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**Author**

AINLEY, Patrick

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**Abstract**

This polemical paper was motivated by its author's concern that the United Kingdom Coalition higher education minister, Willetts, should claim at recent quinquageniary commemorations of the publication of the 1963 Robbins Report to be preserving its legacy for higher education. By contrast, this paper argues that the period of reform aimed at changing society through education marked by Robbins has been closed by the Coalition government's acceptance of the 2010 Browne Review recommendations. The paper is therefore little concerned with the contents of the report but places it in a wider context ending in the current attempted reversal towards a minority higher education with academic schooling dominant throughout the system. In a still greater reversal, the expansion of state over private provision characteristic of the 50-year period of reform of education, is also being reversed towards a state-subsidised privatisation at all levels of learning. In conclusion some alternatives are suggested. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)