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ORIENTATION AND THE SINGLE FRESHMAN

By Lim Yak Kiang

Much recently the local press featured a letter, penned probably by an unsporting freshman who arrogantly stated that ragging had been revived in our campus, and as if that was not enough publicity for his/her letter, he/she had to add oil to the fire by crying out unsoundly that senior students were sporting long hair. This freshman, should he happen to be one, has not only raise everyone's contempt but has also seriously injured the image of his/her and our every own institution.

blissing in disguise. Today however, seniors have come up with what is known general orientaion, which also runs along about the same lines and ideas but occurs in a much milder form, fortunately. It is difficult however to draw a line between orientation and ragging; to most people orientation is a relatively new word in the campus and hence tend to miscomprehend it, mixing it up with a new word for ragging.

For this fluent letter writer's information, ragging has long since died away and is now only ancient history to us. In its place, orientation has emerged. Orientation serves as a bridge to welcome freshmen into a new and independent world, the college world. It is also a process of familiarisation; the freshmen are familiarised with the new environment, they make friends with the seniors and they are led to become more aware of their position and importance in society. Also during this period, the freshmen are involved in a series of activities; strenuously drawn up to initiate in its participants a host of qualities stretching from union awareness to community sentiment and group spirit that supposedly proclaims to help them stand in good stead in their future.

younger brothers into a 'tough' breed, making him a more bold and versatile runner of the rat race; therefore what looked like a nasty happening was really a

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FRESHMEN ORIENTATION CONVENTION 1974/1975

This year's Freshmen Orientation Convention was held on the 27th of May at Shangri-La's Island Ballroom. The Students' Union had the pleasure of inviting Mr. L.E.C. Letts, a member of the Board of Governors, as our Honourable Guest Speaker and Mr. V.P.W. Ager, our Principal. The other guests include the other members of the Board of Governors and members of the Administrative staff.

Orientation can be classified as of two kinds; the systematic and the general. The former is effected by a Union based group, the Freshmen Orientation Committee, which carries out orientation on a very large and responsible scale. The latter is conducted by the general senior population, at most times as enthusiastic as possible.

During the Convention, Mr. Woon Kok Meng, our President, in his speech to the freshmen said that the anti-bus hike campaign failed mainly because the authorities were not co-operative and the Government views it as a threat to the internal security and the political stability of our nation.

by the Internal Security Department also contributes to the failure of the campaign."

In the past ragging reigned supreme, but then it was also a dirty word linked with much more dirty experiences. Seniors then, explained that the idea behind it all was to turn their 'soft'

As he went on, he said, "The press accused us for not doing our homework but that is not true. What kind of homework can we do when our requests for information, statistics and facts from the authorities were blatantly rejected? Constant harassment of some students

Mr. Woon mentioned that the campaign demonstrated the concern of students over the repercussive effects the 10 cents rise would have on the man-in-the-street. Students' interest in the campaign had not cooled down. Our awareness of such social problems remain as strong as ever."

He said, "You can be assured that the campaign is not merely an example

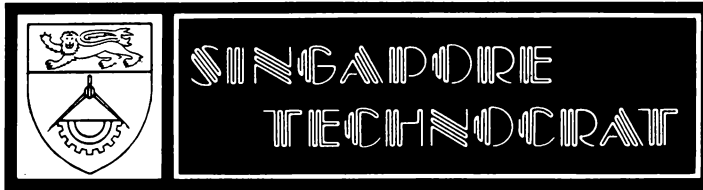
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STUDENT SUPPRESSION

The Singaporean student has on several occasions been criticised as self-centred, inclined only to achievement in academic excellence. His ignorant and indifferent attitudes towards social problems have been appalling to many. Nevertheless, it is not entirely right to declare that our students are all socially apathetic, for there is still a dim spark of hope that students are concerned, as they should be, in the welfare of the people. This little spark has manifested itself several times, one of which was the students' campaign against the bus-fare hikes and it must be fed and fanned and not damped out.

It is regrettable that the Government has not acknowledged students' sincerity in the campaign. This deliberate air of arrogant indifference has sadly turned into repression as exhibited by the perverse and pervasive presence of the Internal Security Department (I.S.D.)

Students' actions throughout the campaign were closely watched and several active ones were constantly harrassed by the I.S.D. Four of our students have already been 'invited out'. As in each 'interview', which takes place in a coffee-house, the student was reminded of his well-being and the consequences of dissentment. Even the welfare of the members of his family was brought up. He was also prompted to co-operate with the authorities and was 'bribed' with mere priveleges and benefits like an easy stay in the Polytechnic, into selling his conscience, by going into a state of inaction or betraying the Union by being an informant. These statements are not exaggerated! They are the truth – the threats we received are real!



But, have the students behaved in a manner detrimental to the internal security of our society? Have we (by any means or in any way) tried to undermine the established system of our nation? We have always been accused of being insensitive, indifferent, ignorant... but here we are, trying to participate in the matters concerning the well-being of our so-called democratic society and here we are suppressed into inactivity.

It is indeed tragic that the authority has to resort to such ruthless and undemocratic means to ensure a submissive population; such suppression will only aggravate the prevailing apathy. True, internal security and political stability are necessary for every developing nation. But must such suppression, which breeds stagnation, be imposed in order that stability be maintained?

In spite of all suppression, we have demonstrated our concern for the betterment of our society. No amount of threats can subvert this concern.

A VAGUE REPUTATION

The allegations that we students are out to create an impression among members of the general public that students are well-off' is a blow and a blatant outrage to our reputation – a reputation which already in the eyes of the public is vague and fragile. Dr. Toh's malicious remarks, publicised readily by the Press (Straits Times, dated 19th May) will catalyse an undesirable reaction among the general public, who, symptomatic of an unquestioning and submissive population, will surely deplore the aims of our Union.

On the other hand, the charges made against us by the Chairman of the Board of Governors of our Institution, Dr. Toh, did not actually strike us with much astonishment.

The absence of the grass-roots contacts between the ruling-class and the man-in-the-street and the obnoxious alienation existing between the administrators and the students has long vividly exhibited itself. Dr. Toh has not given us, his students first, an impartial hearing before plunging into the conclusion. But how much attention can we get from this man, who, besides being the Chairman of the Board of Governors, is also the Chairman of the Peoples' Action Party, Minister of Science and Technology and the Vice-Chancellor of the Singapore University, to mention a few of his major posts. Dr. Toh, has himself, while addressing the Freshmen at the Initiation Ceremony, back in 1965, uttered, "I must admit that as academician, if I were solely an academician.... I am all against the Internal Security Act. But, unfortunately, I am also the other facet to my character as a member of the Government.... I have to support the Internal Security Amendment Act." Hence, how can this man, with his multi-farious heavy commitments, his diverse interest, afford to entertain the cries and whims of our students?

But students are deeply troubled; the fact that our institution is lined with what was most appropriately described as a 'lunatic fringe' pricked us painfully within. But students are more hurt when they suffer a careless disrepute or neglect.

And it is time for students to arrive to a greater awareness that reputation can never be such an easy acquisition – we must join hands and strive for a good name for ourselves, and the Union must harness and direct any restless energies towards the pursuit. Euphoria and public respect will then follow.

From page 1

ORIENTATION AND THE SINGLE FRESHMAN

Every freshman, more affectionately titled freshies or freshettes whichever appropriate, gain admission into the Polytechnic with the grand idea that as a member of a tertiary institution, they qualify as one of the selected few of the elite group in our society. An ivory tower is immediately erected; fenced round by social pride and they turn away with a high nose to the myriad problems of our society. General orientation by the seniors is so designed to tear this social pride to atomic shreds; their ivory towers are mutilated and rammed down and the freshmen soon come to learn of just where they stand in their new surroundings. These young ones learn to laugh back at their adolescent ideals and hollow pride and pick up the many virtues of humility. It can be quite indignifying and a nasty experience at times, but then it has proven to be the most effective tool. Most freshmen learn quickly, but there is still a obstinate minority who cling on painfully to their obtuse pride.

Tragically each year, the seniors are discouraged, at times even threatened with disciplinary action, from contributing their brand of orientation. What the disciplinary commission are not aware of is that this kind of orientation is as essential to the freshmen as their fees are to the administration. But then with the present wet blanket condition, flung most vehemently from the direction of the Principal's office and a section of the public, mostly happening to be loving parents of the pampered freshmen, this breed of orientation is moving headlong into extinction. The death of it will advent a higher ivory tower and a thicker barrier of social pride; our campuses will be a breeding ground for a family of indifferent and status-conscious snobs. Society will have lost all meaning to them, it will just be another word contained in their vocabulary to be used only when required in the normal course of a conversation. This nightmare is the one to be stamped out, not orientation by senior students; so remove the wet blanket, it is getting to be suffocating.

While general orientation concentrates on shearing away foolhardy pride, the FOC takes care of broadening out the single Freshman's horizon and outlook of life about him. But then sadly, history of the past years have shown that this ambitious enterprise have suffered an ugly measure of failure. The single freshman faithfully arrives for each FOC programme, have his horizon widely broadened for a fortnight only to suddenly eclipsed into darkness once school is open and the FOC is but a memory; and he stays that way for the rest of his stay at the Polytechnic. This has caused the FOC to trip and fall flat on their faces; achieving nothing of significance during their period of standing except maybe an eternal mutual friendship with their bankers. Hence those

authorities, always mindful of a respectable image, who deemed the FOC sufficient for orientation has their thought in serious doubt; has need to re-review their thought and action.

No doubt the FOC's programme is glamorous, all those activities, community work, carnivals and blood donations will all certainly convince the public that we at the Polytechnic are in cultivation of a breed of wholesome juniors with good clear healthy thoughts. But then when school re-opens, these freshmen disappear from the scene, lost in a frightening mountain of books, never caring a damn about the Union and other colleagues, and the number of welfare volunteers suffer a significant and drastic drop.

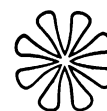
The point underlying it all is that the whole FOC affair is far too general and wide to properly drill the importance and meaning of whatever they are doing into the freshmen's mind. This year there exists about one thousand and five hundred freshmen but only about two hundred adoption scheme leaders to shepherd them. This means that each freshman will only obtain a small dose of orientation which perhaps may not even be sufficient for him to understand the whole thing, its' aims, the rules, the functions.....etc. And so at the end of it all, he is left alone in the blues, puzzled and dumbfounded about what he had just been through; he then loses interest, shrugs the whole thing off his chest and returns to the library. Orientation to him has then become another hurdle that has been leapt over in the scurry for a diploma.

Moreover, not all of the FOC's programme are suited for orientation. Societies campaign is one that seems to be there just for the taking up of time. All that the freshman does during this period is only to sit and listen for hours on end to things of absolutely of no concern with orientation; it cannot in any way inspire or contribute to Union awareness. So it is also with the number of talks by the heads of the various departments. This number of bored hours could perhaps be used more constructively, for example showing the new students the how and the why of our Union. To the majority of freshmen, the Union appears as a complete novelty, alien and doubtful. And to completely expel this doubt is going to take more than just distributing copies of the constitution and introducing Councillors and officials.

Over the years, the FOC have missed badly in their aim, the consequence of which is a very much strained student-Union relationship, general apathy towards volunteer work and large hideous gaps in co-operation and communication in the various campuses and courses of study. It is in the job of the FOC to implant a more acute sense of

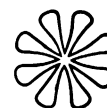
obligation in the freshman's mind; it is up to them to show to the freshmen that besides the library and lecture rooms, another world exists – society. Coming to size this job up, it suddenly looms as a gigantic task and with only two short weeks to accomplish it. Hence we can conclude that the FOC was doomed right from the start. The freshman soon forgets the lessons learnt, the experiences are shelved to gather rust and dust; the co-operation and group spirit pacifies and then freezes. Perhaps this apathetic attitude could well be traced to the fact that the students have totally streamed their energy into another direction, the diploma direction, firstly, thanks to the administration's brainwave of a common engineering course. After a year of being thoroughly soaked in indifference and apathy, the students step into the second year no longer holding any belief in the Union. Any more but strongly confident, instead, of passing their second year.

On the other hand, general orientation seems to have done better. The impression they infringed is indelible, the lesson learnt is for life and this can be shown by the fact that the annual turnout of senior students is large, showing their staunch belief in orientation. Take away the FOC and life could still be bearable enough but take away general orientation and you have taken away a life of the campus, a heritage most generously handed down each generation. Nobody has any right at all to take this part of college life away from us, let alone killing it; it belongs to us students and to us it will stay. Just because the authorities needed a respectable image to present to the public via the press is no strong excuse for stamping out the annual orientation spirit in students. Such tyrannical action deserves not a single merit at all, and is in dire need of a full-stop at once.



ORIENTATION HANDBOOK:

Please be informed that the Handbook is ready for collection. However, please take note that Mr. Gan Kok Beng is not the C.D.O. as he has resigned and that Mr. Patrick Goh is the C.D.O. for this year's Orientation.



DIPLOMATIC

"From ping-pong diplomacy in international politics to student diplomacy in regional politics", so says some observers. Diplomacy was the key which led to the return of the seized passports to the five Malaysian students. The students concerned are members of the 28th Council of University of Singapore Students' Union. Among them was the President.

The whole dramatic story which some people conceive to be a mass scale harassment of union officials started on Tuesday night, 14th May 1974. The five Councillors were among some other students who were harassed while they were in a block of flats in Queenstown. The Immigration Department Officers (seven of them) who raided the flat did present their case — that they (the Officers) were out to check on illegal immigrants, following a 'tip-off' by residents in the block of flats. However, the students did produce their passports to establish their true identity. Nevertheless, those passports seemed useless for a moment and were mere pieces of paper. They were seized anyhow, and five of them were issued with Special Passes which compelled them to report for further inquiry the following day. (Incidentally, the Immigration Department is well known for issuing of Special Passes not only to Foreigners but to Singapore Citizens as well! Reportedly, at least two students (citizens) who returned home after a seminar recently held in Hong Kong were issued with Special Passes.)

It is only natural that the question one would ask is: Since the Immigration Officers were looking for illegal immigrants, was it necessary to seize the passport when they (the students) had already identified themselves and secondly, shouldn't the Immigration Officers look for the owner of the flat first?

Obviously, the nightmare was more than an exercise to 'exorcise' illegal immigrants. For seven well-trained men to carry out a simple exercise like this, if indeed it was one, shows that they (the authority) did at least expect some degree of physical resistance. Poor thing! The five people are but merely "timid souls," still undergoing the man-moulding process in our 'computerised' university which is indeed a factory! (The one-time Minister of State for Education had once said, "university is a factory".) Among the five students was a self-proclaimed naive girl. Even the neighbours could see something strange and unusual at the carpark — 'suspicious' characters taking up positions in camouflage as if prepared for a possible siege. It seemed as though they were even prepared to transport the five students like sheep across the causeway. Eventually, the night-episode ended with the students giving the officers a send-off at the carpark. Of course they bade farewell to their passports also.

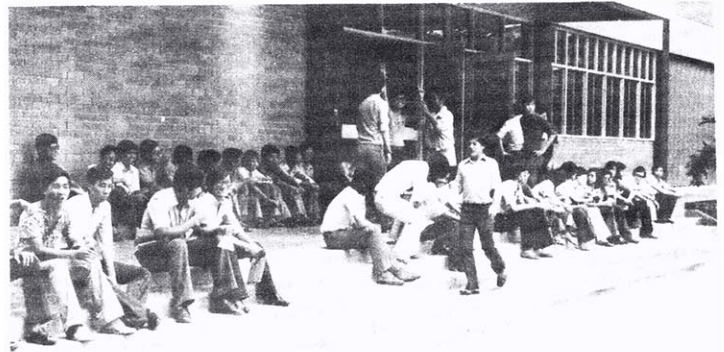
The following day's turn-up at the Immigration Depot was a game of strategy. Knowing the possible 'modus operandi' of the Immigration Officers and as if eliminating the possibility of being sent back together, without anybody knowing, only three out of five turned up for the interrogation. However, to complete the five-man star formation, two other people went along with the students, namely, a solicitor and a Secretary from the High Commission of Malaysia in Singapore. Reportedly, the Officer who met the five-man delegation panicked for some moments. At least one panicky question directed at the solicitor was: "Are they going to sue us?" No reasonable explanation was known to have been given to justify the seizure of the passports.

The passports eventually were returned; even those of the two students who were not present. Why was the passports returned? Was it because the Immigration was satisfied with the true identities, in the presence of the solicitor and the Secretary? Did the Secretary's presence play any part in influencing the decision? If so, what are the implications and conversely, if not, would there be any repercussions? Nevertheless, Singapore students can look upon the whole incident as an insult. They have elected their own union officials to be harassed by their own Government Authority. Yet they may be held in contempt if ever such a case should happen to them. Do they have any Secretary from any High Commission to look to for justice?

ALIENATION

The February issue of the Pelandok (bulletin of the Non-Hostelites Organisation, University of Singapore Students' Union) carried, in her editorial, a vivid report of the example of alienation within our society that manifested itself through lack of grass-roots contact between the governors and the governed. It is only natural and not surprising that alienation finds its own home in our establishments. That is the result of bureaucratic type of administration handed down by our colonial masters.

The stance of bureaucracy within our Polytechnic family, although in existence for a long time, has never culminated with any action against the 'bureaucrats', other than the mere curses, until only very recently. That was on Thursday, 9th May 1974. That day saw the birth of our new President of the 14th Council and also the enrollment of many new students for the coming session. The whole episode began when some 40 seniors, including union officials, were refused admittance to Ayer Rajah Campus because they were alleged to have ragged new students (freshies) the day before. This blatant refusal of admittance led to the students protesting in a mild and peaceful sit-in outside the office of the Assistant Registrar (ARC) who obviously could not handle the situation. (He did not even meet the group of students).



'The Peaceful Sit in'

Although it was only a very mild showdown, it was enough to send our 'General' driving all the way from PEC to ARC together with his 'Chief-Of-Staff'. As if in a highly mechanised system, only a loose screw or nut is enough to send the whole system, be it a computer or compressor unit, running into shambles which only the programmer or operator can put right. The Principal came, and very effectively called for an audience in the students, in his usual suave manner. A meeting ensued and the whole incident was told and retold and a mutual understanding reached between the Admin. and the students' union.

What was discussed at the meeting is not too pertinent to the subject of alienation but rather it explained the circumstances which led to the enforcement of the rule that no senior student could be admitted to the campus on that day. The order came of course from the principal who was very concerned when only 150 out of an expected 250 students enrolled the day before, allegedly because of the ragging incidents. Obviously, in issuing the order, he overlooked the question of union officials who had to enter the campus to facilitate FOC programme arrangements.

Nevertheless, had the Assistant Registrar (ARC) not held on to his cue too rigidly, the situation would not have arisen. Had he shown at least a little bit of understanding when the union officials explained to him the need to make preliminary arrangements for FOC programmes, the Principal probably would not have to drive to the campus. Sad to say, he lacked initiative and foresight. He could have called the Principal on the telephone if indeed he wasn't sure. But he chose to remain and conduct his duties like an authoritarian. And as if to add more light to the subject of alienation, a lecturer who happened to be at the scene and who obviously does not understand what is human sensitivity was naive enough to ask a student whether he was a Singaporean or Malaysian.

From page 1

Freshmen Orientation Convention 1974/1975



Our Guest Speaker, Mr. L.E.C. Letts.

of youthful enthusiasm. Nor is it just a passing fancy."

As the event went on, Mr. Ager, our Principal, in his speech to the freshmen, apologised on Dr. Toh's behalf for not being able to attend the Convention as he had other commitments.

Mr. Ager said, "It is usual on this occasion for the Principal to talk briefly about the Polytechnic in order that you will clearly understand its functions and your roles within the Polytechnic. The Polytechnic exists to train technicians to meet the requirements of the industries, Government and statutory bodies and the shipping interest of Singapore."

Mr. Ager went on to say, "The full time students in the main years of engineering enter the first year common engineering course, and during this course, methods of continuous assessment followed by the traditional examinations provide the basis of allocations of the 1st year students to the second year certificate or diploma courses. Such a system makes for competition among students for the limited number of space that are available in the diploma courses and for this reason I would advise that you should take your studies at the Polytechnic seriously. By that I do not mean that you should devote all your waking hours to your studies but I would strongly advise against over involvement with activities providing distraction from your studies."

Mr. Ager cited the Students' Union as a means where students can have various forms of recreations and the library where students can widen their knowledge. In ending his speech Mr. Ager

conveyed his best wishes to all the freshmen on the commencement of their studies.

Mr. L.E.C. Letts, our guest speaker for the Convention, thanked the Union for inviting him and in his speech that followed, Mr. Letts said, "You may put your minds at rest if you are concerned by the ripples set going by the theft of examination papers, resetting of papers etc. has in any way devalued the status of Polytechnic awards."

Mr. Letts said that the increase in vandalism as a result of the 'lunatic fringe' cannot be endured. He said that the investment in the new campus cannot permit the continuation of this vandalism and that all of us must take obvious steps to frustrate and guide our 'lunatic fringe' away from their wasteful and stupid activities.

"I am not suggesting that our family has to put up with a greater amount of this nonsense than is the feature of college life in England, U.S.A. etc. but Singapore is small and life is closely integrated. Misconduct on the part of a few bites us all harder and more immediately."

Referring to our Union's Constitution, Mr. Letts said, "I would like to

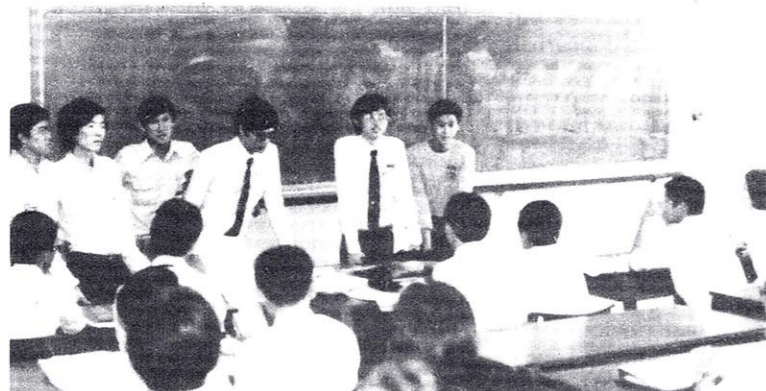
submit one point here — as far as I can see there is only one reference therein to make our family business public. This is to the effect that the Union Council can publish any publication which the Students' Council deems necessary. For myself and perhaps not everyone will agree, I do not like to see Polytechnic family business featuring in newspaper columns."

"One great opportunity made available to you is to join the Industrial Orientation Programme under which you will be exposed to working conditions in various organisations including Government departments, statutory bodies, commerce and industries. This takes place over 10 to 12 weeks from mid-March onwards. On the whole, our students taking advantage of this programme have carried the Polytechnic banner high!"

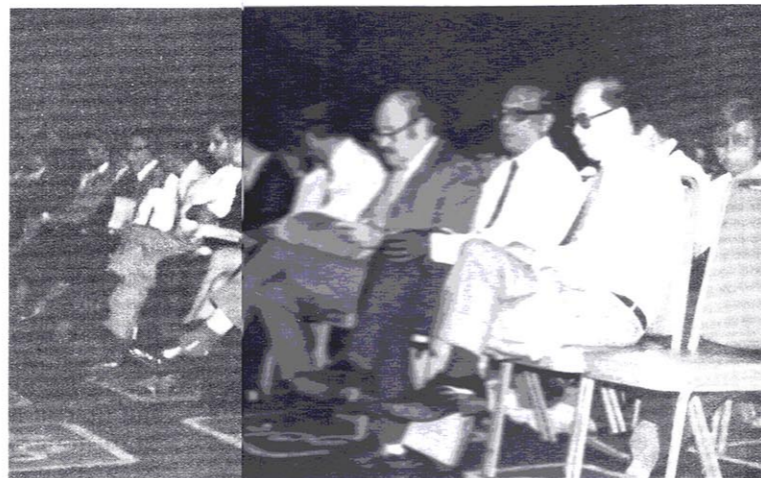
In ending his speech Mr. Letts stress the needs for training personnels to be well versed in nuclear power plants as cited by Dr. Toh. He said, "Polytechnic trained persons will be able to take up the leading and senior jobs in these fields provided they can also offer the personal qualities which, in my opinion, constitutes 51% of the leadership. These include integrity, knowledge, imagination and stamina plus the capacity to inspire confidence in oneself."



ORIENTATION 74/75



Meet the Ex-Co.



Section of our invited guests.



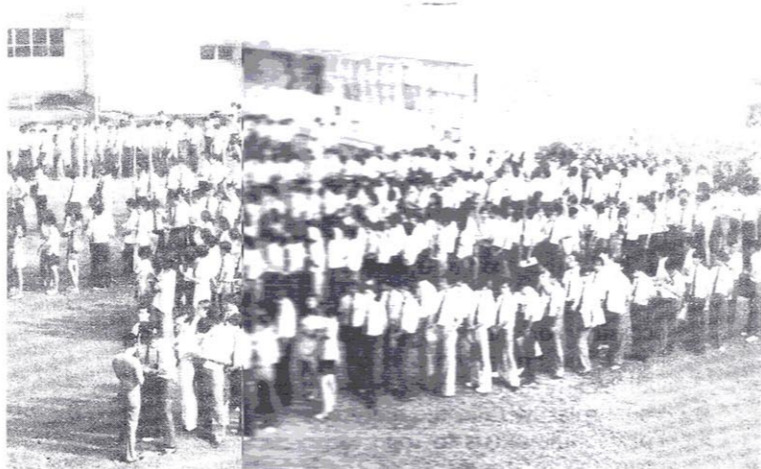
Pull — and we'll win!



Seniors at the water carnival — all ready for winning.



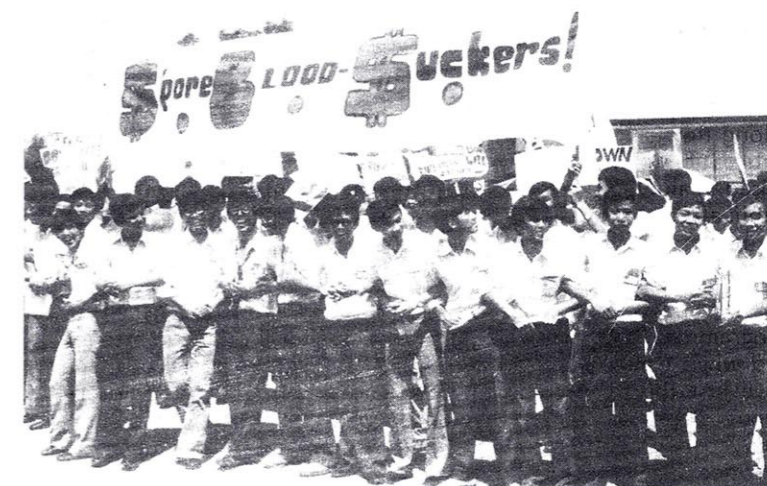
'The Union Oath'



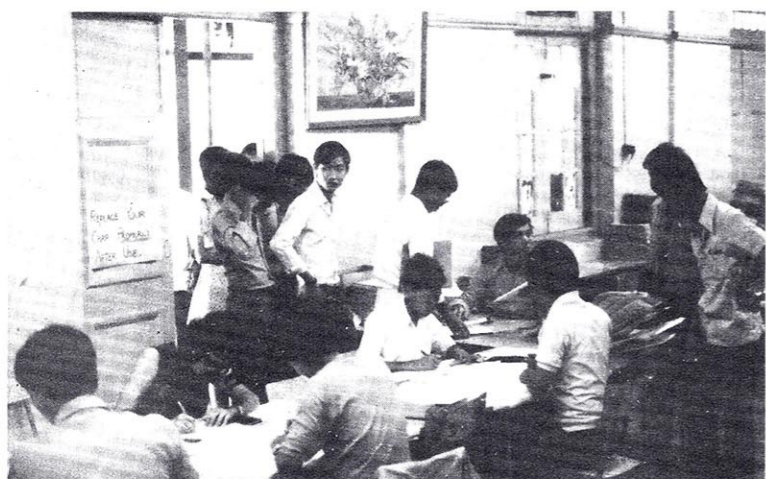
'The Assembly'



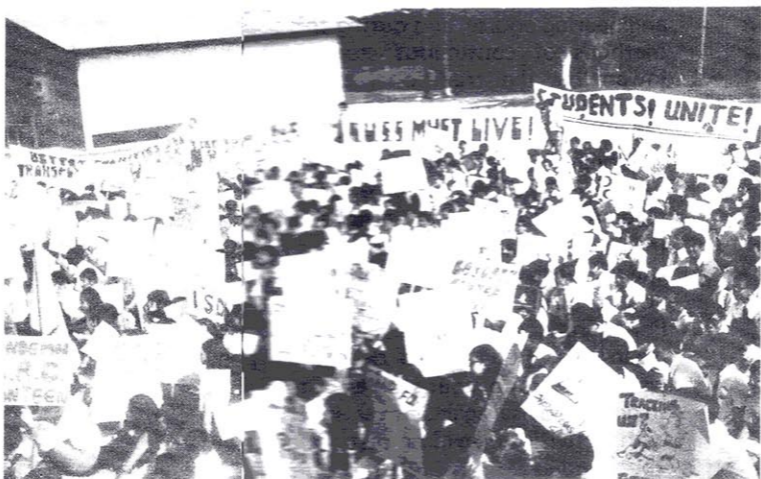
The Wedding Swim?



Blood Suckers?— It sure is!



Collection of Freshmen Packets



Mock or Real?

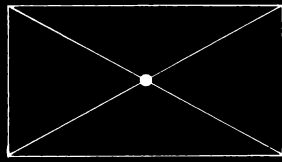


Music at the Union House.



Working or Walking?

Letters to the Editor



OBJECTIVES WORKABLE? ACHIEVED?

Dear Editor,

Two issues of our Union's main organ, the Singapore Technocrat, had been published and I am sure that many Polytechnic students (especially the newly enrolled students) must have read them. But what are their response (if there is any)? Your editorial in the second issue is timely but then there is a question on the success of the ideas that you are trying to imbue into your fellow students in that editorial.

Your policies as spelled out in the first issue looks very impressive on paper but are they workable? How are you going to, for example, foster a closer relationship between full time and part-time students as being outlined or has it already been achieved?

Anyway, on behalf of my classmates, I would like to congratulate and thank you and your committee for bringing the Technocrat out of its grave when the 13th Council reign and you can count on our support in the future.

— "Electronic Student"

Dear Editor,

Surprise and admiration filled my heart as I read the May issue of the Singapore Technocrat. Surprise because it have been a long time since I've read a good informative and frank S.P.S.U. publication. Admiration because a young Editorial Board comprised mainly of first year students have come up with a fine publication. Many senior students will be embarrassed by their contempt and complaint towards the Council. Keep up the good work; you have demonstrated by work and not words.

I must also congratulate the F.O.C. for an excellent programme. I am all for Senior's participation in the Orientation and when I mixed around with some freshmen, majority of them have just the same comment. When asked about how they feel about the programme, they exclaimed that they thoroughly enjoyed it. Proper selection of D.Os should be done though, as I notice many have misused their powers and are a nuisance themselves.

— Chang Pei Tuck

Dear Editor,

I vividly comprehend that the Union was holding the Freshmen Orientation Convention 1974/75 at a luxurious and expensive hotel. Is our Union trying to impress the general public that the majority of our students population are financially well-off? This only contradicts our primal motive for protesting against the ten cents increment in the bus-fare. If the Union does not have a better idea for spending the immense sum of money, may I, honourably suggest that the Union gives numerous amount of scholarships to students belonging to the lower income group and who with determination and endurance want to proceed to the very top of success and achievement.

Were the Undergrads being blessed by our prominent Union Officials to 'orientate' the Freshman when they were promptly collecting their Freshmen's packets at our Union House? And where were the so-called Disciplinary Officers on

that week allocated for the collection of packets? Undoubtedly they were supposed to present themselves at the 'Rose Garden' to prevent any ragging of the Freshmen by Undergrads and to stem out any flare-up between the former and the latter. I am adamant to use the word ragging instead of 'orientating' because the Undergrads' ways and motives of 'orientation' are far out and from the actual meaning of the word.

Let us take for example an actual case which happened on the first day of the collection of the Freshmen packet — A Freshman was leaving the Union house when he was confronted and forcibly directed to the basketball court by a group of Undergrads. Against his consent, he was ordered to remove his shirt, shoes and socks. He was then demanded (by the Undergrads of course) to demonstrate the various styles of swimming by lying flat on his stomach on a garden bench. Later, his tie was knotted shamefully, one end to his neck and the other to his trouser's zip and subsequently told to gallop round the basketball court amidst their laughter and shoutings. Are these ways of 'orientating' the Freshmen, which are practised enthusiastically by the Undergrads, and strongly encouraged and supported by the Students' Union? Regarding the above intolerable and iniquitous methods of 'orientation', may I cordially ask whether the Union classifies them as ragging or basically orientating? One may ingeniously ask why didn't that Freshmen offer some resistance. But, however, it is left with the fact that this question can only be answered with fidelity by that Freshman, himself.

In conclusion, may I ignorantly forward a question to each and every polytechnician to answer honestly:— "SHOULD WE ALLOW OURSELVES TO BE CONTROLLED BY THE UNION OR VICE VERSA?"

— S. A. Tan

Dear Editor,

I refer to the article "A lesson to learn" which is purported to be written by the Editorial Board.

First to be commented was the turnout during the meeting, for which you lamented the poor attendance. A turnout of 300 students from a total population of 6000 was, I agree, poor. But to accommodate 300 students in the M.L.T., much discomfort has already been felt from the 'heated up atmosphere'.

You spoke of the irresponsibility displayed by the two parties (Councillors and petitioners). Yet you failed to support this statement when you later confessed that 'like the much confused students, (you) are still too much in the dark to make any further comments on the whole affair'.

You further commented that the 'ousting could all have been a mistake' and grieved the death of the 13th Council. Yet I find that your sincerity in making that comment ought to be questioned when you later mentioned that the 'student leaders (have) proved to be immatured and irresponsible'.

In your concluding sentence, you refer to the badly marred reputation of our Union. Yet there is still a "good name of the Union" among the remnants, to be rebuilt!

The subject matter, your choice of words and the very long sentences employed throughout the article all made reading very confusing and evidently the moral lesson that you attempted to disclose has lost its significance in the confusion that you have created in the minds of readers.

I welcome your policy in encouraging "students to express their views in letters to the editorial board". In line with that policy I hope that you could publish this letter in your next issue of the Singapore Technocrat.

— Yap Sian Koon

Dear Editor,

I understand from our Constitution, Article IX number 4 on page 16, that the Social Committee shall consist of the Social Secretary who shall be the Chairman and not more than FOUR other members shall be nominated by the Social Secretary.

Thus, it seems that the Orientation Ball organising committee is a very special one. There are seven (incl. the Social Sec.) in the committee. Could you kindly clear my doubt? Is a Vice-Chairman needed in such a committee? Is the Chairman of this committee not capable?

— CKC Polytechnician

Ed — The Social Secretary is not a member of the Orientation Ball Organising Committee but, however, he is the Vice-Chairman of the Orientation Night Committee. Both the committees are sub-committees of the Freshmen Orientation Committee. The Vice-Chairman's task in the Orientation Night Committee is only to assist the Chairman in his designations.



Girls from C.H.I.J. pa.pa.pa.pa.....



A section of the participants from Red Cross

TALENTIME for 'HOMES'

If you have read the first issue of the 'TECHOCRAT' you would know what 'WELFARE TALENTIME' is.

Anyway, the Talentime is for children staying in Welfare Homes in Singapore. So far, 2 Heats have been organised and the 3rd Heat is about to begin. It will be held at the Singapore Council of Social Service Building, Penang Lane, 3rd floor. (behind Supreme House)

DATE: 29/6/74 (Saturday)

TIME: 12.30 p.m.

ALL ARE WELCOME

Dearest GLs and fellow members of Red Group

I take this opportunity to sincerely thank all of you for making my orientation a very memorable one.

I would disclose that my concept of how the orientation was to be like have been proven wrong.

I have spent days and nights mourning and groaning and dreading the idea of having to attend the orientation because some seniors have told me.... But fortunately, the C.D.O. in his letter addressed to all freshmen stated that: "... all freshmen are required to attend the whole orientation programme and.... attendance is compulsory!A fine of \$5/-absent for any one day....."

I was quite subdued by his threats, which explained the presence of myself and many other freshmen on the pre-orientation day and subsequently, the orientation.

I would suggest that these threats be present, as a diluent to the pages of welcomes, in letters to be addressed to future freshmen because these threats have saved many from missing one of the few memorable events in one's life-time.

Most seniors, with the exception of a minority, have been helpful and friendly. I am not quite content with the tyrannical tone of speech used by some senior "gentlemen". I fully understood that no harm was meant and all that the seniors want in return is respect and friendship from the freshmen. The explanation I received from a representative senior "gentlemen" for their impudence was: "We work with machines!" This answer have left me feeling puzzled and worried that I may one day thunder to others.

I am sure that all freshmen from the Red Group would agree with me that we have enjoyed some special privileges which gave ground for freshmen from the other groups to stand green with envy.

If you have already forgotten the special privileges which we had, I would remind you. We visited PMC, ARC, and the Seletar Reservoir. The initiative which our GLs have in planning those outings had to be highly commended.

The Orientation unfolded interesting and meaningful events which have resulted in confidence and independence in myself.

I find great difficulty in accepting the harsh fact that the orientation will end today. I have a silly, childish little hope that the orientation will never end. But I know well enough that this wish would never materialize.

Thank you again for the orientation

Yours sincerely,

Grace Wong

TO ALL NEW STUDENTS:

The Orientation Review Committee has been set up to review the flaws and the setbacks of the Orientation with the object of recommending to the next F.O.C. some guidelines. The O.R.C. has received numerous suggestions and comments such as the one you read above. So, how about you, contributing your ideas for the betterment of our 'next generation'.

PUPPETS ?

The infra-structure of our society provides for, in all her organisations, the rulers at the top and the 'ruled' at the bottom. From a theoretical point of view, work can be carried out smoothly. The directives flow through the so-called proper channels, from the top to bottom, while there's the hope that feed-back informations would flow at the same time in the reverse. It is ideal and it should be the ultimate goal to have a proper dialogue in this respect. However, where decisions and directives, come out from one man and the feedback goes to him or is censured by him as well, its time some thought be given to the system.

One particular area where a sound system is required is in the educational establishments. Needless to say, our future leaders are those in our schools and institutes of higher learning today. The conditions our students are exposed to are definitely going to have an effect on whatever values they inculcate and hence their personalities, through the educational process. If we are too used to the notion of "instructions are instructions and should be followed without question", as indeed we are at present, then by the time we come out to hold the cue, it is highly probable that we would perpetuate the system of "my word is your command", the system that most of us condemn at present.

The light of decision making has been focussed on our school principals. Our Minister for Education, Dr. Lee Chiaw Meng, has said that if the principal lacks vision and imagination, ability and initiative, confidence and competence to guide and mould the school community into a productive one, then all schemes must fail. And further to this as he had pointed out, the skill with which the principal plays his role as an educational leader is crucial to education. The ability to play his role depends to a great extend on his quality and calibre.

The quality of a principal is very important. More important is to what extend and in what direction he is going

to implement the educational policies which needless to say, in our context, are decided by the ruling party. Therefore, presumably, to move in the right direction effectively the principal has first of all got to be a 'yesman'. This is where 'defects' could manifest itself. The aim of education is to built an individual who would be a useful participant in nation-building. To educate a person who must be aware of the social needs of the people.

If the policy of the ruling clique is to produce servants to serve the interest of the capitalists in our country, then perhaps the principal should first of all be a follower of the capitalists. His thinking must be geared towards what the capitalists need and this is generally what the working class deplore as exploitation of human labour. And so this may explain why principal alpha dares not commit himself when student beta asked why liberal arts are not taught because minister omega discourages such subjects being taught in schools.

Having got to be penalised heavily for making wrong decisions, which may mean no future promotion or salary increment, is one thing. But to see this risk as an excuss for not making decisions shows the lack of understanding and realisation on the part of the principal. On the other hand, to put a principal in a position to decide all by himself on any

matter could sometimes prove to be harmful for it is entirely up to the principal if he wishes to produce a crux of anti-nationals or potential anti-nationals.

What about the teachers in our schools? The backbone of our educational system. Inevitably, success or failure of the system, whether geared towards capitalist needs (which often is said to be national needs) or needs of the people, depends to a great extend on the teachers. As such, shouldn't the teachers have a legitimate role to play in the decision making process? Are the authorities conceiving the idea that it's easier to hold one man responsible or are the principals prepared to bear the brunt of responsibility for any mishappening? In this respect, it is a blessing for teachers but as educationists and being the field workers in the educational system, it's high time teachers stand up and be counted and not just hold on to the mythical notion of being an 'educational officer'.

The students, for whom education is designed, have entirely no say at all on what is being taught. The conformists, the second-rate who merely follows emerge as tops and would be rewarded with well-paid jobs. Those who question on the relevance of our system to the social needs of the people would probably end up as being stagnated. So is it better to say 'yes' now and wait till the conditions are more conducive before thinking of saying 'no'?



UNION AWARENESS THROUGH ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

Every seminar or conference must have a theme to work on; the theme so designed serves as a goal for the delegates or members to achieve. Our Freshmen Orientation Committee (F.O.C.) is of no exception. It is a tradition to juggle beautiful and fanciful words and place them in proper order to form the theme. The last two F.O.C.s had beautiful phrases — 'Towards a more integrated society' and 'Better communication through co-operation, tolerance and understanding' respectively as their themes.

But were the objectives of the past F.O.C. themes achieved? Instead of a more integrated society, we find ourselves being segregated into groups; apathy has increased. We have students from the Prince Edward Campus placing themselves above their counterparts at the Ayer Rajah Campus just because they are studying at the main campus. ARC students, on the other hand feel neglected. The so-called 'aims' of the F.O.C.s are clearly defeated as have been illustrated in so many occasions, for example, the procedures preceding the ousting of the 13th Council, and also the segregation of students in the campus into several groups — so much for an integrated society, let alone co-operation, or better communication. One can rightly conclude that the F.O.C.s of the 72/73 and 73/74 sessions have failed in their primary functions.

For this year's Freshmen Orientation, the F.O.C., have the phrase 'Union Awareness through Active Participation' as their theme (A Student need not be intelligent to reason out why the committee designed this phrase). Thus, the

primary aims of this F.O.C. is to instill a sense of Union awareness among our students especially the freshmen. But then, how is the committee going to achieve its aims? yes through active participation — the theme tells us so. Then, what steps will the F.O.C. take, in order, to motivate the students to take an active part in the Union? Through the F.O.C. programmes. We shall now proceed to take a closer and clearer look at the programmes. The two weeks of the so-called activities for the freshmen consists of one week of class-room discussions with societies' campaign, briefings, film shows and the other week, welfare services, sports, flag-day, Chariton, etc..... The traditional seminar, where freshmen were asked to debate on the pros and cons of the theme was sadly dropped out. Whether through such a seminar can the committee achieve its aims and goals is not the question. The main questions lie upon the amount of work the members of the F.O.C. had put in.

Taking a walk or tour around the lecture-theatres and class-rooms where the freshmen were housed, we could see that the basic aims of the whole Orientation had been defeated. Let us follow what goes on in a typical group. After being ushered to the lecture theatres, the freshmen have their attendance recorded. The seniors were of course present at the LTs — it could be a healthy sign. As soon as the freshmen has settled down, the group leaders of that group will start the day by following the programmes or the so-called activities very closely. In between these programmes, the seniors interrupts and everyone can imagine the situation. Nothing discussed is construc-

tive or meaningful. Most of the time was 'killed' with the usual 'sing-along' sessions, accompanied by the seniors' 'orchestra'. All of this at the freshmen's expenses and to the amusement of the senior students.

The whole concept of the Orientation propagated by the group leaders and the adoption scheme members was wrong. Their work was not merely to keep the freshmen occupied but to ensure the smooth running of each programme and, also to orientate the freshmen towards the aims of the Union.

The Freshmen Orientation Committee may say that their job is to help the new students to adjust themselves, from the spoon-feeding school life to the more independent college life, as well as to guide them towards the Union. This is definitely true, but the most important task for them to undertake is still to achieve the aims of the theme. The committee may then agree that only time will tell whether the goal is reached or not, but this is where the fallacy lies. If the road to your goal is not paved, then how are we going to reach it?

As for the rest of the programmes, the welfare services, Chariton, flag-day, sports, water carnival, etc, in terms of organisational efficiency, one can be satisfied. However, these events lack participation, active participation, among both freshmen and seniors. As such, the aims of the theme were lost.

If the fundamental aims of the F.O.C. are as reflected from the theme, then, one can rightly conclude that this F.O.C. has failed in their primary function.

From page 9

TALENTIME for 'HOMES'

The 3rd Heat will consist of Instrumentals and Act O' Rama, all performed by the various Homes below:—

Singapore Assn. for the Retarded Children
Chen Su Lan Methodists Children Home
Singapore Assn for the Blind
School for the Deaf
Toa Payoh Girls' Hostel
Oral School for the Deaf

SEMI FINALS: First S.M. : 27th July 1974
Second S.M. : 10th August 1974

More News will be posted on the Notice Boards in the 3 Campuses.

SO, KEEP IN TOUCH.....



SPORTS - SPORTS - SPORTS

Singapore Hockey Association Division 3 League

			Venue	Time
Monday	3.6.74	Poly Vs. Comex	Poly (Dover Road)	5.15 p.m.
Saturday	15.6.74	Poly Vs. Cooling System	"	"
Thursday	20.6.74	Poly Vs. Khalsa 'C'	"	"
Saturday	22.6.74	Poly Vs. Seletar S.C.	"	"
Wednesday	26.6.74	Poly Vs. SAFSA 'C'	"	"
Saturday	29.6.74	Poly Vs. Prisons 'B'	"	"
Wednesday	3.7.74	R.T.C. Vs. Poly	R.T.C.	"
Saturday	6.7.74	Poly Vs. Ulu Pandan Const.	Poly	"
Saturday	13.7.74	IR.N.Z.I.R. Vs. Poly	Away	"
Thursday	18.7.74	Poly Vs. ACSOBA	Poly	"
Monday	22.7.74	S.C.C. 'B' Vs. Poly	S.C.C.	"
Friday	26.7.74	Poly Vs. Police 'C'	Poly	"

Athletic Championships/Swimming Carnival

S.P.S.C. Athletic Championships:

Saturday, 17th August, 1974.
Venue: R.I., Grange Road
Time: 2.00 p.m.
(Heats will be held in July)

S.P.S.C. Swimming Carnival:

Heats – Saturday, 10th August, 1974
Finals – Saturday, 14th September, 1974
Venue: Shaw Pool, A.C.S.
Time: 2.00 p.m.

Singapore Government Services Football League (Junior Knock-out)

S.P.S.C. is taking part in this competition to be held from mid-June, 1974.

SELECTION WILL BE HELD EVERY TUESDAY AND FRIDAY, COMMENCING ON 10TH JUNE, 1974, AT 5.15 P.M., P.M.C.

Inter-Varsity-College Games 1974/75

Date (From)	Game	Organisers
14.7.74	Tennis (Men & Ladies)	S.U.
15.7.74	Softball (Men & Ladies)	Poly
22.7.74	Hockey (Men & Ladies)	Poly
22.7.74	Sepak Takraw	S.T.I.
Sat. 21.9.74	I-V-C Athletic Championships	S.U.
1.10.74	Netball	I. of E.
Sat. 5.10.74	I-V-C Swimming Carnival	N.A.T.C.
20.11.74	Volleyball (Men & Ladies)	I. of E.
20.11.74	Soccer	N.U.
20.11.74	Table-Tennis (men & ladies)	N.U.
25.11.74	Badminton (Men & Ladies)	N.A.T.C.
25.11.74	Rugby	S.U.
9.12.74	Basketball (Men & Ladies)	S.T.I.

Training/Selection For Inter-Varsity-College Games

Game	Day	Time/Venue
Tennis (Men & Ladies) Softball (Men & Ladies) Hockey (Ladies) Sepak Takraw	Every Tuesday and Friday from 10th June, 1974.	5.15 p.m. P.M.C.



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