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Challenging the Myths of the Scottish Sixties: Student Protests in the Wake of '1968' at the University of Stirling

ABSTRACT

This article challenges two myths about the British and Scottish Sixties: first, that there was no real student radicalism in Scotland in the 1960s, and second that this radicalism was confined to narrow groups of the extreme left. Rather than focusing on processes of cultural change and their manifestations, this essay conceptualises '1968' as a series of political contestations over the form of university governance and, by implication, government in the United Kingdom from the mid-1960s and to the mid-1970s. Conceptually, this article brings together an analysis of governmental and university policy making with the politics of protest. It draws attention to the inter-action between local experiences and central structures in framing the protests, and it highlights how the student protests on the Stirling campus gave expression to broader fractures within the UK polity. Thus, this article demonstrates how students expressed dissatisfaction with the realities of technocratic planning in the context of the centralised UK state by calling for more representation. In doing so, it offers two conceptual messages for scholars working on '1968' more generally: ideological currents and value changes should be connected to specific local places of contestations; and the call for student representation against technocratic planning should to be taken more seriously and analysed in the context of these contestations and embedded in a discussion about the relationship between culture and politics.

Keywords: *The Sixties; student protests; history of planning; technocracy; Scotland; Scottish nationalism; UK governance*

For a brief moment, Stirling came to be the UK's (United Kingdom's) symbol of all that seemed to be wrong in British society and politics in the early 1970s. Newspapers reported tumultuous scenes on campus when the Queen visited it in 1972: a drunken student appeared to lunge towards her, her lady-in-waiting was said to have man-handled protesters with her handbag, and the local population, much of Scotland,

and the British tabloid press were united in disgust in the disrespectful behaviour by Stirling students.[1]

This makes the student protests at the University a significant case study to investigate some of the broader parameters of Britain's '1968'. As on many other UK campuses, most of what we think occurred in the late 1960s—student strikes, occupations, demonstrations –, really happened in the early 1970s and continued into the early 1980s. Protests focused mainly on issues of what university democracy meant and on questions concerning student housing and the campus community more generally.[2] If one believes some popular interpretations of Scottish history in the 1960s, there was no student radicalism to speak of in Scotland during the long 1960s, making the country an outlier in the protests around 1968.[3] As Rory Scothorne has argued for Edinburgh and Aberdeen, however, this popular diagnosis owed much to the conflation of student radicalism with an ideal-type of radical Scottish radicalism, linked with a progressive nationalism, as embodied by the Red Clydeside from the 1910s into the early 1930s.[4]

Most scholarship on '1968' in the UK has so far mostly ignored this Scottish dimension: it has either focused on governmental policy making, or it has focused on sub-groups of the far left, or it has discussed the ways in which the student protests

1   This article on the student experiences is the counterpart and draws on some of the material from my chapter in Jill Pellew/Miles Taylor (eds.): Utopian Universities: A global history of the new campuses of the 1960s, London 2020 that focuses more on the administrative aspects within the University of Stirling. Many thanks to Karl Magee, the University of Stirling's archivist, for making material available to me. The title engages with Nick Thomas's seminal piece on English universities: Challenging the Myths of the Sixties: The Case of Student Protests in Britain, in: Twentieth Century British History, 13:3 (2002), pp. 277–297. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-tayside-central-19922678 [last consulted on 3 August 2020].

2   On the general context, see Lawrence Black/Hugh Pemberton/Pat Thane (eds.): Reassessing 1970s Britain, Manchester 2013, especially the introduction and the afterword. The longer-term continuities are highlighted for higher education by Harold Perkin: University Planning in Britain in the 1960's, in: Higher Education 1:1 (1972), pp. 111–120, pp. 112f.

3   Gerry Hassan: Radical Scotland: Arguments for Self-Determination, Edinburgh 2011; Richard Finlay: Modern Scotland 1014–2000, London 2005.

4   Rory Scothorne: 'Europe has forgotten you': 1968 and the Rise of Campus Radicalism in Scotland, in: Scottish Critical Heritage, 2 March 2018, available at https://scottishcriticalheritage.wordpress.com/2018/03/02/europe-has-forgotten-you-1968-and-the-rise-of-campus-radicalism-in-scotland/ [last consulted 28 August 2020]. In addition, see Eleanor Bell/Linda Gunn (eds.): The Scottish Sixties. Reading, Rebellion, Revolution?, Amsterdam 2013 and Ross Birrell/Alec Findlay (eds.): Justified Sinners. An archaeology of Scottish counter-culture (1960–2000), Edinburgh 2002; Sarah Browne: "A Veritable Hotbed of Feminism": Women's Liberation in St Andrews, Scotland, *c*.1968–*c*.1979, in: Twentieth Century British History, 23:1, 2012, pp. 100–123 and eadem.: The Women's Liberation Movement in Scotland, Manchester 2014.

gave expression to broader cultural values.[5] In the existing historiography, then, the long 1960s in Britain appear as both: a period of extensive planning and a period of social and cultural permissiveness.[6] But scholars have not yet connected these two themes within one analytical framework. Considering a Scottish case study for the planning of a new university offers an especially valuable optic: both themes — technocratic planning and central government as well as student protests — were most obviously connected.

The analytical separation of the spheres of politics and culture as well as protests and government has meant that two fundamental questions have not yet been addressed: the extent to which student protests were responses to specific incarnations of technocratic planning; and the implications of these responses for Scotland's place in the UK union, where local responses to centralised technocratic planning were, implicitly or explicitly, also challenges to the fabric of the British union state.[7] While we have a good understanding of the intellectual underpinnings of this opposition for England[8], we do not yet have a clear grasp of whether or how such ideologies mattered for protesters on the ground. In particular, the impact of this critique of technocratic planning on the fabric of the British union state is only beginning to receive scholarly attention and has not been analysed in depth, although the two New Left thinkers Perry Anderson and even more so Tom Nairn played an important role in highlighting the tensions at the heart of UK statehood from the late 1960s onwards.[9]

5   The classic work here is Arthur Marwick: The Sixties: Social and Cultural Transformation in Britain, France, Italy and the United States, 1958–74, Oxford 1999.

6   See, for example, Glen O'Hara: Governing Post-War Britain: The Paradoxes of Progress, Basingstoke 2012 vs. Mark Donnelly: Sixties Britain. Culture, Society and Politics, Harlow 2005.

7   Cf. on the general history of '1968' in the UK: Caroline Hoefferle: British Student Activism in the long Sixties, London 2013. More generally, see: Jodi Burkett (ed.): Students in Twentieth-Century Britain and Ireland, Basingstoke 2018. For the broader field of movements around 1968, see: Adam Lent: British Social Movements since 1945, Basingstoke 2001. For an overview of the research landscape, see: Mark Donnelly: Sixties Britain and Holger Nehring: Great Britain, in: Martin Klimke/Joachim Scharloth (eds.): 1968 in Europe. A History of Protest and Activism, Basingstoke 2008, pp. 125–136.

8   Michael Kenny: The First New Left. British Intellectuals after Stalin, London 1995; Chun Lin: The British New Left, Edinburgh 1993; Dennis Dworkin: Cultural Marxism in Postwar Britain: History, the New Left, and the Origins of Cultural Studies, Durham, NC 1997.

9   See, however, the important primer by: Rory Scothorne/Ewan Gibbs: Origins of the present crisis? The emergence of 'left-wing' Scottish nationalism, 1956–81, in: Evan Smith/ Matthew Worley (eds.): *Waiting for the Revolution: The British Far Left from 1956,* Manchester 2017, pp. 163–181 as well as Christos Efstathiou: *E.P. Thompson, the early new left and the Fife Socialist League,* in: Labour History Review, 81:1 (2016), pp. 25–48; Madeleine Davis: "Among the Ordinary People": New Left Involvement in Working-Class Political Mobilization 1956–68, in: History Workshop Journal 86 (2018), pp. 133–159. On Tom Nairn, see:

This essay provides an analysis that focuses on Stirling, but that is conceived as a case study for this broader debate about planning and government in the United Kingdom from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s. It does this by conceptualising the 'long Sixties' not from the perspective of value change, but from the angle of a specific mode of governance that relied policy making in the context of a centralised state structure. Importantly, unlike other work on the 'long 1960s' in Britain, it brings together within one interpretative framework the perspective of governmental and university policy making and student protest. It thus complements recent studies that have emphasised the importance of changes in cultural norms for political organisation and party politics but that has not discussed in detail what the implications were for the British union state on the whole.[10] The objective of this essay is, therefore, to use the case of student protests to illuminate fractures and tensions within British government and statehood, fractures that would ultimately feed into campaigns for devolution or even Scottish independence.

In particular, this essay investigates the ways in which students and staff at a provincial university responded to governmental politics and technocratic planning of higher education and explores what happens to the politics on campus and beyond when the assumption of planners conflict, even clash, with the lifeworlds of those affected by planning.[11] In this politics of protest, the well-known parameters of radical politics such as the war in Vietnam, Third World solidarity, women's rights issues as well as a commitment to socialism were not of primary importance. They also did not come as a mere afterthought. But they provided the language and symbolic markers for some (but by no means all) students of deep and fundamental concerns about housing, the campus community, and the status of students within university structures, and about what it meant to live together in a society more generally. This means that the protests on Stirling's campus here do not appear as part of a generational revolt or the reflection of value change as much of the historiography has emphasised. Rather, the protests were situated within a moment of broader debates about citizenship and government in Britain and a growing sense of the centralised governmental system of the United Kingdom having problems in addressing specific local concerns.

Rory Scothorne: From the Outer Edge, in: London Review of Books 40:23 (6 December 2018), URL: https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v40/n23/rory-scothorne/from-the-outer-edge [last consulted on 28 August 2020].

10   Lawrence Black: The Political Culture of the *Left* in *Affluent Britain*, 1951–64. Old Labour, New *Britain*?, Basingstoke 2002; Steven Fielding: The Labour governments, 1964–70. Vol. 1, Labour and cultural change, Manchester 2003; Matthew Worley: Marx–Lenin–Rotten–Strummer: British Marxism and youth culture in the 1970s, in: Contemporary British History 30:4 (2016), pp. 505–521.

11   For this background, see: Glen O'Hara: From Dreams to Disillusionment: Economic and Social Planning in 1960s Britain, Basingstoke 2006; idem.: Governing Post-War Britain.

Founding a New Scottish University

The political context of the protests on the campus of Stirling University and elsewhere was the reforms and expansion of higher education in the 1960s, specifically the conclusions by committee chaired by Lord (Lionel) Robbins, into the shape and structure of the university sector in the United Kingdom. The *Robbins Report*, published in 1963, had raised significant expectations for the improvement to access to higher education. Stirling was the only university on the British mainland that was founded from scratch as the result of the *Robbins Report*, which argued for the significant expansion of universities in the United Kingdom.[12] In the United Kingdom at the time, a smaller proportion of school-leavers than in most other developed countries went on to higher education, and in the context of discussions about a perceived British 'decline', the shortcomings of university education were seen as the fundamental reason that had to be addressed.[13]

At a fundamental level, Robbins's aim was to democratise higher education by creating an "equality of opportunity" to attend university: "Education [was] now viewed within a universal welfare-state context". As with healthcare, the aim was to create "the best education for all".[14] While awaiting the outcome of the Robbins Committee's report, the Scottish Education Department (SED) used the opportunity of the existence of the grassroots campaigns that lobbied for the foundation of a new university to make a case for expansion. Unlike earlier arguments from the late 1940s that had focused on "manpower planning" for industry and engineering[15], civil servants now highlighted two factors which would make the creation of another university in Scotland "inevitable": the importance of demand for science and technology and the current relative disadvantages for Scottish students in the university system as a whole: it was more difficult for Scottish students to go to English universities than the other way round because of their alleged "qualification gap". Only a new university in Scotland, SED argued, could address this imbalance.[16]

12   Harold Perkin: New Universities in the United Kingdom: Case Studies on Innovation in Higher Education, Paris 1969, p. 73.

13   Peter Mandler: Educating the Nation: III. Social Mobility, in: Transactions of the Royal Historical Society 26 (2016), pp. 1–23. On the background to the debate about decline, see: Guy Ortolano: The Two Cultures Controversy: Science, Literature and Cultural Politics in Postwar Britain, Cambridge 2009; Jim Tomlinson: The Politics of Decline, London 2001.

14   Peter Mandler: Educating the Nation II: Universities, in: Transactions of the Royal Historical Society 25 (2015), pp. 1–26, here pp. 1f.

15   The National Archives, Kew [TNA] UGC7/237: Scottish Education Department to Montmorency, UGC, 28 April 1947.

16   Scots "crowded out" at universities, in: Scotsman, 19 February 1962; TNA UGC7/239:

The "quasi-democratic"[17] aspects of Robbins's proposals appeared to fit neatly into what Ewen Cameron has called the "myths of egalitarianism and social mobility"[18] in Scotland—myths that formed an important part of Scottish self-perceptions in education.[19] This broadly humanist "democratic intellectualism"—as Scottish philosopher George Davie called it with reference to Victorian Scotland picking up a reference by Walter Elliot (1888–1958, Conservative Secretary of State for Scotland and Secretary of State for Health)—also regarded "academic work as a public service, the apex of a similarly public system of national schooling", "knowledge itself" as public: it was "a matter of clarifying and making rigorous the 'common sense' of society".[20] With the foundation of Stirling, which followed the creation of Strathclyde and Herriott Watt from technical colleges and the uncoupling of Dundee from St. Andrews, student numbers in Scotland doubled to 33,000 in the period from 1960 to 1969. Ironically, a similar expansion of places in England and Wales meant that the proportion of Scottish students of the overall university population in Britain decreased slightly from 16 per cent to 15 per cent, although this was still significantly larger than the proportion of its population.[21]

This expansion in higher education did not, however, stop the process of depopulation and deindustrialisation that had already been in evidence immediately after the Second World War.[22] But the expectations for universities to stem Britain's perceived decline by fostering the skills needed in a modern economy and for acting as engines of equality within society remained high.[23] The fulfilment of these expectations was tightly circumscribed, however, by the structure of policy making in higher education

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Arbuckle, SED, to Syers, UGC, 20 February 1963; National Archives of Scotland [NAS] ED26/1600: M W Graham, SED, to Pottinger, SDD, 21 May 1965.

17   Peter Mandler: Educating the Nation II, p. 2.
18   Ewen Cameron: Impaled upon a Thistle: Scotland since 1880, Edinburgh 2011, p. 223.
19   See Catriona Macdonald: Whaur Extremes Meet: Scotland's Twentieth Century, Edinburgh 2009, pp. 151–159; Lindsay Paterson: Liberation or Control: What Are the Scottish Education Traditions of the Twentieth Century?, in: Tom M. Devine/Richard J. Finlay (eds.): Scotland in the 20th Century, Edinburgh 1996, pp. 230–249, here p. 231.
20   See Lindsay Paterson: The Survival of the Democratic Intellect: Academic Values in Scotland and England, in: Higher Education Quarterly 57:1 (2003), pp. 67–93, p. 69; George E. Davie: The Democratic Intellect, Edinburgh 1961; and idem.: The Crisis of the Democratic Intellect, Edinburgh 1986. Generally, see: Christopher Harvie: No Gods and Precious Few Heroes. Twentieth-Century Scotland, Edinburgh 1998, pp. 152–153.
21   Christopher Harvie: No Gods and Precious Few Heroes, pp. 152–153. For the more general point, see: TNA UGC7/237: Scottish Education Department to Montmorency, UGC, 28 April 1947.
22   Ewen Cameron: Impaled Upon a Thistle, pp. 236–262; Jim Tomlinson/ Ewan Gibbs: Planning the new industrial nation: Scotland, 1931–1979, in: Contemporary British History 30:4 (2016), pp. 584–606.
23   Peter Mandler: Educating the Nation III.

in the UK union state and public finance more generally.[24] It was these structures that provided the context for the dissatisfaction that was arising not just among students but also among staff about the ways in which the reforms looked in practice.

It is often overlooked that Robbins's recommendations had an important administrative or bureaucratic component that was of significant importance for the relationship between the British state, universities and students.[25] Robbins's suggestions were aimed at creating a unified university *system*.[26] This shift towards an integrated system with centralised decision-making brought a key paradox to light which this chapter will seek to illuminate with regard to Stirling.[27] On the one hand, universities "represented the ultimate realization of the concept of autonomy, the integration of the disciplines and the high degree of academic participation in governance which had been the ideal prerequisites of university status".[28] On the other hand, universities became part of a "[c]entralized educational system", in which the "supply is basically controlled by the government".[29] 70 per cent of annual university expenditure and 90 per cent of capital investment now came from government[30], and the university grant (and university spending) consequently became part of a regular parliamentary audit in 1965.[31]

Paradoxically, the Scottish universities' defence of academic freedom meant that they preferred instructions from the London-based University Grants Committee (UGC, the body charged with advising the government on higher education and planning and counted some senior academics among its members) over devolution of higher education to the Scottish Office: academic self-government, even though ultimately managed at arm's length by the Treasury in London (and from 1964 by the

24 Iain G. C. Hutchison: Government, in: T. M. Devine/R. J. Finlay (eds.): Scotland in the 20th Century, Edinburgh 1996, pp. 46–63; G. C. Peden: The Managed Economy: Scotland, 1919–2000, in: T. M. Devine/C. H. Lee/idem. (eds.): The Transformation of Scotland: The Economy since 1700, Edinburgh 2005, pp. 233–265.

25 On the importance of the state for policy making, see: Oriana Filippakou/Ted Tapper: Policymaking and the politics of change in higher education: The new 1960s universities in the UK, then and now, in: London Review of Education 14:1 (2016), pp. 11–22.

26 Harold Perkin: New Universities in the United Kingdom, Case Studies on Innovation in Higher Education, Paris 1969, p. 45.

27 I. G. C. Hutchison: The Scottish Office and the Scottish Universities, c.1930-c.1960, in: Jennifer J. Carter/Donald J. Withrington (eds.): Scottish Universities: Distinctiveness and Diversity, Edinburgh 1992, pp. 56–66 and mainly focused on the nineteenth century: idem.: The University and the State: The Case of Aberdeen, Aberdeen 1993.

28 Michael Shattock: Making Policy in Higher Education 1945–2011, Maidenhead 2012, p. 43.

29 Richard Layard/John King/Claus Moser: The Impact of Robbins, Harmondsworth 1969, p. 17.

30 Harold Perkin: New Universities, p. 221.

31 John Carswell: Government and the Universities in Britain. Programme and Performance 1960–1980, Cambridge1985, p. 86.

new Department of Education and Science), seemed to be better than control by civil servants at the Scottish Office in St Andrews House in Edinburgh.[32] It was precisely this paradox—the preference of self-governance via a London-based body over the political devolution of higher education to Scotland—that provided the context for the protests at Stirling.

Educating Good Citizens

This paradox was evident at the time of Stirling's foundation, although it remained initially concealed behind the reformist rhetoric and spirit of renewal. Devising a programme and organisation for a university whose buildings did not yet exist and whose funding had not yet been secured was a tall order.[33] That masterplan for the University's foundation was not entirely clear about its fundamental assumptions and objectives: it could not decide whether to follow the "quasi-democratic" implications of the Robbins Report, or its technocratic and meritocratic elements.[34]

So, developing the general aims for the new university, Stirling's Academic Planning Board (APB) rehearsed the objectives that Robbins and his team had identified in their report. It thereby remained firmly within the framework of Victorian and Edwardian notions of political agency, albeit mixed with a new functionalist language of progressivism and economic and social usefulness. So, on the one hand, it sought the education of "cultivated men and women" by the "example of teachers who are themselves learning", the "transmission of common culture", the importance of skills and vocations, and the "advancement of learning".[35] On the other hand, the APB sought to create a "forward-looking institution" that prepared students "for a vigorous life in a free society". It wanted to do this through the "instruction in specific vocational skills" that were of "of practical use", but taught "consonant with the development of a disciplined mind". In doing so, the APB aimed to "commit common standards of citizenship" and play a "more active role in the development of the community, particularly of the local community, in which it works and lives".[36]

32   I. G. C. Hutchison, Scottish Office, pp. 64f.

33   On concerns within the UGC about the Sponsoring Committee's effectiveness, see: TNA UGC7/245: Donnelly, SED, to Griffiths, UGC, 15 October 1964; Wolfenden to Macfarlane Gray, 27 October 1964.

34   TNA UGC7/246: Wolfenden, Handwritten note, 4 December 1965. Cf. the submission of the report by Murray to Wolfenden, 1 December 1965.

35   Claus Moser: The Robbins Report 25 Years After—and the future of the universities, in: Oxford Review of Education 14:1 (1988), pp. 5–20, p. 6

36   Stirling University Archives [UA] A11/5/1: First Report of the Academic Planning Board to the Sponsoring Committee [14 December 1965], p. 3.

Building Progress

Expectations were not only raised in terms of the function of Universities in society and the way in which Stirling wished to underpin them by fostering ideals of citizenship. Such ideas also found their reflection in the architecture of the Stirling campus, but they were soon disappointed because of growing financial constraints in the context of the British economic and financial crisis of the late 1960s. The founders had commissioned the Robert Matthew Johnson Marshall partnership as architects. The partnership had already designed the new campus at York to much acclaim. John Richards was the lead architect for Stirling.[37] In order to highlight the idea of a common culture, one per cent of the capital costs of buildings were made available for works of arts, "based on accepted figures prevailing in USA and Scandinavia".[38]

But the ideals faced an increasingly difficult reality. The darkening economic climate, with rapidly rising inflation since the late 1960s, the devaluation of the pound and frequent strikes (one of which threatened the timely completion of the Pathfoot building, the first building of the university), meant that Stirling had difficulties in planning ahead with some security. Unlike other new foundations and because of a more stringent financial regime towards the end of the 1960s, Stirling had to press hard to receive a small contribution towards its residences, which was later subtracted from its recurrent grant.[39]

Like the other new universities in England, Stirling was planned as a campus university with residences.[40] Initially, Stirling envisaged that two-thirds of its students would live in campus residences or close by in lodgings and therefore had to be able to cater for both the need of day students commuting to university and residential students. While it "dispersed" "smaller communal and recreational areas" across the campus, residential accommodation on the eastern and northern end of the loch would follow the examples of York or Aberdeen's Crombie Hall: one block for men, another block for women, both with refectories and common rooms large enough to be used

37   Scotland: Building for the Future—Essays on the architecture of the post-war era, Edinburgh 2016, p. 83, URL: https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationid=70f19676–2912-4735-8abc-a58400ef667d [last consulted on 28 August 2020].

38   UA/A11/5/1: Meeting of Directors, 8 May 1967; UA: David Waddell: The University of Stirling 1967–1992. The First Twenty Years of Innovation, MS Stirling 1992, chapter 2. David Waddell, a history lecturer at Stirling was commissioned to write the official history for the University thirty-fifth anniversary, but died prematurely. The manuscript is available in the University of Stirling's archive.

39   UA/A11/5/1: Meeting of Directors of University of Stirling Ltd, 13 March 1967.

40   On the general background, see: Stefan Muthesius: The Postwar University. Utopianist Campus and College, New Haven 2000, pp. 73 and 75ff.

by day students as well. The university would provide "single study bedrooms" as well as flats in order to match "the variety of maturity" among the students with "a variety of provision".[41]

In light of the financial problems caused by inflation and the worsening economic situation, Stirling took out a loan from Stirlingshire County Council to fund its first residences in order not to spend all of its endowment.[42] But it remained a "[m]atter of great concern" that "no clear ruling [was] available" on UGC support for "fees, furnishings and rates for residences funded by borrowed money".[43] Given the fact that "sources of funding were drying up" and given the rise in interest rates, a scheme that would recover the original costs through rents would be increasingly difficult; another risk was that new buildings would remain unoccupied because of higher rents.[44] This was a particular concern because traditionally a very large proportion of Scottish students had stayed with their parents for the time of their studies—building a campus university from scratch would have been a risky decision even without the added financial problems.

Stirling's design and development still breathed the idea of a campus university that catered to local needs, but it lacked an explicit reflection on the idealism and social obligation that had characterised the foundation of Keele University, the first foundation of a new university after the Second World War in the late 1940s/early 1950s.[45] Stirling's planners assumed that a university was a voluntary community, rather than an enforced one. But they did not, unlike the planners at some of the other new universities, reflect on the moral and social values that would provide cohesion to such a community, especially when the student body at Stirling was perhaps more diverse than at the traditional universities—with a significant number of mature students and a large number of students from working-class backgrounds joining and with a mixture of residential and non-residential students—and when a framework of (middle-class) "common values" could not simply be taken for granted.[46]

In line with their intellectual framework, Stirling's planners wanted to "avoid large impersonal concentrations of student activity, as in a large permanent student union" and made a "conscious effort to decentralize student life in a way that may make it eas-

41   UA/A11/5/1: First Report of the Academic Planning Board to the Sponsoring Committee [14 December 1965], p. 13; Harold Perkin: New Universities, p. 89.
42   UA/A11/5/1: Meeting of Directors, 11 September 1967.
43   UA/A11/5/1: Meeting of Directors, 14 August 1967.
44   UGC7/1343: Financing Student Residence, Notes of a meeting held at the Treasury, 16 October 1969.
45   On Keele cf. Richard Taylor/Tom Steele: British Labour and Higher Education, 1945–2000. Ideologies, Policies and Practice, London 2011, pp. 43–61.
46   Stefan Muthesius: Postwar University, p. 5.

ier for most students to participate in extra-curricular activities".[47] Stirling intentionally avoided the creation of a Junior Common Room (JCR, for undergraduate students) and a Senior Common Room (SCR, for use by academic staff). Planners instead created a common staff-student club in a building close to the main entrance to the campus. The idea was to create a "compact and continuous teaching environment", rather than one that would be separated in departmental buildings.[48] In short, they envisioned "communities first with separate but connected teaching, communal and residential sectors".[49] The university's primary functions—residences, offices, teaching and social spaces—were "all spaced".[50] As on the other new campuses, great emphasis was placed on separating pedestrians and vehicles by channelling traffic through one peripheral ring road.[51] In his study on the new universities for the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development Harold Perkin viewed such communities as a revival of the "medieval collegiate system" and saw universities like Stirling as new cities away from modern cities and "large-scale urban living": the "artificial solution" of the "integrated pedestrian campus" formed an important antidote to the "motor vehicle and its dispersion of human activities as well as its danger to life and mental peace".[52]

Stefan Muthesius argues that Stirling's architecture and design plans diverged from those of the other new universities by adopting a post-modernist, as opposed to modernist, stance: the architecture sought to regard the student as a free individual who would have a wide range of opportunities of association and in that it returned to an older type of zoning through which residential, teaching and central social facilities were separated.[53] While "flexibility" and "choice" were indeed key words in Stirling's early development, the planners—architects, Directors and Academic Planning Board alike—still thought in terms of an overall community, however. They imagined a modernist *system* rather than post-modernist disintegration.[54]

47   UA/A11/5/1: First Report of the Academic Planning Board to the Sponsoring Committee [14 December 1965], p. 13.
48   UA C/12/1/9: University of Stirling. Development Plan Report 1968, p. 18.
49   Scotland: Building for the Future, p. 39.
50   Peter Murray: University of Stirling, in: Architectural Design 3 (1973), pp. 154–175, here p. 158.
51   Peter Murray: University of Stirling, p. 159.
52   Harold Perkin: New Universities, p. 91.
53   Architects' Journal, 29 May 1968, p. 1233 and Stefan Muthesius: Postwar University, p. 174.
54   UA C/12/1/9: University of Stirling. Development Plan Report 1968, pp. 18 and 34.

Ideals and Reality

So, while the ideas at its foundation and its architecture created high expectations, the planning process already revealed some problems with finances even before Stirling opened its door to students. It became clear that, in spite of all the local involvement and initiative, the new universities were not local universities; they were subject to the rules and regulations—and ultimately benevolence—of central state funding.[55] Stirling opened its doors not only during a period of significant financial and economic contraction, but also at a time where the huge public and political support and approval of the early 1960s was gradually giving way to a more challenging environment: in the wake of the student protests at the London School of Economics (LSE), Essex and Sussex and across the world in 1968, students became symbolic markers in debates about what had gone wrong in British society since the end of the Second World War. Student funding seemed too expensive for many given the dire economic and financial situation, but the students themselves did not appear to show any gratitude to society; and students' understanding of citizenship clashed with more conservative notions of civic duty.[56]

Moreover, despite significant public investment in higher education, universities still did not appear to be delivering the affluence that many had connected with the project of education reform and expansion, and the number of science students had not increased as planned. In fact, it soon became clear that the diagnosis of a comparative lack of places for science students in Britain (a diagnosis made in the context of discussions about Britain's alleged falling behind) had been wrong; there was now an over-supply of places in science subjects—places that could not be filled. An increasing number of politicians and industrial and business elites as well as tabloid

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55   Stefan Muthesius: Postwar University, p. 98. See, for example, the discussion in NAS HH101/3880: Scottish Home and Health Department to Central Legal Office for the Scottish Hospital Service, 6 August 1968; NAS HH101/3879: H. H. Donnelly, note of record of a meeting with Mr. Steele and Mr. Roberts Morrison, 18 November 1965. TNA T227/1629: Harding, Note for Record, Proposed University at Stirling, 16 July 1964; Harding to Sir Richard Clarke, New Scottish University, 17 July 1964; Harding to Carswell, 21 July 1964; TNA T227/1629: Donnelly, SED, to Petch, 31 December 1964; TNA T227/1629: Battishill to Rampton, 2 March 1965 and Battishill to Phelps, 29 March 1965.

56   Peter Mandler: Educating the Nation II, p. 13; Nick Thomas: Challenging myths of the 1960s; Matthew Cragoe: Asa Briggs and the University of Sussex, 1961–1976, in: Miles Taylor (ed.): The Age of Asa. Lord Briggs, Public Life and History in Britain since 1945, Basingstoke 2015, pp. 225–247, p. 236. On the general background for Scotland, see: Eleanor Bell/Linda Gunn (eds.): The Scottish Sixties.

journalists therefore saw little merit in continue to fund the playgrounds of what contemporaries pejoratively called a "meritocracy".[57]

Paradoxically, the University's flat and devolved organisation without departments and faculties as significant decision-making bodies—seen as a sign of true democracy at the opening—effectively led to the centralisation of decision making. While the university's structure had been intended to boost interdisciplinarity and working together, the lack of responsibility and increasing lack of resources, led to disaffection among both younger and older colleagues. In the end, most decisions went to the Principal's office and central committees for approval; but the sheer amount of business proved too much to manage in a consistent and timely manner. A feeling emerged among staff that many decisions were taken behind closed doors and without proper consultation.[58] What had started as an attempt at innovation and inclusion, ended up with feelings of disenfranchisement and failure.

All of this was not merely—and perhaps not even primarily—an issue of internal university management. The fundamental problem was that Stirling operated in an increasingly challenging environment: one in which it was supposed to grow in student numbers in order to finance itself, when student numbers had already reached their peak nationally; one in which, against the background of a crisis in UK public finances, funding for universities began to dry up, especially as far as equipment and capital investment were concerned; and one in which projections of future student numbers in the capital-intensive natural sciences proved to be vast overestimations of actual demand, leading to severe imbalances of staffing and student numbers, and a lack of funding for student residences and common infrastructure.[59]

Growing Dissatisfaction

As at other universities in the UK, growing dissatisfaction about the quality of student accommodation on campus grew over time, became connected with other issues of concern and led to calls for more student representation in University decision making—the students' call for more representation was central for the escalation of conflicts as it encapsulated the ways in which students interpreted the egalitarian and

57   UA/A/1/11/1: UGC, University Development 1967–1972, presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Education and Science by Command of her Majesty, September 1974, Cmnd 5728, London 1974, p. 24. On the debate about decline, see: Jim Tomlinson: Inventing 'Decline': The Falling behind of the British Economy in the Postwar Years, in: Economic History Review 49:4 (1996), pp. 731–757.

58   UA: The Roger Young Enquiry. Report on the Policies and Running of Stirling University from 1966–1973 made to the University Court on 22nd October 1973, pp. 40 and 57.

59   Harold Perkin: New Universities, p. 112.

civic spirit of their university against the more patrician interpretation of the same spirit by the University's leadership. And it connected directly with the growing call for appropriate representation within society by other social movements at the time: women, immigrants as well as workers.[60]

In the late 1960s, according to the University's own interpretation, the number of "justified serious complaints by students about lodging" at Stirling was still small and mainly focused on issues connected with the new buildings. Nonetheless, some complaints already pointed to the conflicts over accommodation and rents that would characterise the university's history in the 1970s and into the 1980s. Rather than live in the bare study bedrooms, the "point had been taken that many of the students would prefer to share flat accommodation if such accommodation was available".[61] Unfortunately for Stirling, the building of residences began just at the time when the UGC had reduced its allocation for furnishings to save funds, although Stirling's capital allocation per student (894 British pounds) was "at least on par with" those of the other new universities.[62] So, while Stirling was under pressure to admit more students in order to fulfil the planning targets set by the UGC and struggling to admit as many science students as planned—UGC funding was tied to the number of students admitted –, there was now not sufficient accommodation for the growing student numbers as building work lagged behind and as cuts to capital grants by the UGC hit the new universities especially hard. But the UGC's position took little account of specific local conditions of recent foundations that required much more investment in buildings than existing universities. It simply pointed out that the "[a]llocation of resources between […] competing claims [was a] proper and indeed inevitable function of Government".[63]

The University reacted to the reduction in funds by exercising this function of government internally and revising its plan for social spaces on campus. Thus, the first

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60   See, for example: Sarah Browne: Women's Movement; George Stevenson: The Women's Movement and the Politics of Class in Britain, London 2019; Eve Setch: The Face of Metropolitan Feminism: The London Women's Liberation Workshop, 1969–79, in: Twentieth Century British History 13:2 (2002), pp. 171–190; Natalie Thomlinson: Race, ethnicity and the women's movement in England, 1968–1993, Basingstoke 2016; Shelley Condratto/ Ewan Gibbs: After industrial citizenship: adapting to precarious employment in the Lanarkshire coalfield, Scotland, and Sudbury hardrock mining, Canada, in: Labour/Le Travail 81 (2018), pp. 213–239; Natalie Thomlinson/Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite: National Women against Pit Closures: Gender, trade unionism, and community activism, in: Contemporary British History 32:1 (2018), pp. 78–100.

61   UA/A11/5/1: Meeting of Directors, 13 November 1967.

62   UA: The Roger Young Enquiry. Report, pp. 85 and 109.

63   UA/A/1/11/1: University Grants Committee University Development 1967–1972, presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Education and Science by Command of her Majesty, September 1974, Cmnd 5728 (London: HMSO, 1974), p. 51.

sustained student protests at Stirling, as at the University of Warwick, emerged over discussions about a lack of a common social building for staff and students.[64] Expectations at Stirling for such a space had been especially high: due to the lack of other venues because of the ongoing building work on campus, the University had requisitioned the Allangrange House, close to main campus entrance just below the Pathfoot Building, as a social space for both staff and students. Yet the growing number of staff and students and the lack of participation by new members of staff in the Staff/Student Club, put this "valuable experiment in staff student co-operation", as the student newspaper called it, at risk.[65]

When the University's Development Committee, against its original plans to avoid separate social spaces for staff and students, decided in 1970 to award 4,000 square feet of social space "for use by staff only", the student newspaper screamed "social apartheid" and registered the "widespread anger, sorrow and frustration among the whole student body".[66] While independence, academic freedom and academic autonomy were watchwords that accompanied the foundations of new universities like Stirling, few policy makers in government and in universities alike had expected that students would claim equality in university affairs by interpreting the democratic rule of majority consistently across the student-staff boundary and calling any other practice "moral cowardice", "rubbish" and "drawn-out-vacillation".[67] The sense of anger and disappointment was shared by many academics, too.

There was a widespread feeling, also among some academic staff, that student interests had simply been overruled and the "experiment" of the "policy of integration" at Stirling would simply be destroyed: "We are not asking for Utopia", the students argued. They saw staff-student interaction in one space as a "social microcosm" "in keeping with the times in which we live". Otherwise, they warned, it was an "objective observation" rather than "revolutionary doctrine" to point out that severe conflicts like at LSE or at Essex would follow.[68] When the University went ahead with the decision to create a separate staff space, around a hundred of the 640 students went on strike and occupied Airthrey Castle. Attendance at tutorials and lectures was "minimal"; some teaching was cancelled.[69] These debates fuelled campus politics, too, as the different political groups sought to link the specific concerns to broader political

64   For Warwick: Caroline Hoefferle: Student Activism, p. 136.
65   Student or staff, in: Brig, 31 October 1969, p. 3.
66   UA D/2/1/6: Social Apartheid, in: Brig, 27 February 1970, p. 1.
67   On these ideals: Stefan Muthesius: Postwar University, p. 99. On the debate, see the exchange between Alex Macdonald: How much of the social space issue of hysteria? and Mick Connerty [later Labour MP for Linlithgow and Falkirk east from 1992 to 2015] in: Brig, 27 February 1970, pp. 1f. Available in UA/D/2/1/6.
68   UA D/2/1/6: Social Apartheid, in: Brig, 27 February 1970, p. 1.
69   UA D/2/1/7: Strike Continues, in: Brig, 13 March 1970, p. 1.

aims. From the late 1960s into the 1970s, student politics at Stirling were mainly dominated by the Broad Left over the course of the 1960s, an alliance of communists, nationalists and at times Labour that campaigned against the Trotskyist International Socialists.[70]

The conflicts over accommodation and social space led to wide rifts among both academics and students as well as between academics and students. It was primarily as a consequence of these conflicts that the practical issue of housing and how to create a campus community became linked to broader issues of social reform. Student activists and their academic supporters adopted a more radical—and here especially socialist—language that enabled them to voice their feelings of injustice and demand recognition, just as their opponents on campus responded by couching their responses in a liberal-conservative language of common-sense probity and good, i. e. compliant, citizenship.

By the time of the graduation of the first undergraduates at the end of June 1970, Lord Robbins, now Chancellor of the University, already saw the legacy of his suggestions for the expansion of higher education in Britain at an acute risk of failure. Whether that expansion was to continue, he told the audience, was the "[g]reat question of our day". And he expressed his hope that "thinking about these matters [would] not be confused by a panic-stricken reaction to recent manifestations of student unrest". Nonetheless, he struck a tone of defiance: emphasising the democratic, rather than technocratic, legacy of the reforms he had so vigorously promoted, he made a strong case for "a suitable university education" being a "good in itself, and a good which society should be prepared to offer its children". This was especially important to prepare for the "intensely competitive world of the future": "I view with amused pity", he continued, "the attitude of those who hold that their institutions of long-standing are the only possible custodians of the academic virtues, and that outside all must be barbarism and disintegration."[71]

The Queen's Visit

All these issues came to a head when Stirling became the national focus for all that appeared to be wrong with universities. When the Queen visited the campus on 12 October 1972, Stirling students and the university became the "national symbol for undergraduate anarchy". Protests against the situation in the residences and the social spaces as well as the cost of rent and food had been going on for several days,

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70   Campus, no. 25, May 1976.
71   British Library of Political and Economic Sciences, LSE archives [BLPES], Robbins papers, ROBBINS 8/1/4: Stirling Degree Ceremony, 26 June 1970, pp. 3, 4, 7.

and the students had occupied some of the administrative buildings. The Council of the Students' Association had voted in favour of a sit-in that would alert the Queen to the continued cuts to student grants and budgets, while significant costs had been associated with her visit.[72] As the Queen emerged from Murray Hall, she was shielded by a heavy police presence as many protesters were drunk.[73] Students "chanted, jeered, sang led songs" when the royal party passed them. A mature student was photographed drinking from a bottle in front of the Queen. There were reports in the press that he swore at her, and that the Queen's Lady in Waiting had to manhandle several protesters to push them out the way of Her Majesty.[74]

With the monarchy as key marker for the symbolic integration of the UK union and for public decency and propriety[75], the debate about the Queen's visit brought to light fundamental conflicts that had accompanied the recent higher education reforms. At one level, the debates saw a clash between a rhetoric of hard-working normal people who complained about the lack of decency and civility of a highly privileged class of students or "drunken, ill-bred louts who merely used tax payers" money to indulge themselves.[76] The example of Stirling seemed to suggest that education would not serve society at large, but foster the belief in some students that they had "a duty to manipulate education as best they can for their own ideological purposes", all at taxpayers' expense.[77] Thus, shopkeepers in nearby Bridge of Allan refused to serve students and buses refused to stop at the university as a sign of outrage, porters and

72   Letter by Principal Cottrell to Linda Quinn, CSA president, 3 October 1972, printed in: Brig, 12 October 1972.

73   Kenneth Roy: The Invisible Spirit. A life of post-war Scotland 1945–75, Glasgow 2013, p. 444. The following description follows Roy's account.

74   Royal party link arms to aid the Queen in rowdy student protest, in: The Times, 13 October 1972, p. 1; Jeering Students Mob the Queen. Smile defies the louts in: Scottish Daily Express, 13 October 1972, pp. 1 and 10; Protesting students chant abuse at the Queen, in: Glasgow Herald, 13 October 1972; John Kerr: Students jeer and sing at the Queen, in: The Guardian, 13 October 1972; What an Insult, in: Daily Record, 13 October 1972; The Queen kept on smiling. Campus Day of Shame, in: Stirling Observer, 18 October 1972.

75   Alvin Jackson: The Two Unions. Ireland, Scotland, and the Survival of the United Kingdom, Oxford 2012, pp. 153–163.

76   Letters by A. Aikman and Elizabeth Greenwood to the Stirling Observer, 18 October 1972; letters by Keith Simpson, London, and Martin Flegg, Redhill, to the Times, 16 October 1972, p. 13; Letter by Kenneth Soutar, London, to the Dundee Courier and Advertiser, 14 October 1972; Varsity grant threat, in: Scottish Daily Express, 27 October 1972. On the broader background for this trope, see: Jon Lawrence/Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite: Margaret Thatcher and the decline of class politics, in: Ben Jackson/Robert Saunders (eds.): Making Thatcher's Britain, Cambridge 2012, pp. 132–147.

77   The harm at Stirling, in: Times Educational Supplement, 20 October 1972; Stirling Observer, 17 October 1972. Cf. on the general background to these debates Louise Jackson with Angela Bartie: Policing Youth. Britain 1945–1970, Manchester 2014, pp. 226f.

cleaners refused to continue to serve students, and Stirling Town Council distanced itself from the behaviour of the students in a public statement to the Queen.[78]

Although some students had signed a declaration to apologise to the Queen, the university seemed to have failed in the eyes of many in imparting the moral and social values, as students rejected forms of welfare state paternalism and deference and campaigned against privilege.[79] One Mrs. E. R. McCulloch, Justice of the Peace, noted in a letter to the local newspaper that the students had come as guests, but had brought "ill repute to this Royal Burgh […] by their despicable behaviour towards our most gracious Majesty". There was a danger, if no strict disciplinary action was taken, that "this infantile riff raff" and "future political parasites will have only been educated to lead and teach in anarchy".[80] The Warden of Murray Hall, William Kidd, claimed in the subsequent investigation that "a small, but not negligible" number of students had "little interest in the civilised functioning of the university community".[81]

Ultimately, the debate about the Queen's visit reflected conflicts about citizenship and community not only on campus but in Britain more generally: from ones centred on the building of character (related to gendered notions of respectability and based on self-discipline) to notions that stressed self-fulfilment, a transformation that was reflected in changing notions of authority from deference towards rights.[82] The Principal's request to the warden of Murray Hall to compile, based on his experiences, a "personality profile" of troublesome students so as to allow for better selection of students in the future was a particularly controversial attempt to reclaim the idea of character as the core of good citizenship, but one that placed the responsibility for order and disorder firmly on the individual rather than society or specific political or social values.[83]

The incident proved highly divisive within the University, as severe disciplinary action was taken against some of the students involved. Some members of staff came out in the students' support, resigning in protest from the University Court and other

78   Official Town Protest. Three Labour Men dissent, in: Stirling Observer, 17 October 1972; Porters dump students, in: Scottish Daily Express, 16 October 1972; Richard J. Evans: A right royal rumpus, in: Times Higher Education, 11 October 2012, URL: https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/a-right-royal-rumpus/421437.article [last consulted on 28 August 2020].

79   "We're sorry"—Students send petition to Queen, in: The Sunday Post, 15 October 1972; Stefan Muthesius: Post-War University, p. 185.

80   Stirling Observer, 17 October 1972.

81   Kenneth Roy: Invisible Spirit, p. 446.

82   Melanie White/Alan Hunt: Citizenship: Care of the self, character and personality, in: Citizenship Studies 4:2 (2000), pp. 93–116.

83   Kenneth Roy: Invisible Spirit, p. 446; UA: Staff-Student Campaign for Freedom and Justice, Petition; Student meetings banned in university halls in Stirling, in: Scotsman, 16 October 1972.

committees. Students occupied the Principal's offices in protest, and a series of legal challenges and counter-challenges ensued. The incident also entered the collective memory of the local community and wider society in Scotland. Some secondary school teachers still warned their students in the mid-1980s that Stirling should be avoided because of the despicable behaviour of students during the Queen's visit—not just in areas around Stirling, but as far away as Inverness.[84] The debates around the Queen's visit connected serious issues with the university's governance with broader political debates about the structure of government in the UK. The university executive had focused on a grand strategy for innovation, but neglected the fundamental question of how to implement it—this was, to no small extent, due to the dwindling financial resources, especially for infrastructure and administration.

There is no evidence for the persistent rumours that the demands by mainly Conservative MPs for punishment and even closure at the time led to the severe cuts to Stirling's funding during Margaret Thatcher's government in the early 1980s—other universities, such as Keele, were far more severely affected in absolute terms. But the discussions and rumours about the Queen's visit demonstrate that the parameters and structures of the debates about the nature and shape of public funding for higher education—and the role Whitehall played in delivering such policies centrally—already emerged over the course of the 1970s. This was the 1970s incarnation of the culture wars that many see in British higher education today[85]—and like today, the culture wars of the 1970s were not primarily about culture. Discussions about a "common culture" were merely the languages in which the broader critique of the role of universities within societies and the role of the UK state in financing and managing universities were couched. Such debates skirted around addressing the issue at the heart of the protests: the structure of the UK Union state and what this meant for government and governance of universities in Scotland.

To some, it seemed that the liberalisation of 1960s led to advocacy of more freedom and autonomy and rejection of all forms of authority.[86] As former civil servant John Carswell commented in his semi-autobiographical book on higher education in Britain, quite in line with critical perceptions of students at the time: students had been taken away from their familiar home towns, so that, "away from familiar social surroundings", they became "academic atoms": "They were unbounded proletarians, free, young, uncommitted."[87] For others, however, this was a more complicated story in which a small minority of "radical" students tried to dominate the silent majority

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84 Many thanks to Ewen Cameron (Edinburgh) for highlighting the importance of this point and for sharing this anecdotal information.
85 James Curran et al.: Culture Wars. The Media and the British Left, 2nd ed., London 2019.
86 Stefan Muthesius: Post-War University, p. 6.
87 John Carswell: Government, p. 121.

of moderates.[88] Nonetheless, the former Provost of Stirling William MacFarlane Gray who had played an active part in the University's Sponsoring Committee resigned from the Court in protest.[89]

In line with public expectations, the university announced that 25 members of its Students' Association would face disciplinary proceedings, including its president Linda Quinn, although she had not herself been directly involved in the protests.[90] This decision led to declarations by other universities in Scotland and the National Union of Students, to demonstrations and protest marches and further strikes and building occupations on campus.[91] More moderate student voices called on the "moral authority of staff" to help "reconstruct the bonds of openness and confidence which are the *sine qua non* of a scholarly community".[92]

By March 1973, the University community, including staff, was divided between those who supported (at least partly) the students and those who wanted to see them disciplined heavily. The administration building was occupied, and half of teaching staff supported calls for an independent inquiry. The sociology lecturer Max Marwick had resigned from the University Court in protest because of "destruction of student relations" by the heavy-handed policy of the University Executive. In the end, most of the students, and especially Linda Quinn, President of the Council of Student Associations, had their sentences stayed through judicial appeal by an independent court.[93]

The University subsequently appointed Roger Young, the reformist headmaster of the private George Watson's College in Edinburgh, to lead an independent enquiry into the roots of the protests. The enquiry process was boycotted by the Students' Association, so that its empirical basis remained somewhat limited: it rested on in-

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88   Cf., for example: Militant Students win the day, in: Glasgow Herald, 19 October 1972; No One is Amused, in: The Times, 14 October 1972, p. 17; 'Demos' in a democracy, in: The Guardian, 14 October 1972. Nick Thomas has argued that this contemporary trope defines British reactions to 1968 more generally: *Challenging Myths of the 1960s*. Cf. also Jonathan Dean: "Angelic Sprits of '68": Memories of 60s' Radicalism in Responses to the 2010–11 UK Student Protests, in: Contemporary British History 30:3 (2016), pp. 305–325.

89   Kenneth Roy: Invisible Spirit, p. 447

90   Action promised over Royal visit riots, in: Scotsman, 14 October 1972; University to discipline students who insulted Queen, in: The Times, 14 October 1972; UA: University Secretary R G Bomont to all staff, 28 October 1972; University of Stirling Press Release, 30 October 1972.

91   Cf. John Kerr, Students back Stirling leaders, in: The Guardian, 19 October 1972; UA: Staff Student Campaign for Freedom and Justice. Matters of Current Concern [October 1972]; Daily Brig, n.d.; Flyer Decision Day, 7 March 1973; Secretary R G Bomont to all Academic Staff, 8 March 1973: "The Administration Building is completely occupied by students".

92   UA: To the Academic Staff of the University of Stirling, n. d.

93   UA: M G Marwick, Open Letter to the Members of the University of Stirling (among whom I include students), 21 December 1972; UA: Minutes of the Academic Assembly meeting, 9 March 1973; Kenneth Roy: Invisible Spirit, p. 447.

terviews with no more than 50 staff and students, although it sought to collate them thematically. In the report that was published in October 1973, Young held back with direct policy recommendations in order to allow for a process of internal discussion. In his report, Young highlighted some issues that were not unique to Stirling. He identified the question of student discipline in the quasi-public, yet autonomous institutions as particularly problematic. On the one hand, universities were, as corporate bodies, immediately responsible for what happened on their premises. But it was, from a legal perspective, not at all clear whether they were supposed to exercise summary justice through a proctorial system, or whether they should dissolve undergraduate immunity and rely on the police.[94] It took Stirling a further five years until December 1978 — and ten years since the issue was first discussed — to bring in a new code of discipline. According to the new rules, certain university officers could exercise summary jurisdiction for offences and fine students up to 20 pounds, or suspend all or some of the students' privileges.[95] Another more general issue that Young identified was that the new universities had an especially large proportion of junior staff. He claimed that these did not identify with their institutions as well as more established colleagues.[96] Moreover, Scottish students, being generally younger than their English counterparts, showed a particular "immaturity" that made it difficult for them to find their way into higher education.[97]

For Young, the fundamental reason why Stirling had failed was, however, that one of the university's original aims had not been fully realised. His solution to the problems of the present was, therefore, a return to the solutions that some of the new universities, in particular the collegiate ones, had sought to provide in the past: to create a community of shared values. Such a community had not been able to form at Stirling as the "internal organisation" of the university did not match its "external planning". Young recommended looking to liberal arts colleges in the US, such as Wooster College in Ohio or Hamilton College in New York as good examples for such social organisation. Against the backdrop of a constantly changing physical shape of the campus and the high staff turnover, there existed an "environment where one never catches up".[98]

Moreover, Young concluded that social life on campus seemed drab: many students talked of "campus paranoia" and the austere claustrophobia of the residences. Both students and staff complained about "relentlessness" of the long (15-week) semesters, exacerbated by the frequent demands of period testing. Older members of the university remained absent from campus as the "drink and discoteque pattern"

94   UA: The Roger Young Enquiry. Report, p. 47.
95   Campus, no. 41, December 1978.
96   John Carswell: Government, p. 128.
97   UA: The Roger Young Enquiry. Report, p. 4.
98   UA: The Roger Young Enquiry. Report, p. 18, pp. 6f.

did not appeal to them.[99] In short, Young saw the fundamental problem at Stirling in the absence of a "common culture of citizenship" and the absence of a "caring community".[100] The staff newspaper regarded Young's analysis as no less than a recommendation for a "major reshaping of the administrative and social organisation" of the university.[101] But both the report and most internal and external commentary ignored the structural constraints—the political and financial framework of university governance in the UK—in which the protests had occurred and within which any reactions would have to be placed.

Shock and Transformation

Principal Cottrell's death from a heart attack in his residence on campus in the wake of these debates in 1973 and the continued divisions between and among students on campus were the symbolic markers of the end of optimism at Stirling. Early in December 1973, the Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer Anthony Barber announced significant cuts to the higher education budget: he cancelled half of the agreed inflationary compensation for university costs and announced another reduction within weeks of that, amounting to 10 per cent of overall contributions across the board.[102] By the mid-1970s, the UGC annual report registered "a deep and damaging sense of uncertainty which can only be removed by the restoration of a longer-term planning horizon".[103] But that "planning horizon" did not appear. When the last quinquennium ended on 31 July 1977, there was no longer any room "in the now uniform public expenditure survey system for exceptions of the old-fashioned sort"; and there was no longer any general norm, with regard to targets for student growth in certain subjects and associated income, against which expectations could be planned; there were only "planning figures".[104] Stirling's Chancellor Lord Robbins had found the situation serious enough to discuss the "maelstrom of inflation" of 25 per cent per year in his degree ceremony speech in June 1975, an occasion that is usually reserved for more uplifting thoughts.[105]

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99   UA: The Roger Young Enquiry. Report, pp. 80f., p. 9.
100   Protest at Stirling blamed on secrecy, in: The Times, 3 October 1973, p. 3. Cf. UA: The Roger Young Enquiry. Report, pp. 7 and 16.
101   John McCracken: Analysis of the Young Report, in: Campus, no. 4, November 1973.
102   John Carswell: *Government*, pp. 145f. Cf. TNA UGC ED188/312: Forsyth, Treasury, to Hardyman, DES, 25 January 1972.
103   UGC Annual Survey for 1975–76, CMND 6750, HMSO, para 24.
104   John Carswell: Government, p. 157.
105   BLPES: ROBBINS/8/1/4: Degree ceremony speech, 27 June 1975.

Stirling suffered especially badly from these changes to the funding system: the building stock was "out of phase", observed the internal planning document, and "growth to 3,000 [students was] vital to resolve present difficulties". This, in turn, posed significant problems for the availability of spaces in the existing residences. Student complaints about rising rents and rent strikes continued to remain perennial features of Stirling campus politics.[106] There were several acute accommodation problems over the course of the 1970s, either because building work had not yet finished when the students arrived or because of larger-than-expected student intake.[107] These problems meant that, in early February 1974, the "stage III expansion", "especially the extension of social space in the central building", appeared under acute threat, although this had already been an issue of concern before.[108] The anticipated reduction of the university grant by 300,000 British pounds put the student study area at risk, as its closure would allow the university to make at least some modest savings.[109]

Throughout this period, University planners still assumed the continuation of a steady growth of student numbers by 10 per cent per year from 1977–1982 with a final target of 3,420 students, and a target ratio of 75/25 non-science/science students.[110] This strategy of growth—with the aim of maintaining the UCG's recurrent grant by keeping up with the student projections—came with significant capital costs, both in terms of residences and in terms of staff-student ratios across the institution and therefore potential staff costs.[111] In February 1976, Deputy Principal Professor James Trainer wrote a desperate letter to the chair of the UGC, Sir Frederick Dainton, mentioning that Stirling was now running with a "small accumulated deficit, no general reserves, [and a] loan-financed residence problem". What made this difficult to solve was a "serious imbalance in the sphere of academic staffing": there were comparatively too many staff in the sciences (with high levels of capital and equipment costs), and too few in the arts and social sciences.[112]

Critics no longer saw the modernist beauty of Stirling campus. Instead, to the architectural critic Peter Murray, Stirling appeared as the "physical embodiment" of an "élitist attitude to university education in Britain". The "cohesiveness of the scheme"

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106 Rent strike staggers into second semester, in: Brig 7:1, 15 September 1975; Dave Broom: Halls of Reticence, in: Brig 12:2 (1981).

107 UA/D/2/1/11: Confusion on Campus! Students arrive to find buildings unfinished, in: Brig, 25 September 1970, 1; Battle of the Bulge, Campus, no. 31, spring semester 1977.

108 Campus, no. 6, February 1974.

109 Campus, no. 11, October 1974; Campus, no. 12, December 1974.

110 UA/A/1/11/1: Agenda, Committee of Academic Development, Report from Academic Council, CAD (75)19.

111 UA/A/1/11/1: Paper CAD (75)12, 'Staffing implications for student growth', 15 May 1975.

112 UA/A/1/11/1/2: Trainer to Dainton, UGC, 2 February 1976. Cf. also Campus, no. 20, November 1975. On the background, see: Claire Callander: Student Numbers and Funding: Does Robbins Add up?, in: Higher Education Quarterly 68:2 (2014), pp. 164–186.

behind Stirling's campus was especially problematic, more so than the modernist uniformity of its building: Stirling now appeared as a "monument to the UGC and the Establishment as the University Tower at Bristol was to the Wills Family". Its design no longer seemed fit for purpose at a time when "monolithic established authorities are breaking down, where the relationship between student and authority are becoming democratised".[113] The Macrobert Arts Centre, with its cultural programme, seemed to exacerbate the university's elitist appearance: Murray thought that it appealed primarily to a middle-class "Bridge of Allan fur coat mob". A "[r]eal claustrophia" had set in, especially because "Scottish students younger, less mature and less articulate than their English counterparts" were often away from the campus. As the use of the student residences for tourism during the semester breaks became increasingly popular, the University was at risk of becoming a "Holiday Inn among the lochs and hills of Britain's major tourist area".[114] So, Stirling—and the university system that the Robbins Committee had created—no longer appeared as the harbinger of democracy and equality as which it had been created less than a decade earlier. Instead, it seemed to be a sign of regressive attempts at quasi-authoritarian control and the dark side of consumer capitalism.

The early 1980s did not see a revival of quinquennial planning and a move towards the control of cash flow in the system. Against this backdrop, the UGC decided to make cuts by differentiating between subjects at particular institutions on the basis of academic merit rather than by differentiating between institutions. The idea of this the "last hoorrah" to protect an independent university system, "publicly funded, but self-regulatory", was to encourage science degrees and discourage social science by using institutions' grant income and the quality of their students as yardsticks. As a consequence, Stirling suffered the 6th largest reduction among UK universities: it was asked to make cuts of 27 per cent from 1981 to 1983/1984. This equalled a 22.7 per cent reduction of its projected income in 1986/1987 *vis-à-vis* 1981 (versus Keele's cuts of 34 per cent and 35 per cent respectively).[115]

It might well have been the case that the cuts in the 1970s occurred primarily due to international financial and economic pressures, whereas they were, in the 1980s, primarily ideological.[116] The Thatcher government's understanding of Unionism was based on the idea of untrammelled individual freedom—this meant that it was unitarian and assimilationist, wishing to implement the same standards across the Union

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113 Peter Murray: University of Stirling, pp. 173 and 175.
114 Peter Murray: University of Stirling, pp. 170, 174, 175.
115 Michael Shattock: Making Policy, p. 126, pp. 128f. (numbers), p. 130 (quote). Cf. also William Whyte: Redbrick, p. 291.
116 Robert Anderson: British Universities. Past and Present, London 2006, p. 169.

and cutting back on redistribution.[117] But there was a paradox here: higher education campaigners in the 1970s, including some unionists seeking more autonomy within the Union state, had campaigned against the inclusion of higher education in the debates about devolution in the 1970s, and Principals came out strongly against higher education becoming devolved to the proposed Scottish Assembly, regardless of whether or not they were in favour of political devolution more generally.[118] To many in Scotland, Scottish national institutions in the context of the United Kingdom still appeared "levers […] by which they might enjoy full equality" in the Union.[119] The seeming self-government of universities through the UGC with its emphasis on institutional autonomy thus worked as an "antidote to nationalism" in the debates of the 1970s.[120] But the shift in the public opinion vis-à-vis students and universities meant that universities had now become part of the "political bargaining" process.[121] The distribution of funds within the UK union state was no longer a mere technocratic act, but was now part and parcel of the political debate about the scale and shape of the public sector in the UK.

Conclusion

Similar to the other new universities, Stirling was a "victim of its own success". As William Whyte has argued, the "size and scale of project […] helped create a counter-reaction which was impossible to contain".[122] The expectations that accompanied Stirling's opening were so high that they could only be disappointed—and the more students were admitted according to the five-year plans, the more obvious some of the faults in the system became, leading to widespread dissatisfaction among students and some staff about the quality of life of campus. However, this was not only an issue of a clash of experiences and expectations, that classic constellation that has driven protests in modernity.[123] It was also due to the structures in which these disappointments and protests were voiced—and due to the fact that these structures could ultimately not be changed locally as they were intricately connected to the fabric of the UK union

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117   Richard Finlay: Thatcherism, Unionism and nationalism: A comparative study of Scotland and Wales, in: Ben Jackson/Robert Saunders (eds.): Making Thatcher's Britain, Cambridge 2012, pp. 165–179, p. 167; Ben Jackson: Two Unions, pp. 265–268.

118   Ewen Cameron: Impaled upon a Thistle, p. 301.

119   Ben Jackson: Two Unions, pp. 136–137.

120   Ewen Cameron: Impaled upon a Thistle, p. 299.

121   John Carswell: Government, p. 150.

122   William Whyte: Redbrick. A Social and Architectural History of Britain's Civic Universities, Oxford 2015, p. 267.

123   Reinhart Koselleck: Critique and Crisis. Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society, Cambridge, MA, 1988.

state. The debates and conflicts on campus and beyond were therefore hardly affected by which party—the Conservatives or Labour—held power in Westminster. This was not because the conflicts were unpolitical, but that they were fundamentally the result of the set-up of higher education governance in the context of the UK union state.

This history of the long '1968' at Stirling has therefore offered an especially poignant case study for conflicts around the shape of government and statehood in post-1945 Britain. Although the Scottish nationalists were buoyant politically and although the question of devolution of power to Scotland was controversially discussed over the course of the 1970s and resolved through a referendum on a devolution settlement (which supporters of devolution narrowly lost)[124], the conflicts at Stirling and other Scottish universities were not (yet) framed in terms of devolution of power or Scottish nationalism. Scottish nationalism figured mainly as a "dream" among Scottish intellectuals as opposed to the "grind" of politics: the fields of culture and politics had not yet become fully aligned.[125]

And yet, Stirling's malaise revealed especially clearly the difficulties involved with combining the ideal of academic freedom with tightly controlled public funding and direction.[126] The debates around the Queen's visit and the protests around the lack of appropriate housing and facilities more generally did not lead to major shifts in the way in which the University was set up, although the flat organisational structure gradually became more hierarchical. In the end, local actors—students and University administrators—focused on the external environment rather than local changes. The severe budget cuts to higher education in the 1980s meant that the episodes of the 1970s were soon replaced by attention to the external structural constraints under Thatcherism. But the conflicts over funding, equipment and expansion at Stirling—and the contestations over who was going to decide on these issues, with students demanding representation—highlight the broader contradictions in British higher education policy. It was only as a consequence of these debates that, from north of the border, these issues began to appear differently as "Scotland" offered an ideological category as a way of seeing the political world.[127] The welfare state—and the place of higher education within it—was subsequently identified "in the popular imagination as the fundamental British institution that cemented Scottish loyalty to the Union".[128] This

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124 Peter Lynch: Aye or Nae: The Referendum Experience in Scotland 1979–2014, Cardiff 2019.

125 Scott Hames: The Literary Politics of Scottish Devolution: Voice, Class, Nation, Edinburgh 2019.

126 Michael Keating: The Independence of Scotland. Self-Government and the Shifting Politics of Union, Oxford 2009, p. 6, pp. 7–8; James Vernon: The Making of the Neoliberal University in Britain, in: Critical Historical Studies 5:2 (2018), pp. 267–280.

127 Catriona Macdonald: Whaur Extremes meet, citing David McCrone, p. 193.

128 Richard Finlay: Thatcherism, Unionism and nationalism, p. 167.

consensus, which reached well into the Labour and Conservative Parties, appeared as a "pillar of the modern Union [and] an expression of Britain-wide solidarity and redistribution".[129] The "alteration in the size of the state, or of the employment and benefits which it purveys" under Thatcher therefore had direct implications for the arguments in favour or against the UK union.[130]

This had profound consequences for the structures of the debate of higher education and public policy in Scotland and the UK. In line with the solidaristic conception of the Union, Jack McConnell, as student association president in the early 1980s, was certainly not a nationalist arguing for independence; and yet he phrased his critique of the Thatcher government policies in terms of Scottish interests, as did Scottish Labour MPs who argued, on the very same basis, against political or administrative devolution.[131] Likewise, we can find arguments about the centralising, authoritarian and ideological policies and *diktat* from London amongst both Conservative Unionists and Nationalists in the 1960s and 1970s. Margaret Thatcher and her government, by contrast, tried to present themselves, however misguided, as true guardians of Scottish interests by highlighting their idea of fostering individualism away from government control, with some significant support from Scottish Conservatives.[132] As a consequence of these debates, Scotland now began to emerge as a dream space against which general aims of welfare and redistribution could be measured, and this happened primarily within the context of Labour politics of the 1980s developed ideas for a "pliable, non-sovereign nationalism" in concert with some public intellectuals, which led up to the Scottish Constitutional Convention of 1989 as a framework for devolution.[133] This happened precisely at a time when the solidarity of the Union appeared to unravel against the backdrop of economic crisis and fiscal austerity.[134]

The failure of one utopia—that of the Robbins' report hoping to create a meritocracy and more equal society through the expansion of higher education—gave rise to another: one that argued that a more equal society could only be achieved through devolution of power or even independence. It was because of that constellation that the legacies of Scotland's student protests in the late 1960s and early 1970s

129 Michael Keating: Independence, p. 53.
130 Alvin Jackson: Two Unions, p. 172.
131 Cf. UA/D/2/1/89: Brig, vol. 11:4, May 1980, n. p.; UA/D2/1/92: Protest and Survive, in: Brig, October 1981.
132 Cf. Alvin Jackson: Two Unions, p. 268. For a case study in another area, see: Jim Phillips: The industrial politics of devolution. Scotland in the 1960s and 1970s, Manchester 2008.
133 Rory Scothorne: Scotland's Dreaming, in: London Review of Books 42:10 (21 May 2020), URL: https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v42/n10/rory-scothorne/scotland-s-dreaming [last consulted on 28 August 2020].
134 Ben Jackson: The Political Thought of Scottish Nationalism, in: The Political Quarterly 85:1 (2014), pp. 50–56.

were forgotten, as they could not be retrofitted easily into stories about the growth of nationalism. But it was also that constellation that provided the structural roots for the conflicts at Stirling in the long 1960s. And this constellation still provides the fuel for the crisis of British statehood in the wake of the Brexit decision in 2016.

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