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STUDIES IN EDUCATION

*8. Education and the End of Empire*

by

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EDUCATION AND THE END OF  
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## EDUCATION AND THE END OF EMPIRE

THE title of this lecture suggests that I am to talk about politics as well as education, and I hope that this will seem wrong to no one. There are situations in which the mingling of the two themes is inescapable, and in any case it is often good to consider the purposes of education against the broader civic background. But to avoid any misunderstanding I should like to say at once that I align myself with those who are conscious of the danger to education of improper, and especially violent and partisan political pressures. Such pressures are especially menacing where differences of race, religion, language or class confront one another angrily on the political scene. And indeed a reasonable accommodation in such matters has been reached and sustained in rather few countries. Our own country can, I think, claim to be one of these. And for this reason, if for no other, the first thought of someone returning to academic life here, and honoured by an invitation to a Chair of Education, must be that he is very fortunate; for although we feel some of these differences keenly enough we try to resolve them in amicable compromise and with at least some measure of success. Our schools are the subject

of vigorous political debate, but not of faction, and those of us who are concerned with education here are free to do our proper work.

But if our work is colonial education it must be said that the escape from politics is not to be made so easily. There is, of course, more than one way of looking at colonial education. We may see its problems as only special examples of those that meet the teacher and the educationalist everywhere. In the Department of Education in Tropical Areas everything that our colleagues in the Institute do is relevant to our work, be it in the study of child development, the philosophy or history or sociology of education, comparative studies, or the techniques of teacher training. Another way of looking at colonial education, and one whose importance and fruitfulness was signally shown under my predecessor, Professor Margaret Read, starts from the concerns of the anthropologist, for the shaping context of colonial education is one of clashing cultures and changing ways of life. But the distinctive and overriding factor in colonial educational development at this moment is surely the political one. No view of it at present could make much sense if it ignored the rapid changes in the political scene. Indeed, had the Chair whose scope and purpose I wish to discuss today retained its earlier title, a new incumbent might have asked if he was not being invited to devote himself to a study that had no future, so rapid is the apparent dissolution of the British Colonial Empire. It was not the least sign of the wisdom, as well as of the

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tact, of Professor Read that she secured a change in the title of the Chair, so that where we once read 'colonial education' we now read 'education in tropical areas'. This escape from history into geography may sound a little odd, but no doubt it was felt that lines of latitude were marked in a more permanent colour on the globe than the once supposedly indelible imperial red.

At present, in spite of the encouraging change of title, the content of the work remains substantially the same. It is, of course, academic work, and the word 'academic' is often misused to imply 'out of contact with the realities of contemporary life'. This is odd, because we owe the word to the thinker who, more than any other, believed that education and politics were inseparable elements in a single study with a single purpose, the good life of man. I suppose, however, that a professor concerned with colonial education should be a little wary of invoking his name. We recall that Plato, when he had begun to despair of influencing his fellow-citizens at home, was rash enough to accept an invitation to go on an advisory mission to one of the colonies. The mission was not a success and he came home. Then, in spite of this experience, he agreed to go for a second time. Now his mission was a complete failure, wrecked (if the tradition be true) on a dispute about curriculum, Dionysius maintaining that with the Carthaginians in Sicily studies must be more practical than the higher mathematics on which Plato continued to insist. Had Dionysius known

what we know of the usefulness of mathematics for devising lethal weapons he would have seen that he was wrong, though it is perhaps doubtful whether his conversion on these grounds would have given Plato pleasure. It all goes to show that an educational adviser may be quite right in principle but through political circumstances and personalities in a colony fail as decisively as if he had been wrong.

However sharply we might disagree with some of Plato's particular views, his emphasis on good education as indispensable for good citizenship is of the very stuff of our own educational thought. It is clearly what they believe also, and vigorously aspire to, in the Gold Coast, in Nigeria and in other territories that are beginning to fashion their future life as independent communities. This movement to independence has gathered speed remarkably in the last few years.

Already after the war India, Ceylon and Burma had gained their independence. These countries were the homes of ancient civilisations, and people who had doubted whether they were ready for independence had thought chiefly of their lack of trained leaders. They were also, it is true, technically backward by western standards. But their peoples were not primitive peoples. It had been generally felt that independence for them was a natural development and only a matter of a little more time. After the war the time had clearly come and the independence that had long been foreseen became a fact.



Since then, not only has the pace been fast but the movement to independence has been of a somewhat different kind. It has included heterogeneous communities, like those of the West Indies, with no indigenous civilisation behind them but an amalgam of European, Asian, African and indeed American elements; and it has included territories like those in West Africa which were political artifacts, drawn on a map by colonising powers without regard to previous unity, and involving peoples that had been until recently largely tribal. So much has happened, and at such a speed, that people are saying that the colonial empire will soon be little more than a string of small places, once coaling stations and garrisons, now perhaps airstrips furnished with a few technicians.

There is much to confirm this impression. Malaya has been promised its independence and will have its own Constitution before the end of 1957. In the Caribbean we are on the eve of Federation. In Africa the Sudan, though not a British colony but in practice British-administered, is now an independent republic. On the West Coast we are getting familiar with a name hitherto known only to the historians of African Africa, the independent state of Ghana which will come into existence on March 6. Soon there is to be a conference to consider self-government in Nigeria and the accommodation of federal government with the varying desires of the regions. In Uganda some people have assumed that the

reconsideration of the constitutional position promised for 1961 means independence in that year, and the Governor has had to remind them that this is not so and that a good deal remains to be done before an all-Uganda African authority can be established to which we can hand over power. Even in the smaller colonies surprising things have happened. Malta, against the prevailing pattern, has asked for closer relations with the United Kingdom. Singapore came very near a few months ago to attaining agreed self-government and there will shortly be resumed discussions in London. Even in Aden enough people have been touched by Arab nationalism to produce an agitation that is at present a minority affair but may not remain that. In Cyprus, long thought of as a friendly base when Suez failed, we have had to face a movement for union with Greece which has taken the form of terrorism, and whose leader has been banished to one of the few remaining colonies where apparently there is nothing more disturbing than a petition against the behaviour of an expatriate dignitary.

It must be recognised that these changes have introduced a factor in colonial education that was not present in like degree only a few years ago, and I should like to examine the stage we have now reached, from this point of view.

First, we must glance at the past, for our overseas education is still conditioned by what was done, or not done, before we had a national policy in the matter. Although there had long been much



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private activity, especially of course by the Missionary societies, one could wish that there had been a national policy long before. But hindsight is easy, and it would be somewhat un-historical to complain that our earlier imperialists, traders or missionaries or laissez faire politicians, did not believe in the Welfare State. It is only recently that we have realised how disastrous economic development and western ideas may be if they unwittingly destroy the social values that lie in their path. Until well on into the nineteenth century this was assumed to be all right, the mere minor adjustment that had to be made for progress. We now see it to be dangerous and often to constitute a grave wrong, though even now we do little enough to control it.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century a more responsible school of imperialism developed, summing up its view of colonial responsibilities in the phrase 'the white man's burden'. I still remember my delight when for the first time I heard the retort, 'But the white man's burden is on the black man's shoulders!' True, in large enough measure; but the retort was too easy. It ignored the very real devotion with which many an Englishman in India, the Far East or Africa had faced his responsibilities, making these countries his real home and the centre of his life, as indeed he discovered when he retired. It is of little use, and it is often less than just, to cry over spilt history. Our predecessors, acting according to lights that are not ours, were its instruments.

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When we look at the record in education we can certainly say, that whatever mistakes were made, some of the best work of the British people overseas went into teaching, into the building of schools and into that initiation of adults into modern life that Unesco terms 'fundamental education'. At least enough was done to give something on which to build national systems later.

It has been said, however, that we hardly had a general educational policy for the colonies till the inter-war years. In these years criticism was increasingly brought to bear on educational practice under colonial rule. The classical account of the way in which colonial rule could break the coherence of an existing society, and fail in its best educational intentions as a result, is in J. S. Furnivall's analysis of the British record in Burma in his book *Colonial Policy and Practice*.

Furnivall tells how the British had found a self-sufficient pre-money economy, a society based on custom rather than law, and a religion that was universal within the country and was responsible for temple schools that really did 'educate for life' as it was then lived. Into this situation we brought two things, both of them seeming incontestably good: economic progress and the rule of law. But economic progress meant the substitution of export for subsistence crops, the increase of indebtedness (which we call credit), and the exploitation of the producer by the landlord, the moneylender and the merchant. The rule of law, which was based on a codification of Burmese

custom understood by neither Burmese nor British, meant the growth of litigation where there had been arbitration through the mediation of an elder, the creation of a class of case-hunting lawyers (many of them Indian) where there had been none before, and even the increase of crime, since the law had no organic relationship with society.

It was not surprising that education suffered. The temple schools, which were not of a high standard in western terms, had at least given literacy to a high proportion of Burmese boys. Now they fell back in comparison with the government-aided schools. These were not concerned with educating for Burmese life from within its setting. The primary aim of those who conducted them was to make converts to an alien religion; they were valued by the government because they produced lower-grade clerks; parents sent their boys to them so that they might escape from agriculture into prestige-conferring, even though humble, clerical employment. From this came every kind of educational unreality: a curriculum unrelated to the environment, and then, when this was found to be sterile and it was remembered that schools were supposed to form character, the addition of lessons in hygiene that the teachers neglected in their own homes and lectures on the virtues of thrift by schoolmasters who were inevitably in debt.

For us to learn the lesson of such failures was a paramount need. Indeed, it still was only a few

years ago when Professor Read gave her Inaugural Lecture. Reviewing the situation as it then was, she said:

The British policy has been against assimilation both in the political and in the cultural sense. Not having the rational logical outlook of some of the other European powers, we have laid up for ourselves a store of trouble in the educational field. We have radically altered the economies of the colonial peoples; we have introduced new religious faiths, new sets of values, new concepts of citizenship. We have taken with us wherever we went, and indeed we could not have done otherwise, our own cultural tradition, including our language and literature and social and political institutions. . . . The problems which have accumulated as the result of this cultural policy of the United Kingdom are formidable. It is more than time that we in this country and the leaders of the peoples in the dependent territories together examined the situation, and tried to analyse it in terms of the future education of their children.

Such analyses of our failures in colonial education, stressing the supreme importance of an organic relationship between the school and the community, have coincided with similar tendencies in our educational thinking at home, and so have been reinforced. We have long passed the stage

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when the discovery that 'education must be child-centred'—a very useful phrase in its day—could make us feel that we were in possession of the only truth that really mattered. We have accommodated it to the perennial insistence that children need to be educated for the society in which they are to live. We have made more and more allowance for the fact that children are educated by society, and not only for it. More particularly in these last years we have been thinking of the school in its relationship to the community, and not only under American influence (though this has been interesting for us) but in more British forms such as those familiar to us, for instance, through the advocacy of Mr. Henry Morris and the ideas behind the Cambridgeshire Village Colleges. So, with these now more current ideas at home and analytical reflection on our past record overseas, there has grown up in more recent years, I will not say a formulated doctrine, but rather a shared attitude about education in the dependent territories between university people on the one hand and officials concerned with policy on the other.

This has developed especially through the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies and a number of similar committees. In these years, with an improved understanding of the nature of the work, there has been a general co-operation between many partners to make that work better: government officials at home and overseas, teachers at home and overseas, private



agencies like the missionary societies, and public but non-governmental institutions like the universities. Each has its independence and often its particular point of view, but the common thinking and common work has been serious enough to warrant the claim that there has begun to develop not merely a general governmental policy for education in the dependent territories, but a general national attitude to it, in a wider sense.

As Sir Christopher Cox suggested in his authoritative review of this progress before the British Association it has perhaps shown the most striking results in the fields of higher education. In this country we are very cautious, and rightly so, about the conferment of the title of university. In these circumstances it is indeed something that in the last ten years no less than seven university institutions (one a full university, six university colleges) have been established in British colonial territories; and, it may fairly be said, without sacrificing quality to speed. Progress was to be as steady at Accra or Makerere as in North Staffordshire or the City of Leicester: first a university college, and only when the new institution had proved itself the full university status. And if the students in these tropical establishments (where it is not always cool in the evening) have to come to dinner in gowns, that—though no doubt a quaint piece of sartorial imperialism in the eyes of the mere American or Frenchman—is an outward and visible sign that they will have the inward and

spiritual grace that legend attributes to the young men of Oxford and Cambridge.

In school education expansion has been steady and the cumulative result not unimpressive.

Americans are not normally sympathetic to British colonialism and it was with the more pleasure, therefore, that we read the summing-up of Mr. John Gunther in his survey *Inside Africa*. He said:

Taken all in all, British rule is best. If I were an African I would rather live in a British territory than any other. The British do not give as much economic opportunity in some realms as the Belgians, and perhaps not as much political and racial equality as the French in Black Africa, but the average African in British territory has more copious access to the two things Africans need most—education and justice.

So we need not feel too badly about our record, at any rate in comparative terms. Professor Read, it will be observed, pointed to a qualitative defect in our policy. Mr. Gunther, on the other hand, spoke of something quantitative. He said that Africans had 'more copious' access to education in British than in other African territories. So that the two observations are not inconsistent with one another. To them may be added a third, which confirms the comparison they both made. A former Rector of the University of Dakar,

M. Camerlynck, wrote recently that French educational policy could take pride in the quality of the work it had promoted in French West Africa; it was quantitatively that they had failed. Professor Read's criticism was that, being less rational and logical than the French, we had muddled the qualitative impact between our civilisation and African ways of life, with consequences that were serious for the education of African children.

Criticisms similar to this were made by other writers in these years. They began to carry weight with those who were thinking seriously about education in the dependent territories, though it would be much too much to suggest that their effect was felt in every school and education office in the territories. But nationally we began to realise that the western school was an alien importation and could not succeed unless consideration was given to what that fact implied.

In overseas schools—in many of which British people will serve for some time yet—much remains to be done to carry these principles into effect, and these warnings cannot be too often repeated. But in high places at home the change of attitude has been profound and I would not wish either ourselves or the world to forget the patient and often experimental and adaptive work of many British teachers and schools in Africa and elsewhere. Yet the period has been very short during which we have had such a general policy for education defensible in terms of educational

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principle and of the values expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We have barely had time to see the first fruits of this policy when political changes—of which we ourselves heartily approve—deprive us increasingly of the power to apply the wisdom that we think we have gained. This is the stage we are now reaching. If it is not altogether easy for us to become reconciled to this new situation it is still harder to think out constructively its implications for the practical work we should like to do in association with our colleagues and fellow-citizens of the Commonwealth overseas. In terms of broad principle we do see what kinds of thing should be done. Who is now in a position to do these things is another question. In several territories for us to do anything directly (apart from giving advice if it is asked for) it is now almost too late. Between one brief incumbency of a Chair and another we have moved so fast in political, and therefore in educational, history.

So, almost suddenly, the terms of reference of our problem have changed. It is not enough now for us to know what the aims of our educational policy in the overseas territories should be. For the policy is ceasing to be ours to make. In the period ahead we shall have increasingly to ask ourselves a different question: given this loss of power and the continuance of an educational relationship, what is the role that we should play? We cannot expect that educational decisions will always be made in terms of what we think wise. I referred



just now to our policy in higher education. While we have put money and effort into Ibadan and carefully defined it as a university college during the period of its necessary growth, along comes the Government of Eastern Nigeria wanting to start an all-Nigerian full university in the Eastern Region, whether by our standards they have the basis and resources for it or not. Again, in Western Nigeria they start an expansion of primary education that seems to us to go far beyond their capacity to place teachers, let alone trained teachers, in the schools. We can, if we are of that turn of mind, console ourselves with the thought that if things go wrong because of stubborn facts the blame cannot just be laid at the door of the imperial power. Putting that more generously, it is a good thing that African politicians sincerely anxious for educational advance now have the responsibility for facing things as they are. More important, it is a good thing that they can do so with a new sense of released popular power behind them, and indeed (though within limits) that may make them right rather than rash because they have a factor on their side that was not operating in the same way before. Still, mistakes will be made, and we should be less than human if at moments we did not wish that we had had a few more decades to put the policy of the last years more fully and more carefully into effect.

Yet, if one reflects, can this be one's final feeling? We welcome the stirring of spirit that has made our task in a way more difficult. For we have long



declared that to be our end. Those of us who are concerned with education welcome it in a special sense, for people seem to show a new belief in education at the moment of feeling that they can take charge of their own destiny. J. S. Furnivall was finishing his book in the closing stages of the last war, and he speculated as to whether a rising sense of national independence might help a society to regain the coherence it had lost under colonial rule. Since then there has been much evidence to support his surmise. It is the élan that comes from the sense of being in charge of their destiny that has been behind the progress of education in India since 1947. The British did make an educational effort in India even if their kind of education was alien. Indians still pay tribute to the Sargent Report of 1944 which marked out their future progress. But only recently in this University we heard Professor Hamayun Kabir claim that in spite of all the difficulties they were sure they would now attain universal primary schooling well before the earliest date that Sir John Sargent had thought possible. We have seen evidence of the same kind in the Gold Coast, where the first African Government called for a speeding-up and extension of the existing Development Plan for education and where this more ambitious plan is being carried out by African and British civil servants and teachers working together.

Some would explain this happy conjunction between national and educational fervour by the

rather intellectualist supposition that a people about to control its own affairs realises that to do this it must be better educated. This is true so far as it goes, but what I am noting is a widespread and popular belief in education as offering almost talismanic power over the future. It is like the feeling of the early days of the Revolution in France as caught so perfectly for us by Wordsworth, a mood part nationalistic, part democratic, but above all of new-found confidence in the powers of man. It was at this time, it will be remembered, that universal education was first accepted as a goal of national policy in France. A society divided against itself, by internal injustices or by unassimilated alien ways, cannot have this sense of liberation and unity. But when new possibilities of social or of national freedom are opened up the sense of restored coherence, or the vivid hope of it, engenders a new vitality in education.

This is a clear gain as colonial education ceases to be colonial. Yet it will take us beyond the stage when we alone have the power to adapt that education to an indigenous way of life. Indeed, although 'giving Africa an education adapted to the African' may have seemed to us when we began to use the phrase some thirty years ago to represent an advance in our thinking, it has not always been welcomed. Many Africans have felt that 'education suitable for the African' must be a sort of second best, especially if we go on to explain that their education ought to be more

'practical' and less clerkly. They know very well that over here the education that is most academic and least practical (in the popular meaning of those words) continues to enjoy the greatest prestige. There comes a moment when even though we know that imitation English education is unlikely to be good education in Africa we cannot say so without being thought to offer less than our best.

I think the first illuminating discussion of this difficulty was in a book now thirty years old, Dr. Victor Murray's *The School in the Bush*. He makes an amusing comparison between the movement for colonial independence and the movement here for the emancipation of women. The first stage of the latter was a rather shrill insistence that women were 'as good as' men, i.e., that they could do as well as men exactly the same things that men did. So if men could grind away at the duller academic studies, women must show that they could be dull also. If men rowed, women must row. If men were tough, women had to show they could be tough too. Any suggestions that there might be a womanly woman, or that there were spheres of interest that were preponderantly feminine, was treason to the cause. (I myself a year or so ago met a feminist from a country still going through this stage who took Unesco very much to task for saying that women everywhere wanted nice homes—'You must not suggest that woman's place is the home', she said to me.) Murray noted that it was only when women had won recognition of the right to equality that they

felt free to discuss differences in the curriculum based on the general differences of interest or of rates of development between girls and boys. Equality first, and discrimination afterwards. And those who have won the equality will then be ready to do the discriminating very largely for themselves. This, he suggested, would prove true of African peoples in relation to their education. They want to enter into the full heritage of the world's thought and civilisation, as we ourselves and other formerly uncivilised peoples have. Appropriate adaptations will of course be made, consciously or subconsciously and, as Margaret Read has said, their own revived interest in the aspects of their traditional cultures they wish to retain will be fused by themselves with what they take from the West. Yet in a longish transitional stage, while we send teachers and conduct examinations, our help and goodwill will be very much needed.

Because British teachers will be wanted in their schools, because the English language is likely to be their chief medium of introduction to a wider world of life and thought, because (we hope) the tradition of British contact and friendship will long remain, a new and quite disinterested effort is called for on our part. We shall no longer offer them an imitation British education. It will not even fall to us to insist on our version of the adaptation of it that we might think appropriate to their life. They, being independent, will increasingly discriminate for themselves. It would therefore

be foolish as well as wrong to fight some last-ditch battle of cultural imperialism when political imperialism has gone. On the contrary I hope that we shall be at their disposal to lift the dead hand of an alien tradition under which good work was done but that really did not fit, and to help work out, on their terms, what is really a teaching problem of a new kind. That problem is how to utilise a foreign medium for gaining the kind of education the modern world requires in schools and universities that are at the same time discovering their native roots. The latter condition I am sure a new nation will demand. India since independence has been re-thinking its whole idea of primary education, and although educationalists might well have reservations about some aspects of Mr. Gandhi's *Basic Education*, of the rightness of its aims there can be no doubt: it wants to root the school in Indian life as it has not been rooted before. I think that the emerging countries of British Africa and the Caribbean will ask our co-operation as India did not need to do. If we are to give it I suggest that we shall have to do much radical thinking and in particular to clear a lot of examination and class-room lumber out of our minds.

One could say much about methods of teaching the English language in such a context, but since I have time for only one example let me take it from a field, the teaching of history, to which perhaps less attention has been given yet. The examination syllabus in history in British African



territories is at present, from an African point of view, manifestly absurd. There is no politer term for it. To state the fact is easier than to say who is responsible or to point an immediate remedy. I know that British examining bodies have offered liberal options that commonly are not taken up. I know that if one charges the schools with conservative rigidity they say there are no appropriate textbooks of African history or of history from an African point of view, and while this is not altogether true there is a measure of truth in it. It is said that the present British connection and British bias in what is taught are a guarantee of 'standards' and that the high proportion of failures shows how necessary it is to keep standards up. But it seems not to have occurred to such apologists that the high proportion of failures may be radically connected with the utter unreality, in terms of personal and social context, of so much that is taught. If candidates are asked—as African equally with English candidates were asked this year—'What do you know of Elizabethan arms and armour?'—how can you expect any other result? An excellent question for home candidates, encouraging them to visit museums: it is not the examiner's fault if the same papers have to be taken by overseas candidates. But how grotesque it is, as if the museums of Africa were full of such paraphernalia.

It would appear then that as our former colonial territories near the point of independence two things especially are to be expected in their

educational demands: an expansion in educational facilities far more rapid than anything we had thought possible, and a re-thinking of the content of their education in terms of their own distinctive needs. In both of these respects we may feel certain doubts, as administrators or as education-  
alists. We may feel anxious about 'standards', as I have said. We may feel that expansion is planned beyond what it is possible to do well. If we are consulted we must state any honest doubts we feel. But at the same time we are in a situation, a moment of history if you like, when day-to-day administrative caution is not the most important factor. You must have a basis from which to make a jump, and it is not possible for human beings to make a jump of any length. But it is a magnificent thing that in education these countries are determined to make a jump, to close the gap as soon as they can between the schooling they have and something more like the schooling they need. The World Bank Mission may have advised Jamaica that although they are a good way on the road to universal primary schooling they should not try to finish the job yet. They know that to do so they will need to increase the economic wealth of the island. But it seems likely that they will try that jump soon: and that they are determined to do so seems to me encouraging. I cannot believe that we in this country will fail to give generous welcome to such forward moves. The very forces behind them can release energies, for voluntary school-building and for devoted teaching

and for adult education that, as the Indian example shows, may do much to overcome difficulties that the merely budget-minded see looming so large.

In the new situation that is coming, then, what will be our part here? I am not alone in the belief that as our political role diminishes our educational relationships with our former colonies may very well increase. I should think it most likely that as education extends in these countries more and more of their students and teachers will wish to come abroad for part of their education and training; and they will be most welcome here, just as students continue to come to this country from India and other newly independent countries. I think they will want to come for two reasons: in the first place to see our schools and universities and educational methods in this country, and in the second to pursue their training as teachers and educational officers in a university well endowed for comparative studies.

There is of course an immense amount to be said in general in favour of a period of study abroad for anyone who has reached a stage in his education where that is appropriate. But there are particular reasons, of great weight, in this case. There is the fact of historic association. For a long time to come it will be necessary to study the educational institutions of this country, and their philosophy, to understand not only the facts but the potentialities of many things in the educational systems of countries that were once British colonies. Again, and largely because of this common origin,

significant developments in education in this country, though not suitable for direct imitation, are more likely to yield suggestions of importance for them than those in a completely different tradition. Most important of all, I think there are positive values in the system and philosophy of education that we have nourished here which will contribute significantly to the development of a teacher or student from abroad. Our Department of Education in Tropical Areas will continue to try to be a bridge between what is most significant in our educational experience in this country and that of the tropical regions.

We would none of us wish to claim too much for our own schools, for we are all conscious of their imperfections and of many continuing confusions of our educational thought in this country. But after some acquaintance with schools and education in other countries I would like to make an observation that I think few education-  
alists would have made even thirty or forty years ago. Though our secondary education does not last so long for everybody as it does in the United States; though its intellectual rigour is perhaps (though I am not altogether sure of this) not quite up to the standard of the lycées of France and the gymnasia of some other European countries; and though like others we have not really solved the problem of what to teach to young people between the ages of eleven and fifteen; yet with all such qualifications, and taking into account the many criteria that have to be

satisfied, I doubt if there is any people that could say with confidence that it has a superior school system to our own, or on the whole better teachers. As to our general way of doing things in education, I have referred earlier in this lecture to our habit of tolerance and our sense of practical compromise. This no doubt has blurred the edges of our thinking and made us appear intellectually uninteresting, but it has enabled us to avoid fighting each other too much, with children as pawns in the game; and it has saved us from the folly of supposing that we must all be of one mind (we never shall be, and we rejoice in the fact) in politics, religion or philosophy before we can work together in our schools. I believe that this reflects something more than intellectual laziness or spiritual indifference. I think it springs from a matured humanity. And I should like to think not only that it is felt to be good by ourselves, but that it has something to offer to the world.

There is another respect in which we may claim to have achieved a measure of success of special interest to teachers and administrators from countries now providing their own leadership. I think that our schools and universities in this country have succeeded, and certainly more by their essential character than by what they teach directly, in preparing leaders in different walks of life, and in ever-widening social circles as we have become more democratic. I agree very strongly with Sir Eric James that for leadership intellectual quality is necessary: neither being 'the right type'



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nor being a good democrat is enough. If democracy does not subsume some of the characteristic aristocratic virtues, if in the words of Pericles it does not only secure equal justice to all but also recognise the claims of excellence, it will be a poor thing. It would seem to me that on the whole our schools and universities have succeeded, perhaps better than most, in developing in young people the combination of the two things we need: respect for intelligence and readiness to undertake socially responsible action.

However this may be, it will be for these newly independent countries to consider what in our educational experience here it will be fruitful for them to study. What we can say is that, especially in a great cosmopolitan university like ours, there is a splendid opportunity to consider educational problems in that atmosphere of comparative study that can add a whole dimension to intellectual grasp. It is not a matter of books only, but of students and of teachers that come here from every corner of the world. It is useful for a student from an African country to compare his school with schools in Britain. It is even more useful for him to compare his problems with those of students from other African countries, from Asia, from the Caribbean. Educational problems are the same everywhere; and they are always different, because the context is different. If one begins to understand what that apparent paradox means one is delivered from the 'tyranny of the here and now' which deprives education of insight.

For our compatriots who are going overseas those who teach here will need to continue to emphasise the relation between their work and its tropical context. For those who come to us from overseas we shall continue to give the best introduction we can to English education and to encourage them to see comparatively the problems that concern them at home. But more important still, it will be our privilege to try to share with both the heritage of educational wisdom of many civilisations and to do what we can to justify the hope that this may be a little enriched by what the British people have done when our colonial empire too shall finally—I will not say have reached, but have achieved its end.

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