

Ref CE 6

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The Chairman,
Committee of Enquiry,

Dear Sir,

I should like to express my agreement with the substance of the statement of principle recently circulated to all members of the University. I agree with all but the first half of the last sentence of (c), which appears to me to entail a practical difficulty, and a potential danger to the general principle.

The practical difficulty seems to me to lie in the definition of "moral justification," which presupposes that there is any general agreement as to what would, in fact, constitute a moral justification. I very much doubt if such agreement exists or ever will exist.

The potential danger lies in the way in which the inclusion of this sentence in any formal statement of principle such as this could be interpreted. I do not disagree with the idea that a "moral justification" may be offered as an extenuating circumstance to be taken into account, or not, at the discretion of the person responsible for passing sentence. However, I feel that it should not be listed separately from others. To quote it on its own could well encourage people to commit disciplinary offences in the expectation that they will receive lenient treatment, and this could in turn

lead to an excessive number of protests of this type which, by their occurrence, would make others reluctant to exercise their rights as set out in (a) and (b). This would, in itself, appear to be a practical limitation of their freedom of communication, even if it is not technically so.

It seems to me that the effect of demonstrations in the past, and in other places, which took the form of a defiance of rules or regulations applicable at the time and place of the demonstration has lain in the fact that the participants have known that they could expect certain penalties, and were not afraid to incur them. To insert this sentence therefore seems to me to lay us open to more demonstrations, and at the same time to reduce the possible impact of a demonstration which was in fact strongly justifiable on moral grounds.

Finally, as a pacifist, I should be very sorry to see the way laid open for violent demonstrations of any kind.

Yours faithfully,

J.M. Doroden.