

- CORRESPONDENCE

From DR. KENNETH ROBINSON, C.B.E., D.Litt., LL.D.

Dear Editor,

In his review of Public Administration in English Speaking West Africa 1945-1975 (ARD 16/17), Mr. Kirk-Greene asserts that 'it was Africa's Institutes of Public Administration and later the new African Universities which brought respectability to a subject long acceptable to American universities but virtually untaught in British ones (outside Exeter notably) until the latterday nineteen fifties.' This seems to be a particular example of the myth, commonly repeated in the African context often at American instigation, that British universities seldom if ever concerned themselves with vocational subjects, a myth which no amount of repetition will make any nearer the truth.

So far from developments at Manchester University and the London School of Economics in the 'latterday nineteen fifties' being a reflection of an earlier 'shortfall', Manchester University established its degree in public administration in 1926, and the University of London (at the instigation of what is now the Royal Institute of Public Administration) its Academic Diploma in Public Administration in 1927. Similar diplomas were offered by Oxford, Leeds, Sheffield and Liverpool Universities in the nineteen twenties.

Public Administration was a Further Subject in the Honour School of Philosophy Politics and Economics when I went up to Oxford in 1931. The content of these courses no doubt largely related to the structure of British central and local government and it is perhaps not surprising if they did not seem very relevant to those responsible in the thirties for devising training courses for colonial administrators, preoccupied as they were with the supposed requirements of district administration in African colonies. Their failure to make greater use of them in the fifties is a different issue but hardly one for which lack of provision in British universities can be blamed.

Yours etc.

AFRICAN SCIENCE EDUCATION: AN APPEAL FOR INFORMATION

I am interested in building up as complete a picture as possible of SCIENCE EDUCATION RESEARCH ACTIVITIES within Africa. I would hope that an up-to-date register of such information would help to stimulate further such activities by a process of cross fertilization of ideas simply by being in the position to put isolated workers in related fields in contact with each other.

I would therefore welcome any information from individuals or institutions who may be carrying out, or contemplating, research into any area of Science Education. While I am interested in curriculum development projects - particularly locally based innovations - I am anxious to hear of empirical investigations into any aspect of teaching science at whatever level.

If you have any information about such projects, e.g. offprints, references, personal involvement, or merely an interest in setting up a project, then I would be most pleased to hear from you.

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