

University Report

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UNIVERSITY REPORT

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- COSMO PIETERSE: Welcome to a special fourth birthday review edition of 'University Report'. Four years old - four years of trying to achieve the aim we set ourselves back in 1967 - to create an exchange of information on all aspects of University life - research, conferences, teaching, student activities and administration.
- And perhaps it's in administration that we've seen some of the biggest changes and developments the last four years. For instance at the beginning of this year we heard from the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland about the establishment of a national campus for each of the three countries involved, in a word: devolution. Allan Macartney spoke for us to Professor S.B. Guma, then Pro-Vice Chancellor Elect of the Swaziland campus and Professor Guma explained for us what devolution would bring about:
- PROFESSOR GUMA: I think I'll start off by saying that devolution in this context means extending the activities of the university to both Botswana and Swaziland. According to the Alexander Mission Report which has now been accepted by the University Council, there is going to be a development in Botswana and Swaziland for the teaching of the Part One in the degree courses in 1971. This development is to be followed almost immediately by a polytechnic phase.
- COSMO PIETERSE: It's only six years since the university was founded so why, our reporter at U.B.L.S. Allan Macartney asked Professor Guma, 'Why was the joint university embarked on initially if the breaking-up was to take place so soon after?'
- PROFESSOR GUMA: In effect, the three countries inherited the university. The university was set up by the British administration on the eve of Independence. It is only now that the countries, I think, are actively engaged in setting up a university.

COSMO PIETERSE: Professor Guma of the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland on new developments in the University administration of his area; and while on the question of administrators - in 'University Report' of only the week before, we reported that Mr. Pius Msekwa had been appointed first Vice-Chancellor of Dar es Salaam University following the break-up of the University of East Africa. Mr. Msekwa had previously been prominent in politics, and especially as National Executive Secretary of the Tanzanian African National Union or T.A.N.U. Our Tanzanian reporter, Mansoor Ladha, mentioned the fears of some students that the University's academic freedom was imperilled. In 'University Report' Mr. Msekwa answered the charge:

PIUS MSEKWA: But what your fearing student does not perhaps realise, is that the principal aim and main task of the University of Dar es Salaam is to produce the high level man-power required to bring socialist progress to the people of Tanzania. I don't know what the student meant by what he called 'academic independence', but I suppose he didn't mean the negative kind of freedom of doing what ever one want to do, irrespective of whether it is useful or not. This is certainly not the sort of freedom a mature person would want. What is required is freedom to do the right thing, and the right thing in Tanzania is well know, and that freedom to do the right thing is, of course, is very much there in the University of Dar es Salaam

COSMO PIETERSE: Mr. Pius Msekwa, Vice-Chancellor of Dar es Salaam University on the academic and social policy of Dar. And, remaining in East Africa, we go next to Nairobi University, Kenya, to hear about one of the youngest academic disciplines in African universities. The subject is journalism, the speaker is Mr. Jorgen Petersen, Head of the then eighteen month old School of Journalism in the University of Nairobi

JORGEN PETERSEN: There is an enormous shortage of trained journalists in East Africa for instance. You know, as far as I'm informed Britain got its University-based School of Journalism six months after Nairobi got its School of Journalism. I may be wrong, but as far as I am informed this is more or less correct. But what I'm trying to say is that the ex-patriate journalists we have here haven't been trained either. Oh no, there is a tremendous need for trained reporters - ex-patriate and local alike - and I firmly believe that the general background of a journalist is more or less international. But on top of this we have specific problems of communication connected with development. In other words, the journalist has an educational role in developing countries, which he doesn't have in a developed country. In other words, if the government here wants to put over a certain agricultural plan, I think this is impossible without well trained journalists, I

JORGEN PETERSEN: think a lot of the difficulties we've had in African countries of political and other nature is due to the fact that the regimes have not been able to communicate effectively to the ordinary man.

COSMO PIETERSE: To communicate effectively to the ordinary man. Mr. Jorgen Petersen, Head of Nairobi University's School of Journalism. Now to "communicate effectively to the ordinary man" may be taken as the theme of one of 'University Report's' staple topics - adult education. Let's go back a few years and hear from a stalwart in the field, Professor Lalage Bown, now at Zaria University in Nigeria, then in Lusaka, Zambia. John Barnor, our man at the University in Lusaka, had asked Professor Bown about manpower difficulties and the training of adult education organisers.

LALAGE BOWN: Yes. Well now, first of all, there's the question of in-service training at the level of the academic staff. One of the things that I personally was very anxious about when I came to this department was to see that people didn't think that this was something done by foreigners, that this is a job for Zambians and for Africans, and there were not any trained Zambian graduates immediately available so I thought we should do two things. First of all we should try and recruit in the meantime on our staff Africans from other African countries - such as yourself, for example - and this, I think, is the first arm of our programme because this demonstrates that this is something familiar and a job for Africans to do. Secondly, we had to prepare some of our undergraduates of the present day so that when they do graduate they will be able to take over as extra-mural tutors so we have a sort of in-service training course for undergraduates. It's a voluntary thing and we ask for applications and then we select on the grounds of academic performance. And then we give them an intensive course in Adult Education during their long vacations. They have to come for two consecutive years and at the end of that time they've done a good theoretical study of Adult Education in Zambia and have also done a certain amount of practical work. They've been attached to one or other Adult Education agency in the country and in this way, in three or four years, we should be able to Zambianise the department

COSMO PIETERSE: Professor Lalage Bown. 'University Report' has been following up the development of Lusaka's adult education work, and also followed this kind of work in other parts of the continent. We've had reports from Nairobi, and Dar es Salaam, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Ghana and discussed several books that deal with this abiding interest. Abiding topic? From several points of view, yes ... but we'll leave it aside for the nonce and peep at our coverage of the sciences:

- COSMO PIETERSE: In April 1968 Dr. Thomas Odhiambo of the then University College of Nairobi talked about his work on the reproductive system of the tsetse fly, work that has the aim, of course, of ridding us of this destructive pest. Then in December 1969 Dr. Odhiambo brought us up to date with Ahmed Salim on his work, the emphasis in 1969 was on the digestive enzyme activity in the gut of the tsetse fly:
- DR. ODHIAMBO: A few things have emerged. For example, we have found that in the tsetse fly there is a sort of crop in the insect. And for some time we thought that when the insect has taken a blood meal the blood will go straight to the crop and be stored in the crop and over the three days parcels of this blood meal will be released into the midgut from the crop and will be digested. So that over the three day period there is a sequential, progressive digestion of the blood meal.
- AHMED SALIM: This sounds like some kind of reservoir, as it were.
- DR. ODHIAMBO: That was our first suggestion. We thought this was just a reservoir. And we didn't find any enzymatic activity there so this seemed to confirm that this was a reservoir. However, when we did actually experiment to find out how fast the meal in the crop is released from it into the midgut we found that, in fact, the meal is not found in the crop one hour after feeding. So that, in fact, if it is a reservoir at all it is a very transient camp before the bloodmeal is released into the midgut. This set us thinking.
- COSMO PIETERSE: Thinking and experimenting in Nairobi in December 1969 Dr. Thomas Odhiambo. And in August of that year, another scientist, Dr. Peter Mwanza of the University of Malawi spoke of the aims of wide-ranging inter-disciplinary research at Lake Chilwa in Malawi.
- DR. P. MWANZA: Well the whole programme of Lake Chilwa is aimed at primarily stabilising the fisheries of this lake and we hope that by studying the factors that control the productivity of the lake we might be able to know how to stabilise the fisheries. This lake is one of the most productive lakes in the world and if we can know how to utilise the sources of fish then we might be able to benefit more from it.
- COSMO PIETERSE: The Lake Chilwa interdisciplinary research project that Dr. Mwanza spoke about was followed up in its progress, and this summer we heard Dr. Mwanza on the continuing work at the lake. And now, the arts, and this time we go to West Africa. To Ife, in Nigeria, back in December 1968 when the annual Ife Festival of the Arts was held. One of the highlights of the Festival was the play,

COSMO PIETERSE: "The Gods are not to be Blame" by Ola Rotimi, playwright, and then research fellow at the University of Ife's Institute of African Studies. The play or reworking of the classical Greek story of Oedipus. Here is Ola Rotimi, telling Akin Euba why he chose this theme;

OLA ROTIMI: The choice of theme really was motivated by one major factor, namely the desire to let the Nigerian audience experience this tragic essence which only a play like "Oedipus Rex" can bring out, and the tragic essence really takes several forms - one, the idea of puericide: the killing of a child soon after birth, two the idea of patricide: the killing of the father by the son for that matter, and done in ignorance, and three, the idea of incest, you see, these tragic evidences which I thought the Nigerian audience should have a feeling of and also there are parallels between Nigerian cultural indices and what we find in the great cultural set-up that brought about this Oedipus Rex story.

COSMO PIETERSE: We have since heard Ola Rotimi on a number of occasions and sometimes with Professor Crowder, until this year Head of the Institute of African Studies at Ife, now with the equivalent post in Zaria. And so, to a functional, scientific art - namely, architecture, and for that to December 1970 in 'University Report' time and to Kumasi, Ghana, in the space of Africa. Actually the talk was recorded in our London studio, when Gwyneth Henderson spoke to Professor John Owusu-Addo of the Faculty of Architecture. Here Professor Addo outlines the changed syllabuses in architecture at the University of Science and Technology, Kumasi.

PROFESSOR ADDO: First of all I would start my saying that when the Faculty of Architecture was started at Kumasi, the syllabus was all based on the Royal Institute of British Architects requirements but now we have succeeded in throwing that out completely and building up our own syllabus which is suited to the needs of the country. The programmes for the second, third and fourth years have all been based on actual projects. At the end of the third year students are taken out to survey rural areas and during the ensuing year the entire programme is based on the results of the survey. In the fourth year the same thing is repeated, but this time in the urban environment and during that year the entire programme is also based on the results of their survey. This means that the general syllabus for the architectural course in Kumasi is based on the specific requirements of the country.

COSMO PIETERSE: 'Specific requirements of the country'. Professor Owuso-Addo echoing again for architecture what has surely been the most often expressed thought in 'University Report' during, the past four years. In every field - in every University from Khartoum to U.B.LS - from Uganda to Sierra Leone and all points inbetween. Perhaps the other most recurrent theme in 'contact' - cross-fertilisation between different countries, different disciplines, and different people. And for me my nine month stint on 'University Report' has means just this exciting, relevant active contact. Sadly this is my last time with you and the programme for sometime - I'm off to take up a University post in America - but producer Gwyneth Henderson will be here in the chair next week.- instead of just behind the scenes.

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