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Adherents of the yobbo school of academic protest have much to feel satisfied about. Their most recent labours have driven a distinguished, if often controversial, visiting lecturer, Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien, from two South African campuses and out of the country.

We totally agree with UCT's Professor David Welsh, who said this week: "What has happened is a disgrace. Unless the universities take steps to act in a manner to prevent it or cease activity."

UCT and Wits, the two universities that have been held ransom by a handful of radicals, are beacons of liberal light which have striven gamely, if not always with even-handed enthusiasm, and certainly with varying degrees of success, to keep the principle of academic freedom alive.

That principle becomes utterly corrupted if unmannerly minorities are permitted to divine which intellectually acceptable ideas are not. The subsidised yobbos left at UCT and Wits need to be severely dealt with.
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Education, Censorship and Democracy
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Editor's Introduction

This number initially started life as two separate issues, one on “The South African White Intellectual and the 'Black' Struggle”, to have been edited by Njabulu Ndebele, and the second on “'Black' Universities”, edited by Richard Aitken. As things turned out, both projected issues were overtaken by political events heralded by President de Klerk's dramatic reforms in February 1990.

This issue, then, as with the times, should be seen as having a 'transitional' focus on university educational struggles in the period between apartheid and that which is following apartheid. Discussion initiated in an earlier issue of Critical Arts, for example, 'Education, Capital and Discourse in South Africa' (Vols 4/5 No 1, 1988/89) is carried through by James Moulder in this issue.

The articles by Rob Morrell (on Durban-Westville), Rupert Taylor and Owen van den Berg (on Western Cape) were written at the height of emergency-administered repression, while Eve Bertelsen discusses the Conor Cruise O'Brien UCT affair within the 1991 context. Chantelle Wyley and Chris Merrett (Natal) offer an up-to-the minute report on the controversy over Mzala's book on Buthelezi. Against the struggles of South African universities during the '80s, moving into the '90s, Geoffrey Langwangwa provides a corrective view of university education in Zambia and the essential irrelevancy of this form of certification with regard to economic development in less developed countries. A lesson for South Africa perhaps?

Keyan Tomaselli
December 1991
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