

THATCHER'S STUDENT BASHING

STUDENT UNIONS ATTACKED

Last week saw the appearance of a consultative document produced by Mrs Margaret Thatcher (Minister of Education and Science) which announced the government's proposals for reforming student unions.

the paper follows outcries from local authorities regarding the wastage of monies which they have paid in the form of compulsory subscriptions to student unions. (S.E.D. And local authorities pay £12 in the capitation fee which together makes up your subscription to Alangrange and the Student Association). Recently two Unions have appeared in the news as examples of the wastage.

- 1) Southampton Union has refused to give money to the Conservative club.
- 2) Sussex Union voted to give £500 to Bangla Desh Relief and £800 for free school milk which have been stopped by an injunction on Union officials and a University finance officer, served on behalf of a member of the Conservative Association (surprise, surprise)

Tory proposals :

- a) Local authorities will not pay union subscriptions in the capitation fee.
- b) U.C.C. will make block additional grants to the university authorities and this would cover the essential services of the Union, but it's not clear whether it would also cover the cost of student newspapers, sports clubs etc. The Union would have to compete with other university departments for funds and the university authorities have the power to vet the use of union funds.
- c) Student union membership will still be compulsory and part-time students will also be members (the documents one sensible proposal).
- d) Conscientious objectors will be able to refuse union membership while continuing to enjoy the use of union facilities.
- e) In order to stop unions spending compulsory subscriptions on purposes that "would more appropriately be supported by the voluntary subscriptions of individual students" the student maintenance grant will include a "modest sum" to enable students to join clubs and societies which could then be all spent on donations to the Black Panthers or the Monday Club.

The aim of the proposals are to "encourage authorities in colleges and Universities to measure the claims for Student Union facilities against other claims on their resources" said Mr. Van Staubenzee at a press conference.

His prayer throughout was "I should have thought it unlikely." These are some of the things he thought unlikely even though they were all theoretically possible:

- a) that University or college avenge themselves for acrimonious periods of revolt by dismantling student facilities.
- b) that they'd insist on subsidising an expensive prestige facility, such as a boat club, in the face of the opposition of the majority of students.
- c) that university authorities in a period of hard times would use the block grant from the U.C.C. on a new Laboratory. NUS called on everybody to trust the university authorities (the Guardian called - every body to trust the students) These proposals which affect 700 Student Unions have been presented for discussion..



1972

Judging by previous "consultative documents" this means that if Ted & Co feel so inclined, as appears to be the case from Friday's Education Debate, the proposals will be put into effect by September 1972.

fascist Proposals



Faced with such a barrage of fascist proposals I find it impossible to decide which aspect to criticise first so I'd quote the Guardian's leader of last Wednesday: "It is impossible to avoid the conclusion from Mrs Thatcher's consultative document on student unions that she is trying to weaken them... a recommendation that is tailored made to create new areas of conflict between students and college authorities.... in what sense are college authorities more competent to decide the details of how students should spend the money given to them in bulk as unions than the students themselves? If a union decides by a democratic decision to give money to Bangla Desh, and the Vice Chancellor or the Auditor General says this is an "improper" decision, who is the best custodian of the public interest? If students are to be accepted as adults and are allowed to form unions at all, then they must have the power to decide on some matters themselves. Parliament has accepted that 18 is the age of majority That means what it says.

The government is not acting on behalf of local authorities here, there are plenty of ways by which agreement over the accountability of union spending of public money could have been reached, nor is it reacting to students' unions anti-Tory leanings as displayed at Southampton and Sussex, it is proposing a policy which deliberately allows university authorities to cut student union funds if the union is too militant or adopts policies which the university dislikes.

Stirling

Mr Van Staubenzee's "unlikely acts" have a sour taste to Stirling students whose university authorities have stopped the flow of money because it doesn't trust the student body to spend it properly while it spent £500,000 on the MacRobert a prestige project if ever there was one.

The provisions for conscientious objectors is of course aimed at creating splits within the student body, allowing people like Sandy Thomson to write to the Tory press pointing out that, not being a member of he had nothing to do with the decision to give money to UCS (or whatever) while he drinks union beer, smokes fags obtained in the union, writing with the cheap union pen and stationery and

playing in the union's billiard table. (Obviously not all of this applies to Stirling where Alangrange is not part of the Union) The whole concept is sickening and insulting to the student. Each of us disapproves of some policy of the Association but if we wish to dissociate ourselves to the extent of withdrawing membership, we must accept that we cannot use the Union's facilities.... The principal if logically applied elsewhere would allow one to emigrate but to return for cheap prescriptions, unemployment and sickness benefit.

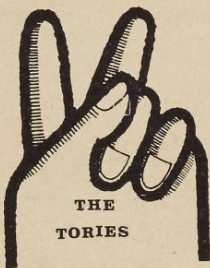
hope

There is but one glimmer of hope in the proposals, the idea that universities, polytechnics and colleges should all be treated similarly, however the answer is to give unions in colleges the same rights as those in universities, not remove the rights of the latter.

attack

The idea that university authorities should decide the amount of, or to a large extent the distribution of student union funds is a fundamental attack on the student body which must be resisted. Already NUS and the Federation of Conservative students have criticised the proposals. Criticism is not enough, especially when NUS virtually apologise for Southampton Union's decision re Tory club. The proposals must be rejected and fought. One wonders however how effective will be this action when the whole of the Trades Union movement fought Tory proposals to reduce their powers. If these and other Thatcher proposals, e.g. that students should attend their local university and live at home go through, then not only will university life as we (and of course the Oxbridge Dons) know it disappear, so too will that phenomenon of the 60s, Student Power.

conclusion



THE TORIES



Film circle

FILM CIRCLE - fear, sex, crime, love and insight.

November Attractions

- November 10 : THE EAST IS RED 5.00 pm & 8.00 pm. Genuine Chinese film glorifying the Revolution.
- November 13 : THE SAVAGE EYE & THE WAR GAME Two brilliant and frightening class-ics. THE WAR GAME was so terrifying it was banned by all the world's broadcasting services. 7.00 pm.
- November 17 : BREATHLESS 5.00 pm & 8.00 pm. An exciting crime story from Jean Luc-Godard.
- November 19 : VIVRE POUR VIVRE c. 11.00 pm. The late, late show - after the Soft Machine concert come and see Lelouch's (director of A MAN AND A WOMAN) vivid eternal triangle.
- November 24 : VIRIDIANA 5.00 pm & 8.00 pm.a beggars' orgy to the accompaniment of Handel's "Messiah" by Bunuel.....murders practical Christianity.
- November 27 : DANISH BLUE - Gabriel Axel A "pornographic" send up of porn... what else need we say.

bomb scare

Last Monday night an anonymous phone call was made stating that a bomb had been planted in Aithrey Castle. This message brought 4 cars carrying numerous gentlemen clothed in similar blue suits and wearing hats with checked bands. These gentlemen are believed to have been the fuzz. After a thorough search of the castle these gentlemen could find nothing. Disappointed they jumped into their cars and returned from whence they came.

Student Travel

Travel Office offers information and bookings on all types of travel and accommodation, e.g., boats, trains, hotel, car rentals, tours, scheduled domestic and international flights, etc.

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HOURS: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2.30 pm to 4.30pm

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Seek and ye shall find



I have reason to believe that you are pushing dope.