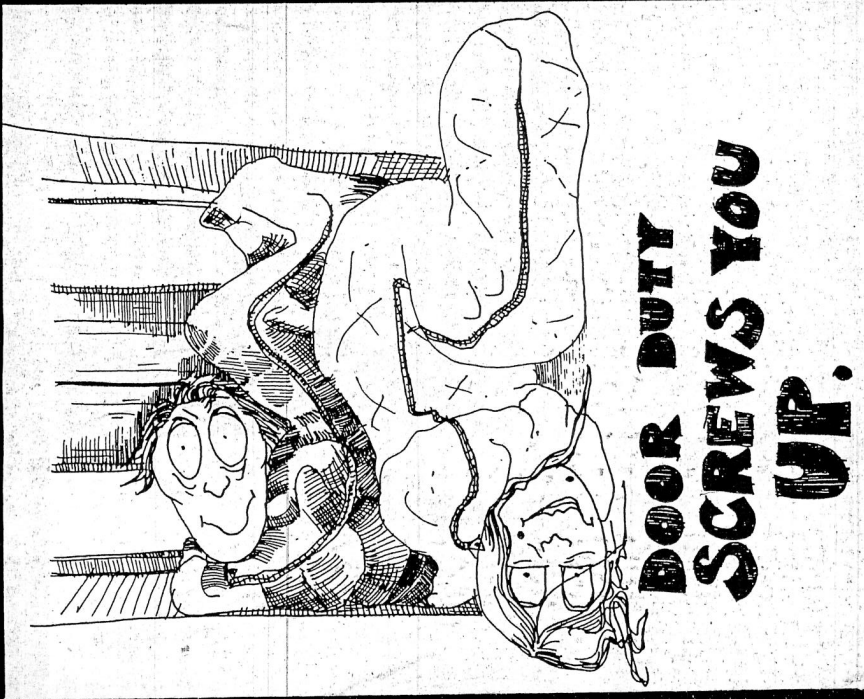


The Cat Hill occupation



**DOOR DUTY
SCREWS YOU
UP.**

Time for a Shock. Students at Cat Hill Work very Hard. Surprised? Don't be. Contrary to popular belief, Art Students have a work load that would make your average "normal" student turn pale and reach for the job section in the local paper. You may be screaming in protest at this, or laughing hysterically (Especially if you are an Art student) but allow me to explain.

With a heavily practical course, you have to attend college five days a week and work a full 9.30 to 6.00 day - just like in the real world. You often need to spend an extra two or three evenings a week using your studio space; living a solitary, monk like existence behind piles of paper, clay and unfinished sketch books. So dedicated is the life of a Cat Hill workaholic, that they rarely notice the outside world. They seem to let international crisis pass them by without noting their passing; they haven't even heard of the NUS and a branch chair was what the furniture design group made out of the trees they found knocking about.

However, something suddenly began to impinge on this happy, apathetic way of life. Suddenly, Tutors began vanishing; materials stopped appearing in the workshops, and suddenly there were so many art Students that they were treading on each others toes. Art Students got angry - and when they do it's a bit like those

volcanoes that have been dormant for years and suddenly take out half of Tokyo.

The fundamental reason why Students at Cat Hill were the first to hold a meeting with the Director and the first to take over their site, was that they had no Union to get in the way, due to their previous apathy. Political parties of any persuasion had long given up on them, so apparently, had every one else. No one was there to say "No, you can't have a meeting now, you must wait until the branch meeting and if someone puts in a motion and the meeting is

a quorum etc.". They just did it.

There are, roughly, one thousand Students at Cat Hill. There were anything from five to eight hundred of them at that meeting - no one is quite sure. The meeting was advertised by a few posters here and there, only A4 size, with "Possible Occupation" written on the bottom. But they all came, and then, they all voted for occupation.

After that, they had as many problems and arguments as any other site, but for that one, glorious day, there was a kind of synchronicity that made everything work.

People have many complaints about what happened next - and I am not going to discuss them here; mainly because they were relevant then and are obsolete now. Personally, I felt from the very beginning that we were never going to achieve money, because there is none. Anyone who thought that the Government were suddenly going to give Melville a few grand to patch up the leaking roof was kidding themselves. Having said that, we did achieve other things that it is difficult to put a price upon. (Typical that in this profit motivated day and age, people don't seem to appreciate anything without a price tag)

We scared the management witless. They will not try and impose cuts on us like that gain. They have already agreed that the deficit will be reclaimed in



.....and beyond

a way less damaging to students - if they break that promise, we know how to hurt them.

They were particularly hard on us, but then it is easy to see why. Because of our occupation, thirty one other colleges held occupations up and down the country - if they had given in to us, then that would only have fuelled action even more. As it was, it was our occupation that finally forced the Government to discuss the problems of Student Hardship - lets be honest, it was the first time that they have admitted that there was such a thing as Student Hardship.

We also know that we are not an isolated polytechnic singled out for no good reason - every higher Educational institution either is suffering or will suffer this year when the September intake is greatly increased with no extra funding.

This year, if we care about our Education, we must carry on fighting. I'm not suggesting that we re-occupy the moment we get back to college in January - I'm saying that we cannot afford to lose the energy and anger of last year.

John Major was worried about us enough to personally approach Melville and advise him to be as tough as possible with us. Yes - we've even got him worried. You must not forget, this is an election year, and no body is sure who is going to win. There are one and a half million Students in Britain, all of them old enough to Vote. Not only that, but anybody with Children going through the school system now must be made aware that their children will be offered a worse Education than ever before unless something is done now. Everyone, regardless of age, sex, race or wealth has the right to degree standard Education - and if things don't change they won't get it - simple as that.

So - there will be Branch Meetings at Cat Hill. (With out a Branch chair but never mind, the same thing is happening at all the other sites. Go to those meetings full of ideas of how we can spread the word. It doesn't matter if all you can do is spend one lunch time making a banner, or one afternoon at a match or half an hour writing a letter to an MP - do it. If an Occupation can begin at Cat Hill, then nothing is impossible, absolutely nothing.....*



"If an occupation can begin at Cat Hill then nothing is impossible, absolutely nothing."



Where it all began....the Cat Hill meeting which Director Melville addressed in an attempt to reassure students, needless to say he failed and the occupation began.