

THE

UTS OCCUPIER

The Journal of the 1997 UTS Easter Occupation



vol 1 issue 1, 23rd april 1997

dare to bite back...



"UTS : where students and police dogs come together"

MAY 8 STRIKE

COME TO THE STUDENT STRIKE & RALLY THURSDAY MAY 8 TOWN HALL 1PM



CRC The Cross Campus Education Network (CCEN) is a state-wide network of students run in conjunction with the National Union of Students, NSW branch. Its aim is to bring together students from around NSW in order to coordinate and organise education campaigns at a state and campus level and IT NEEDS YOUR PARTICIPATION. Come to the Student Strike/Rally/March on Thursday May 8, 1:00pm Town Hall Square. For more information about May 8 or the CCEN, contact NUIS NSW on 02 9267 4466.

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EDITORIAL.

EASTER 1997 - THE RESURRECTION OF THE STUDENT MOVEMENT.

On Wednesday the 26th of April the student movement in NSW tried something new. Or, to be accurate, tried a tactic that had not been used seriously for years. They occupied the administration of the University of Technology, and declared it under student control.

This publication is an attempt to record the events of the three days that students held the administration block, and to discuss some of the issues that have been raised as a result of the action. It is also a guide to action for activists who may want to try to co-ordinate such an action in the future and a chance for those who were involved to assess the strengths and failings of the three days that shook the university.

Why UTS? The demonstration that became the occupation was the NSW part of the national day of action called by the National Union of Students, and organised by the Cross Campus Education Network. The demands of the NDA had focused on the threat of the Common Youth Allowance and the possibility of up-front fees for undergraduate students being introduced at some universities.

Running through these central demands was the general concern with the direction our education system is moving. From the mid-eighties there has been constant pressure, from both Liberal and Labor, to transform the education sector from a publicly funded system to a user-pays one. Since the arrival of the Howard government that process has moved up a gear.

An education system that is user pays is inequitable. It reduces access to higher education for working class kids, women, aboriginal people, and any other marginalised group you care to name. It is denying people the human right of education on the basis of their income. It is unacceptable.

UTS Council (the managing directors of UTS) had been leading the charge of NSW universities in discussing the possibility of introducing full up-front fees for some undergraduate places in 1997. It was regretful, they said, but the government cuts and the academics pay claim had left them with financial holes that had to be filled. Student fees was one way to recoup some of the lost money.

Student activists at UTS had organised around the issue before the academic year had begun, picketing and entering (despite security's best efforts) a meeting of University Council. The decision was deferred to a working party, but the issue had not been decided.

So come April 26 students from around the state went to UTS to help apply a little pressure. The demonstration entered the admin block, secured it, and decided to stay until our demands had been met. It wasn't just about fees anymore - it was also about who ran the university.

At 2.00am of the 29th 115 police, including members of the State Protection Group (the TRG by any other name) and the dog squad broke into the admin block using sledgehammers. No warning given. The occupation was over.

The campaign continues, and everyone who came out of the occupation is that much more aware of who the real enemies are and how to organise to maximum effect. It isn't over at UTS. It isn't over anywhere in the higher education system. The message for both the government and university management is simple - we will make their institutions unworkable if they continue to attack, degrade, and commodify public education. We hope that this publication will be a useful part of that process.



The UTS Occupier" is an occasional publication for student activists by student activists. Articles reflect the author's opinions only. We are looking to expand our operations to all universities in the Asia-Pacific region. All comments, suggestions, or requests please address to the Cross Campus Education Network, c/o NUS NSW, level 2, 9 Albion Pl, Sydney, NSW Australia 2000 and it might get to us at some point.



Demands of the UTS Occupation.

The Students occupying the UTS administration block:

Demand that UTS management and the managements of all other Australian Universities:

1. Refuse to introduce full up-front fees for any domestic undergraduate students.
2. Repeal fees for postgraduate and overseas study.
3. Repeal proposed 14% funding cut to the library.
4. Refuse to introduce ancillary service charges or implement any other user-pays mechanisms.
5. Classify all enrolling students in the lowest band of HECS.
6. Supplement funding of on-campus childcare.
7. Take a position to the AVCC that no university implement the funding cuts, staff cuts or any upfront or ancillary fees.
8. Take these demands to the West Review.

Call on the West Review to recommend to the Federal Government:

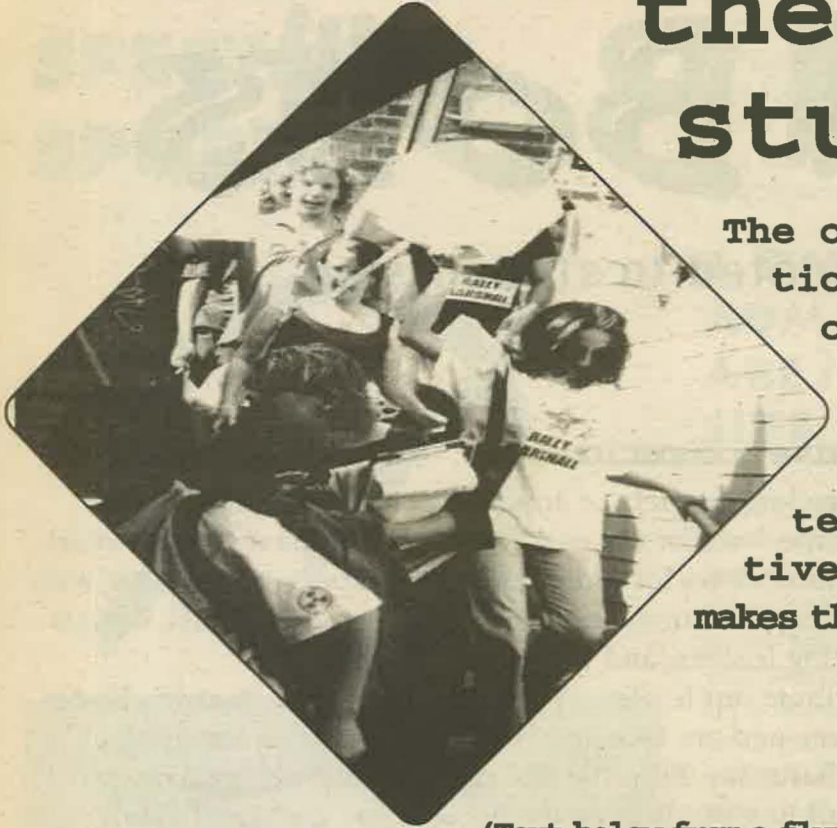
1. Not implement the proposed Common Youth Allowance.
2. Repeal upfront and HECS fees.
3. Increase Austudy to 120% of the poverty line and reduce the age of independence to 18.
4. Reverse university funding cuts.
5. Tax business, cut defence and increase education funding.

Demand that the Federal Government:

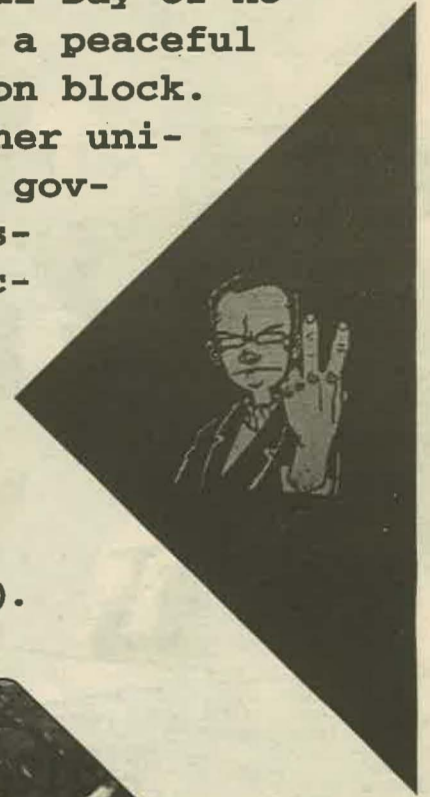
1. Not implement the proposed Common Youth Allowance and instead provide a livable income for all.
2. Increase Austudy to 120% of the poverty line and reduce the age of independence to 18.
3. Not implement the proposed 'work for the dole' scheme or compulsory military service.
4. Repeal funding cuts to childcare and increase funding to above previous levels.
5. Repeal funding cuts to legal aid.
6. Repeal the work place relations bill.



the UTS student occupation!



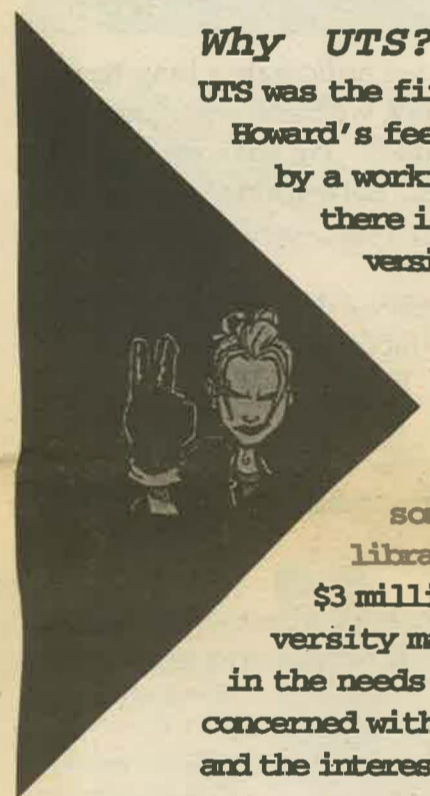
The occupation began as the National Day of Action on March 26th culminated in a peaceful occupation of the Administration block. We occupied UTS because neither university managements, nor our government, are interested in listening to student voices. Collective non-violent direct action makes them listen.



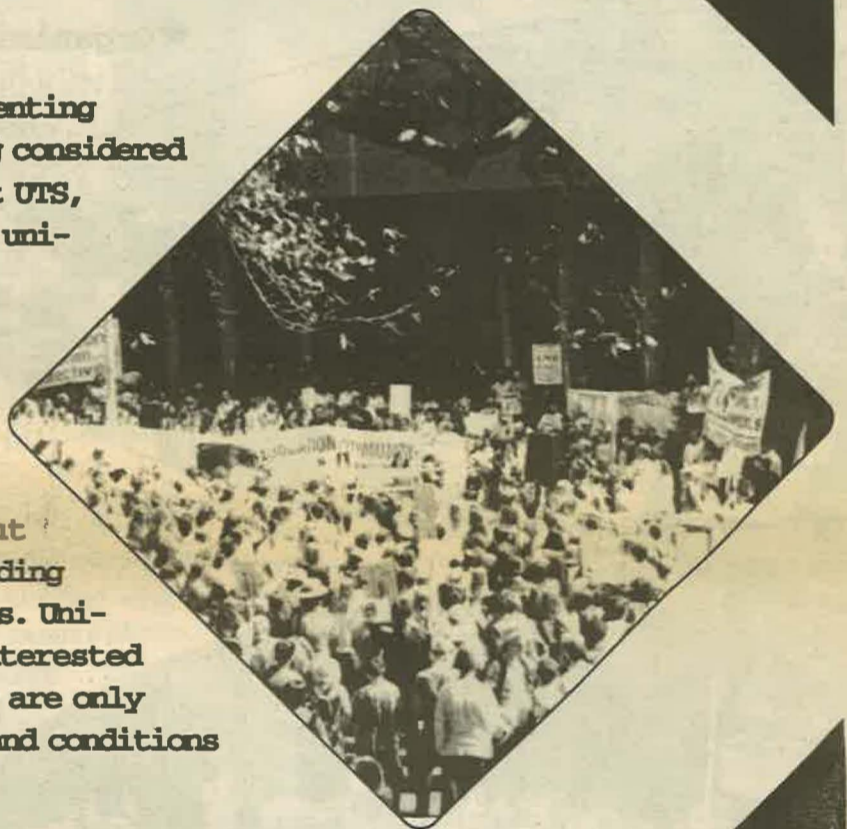
(Text below from a flyer used to build the occupation on other unis).

Why UTS?

UTS was the first university to formally consider implementing Howard's fees-scheme - this proposal is currently being considered by a working party. If this scheme is implemented at UTS, there is little stopping its implementation at other universities.



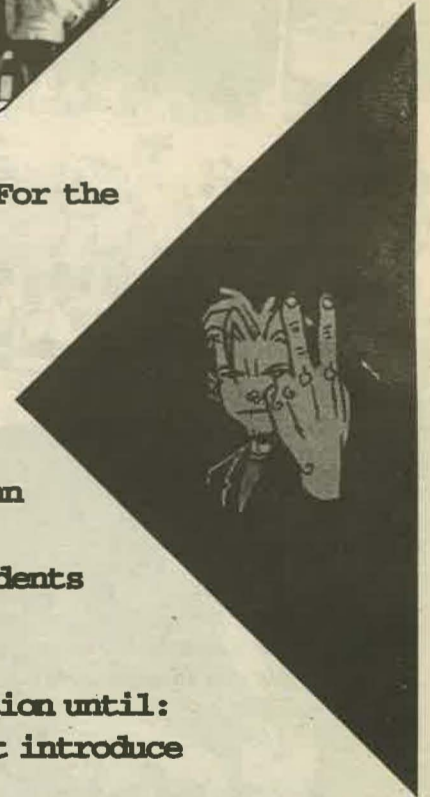
University managements have used federal funding cuts and staff pay rises as an excuse to implement additional fees, saying that "money has to come from somewhere". But at UTS, management has cut library funding by 1.2 million dollars, while spending \$3 million on refurbishing the Administration offices. University managements have shown that they are not interested in the needs of students and the broader community, but are only concerned with protecting their own exorbitant salaries and conditions and the interests of the ruling elite.



These interests clearly parallel those of the Liberal government, with their proposed Common Youth Allowance and Work For the Dole scheme, and restrictions on access to Austudy.

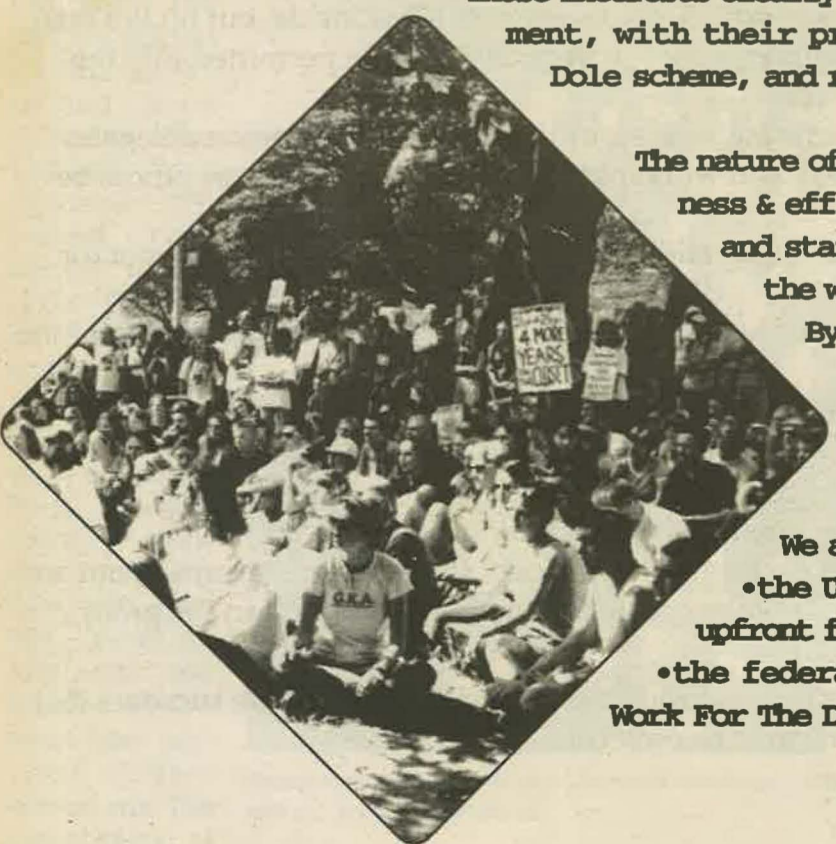
The nature of universities, where the interests of business & efficiency overrule the interests of students and staff, means that our power lies in stopping the workings of that profit-making enterprise.

By occupying the administration block, we can prevent "business as usual" and recreate the "business" of UTS into one where students are a priority.



We are determined not to surrender our occupation until:

- the UTS management publicly state they will not introduce upfront fees
- the federal government scraps the proposed Common Youth Allowance and Work For The Dole scheme, and instead provide a liveable income for all.



Nuts and Bolts

...reproduced from a flyer circulated to students on day two of the occupation...



★This is not a passive occupation

We are actively engaged in a variety of activities to publicise and gather support for the occupation. For the past three days we have been contacting media, doing interviews for radio and newspapers, networking with other groups under government attacks (such as trade unions), designing and distributing leaflets, and painting banners.

We intend to distribute our leaflets at central locations such as the Easter Show, Central Station, and are focusing on the Equinox concert at Macquarie University for Saturday 29th. We also plan to drop a huge banner from the top of the UTS building publicising the occupation, and aim to stop traffic on Broadway to distribute leaflets. Bring your ideas!

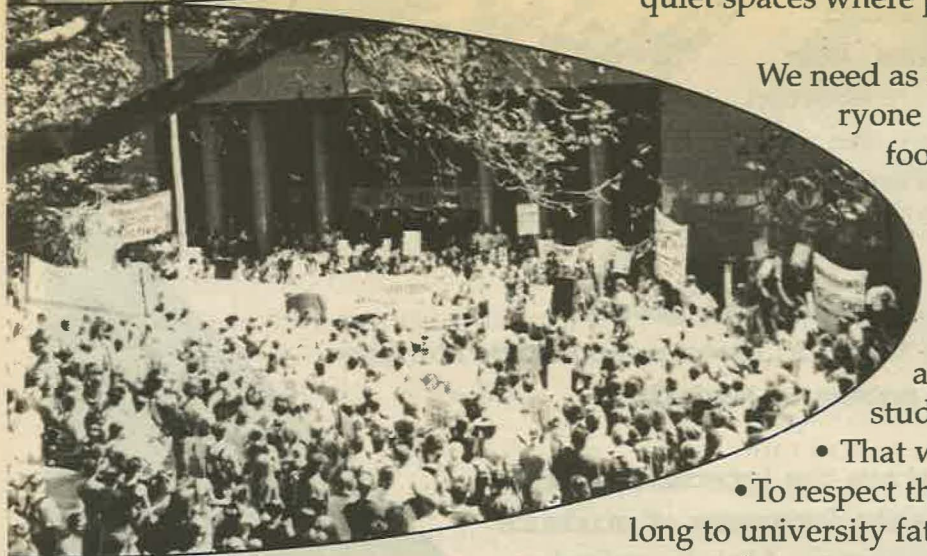


★Organising Ourselves

We will stay until our demands have been met. As such, we anticipate a long-term occupation. As well as organising to build it externally, we have organised meeting the day to day needs of the occupation itself. We have set up collectives organising cooking, cleaning, activities, "networking", our space, and the security of our occupation area.

We have morning and evening meetings where we discuss and plan our activities and strategies. Someone is elected to facilitate the discussion, and all resolutions are voted upon by the group. Everyone is encouraged to participate and contribute ideas.

We have speakers coming in, films showing, music, table tennis and games, as well as quiet spaces where people can sleep and study.



We need as many people as possible to participate in the occupation, so we urge everyone to come in whenever they can and bring contributions such as bedding, food, friends, and fun things to do.

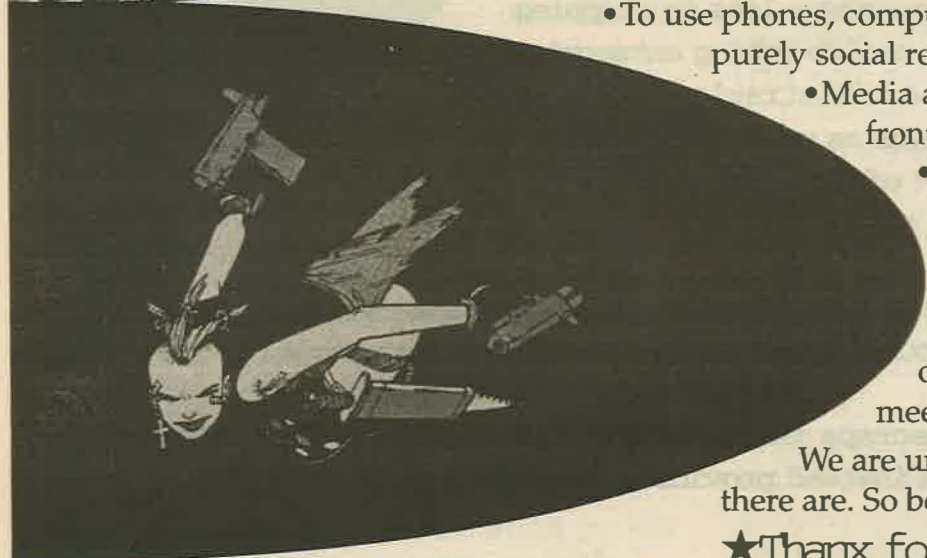
★Resolutions of the Group:

- To stay until our demands have been met.
- All people who support our aims are permitted inside, but no uni management representatives, police or security are to be permitted into this student-controlled space.
- That we will not communicate with security except through union delegates.
- To respect the personal property and workspace of workers (not all these offices belong to university fatcats)
- To use phones, computers, faxes etc for "occupational" purposes, and study etc, but not for purely social reasons.
- Media are not permitted inside the admin building, but will be spoken to out the front.
- To respect the privacy of fellow students and stay out of the Student Records office.
- Not to damage property.
- Not to smoke inside the admin building.

Please respect the decisions of the group. If you have concerns about any of them, or would like to suggest others, please raise this in the group meetings.

We are unsure if there are cameras inside the building, but there are rumours that there are. So beware, your actions may be on record.

★Thank for joining us!



THIS IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT.



The politics of occupying.

The Easter occupation of the UTS administration has been referred to as the resurrection of the student movement in NSW. Certainly, for most of the participants it was the most powerful form of political action they had ever undertaken.

The last few years has seen a change in the quality of the student movement. Not surprising, given the volatile nature of the world in general and the chronic state of the higher ed. in particular. *This improvement can be seen in the increasing minority of students with a militant attitude and a sense of confidence.*

Then there's the new layer of activists. Education activist groups are realities on a number of NSW campuses this year, unlike in '96 when the campus activist community tended to be limited to office bearers and whatever socialists happened to be about. This shift is to be welcomed.

But it was also to be expected. New government, new times, new campaign realities. What really set the Easter action apart from previous student demos was the actual tactic of



Occupation meeting Thursday. Open and democratic decision making. Try it - you'll like it!

occupying. Not just because of duration, though that was important. Not just because of the police action that crushed it, though that too will be remembered. It was the act of occupying itself that let us make two central political points in the most concrete way imaginable.

1. THE UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION ARE NOT ON OUR SIDE.

After the debacle of the '96 collusion with the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee, where students and staff of universities invited our own bosses into an alliance against the government (which the VCs themselves broke, thank God) the UTS action has a special significance. By targeting UTS we stated, through our actions, that the VCs were as much the enemy as Howard. University management will tell you they regret the cuts, in private they will bemoan what the govt. is doing to their university, they really *understand* why we're angry. But they still carry out the cuts when they're told to. Some of them even see it as an opportunity for their institution to come a bigger piece of the education market (eh, John Niland?). So at UTS students took a big step in saying that if you're not fighting on our side then you're on theirs.

This cannot be overstated. The liberals have consciously devolved decision making in higher education. It fits their ideological framework to have VCs acting more as traditional CEO, and (as a bonus) lets them partially off the hook. This means that now, more than ever before, the decisions that will shape our education occur close to us. We don't have to travel to Canberra just yet when we can take on their representatives just next door.

2. OCCUPY, IT WORKS.

During the occupation there was continual, passionate, debate about what to do next. From the first day there was an argument as to when we should leave. There was the "we've made our point, this has been fantastic, *but let's go now*, go out with a bang" position. This was counter-posed to the feeling that we were just getting started - that the potential for this occupation to grow into something new was huge.

What became clear as the days went by was that to remain in the admin was to assert the question who runs the university. It was more than the issue of fees. Think about it - a rally can be contained, even a militant one. A smashed window, a police riot, this is nothing to the run-



Constable Care trying out some new community outreach techniques.

ning of the education factory that is the modern university. But to occupy - we assert our power to stop that business from running.

Which is why they ultimately couldn't allow it to continue. In some ways it's so simple - as students we are relatively powerless. The trade unionist can stop production, can actually use their position in society as one of leverage. If the students don't go to class the effect is nowhere near the same. But when we occupy it's like a bastardised form of industrial action. Through this tactic we really force the issue in a way that is generally denied to us as students.

It takes political guts to do this. It needs an analysis that is uncompromisingly a class based analysis where you know who your allies are (staff, TAFE students, trade unionists - ordinary people generally), and who your enemies are (the government, big business, the uni management - the ruling class). When we occupy we assert these things in a concrete, creative, and powerful way. And in a couple of short days we hopefully gave these ideas currency that they haven't had in student politics for a decade or more.

As a final note, thank you Tony Blake and the NSW police service, for hardening up and educating a layer of student activists.

We won't shift so easily next time.

Socialist Worker Student Club, UTS.



MEDIA RELEASE- NATIONAL UNION OF STUDENTS.

26th March 1997

"UTS occupation gains momentum"

The mass student rally held in Sydney today as a part of the National Day of Action, organised by the National Union of Students, has dramatically demonstrated the depth of student anger by occupying the Administration building at the University of Technology, Sydney. The occupation, which began at 1.30pm, has presented a list of demands to the acting Vice-chancellor and has resolved to remain indefinitely.

The National Day of Action focused upon the proposed Common Youth Allowance (CYA), which will exacerbate the poverty of over 600,000 young people. The CYA will amalgamate all existing welfare payments for young people, including Austudy, Abstudy, unemployment payments and apprentice and trainee wages.

The UTS occupation has gained great support from students outraged at the prospect of full up-front fees in 1998 at UTS, which will establish a precedent for other universities to follow.

"These regressive measures will particularly affect already marginalised groups such as Indigenous people, queers, women, low income earners and regional students" said Mr Andrew Burke, President of the National Union of Students (NSW).

"Since the occupation began many people have joined the group and we're really gathering momentum. Young people are suffering and are angry - we call all supporters to come and join us" Mr Burke finished.

CHRONOLOGY

Wednesday 26th March - National Day of Action. Students from campuses around the state came to the demonstration in Sydney.

- 11:00 am** Marshals Meeting- Volunteer marshals were informed as to the rally plan. Marshals were organised to attend the intersections along the way.
- 12:30 pm** Rally begins at Belmore park, then moves to DEETYA building to focus attention on the Common Youth Allowance. Proposal made to proceed to UTS to protest the threat of up-front fees for undergraduates being introduced.
- 1:00 pm** Rally accepts proposal and proceeds towards UTS.
- 1:30 pm** UTS Administration occupied. Police, bureaucrats and security expelled from building.
- 2:00 pm** Meeting begins. Speakers announce demands. Open microphone. Further talks on issues affecting students and youth in general. This meeting begins to make decisions based on an open democratic process. Party of five chosen to meet with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Tony Blake was overseas at the start of the occupation so we made do with his flunky, Brian Low) to present our demands. At this stage there was two different ideas among demonstrators as to future of action. One approach was to leave at 5.00pm, the other to stick it out.
- 2:30 pm** The delegation to management demands that management provides letters signed by all counsellors stating a refusal to support upfront fees before the occupation would cease.
- 5:00 pm** Second delegation sent to the VC. There has been no change in situation. The decision is made to continue the occupation. Now a urgency to get more people involved - concentrated effort made to phone all known activists in Sydney. Access to the internet made.
- 6:30 pm** Large meeting. Agreement to try to build a rally outside the admin for the next day at 1.00, to draw as many new students as possible. Collectives are organised. Media collective organise the plan of media releases and to attempt further coverage on radio and internet. Kitchen. People begin to organise preparation of food for dinner and to organise more food for the occupation. Collection done for big grocery shop, some Student Unions donate money. Security. Shifts set up, attempts made to secure all unused doors. In retrospect we weren't serious in barricading them. There's always next time.



The way things were



Bedding. A mini-van goes on a tour of inner city suburbs, picking up blankets and sleeping bags from people's houses.

Trade Union liaison. Argument made for staff liaison for campus and to try to get endorsement from other, non-education, unions. Plan to send out people next day.

7.30 pm

From this time onwards internet access denied and the phones begin losing STD access. The meeting is still going, as people wander in and out. There is a discussion about our relationship to private files and staff personal effects. Decision made to respect these - based on a desire to not alienate support staff who are as ripped off as we are.

8.30 pm

General festivities occur. A DJ comes in and plays. People get fairly out of it (it's been a long day). Videos watched include the Simpsons and Land and Freedom.

1.30 am

Ben and Greta turn up late with their decks and a good PA, but people are getting tired and aren't into it (sorry). Bizarre meeting to decide whether the music should stop and people sleep or not.... "I think it should keep going because I've only been dancing for ten minutes." etc. Music moves off to carpark.

Thursday

4:00 am

Poster run.

5:00 am

Clean up begins. Admin block vacuumed, rubbish collected, and recycling sorted. Breakfast begins. Hare Krishnas get into the act by providing food.

MEDIA RELEASE-NUS

26th March 1997

"Students settle in for the night at UTS"

The Mass student rally held in Sydney today as part of the National Day of Action, organised by the National Union of Students, has dramatically emphasised the depth of student anger by occupying the Administration building at the University of Technology, Sydney. The occupation, which began at 1.30 this afternoon, has decided to remain for the evening with about 150 students prepared to sacrifice their warm beds.

Earlier in the day the rally, about 1,500 strong, heard several speakers at both Belmore Park and at the offices of DEETYA (Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs.) More speakers were heard at UTS.

In a departure from the official program, rally organisers decided to take the crowd to UTS to protest against the plan by UTS administration to introduce up-front fees in 1998. This proposal has been previously condemned by NUS as blatantly unfair and unjust.

"The last twelve months have seen unprecedented attacks upon students and higher education - there's only so much that students can suffer" said Mr Andrew Burke, President of the National Union of students (NSW).

"Full up-front fees create a system based upon wealth - some can afford to buy themselves a future whilst others have no chance to go to university" Mr Burke continued. "It's a clear indication of how desperate students are that so many are prepared to spend the night on a cold floor - many fear that the government's changes to AUSTUDY will force them to drop out of uni" Mr Burke finished.



MEDIA RELEASE - What Happened to Students fighting for a public, equally accessible education last night?

"Police dogs set on students at UTS occupation"

The peaceful student occupation of the University of Technology, Sydney Administration offices was violently broken apart at 3am this morning by 100 armed special police officers with attack dogs, truncheons, sledgehammers, crowbars and video cameras. Two students were mauled by dogs as the uniformed and undercover police stormed the rear entrance of the student camp, set up in the offices last Wednesday as part of the campaign against the Federal Government cuts to higher education funding, the introduction of student fees and the proposed Common Youth Allowance.

National Union of Students NSW Education Officer, Thomas Michel, present at the police raid, said:

"Two students wounded by special force attack dogs were repeatedly denied medical attention by police. The raid was carried out when most of the 150 students present were asleep. Police used force which was brutal and completely unwarranted".

Mr Michel continued:

"The acting Vice-Chancellor of UTS, Brian Low must also bear full responsibility for sanctioning this violent attack. This only shows his reckless determination to push through full fees for degrees at the university, despite the opposition of students."

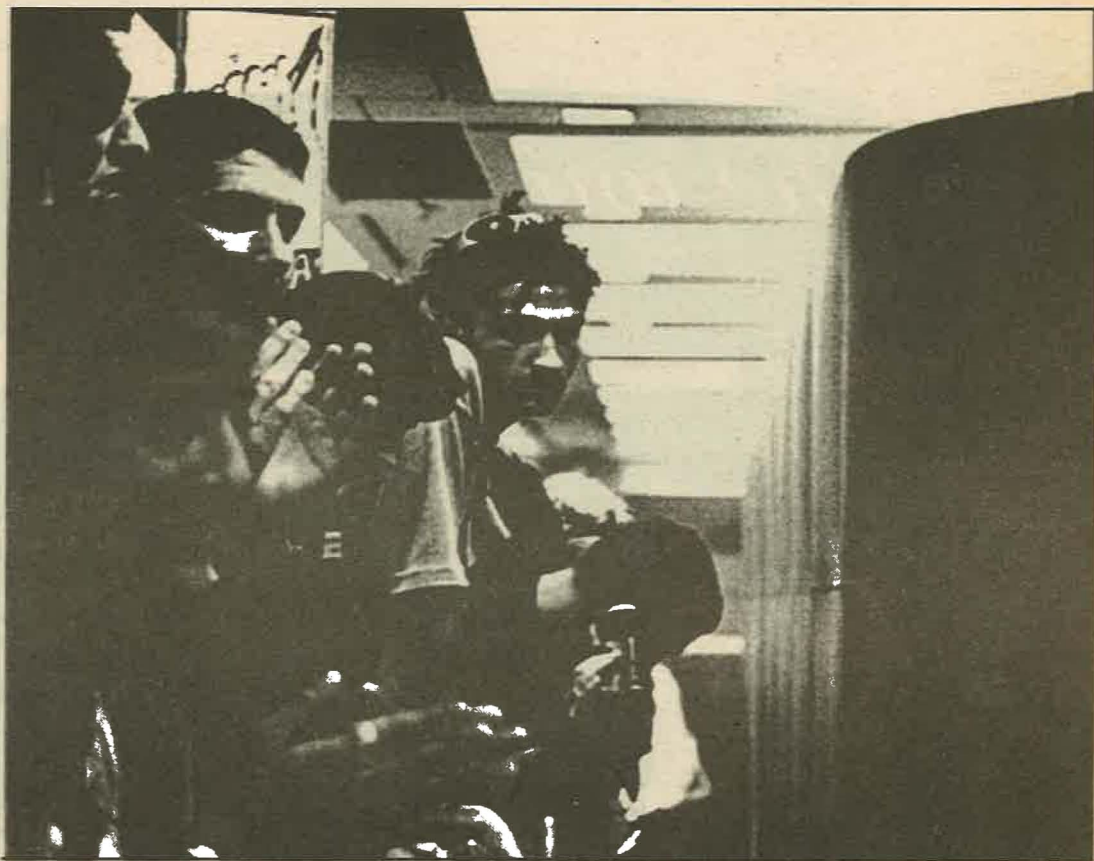
"This was, and is, an ongoing and peaceful protest against further government attacks on the rights of everyone to participate in higher education," said Mr Michel. "Using police, dogs, and violence against students only serves to legitimise real anger and frustration towards a government attempting to silence all opposition to their punitive higher education policies."

Mr Michel added:

"Students have been continually excluded from any discussion regarding the future of university education or the introduction of the Common Youth Allowance. The occupation of UTS took place because students are desperate to draw government attention to the dangerous course down which their higher education agenda is taking the students, and the future, of this country."

"Our right to peaceful protest has been, literally, mauled by the events of this morning"

"The violence of the police attack at UTS will serve only to strengthen student resolve to fight the Howard Liberal Government..."



8.30-9.00 Morning Meeting. Discussion of our demands and the 1.00pm action. Teams of leafleters and posters form and move out. Plan for basic running of occupation refined:
* When media started to film meeting they were expelled and the decision was made to ban media from entering the administration.
* Decision made to not tamper with anything reinforced.

9.00 am - 1.00 pm Skeleton crew in admin with people running around UTS drumming up support for rally. Some in the Students' Association office sending messages to other institutions and activist networks. Some people go to work, some go home, some go to their own universities to put up UTS posters.

1.00 pm Rally. About 200 people, mostly students. A speaker from the UTS branch of the NTEU addressed the rally, to her credit, pledging support for the occupiers demands. Really good atmosphere - morale high.

2.30 pm. Meeting - what next? Strong debate as to next step. Resistance argues for demo to withdraw at 5.00pm, to "go out with a bang". Opposition to this - sentiment that we can stay until our demands are met. Debate follows. Vast majority vote to stay. We decide that if numbers ever drop below thirty that first priority to get onto phones to build up numbers (it never proved to be necessary). Privacy issue brought up again. Made very clear that we had to respect staff and student files, and staff personal property. *Downstairs students records locked by govt decision.* Decision made to produce flyer for people who come into the occupation new, explaining what collective decisions had been made. Use of recreational drugs at the occupation discussed. Collective decision that any recreational drug use to occur outside - we didn't want to give the cops an excuse. More organisational details:

- * political, educational, informative and entertaining videos displayed.
- * repairs made to the roof where it was used to access rooms. Analysis made to know where everything was to make certain of no tampering. Organisation of cleanups vacuuming washing up etc
- * banners made.
- * media releases/solidarity requests continue.
- * trade union support work can't really progress - most Sussex St. union officials seem to have got an early start to the long weekend. Decision made to leave it until next week (assuming we last that long).

7.00pm - late. People eating, laughing, talking, arguing, singing, cleaning. Someone gets hold of an guitar and is possessed by the departed ghosts of Janis Joplin and other such entertainers. Opinion is sharply divided over this development. Most people get into it though.

Friday

6.30 - 7.00am. Some people begin to stir.

10 am lights on, remaining sleepers wake up. Vacuuming done, general cleanup, brewed coffee, and breakfast.



Meeting:

- * Expansion of groups with greater focus on output/jobs to be done.
- * Morale increase with faxes from other universities around the world informing of verbal/financial support. Declarations of financial contributions from Australian student associations.
- * Funding pool made.
- * Further discussions of security. Again, we know better for next time.
- * Multiple banner production
- * Discussion on immediate tasks to build numbers. Idea of mass leafleting at Equinox (music festival at Macquarie University). Pamphlet designed and printed. Numbers organised for its distribution. Arguments as to whether focus solely on Equinox or include general poster running, Glebe and Bondi markets, Easter show.

6.00 pm Bouganville support meeting. The occupiers invite Moses Havini and Vicki Johns from the Bouganville Freedom Movement to speak on the situation in Bouganville.

6.30 pm Critical mass rally does solidarity ride by. (Critical Mass is a monthly bicycle demo, where hundreds of cyclists take over the streets). Bouganville meeting takes a brief break.

Saturday.

2.15 am 115 police officers enter occupation using sledgehammers on outer door and crow bars on inner.

- * Students who tried to leave were dragged back inside
- * Students screaming that they wanted to accompany police peacefully when being moved in wrist and finger locks had the locks tightened.
- * One student who exited a room had a police dog attack her then was dragged in a wrist lock to the group who had formed in a circle in the main meeting room. An other student had a dog attack his arse!!
- * Everyone massed into the main room. The Canberra student who had been bitten on the bum was yelling for medical attention, showing the arse bitten out of his pants. People had to request medical attention for the woman who had been bitten. She was unable to ask for it herself as she was in shock.
- * Police surround students. They've got batons, crowbars, attack dogs, and an ugly attitude. We've got pyjamas.
- * Students were being grabbed and forcibly removed from admin, where they were charged with either occupying an enclosed space, or disturbing the peace. Then photographed and placed in paddywagon (11 people in total). They were later released. Two of the students insisted that they be charged. They were again told to leave and had their arrest forms torn up.
- * Students made demands for a five minute reprieve from these police actions to have a group discussion on their actions, accepted by the officer in charge. Some police ignored this demand and continued to forcibly remove students. Students agreed on passive exit, upon attaining personal items. Police agreed, but with the restrictions that each student be accompanied by two cops. Students demanded that they be allowed to move in groups of two and that female students only need one officer. Heavy restrictions still set on movement within building. Once out of admin all equipment thoroughly searched by scum! Sometimes neglecting the law of only sergeants performing bag searches.
- * Police stated any items removed not belonging to oneself, then one would be charged with theft. In spite of their searches, no student charged with theft. Told that all seized equipment would be available for pickup the following day from the police station.
- * All computer disks, videos and camera film confiscated, including student assignment and thesis work, etc.
- * Once outside ambulance arrived and officers attended injured students - the two students mauled by dogs, student hit by police baton, those suffering from bruising, shock and other injuries through excessive force.
- * Students decided to go back to NUS office where they organised meetings, media, and the petitioning of Equinox.

9.30 am. Meeting out the front of NUS. About thirty to forty attend. Massive security presence. Student possessions being deposited in mini-skip by contract cleaners. People still in shock from night before. Some discussion of the nights events - decision to go to equinox with revamped flyer. A small group volunteer to remain out the front and let people who turn up to participate know what happened. Meeting planned for the following evening at NUS.

Sunday.

Easter Sunday evening over seventy people turn up for the meeting. Has to move up to Town Hall square (in hypothermic winds). Discussion on all aspects of occupation. Meeting does three things:

1. Chance for people to debrief in the aftermath of the police action.
2. Discussion of strengths and weaknesses of the occupation.
3. Planning for the up-coming demonstration - the back to UTS rally.

The Struggle Continues...

MEDIA RELEASE

To SBS Radio 29th March 1997

As you're aware last Wednesday University students from all over the NSW met in Sydney to protest against the proposed changes to education by the Federal Liberal Government. Over 1000 students rallied in Belmore Park expressing how the changes will affect them as individuals as well as a whole. The students then moved through the city past the Sydney Central Building and then occupied the student administration area of UTS - Broadway. At all times students were peaceful and continued to occupy the area until early Saturday morning. At approximately 2am the peaceful protest was violently brought to an end when a special branch police squad smashed through doors with sledgehammers and setting attack dogs on students and damaging university property, despite the fact that the peaceful protestors presented no threat to the University or to security. Two people required medical treatment after being bitten by dogs and belongings were confiscated.

Because of these actions a second rally has been organised for Wednesday April 2nd at 4pm on the steps of UTS - Broadway.



TONY BLAKE *and* SOCRATES

“one of these two is not like the other...”

Somewhere, probably deep in the bowels of Police Headquarters in College Street, there's an officer of Her Majesty's Constabulary whose job it is to come up with interesting code names for police operations. One can only guess what thoughts ran through their mind when they were briefed to come up with a name for the operation to remove the students who were occupying UTS.

“Operation Big Dog? No, too obvious. Operation Stifle Dissent? Hmm. Could be interpreted the wrong way. Hmm. Something upbeat, something for the young people, I think. Operation Excellent Adventure? No... Aha! I have it! Operation Socrates!”

History will probably never record just why the name Operation Socrates was selected. Considering who Socrates was, and what he stood for, it does seem to be a peculiarly ironic choice.

Socrates was a Greek philosopher who lived from 469 to 399 BC. As a young man, he fought in three Athenian military campaigns, distinguishing himself in each of them by his bravery, indifference to fatigue, and remarkable physical endurance, characteristics which were much more readily found among the students than amongst the members of Operation Socrates. In later life he entered public office, and gained a reputation for moral courage in resisting illegalities. It is unlikely that Socrates faced police brutality or the attempted imposition of illegal fees for students, but it is likely that he would have opposed them if he had. As for moral courage... Professor Blake, are you still reading this?

At the age of 70, Socrates was charged with “corrupting of youth”, for opening the minds of young people to new ideas. He refused to accept the charge (which carried only a small fine) opting to fight it instead. As a result, he was sentenced to death, but rather than accept death at the hands of the state he committed sui-

cide. Equally, the occupation of UTS was a demonstration that students are not prepared to accept the increased fees and charges which threaten to corrupt avenues of equitable access to higher education. Students will fight these charges, and we will neither be silenced by the state nor follow Socrates' example by lying down and dying.

It is also interesting to note that Socrates' philosophy sought to examine con-

Perhaps the crowning irony, however, is that one of the primary techniques used by Socrates (the doctrine of formal argument known as the “Socratic method”) is to draw out your adversary by feigning ignorance, and asking a series of obvious and simple questions. The ignorance and internal contradictions of your adversary will then be clearly exposed for all to see. The aftermath of the occupation has in fact exposed both the University administration and the Federal Government in this way.

The lack of commitment by the University administration to addressing student concerns has been laid bare by their failure, even now, to deal with the issues which the occupation highlighted. Their inability to see past the physical fact of the occupation is seen most obviously in the letter which the Vice-Chancellor mailed to all students. The V-C had a perfect opportunity to reassure students of his commitment to their interests; instead, he chose to spread his own propaganda in response to the “false claims made by various groups.”

Equally, the response of the Federal Government to the occupation has provided yet more proof (if any more were needed) that there is quite a lot of ignorance to be found in that direction. The reported comments of Jackie Kelly, Liberal MP for Lindsay, that occupiers were “dreadlocked yobos” avoids the issues involved in the occupation, and also ignores the fact that the fight against cuts to education draws together a very diverse and broad-based group of students.

Thus, the choice of Socrates as the patron of the police action appears not to be one which the philosopher himself would have supported. The lesson: Those who don't learn the lessons of history are condemned to stuff things up now and again. This is a lesson which applies just as much to university administration as it does to that nameless officer in College Street.



cepts like justice, equity and ethics. These are precisely the questions that the occupation sought to raise in relation to higher education. Just as the work of Socrates provoked a shift in Greek philosophical thought to these issues, as opposed to considerations of nature and the cosmos, the work of Operation Socrates has ensured that the minds of students are more firmly focussed than ever on the need to work and fight for an equitable higher education system.



In the aftermath of the occupation, the Sydney University student paper Honi Soit interviewed acting District Commander Terry Andrews, the cop who was responsible for operation Socrates. Here Terry tells how it was done...

HOW CONSTABLE
CARE SPENT
HIS EASTER
HOLIDAYS.

Why were the police called in to remove the students occupying the UTS administration building?

The police were asked to by the university...I think they (the university Council) thought, at the end of the day you can only put up with so much, and at the end of the day we've still got to run our business. You have to understand that only one was a UTS student, there was estimated \$40,000 in damage plus and additional \$70,000 cost to the administration.

There was definitely more than one UTS student and the students claim that a lot of the damage done was in the police raid.

That's not true and the information on the student we got from UTS security.

Did the police anticipate violence from the students and to have to make arrests?

We didn't particularly want to arrest anyone and fortunately we didn't. We have had some very bad incidents with that particular group, the student union movement. We had a particularly bad one last year where a lot of police got injured, where a small number of them caused an inordinate amount of bloody damage and injury, more so than any other group of demonstrators we have. We have to plan so that we don't have to fight, so that we can control the situation in an orderly way.

Is that why police dogs were taken in?

We had police dogs in there to do 2 roles; one was to protect their (the police's) back which is to go in behind them; and the second team was to do the searches of all the offices;

Are they drug squad dogs?

They can do drugs (!) but they weren't there for that reason, they can do explosives (!!) and they can do people (!!!)... We assumed we would have people hiding in places... they (the dogs) had nothing to do with the main thing (eviction), we wouldn't put them in contact with a group of people.

One woman was injured by a dog.

No she wasn't. She claimed she was injured by a dog. I debriefed both dog handlers the following morning. We don't control the crowd with dogs because dogs can't make value judgments, the handlers can, but it's too much to expect of the dog.

Why did the police not announce their entry, nor give the demonstrators time to leave orderly, but herded them up?

What do you mean. The students were not going to allow us in there. We had tried to get in there and got ordered away... so did their own university security... they controlled totally that whole area.

Why were no ambulances called when students asked for medical assistance?

There was no demand for an ambulance.

Yes there was and police did nothing, so the students had to call one themselves.

But no ambulance came.

An ambulance came, but they now have no record of it.

(After this interview was recorded the "misplaced" report of that night turned up. The report indicates that a female student was treated for shock and a dog bite to her arm.)

This is another amazing part to me, you get a group in there and clearly they have no right to be there, occupying a place in a siege situation saying, we're sitting here, go to hell. There is no way you can remove a group like that in a reasonable way... I think sometimes the expectations of the people in there are a little bit, um, unfair.

You have to understand that people there felt that this is the most desperate situation, that no one is listening and that all other channels are closed.

But you're not winning them (the public)... if there is a valid rationale behind their argument, and I'm sure many will say there is, what they're seeing on television is losing you so much credibility. Can you suggest any more effective means of demonstration?

I don't know, but whenever you get people going over the top you get the whole community tagging them and it's only too quick to do so, as they would do to us you know. Everyone is quite happy to believe that we went in with jack boots and a dozen dogs and tore the hell out of the students, where as the truth lies between the stories.

And how the media presents it.

And how it presents it... I

haven't got the answers to it, but at the end of the day I only get paid for doing my job.

Did the police display their badges in the raid?

Yeah they had them on. You will find occasionally that they don't because they're only plastic garbage things and a lot of them get pulled off (crap, no one was resisting, they were all too scared)... and you'll get the occasional one that just hasn't got them on, because I mean they're just garbage.

But it is the law that police have to display their badge numbers.



Oh, we try to ensure that the number remains. They get two, sometimes both of them get injured and it takes a day or two to get new ones, but we tend to try to keep those people away from the front line.

Why was photographic film removed from a student's camera, and will it be returned?

I don't know, I've never

heard of that one before.

Will the police use this sort of force in the future?

There's no doubt in the world that if the students are silly enough to try it again they will not get in... and if they do, we will go straight in and get them out... look, I might sympathise personally with you, but that has got nothing to do with it.

Have you met with other Vice Chancellors?

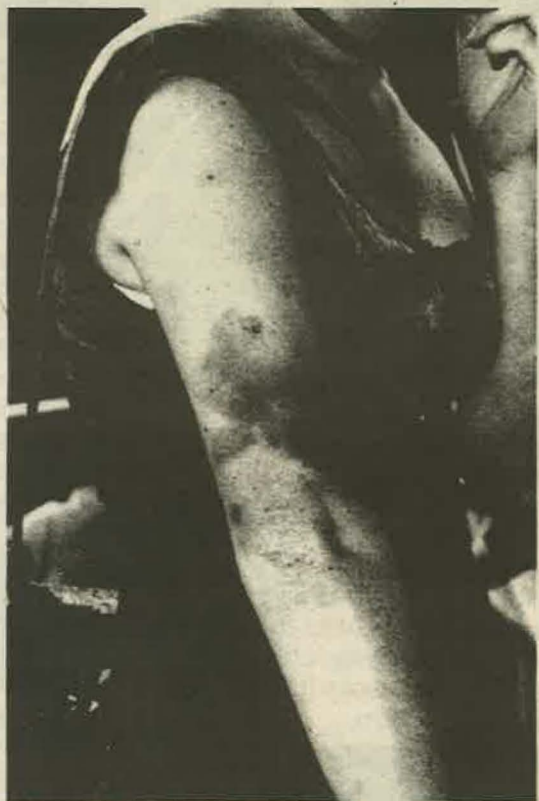
No

So if a similar situation occurred at say, Sydney University, the police would have no basis for coming in?

That would depend entirely on the university—the Senate, not just the Vice Chancellor, would have to make the decision.

Thank you officer.

Well, we hope you found this as comforting as we did. Turn ahead to the personal accounts of the raid - it doesn't paint nearly as cuddly a picture.



The arm of the woman who "claimed" she was bitten by a police dog.

"The policeman isn't there to create disorder. He's there to preserve disorder." Richard Daly.



STUDENT ACTIVISTS RIGHTS*

*material used is from the
Activist Rights Handbook with
the permission of Tim Anderson

The 10 Commandments (the 'revised' edition)

*When the law contravenes democratic rights,
they should be opposed and broken.*

We have rights and responsibilities, not because the state bestows them, but because they are inherent in our social being. *Where the state has often denied our right to resist or obey, we take back our right to participate actively in our society, and by doing so we empower ourselves and our community.* This is an outline of what rights student activists do have, so that we may understand the law, not so that we obey it, but that we can take control and make informed decisions.

This is an assertion of our rights which already belong to us, but it is also a recognition that we live in a society which has a cohesive apparatus that affects us and, on occasions, we may choose to obey or to oppose. The state does not define our rights but it may influence the way we choose to express them.

1. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO PROTEST

Criminalising political dissent has long been on the political agenda. Claims of "you have the right to protest, so long as you stay within the law" have to be understood within this context.

Plan your action. Collectively decide what you want to achieve, and the risks you're prepared to take before you start. This might seem rather obvious, but it is essential. Attempts to foresee obstacles (including police action) will help you develop several contingency plans. Things rarely go as planned.

Organise video coverage of all major actions. This helps to restrain police violence and can provide valuable evidence if needed later, in exposing

the fabricated police evidence that often follows multiple arrests at actions. Police fear video coverage. They will either (a) moderate their behaviour (b), try to seize the camera. Violent attacks on photographers are common by both NSW and Federal police (usually followed by false charges against the photographer to cover the police attack). On occasions police take video footage (by request or by warrant) to prevent it being subpoenaed by defendants; *this occurred when police raided*



the student occupation at UTS on the 29th of March 1997. Security for photographers has to be planned. There can either be people assigned to "buffer" the photographers from police, or the camera people can act from a safe distance with a zoom lens. Plan to prevent the police from seizing your cameras and film. If you have useful photographic evidence of demonstration arrests try to keep it safe and secret from police, and make it available to the victims of the police action.

2. POPULAR ADVERTISING AND GRAFFITI

Popular advertising: posters, stickers and tasteful and well-placed graffiti are valuable, but possibly illegal tools of the trade.

Plan your popular advertising with this in mind: (a) police will charge you for graffiti, (b) police generally make you pull down posters instead of charging you, (c) private security guards who stop posters at work will give chase as if you are an axe murderer. Set up a look-out and make sure that you have an escape route. The person or organisation authorising a poster is not liable for any offence connected with the act of sticking a poster to the wall. It is not an offence to produce a poster. It is a criminal offence to "publish" any material defamatory to a person with the "intention of causing serious harm", or where serious harm is probable (s.50 NSW Defamation Act (1974)). The Maximum Penalty is 3 years jail, fine or both.

3. CRIMINAL CHARGES THAT GIVEN TO STUDENT ACTIVISTS

The normal range of criminal charges are open to university authorities in dealing with student dissent or actions. *But initiating criminal charges can be an embarrassment to the administration, so many potential criminal charges are dealt with through internal disciplinary procedures.* If you are not a student (or staff member) your rights on campus are broad but qualified, so officers of a university can

legally order you leave (for whatever reason) under the trespass laws of NSW Inclosed Lands Protection Act.

All Australian Universities have some form of internal disciplinary procedures (usually in the By-laws under the Act of that university) which prescribe penalties for both staff and students who break university rules. There is a general offence of "breach of discipline" or "misconduct" under the university's rules or By-laws (check your university rules in the university calendar for the specifics of the procedures). Universities now make it a condition of enrolment that students agree to abide by the university rules. Note that no university authority (senior executive or security guard) can order y





to do something that they are not empowered to do under the university's Act. You need not obey any unreasonable or oppressive direction.

If you are questioned by university authorities in circumstances where it is possible that disciplinary charges may be laid, you should follow the same course as if you were being questioned by police; i.e., decline to answer any questions until you have had independent advice from a lawyer about your rights.

4. SECURITY GUARDS

Security guards generally have no more legal power than the average citizen, except (a) when they are sworn in as "special" constables, and (b) when there is some extra power given by the university rules. At Sydney University for example, a prescribed officer (which includes security guards) may give directions to students which are consistent with university rules. This does not mean they can tell you to do anything. Sydney University guards actually have a power that police officers do not: if a student does not produce particulars of identity to a prescribed officer it is defined as "misconduct". Avoid any conflict between students and security guards by negotiation with their union.

5. POLICE AND YOUR RIGHTS

Police have a few more powers than ordinary citizens. However they are an armed force supported by the state and those in positions of power.

Police have some wider powers of arrest than citizens, but they have no other formal rights. Their power comes from the fact that they are armed, equipped and organised, backed by the state, supported by the rich, promoted by the mass media and accepted by those who have not questioned the trappings of state authority.

Conflicts with police do not necessarily lead to arrest. There is often room to negotiate and avoid problems. Remain calm and dignified when dealing with police. A court case can be a long and drawn-out ordeal, of little use to anyone and worse than most penalties for minor offences. Avoid a court case if at all possible!

Police have a duty to prevent a "breach of peace", which means they may intervene to stop damage to property. **Notice however that preventing breaches of the peace does not entitle police to take you away somewhere (as police tried to do with two students at the occupation of the UTS administration building), or to take your property.** They can take you away if they intend to charge you with an offence. Property can only be seized if it is to be used as evidence of some offence.

NOTE: the formal power of the police is less than popularly imagined, and can be challenged. Much of police power depends on bluff and bullying. Police insisting on your "co-operation" means that they want your obedience. Have a basic human respect for police, not a subservience through fear or a misguided acceptance of the need for a one-sided co-operation.

6. POLICE SPIES

All Australian police forces have units which engage in spying on political activists. To some extent they duplicate the efforts of, and work loosely together with ASIO. These units are usually called "special branches" and while many of their members are ordinary "plain clothed" police officers, their activities have nothing to do with the prevention or detection of crime. Police "special branch" (or similar units) collect information on individuals and groups, mostly from the left, trade unions and ethnic groups. Their rationale is the need to prevent possible future conflict or violence, but in practice they collect gossip and half-truths. Police "Narks" are often instructed to steal documents, including address books, financial records and letters. If you suspect a person to be an informer, act cautiously and leave them in their place.

7. IDENTIFICATION

You are not obliged to give police your name or address, except in limited circumstances (e.g., when driving a car). If arrested, police may hold you until they obtain some identification. It is NOT an offence to give an assumed name.

Generally speaking, you do not have to identify yourself to police. If you give police an assumed name, any charges (or convictions) will be recorded in that name, which will then become an official alias.

Many people use more than one name and there is nothing wrong with this. A second name is not necessarily a false name.

However there may be little to be gained by refusing to identify yourself (police can also be asked to identify themselves) and there may be some tactical disadvantages. First, if arrested, it can make it difficult for friends to locate you. Second, if police are not satisfied that they have identified you, they may delay your release on bail until they are satisfied.

8. THE RIGHT TO SILENCE.

Whatever you decide about your identification, always assert your right to silence when being questioned by police. This means that you make no statement to them about any offence of which you are suspected. Anything at all you say to police can be used as evidence against you.

Claiming your right to silence does not mean that police may not continue to ask you questions. It does not mean that your refusal to answer questions is evidence of your guilt. The best way to handle police questioning is to say literally nothing in response, or to say "I do not want to say anything until I have spoken to my lawyer". The NSW Police Commissioner Instruction 31.10 says that police should persist in questioning a person who makes it clear that they will not answer.

It is not a breach of your right to silence to ask for a drink of water, a coffee or to ask police to stop hitting you. But do not be drawn into chit-chat with them; this is how they try and get people to open up. But refusing to be questioned may not prevent police verballing you- fabricating a statement which contains "admissions" to some offence. NSW police do this regularly, and as an activist you can not stop them from doing this. However you can take out some insurance against this practice by making a STATUTORY DECLARATION, signed and dated as soon as possible, in which you state: **If questioned or under suspicion by police I will, as my legal right, not answer any questions or make any statement.**

9. SEARCH AND SEIZURE

Even with a search warrant police are only authorised (by a magistrate) to search premises for specified items. Except in very limited circumstances, police have no right to search your premises, your vehicle or your person without a search warrant. Monitor the search carefully, using available witnesses, tapes and cameras where

ATTENTION:

It is important to remember that when you are contacted by police at **anytime** after an incident like the UTS Occupation, you are under **no obligation** to answer any questions put to you.

The UTS Occupier editors say that if police start asking you about the UTS occupation now, contact the Redfern Legal Centre on (02) 9698 7277.

Don't be alone when you're interviewed by police.





possible. Without a warrant, police may enforce a search if they have "reasonable suspicion" that they will find evidence of a crime, or if they are given permission by the occupier. Where possible refuse all illegal searches

Check every item police attempt to take away, and ensure that your witnesses see that police do not plant or falsely "find" anything. Insist on a detailed receipt for anything that is taken- this can be cross referenced with the report to the magistrate.

If you are going to be in a situation of risk (such as an occupation), do not carry with you any of the following: any illegal drugs; address book (other than lawyers' phone numbers); more keys than you need; anything else you do not want police to seize.

10. ARREST

An arrest occurs when any two of the following happen:

- a police officer tells you that you are being arrested
- the police officer physically touches you (e.g., by a hand on the shoulder).

It is an offence to resist or hinder a legal arrest (s.546 NSW Crimes Act). It is not necessarily an offence to passively avoid arrest, for instance by lying down. You do not have to help police arrest you, but they may then use "reasonable force" to take you in. It is not an offence to run away before an arrest takes place, but it is better to walk away from police than run as (a) there is less likely chance of being shot in the back (b) running away may later be represented in court as evidence of your "consciousness of guilt".

Let other people know you have been arrested and where you are. This is fundamental. Only then can others help to release you.

These are the things police may demand that you do, but which you do not have to do:

- >answer police questions
- >make a signed statement
- >submit to a degrading body search
- >join an "identification" parade
- >fill out any forms (police also collect hand writing samples)
- >handle any objects given to you by police (beware of leaving fingerprints)
- >give any blood or tissue samples (unless there is a court order)
- >go anywhere with them other than a cell or room until they have processed your charge and bail papers.

Federal property.

Obstruction- This is often used when police want someone out of the way. They will allege that you were in some way preventing "the free passage of a person, vehicle or vessel in a public place" (s.6 NSW Summary Offences Act (1988)).

Trespass- There are several trespass-type offences, under state and federal law. The oldest federal penalises a person who "trespasses or goes upon any prohibited Commonwealth land" (s. 89(1) Commonwealth crimes Act (1914)). Other Federal trespass laws ban trespass on "premises" in a Territory or the Commonwealth (s. 11(1) & 12(1) Commonwealth Public Order (Protection of Person and Property) Act (1971). The NSW law is directed at private property, and is directed at "unlawful entry" and a refusal to leave someone's property. It is an offence to "enter the enclosed lands of any other person, without the consent of the owner or the occupier" (or to) remain upon the inclosed lands of another person after being requested to leave those lands" (s.4(1), Inclosed Lands Protection Act (1901)). This is what the police tried to charge the students at the occupation at UTS on the 29th of March. Since no request was given by the Vice-Chancellor, Tony "attack-dog" Blake or by the NSW police before their raid, the police would have made false arrests if they had arrested any students.

Unlawful Assembly- The NSW law dates back from 1929 and it defines unlawful assembly as "any assembly of five or more persons whose common object is by means of intimidation or injury to compel any person to do what she is not legally bound to do or abstain from doing what she is legally entitled to do" (s.545C NSW Crimes Act (1900)). Also under s.23 of the NSW Summary Offences Act (1988) organisers of public assemblies such as rallies and marches can have their functions "authorised" by notifying the Commissioner of Police in writing of their intention. The Commissioner can then "authorise" the assembly, or apply to a judge for an order to prohibit the event. Not that this procedure needs not be followed, for many successful mass actions are held without police permission and without police intervention. The only advantage in having the event "authorised" is that (by s.24) you cannot be charged with unlawful entry or obstructing traffic. The disadvantage is that police might try to prohibit the action leading to conflict if the action proceeds.

Police routinely take fingerprints and photographs, they only have a legal backing to demand this if there is a question to your identity. you can resist giving fingerprints, however this may cause them to delay (though not by much) your release on bail.

WHAT WILL YOU BE CHARGED WITH

Listed below are some of the most common charges arising from actions in New South Wales and on

Offensive behaviour- The NSW law against offensive behaviour or language states that it is offence to use offensive language or behaviour "in or near, or within view or hearing from a public space or school" (s.4 Summary Offences Act (1988)). "Public Space" is widely defined to include private property open to or used by even a small number of members of the public. 90% to 95% of those charged with offensive conduct or language are convicted in NSW, and most of these are fined.

Resist or hinder police- It is a federal offence to "intentionally and knowingly obstruct, resist, hinder, use violence against, threaten or intimidate a member of Federal Police carrying out a "function or duty" (s.76 Commonwealth Crimes Act). The maximum penalty is two years imprisonment. It is a state offence to "resist or hinder", or to incite someone else to "assault, resist or hinder a member of the police force in execution of his duty", including the making of an arrest (s.546C NSW Crimes Act). "Resisting" means opposing by force; "hindering" means causing an arrest or other police action to be more difficult to carry out. It is not an offence to passively resist arrest, or to run away before an arrest is completed. It is not an offence to resist or hinder a police officer who is not acting in execution of his or her duty, such as making an illegal arrest or the use of excessive force.

Assault Police- NSW law makes it an offence to "assault, resist or wilfully obstruct" a police officer "while in the execution of his duty", or to "assault any person with intent to resist" the making of a lawful arrest (s.58 NSW Crimes Act).

Riot And Affray- "Riot" under s.93B of the NSW Crimes Act occurs where 12 or more people together use or threaten "unlawful violence for a common purpose", and where their conduct would cause a "person of reasonable firmness" to fear his or her safety. The maximum penalty is 10 years. "Affray", covered by s.93C of the NSW Crimes Act, occurs where less than 12 people (including a person acting alone) use or threaten "unlawful violence" causing "a person of reasonable firmness" to fear for his or her safety. "Violence" means conduct which causes or intends to cause injury or which causes or intends to cause injury, and in the case of riot, includes violence towards property. Riot and Affray can be committed in both private and public spaces.

For a copy of the *Activist Rights Handbook* Write to:

The Justice Commission
P.O. BOX K365
Haymarket NSW 2000
(tel) 9281 5100



**Out of the smoky
remains of an
occupation
comes...**

Some musings on the point of occupation & direct action etc.

In the aftermath of the occupation at UTS, and believe me as a UTS student association office bearer there has been considerable aftermath, the question has often been asked by friends & aunts & acquaintances & parents, "Did you win?, did you get what you wanted?". When asked this I tend to stumble around going "no, but that doesn't really matter..." & being a little unsure as to what to say. This article is basically going to be a rambling, musing kind of rant about the reasons for direct action, reasons apart from having our literal demands met by the "...powers that control & bore us..".

In a society such as the one we are currently in, ie. capitalist & veering deeper & deeper into the corporate, economic rationalist mode of organisation. A mode of organisation/of control that gives ever more freedom to the corporate & business sectors & the rich, but at direct expense to the freedom of most of the population. The opportunities for people to exert meaningful control over their existences are whittled away more & more. At UTS, like all other universities the avenues for students & staff to have a voice within the institutions that they study & work within are very limited. Universities are increasingly being run on a corporate model of management, where they are answerable & accountable to the holy dollar. This pre-occupation & obsession with

THE UNRECOGNIZED ACHIEVEMENTS OF OCCUPYING

profit making means that any notions of democracy become subjugated to the need for efficiency & results.

Direct actions such as occupation can work to make these institutions, these profit-making machines unworkable. Even for just a day, for just an hour, to stop the smooth workings of capitalism is a pretty exciting thing. Causing rupture in the controlling & oppressive structures that we live within is if nothing else exciting. For a brief time at UTS we were articulating a vision(s) of what a space such as the Administration could become. Hierarchies had been abolished. (That is not to say that informal hierarchies didn't create themselves with all the factional hacks vying for their party's line to dominate) But in terms of the way that management at UTS normally run the place, a tiny 'revolution' had taken place. As a group we were making decisions together, each person able to participate fully in these processes. This is where I see the value in direct action & occupations in particular. They can help in the process of articulating alternative visions for a transformed society & education system. Yes, I suppose it is revolution that I'm talking about. ..

We became aware of the immense power we can have collectively & saw the potential we have for taking it further. The extreme reaction of the police & the university management tells us that we were do-

ing something that threatened them, it's funny how these people seem to feel threatened when they see democracy in action, when they see that the students are getting a bit above themselves, we had lost sight of our 'rightful' ie. subservient place within the university hierarchy. After all what is the point of education, if it's not to be churned out at the end of our degrees as pieces of "value-added human capital", as smooth, efficient workers who can contribute to the profit margins of large companies even more ?.

Of course many of us are approaching our ideas of education & its function within society from a totally divergent view to those we are fighting. There seems to be little negotiatory territory, little common ground on which we can meet. Notions such as education for liberation, education as a means to understanding ways in which to transform society are not in the interests of university management, despite their rhetoric they have little regard for student input, for any notions of real participatory democracy, I mean these kinds of things are in direct contradiction to their own six figure salary interests. And then they wonder why the kids get angry, why we want to reclaim some space.

I think we need to see occupation as a perfectly legitimate tactic & one that's success can be measured in terms other than simply whether our demands are met or not. The 'success' can & should be measured in terms of the collective processes that are developed, the 'damage' that is caused to the smooth, the efficient workings of capital, the processes of politicisation that occur amongst those involved, the opportunities that are created to articulate new ways of doing things, new ways of organising. Surely it's all part of an ongoing process ?, a process of transformation.

**DESTROY THE POWERS THAT
CONTROL AND BORE US!!**



why believe

Fear of full fees stirs student anger against 'the

Ties at the ready as police prepare to face the students

These are just a few of the headlines that have blazed across the pages of our newspapers in the last few weeks. You may have noticed, especially if you were involved in the recent activism, that the media is representing protests and protesters under some kind of preset context. There has been so much reporting of incorrect facts that it is enough to lose a lot of confidence in the supposedly "free press".

The mainstream media apparently has an ideological aim of being a tool for finding the truth, but it can be seen from recent coverage of student demonstrations, especially the UTS occupation, that news-especially television news is looking for the "insane" in this supposedly sane world.

Take the coverage of the March 26 rally. The event was covered in different manners depending upon the aims of each particular media server. For example, the rally and subsequent occupation was given minimal coverage in 'The Australian' newspaper, whilst a considerable amount of initial and follow up coverage was provided by the 'Sydney Morning Herald'. This gives an indication that the protests were considered to be a local Sydney concern only, which is disturbing as the issues and demands raised by the UTS occupation were a concern for all people in Australia.

Different media tends to cover the same event in different ways, depending on the so-called quality of the publication. For example the coverage by the Daily Telegraph ("Cop This, Pal" and the rest) tends to focus upon holding up the authority figures, whilst ridiculing students and their concerns by setting up and broadcasting any sensation or spectacle they can. The Sydney Morning Herald in this instance did seem to be fairer in their

Students accuse police of brutality

coverage to the extent of letting student actually have their say.

Television news, being a different medium altogether, and much more visual in nature, shines through in broadcasts shown on the evening news on March 26. The visuals were concentrated upon students

putting pressure on doors and the "violent clashes" with security. Nine network has been doing its best to create an image of students that is confusion and disorganisation, selecting appropriate footage to set this agenda. "Some of the students did not even know what they were protesting about" was Peter Harvey's comment.

TV news focuses upon the image and once the image or the sensationalism of that image is lost, so in most cases is the story. This can also be applied to the print media, as they move towards a higher content of visuals to assist in the telling of a news event.

When the UTS occupation was dismantled by force at 3am March 29, calls were repeatedly made to all major media servers, to witness and report the injustices that were being perpetrated. Though this story was high in sensational value (police with dogs has a large drama rating), not a single media representative attended. They would have missed the initial clash police made with students - no visuals, no story. This is also a theory as to the reason for the lack of any warning given by Tony Blake to occupying students; 1) the image of students being frightened by police in riot gear and brandishing sledge hammers is hardly how society should see its police force, and 2) the daily papers went to press shortly before the police arrived.

The image of the student protester is constructed to be both



the hype?

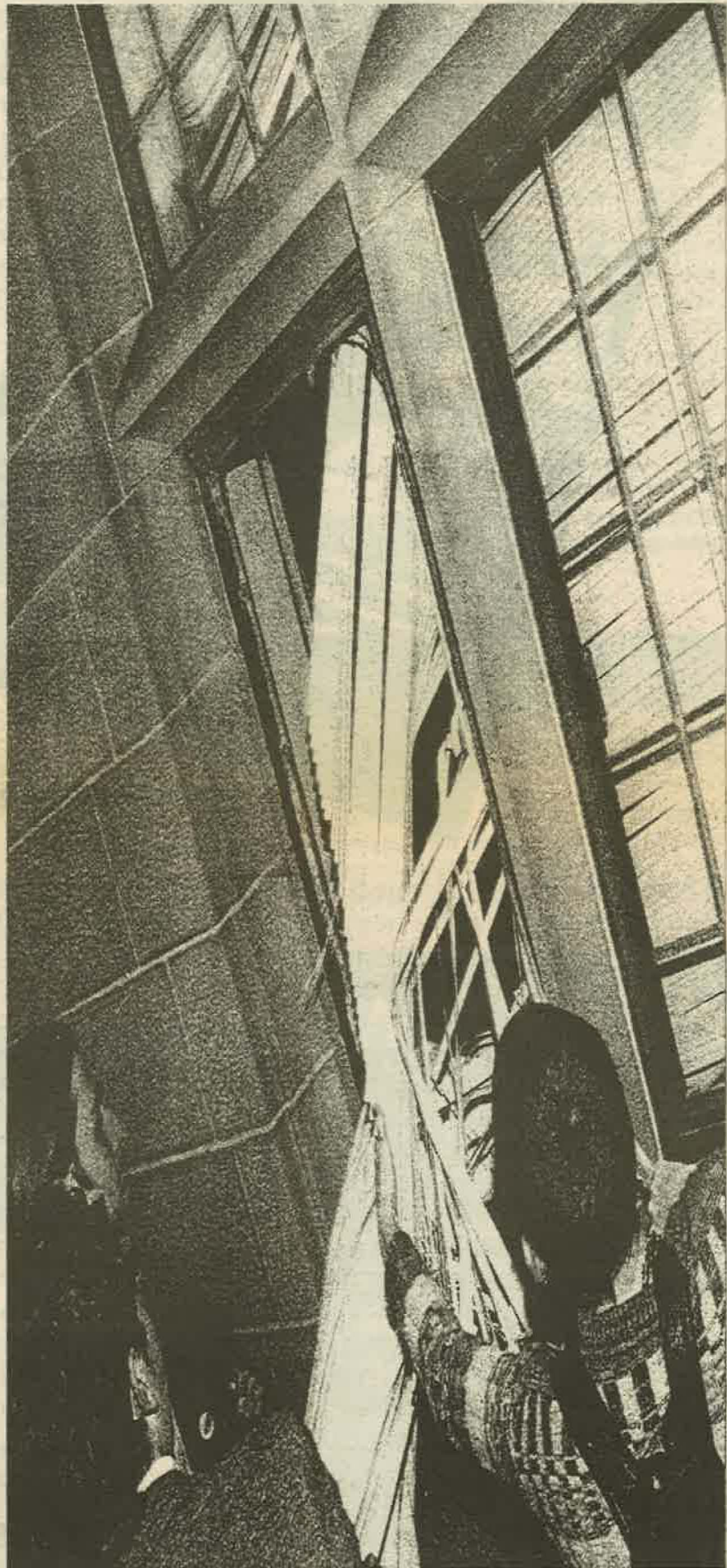
student anger against 'the greedy enemy within'

Crash-through vote at Sydney Uni brings in full fees

negative and violent, with students being portrayed as lazy, unemployed, and self-indulgent. These images exist so that the main audience - that is advertising dollars - is seen to be the standard in society. Disenfranchised groups such as students, Aboriginals and the unemployed are portrayed negatively so that the news server appears to be both independent and objective. Dissent is pushed to the outers-others are those who object to whatever is a set agenda by the government.

Why students protest is shoved to one side, the method of protest becomes far more prominent than the far reaching issues of education and employment. Dissent is down played, "it started as it always does, students against the government" nine stated, the alleged banality of the protest highlighted. Just what the government would have the mainstream audience believe-the status quo survives another assassination attempt in the name of higher audience numbers.

Right: an extract from the Sydney Morning Herald after the April 7 action at Sydney University. "Search & Destroy" is a little excessive don't you think?



If you are as disgusted as we are about recent media coverage, get involved in the process. Submit articles to various publications to get your side of the story out onto the streets. Independent papers are often sympathetic to our cause (see Drum Media on April 8 for a great article). Also, attack the daily newspapers with letters to the editor and remember there is always Backchat on the ABC. Ring the commercial stations to - tell them we've had **ENOUGH!**

Search and destroy . . . students occupy the roof of the historic building while, below, others take a more direct route.



Marshalling as an art form or, useful tips on creative alternatives to marshalling as a 'rally police'



Riot grrl: a protester on the move

Although this publication will focus on looking at how the UTS Easter occupation unfolded, it is worth devoting a bit of space to the intricacies of the occupation. On March 26th, over 1500 students were able to move from the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA) offices, past three city blocks, and crossed through some quite busy intersections, to arrive at the UTS Administration block within the space of under five minutes. This was made possible by marshalls. Rather than acting as 'rally police' to control the crowd and suppress any attempts to occupy, the marshalls' role was to ensure minimal police intervention when protesters ran to UTS, and minimal chances of injuries to protesters (at least until the police caught up). Within the first few minutes after arrival, protesters were able to gain entry to the Admin block without anyone being injured. The occupation was on.

Despite the Australian government's promises of freedom of assembly and freedom to demonstrate, in NSW all mass gatherings of people need to have approval from the police. Notice was given about three weeks before the March 26th that students were intending to have a rally, and that we wanted to march from Town Hall to DEETYA, then to UTS.

The application was rejected, ostensibly because too many police would be needed to cover the route. The rally co-incident with the annual Royal Easter Show, and although the showground was about 8 kilometres away from the planned march route, the protest organisers were told that no rally would be acceptable if it blocked traffic. Police concluded that only a static demonstration in a park or a square would be allowed.

A collective decision was made that the political points of going to the DEETYA offices was too important to forgo. An application was made to start the demonstration at Belmore Park and then march to DEETYA offices, about one block away. This was accepted by police and the protest organisers were left with the problem of what, if anything, we would do after that. It was collectively decided that, assuming the rally voted to continue on, that the safety of everyone involved was our utmost priority.

Violence at rallies is an important issue to address by any organisers of a demonstration, and a non-violent approach was agreed to before the rally for a number of reasons (as interpreted by the author):

- a) aggression/physical violence at the March 26th rally would only lead to alienation --which is against our political motivations for protesting.
- b) injuries to students or anyone would hurt the ultimate political objectives of the protest.

(NB: Violence was not debated around the 'moral' question, but rather on the political and tactical level -- many of us were of the opinion that what we are up

...many of us were of the opinion that what we are up against is a system and a government that is extremely violent, explicitly in the form of police, military and other types of 'order' enforcement, and implicitly in the form of supporting and encouraging through regressive government legislation (including legislation surrounding education) an economic and social order that tells us that we should be feeling comfortable and relaxed about levels of unemployment of around 9%, a youth unemployment rate of almost 30%, and ever deepening income, gender and race inequalities. Confining our tactics to conform to this system's set of 'values' or 'rules' as to how it defines violence seemed absurd. At the same time, if we assume that one of the central political objectives of the campaign is to eradicate violent social relationships in all forms, it would have also been politically absurd to encourage violence at the rally...



against is a system and a government that is extremely violent, explicitly in the form of police, military and other forms of 'order' enforcement, and implicitly in the form of supporting and encouraging an economic and social order through regressive government legislation (including legislation surrounding education). These new policy changes, many of which have been introduced in the last twelve months by the Howard government, are taking place in a context of levels of unemployment around 9%, a youth unemployment rate of almost 30%, and ever deepening income, gender and race inequalities. Confining our tactics to conform to this system's set of 'values' or 'rules', and to how it uses violence, seemed absurd. At the same time, if we assume that one of our central political objectives is to eradicate violent social relationships in all forms, it would also be politically absurd to encourage violence for the sake of violence, or as an option used when there were other non-violent options available.)

c) tactically it would not be smart-- in a war of physical force, the state would win. Concentrating entirely on 'military' gains attained through physical violence would be short-sighted and would not be likely to lead to building social support for the campaign.

d) frustration for most of us is the prime motivator for political action, but a situation of violence motivated by frustration is not necessarily constructive or empowering. An occupation like the one at UTS was born from a high level of frustration with the 'system' in general, but the occupations success can be attributed to keep property damage to a minimum when we initially arrived, not because UTS administration property was sacred to us, but because any property damage in the first few minutes would have led to increased police intervention and feelings of alienation by the occupants.

The first thing that needed to be done was to become familiar with the route. Organisers walked the route three times and used maps to identify seven different strategic points where traffic would need to be stopped. Approximately 50 marshalls would be necessary to block traffic, to keep the rally together, and to ensure that everyone would arrive safely. After deciding on the number of marshalls needed, forty red stop signs were made up out of plastic cardboard, thin red foam, a stick, and a bit of paint. (NB Check out Reverse Garbage in Sydney for useful material for project like this).

'Marshall' stickers and long strips of cloth to stretch across lanes of traffic were also made up. "Warning: this glass door will break if pushed on" posters were also drawn up for the front doors of the admin (but were not put up before people managed to get in.)

On the day, the traffic marshalls did their job perfectly. With the total police presence being one squad car following the rally, all protesters made it to the UTS front office safely, where marshalls were present to ensure all entrances were kept open and that no-one hurt themselves by breaking the glass doors. At the entrance to the Admin block, about 20 metres away,



The March 26th rally outside the DEETYA offices



Moments later... "Hey boss, where'd they all go?"

marshalls were again present to do the same. At these doors security guards were present in front of and behind a set of four glass doors, which were locked and barricaded with a long thick steel bar. When protesters arrived, the glass doors were dangerously close to being broken which could of caused a bit of a mess. It was in the next 60 seconds that pre-planning and a commitment to achieving the political objective of occupying UTS administration building were most crucial. This is also an important lesson for any similar future actions: (this is the bull-through-the-front-door or butterfly-through-the-window question) in many cases the easiest way to get a large crowd through guarded, locked doors is to unlock them (this may take a lot of pre-planning and require creative tactics, but it can be done).

The central thing we found in organising the marshalling was the need for everything to be democratic and open. There was no conspiracy, no elite group of leaders. The marshalls merely created a space in which the demonstration could decide what it wanted to do in the safest possible way. For this reason it doesn't matter if the police read this article, but it does matter if other student activists



Blah Blah Blah Blah Blah

Get a letter like this in the mail? It was written and mailed to all UTS students by the Vice Chancellor Tony Blake and the Administration. Isn't it convincing? Aren't those UTS occupiers criminals? Wasn't it justifiable what the VC, Tony Blake, had to do? **YEAH RIGHT!** Tony Blake, in his attack on the occupation, has told only a very narrow version of the story. It is full of deliberate lies and inaccuracies. All sorts of info have been left out or, like that the Administration chose to stop negotiating with the occupying group and decided instead to apply a military response to a protest demonstrating against up-front fees for undergraduate courses. Let's have a look...



The occupation of the UTS Administration building and the demands made by the protesters: some facts and background

When **the administration area was occupied** on Wednesday, 26 March, a total of 20 demands were made. Many of these directly related to decisions made by the Federal Government, for example, repealing the Workplace Relations Bill and repealing funding cuts to legal aid, and were unrelated to UTS student issues.

The **occupation** was not the so-called peaceful protest suggested by students. Staff were intimidated, forcibly evicted from their workplace and not allowed to collect their personal belongings. Confidential personal records were broken into, **the building was damaged**, student records were accessed, and personal belongings were removed. UTS was forced to make the difficult decision to evict the occupiers in order to secure University student records and property.

UTS has not introduced full-upfront undergraduate fees. A University Council working party, which includes student representatives, is exploring the principles underlying fees and their possible impact. The Working Party is asking for submissions from the UTS community.

The **UTS Library** will experience some funding cuts, but not 14 per cent, as stated by the occupiers. The Library cuts are the same as the Federal Government cuts to the UTS operating grant and the same as cuts to all parts of the University.

UTS provides substantially greater **child care** arrangements compared with other NSW universities. Since 1990, the number of child care places provided by UTS has been increased from 40 to 120, plus the provision of a subsidy for ongoing operations. UTS has recently funded the construction of two new child care centres.

UTS has no **ancillary charges** under the new Federal Government guidelines, unlike other universities. The general purpose fee for Union/Student Association and student accommodation is the eighth lowest out of 11 in NSW and the lowest in the metropolitan area.

Professor A J D Blake, Vice-Chancellor
2 April 1997



Blah... ◆◆◆

Quite correct. Education is not separate from other social issues, and vice versa. This is why the proposed introduction of upfront fees is of concern not only to students, but to broader society.

No staff member was physically removed from the UTS Administration block. No one ever touched any member of staff. All left voluntarily. More than anything else, it was police presence on the day that led to a much higher level of violence and confusion.⁹

Upfront fees hurt parents and families of parents trying to study. Think about it! There have also been rumours that one of the ways the UTS Administration will try to cut back on costs even further involves not providing child care during enrolments.

Students made a democratic decision not to tamper with student or staff files during the occupation. The rooms to the student files had been left open by staff; in order to maintain student confidentiality, students later made a democratic decision to ask all participants in the occupation not to enter the area containing student files. Staff property and documents were discovered by protesters in a police dumpster bin the morning after the eviction of the occupiers.

In the raid on the morning of March 29th, the UTS admin was "forced" to undertake the action of sending in over 100 specially trained members of the NSW police's State Protection Group to evict around 90 protesters engaged in a completely non-violent occupation. Police dogs were sent in and two students were mauled. Other students were injured in the attack; people were choked, punched and pushed down stairs. One officer told a group of cornered students, "Don't move or I'll fucking break your necks". Regardless of repeated demands, protesters were denied the right to medical assistance. Around 10 students were taken into custody, detained in elevators, photographed, interrogated, put in paddy wagons and then released without being charged. Others had personal belongings confiscated. Only one video camera was recording at the time of the raid: it was a police camera, and they have refused requests to make it viewable to the public.

The UTS Vice Chancellor is a liar. The library will experience 14 per cent funding cuts over three years. This means a \$1.2 million funding cut over 3 years. There is documented proof of this. At the same time the UTS Administration has undergone renovations costing over \$3 million dollars, including to the Vice Chancellor's and Deputy Vice Chancellors' offices.

UTS University Council was set to vote on the introduction of upfront fees for domestic undergraduates at a meeting on February 27th, the week before students returned to classes. The Deputy Vice Chancellor, Brian Low, submitted a motion which would have introduced undergraduate fees for degrees by next year. He wanted the motion passed. A student demonstration on the day inside Council chambers forced the decision to be put off. The Administration have intentions to decide on the issue within three months. Both Vice Chancellor Tony Blake and Deputy VC Brian Low support the introduction of fees.

Tony Blake hasn't seemed too upset about spending tens of thousands of dollars of university money on mailing this letter. Isn't it ironic that the cost of the mailout was approximately as much as the alleged cost of 'malicious damage' supposedly done by students during the occupation. He thinks it's quite justifiable to devote scarce uni resources to funding an anti-student propaganda attack based on lies, inaccuracies and storytelling. Do you think it may have been an attempt to weaken student opposition to up-front fees?



Creative political action

Directly after the peaceful occupation of the UTS administration building, mainstream media coverage of issues was both sparse and sensationalist. Tony Blake claimed that students caused in excess of \$25 000 damage (*SMH*, March 30; even \$100 000, in 'Cop this, Pal', *Telegraph* April 3), and has attacked students for violating confidential documents and student records. Alleged property damage is one of many issues that need a more accurate context. We need to write our own histories of the occupation, and analyse its processes and outcomes. With a view towards longer-term political occupations and actions, I want to consider six working groups that were established on Day 2 of the occupation.

On Thursday March 27, a group meeting was held in the open area of the administration building. Protesters met to discuss the occupation's progress and its sustainability. It was proposed that mass meetings be held twice a day, at 9am and 5pm, as a forum for discussion and participatory organisation. The motion was voted upon by all present, and carried.

It was suggested that six working groups should be set up, to focus on: media relations, trade union liaison, networking (building the occupation), the kitchens, security matters (including property), and the space itself (cleaning, possible group activities, the occupation as a shared living space, etc). We voted to establish the groups, and to make them a co-ordinating focus of occupation activities. Groups would meet in designated places; anyone interested could meet with any group. We decided to meet immediately, and re-convene two hours later for progress reports from the various groups.

The occupation population continually shifted: People came and went, contributing support and solidarity when they could. Regular mass meetings are a great way of enfranchising people who come into a political action some time after it has 'begun'. If actions are to be sustained however, it is important to include as many people as possible in *all* aspects of the process: organisation, decision-making, communication, different types of necessary labour. Grass roots, hands-on locations (such as open working groups) where people can *participate* in setting up a community are productive and inclusive, and can inspire people to feel committed to an action.

For activists without previous experience of meeting procedure, meetings can represent quite an alien culture. It can be intimidating to speak in front of many people, particularly if the speaking list is an unfamiliar concept.



Procedural language can be confusing. Political pressures might inhibit some people from publicly disagreeing with others. While an open discussion is democratic in principle, it must be remembered that not everyone has a voice in open meetings; and that *voting* and *voicing* are different things.

Open working groups – especially in actions as large as the UTS occupation – can enfranchise people who come with different ideas or campaign experiences. If people get politically involved on a very local level first, they often feel less alienated from the larger political movement, and more able to participate in democratic forums such as large group meetings.

Inside a political action, information can circulate in very diffuse ways. It may be difficult to get a handle on exactly what is getting done, and what has been decided. Many people entered the UTS occupation without knowing where to direct their energies. It is crucial not to lose interested people, when building a long-term movement. Although it is sometimes expedient and necessary for some people to initiate and make decisions in response to matters as they arise, it is important and democratic to keep everyone informed (should they choose to be!) about what has happened.

I think that the UTS working groups held interesting possibilities for a sustained and well-integrated political action. They were partly successful; partly ignored by people with different agendas for action; and partly forgotten about by

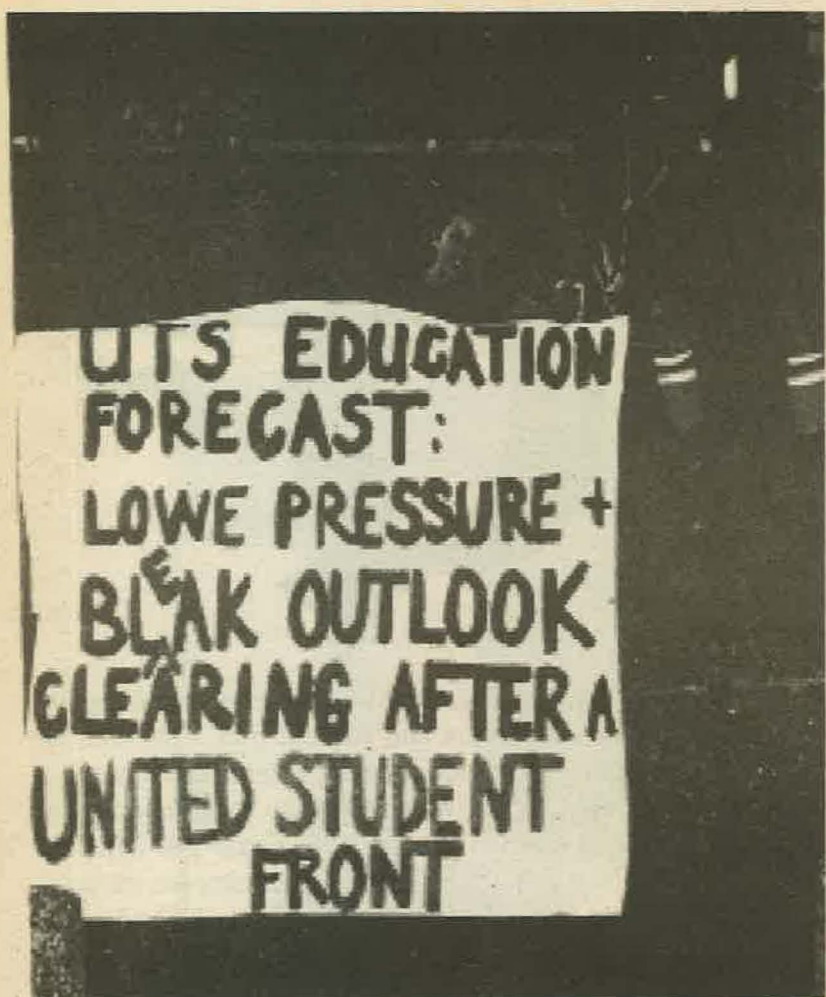
people who had agreed to participate in them when we voted collectively.

On Thursday 27 March when we held a report-back, it was unclear how successful all the working groups had been. Momentum had not quite gathered for people to follow up their *collective vote for the groups with collective work within the groups*. The media liaison group had not met, and neither had the trade union liaison group. People who had been doing media and trade union work kept working – but they did not move their individual work into a more collective space.

The security group dealt with some very important issues. One was the occupation's use of downstairs space at the administration. Among other things, the space contains student records. It was proposed that we should not use the space. For many students, a right to privacy regarding records (such as those dealing with special consideration) is something that has been fought for. Two members of the security group suggested that the records were an ethical issue; on principle, we should not use rooms containing student records. In disagreement, it was suggested that occupation members were trustworthy enough not to have to make a decision separating that space from other spaces. However, it was countered that the issue involved specific ethics rather than trust. It was impractical to rely upon trust; new participants might, at first, be unaware of group policies. We collectively voted *not* to use the space. We also agreed that property damage was against the collective aims of the occupation.

In an occupation community, it is important that everyone





knows about previous collective decisions so that they can make informed choices about how to participate – for example, deciding whether they agree. We decided that new people entering the occupation should know about previous decisions straight away, so that they could understand the spirit of the occupation and the history of its general meetings. It is important for a political action to keep a record of decisions and broadcast them to new participants, to avoid confusion over what has been decided. An information desk was set up by the space group; petitions, pamphlets, phone numbers, maps of the area, decisions about how to use the building, and messages of solidarity were placed on walls behind the desk.

When the space group made an assessment of the administration space, we carefully recorded *all* damage that had been done by protesters during the entry. We counted three incidents of graffiti, and *one* broken kitchen door handle on level 2. Ventilation slats had been removed or bent to allow some doors to be unlocked. There was no other visible damage, although we understood that material on some computer desktops had been rearranged. Tony Blake has recently posted a private circular to all students of UTS, explaining the administration's view of the occupation (dated 11 April, 1997).

Tony Blake writes:

“On their return, [UTS staff] were faced with a major clean-up and greeted with a violation of property and working space. Several doors were smashed in addition to ceiling panels being damaged by occupiers climbing into the roof space to gain access to rooms and offices. Walls were damaged with signs and scrawled slogans.”

He includes a list of “facts and background” in order “to set the record straight” about the occupation. False or incomplete information must not become the generally accepted view of the UTS occupation, however. The police entry on Saturday morning

actually caused a significant amount of damage. We were not indiscriminate about the action, or reckless in our approaches to property.

On March 27 the ‘kitchen’ and ‘space’ groups organised cleaning and cooking, so that the occupation space could be kept livable and self-sustaining. A long-term political community cannot function unless all aspects of necessary labour are respected, valued and participated in democratically. The networking group met successfully, and suggested ways of making information readily available to people both outside and inside the occupation.

The working groups held great potential for maintaining a longer-term occupation. They also represented open, creative involvement at local levels. Within them, people initiated actions and shared information. There wasn't always enough communication between working groups and group meetings; some suggestions fell into limbo, or didn't get acted upon. However, the groups were an attempt to localise politics. They were a crucial addition to mass meetings – especially when political action became a 24-hour live-in undertaking. For a democracy to be sustained and strong, it must be *practically* inclusive; it is not enough to be *rhetorically* inclusive.



SPACE REPORT

The UTS occupation was a successful political resistance to undemocratic structures, processes and cultures. We need to remember – and think about, after the event – all aspects of the collective democratic culture that we generated over three days. What might have happened, had the occupation continued? We would have faced different choices about the community we were participating in. A healthy critique of processes, and a commitment to sharing our histories with future activists, will make for continued creative campaigning.

When the descriptions of the UTS administration building post-occupation were released to the media, they did not include any of the following:

- (i) the repairs done on two toilets.
- (ii) the sweeping and vacuuming of the spaces that we used.
- (iii) the meticulous cleaning of the kitchen after each meal cooked for the 100 or so occupants.
- (iv) and the separation of rubbish into
 - glass
 - plastic bottles
 - aluminium
 - paper for recycling
 - paper for reuse.

They failed to report to all the very interested people who were supporting the occupation that one hundred vaguely connected students and supporters lived collectively and maintained a community for several days.

I am curious as to what might have happened to the recycling, like the many other unreported student works over the Easter weekend, after the occupation had been broken up and the student administration once again closed to students.



-OPERATION NOT COMPETITI

-ON:

How we organised ourselves and our activity was an integral part of the UTS occupation, no less important than our concrete political objectives. We adopted co-operative forms of organisation which enabled things to get done, but were also affirming different social relations in opposition to the undemocratic, competitive and individualistic norms of capitalist society. The experience of collective, democratic decision-making within a large group was a pretty empowering one, giving a sense of what it could be like if society were organised in a more participatory way.

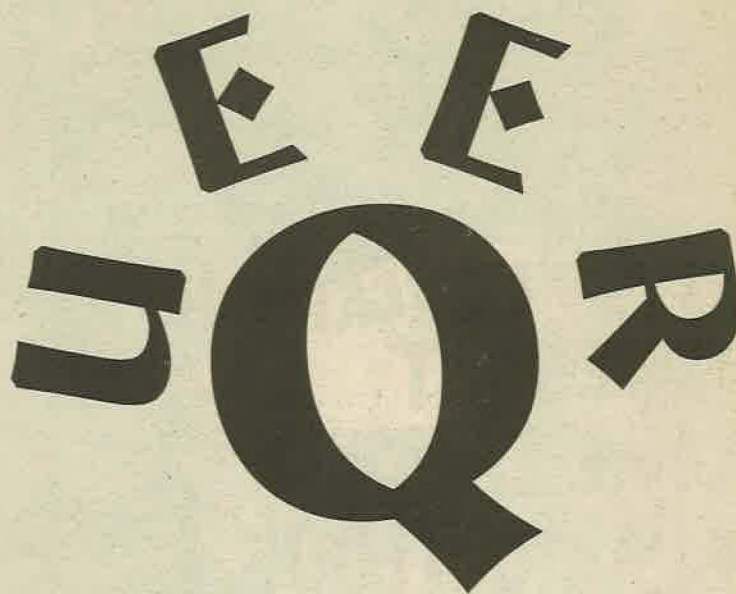
We held open general decision-making meetings every morning and evening, where we discussed our strategies and priorities, and in which everyone had the right to speak and vote. We also created working groups in which everyone could participate, to deal with specific areas of work. These included networking, food, media, our space, and solidarity. We also reorganised the whole space, designating areas for meetings, games, chilling-out, sleeping, storage, eating, studying, and watching films, hanging colorful banners we painted over the dull grey walls.

However, there were also problems with the internal dynamics. In the general meetings, particular individuals tended to dominate discussion on repeated occasions, taking the discussion in the direction they desired, which made it difficult for others to fully participate. Members of some political groups seemed relatively unconcerned with upholding democratic process but more with ensuring that their agenda got through. There was also a tendency for people from particular groups repeating what other members had already said, apparently to give an impression of great support for or opposition to a particular proposal. There was also no avenue for people to express their frustration with these processes.

Involving people who had come in to join us in occupation activities, could have been helped if these activities had been more publicised. Involving new people would have enabled us to achieve more and reduced the workload on those already involved. Some of the hierarchies which developed in the main group were also replicated in the smaller groups.

However, such problems can always be resolved given the will to do so. One way of facilitating this might have been to constitute a forum for concerns about internal processes to be heard, working group which could raise such issues for discussion in decision-making meetings. If we are serious about wanting to transform social relations, then we must be serious about preventing the replication of these same hierarchical tendencies amongst ourselves, as part of creating viable alternatives to supercede them.

ORGANISING OURSELVES



I got up on Wednesday morning - FUCK - I was running late again. The combination of queer time and student time can often be fatal to one's punctuality, I rushed down to UTS to meet my other queer comrades (who, by the way, were also experiencing the same time flux differentials) so that we could get Amanda "Octopussy" Vanstone down to Belmore Park in time for the rally. After we loaded her on to the truck, Christina and I had some time to update our banners and placards which we had used in the Queer Collaborations float for the Mardi Gras. The reason we marched in the Mardi Gras was the same reason we came to this rally. We thought that it was really important to show the intersection between queer and education/student issues. Indeed, we wanted to show that at times the distinction between queer issues and student issues was farcical. In this particular case, but just as one example, we took the stance that although queer students were just as economically vulnerable as other students, the addition of "queer" to the formulae made the education budget cuts a dangerous concoction. Most students are more often than not financially dependant on their parents. Most queer students who live at home are not "out" to their parents. The family home is often one of the most oppressive and abusive environments when it comes to issues of sexuality. Therefore, raising the independent age of Austudy to 25 means that more young queer are forced to stay in the closet until they finish their degree or until they turn 25. Otherwise they are forced to forsake a tertiary education in order to move out of home to be able to express their sexuality. When we consider that queer youth are disproportionately represented amongst the homeless, and account for 50 per cent of youth suicide rates, the increase in the age of independence of Austudy and the proposed Common Youth Allowance (CYA) will only exacerbate rather than address this serious problem. When we consider queer students who live in regional or otherwise isolated areas, these changes spell a living hell. I thought the rally was excellent. Us queers were accounted for almost exactly (if you believe that believe that bull shit of one in ten)-there was a huge show of support from the queer community, represented by about 30-40 students. I found the occupation exhilarating, I was amazed at what people could do when they worked together. The occupation itself? Hmm. I'm not sure. Although there were some attempts to make decision-making as participatory as possible, I don't think it was ultimately successful. Unfortunately/fortunately I wasn't there the night police came with dogs and battering rams, but I think we should see that as a victory and not a defeat. The VCs and the state were forced to show the face that lies behind their veneer of rationality, diplomacy and flexibility.

-CO



UTS ADMINISTRATION PROTECTION FORCE



UTS ADMINISTRATION
PROTECTION FORCE

PROVIDING MILITARY SOLUTIONS TO SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Memorabilia

PERSONAL ACCOUNTS OF PARTICIPANTS AND MESSAGES OF SUPPORT AND SOLIDARITY RECEIVED DURING THE THREE DAYS OF OCCUPATION

Date: 27 Mar 1997 16:38:19 -0800 (PST)

From: Jonathon Oppenheim
<oppenh@black-hole.physics.ubc.ca>
To: the UTS occupation @uts.edu.au
Subject: support education or face occupation

You rock! We must take back the power from those hacks up there, whether they be multinational corporate CEO's or their puppets in the government. Long live the student occupation! It is spreading from country to country.

Solidarity!

I just got out of a 7 day occupation in British Columbia, Canada and the support that was mobilized was incredible. We will win this. Not today, or this week, but eventually. We are gaining momentum!!!

Jonathon Oppenheim

Even though I was only at the UTS occupation for a short time, I was there long enough to see how well it was organised and how aware the students were of their surroundings. The media made out we were trashing the place but that was hardly the case. When I first arrived on the Thursday night (March 27), a meeting was in progress and basically involved all the students sitting around, discussing how the day had gone and their plans for coming days. The same happened on the Friday night, and after the meeting everyone had dinner, after which several students, including myself, went into the kitchen and cleaned up - we washed, dried and put everything we had used back where it came from. So many people offered to help clean up that it was almost funny - the kitchen was so small and at any one time there were about five of us actually cleaning and another five or so people offering to help. I also noticed that the toilets had been cleaned some time during the night - a fact which the media would not have been interested in had they known. The image of students as clean and tidy is hardly one that the mass media encourages.

After dinner had been cleaned up, I went outside and played cards and listened to the DJ who had set up outside the administration building. Other students were making fliers, talking, sleeping, making plans for Saturday, or just sitting around. I never saw any student damage, destroy or use equipment or facilities in any way that could be described as inappropriate. I left UTS about an hour before the police raided, and at that time the administration building was not damaged in any way, and there is no way that a group of peaceful students (most of whom were asleep at the time) could cause \$40 000 worth of damage in such a short time, as UTS and the media would have us believe.

Dear occupants,

I'm one of the students who occupied the President's office at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. We were in the office for nearly a week, and came out just yesterday after receiving incredible amount of support from our students and faculty in the fight against fee hikes and the lack of democracy at the university.

I fully support your cause, and encourage you to hang-in there.

In solidarity,
Makoto Fujiwara



I think it was Thursday. Everyone had been pretty busy for the whole day, and no one had had the chance to chill out. Around 8:00pm there was still a lot of people doing 'occupation' work. I was going into the kitchen to pick something up. When I stepped in the doorway, it was like walking into a forest. There were about seven or eight people there, all dead quiet listening to a woman sing a song. The woman was playing a guitar and had the most beautiful voice imaginable. It was as if the song was in the air all around us. The whole room was transfixed, and no one was making any noise. We all just calmly listened. It doesn't sound like much, but the ten minutes I spent there were one of my favorite experiences of the three days at UTS.

UTS crew

Stick it to the man ...

Chris.

Christopher Tola BA JP
Proprietor of Yahoo! Surf
School @

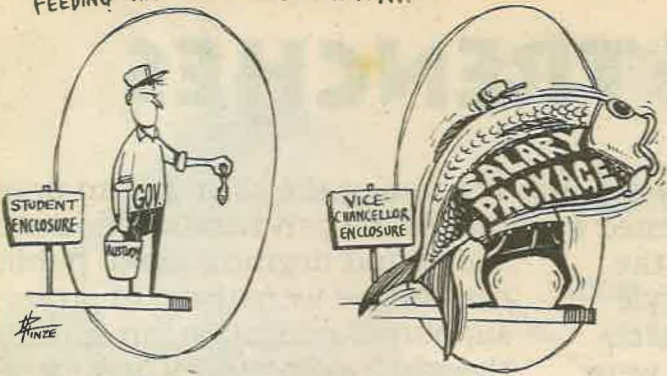
Student, Facilitator + Representative for the Surfrider Foundation.

P.O. Box 1041, Newcastle East,
Australia 2300
Voice: 049 - 262609 (ah) 0412 -
451474 (mob.) Fax: 49 - 561611

The Ocean, Travelling, Friendships and Coffee ... are damn fine things.



FEEDING TIME AT THE UNIVERSITY...



From all the youth at Yout Today, a bilingual monthly newspaper in Ottawa-Hull, keep it up, Australia!!!!

Dear (UTS occupation)

The LaTrobe University Postgraduate Association whole-heartedly supports the attempts of the students at UTS to preserve one of the cornerstones of a good and just society. Access to knowledge and learning should be available to all, not just to those who can afford to pay.

Best of Luck,
Les McFarland, President, LaTrobe University Postgraduate Association



Good Work!

You have the full support of post-graduates at the University of South Australia

Sorry I couldn't get this message to you earlier.

Here in Adelaide we had a fairly poor turnout for the NDA but the rally went well and there was an overnight 'sit in' on the footpath outside Vanstone's office symbolising the plight of students under the CYA.

Cheers,
Paul Vince

To the students of the UTS occupation:

This is a message of solidarity from one of the occupiers of Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. We are facing a similar agenda of cutbacks and rollbacks here, so it is important that we support eachothers fightbacks.

In Solidarity,
Melanie Peppin

Subject: Message of solidarity with student occupation at UTS

Dear comrades,

We had a meeting of Socialist Alternative at UNSW today about Bougainville, but devoted the first half of the meeting to a discussion of the occupation and getting more people involved in the education campaign more generally. The meeting unanimously passed a motion of support for the occupation and its demands, and some of us will come over this afternoon.

On a related note, I moved at a meeting of the UNSW branch of the academics' union (NTEU) yesterday, for the union to help organise the next rally on 8 May. It was also passed unanimously. The same result was achieved yesterday by the ANU NTEU branch.

In solidarity,
Diane

Dear (UTS occupation)

You have the strength and solidarity of your comrades in Wellington. Stick it to them. We decry such belligerent tactics wherever there are deployed and as New Zealand has been somewhat of a precursor to some of the changes you are now experiencing we share your indignation. Good luck!

T.M Landers
*M.A. Student (Women's Studies)
*PGSA Executive Officer



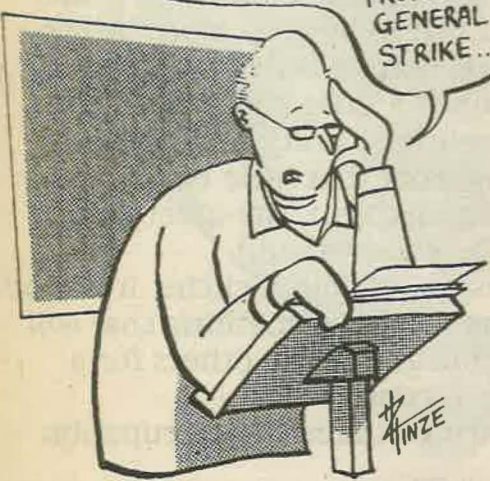
So we hear that the cops have come up with a theory as to why a peaceful student demo turned ugly. Apparently they are of the opinion that the demo was manipulated by a group of outside agitators. These agitators were distinguishable because they all wore black t-shirts, carried khaki backpacks, and stood back from any physical confrontation (preferring to lead from the rear).

These dangerous criminals were also "seen by police" at the parliament house demo in '96. And they call themselves the International Socialist Organisation.

As a member of the ISO / Socialist Worker Student Club at UTS this was one of the funnier aspects of the aftermath of the occupation. Don't get me wrong - I was proud of the way my organisation worked in the occupation. We were the only organised grouping that tried to focus the feeling people had to continue the occupation, in spite of the fact that other organised groups were making a hard argument for people to leave immediately and "go out with a bang". But regardless of how proud I have to confess we weren't that important. We couldn't have been - the demonstration and the occupation's strength reflected that students have had enough - it was bigger than any one political group.

In any case, the police theory couldn't have been true. Too many of my ISO partners in crime suffer from dress sense problems. They wouldn't be seen dead in black.

... AND PLEASE NOTE THAT NEXT WEEK'S LECTURE ON "THE END OF CLASS" HAS BEEN POSTPONED FOR A WEEK DUE TO THE PROPOSED GENERAL STRIKE...



REPORTS FROM THE TRENCHES

After a year studying in Germany, I returned in early March, thrown straight back into uni life, curricular and non-curricular.

General disenchantment with the continuing impoverishment of public education seemed increasingly to be reflected in a willingness to actively express that dissatisfaction. More and more, people seemed to be ready to stop passively accepting changes they disagreed with. In just one year the change in atmosphere was palpable.

Germany. There, education is free. Not just for undergraduates, not just for the locals; for everybody. No fees. As an Australian, with no family or other ties to Germany, I was able to study in Germany for free and, as a student, I was able to work to supplement my savings. So, with my airfare being less than a year's worth of HECS, I was able to study on the other side of the world for less than I could've here.

The only fee students pay in Germany is an enrolment fee of between \$30 and \$80, depending on the institution. Nothing more. With the threat of this being increased, as well as the possibility of reduced funding, German students demonstrated to protect university funding. In the middle of last year one of Berlin's universities was closed for days on end due to striking students. A whole semester was almost cancelled.

Ordinary people, acting together, can express their aspirations, can be heard, can exert influence. What I saw in Germany confirmed that: we don't need to passively accept decisions made on our behalf for the benefit of others. We can change things.

Which brings me to the 26th of March, Belmore Park, and the National Day of Action (don't forget the next one on May the 8th). Here were assembled over 1500 students from all over Sydney, as well as from Wollongong and Newcastle.

After hearing speeches detailing the current state of public education in Australia, the rally moved to outside the offices the Department of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA).

Police at the front doors. More speeches. More anger. Although of itself of no great significance, it was great to be expressing my disgust at what's being done to education by the Federal government, to do so with many others, vocal and united.

Leaving DEETYA, the crowd moved

briskly to UTS, surging into the Administration area through doors opened by students on the inside. Despite the news media's skilful *Frontline*-style manipulation, there was actually no damage done to the doors: they were not smashed in as the editing suggested.

Entering the main atrium of the administration area we ran for the locked door of a Deputy Vice-Chancellor's Office, to where the rapidly retreating security had headed. Being among the first to enter, I can say, that despite media beat-ups, this was accomplished non-violently, if forcefully. Outside the office of the Deputy VC there was a bit

The aim of the sit-in was to draw attention to the privatisation, commercialisation and degradation of public education. We were there to protect state-supported education, an education for the whole community, not just for the very affluent. They'd be better off directing their energies at the corporate criminals who are doggedly endeavouring to relieve the state of as much of its assets as possible.

State Protection Group. Sounds rather political doesn't it? Although the infamous Special Branch was recently disbanded, it seems that the Police Service is still being used for political purposes.

So, what did I get out of it?

I saw that something really could be done. The resignation of years was removed. I saw how everything I suspected about Australia's slapdash, ad hoc, sensationalist media was true. How facts were manipulated. I felt that great feeling of co-operating with hundreds of other people, striving to achieve positive change.

Waking up bleary eyed after an uncomfortable night's sleep to see that we were still there is something I won't forget for a long time. Seven o'clock, people stirring from their slumbers, a few early risers already quietly cleaning or preparing breakfast for everyone. Us on the wall in the newspaper clippings. The media release on the wall, "A New Day Dawns on the UTS Occupation". Surreal. A feeling of quiet elation. We

really were there. We really had made a splash. We made such a splash that they sent the hard boys in. And all the pretence that the administration wasn't trembling to the bottom of their boots is just that. For once they were listening.

But, for me, apart from the many concrete achievements, there is something that I think is even more important. Words seem a little inadequate. And it sounds a little airy-fairy. It was just the feeling of unity, the positivity emanating from that little enclave, the orderly organisation, the quiet co-operation, the goodwill and selflessness.....to coin a cliché, it was all that and more. It's something that will stay with me and many others for a long time to come.

The spirit of the Easter Occupation lives on.....



of a kaffuffle with security but no punches were thrown, no damage was done - well that's strictly speaking not true; one of my sandal straps got torn off. In a spirit of magnanimity and conciliation I am not going to bill the UTS administration for this damage. It is, however, interesting to note that, using the University's official Damage Estimation Process, the total real cost of this damage amounts to approximately \$27,400.

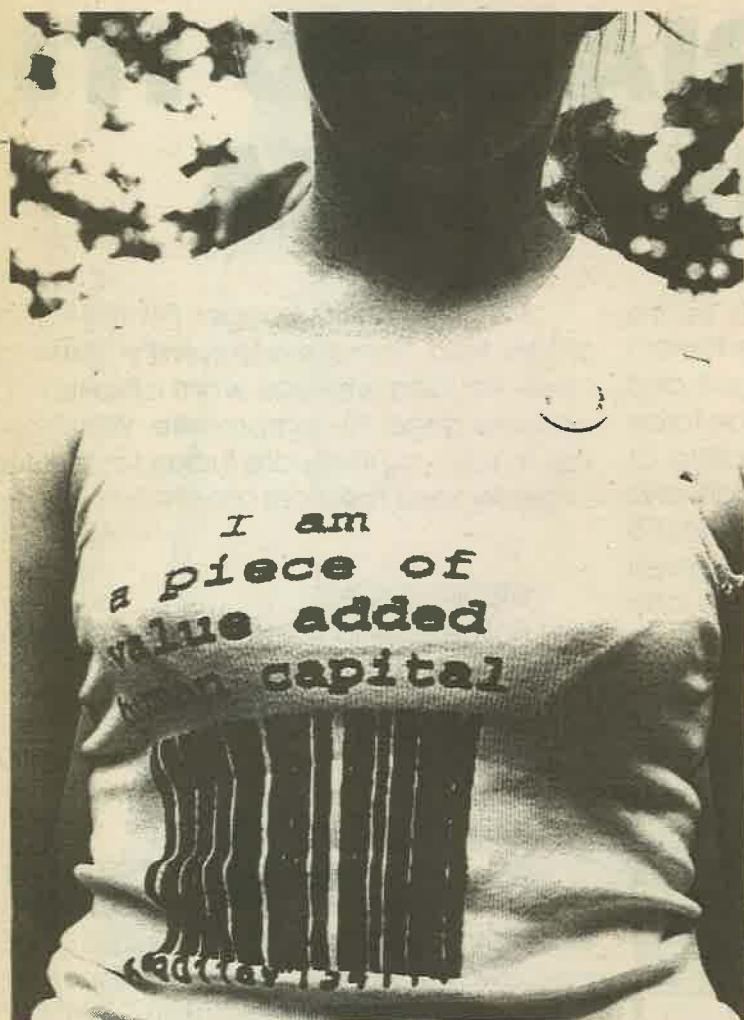
Pretty soon everybody sat down and things quietened down. And they stayed. Peacefully. Constructively. Positively. Until 2:15 am on Saturday. With dogs, sledgehammers and a beautifully ruthless efficiency the State Protection Group smashed in barricaded, locked doors, and it was all over in a flash.

State Protection Group. Ironic that.

"LEBE, LIEBE, LACHE, KAEMPFE." German graffiti meaning

Live, Love, Laugh, Stuggle.



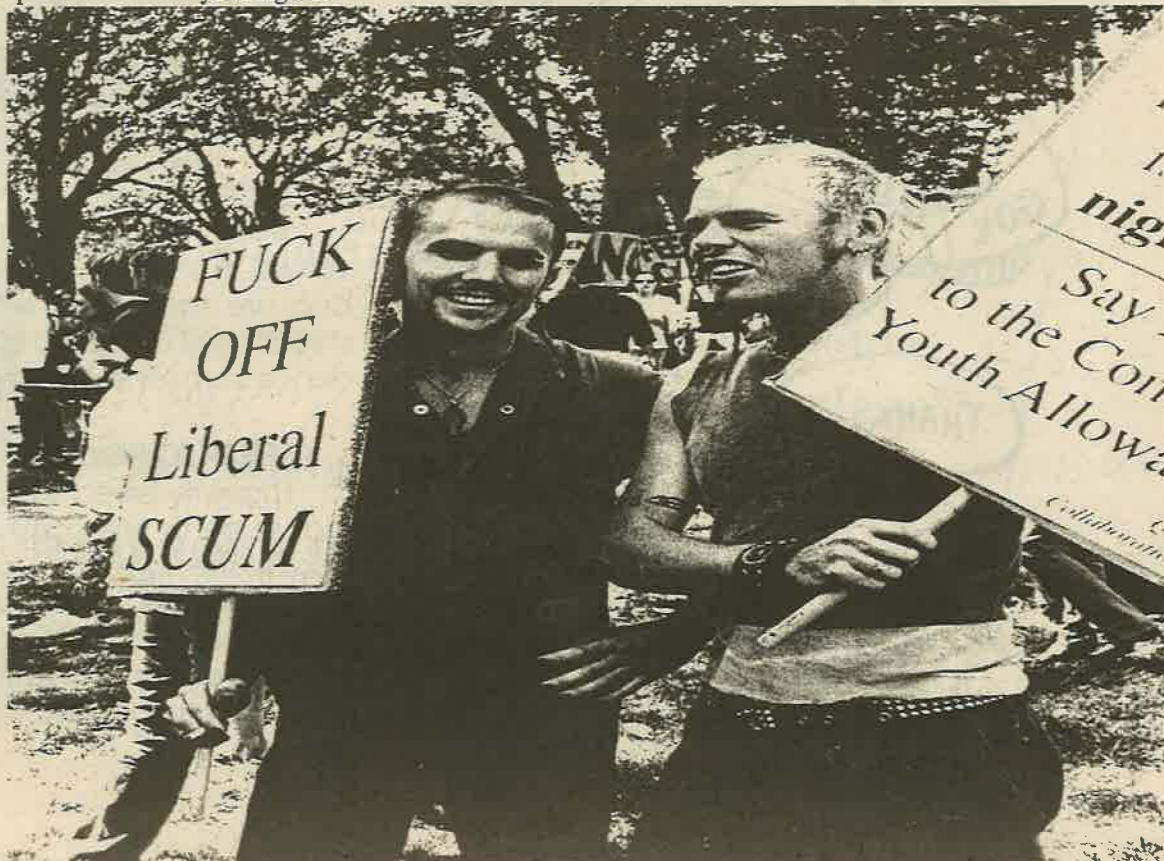


see a number of police paddywagons. The thought that I will soon be sitting in one of those things is inconceivable and yet, the males are separated from the females and we are led into one while being videoed and being asked to look up to have some polaroids taken while going in. We were taken out individually and frisked and then asked for our names, dates of birth, hair colour and height. Feeling thoroughly violated, I imagined this is something like what being raped must feel like and other such morbid thoughts, as I was then not aware of the essential reading for taking part in a protest on any level, The "Activist Rights Handbook". (Read it.) Were we arrested or simply being detained and what were our rights? A policeman standing outside of our paddywagon wasn't sure either, as he asked another, "They're not arrested are they?" When I pointed out to this person that we were not given the chance to leave and that we were simply led down into the paddywagons he told us we could be "de-arrested" after being arrested which was something of a relief. He later asked us how many females were there and I told him the proportion was about half and half and then he asked where the rest of them were, something we were rather curious about ourselves!

After what seemed like a lifetime a policeman comes to tell us that the other students have agreed to leave peacefully and that if we agree to do so as well we will not be charged with "disturbance of the peace", whatever that means. We accepted with relief, and were let out

and over to where the males' paddywagon was and watched while their names were called out and asked if they wanted to leave. When they accepted, their sheet containing their details was torn up and dropped to the ground, while their photographs were scrunched up. Hmm... Now apparently one's details are supposed to be "destroyed" in front of one. In my case, a piece of paper was torn and a polaroid (which I did not even see if it was mine) was scrunched up and when I asked if I could take these with me (surely they were not intent on littering?!) the answer was negative with a huge smile! My protests were met with, "Look, you've got to trust somebody sometime, haven't you?"

Given that there were undercover police in the occupation from beginning to end and that the whole occupation was secretly videoed, the police were thoroughly aware of the peaceful nature of the occupation and hence, their actions were of a purely political nature and show the extent to which the state will go to intimidate (or rather terrorize) people and attempt to crush dissent. In retrospect, it was naive to expect otherwise, so be prepared and know your rights!



.....constant screaming which interrupted a conversation about a certain sleazy lecturer alerted us to the possibility that it was all over, and sure enough, we see police (with dogs!) spilling into the building. I walk down stairs, even raising my hands when I'm obliged to pass a policeman who is not sufficiently restraining his most vicious looking barking and snapping black dog on its leash, just to make it clear that I have no intentions of resisting, and go and sit in the circle where all the other terrified students have been herded into. I look around to see we are surrounded by the unsmiling State Protection Force, some of whom are holding crowbars, whilst others sharply dart towards the circle and remove anything lying near us. We are being videoed from upstairs and I note from their ecstatic expressions, that some sick individuals there are taking great pleasure at what they see. One student yells out, "We want to leave peacefully!", while another traumatised student stands up to demand immediate medical attention as he has had his backside chomped into by one of those dogs, and he is ignored.

As students are chanting rousing slogans in support of a free public education a pink-shirted man (Steve "Grub" Wallace - ed.) reads something out from a pink paper but absolutely nothing can be heard over the chanting. Suddenly, I am horrified to see that policemen are starting to forcefully pick up students from the opposite side of the circle from which I am sitting. What I see does not inspire me to resist, should the same happen to me. I know of at least one student who still has injuries because he did not care to assist with his evacuation. Soon a policeman firmly grasps a male student sitting next to me by both shoulders and says, "Come on mate, you're coming with us." At this point I feel so absolutely mortified, I'm ready to bound up should anyone touch me! I suppose I should be grateful that all that happened was that a slightly built policewoman tapped me on the back (or did she just speak to me over my shoulder?) and asked me if I would like to accompany her. Well, I wasn't aware of having any choice in the matter and said, "OK." I asked her if I could go and get my bag and upon pointing it out was told I could get it later as all property is going to be searched by police.

A group of about eleven of us are led out of the Administration area. It felt thoroughly bizarre to be walking along with a policewoman holding on to the back of one's T-shirt. I assume that we are going to be escorted out of the building but no, we are led to lifts and taken down to the basement where I



DYSLEXIA, HYSTERIA AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE MEDIA

LETTER TO THE GOVERNMENT:

Dear Amanda,

I followed your directions. Now students have occupied my building. What am I to do? I need your assistance in removing them. This is a large and ugly problem.

THE REPLY:

Dear Tony,

I have been trying for months to stop students from going to any University unless they pay pay pay. If you cannot do anything correctly I recommend that you go to the police for help. I am also very very very distressed at your implication that I am a large and ugly problem. I have had enough of people commenting on my dress sense and my size. Fuck off.

LETTER TO THE NSW POLICE:

Please help me. There are students occupying the University of Technology Sydney building. I need your assistance in having them removed.

Yours In Desperation,
Tony Blake

THE REPLY:

Dear Tony,

What the fuck are you on about. You want me to do what?!! remove students from the University. Are you a complete incompetent? That's like asking me to stop people from eating in restaurants or not letting golfers onto a golf course. Seek medical advice.

LETTER TO THE GOVERNMENT:

Help. There are still students in my admin. They are not supposed to be there. I want to go back to my game of golf and have a meal at a restaurant. The police force are threatening to stop me from eating at restaurants, and from going to play golf, and refusing to remove the students from the UTS Building. The government have also given me a rebuffing refusal for help. Please can you print something in the paper?

LETTER FROM GOVERNMENT TO MEDIA:

Due to student protests I have received harassment in the mail from a particular University abusing me about my weight and complete lack of dress sense. I want to go out to the restaurant but I have heard that the police are stopping people from eating there so am staying at home.

MEDIA ARTICLE:

Insults Wound Minister. Minister refuses to attend any public forums, etc etc.

LETTER TO SECRETARY OF BLAKE:

Err...what exactly is in the administration office? I have been so busy trying to find new ways to get the university lots more money that I have no idea. Please inform me as soon as possible as I need a substantial reason for the police to act.

THE REPLY:

Not you again. Bugger. Firstly you need students to operate a University. Secondly have no idea why you want officers in ceremonial dress. I'll compromise. Which lets me to say, you really are fucked in the head. Urgently seek medical advice.

MEDIA RELEASE:

Police attend student rally at UTS in ceremonial uniform.

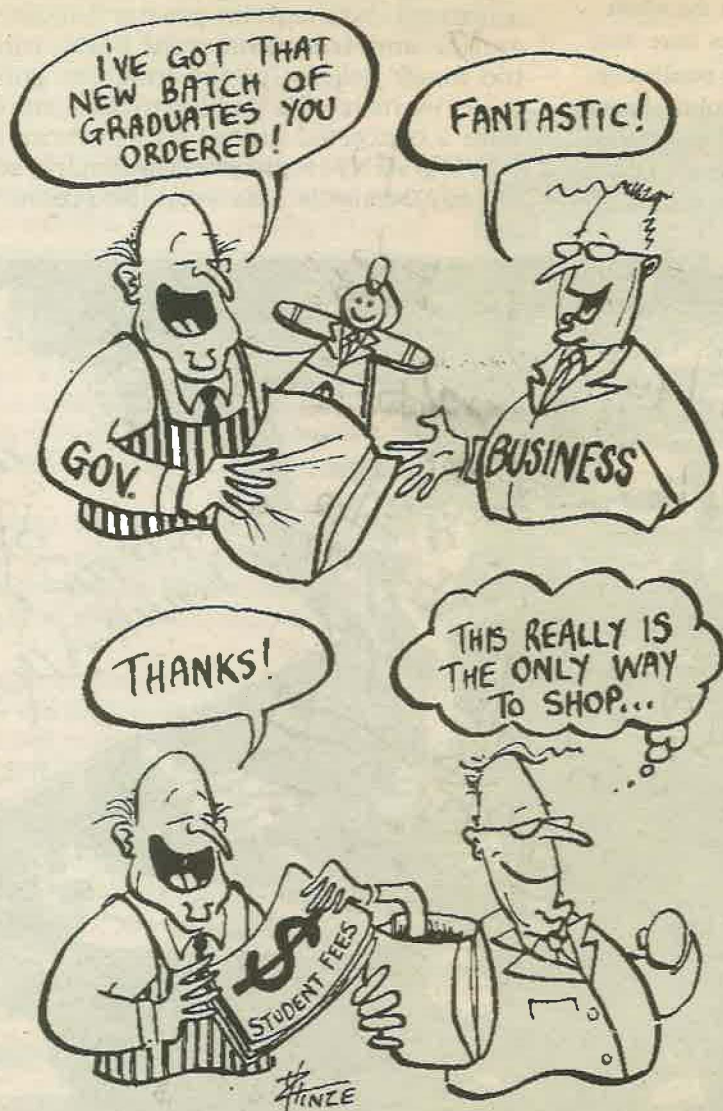
LETTER FROM AVCC:

Dear Tony,

We understand you are under a lot of stress lately and like the rest of us you are uniquely incompetent. But please, please stay away from the media you numbskull. You are making the Australian Vice Chancellors Committee look like a BOMBINATION. Please seek medical and legal advice.

LETTER TO MEDIA:

Bombs!! Police called in to break up UTS Occupation due to a bomb scare.



THE REPLY:

Well, I cannot give you a full rundown at present, due the students in there. But I can tell you that there are files downstairs. If you feel they may have tampered with them and if you are having trouble getting the police, call the military.

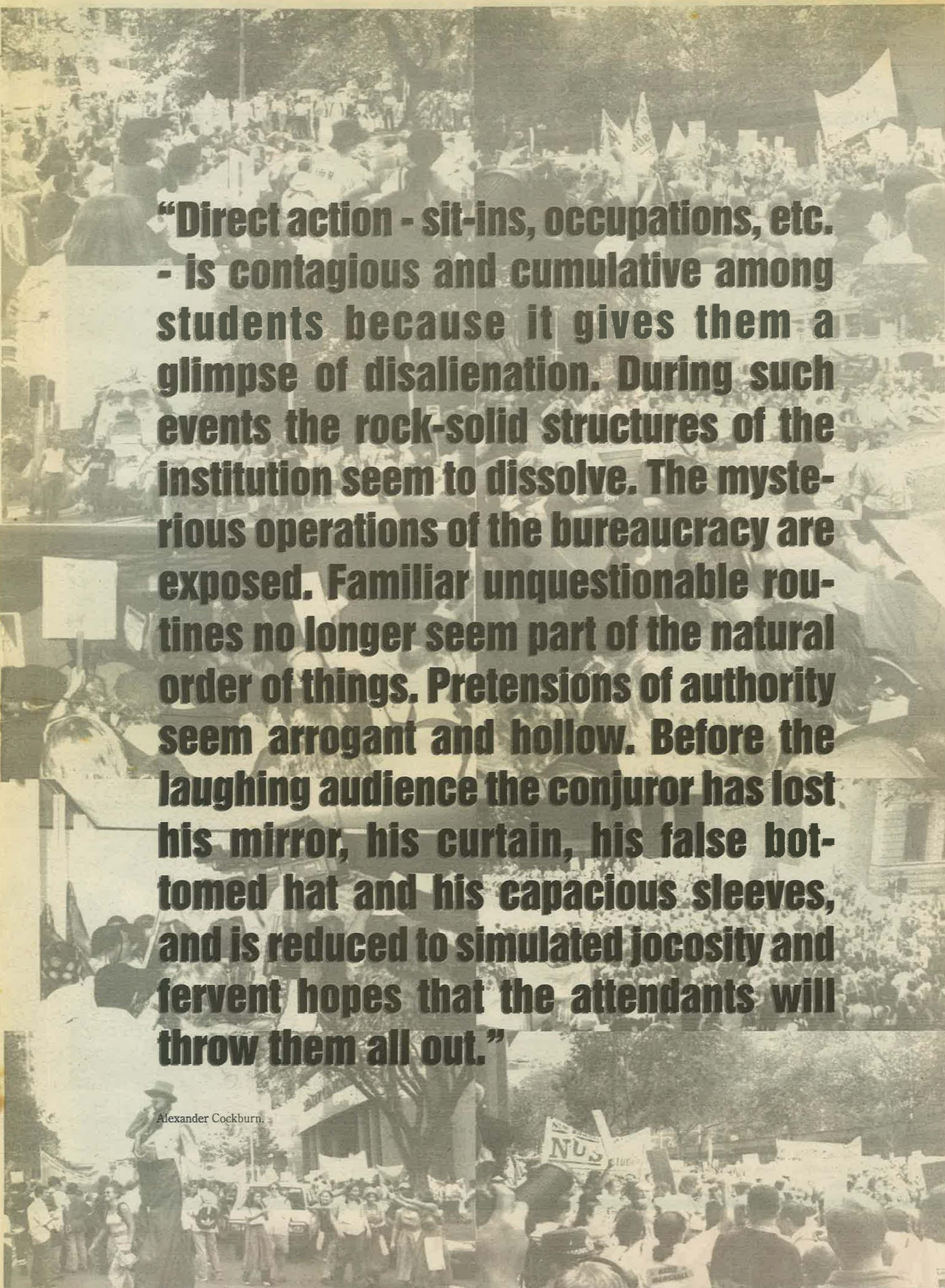
LETTER TO MEDIA:

Militant groups involved in student protest and are tampering with student files. I have the evidence from my secretary!!

LETTER TO POLICE:

I have received notice that students are coming back to the university!! You know how I like the University to look, good with ceremonies and other events. How am I to address the problem.





“Direct action - sit-ins, occupations, etc. - is contagious and cumulative among students because it gives them a glimpse of disalienation. During such events the rock-solid structures of the institution seem to dissolve. The mysterious operations of the bureaucracy are exposed. Familiar unquestionable routines no longer seem part of the natural order of things. Pretensions of authority seem arrogant and hollow. Before the laughing audience the conjuror has lost his mirror, his curtain, his false bottomed hat and his capacious sleeves, and is reduced to simulated jocosity and fervent hopes that the attendants will throw them all out.”

Alexander Cockburn.



AUSTRALIA'S MOST WANTED

for aggravated assault and malicious damage to public education



In just one year, **John Howard** and his government have increased HECS, slashed Austudy and encouraged the introduction of upfront fees for domestic undergraduates. More cuts to Austudy, Abstudy and the dole are planned for May.



Peter Costello. The man with the money. He is Australia's number one corporate lackey. A real right-wing arsehole.



Ahh, Mandy, Mandy. We don't care about her weight and we don't care about her clothes. We care about employment, education, training and youth affairs. She does not. She makes a mockery of equitable, accessible education. She is nothing but a social vandal.



Tim Fischer: who?



Kim 'Crocodile Tears' Beazley: is happy enough to complain in opposition, but never forget what he and the ALP did during the last thirteen years-- led the gradual assault on public education that has paved the way for the Liberal 'reform' agenda. He's not doing much now, but he would if he could.



Peter Reith, Minister for Industrial Relations: The man who wants to make working Australians pay for the problems of the Australian economy. Young, old, male, female - all will suffer. Thanks Pete. Thanks a lot.



Gavin Brown, VC of Sydney Uni: works hard for his salary of \$250,000 by doing overtime for the government to implement cuts, increase and introduce fees, privatise courses and turn his university into a lean, mean, profit-making machine.



Tony 'Police Dog' Blake, VC of UTS: has been giving it his 100% best to run a political smear campaign against students ever since he made the decision to send in attack dogs and police to clear out an anti- upfront fees occupation from his office space-- an area that recently underwent renovations costing over \$3 million. Sound like a lot of money? Don't worry, the cuts of over \$1 million to library funding have helped compensate. Upfront fees will help compensate even more.



John Niland, Vice Chancellor of UNSW: has taken up the Liberal government's slash and burn agenda with zeal. A close political ally of the Libs, he has already overseen the abolition of the St. George campus and is rubbing his hands at the chance to introduce upfront fees elsewhere. Not to be trusted.

MAY 8 STRIKE

COME TO THE STUDENT STRIKE & RALLY THURSDAY MAY 8 TOWN HALL 1PM