



Felix

THE NEWSLETTER OF IMPERIAL COLLEGE UNION

Exams in jeopardy

The Association of University Teachers have voted to boycott University examinations and course work in a move designed to highlight the AUT's claim for higher wages. From January 9, AUT members will refuse to set, mark or invigilate examinations and will decline to mark course work, although academics will be free to offer advice on improving items of coursework.

According to the results of a ballot released on Wednesday, 64% of the AUT's members are in favour of the move which has been described as 'the strongest form of action ever considered by the association.'

The AUT say that they have been pursuing the pay claim for the past eleven months and they are unhappy that the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals (CVCP) have refused to discuss the matter. They claim that University teachers are underpaid compared to their counterparts in Industry and the Civil Service, but the CVCP argue that money for wage rises is not available.

AUT General Secretary, Diana Warwick commented 'The decline in academic pay is critical for academic staff, for universities, and for the nation which needs high calibre graduates. This vote demonstrates that our members are prepared to take damaging action because they have no option.'

The move has received a mixed reaction within Imperial College and a number of academics are reportedly considering resigning their membership in the AUT in protest to taking action which would affect the education of students.

The President of Imperial College AUT, Sue Parry said that the AUT considered a number of other forms of action including strikes, mass

resignation and withdrawal from Government research projects. She told FELIX that the only effective form of action was an examination boycott and pointed out that this would be less damaging to students than striking or mass resignation.

'We hope that it will not reach the stage where students would have to leave College without degrees' she said.

Following a mandate at the Union General meeting on Nov 29, Imperial College Union President, Nigel Baker has written to the academics at Imperial highlighting the Union's concern at the AUT action. In the letter, due to be delivered today, Mr Baker urges the academics not to follow the AUT examination boycott and points out that the action could result in students having to leave the University without a degree, or if examinations were delayed, with lower grades than they deserve. The letter also points out that although 64% of the AUT members who filled in a ballot paper voted in favour of examination boycotts, this represents only 37% of the AUT's membership.

Union President Nigel Baker told FELIX that he was worried that the CVCP would 'call the AUT bluff' severely affecting the position of final year students.

Jackson slides deeper



Following the narrowly defeated motion of 'no confidence' brought up at the University of London's General Union Council (GUC) on December 5, Stuart Jackson, President of the University of London Union (ULU) looks set to face a second 'no-confidence' motion at the first GUC of next term.

At least six major students unions within the University of London, including King's College, the London School of Economics (LSE), and University College have passed 'no-confidence' votes against Mr Jackson at emergency executive meetings.

Imperial College is the only large union which has not yet formed a policy on the motion since the last GUC, reported in Wednesday's FELIX and ICU President, Nigel Baker told FELIX that there are no plans to discuss the issue at an ICU executive meeting.

The GUC's no confidencing of Mr Jackson is in part based on his

frequent support of the Governments attitude towards the National Union of Students (NUS).

Mr Jackson stressed that in the past he had been 'standing out' against the Government, which he claims wants the power to destroy student unions.

'Now I think the Government are right; the NUS is a waste of time and rate payers money' he said.

The ULU executive and leading members of many student unions within ULU remain displeased with Mr Jackson's conduct. His handling of the student loans issue, in particular, has angered them.

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Editorial

AUT boycott The results of the Association of University Teachers (AUT) ballot on Wednesday made it clear that the Union sees a boycott of examinations as the only way they can highlight their claim for higher wages.

It is in many ways a sad decision, for if the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals 'calls their bluff' as Nigel Baker suggests, students will be very badly affected.

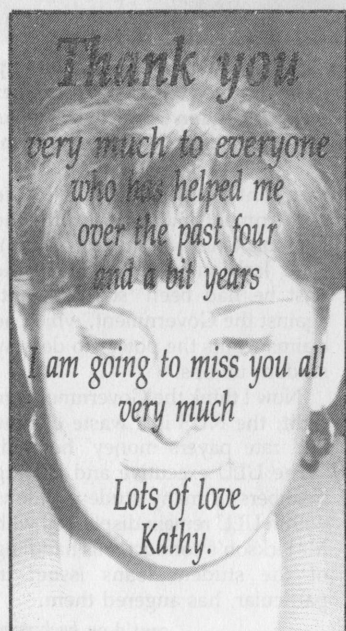
Nevertheless the fact that academic places are becoming progressively more difficult to fill highlights the need for higher wages for University Teachers.

The question remains whether the AUT could n't have chosen a less harmful way of proving their case.

Islamic Society I have had a succession of members of the Muslim faith expressing their concern over the front cover of the Christmas issue which depicted a copy of the Quran adjacent to a bottle of whisky.

I would like to point out that there was no intentional significance to the positioning of the book and the bottle next to each other and apologise for any offence caused.

Thanks to David Smedley, Doug King, Sez Wilkinson (apologies for hacking your story), and Steve Mayfroidt for putting together this emergency fly sheet. Thanks also to all the staff who turned up to the FELIX party and made the radio show such jolly good fun particularly Neil Motterham for looking after the technical bits.



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Mr Jackson is reported to have told the Joint Planning Committee of Court and Senate of ULU that the students of ULU would not fight student loans, on the grounds that it was politically evident that they would happen anyway.

Vice-Presidents of ULU, Louise Van Der Straeten and Nicola Jones, who claim they have suffered continual personal abuse from Mr Jackson, were 'absolutely stunned,' at his statements to FELIX and said claims that the issue was a 'personal conspiracy' against him were 'absolute rubbish.'

The 'no-confidence' motion was defeated at the last GUC by two votes. The President, Vice-President and Honorary Secretary of IC Union voted against the motion.

Nigel Baker told FELIX that he voted against the motion because he did not feel their was sufficient evidence for Mr Jackson to be 'no-confidenced', and he did not have time to check the facts behind the motion before the meeting. He now claims that had he known more about the situation he might have voted differently. He admitted that Mr Jackson had 'shown a lack of efficiency' and said that had the motion centred around Mr Jackson's incompetence it would probably have been passed.

Mr Baker told FELIX that he sent a 'personal' letter to Mr Jackson on December 13 pointing out the fact that he no longer supported him, but both Mr Jackson and the ULU post room have confirmed that such a letter has not been delivered. Mr Baker was unable to explain why the letter had not been received.

Bye bye Kathy

Union Assistant Administrator, Kathy Tait is leaving IC Union today to be with her boyfriend, Alan Hepper in Farnborough. Kathy came to ICU in September 1984 as receptionist under President Ian Bull, after working as a hotel receptionist at the Onslow Court Hotel, Queensgate.

In her time at ICU she has worked with Union Administrator Jen Hardy-Smith and Union Typist Pat Baker, who she described as 'Godsends'. She went on to say that she had made a lot of friends at IC who she would miss a great deal. There will be a small leaving party for Kathy in the Union Bar this evening, anybody who knows Kathy can pop along.

Clubs

Dance Club

A busy term of spin turns, cuddle holds, straddle jumps, slows, quicks, bruised toes and lots of laughs had its highlight in the annual London Ball, which was hosted by the IC Dance Club on the 26th November. We welcomed an excellent turn out of Imperial dancers alongside students from as far afield as Cardiff for a friendly evening of general dancing and informal competitions. We took a rest from our efforts on the dance floor to watch a vibrant professional demonstration of Latin-American dancing by our own team coach, Vicky Cuniffe, and partner Lee Williams. The evening provided this term's beginners with a good opportunity to try out their new steps and was a pleasant informal prelude to the more serious inter-arsity competitions next term. We are grateful to Grant Thornton Chartered Accountants for their sponsorship of the event and

presentation of the prizes.

By the time of publication the Club will have held an end of term Barn Dance on December 13. The Club's rock 'n' rollers will be heading for town after classes in the last week of term to hit the floor at the '2 I's' rock club on Tottenham Court Road.

Classes have gone well this term. Two additions to the timetable have been the jazz and Latin-American classes. The joint ballroom and Latin classes have been operating at the levels of beginners, intermediate and advanced, and next term we shall be starting a new beginners class at 6pm on Tuesdays in the JCR. Next term will be a busy one for the teams with competitions in Sheffield, Cambridge and Southampton. We also have a rock 'n' roll evening to look forward to in the Great Hall in January, incorporating the National Student Rock 'n' Roll championship.

Letters

Dear Bill,

I am writing to express my disgust at some of the points of view being proposed in this publication. I was incensed by the mean, petty, selfish, and money-grabbing attitudes held by so many of the students of this most prestigious college. I do of course refer to the issue of student top-up loans.

While there still exists in this country, the illiterate, innumerate, and those in gravest poverty, I cannot accept that higher education

is a right. It is a privilege!

I am sickened at the ceaseless carping, by certain factions among us. How can they be so ungrateful? In my opinion, these people are not deserving of places at an establishment such as this.

Therefore, I applaud Mr Kenneth Baker's proposals, and would encourage him to go further, and make all student finance in the form of loans.

Yours,
Duncan McKenzie, Physics 3.

Dear Bill,

Its comes as a great occasion to share our homage to a great historical messenger, Christ Jesus, on this gracious occasion of Christmas. Along this great spirit, however, there has been an act of great sin and rancour which has hurt and offended the feelings of hundreds of Muslims at the College. This is about the sketch which depicts our Holy Book, the Quran, along with abominable items which are not only incompatible with the Holy message of the Quran, they are strictly outlawed. I believe that you had earlier declared that FELIX will not publish anything

'offending'. This particular act is not only extremely offending, it is inexcusable, and considered utterly immoral by the muslims.

It is hereby, requested that the person responsible for this mischief may be removed from the publication and activities of the Phelix (sic) and a possible enquiry be conducted in this matter.

We do hope that you will take up a stand of justice in this matter and deal with it accordingly.

Yours sincerely,
Members of IC Islamic Society,
Forwarded by Abdul Hqim and M B Khan.