

mayday manifesto

Special Bulletin

No.1

'thugs & wreckers'

The case of the LSE by Jill West

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JILL WEST

"Thugs & Wreckers...."

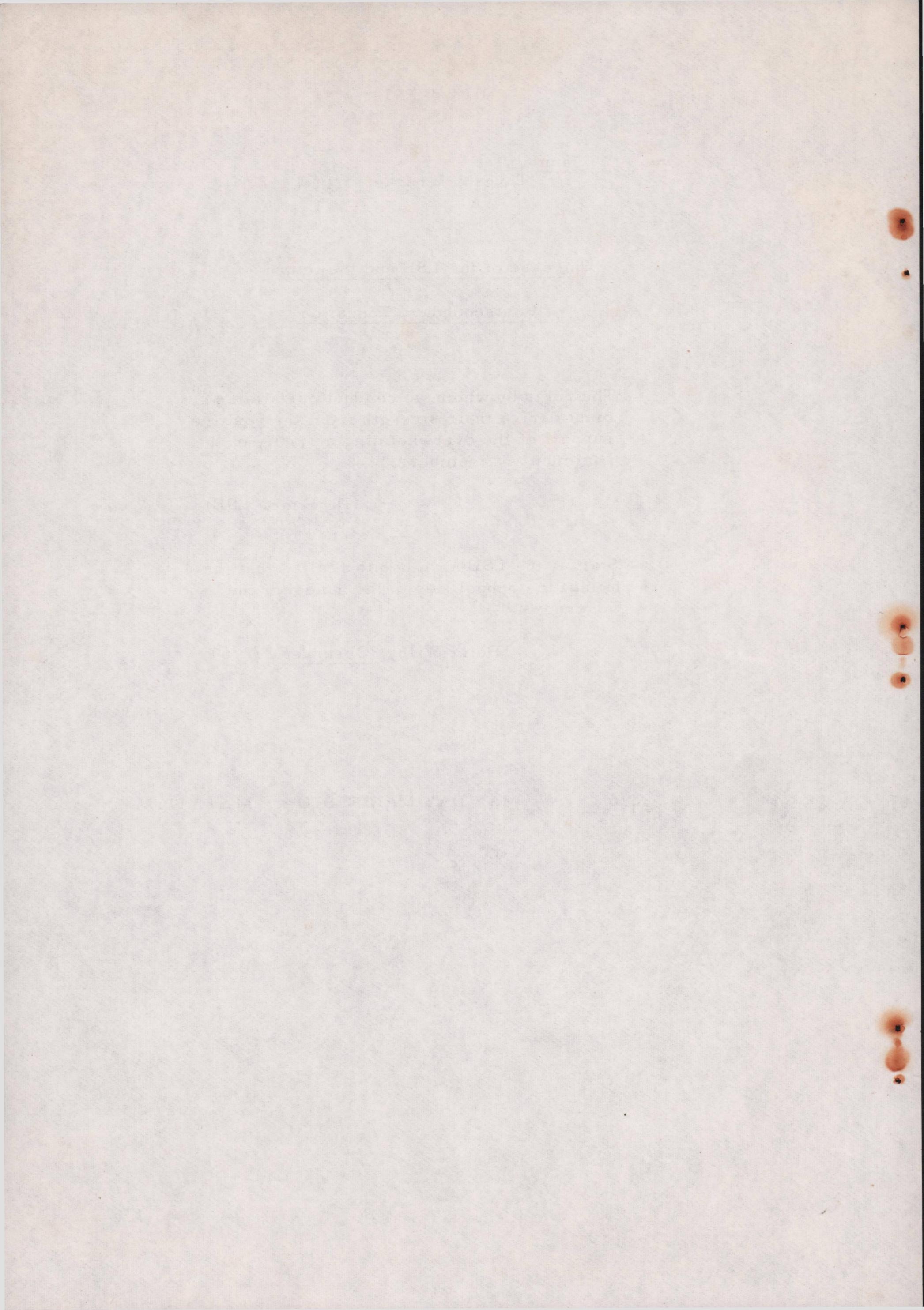
The case of the LSE and the future
of Postsecondary Education

"The rules by which we conduct our affairs must derive their strength from the positive support of the overwhelming majority of the community's members."

(Director, LSE)

"Staff at the LSE have had to realise that the fate of the School lies in the hands of the Governors."

(Peter Wilby, Observer 2/2/69)



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Published as a "May Day Pamphlet", this text does not commit any members of the MDM or the National Committee to the support of any of the theses advanced.

Last year was the year of the promise of Hornsey. This year is that of the struggle for the LSE.

The argument of this paper was originally presented in a paper completed on February 15th. For this re-impression, I have reorganised the argument to a certain extent, made certain corrections and added a few footnotes, and extended the argument of the last part. Otherwise the rest remains substantially the same. Were it to be written, a number of the following points would have guided the re-writing:

1) It has been argued that the paper gravely over-estimates the capacity of progressive liberal staff to have the courage of their hypothetical convictions in any crisis situation where it matters. The vast bulk of academic staff, students have said, would never solidarise with the students if this meant encountering the hostility of their colleagues and superiors. Short-run occupational pressures will always outweigh any more far-sighted "ideal" perspective.

This may be the case. The failure of academics in particular and intellectuals in general to respond to the purges at Hornsey, Guildford and other art colleges in any effective way suggests that any successful victimisation at the LSE will also be successful - providing the Authorities wait long enough. On the other hand, even if only 35% or 15% of middle-level universities and colleges were to harbour a strategic minority of consequent liberal staff, the achievement of more or less successful academic communities would be of immense general political significance. I would argue that the experiment needs to be made on each campus rather than argued a priori.

2) The developments in the latter part of February at the LSE show that, in the current phase of crack-down on all sectors of the union movement, the Governors feel sufficiently backed to disregard completely the most authentic expressions of student opinion. They have completely disregarded massive and repeated Student Union votes for "negotiations over the gates on the basis of no victimisation". The concession to the staff of opening the School in fact enabled them to de-fuse any potential opposition bloc that might have emerged among the staff. The strategy of victimisation and expulsion appears unaffected by McKenzie-like operations or opinions. These latter then come to appear as objectively demobilising the students.

3) More academics than might be expected are prepared to spy on and inform against students or against their colleagues. The LSE "Academic Informer" listed some 20 involved in providing and giving evidence: JWN Watkins, CI Jackson, HC Edey, Percy Cohen, J Pike, FR Bridge, GH Stern, K Bourne, Peter Wiles, SK Panter-Brick, B Donaghue, M Bromwich, AE Musgrove, A Day, M Freedman, Terence Morris, W Adams, M Bromwich-Jones, E Thorpe, R Bullen, FR Bridge, GT Mitchell, G Dawson, Dr. Anderson. No doubt, they acted honourably according to their lights. The problem for all those concerned for make colleges and universities a tolerable place: what are there lights?

4) In general, what current developments bring out quite clearly is the readiness of the dominant set in some "academic communities" to exploit the full resources of the State judiciary and penitentiary. To settle disagreements with the community, the law is brought into deal with recalcitrants:

injunctions, suspended sentences, and, given the nature of the British legal system, very considerable financial losses for groups who can ill afford them. With such a concept of community, the discreet liaison of university authorities and parallel police can be expected to develop further, as can that with the National Union of Students.

Interpretations of "professional behaviour" and "academic responsibility" previously held to characterise Stalinist and other totalitarian regimes and military-police dictatorships (with occasional forgotten slips in the West during the McCarthyite period) have a certain chance of attaining an undeclared and inexplicit respectability. Should this prove to be the case, future historians may well take the failure of liberal intellectuals to respond effectively to the "purgers" of the late sixties to have been an important factor in the gentle slide into a post-liberal society.

It has been in the belief that this betrayal of the intellectual, though possible, is not necessary that this pamphlet was written.

March 1st 1969

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Last month, a college of one of the major universities of this country has been closed down. A debate in parliament showed the leading spokesmen of all three dominant parties united in their diagnosis of the situation. A small group were out to 'destroy society', both the academic societies of our universities and inasmuch as the right of free discussion and the system of majority-decision making are concerned, were out to destroy British society in general. A whole system of law and a whole system of order were said to be threatened by organised violence.

.... The real perpetrators were... less than 30. The thugs of the academic world.. (whose) weapons are lies misrepresentation, defamation, character assassination, intimidation and physical violence. .. This tiny cell of people could do untold long-term harm.. (Edward Short)

1 The Argument

It will be argued that these statements are broadly correct; that those responsible for this planned development are not within the academic community but outside it (though they have helpers both among academic staff and among students); that the current development of British capitalism explains both the origin of these attacks and their timing.

It is argued that those responsible for the closing of the LSE and the strategy in which that is an essential part are to be found in a reactionary bloc that can be called the Robbins-Roberts-Crouch axis. This group is currently (i) centred in the person of Lord Robbins (who dominates the Governing Body of the LSE and its active nucleus, the 'Standing Committee'), also involves (ii) a caucus of conservative dons (mostly economists) who are strong in the General Purposes Committee of the Academic Board and have under normal circumstances a preponderant influence on the Academic Board; and (iii) a caucus of reactionary students whose spokesman is perhaps Colin Crouch.

It will be further argued that the primary target of those responsible is academic staff, not a minority of staff but the majority. It will also be argued that this operation within the LSE has had parallels, and will have more, in other colleges and universities throughout the country, and consequently very important lessons must be learnt, (a) by staff and students in order to prepare for future conjunctures and crises, and (b) to cope with the development of the crisis.

It will be argued that these precipitated crises and preparations for them are part of a concerted general understanding which crystallised at the Vice-Chancellors' Cambridge Conference early last summer, and is further developing in conjunction with the National Union of Students. This bloc will be called the VC/NUS axis.

Finally, it will be argued that there are specific reasons for the urgency of the anti-LSE operation which illustrate the general problems of British capitalism and the hopes and fears of the constituted authorities for their programmed development of British society in general and for education in particular.

I. Operation January at the LSE

2 'Operation January'

The concerted planning of the Vice-Chancellors and of the National Union of Students dates from the meetings of the Vice-Chancellors in Cambridge early

early last summer. This was itself a reaction to the 'May events' in France and their potential repercussions in Great Britain.

The decision to erect 'gates' in the LSE was taken "last summer". The gates were erected in January. How can the lag between last summer and January be explained. This is a problem of timing.

The intervening period of the October 1968 term saw a period (of ideological and juridical preparation) during which the authorities attempted to create favourable conditions for the crisis which was to be precipitated by the 'shock-effect' of suddenly erecting steel grilles in the university corridors without warning or consultation. *

3 Ideological and Juridical Preparation for 'January'

Ideological 'preparation' of the public and of the academics was achieved by a systematic development of the theme of 'student violence' in particular and minority violence in general. The linking element was Powell's stimulation, first of a 'racist' backlash and then of an 'anti-student' backlash by the rather simple device, in the latter case, of a well-publicised 'racist' tour of the universities. The reaction of the student Left could then be presented as attempts to destroy 'freedom of speech, 'mindless violence' etc.

The intention was clear, too, in relation to the October Vietnam demonstration. The Press build-up of maximal anticipation of violence (to be fully screened reported etc.) had its effect even though the lack of violence ('only the admirable British police...') was so obvious (e.g. the Times) as to (slightly) misfire due to the discipline of the October mobilisation.

The ideological preparation was both national in the sense we have suggested and also particularly related to the LSE. The utilisation of the LSE during the October mobilisation as 'hospital and sanctuary' provided the occasion for Lord Robbins to initiate the juridical preparation of the 'gates crisis'. The General Purposes Committee was given the task of developing a juridical basis for the future 'purge' of militant academics and the 'subordination' of the moderates.

4 The Extension of Contractual Duties

This juridical base was an extension, a new interpretation of the contractual duties of the staff. Two extensions were proposed and 'leaked' prior to the discussion by the Academic Board. The 'extreme' extension was not carried, the essential extension was carried with extraordinarily few dissenting votes.

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* Reflecting on the failure of staff and students to react to the juridical preparation or to understand their significance, either in general or in this particular case, one analyst has compared the "gates" with the action of the Americans in setting-up "Tonkin Bay". The loss of control by Congress and Senate over the incredible and counterproductive escalation of the war in Vietnam is based on a juridical blank cheque given to President Johnson at the time. There, too, the implications were only discovered at considerable time later (Fulbright) after it was for the most purposes too late. Will we see a time in the future, too late, when academics will complain that they were "brainwashed" by national media and local authorities into a complete misreading of campus situations?

Under academic contracts, staff can be dismissed for 'misconduct' or 'incapacity', where incapacity is defined in terms of failing to carry out contractual obligations. Hence, the critical importance of changing precedents in "interpreting" academic priorities in the light of the vague formulations of contract.

The extreme extension of contractual obligations was one whereby staff were asked to recognise that 'in exceptional circumstances' (i. e. when the authorities decreed a state of exception), the 'use of force' by staff against students might be 'necessary'.¹ Given the absurdity of really obliging elderly teachers² to use force against young men and women, it is reasonable to consider this either (1) as a contractual obligation that would rarely be enforced or (2) as a 'straw man' to ensure that the more 'moderate' extension would be accepted by the Academic Board.

The moderate extension to contractual obligations was, of course, the obligation to be assumed by staff to 'identify students' in situations in which a breach of the peace 'seemed to be occurring'. If this were adopted; if breaches of the peace were to be provoked subsequently, and staff were to refuse to 'identify students', then this would count as grounds for dismissal.

The knowledge that staff had accepted as their contractual duty to their employers an obligation to betray their professional 'clients', the students, was expected to have clear political consequences: it must provoke a polarisation between 'academic staff' and 'students'. The existence of such a contractual obligation would seal, symbolise, and enforce a political rupture between the two components of the academic community.

It was only after this 'essential juridical preparation' has been provided on the basis of general and particular ideological preparation that the 'casus belli', the gates, could be mounted.

5 'January'

The scenario generally concerted in the summer of last year then developed predictably. Students 'used violence' (not on persons, as the General Purposes Committee had wished to make obligatory on staff, but on 'iron gates more suitable to a Borstal'). Senior professors just happened to be around, both in the 15-minute period when the gates were removed, and a couple of hours later when the police were finally persuaded to come and invade the Students Union Bar (in scenes described as reminiscent of Czechoslovakia or Chicago rather than Great Britain). These professors 'found that they had no choice but' to finger out the miscreants. One report escalated their alleged moral repulsion to the point at which instead of 'crocodile tears', one senior academic was driven to vomit- after doing his duty, of course.

1 Compare the strictures of the dominant parties and the media against the School authorities attempt to instruct staff to assault students (zero), and their strictures against students removing Borstal grilles with no more 'violence' than anybody would use in taking down a fence in his garden. Images of anarchists with pickaxes, mad-eyed mobs, thugs and wreckers saturated the popular imagination in the critical period.

2 outnumbered by 10:1 on the current UGC staff-student ratios.

To everybody's surprise (except those who had planned the operation) the School was then closed by the Director (to the end of term' if necessary) and the task was then given to the 'student element' in the bloc of reactionary LSE forces to persuade the moderates to allow the 'violent minority of staff and students' to be disciplined and expelled, if not from the country then at least by the College.

A notable feature of the operation was the full mobilisation of the three Establishment political parties and the mass media. In terms of what had happened ('enough damage to warrant sending a junior constable, perhaps' as one police officer put it), the ideological campaign was as disproportionate on the surface and as tactically necessary as that put into effect at the time of the VSC demonstration in October 1968.

The 'Trojan Horse', the 'Fifth Column' element were roundly denounced by the eminent spokesmen of all three parties in a Commons debate, the tone of which was given by Edward Short; editorials and "How long...?" letters to the editor sprouted throughout the press; the BBC exemplified the "foreign wreckers" approach by carefully listing the nationalities (why not ethnic origins?) for TV viewers. A thoroughly disgraceful and exemplary occasion.

It was in this national ideological context that the Administration and the NUS prepared a Union meeting for the LSE at the Friends Meeting House. In this meeting, it was all-too-obviously expected, the moderates-- and maybe even Colin Crouch's conservatives? -- would get the "decent majority of LSE students" to disavow and denounce the "tiny minorities" to the internal and external courts in return for permission to return to the LSE and a prepared 'symbolic victory': the removal of some or all of the gates--these now having served their major purpose.

6 The Over-Played Hand: The 'Wrong' Polarisation

The plan miscarried, on account of the solidarity of the students rather than the initial perceptiveness of the staff; and a number of 'non-secrets' were revealed to the attentive reader of the Press and eventually, because of the sustained solidarity of the students, some of the implications of the operation started to become clear even to the academic staff. *

Lord Robbins found divisions within his Standing Committee (reported as being 'by no means unanimous in refusing to re-open the school' in the face of the expressed desire of a majority of staff and students for an early re-opening'). One member of the General Purposes Committee (Dr. George Morton) resigned calling for 'the limitation of the power of the Court of Governors to interfere in the running of the school', on the grounds that 'on many important questions of policy, neither the Academic Board nor its General Purposes Committee was informed, let alone consulted, and free discussions have been curtailed (0, 9/2/69)'.

An unanticipated consequence of the crisis was that Robbins and his small 'Standing Committee' (One-half academic, the other 'lay') dominating the 80-strong Board of Governors became clearly distinct (1) from the majority of staff (expressed in votes of the Academic Board) and (2) from the majority of students (expressed in the Establishment sponsored Union meeting).

It now becomes 'no secret' that it is 'Robbins who rules the roost' and Adams who occupies a vital yet subordinate position. Governors

* resignations not reported in the national press, not to speak of private intentions to leave

express their misgivings to the Press that in these meetings, held in the offices of Robbins' Financial Times, or elsewhere, Robbins guides 'statements' through 'too quickly', drafts ultimata which some think 'uncompromising', which on one occasion even Maudling thought could have been "phrased more constructively". It also becomes 'no secret' that 'a significant number of the governors' and 'some dons' have been 'fumbling for the whip hand and would like to teach the militants a lesson'.

This polarisation of Governors against the Academic Board is a political resource whose proper development is of the utmost importance for academic freedom and political freedom in Britain. In terms of the ideological struggle to discredit the students, it had always been axiomatic for the Establishment that there was already in existence a free liberal institution with full discussion and majority decision by the academic community as such. It was the alleged existence of a prior self-governing academic community which made student action appear as a threat to the 'core values of our society'.

7 Who Does Control the College...?

Sustained student refusal to provide the Robbins bloc with a rapid victory through victimisation, made clear both that the students had never been considered part of the academic community (their Union delegations to the Academic Board and other official instances were refused the right to either speak or listen); and that in times of crisis - that is, in matters of policy - 'the fate of the school lay in the hands of the governors', and not anywhere in the academic community: ... neither the Academic Board nor its general purposes Committee was informed, let alone consulted, and free discussions have been curtailed...

At the time of writing it is clear that the combined declared demands by the academic staff and by the students for the re-opening of the college are made against a group of governors dominated by the chairman of the Financial Times. The conditions in which Lord Robbins 'suspended' his lock out (for Wednesday 19th) suggest he is prepared to look for a better, second excuse to close them more definitely in a less obviously provocative fashion, unless he can liquidate insubordination of staff and students in the mean time.

An imperfect reflection of the real as opposed to the apparent meaning of the crisis can be read in two editorials of the unhappy Observer.

On 26th January, an editorial headed 'Student Intolerance' stressed that the right of free discussion and the system of majority decision-making were central to our liberal society, and that the logical implication of this was that disciplinary action must be taken against those involved in the 'violent action' of the LSE. A reluctant disguised admission of what is really at stake was to follow a week later.

By the 2nd of February, the Observer had discovered that 'the interruption of lectures' was not simply a wrecking operation but designed to facilitate 'their gradual replacement by free discussion' (cp. Dr. Morton's complaint about the curtailment of free discussion... by those above and outside the Academic Board). The militant minority, said the Observer, wanted to make institutions in which 'all members of the institution would have an equal voice'.

Previously described as essentially hostile to 'the right of free discussion, the system of majority decision-making', the students suddenly appear to be fighting for 'free discussion' and 'an equal voice for all'.

Given this belated discovery, the analysis must be pushed further. Since it is the students, the militant students, who are fighting for these core values of liberal society, for the creation of an academic community, and its liberation from control from the Governors and Above, who, then, is resisting? Who are the thugs wrecking the academic community by fighting to prevent its realisation? Why?

8 The Conservative Bloc within the College = Crouch-Robbins-Roberts

- (i) 'A very few students' under the guidance of Colin Crouch, backed by the Chairman of the Conservative Club not at the LSE but only at University College. Despite hopes and plans, the conservatives have so far failed to gain hegemony over the moderates and liberals at Union meetings. However, as we shall see, though the conservative student bloc is not powerful at the LSE, its national counterpart and expression in the NUS is far more dangerous.
- (ii) 'Some dons', whose most frequently cited member is held to be Ben Roberts. One journalist expressed naive surprise that it should be the Professor of Industrial Relations who should prove the most 'hawkish' of the dons: in fact, the brutal authoritarianism of Professors of Industrial Relations at LSE foreshadows and acts as an index of the orientation and strategy both of subaltern academics in an age of business pressure on all centres of non-business activity, and of those concerned with handling 'industrial relations' in the British economy in the current conjuncture.
- (iii) 'A significant proportion of the governors' as we have seen wish, as a significant and significantly current metaphor has it, to 'teach (the students) a lesson'.
- (iv) Finally, we must add to our description of the LSE reactionary bloc, the dominant political and ideological force within the Governing Body - so dominating that even Mr. Maudling was moved to mild protest - Lord Robbins. It is customary to attribute this to 'forceful personality' on those occasions when the subordination of Dr. Adams is publicly admitted. This is, of course, psychologising nonsense. Robbins is a representative.

II. Two Struggles and the Incorrect Handling of Contradictions

9 The Two Instances of Struggle

In the universities, two types of struggle are in process, of which the results of one determines the terrain of the other.

On the terrain of institutional practice, within the politico-juridical framework of the 'colleges and universities', an ideological struggle is in process. There is therefore a political struggle within and across the institutional boundaries to determine the institutional conditions of the ideological struggle.

The results of the politico-juridical struggle determine (limit) the practice of the ideological struggle in the universities and colleges just as the results of the broader politico-juridical and ideological

struggles over the highly political 'liberties' of the labour movement determine the terrain of the economic struggle of wage-labour.

In terms of the ideological struggle on the campus, we may say that the ultra-institutional forces in presence come from (but are not reducible to) the academic staff and students¹. However, to identify as the principal general enemy those ('the liberal staff') who may be only the principal enemy on the particular front of the ideological struggle is a great risk for the student movement to run. If the 'liberal staff' are an enemy in the ideological struggle but a vital ally in the political-institutional struggle: if the political-institutional struggle determines the terrain of the ideological struggle; then a major political error is in process of being made.

10 The Shared Mistake of 'Liberal Staff' and the RSSF = A Mistake of Principle

We would argue that both the academic staff and the students are failing to understand properly what is the principal battle and, therefore, who is the principal enemy: they are both handling badly contradictions among the 'people' (the academic community), and as a result, both together are preparing the ideological and juridical conditions for a politico-institutional victory over both of them by forces driving towards a 'post-liberal' rationalisation of the intellectual apparatus of Britain.

Some studentist arguments for 'Red Bases' rest on a dangerously partial analysis of the concrete situation. They ignore the real specific situation of higher educational institutions in this country at the present time, and develops a strategy predicated implicitly upon (1) effective isolation of colleges in terms of the practice of capitalist forces and (2) the integration of colleges in terms of the practice of anticapitalist forces. On the basis of an analysis which says that the primary ideological enemy is that of 'liberalism'¹ it sets up a general political enemy within the campus of 'staff' (identified as forces of liberalism), and then struggles for a polarisation of the academic community at the political-institutional level between staff 'as such' (unless clearly NOT liberals) and students 'as such' (unless 'lumpen right'² or 'Union bureaucracies'). Studentism is discussed further in section 29 below.

This being said it should be insisted (1) that the visible indices of an incorrect strategy by the students (prevention of lectures, and similar devices, the disruption of ideological struggle) are less apparent than the adoption of repressive practice by the staff. These latter have in general few qualms about unilateral lecturing, lack of institutionalised

(1) A more developed analysis would distinguish two types of ideological struggle: (i) over the ideology inherent in the structure of curricular exclusions and disconnections and explicit in the content of courses: (ii) over the ideology of teaching and learning practice inherent in the different conditions of intellectual work of postgraduates and undergraduates, publications and examinations, seminars and unilateral lectures etc.

It might well be that at the ideological level, the primary struggle is over the organisation of the conditions of intellectual work, the secondary one is over the content of what is worked in those conditions. This argument cannot be developed here, however.

requirement for staff to be subjected to ideological-intellectual questioning by students in the way that students are required to be ideologically and intellectually open to staff, and similar devices, in short, the permanent repression of ideological struggle. Also, (2) in the case of the LSE, this relative 'merit' of the students co-exists with an absolute 'merit'; there has been hardly any disruption of curricular instruction by students in general, and less at the LSE than elsewhere.

The whole direction of contemporary capitalist strategy is to raise the phantom of the 'hydra-headed student monster' so as to terrify the rank-and-file of academic staff into identification with the extra-academic oppressor; into identification with the interests dominant on Boards of Governors and translated into Administrators' instructions. To the extent to which they fail to resist this stimulated 'ideological panic' they will accept the calling in of security police, police, local authorities and the Special Branch who will offer their disinterested services to resist the monster. This will increase the student's perception of the academic staff as their primary (and hypocritical) oppressor, and, if this scenario is worked through within the period of a Five Year Plan, the academic liberties of Britain will probably have less real existence than the liberties of the labour movement.

11 On Discrediting the Notion of 'Academic Freedom': the Inadvertent Lesson

The way is open already for the simple reason that the actual practice of many academic staff has taught the students that 'academic freedom' and 'academic community' is something which staff are determined to maintain against a firmly contemptible student rabble, even if they have to give it up to Governing Bodies and Educational Authorities to do so.

Guildford and Hornsey may not have been 'real' for college and university staff in the middle and higher sectors of 'Higher Education': they were very real for the staff and students who lost departments, jobs, and careers, as a result of them, and they are very real too for radical students and staff. The unfortunate indifference of 'most staff' to such phenomena only makes the accusation of 'hypocrisy' the more plausible.

footnotes p

1 This analysis of the principal ideological enemy on the campus as being that of 'liberalism' suffers from ignoring the development of 'post-liberal' trends in the ideological apparatus of the country as a whole.

2 The whole point about a 'lumpen' Right is its weakness 'after the revolution' (and only after the revolution'), and its strength before the revolution. Its strength before the revolution lies not in the realm of pure ideas but in that it is the internal ideological vehicle for the political practice of an institutional Right which is not lumpen but dominant. To focus on the ideologically-negligible lumpen Right when they derive their situational plausibility from a balance of political-institutional forces outside the college as well as in them is (a) to focus attention on a despicable ally of the enemy rather than the redoubtable enemy himself (b) to focus attention on the ideological struggle rather than the political-institutional one.

Nonetheless, real academic freedoms do exist within British higher education in an imperfect form and in a relatively fragile condition: 'Operation January' was designed to take advantage of their imperfection (as reflected in the discrediting of the whole notion) in order to destroy them. The operation must be understood in the larger context of the opportunities offered by the unequal development of academic freedom and academic repression within the binary system.

If we rate colleges and universities within the British higher education system according to the development or lack of development of the juridical and financial bases for relative autonomy, we find that the so-called binary system can be seen as a three-level system.

- 12a Colleges of Art, Technical Colleges, Colleges of Further Education, Colleges of Education and Polytechnics can be in general considered as making up the most under-privileged level. At this level 'academic staff' have never been juridically more than employed staff. They do not have tenure. In such colleges, there is no juridical base or financial autonomy on the basis of which these teaching academics could affirm themselves, individually or collectively, as 'professionals first, salaried wage-labour second'. All that they can rely on for their defence against 'redundancy' is professional trade unionism¹.

At this bottom level of the binary system, those who have the power, juridical and financial, to adapt the educational system to the dictates of capitalist rationalisation are the Local Authorities and the Governing Bodies together with their dictatorial Principals within the colleges. Given the interests and the class composition of LEA's and Governing Bodies, these have no reason for resistance. A private groundswell of 'responsible' opinion in this direction or that it is quite sufficient to control the behaviour of college authorities at this level.

It follows that there is no need for an assembly of 'academic staff' to ratify (LSE-style) any extension of contractual obligations, since the freedoms and collective autonomy which need to be 'lost' at higher levels have never existed here.

- 12b At the highest level of the binary system, juridical powers of self-determination lie in the hands of the 'academic community' as such. Academics at the Oxbridge level have the juridical and financial basis for a very considerable autonomy.

The most difficult level for Capital to de-liberalise, Oxbridge will only be attacked directly once the other levels are safely controlled. Given a juridically autonomous academic community, and a relative financial security, it is most likely that, when the attack does come, not just ideological but also financial power will have to be directly and obviously employed to achieve the surrender of these academic communities.

In the present balance of forces, these universities are asked only to make their own arrangements. They are asked only to ignore and acquiesce in the levelling-down of academic autonomy in the sector immediately below them - the sector in which most colleges and universities find themselves, the middle level.

1. See section 30.

The middle level of the binary system - into which the sub-Oxbridge colleges and universities fall - is the most important for our analysis. In these universities, there is a calculated distribution of financial and juridical capacities and incapacities which renders the distribution of real power obscure - except in critical moments when it can be forced to emerge. Juridical power is 'shared' between academic staff and Governors in such a way that while staff have (apparently) the 'dominant' share of power (content of curricula, appointments to a certain level, etc)¹, as has just been revealed, it is the Governors and their Director who have the determinant share. At the LSE in 'January', according to one reported, 'staff realised that the fate of the School lay in the hands of the Governors'; since the latter had and have the power to open and close the college, the power to have grants withdrawn from students etc. despite all 'academic' considerations and demands.

This system of 'mixed' power (with ultimately determinant power held by the Governors and dominant power 'held' by the Academic Community) is unstable. Its stability depends upon a non-resistance by the academic community to these limitations on their autonomy.

This system of power shared between a dominant (academic) partner and a determinant (Governorial) partner contains a potential contradiction which (a) renders it the most efficient system under circumstances of 'normal functioning', mystifying and polarising staff and students; but (b) renders it potentially dangerous. From the moment that the subordinated partner in the system comes up against its subordination (the limits of its autonomy), it threatens to upset the system by bringing the students into the academic community. When revealed and when resisted, however, this situation of 'mixed power' has the dangerous potentiality of becoming 'dual power'. From this moment on, the 'mixed system' is historically doomed and must be seen as transitional. The outcome of the transition depends on the balance of conscious forces.

III. Capital's Plan for the Development of the Binary System

At the moment, staff are obscurely becoming resentful of the worsening of conditions forced on them through their Governing Bodies. Some, as a Tory M.P. put it, are, and more might become, "traitors to their leaders" where 'treachery' is defined as solidarity with students. The current phase is one in which staff are no longer certain that the Governing Administration is their friend, but do not yet feel that the students could be their allies. The Establishment are acutely aware of the critical nature of the current phase and its possibilities: the students and staff less so. The achievement of academic solidarity on the campus in France since May - discussed in Part 5 - is a warning to Capital in Britain.* 'Operation January' and its successors are precisely designed to resolve the crisis in a way favourable to extra-academic forces; they are designed to move towards the liquidation of the 'mixed academy' in a way that aligns conditions of intellectual and academic work in as many universities as possible with those conditions of unqualified subordination characteristic of the lowest level of the binary system.

1. and as such draw the main fire of student opposition to the consequences of the system as a whole.

* Totally unreported in the British press, significantly.

The current phase is one in which the lower part of the binary system is being ignored because it has no academic autonomies; the upper part of the binary system has to be ignored because it has too real an academic autonomy; and in which the partial but real nature of academic autonomy at the middle levels of the binary system provokes a struggle to reduce academic autonomy at those levels. The critical stratum at this level are the academics because, and only because, their existing juridical powers prevent their freedoms from being removed without their own collusion.

The Academic Boards in the middle-level universities and colleges must be ideologically pressured into juridical surrender of powers, so as to complete their political subordination.

The function of the 'gates' at the LSE was primarily to achieve this political, ideological and juridical subordination of the staff. In this phase, the provocation of students is a means to this end.

14

A Strategy to Disaggregate Sectors, Institutions and Groups

The political disaggregation of the various levels and sectors of the binary system as a whole is essential for its phased subordination and eventual levelling-down to that condition of dependence required by post-liberal capitalism.

The one danger that has to be averted in a period when the substantive demands on colleges and universities are making themselves felt is that of a re-aggregation of academic power not just within that college but between the levels of the binary system as a whole. This explains the increased practical freedom which has to be granted at the Oxbridge level. An active solidarity between the levels in the binary system nationally and between the levels in each college might produce a counter-movement of the British academic community as a whole, a movement of re-liberalisation. This would involve an extension of academic autonomies and powers to categories (students) and colleges (bottom and middle levels) who have never had such powers juridically and whose glimpses of them in practice (Hornsey) have been sporadic and almost inadvertent.

The struggle to unify (by levelling down) the two lower levels of the binary system is only the most obvious aspect of the complex operation of contemporary capitalism in Higher Education. It goes hand in hand with the selective development of different levels and different sectors of the system:

- (a) a shifting of financial resources between different types of course, and between teaching and research within colleges: A general reduction of time and energy for research throughout the system as a whole plus the highly selective stimulation of sponsored research in certain fields. 'Free research' time is being cut down: specific funds will be made available for selected research.
- (b) a shifting of finances between institutions: this involves the expansion of 'instructional' institutions in the bottom level and the lower part of the middle-level of the binary system as opposed to more balanced 'universities' further up. Polytechnics and Further Education Colleges will get the bulk of student expansion: universities will be held relatively constant or fall - unless, of course, they turn themselves into identical replicas of Polytechnics and Further Education Colleges.

(c) a general increase of the amount of conditional and selective finance (by public or private authorities) at the expense of general and unconditions funds: the loan-scheme proposal for students is paralleled by the selective grants for colleges.^{1*}

15 Its Current Phase: Elimination of Academic Power in Middle-Level Colleges

Students in Britain and elsewhere are pushing hard not at the steel gates erected in the corridors of the LSE but at the juridical gates of the academic community. This pressure for 'a system of majority decision-taking, a right of free discussion' (pace the Observer) makes historically possible a realisation of academic community; an academic community, however, less likely than the current simulacrum to accept political and ideological subordination within the 'mixed juridical academy'. The real gates which the Governors are trying to erect are barriers in the minds of the staff to realising such a juncture with students.

At a certain moment, under the combined pressure of student attempts to realise academic community and extra-academic pressure for de-liberalisation, the staff could come to use their partial juridical autonomy against the Governors. They must be disarmed (i. e. disarm themselves) before the issues become clear.

16 ... Outside the College, the N. U. S. ...

Confined to the role of a cheap travel agency and launching pad for careerists in periods of student apathy, the real possibilities of the NUS only become realised in periods when its covert role has to become manifest. The development by the Establishment of the NUS has been so far in two phases:

- (1) Since the Vice-Chancellor's Conference, it has been systematically mentioned, quoted and its opinions sought on every possible occasion.^{2*} 'Recognised' by authorities on and off campus as the omnipresent and permanent 'valid interlocutor', the NUS leadership is to be made 'representative' as against all other contenders. Significantly, it has been encouraged to launch into demagogic attacks, not against the real authorities, but, 'against fuddy-duddy dons', "Peter Pans of the Academic world" etc. It is a tool not for the rank-and-file academics but against them: it supported the PIB proposal to polarise staff against students politically by the simple device of making staff incomes directly dependent on votes and questionnaires.
- (2) A new phase is now just beginning. The authorities lack an instrument for rapidly de-legitimising particular student struggles. The 'Students Union Assemblies' of particular colleges are far too cumbersome and are now worryingly unreliable (cf. the failure of Crouch to dominate LSE Union). Consequently Student Unions - these organs of direct democracy - must be replaced rapidly by those of a classic oligarchic 'representative' system: the NUS is tailor-made for the job. In future, it won't be necessary to have to persuade 'Student Unions' to dissociate themselves from student action; a telephone call to Trevor Fiske will do the trick. The direct democracy of S. U. assemblies must be replaced by NUS non-representation.

1* A plethora of schemes for the Gleichschaltung of universities is being put forward and developed in magazine such as Encounter. Their explicit aims are mystifying: their practical concern is clear.
2* to the point of dining with Nixon.

It is in this light that we must see Trevor Fiske's demand for 'campus contracts' and a system which would enable him to declare 'wild-cat strikes' unofficial, thus permitting procedures of reprisal and repression 'normal' in industrial relations, though not ~~yet~~ in academic relations. This demand initiates the struggle to achieve Phase 2 institutionalisation. A student 'loan-wage' would be a cheap economic price for such an organisational victory.

It is precisely at the moment when students are demanding entry into the 'academic community' that the authorities (including the official 'opposition') rush to proclaim that

... relations within universities are coming to resemble relations in industry... management and workers, authorities and students including some sympathetic dons...

(Times editorial, 28th January

What this really means is that 'sympathising' (i. e. 'nigger-loving') dons will be treated as students, and that dons in general must regard themselves as management confronting students/workers. If they don't, if a majority of dons 'sympathise', then the dons as such will find themselves in the 'labourised' side of the knowledge industry.

The new marshall of the NUS, Trevor Fiske, is quite aware that it is inherited 'feudal relics' which impeded this rationalisation. Peter Wilby (Observer, 2nd February) quotes him as saying:

"the problem is that a university's autonomy is based upon a royal Charter."

However the NUS and their supporters inside the college are also a 'produced' force. The question is, who produces them? Part of the answer has already been given: the Vice-Chancellors. As for the rest, rather than attempt to explore the extended relations of 'free world trade unionism' and the CIA, we shall consider our own home-grown British capitalism.

17 The Real Threat...

The persistence of the theme of 'student violence' was accompanied by a vast scare campaign of the 'anti-intellectual revolt', the 'tax-payers revolt', the 'anti-intellectual backlash'. Students, academics and liberals were warned that unless order was maintained, the backlash would come. Academics were invited to assist putting down the students, the implied threat being that if selective students were not deprived of their grants then particular universities and colleges might be deprived of their funds. This threat is real.

The Government 'reluctantly' apathetic over Hornsey some few months ago, is now actively stimulating local authorities to 'bring pressure to bear' on... the Government, so as to achieve the denationalisation of witch-hunts.* The critical variable is not the attack on individual student grants; it is the flight of Corporate Capital from colleges and universities.

* In this way, no Government need have to answer in Parliament for "witch-hunts unfortunately out of their control"

18 Outside the College, Edward Short. . . .

Prior to their simple response to the provocation of the gates, the students were involved in the exploration of the real question of who rules the LSE, what determines the LSE's investments in S. Africa and the interlocking of academic and business government.

Lord Robbins does not rule the LSE, nor does he find allies among the dons and students, nor does he subordinate the Director, because of accidents of 'personality'. Not is it an accident of personality that turns Edward Short, a Social-Democratic Minister of an important capitalist country, into a vicious ideological mouthpiece for Lord Robbins, giving, as one lecturer put it, 'ministerial authority to all kinds of oppression by local authorities and governing bodies' (The Times, 3/2/68)

How can we explain Short's attack upon the autonomy of the academic community? Six months after Hornsey he was (prematurely) ready to give to local authorities the effective power to determine who shall go to universities on what conditions and when they shall be expelled, by giving them the power to give and **remove** the financial grants on which student access to the means of learning depends. (1)

Edward Short spoke of 'thugs who have already succeeded in closing the LSE' . . . and everyone assumed that it was some band of students who could have made this their strategic aim or tactical means: an objective idiocy which says much for the state of our collective intelligence. Neither students nor staff of a college have an interest in its closure; in the case of the LSE, both are now demanding its immediate re-opening. It was closed, however . . . from outside. People and interests outside the academic community closed it and are prepared to try and close it again if their demand for capitulation by staff and students is not met.

19 . . . The Flight of Capital

Capital flight is the supreme weapon, the classic threat of Capital, its 'legitimate' response to real or imaginary attack by governments, students or the working class. The educational system at all its levels is being threatened with a flight of capital unless it meets the specifications of capital. (2)

(1) Cf. A. U. S. captain in Vietnam: "We had to smash the town in order to save it."

(2) 'Responsible' journals repeatedly ask seriously whether we really need all this this expensive education. . . Art Colleges have been politically and economically pruned with no outcry from universities. . . .

The basic requirement of capital is the political polarisation between academic staff and students. This ensures the division of a potentially dangerous 'liberal bloc'; it ensures the subordination of noncommercial cultural centres to other-than-student demands. It makes the academics accomplices in the prevention and the destruction of autonomous academic communities. It permits the expulsion of 'dangerous minorities' of staff and students, of intellectuals and apprentice-intellectuals, from the means of critical intelligence. (3)

The Conservative Party offers up ethnic minorities, the Labour Party competes and collaborates by offering up academic minorities. Both are involved in a complex adaptation to the structural crisis of British capitalism.

20 De-liberalisation and the New Fear of Intellectual Minorities

Capitalist rationalisation of a post-imperial economy undergoing structural relative decline in a period of world capitalist stagnation and world economic system fragility requires the relatively rapid 'de-liberalisation' of British society. Trade-union and liberal autonomies are tolerable in periods of absolute or relative expansion. Just as British capitalism now requires the Social-Democratic Party to 'initiate' the dismantling of the free trade union movement, it also requires it to initiate, if not to complete, the purging and subordination of the cultural apparatus.

Until May last year, it was no news to any ruling class East or West that 'masses of student intellectuals' required by current social and scientific technology were also the fertile seedbed of oppositional movements.

It was after May 1968, it became new and very urgent news that 'campus insurrection' could combine with more general discontent to spark off 'organised labour's insurrection' in such a way as to create a 'revolutionary situation'. This required and might require only an organised revolutionary bloc to provide what could become a 'Cuba in the heart of Europe'.

The critical variable which transforms 'student insurrections' from sporadic police-problems to detonators of potential revolution is that of the majority of the population in general and of organised and organisable labour in particular, and their perception of, and relation to, the student struggles.

The key to the present situation in the educational sphere is the Vice-Chancellors' Conference last summer; the key to that is the May events in France.

What happened in May?

(3) The attack on 'Marxist' lecturers, the tiny minority of staff who, as a Tory MP put it, might be 'disloyal to their leaders' is of course 'prematurely' developed on the Right as part of the softening-up process by the Centre. Security and secret police (of both the paid and the amateur, both the governmental and the administrative varieties) are now on the campus of most institutions of higher education in this country. The chairman of at least one local Labour Party is said to have offered his services to contact students to spy on students and lecturers. As early as 1957, intelligence boasted that it has correspondents on every campus in the country.

21 'May' in France

In May, what appeared to be one of the strongest currencies in Europe fell to the point of 'devaluation'.

In May, a revolution was only averted by 'buying off' a section of the labour movement with massive wage increases of the order of 30%.

France's potential capacity to compete in the export market was sharply altered. From the strong man of Europe, France became the, or rather a, sick man of Europe.

In May, a student insurrection on the Left bank of the Seine detonated an explosion of grievances of the French working class, a general strike of 10 million workers, occupation of factories, dual control over provincial towns, a labouring under the pressure of capitalist rationalisation, and fore-shadowed a potential union of the 'young intellectuals' and the 'workers'.

After May, the French government felt obliged to permit the 'invasion' of the instances of academic government by the organised students and staff, ^{*} an 'invasion' which shifted the orientation of French education, at least for a time, from the domination of university practice by governments and extra-academic employers to the redefinition of academic objectives by students and staff. Experimentation by the academic communities of France and their autonomous handling of their own staff/student contradictions produced a specific loss of control by Capital over the national cultural apparatus.

After May, the profound potential unreliability of many 'professionals' and 'intellectuals', whether in the universities or in the radio, television or press or in the free professions became apparent both to the intellectuals and to Capital. The albeit momentary lifting of the terror exercised by Capital over the intelligentsia was profoundly revealing.

The response to May in the United States was Chicago; in England, it starts from Hornsey and the LSE. From the point of view of the stability of the system, the situation could become more dangerous in England than in France or the USA. How?

22 'May' and Britain

The British pound starts not from the position of the French franc before May, but from a position of 'permanent imminent devaluation', rather like that of France immediately after May. 'May in Great Britain' would not make a strong economy weak: it would find an already enfeebled economic system and weaken it still further.

The 'destruction of society' loudly apprehended by the mass media is not seen as the result of a quarter-hour's removal work on some gates in an educational institution; it is seen as a possible detonation by a 'student insurrection' of a seething mass of non-student discontent. Until now these discontents have just about been repressed by the institutions of the Labour movement. But the domination of the Labour Party oligarchy over its members and the TU leaders, the TU leaders over their men, is fragile.

Not only is British capitalism much weaker economically and more jittery politically now than French capitalism was in April 1968:

movement in England far exceeds that which could be developed in France. An unsubordinated Labour movement in Britain would be far more unified and far more dangerous than its French counterpart.

The movements of Powellism revealed the potentialities for distraction but also the potentialities for explosion of British society. Were it ever detonated in Britain by a 'smaller motor', the 'larger motor' is still more powerful than its counterpart in France.

23 A 'Fourth Republic' situation?

In a certain way, it may be more useful to think of the present epoch of British history as comparable to that of the decline of the Fourth Republic in France. The incompetence of the various political regimes and teams to solve the crisis of France's economy, and their progressive discrediting of the entire complex of 'Fourth Republic men and institutions'; the displacement of grievances onto "wracking minorities" (generational, ethnic, intellectual, political), the structural crisis of economy and society dragging on and on. If Powell's nationalism does not yet have quite a Gaullist resonance, in other men's minds, he may be preparing the way forward for a possible authoritarian political regime that could not be called fascist but marks a new adequation to the demands of the dominant capitalist class and a new stage in the elimination of the vestiges of 'liberal-republican capitalism' in Britain.

The danger for British capitalism can be represented in this way. In 1958, the only 'detonator' was an intrinsically reactionary one of the Algerian colonials and the French army; the only 'motor' that could be set off was that of middle-class reaction. But what would have happened in France in 1958 if the political situation had been that of France in 'May', if the 'detonator' had been the students, if the 'detonated' had been the working class?

The degradation of British 'liberal capitalism' in the 60s is very similar to that of French liberal capitalism in the 50s, but the balance of political forces which would struggle to 'exploit' the crisis is radically different. Instead of patriotic unification behind colonial war, we have mass mobilisations against colonial wars in Vietnam, whereas the dominant latent political force in France is a chaotic confusion of middle-class and peasant elements, in Britain the dominant latent force is that of the labour movement.

24 The Nightmare of British Capital

The nightmare of British capital is that of political forces dominant in May inserting themselves into a structural crisis in Britain similar to that of 1958 in France.

It is to exorcise this nightmare that the progressive purging of the free trade union movement and of the free cultural corporation movement is being attempted. (1)

Why did the Governors not agree to settle for the general condemnation of the use of force? As a guiding line, this could have been readily cashed at the moment of some future 'Socialist' outrage?

(1)a-cp. internal tightening -up in national bodies like the BBC;
b-multiplication of "sub-national" (therefore irresponsible) and commercial units. This is cultural de-nationalisation prior to commercialisation.

Why are they do determined to get their pound of flesh in terms of expelled staff and students? 'Disciplining ringleaders is an essential part of any settlement' for the G. P. C. wrote Peter Wilby and Ivan Yates (Observer), 9th February. = What they failed to point out that it still is the point of the whole exercise at the LSE and will be one in other institutions tomorrow.

The general answer ^{*} to this question is their awareness that they may never be able to mount again such a 'beautiful' provocation: next time, the students may have become more wary of such traps. We have seen how long it took to mount the operation: these traps cannot be sprung too often in the same way.

The argument so far has tried to show that ruling class strategy in a 'Fourth Republic' situation must be to provoke abortive and displaced partial student action. These must run no risk of detonating the labour movement. Instead, they should provide (suitably distorted) material for ideological preparation needed to alter old juridical structures characteristic of the 'liberal' period towards ones more suitable for a 'post-liberal' development. The academic elite must collude in this process of 'dismantling', just as the trade-union elite must collude in the attacks upon the unions. The greatest danger is in the union leaders being swung back towards their rank-and-file; a lesser but real danger is that of academics being swung back into solidarity with their students.

* This still leaves the problem as to why the urgency about LSE. One additional non-critical factor can be suggested.

There have been considerable discussions about the spatial location of the School. There was an early project mooted to remove it from its position near the centre of the Metropolis across the water and further down the river. This seems to have been dropped... but what problems might it have solved?

If we compare the situation of the LSE to the situation of the Sorbonne, certain similarities and differences must spring to the mind of even the most naive analyst of strategic possibilities.

Like the Sorbonne, the LSE is the nearest centre to the foci of political and financial power in Britain: Parliament and the City. Like the Sorbonne, there is a constant state of ideological effervescence and readiness for direct action.

Unlike the Sorbonne, the LSE is not separated from the centres of financial power by a few strategically-placed and perfectly blockable bridges; instead, an infinity of small streets separates the LSE from the City. Whereas in Paris, the intellectual centre is cut off from the political-economic centre by a defensive moat (the Seine), the same clear obstruction would not face any LSE-based insurrectionary movement.

The fact that such a movement is unlikely in Britain does not warrant the absence of contingency-planning to cope with such an unwelcome Wilsonian political economy.

In the light of these hypotheses, let us consider more closely the prospects for the LSE in terms of the strategic options of the Robbins-Roberts-Crouch bloc. This is not a purely speculative exercise, but rather an attempt to bring out the significance of kites already flown.

25

The L. S. E. must be de-fused... or closed!

The actions and statements of those directly concerned with applying the Vice-Chancellors' 'line' in the LSE and the authoritative editorials and pronouncements designed to leave no doubt as to the general Establishment backing for the application of the line reveal a clear determination. The 'fuse' of the LSE must be removed; the majority of staff and students must 'acquiesce in the inevitability' of the liquidation of militants and militancy in the School.

In the precipitated crisis, the Robbins bloc have so far made just a few more mistakes than the students. As a result, the polarisation of academic staff against students achieved in the adoption of the General Purposes Committee's recommendations was too precarious to survive the absence of a rapid capitulation by the Students Union. The failure of the Students Union conservatives and/or moderates to achieve an explicit dissociation from menaced staff and students brought about a prolongation of the 'lock-out'. This crystallised doubts among the academic staff. The solidarity of the students forced a serious discussion onto the staff who then split, with only a minority supporting unconditionally the Robbins line.¹

26

The Ambiguity of Adams

Peter Dunn in a significantly inconsequential but suggestive article in the Sunday Times discussed the respective 'personalities' of Dr. Adams and Lord Robbins. It seems generally agreed that it is Lord Robbins who leads and insists upon 'hawkish ultimata' and warns that the School will remain closed until 'law and order' (the cowboy motif) can be guaranteed, and is very sensitive to allegations that the Governors are reduced to 'a handful of men meeting in his offices'.

Dr. Adams on the other hand is presented by Dunn as a man desperately trying to get in touch with the students, trying to 'meet them half-way', and insisting that 'the LSE is an academic community' in that 'the rules' by which we conduct our affairs must derive their strength from the positive support of the overwhelming majority of the community's members'.

Peter Dunn, for no apparent reason, then goes on into a discussion of Dr. Adams' role in Salisbury and presents him as a man capable of making a variety of perhaps not completely reputable concessions in order to achieve his goal of keeping the college going:

1. Thursday, 6th January meeting of the Academic Board. The refusal to hear the students delegation was only won by 95:81 votes. (Compare the unanimity of the General Purposes Committee's refusal to meet the student delegation and original adoption of GPC recommendations by Academic Board.) The motion which offered 'full and active cooperation' with 'any measures' taken by the Director to maintain 'good order' had more faculty abstaining than voting in favour! Some 75 abstained, 33 voted against this blank cheque and only 69 voted in favour. Finally, the motion calling for the unconditional reopening of the School early next week was passed by the large majority of 103:75.

"His substantial lack of success in Salisbury was not because he agreed with the encroachments on academic freedom but because he tried to settle them quietly. He tried to avoid confrontations which, once they snowballed, could result in the closure of the college."

Given this background, Adams' behaviour at the LSE appears at first sight incomprehensible. In Salisbury, he tried to keep the college open; in London he is prepared to keep it closed in order to get the students to 'condemn violence' and permit the expulsion of the militants.

The only way of explaining this apparent paradox is to assume that Adams is being consistent, and consistently wrong. He is trying to preserve the college from a 'confrontation which could result in the closure of the college', just as he was before. In order to avoid that confrontation which he fears would close the college permanently, he is prepared for another confrontation which might close it temporarily. The confrontation Adams fears is the confrontation with Lord Robbins and the forces behind him; the closing of the college and the clash with the students is a means to avoid that confrontation.

The different tone of two documents sent to all LSE students before the weekend of the 14th February reinforces such a reading. One is an unsigned press-release by the Governors stating that victimisation will take its course, and that any 'significant direct action' will lead to 'the closure of the School'. The later one is a signed letter by Walter Adams, attempting to sound as conciliatory as possible within the strict limits laid down by the Governors. This may be part of a 'good policeman'/'bad policeman' operation: we are inclined to give it slightly more significance than just that.

It is clear now that Lord Robbins and his bloc are in danger of losing control: the polarisation has swung against them rather than for them, even if only momentarily. They cannot afford to permit this moment to be prolonged or consolidated.

Hence, they concede to staff pressure for the opening of the School and carry on with internal and external punishing of students and staff they wish to expel. (Suspended sentences, heavy legal costs, kangaroo trials and the like.)

Robbins' Last Bid: Will February be a replay of 'January'?

The original tactic of maintaining the 'lock-out' until the Students Union capitulates proved mistaken. Consequently the Governors 'acutely aware of the deprivation inflicted by closure' re-opened the School. On the other hand, they ignore all the representations and tacit understandings generated against victimisations (not to speak of the gates). Proceedings (legal and administrative) will take their course' and then 'appropriate disciplinary action will be taken'. As for the gates, they are being retained, not removed: 'damage to gates is being repaired'.

It is clear that Robbins is trying to re-play January, insisting both on the retention of the gates and on ongoing victimisation procedures to develop. If the entire academic community accept the ultimatum, then the Governors will permit the academic community to come back

If not,

If there is further disruption of the orderly working of the School... then the School will be declared closed and grant-awarding bodies will be notified.

The 'academic community' is to obey: the Governors will govern. (1) Order is to reign in Warsaw. It is Robbins' last bid to retrieve his mistake by the most classic tactic in the book: escalation. If he wins, we may expect those staff unwise enough to have embarrassed the Governors to find themselves correspondingly 'embarrassed', and the grip of the Right upon college culture further tightened. (2) In that case, what might have become an emergent 'academic solidarity' (the meeting of the Academic Board which dared pass the McKenzie motion) against the Governing authority will turn out to have heralded not the beginning of an academic community but rather the last flickers of academic autonomy, and the McKenzie motion will be buried in a flood of obedience.

The minimum target of 'Operation January' and its successors is the physical removal of 'unreliable elements in the short run ('January') coupled with more careful political selection of staff and student recruitment in the future.

Should such a purge be unsuccessful, then the measures taken must be more radical: a number are suggested below.

31 If no purge, what escalation against LSE would be like

- (1) The elimination of 'dangerous' courses: say, the M. Sc course in Sociology. This would be seen as a method of bringing pressure on academic staff without too obvious a curtailment of academic freedom.
- (2) The elimination of 'dangerous' combinations. One valuable tactic would be to separate clearly 'research courses' from 'undergraduate courses' thus reducing the dangers of 'continuity' of student memory. It is a commonplace of American counter-insurrectionary campus doctrine that postgraduates 'contaminate' undergraduates with a certain self-confidence and provide a dangerous alternative intellectual leadership.
- (3) A more radical method would be that of the simple elimination of 'undergraduates' as such from the School. These could be safely shunted off and fragmented in outlying small colleges on the strategic periphery.

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- (1) Observer editorialised (16th Feb. 1969) that the Governors were failing 'to check a situation which allows at least the moderate majority to save face' and worried about the 'lack of tactical skill' involved in threatening to close the School and unleash the local authorities. The real point is that it is a tactic in another strategy which the Observer is scared to recognise in terms of what it implies about the identity of the 'intolerant minority' of 'wreckers'.
 - (2) As of March 1st, the conservative bloc seem to have regained ascendancy. A number of staff have, more or less discreetly, resigned.

- (4) The increase of 'social-financial' control mechanisms. This involved (a) raising tuition fees to the point at which no or few 'unaided' students can afford to go to college; (b) on the basis of impossibly high tuition fees, making the student grants increasingly 'conditional' and as soon as possible introducing a 'loan element'; (c) increasing the number of occasions on which and the number of authorities by which students may be threatened with the withdrawal of their grants or the obligation to start paying back their loan. Frequent examinations and the 'unleashing' of local authorities are obviously in order here.
- (5) The final stage would involve the 'fragmentation' of the LSE. This might take place through a 'splitting operation'. On the grounds that 'student demands etc. make it impossible to work', a large number of the staff would resign and move off to a Private Business University. Given a sufficient 'authority' of such a move, this might easily be a signal for all business endowments to the LSE to cease and be transferred to this ideological off-shoot of the I. E. A. The LSE could then be left ~~either to~~ break-up or to go into a low or accelerated decline.

Advance warning of such a 'specific 'strategy' for dealing with awkward colleges was given -oddly enough, this winter - in well-signed proposals in the Times for the setting up of such a 'Business University'. This is (a) as a project well in hand and at an advanced stage of preparation. (b) a clear warning to Adams and his ilk that he and they have less time and leeway than they might wish: Capital has no qualms about abandoning any particular recalcitrant college that fails to put its house in sufficient 'order' and keep it that way.

It is pure guesswork, but one could speculate that at some level Adams is aware of these possibilities and scenarios; and that to prevent a flight of Capital (not to speak of Capital's economists) he is attempting to meet Robbins' minimum demands for a thorough purge. But, as we have said, such a counter-strategy is misguided. The relative autonomy of academic institutions can no longer be preserved against the students, by 'bringing in the police' (William Pickles, Sir Edward Boyle) or becoming the police.

VII On the Correct Handling of Contradictions

We have tried to show in sections IV/V that there are strong reasons why extra-academic forces have an interest in attacking the relative autonomy of middle-level colleges and universities, and constraining the academic staff and the students where relevant to bring about and collude in this process. Students can only be allowed to enter the Academic Community if the academic community is firmly subordinated. Otherwise, mixed power with the Governors could become dual power, and the rationalisation of postsecondary education could be impeded.

We have tried to show that the academic staff cannot fight any open battles, and the students cannot win any decisive victories, without each other.

Neither 'Staffism' nor 'Studentism' !

The Contradiction between Academic Freedom and Outside Domination is primary; the contradictions between teachers and students within the academic community are real, but secondary.

If the above analysis is correct, then the fatal mistake for staff and students to make is to identify the other as the primary enemy. We have seen that the very institutional structure of "mixed power at the middle level" encourages staff and students to make this mistake. ¹

The question then is posed: what are the appropriate institutions to be strengthened and alliances to be made to develop a countermobilisation against the forces of de-liberalisation?

The question is complicated and requires specific answers for each educational institution and each political conjuncture.

It poses itself quite specifically in relation to the problem of the unions (AUT, ATTI etc. for the staff, NUS for the students). Are these unions (or some of them) to be seen as powerful potential instruments in the struggle for academic autonomy? Or are they always ambiguous and eventually reactionary?

If the latter answer is truer than the former, then both staff and students be aware of the constant menace and temptation of a "trade-unionist" response to the crisis in postsecondary education. To the extent to which the campus becomes seen and polarised in terms of "studentism" on the one hand and "staffism" on the other, the domination of extra-academic and postliberal forces is assured.

Unions maybe, Unionism No!

In Britain, unlike France, there is in the educational world a very considerable practical autonomy devolved from the State to the university, college or school. This is true even at the bottom level of the binary system of higher education.

With the exception of Oxbridge, these powers are shared by a particular intra-college group on the one hand, and a particular extra-college authority on the other. This latter may be a Board of Governors as in the case of the LSE; more usually it involves the Local Educational Authorities directly or at one remove.

1. That the staff are most likely to make this error needs no pointing out. That students fall into 'studentism' just as the working-class falls into 'ouvrierisme' or "workerism" is worth stressing. A recent RSSF document, having learnt nothing from the significance of the ambiguities and splits of the liberals at the LSE and elsewhere denounces them in routine fashion. In relation to the strategy of the "ruling class enemy", it asks

"How do we combat the lumpen Right, the Union bureaucrats, the liberal staff? What is our national strategy?"

The RSSF needs an alliance with progressive elements among the liberal staff: to lump all the liberals with the 'lumpen right' is vulgar studentism and simple-minded revolutionarism. A strategy based on that will simply strengthen the non-lumpen Right.

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Each college or university has a very considerable degree of autonomy within broad limits fixed nationally, and bargains and negotiates with the relevant extra-college authority. Within these broad limits, real working conditions for academic staff and for students depend on intra-institutional plant bargaining and balances of power.¹

Almost all the conditions and content of work (except the amount of wages at each level of promotion) are in practice determined by a dominant set of salaried employees within the College. Even where the powers are juridically reserved for Boards of Governors and Local Authorities, these are practically determined by the positive and negative recommendations of the College authorities.

30a Teachers Unions

The official teachers union structure in primary, secondary and postsecondary education is dominated by unions which do not distinguish between different categories of salaried 'teaching' employee. These unions include everyone who teaches (in some cases, who used to teach) from university professors and college Principals down to the level of assistant and part-time teachers and lecturers.

In their capacity as 'salaried/teaching personnel', the ruling and self-recruiting oligarchs join the appropriate union and run it for their own purposes of further intimate control over their 'colleagues'.

Polarised for external national wage negotiation with the State, for the all-important intra-institutional defence and bargaining teachers' unions are bosses' unions. Just like the private company unions in the USA or the transmission-belt unions of the USSR or the vertical unions of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy in the interwar period, they are sterilised as far as democratic and unafraid discussion about the plant itself is concerned. In all critical matters they are an extra line of social control from above.

This 'company union function' can be carried out either by the direct presence of the College oligarchs or, more subtly, by everybody's understanding that the gist of any "dangerous positions" would in fact leak back by a variety of interposed persons. The LSE has provided those involved with a revelation of how much 'quiet observation' exists on the campus by amateur or professional observers: at critical moments, a relevant dossier can be provided by 'colleagues'.

1. The real level of wages for teachers and staff is determined by national bargaining. However, it is the intra-college authorities who recommend promotions or arrange disciplinary expulsions and thus determine for the individual alterations in his wage-position. These authorities determine (1) the timing and type of work, (2) extra duties and relief from duties, (3) sponsorship of or opposition to actual or potential courses, new or existing modes of teaching, (4) student intake and the like. Any teacher can provide instances (and no doubt those at the LSE can provide more) of the efficacy of this 'covert' system of negative and positive patronage at the disposal of the dominant bloc within the college. Indeed, the relative apathy of British as opposed to French teachers can at least be partly explained by the more intimate control exercised at the level of the British educational plant.

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These teachers unions are historically backward; they provide the same evidence of "yellow" domination and terror as those e. g. of the agricultural labourers in the early periods of industrialisation, of the police etc. It is nothing inherent in the task of teaching that creates such backwardness; it is produced in the structure of intra-college patronage and discrimination, in the undemocratic relations among academic staff. Consequently, it must continue as long as that structure continues. The 'community of teachers' is determined by the hierarchical of College Authority and the powers of patronage and discrimination yielded by such different structural positions among colleagues.¹

Not only are all the established teachers' unions Establishment Unions, they are also organised in such a way as to preserve and perpetuate the political disaggregation of the binary system that we discussed earlier. University teachers organised separately and if necessary against teachers in the bottom part of the binary system etc.

Fragmentation within the campus among teachers, fragmentation between different types of campus at different levels of the binary system, neutralisation of even those fragmented teachers unions by the effective presence of their college employers: it is small wonder that the established division between all teachers unions as such and unions of students on the other prevents the development of a common real arena at the level of each institution in which the real questions and problems of the development of universities and colleges could be posed freely and resolved.

The problems between the staff and students in each institution will not be resolved but compounded by negotiations between teachers' unions and students' unions. The common arena is not the meeting place of AUT/ATTI or whatever representatives and representatives of the Students Union or NUS under the benevolent eye of the college hierarchy. This sort of participation is as much an instrument of intimate social control as informal sherry parties with the staff.

Real full discussion can only take place by the constant direct discussion of the rank-and-file teachers and the rank-and-file students directly involved in the campus, college or course.

31 Academic Power = Academic Board X Students Union = The Common Arena

Staff and students have to come together primarily in each college, they have to come together not through negotiating bureaucracies (in which the intra-College authorities sit by right) but directly in Assemblies open to the rank-and-file staff and student, but if necessary closed to members of staff whose primary function is that of administrative control.

1. The May Day Manifesto Bulletin no carries a further discussion of this point and of the reforms required by a consistent democratisation of post-secondary education. We described the significance of the NUS in section 16 and 'studentism' earlier on in this section. This does not need repeating. However, our description of the functioning of the NUS - with its basic alliance being with Vice-Chancellors, Principals and free world trade unionism has a general relevance. The NUS represents in as yet an uncultivated and unguarded fashion the deviations and distortions to which all 'representative pseudo-unions' are bound to be subject. The teachers unions have grown more slowly and naturally into their specific niche: the NUS has been forced to become a tool for educational management in a much more rapid, blatant and conscious

Just as the college authorities can handle the NUS more easily than the general assemblies of the Students Unions, just to that extent are they hostile to all organs of direct democracy by the rank-and-file of students and teachers separately to which they do not have access. And, of course, they are most hostile of all to a General Assembly of Students and Non-Governing Staff (Hornsey style) in which the full and free discussion of all academic problems would take place beyond the controlling eyes and ears of the ruling group.

The only possible organisation in which academic community can be realised is within an autonomous Academic Board extended to include the students. A first step towards such a situation might be meetings of the Students' Union extended to include the (non-governing) staff. Other devices and directions are at best means to achieving these ends, much more probably diversionary manoeuvres towards diametrically-opposed objectives. The existing juridical positions of both Student Unions (as against the NUS) and Academic Boards (as against teachers associations) must be not just preserved but extended, and not just extended but fused.

In fighting to preserve the LSE and academic freedom not just without the students but against them, Dr. Adams is making the mistake which all academics are invited make.

In identifying in a period of de-liberalisation the 'liberal staff' as the enemy, the RSSF is making the mistake which all radical students are invited to make.

In leading and giving ministerial authority to the campaign against academic autonomy, the Labour Party's Minister for Education is making the mistake which the liberal element of the Establishment is invited to make.

And if the campaign against trade union and intellectual liberties is allowed to succeed, historians will record that social democracy was induced to dig its own grave and through division create a post-liberal State.

A trade unionist considering the struggle at the LSE in the light of the social struggles in the country as a whole remarked that

..... this is part of an aim to create as much disunity and to divide as much as possible the working classes, socialists and progressives and radical forces within society.

cont. note p. 27

These differences of origin, style and actual 'image' are, however, in the last analysis unimportant. Inasmuch as the separate unions with their respective dominant bureaucracies confirm and perpetuate the political fragmentation of the academic community both within each institution and throughout the binary system, to believe that the struggle can be won primarily through these unions is the most dangerous folly.

P. S. For the past four years or so, the LSE has been asking the University Grants Committee for permission not to run undergraduate courses. The reason not given is that staff do not feel undergraduates to be their prime focus of interest. The solution, therefore: get rid of the students. This has advantages. An alternative solution, also with advantages, would be to find staff who did have undergraduate education as a prime focus of interest.

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