SOCIALIST WORKER

for workers control and international socialism

LSE LOCKOUT

1965
APRIL: Socialist Society founded
OCTOBER: Labour Club split and floundering.
NOVEMBER: "Agitator" Socialist Society paper begins fortnightly publication

1966
JANUARY: Walter Adams announced as new Director.
OCTOBER: Socialist Soc. publishes an Inquiry on Adams's political record.
NOVEMBER: President Adelstein disciplined for writing to The Times. Students boycott.

1967
JANUARY: Meeting on Adams banned. Old Theatre occupied, porter has heart attack.
FEBRUARY: Adelstein and Bloom suspended for 3 months.
APRIL: 8-day sit-in. Suspensions lifted after 10 days.
OCTOBER: Socialist Soc. militants arrested on Barbican picket line.

1968
MAY: 1 day occupation in solidarity with French workers and students.
JUNE: RSSF founding Conference held
OCTOBER: L.S.E. held for debate, aid and rest over Oct. 27 Vietnam Demonstration.

1969
JANUARY 23rd: SCHOOL CLOSED DOWN

"THE SUPERSTITION THAT USED TO ASCRIBE REVOLUTIONS TO THE UGLY INTENTION OF AGITATORS IS A THING OF THE PAST. TODAY EVERYONE KNOWS THAT WHEN A REVOLUTIONARY UPEHVAAL TAKES PLACE, ITS SOURCE LIES IN SOME SOCIAL NEED THAT OUTDATED INSTITUTIONS ARE NOT MEETING. THE NEED MAY NOT BE STRONGLY FELT ENOUGH, OR SUFFICIENTLY WIDELY KNOWN TO OBTAIN IMMEDIATE SUCCESS BUT ANY ATTEMPT AT INTERNAL REPRESSION WILL BE RESISTED BY THE INCREASED VIOLENTNESS OF THE SOCIAL NEED."

we demand:

1. RE-OPEN THE L.S.E. - NO GATES, NO POLICE.
2. NO VICTIMISATION - DROPPING OF ALL CHARGES AGAINST STUDENTS.

the gates are open...

The iron grilles of the L.S.E. are down. The police hold the campus. The school is closed. Dozens have been arrested and many face probable expulsion. What for?

The Press claim that a student minority provoked the closure. But the press knows that the provocation came from the ruling minority at the L.S.E. - the Board of Governors who put the gates up in the first place. This minority charge the students with 'intolerance'. Steel grilles belong in a prison, not in a school, so who wouldn't be intolerant towards them? They charge the L.S.E. Socialist Society with 'intimidation' of students. In reality, they know that every L.S.E. student wanted those gates down.

Lord Robbins, Chairman of the Governors, (the Board of Ideological Higher Education policy) has stated that the L.S.E. will re-open when he decides, and when 'law and order' is assured. But there can be no order while students face jail and expulsion, and while some sit at act as common police informers. They know that we will not accept this, so they cannot open L.S.E.

L.S.E. is locked out because students have begun to ask awkward questions about what they are taught and who runs their college. L.S.E. students demand control over their own lives and are fighting for this. L.S.E. was the first college where students sat-in. Now it is the first to get the chop. This threatens every student in Britain who is questioning the way his college and society is run.

At L.S.E. the liberal university mask is off. The administration wanted the professors to act as mental policemen; to identify anyone who dared query their sad lies about the world; to pick off those who broke the rules of intellectual etiquette. The liberal and left-wing staff expressed their reservations, distaste and sorrow, but L.S.E.'s pyramid of power ignored their script and moved in the police. But this need for 'social discipline' is not confined to the universities. In the factories Barbara Castle's White Paper indicates that the gloves are off. The T.U.C. leadership's bleating will be disregarded too when the Labour Government gets around to the business of smashing shop floor organisation. The L.S.E. students' Action Committee states specifically that:

"The lock out and victimisation of L.S.E. is part of a general crack down on militant workers and students throughout the country during the present crisis of British capitalism. In this light the repression in the school is part and parcel of the repressive anti-union legislation currently being engineered by Barbara Castle and the Wilson Government." L.S.E. students, as they prepare to fight the lock out need the support of workers. Students are isolated and opposed by workers who accept the distorting and hostile propaganda of the Tory press: the same press that daily lies about the struggles of the working class. Students will not accept any so-called 'efficient' university system whose main purpose is to make us more efficient managers and apologists for the exploitation of the British working class.

But right now L.S.E. students need solidarity from other students. On Monday and Tuesday it must be concretely expressed in leaflets, meetings, demonstrations, and above all - OCCUPATIONS - in every college in Britain. The demands are simple:
The first sign that the authorities were intending to use physical controls against students came during the events before last October's Vietnam demonstration. Locks were re-inforced, doors fortified; then sets of steel gates were fitted finally — dividing floor from floor & building from building. Students were shocked, treated them first of all in a joking fashion. Notes of “aching” appeared on some of the gates. But my impression — with other evidence of the increasing authoritarian attitude of the administration, the students began to see them clearly as direct instruments of oppression & not merely a measure to protect property — which the administration’s original justification.

The LSE authorities have become increasingly nervous over the last year as numerical support for the Soc. Soc. has grown & discussion within the student body has focused more & more on issues of concern to socialists. This discussion has challenged not only the union hierarchy but the whole power structure of both the LSE & British capitalism as LSE’s links with industry & the state via both its Governors & the ideological content of courses have become clear to more & more students. The union secretary himself has himself been found to contain student opposition at an ineffective level has become progressively isolated from the students. Their legitimacy is constantly eroded by general assemblies with an attendance at union meetings.

Concurrently questions, started being asked in classes & lectures, the “value-free” research, the “scientific truths” which these counterfeits of the mind were called into question.

The LSE establishment in the last few weeks has been challenged on the question of its involvement through investments in South Africa & Rhodesia. The Governors with directorships in such companies were told to choose: either resign from the Board of the LSE or from that of the companies.

All this proved too much for this “liberal institution of learning” and the “aloof” & detached academics hurriedly accepted a report that made them in effect the policemen of the LSE. The report also declared illegal any anti-war demonstration on the premises, asking for even more restriction of the activities of the student movement. Students guilty of such actions would risk being thrown out of the school. Similar threats against progressive staff were implied.

It is thus in a climate of general repression in the school that the gates became the focus of a power struggle. For the militants there was no doubt: the gates must go.

For years most factory workers have thought of students in terms of the Henries of the General Strike, the wear-collared mothers boys who broke the picket lines. The stereotype is of long haired weirdos standing on the London Sunday traffic and causing trouble for our wonderful policemen. And its surely the whole collapse of a whole generation of workers when they refused to go to college. They were outside the factory gates with leaflets and socialist newspapers.

So the decision to clamp down on left-wing militants at L.S.E. has to be seen as part of a more general move to undermine, demoralise and, where possible, destroy socialist militants at their place of work. The fact is that the battle for socialist ideas in the colleges has developed very fast. The controllers of these educational factories are now quite literally unable to answer the questions students are raising. They cannot explain away their deep rooted connections with the British ruling class or their personal investments in the Southern African slave mines. They realise that students are starting to be satisfied with trivial reforms about the college. They are trying to turn them into student “leaders” on some distant committee. They understand very well that the abolition of the class university requires the overturning of the whole college structure as one encroaching on the students. So now they are appealling to the factory gates with students.

Above all, they are terrified in case this new stage in the L.S.E. struggle should carry the second revolt of the young workers started in Paris last May. The long frozen slopes of British politics are starting to melt, one action might set off an avalanche. But the factory struggle on a different time-scale, is more concrete and has more stamina. Despite the dramatic threats of the Labour Government, the ruling classes of the factories have had little success in their plans to powder the workers with more sub division and more relative wages. As the productivity deal, the scientific management, the “cash now, pay later” bonus schemes. But if it has been stated in the factories with the insurrectionary outbreaks in the Barbican and around the Roberts and the Odeon & the Lonley Tynes, many very young workers have thought differently. Young workers have already been involved in experiments in solidarity demonstrations, the socialist groups and the left-wing meetings. When L.S.E. was opened up before it was these young workers, told all their lives that they had been taught who could number, who could number, who could. L.S.E. students, especially those in L.S.E. go regularly to the London factory gates, the Tongues in the Aton, Acton, Kilburn and Enfield. Ford strikers, London dockers and engineers have frequently put their points of view at the L.S.E. Soc. meetings. And at other university meetings.

We want SOLIDARITY. Without the support of the working class, we cannot stop the Red Line being turned into the Police’s Blue Line islands and workers alongside can build a force which will rip the gates off the college and the factory.

SOLIDARITY from 11.00.00 W.T.W. where a mass meeting of students will decide their tactics. LSE Action Committee and R.S.S.P. Society have called for a demonstration in support in support. Also attendees, mass meetings and telegrams of support (to U.D. meeting).

Thursday a national demonstration outside L.S.E if student demands have not been met. All college support required to recover L.S.E.