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Statement concerning the events of 7th May

Julian Harber

As a participant in the events of the 7th May 1968 I would like to offer both an account of that participation and an account of my impressions of ~~the~~ events.

Before doing so however I would like to briefly voice some misgivings I have about the terms of reference of the committee of inquiry

First - I believe the divorce it seeks to establish between fact and value not only to be philosophically impossible but also liable to lead to conclusions which masked as fact pass value judgements supporting the status quo.

There are at least 3 objections to such a divorce

- (a) what are considered relevant facts, irrelevant facts and value judgements depend on the value judgements of the committee of inquiry and indeed of anybody concerned
- (b) To understand human actions one must understand peoples motives i.e. the values they held.
- (c) the actual understanding of the values of those acting may be incomplete or ineffective if those attempting to do so have a radically different conception of the world than those they are trying to judge.

Second. I believe senate is attempting to insist that after the so called 'facts' have been collected they will be evaluated against a value judgement about 'free speech' which they laid down retrospective to the events of 2nd May.

One would presume that any committee of inquiry with any aspirations to fulfilling the obligations of the laws of natural justice, would refuse any such invitation by senate.

If however this is not so, I would like to have nothing to do with ~~such a~~ ^{the} committee of inquiry

I first learnt about the visit of Doctor Inch from the non-Trotskyist ~~source~~ 'Newsletter' of the University. I have long been highly alarmed at the activities of Porten Down and the secrecy that surrounds them. The title of the lecture made me feel that Dr Inch must in some way be involved in these immoral activities. I therefore felt it an absolute necessity to use this occasion to both let Dr Inch

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knew of my views on the subject, to attempt to find his views, and to gain the maximum publicity about ~~Porter's~~ Biological and chemical warfare. It was immediately obvious that many other people in the University felt the same way.

I arrived at the University on 7th May with Lucia Jones not long before the meeting was to start. To our surprise as we came round by Wivenhoe House we met a large number of people coming up from the valley. We gathered the meeting had had its venue changed at the last moment apparently to prevent us being present.

The unfriendly attitude of the organisers seemed to be confirmed when we reached the meeting. For there appeared to be some difficulty in entering the room. I was not in the front so did not see what was happening. But there seemed so much difficulty ~~in entering the~~ that I thought ^{by mistake} people had in fact come to the wrong meeting and were thus being excluded.

Once in the room, one could not say from the expressions of the faces of the members of the chemistry staff, that they ~~were~~ seemed very pleased to have so many people new to their society.

I was at the back of the room behind a lot of people and ^{so} once the meeting had started could not see much of what was going on.

However I heard ~~the~~ someone presumably the chairman introduce Dr Inch.

Before he could speak Nasse Triashan began reading out and inditement - a copy of which I and many other people had already been given. We were surprised to read from that inditement should those who actually did so have been prevented from so doing.

Some way through this inditement it was announced that Dr Inch was leaving. This I felt was not good enough given the nature of the work of Porter House. I believed there were many questions that needed to be answered.

Many others obviously felt the same way and we therefore ran out of the back door of the room to prevent Dr Inch from leaving and get him to answer the inditement.

There was on my behalf no intention of in any way physically harming Dr Inch and from the nature of the people around me I would think it fair to say they felt similarly.

I and several others went out through the kitchen and entered the buildings again by the Porter's desk. ~~By the time~~

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Once up ~~we had checked~~ the doors we found that Mr Inch had already been hammed in in the corridor.

After chanting such slogans as 'Close Rotten Pouch' and 'Keep science clean', the inditement continued. Subsequent to this questions were asked of Mr Inch on such questions as his ethical justification for his work. There were some interruptions to his answer but he was heard fairly well.

After some time the police arrived which seemed rather unnecessary since there seemed no danger to Mr Inch well being.

Immediately, to demonstrate we were peaceful we sat down. Had simply to prevent the police entering we would not have done this. Standing up with linked ^{arms} ~~hands~~ would be have been the effective weapon.

To our amazement the police after a while talking to our wicket and others began to climb over us in an attempt to extricate Mr Inch. This I regarded ^{both} as unnecessary and unfortunate since it did appear that Mr Inch might be prepared to re-enter the lecture room and continue a dialogue there. This would have been more orderly and comfortable.

The reaction to the police by the students was not uncharacteristically very friendly. There was considerable jostling to prevent them reaching Mr Inch which I took part in. No-one I saw however acted very violently and I saw no blows struck by either side. Though I presume from the chanting of police numbers that occurred that some sort of violence might have taken place.

Eventually the police did extricate the toxic academic though I was not in the front and did not see which way he went.

Since we had once more been robbed of my chance to question Mr Inch and ran with others down the stairs towards the Porter's desk in an attempt to prevent him leaving campus.

At this point my evidence becomes to a large extent negative-negative in the sense that serious allegations have been attributed to be that Mr Lilley and Mr Wyatt made which I wish to deny.

Mr Lilley has claimed that

"A scuffle developed near the boiler house and I believe that one policeman was knocked to the ground. A number of policemen lost their hats - I saw one of these incidents quite clearly and saw Julian Barker strike one of these

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police and remove his hat

~~This simply is~~ The part that refers to me is simply untrue.

I have in the past outside the university both struck and knocked off the hats of policemen in situations where I considered it necessary. I do not feel ashamed of having done so.

However on this occasion I did not see any need to and did not do so. Lucia Jones was with me well concern this.

Mr Lilley was thus obviously mistaken, or even worse perhaps has attempted to falsify history. This is a serious accusation to make. But when someone in the same piece of evidence says he saw Andrew Pring (a person so distinctive, as it to be impossible to confuse anybody else for him) ^{when he was not even there} prominent on the demonstration, one must begin to doubt his integrity as a witness

Mr Wyatts evidence of my behaviour outside the building is equally false

He says he saw a policeman ~~knocked~~ knocked off over. He does not say as was the culprit, but implies it by saying afterwards an attempt was made to arrest someone who ran off evading such arrest and who he later learnt was me.

One wonders where it he learnt it from

In actual fact I came out of the building with Lucia Jones to find a student struggling with the police who were apparently attempting to arrest him. I ~~can~~ ^{cannot} be sure who this student was, but I am confident it was not me.

The crowd around the police were convinced the arrest was unjustified and the student managed to break away. I and Lucia Jones joined in the chase to prevent re-arrest and soon rejoined the main body of students after the police had given up attempts to do so.

I hope the Tribunal is convinced of ~~the~~ my innocence of the accusations of these 2 men whose whole evidence I believe must be suspect. It is not a particularly intelligent and fruitful way of representing people where political opinions and actions you do not agree with as a Unicare Group. I think this attitude has clouded their memories as to what actually happened.

However should there be any doubt whatsoever in the minds of the committee I here I will be given a chance to defend myself with witnesses and an opportunity to question the 2 men in public.

I would finally like to say in regard to accusation of attempting to prevent free speech

- (1) There was nothing in the University regulations in force as I could see that made what was done ~~illegal~~ a breach of discipline
- (2) In respect of this I believe that ~~the~~ free speech must be taken in a global sense. And in ^{the} ~~this~~ case of chemical and biological warfare the whole concept becomes meaningless since on this subject there is no free discretion allowed.

Dr Inch is normally allowed freedom from speech not free speech.

We attempted to remedy this

Julian Hawker
28th May
1968