

UNIVERSITY OF IFE · NIGERIA



Inaugural Lecture Series 55

**EDUCATIONAL
POLICY IN
NIGERIA: A
CENTURY OF
EXPERIMENT**

by 'A. Fajana

AZ:506.3
If 2/n1
No 55



UNIVERSITY OF IFE PRESS

EDUCATIONAL POLICY IN NIGERIA: A CENTURY OF EXPERIMENT

by

A. FAJANA

Professor of History of Education

**Inaugural Lecture delivered at the University of Ife
on January 6, 1982.**

Inaugural Lecture Series 55

University of Ife Press, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

© University of Ife Press 1982

Bosude Printers Limited, SW8/910, Bateye Street, Oke-Ado, Ibadan.

I have had the opportunity in recent years of listening to inaugural lectures which opened with certain claims. In particular, it was exciting to listen to the professor who claimed to be inaugurating the first chair in his field in Nigeria; and to another who extended his claim to the whole continent of Africa! I cannot make any such claim. In fact the history of the chair which I inaugurate today has been very interesting, for it illustrates changes and experiments in policy perspectives even though at a departmental level.

About ten years ago, historians here were discussing areas of expansion of their academic programmes. One area, among others, generally believed to be a possible and viable direction of expansion was the history of the professions, such as the history of Science, Law, Music, Education and so on. The history of education was to be the starting point for obvious reasons, and young lecturers were to be recruited and sent out to train in one or other of these fields. However, a few years later, the policy was completely dropped, possibly as a result of a re-thinking of the whole subject. This is quite understandable. But what many have not been able to explain is the philosophy which, though held by a few at the top, crept in at a stage - that the history of education cannot be regarded as 'proper history'. Certainly, the new interpretation did not go unchallenged for while some were understandably indifferent, there were whisperings here and there but the protest was not loud enough to change the situation. Notwithstanding the changing views, the chair of the history of education is being inaugurated today!

In almost all parts of the world today, public education has become the "growth industry". Next to defence, education is the single largest enterprise in most nations' political economy. Unlike defence, it is the only activity that in many



ways and at one time or another directly involves every citizen. Yet, for a long time educational policy has not been studied in a way to give direction to *ad hoc* thinking. In recent years, however, some of the best minds in education have been engaged in policy studies. This becomes necessary because of the complex problems of school administration, local, state and federal financial support for schools, the social settings of schools and the relationship between schooling and economic growth. If the emphasis on education remains, and it is difficult to imagine any alternative, more attention will have to be devoted to a more systematic study of this subject.

When the topic for this lecture was first conceived, it was to be 'Nigerian Educational Policy: One century of experiment'. But as I continued my consideration of it I persuaded myself that a modification was necessary. I came to this conclusion because when one looks at the whole century under consideration, broadly just before 1880 to the present, except in the last two decades, there was nothing in the educational policy that can properly be described Nigerian. Any student of Nigerian educational policy will not be surprised that the educational systems in Nigeria were based very closely on the educational systems of Great Britain, for they were framed very largely by people who had been brought up in the British tradition and who were more familiar with them than with those of any other country. A good number of those involved in the establishment of these systems were, in fact, British people. In developing the systems in Nigeria which were virtually photocopies of the British model, they were simply being faithful to their imperial instincts; and moreover, it was the system with which they were most familiar. Consequently one finds in Nigeria, and indeed, all over the former British Africa, systems of primary and secondary education broadly similar to each other and to the British system which influenced them.

The British influence was particularly pronounced at the secondary school level. In Nigeria, and virtually in all the former British colonies in Africa in the early periods, boarding

secondary schools were established and were largely staffed by products of the British public schools aiming at and indeed achieving the same high standards of their British counterparts. It is ironical that these schools and the universities which were later established with equally close links with British universities played a decisive role in the African independence movements, for from them came a steady stream of highly educated elites who recognized themselves as well qualified to take over their nations' governments and who formed the backbone of the first independent governments of many African States.

The overall result was that what we now regard as our educational policy is in fact what we inherited from our former British overlords. I do not intend to give the impression that Nigerians did not contribute anything to what we now have as our educational policy even at the early stages. On the contrary men like Rev. I.O. Ransome-Kuti, Rev. J.O. Lucas, E.E. Esua and the controversial Henry Carr, better known in educational circles as 'Inspectors of Schools', all made some contributions to the educational policy in terms of objectives, language policy, teacher training and the development of secondary education, to mention a few. But we must recognize the limitations of any African connected with educational policy at a time when the full brunt of responsibility for achievement or otherwise rested on the Head of the administration. This means that however laudable any educational programme proposed by any African educator might be, the responsibility for approving it rested with the head of the administration whose duty it was to assess it alongside others produced by other departments and decide on which was to be regarded as priority. Whatever contributions Nigerians might have made, they could only be in the nature of suggestions. Moreover, it should be realized that it was not possible to carry out reforms in educational system in the midst of the general apathy of the people, especially under a system in which the administration was the expression of the will of its Head, who, having regard to the means at its disposal for effecting his general policy might conceive it his duty to delay the implementation of any

particular measure which appeared to him to be of relatively minor importance. We can therefore see why educational policy for three quarters of the century in question could not be considered Nigerian.

Today, it is fashionable to describe our educational system as the product of British provincialism, not taking into consideration the real needs of this country. Such a judgement can neither be regarded as fair nor could it have taken into consideration the historical perspectives. It is easy to criticise our educational system in the past from the standpoint of the present but it is only realistic to make such a criticism with the full understanding of the best of the contemporary educational thought of the period we are considering and the range of choices which were then open.

We often do not realise that educational theories about education in Africa were often far ahead of what obtained in Britain itself. The *Memorandum on Educational Policy in British Tropical Africa*, by the Advisory Committee on Native Education in the British Tropical African Dependencies', for example, contains many statements with surprisingly modern rings. Among them is the assertion that:

the aim of education should be to render the individual more efficient in his or her condition of life, whatever it may be, and so promote the advancement of the community as a whole through the improvement of agriculture the development of major industries, the improvement of health, the training of the people in the management of their own affairs and the inculcation of true ideas of citizenship and service.¹

Let me add quickly here that when referring to the condition of life of the Africans, the commissioners were satisfied that it was perfectly all right. They asserted that the first task of education is to raise the standard and the character and efficiency of the bulk of the people, but that provision must be made for the training of those who are required to fill posts in the administrative and technical services as well as those

who, as chief, will occupy positions of exceptional trust and responsibility.

Another example of an up-to-date educational theory for African dependencies and probably more advanced than those for the United Kingdom itself can be found in the 1935 memorandum which contained the following statement:

The main purpose of this memorandum is to show the educational significance of the interrelation of all the factors of community life. The school can make its most effective contribution only as part of a more comprehensive programme directed to the improvement of the total life of the community. The hindrance to social advance needs to be attacked simultaneously from many sides. The true educational aim is the education not only of the young but also of the whole community.... This involves a clear recognition of the intimate connection between educational policy and economic policy.²

These views are still valid fifty years after they had been expressed. Nor can we overlook the self-evident truth that any plan for educational development "must take into account African thought and feeling". Unfortunately, the thought and feeling' of the African people at that time, and even today, were directed towards obtaining for their children the kind of education which would release them from the ceaseless toil on the land and secure for them the prize of a government employment. The experiment of vocational schools set up, as those before them, did not succeed for this reason. To the European educationist, this was a tragic failure. To the Nigerian, the experiment was unacceptable. The Nigerian wanted much more than what was regarded as African thought and feeling. In fact, the alone was the interpreter of his own feeling. It was not because the Nigerian did not want to use his hands, but his choice was a realistic one if his standard of living must improve. Whatever we may think of the attitude of the Nigerian to an experiment which was believed to be rational, it must be realised that the Nigerian was opposed to

the departure from the existing conventional school system because of his genuine fear of any movement for segregation of the black people. Experience had shown him that a departure from the white man's method has too frequently meant an inferior provision for the black people; they were therefore suspicious of any experiment of adaptation. Who can blame them?

AFRICAN EDUCATION

Having said so much on the memoranda of the Advisory Committee on Education, I should not fail to call attention to the fact that whatever the validity of the theories we have discussed, they were essentially meant for Africans; and were not intended to have universal application. In fact this was where we had the roots of the idea of 'African Education' commonly held among educationists, as if Africans are a separate species of beings that must be educated in a special way. Most educationists who hold this view had no knowledge of the historical background to the idea. The Commissioners who produced the report for the Advisory Committee on Native Education laid undue emphasis on agricultural education because they allowed themselves to be influenced by the Tuskegee experiment in the education of the Black American and concluded that what was required most by the Black American was an education in character training and understanding the dignity of labour through working with the hands. The Commission believed that what was good for the Black American was equally good for the African even in his own country. And today, Europeans and Americans still express great concern about growing industrialization in Africa and the consequent breakdown in traditional life, fearing that this would bring the problems being faced by developed countries -- air pollution, destruction of family life, growth in crimes, etc. My answer has always been that when we develop our industries, when we can eat good meals and live in good environment, we will be ready to face the consequences as the developed countries are doing!

Let us now come nearer to the experiments in educational policy which is our main concern. In a lecture of this type one can only select a few examples for discussion. In order to make this easy, it is essential to divide the century in discussion into three periods:

- (1) the missionary era when missionaries alone decided on educational policy;
- (2) the colonial era when government slowly took over control by the policy of grants-in-aid, inspection, certification and so on; and
- (3) the post independence era when Nigerians took over and made attempts to foster a national policy.

Since the missionaries had limited objectives, their experiments were in the area of education for conversion. They were concerned mainly with the 4 Rs - reading, writing, arithmetic and religion. Time will not permit me to enumerate the experiments during the missionary era, nevertheless one or two deserve our attention.

INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION

This was a genetic term for manual work of any kind as opposed to literary activity. All the missions agreed to the dictum of Thoma Fowell Buxton that 'the missionary, the schoolmaster, the plough and the spade' should go together. To this end the C.M.S. established industrial institutions in Abeokuta and later in Onitsha and Lokoja to encourage the cultivation and export of cotton. They sent Henry Robin and Josiah Crowther, son of Bishop Crowther, for training in Manchester. Soon, there were as many as 300 gins at Abeokuta and a few at Ibadan and Ijaiye.³ Furthermore, experiments were started in brickmaking. At first, hand presses still common in our building industry today were used, but later, a steam engine with a brick-making machine attached to it was sent out by the Society. For reasons we cannot discuss here, the brick-fields had to be given up, but the main objective of teaching people how to make bricks was accomplished. The

Holy Cross Cathedral and the Christ Church in Lagos benefitted from this experiment.

The Catholics also pursued the policy of industrial education with great vigour by attempting a large scale programme of agricultural education at Topo and Badagry. The scheme was established in 1876 and before long 'gari' was being made from cassava by means of a simple machine. A plan was devised to export copra to Europe and to make and export coconut oil.

Despite all the efforts of the missions, industrial education still failed while literary education flourished. This was because the people found clerical work profitable, better paid and therefore, naturally flocked to it. A time came when industrial education was even regarded as a hindrance to good education. Attempts to revive the experiment has been made over and over again and in recent times by Tai Solarin in Mayflower, Ikenne and currently by Jegede at the Comprehensive High School, Ikere-Ekiti. I have read an unpublished glowing assessment of the Ikenne venture described as a pioneering one, but I have no doubt that both are following the footpath of their predecessors. But if Governor Bola Ige fulfils his promise made a few weeks ago to re-introduce agriculture to all schools, using modern methods of cultivation, a new experiment would have started with a greater chance of success than anyone before it.

THE VERNACULAR

When in 1970 in Institute of Education in my Faculty started the Six-Year Primary Project - an experiment aimed at proving that children can learn better in their mother tongue than in a foreign tongue, it was thought a new area was being explored. To confirm this, many people and institutions have been writing to ask for details of this experiment and we are happy to lead in it. But as a matter of fact, missionaries had proved this a hundred years ago, but the results were not pursued. In fact they proved that a child learns better in his/her mother tongue by showing that in training their

missionaries better results were achieved by a good working knowledge of the language of the people. In other words the student learns better when his teacher understands his mother tongue. The Wesleyan Missionary Society, now known as Methodists, asserted that "for effective preaching of the gospel, the hearers' mother tongue is the best",⁴ therefore Europeans must learn to speak the local language. By 1900 it had become a firm policy that every English missionary in the West Coast was to be made to learn a local language and a course of between two and three years duration was to be arranged. This meant that every English probationer took an examination which included a local language. This became a firm policy. In 1902 an official policy was enunciated in Lagos that 'every missionary to Africa, unless specially exempted by the Committee, will be expected to learn a vernacular and must take an annual examination'.⁵ A curriculum covering the three years of language study was drawn up. Later there was to be co-operation with the C.M.S. for the effectiveness of the policy.

When the 1882 the Education Code was passed, missionaries objected to Clause 10 Section 5 which stipulated that grants would be paid for English and not for the vernacular. They submitted a memorandum signed by about 70 people, pastors and schoolmasters, protesting to the Secretary of State against what they called 'the violation of a sound pedagogical rule'. And it was! The Colonial Office suspected the missions of wanting to improve the size of their grants which would be more easily earned in Yoruba than in English. Some of us thought so until recently. The Government spokesman, Rev. Metcalf Sunter, asserted: 'I regard these said languages as only interesting to the comparative philologist and never likely to become of any practical use of civilization'. Others who supported the Government view argued that without a full acquaintance with the English tongue, translators into vernacular would never render acceptable service to the country. They concluded:

Let it therefore be understood that we love our mother tongue, we prize it, use it, and do think that

the solemnity, melody, potency, so natural to it can never be expressed in any other, but this is certain, that our relations and present conditions operate against our speaking in our native language alone.⁶

The missionaries did not advocate the study of Yoruba alone!

There is no doubt now as to who was right in this controversy. Today we know that the study of the mother tongue opens the way to the study of African history, customs, songs, beliefs and literature. To have dropped the study of the indigenous language of a people was educationally unsound and socially destructive. To preserve the mother tongue of a people is to preserve the people and their cultural heritage. Though the missionary experiment was killed, it resurrected, not on the third day but after eighty seven years and in the Faculty of Education, University of Ife.

THE COLONIAL ERA

This period was still dominated by missionaries but controlled by Government in various ways. The main objectives of this period were to train people so that they might be easy to govern, and provide the needed clerks in Government departments and mercantile houses. There were policy experiments in qualitative and quantitative education which are now regarded as new policies. There were experiments in character training, teacher training, educational finance, higher education and so on.

QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE EDUCATION

Contrary to recent impressions, quantitative and qualitative education are not mutually contradictory. It is sad that after a century of experiment we are still not clear on this issue. Lugard did enunciate this in the 1916 Ordinance when he stated: The aim of the policy will be:⁷

- (1) To promote a better standard of discipline, self control and integrity combined with educational qualifications more adequate to the demands of the state and of commerce,
- (2) To increase the output so as to keep pace with the demand.

The Phelps-Stokes Commission was saying the same thing when it recommended:

- (1) that the native teaching staff should be adequate in numbers.... and should include women;
- and
- (2) that a thorough system of supervision and inspection is indispensable for the vitality and efficiency of the educational system.

The Memorandum on Grants-in-Aid in Education in Nigeria⁸ also attests to the concern of both the Imperial Government and the Colonial Administration in Nigeria for the improvement of both the quality and quantity of education. There are many other policy statements of this kind in the official documents all along. The conclusion is that the extension of education to as many as possible need not be devoid of quality; in fact it should be assumed that quality will be planned with it.

The point to be stressed here is that we can hardly talk of one without the other. In fact each is a side of the same coin.

Experiment in qualitative education began by the establishment of an inspectorate in the last decade of the 19th century. The main duties of the Inspectorate were: inspecting schools, recommending payment of grants-in-aid, issuing reports, conducting examinations and ensuring the quality of certificates.

Yet at various times, there were serious complaints about the quality of instruction in schools, the paucity of able and qualified teachers, the neglect of technical education and a general decline in standards. Various policy decisions were taken to ensure quality in the school system including stressing character training through moral instructions and improv-

ing service condition of teachers. In fact in 1926 to take one example, a drastic legislation was proposed to close schools not considered of good standard. Nigerians in the Legislative Council and outside it argued with one voice that this was a retrograde step and maintained, quite rightly, that whatever defects here might be in the schools, they, at least to some extent, satisfied the yearning of the people for education, since many who otherwise would not have been able to read and write had acquired these skills. This comment has some relevance to the present day debates on qualitative education.

Experiments on quantitative education are not new either. At different times, policy makers have tried to increase the output of the school system to meet the increasing demands in various spheres. To achieve it, the system of funding had to be revised to make this possible. The earlier attempts were based on grants according to results. At other times it was based on attendance. As schools continued to increase, the problems of grants-in-aid became so pressing that a Commission headed by Sir Sidney Phillipson, was set up in 1948. By then, the voluntary agencies could no longer bear the heavy load resulting from the rapid increase in the number of schools and the payment of teachers' salaries. The overall result of Phillipson's recommendations was a considerable increase in government funding which prepared the way for the enthusiasm of Regional and Federal Governments in the fifties.

Towards the close of the second period and with the constitutional developments going on, the three Regions into which the country had been divided were using their newly acquired constitutional powers to introduce new educational policies. The experiment of the Western Region, among others, is worth mentioning. Though limited in scope to primary education, the introduction of the Free Primary Education in 1955 represented the plan of a people in a hurry. The plan was pursued with great determination. Churches, mosques and open sheds were used as classrooms. If more funds had been available and if more time was available for planning, many of the criticisms (often exaggerated) against

the experiment could have been avoided. Nevertheless, it was a magnificent experiment by Nigerians themselves.

On the eve of Nigeria's political independence, the Federal Government, in preparation for it, identified the manpower needs in the country. There are two points to note here. First, for the first time in the history of our education since 1882, Nigerians themselves attempted or initiated a long-term educational planning. Second, it was the first plan directed by Nigerians to fashion their own educational course, even though non-Nigerian experts were still called in.

But in this first national effort and those that followed, a wrong question was asked. The commissioners were asked to look into the manpower needs of the country during the next two decades and make recommendations for meeting the needs. Curiously enough, the commissioners admitted that they could not see far enough into the future, so they agreed to investigate the needs mainly for the period up to 1970. Those who followed the trends of affairs would agree that their projections, though at that time appeared very ambitious, were exceeded by far before the end of 1970.

It is doubtful whether the question of manpower requirements at some future date was the right one to ask in order to plan for the number of boys and girls at primary or secondary schools, at universities and technical colleges in the next few years after independence. Without necessarily being an admirer of Soviet educational and economic planning, I believe that the experience of educational planning in the Soviet Union in the 30s is instructive. Some of the more impressive developments in the Soviet industry in recent years, as in electronics, have been made possible by a massive programme of university and technical education started in the thirties. The case of Japan is another example, it is unlikely that the technical and managerial manpower needs in the sixties were foreseen. Rather, it was obvious to them that a large scale sophisticated industry would not be possible without the provision of such manpower. At the risk of disagreement with my colleagues in educational planning, I wish to assert that the employment opportunities of the labour force are a function of the

skill of that labour force and not a matter of decision by planners or employers. However carefully we may plan our manpower needs it is not possible to be absolutely accurate as to future needs.

In a developing country like Nigeria, it is impossible to ignore the current argument about the relationship between education and economic development. It has been argued that the character and extent of a country's development is determined in large part by that country's stock of knowledge and skills and upon the basic attitudes and values of its citizens. Moreover, the operation of an educational system absorbs a considerable proportion of the scarce resources of manpower and capital.

The economic planner is interested primarily in the effects of the educational system of the country on its economic development. He tends, therefore, to stress what is often referred to as 'investment education' as compared to 'consumptive education'. Investment education increases the productive capacity of the citizens by the inculcation of skills and knowledge which are directly related to economic development. Engineers, doctors, machanics, agriculturists, scientists, economists, administrators etc. are believed to be more likely to add to the material wealth of the country than good French speakers or those versed in Shakespeare or the Bible, valuable though these latter people may be in a wider context. This is a source of conflict between the economic planner and the educationist who believes that education is not necessarily to make people produce more goods and services but to enable them to express their potential capacities more fully, whether spiritually, intellectually or materially. Whatever view we may hold on the subject, we must be realistic that few governments responsible for financing education will accept a situation whereby education would be of consumptive type for, the greater the proportion of the gross national product in consumed, the less it will have left for capital formation.

POST INDEPENDENCE ERA

Let me now come to the third stage - the post independence era. The period opened with the working out of the policy planned in anticipation of independence. Education became the most important aspect of national policy, the States competing among themselves and spending a high percentage of their total budget on education. A number of important and new developments, however, came during the military era which opened with great optimism. The people of Nigeria seemed to have lost confidence in the political leaders of the first Republic. The despatch with which things were ordered gave the impression that good days were here. This is not the place to attempt an evaluation of the Military Rule for thirteen years, nor am I competent to do so, but as far as education was concerned, the first attempt to evolve a truly Nigerian Educational Policy was begun during the military regime. A seminar organized in 1973 was attended by representatives of religious organizations, the Universities, Ministries, National Universities Commission, interested external agencies and the private sector. Women organizations were there too. The document which came out of their deliberations was finally published in 1977. This document ? can therefore be regarded as the collective wisdom of Nigerian educators and their foreign friends, the first comprehensive attempt to design a policy appropriate to Nigerian situation.

The National policy on Education is an admirable enunciation of the intentions of the Federal Military Government. The Sectional policies and programmes are well designed and constitute an important step in the advancement of education in the country even though, here and there are to be found, as will be expected, controversial points. The document, however, lacks a coherent educational philosophy. The attempt to define the 'Philosophy of Nigerian education in two pages of the opening chapter of the White Paper is an ambitious venture: but much damage is done to the document by this brevity. First, it is laden with empty concepts such as 'freedom', 'democracy', 'egalitarian', 'dignity' and 'responsibility', all used without clear definition. The failure

to define precisely these terms which are central to the philosophy, presents it as a hollow philosophy without meaning. For example what is the meaning of 'a free and democratic society' or 'shared responsibility for the common good of society'? Unless these are clarified it will be difficult to use the propositions to guide the thinking of Nigerians - educators and laymen.

Secondly, the impression is given that the five national objectives stated in Paragraph One are the same as the philosophy of Nigerian education, if it says anything. There is nothing wrong if this is so. All that will be necessary will be a discussion of the basis of the propositions. The original impression is contradicted by the expression 'for the philosophy to be in harmony with Nigeria's national objectives' in paragraph four.

Thirdly, there are elements of contradictions inherent in the philosophy as stated. For example, 'a free and democratic society' does not necessarily result in 'a just and egalitarian society'. A free and democratic society implies free enterprise which results in capitalism and unequal distribution of resources which can hardly be a basis for a just and egalitarian society. In the same way, a great dynamic economy does not necessarily result in 'a land of bright and full opportunity for all citizens'.

Furthermore, a just and egalitarian society implies a society where access to knowledge and training is not circumscribed by social circumstances. I agree that endeavours on behalf of equality of opportunity constitute a continuous task both politically and educationally. But we cannot overlook the fact that equality of educational opportunities does not necessarily promote the equality of those who wish to educate themselves by making use of those opportunities. The truth is that equality of opportunities always entails unequally distributed possibilities of its utilization and this unequalness, the consequence of implementation of equality of opportunity, must be recognised politically and morally.

The policy lays it down that education should make people mature to be able to make rational decision, thus making them

able to think for themselves and liberate them from the clutches of the society. We seem to confuse the problem of intellectual tradition and maturity with the social problems entailed in social classes and mobility. The school is seen as an instrument for the establishment and safeguarding of social demands, and is expected to enable people to gain social and vocational advantages. It demands the overcoming of those conditions determined by social origins that prevent people from being self-reliant, but that in no way entails the rejection of existing traditions. It seems unacceptable that the moral, political and educational impetus should now be called into question with the argument that the ideal of future maturity entails declaring present society to be less mature. It should be enough to ensure that access to knowledge and training is not circumscribed by the social circumstances in which children are born and brought up.

The philosophy, as stated stresses a great desire to promote personal and individual development as shown by such expression as 'self-realization, individual efficiency, freedom, equal opportunities etc.' These ideas have been so much flogged through the ages that to hold them as major tenets of Nigerian educational philosophy without further definition during this period of general malaise would, according to S.O. Awokoya, 'open the gates to a social and moral wilderness'.¹⁰

In the same way, the promotion of national development, the second major line of emphasis though laudable, should have been expressed in easily identifiable paragraphs and not scattered about. In conclusion, the section on the National Policy on Education is most inadequate and the search for an appropriate philosophy should be intensified.

The present state of the nation gives cause for anxiety. We have evidence of indiscipline in all aspects of our national life. There is corruption and nepotism everywhere among men in high places and all sorts of malpractices at the lower level including examination leakages in schools. There is a growing disregard for law and order as evidenced by organised robbery and violence everywhere. Our philosophy of education must correct this situation.

Furthermore, the developing countries, without exception are faced with the challenge of development. They are dependent on the more advanced countries scientifically and technologically. The situation becomes more serious when it is known that the advanced countries continue to make greater progress in their research and development. It has been said that 80 per cent of all that is known in science today has been discovered during the last 80 years. If our efforts are not doubled, the gap between the developed and developing countries will continue to widen. Nigeria cannot develop in isolation, it must take note of what goes on in the rest of the world. Thus, efforts must be made to evolve an educational philosophy geared to the needs of the nation. We must embark on a systematic mobilization of our national resources and develop a modernized cadre of scientific and technological manpower which will make it possible for our services to work. To cope with these critical situations, a coherent philosophy of education which will achieve the national endeavour and lead to the curing of the present maladies is the answer. In this respect I suggest a *philosophy of developmentalism*. It is difficult to find a more appropriate philosophy in our present situation. Developmentalism here should not be seen from a technological perspective alone. It is to include social, moral and intellectual development.

While we must attempt to catch up with the developed countries by 2,000 A.D. we must focus attention on national discipline, promote moral integrity, law and order and, most important of all, develop a new set of values which will recognise honest leadership and discourage the craze for ill-gotten wealth.

Let me say at this point that I do not claim any originality in this suggestion, rather this is the present thinking among scholars in this field and I take this opportunity to emphasize it.¹¹

There are other policy experiments that could be discussed but I am compelled to confine myself to only two.

Higher Education

A great deal has been said on the subject of higher education and, in particular, university policy during the recent months that one feels like letting the subject rest. Nevertheless, it will be difficult not to make one or two comments here.

On the general question of higher education, we must realise that the idea of the university is only tolerated but not truly accepted in this country either by the masses who pay the taxes or the political leaders who allocate the funds. The mass of the people may be interested in walking round the imposing buildings of the campuses; they may be impressed by the earning capacity of the degree holders and nurse the hope that their children might one day come there. They often show the curiosity to watch the colourful academic processions but they do not see the university as an institution which will help to solve some of the most pressing problems of improved production of much needed materials for better living conditions.

The political leaders are often interested in the university as an amenity and so are interested in the siting and the contracts. Those strictly concerned with the funding are always alarmed by the size of funds asked for and see the university in terms of manpower only! If the goal of the university is to be achieved, the leaders must try much harder than they are doing at the moment to understand the role of a university in the society. On the other hand, the university has to protect itself and its existence by striving to achieve greater relevance. It must be accountable to, and serve the vast majority of the people particularly those who live in the rural areas. It must be committed to active participation in social transformation, economic modernization and the training and upgrading of the total human resources of the nation and not just a small elite. If the university succeeds in doing this the masses will move from toleration or indifference to understanding and acceptance; and the confrontation between the state and the university may reduce in intensity.

On the issue of control, it must be said that before the advent of the military interregnum, the existing arrangement

was accepted as providing adequately for the academic freedom of the universities. The freedom then consisted of the right of the teacher to teach and pursue his research and this was extended to making public assertions without fear of persecution unlike a civil servant. This is what it should be. The university, say what you like, is the one institution of the state with the highest concentration of highly educated, intelligent, and knowledgeable men and has acquired by necessity the role of watch for the conscience of the nation. It represents, the only balwark against the excesses of corrupt, oppressive and unpopular regimes.

It is often forgotten that 'a University' according to Ashby, 'is a society which cannot run except as an inverted hierarchy!'. The ideas well up from below, the money flows down from above'. In other words, ideas and initiatives do not come down from the administration as directives to be obeyed, they percolate upwards from individual scholars and scientists as recommendations to be approved by the administration. No other great institution works quite like this.

This is why we should be brave enough to call on the Federal Government to halt the present trend of tying the hands of the University Councils and ensure that its membership is not used as an instrument of political patronage but see to it that those who are appointed are fearless men and women of high integrity as well as those who have adequate experience in public affairs so as to enable the universities benefit from their mature contributions. Governments should also remove higher education from the Ministry of Education for purpose of funding because the present arrangement is not only amorphous but unwieldy. Two suggestions have been made the creation of a new Ministry for Higher Education which looks to me not particularly attractive, and putting higher education under the president. The latter seems to me a more promising experiment in fostering the much needed cooperation between the University and the government without which the colossal sums of money being expended on the university will not yield an optimum result. Furthermore,

government should involve the university more in its higher education policies. A situation whereby government announces the opening of five or ten universities without seeking the advice of the universities is unsatisfactory.

The corollary must be added once again that the exercise of institutional autonomy presumes a high degree of internal discipline on the part of its beneficiaries and their ability to anticipate the needs and problems of society and act in consonance with them. Government which provides the funds must be satisfied that unreasonable duplication of instruction and research is avoided.

Adult and Non-Formal Education

The experiment in adult and non-formal education in Nigeria has fluctuated all through its history. At one time, adult education flourished in the North with a mass circulation of newspaper of its own supported by a printing press and a literature bureau. In the West there was a similar enthusiasm before 1955 when 'a programme of promoting the publication of the intellectual legacy of the human race in Yoruba and the preparation of a dictionary of scientific and technological terms' were conceived. Such experiments as these and the beautifully enunciated policy contained in the 1977 sectional policy on adult and non-formal education are rendered ineffective by lack of funding. The unwillingness to provide funds arises from the out-dated view that expenditure on adult education is a poor investment since adults are believed to be resistant to change and have a short productive life left to them. I know of a vivid case when a Minister for Education presented a programme of adult and continuing education while pleading at the same time for funds for universal primary education - a very bad strategy. No wonder he was told to choose between the education of those about to die and those beginning to live! The choice, at that time was clear, but the truth is that even in the most traditional societies, adults can be induced to change if motivated. Moreover, it is self evident that in societies where the great majority of the

population has had little or no formal education, there is a large pool of under-utilized intelligence only waiting to be activated by the appropriate stimuli. The argument that adults represent only a short-run educational investment falls to the ground because it fails to take into account the fact that an adult in his role as parent, union leader, politician or manager, can immediately apply any new knowledge acquired, whereas much of what the young are taught cannot be applied, or is out of date by the time they are of age to apply it. We can now affirm that in developing countries, money spent on adult education offers not only quicker but more certain dividends than does expenditure on primary and secondary education for children. Even university students only constitute potential manpower. To neglect the education of adults therefore is to kill the hen that lays the egg.

The mass literacy campaign which we have heard so much about is planned to wipe off illiteracy from the surface of Nigeria in ten years. Even though it is to be launched in July 1982, the staff, teaching and administrative, are still to be trained. Some funds have just grudgingly been provided. Again I take the opportunity to remind the Federal Government that this excellent programme may follow the fate of earlier experiments but it should not be allowed to. Rather, in addition to the plans already made, a broadcasting station should be created to support. Nigeria cannot afford to wait for ten years; we can shorten the period by half if we we have the will to involve the whole nation.

CONCLUSION

About every five years in this country, committees have been set up to review the contents and method of education and to recommend a system which will produce the kind of citizen needed in a fast developing nation. A new revised National Policy on Education was published only a few weeks ago! To anyone who has studied the various systems and schemes proposed in the last four decades, it is apparent that theories and practices discarded as obsolete and un-

suitable in one decade have ways of being resurrected, dressed and garnished in the next decade as the latest and up-to-date modern approach.

Let me make it clear, if it is not already clear, that policy review in itself, is not necessarily a bad thing. According to Winston Churchill, 'to change is to improve and to improve is to change often.' Since education is a dynamic instrument of change, policies should be reviewed constantly to ensure their adequacy and continued relevance to national needs and objectives.

It is doubtful whether we have looked critically at the reasons why many of the experiments on education policy during the century had had limited success. Several reasons can be adduced for this:

1. Emphasis has very often been laid on reformation in the direction of relating education to work in agriculture and the life of the village. This has been resisted because of the intolerable hardship and low rewards of a life spent in agriculture and the completely inadequate facilities of the poverty-stricken rural villages. Naturally the aim of every young person has always been to escape from such conditions, and nothing short of a transformation of agricultural practices and reward and of rural life itself will alter this sentiment. The Industrial Schools of the late 19th century, various efforts to improve agriculture and crafts in the twenties, the use of grants to compel the teaching of agriculture in the thirties and the carefully worked out agricultural programmes of the 70s all failed because they were all based on the use of the hoe! It should be realised that educational development cannot go on in isolation, rather it must be integrated into the overall plan of development.
2. The African realised that if he was to be successful in the modern world, he must be able to compete on equal terms with people of the Western society. This involves the mastery of Western technology. Any alteration of the syllabus, or even of the organization of the educa-

tional system, which seemed to make such mastery more difficult, was therefore to be resisted. This goes far in explaining the passion with which African States, and Nigeria in particular, even after independence, have copied educational models from primary schools to universities from Western nations.

3. We have not always ensured that the advanced thinking of the few was understood by the policy-makers and then by the managers, principals and teachers of the schools and by the parents and children themselves. The example of the opposition to the introduction of Teacher Grade III by Hussey supports this view. Teachers thought it was a means of devaluing the quality of teachers but when later it was understood, it spread and these teachers played a useful role in the rapid development of teacher education.

Thus, unless the need for change was clearly understood and appreciated by all groups, any attempt to change will meet with hostility and obstruction. This explains why what was often regarded as the introduction of new policies were nothing more than the introduction of new educational ideas and for reasons discussed above, they did not become a policy but remained on paper. Thus every group in the educational ladder must be involved in policy changes.

4. There is the fear to which the Phelps-Stokes Report, which we discussed earlier, bore witness to, that difference may imply inferiority. 'If it is good enough for Great Britain, it is equally good for us' is an attractive, though hardly progressive rallying call. This was the main purpose of the resistance to the purpose of the Higher College, to the idea of a General Degree in our universities. We now have to offer an honours degree to everybody. What we need is the development of our own.
5. The changes were often too rapid. Sometimes policy makers who took over wanted to show something during their time, however short, as Lugard attempted to change Vischer's policy in the North in 1914, Donald Cameron

in 1919 and in recent years Commissioners of Education. After 1951, the three regions were each pursuing their own policy of education and sometimes attempted to be different. But how easily the changes have been absorbed or digested is another question.

6. Finally, there were excellent policies which were enunciated over the years but it was not possible to prosecute owing to lack of finance. For example, the depression years of the 1930's did not provide fertile soil for the growth of new and expensive educational ideas. The present problems we are having with the U.P.E., the funding of universities, etc. are examples of economic effects on educational policies. Governments should try to examine their finances well before plunging into expensive policies.

I do not consider any summary necessary and I also think my recommendations are included in my discussion. But I cannot resist listing some of the areas to which we have to direct the attention of government.

1. The mass literacy programme planned for 1982 must be pursued with all the vigour and resources available to all the governments of Nigeria. We cannot achieve national development without the participation of the masses. In addition, facilities for continuing education for all citizens must be provided without further delay.
2. The adoption of the philosophy of Developmentalism is recommended. Our previous attempts are defective, we must decide where we are going.
3. Our U.P.E. policy must be pursued to cater for both quality and quantity and we must now make it compulsory, while the secondary educational policy must be work-oriented.
4. There should be more cooperation and understanding between the government and the universities and the atmosphere for relevant research must be created to the mutual advantage of all.

We have seen that the century just described has not, in any way, been deficient in sound educational ideas; what has been lacking is the backing up of these ideas with the appropriate action. The next two decades are, however, crucial in the continuing attempt to match both, thereby transforming the country into a modern state and facing squarely the equally difficult task of catching up with the developed countries by 2,000 A.D. If we fail to harness our comparatively rich resources (including the oil wealth) towards the achievement of these goals, the generation coming behind will be justified in condemning us. We cannot afford to fail

FOOTNOTES

1. NNA CE/A9 *Memorandum of Education Policy in British Tropical Africa*. Cmd. 2374. H.M.S.O., 1925.
2. NNA. Advisory Committee on Education in Colonies: *Memorandum on the Education of African Communities*. H.M.S.O. 1935.
3. See A Fajana: *Education in Nigeria 1842-1939* p.38 An Historical Analysis, Longman Nigeria, 1978.
4. WMMS 2/4/3, 1878
5. Letter from London to Lagos: 24/12/1900 WMMS 2/4/1
6. NNA *The Lagos Observer* 16/8/1883, Editorial. 'Our Vernacular'
7. CSO 26/2 19524 F. Lugard: *Education in the and S. Proouces of Nigeria*, F. B. 1914.
8. CE/P.3 S. Phillipson: *Grants-in Aid in Education in Nigeria*. Lagos 1948.
9. *Federal Republic of Nigeria, National Policy on Education*. Lagos 1977.
10. S.O. Awokoya: *National Policy on Education: An Asseement*. Univ. of Ife, 1979.
11. This idea was first developed at the Baganda Lake Seminar organized by NERC. September 1-5, 1980.