
Editorial

This guest edition of the *IDS Bulletin* has been contributed by members of the Department of Administrative Studies, University of Manchester (DAS), which holds courses, of varying length, for public officials from developing countries. Many of those who attend these courses are what used to be termed 'generalist' administrators, and a number of articles in the first part of this issue refer to problems of course construction, content and teaching methods, to be applied to a group whose only common feature would appear to be the state as paymaster. The 'business' or 'industry' of running such courses is the subject of worldwide debate: what does training actually mean; in what sense is it different from education; does training improve administrative capacity, etc. These questions are familiar to many readers of the *Bulletin*, and there is little doubt that the answers are as various as the people involved.

Questions of this sort are raised, in particular by Martin Minogue's article on what he describes as 'doublethink' and 'newspeak' (with apologies to Orwell) involved in the training 'business'. What he has to say is unlikely to endear him to many of the older hands at the game, and his attack on what he sees as the fallacies of the relationship between training and underdevelopment should provoke debate.

Ron Goslin also looks at the question of study programmes for public administrators, and concludes that the difficulties of gearing broadly-based programmes to effective training objectives are so great, that it is problematical whether we should make claims on the basis of training objectives at all.

The treatment of the subject of development studies for public officials is dealt with in two contributions. The first from Colin Fuller deals with barriers to the growth of development studies within a University framework. He points to the fact that many disciplines contribute to development studies and suggests that, at least organisationally, this constitutes a barrier because of the way disciplines have developed within departments in Universities. However there has been movement in a number of directions. Many people are aware of the excessive attachment to disciplines, but one has to remember that development studies remains 'underdeveloped' as a sub-

ject and relies on a range of disciplines for inputs. This can in itself give rise to a fruitful interchange between what were often rival camps (economists on the one hand and sociologists and political scientists on the other). The development of policy studies is an area where the disciplines can meet, and problems of resource generation and allocation can be discussed by economists and political scientists alike. The second contribution on this theme is by Lloyd Edmonds on the subject of Development Economics. He points out that the monopoly enjoyed by the economist is over: There is now increasing emphasis on the non-economic factors in development.

The question of research and study programmes is discussed by Martin Boodhoo who emphasises the importance of 'action research', that is, work that has an applied orientation. This is all part of the current demand for relevance—the need to make teaching and research relevant to the needs of people. There is much that is acceptable in such arguments but there are also dangers. People have many problems and the decision as to which are most important depends largely on the perception and social position of those defining the problem. I am reminded of a recent conversation with a senior Indian public official on the state of emergency in India. I was told that the Indian masses were uninterested in such issues as a free press, democracy and so on. They were interested in simply getting enough to eat. When asked what Mrs Gandhi intended to do now that her opponents were silenced, that she could not have done over the last ten years, replies became a little evasive. What the official was really saying was that for him government is easier without vocal opponents.

The second group of articles concerns the research interests of members of the department. First, Arthur Livingstone takes up the issue of collaborative research and argues that if such research is not to be some sort of academic imperialism, it must be genuinely collaborative, taking into account the priorities of the people likely to be affected by changes resulting from the research. George Ritchie's work on Disaster Preparedness is an area of growing interest. The article, which argues strongly for preparing for natural disasters, stresses the crucial role of the administration in the planning of support systems.

It also makes a number of proposals in the area of training for such eventualities.

David Winder, in collaboration with James Craig and Martin Minogue, has been looking at rural development policies in Mexico, Malaysia and Ireland. His article examines aspects of agrarian reform in Mexico and points to the difficulties of collective agriculture in a predominantly capitalist economy. Martin Minogue sets out in a short research note, his ideas on research in Britain and Ireland as a means of gaining insight into the development process. James Craig's article on the Politics of Planning in Malaysia attempts to place the Third Malaysia Plan within the context of the Malaysian political system.

Ron Clarke, who has been running a course at

DAS for administrators in higher educational institutions in developing countries, is interested in the role of universities in development. He argues the case for regarding community-related activities as an important element in university work, with a place alongside teaching and research.

This edition of the *Bulletin* does not have a theme as such, other than an opportunity kindly provided by the IDS for colleagues in DAS to raise issues concerned with teaching and research in development studies, particularly for public officials. I can only hope that we have not 'stared at our collective navel' too much—we would welcome views on the issues raised here.

J.A.C.