

Standing Committee were soon to come to their assistance and also were to stir up faculty concern about how the school was being managed.

In October, a mass Sunday march against U.S. policy in Vietnam took place in London. Amidst erroneous reports that the march would bring violence (a small breakaway group did get into some fights near the American embassy, but the main body of the march proceeded without incident), the Socialist Society inspired the Student Union to vote to occupy the school over the weekend for use as a staging area, refuge, and first-aid station. LSE Director Adams responded by closing the school on the Friday preceding the march. About 200 students then took over the premises to keep the buildings open. A few days later, Lord Robbins inadvertently began the process of politically arousing the teaching staff by noting that a few youthful faculty members had encouraged the occupation. And, in the style of a gunboat captain assigned to show the flag, he warned the faculty that assisting the students in such circumstances could be regarded as "a grave offense . . . warranting termination of contract." To which he appended, "On this occasion, having regard to the immaturity of those concerned, we took the view that the process whereby staff in clear breach of contract can be dismissed need not be invoked." A few days later, the Student Union voted, 229 to 85, for "direct political action"—whatever that might be. And a week later, 76 of the 300 faculty members responded to Robbins's warning with a letter that stated, "The threats are particularly objectionable because they are specific in the action which may be taken but wholly imprecise about the nature of the offense." A separate letter signed by seven well-recognized "moderate" faculty members declared, "We resent this new authoritarianism and we resent being treated . . . as middle level management on whom is to be imposed obligations to obey the directors' instructions whatever their own view."

At that point, things were looking so bright for the tiny Socialist Society that it dropped its general policy of not running for office in the Student Union and put up five candidates for seats that had become vacant when a moderate bloc resigned in an attempt to arouse student support against the radicals. All five Socialist Society candidates were defeated by an average of 200 votes apiece, which, even allow-

ing for the confusions of LSE student politics, suggests that radical exploitation of specific issues, abetted by the administration's all-thumbs response, had become the main propellant of the Society's success.

At the beginning of 1969, the radicals began to bear down hard on Rhodesia, scattering allegations about Adams's activities there, accusing members of the Court of Governors of having financial interests in Rhodesian companies, charging that the school held investments in Rhodesia and South Africa (\$1200 in South Africa is all they ever turned up), and inveighing against recruiters for Rhodesian companies coming to the school, though few, if any, ever did actually show up at LSE. And, as the radicals grievously acknowledge, the students yawned. But then the administration came to their assistance.

#### "Tear Down the Gates"

Late in January, Lord Robbins chose to attend a meeting of the Student Union, in the course of which a member of the building staff politely inquired whether a series of steel gates that had been installed in major corridors after the October sit-in were in conformity with the fire regulations. Robbins explained that the gates were there to protect school property against various dangers, including sit-ins. At the time of the meeting, the gates had been installed for several months and had evoked little interest. Now, in the setting of Robbins addressing the increasingly politicized Student Union, and with his acknowledgment of the gates as a means for controlling political activity, a new issue suddenly blew up—and it was infinitely more powerful than the abstract issue of Rhodesia. "Tear down the gates" became a call that readily aroused student support. Director Adams responded by declaring that the gates would stay. On 23 January, the Student Union voted, 365 to 332, against the gates but also for negotiating their removal. Adams insisted they would stay. The following day, the issue was taken up again by the Student Union, and it was voted, 282 to 231, with 68 abstentions, to tear them down; this the students immediately went out and did with axes and crowbars. Thirty-six were arrested, and proceedings leading to dismissal were started against three faculty members—one of whom was charged with simply commenting approvingly on the removal of the

## NEWS IN BRIEF

● **MAYER NAMED NUTRITION ADVISER:** President Nixon has named Harvard University nutritionist Jean Mayer as his special consultant on nutrition. Mayer, who has frequently criticized the government for insufficient support of antihunger programs, will head the White House Conference on food, nutrition, and health in October.

● **SEVERE DAMAGE TO AEC PLANT IN COLORADO:** Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) officials say that the fire on 11 May at the AEC nuclear weapons production installation at Rocky Flats, Colorado, is the most costly single accident in the AEC's history. Damage to the AEC's plutonium production plant, located northwest of Denver about 12 miles from the University of Colorado campus, is estimated at \$40 to \$50 million, excluding the cost of reprocessing plutonium which escaped during the fire. Two nuclear weapons production buildings were contaminated by radioactive materials during the fire and AEC officials estimate that it will be at least a year before the facility will be in full operation again. The Rocky Flats facility is owned by the AEC and operated by the Dow Chemical Company. Possible causes of the fire are being investigated by a special AEC committee.

● **MENINGITIS VACCINE DEVELOPED BY ARMY:** A vaccine that may prevent spinal meningitis, an infectious bacterial disease which has been a particular problem in military camps, has been developed after about 6 years of research at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research in Washington. Malcolm S. Artenstein, director of the project, says the vaccine, still in the experimental stages, may substantially reduce the number of persons carrying and transmitting the disease. He said that although the vaccine produces antibodies to the disease, it must be administered before exposure to the disease. The Army plans broad experimental use of the vaccine on Army volunteers. The vaccine is not expected to be available for public use for at least 2 years. The number of cases of spinal meningitis is estimated annually at about 200 to 500 among military recruits and about 3000 among civilians.