

T of E Ref: 63

Tribunal of Enquiry

RLD/JT

25th May 1968

Dear Lord Alport,

You will no doubt be aware that a Tribunal of Enquiry has been set up to enquire into the facts relating to the visit of Dr. Inch to the University on 7th May and the events leading up to them.

At its first meeting the attention of the Tribunal was drawn to statements made by you to the Press. The Press reports are somewhat unclear, and in particular it is not clear whether you were intending to refer specifically to the events surrounding Dr. Inch's visit. However, the presentation of your remarks in some newspapers could lead to the interpretation that you have evidence that agencies outside the University had a part in bringing about the demonstration which took place.

The motivation of those who participated in the demonstration is a matter which falls within the Tribunal's terms of reference. Accordingly I am directed by the Tribunal to ask whether you have evidence of the kind referred to above, and if so whether you would present it for the consideration of the Tribunal.

I enclose a copy of a circular which explains the Tribunal's functions and procedure.

Yours sincerely,

R. L. Dixon  
Assistant Registrar  
Secretary to the Tribunal

Lord Alport,  
The Cross House,  
Laver-de-la-Haye,  
COLCHESTER, Essex.

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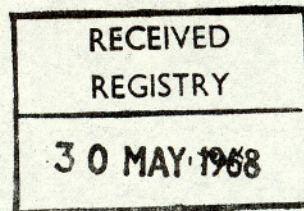
THE CROSS HOUSE, LAYER de la HAYE, COLCHESTER, ESSEX

Tele: LAYER de la HAYE 217  
Station: COLCHESTER

From THE RT. HON. LORD ALPORT, P.C., T.D.

29th May, 1968.

R.L. Dixon, Esq.,  
Assistant Registrar,  
University of Essex,  
Wivenhoe Park,  
Colchester, Essex.



Dear Sir,

Lord Alport has asked me to acknowledge your letter of the 25th May. He is aware of the terms of a motion reported to have been passed at a mass meeting of students at Essex University and which clearly has prompted the invitation contained in your letter. Lord Alport assumes you will not expect him to take seriously an invitation originating in such circumstances.

He has himself issued an invitation in the following terms:

"If, after the exams are over, a group of, say, six representative students care to ask to come to see me, I would be very glad to have an opportunity of talking to them, hearing their views and trying to explain to them some of the facts of political life as I see them."

It is his view that controversy of a political nature should be conducted, not by tribunal or mass meeting, but by group discussion and he hopes therefore that six representative students of the University will avail

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THE CROSS HOUSE, LAYER de la HAYE, COLCHESTER, ESSEX

Tele: LAYER de la HAYE 217  
Station: COLCHESTER

From THE RT. HON. LORD ALPORT, P.C., T.D.

29th May, 1968.

R.L. Dixon, Esq.

2.

themselves of his suggestion.

Lord Alport has asked me to add that in view of the apparent nature and pretensions of the Tribunal, as disclosed in the circular attached to your letter, he is concerned to learn that the political motivation of those who participated in the demonstration is a matter which falls within the Tribunal's terms of reference. It seems to him to be contrary to the whole design of Essex University, and indeed, to the principles of British university administration, that a tribunal concerned with matters of university discipline should be required to investigate and pronounce upon the political motives of students and staff. Lord Alport foresees that this extension of the Tribunal's field of enquiry could lead to grave misunderstanding and vitiate any constructive results which the Tribunal may hope to achieve. He feels strongly that the Tribunal may place itself in a totally false position if it seeks to act as a political tribunal and he would like to place it on record that, in his view the interests of the University require that this should be avoided at all costs.

V. Cartwell

Private Secretary

Tribunal of Enquiry

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Telephone Extension 2244

31st May, 1968.

Dear Lord Alport,

As chairman of the Tribunal of Enquiry investigating the events of May 7th I have seen your secretary's letter of May 29th.

First may I make it clear that the decision to write to you was not in any way influenced by the motion passed at the mass meeting. The Tribunal has been established by the larger Committee of Inquiry, which was itself set up by the Senate. Its impartiality, so far as I can gather, has not been questioned. It is in no sense a creature of any mass organisation.

In inquiring into the events leading up to the May 7th affair, the Tribunal has, quite properly in my opinion, asked probing questions about the planning and organising of the demonstration. The clear picture which emerges is that a large number of people were genuinely concerned to make a protest and agreed on the form by a process of informal discussion.

If there had been evidence of a contrary nature, for instance that a small band of agitators brought about the demonstration in pursuance of a plan to foment disorder in the University, the Tribunal would have thought it right to consider it. The purpose of writing to you was to discover whether you wished to present any evidence of that kind.

We enclose a copy of the Senate's statement which in paragraph 6 provides for the factual enquiry. I hope in the circumstances that you do not feel that our request was frivolous.

Yours sincerely,

Lord Gifford,  
Chairman,  
Tribunal of Enquiry

The Rt.Hon. Lord Alport, P.C., T.D.,  
The Cross House,  
Layr de la Haye,  
Colchester,  
Essex.

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THE CROSS HOUSE, LAYER de la HAYE, COLCHESTER, ESSEX

Tele: LAYER de la HAYE 217  
Station: COLCHESTER

From THE RT. HON. LORD ALPORT, P.C., T.D.

5th June, 1968.

The Rt. Hon. Lord Gifford,  
Chairman,  
Tribunal of Enquiry,  
University of Essex,  
Wivenhoe Park,  
Colchester,  
Essex.

*Lord Gifford,*

Thank you for your letter of the 31st May and copy of the Resolution of the Senate.

I only learnt the fact that you had been engaged in the "Tribunal of Enquiry" through the local Press, and I assume that you are the "Barrister" (to be instructed by Mr. Douglas-Mann) referred to Dr. Trace's memorandum to the University of the 21st May. I note that there is no reference to a Tribunal of Enquiry in the Senate's Resolution, nor is there any evidence that political motivation is included in either the Tribunal's terms of reference or in the Resolution of the Senate setting up the Committee of Enquiry, the operative paragraph of which seems to be paragraph 5 of the Senate Resolution of the 16th May.

No doubt the whole matter will be reported to and discussed by the Council of the University at their meeting on the 1st July. If, however, the Enquiry has extended its terms of reference to include "political motivation" and it is intended that reference to this should be included in the Committee's findings when it reports to the Senate, no doubt you will consider that it would be appropriate that the letter signed on my behalf by my secretary on the 29th May should also be recorded, in full, in this report.

*Ms. Mican  
Alport*