

Students & Revolution

DESPITE ALL THE SIT-INS, *sit-downs*, and *occupations*, four out of five British students are glad to be at the universities which selected them. And three out of four are satisfied with their lives as students.

These disclosures—the other side of the frequent picture of brawling, cat-calling troubles—are made in a survey by National Opinion Polls. It is clearly shown that although students do have genuinely-felt grievances about the running of their colleges, the great majority want these settled by peaceful negotiation.

A minority are prepared to support “revolutionary” leaders in demonstrating for such far-out aims as the overthrow of Britain’s present social and political structure.

NOP made its survey among a representative sample of students from four old-established universities, three redbricks, and two new universities.

THESE ARE SOME of their basic findings about all students:

Only 30% have actually taken part in any demonstration, ranging from a simple protest march to more aggressive sit-ins and strikes. More than one-half believe that they have too little say in the administration of their universities. Three out of four think they ought to be consulted about what aspects of their subjects they should study. Nearly seven out of ten do not believe that examinations are the only fair way of evaluating their abilities. They want greater weight given to the quality of term-time work they produce for their tutors.

60% think that present relationships between teachers and students are satisfactory. And 75% commend their tutors as “helpful.”

STUDENTS WERE ASKED:

On the whole, are you glad you came to this university or not?

ANSWERS (in percentages)	ALL	MEN	WOMEN
Yes	85	84	90
No	12	13	8
Don't know	3	3	2

In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with life as a student?

	ALL	MEN	WOMEN
Satisfied	78	77	83
Dissatisfied	19	21	14
Don't know	3	2	3

Students who said that they were dissatisfied were asked to give their reasons. These received the highest votes:

REASON	PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS
Criticism of study courses	26
Financial Problems	16
Not enough freedom	12
Social problems	11
Too much hard work	11

Even though most students believe in negotiation to settle internal university grievances, they are prepared to demonstrate if negotiation fails.

They were asked first:

If the students had a grievance to do with the running of the university, which one of the following courses of action do you think would be most effective in getting the desired result?

	ALL	MEN	WOMEN
Negotiation	61	57	71
Committee of inquiry	22	23	20
Arbitration	6	7	3
Sit-in or demonstration	11	13	6

They were then asked:

In general, do you agree or disagree with demonstrations to express dissatisfaction with the running of the university?

	ALL	MEN	WOMEN
Agree	64	63	64
Disagree	34	34	35
Don't know	2	3	1

Only 41% of students believe in demonstrating as a gesture of opposition to society—the kind of aim put forward by such organisations as the Socialist Society, at the London School of Economics, for example. But this is clearly still a large enough minority to worry university administrators.

ON THE WHOLE, NOP finds a greater tendency towards interest in extreme political demonstrations among students from better-off families. Students from less-well-off homes—sons of skilled craftsmen and manual workers—are generally more concerned with basic “trade union” issues, like greater student-participation in university affairs.

And NOP confirms the belief that general unrest is more predominant among arts than science students. And with the arts students it is especially notable among those studying social sciences—subjects such as economics and sociology.

Overall the important implication of this NOP survey, based on interviews made between February 10 and February 12, is this: If current negotiations over increased student-participation succeed in the universities the causes of much of the current unrest could finally be removed.

Report of THE NATIONAL OPINION POLLS, LTD., in the DAILY MAIL (London)

in the school's entrance hall to show "solidarity" with their Parisian counterparts. In October over the period of the celebrated Viet Nam demonstration there was a further weekend occupation with parts of the school converted into a "hospital and sanctuary for the marchers." In December, before the Oration by Professor Trevor-Roper, the Socialist Society invaded the seats reserved for visiting dignitaries, and festooned the platform while the guest speaker delivered himself of a brilliant lecture, including remarks on the dangers of a new fascism.⁴ He was afterwards questioned about his views on Greek politics in an unscheduled part of the programme.

At the start of the new term, on the occasion of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference, the militants demanded that the L.S.E. should publish a list of its investments in Rhodesia and South Africa, and that the governors should divest themselves of directorships in companies with interests in these areas or resign. Later, in the course of the same protest, the Senior Common room was occupied.

At a subsequent meeting, addressed by Lord Robbins, the issue of the internal gates which had been set up in the wake of the October Occupation suddenly came to the fore, prompted by a question from a porter about whether or not their presence infringed the fire regulations. For a week votes in the union on the student policy towards them veered backwards and forwards, but finally on Friday, 24 January, came (to quote *The Black Dwarf*) "the glorious moment when, with sledgehammers, pickaxes and crowbars, we went from one gate to another and removed them painlessly, efficiently and by mass action. . . ." The School was closed until 19 February: the weeks in the wilderness were filled with marches, motions, and even an occupation of University College, London, terminated by counter-revolutionaries in the shape of one Rugger club, but on reopening, after a further brief 24-hour occupation, some wall-daubing, and various other protests against the inception of disciplinary

procedures, internal, criminal and civil, against the alleged culprits, the term ended without significant activity.

THUS NARRATIVE, now explanation. The conditions postulated by disciples of the conventional wisdom as necessary for student troubles are all unambiguously present at L.S.E. The study of social science is the main ingredient of the curriculum. The architecture of the student body is not that of a pyramid tapering to a graduate summit, but a two-storey building with graduates (*circa* 1300) almost as numerous as undergraduates (*circa* 1700). Finally there are, as there have always been, a high number of overseas students. In his report of 1966-7 Caine wrote

Much the most striking change has been the rise in the number of American students, predominantly post-graduate (over 100 between 1965-6 and 1966-7). . . . It is reasonable to doubt whether this strong American influence is on balance good for the school (p. 7).

Of the thirteen students originally banned by injunction from entering the school without the director's permission after the '69 closure three were Americans; and Bloom, another American, played an important part in the 1967 eruption.

The rapid growth of the student population in the 1960s, aggravated in 1966-7, the first year of disorders, by an exceptional number of re-admissions, taxed L.S.E. to its limits, and maybe beyond them. Lord Robbins, expansionist pioneer of the Report that bears his name, sowed the whirlwind for Lord Robbins, chairman of the Board of Governors. This has been an ever-present problem of the school. It troubled Beveridge; it re-emerged after the wartime evacuation to Cambridge; it was appreciated by Caine, and it alarms Adams.⁵ L.S.E. is squeezed into a tiny area on the flanks of Houghton Street which winds, sinuous and cloacal, between Aldwych and Lincoln's Inn Fields. The academics' studies are cramped; there are none for students; the library, which has long since abandoned an open-shelf policy, is overflowing, and is taunted by the plate-glassed paper-backed frontage of The Economist Bookshop on the other side of the road. There is no space for residential accommodation, and apart from Passfield Hall, Carr-Saunders Hall and a few converted houses the students have to wander far afield into suburbia (as do their teachers),

⁴ A student pamphlet, *Oration or Discussion?*, said in advance that it [*History, Past and Present*] was "a topic which bears no real relation to the issues that face us." No doubt the author failed to appreciate the unconscious irony.

⁵ See D. C. Watt, "Expansionism at the London School of Economics," p. 32, *Fight for Education* (1969), on the disastrous story of the current decade.

making this, when no occupations are in progress, a 9-to-5 Monday-to-Friday College. The student areas of the building are similarly crammed to capacity, and the Three Tuns Bar, centre of social life, has a feral, claustrophobic atmosphere at lunch-time and the early evening. The Clements Inn passage site, whose buildings will relieve congestion, is still under construction, and the space commonly available in the school has actually lessened because of the necessary demolition. The cost of land in the centre of London is of course enormous, making it expensive to expand.

Communications between senior and junior members of this society have necessarily worsened. Older teachers hark back nostalgically to the intimacy of pre-war years. The last formal research into student grievances on the eve of the disturbances showed that "the majority of complaints arose out of academic relationships—the arrangement of teaching, access to tutors, etc." (*Caine Report, 1966-7, p. 15*). And D. C. Watt has described the social cost of increased departmentalisation and the accretion of a research staff uninvolved in the task of teaching.

YET I AM DOUBTFUL that this is the real reason for the L.S.E. disorders. The conditions of life may be a *causa sine qua non*, but they not not a *causa causans*. These kinds of issues have not been a source of controversy between staff and students; indeed they are a source of consensus. Moreover the rebels cannot hope (even if they aim) to solve them. The reverse is true. The School is on the verge of an appeal for funds for a new library. It is no secret that recent events have made it an unpropitious time to launch such an appeal, nor, in the wider context, that a taxpayers' backlash could put in jeopardy plans for the school, already frustrated by national economic troubles. Student concern for these prosaic but vital matters has not made itself heard over the militants' clamour. Even in 1967 Caine could write: "It has been typical too that in the recent past representations made on behalf of the Student Union were comparatively little concerned with general conditions in the school, but much more with the facilities and privileges of the Students Union as such." And in December of that year when staff-student negotiations were faltering for lack of student negotiators

the editorial of *Beaver*, the student newspaper, commented,

The sad truth seems to be that while members of this college are prepared to strike, sit in, and criticise the action of its own executive and of the school authorities, they are not prepared to get on with the hard work of finding solutions to the very real problems that exist in the college.

Another orthodox view is that the student body wishes to participate more in the administration of the school, both as a means to improvement of various aspects of its life, and as an end in itself, to reflect a new status in the academic community. But moves to democratise the machinery of government were already under way in 1966. Furthermore in the wake of the 1967 occupation a joint staff-student machinery of government committee was set up, whose final recommendations included student membership of the three main governing bodies of the school. This was rejected not only by the Academic Board, but also by the Students Union. In October 1968 still more radical proposals by the authorities were not even considered fully by a Union meeting, devoted instead to the forthcoming Viet Nam demonstration. *Ad hoc* reforms have placed students on six committees since the start of 1968-9, and in his letter to the exiles during the February closure Dr. Adams offered membership of the Court of Governors, the Building and Library Committees, and eight committees of the Academic Board—including the General Purposes committee—together with consultation on matters of curricula, teaching methods and examinations. It was like tempting a tiger to return to its cage with a packet of water biscuits. One of the most surprising features of the L.S.E. story is how marginal has been the change in the organisation of the School compared with the general trend in institutions of higher education in the country. Two out of nine places on the Passfield Hall Sub-Committee is not much to show for some two-and-a-half years of conflict.

The School Authorities have made a variety of efforts to improve the quality of student life. A Dean of Undergraduate Studies was appointed in 1967-8. Each student has been assigned a tutor for consultation on his general academic programme. There is a flourishing health service with psychiatric treatment available; also an employment officer. Loans and grants can be obtained in the case of economic difficulties. Talking to the militants one feels

that all this well-intentioned activity is an irrelevance. The Revolution will not be postponed by the provision of a Welfare State.

FOR THE MILITANTS representation is inadequate; for the moderates (still a majority) it is presumably uninteresting. Indeed for the former that it is offered at all is an insult, for in the words of one: "Rights are not offered—they exist." Parity of authority is the aim.⁶ Some of their pamphlets, can speak of "Worker, Student, Teacher Control," although, without examining the precise nature of the contribution that the cleaning staff might make to a graduate syllabus in econometrics, one can confidently say that they have shown no inclination to make any. "Porter Power" is a pipe-dream. But if the content of the demands is variable, their presentation is not. Any concession to a stated demand is rejected by enlarging the demand itself: for example, that Governors be barred from the premises. "What do we want? Everything! When do we want it? Now!

It is not fanciful to conclude that the pace-makers among the student militants actually prefer conflict to cooperation, an attitude quite explicable in terms of their basic theory.

The Students at L.S.E. must see their struggle as part of this world fight of the students for control of their educational system, as part of the struggle to overthrow the capitalist system, and to end all authoritarian and bureaucratic régimes. It is not a struggle just for academic demands, but the revolutionary anti-capitalist struggle in the student field. (From: *For the Immediate Occupation of the L.S.E. on the Anti-Capitalist Programme.*)

This is not the sort of aim susceptible of satisfaction by a staff-student liaison committee.

Academic demands, of course, feature as well.

"We are getting fed up with irrelevant rubbish and bourgeois ideology." (From: *Take Down*

⁶ According to one student the staff are in fact intellectually converted to this scheme. The author of a minority note to the machinery of government report, he wrote: "Non-Student members of that committee admitted in private that the 'students won all the arguments hands down,' that 'they succeeded in educating the rest of the committee in a variety of ways. But when it came to decision, to voting, these and other members of the committee decided not on the merit of the arguments, but with reference to what can only be called a certain type of authority.'" R. Atkinson, *Students Today* (*Young Fabian Pamphlet*, 1968), p. 8.

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Those Gates by Negotiation or We Will Do it With our Bare Hands.)

It is, however, quite possible to study Marx at L.S.E.; writers here, unlike in the countries favoured as models for Utopia by the militants, may be prescribed, but are not proscribed. Or

“This Assembly rejects the idea that academic freedom means that academic staff have the right to teach and do research into any subjects whatsoever regardless of the consequences with responsibility to no one in such activities” (*Motion for General Assembly, 22 January 1969*).

A sympathetic motion if it were directed at the medical research of Nazi surgeons, but not if it is aimed, as other experience might suggest, at Professor Alan Day’s suggestion that a mild degree of unemployment may be necessary for an expanding economy!⁷ The demands for selection of teachers and control of curricula cannot be isolated from the enthusiasm shown for a “cultural revolution.” It is not the inexperience but the motives of the militants that should be scrutinised.⁸

THE WHOLE EXTREMIST MOVEMENT at L.S.E. has only been loosely concerned with the purposes and functions of a university as at present conceived. Events have fallen into the by now familiar pattern: political demonstration or activity carried out by methods unacceptable to the existing university authorities; than a wider demonstration against the attempted exercise by those authorities of their existing powers. The Adams affair and the attack on the school’s investment policies were really about Rhodesia; the Trevor-Roper episode was about Greece; the incidents contemporaneous with the May Revolution in Paris and the Viet Nam demonstration in London speak for themselves. Even the “Gates” were converted by rhetorical alchemy into a potent political symbol rather than a practical measure

⁷ See “Ideology and More at L.S.E.” (*The Guardian*, 27 January 1969).

⁸ Though they would doubtless hate to hear it, the militants are in the tradition of G. B. Shaw and Ramsay Macdonald in believing that L.S.E. should be a politically partisan academy (see Janet Beveridge, *An Epic of Clare Market*, pp. 26–8 (1960); Caine, *The Foundation of L.S.E.*, pp. 45–7) (1963).

⁹ As one L.S.E. pamphlet put it: “Creative vandalism can postpone the eve of destruction! Wreck something today!...”

to segregate various parts of the unwieldy complex of the school buildings. In tearing down the gates, said Nicholas Bateson (the psychology lecturer who is a leading Marxist ally of the student militants), they had all acted “in solidarity with the heroic liberation fighters of Viet Nam and Zimbabwe.” At such moments the politics of confrontation become the politics of hallucination.

THE TACTICS used by the L.S.E. militants were more comprehensive than elsewhere in England, though, to the connoisseur of such matters, essentially derivative: the files stolen from the room of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies (Columbia, Birmingham); the damage to a painting in the common room (Sorbonne); the spreading of obscenities about the Staff (Berkeley, Sussex); the interruption of ideologically unacceptable speakers; the graffiti, often insensitive and tasteless, e.g., BeLSEn. The sit-ins of course were prolonged and effective, aided by the physical lay-out of the school, and the closure of the school, nationally-speaking, a unique achievement.

There is something toxic in the veins of L.S.E., which explains the persistence of the crisis. Moderate student leaders have been ostracised; staff “hawks” openly menaced and abused. The publication of lists of teachers alleged to have informed on their pupils (“Super-Spies”) raised the temperature; Lord Robbins said in his affidavit in the injunction proceedings that he feared “reprisals.” Visitors to Connaught House (the administration H.Q.) had in recent weeks to submit to scrutiny through a spyhole, answer questions as to their credentials, slip in solo, and be faced with an array of porters who, in my case, apologised for the “cloak-and-dagger stuff.” This would all seem faintly amusing were it not for the foreign experience of bombs and bullets. The L.S.E. Union in January and February 1967 passed a motion unanimously ruling out the use of violence to achieve their ends in the future. During the recent period of lock-out a motion that incorporated a similar sentiment could not even win bare majority support. Is the hour of the creative vandals⁹ at hand? The waves recoil, but each time they break a little further up the beach.

THE MOST REVEALING ASPECT of the militant campaign is exposed by the literature

thrown up by their free press, for it undermines any belief that the whole movement is an expression, albeit an exaggerated one, of an admirable idealism. This is not just a question of such vapid slogans as the L.S.E. is a "breeding ground of social imperialism and social fascism," but of the specific attacks launched on individuals. The campaign sprouted from poisoned soil. Adams, who had sacrificed his own scholastic career to help the academic victims of Hitlerian persecution, was an odd target for veiled allegations of racialism (see *LSE's New Director*, Agitator Publication, 1966). Nor was the case for the prosecution aided when of the authors of the two documents from which the pamphlet was stitched together, one denied that he had given permission to publish (Louis Blom-Cooper, *The Times*, 24 October 1966), and the other, Sir Robert Birley, actually wrote "Dr. Adams' work in founding the College has been one of the few constructive pieces of work on behalf of multi-racialism during recent years on the continent of Africa" (*The Times*, 4 November 1966). In a recent pamphlet all inhibition is cast away and Dr. Adams is described as a "true friend of Smith and Vorster."

Charges of racialism are not merely launched against the living. The late director of L.S.E., Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders, was said to believe that "black people were innately inferior," a grotesque inversion of the truth. Lord Robbins was "winner of the Best Lie of the Year award"; British Petroleum, of which he is a director, is pumping oil to Rhodesia through a pipeline and from a refinery which vanished two years ago. Professor Trevor-Roper had written "Nazism was not undemocratic": doubtless the isolation of this dictum was intended to convince the illiterate that he was a Nazi sympathiser—again the choice of the defamed could hardly have been less apt. Even the complaint about the running of the school was ignorant, since the Governors, described as possessed of "arbitrary and illegitimate powers" in fact exercise *less* authority than almost any other lay body with responsibility for universities in the country. And certain of the American agitators took a deal of persuading to give up the view that the root cause of the corruption of L.S.E. was "control by the alumni." Such criticism passed beyond the boundaries of argument into the territory of mendacious and malicious propaganda.

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WHAT, THEN, IS THE SUPPORT for the militants? Are there "only thirty," the number cited by Education Minister Edward Short in 1969? Here it is important to discriminate between the two aspects—the protest proper and the protest against the punishment of the protesters. There is no doubt that there has always been a massive reinforcement to the Socialist Society core of ideologues when the affair passes from its first to its second phases.

The most significant fact about the Socialist Society strategy has been their manipulation of the Students Union. The politicisation of the Union in summer 1966 was a precondition for the subsequent outburst. Once the Union became a forum for wide-ranging debate the militants took good care to cloak their activities in an aura of legitimacy. Everything that has happened at the L.S.E. by way of direct action and the like has been sanctioned by "a popular vote." This has put a premium on attendance; further, if initially a vote went against the militant plan, it would be re-taken. The procedures of the Union allowed for the calling of a general assembly at the request of 30 students; and for an endless series of votes on any issue. Thus "the vote to occupy" over the Viet Nam Demo weekend reversed a previous decision not to do so taken the day before. The same happened over the decision to pull down the gates. This process of democratic attrition ensured militant victory. The moderates had other things to do than play revolution day after day, and the criticism voiced against them that they were passive victims of militant disruption is misconceived. In the same way the militants were able to force the resignation or virtual retirement of such able leaders as Peter Watherston and Colin Crouch, and leave a power vacuum in the centre of L.S.E. student affairs. The hard core were, of course, covered both ways. As the *Creative Vandalism* pamphlet put it:

The Question must now become, not "What do the majority of students (embryo people-eaters) think?" but "What can we do, as a majority or minority, to smash authority and capitalism?" Talk on the first question has become a major diversion from real action, and as such is reactionary.

The General Will is not necessarily housed in the ballot-box.

¹⁰ Colin Crouch, "The Chiliastic Urge," in *Survey*, October 1968.

The result is that the militants who even now (to judge by union election results, the fairest test) do not number above 500–600 students, have dominated a union comprising over 3,000. For the decisions, whether taken on a snap or a repeated vote, bind not merely those present but those absent as well. Hence on every occasion from the sending of the anti-Adams letter to *The Times* onwards the leaders could rightly claim that they had been "mandated by the student body," and deserved their protection. Hence, too, the constant talk of "victimisation." The punishment of a few is unjust when the responsibility is that of the many. After the re-opening of the school in February this issue generated the residual protest. The militants took the orthodox line, the moderates argued that the closure of the school had itself been a general punishment which wiped the slate clean.

In addition there was a "kith and kin" appeal for "tribal loyalty," as Colin Crouch has called it. Even where specific acts could be pinned on individuals they were immune from exposure. Students who, as members of society, might feel it a civic duty to turn Queen's evidence, would not turn Director's evidence as members of a university. The militants promoted the philosophy of Stokely Carmichael and demanded the loyalty of Stalky & Co. While the injunctions forbade certain students to come on to the school premises without Director's permission, they were actually able to speak at a Union Meeting and thus be in contempt of court without fear of detection. Discipline rests on the consent of the disciplinable, and in a real sense the consequence of the student attitude is that no writ can run on the campus.

NOR SHOULD ONE UNDERESTIMATE the force of the sheer excitement of communal action, of the fusion achieved by the rhythmic chants "*Free, free, LSE! Take it from the bourgeoisie!*"—the logically suicidal chorus of these *filis du papa*, or by the shared vigils. One student has written how the sit-in became transformed from a means to an end in itself:

As a form of participative activity which broke down "structures" and created its own forms of experience, occupying the "whole man," it was not so much part of a sojourn in the wilderness as a trailer for the promised land itself... People spoke of the "community" that had been created during the "sit-in"; they valued the concrete nature of the immediacy of the experience.¹⁰

This sense of solidarity (evidenced elsewhere by the sympathetic outbursts in universities up and down the country in March 1967 and February 1969, presaging the militants' dream—The General Sit-In) is reinforced by outside criticism. The Minister of Education's Parliamentary philippic served only to win new allies for the cause. "*We are Academic Thugs!*", "*We are Only Thirty Militants!*" (echoing the Parisian "*Nous sommes tous les juifs allemands*" and the Viet Nam protesters, "*We are All Foreign Scum!*") New words to old rhythms: *Us is Us* and *Them is Them* and never the twain shall meet.

The militants have similarly been able to play on divisions among the staff. Three alone, Bateson, Harris and Robin Blackburn, are their unequivocal allies, and were in the event subject to internal disciplinary proceedings. Indeed the ideological gap between such a charismatic figure of the Left of the early 1960s as Dr. Ralph Miliband and the current student generation speaks volumes, or at least mimeographed pamphlets, about the pace of change of radical campus ideology. However, once again the familiar distinction between support for what the militants say or do, and support for their total freedom to say or do it, was responsible for the formation of identifiable groups.¹¹ The Law Faculty were surprisingly "Doves" (Wederburn, Griffith, Zander, Thornberry, Leigh); "Sparrow Hawks"¹² included such well-known figures as Morris, the criminologist, Cranston, the political philosopher, Roberts, the professor of industrial relations, and Day, the economist. The main issues of division were the validity of the original suspensions of Adelstein and Bloom in 1967;¹³ the recommendations of the General Purposes committee in January 1969 for maintaining internal discipline which included the reporting by staff of misbehaviour of individual students and the possible use of force to counter disorder; and the terms for re-opening the school in February 1969 which threatened renewed closure and withdrawal of grants. The way in

¹¹ Contrast "The Gates at L.S.E.," by Professor J. R. Griffith (*New Statesman*, 4 February 1969), with the same writer's criticism of the proposed disciplinary code for the school (*The Guardian*, 22 January 1969).

¹² See John Sparrow, "Revolted Students" (*The Listener*, 4 July 1968).

¹³ Julius Gould, "Politics and the Academy," in *Government and Opposition* (Winter 1968), pp. 34-5.

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which the General Purposes Committee proposals (a confidential document) found their way into the hands of the press itself shows how the normal conventions had been eroded. Of a staff of 300, 55 voted against the proposals, and 34 against the terms for re-opening the school.

The result of the student revolt has been to force academics to deploy a range of skills as diplomats, judges, and even policemen, that have not previously been considered necessary qualification for the profession. It is not therefore surprising that, among other things, confusion and mutual suspicion run riot.

THESE INTERNAL CONFLICTS are reflected in an inconsistent policy. The authorities have adopted a strategy of *sauter pour mieux reculer*. Adelman's sending of the original letter to *The Times* was forgiven as "an error of judgment made in good faith." After the March sit-in in 1967, the Disciplinary Board suspended the two leaders till the end of the summer term; the Standing Committee of the Board of Governors remitted a month of the sentence; and after a statement issued by the then Secretary of the School, Harry Kidd, on 19 March that "The decision of the Standing Committee on the suspension of Mr. Adelman and Mr. Bloom will stand. They never have been and will not be a matter for negotiation," on 15 April the Governors lifted the suspension entirely on receiving certain "apologies and assurances." The sitters-in themselves had their original suspension commuted to fines.

The same pattern continued in 1968. Over the Viet Nam weekend Dr. Adams declared that the school was "formally closed"; physically it remained open. The gates, only one of whose functions was to protect the school against unauthorised occupation, in the event provoked the very disorders that they were designed to prevent, and proved their inadequacy for that purpose. (The "cage doors" and "iron anti-student gates" in the emotive language of the militant press were small and feeble grilles which a casual visitor finds hard to locate.)

The imposition of discipline was made difficult not only for the reasons previously outlined but also because of the skills of those threatened with sanctions in turning the law to their own advantage. The militants would accept its protection, but not its punishment:

a new breed of "barricade" lawyers was born. The law relating to conspiracy and trespass, the scope of injunctions, the boundaries of the operation of "natural justice"—all have been painstakingly analysed in this new context. The crisis exposed the rustiness of the internal disciplinary machinery, unused since before the War, and the inability of the school rules (designed in happier times) to stand up to close legal scrutiny. Evidently the militants did not desire the martyrs' crown, and they were apt to recant their revolutionary prophecies when it suited them and even compare themselves (favourably) with rowing rowdies. It was as incongruous as if Joan of Arc took a point on the judge's rules. One could perpetually anticipate a looking-glass result; something happened, no one did it.

THE VACATION has come; the guerrillas have gone home. But there is no reason to think that the campaign of the militants is at an end. Yet when one surveys the whole history up to now, the impression left is one of its hopeless irrelevance. Capitalism has not been overthrown. The School has not been improved. The reputation of the L.S.E. has suffered, costing it both financial support and, though conclusions must be tentative, a fall in the number of applications. Everyone's time has been wasted; staff, who wished to devote it to their tranquil pupils, bitterly resent the long hours spent on negotiating committees.

It seems that it is the minority interest (the students of working-class origin, and those from the developing countries) who have suffered most from the activities of middle-class colleagues: again though, definite conclusion as to the militants' background must await the judgment of sociologists. The only victory of the militants has been to save their comrades from punishment for activities that have done the causes they espouse no good at all. If one had to choose a military analogy—and in student affairs the metaphors of industry have yielded to the metaphors of battle—one would choose the first World War. It is a long slog with heavy casualties on both sides but with little doubt as to the ultimate victor. There is here none of the romance of the Paris barricades; none of the anguish of what is happening across America; none of the explosive generational bitterness of post-Hitler Germany; none of the heroism of

Prague or Madrid. Only the fact that Fleet Street is nearby, and Thames Television next door can have created the illusion that this is a creative conflict of public philosophies.

The irony is that it should be L.S.E. that is thus troubled, for it was uniquely created to promote social change. This was the purpose the Webbs had in mind. In the first recorded mention of the plans for L.S.E. Beatrice Webb wrote in her *Diary*:

We want the ordinary citizen to feel that reforming society is no light matter and must be undertaken by experts specially trained for the purpose.

Economics, politics, sociology have been the school's prime concerns. Its sense of involvement in practical problems was reflected in its long history of mature and part-time students and in its special courses (for Army Officers between 1907 and 1932 or, after the war, for those who were to join the civil services of the newly-independent nations). Its staff has been distinguished by its radical accents from the days of R. H. Tawney and Harold Laski to the days of Titmuss and Wedderburn. In the first post-war Labour Government, the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Secretary of State for India were former L.S.E. lecturers; and its alumni have included John Kennedy, Pierre Trudeau and Jomo Kenyatta. The L.S.E. tradition comprised the advancement of human welfare through the application of knowledge and the deployment of reason.¹⁴ The doctrines were those of the Blue Book, not the Red Book.

L.S.E. is a particular, not a paradigmatic example of the British student power movement. But it is clear from what has happened here that the motives and methods of the militants, who have been throughout the pace-makers and moulders of events, are different from and divorced from those of the unthinking liberals who so tolerantly give benediction to their activities. L.S.E.'s history represents reform; the militant students represent, however absurdly, "revolution." These are two different concepts of change and progress, and they are incompatible, not interconnected.

¹⁴ "Only in this path of scientific study lies any hope of remedying social evils or relieving individual misery." (Sidney Webb to Mrs. Bernard Shaw, 26 January 1899, quoted by Caine, *op. cit.*, p. 95).

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How to Fail Without Really Trying

By Stuart Maclure

BOTH THESE BOOKS,¹ in their different ways, are a reminder of an unpalatable truth. In most countries—and this certainly includes Britain—the only thing which prevents the educational system from going bankrupt is its sheer inefficiency.

The British educational system only keeps going as it does—with proud terminal standards and good levels of staffing—because half the population obligingly contracts out of secondary education at the half-way mark, and six out of seven never present themselves for higher education. It must be a Minister of Education's nightmare that suddenly standards of educational inspiration will be transformed and the teachers will succeed in implanting the will to complete the course in a whole generation instead of only in a minority; that all that human potential which, now, for a variety of social and pedagogic reasons is never released, will come to fruition; and that, confronted by an army of drop-outs who refuse to drop out, he will see the educational system collapse in a shambles before his eyes.

Lord Butler's essay—a lecture, blown up into a book together with some reference material about professional education—is a prosaic plea for more education all round, and particularly at the higher and professional level. His approach to the matter is in terms of national need. He sees mass education not simply as an expression of the good society but also in terms of economic growth and material progress. He makes the familiar contrast between the technological sophistication and managerial expertise of the Americans and the relative failure to harness education to national needs in Britain.

In Japan [he writes] where the rate of illiteracy is the lowest in the world, the formation of technicians and scientists is far more abundant than in either England or France. It is estimated that in five years' time thirty per cent of the total

labour force will possess a university degree. To make even a start in this country will entail a fundamental reappraisal of the role of universities and a radical change of heart in some of the older universities, where specialists and professionals as a whole are tolerated but have never been assimilated. At the present time, our educational system is too poor to mobilise the full resources of the country, and it has yet to be brought into line with our industrial requirements. If it is not, we shall find ourselves in a position similar to the Mycenaeans at the beginning of the Iron Age.

He emerges as a whole-hogging expansionist—unworried by murmurings of rebellion from conservative university quarters—even flirting with a Pippard-type proposal for two-year first degrees and enlarged graduate schools to provide a top dressing for some and to “preserve standards.”

Much of this is significant only because of the source from which it comes. There is a proprietary note in some of his general comments.

In 1944 we were well aware that education had to be widened and improved but since then little has been done because the controversies have not centred around the real problem, which is to bring the education system in line with the 1960s and 1970s, but instead have been obsessed with the reorganisation of secondary schools and a re-vamping of educational policy which seems sometimes to put more value on equality than on scholarship. It seems to me inevitable that the character of the universities will change; and there is no reason why it should not.

Here, perhaps, even from his cross-bench, the old party Adam is coming out. It is not true that “little has been done” and uncommonly difficult to square a whole-hearted commitment to mass education with the indefinite continuation of a selective system. Difficult as the transition is going to be, if you believe what Lord Butler believes about expansion at every level, logic points to removing gratuitous obstacles like the 11-plus.

Sir George Pickering, F.R.S., the Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford, is another who believes that the British educational system artificially restricts the supply of talent and mis-

STUART MACLURE has been an editor of Education since 1954; next month he returns to The Times Educational Supplement as Editor. He edited Educational Documents in England and Wales, 1816-1967 (Chapman & Hall, 1967) and, with T. E. Uteley, Documents on Modern Political Thought (Cambridge University Press, 1957).

¹ *The World Educational Crisis*. By PHILIP H. COOMBS. Oxford University Press, 51s. *The Responsibilities of Education*. By LORD BUTLER. Longmans, 30s.