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Adelaide-Flinders: the STRUGGLE

A supplement to On Dit.

The History students of Flinders University have been trying for four years to alter their methods of assessment. They oppose compulsory exams and favour optional ones, a stand that has been formulated at a series of student meetings and via a student questionnaire. Requests were made to both the History Dept. and the Consultative Committee, the former being rejected out of hand, the latter referred back. Finally Professor Moore refused to even discuss the matter with students other than elected School Board representatives.

In desperation, the students occupied the History Dept., but they were still ignored. Finally they moved to the Registry, which they now control, including the University's external switchboard. During this occupation, negotiations with Moore, the Acting Vice Chancellor Professor Clarke, and the University Council have proved fruitless.

On Tuesday night after negotiations broke down, the University Council issued a series of demands. Students were ordered to vacate the building and return all files, documents and copies thereof. Professor Clarke has come out strongly against the occupants, and is behind an assault in Council led by Professors Brennan (Physics) and Hancock (Economics). Council requires the Registry to be cleared before negotiations resume and in any case refuse to consider changes to assessment in 1974. It does not want to impose upon the "academic freedom" of the staff. No mention is made of students "academic rights".

The Council ignores the fact that many files (those of student records) were replaced unopened in the Records Office and that office locked. It ignores the precedent set in the Flinders Economics Dept. last year of changing assessment procedures which were not achieving, or were in agreement with, the aims of the course. Suggestions have been made at Council to cut off the power, but fortunately this has not been done, on the advice of the Chancellor, Justice Bright. Phones have been disconnected this morning.

The next meeting of University Council is scheduled for Thursday night. If the occupation has not finished by then the following schedule is likely to be adopted (it was outlined at Tuesday's Council!). An injunction shall be sought. 24 hours notice shall be given to the occupiers to leave, that is by Friday night. If the occupiers do not leave, the injunction will be placed in the hands of the Sheriff, who will then be able to act, i.e. over the weekend, when it is hoped many of the occupiers will not be there, or supporting students on campus. The Sheriff need not call the police, but can appoint other persons, i.e. bouncers, to enforce the injunction.

The President of Flinders University Union has announced that the Union executive will close the staff club if the injunction is served, with possible further action. In addition the Union buildings have been declared a sanctuary.

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Yesterday, the following press release was issued from Adelaide University, supporting the principles of the "sit in" struggle:

We express support for the demands of Flinders University students in the struggle against compulsory exams.

Students in Politics, S.E. Asian History, Pacific History and History 1B at Adelaide University already have optional examination or course work assessment. Effective student participation in choosing forms of assessment encourages self assessment. Education should be about learning. It should encourage rational action, creativeness and a desire for continued learning. Compulsory competitive exams direct all students

to the same ends and stifle these aims. No rational defence has been put forward for compulsory exams.

Further, we deplore any actions by the Council of Flinders University to resort to legal and police violence to break a situation which can only be solved by continued negotiation.

Jim Hyde, President S.A.U.A. Students Association, University of Adelaide.
R. Walsh, Vice President, S.A.U.A.
Nigel Stapledon, Treasurer S.A.U.A.
Ruth Hayes, Secretary, S.A.U.A.
N.H. Lean, Executive Member, S.A.U.A.
Graeme Duncan, Professor Politics Dept. Adelaide University
Owen Slight, Deputy Librarian, Barr Smith Library, Adelaide University
John Millbank, Tutor in History, Adelaide University
Jill Matthews, Postgraduate student in History, Adelaide University
Grant Elliot, Tutor in Politics, Adelaide University
Brian Abbey, Lecturer in Politics, Adelaide University
Peter Burns, Lecturer in History, Adelaide University
R.L. Reid, Senior Lecturer in Politics, University of Adelaide
A. Vicary, Lecturer Politics Dept. University of Adelaide
J.R. Robbins, Lecturer Politics Dept. University of Adelaide
John Gibbons, President, Post Graduate Students Association
Duncan Reilly, Joint A.U.S. Secretary, Adelaide University
R.K. Ludvigsen, A.U.S. Regional Organizer,
P.F. Nursey-Eray, Lecturer in Politics, Adelaide University
Phillip Broderick, Union Council Member
A.J. Williamson, Admin. Assist., Barr Smith Library, Adelaide University
G.R. Knight, Lecturer, History Dept. Adelaide University
Chris White, Law School
Ralph Bleechmore, S.A. Member A.U.S. Executive

The following is a telegram of support sent to Flinders students:

AUS - SA Region supports demands of students for an effective participation in choosing forms of assessment and an end to compulsory examinations. Bleechmore, Ludvigsen, Broderick (Adelaide University), Rutter (Torrens CAE).

A G.S.M. WILL BE HELD ON THE BARR SMITH LAWNS ON FRIDAY 9TH AUGUST,
1.00 P.M. TO CONSIDER :-

1. That the S.A.U.A. supports the Flinders University students in their struggle against compulsory examinations.
2. That the Students Activities Office be declared a sanctuary for Flinders students defying the injunction.