

THE STRANGE DEATH OF THE LIBERAL UNIVERSITY

John Cowley

THE 1960s sees the birth of a new political generation in the advanced capitalist countries. Its school is the student movement. In Germany, Japan, America, France and Italy, combative student movements, born of explosive social tensions close below the surface of post-war affluence and political quietude, are demonstrating the vulnerability of advanced bourgeois society. Britain until recently appeared immune from such developments, although here too events of the past year pose the question as to the possible birth of a student movement. This essay is an exploration of that possibility. The focus is limited to the question of the actual basis for such a movement in the educational system itself.

What is historically distinctive about the student movements of today is their involvement, centrally, in politically contesting the established university structure and practice. This political contestation on a global scale is emerging during a decade of rapid and spectacular growth in higher education in the advanced capitalist nations. The connection between university expansion and student agitation and protest needs exploring, for the two are intimately related and each is revelatory of the other. In the process of expansion, in one country after another, traditional educational values and practices are subject to general questioning and the old university system is attacked from within and from without. This much is generally accepted, but what requires to be understood is the essential nature of the crisis that now manifests itself. It is a crisis embracing both teachers and students. Increasing numbers become conscious of it, as more and more experience the confusion and uncertainty now pervading academic work and study.



In Britain the active propagation of specifically student demands is a new phenomenon and precipitates an immediate response. The student "revolutions" at Hornsey and Guildford in June 1968 led to swift and far-sweeping action on the part of the local authorities concerned : students were expelled, teachers sacked and whole departments disbanded. At the London School of Economics the authorities, if somewhat less direct and primitive in their methods, are no less repressive; informing by teachers on students, erecting iron gates to forestall student occupations, requesting police intervention, issuing writs to

selected militant students and threatening staff with disciplinary action and dismissal. Such repression accompanies the "concessions" recently negotiated by the National Union of Students with the Committee of Vice-Chancellors.¹ The pattern is clear: where an increase in student representation in the on-going administering of the college fails to contain student unrest the State will step in. Parliament and press now speak with one voice of the need to crush student action at its inception. However, they err in their judgment that a handful of militant students stand in accidental relation to the mass of students.² On the contrary, as will be discussed later, they articulate an emerging contradiction in the educational sector of contemporary capitalism. The nature and dimension of this contradiction are obscured and shrouded by the peculiar structure of British higher education: its marked status differentiation and class determined institutional segregation. The complex structure of higher education first needs dissecting if the social tension it contains is to be revealed, and such an analysis requires an examination of the educational system's selective and adaptive practices.

Under capitalism, as in all social formations characterized by economic scarcity, education is closely related to the needs of the economy and the established social order: the necessary personnel are selected for a given, or anticipated, occupational structure. The educational system produces and reproduces a highly differential labour force. So that, for example, the 1944 Educational Act, for all its democratic rhetoric, no more than consolidated secondary education within the framework of a tripartite division aimed at providing a "practical" education in the secondary modern schools, "technical" in the junior technical schools and "academic" in the grammar schools. The relationship of such a division to the class structure of Britain is both obvious and direct, producing blue and white collar and administrative and technical workers. Such divisions exist throughout the educational system. In the main the public sector³—from state schools to Colleges of Further Education, Technical and Art Colleges, and Colleges of Education—is geared to fulfilling the task of developing a range of technical skills and aptitudes or what is conventionally referred to as an "emphasis on vocationalism". The public sector is more narrowly subordinated to the criteria of capitalist society, whereas the autonomous sector, [fundamentally concerned with the formation of the bourgeoisie as a class for itself], is responsible for educating a cultured elite and elaborating, transmitting and preserving an elite culture. Preparation for rule and its justification on the basis of a supposed moral and intellectual superiority go hand in hand. In other words, the selection and forming, in both a technical and cultural sense, of the organisers and administrators, the scholarly intellectuals

and professionals, required to manage and direct capitalist society, is primarily carried out in the private and "semi-private" institutions of the autonomous sector: the public schools and ancient universities, particularly Cambridge and Oxford. Historically, the institutions of the private sector are less clearly integrated into society, thus giving a semblance of autonomy and encouraging beliefs in the historical character of academic life and the detached pursuit of truth.⁴

The ideological justification of capitalist society and its everyday affirmation in popular consciousness is vitally assisted by the educational system's adaptive practice. At school the child is adapted to the established social structure and its most fundamental values: he is preparing to bow to the existing capitalist relations of production. The child acquires habits of regularity and disciplined behaviour: the headmaster's near-monopoly of power, the staff and prefects' responsibility for maintaining order, the playground drills and school uniforms, and the child's passivity in the class room (the first lesson learnt at school is to obey), are all elements that together constitute an organization of school life which trains and disciplines the individual child. It is within such a structure that the imposition of fundamental bourgeois values takes place. The reference here is not to the myths of England's past that may or may not be spun in the history class room, but to the everyday inculcation, by word and by deed, of such "values" as neatness, responsibility, privacy and the competitive basis of self-advancement. Above all the educational system "keeps alive and flourishing the whole ideology of elite rule in so far as it emphasises the selection of exceptional individuals for elite positions, and the rewards in income or status of scholastic achievement. . . ."⁵ Although for the working class child attending a secondary modern school, the emphasis is more upon the child's own personal inadequacy being the cause of his academic failure. The ordering of school life, then, and its everyday routines, mirrors the life of bourgeois society: it imposes its class-determined forms of adulthood on the child.



The specific form of the basic educational practices, the nature of their combination and ideological justification, is determined by the central experiences and peculiarities of British history. The formation of the educational system and its most characteristic features have a long history. What is at stake here is the change which has taken place as a result of the recent spectacular expansion of higher education, and this can only be adequately explored if cognizance is taken of the broader social context.

British capitalism, however hesitantly, is entering the phase of organized capitalism: the domination and top-down regulation and

management of society by the State and the private monopolies. The consolidation of corporate concentration and control and concomitant technical innovations have necessitated a restructuring of education, in order to elaborate the differentiated specializations and skills appropriate for an economy undergoing much needed technological advance. Technical and intellectual workers are now top priority. The renewal and rationalization of capitalism requires more scientific and technical workers, administrators, communication experts and personnel, trained managers of men, market researchers and computer programmers, as well as a new kind of semi-skilled labour for semi-automated industry and the computerized bank or insurance company. In the epoch of large-scale organizations, public and private, the tendency is for ever greater specialization, and, in the process, the space for individual initiative and responsibility is ever more limited, and functionaries proliferate to manage, supervise and direct the employee performing his narrow specialism. As a consequence the whole educational sector becomes more closely oriented to the needs of the productive apparatus, and in the expansion and restructuring of education the socialist traditional demands for a more democratic system of higher education, the ending of 11+ and the creation of comprehensive schools at the secondary level become bent to meet the technical and managerial requirements of capitalism. Instead of a more open and equitable system of education there takes place a more efficient institutionalization of social mobility;⁶ instead of an end to streaming there emerges a class-biased specialization upon the well-established American pattern (i.e., streaming according to subject specialization and the selection for preferential treatment of an "academic" elite, allowing the middle class teacher to find a natural rapport with the brightest offspring of his own class). The fundamental class roots of the education system are left untouched. However, even this modernization of education is unlikely to be ever fully accomplished, for capitalism is always forced to skimp on such social investment. Hence the postponing of the raising of the school leaving age and the continuing inadequacy of building and equipment grants. In the present period of economic squeeze and general trimming of public expenditure bottlenecks and distortions arise at every level of education. At the end of 1968 the Prices and Incomes Board went so far as to suggest the teacher's wit might be sharpened by material incentives.

Although in education as in other sectors capitalism successfully absorbs reforms, bending them to its own purposes, the expansion of university-college education has also involved a transformation of structures and practices. The expansion and accompanying extension of technocratic aims is slowly undermining the traditional hegemony of Cambridge and Oxford. Standing at the apex of the educational

hierarchy, Cambridge and Oxford have provided a distinctive form and peculiar tone to British society, deeply penetrating social and cultural life. It was Oxbridge which produced the "inspired amateur", a non-specialist yet good judge of character, to control and direct British industry, finance and government. The English bourgeoisie always have put a special stress on character training, both moral and physical, and have paid less attention to fundamental intellectual qualities as such. The whole organization of college life, socially and intellectually, at the ancient universities has been dominated by the ideal of the cultivated gentleman. Although still sprightly stepping the corridors of power this "gentleman", for all his culture and administrative brilliance, can no longer meet without aid the challenge of a capitalism requiring renewal and rationalization if it is to prosper in the last third of the twentieth century. The historical task of the post-war period is that of rejuvenating British capitalism, and this necessitates the consolidation of the corporate oligarchy and the assertion of corporate rationality into every sector of society.

The old university-college system is expanded and changed to meet new needs and in the process brings to the surface—and activates—a fundamental social tension. This is to be seen most clearly in the lower levels of the binary system: in the art colleges particularly, but also in the technological universities⁷ and technical colleges. A contradiction emerges between the skills, creative thinking and individual initiative that is technically made possible by the new technology and the actual subordination of even the most skilled engineer, industrial designer and teacher necessitated by capitalist productive relations. André Gorz puts the point well :

Once "a certain level of education has been reached, it becomes out of the question to try and limit the need for independence; it is impossible to teach knowledge and ignorance in the same breath, without those taught finally grasping how they are being stunted; it is impossible to contain the independence inherent in cognitive praxis within tight limits, even by early specialization. In short it is impossible, in the long run, to bottle up independence. Monopoly capital dreams of a particular kind of specialized technician, recognizable by the co-existence in one and the same person of zest for his job and indifference about its purpose, professional enterprise and social submission, power and responsibility over technical questions and impotence and irresponsibility over questions of economic and social management".¹

Initially this contradiction is experienced by the student, individually and collectively, as an inadequate educational preparation for the position he hopes to achieve in production. The student very often sees the problem as being caused by the immediate economic squeeze and a general lag in educational adaptation and reform in a period of college expansion and general technological advance. Art students, notably at Hornsey, Guildford and Birmingham, perceive the inade-

quacy of their technical preparation of being instructed and trained "in art", as opposed to acquiring a genuinely creative education as artists in search of a career which has not merely monetary worth but an intrinsic meaning and value.⁹ All these fears and worries are further increased as art students come to be haunted by the spectre of unemployment.

In the technological universities too there are important indications of students becoming critical of the fragmentary technical knowledge they receive (i.e. the lack of coherence in the structure of degrees and individual courses often based upon the particular research interests of lecturers, together constituting a partial and ad hoc approach to technology), and its mechanical transmission in the class room. At the City University in London, formerly a College of Advanced Technology the students at a series of mass meetings in November, 1968 endorsed demands for major structural reforms.¹⁰ The students in such colleges seek a formation, in the sense of the acquisition of the basic intellectual skills necessary for mastering their chosen field and the requisite skills for social life, adequate to their proposed future position in production. This corporate awareness contains within it the possibility of, and tends towards, a general social awareness, because the quality of educational practice and the unresponsiveness of college administrations are problems that ultimately cannot be separated from the organization of the productive process in which the technical possibilities for individual creativity and intellectual mastery contradict the political organization of the factory. Capitalist social relations of production impose their logic throughout the society, and the specialization demanded by industry is a *fetter* on technological progress itself because it crushes the *practical imagination*.¹¹

However, full consciousness of the inter-connections of school and society will not develop immediately and spontaneously. Such a maturing of consciousness ultimately depends upon the development of a student movement and upon its organization and political-educative practice. Although such a consciousness is implicit—it exists embryonically—even in the most limited movements for reform of educational structures, and even in the most corporatist movements there is the demand for some, however partial, control over the students' own education signifying the end of students as passive and manipulable objects. The end, that is, of the student body as an atomized mass of separate individuals engaged in the competitive pursuit of self-advancement; a condition which has been central to their preparation for the established organization of production. The demand for control over one's own technical formation challenges the actual preparation for a future subordination to capitalist relations of production. Today the student is merely an individual in transition from a past class back-

ground to a future location in society's productive apparatus. This is true of the vast majority of students who are destined to become skilled intellectual and technical workers. Tomorrow, organized, the students¹² could represent a social group, not a class it must be emphasized, but a collectivity in movement, questioning the society for which they are being prepared. Thus the student demands for structural reform contain within them the possibility of going beyond an immediate challenge to existing educational practice, whatever its degree of inadequacy, to a general societal critique. Further, this overcoming of atomization and passivity in one sector threatens by its exemplary nature to erode such passivity in all sectors, thus undermining the basis of political authority in the schools, in the factory and in society at large.

The crisis in higher education is essentially a crisis of incorporation, arising from the ever greater inter-connectedness of university-college structures and the capitalist productive apparatus. In the process of incorporation the historical insubstantiality of the liberal conception of the university as an outpost of intellectual freedom, a community of scholars practically consolidating a tradition of academic autonomy and intellectual challenge and discovery, is starkly revealed. The increasing penetration of technocratic aims permanently disrupts the old structure, social and intellectual, of college life. The technocratic aims of capitalism in themselves provide merely administrative principles of effectiveness (the move to relate the lecturer's pay to his "productivity" is indicative, even though the immediate cause is the economic squeeze), and offer no adequate organizing principle or rationale to replace the old bourgeois ideal of the cultivated gentleman. The proposals of the Robbins Report, which were the basis for the recent spectacular expansion in higher education, are premised upon the need to modernize the economy in order that Britain may maintain an adequate position in a fiercely competitive world. The Report argues that investment in higher education "can increase quite substantially in comparison with what has been spent hitherto without incurring discredit by comparison with ordinary commercial investment or with investment in most forms of nationalized industry".¹³ However, if the criteria of liberal economism (i.e. the needs of industry and market value) are to be the basic criteria of the newly expanded university-college system then elaborate governmental and bureaucratic forms of control are undoubtedly going to be extended, because it will not of its own accord, internally and out of its own life, generate an organic unity and cohesion. The new needs of capitalism cannot be pressed into the traditional social and cultural forms of college life without the organic unity of the old being destroyed. In the period of expansion and transformation of educational structures talk of academic com-

munity and academic freedom is the echo of an increasingly hollow rhetoric. The exigencies of the present crisis-ridden economic situation of British capitalism merely hastens the demise of the liberal university; the cause of death is to be located elsewhere.

In the higher levels of the binary system, in colleges such as the London School of Economics, Essex and Hull, the liberal arts and social science students are the first to respond to the emergent social tensions already referred to. Again it is immediately experienced as an inadequacy in the existing educational practice, what Touraine terms "the gulf between the functioning of teaching and the hopes of the students".¹⁴ At the upper levels of the binary system, in the universities, the technical formation of the student contains its own contradiction between what is concretely possible in terms of individual independence and initiative and the actual constraints imposed by capitalist productive relations; the only difference is that because such a formation centrally involves the study of society and culture the ideological component is much more explicit and significant. The students perceive the gulf that exists between the increasingly technocratic aims of education, with its emphasis on technique and vocational preparation, and the traditional liberal notion of the inner development of the individual. Such a perception quickly leads to questioning of the established relations and values of the college. In practice the liberal ideal of the separate individual, his self-sufficiency, intellectual powers, social poise and cultured mind, tends to become relegated to the student club and the occasional faculty sherry party. It becomes but a by-product of education, at most a cultural gloss, in an age in which a pragmatic and essentially technical theory increasingly predominates in languages, literature and the social and applied sciences. The traditional liberal educational practice based upon the accepted atomization of the student body, seeing learning not as a collective experience and creative dialogue but as the acquisition of specific skills and knowledge by the isolated individual, itself tends to solidify into one of the mechanical imposition of fragmentary and often superficial knowledge. As a consequence the ideological component—liberal values generally, but also the rhetoric concerning the academic community and the disinterested quest for knowledge—is also mechanically imposed from outside for it is no longer an organic part of college life as a whole. The inadequacy that emerges within the educational system's adaptive practice of "socializing" the individual into the established social system and conceptual framework, is in itself more immediately political for it represents incipient breakdown in the very process of legitimizing the established social and class structure. The contradiction between ideology and reality becomes apparent in the very institutions engaged in interpreting and justifying the social order. Further, the tradition

of the political club and the general intellectual permissiveness in universities such as the L.S.E. and Essex directly encourage a more immediate political questioning of the university's societal role and institutional connections. Hence at the upper levels of the educational system there emerges highly political demands and actions on the part of the students, directly challenging the ideological role of the university. In this respect the L.S.E. is perhaps the outstanding example in this country of student challenge to the ideological functioning of the college. The educational home of Fabianism, administrative and administered welfare state socialism, becomes ensnared in its own largely mythical radical past. The limits to academic freedom at the L.S.E. become revealed when the students seek to overcome their position of subordination. They find they are excluded from the prevailing definition.

As the educational system becomes increasingly technocratic in its aims, administrative principles come to dominate educational ones. The main virtue, historically, of the nineteenth century definition of university education is that it provided at least a semblance of autonomy and freedom for the academic. Certainly there have been no direct political constraints on the thoughts and words of the academic, and in this sense the universities can be said to have experienced a flowering of bourgeois freedom. Even the Marxist academic, once in, has been free to follow his intellectual interests, presenting Marxism as another intellectual tradition worthy of study. Society has left him alone in his separate isolation. Present day capitalism, with its attempted rationalization and renewal, threatens even this passive and partial freedom of the intellect. With the pressure for increased productivity, growth and efficiency in every sector, the universities begin to lose even a semblance of autonomy : they become increasingly subservient to capitalism. One of the ironies of capitalism is that the more wealth it produces the more cost conscious and sparing it becomes. The Universities' Conference, 21 March, 1968,¹⁵ and the PIB Report of December the same year reflect the pressure being exerted internally and externally for rationalization of academic work on a strictly quantifiable basis. The institutional autonomy of the university is attacked for shielding gross inefficiency. From without and from within it is being subverted. "Academic freedom" becomes the ideological cudgel of the bourgeois academic defending his privileges and dying culture. Behind the slogan there exists the realities of the universities as institutions characterized not by a diversity and active struggle of ideas but by a much-of-the-sameness, not tension-producing social criticism and debate but a meek seeking after exactitude in the name of objectivity. The academic community in its teaching and research, increasingly betrays itself in the service of the capitalist "community". The academic freedom now

being defended by the administrators and professional elites is largely formal when the thinking is ever more purely technical thinking and the freedom of students is essentially that of being lectured to and examined as to their absorptive capacity and technical competence. In this situation student demands for radical educational reforms brings about not an active dialogue with the faculty, nor reform of educational practices, but the attempted foreclosure of the challenge and debate by administrative manoeuvre.

In this present crisis even the most fervent of liberals are no longer confident that their ideals still have purchase. The confusion this gives rise to in the academic world is widespread and multiple in form, producing a questioning of educational roles and aims. The confusion is confounded by the fact that student agitation seeks not a repairing of the old university system but the attempted articulation of a completely new definition of education. The demand for student power is an expression of the need for self-dominance (i.e. control over one's own life and work). What is sought is a restraining of the learning process to make it a genuinely collaborative and creative interaction of the experienced and the not so experienced. The ultimate goal is a self-determining collectivity of teachers and students. Student action is also a reaction to the educational system's role in legitimizing the established social conditions of existence. The demand is for intellectual work and learning to have a critical social relevance, not merely in the sense of its encouraging an increase in social awareness and a stimulation of necessary social reform but much more importantly in the sense of its being centrally concerned with the most fundamental issues of human experience. There is a desire to explore deeply into the nature of social and natural life and its possible meanings. The development of such an intellectual practice requires an authentic diversity of ideas. Student militancy is the first step towards the free struggle of ideas. The most crucial questions raised by student action are whether it is possible to create an educational process which is also a process of individual liberation and also how this can be achieved within the revolutionary transformation of society as a whole.



Student opposition to capitalist rationalization is still at a primitive and early stage. The actual birth of a coherent and combative student movement is still in doubt. Although the social basis for such a movement exists, its successful creation cannot be assumed. There is no inevitable line of progression from the first manifestations of student unrest to the establishment of a revolutionary student organization and political practice. The Revolutionary Socialist Student Federation, set up in June 1968, represents much more a transitional grouping of

disparate radical tendencies than the real beginning of a revolutionary student movement. Nevertheless, ultimately the outcome does lie within the purview of the student activities themselves. As Anthony Barnett says: students are now locked in battle with the university authorities, the vice-chancellors and principals, for "the political allegiance of an entire social bloc".¹⁶ The opposition is extremely powerful and is mobilized, and it exists within and without the educational sector. A year long campaign conducted by the mass media, and aided by Parliament, has helped to localize student action and generate general hostility towards it. Important here is the attempt to register in popular consciousness the identification of direct action, occupations and street demonstrations, with violence. Great efforts are made to isolate and discredit student agitation and protest at its inception. At the same time the university authorities, with the aid of the National Union of Students, attempt to incorporate student militancy, via a proliferation of committees, into the existing administrative structure. Where this fails more forceful action is taken and students are issued with writs and taken to court.

The immediate position of strength held by the university authorities is rooted in the institutional compartmentalization of students and their subordination and fragmentation within each institution. The as yet largely inchoate attempts to break down the segregation of students in art colleges from those in technical colleges and universities, etc., and at the same time overcome the inner-institutional passivity and atomization of students, are going to be the two pivotal struggles determining the outcome of the battle as a whole.

The differentiated structure and institutional segregation of the binary system encourages and exaggerates the very uneven development of the student protest. On the other hand, in art colleges there arises a very militant "trade unionist" struggle on immediate educational matters which embraces the majority of students in these institutions, and, on the other hand, in the universities the student protest is very political, often abstractly so. The separation of these disparate tendencies is crucial to the power of the authorities; segregation of students into different sub-sectors of the educational system is the *institutional* basis of bourgeois dominance in education. Such compartmentalization of students prevents them as a mass becoming a social group in autonomous movement, critical of, and struggling against, the capitalist social and political order. The radicalization of the mass of students and the formation of a combative student movement depends upon breaking down those same institutional barriers which keep isolated whole groupings of students. The institutional segregation is also a factor in the preservation of the opaqueness of the class structure, and a struggle against the binary system will vitally assist the demystification

of the capitalist social order. Hence, the double importance of the campaign at Bristol university to open the new union facilities to all students of the city. A campaign such as this threatens to make the first serious inroads into the compartmentalization of students, while at the same time opening up the possibility of making transparent the crippling class structure of Britain. Further, such a struggle helps to cut through the current, often sterile, debate as to the legitimacy of the educational struggle and the largely rhetorical juxtaposing of factory to school. The building of a student movement involving students throughout higher education, including young workers and apprentices still engaged in studying at night school and on day release, precedes—and is a necessary precondition for—any student-worker alliance. The political self-dominance of students, organizationally based upon the whole mass of students, would resolve once and for all the contradiction that has traditionally existed between the revolutionary rhetoric of many of the small political sects, often dependent upon student recruits, and an essentially passive practice of factory-gate picketing and leafleting. Clearly in the battle for the political allegiance of the mass of students a pivotal struggle will be over the inter-institutional organization of students and the breaking down of the segregation maintained by the binary system.

The other central support of the university authorities is founded in the subordination of the mass of students within each individual institution. The problem is not simply one of autocratic administrations but also of the essentially coercive nature of educational relationships. The hierarchy of authority within each institution, the competitive examination system and the faculty's ultimate power of determining success and failure, together help to keep the students in a generally subordinate and passive position: the receivers of education rather than active participants in a process of learning. Here it is the essentially coercive nature of the educational process which is at stake, for it is central to the bourgeoisie's exercise of ideological, political and social control over the students. The very structure of educational relationships and existing pedagogic practices places the faculty in service to the status quo. Faculty work within an educational structure which encourages conformity on the part of students in the effort to succeed and imputes personal inadequacy to those who fail at one of the many examination hurdles. Existing teacher-student relationships are deforming of both, fostering attitudes of paternalism and deference and a spurious gentility.

Not even the Marxist teacher escapes his actual function within the educational system and he too is directly challenged by the struggles of students, for such struggles do strike at the anchoring of his social personality within the system and so brings about a confrontation with

the bourgeois aspect of his own life as a bourgeois academic. The personal gratifications and assurances provided by existing teacher-student relationships, academic qualifications and titles, and the respect guaranteed by formal position, provide a professional identity inseparable from the academic's personal identity. The accustomed life-style of the teacher is directly threatened by the student activists, who are prepared to accept no more than the greater experience and knowledge of the teacher and wish to be able to confront him with direct and critical argument. The privileges, formal defences and personal gratifications of the academic are centrally involved. Hence the general conservativeness of faculty, whatever their political views, on questions of institutional democratization.

In the present crisis the academic tends to view student militancy as *the* threat to his cherished university—and world. Uncomprehended is the student experience of the deforming reality of a technocratic dominance of education, which demands specialized technical skills and a marketable intellect. There is little real understanding of the intense concern of the present generation of students with the actual quality of life and with it means to be one's self at one's best, having control over one's work and life. The hopes and needs of a new generation are expressing themselves in varied and often weird ways: pop music and art, colourful styles of dress, drugs and sexual casualness are both expressions and symptoms of a deep concern with personal self-expression and liberation from repressive social relations and conventions.

Student demands for control over their own education, for anti-authoritarian modes of teaching and for democratization of educational structures generally, is the other pivotal struggle in the present battle. The struggle for student power provokes an immediate crisis of authority, for it destroys the traditional consensus upon which academic power is based. The very organizing of students, however incompletely it may overcome the passivity and atomization of the student body as a whole, generates a crisis in academic authority and makes for instability and conflict.

The class-based institutional segregation of the student mass and the subordination and atomization of students within each institution are immense obstacles but ones which the present wave of student protest threatens to breach, establishing itself as a political force to begin the challenge to the political, intellectual and moral supremacy of the bourgeoisie. The present crisis brought about by the post-war movement towards a more effective and closer integration of universities and colleges into the productive apparatus of capitalism perpetually forces the student protest, however primitive and inchoate it presently may be, to go beyond mere sectoral demands for pedagogic

reform to a contestation with the system in its totality. Such a political contestation would signify not only the birth of a new political generation, but also the establishment in embryonic form of the long dormant socialist ideal of society as a school and school as society.

NOTES

1. See the *Joint Statement from the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals and the National Union of Students*, obtainable from NUS, 3 Endsleigh Street, London, W.C.1.
2. Following the students removal of the iron gates at the LSE at the end of January, 1969, it was stated by governors of the School and in Parliament and the Press that a handful of troublemakers were responsible. Mr. Edward Short, Secretary of State for Education and Science, in a hysterical statement to Parliament asserted that "fewer than 30" were responsible, and of "these at least four are from the United States. . . . These gentlemen are clearly not here to study. They are here to disrupt and undermine British institutions. This small group are the thugs of the academic world". And, "the activities of this tiny cell of people could do untold long-term harm in this country". *The Times*, Thursday, 30 January, 1969. The foreign conspiracy is never far from the politician's mind.

The public sector is distinguished from the "autonomous" sector by the fact that the former is directly financed by and responsible to public authority, usually a Local Educational Authority.

The historical basis for such beliefs is the fundamental social division of labour existing between intellectual and manual work, a division which is a central characteristic of all forms of class society, and helps provide a relatively detached and privileged position for those engaged in essentially ideological elaboration.

5. T. B. Bottomore, *Elites and Society*, Watts, 1964, p. 117.
6. John Westergaard concludes: "The frequency of social mobility has not been significantly increased; but its incidence is steadily more confined to a single phase of the life cycle. If the individual is to be socially mobile, he must be so during his years of formal education: the chances of promotion or demotion, once he has entered on his adult working career, are almost certainly narrowing. The position of the adult manual worker—and to a growing extent, that of the routine clerical worker—becomes a more, not a less, permanent one". J. H. Westergaard, 'The Withering Away of Class: A Contemporary Myth', *Towards Socialism*, (eds. P. Anderson & R. Blackburn), Fontana, 1966, p. 90. There is also the important fact that as the institutions of formal education are enlarged, and social mobility institutionalized, the space for "informal" education in the work place is reduced. In short, the pedagogic aspect of work relationships is slowly withering away.
7. Formally the technological universities are in the upper half of the binary system, although in fact their position and status in the educational hierarchy remains ambiguous.
8. A. Gorz, "Capitalist Relations of Production and the Socially Necessary Labour Force", *International Socialist Journal*, August 1965.

At the occupation of the Hornsey College of Art, students and teachers worked-out a whole new conception of art education. By a process of direct democracy—permanent assembly, open discussions and commissions—they collectively produced an entirely different model of art education, from basic structure of the college to content of courses and teaching modes. It represented a complete rupture with the past.

10. The following motion was passed by a meeting of over four hundred City University students (with one vote against and four abstentions): "This Union mandates the Executive and Union representatives meeting the University Grants Commission (U.G.C.) to express their dissatisfaction with the structure of courses that do not provide a University education, either technically and in the wider sense of the word, and that the finance provided by the U.G.C. is not made best use of". A second meeting attended by over 1,000 students, with the Press in attendance, endorsed (virtually unanimously) demands for student representation on the central governing bodies of the University and access to all information.

The need to reform radically technology teaching, the possibility of a critical approach within the applied sciences, and whether or not one can speak of an authentic technical culture and cognitive praxis, are questions of the utmost importance. One of the conclusions Peter Morris draws in his study of engineering students is that "their work requires as much creative insight into the use of fundamental principles as theoretical research, and as imaginative an interpretation of civilization as the study of cultural forms." P. Morris, *The Experience of Higher Education*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964; p. 117.

12. As Andr k Glucksmann argues ("Strategy and Revolution", *New Left Review*, No. 52), whether the student movement consists of a minority of all students or not is an irrelevant question, for it is the organized students who represent, strategically, the *political force* of students.
13. *Higher Education Report*, 1963 (Cmnd 2154), paragraph 628.
14. A. Touraine, "The Birth of a Student Movement", *Le Monde*, 7 & 8 March, 1968.
15. The conference was convened through the Joint Consultative Committee of the Vice-Chancellors' Committee and the Association of University Teachers. Its theme was productivity and the universities. Its background papers reveal all too clearly the nature and extent of the anti-intellectualism now rampant in the universities.
16. Anthony Barnett, "A Revolutionary Student Movement", *New Left Review*, No. 53, January–February 1969.

