STANDARD

tudents bid to ke over every ondon college

T London students are poised to all the capital's colleges as they campaign for extra cash. Tomor- million-strong National Union of in Blackpool will debate calls for al protest against "hardship and te facilities".

by Bruce Kemble

their four-day sit-in, after the management agreed to cut rents at halls of residence by up to £6.50, reduce catering prices and almost double its library budget to £200,00

REVOLTING STUDENTS

logy exists, between the student de- tions of the Sixties and those that ce yesterday. Then, students claimed perspective: they wanted Ho Ho Ho inh in and Wilson out, out, out! demonstrating students merely op- nt increases.

shadow of the Sixties hangs over the demonstrators the fathers terally, thei ment assun it fuelled by lifestyle that t ly envy. The y gives a fig f iority for their a political mot counts for not ct, it has a str nt grant amou nts frequently ra Today's students mum grant of £2, is a reduction of some 20 per cent in terms, and Micawber's law of the ppy relationship between income and nditure applies with a vengeance. On of that, accommodation is scarcer, state

broad solutions to these problems. It could decide to go back to the 1960s. The cabinet might reckon that the national interest required the highest possible standards of education for the most talented of the population. Higher education would then be treated like primary and secondary education, as the financial

DAY, 22 NOVEMBER, 1991

Richard Hamilton: the visual arts under attack

PATRICK Heron's outcry at the plight of British art schools (Review Guard- an, November 7) is both understandable and most timely. It is also entirely altruistic. Profs as do entirely altruistic. Profs as do ecent made over many ears, often by those b e ce the role created by the ecretive government of ssist teaching in the schools. that appears as slow progress t divorce from the market's notes the appointment of a new Director, ousting of distinguished departments heads and the transformation of a noble museum into a shop with a "great cult" are her re-spon- bility. The vandalism imminent to the historic Royal College of Art studios, originally built on the rear of the V. & A and now annexed by the museum, is too publicised. The Painting School has been wined into an adequate new premises and it is hard to see how study of painting can survive in the context of the Royal College of Commerce at Am- Richard Hamilton. Northend, Henley-on-Thames

THE UNDERLYING reason for the gathering crisis in the art schools over the past decade has been government education policy. The central tenet of that policy has been the require- ment to increase student num- bers while simultaneously cut- ting costs and maintaining aca- demic standards. An impossibility of fulfilling this ignorant and cynical dic- tum need has not yet become apparent but the quality, in fact the very character of art education has been, and continues to be severely com- promised. The consequences of this are already alarm- ingly evident in art colleges directly involved in art educa- tion, the consequences for the cultural life of the country will become apparent over the com- ing years. The appalling situa- tion faced by the art schools can no longer be seen in isola- tion. What is now decided ur- gently is an independent in- quiry such as a Royal Commission to look at art and make recommendations con- cerning the whole field of higher education.

Michael Craig-Martin, Kentish Town.

PATRICK Heron's article per- ceptively, too mildly and stand- ing about Brighton Polytech- nic's plight and current work. The NATFHE conference at Easter 1991 did discuss the range of financial forecasts we had produced for internal dis- cussion, in which we demon- strated the hypothetical effect of the continuation of current policy. The purpose of the exercise though, was to ensure that we avoided the £17 million deficit, rather than achieved it. We remain in a strong financial position.

No course or option in our Faculty of Art, Design and Hu- manities has been discontinued for financial reasons.

David Watson, Director, Brighton Polytechnic.

IT IS obvious that art schools and departments of art and de- sign are not immune from the shake-out taking place in the economy as a whole. We are living in a dog-eat-dog world- living in a dog-eat-dog world- a debate. "Is Art and Design Education Dying?" will take place at the Royal College of Art next April organised by the Alumni Association. Patrick Heron will be invited to speak. Anyone who would like to at- tend should contact me.

Sheridan Lundy, Royal College of Art, London SW7 2EU

Student action ... Middlesex Poly

Art and design students at Middlesex Polytechnic yesterday (Tuesday) voted for immediate action against staff shortages and insufficient facilities.

The students have begun an indefinite occupation of the polytechnic's Cat Hill site.

MIDDLESEX POLY tried to in 20 percent more stu- his year whilst running esources.

s has meant students en turned away from vded lectures. To add injury the Poly man- has neglected the li- nd pushed up the he canteens.

aints over canteen o over 300 students ng for a canteen boycott.

Two small sites in the col- lege then occupied over facili- ties and won their demands within 48 hours.

Lashings of champagne and streams of consciousness

Evening Standard - 27.11.91

ft-wingers 'holding students to ransom'

by Tom Leonard and Sarah Griffin

WING student leaders are us- timidation and manipulation s to force through mass sit-ins e north London colleges, an- student claimed today.

e of Middlesex Polytechnic's colleges are now under indef- occupation until, say students, demands for better facilities met.

t an angry mature student at one of the affected colleges, DENT STRIFE is threatening to blow universities and colleges across. A spokesman for the students' union at North London's Middlesex Polytechnic contends that the NUS never did ask last week to point out that students not reach London's Middlesex Polytechnic's buildings since the start of the vote, in protest against cuts in staff and soon occupying the Polytechnic's buildings since the start of the vote, in protest against cuts in staff and ers. Students at Glasgow Polytechnic and Lancaster University are already taken similar action, and other student unions are due to vote on joining the strike this week. Holders of tickets for upcoming gigs versity and college venues would therefore be well-advised to check the current situation at the venues in question before setting out for live dates.

being drowned out by political extremists bent on confrontation with the administration.

Rosemary Silverman, a second-year history student, said that a college meeting called yesterday to decide on what action to take was a disorganised farce.

She claimed the vote was many students from the already occupied Cat Hill college nearby.

"All the people who spoke against occupation were heckled, often by the people from Cat Hill," said Mrs Silverman. "The meeting was hardly representative and there was no secret ballot.

"Most of the student union committee seemed to be wearing Socialist Worker Student Society stickers. I feel I'm being held to ransom by these people.

"I won't be pushed by a minority infiltrated by

caucus and a lot of people feel the same way."Mrs Silverman said she agreed with the student demands but not with indefinite occupation, "which will send me out of college with a third class degree and no job prospects".

But she also accused the poly administration of apathy, saying: "If Middlesex is not prepared to give me an education, for which my local authority has paid them, I'll take my education elsewhere."

The visual arts under attack

An edited selection of letters on last week's Review Guardian article by Patrick Heron

ANYONE outside the field of art could be forgiven for thanking that Patrick Heron went somewhat over the top in his lament for the art schools. He did not, and hundreds of us who know every detail of the procedures by heart can only feel wretched that we didn't cause more trouble while we saw it happening.

At a time when British art schools were close to their peak, the cynical opinion was quoted to me that they were ripe for a takeover by the

expert staff were no longer indispensable (early retirement forms were theatrically flourished). Secondly, survivors were promised (and began to get) better rates of pay than they had been used to. And, to be fair, many have lived the line in the belief that the new system might work.

It has been a disaster not so much to the comparatively small world of "art" as to the spirit of invention, enterprise and imagination which our art schools were once so influential in generating in a wider context.

If any vigorous enterprise still exists in this country which has not yet been drained by "the management boom" recommend careful

Patrick Heron

lassic

Hornsey spirit, albeit considerably drained, crippled and invalid. We are not demob happy like the others.

But what now? What is there left for the few pioneers like me who are still there? On an individual, personal level of satisfaction, and max- potential, it is drain- moralising to contin- also devastating to t the young artis of the fu

Duncan Campbell Dome Correspondent

Police agree £22,000 for demo injury

Buildings occupied as student unrest grows

Report by Oliver Gillie

ANGRY STUDENTS have occupied buildings at Lancaster University and Middlesex Polytechnic to protest against rent rises and falling standards of teaching.

The occupations are the latest

Why the student volcano erupted

NUS meets this weekend in the middle of a revival of radicalism. Tony Tysome reports

'Revolting students'

From the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science

Sir, Your leading article, "Revolting students" (November 26), describes the government's student-support policy as an uneasy compromise. But our policy recognises that higher education benefits not only the individual student but also his or her family and the culture and economy of the whole country. Thus our aim is to spread the costs between students, their families and the taxpayer. To ... then either wholly on the ... student, as you ... less

... policy's success is proved by ... tinued growth in demand for ... education, with new enrol- ... up some 20 per cent over the ... wo years.

... Sir, yours faithfully, ... AN HOWARTH, ... partment of Education ... d Science, ... izabeth House, ...

Talks seek to end outbreak of student sit-ins

Cuts spark campus revolt

Poverty protest in Lancaster as rent stri...

Guards patrol 'easy-going' campus to prevent another occupation. David Ward reports

...fashion backs Poly students

SPEAKER'S CORNER

Middlesex polytechnic students recently occupied their college sites; PHILLIPA MORRIS explains why this time it's different

How many students can you get in a seminar? It depends on how thick they are. How do you spot an academic? It runs. And what do students play? Pass the pencil. These are not jokes, and our occupation of Middlesex Polytechnic is not a long party, nor is it similar to student protests of the 80s. The issues have changed.

The Board of Governors is Dickensian (bunch – all well-fed) has risen to the financial challenges of the 90s with a stroke of industrial genius: someone must

New Framework' becomes law, polytechnics will be empowered to award their own degrees. Universities will then discover the reality behind the Paper's happy discovery that 'the real key to achieving cost effective expansion lies in greater competition for fees and students'. Conditions at Middlesex might be looking up for our chubby governors (there might even be knighthoods for extra efficiency), but students are finding it more difficult to flex their budgets. Student finance in the 90s is a new phenomenon; there is little part-time work to supplement grants, few holiday jobs, and the removal of housing and unemployment benefits is causing real poverty, despair and illness. As Dr Johnson remarked: 'A man, doubtful of his dinner, or trembling at a creditor, is not much disposed to abstracted meditation or remote enquiries.'

It would be naive to bracket us as 'students' and ignore our relevance to the wider arts community. We have traditionally been a substantial source of income for

Since theatres and small independent cinemas, and it is here, in these poorer venues that our

Students marching over Waterloo Bridge in protest against the impending cuts in the University of London, Middlesex Polytechnic and the

THE MILITANT

Students occupy ca...

Art for art's sake, money for whose sake?

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