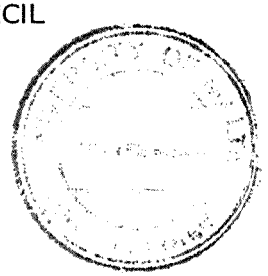
JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL AFFAIRS

STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL
ROYAL UNIVERSITY OF MALTA



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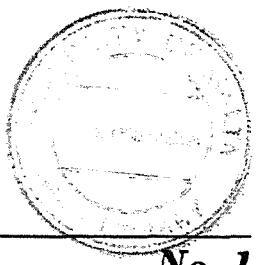

Volume 1 ***No. 1***

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'The Journal of Educational Affairs' is a journal of views, opinions and research in the field of education. Articles are selected, edited and published by an Editorial Board selected by the Students' Representative Council of the Royal University of Malta. The discussion, disposition and solicitation of manuscripts are the responsibility of the Board as a whole. The Board accepts contributions by teachers, scholars, research workers in education and persons working in related fields. Correspondence motivated – favourably or unfavourably – by previously published articles is welcome.

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EDUCATION: TODAY'S SOLUTION TO TOMORROW'S PROBLEMS?

The need has long been felt for a forum whereby specialists can sound their new concepts, ideas and fresh approaches towards education. The STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL is proud in having set up, what it feels is a viable medium through which such a forum has been established.

This first issue is completely dedicated to education in Malta; however we do not hesitate to point out that we shall broaden our horizons and the next issues will contain articles which deal with problems the international community is facing in the field of education.

Education is an indispensable instrument for a nation's development. The education crisis has to be tackled seriously. Yet we have barely begun to scratch the surface of this problem. Progress must not only be envisaged in economic terms, vital though these may be, but also in a social cultural and political milieux, and in terms of the degree of awareness, attitudes and values. Education teaches not merely how to achieve one's purpose; but what PURPOSES it is wise to achieve.

Hence we feel it is the duty of a progressive university to meet society's demands by carrying out a continuous reform orientated towards democratisation and quality.

The present ideal is to provide higher education to large number of students. Achieving this ideal has become more and more difficult because of rising costs, overcrowding and the necessity to maintain high standards. Yet unless the government takes steps to provide financial benefit to students a considerable intellectual waste will be incurred. Promising students owing to lack of funds are unable to avail themselves of tertiary education, thus depriving our country from the manpower which is the prerequisite for national progress.

The university requires gradual proceeding and mature actions. In fact various solutions and suggestions have been proposed and one would indeed be justified in criticising some of them for their severe deficiencies. Reproach, however will not carry us too far because society, the university being part of it, will demand its rights. The only solution is that the university takes over the ini-

tiative for a reform and carries out hastened preparations for it. The university can perform this task only if it establishes close contacts with society's demands having a necessary critical attitude towards social endeavours and also towards its own work.

The essential characteristics of this proposed task should be the following:

– introduction of research work methodology into presentation of knowledge,

– consolidation and reinforcement of knowledge based upon problem solving,

– involvement of student in research projects so that they participate in team work or to carry out certain tasks individually.

In short, education is – besides presentation of knowledge – aimed at developing creativity, a critical attitude and capability of adapting oneself to new situations.

In order to carry out such a reform it is necessary to reach further back and to do away with a number of causes for the educational crisis, which may not be obviously linked with the process of university education itself. They are, however, undermining possibilities for its improvement especially as regards functional integration of educational and research work, the fundamental characteristic of which is that research work as a method is becoming an imperative not only for the university teacher but also for the student.

Education must be state aided, state supported but not state controlled. We expect increased demands on the university to encourage those activities relevant to the national needs of the economy for trained manpower and to produce what have been called the right courses at the right time. We are not against being accountable to society. However we strongly feel that if the present pressure is stepped up in future, university would lose its identity as a centre of learning and free enquiry. In the long run this would weaken its capability to produce creative and original work.

Finally we would like to thank all those who gave us their enthusiastic support both material and moral, in the publication of the Journal, illustrating abundantly the need for such a Journal in the absence of any regular Maltese literature on education.

L-UNIVERSITÀ FI ŻMINIJIETNA

mill-Professur Ġ. AQUILINA

META soċjetà tgħaddi minn żmien għal ieħor, ħafna drabi tgħaddi minn taqliba ta' ideat, strutturi amministrattivi u akkademiċi miġbudin mill-forza ta' ħtiġijiet ġodda li l-edukazzjoni tal-pajjiż ikollha tadatta ruħha għalihom. L-Università tagħna, li bħal issa għaddejja minn taqlib kbir, biex ma tiġġarrafx jeħtiġilha, bħal istituzzjonijiet edukattivi oħra, tadatta ruħha għal żminijietna. Bilkelma "żminijietna" għandna nifhmu is-soċjetà ta' żmienna kif din qiegħda titbiddel il-ħin kollu.

L-Università ma tistax tibqa' magħluqa fiha nfisha, bħal kastell fuq quċċata ta' muntanja, imma jeħtiġilha li tistudja l-qagħda ġdida tagħha fi żmienna u tipprova taqdi l-ħtiġijiet tal-pajjiż mill-aħjar li tista', sakemm dawn huma ħtiġijiet li għandhom x'jaqsmu maxxogħol tagħha.

Hawnhekk tinħass il-ħtieġa tal-kooperazzjoni ta' l-Università mal-Gvern u tal-Gvern ma' l-Università. Din il-kooperazzjoni tista' ssir waqt li t-tnejn jibqgħu jirrispettaw il-fruntieri li jifirdu l-edukazzjoni tal-poplu mill-politika tal-partiti, għax malli jitneħħew dawn il-fruntieri, titneħħa kull idea ta' edukazzjoni. Dak li lili jħassibni ħafna hu li, flok iħarsu 'l quddiem biex jaraw kif jistgħu jtejbu dak li mhux tajjeb biżżejjed u jwarrbu dak li hu ħażin, x'uħud qed iħarsu wisq lura, ifittxu x-xagħra fl-għaġina, wieħed iwaħħal fl-ieħor donnu ħadd ħlief ħadd ieħor m'għandu l-ħtija talħsara li l-edukazzjoni tal-pajjiż ilha ġġarrab, l-aktar minħabba l-politika tal-partiti u l-ideoloġiji partiġġjani.

Il-problema tal-progress fl-edukazzjoni hi dejjem problema talawtoritajiet bħal ma hi f'kull kamp ieħor. Awtoritajiet ħżiena, pajjiż rasu 'l isfel bħal vapur għall-għarqa. Jekk l-awtoritajiet ikollhom *mentalità pożittiva*, dawn jistgħu jagħmlu ħafna għat-tajjib tal-pajjiż b'mod ġenerali, u ta' l-Università b'mod partikulari; imma, minn naħa l-oħra, jekk jinzertaw ta' *mentalità negattiva*, nies li jgħidu le għal kull proposta li ma ħarġetx minn rashom, u erħilhom ifixklu l-inizjattivi tajba ta' ħaddieħor flok jimbuttawhom 'il quddiem, il-pajjiż jaqbad in-niżla tar-rovina. Jekk jiġri dan, nistgħu ngħidu li l-edukazzjoni f'Malta flok timxi 'l quddiem sa tiġbed lejn il-qabar tagħha.

Għalhekk hu meħtieġ ħafna li dawk kollha li, b'xi mod jew ieħor, għandhom is-setgħa u huma mħallsin għaliha (kull setgħa toħloq magħha dmir u responsabbilità) jiddeċiedu kustjonijiet ta' edukazzjoni b'moħħ miftuħ u qalb flokha, jiltaqgħu flimkien, mhux biex wieħed jieħu r-raġun fuq l-ieħor, imma biex wieħed jitħaddet ma' l-ieħor u, għall-inqas fejn ma jistax isir ftehim sħiħ, isir dak il-kompromess li wieħed jista' jsejjaħlu s-sintesi ta' konflitt ta' ideat imlaqqgħin f'punt ta' qbil. Tabilħaqq, meta d-differenzi jiltaqgħu u jitħalltu għax ikun hemm ir-rieda tajba min-naħa l-waħda u mill-oħra, jintlaħqu l-kompromessi meħtieġa. Qed ninsisti fuq dan l-ispirtu ta' kooperazzjoni u kollaborazzjoni għaliex il-progress fl-edukazzjoni huwa ħafna drabi kustjoni ta' personalità pożitiva jew negattiva min-naħa ta' dawk responsabbli għall-edukazzjoni talpajjiż. Il-Gvern għandu kull dritt jitlob il-kooperazzjoni ta' l-Università fl-iżvilupp ta' studji li għandhom x'jaqsmu ma' interessi nazzjonali li huma diversi, u li għalhekk, m'għandix għax insemmihom kollha. Il-Gvern, min-naħa tiegħu, m'għandu bl-ebda mod iħassar wiċċ l-Università billi jneħħilha l-karatteristiċi li jagħżluha minn istituzzjonijiet edukattivi oħra għax meta jsir kollox ħallata ballata tispiċċa l-idea ta' università kif jifhmuha dawk li jafu x'inhi università tabilħaqq. Il-kooperazzjoni trid issir miż-żewġ naħat, imma ż-żewġ naħat iridu jaqblu li l-fruntieri għandhom jibqgħu. M'għandix f'rasi fruntieri li *jifirdu*, imma fruntieri li *jagħżlu* tip ta' istituzzjoni minn oħra, Politeknik minn Università, ngħidu aħna, għax, nirrepeti, meta sistema ta' studji ma tibqax tingħażel minn oħra, lanqas l-università ma tibqa' tingħażel minn istituti edukattivi oħra.

X'għandu jsir minn naħa ta' l-Università biex tiġġustifika lilha nfisha bħala università? It-tagħlim ma jsirx fl-Università biss; isir ukoll f'istituzzjonijiet edukattivi oħra. Mela sa hawn biss l-Università ma tistax tingħażel minn istituti edukattivi oħra. Sa hawn biss m'hemmx x'jagħżel l-Università mill-M.C.A.S.T. Biex l-Università tingħażel minn istituzzjonijiet edukattivi oħra, din għandha ssaħħaħ dak li jagħżilha minnhom, jiġifieri ir-*research* fid-diversi Fakultajiet biex dan iservi ta' bażi għall-kontenut tal-*lectures* minn kors għal ieħor, u tgħinu jixxandar biex jintlaħaq u jitgawda missoċjetà billi tibni fond qawwi għall-pubblikazzjoni tar-*research* bis-serjetà u bis-saħħa ta' dawn il-pubblikazzjonijiet tintrabat iżjed ma' l-universitajiet ta' barra. Fl-aħħar mill-aħħar, min sa jidħol għar-*research* jekk ix-xogħol miktub fuq dak ir-*research* jibqa' fil-kexxun? Jekk l-Università ma ssaħħaħx dawn iż-żewġ at-

tivitajiet ma jkollhiex x'jagħżilha minn istituzzjonijiet edukattivi għolja oħra ħlief is-suġġetti li xi drabi jistgħu jkunu l-istess suġġetti mgħallmin f'istituzzjonijiet mhux universitarji ngħidu aħna fil-Politeknik.

Università li ssaħħaħ biss il-magna amministrattiva tagħha mingħajr, fl-istess ħin, ma ssaħħaħ il-forza tat-*teaching staff* u lil dawn tipprovdilhom mezzi aħjar għar-*research*, u pubblikazzjonijiet, biż-żmien titlef id-dritt li tibqa' teżisti.

THE STUDY OF MEDICAL HISTORY

by Dr. PAUL CASSAR

THE HISTORICAL VISION

If you look at a large painting only a few feet away from it, you will only see a small – perhaps insignificant – detail of it; if you view it at a distance of some yards, your eyes will absorb a larger, more meaningful area; and the more you recede from it the more you can perceive of the extent of the picture until your field of vision will encompass the whole scene. In the end, therefore, you will have reached a point where the small detail which you saw at a short distance will merge in a wider context and acquire adequate significance since an item can only be appreciated when viewed in relation to the whole pattern in which it occurs. The study of the history of medicine may be likened to this perceptive process. Looking at a large canvas only a few feet away corresponds to the 'present' which is only a minute part of the long continuum of time. Receding from the painting with consequent enlargement of your vista of the picture corresponds to your study of our medical past by which the present acquires meaning as a phase in a long process of development that has been unfolding over the centuries. Thus the study of medical history broadens, for the physician, his concept of his art and science and gives him a heightened awareness of himself and his work in relation to the events of the past and of his own time. If, therefore, the practice of medicine is to have any meaning to the student and to the practitioner, apart from its technical aspects and its material rewards, it is imperative that its history be taught to the undergraduate and be cultivated by him after he leaves the university.

WHAT IS MEDICAL HISTORY?

It is the record of how our knowledge of medicine has been gained and of how we are learning to apply that knowledge to the prevention, control and treatment of disease. Medical history, therefore, is not a simple chronological sequence of exciting events and dates; it is neither a mere array of factual information relating to persons, times, places, and discoveries, but it is above all a body of organised learning derived from answers to such ques-

tions as: How did a particular event happen? Why? Why at a particular time and not earlier or later? What other events preceded it and paved the way for it? How did such a book come to be written? What prompted it? What kind of person is its author? What induced him to follow that particular line of investigation? How does it fit into, or contrast with, contemporary medical thought? How has it influenced our present conception of illness, our methods of treatment, our measures of control over the spread of disease, our means of the alleviation of pain and suffering, our social and economic structure and our moral values?

Lessons of Medical History

I have sometimes been asked by students and colleagues: 'What have you learned from the history of medicine?' I have replied as follows: 'Medical history has taught me a number of lessons which have stood me in good stead during my thirty-five years of professional life'. These lessons are:

(1) Apart from enriching the doctor's cultural background, medical history integrates the various separate disciplines of the medical curriculum into a meaningful and holistic pattern.

(2) It makes students aware that certain current problems are not 'modern' at all but are rooted in the past and that some contemporary medical situations are really 'old' problems that were not tackled and studied adequately in the past. Ex. adequate system of sewage disposal.

(3) We realise that the pursuit of medical science must include a study of social, political, technological and economic factors since these affect the way of life and the health of the individual and of the community as much as invasion of the body by bacteria, the appearance of neoplastic formations, etc.

(4) There is no place for dogma in scientific medicine. The doctor learns to criticise himself and to be receptive to ideas coming from sciences beyond the medical field, such as physics, statistics, eugenics, biology.

(5) There is a tendency on the part of individuals and groups to keep things as they are either because of self-interest or because of lack of understanding. The doctor must, therefore, be prepared to face and overcome obstacles to changes in our traditional thinking and practice from various quarters.

(6) Speculation on the nature and aetiology of disease leads to error but observation and experiment lead to the discovery and

confirmation of new principles. Ex. Jenner's discovery of vaccination against smallpox and Sir Themistocles Zammit's discovery of the germ of brucellosis in the blood of the goat.

(7) Knowledge about diseases is acquired not only from books but mainly from the bedside of the patient, in the laboratory and in the post-mortem room where correlation between symptoms and the underlying pathology can be established and verified.

(8) Advances in medicine often depend on progress registered in other scientific fields such as physics and chemistry. Ex. Histology on microscopy; bacteriology on staining procedures; treatment of cancer on radium; diagnosis on X-rays. Similarly development in one branch of medicine may be due to progress in a different medical sphere. Ex. Surgical progress would have been impossible without the achievements of anaesthesia and antisepsis.

(9) Although planned research has its importance, quite a number of momentuous discoveries in medicine have been accidental. Ex. The discovery of penicillin. However, research workers sometimes fail to perceive solutions provided by 'chance' or 'accident' with the result that they continue to follow a sterile routine with loss of time and delay of benefit to the sick.

(10) Discoveries or new ideas may be received at first with doubts, sometimes with ridicule or downright opposition. Ex. The work of Thomas Sydenham and of Lord Joseph Lister.

(11) Advances in medicine are often the result of efforts of more than one investigator and of the gradual cumulation of work of centuries. Ex. William Harvey's work on the circulation of the blood.

(12) In spite of the vast corpus of knowledge and experience that we have amassed since ancient times, we are far from knowing all the answers. We have scored many successes but we still have many failures. We must, therefore, learn to be humble as we are still very much in the dark with regard to the causation and treatment of such as yet unconquered diseases as cancer, cardiac ischaemia, congenital defects and psychiatric disorder.

(13) The control and treatment of disease has been guided more by credulity than by a rational and experimental approach to the causation and nature of the pathological process; while prejudice and economic stringency have often retarded medical progress.

(14) New achievements in one direction pose new problems in other spheres.

(15) While political movements, economic differences and religious beliefs tend to divide humankind, the benefits of medical

progress foster a humanitarian bond of unity and solidarity among nations, races and individual men and women.

Formal Teaching of Medical History

The formal teaching of medical history has found a place in the medical curriculum of many universities since the early decades of the last century. One of the earliest chairs of the history of medicine was established in 1750 at the medical schools of Wurzburg and Gottingen. By the dawn of the present century there was a wave of enthusiasm for medical history in America, Germany, France and England, represented by such eminent historians as Sir William Osler, Harvey Cushing, Fielding Hudson Garrison, Karl Sudhoff and Max Neuburger. By 1937 medical history was being taught in seventy per cent of medical schools, either as an 'elective' or a 'required' course with or without a compulsory final examination.[1]

To us Maltese, poised in the midst of the Mediterranean Sea, the study of the history of medicine is of particular interest because our sea has seen the birth and development of a civilization that is the resultant of the cultural and scientific forces that rose and unfolded on its shores since pre-historic times to be followed by Phoenicia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, Arabian Spain and North Africa. We, therefore, occupy a good vantage point from which to view the dissemination and fusion of these ancient civilizations into our present way of thinking and living. And since the history of medicine is but a facet of the history of civilization we are favourably placed to observe the various currents and cross-currents that have come to form the mosaic of medical thought as we know it to-day.

The first to propose the inclusion of the study of the History of Medicine in the curriculum of medical undergraduates of our university were Drs. Tommaso Chetcuti and Nicola Zammit who suggested in 1842 that the subject should be taught in the penultimate year of the academical course over a period of five months.[2] This suggestion, however, was not acted upon and nothing was done in our university to foster the knowledge of medical history.

A revival of interest in the history of medicine in general and

[1] Galdston, I. On the Utility of Medical History, New York, 1957, pp. 35 & 41-44.

[2] Chetcuti, T & Zammit, N. *Rapporto ragionato della commissione incaricata dalla Società Medica di esaminare il progetto di studi relativamente alla medicina*, Malta, 1842, p. 36.

the medical history of Malta in particular occurred many years later in 1964 when Professor Walter Ganado, who was then Head of the Department of Medicine, agreed to my delivering a few lectures to the final year students on the medical history of Malta. In my opening remarks to the first lecture on the 15th April 1964 I said: 'I must first of all thank you for honouring me with your presence this morning. This is a very special occasion in the long life of our medical school for it is the first time that lectures on medical history are being delivered to university students. I wish also to express my thanks to Prof. Ganado who as Head of the Department of Medicine very eagerly accepted my suggestion to give you these lectures. By this venture we are joining the ranks of the foremost medical schools of Europe, USA, South America and Japan where courses in the history of medicine are held regularly and where research in medical history is actively pursued. Our beginnings are small, in fact I have been alloted only three lectures dealing with the medical history of Malta which I propose to consider under three aspects:

(a) Stone Age period to the Middle Ages;

(b) The Medical Services under the Order of St. John of Jerusalem;

(c) Medical Progress during the 19th century.'

In a letter to Prof. Ganado of the 29th April I remarked: 'The innovation was welcomed enthusiastically by the medical students ... The appreciative manner with which the lectures were received has convinced me that there is scope for a longer and more comprehensive course in the history of medicine as a permanent feature in the curriculum of the Department of Medicine as in other progressive medical schools abroad.'

In his reply of the 31st May Prof. Ganado assured me that the lectures had been greatly appreciated by the students and that it was his intention to ask me to repeat them to the next course of medical undergraduates.

A wider appreciation of the value of medical history was whipped up during 1964 by (a) the visit to our Island, at the invitation of the university, of Professor A. Pazzini, Professor of the History of Medicine at Rome University, who gave two lectures on medical history at the Lecture Hall of St. Luke Hospital on the 15th and 17th April under the auspices of the Malta Branch of the British Medical Association and of the University of Malta; (b) the participation to the FAO Anti-Brucellosis Congress held in Malta on

the 8th to 13th June, of the late Dr. K.F. Meyer Ph.D., M.D., Director Emeritus, G.W. Hooper Foundation, University of California Medical Centre. Dr. Meyer was fascinated by our medical history and offered all possible help to foster its study. Prof. Ganado grasped this opportunity to submit a memo to him in which he informed Dr. Meyer that it was proposed to set up a Fellowship for the study of Maltese Medical History and also a part-time lectureship in this subject at our university; (c) the setting up of an 'Exhibition Illustrating the History of Medicine in Malta' in connection with the First European Congress of Catholic Doctors at Floriana in September.[3]

Interest was sustained by the publication of my *Medical History of Malta* by the Wellcome Institute of London in 1965; so much so that at the beginning of the following year a request for the establishment of a Lectureship in the History of Medicine was made by the Malta Branch of the BMA to the university. As I was given to understand that the university was unable to comply with this request owing to lack of funds, I wrote as follows to the Rector on the 30th July 1966: 'This is not the occasion to discuss the utility of such a lectureship but I should like to point out the importance of the subject very briefly under four headings: *Cultural.* The physician is becoming more and more a technical man without that cultural background that makes of him a thinker and a the utility of such a lectureship but I should like to point out the importance of the subject very briefly under four headings: *Cultural.* The physician is becoming more and more a technical man without that cultural background that makes of him a thinker and a scholar. The teaching of medical history supplies this deficiency by bringing literature, philosophy and the various arts and sciences in close contact with medical thought and practice. *Holistic.* The modern doctor tends to specialise as soon as he qualifies and thus early to isolate himself from the rest of medicine and surgery. The history of medicine counteracts this isolation by presenting an integrated and holistic picture of our art and science. It thus broadens his concept of medicine and gives him new vistas over a wider horizon. *Social.* A doctor who is only a technician or a specialist, even if he is one of the best, is not a mature and enlightened professional man unless he understands the origin and

[3] Cassar, P. Guide to the Exhibition Illustrating the History of Medicine in Malta, Malta, 1964.

development of the social, political and economic milieu in which he has to exercise his profession. The teaching of the history of medicine highlights this awareness and extends it beyond his limited personal knowledge and also beyond the experience of his contemporaries. *Practical.* George Santayana said that 'those who forget history will have to repeat it'. This applies also to medical affairs and events. The teaching of medical history, by exposing facts and results, helps us to sharpen our powers of observation, to avoid pitfalls, to form correct judgements and to develop prudence and foresight.

As you know the most advanced medical schools of Europe and the Americas have been teaching medical history since many years. Here are a few examples: Wurzburg and Gottingen since 1750; Paris 1794; Florence 1806; Vienna 1808; Johns Hopkins 1877; Prague 1900; Leipzig 1905; University College Hospital London 1932. Other medical schools in the United Kingdom that teach medical history are Edinburgh and Manchester. In the United States of America out of 77 schools 54 give instruction in medical history. The position is similar in Canada and South America.

Of the main Faculties in our university – Theology, Law, Medicine, Engineering and Architecture and Arts – ONLY the Faculty of Medicine possesses NO chair or lectureship on its history. In fact there are Chairs in Church History, History of Legislation in England and Malta, History of Architecture and General History ... At the beginning of the current year the Malta Branch of the British Medical Association asked the university to set up a lectureship in the History of Medicine but the reply, received this month, was that no funds are available. To overcome this financial hurdle I hereby offer GRATIS my services as an Honorary Teacher in the History of Medicine. The posts of Honorary Teachers are an accepted feature in our university. In fact I am myself an Honorary Teacher in Clinical Psychiatry so that there should be no difficulties in the creation of an Honorary Teacher in the History of Medicine. It would be no precedent.

As a start I would suggest that, by arrangement with the Professor of Medicine, there should be six lectures a year during the last two years of the course; that attendance of students should be obligatory as in other subjects but that there should be no examination in the subject ...'.

On the receipt of this letter the Rector informed me that he was referring the matter to the Faculty Board for transmission to Senate

and Council (Letter dated 17th August).

It so happened that at this period, University College, London, announced the creation of the first University Department of the History of Medicine in the Faculty of Medicine at University College. In pointing out this new development in England, I wrote as follows to our university authorities, on the 13th October, quoting an excerpt from an annotation by the *British Medical Journal* of the 24th September 1966, p. 720: 'It is expected that medical history will be taught to pre-clinical and clinical students and that instruction in the medico-historical aspects of non-medical subjects will also be arranged ... In addition to fulfilling the wishes expressed by Singer in 1919 for more teaching of medical history, they are giving practical support to the plea of the Association Medical Journal ... which as long ago as 1853 stated: 'We advocate the study of medical history, then, and we shall in future articles continue to do so, since we are deeply impressed with the immense benefit to our profession which must flow from its general cultivation'. I commented: 'These remarks show the great importance that is being given to the teaching of medical history abroad and add weight to my suggestion for the formal establishment of such teaching in our university. I should feel grateful if you would kindly submit this communication to the Faculty, Senate and Council.' On the 31st January and the 14th March 1967 I was informed by the Rector that Senate had agreed to leave the matter in 'abeyance' until provision was made in the statute for the establishment of Honorary Lectureships. There have been no further developments.

On the 11th November 1966 I gave the first of four lectures on medical history to the final year students at the invitation of Prof. W. Ganado. Like the previous ones, these lectures were received with keen interest and lively enthusiasm, so much so that Professor Ganado wrote: 'I consider your lectures a most essential part of the medical course, not only for culture's sake, but also because I consider it important that the local profession should develop a pride in its past achievements ... The contents of your lectures are achieving this effect. This justifies not only further teaching in this subject but also the establishment of a separate lectureship which would encourage further research and give opportunity to raise interest in Maltese medicine. I am sending a copy of this letter to the Dean of Medicine' (Letter dated 30th December 1966).

I am happy to say that Professor Frederick Fenech, on his being appointed Head of Department of Medicine on the 16th April 1974, invited me to deliver two lectures on the history of medicine to his students which I very gladly gave on the 31st October and the 7th November 1974.

As already stated the Rector, in his communication of the 14th March 1967, informed me that Senate had left the question of the establishment of a Lectureship in Medical History 'in abeyance'. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* defines the word 'abeyance' as a 'state of suspension, dormant condition liable to revival'. In effect this means that despite a lull of eight years, the issue is still open. I, therefore, appeal to the University authorities to reconsider the suggestions made to them since 1964 and implement them.

SOME REMARKS ON TERTIARY EDUCATION TODAY

by Prof. RALF DAHRENDORF

THIS is my first opportunity to publish, in Malta, some of my views about tertiary education today, and I welcome the fact that it is the Students' Representative Council which has provided me with this chance. I have of course had other opportunities for making my views known in Malta, and I am therefore not unaware of what is expected of me at a time at which many institutions of the country, including those of tertiary education, are in a stage of dynamic development. Change is not a value in itself, but more often than not, changes are needed in order to fashion institutions in such a way that they serve the people for whom they were created. Malta is going through such a period of change, and will – so one hopes – in the process find its identity not only as a bridge between cultures, but also as a model of the democratic dynamics of an open society. To this end, the University and the other institutions of tertiary education have an important role to play.

It may be useful to look for a moment into the history of universities. Towards the end of the 18th century, most of the universities then extant followed a fairly well-defined pattern. They were the place where the learned professions educated their children, metaphorically speaking, and outside theology more often than not in a literal sense as well. Speaking of 'education' in this context may indeed be something of a euphemism; it was in fact training more than education, with a set syllabus, and the drill of learning by heart the canonized information passed on in the classical Faculties of Theology, Law, and Medicine. Traces of what we would today call academic freedom, in the sense of a freedom to teach what the scholar believes is true, and freedom to select at least to some extent courses and classes on the part of students – traces of such freedom could possibly be found in a fourth Faculty, viewed with suspicion for many centuries, and yet productive of most that was new, the Faculty of Arts. However, even here, there were but traces. I remember vividly Immanuel Kant's sad description of his lectures on physical geography, far too many every week, in which he had to read a silly text sent to him by the Prussian Ministry of Education, to bored students who applauded him whenever he

dared insert a sentence or two of his own.

In the early years of the 19th century, a great change came over the universities at least in some parts of the world, and notably in continental Europe. Universities were, one might argue, revolutionized by their Faculties of Arts (or of Philosophy, as they are called in some countries). The sciences emerged as a separate set of

In the early years of the 19th century, a great change came over the universities at least in some parts of the world, and notably in continental Europe. Universities were, one might argue, revolutionized by their Faculties of Arts (or of Philosophy, as they are called in some countries). The sciences emerged as a separate set of disciplines, oriented towards 'pure knowledge', fundamental research as we would say today. Classical scholarship turned into a critical discipline and inspired the study of non-classical languages. Gradually, and haltingly, the first social sciences emerged as such. Philosophy itself inspired the entire structure of the university with a sense of academic autonomy and scholarly values. Hegel, barely two decades after Kant, not only did not have to waste his time lecturing on physical geography, but taught, in his lectures his own most recent thoughts without ever repeating a course. The older, professional Faculties remained in existence, and of course their representatives wore the more splendid gowns, but the dynamic of universities moved to disciplines which were inspired by a sense of scientific discovery rather than professional training.

It is a significant fact that this 19th century revolution bypassed the English universities (although not those of Scotland which remained an integral part of the European tradition). It was only when University College London, and later the first 'redbrick' universities were founded that the new spirit entered the southern part of the island. In the United States, on the other hand, a remarkable and uniquely successful merger took place between the old medieval tradition which remained alive in the form of the College, and the new scientific tradition which became institutionalized in the Graduate Schools. Thus the American university has become the hybrid which makes it, at least in its most distinguished examples, one of the most successful academic institutions in history.

In fact, American universities became the starting point of a third academic development as well, a revolution which did not reach Europe before the 1950s and 1960s, that is, the revolution of mass education. The discovery of education as a human right, and as an economic asset, originally led to the great campaign for universal literacy which stimulated the introduction of general educa-

cation in Europe in the nineteenth century, and which continues in the developing world to the present day. But at some stage, quite early in the United States, much later in Europe, a second stage of the educational rocket was ignited: the discovery that it was useful, and indeed just, to enable as many people as is feasible to acquire an extended education, thus developing their capabilities fully and enabling them to live in a complex world. I shall not enter into the arguments behind and around the developments set in motion by the Robbins Report in Britain, the first Recommendations of the Science Council *(Wissenschaftsrat)* in Germany, and parallel developments elsewhere, except to say that I have always been an advocate of the notion of education as a civil right. This is not to dispute the social function of education, or the practical relevance of scientific research, but to say that in the last analysis these will flourish only if and where the individual and his development are the guiding principle of educational policy.

Turning from argument to fact, it is clear that the revolution of mass education has changed universities out of recognition. There has been growing pressure on admission to universities, while in the end one-third of each age group demand some tertiary education. New subjects have emerged, both practical and theoretical, which were unheard of in earlier phases of academic development, accounting and linguistics, industrial relations and microbiology, labour law and comparative religion, and many others. At the margin of universities, and sometimes outside them, new competing institutions came into being, colleges for the training of teachers, of nurses, of interpreters, and above all of engineers in the widest sense of the term. One of the greatest merits of the most distinguished American universities consists, in my view, in the manner in which they have managed to draw into the generous cloak of one institution a variety of disparate parts without destroying the uniqueness of any one of them. They have become department stores of knowledge – undoubtedly a distateful idea to some, and certainly a controversial way of describing a fact –, and have thereby been able to offer the widest possible choice to the greatest possible number. When I am talking about the 'comprehensive university', I am in fact thinking of places like Columbia University, or the University of Chicago, or the University of California.

Times are moving fast nowadays, and it sometimes appears to us in Europe, and in the United States, that quite soon after the revolution of mass education another academic change is under way. The extension of periods of initial education for a growing

number of young people has led to a kind of vested interest, an educational class with its own culture and politics. It has also led to a growing disillusionment of the general public with education. Elections are certainly no longer won on a platform of educational expansion. These seemingly contradictory trends might usefully be turned into the beginning of a reconsideration of the place of tertiary education in society and in people's lives. I for one would like to think that we are moving in a direction which makes education 'lifelong', 'permanent', 'recurrent' in the true sense, and thus interweaves our universities and other institutions of tertiary education much more intimately with the other dimensions of people's lives. If the institution for which I am responsible, the London School of Economics and Political Science, became a model of such new departures, it would give me even more pride than LSE warrants in any case.

But I must stop a train of argument, the relevance of which for Malta is perhaps not immediately evident. There are many obvious reasons why the University of Malta is not going to be another Columbia University nor another London School of Economics; nor should it be. The specific tradition of the University of Malta, the cultural significance of its location, the role it can play in the development of the country all make for a unique combination of factors. Yet there are a few general points which follow from the analysis which I have presented here, and which I would like to offer as conclusions:

1. The University of Malta has remained, longer than even the English universities, primarily a place for the training of future members of the great professions. In any case, the tone of the university was set by this function, and by the specific relations with the wider community which it entails. This has meant a certain insulation of the University, for it has led to underemphasis on at least three other academic functions: training and research relevant to sectors of the community other than the learned professions; scientific research, that is, the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake; a contribution to mass education. Taking a university out of the mainstream of modern academic developments was bound to weaken its position and impact; there was a need for change.

2. Partly in line with developments in other countries and notably Britain, but partly as a consequence of a certain insulation, there emerged separate institutions of tertiary education for training teachers and engineers. An uneasy relationship developed between them and the University, with the latter appearing to defend privi-

lege and the former torn between their desire for higher status and the advantages of easier access to the funds of government. This rivalry was both wasteful and detrimental to the development of the notion of a modern university which is necessarily multi-functional, not to repeat the term department store.

3. In terms of organization, the university had preserved for itself the autonomy of medieval guilds, whereas the two other colleges came directly under government control. The former is nice; yet it is not only difficult to justify at a time at which there is no economic autonomy of academic institutions, but also unsatisfactory in so far as effective communication between academic developments and the general needs of the community is concerned. The latter on the other hand, that is direct dependence on government, is at all times a mistake. Even governments which make it their principle to control all autonomous institutions tightly (which the government of Malta does not), have found that this impairs academic quality and initiative. In the light of such considerations, it seemed right to create a Commission which acts as a meeting place of interests, and at the same time a buffer zone for pressures of whatever origin. Responsible autonomy can well be maintained by a combination of block grants and mixed academic-governmental-independent commissions.

4. The next steps in the development of tertiary education in Malta might well be changes in the internal organization of the various institutions and their interrelations. Here, a maximum of flexibility seems indicated. A Faculty of Social Science will respond to an evident need, both in academic and in practical terms. There is no reason why the University should not incorporate one or two research institutes. The federation (if that is the word) with MCAST and the Teachers' Training College can be developed on many levels. Initiatives by the institutions of tertiary education to promote adult education and offer shorter or longer refresher courses would probably be welcomed and would indicate that these institutions play an active part in the life of the community. A deliberate policy of developing academic links with institutions outside Malta might help solve staff problems and would benefit students and staff alike. If in this process the University of Malta became a kind of comprehensive university, it would, I am sure, serve as a model for many others.

There are, I know, other problems of tertiary education. Students would perhaps have liked to hear more about student participation. May I confine myself to one remark in this respect and say that

open govemment seems to me essential in universities, and it requires the free flow of information to and from all groups; but making universities miniature political communities has turned out to be disruptive for all their functions. But I must stop appearing to give advice to people in a country about which I know little after all, and who are themselves best able to judge where they want to to go. One of the prime purposes which my colleagues and I in the old University of Malta Commission pursued, was to make sure that ways would be found to have Maltese citizens run their own institutions in this field as well. We all need communications across boundaries, and the academic community has always been an international community, but communications within this community are a two-way process, in which the University of Malta should and will play its full part.

MEDICAL EDUCATION IN MALTA – PRESENT TRENDS AND FUTURE GOALS

by Dr. R. ELLUL-MICALLEF

INTRODUCTION

Formal medical education in Malta began in December 1676 with the establishment of a School of Anatomy and Surgery by Grand Master Nicholas Cottoner. Its first director was Dr. Joseph Zammit, who besides being the chief physician of five successive Grandmasters was also a priest and a member of the Order of St. John. It was not until 1771 that a Faculty of Medicine was established in the University incorporating the School of Anatomy and Surgery, thereby enabling Maltese students to study both surgery and medicine locally. Previously, students aspiring to become physicians had to obtain their training and qualifications overseas.

Over the past three hundred years our medical school has generally managed to maintain the high standards and to fulfil the ideals for which it was founded. Maltese society has benefited in no mean way from its medical school. In the XVth report of the Royal University of Malta Commission under the chairmanship of Professor R. Dahrendorf, our medical school came in for some very favourable comments. The Faculty of Medicine was described as 'the most progressive and closely concerned with the life of the community'. Whilst this is most reassuring to the medical faculty in particular, and to Maltese society in general, there should not be any room for complacency.

I would like to emphasize that the views expressed in this article are entirely my personal ones. I hold no brief to speak for my department, my faculty or the university bodies of which I form part. It is not my intention to write a comprehensive report on the subject; I would however like to raise and discuss a number of points, some of which may well prove to be controversial, in the hope of provoking further thought and perhaps some possible future action.

TEACHING

Medical education is often accused of being generally somewhat traditional in its approach to both methods of teaching and to curriculum content. Here in Malta, the Faculty of Medicine has proved

to be conscious of the need for change in the curriculum so that new branches of knowledge may find their place in it and so that students may be better equipped to meet the contemporary and future needs of society. It is widely recognised that a curriculum which is overburdened with purely factual data, sometimes presented in an unrelated form, that must be committed to memory, is a poor preparation for the acquisition and development of scientific habits of thought. The archaic process of learning, remembering and reproducing of largely undigested, unabsorbed and disjointed facts from books or notes should be shelved once and for all. The major purpose of a basic medical course may be said to be to provide practice in the critical evaluation of evidence with which students are presented. It is of vital importance that students should be encouraged in all possible ways to develop the ability to think for themselves. Only in this way may one hope that they will become safe and competent doctors. Unfortunately the indiscriminate regurgitation of data, often straight from the lecturer's notes, is still a common phenomenon in examinations. Perhaps the blame for this should not be placed entirely at the student's door.

I think that a closer look at present methods of teaching is warranted. There are two extreme patterns of education in medicine, the so-called 'block' and 'integrated' systems. The former is the traditional system in which various subjects are taught either sequentially or in parallel. In the integrated system subjects are taught in an integrated fashion and individual topics are dealt with coherently by teachers from more than one department. Full integration would imply that teachers from every department will in principle be concerned with teaching at all levels and entitled to participate in it. Three major advantages of this system immediately spring to mind. There is an avoidance of unnecessary repetition in teaching which is not only educationally harmful but may add considerably to expense. The student is also discouraged from compartmentalising his knowledge and is encouraged to bring one discipline to bear on problems arising from another. In the integrated teaching system it is also easier to alter courses in the light of experience, since teaching time would be allocated to topics rather than to departments represented by academic administrative units. Departments have been largely autonomous and have been regarded as 'owning' both space and time on the curriculum. This has often prevented or delayed the discarding from the curriculum of material that is no longer strictly necessary for the

basic training of doctors. Departments must be prepared to give up consciously some of this autonomy. At all levels students must be encouraged to integrate their knowledge. One must admit that there will always be limits to the degree of integration that is practicable. In such a system each teacher must be fully and continuously aware of the instruction given to each student and this will require a high staff-student ratio. More co-ordination of teaching, although falling short of full integration is perhaps the most feasible for local conditions. Such a recommendation for a co-ordinated planning of all stages of medical education has again been made this year in the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Medical Profession (Merrison Report) referring to medical education in the United Kingdom. A wellcome first step in this direction has been taken this year by a number of clinical departments but more remains to be done.

As new topics and areas of studies are introduced into the undergraduate curriculum one must be prepared to prune continuously the traditional material if the student's burden is not to become impossible. Communication between teacher and student remains the very essence of the educational process in medical education as in every other field. Students are now more than ever intimately concerned with the organisation of their own medical schools. Obviously a system such as that prevailing at Uppsala where feed-back between students and teachers is actively encouraged could prove to be of immense value. Whatever the pattern of teaching that is finally adopted – fully integrated, co-ordinated or block – it is important that aspects of clinical medicine be introduced in the early stages of a medical student's course. Carefully organised clinical demonstrations can admirably illustrate and supplement aspects of the pre-clinical sciences. This has been the policy followed by the Department of Physiology and Biochemistry for the past ten years. The bridge between the pre-clinical sciences and clinical subjects must be further strengthened and broadened allowing for a two-way flow of participation, to enable it to take a heavier load, especially now that the faculty is committed to annual entry. We will thus make sure that we will not be running the risk already present in some countries of producing medical biologists instead of clinical doctors.

General Practice Apprenticeships

In 1967, following the recommendations of the General Medical

Council, training in general practice was accepted as an integral part of the curriculum for all medical students in the United Kingdom. Although initially the recommendations do not appear to have been immediately and satisfactorily implemented in all medical schools (Pearson *et al.*, 1968), student attachments in general practice now form regular part of the general training of British medical students (Bryne, 1973). Most of these attachments are held sometime in the final two years. The Carnegie Commission, in 1970, also recommended that medical education and health care should be more closely linked and interrelated.

By far the largest proportion of doctors in any country are general practitioners. It would therefore seem a sound idea to train our students with general practice in mind. Up to the present, emphasis in teaching is still largely on hospital medicine. Both the university and government health authorities lately appear to have become increasingly aware of the need for change. For the first time, last October, the Faculty of Medicine co-opted a general practitioner to form part of the faculty board. This is certainly a step in the right direction. But perhaps even more important, following the recommendations of the Dahrendorf Commission, is the imminent establishment of a Department of Community Medicine. Such a department should serve to establish and forge links between the various hospital clinical departments and medical practitioners involved in community health care, besides carrying out epidemiological research.

One hopes that the establishment and organisation of general practice attachments for our medical students will be high on the priority list of the new Department of Community Medicine. Students will then be able to observe a spectrum of medicine which is different from that normally seen in hospitals. They will not only be given the opportunity to study diseases which rarely reach hospital but will also be able to see the early stages and first symptoms of those that do. Furthermore, students will be able to follow patients when they leave hospital and return to the community. Ideally these attachments should allow students to follow a planned though flexible teaching programme with emphasis on the personal, emotional and psychological aspects of family medicine over a period of four to six weeks. General practitioners involved in such a scheme should be carefully selected to ensure that they will be able to devote at least two full sessions each week to teaching. During such a general practice attachment the student

should be able to acquire first hand knowledge of all aspects of community care and be able to observe, from close range, general practice as a possible vocational opportunity for himself. It has been established that in Britain medical students look upon exposure to general practice as a useful contribution to their medical education. (Dean, 1971).

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Little more than a decade ago continuing education was a new term just coming into use in the more developed countries. It can now be claimed that the term has become common parlance. As early as 1900, William Osler, an outstanding clinican and teacher whose contributions to medicine have earned him a place amongst the truly great physicians of all time, understood and felt the need for continued learning. Writing in the Lancet, he stated, 'If the licence to practise meant the completion of his education how sad it would be for the practitioner, how distressing to his patients'. Continuing education in medicine involves the provision of learning facilities through which a medical practitioner may keep abreast of the advances in knowledge, development of skills and the ever changing attitudes which are intimately related to his field of practice. It has been defined as an education in which learning often occurs of necessity borne of the problems of medical practice (De Crow, 1969).

It was only in 1959 following the Second World Conference on Medical Education that widespread recognition was afforded to the importance of continuing medical education (Clegg, 1961). Since then many countries have shown a great deal of interest (Nakamoto and Verner, 1972) and it has been generally recognised that perhaps even more than in any other field, there can be no terminal point in learning in medicine. The mushrooming volume of knowledge in medical care poses an ever increasing challenge to medical education. I believe that continuing medical education is evolving to be the principal means of meeting this challenge.

The need for continuing medical education in Malta has been acutely felt and increasingly recognized over the past few years. The local branch of the British Medical Association has been organising yearly refresher courses for general practitioners in an attempt to satisfy some of this need. The number of postgraduate lectures delivered every year both by local and foreign lecturers at our Medical School also helps in keeping doctors aware of the ad-

vances and developments that are continuously taking place. However, I feel, that something more ought to be done to put continuing medical education in Malta on a more permanent and better organised footing. It can perhaps be readily appreciated that there can be no better start made than at an undergraduate level by inculcating the student not only with a continuing desire to learn but also, and this is perhaps even more important, with an ability to do so. Encouraging the student, from early on in his medical education, to look things up for himself and to involve him in small research topics will in the end, prove to be a most rewarding exercise.

The responsibility of providing continuing educational activities ultimately lies with the University, the medical profession and the government, through the Department of Health. Continuing medical education must be a partnership in which general practitioners, medical societies, hospitals, medical school and government participate (Sodeman, 1969). It is important in drawing up plans for continuing medical education to ensure that any courses provided are readily accessible. A great deal of thought has to be given and co-operation sought between the various bodies concerned to make sure that courses take place during such a time when busy doctors will be able to attend. It is perhaps in this respect that the Department of Health can make a most valid contribution by releasing doctors in its employment for short courses as well as arranging locums for general practitioners wishing to avail themselves of any courses organised by the Medical School together with the medical societies. I think that the Medical School should actively pursue a policy of organising continuing medical education which present undergraduate students and qualified practitioners will be able to follow. Continuing medical education should be an integral component of our health care system.

Conclusion

The clear identification of the skills which students should and must acquire in order to be able to meet the ever-growing demands of medical care will continue to constitute an important challenge to our medical curriculum designers. In various countries medical schools are increasingly carrying out a number of studies of all aspects of medical education, including criteria for admission, educational methods, student attitudes and aptitudes, as well as examinations and other forms of assessment. It is now generally

recognised that considerable expertise in educational methodology is required for the critical evaluation and planning of a medical curriculum as well as for its final implementation. A problem in medical education presently facing a number of medical schools abroad is the low level of staff-student communication. Whilst it can be stated that in Malta the problem is not so acute, the size of our medical school is such as to allow the almost complete elimination of such a problem, resulting in a better exploitation of the capabilities of both groups. Ideally medical educational programmes should be planned to respond sensitively to feed-back from a number of sources including the students, their teachers, as well as the health authorities.

Ministries of health all over the world, are now expecting medical schools to devote increasing attention to continuing postgraduate training, to social research and to provide expert advice to government, besides fulfilling their more traditional functions of teaching and research (WHO report, 1975). This necessarily calls for a much closer co-operation between the health authorities on one hand and the medical school administration on the other. Such co-operation has to a certain extent been always present in Malta. The mechanism for maintaining the necessary relations between the local medical education system and health services will perhaps be further strengthened and developed once the new Department of Community Medicine has been firmly established.

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MATRICULABILITY

by PETER SERRACINO INGLOTT

'MATRICULATION' is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as 'admission to privileges of University.' (The word is derived from Latin *matricula,* a diminutive of *matrix* and meaning 'a register'). Matriculation examinations were held originally to be used in determining who should be admitted to the University.

The concept of 'matriculability' became more complex for two reasons:

(a) the relevant examination came also to be used to assertain the successful termination of pre-university schooling and, indeed, to influence the pattern of studies at the secondary school level;

(b) the period of transition from secondary to tertiary education gradually expanded and now amounts to a two or even three year layer sandwiched between the school and the university, with its own peculiar problems.

In the spate of recent changes in the whole educational system in Malta, this crucial interface in the educational process may not have been given adequate importance. Yet it is vital that changes which now appear to be in the offing be made only as the result of reasoned dialogue between those involved both at the intermediate level itself and also at the secondary and tertiary levels, since all are seriously conditioned in their work by decisions about criteria for matriculability. Contemplated changes should be studied by an expert work-group given whatever political directives are deemed to be desirable on grounds of public policy as long as they are compatible with pedagogical possibilities.

From a University point of view, matriculability involves three elements on the candidate's side:

(a) the attainment of a satisfactory level of general education, including the required mastery of linguistic tools (which may be both verbal and mathematical) and a rudimentary acquaintance with the basics of human knowledge;

(b) a somewhat more advanced knowledge of the areas relevant to the specific courses to be followed at the University;

(c) an adequate development of the personality, including the ability to make value-judgements.

The crux of educational planning, at this stage, is to integrate the three elements, without distortions. (I am ignoring such conditions which may occur on the university's side, such as availability of places. In my view, such conditions should be explicitly stated and not fulfilled by hidden manipulations of standards at examinations and similar devices).

Recently, in Malta, there has been a tendency to identify: element (a) with the certification obtained at the end of the fifth form of secondary school (with some candidates attempting to obtain it even a year earlier);

element (b) with three 'A' levels passes at certain grades;

element (c) with a minimum age limit and, possibly, the examination in religion.

This amounted to a grossly imperfect imitation of the U.K. system. The imitation is apparent in the fact that the special requirements (b) come to be more important than the general requirements (a), since the immediately preparatory years are devoted almost exclusively to (b); this is the contrary of the system on the Continent. The gross imperfection of the imitation appears in the fact that it was the usual practice for U.K. universities, in deciding upon admissions, to rely heavily also on reports of Headmasters in order to take (c) into account. Nothing corresponding was done in Malta.

The result was clearly distorted. It is true that attempts began to be made belatedly, at the (then) Junior College to raise the general educational level and ensure personality growth, with the progressive adoption of the style of study and critical evaluation appropriate to the tertiary as compared to the secondary level of education (instead of coaching exclusively for three A levels). But, once again, these attempts appear to have met with unfavourable circumstances, when they should have been further encouraged. At any rate, no serious testing of achievement in other areas than the A level requirements was carried out for purposes of assessing matriculability.

In my view, matriculability should not even be assessed on the basis of a conjunction of certificates relating to different phases of the educational process, but there should be one assessment relating to the total performance at the Upper Secondary level. This assessment should relate to the level of all three of the elements attained at the time of testing. The second element (b) is being adequately tested and can continue to be tested on the present lines. The other elements (a) and (c) are not. I suggest that the requirements should be in this respect:

1. Skill at linguistic tools. Those should include (i) the two official languages (English and Maltese), without a literature component; (ii) mathematics (which I think should be regarded not as one of the empirical sciences as the present Matriculation regulations treat it, but as the 'language' of all empirical sciences).

2. Knowledge of (i) a foreign culture (including language, literature and other components of the culture) and students could be encouraged to select preferably Italian or Arabic culture, as the two most closely connected with Malta, but they should not be forced to do so to the exclusion of, say, Latin or French, or any other major culture; (ii) an empirical science as a necessary element of a contemporary education (in addition to mathematics required as above for the given reason).

3. A subject which shows the ability to make value-judgements about human life in society, such as philosophy, (or any of its branches, such as psychology, theory of knowledge, ethics, politics) or allied subjects (such as religion or anthropology), but not history (unless inclusive of meta-history) or geography (unless treated from the human angle and in such a way that man-environment-development problems are tackled).

These could be assessed in a variety of ways, not necessarily on hitherto accepted examination lines, e.g. by evaluating portofolios of work done throughout the previous year supplemented by interviews or some other of the many types of testing which have been evolved over the recent years.

Even if this pattern were to be accepted on theoretical grounds, the question of its practicability arises. Practical alternatives have to be considered and weighted respectively. There are basically three: (i) the U.K. G.C.E. exams, with supplementation by local tests; (ii) new European-wide examinations, such as the International Baccalaureate, the organisers of which allow considerable room for local adaptations and experimental curricula; (iii) purely local examinations. The three alternatives should be looked at carefully in turn. (The considerations offered here are only intended to bring a number of issues into the open and evidently not as a conclusive discussion of the whole thorny question).

(i) There are several advantages in taking the U.K. G.C.E. exams: (a) they have a world-wide recognition, which is important especially for emigrants and study abroad;

(b) they ensure a general acceptance of fairness and competence in the setting and correcting of papers;

(c) they are well-known and the local system is already geared for them.

Against this there are: (a) the issue of fees going abroad which seems to worry our present Govt. a lot; (b) the more important question of their suitability to our needs; already a special paper is set by Oxford in English for Maltese students; and local exams with different syllabi are set in Maltese, Maltese History, Italian, Philosophy and Religion; in many other subjects, adaptations of the British syllabi are desired by local teachers; however, it should also be kept in mind that syllabi and text-books go hand in hand, and, in most cases, especially with science, we are dependent on English textbooks almost irremediably, since it is not an easy and hardly a worthwhile task to produce our own in many subjects; (c) Moreover, September sessions have been held in practically all subjects in order to provide supplementary examinations. This is, of course, a vexed question. Is it possible that someone who failed in early summer can have improved sufficiently to pass by the late summer? In practice, experience has already shown that this does not usually happen. The September session only gives a second chance to a student who failed through ill-luck. But this second chance seems to be wanted.

(ii) Ideally of course, as we move towards European integration, an International European examination would appear to be the best solution. A move in this direction was the institution of the 'International Baccaleureate' Examination, with its centre in Geneva. Moreover, it seemed to be excellently conceived in terms of structure and adaptability to local needs.

Against this: (a) the impression has grown that the I.B. has so far failed to obtain the widespread acceptance which alone would have enabled its sponsors to get a really efficient administrative machinery functioning; (b) it also differs enough from the British G.C.E. to require preparations for it to begin fairly early and hence it would not be wise to merely introduce it as the final examination without altering the curriculum of the lower classes. With all the changes that have occurred lately in the secondary schools, there may well be considerable reluctance to add to the sense of insecurity already generated by these many changes by further substantial curricular changes unless these are a rigorous necessity. Teachers have also to become accustomed to a different curriculum and style.

(iii) A local examination would have several advantages:

(a) It could be tailormade for our needs. Here special care

would have to be taken to ensure that there would be no lowering of standards in order to ensure a substantial number of successes even if the level of achievement of the secondary schools happens to fall low. Moreover, it would also be necessary not to depart too much from the patterns accepted abroad. It is important that Malta should not be too special and peculiar, if its school results are to be acceptable abroad. We must not over-accentuate our isolation.

(b) It would keep a certain amount of money in Malta, but it should not be imagined that the examination could be run without expenses or without a considerable administrative machinery. The examination should be run by the University, with the collaboration of the Department of Education, as is usual. This should not now be difficult, since the Government is now very closely involved in the organs of the University.

From the point of view of the Secondary School, since a divergence of ways occurs at the end, with the large majority of students moving into the world of work and a small minority (about 6% of the age-group in Malta at present) continuing with further and various studies, differences should be made.

The idea was indeed suggested, and it ought to have been given more serious consideration, that there should be two types of Upper Secondary School: one geared to the transition from school to a job, the other to that from secondary to tertiary education (in the functioning of which those responsible for tertiary education could be involved). The idea was unfortunately not taken up.

RESEARCH IN MALTA

by PAUL XUEREB

THE history of material progress is almost synonymous with the history of research. Though the accidental has played its part in the development of the various civilizations, much has been the result of painstaking study, reflection and experiment, whether by humble artisans or by university professors. The highly advanced technological societies of the West owe their prominence to the encouragement they have given to the research worker, whilst the endless technological experimentation chronicled so admirably by Joseph Needham was responsible for the richness and strength of China in ancient and medieval times.

Never has so much research been carried out as in our own times. Some of it is highly complex, particularly that on fundamental problems in physics, chemistry and biology. This type of research often calls for large teams of research workers and very costly equipment: only countries with considerable resources can afford to support it, so it is not surprising that most major discoveries are made by scientists in the U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Western Germany, Great Britain, Japan, and a few other countries. Besides research of this type, there is an ocean of less basic but still highly important work to be done, and this is where the powerful and wealthy countries have never had a monopoly.

Hitherto, Malta has not distinguished herself by her contributions to knowledge, theoretical or applied. Such names as those of Sir Themistocles Zammit, Count Luigi Preziosi and John Borg in the past and two or three others at present, are all too exceptional. The dearth of research work, other than of the enumeratory kind in the biological sciences and antiquarian research of the old-fashioned kind, in the past is not difficult to account for. Maltese artisans and architects frequently had to face competition from foreigners and, worse still, to ape foreign methods to gain the favour of the foreign rulers of the time and of the wealthy Maltese patrons, always ready to look down on anything bred in Malta. Moreover, few people capable of creative research found much encouragement or had sufficient time for it. Maltese physicians and surgeons have a long tradition of being overburdened with

work, and until recently our University never had full-time teachers in the medical Faculty. The sorry state in which Science teaching was until recently at all levels of our educational system goes far towards explaining the near nonexistence of scientific research in this country until the past ten years or so.

The picture today is not, of course, half as discouraging as it was, say, even as recently as 1960. One of the reasons is the rebirth of our University, its gradual transformation from what the unkind termed 'a glorified secondary school' into the respectable institution it is today, staffed by a new generation of scholars with research degrees from the best British and American Universities. Another possible reason is the attainment of political independence and the concurrent realisation that henceforth Malta must forge ahead under its own steam. The artistic and literary renaissance of the late '60's and early '70's was accompanied by increased research in the field of Maltese history and the first attempts at research in the social sciences.

There is little about which to be complacent, one ought to add immediately. The University Reports for recent years list the publications – the record of research carried out – of its teaching-staff, so it is easy to find out what is being produced in this institution. The most prolific Faculty is undoubtedly Medicine, followed by the Faculty of Arts, and that of Science. The Polytechnic and the College of Education seem to produce nothing, or next to nothing; at least, they do not seem to publish much. There are, of course, no research institutes, such as are common overseas, and those few governmental and industrial bodies with laboratory faculties and research officers are engaged solely in routine analyses and investigations, or else prefer not to publish their findings. There are then individual research workers, mostly enthusiastic amateurs but some of them worthy of the highest praise, in the field of botany, zoology, Maltese history, and literary history. A few of these have produced work of great value: Father Michael Fsadni's trilogy of books on the Dominicans in Malta has become fundamental for any scholar working on our history, and particularly on our ecclesiastical history.

Maltese research workers, like those in other countries, must work within the limitations set up by laboratory and library facilities, funds available for new equipment and supporting staff and, in some field, the availability of primary research materials. Presumably, the laboratories in the University's Faculty of Science, including the new ones at the Marine Biological Station, and those

at the Polytechnic are reasonably adequate, but the most familiar sound at Tal-Qroqq is the wail of the dedicated research worker who wants an expensive piece of equipment and is told he cannot get it. The University's income from State funds enables it to give limited support to research and even less to publishing, so extensive projects have to seek very often funds from foreign or international foundations or other bodies. Thus the work being carried out in the Department of Physiology and Biochemistry has received substantial grants-in-aid from the Nuffield Foundation, and Britain's Overseas Development Administration has been another important source for the support of research projects. Another way of exceeding local boundaries has been to collaborate with departments in foreign Universities engaged in the same field. Thus the Department of Maltese has been engaged in a dialectal survey in conjunction with the Department of Semitic Languages at Leeds University, and the Department of Physiology and Biochemistry's research project on abnormal haemoglobins in Malta is being carried out in conjunction with the Medical College of Georgia which agreed to support a Research Fellowship in Malta for this purpose.

A serious disadvantage faced by the highly specialised research worker is the dearth of good libraries and the lack of libraries with specialised collections. The only libraries with fairly large collections are the Royal Malta Library and the Royal University of Malta Library, and even their collective resources are highly inadequate if one considers that even scholars in countries with such excellent libraries as those of Great Britain have from time to time to call upon the resources of foreign libraries. In any case, the Royal Malta Library is solely for the humanist: scientists have to rely entirely on the University library. This library can afford to subscribe to fewer than one thousand periodical titles, and though a high proportion of its funds are spent on science periodicals, specialist coverage is often very thin. On the other hand, the main abstracting journals, like *Chemical abstracts* and *Physics abstracts*, are received by this library: they are very good tools for the research worker to trace relevant literature and then obtain it in Xerox form, through the University Library, from the British Library Lending Division in Yorkshire, whose service is normally very efficient. On a few occasions, the University library also helped scientists with requests for computer searches in Britain. Malta does not possess a computer to which her research workers can have access.

For primary materials, the historian and the social scientist are placed best of all. The historian has an abundance of archival material to draw upon for some periods in our history: other periods, like the Arab period, are notoriously undocumented in this country. The social scientist is just as well off, having a good range of statistical publications to work on, and almost virgin territory to explore. Both the historian and the social scientist do find it difficult at times, however, to make comparative studies with other countries, because of a dearth of published foreign sources in Maltese libraries.

The Maltese research worker has also to face a difficulty with which foreign scholars are also familiar nowadays. He finds that his research is regarded in official, fund-providing circles, as being 'unproductive' and thus an unworthy recipient of public monies or even of monies administered by private organisations. It is hardly surprising that the research workers in the various technologies, including medicine, and in some of the social sciences, such as economics, find it much easier to convince the holders of the purse-strings of their work's social relevance, than it is for someone in many fields of pure science, or in most arts subjects.

In a way, this difficulty is the basic one, particularly for those doing research in the institutes of higher education, all of which are funded either completely or to a large extent by the State. This is understandable in a country which is far from wealthy, but there is an obvious danger to research which may subsequently be of great practical importance, although this may not be evident at the moment. Still, it is difficult not to give priority to work which may have direct, beneficial influence on the agricultural, industrial or social development of the country. Part I of the Dahrendorf Report on the University spoke of the need for the 'identification of the needs of the country and the society of Malta as they become relevant to developments in higher education' and of the 'initiative of new developments within the fields of training and research ... and phasing out of activities which are no longer relevant'. It ought to be one of the main functions of the newly set up Council for Higher Education to provide a forum for the discussion of the country's needs in the various public and private spheres, for the State is represented on this Council by senior civil servants from various Ministries who can put forward governmental views on aims towards which research ought to be directed, whilst the three institutions of higher learning, represented by

their Heads, can comment on feasibility and put forward their institutions' views regarding the priorities desired. Only dispassioned, objective discussion at this level can ensure that the best possible decisions are reached. Alternatively, an independent body could be set up, on the lines of France's *Centre Nationale pour la Recherche Scientifique* (C.N.R.S.), which would consider requests for support of research projects not only from Higher Education but from all sectors. This body would have to administer its own funds, and would have to be composed of first-rate academics, as well as civil servants, representatives of industry and of trade unions. The sources of the funds should not be solely public: it is in private industry's interests to supply part of them. The C.N.R.S. in France does a considerable amount of publishing of research and thus makes it possible for works to be published which would never have been looked at by a commercial publisher. Something similar is badly needed in Malta. The present system of awarding sums of under £M100 to one or two books a year (which need not be research works at all) is praiseworthy, but grossly inadequate. The funds available for publishing by research workers at the University are also too small. The Gollcher Foundation also subsidises scholarly publications, but has done very little so far.

Once clear objectives in the national research policy have been set up, it is necessary to take steps to reach them and to direct one's main resources and energy in that direction. Presumably, research projects will have been costed, though obviously without certainty of accuracy, before they are approved, and each approved project will have its budget, with headings for research staff, equipment, books, purchase of microfilms and/or Xerox copies, and (in certain cases) travel.

Apart from subsidising individual projects within the framework of a national research policy, the State should also take measures for the strengthening of the country's library network. Whilst administrative centralisation would be highly detrimental to efficiency, a central policy-making body would be beneficial, for though some libraries have made informal attempts to cooperate, systematic measures are possible only if there are clear directives and, more important yet, funds made available to carry them out. Thus, the existing agreement between the Royal Malta Library and the University Library for the cooperative purchasing of scholarly works has not functioned very well largely because the former's inadequate funds have made it difficult for that Library to carry

out its side of the agreement.

For the history research worker and for the social scientist, the centralisation of public archives in a Public Record Office would be a great boon. The papers published in the University publication, *Maltese history what future?* provide ample evidence for the need felt for such an institution, and for the benefits that would accrue from it. Such an institution, preferably with air-conditioned and dehumidified repositories, would for one thing save much of our precious archives from rotting away in the manner described almost macabrely by Godfrey Wettinger.

Little is known of the research, if there is any, being carried out in our industries. It is known, however, that one or two have research officers; a well-known brewery recently sent its research officer for postgraduate training in the chemistry of brewing in Scotland. If it should prove economically impossible for individual industries to finance entirely this research, which would enable them to improve their products, contributions to, say, a University department and cooperation between the factory's laboratory and that University department might be the solution.

What is needed above all is for more people and institutions to realise that if they want research tailored to their needs, it has to be done mostly in this country. Money spent judiciously on it, far from being wasted, ought to bring in rich dividends.

ADULT EDUCATION: THE ROLE OF R.U.M.

by E.L. ZAMMIT

UNIVERSITIES have become notorious in several countries for developing into specialized centres of learning which are unrelated to the most pressing needs of the societies which support them. It is perhaps ironic that contemporary affluent societies, characterized by so many luxuries which earlier societies could not afford, are reluctant to subsidize the existence of 'ivory towers'. Contemporary criticisms are aimed at the quality of much research carried out in universities in terms of its relevance to society. Universities are also criticized especially by radicals for failing to promote what they regard as 'necessary' changes in the social structure.[1] Instead, like many other traditional institutions, universities tend to reflect the existing power distribution of their society and to promote its continuity. As a result universities are said to be largely manned by elites – especially those constituting the traditional professions and the middle class 'intellectuals'.

Undoubtedly, the pressure being exercised on universities to adapt themselves to the demands of Governments and other 'stake holders' reflects the newly emerging power centres within societies as well as changing values at large.[2] Universities lack the power and often the inclination to resist their new masters. They resemble the intellectuals and artists of the past who depended upon their patrons for their existence and who consequently were under their influence in their works of art.

As far as R.U.M. is concerned, much of the criticism levelled by Government is particularly directed at its social role. Because of the small scale of Malta's University, it cannot be expected to

[1] Such criticisms are directed at universities as institutions. The parts played by certain university groups (e.g. students) and individuals in promoting radical social reforms are obvious.

[2] Universities – like organizations generally – may be conceived as coalitions of several 'stakeholders'. These include all those individuals and groups who depend on the organization for the attainment of their goals and on whom the organization depends for its survival. 'Stakeholders' make certain conditions for continuing their support.

undertake large scale research projects – especially in the sciences. Such projects would undoubtedly be far beyond its resources. Of course, this does not exclude research in certain limited, well defined areas. However, the bulk of R.U.M. activity is bound to remain in its teaching functions. To be fair, R.U.M. was never quite an 'ivory tower'. For example, its staff has been very active – perhaps too active – on an individual level in its professional activities outside the University. Teaching at the University has traditionally been conceived by many staff members as only a part-time activity – mainly for prestige and other peripheral benefits.[3]

Nonetheless the University was for many years monopolized by local intellectual elites. Even when, as a result of changes in the social structure it expanded and became available to the 'new' middle social strata, it continued to respond to traditional demands and aspirations. There was hardly any change in its value orientations. Its students were mainly attracted by the traditional image of the graduate status – accompanied by its economic and power privileges. Hence the disappointment when, due to various factors, many 'new' graduates remained unemployed. There is still a lamentable lack of appreciation of the special qualities which a graduate is supposed to have particularly among local businessmen and industrialists. They would rather rely on a combination of experience and common sense which have served them well enough in the past. And as every market researcher knows, it is difficult to sell to a businessman. This itself is another indication of the distance which separates university education and the problems of the 'real' world outside.

It was partly in response to such problems that the Dahrendorf Commission,[4] recently appointed by the Government in order to examine the role of the University has strongly recommended that the University should participate 'more closely in the life of the

[3]Even today part-time employees on the teaching staff by far outnumber the full-time employees.

[4]The Royal University of Malta Commission (The XVth Report, Part II page 4). Prominent among the *Academic Reforms* necessary, the Commission recommends that the University should 'move into the social sciences'. And subsequently 'The enlargement of the present limited range of part-time and extra-mural studies is an essential condition for involving the University more closely in the life of the Community'. (d) '... In particular, industry, commerce and banking should be encouraged to contribute to courses in business management...' (e)

community.' It should make its educational facilities available to a wider cross section of the Maltese Society. This can be done through adult educational activities organized by the University itself and not simply through the initiative of its individual staff members.

On the part of the Maltese public there is an urgent need for adult educational programmes. There is also an encouraging awareness of this need. As the rate of social and technological change gathers momentum the adult generation increasingly finds itself at a loss in its ability to cope with these changes. Education offers them the means with which to re-equip themselves with the necessary intellectual apparatus. Adult education is made possible by shorter working hours and the higher standards of living generally.

In recent years, the Department of Economics – as well as other University departments – have conducted a number of open forums aimed at making the general public aware of the outcome of their socio-economic investigations on various contemporary issues. While attracting a sizeable audience, the result was often disappointing in that the response came mainly from the same persons or others drawn from the same social background. Typically, the workers shied away.

During the past academic year a new venture was started by the Economics Department. With the cooperation of the trade-unions and various employers a series of extension courses was inaugurated with the aim of providing adult education in the social sciences for special categories of people. One course was specifically planned for trade unionists, another for personnel managers and a third for supervisors.[5] The programmes consisted of a number of sessions each devoted to the theoretical and practical aspects of issues relating to the work situation. Most sessions included lecturing and group periods. Instructors made it a point to encourage active participation by giving everyone the opportunity to voice his opinion on the topics under discussion. The series was concluded by a symposium on wage determination in Malta.

[5] Professor E.C. Koziara, Associate Professor of Economics, Drexel University and Fulbright Lecturer in Economics, R.U.M. was mainly responsible for the coordination of these programmes. They were held with the full support of the Malta Employers' Association and the General Workers' Union. There were also participants from other Maltese trade unions. Each programme consisted of about ten sessions of four hours each.

The participants were also presented with certificates of attendance.

When these programmes were being planned it was assumed that the Maltese adults – like Maltese students – were inhibited from asking questions. Boissevain has suggested that this was due to certain traditional structural factors like the centralized colonial administration, the religious fear of doctrinal heresy, the Island's small scale and the language barrier in educational institutions.[6] It can, however be argued that these constraints apply mainly to formal questioning. As every foreign teacher knows, Maltese students – like Maltese workers – often react to what their superior says indirectly, among themselves in the Maltese language, confident that he cannot understand them. This way the language barrier has been manipulated into a protective device from foreign, superior 'intrusions'. It is well-known how workers develop their own 'language', often through the use of special signs and gestures, as a defensive mechanism against their bosses. It was therefore anticipated that these obstacles would emerge during the educational programmes. The Maltese have become socialized into enduring endless sermons and speeches but not to participate calmly in an intellectual discussion. And it would be an oversimplification to claim that these elements were totally absent during these sessions. However, the fact that open discussion did emerge in the group sessions reflects the new atmosphere which is beginning to prevail everywhere in Malta. In the work place, the school, the Church, the family, the political party, the club and the town or village the old hierarchical structure is breaking down. There is at the grass roots a clear demand for autonomous expression and ultimately for participation in decisions. A new Malta is evidently in the making.

In a survey on workers' participation in Malta conducted during 1972,[7] one of the results which emerged was that the Maltese workers overwhelmingly desire to participate at both the top and the shop floor levels. Such a tendency was clearly evident in the educational programmes held at R.U.M. recently. The experience

[6] J. Boissevain: 'Why the Maltese ask so few questions?' *Ferment* (R.U.M. Jan. 1969).

[7] G. Kester: *Workers' Participation in Malta – Issues and Opinions.* Department of Economics, R.U.M. and Institute of Social Studies, The Hague 1974.

of participation in one's own education was indeed one of the benefits which could be derived from them. In addition, the technical knowledge which they became acquainted with could serve them as the basis for further study and self-improvement. As Mr G. Agius, the General Secretary of the G.W.U., stated in the opening session, effective workers' participation in industry requires them to possess certain techniques as well as to broaden their horizons. Moreover, by raising their general educational levels, individual workers would secure for themselves better opportunities for upward mobility.

The educational process is ultimately one of communication of ideas and experience among a group of people. This process offers an ideal opportunity for progress towards social consensus about social goals and means among the participants. These held constant re-definition as a result of new ideas and experience. Unfortunately, as a result of over-population, economic scarcity, political impotence and other factors, the Maltese people have to suffer profound divisions and competitive elements in their social structure. The economic, political and social goals set out by successive Governments require a much greater level of national consensus for their realization than has been achieved so far. As a united people the Maltese need to strive towards common objectives through commonly accepted measures in the face of stiff competition from abroad. The educational process establishes communication channels through which acceptable solutions to common problems can be worked out in a tolerant, democratic atmosphere. Internal rivalries between classes, age groups and other social divisions can tear apart bigger and wealthier nations. The current popularity of adult education programmes in Malta and the enthusiasm manifested at the R.U.M. sessions indicates an intellectual vacuum exists which can be profitably exploited for our common well-being. There is a demand for knowledge among a cross section of the Maltese population – youths and adults.[8] The University can serve as an ideal forum for all social categories where common solutions for common problems could be sought at

[8] There are several voluntary organizations conducting adult education courses in Malta at present. Yet their facilities are very limited. Meanwhile, the Department of Education also offers instruction in specific subjects during its evening courses. Yet there are vital areas, particularly in the social studies at the higher levels which remain neglected.

the grass roots level. To this end the University can contribute through the services of its trained personnel and the use of its facilities.

On its own part the University can also reap many benefits from such an involvement in national issues. It acquires a new identity and a more direct sense of usefulness. For while it continues to provide society with its needs for professional manpower it extends its educational activities even further – to those who as adults, have already 'graduated'. In this way it is enabled to perform its traditional teaching and research roles from a new perspective. For there is no better laboratory for the testing of hypotheses and the development of adequate theory than the actual world itself. Teaching and learning has always been a two-way process.

It appears that the involvement of universities in adult education programmes is being recognized as one of their important roles in other countries as well. The role of universities in workers' education programmes was the subject of a symposium convened by the I.L.O. in Geneva in November 1973. A number of experts from universities, trade unions and related areas attended. Their recommendations have been endorsed by the I.L.O. Governing Body.

'The experts suggested that the I.L.O. should establish "a central clearing house of teaching materials used in union-University workers' education programmes, possibly on the model of the International Institute for Labour Studies or in association with it.'[9]

Adaptation to changing situations is a guarantee of the survival of any organization. The new role which universities are adopting ensures that rather than isolated centres of conservatism they are becoming catalysts of democratic change in their social environment.

[9] I.I.L.S. Bulletin (12) Page 78. The conclusions of this symposium have been published in a volume entitled: *The Role of Universities in Workers' Education* (I.L.O. Geneva 1974).

CORRESPONDENCE

16th July, 1975

Sir,

For a number of years, the Students' Representative Council, as you well know, and the University Chaplain have been urging on the authorities, the need for a University Medical Officer. My contact with students as University Chaplain has led me to the conviction that the students should enjoy the services of a doctor. The priest is often approached by people who in fact, to turn Shakespeare's phrase the other way round, need more the physician than the divine. In this letter I should like to spell out at some length why I am convinced of the need of a University Medical Officer by giving examples of types of cases who would benefit from a permanent Medical Officer.

Before proceeding, I should like to make it clear that the medical officer in question will have to be easily available and on friendly terms with the students. By mixing with them he should be able to spot those who may need help, perhaps even before they are aware of it themselves. A member of the academic staff of the Faculty of Medicine would be the obvious choice, but besides his office he would need a small clinic, where he would be in attendance once or twice a week for a few hours to receive anyone wishing to consult him. The sitting of the clinic might present a dilemma: if it is in a conspicuous place, it might frighten the shy to be seen going there, but if on the other hand it is hidden away, many might remain unaware of its existence.

Turning to the cases which he is most likely to meet, the most common would be those of students who through hard work especially as examinations draw near, are in danger of suffering a breakdown, which can often be prevented if discovered in time. In this connection, the help of the academic staff is very important as they often notice before anybody else, from some peculiar behaviour in generally normal students or from a sudden drop in performance in the work of usually good students or from other indications, that all is not well. A timely warning to the Medical Officer or a little encouragement to the student to approach the Medical Officer could make all the difference.

Difficulties of mental health are by no means the only ones students face, though they are by far the most common. But even other problems, like drugs or extra-marital pregnancies, are often connected with psychological troubles. The doctor is particularly necessary for the cases just mentioned, even though they are comparatively rare. Much more common would be cases of acute anxiety, difficulty in relating to others, feelings of insecurity or inferiority, but especially, sheer inability to take the strain of hard study which is demanded by University courses.

It must already have been gathered from the examples given that the University Medical Officer will need some training in psychology not so much in order to be able to prescribe the cure himself as much as to be able to refer his patients to the right specialist. Sometimes, the Medical Officer may need the help of the Chaplain in dealing with a client. Co-operation between the two, of course always with the client's explicit consent, could give very positive results. This co-operation will most often take the form of advising the client himself to consult the other University official as well. Sometimes little can be achieved unless (confidentiality being strictly respected) there is co-operation all round, with each one helping in his own way and within his own competence. Very often even the client's fellow-students should help, at least by refraining from making remarks and jokes which would make him self-conscious about his consulting the Medical Officer. Such comment, though often not meant to be cruel, tends to prevent from going to the Medical Officer the very ones who need it most.

Before closing I would not like to leave out certain problems which may not properly fall within the Medical Officer's scope except in so far as they cause mental strain. Such, for example, is the case of students who are at University not because they really want to obtain a degree but rather because they have been pressured, sometimes subtly and not so subtly, to do so by their parents who may unconsciously wish to fulfil their own ambitions through their offspring. A very common case in Malta is for young men and women not to be allowed by their parents to grow up and mature. This can be seen even in the choice of courses at University as some students choose according to their parents' wishes rather than their own aptitude. Other students may choose courses which they do not really like but which they find the only ones open to them. Such 'choices' cause enough mental anguish to need the attention of the Medical Officer, although the solution lies elsewhere.

One may object that many of the cases mentioned really need the services of a counsellor besides those of a medical officer. The objection is well made. I myself started off by seeing the need of a medical officer but after a short time I became convinced that even he would not be enough. I still feel that the appointment of a University Medical Officer should be given priority, but only as a first step towards building up an all-round counselling team.

Yours truly,

Mario Jaccarini, S.J.

PAINTS?

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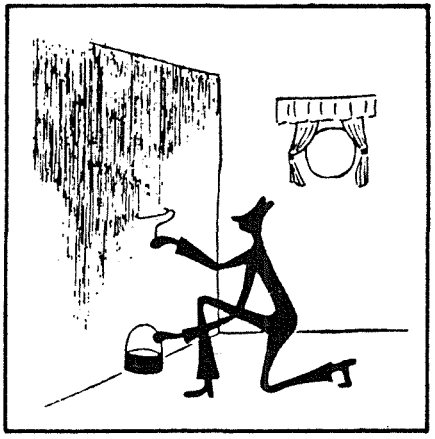

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