



Felix

NEWSPAPER OF IMPERIAL COLLEGE UNION

FREE!

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RENT STRIKE SPECIAL EXTRA

RENT STRIKE DECISION ON THURSDAY

The purpose of this special issue of "Felix" is to tell you about Rent Strikes, and why it is proposed that we hold one in Imperial College.

At the end of last year, several provincial university unions decided that, since their hall fees were so high, and were greatly in excess of the "notional element" of £240 allowed for in the grant (£275 in London) they would go on rent strike until increases scheduled on these fees were cancelled and the fees tied to the notional element. Major centres were Surrey, Dundee and Keele.

It worked. So, at Margate Conference in November, NUS delegates from colleges all over Britain voted to use the Rent Strike weapon in order to force the government to increase student grants. A call went out for a national rent strike, and 25 unions have already responded positively. Ten more are discussing whether to hold one this week. That includes us.

On Thursday, at 1 p.m. in the Great Hall, a UGM will decide whether or not we should join the 25. The motion that will be put to the Union is printed below in its entirety. Elsewhere in this issue you can read how the campaign was born at Margate Conference; John Lane explains how a rent strike would work; we have a report of the Campaign Co-ordinating Committee (set up by the NUS) first meeting; and a report on how the rent strike at Surrey University last term worked.

In future weeks we shall be able to tell you how rent strikes are working at other universities in Britain, or how they are failing. This week a London Student Press Association team is visiting 8 Midlands universities, and their report will appear first in FELIX next week. It is hoped that other teams will visit other parts of the country over the next few weeks.

Finally, it might seem to you that having a rent strike is now a fait accompli, having read what appears in this issue. It is not. It is only a proposal.

WHETHER OR NOT TO HAVE A RENT STRIKE IS YOUR DECISION.

YOU HAVE TO MAKE IT THIS THURSDAY.

SEE YOU AT THE UNION MEETING THEN.

The Motion

Imperial College Union reaffirm its demand for "£100 increase in the grant now" and "the full grant for all who study".

In the interests of a united campaign, I.C.U. pledges full backing to the immediate demands of the N.U.S. for

1. An end to the discretionary award system which allows local authorities to pay lower grants to many students, particularly those in FE Colleges.
2. An end to discrimination against married women students.
3. An interim grant increase of £65 to cover the cost of inflation since 1971.
4. An annual grant review based on a student cost index.

This union notes the "secondary but no less important" demand of the N.U.S. Margate Conference for higher grants for post-graduates. I.C.U. strongly urges N.U.S. Executive to give this demand much greater priority and itself resolves to treat it as equal to the above four.

I.C.U. notes the rent strikes by nine student unions last term and those proposed by twenty-five unions this term, and expresses its whole-hearted solidarity with all unions on rent strike, whether against excessive rents or for higher grants as part of the NUS campaign.

I.C.U., observing the reduced taxation of the rich and big business concerns and the increased expenditure on armaments by the Heath administration believes that higher grants should be financed from these sources rather than by further taxation on working people.

I.C.U. withdraws the voluntary levy of 35p per week paid by students in hall towards the cost of new halls and calls for all future buildings to be financed by a wealth tax.

I.C.U. resolves on a two-pronged campaign aiming

1. to win public support, and in particular that of the organised working class, for our claim to demonstrate the united anger of 600,000 students at the deterioration in our living standards and thus make it politically very difficult for the government to reject our demands.
2. to use the only economic power we have, the ability to withhold hall and house rents, to force the college authorities to put intense pressure on the Government to concede our claim.

I.C.U. therefore mandates

1. the President, Executive and Council to organise support for the N.U.S. grants campaign, in particular for
the USK area activities
the London demonstration on Feb. 21st
the National Day of Action on March 14th.
2. the President and Departmental Representatives to organise departmental meetings to discuss the Grants Campaign.
3. Union members in hall or house to pay their rents bill less £3.85 new halls levy into a special rent strike fund the contents of which will not be paid to the college unless a resolution of an I.C. Union Meeting so instructs.
4. this meeting to elect a committee to organise a rent strike.
5. the President to inform the media, Norman St. John Stevas, M.P., Secretary of State at the Department of Education and Science, Lord Penney, the N.U.S. and all unions involved in rent strikes, Hammersmith Trades Council, the Brians' "Work-in" and the trade unions in I.C. of this resolution with a view to obtaining their support.

MARTIN'S BIT

TICK TOCK TICK TOCK TICK TOCK

Welcome back to IC.

I hope that you had an enjoyable vacation, didn't drink an excess of (Distillers') Christmas Spirit, and are refreshed ready for another term.

(Remember, exams are only four months away.)

on Money

I have some bump from the NUS about charitable trusts and money for Travelling Scholarships (the "Gilbert-Treasy-Kapp Scholarships"). Anybody who is nearing the end of the course and has suffered an unexpected financial disaster or would like a vacation on the NUS should form an orderly queue in the Union Office.

on Parking

A few people have still not collected their Parking Stickers. Any that are not collected by 1st February will be cancelled and the places allocated to people who are on the waiting list.

on Constitutions

I am at present looking at the IC Union By-Laws with the intention of rationalising some anomalies (such as having two different constitutions for the Ents Committee) and making elections foolproof. If you have any ideas, I will be very pleased to discuss them

with you and will welcome all contributions.

on Screws

Somebody has borrowed the Union Office screwdriver. This makes screwing in the office difficult. Any person with information which leads to the recovery of my tool should send it to me or contact their local police station.

on Photographs

On a more lighthearted note, if anybody has a photograph of me doing interesting things like refereeing the Pancake Race last Shrove Tuesday, or being thrown in the Round Pond, or reading the minutes of Union Meetings, or playing Rugby, or paralytic in the Union Bar, I would like to see them with the intention of buying copies to show my grandchildren some of the things that Grandad did when he was at College. This may seem silly to many people but on the other hand they will be valuable when I become rich and famous.

on Dinners

A very talented writer has submitted an article to Felix on How to Behave at Dinners. It is a really excellent piece of journalism and I recommend it to you.

Supping in Style

Whatever part you take in Union Activities, it is almost certain that the organisation involved will have its annual dinner this term. So perhaps a couple of sentences on when to bang the table and what to do with the Port may be useful to some of my multitudinous band of readers.

1. Sherry will be served at a reception from approximately 7.00 p.m. until 7.30 p.m., when somebody will bang a gong or stand on a table and say words to the effect of "My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dinner is served", or, alternatively, "Oi! Nosh's up!"
2. The assembled multitudes then go into the dining room, and stand at their places until the Chairman has said a form of grace, and then sit down.
3. The meal is then served. One does NOT
 - (a) smoke, or
 - (b) leave the room

until after the toast to the Queen.

It is customary at Imperial College to bang the table if somebody leaves the room before the Loyal Toast. At Club Dinners he will often be required to drink a pint of beer before sitting down to continue his meal.

4. The Port is passed from right to left, each diner pouring his own glass; the decanter is **not** put down until each person's glass is full.
5. When the Loyal Toast is proposed, the company stands and says "The Queen". Toasts are taken seated only on board ship.
6. It is in order to smoke or leave the room after the Loyal Toast.
7. There will probably be some other speeches and toasts. It is in order to laugh at the jokes but this rarely happens (to my jokes, anyway).
8. After the speeches, diners do not leave the table until the Chairman and his party leave. He will often suggest the dinner adjourns to a neighbouring bar.

If anybody doubts my qualifications to impart this knowledge, I went to 23 dinners last term (and paid for most of them), enjoyed the omelettes or stuffed peppers and actually turned down one invitation. I shall be glad to expound further if anybody is confused—especially as to the origins of some of the rituals—if you come and see me.

Martin C. Black

the e.g.m. minutes

MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING OF THE IMPERIAL COLLEGE UNION, HELD ON TUESDAY, 12th DECEMBER 1972 IN THE GREAT HALL OF IMPERIAL COLLEGE

1. The Honorary Secretary, Mr. M. C. Black, was in the Chair; there were approximately 350 members present. The meeting was opened at 1.18 p.m.
2. Mr. Jowitt explained that the motion of Ratification of Election Procedure passed by the U.G.M. of 30th November 1972 had been referred back to the Union by Council for, and with, clarification, recommending that the E.G.M. pass the motion "The Union ratifies this election and its results for President of the Imperial College Union for the Session 1972/73", again.
Mr. Coffey spoke against and Mr. A. E. Smith spoke for the motion.
Mr. Gillett proposed a move to a vote. This was carried.
Mr. Jowitt summed up. The Motion was passed overwhelmingly with 20 members voting against and 16 abstentions. The Chairman passed the Chair to Mr. John Lane, President of the Union.
3. **Returning Officer's Report**
The Honorary Secretary, as Returning Officer for the Election of a Representative for the Department of Geology, declared Mr. Easterbrook elected unopposed.
4. **Report of the Delegation to the N.U.S. Conference at Margate**
Mr. Armitage spoke at length on behalf of the delegation, and introduced the report which had been circulated (filed in the Minute Book). Mr. Castledine spoke on the Grants debate. The delegation answered questions from the floor and Mr. Corbyn spoke on Rent Strikes. Mr. Armitage suggested one of the best ways of reporting back to the Union was to debate motions passed by N.U.S. at U.G.Ms. and he asked the Union to note the Motion on Thalidomide which had been circulated (filed in Minute Book). He then proposed "Imperial College Union boycott the products of the Distillers Company Limited" in line with instruction A3 of the N.U.S. Motion. He asked members to sign the petitions which were being circulated.
Mr. Dowson pointed out that although Mr. Armitage was asking the Union to boycott spirits, D.C.L. had a large interest in two breweries and he felt that this should be included in the motion. This amendment was accepted.
Mr. Newman proposed an amendment making the boycott voluntary. This was defeated. Mr. Phillips proposed an amendment asking the College not to use D.C.L. products. This was accepted. The Motion as amended was passed overwhelmingly.
Miss Hochfelder began to propose a motion on Grants.
Mr. Hoskins proposed a move to next business. This was passed.
5. **Indochina**
Mr. Corbyn proposed:
"I.C.U. recognises the importance of the struggle of the Indochinese people as part of the struggle all over the world against Imperialism.
I.C.U. realises that the U.S. Army will only in fact withdraw if they are driven out by the strength of the revolutionary movement in Indochina and the world-wide solidarity movement.
I.C.U. notes the call by the Vietnamese National Liberation Front for the rebuilding of the world-wide solidarity

movement, and welcomes the initiative taken in Britain to organise the Indochina Solidarity Conference.
Hence, further to requests:

1. ICU affiliates to the Indochina Solidarity Conference and agrees to elect delegates from this meeting to report back on how ICU can help build the solidarity movement. This movement to be organised in I.C. by the Indochina Solidarity Front.
2. ICU agrees to pay £20 affiliation fee/donation.
3. ICU agrees to pay £20 towards the cost of posters for the coming campaign, these posters to be printed by Briants Colour Printers."

After discussion the motion was taken in parts and the first part was defeated. The Hon. Secretary explained that since the first part had been defeated it was pointless to continue discussion since it would be concerned with paying money to an organization the Union had just decided not to support.

6. Briants Colour Printers

Mr. A. Smith proposed:
"ICU recognises that the people 'working in' at Briants Colour Printers are fighting, with the only method available to them, to defend their jobs. Also that during this fight they have shown how such struggles can best be fought by using the works as a focus for other working class struggles such as during the fight to free the five London dockers when Briants printed posters in support of the five.
Hence, I.C.U.:

1. Will offer all future printing orders to Briants in the first instance, since it is only with orders that the work-in can continue.
2. Resolves to donate from Union funds the sum of £50 to defend this work-in.
3. Strongly urges all organisations it supports or affiliates to get printing done at Briants."

Mr. Wadsworth pointed out that Entertainments Committee had taken estimates from Briants Colour Printers and that these were of the same order as their present printers.

After brief discussion the motion was taken in parts.

The first and third parts were carried, the second—to donate £50—was defeated.

7. University of South Kensington

Mr. Armitage proposed:
"ICU reaffirms its support in U.S.K. as a socio-political entity, and hopes to see clubs and societies not only offering membership to U.S.K. students, but also being run on a U.S.K. basis, that is to say, by officers drawn from U.S.K. colleges.

ICU pledges to consider financial support, in conjunction with other U.S.K. Colleges, to any society or group which wishes to become a U.S.K. society or group."

Mr. Hoskins proposed an amendment that the motion should not apply to Rag. Mr. Armitage accepted this amendment. The Motion was passed.

8. The Quorum was successfully challenged. The President closed the meeting at 2.22 p.m.

John Lane tells you HOW, WHY AND WHEREFORE

Are you sitting comfortably? Do you get three square meals a day? Do you get Whizzo whiteness in hot, warm, even in cold water? Do you enjoy sharing a flat with people who get on your nerves 'cos it's all you can afford?

No?

Then what you need is the new up-lifting N.U.S. GRANT INCREASE.

Below, in superb technicolor (that'll stump Dowson) (Yes, well, er, John, try Black and White Eroticolor? — Ed) is a graph showing exactly how inflation has hit YOU. And that gap is getting wider each year. The last grant review was in 1971. Since then the value of our grants has decreased by a staggering £65. Since 1962 the value of grants has gone down by nearly 20%.

In addition, according to the N.U.S., 50% on average of parental contributions are never paid in cash or kind, and since this makes up on average 30% of the total grant, we suffer a grant cut of 15%

owing to the means test.

When you remember that the most important items in a student's budget: food, clothes and books, are rising at 9.4%, 7.8% and 8.9% (alcohol 5.5%) annually and that the effects of VAT and

Presidents Column

the Common Market are yet to come, it is time to stop quoting figures and do something about it. **Vot Is To Be Done?** (to quote my good friend Vladimir Ilyich)

First thing is to cast aside the defeatists who say we can't bring the country to a standstill and exercise the power we do

have. Rent Strike! By withholding hall and house rents we can force the college to put a great deal of pressure on the Government. Especially if it is part of a national hall rent strike, which it will be since 25 universities have already decided on one, with a further ten discussing it this week. Especially if it is part of the national campaign for higher grants which N.U.S. is launching this term.

How would a Rent Strike work?

Each student on rent strike would pay his or her rent into a special fund controlled by the Union General Meeting. They would receive a receipt, and a copy of the Rent Fund constitution and would have the right to withdraw their rent if they so wished. The Union's auditors would audit the accounts.

A committee elected by the U.G.M. would organ-

ise the strike with the maximum of activities going on in the halls to keep up morale, meetings, concerts, street theatres, news-sheets, etc.

All of us must remember that it is the first year students in hall this year who will benefit most from a grant increase. Next year they won't be in hall, next year they will have to pay sky-high London rents. It is then that a student in London really feels the pinch. Some are lucky enough to be in hall more than two years, but they are not a majority and I hope they will support their fellow students in the campaign.

The National Campaign

This envisages three phases. In late January and early February area-based actions — in our case all USK colleges — ideas suggested so far include a total refectory boycott, a lobby of Parliament, mass leaflet distribution/petition signing session in High Street,

Kensington. On February 21st there will be regional demonstrations in four or five centres, including London. This would show our strength in public, get our demands national publicity and get us all on the move for the National Day of Action on March 14th which will be based in the college and aim to involve as many students as possible.

Roight then, yew'ur interlektschals, how about some bright groovy and original ideas for March 14th?

Support and Solidarity

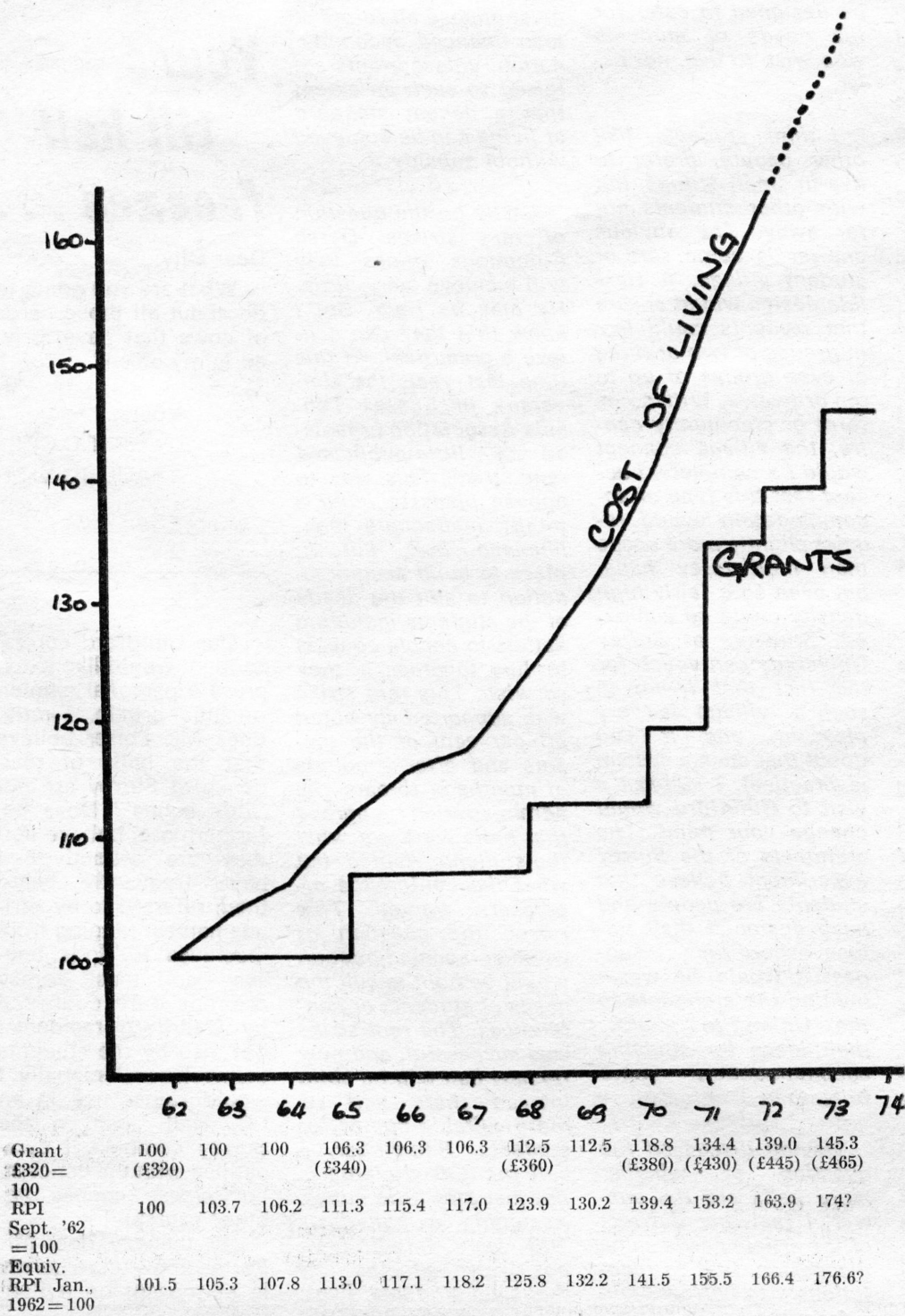
N.U.S. Executive reck-on that we will be favourably received in the educational world, in trade unions and also by some sections of the press (no prizes for guessing which). Spring will be an ideal time to get the support of the militant workers, 'cos the freeze runs out then and gas workers, civil servants, actors, hospital staff, Ford workers, etc., will all be fighting the same gov-

ernment for the same reasons as us.

In this connection it is especially important that we make clear where the money to pay for our grant increase should come from. Are we doing down the Old Age Pensioners or the low-paid workers? In fact, in 1972 according to the Financial Times, profits increased by 17%, the highest increase since 1969. It has been Government policy to cut taxes on the wealthy, and VAT will increase the burden of indirect taxation which hits the low-paid (like students) hardest.

So we have to tell the ordinary people of this country, the old people, the poor, the workers fighting for higher wages or against redundancy that we are not demanding higher grants at their expense but from the profits of the industrial concerns who will, after all, benefit from our skills when we start work.

How Grants and Prices have risen



Remember
RENT STRIKE ?
IT'S
YOUR
DECISION
Make it Thursday
1300
Great Hall

This Rent Strike Special Extra issue of FELIX, being the 323rd of that name and dated Monday the 8th January 1973 was conceived by ICU Executive (bless their little cotton socks) and written and produced in living colour by Oliver Dowson (Editor), Mary Dunne, John Lane, Martin Black, S. J. Nomo, and William Shakespeare, Bart.

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Science in Society

Why should scientists and engineers, rather than ordinary working people or people in professions have a special responsibility to society? Because of the special skills and powers which they acquire during their training. The learning of scientific method, a very powerful philosophical tool, enables them to understand some of the natural world, and hence to control it. The knowledge thus gained may make them experts in their field, and their judgements will be relied upon by these people, possibly in positions of power, who do not have the knowledge. The crux of social responsibility is for each scientist to decide HOW he is to apply his knowledge, whether it is to be for the benefit of mankind as a whole, or for, say, a company or a defence ministry.

In one area of science, the ethical and moral problems come under close scrutiny. Medical doctors use scientific method in their work, which because it involves people directly, has a professional body to oversee it, and a code of conduct to which all doctors adhere. Could this system be extended to include all scientists and technologists? It would be more difficult since medicine is a rather well defined field; but at least scientists involved in medical and pharmaceutical research could profitably be tied to a code of conduct, the nature of which could be kept under constant review by a representative group of scientists. In this way it would be recognised that the ethical problems raised by, say, test-tube babies, were being considered by the scientific community as a whole, and not by each individual research worker.

Already, workers who use vivisection in their research are required to hold a Home Office licence which embodies a code of conduct. Should workers who undertake undesirable research be 'struck off'? This is a very difficult question, since it seeks to draw the line between what is neutral with regard to knowledge and what is not.

It can fairly be said that knowledge is neutral, but that its application will inherently contain the biases and prejudices of its user. It is false to assume that the knowledge gatherer (the scientist) is totally neutral in this respect and that the knowledge applier (the engineer or technologist) is totally

biased. The only neutral knowledge is the reading on a meter, and even this is dependent on the design of the experiment and apparatus. When this reading is written down it has again gone via a biased human being and must be viewed as such. Also, experimental results must be interpreted by the experimenter in the light of a theoretical model, and the controversies in some aspects of science clearly indicate that interpretations can differ. Hence the scientist, although he may like to believe that all the research he does is in pursuit of pure knowledge, has a definite responsibility to society because he defines his own opinions and prejudices with his results and conclusions. An area of special concern here is experimental psychology with respect to intelligence and race, or environmental effects on I.Q.

A similar responsibility lies in the scientist looking for the scientific and social effects of his research. He cannot divorce the social effects from scientific curiosity, saying that they are not his concern, because that is like giving a man a gun and disclaiming responsibility when someone is shot. Once these effects are recognised in work that has been completed then the scientist must carefully consider whether or not to publish the results, and have the courage to withhold information and even to drop an entire piece of research if he thinks it will be detrimental to society at large. This has broader implications in the choice of a job or field of research — to weigh up the value of the work, and to refuse to under-

take it if it is harmful to society at large. Ideally, every scientist should be able to fully justify his research to the general public, because it is they who will have to suffer its unforeseen consequences.

There are two ways to ensure that scientists and technologists bear the social side of their work in mind. One of these is to form some professional body or council to vet new devices and techniques before use; a similar body to the one mentioned previously. The second, preferable, method is to give a training in the social consequences of science along with the training in scientific method. There are some University courses along these lines already (like the 'Science, Technology and Society' and 'Environment and Man' courses here in I.C.) but the object should be unified courses in which these matters are brought up as an integral part of the course. In this way, scientists will be able to keep their work in perspective, and society will benefit from it.

There is, however, a gap in the time scale between the present time and the time in the future when scientists and technologists have been educated to be socially responsible—what is to happen in this period of intense scientific effort? Each individual scientist must take the responsibility on his own shoulders, and critically look at his own work and that of others, and decide whether or not it is justified. If it is not, he must have the courage to stop, and take his valuable skills and knowledge to a more responsible field.

Readers' Letters

Students, Human Beings and Halls of Residence

Sir.—As the editorial suggests, Derek Cummings' blueprint for action certainly needs some further comment. He has assumed, first of all, that the answer to the student housing problem is more halls of residence. Is this in fact the right answer? Are student needs such that they need to live in a little cube, in the middle of a hundred other little cubes, stacked one upon the other in the manner that a child might stack his first building bricks? Why is it that the rest of the population don't clamour to live in a similar way? Shouldn't students be treated as people and given homes instead of units of accommodation? I've no doubt that some students do like living in little cubes, but don't we have enough already. Future student accommodation should be designed to cater for the needs of students who wish to live, not exist.

I think students, like other people, prefer to live in small groups, but with other students not far away. The obvious answer is some sort of student village. A flexible design would ensure that students could live in groups of two or three or even groups of up to ten or twelve. With some form of community centre, the village concept would be complete. I accept that this type of accommodation would require slightly more space than multistorey halls, but even so a fairly high density could be achieved. Students at Surrey University can vouch for the fact that living in such a village is very pleasant, and if you doubt that such a system is practical, I suggest a visit to Guildford would change your mind. The architects of the Surrey experiment believe that students are people and have designed their village accordingly. I suggest it would be worth inviting the architects to the Union to explain their ideas for students accommodation more fully than I am able.

Having discussed the question of whether more halls are the answer, I feel that the rest of the article needs some discussion. Is it so revolutionary to borrow money from the banks to pay

for future student accommodation? I was under the impression that it was Tory government policy that future student accommodation should be loan financed? And with interest rates running at 9 per cent and rising, the suggested cost of a hall at £1 million per 300 cubes means that the annual interest repayment to our kind benefactors, the banks, would be at least £300 per student. Assuming some of this is recoverable from conference lettings, what student could afford even half that amount when account has been taken of cleaning, electricity, rates and even capital repayment, which would put the rent even higher.

Of course all forms of accommodation will cost us a lot of money and that is why students must oppose all forms of loan financed accommodation, unless grants are raised to such an extent that a decent standard of living can be achieved without subsidy.

Lastly on the question of rent strikes. Derek Cummings thinks they will achieve very little. He may be right. But I know that they can achieve a great deal. At this time last year, the University of Sussex Tenants Association organised a little-publicised rent strike. This was to oppose plans to build a totally inadequate loan-financed hall, but in place to build accommodation to suit the needs of the students including flatlets to enable couples to live together if they so wish. This rent strike was supported by about 90 per cent of the tenants and after a couple of months of threats, the administration agreed that halls were not what the students wanted, but what the conference organisers wanted. This raised the question of whether accommodation would be built to suit the needs of students or conferences. The rent strike was successful, and now no new hall will be built. Instead there will be more suitable homes for students. Remember, a hall for 300 students is not just 300 little cubes. Assuming a hall lasts 100 years, it will have positively affected 30 thousand students' lives. JOHN PORTER.

Sir—How naive is our president? I refer to his droolings in President's Column in the Christmas edition of 'Felix'. He ascertains that since college may be serving redundancies to cleaners, the money college saves should be reflected in a decrease in our hall fees. Surely college is only planning to reduce the cleaner staff in order to keep our hall bills stable? The cleaner staff is excessively large anyway: who needs their rooms cleaned every day?

If trade unionists stopped fighting for, and obtaining, large wage increases, then hall bills would not go up.

One man's wage increase is another's price increase.

Yours, etc.,

TIM BRADBURY

Yours till hell freezes...

Dear Olly,

What are you going to do about all those herds of cows that have arrived in my office?

Yours,

T.T.C.C.H.,

PAUL JOWITT.

Our Guildford correspondent would like to express a personal opinion on this article. Firstly, does Mr. Porter believe that the halls of residence at Surrey are not 'little cubes'? Does he, furthermore, believe that they are attractive? I have frequently heard them referred to by various names, ranging from 'beehives' to 'dolls' houses—and these names are not only conferred by Guildford residents, but also by the students themselves. Personally, I would rather live in an I.C. Hall, than in the Surrey complex. I sympathise with the concept, but please choose another example!

(By the way, does Mr. Porter know that Surrey is at present on a Rent Strike?)

FELIX WISHES YOU A

HAPPY LENT TERM

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
8 JANUARY	9	10	11 Union Meeting 1300 Gt. Hall	12	13	14
15 JANUARY	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 JANUARY	23	24	25	26 Union Finance Cttee	27	28
29 JANUARY Council, 1730	30	31	1 FEBRUARY Union Meeting, 1300 Gt Hall	2	3 Open SRC on Murray, ULU	4
5 FEBRUARY	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 FEBRUARY Nomination papers for sabbatical posts and Dep Pres posted	13	14 St. Valentine's Day	15 Union Meeting, 1300 Gt Hall	16 Nomination papers for Dept. Reps posted	17 SRC, Chelsea College	18
19 FEBRUARY	20	21 NUS Day of Action Meeting	22	23 Nominations for sab- batical posts and Dep Pres close Union Finance Comm	24	25
26 FEBRUARY Council	27 Dept. Reps nomina- tions close	28	1 MARCH Hustings UGM Nominations for most union officers open	2	3	4
5 MARCH Ballot for sabbatical posts and Dep Pres SRC, ULU 1930	6 Ballot continues Shrove Tuesday	7	8	9 Dept Rep ballots	10 Nominations for Union Officers close	11
12 MARCH	13 Union Finance Com- mittee	14 NUS Day of Action	15 Results UGM	16	17	18 Council at Silwood
19 MARCH	20	21	22	23	24	25

Check the Felix Diary every week

for the most up-to-date info on IC happenings

Phosphorous the Jobrot and Ferocious Din

Part four of a nine-part
serialisation of the book by
Steven Swailes

CHAPTER FOUR

Phosphorous floated gently in front of the surprised and bewildered visitors.

"Dear boy," said Ferocious, "I had felt that, like the proverbial bad penny, you would turn up; but what are you doing?"

"I'm floating," said Phosphorous, "For the Luigi Rabbit Organisation."

"I remain bemused, old son," said Ferocious, "start at the beginning and EXPLAIN."

So Phosphorous explained about Dino and Whiskers and Luigi Rabbit and the Device and everything.

"Hum," said Ferocious, when Phosphorous had finished, "you seem to have been having more than your fair share of this adventure so far. However your floating there is not helping us get the Twigworm back in the bosom of his family—so to speak. We must rescue you immediately. How do you turn that thing off?"

"Don't touch it," yelled Phosphorous, "I'm ten feet up in the air; I'll break something if you turn it off suddenly."

"Good thinking, dear lad," said Ferocious, "but not an insurmountable problem, me thinks. The Twigworm is easily tall enough to catch you as I turn it off." The Twigworm blanched.

"I couldn't possibly do that," he said, "I mean the responsibility, I just couldn't face it."

"Give me strength," muttered Ferocious under his breath. "Dear old enormous person," he said out loud, "the continuation of this adventure depends on your using your much-abused height at this juncture." The Twigworm wrung his hands and bit his huge rubbery lip.

"Well, I'll try," he said, "but don't expect too much."

"Good man," said Ferocious, enjoying his new role as man-of-action, "to your places men."

The Twigworm shuffled up to Phosphorous and got ready to catch him. Ferocious disappeared round the back of the Device. There was a pregnant moment of silence. Nothing happened. Ferocious re-emerged.

"Actually," he said, "It's more complicated than I thought. There doesn't seem to be a lever marked 'OFF' or anything. I could just rip out a handful of wires—as it were—but I might get slightly electrocuted in the process. Has anybody got any ideas?" There was a pause.

"The Gumboots!" shouted Phosphorous suddenly.

"Of course," said Ferocious, "Phosphorous, dear boy, I sometimes think that deep in that tiny brain of yours there burns a spark of genius."

"Thank you," said Phosphorous.

"Where are the strange things?" asked Ferocious.

"In my pocket," replied Phosphorous. Sure enough, from Phosphorous' pockets protruded the toes of the Partially Invisible Gumboots.

"This is all very well," said Phosphorous, "but what are we going to do with them?"

"Good point," acknowledged Ferocious, "As I see it the situation is this; we don't know how to turn off the Device without injuring me. Or you," he added, seeing the look of Phosphorous' face. "Now who does know how to turn it off?"

"Haggis MacPlumbing does," said Phosphorous.

"Is that a name or a meal?" asked Ferocious facetiously.

"He's the engineer—and he got me up here in the first place."

"He is patently the man for the job," said Ferocious, "where is he and will he do it?"

"He went outside, and he wasn't very keen to let me go before," said Phosphorous.

"A sticky one, dear boy," mused Ferocious, "I feel we must use low cunning. Function, much-taxed, grey cells, a solution is required." Ferocious sat down, head in hands, and pondered. The sounds of the fair filtered through the walls of the tent, and a breeze flapped the canvas.

"Do hurry, Ferocious," whispered Phosphorous, "Old Haggis may come back at any minute, and then I'll be stuck here for life."

"Have patience, dear lad," said Ferocious, "even jolly old Einstein didn't get a touch of the instantaneous Eureka. Something is beginning to formulate if you'll just shut up for a moment." Phosphorous whistled tunelessly to himself, and the Twigworm tried unsuccessfully to twiddle his thumbs.

"I have it!" shouted Ferocious, at last, "You put on the Gumboots, Phosphorous, and then, of course, you'll disappear."

"Yeah, but the boots won't" objected Phosphorous, "and I'll still be up here."

"Have patience, once again," pleaded Ferocious, "and listen to the rest of my brilliant scheme. It will then look as if a pair of Gumboots is floating there and nothing else. I will then leave the tent, and complain to the management

that there is only a pair of old boots floating, and not the Creature from beyond Mars, as promised. They will send somebody in to see. He will see the boots, turn off the machine, the Twigworm catches Phosphorous as he falls, and we run like nothing on earth. How does that appeal to you, fellow adventurers?"

Phosphorous looked at the Twigworm.

"As long as he can catch me alright," he said, "it

"As long as he can catch me alright," he said, "it sounds tremendous. You are clever, Ferocious." Did he detect a note of sarcasm, wondered Ferocious.

"Thank you, dear boy," he said, "It was absolutely nothing. If we are agreed then I suggest that we proceed. Pop the boots on, Phosphorous, and off we go." Phosphorous wriggled the Partially Invisible Gumboots out of his pockets, and with much grunting managed to pull them on; no easy task, floating ten feet up in the air. As soon as he had both boots securely on his feet he disappeared. All that remained was a pair of rather scruffy gumboots, kicking slightly, with no visible means of support.

"Remarkable," said Ferocious, "Most convincing. I will now find a representative of the management, as planned. Try to look outraged, Twigworm." With these words he turned and left the tent.

Outside stood the old man who had taken their 10p on the way in.

"Excuse me," said Ferocious, "but I must protest in the strongest possible terms. Having laid out the not inconsiderable sum of 5p, in order to observe the Creature from beyond Mars, I did not expect to be confronted with a pair of second-hand Wellingtons—obviously suspended from the ceiling with string. I demand to see the manager immediately." Haggis, for it was none other, paled visibly.

"Second-hand Wellingtons, ye say," he grated "Is there no a scruffy wee laddie, wi' a nose like a potato, floating in there?"

"There most certainly is not," said Ferocious firmly, "I will lodge a complaint with the authorities."

"Och dinna be in such a hurry, sorr," said MacPlumbing, "I'm sure there's been some mistake—you come back in there wi' me now and we'll see what's up."

"Oh, very well," said Ferocious, "but I shall expect my money back at the very least." Old Haggis turned, and Ferocious allowed himself to be led back into the tent. There floated the Gumboots, as before, with the Twigworm trying to look outraged, and ready to catch Phosphorous, at the same time.

"Burn me sporan!" cried the old man. "How did the wee laddie ever get down out o' the field?" he turned to Ferocious. "I do apologise, sorr, there seems to have been some kind of technical hitch. You can have your money back, of course, and your large friend as well."

"Oh, thank you," said the Twigworm, "that really is awfully nice of you, it's not often you get this sort of service nowadays, is it?"

"Don't overdo it," whispered Ferocious.

Haggis had gone round the back of the Device.

"I'll just turn off the field," he said, "and get them boots out o' the way."

"Get ready, Twigworm," said Ferocious. The Twigworm shuffled over towards the Gumboots, and raised his great arms in readiness. The note of the machine began to fall, and so did the boots. The Twigworm lunged gracelessly forward and grabbed them. There was a shout and a crash, as Phosphorous reappeared on the floor in a heap. The Twigworm was proudly waving the boots and shouting

"I've got him, I've got him."

"Are you alright," asked Ferocious of his fallen friend.

"I think so," said Phosphorous checking his extremities.

"Come on then," shouted Ferocious, "Let's get out of here."

"What on earth's going on?" demanded Haggis, coming out from behind the Device. But he was too late. Ferocious and Phosphorous were dragging the still triumphant Twigworm out through the door of the tent.

"Come back!" shouted the old engineer, waving his arms hysterically, "You'll no get way with this, you mark my words." Seeing the trio running away into the maze of tents and sideshows, Haggis MacPlumbing rushed to where a lever stood, by the trapdoor in the floor. Over the lever hung a notice:

"GENERAL ALARM" it read, "penalty for improper use £5." Old MacPlumbing grasped the lever and pulled hard. Deep within the passage ways beneath, an ethereal wail began, echoing around the tunnels, and arousing the Luigi Rabbit Organisation. The pounding of feet could be heard over the wail of the alarm. The chase was on.

Meanwhile Ferocious and Phosphorous were leading the Twigworm as fast as they could away from the Device tent, and deep into the fair. They had put several tents between them and the Device, when Ferocious called a halt.

"We must be O.K. here," he said, "They'll never find us in this maze."

"Oh, I don't know," said Phosphorous, "If that nasty Luigi Rabbit is after us, you don't know what might happen." Hardly had he spoken than a voice squeaked out, somewhere above their heads;

"Hello sweeties, this is your old chum Luigi Rabbit here. Now you've been awfully naughty, running away from

poor old Haggis like that. You come back this very minute, dearies, and we'll say no more about it. Don't think for a moment that you can escape me. My dear boys are everywhere. I'm sure you can hear me, I have these super loudspeakers all over the fair." The three escapees looked at each other.

"Well," said Ferocious, "things seem a little more complicated than I had at first assumed."

"You can say that again," said Phosphorous.

"He may well be bluffing about the 'dear boys everywhere,'" went on Ferocious, "So I propose that we take it as quietly as we can away from the fair. If we're spotted, the jolly old Twigworm here can get up to maximum speed—so to speak—and Phosphorous and I will scamper along in his wake. I doubt if even Luigi Rabbit can stop a stampeding Twigworm." The Twigworm was not convinced.

"This is all very worrying," he complained, "I mean I shan't know what to do."

"Dear old fleshy mound," said Ferocious, "All you have to do is run when I shout 'run'. It will all work out I'm sure."

"If you say so," said the Twigworm.

Stealthily the adventurers tiptoed away towards the edge of the fair. The perimeter was in sight when two figures emerged from the shadows.

"Hold it right there, you guys," grunted Dino Confetti."

"Yeah, man" said Whiskers.

"RUN!" bellowed Ferocious. Like a vast rubber-pistoned steam engine, the Twigworm began to move forward. Cubic yards of air rushed into his Zeppelin-sized lungs. The ground trembled as his gargantuan feet crashed down. Like a berserk bulldozer he was away, thrusting tents, trees, and Dino Confetti aside in a tidal wave of flowing momentum. A hastily flung carrot was the only sign of pursuit. On thundered the Tiny Twigworm, his arms pumping, legs squashing like springs at every step, his plate-sized eyes streaming in his self-generated whirlwind. As he ran great shrieks of laughter burst from his mouth. What mortal creature could stand before a Twigworm in full flight? Always his size had been an embarrassment in the company of smaller creatures. Now he was a colossus in motion, a juggernaut released, his vastness a badge of honour. His heart sang, as his limbs crashed and churned.

"STOP," a reedy voice from somewhere behind him penetrated his reverie. It was Ferocious, panting hard, and vainly trying to halt the rushing giant. Slowly the Twigworm slowed to walk, and finally stopped. He sat down, only slightly out of breath. He beamed around at Ferocious, and a gasping Phosphorous whose little legs had left him some way behind.

"Did I do alright?" asked the Twigworm. Ferocious was getting his breath back.

"Magnificent dear boy," he breathed, "I never expected anything like it. I only hope the bill for the damage never finds its way back to me."

"I am glad you're pleased," said the Twigworm, "I must admit I enjoyed that little run immensely. There's not much room for a good run in a Twigwormery, and it was rather frowned on at the Centre." Ferocious smiled.

"I'll bet it was," he said, "one afternoon's trot and there wouldn't have been much Centre left." Phosphorous was also recovering, and added his congratulations.

"But it was all Ferocious' idea," said the Twigworm, modestly.

"Thank you," replied Ferocious, "but we mustn't sit here congratulating each other indefinitely. That villainous rabbit will be after us even more, now we've run a Twigworm through his tents. We must press on—after all we are supposed to be getting the Twigworm back to his folks, are we not?" The others agreed, and so they all got to their feet, and plodded off down the beach once more.

They had crossed the dunes, and were walking by the sea's edge, when they noticed a huge dark object, crouched on the sand. As they approached, they could hear it grumbling away to itself:

"It's not as if I ask for very much," it went "just a drop of the high octane stuff now and again, and the occasional service. And what do I get? dumped on this lousy beach, that's what I get, with no decent landing facilities, and soggy sand in me undercarriage. I don't know what aviation is coming to."

"What is it?" whispered Phosphorous.

"I've no idea, dear boy," said Ferocious, "Let us approach it and inquire." Drawing near to the contraption, they could see that it was an aeroplane. It was very large indeed, a biplane with miles of wires and two huge engines slung under the wings.

"It's Alcock and Brown, took the wrong turning," giggled Ferocious.

"Who?" asked Phosphorous.

"Never mind," said Ferocious, "I will ask it what it is doing on this beach. It is no doubt something to do with this adventure—everything else round here seems to be."

He walked up to the plane.

"Ahem," he said, "I am Ferocious Din and this is Phosphorous the Jobrot. The tall gentleman is the Tiny Twigworm, on whose adventure we are engaged. Are you by any coincidence in any way connected with the aforesaid adventure?"

"Am I connected with the aforesaid adventure, he asks," grumbled the 'plane, "I have only been sitting here on this damp beach for several days, waiting for you to show up, you verbose little man."

"I say that's a bit strong," said Ferocious, "we have gone through considerable hardship to get here and when we do, all you do is insult us. My opinion of the Adventurers Association has gone down a lot I must say."

"I sit here for weeks," said the plane, unaffected by Ferocious' outburst, "and a bunch of idiots like you lot show up. It was never like this in the old Imperial Airways days. Ah, the style, the luxury, the subtly expressed elegance, those were the days. Not like now—ferrying offensive adventurers about. There was excitement then—now it's just one milk run after another." He paused for breath.

"If it's excitement you crave," said Ferocious, "then those people down there are about to supply some."

They followed the direction of his pointing finger. Scurrying along the beach towards them came a large crowd. At its head ran a little furry figure, with long silky ears, and a cigarette holder. Behind him strode a tall man in a bulging trench-coat, and at his side bounced a tiny bristly person, waving a carrot. Yes! It was Luigi the Rabbit Organisation in full strength.

"Oh dear," said Phosphorous.

Après-Ski

While you have been away making merry on your winter vacation, tobogganing through the fog and skiing down the M1, your beloved Government have been working hard at higher and further education. They have produced not only a White Paper (which did more than just give money to build nursery schools) but also a Finance Report. Read on . . .

Cost-cutting and shorter courses

White Paper on Education

A jump from 463,000 to 750,000 in the numbers of students and 22% of eighteen-year-olds in further education are the major aims for higher education set forth in the Government White Paper published in December*. The main expansion would take place in the Polytechnics who, the Government hopes, will take the same number of students as the Universities (375,000) by 1981. The number of part-time students would increase considerably, but the percentage of post-graduates would fall from 19% of students to 17% (an increase in numbers of only 7,000 over the next ten years).

The White Paper suggests a need for a shorter course than current first degree courses, and proposes a 2-year course leading to a Diploma of Higher Education (Dip HE). This would be of comparable difficulty to the first two years of a first degree course, could be offered at both Polytechnics and Universities, and would carry a mandatory grant to students with it. A considerable number of students opting

to take the Dip HE instead of a three-year course would reduce the number of places required in HE institutions, and thus cut costs. Cutting costs is a major preoccupation of the White Paper.

Notwithstanding this, the White Paper contains proposals to build a further 11,000 units of student accommodation in 74/75. Places should be available for about two-thirds of the additional

students expected in the current quinquennium (1972-77). However, the White Paper says that "the Government shares the frequently-expressed view that it is unrealistic and unnecessary for such a high proportion of students to reside and study at a distance if equally acceptable courses are available to them within daily travelling distance of their homes" and suggests that Universities and institutions of Advanced Higher Education should lay great emphasis on home-based students.

The Government believes that since one of the biggest costs of higher education is that of employing teaching staff, economies should be made here, and the staff/student ratio should be reduced to 10:1. They suggest that "a gradual transition to this average figure should be possible without lowering

Bye, bye, Binary

The Education and Arts sub-committee of the House of Commons Expenditure Committee published their report on further and higher education on Wednesday, December 20th. If accepted, the report would mean an end to the binary system of financing higher education, an aim that student organisations have been fighting for for many years. At present, the Universities and Colleges apply for their money from a central body, the University Grants Committee (UDG), which is given a certain amount of money by the Government to dole out amongst the Universities. Polytechnics, Colleges of Education, and other Higher Education institutions get their money from the Local Authorities. The Expenditure Report recommends that all Higher and Further Education be brought together under one financing authority similar to the UGC: a "Higher Education Commission".

standards". Recently Mrs. Thatcher, Secretary of State for Education, ruled such a possibility out as "administratively impracticable". But Mr. Neil Marten, Chairman of the Sub-Committee, said that were it solely an administrative difficulty it could be overcome.

Home-based students

The report suggests that the universities be initially given a few years to increase the number of home-based students, and if they do not succeed the Government would be justified in taking tougher measures. These measures could include not providing any more purpose-built student accommodation, universities not be-

ing allowed to accept students from outside their own region unless they can guarantee accommodation in halls of residence or approved lodgings, giving priority to students from difficult home backgrounds and the expansion of institutions with large local catchment areas.

Loans for U/G's rejected

The committee said that since, were a loan scheme for undergraduates to be introduced, it could not be done without numerous exceptions and special cases, it should not be considered a practicality at the moment. The report did not, however, entirely rule out the idea. Although yet to be fully investigated,

ed, the Committee did suggest that loans for post-graduates might be a welcome scheme.

UCCA extended

The Universities Central Council on Admissions (UCCA) should be extended to serve all institutions of higher and further education, suggests the report. At present, polytechnics and colleges of education have to be applied to separately and individually.

A National Manpower Council should be set up to advise students about the demand for qualified manpower. A Careers Advisory service for scholars interests in going into higher education should be included, to tell them what jobs are offered for which qualifications.

End to Quinquennial system

At present universities work on "The Quinquennial Plan", i.e. they receive an allocation of money every five years for the next five years' work. The Committee suggests that instead of this a five-year rolling plan co-ordinated with and on the lines of the public expenditure surveys. The committee expects that expenditure for three years ahead could probably be firmly fixed, and the next two years reasonably accurately forecasted.

My dear Edward

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE,
WHITEHALL.

1st April 1974

My dear Edward,

As you are aware we at the D.E.S. have long been troubled by the activities of a small group of your subjects. I refer of course to the students at present attending the Universities.

I am therefore delighted to inform you of the details of the White Paper we are to publish next month entitled 'In Place of Struggle'.

The Paper outlines the new structure of degree courses as from next September. The basic principle behind the scheme is to give students their long awaited parity — financial and otherwise — with their peers in industry and offices.

Financial parity is achieved by paying the students a salary of between £20-£25 per week on a sliding scale according to age.

Students will attend lectures for 40 hours per week and be given the usual 3 weeks annual holiday. This will result in the same amount of time being allotted to lectures and tutorials as under the present system of a 3 year degree course. However, this scheme is based on one year's study to an honours degree.

I am advised by my colleagues in the Treasury that this could result in either a cut of 50% on higher education spending, or a rise of 100% in the number of graduates—I know which one you will prefer Tel!

Too good to be true, you say, but will public opinion allow us to pass the Bill? Never fear, after last year's rash of student rent strikes and militancy, public opinion has never been more solidly behind us in our struggle against the student.

Hoping the above meets with your approval.

I remain your humble servant,

Maggie.

The author would like to state that the figures quoted in this letter are quite realistic.

On joining Europe

'This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,

This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,

This other Eden, demi-paradise,

This fortress built by nature for herself

Against infection and the hand of war,

This happy breed of men, this little world,

This precious stone set in the silver sea,

Which serves it in the office of a wall,

Or as a moat defensive to a house,

Against the envy of less happier lands.

This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England.'

(Richard II)

Will it ever be the same again . . . ?

REMEMBER U.G.M. THURSDAY 1300 GREAT HALL

Surrey succeed with 60% support

The students at Surrey University are at present running one of the most successful rent strikes in the country. After one term they were able to report 60% support for their strike—that is, 60% of all students at Surrey had paid into the Rent Fund. £44,250 had been collected from 950 residents by 13th December, 1972. In fact, support for the strike is even greater than this, as less than 20% of students have paid the University. And it should be remembered that, as rents are paid on a termly basis at Surrey, the Rent Fund could conceivably double as this term progresses.

When I asked Mel Ingram (President of the Students' Union) and Iain Morrison (Chairman of the Rent Action Committee) the reason for their success at Surrey, their answer was simple; hard work, and careful organisation. When the rent strike started it was necessary to educate the mass of students as to the issues involved. Newsheets were (and are still being) printed regularly. Posters were designed and displayed all over the University. Pickets were appointed to stand outside the Cashier's Office (where students would normally pay their rents) to attempt to persuade them to pay into the Rent Fund instead. A videofilm was made showing Union officials trying to negotiate with University Authorities. Volunteers were found to distribute leaflets. And, probably most important of all, a door-to-door survey was undertaken to discover the extent of support, and to try to persuade those who had not yet paid any-

one to pay into the Rent Fund. This was a mammoth task, as it involved knocking on 1,600 doors, but it had positive results in that 77 more students paid after they had been visited personally.

non-residents have not been involved in the struggle. Non-residents are, in fact, attending Union General Meetings (at the rate of two a week!) and have been giving the strikers all possible support. At the beginning of the Surrey strike a Rent Fund Constitution was drawn up which has been rigidly adhered to. This lays down the only uses to which the money can be put to pay the University in the event of the strike being settled, or to reimburse any person who wishes to withdraw his contribution. It also states that the Fund shall be open to inspection by any member of the Union, and that accounts should be presented to a General Meeting at least once every two weeks. It is worth noting that on average Surrey is holding General Meetings twice a week at the moment, and that these Meetings continue to be quorate.

Now Surrey is trying to identify its local efforts with the national Grants campaign. Members of the University are visiting other Colleges to give them the benefit of their valuable experience. Speakers have already been sent to Hull, Keele, Aston, Birmingham, Reading and Bath. Surrey University has been successful so far. It remains to be seen how many other Universities will be able to drum up sufficient enthusiasm to follow in their footsteps.

One more factor which has been of great assistance to the strike organisers is that Surrey is a Campus University. This has obviously helped, especially as far as communication is concerned, but it has not meant that

Only sixteen at C.C.C.

On the 16th December 1972 the Campaign Co-ordinating Committee met at U.L.U. (University of London Union) to discuss the probable outline of the Grants Campaign as it could take place this term. Digby Jacks (President N.U.S.) presented a paper to the C.C.C. which divided the campaign into 4 phases.

The first phase has already started, and includes the rent strikes which have been taking place in the last term, for example at Surrey, Keele and Exeter.

Phase 2 will begin towards the end of January. It will involve activity by students on the three priorities of the grants campaign: the main rate of grants, discretionary awards and married women students' grants. The activity envisaged includes not only rent strikes and catering boycotts, but also lobbying of M.P.s and, possibly, of Local Education Authorities. Such action should be organised on a local basis.

Phase 3 should take place in mid February. This is to be a unified national campaign. It is hoped that 3 or 4 regional demonstrations can be organised, in such places as London, Cardiff, Edinburgh and Birmingham, although the venues are,

as yet, provisional. Such demonstrations would show the unity of and mass support for the campaign. Wednesday, 21st February has been suggested as a possible date for this.

The campaign would reach a climax with phase 4, towards the end of this term. If previous support has been sufficient either a national Day of Action or a national strike will be called in mid March.

These then were the proposals put by the N.U.S. Executive (in the shape of Digby Jacks) to a C.C.C. which consisted of precisely 16 members. It seems incredible that there were not more people present at a meeting which had to decide matters of great importance to the grants campaign. One could not help feeling that if this was representative of support for the campaign, the N.U.S. will not have to organise that national strike in March.

More to Grants Campaign than Rent Strikes

As was reported briefly in the 5th December issue of "Felix", the NUS National Conference at Margate in November passed a large and comprehensive motion on Grants. It called for an immediate increase in the mandatory rate of grant to cover rises in the cost of living since the last award: the NUS Executive is asking for £65 which would restore the grant to the 1968 settlement level (which restored the 1962 level). Other major demands were

- * an end to discrimination against married women students in grants assessment (at present, married women get £275 p.a. — single women get £480).

- * the abolition of discretionary awards — and an especial call for the designation of the Higher National Diploma (HND) and other non-designated advanced courses. (Explanation for the uninitiated: There are designated and non-designated courses. **Designated** courses — like degree courses at Universities and Polytechnics—carry with them a **mandatory** grant level, which is paid to all students regardless. Students on **non-designated** courses like courses at Art Colleges, F.E. Colleges, etc.) have their grant decided upon by their Local Authority, who use their **discretion** to decide how much, if anything, they will pay.)

- * the grant must be enough to pay the full economic cost of students' catering residence.

- * grants should be revised annually on a "Student Costs Index".

- * there should be a "threshold agreement", such that any upward movement on the Student Costs Index beyond an agreed percentage during the period between reviews should

result in an automatic interim increase in the level of grants.

- * the notional element in the grant allowed for vacation maintenance should be disallowed in the assessment of Social Security payments.

- * National Insurance contributions should be paid for all students while in full-time education.

- * grants for courses of duration greater than 30 weeks should include one-thirtieth of the full grant for each week the course lasts in excess of 30.

- * UK students studying abroad should have their grant levels adjusted to make provision for the changes in exchange rates since 1967, when they were last fixed.

Conference agreed not to press for a student wage instead of a grant for the time being, until all students had been informed of the issues involved in this demand and the advantages that might accrue. A publicity drive to gain support amongst students for this concept is to start shortly.

The national Rent Strike is planned to be a major springboard of the campaign for higher grants. Where Rent Strikes are impracticable, Catering Boycotts are urged.

FELIX EDITOR ELECTIONS ARE SOON !

If you fancy a sabbatical
year, join Felix now
and find out what it's
all about. You will be
welcome.