

rhodeo

Rhodes Student Newspaper

VOL. 27 NO. 4

The monument
and the
shack ---



.... symbols of
government and
capitalist colla-
boration

BRUSH-OFF

The Rhodes University Administration could not identify itself with student activity, according to a statement made by the authorities last week.

The statement arose from a planned visit by students to the Grahamstown location, as part of the Labour campaign. Students required an 'entry letter' signed by the Vice Chancellor, the Registrar, or the S.R.C. President.

A letter from the President was obtained. Students were then told that only a letter from the Vice Chancellor would do. When a student went to collect the letter next day, he was told it was not ready, as the matter had to go through a S.R.C./Council meeting the next Wednesday.

Professor Chapman said that the letter should go through the S.R.C.

The letter started with the S.R.C. President.

The Administration finally decided that they could not identify with this particular student activity.



after action— satisfaction

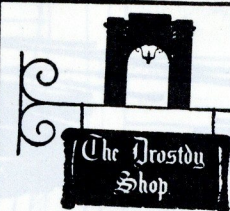


alive with flavor

VIOLENCE CANNOT DESTROY NOR CREATE CULTURE

Woodbourne falls victim to the forces of destruction to make way for a science block. A full report will appear in the next issue of RHODEO.

*Kingsley Retread
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HISTORY IN MICROCOSM

by graham watts

THE 1820 Settler Monument on Guntire Hill overlooking Grahamstown is more of a monument today than it will be when it is completed in February next year.

Envisaged by the Monument Foundation to be a living memorial to the heritage of the British settlers in our country, the actual construction of this R5m colonial edifice is history in microcosm.

A visit to the site reveals that at the heart of the whole construction process are the essential contradictions of the colonial heritage under which South African society labours today. Little has changed in this country, and even less in Grahamstown, since the arrival of the 6 000 men and women who made up the settler party. Things may be a little more sophisticated today - their essential nature remains the same.

Behind this enormous project are the aspirations and sentiments of a number of prominent English-speaking South Africans. These sentiments are, in effect, largely representative of the majority of White English speaking South Africans.

Adult. At the root of the desire to build a living memorial to our own English

heritage lies the belief that the arrival of 'civilised' Anglo-Saxons to this coun-

try is the best thing that happened to the African continent. This stems from the sort of colonial paternalism that is today an important element of the United Party, and probably more so, Progressive Party thinking - the White is seen as the benevolent 'racial adult' guiding and protecting the Black 'racial child'. A R5m monument to commemorate the British contribution to South African society is a manifestation of the popular misconception among English liberals that the political oppression in this country has nothing to do with the English people. That is the Afrikaners' fault. Our contribution is one of culture, economic growth and everything that is good and British.

Secondly, there is the old British imperialistic tradition of over-concern with international reputation. I quote Mrs Thelma Neville, chief Public Relations Officer for the Monument Foundation: 'The entire monument com-

plex is the biggest in the Southern Hemisphere, and it is the only monument of its kind in the world to offer such facilities.'

This highest regard for things big and things exclusive seems to have originated in the nineteenth century Anglo-Saxon value system and manifested itself mostly in the sort of backlash of British feelings at the fearful consequences of the so called 'Fall of the British Empire'.

Slaves. The only reason why South Africa can boast the biggest sugar terminal in the Southern Hemisphere, the biggest ports, the biggest dams, and now the biggest Tower of Babel, is that we can afford them financially - and the only reason we can afford these things financially is that we have a complete disregard for the comfort and human

condition of the cheap labour that builds them.

Egypt was able to construct monstrous pyramids to the honour of its pharaohs.

For 150 years since the arrival of the settlers, British capitalists have built a highly industrialised country on cheap black sweat. For the past 15 months these same English people have been building a magnificent monument of their forefathers - also on cheap black sweat.

Fourthly, the arrival of the British Settlers to South Africa was also the arrival of capitalism and its inherent contradictions, probably the chief one being alienated labour. Man's creative abilities and sense of subjective identification with the product of these abilities have been lost in the process of selling his labour and becoming a unit of production, turning out

commodities for the benefit of some remote and unknown capitalist to the extent that he has no say in what happens to the product of his own labour.

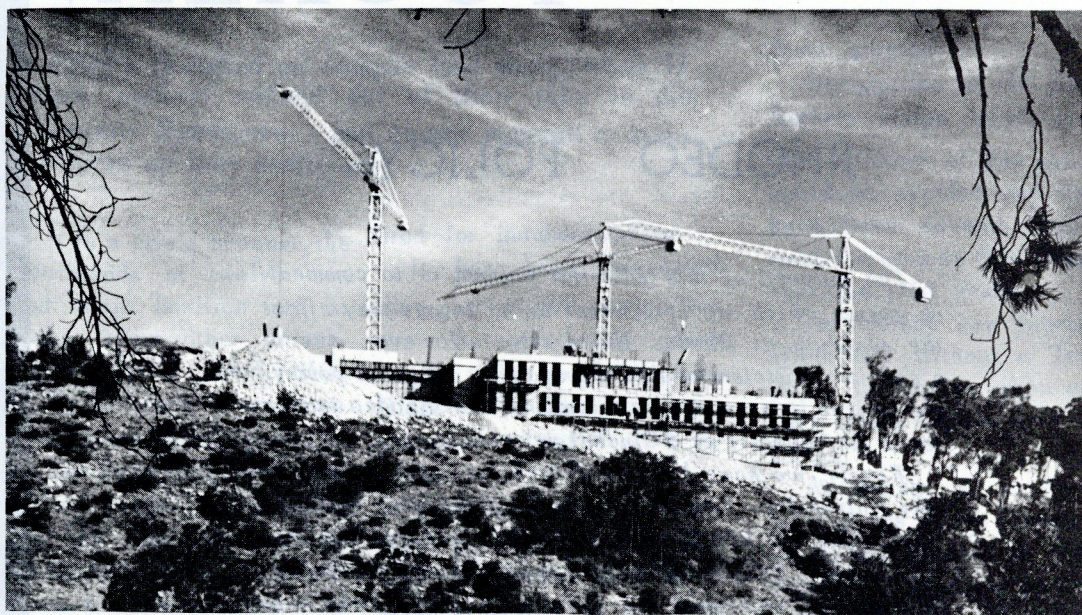
And so it is on the hill above Grahamstown. Out of ten workers, randomly selected, only two were able to tell me what they were building and whom it was for.

Inflation. And finally, R5 million being ploughed into this enormous construction, which, when understood, is undoubtedly a fine piece of architecture and design, is an example of another habitual trait inherited from our British forefathers.

That is the investment of capital in non-productive enterprises. Our country is being throttled by inflation. This is blamed, of course, on the Nationalist Government by the majority of English-speaking industrialists.

The use of R5 million on a scheme which provides only temporary employment and further increases the gap between capital investment and marginal productivity, can only be attributed to a strange list of priorities.

If black people object to the five million rands' worth of colonial and paternalistic sentiments embedded in the concrete of this edifice, and the cheap black sweat eternally enshrined in that memorial and the view of the Grahamstown location from the monument gardens, let us not tell them 'it's just all cricket'.



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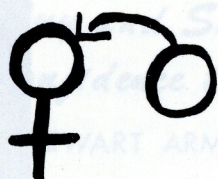
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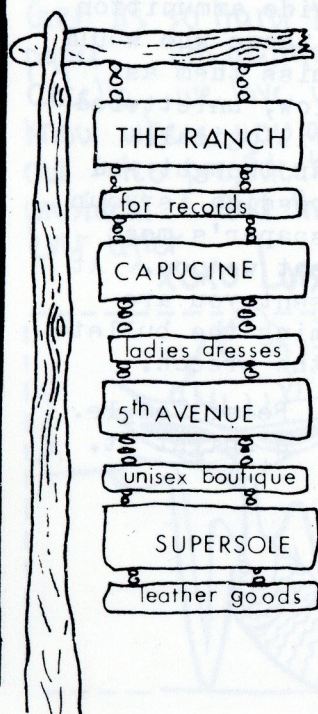
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RHODEO POLICY

The purpose of this editorial column is to comment on events which are of interest to, or in any way effect the students at Rhodes University. However, due to a specific criticism of this newspaper's editorial policy, we believe it is necessary to outline what Rhodéo stands for in its capacity as a student newspaper.

Firstly, we have been criticised for not representing the University. Let us point out straight away that it is impossible for Rhodéo to accurately represent the student body. People seem to be under the impression that Rhodéo can represent the University in the same way as a lawyer represents his clients in court. The analogy is plainly ridiculous.

Nevertheless, Rhodéo (or any newspaper) must adopt a positive editorial policy. Our decision is based on the assumption that students come to university to think and be stimulated. If this is not the case, then we apologise for making an unwarranted inference.

If we accept this premise, then it is easy to understand why we do not print social tittle-tattle, which merely allows certain socialites to have a sleazy giggle once a fortnight. Our concern is to allow students to think and if possible, react to what we print in our columns.

The second criticism states that Rhodéo is a mouth-piece of the SRC and NUSAS. This seems to be an objection to Rhodéo's treatment of politics in general. In our issue of March 8, we stated that South Africa is one

of the most politically orientated societies in the world. Thus many of the subjects we deal with have unavoidable political connotations. It should also be noted that the popularity of 'Wits Student' does not hide the fact that it is far more politically orientated than Rhodéo.

Rhodéo has changed its editorial policy, and as a result it appears that certain students are upset - their rigorously defined roles and expectations on campus have been violated.

Within reason this is a healthy situation. Rhodéo will question anything which is influenced by tradition or the desire for uniformity. We do not reject either out of hand but we believe that these factors are exerting too great an influence on student consciousness here.

Rhodéo does not want to be a popular newspaper if by being popular it satisfies that section of the university which enjoys reading trivia. Those people who look forward to their Thursday edition of Rhodéo merely to 'gen up' on the latest campus gossip, will probably be disappointed by the loss of their loved ones. However, Rhodéo is not unduly concerned about the loss of their support. These people will no doubt find other ways to revel in the mud.

In conclusion it is necessary to point out that Rhodéo is not aimed at any kind of intellectual elite. Our task is to disturb the status quo which manifests itself on political, social and cultural levels. The sadness lies in the fact that students are very much part of this thought conditioned body.

Rhodéo will continue to pose awkward questions because it is through controversy and conflict that students may eventually gain a valid perspective on their role at Rhodes University.

LETTERS

Dear Sir,

Mr. Deacon, the Honourable M.P. for Albany has based the importance of his statement concerning NUSAS upon the use of the word *re-e-f-o-r-m*. He has taken great pains in clarifying his stance by pointing out the fact that what he meant was that NUSAS should take steps to not reform but *re-form*.

I was under the impression that the eight bannings made it rather necessary that NUSAS *re-form*. However, I would like to take this opportunity in congratulating Mr. Deacon in his powers of interpreting the English language and in his potential for the pre-termination of history.

At the same time I would like to point out to Mr. Deacon and all his ardent supporters (students included) that NUSAS, I am sure, would like to clarify its stance in respect of the Honourable M.P.'s *re-statement*... as I see it, NUSAS is concerned with *re-evolution* and not revolution.

B.M. Curran

Dear Sir,

On behalf of the 1973 Rag Committee I would wish to extend my apologies to all those people who were offended by the "Godfather" Rag Stunt on Wednesday March 21.

All the money realised by this stunt has been handed in to the Rag office and will go towards the purposes for which Rag is constituted.

However, should anyone still feel aggrieved, their

Terry Brick
CHAIRMAN

Dear Sir,

Due to the eccentricity of your distribution system, I have only just read your issue of March 8. May I congratulate you on your newly-won liberation from the limitations of the letterpress process. At the same time, may I deplore your apparent liberation from the rules of English usage and logical argument. To cite examples would be tedious; the issue abounds in them. Your stated intention is to provide "a fearless commentary on the traditions and news of this university" and to "expose the side of Rhodes that the majority of Rhodians would prefer untouched". Certainly the March 8 issue provides an unconscious exposure of your own standards that must leave certain Rhodes departments despairing.

If students want to be taken seriously - and it is of vital importance that they are taken seriously - they must strive not to provide ammunition for those who would dismiss them as callow, unlettered and illogical. Clear thought and expression is your newspaper's most potent weapon. At present you are jamming the bullets in the breech.

Peter Temple.
4 Knight St.

+ FREE
STICKERCecil John

WALKOUT

at last!
pure sweet con-
sensus

POISON DIV. 1.

gee it was super to skip downtown with the Cecelia All-Stars Club in our new Cecelia T-shirts. Allisoun Wonderland unanimously chose herself as president to lead us all in our stand for popcorn. Her brand new idea is going to save everybody from having to have convictions. She says we are all just the same so we shouldn't have to be sudo intellectuals. But she doesn't not like intellectuals. Its just the sudo intellectuals. She too can be lectual if she wants to as well. We think Cecelia should become the patron saint of the varsity and also the rest of the world. Why not? Cecelia knows our every whim and fancy and she would like our popcorn power. Popcorn is going to flaunt all these silly conflicts in our university life. Once we can see how well it works wonders we can show the world all they don't know about. We don't like all these serious boys and girls. Allisoun hates them. They don't smile like she does about anything. Popcorn will more than keep every one happy. And when we're not hungry. And more we can do finger paintings or french nitting or make flowers for rag. Popcorn brings us together. And we are going to have secret meetings in our clubhouse up near the Kwarry. And we are going to make Cecelia and popcorn bumper stickers for our trikes and clip boards. And we are starting a Cecelia fan club. Please send all your post to Olive Shriner and not to rhodes because they **DETEST** popcorn. Gee its so hard to write for a student news paper. I'm getting cramp in my thumb. Oh Cecelia we love you so much but we don't know where you are. Please come and be our vice president cause Allisoun likes being president. And then we can live happily ever after

xoxo Lots of Love

Sally xxxoxo

Cecilia

Popcorn brings us.....

..together.

A CRISIS occurred on campus last week, when 11 Black workers walked out of their jobs in the Chemistry Department - and no-one appears to know the facts as they really are.

It is a crisis because the livelihoods of twelve men and their families are at stake. Many other University workers could quite easily find themselves in an equally unpleasant situation.

The facts that have emerged are partially conflicting but the one factor which resounds harshly is the allegation of maltreatment of the workers.

According to one source a man who had been working for the university for 19 years, applied for leave to attend a funeral. Mr Webb, the overseer of the Black workers in the Chemistry Department, refused this.

The following week, the worker was ill and did not come to work. Mr Webb later insisted that he had gone to the funeral, despite his production of a medical certificate.

Mr Webb then transferred him - an old man, to another job. It was claimed this job was too strenuous for him. Another worker, instructed

to take the man's post, refused, saying that the older man was being victimised.

Another source said that Mr Webb told workers to hurry with their tea in order to do a job. One worker swore at him, and Mr Webb replied that if he had grievances he should bring them forward.

The worker walked out, and within fifteen minutes the department was empty; 11 workers had left. Mr Webb found one man who had remained. After harsh words between the two, he was

fired for insubordination.

It has been suggested that part of the reason for the walk-out was poor wages. The highest paid Black in the Chemistry department is paid R16 a week.

Whatever the actual incident that led to the walk-out, there must have been some grievance on the part of the workers for them to throw down their livelihoods.

This statement is supported by the severe shortage of employment for Blacks in this area. The morning after the walk out no fewer than 150 Blacks were waiting outside the Chemistry Department to fill the 12 vacancies.

The time has come, indeed it is overdue, for the Rhodes Black Workers Union to be recognised as an official body on campus. The existence of the Union has been noted by Council, but no official recognition has

been granted.

Recognition of the Black Workers Union would mean that incidents of this nature could be avoided and there have been several employment disputes on this campus over the past years.

No worker can function effectively without a Trade Union to turn to when conflict arises in his work situation.

According to a report, the workers in the Chemistry Department found Mr Webb difficult to approach on frequent occasions. There have been allegations that he swore at them and abused them.

This conflicts with reports that he did not maltreat them, but that he helped them whenever necessary, for example in the formation of a choir last year.

The fact remains that official recognition of the Black Workers' Union could prevent a similar situation from arising. It would give the Black workers at this University the human right to speak when working conditions become oppressive.

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THE DEGREE of dependence on black labour in urban areas, and the urban ratio of blacks to whites, are both increasing.

At the end of 1971 there were 5.8 million economically active Africans out of a total of 8.3 million active persons in the economy. An active proletariat of 22 million is estimated for South African cities by the year 2000 (just over 25 years from now!)

This black proletariat and their families are rootless, poverty stricken, undernourished and largely, uneducated. In spite of the Durban strikes and the growth of black consciousness, both employers and Dr Diedrichs have chosen to ignore these warnings.

"Oh, but this is untrue! Employers are trying desperately to close the wage gap and at least the government have given incentive to economic growth which will raise living standards among the Natives," say the respectable English liberals.

How far can Africans trust English liberals who, we must remember, occupy the highest positions in the economic power structure? How far can Africans trust the supporters of the Progressive Party and the "Harry Oppenheims? It is in the short-run profit-maximising interests of management to practice racial discrimination. Industrialisation operates within the country's political and legal framework, where it is usually more profitable to placate one section of the working force by discriminating against another section.

In order to continue a firm's existence, it is obviously in its short-term interest to adjust its profit-maximising policy to comply with the legal and social constraints of the system. The economic system can easily contain marginal wage increases and a small degree of vertical mobility by black workers.

In this sense, there is an overall collaboration between white business and white government to pres-

erve their monopoly of political and economic power.

As one can see, a pragmatic alliance to entrench power in white hands would have to include owner's and business's interests together with those who hold the greater degree of political power, namely the white rural, lower-middle and working classes.

Because this "artificial" co-operation between those who hold economic power and those who hold political power occurred during South Africa's industrialisation, it has been necessary for white management and organised white labour to collaborate with the government's help.

The interests of white workers and white employers are still in conflict (as shown in the three white political parties and their policies) but

the employers can afford to give in to certain demands of the white trade unions. The old "frontier myth" about white workers not being able to hold their own in the face of cheap black competition on the labour market, has led to a situation where employers are able to "play off" white and black workers against one another in order to secure economic gains for management.

Figures show that the share of capital in South Africa has always been far in excess of the marginal productivity of capital. South African profits are extremely high.

Although, economically, the white worker has not gained at the expense of the entrepreneurs (many of whom are foreign), he has gained at the expense of the black worker.

This has been done through the political process by eroding the rights of black workers and by the lack of monopolistic and tax restrictions on companies. Racial labour

legislation affecting African trade unions, African access to entrepreneurial activity, and apprenticeship training together with job reservation and contract agreements, have affectively crippled the share of wages accruing to Africans and have completely undermined job security.

Thus it is that both white and black workers are underpaid in terms of their marginal productivity, but that white workers have gained at the expense of black workers. If the "wage gap" is closed one must still

This is a sketchy outline of economic insights in South Africa and campus perspectives for combatting this economic injustice

solve the problem of overpaid entrepreneurs and underpaid labour in general.

Since it seems highly unlikely, given the socio-political framework that black and white workers will unite their interests against employers on any co-ordinated level, one can expect high rates of profit to be maintained by employers, and marginal increases to be given to Africans at the expense of white labourers (given the continued frustration and unrest shown by Black workers.) The maintenance of white privilege requires a certain level of economic growth. However, if this economic growth is sustained, it will exert pressure on a conservatively structured politico-legal structure which may offer opportunities for a partial redistribution of income.

Productivity drives and trainingschemes for artisans aimed at decreasing inflat-

ionary effects may offer opportunities for the organisation of black labour into bargaining positions.

The history of unionism shows that workers must first demonstrate their inherent bargaining power before it is legally recognised. The flexibility of apartheid to cope with industrialisation does, however, dampen these prospects into hard reality.

The struggle for economic justice is an extremely difficult (and seemingly never ending) one.

How does this view relate to campus life?

Well, firstly students have been told, ironically enough by English liberals in most cases, that university involves the 'pursuit of truth'. It seems, though, that 'pursuit of truth' is a life long activity which involves more than reading books and vomiting information back onto examination sheets (which is usually rationalised as 'lecturers teaching students to think') - more than repeating arguments and going round in circles, 'forgetting what we were going to say'.

It seems to involve acting on what we believe is true - this involves questioning action particularly always

of those who have power and privileges.

It follows that "the pursuits of truth" cannot be separated from those pursuing it and their attitudes towards their social milieu.

The information a lecturer gives cannot be separated from his liberally minded, middle-class, white South African outlook in most cases. Nor can the views of white English-speaking students be separated from their apparent alienation from officially accepted South African norms and values.

The uniqueness of each person's experience must be respected in order to achieve the co-operation needed for improved human relationships between black and white, or between employer and employee, if they

cannot manage it between themselves?

How can lecturers make a genuine attempt to contribute towards a responsible society if they cannot, through their thinking and guidance, even sow the seeds amongst their own students?

How can university administrators hold any hope for non-violent change in this country if they fail to reduce the inequalities amongst their own employees?

The answer seems to be not to become propagandists on the one hand, and not to hide behind pseudo academic purity on the other. The answer requires a moral obligation to our comrades, black and white, and also a self awareness capable of seeing our own and other people's limitations.

Here lies the motivation that will sustain our attempts in the face of disillusionment.

In short, a genuine attempt to establish a responsible community on campus (without the utopian dreams of Marcusian negativism) is called for, in order to be effective on a wider scale.

It requires students, staff and administration to become aware of themselves, their families, their class backgrounds, and the power (or potential power) they exert in relation to the broader society.

It requires cooperation, particularly in improving wages, medical and pension benefits and job security for black staff members of this campus.

It requires an awareness of which of us and which of our mothers and fathers are exploiting black (and white) labour in Southern Africa.

How, also can a radically divided campus effectively face the onslaught of the Schlebusch Commission and the looming threat of the Van Wyk de Vries Commission?

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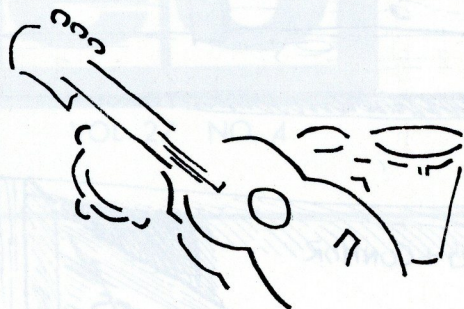
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FOLK SHOW DRAGS



AFTER a half-hour delay the first big meeting of the folk club tottered into a tedious four hours of repetition.

There was so much crammed into the programme that some of the singers did not have a chance to perform. The audience often broke into spontaneous participation, but on the whole the performers failed to capture their audience.

Most singers dragged through their songs at an incredibly slow pace, and this marred all attempts at variety. They lacked harmony, the essence of folk, and were unrehearsed and uninspiring.

Worst of all were the faked American accents, unnecessary in most cases, and the incoherent mumblings into the microphone.

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ACCOUNTS GLADLY OPENED

Baron giggled and squeaked their way through a few songs before we were introduced to one of the few talented performers, Andre, from East London.

Dylan was one of the most popular composers, and Andre's skilful handling of the harmonica in "Alberta" was rivalled only by Joe Meyers later on. He has a like most others he lacked good, sensitive voice, but like most others he lacked variation.

Rhodes' offering was appalling, perhaps because our audiences are prepared to accept anything without question. Graham Brown's bongo playing is perhaps worth mention, but then again no-one has to harmonise with bongos.

The second half of the programme was bounced into life by a truly professional performance by Charley Griffin. He can command his audience, hold them in his hand and lead them to an imaginative euphoris. His high baritone voice is superb. One of the highlights of the evening was his sad and stirring version of John Denver's "Take me Home Country Road".

Then there was Julia Blundell, of her father's family fame. She sang Carole King's "Tapestry" in a clear plaintive voice. Perhaps some day we will be privileged to hear her again.

Compere and singer Ray Sowman was unable to handle the heckling he received. He has a good voice but

would be well advised not to warble ALL the time.

John Oakley Smith, who hitched all the way from Johannesburg, provided some exciting instrumental work. Barefooted and relaxed, he performed in the true folk tradition. It is a pity there is not more scope for his talent in this country.

By the time a Blue Grass type band from East London ended the evening with a lively Hoot Nanny session half the audience had crept home to bed. The other half were asleep on the floor. Unfortunately they missed an interesting little performance, harmonised and fluent.

Next time, we hope, the organisers will be more selective and throw out those not up to standard. The few good performers were somewhat bogged down by others who were far too shoddy. Folk music is normally an opportunity for informal entertainment. But the Great Hall just wasn't

Ma's back yard.

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Graham House

The Wild Ones

THE FILM SOCIETY'S showing of the 'Wild Ones' last Thursday night was a surprisingly effective portrayal of the distinctions that can be drawn between conformism and non-conformism, being something and being nothing.

Johnny, played by Marlon Brando, is the leader of a motor cycle gang who wander from town to town looking for something which will give their lives some purpose.

Unlike contemporary films, the 'Wild One' does not represent youth as an articulate, sensitive body who act as the conscience of the world. Rather the film attempts to portray youth's naive and blind subjectivity.

Youth is shown to be as blind in its rejection as the established bourgeoisie is blind to its own hypocrisy.

Johnny's tragedy is that whilst he is committed to a gregarious life-style, he cannot allow his girl's intimacy to touch him. Indeed he cannot allow anything to touch him. Yet, because he perceives beyond his immediate situation he is tormented by self-doubt.

The end of the film is inconclusive. Johnny gives the girl a token, but leaves soon afterwards. Some communication has been achieved, but the gulf between them is too deep. P.C.

Correction

Dear Sir,

In RHODEO, March 22, it was reported that "white staff... gave R100 to their black counterparts". This is incorrect. Last year staff members contributed R2 775 to the Rhodes Staff Association Welfare Scheme. This amount excludes contributions to any other campus and non-campus welfare scheme.

Mrs. S. Moulder,
Secretary,
Rhodes Staff
Association
Welfare Scheme.

ELECTRA

the birds April 9-14 *

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THEREOF.

RHODEO apologises
for the absence of
sport in this issue.

Owing to unavoid-
able technical prob-
lems we were unable
to set up the sport
copy.

Every effort will
be made to rectify
this in future is-
sues of RHODEO.

- Editor

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