

# ALL SET FOR MARCH AND BOYCOTT

## Protests Are National

**A**MONG other universities holding a lecture boycott are Birmingham, Southampton, Keele, and Manchester.

York University, in addition to the strike, are donating one day's grant (approx. 18/-) to a fund for overseas students, while the staff are giving one day's pay. Of the twelve hundred students at York, it is expected that about half will give a donation.

As well as a strike, most Universities will be holding a rally in the town, subject to permission from the authorities. Even those Universities not holding a boycott are expected to hold a rally.

The Executive Committee of the Student Christian Movement of Great Britain and Ireland (meeting on the 11th and 12th February, 1967) has found itself unanimous in its opposition to the Government's decision to raise the fees of overseas students in Britain, and has called on all its branches to support, and where necessary promote, local protests.

They have sent the following telegram to the Prime Minister:

Student Christian Movement registers its opposition to recent Government decision to increase fees of overseas students, and asks for reversal of discriminatory measures.

By THE NEWS STAFF

**T**OMORROW'S protest march and boycott are on. All over the country students will be showing their opposition to the Government's decision to raise overseas students' fees.

"The most important part of the programme is the march," said President-elect Jack Straw. "It is recognised that some students may not be able to participate in the lecture boycott, but those are requested, nevertheless, to take part in the march."

He added, "Students are asked to dress smartly for the march; it will be an extremely orderly affair, conducted in silence. There will be no shouting at all. Banners will be provided by the Union."

### PROGRAMME

8.30: The Union will open early for the PICKETS to assemble in the Riley-Smith Hall, where they will be provided with posters and details of where to picket.

10.45: MARCH STEWARDS assemble in the Union, and collect armbands.

11.00: All those taking part

in the MARCH assemble outside the Union, where they will hear two short speeches from the President of the Union and one member of staff.

11.20: The MARCH will move off, and deliver letters of protest to the offices of the three major political parties.

ROUTE (this has now been approved by the police): Woodhouse Lane; Queen Square (Labour Party); Woodhouse Lane; Lewis's; left, down Headrow; right, down Vicar Lane; along Boar Lane (Liberal Party); City Square and Infirmary Street; East Parade; left, into Headrow (Conservative Party); Cookridge Street; Woodhouse Lane; back to the Union, where the march will disperse.

## NEED FOR UNITY

By UNION PRESIDENT MERVYN SAUNDERS

**T**OMORROW, Wednesday, 22nd February, will be an important one in the history of the British student movement.

It will be one on which students throughout the country will unite on a single principle, regardless of the opinions and ideologies which otherwise divide them.

There is every indication that here in Leeds the protest will be as strong as anywhere in the country, as the University and Colleges come together in an expression of united protest such as the citizens of Leeds have never witnessed before and such that the Government of this country would be foolish to ignore.

### DOUBTS

On the eve of such a protest, it is natural that some of our members should express doubts and others dissent concerning the action we are about to take. Freedom of opinion has long been the cherished right of any academic community and unanimity cannot and should not be expected.

It is clear, however, that within the student body there are very few people indeed who would want to uphold the Government's decision to increase fees for overseas students and fewer still who would attempt to do so on a rational basis.

To these I would say, "Come out into the open. Discuss the situation, substantiating your position with facts and figures and you will be listened to." So far, only one Union member has attempted to justify the increase to me and then on such a basis of hypothesis and conjecture that I still have to hear one valid argument for the increase.

There are, of course, those who are opposed to any fees increase but, at the same time, opposed to boycott action. Many of the arguments put forward in opposition to a boycott are certainly cogent ones, and they certainly raise objections which we must all consider.

### MAIN OBJECTION

The main objection to the boycott is that we are alienating the public rather than soliciting their support. I am prepared to concede this, although it should be remembered that strikes and boycotts are the language which the working classes have come to understand; whether they are sympathetic or not, these are the people who

are keeping the present Government in office. We must not expect sympathy. Did William Wilberforce expect it when he fought to free England of the slave trade? Did Mrs. Pankhurst expect it when she campaigned for the vote for women? It would be unrealistic to expect a sympathetic first hearing. We will have achieved a great deal if we can simply convince the public that the position of overseas students is worth thinking about.

### RESPONSIBLE

To this end, it is imperative that our demonstration in Leeds shall be a responsible one. The possible impact of over a thousand students silently and responsibly bearing testimony to a proposed injustice to their fellows is, as yet, unknown.

I am adamant that our march should be silent and efficient—efficient in the sense that onlookers will recognise that our protest is not one of extremism but one of sobriety and deeply felt conviction. The march will be silent and orderly.

Finally, I ought to say that I am sure that there are those who are scared stiff of the whole thing. If you are afraid of academic reprisals, I think I can reassure you. The staff of the University are as indignant at this infringement of academic autonomy as we are. Our sympathies being together, I cannot see the staff objecting to what they see as our over-enthusiasm on an issue in which we are at one.

### SCARED

If, on the other hand, you are scared by the whole protest mechanism, then I am bound to say, "So am I." This sort of thing goes against my natural inclinations and I have to push myself realising that this is something which must be done.

I recognise that participation in the protest will, for many, be an act of self sacrifice, as it is for me. But there is no such thing as sacrifice if the cause is great enough.

Remember, our cause is as great as any. Our cause is freedom of educational opportunity throughout the world, regardless of race, colour, creed, or any other accident of birth. The future of our country is our responsibility. We must keep it free from Educational apartheid.



A critical audience faced Mervyn Saunders at the Dental School yesterday, when he went to put the case for a boycott. But they were willing to listen—and laugh—in between booing.

## 'PANIC MEASURE' SAY DENTALS

**O**PPPOSITION to the boycott was expressed vociferously in a meeting addressed by Mervyn Saunders in the Dental school.

His speech was frequently interrupted by catcalls and boos and the general reaction seemed to support the proud claim made by one medical student—"that we just don't want to be associated with other students."

Saunders sketched out his main objections to the overseas students' fees rise, saying that they were not justified on economic, academic or moral grounds. He said that Britain could no longer adopt an attitude of "I'm all right, only going along for the

laugh." Moreover, dental students "did not want to be identified with a lunatic fringe from C.N.D. and Ballad and Blues."

Mervyn Saunders assured the meeting that he did not intend to parade around Leeds just with the Communist Society.

Jack Straw spoke on the same subject in the Maths block yesterday. Questioners seemed particularly worried about the effect on the student image. The meeting eventually supported the boycott motion 30-24.

## STOP PRESS

Engineers warn that Saunders and Straw may be pelted with soot and flour and debagged while addressing Engineers at noon today.

Anti-strike petition organised by C. Swann and F. Odds has "growing support".



# M.P.'S TO DEBATE FEES INCREASE ON THURSDAY

**T**HE question of the increase in fees for Overseas Students will finally reach the floor of the Commons on Thursday, when an Opposition censure motion condemning the increase will be debated.

## N.U.S. Urges Action

**T**HE announcement of the fees increase, which coincided with the temporary dispersal of students at the end of term, brought an immediate and strongly worded protest from the N.U.S.

On the 26th January this year, an informal meeting of Union Presidents at Hull put forward the idea of a day of mass student action to protest against the decision. The proposal was commended by Sir William Mansfield Cooper, Vice-Chancellor of Manchester University, who said that he thought there would be sufficient sympathy amongst the staff for them to take "a lenient view" of any absence.

The Radical Students Alliance, holding its inaugural convention at LSE on the 28th-29th January, also vehemently attacked the increases and decided, against the advice of NUS, to support a mass lobby of Parliament on the first of February, to protest to individual M.P.s about the increase.

Nearly 4,000 students answered RSA's call and of over 100 M.P.s lobbied from all Parties, less than ten supported the Government and many promised to actively oppose the decision.

On the 8th February, representatives from 17 universities attending a meeting at Leeds, decided to hold a day of protest action on 22nd February, but agreed that any action—including boycotts—should be organised only with the agreement of the university authorities in order to demonstrate that opposition was to the Government and not the university authorities.

The same evening, Geoff Martin, President of N.U.S., and George Foulkes, President of the Scottish Union of Students, met Mr. Crosland. They described his answers as "totally unsatisfactory" after the Minister had stood firm on his decision, although he claimed that he was willing to give consideration to evidence of hardship.

In a circular sent round last week, NUS has asked all Student Unions to hold "A day of activity to publicise the increase of Overseas Students' fees", and has recommended action from teach-ins and vigils to non-attendance of lectures.

Although the decision to increase fees was made before Christmas, it is only in the last week that the matter has been raised in Parliament, with a discussion in the Lords and a question being answered in the Commons last Tuesday.

In a written Parliamentary answer, the Government first announced the increase on 21st December last year, at the end of both the academic and Parliamentary session. This meant that reaction was delayed until after the Christmas period.

The increase was condemned by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors' meeting on January 27th and by the National Union of Teachers on January 29th.

Individual Vice-Chancellors made statements criticising the Government's policy.

Sir William Mansfield Cooper, Vice-Chancellor of Manchester, addressing a Union meeting on January 30th, told students: "Let us not mince words. What these differential fees do is to create a category of foreign students, and such a category has no place in a university."

### "INHUMAN"

On the following day, Mr. W. H. F. Barnes, Vice-Chancellor of Liverpool, described the increase as "inhuman, foolish and autocratic."

At Leeds, the Senate condemned the proposed increase, and on February 3rd, the Vice-Chancellor, Sir Roger Stevens, stated that "The University will not take any action to put into effect the proposal to increase fees for Overseas Students pending the outcome of representations made by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals to the Prime Minister."

Vice-Chancellors were not the only group to protest. Many educationalists, including Lord Robbins, Chairman of the Robbins Committee on Higher Education, have also condemned the policy.

Mr. Crosland, Secretary for Education, has used the Robbins Report to justify the proposed increase; the report certainly recommended increased fees—but for all students.

### "APARTHEID"

In the debate in the Lords last Tuesday, Lord Robbins condemned the Government's decision as "blatantly discriminatory." He said: "It is a sort of financial apartheid. It is a policy which charges the overseas student a different fee just because he is from overseas."

Lord Longford was the only Peer in the House to speak for the Government.

Mr. Crosland has justified the increase on financial grounds. The decision will save the Exchequer five million pounds next year. It was decided not to raise students' fees generally as this would simply transfer the cost from the central Government to local authorities.

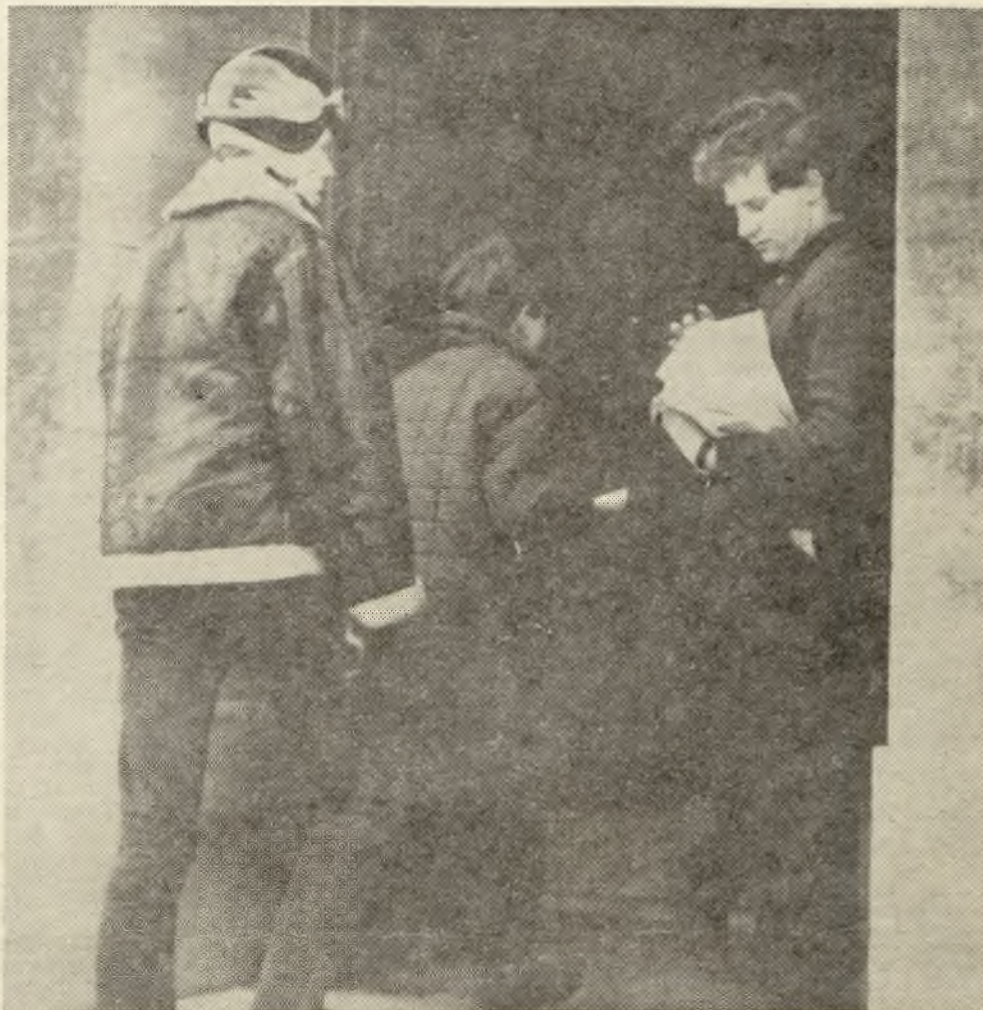
The Minister denied that the increase would produce much hardship, but when he met N.U.S. leaders on February 8th, he agreed to consider any evidence of hardship that could be produced.

Last Tuesday, at the end of the debate in the Lords, in reply to a Parliamentary question, it was announced that a fund would be set up to give grants to students who would suffer hardship from the fees increase—"the aim will be to ensure that those overseas students already here will not be prevented from completing their courses because they are unable to pay the increased fees," said Mr. Crosland.

### NOT UNMOVED

This concession, although small, suggests that the Government does not remain totally unmoved by public and Parliamentary protest.

N.U.S. leaders are meeting Mr. Heath, leader of the Opposition today. Widespread student action tomorrow could well help to influence Thursday's debate in the Commons.



Leafleting has been going on since last week to acquaint students with the facts concerning the fees rise.

## Why oppose the fees rise?

**I**N a written Parliamentary reply on December 21st, the Secretary of State for Education and Science announced that fees for overseas students would be raised from £70 to £250 a year from the beginning of the next academic session.

The increase in fees will be only £50 for those who are already here to complete the courses they are on; last week a fund was announced to help those who might suffer hardship from the rise.

Mr. Crosland said that last year the total amount by which the fees paid by overseas students (of whom there are now over 30,000 studying in universities and colleges in this country, with 7,000 coming from countries with a fully developed system of higher education) fell short of costs by over £18 million. It is estimated that the net saving from the increase in fees will be £2 million in 1967/68 and over £5 million when the increases are fully effective; the number of students stays the same.

In the case of students financed from British official sources only (i.e. the Ministry of Overseas Development and the British Council) the additional cost will be met by the British Government; and a fund will be provided to reimburse the Governments of developing countries with the additional fees of £50 payable for students whom they are financing and who have already started their courses.

1. The Government's decision, apparently without consultation, was announced just before Christmas. It came only two months after the Prime Minister, in a speech commemorating the 20th anniversary of UNESCO, had said:

"We have done our best not to reduce our aid to developing countries and we have expanded, wherever possible, the assistance our schools, universities and colleges of further education are giving to students from those countries."

—"Daily Telegraph", 20th October, 1966.

2. The increase in fees is entirely unselective and will therefore hurt those least able to pay. Less than half of the overseas students at our universities are supported by a scholarship grant or fellowship.

3. Mr. Crosland has suggested that the decision will result in more students staying in the developing countries for their higher education. This seems very dubious: they will more likely go to the U.S., Germany, and the Eastern European countries.

4. It is a breach of faith with those who (a) have already started courses and were given no warning of the additional £50 charge, and (b) those who have been promised places subject to satisfactory 'A' levels for which they are now working in this country. The latter are faced with the full impact, i.e. a trebling of the amount for which they budgeted when they came to the U.K.

5. Only one-third of overseas students are financed from official sources. Many—including all refugee students—are financed by charitable bodies whose income, in most cases, is not at present increasing. Fewer students will, therefore, be financed by these bodies in future.

6. The decision could lead to reprisals by other countries and a fall in the number of British students going overseas on exchange, and may well mean a loss of foreign exchange to the U.K.

7. It will hit the postgraduate and research students from abroad, whom we should be encouraging to counter the effects of the 'brain drain.' Many overseas students are medics and contribute to our health service.

8. Some universities seem to be prohibited by their Charters from charging differential fees; they will have to cut expenditure elsewhere to compensate for loss of income from the U.G.C.

9. Subsidising overseas students is not a charity but an investment. This is true of all overseas aid, as in the long run, the under-developed countries are our potential markets.

10. Overseas students from the West provide a valuable source of foreign exchange.

11. As an economy measure, the increase will achieve little. It will result in a saving of £5 million a year . . . cost of military brass bands in this country is £7½ million year.