indictment of Inch for his work on germ warfare. Dr. Inch stopped and the student continued to speak; ~~xxxx~~ when he stopped, another student continued reading. During this time, Drs Inch and Tillett were talking together at the other end of the room and Dr. Inch collected his briefcase and papers together. When the second student had finished reading, I took over, reading from a copy of the indictment which I had. At about this point Dr Inch tried to leave the room, with Dr Tillett; Uproar broke out since most of those present wanted Dr. Inch to listen to the indictment and reply to it. However, Dr. Tillett pushed him out of the room by the side door (into the Bar); I continued to read and thus saw very little of what was happening, though I did note that Dr. Inch's progress was being aided by a number of Chemistry staff and others amid much shoving and, to use the Registrar's phrase, "jostling".

As soon as it became obvious that most people were leaving the room with Dr. Inch, I stopped reading and left the room by the main door. By this means I managed to intercept Dr. Inch at the end of the Bar. He was being followed by a large group of students and had Mr. Davis by his side. I and others walked along the corridor with Dr. Inch. When he reached the foot of the large staircase leading up to the Upper Common Room, Dr. Inch stopped. I began to talk to him - I can't remember exactly what I said but it was something to the effect that he was misusing science and why didn't he do research which was of use to humanity instead of being aimed at its destruction. Dr. Inch's only comment was: "What is your name?". Since he did not produce the necessary authorisation from the Registrar as required under the University regulations, I declined to answer his question.

Dr. Inch was then surrounded by various people like Mr. Davis, Chemistry staff and anonymous men in dark suits and ushered out into the corridor. I followed them but when he reached the corridor by the door leading out to the back of Wivenhoe House, Dr. Inch stopped again. He soon got separated from his "bodyguard" since the corridor quickly filled up with the people who were following. Dr. Inch stood quietly in the corner. I moved closer to Dr. Inch and linked arms with some other students in front of Dr. Inch partly to prevent him ~~xxxxxx~~ being dragged off again by his bodyguard and partly to save him from being crushed by the sheer weight of numbers in that small space. It was only at this point that I noticed that Dr. Inch had some sort of yellow powder on his clothes. My first thought was that it might be a type of student repellent but muttering something about dandruff I tried to brush some of it off. However, Dr. Inch pushed my hand away and I stood, the Samaritan spurned.

Someone continued to read the indictment. When it was finished, someone else asked Dr. Inch a question. Dr. Inch began to answer and was interrupted - he then said: "You've had your say, now let me have mine." I took this as a clear indication that he was willing to say and answer our questions. At this point I saw a number of uniformed policemen at the other end of the corridor and the people who were filling the corridor were sitting down. The policemen stayed at the end of the corridor with Mr Wyatt and I assumed that they would not intervene since it was obvious that an orderly discussion was taking place. The questioning continued and Dr. Inch replied to each point fully and without any sign of unwillingness. I stood next to him the whole time AND AT NO POINT DID HE INDICATE THAT HE WANTED TO LEAVE. Several members of ~~xxxx~~ the

of the Chemistry Department, including Dr. Tillett and Professor Gordon, were standing nearby (i.e. within a couple of feet of Dr. Inch) and at no time did they or anyone else try to make Dr. Inch leave. I took this to mean that they were allowing the discussion to continue. Someone suggested (I believe it was Prof. Gordon) that we should all go back to the room we had come from and continue the discussion there. I repeated this suggestion to Dr. Inch but before I could get a reply from him, a commotion started at the far end of the corridor. I looked round and saw several Fuzz climbing over the students sitting in the corridor. As they reached the wider part of the corridor where we were standing they started heading towards the restaurant. Someone pointed out that this was not ^{the} time to stop for tea. Dr. Inch was pointed out to the Fuzz and one of them shouted something like "Right, get him out of here." By this time the discussion with Dr. Inch had ceased and he stood silently in the corner. Two of the policemen forced their way through to Dr. Inch - or at least they seemed to think that it was necessary to use force, though in fact people stood aside to let them through. I was kicked on the ankle several times by a Fuzz whose number I have and will supply if necessary; the same gentleman later deemed it necessary to punch me in the kidneys. These two officers proceeded to push Dr. Inch towards the restaurant; their action was somewhat contrary to the remarks of another Fuzz standing nearby who said something like "What are we supposed to do - this has got nothing to do with us."

Our end of the corridor was by now becoming a little congested and I was pushed along in the same direction as the Fuzz and Dr. Inch. One officer began imitating the movements of the posterior ~~of~~ normally associated with a belly-dancer and the person in front of me turned and, muttering something about 'not wishing to commit buggary with a bleeding fuzz', pushed me in front of him. Before I could object to myself being chosen as a more suitable candidate for gross acts, the Fuzz who had previously assaulted me, turned and threatened to do me grave injury if I tried to hit him again. I told him that he ought not to put ideas into my head and at this point our social dialogue broke down. The Fuzz and Dr. Inch hared off towards the restaurant and I followed a large group of others through the door and down the ramp to the back of Wivenhoe House.

I ran with others along the back of the Chemistry labs, through the bicycle shed and round to the front of Wivenhoe House. I was horrified to see five police cars parked there, along with a dog van which I recognised from the fact that it barked at me. I restrained my natural animal lovers urge to feed it, and watched as a white police car bore down on me. I stood my ground and braced myself mentally but unfortunately my feet got the better of me - I shall always regret not being Essex's first martyr. The car contained Dr. Inch and a few Fuzz; I and others shouted after it and thumped on its boot as it sped out of the University.

I turned away from the exit (i.e. the place where the chains across the road from the bus-stop to Wivenhoe House had been removed) and became part of a large group of students standing in the middle of the car-park. A policeman (tall, young with a ruddy complexion) shouted "This one will do" and grabbed hold of a student. His colleagues seemed a little bewildered and did not move until a group of us pulled the student away from the Fuzz, some chanting "No arrests". The student ran off round the back of Wivenhoe House pursued by fuzz and rescuers. I was about to follow, when a girl in front of me pushed past the policeman who had ~~seized~~

earlier kicked and punched me. He turned to me and said something like " Right, I 've warned you - you're coming with me ". I declined his invitation and the jilted fuzz walked away to his car. I went over to Mr. Lilley and told him that I thought they must be mad to call in the police and that he had been responsible for breaking up a serious discussion between Dr. Inch and us. He replied that he did not know who had called the police. I told him that Mr. Wyatt probably had, and he said "jolly good". I started to dissent from his statement but in my state of high emotion stammered badly - Mr. Lilley giggled at my disability and I walked off in disgust. I then joined in a discussion with one of the drivers of the police cars; he turned out to be about the only sane individual present and seemed very sympathetic. He could not understand why the Fuzz had been called in but said that the "authorities" ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ had called them and that since they owned the place the Fuzz had to do as they asked. At that point, a member of staff arrived and said that he had checked with the Registrar and he ~~had~~ not called them; the driver then drew an analogy with being called to aid a drowning child and not having time to ask for details.

At this point the pursuers of the semi-arrested students returned and the police got back into their cars. They drove off, leaving the dog van behind. When they got beyond the chains, they stopped and seemed to be waiting for the dog van. There was much jeering and waving good-bye and eventually one of the cars turned back. I and another replaced the chains and poles in the position laid down in the Regulations and Traffic Flow Plans of the University. The dog van moved off and the occupants of the car removed the chains to let it through despite my efforts to point out that this was contrary to Regulations.

Finally as I was leaving the car-park and heading back to the Valley, I met a friend of mine, another student, who was in a highly distressed state apparently because a grey car driven by a member of the Chemistry Dept. had almost knocked him down. I returned to the Valley.

23rd May 1968

Col. S Rogers