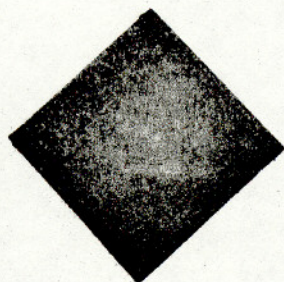


Inch

T of E Ref 39

by

Inch



As I saw it

by

R.A. WHITE.

To the Committee of Enquiry

With regard to the "Affair of Inch" I, as a participant in the protest against Chemical and Biological Warfare, wish to state the following:-

7th May 1968, 3.30 p.m. Valley Common Room

Was informed by a friend that the lecture venue was now uncertain; that L.T.B. 2 was no longer the correct room. My immediate reaction was anger for I felt that the possibility of expressing my doubts about the social value of any research which, even if in its narrow field is worthwhile, becomes a unit of support and succour for a larger organisation that carries out the most anti-social research ever conceived by the evil of man, had been limited. I said to friend, "Blimey! This is bloody provocative. This is going to rocket some blood pressures all round. How undignified these chemists are!"

4.20 p.m.

Was informed that the new venue of lecture had been discovered and that it was shortly to be held in Wivenhoe House. Hurriedly I gathered my things together and began to wend my way across the pseudo-bog-lawn towards the House. I saw a police car in Square 5, the occupants of which were watching some 150 students who, like myself, were belatedly straggling across to the House having been deceived into the belief that the lecture would be held in L.T.B. 2. What was to have been a dignified, organised, passive but direct protest in the form of a confrontation on the subject of "toxicological effects of certain chemicals" became a disrupted, less dignified and rather unsettled affair.

4.35 pm. Wivenhoe House: Outside Committee Room

A student opens door. A man I believe to be Dr Tillet barred student from entering on the pretext that the meeting was not open to all.

members of the University. Student replied that, under the rules governing the type of meeting advertised in the NEWSLETTER, he was willing to pay one shilling and thus qualify to enter the meeting. Dr Tillet then said, in effect, that the meeting was now a departmental affair and, therefore, he could not allow him (student) in. However, while the student had been talking to Dr Tillet, about 60 or 70 students filed past into the Committee Room. At this point Dr Tillet declared the meeting full. This was a blatant lie. Half of the remaining 60-70 students outside of the by now closed door eventually gained access. A member of the Chemistry Department turned to the nearest of the newly arrived students, Raphael Halberstadt and told him brusquely to put out his cigarette. - (Some 60% of those present were smoking.) It was an obvious attempt at intimidation by a member of staff over a student. Naturally, Raphael refused politely, thereby breaking down the authoritarian hierarchy that Staff Chemists in general at that meeting had been attempting to enforce. This senior member of the hierarchy, ie staff, then demanded thus in a loud voice, "Name?" This was duly given, again politely.

4.40 p.m.

Dr Tillet introduced Dr Inch. Immediately after the introduction, before Dr Inch began to speak, students rose in succession to read out an indictment of Chemical and Biological Warfare Research and products. After only five minutes of this reading, it was announced by a chemist that Dr Inch was leaving. Unfortunately, the doorway was full of people still trying to gain access. Members of the Chemistry Department angrily pushed these people aside in their attempt to clear a path for Dr Inch. The whole meeting then followed Dr Inch and surrounded him in a fairly confined space. At no time was the Head Porter within five feet of Dr Inch even in narrow corridors as he began to leave the Committee Room. I saw no violence [except when the police attempted to force their

went through very narrow corridors which were choked with people). This public meeting had been proceeding very well considering the confined space. Dr Inch began answering questions preceded by the words, "You've had your say, now I'll have mine!" The only duress Dr Inch underwent was verbal and all defenders of free speech should remember that, at a public meeting, verbal duress shows this principle to have been healthily enacted.

4.52 p.m.

Professor Gordon had just suggested that we all move to a more suitable place so that those people at the back of the throng could hear better, when the police began to force an entry through the tightly packed corridors. Students helped their passage by sitting down. The police in general were energetic but reasonable though P.C. 1405 was rather less reasonable than energetic. If there was any degree of resistance to the police, it was probably through the fact that many people felt there was no reason for their being called in the first place. The police soon extracted Inch from a space not much larger than the poor fellow's name or his ethics (although no student was actually in bodily contact with him).

5.00 p.m.

Not quite knowing why or for what purpose, except perhaps to express ~~the~~ perplexion and disappointment I felt at the turn of events, I dashed outside in pursuit of the first police cars.

Signed: *RAA White*

1st YEAR COMPARATIVE STUDIES

date: 27th May 1968