UNIVERSITY OF LONDON INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

STUDIES IN EDUCATION

9. PARTNERSHIP IN OVERSEA EDUCATION

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9. *Partnership in Oversea Education*

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L. J. Lewis, B.Sc.

Professor of Education with special reference to Education in Tropical Areas, University of London Institute of Education

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PARTNERSHIP IN OVERSEA EDUCATION

THERE is a story told of Richard Porson, that when, very tardily, he fulfilled the duty equivalent to that of giving an inaugural lecture, he did so in three brief sentences. Whether the story is authentic, or, as I rather suspect, part of the Porsonian apocrypha makes little odds. What is probably regrettable, is that it did not develop into a tradition, though I suspect, for many, if not for most professors, to produce an inaugural lecture in three brief Porsonian sentences would be a trial to be faced with greater trepidation than is the existing conventional requirement.

The office which I now hold, and which requires me to give this lecture, is defined as 'Professor of Education with special reference to education in tropical areas.' In some respects this is a misnomer in that the latter part of the definition, in my opinion, ought now to be, 'with special reference to education in the New Nations or the Emergent Nations'. If such a change of title were made, it would reflect the latest change in the political character of the field of study of education which was inaugurated in the University of London Institute of Education during the nineteen-twenties under the inspiration of James Fairgrieve

and which gave rise to the establishment of the Colonial Department in the Institute.

Colonial Department, Tropical Areas, New Nations. In these three labels we have, as it were, some indication of the elements of past and current experience and of future aspiration essential to every successful educational endeavour, and it is in something of these terms I wish to attempt a partial review and forecast of our particular field of study.

In 1925, as a result of Christian mission thinking under the leadership of Mr. J. H. Oldham, American generosity in the guise of the Phelps-Stokes Commission reports on *Education in Africa*, a constructive attitude on the part of the Imperial government and the willing concurrence of the Colonial governments, there was brought into being an *Advisory Committee on Education in British Tropical Africa* which within a few years became the *Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies.* That body, initially under the joint guidance of Mr. A. I. Mayhew and Major Hanns Vischer as Advisers, and in succession to them Sir Christopher Cox, enunciated policy and offered advice in a series of memoranda and reports which set the pattern for educational development in British tropical areas with an authority and purposefulness of direction that previously had not existed. The Imperial Conferences on Education held prior to 1914 showed some recognition of education as a matter of government concern but did not provide an instrument for systematic and continuing oversight of policy. Under the influence

of the advice provided by the Advisory Committee the Colonial territories proceeded to develop educational facilities by their best lights and within the limits of the resources available to them.

The emphasis that was thereby laid upon the importance of education in the development of the colonial dependencies made new demands upon the mission organisations who previously had been, and at that time still were, the chief providers of educational facilities. It also resulted in the expansion of, and in some cases the initial provision of, government education departments. What previously had been on the part of the Christian missions an activity subordinate to their main duty, of witness to the Word of God, became a major responsibility requiring considerable professional service. Similarly, for the governments, a negligible or minor administrative duty became the work of a major department requiring the services of professional specialists. The Colonial Department of the Institute of Education was a direct response to this need, providing facilities for training recruits to mission and colonial government educational services, accumulating source material for research and investigation, and stimulating thought and practice in the field of study.

In the first memorandum[1] produced by the Advisory Committee the concept of co-operation was laid down as a fundamental guiding principle.

[1] *Educational Policy in British Tropical Africa.* Cmd. 2347, H.M.S.O., 1925.

While the Government reserved to itself the right to direct educational policy and to supervise all educational institutions by inspection or other means, it desired that voluntary effort should be encouraged and Advisory Boards of Education should be established in each dependency to ensure the active co-operation of all concerned.

This concept of partnership was evident not only in the colonial territories. It was a feature also of the Advisory Committee itself, which included, in addition to the representatives of the mission and government interests, representatives of educational interests in Britain of the highest calibre. In the Colonial Department of the Institute of Education the factor of partnership was to be seen in the sharing of the facilities for training and study by mission and government recruits as well as by small but significant numbers of students from the dependent territories. It was also demonstrated through participation in the teaching of the Department by Mr. Arthur Mayhew and Major Hanns Vischer, and through mission workers and colonial government education officers on furlough sharing their experience with the new recruits in training.

The elements of partnership as between the missions and the governments in the making of policy and its practical application and as between the university, missions and governments in training and research had their counterpart within the university itself. An Institute of Education established in London primarily to provide facilities

for professional training for men and women intending to enter the teaching profession in Britain was not equipped to provide facilities for the study of African or Oriental languages, nor was it equipped to provide the sociological and anthropological background knowledge and outlook necessary to the relating of the content and method of education to the local circumstances of the oversea territories. Co-operation between the Institute of Education, the School of Oriental and African Studies and the London School of Economics provided the answer to the immediate needs and served to emphasise the inter-relations between the different fields of studies.

Throughout the thirties and the early forties (during the latter, despite the impact of the war) progress towards the provision of adequate systems of education in the several territories proceeded at varying pace, with local variations in priority and phasing of development, and differing degrees of appreciation of community needs in respect of social, economic and political circumstances. If experiments in adaptation, such as the Malangali School attempt at using traditional tribal training in discipline and citizenship, the attempt in Sierra Leone to introduce modern health instruction into the traditional initiation training of women, and the Omu School experiment in Nigeria, had proved inconclusive, the importance of education as a social institution involving the whole community, young and old, had become clearly established, and its significance

to political, social and economic progress accepted by all. This was expressed explicitly in the Advisory Committee report on Mass Education in 1944 in these words: 'A man may be healthy though illiterate. He may be prosperous without being learned. He may, while still almost entirely ignorant of the wider duties of a citizen, live and, indeed, enjoy life under a government which provides him with security and justice. All these things may in a measure be true, but it is far truer that the general health of the whole community, its general well-being and prosperity, can only be secured and maintained if the whole mass of the people has a real share in education and some understanding of its meaning and its purpose. It is equally true that without such general share in education and such understanding, true democracy cannot function, and the rising hope of self-government will inevitably suffer frustration.'[1]

There is one further backward look which it is necessary for us to take. In 1945, two Royal Commissions and a sub-committee of one of them completed the exposition of policy in advisory terms with a general report on higher education in the colonies, a report on the higher education needs special to the West Indies, and a report on higher education in British West Africa. If there were cynics who saw in these particular commissions further examples of the Royal

[1] *Mass Education in African Society*. Col. No. 186, H.M.S.O., 1943.

Commission device being used as an instrument for procrastination they must have been rudely surprised. For, in a remarkably short period of time, new university institutions were established in all the territories and an exercise of partnership in education of a new dimension came into being.

This new demonstration of partnership contains two features deserving particular attention. In order that the institutions should receive the best advice and assistance possible, there was brought into being an *Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the Colonies*, representative of all the home universities and each Colonial university or college. Through this instrument the Secretary of State was provided with the best possible sources of advice on academic aspects of any scheme for which financial aid might be sought from Britain, and the Colonial institutions were provided with an authoritative source of advice on any matters of academic policy if they so desired it. The other new feature of partnership was the creation of the scheme of special relationship between the colonial university institutions and the University of London, whereby in the initial stages the students of the new institutions might be awarded degrees of the University of London, the latter body maintaining standards whilst providing for syllabuses to be adjusted to local conditions and giving the staffs of the new institutions experience of teaching and examining to an accepted university standard.

Despite strictures passed by a person so eminently qualified to comment as is Dr. K. Mellanby, whose apologia for his stewardship of the early years of University College Ibadan recently published under the title, *The Founding of Nigeria's University*, is as enlightening as it is readable, the genius of this particular exercise of partnership in education has been clearly demonstrated and promises even more far-reaching consequences for the future. As for the scheme of special relationship between the University of London and the oversea institutions, if I may be permitted to offer a personal comment after benefiting for nine years as a member of a junior partner in the scheme, I trust that now, having become a member of the senior partner to the scheme, I may be able to give in as goodly a measure as previously I received.

What all this amounts to is that over a period of less than four decades, in a variety of territories mostly but not all of them in tropical areas, there have been developed systems providing formal education of a comprehensive character together with less formal educational facilities for adult community education relevant to local needs and circumstances. In the process there has been demonstrated a spirit of co-operation and partnership of an exceptional nature. This partnership, I would suggest, derived its strength from the existence of a specific goal, which at the moment of apparent achievement implies new opportunities for partnership.

The goal was first described by Lord Macaulay on July 10, 1833 in a speech delivered to the House of Commons on the subject of the government of India when he said: 'It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system till it has outgrown that system; that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government; but having become instructed in European knowledge, they may, in some future age, demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come I know not. But never will I attempt to avert or retard it. Whenever it comes, it will be the proudest day in English history. To have found a great people sunk in the lowest depths of slavery and superstition, to have so ruled them so as to have made them desirous and capable of all the privileges of citizens, would indeed be a title to glory all our own.'[1]

This is an end that has frequently been in doubt in the eyes of many dependent peoples, and the wisdom of the end is still questioned by some of our countrymen intimately concerned with dependent communities, and this despite the unequivocal expression of the objective made one hundred and ten years after Macaulay when the responsibility of the Imperial government for the dependent peoples was stated to be to 'secure (i) the improvement of the health and living

[1] Lord Macaulay, Government of India: A Speech delivered to the House of Commons on July 10, 1833. Macaulay: *Prose and Poetry*, edited by G. M. Young, Hart-Davis, 1952.

conditions of the people; (ii) the improvement of their well-being in the economic sphere; (iii) the development of political institutions and political power until the day arrives when the people can become effectively self-governing.'[1]

What we are now concerned with is education among nations embarked upon a venture, as yet unproved; with hopes set upon communities in which men shall be given unchecked control of their own lives.

It would appear that to a great extent the partnerships of the last forty years must of necessity largely disappear. The direct participation of the Christian missions in education appear to be giving way to participation being shared between the indigenous churches, local and national authorities. The colonial educational service is giving way to local national educational services. The development of Institutes and Departments of Education as concomitants of the new university institutions points to local provision of academic and professional training previously supplied by the home universities. But these features of change are appropriate parts of the process of development implying the change and development of roles rather than mere replacement and disappearance of some of the actors.

The faith evinced by the people of the new nations in education as the keystone to their national and individual futures is already resulting

[1] *Mass Education in African Society*. Col. No. 186, H.M.S.O., 1943.

in an expansion of educational facilities far beyond present local manpower resources, and will continue so for many years ahead; and there are clear indications that far more men and women will be needed to assist in the development of the expanding systems than can be trained for the purpose through existing facilities. This does not mean, however, that the continuance of the existing facilities or their expansion in their present form is the sole responsibility ahead of us. Rather, it means the discovery of the areas of training and research which will represent the appropriate element of special contribution to be made, as for example in 1944 it was recognised that the provision of special facilities of study for trained experienced non-graduate teachers ear-marked for posts of special responsibility was an appropriate special contribution in the then existing conditions.

If a venture at prophecy is permissible on such an occasion as this, then it may be suggested that among our primary contributions in the immediate future may well be the provision of special facilities for study and reflection for those men and women, whatever their previous training and experience, who find themselves, as senior members of their local education services, responsible for providing professional advice to their political masters and responsible for interpreting in a satisfactory professional fashion the educational aspirations of the people they serve. Such professional interpretation calls for imagination purged and judgment ripened by 'awareness of the slow, hesitant, wayward

course of human life, its failures, its successes, but its indomitable will to endure.'[1] Such purging of imagination and ripening of judgment may more easily be recognised, if not come by, in this country where we are involved in an educational experiment based upon an exceptional accumulation of experience and knowledge and subject to a strength and wisdom such as is attainable only as we are able to stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before.

The political leaders of the new nations are particularly prone to the dangers of general suspicion and distrust, and stand in particular need of integrity of purpose in their professional advisers. If in the field of education those who accept professional responsibility for policy and its administration fail in openmindedness and brave free discussion then the communities they pretend to serve will rapidly find themselves on the slope which leads to aboriginal savagery and fratricide instead of climbing to the summit of civilised living in mutual confidence. In this respect some words of Marc Bloch are not inappropriate for our consideration, words which he committed to paper in 1940. 'The duty of reconstructing our country will not fall on the shoulders of my generation. . . . France of the new springtime must be the creation of the young. . . . It would be impertinent on my part to outline a programme for them. They will search for the laws of the future in the intimacy of

[1] Judge Learned Hand, The Future of Wisdom in America, *Saturday Review* 1952.

their heads and of their hearts. The map of the future will be drawn as a result of the lessons they have learned. All I beg of them is that they shall avoid the dry inhumanity of systems which, from rancour or from pride, set themselves to rule the mass of their countrymen without providing them with adequate instruction, without being in communion with them.'[1] To provide opportunity for the educational leaders of the new nations to so equip themselves that they will provide adequate instruction for the mass of their countrymen and to remain in communion with them is a responsibility that requires the re-examination of the content and methodology of education in the circumstances of the new nations, with the most careful attention to the current social, political and economic facts against the authentic heritage of their own past as well as those elements of our own heritage which they choose to integrate into their own future tradition.

The re-examination of the content and methodology will involve, among other matters, consideration of the place and purpose of the teaching of languages, science, religion, the arts, and the social studies.

In all the nations with which we are concerned we find to a greater or lesser degree a multilingual situation of a complex of languages and dialects and great disparities in the development of written form. In many instances, despite the labours of the small body of linguists who have devoted

[1] Marc Bloch, *Strange Defeat*, O.U.P., 1949.

themselves to the study of the languages, little is yet known of their structure, usage, or potential future value. The failure on the part of educational workers to investigate and experiment in their use as media of instruction, and ambiguity in attention to, and in interpretation of language policy, has on occasion led to abuse of the apparatus of linguistic study and of the results of the findings of such studies. A further complication has been the result of vested interests giving rise to the intrusion of distracting emotional factors providing fuel for pseudo-psychological theorising and lending strength to neo-tribalism masquerading as nationalism. To establish in a satisfactory manner the place, content and treatment of language in the education of the young of the new nations will call for the widest degree of co-operation between educationalists, linguists, anthropologists and sociologists in circumstances where matters of personal prestige and face are reduced to a minimum significance.

If the ignorance, which his critics in their hindsight accuse Macaulay of, when castigating him for his famous or infamous minute of February 2, 1835 is put in proper perspective, it can still be said of English with a permissible degree of literary licence that, 'whoever knows that language has ready access to all the best intellectual wealth, which all the wisest nations of the earth have created.'[1] It is likely that political independence

[1] Lord Macaulay, Indian Education Minute of February 2, 1835, Macaulay: *Prose and Poetry*, edited G. M. Young, Hart-Davis, 1952.

will result eventually in a lowering of the emotional significance of local tongues and the development of a more objective appreciation of the essential necessity of learning English as an international language and as the key to economic and technological know-how freed from the suspicion of devious imperialistic significance. Valuable as has been the past study of the teaching of English as a second language, in the future it is likely to become of much greater importance.

At a time when the most powerful nations of the world are planning to invade other solar bodies and close observation of other galaxies is likely to become a matter of serious theorising it would appear unnecessary to suggest that the place of science instruction is a matter needing special attention. But the circumstances of the new nations are such that attention to the content and treatment of science in the schools is particularly urgent. The jump from ancient concepts of the physical world as they exist in Africa and Asia may, in some respects, be easier than the jump from the world of Dalton and Newton to the world of Rutherford and Einstein, but it is a jump that would the more easily be made if its nature was better understood. Another reason for paying special attention to the place of science in the school curriculum of the new nations arises from the fact that so little development of the teaching of science has as yet taken place that there is much more scope for experiment in the teaching of the subject as part of the general equipment of the layman as a citizen-

to-be and in the preparation of the potential specialist and technologist. A third consideration arises from the fact that to all intents and purposes the communities with whom we are concerned have yet to move from a peasant to a technological way of life. The process of by-passing the experience of Europe and America, even the by-passing of the briefer experience of Japan and Russia, in this respect, sets problems and offers opportunity deserving our attention.

A fourth consideration is the contribution of science to health education. It was demonstrated during the First World War that knowledge of the facts governing health did not necessarily result in sound health practices either individually or co-operatively. We are a long way yet from the provision of satisfactory programmes of health education, and in the schools we have much to learn from the experiences of mass education and community development experience about both the content and the teaching of satisfactory health attitudes and practices.

In view of the major part that the Christian missions have played in education in the areas we are concerned with it is a matter of surprise that so little originality has been shown in the study of the content and treatment of religious instruction. Part of the failure is, without doubt, due to the conservative theological outlook of the evangelical movement and the equally strong conservativism of the teaching profession. In part, also, ignorance concerning indigenous religions, written off as

barbaric and antagonistic to the one true faith, has contributed to the absence of experiment in a study, subject more than any other subject to the control of established dogma. Furthermore, as has been the case generally in education in the oversea territories, there has been a lack of dissemination of information about the few experiments in content and method that have been attempted.

In all the communities we are interested in, the religious situation is complex. In Africa, Christianity and Islam are intrusive faiths established in varying strengths on an animistic substrata. In Asia other ancient religions hold their sway. The teacher, in whatever circumstances he teaches, should have understanding and sympathy of these religious influences in the life of the community as a whole and in the lives of the individual pupils for whom he is responsible. This alone sets a problem in education that will not lightly be resolved.

In the related field of education for citizenship the impact of modern ideas and practices upon older traditions set problems of content and method in geography, history, moral instruction and character training that cannot be met adequately merely by taking over and superficially adapting the solutions that have been worked out in circumstances unrelated to the ways of life and thought of the new nations. The solutions are to be sought by bringing to bear upon the problems exact knowledge of the ways of life the peoples are developing in the changing circumstances. It is

more than unlikely that the school will fail the community in preparing the young for the responsibilities of citizenship if this is regarded as merely a matter of pedagogy. It is a matter in which careful prescription of content and ingenuity of invention in techniques of instruction will count for nothing if there is absence of understanding of the objectives. All of which suggests that the point of responsibility, initially at least, is to be found in teacher education. In this, as in religious education, we are involved as partners in receiving as well as in giving. Satisfactory solutions to the needs of the new nations in religious education and training for citizenship will provide us with material, and possibly teaching techniques, to help to provide our own children with a better understanding of the other peoples as members of the world community.

In communities whose economic resources are under-developed or largely limited to primary products the anxiety for vocational education tends to be overstressed. Together with sociological undertones, such as the assumed necessity for preventing the drift from the land and the assumed importance of teaching the dignity of labour, these considerations have led to disappointing experiments that have served but to underline the need for educational planning to be related to economic trends if the planning is to prove constructive. The prospects of agricultural and technical development that are held out by such agencies as the Colombo Plan, Commonwealth and United States

economic aid projects, and the like, are setting new educational problems that will require the harnessing of the best resources in a co-operative effort if frustration and misery is to be avoided. Furthermore, political independence, resulting in local communities becoming directly responsible for their own corporate and individual well-being, is already creating a different climate of opinion about agriculture and technology, and thereby is opening up the way to a re-appraisal of the function of the education system in respect of vocational training.

The place of the creative arts in the curriculum at all levels of formal education leaves much to be desired. Despite brilliant work by isolated individuals in music and in the visual arts much of what passes for art instruction is but imitative repetition of the most uninspired practice still current in Britain. Local arts and crafts, in so far as they are introduced into the classroom, with brave exceptions, are treated without understanding of the nature of their roots in indigenous life. Furthermore, there is a 'museum-complex' about much that is attempted. The first requirements, in this respect, would appear to be the establishment of the nature of local aesthetics, and of the creative significance of the arts as part of the curriculum. These are things that probably will not be done satisfactorily until African, Asian, Caribbean and Polynesian artists and teachers are able to integrate the traditional significances of their arts with the purposes of education as they are developed and expressed in the schools. This is a process that

calls for patience and imagination, insight and sympathy, as well as exceptional teaching ability.

Underlying all formal instruction should be a thorough knowledge of the individual as an individual person and as a member of society, the knowledge of which we seek through sociological and psychological studies. To record that such social and psychological instruction as is provided in the teacher training colleges in the territories we are concerned with is still almost entirely an imported product, frequently without even the misleading but superficially satisfying coating of local illustration of the accepted British or American exposition of theory, is but to say that the necessary research and investigations have not yet been carried out to the extent that makes it possible to integrate the findings into the training of the teachers. That this has not yet come to pass reflects the lack of the specialists and the lack of facilities for the systematic and persistent pursuit of the necessary studies. It also reflects the slowness with which the profession has come to appreciate the importance of these studies to daily classroom practice.

Now it may be accepted that what I have described as the kinds of thing to which study and investigation should be devoted are properly deserving of current attention, but it can be argued that most of them are matters that can be dealt with satisfactorily only in the field, that London is not the place for the pursuit of such studies, and that furthermore the existence in the new universities of Institutes and Departments of Education provides

the most satisfactory facilities for the pursuit of such studies. To such argument I would reply that it is true that there are now existing in most of the areas with which we are concerned Institutes and Departments of Education, and that it is true the field work cannot be pursued in London. But I would point out that the existing Institutes and Departments of Education are very small; their local resources are limited. In many cases there is a greater accumulation of knowledge, and may I dare say it, even of wisdom, in London than is available at any one of the new institutions. For these reasons there is a continuing responsibility on this University to provide partnership in the study and promotion of education in the new nations.

There is also, I would suggest, a special duty, in this field of study, as in so many others, that London is peculiarly fitted to provide, namely, that of a clearing house of information and as a central exchange of opinion and ideas. It would be easy to provide examples of unnecessarily duplicated effort, of mistakes repeated through lack of information of individual effort in different but parallel educational situations.

The urgency with which educational workers are being pressed by political leaders of the new nations for working answers to current needs leaves far too little margin of time for the educational workers to digest and disseminate the findings of their studies. Anxiety on the part of political leaders to make progress, to obtain results that will

commend themselves to their voters and to justify their policies, is likely to increase the pressure and further reduce the possibility of the standing back which is essential for the long view ahead. Here is something that can be provided by partnership between the old and the new foundations, provided in part by the advantageous apartness of geographical circumstances enjoyed by the old foundations from the more immediate tasks, provided in part by the possibility of exchange of workers.

Nor should sight be lost of the importance of the partnership being a matter of mutual advantage. Some reference has already been made to this implication in the relationship. Two further brief references may serve to underline it. In 1944 plans were prepared for intensive and systematic attacks upon illiteracy in the dependent territories. Teaching people to read and write led on to what has become known as community development revealing new possibilities of adult community education from which we might well be able to learn something to our own advantage. Secondly, the prospect of large-scale and comprehensive psychological and sociological studies now possible among the new nations as a result of facilities for research being made available in the new institutions may well reveal facets of study and application obscured from us by familiarity with the ways of our own community. Approaching the study of educational development among the new nations in the correct manner must be to our mutual advantage.

There remains one aspect of the partnership upon which I wish to comment. I referred at the beginning of the lecture to the fact that there was an element of American participation in what I suggested was a crucial step forward for education in the then British colonial dependencies. I refer to the contribution of the Phelps-Stokes Commission. Since then, American philanthropy through the Christian missions and through the sponsorship of the great trusts of Carnegie, Rockefeller and Ford, and the Fulbright scheme have contributed increasingly to educational endeavour in the new nations. There have been, and there still are people, sometimes influential persons, who suspect such American endeavour as being an expression of dollar imperialism. Such prejudice is without foundation and is detrimental to the establishment of a united world community. The tide of educational endeavour will eventually wash away such prejudice. Meanwhile, the co-operation which has existed in the past in this field of education must be strengthened and extended. The educational needs of the new nations are such that the maximum of efficiency of effort is essential. That efficiency of effort will be attained if as in the past we see the responsibility for the study and extension of education in the new nations as an exercise in partnership.

My discourse has departed very far from the suggested ideal of three Porsonian sentences, yet there is much unsaid.

May I end on a personal note. Having served my student-apprenticeship in this place under

James Fairgrieve and Dr. Mumford, my period as a lecturer-journeyman in this same place in the company of Professor Margaret Read and Mr. A. S. Harrison, I count myself the most fortunate of men to have been able to return here to profess my subject under our Director, Mr. Lionel Elvin, my immediate predecessor in office.

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