

The Crisis of International Education

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International education is in a state of extreme crisis. The International Education Act signed into law by President Johnson on October 29, 1966, has yet to be funded. Recent congressional allocations with respect to international exchange programs have been slashed by an unprecedented 30 per cent — from \$46 million to \$31 million. Hardest hit was the Fulbright program whose funds were reduced approximately 72 per cent. The Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs which oversees the exchange programs has planned an overall geographic cut, and Western Europe which traditionally has received the most grants will experience the largest numerical cut. For example, the United States allocated \$680,000 in 1968 to fund an exchange faculty program in Great Britain. In 1969, there will be \$136,000 for the Britain program — a cut of 80 per cent. Denmark which had an appropriation of \$380,000 in 1968 received only \$40,000 for 1969. Other countries in Western Europe are affected in the same manner. By treaty with the countries involved, each agrees to match a part of the American contribution to the exchange program. It is hoped that the local government will match its contribution with the 1968 appropriation rather than reducing it proportionately to the 1969 level. If not, the Fulbright Commission which operates the program in eighteen European countries might be inclined to terminate the exchange programs rather than maintain them at a minimal level. In 1969, U.S. graduate students studying abroad and exchange faculty have been the group most seriously affected. These programs have been cut by more than 67 per cent. In addition, the number of foreign students studying in the U.S. will be reduced approximately 20 per cent.

The over-all squeeze on international education programs has been primarily due to the Vietnam war, the war on poverty, and the balance of payments problem as well as a traditional lack of sympathy by Congressmen for international education. Kenneth Holland, President of the Institute of International Education,

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perceived signs of an impending crisis in educational exchange when he wrote in the 1968 annual report that "the burden of foreign commitments and the increasing awareness of domestic needs threaten to undermine interest in and support for international education programs." He added this warning: "the nation's concern to attack national problems can, in the end, prove short-sighted if it means the abandonment of our international interests and concerns."

With the passage of the International Education Act, the Federal Government has committed itself to international education as a major national policy. When President Johnson proposed the I.E.A. to Congress in February, 1966, he said, "education lies at the heart of every nation's hopes and purposes. It must be at the heart of our international relations." In a subsequent report to Congress in August, 1967, President Johnson



wrote, "the international exchange of students, teachers, scholars, and leading specialists is one of the nation's most effective means for dispelling ignorance, prejudice, and international suspicion." Congressional delay in funding the I.E.A. has prevented the establishment of a Center for Educational Cooperation in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare in which international education was to be emphasized as an integral part of our entire educational system. In not funding the I.E.A., Congress has halted the implementation of new programs in international affairs in the elementary and secondary schools as well as comprehensive collegiate programs in international study at the undergraduate level. International education at home is essential if American education is to succeed in equipping Americans with the knowledge and guiding ideas they require to make sense of the world in which we live. Addressing the annual meeting of the American Council of Learned Societies, Distinguished Professor Robert F. Byrnes of Indiana said, "it is senseless in 1968 for great universities, or even small colleges, to have large numbers of faculty members who do not . . . have a signifi-

cant amount of information concerning at least one foreign culture and who do not take the entire world, its past as well as its future, into consideration in research and instruction in their own discipline, whatever it may be."

Congressmen have been overwhelmed by the Vietnam issue, but they have been insensitive to the needs of supporting international education. If Americans had an understanding of Vietnamese history, its people and culture, we might not have intervened in their internal affairs. At least we might have been more cautious in formulating our Vietnam policy. But how many Vietnam specialists did we have in the academic community? For that matter, how many Southeast Asian and African specialists are there in government or in the university system? Not many, for we have not yet, as a nation, devoted ourselves to international studies, and so we have not yet caught up with our responsibilities as a world leader. It is not through less communication, but through more, that we can insure either the strength and integrity of American education or the strength and integrity of American foreign policy.

A proposal to remedy the de-emphasis in international education is to establish an effective lobby in Washington, comparable to the American Medical Association and the National Rifle Association. Private organizations that are involved in international education have traditionally acted as independent units and have been primarily concerned with their own particular programs instead of unifying their efforts. Recently, a deep groundswell of discontent in the scientific communities with respect to appropriations prompted President Nixon to add \$10 million to the \$480 million ceiling that had been placed on National Science Foundation research spending. Likewise, prominent organizations such as the Institute of International Education, Foreign Policy Association, and the Experiment in International Living should coordinate their efforts and exert constant pressure on the new Congress to fund the I.E.A. and to restore allocations to the Fulbright program to a decent level. More important, former Fulbright grantees and international centers on college campuses should make an herculean effort to support and preserve these programs. The Councils on World Affairs can play an important role in establishing a "hot line" to Washington by emphasizing the significance of international education in their respective communities. One method of funding international education programs would be to make greater use of the foreign currencies that have accumulated under the Food for Freedom programs. What is required is new legislation appropriating those surplus foreign currencies for use by the State Department to

expand the exchange programs in Europe, Africa, as well as Asia.

If international education is to survive, it desperately needs a spokesman in Washington. If we are to meet today's demands for quality education, support and encouragement are necessary from the Federal Government. The Federal Government should re-think its responsibilities and obligations to international education. In addressing Congress, President Johnson stated, "we can not ignore international education . . . our national interest warrants it, the work of peace warrants it."

Responding to a resolution by former U.S. Ambassador Arthur Goldberg, the United Nations proclaimed the year 1970 as "International Education Year." Goldberg stated that "such an observance in 1970 could mobilize energies and inspire world-wide initiatives that would give this subject the priority it deserves." A milestone in this direction would be for Congress to fund the International Education Act which it enacted in 1966 and to restore to the Fulbright program the 72 per cent slash in funds. It is now a fundamental and overwhelming fact of contemporary life that an education without an international dimension is an inadequate education for Americans in this century.

correspondence

Dear Sir:

For my doctoral dissertation I am making a comparative analysis of the attitudes of the Methodist and Anglican churches of Great Britain and South Africa toward the trade union movement, between 1914 and 1968. I would appreciate hearing from any of your readers who remember actions or statements made by these churches, their members or their clergy, especially with regard to

<i>Great Britain</i>	<i>South Africa</i>
General Strike, 1926	Rand Strike, 1922
World War II Strikes	African Miners' Strikes, 1946
London Busmen's Strike, 1958	Banning of Trade Union Leaders, 1950's & 1960's
Communists in Trade Unions	Communists in Trade Unions

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