Discussion Group II (English Speaking)

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Methodological considerations relating to the investigation outlined in Professor Eckstein's paper were looked at, but a good deal of the discussion concerned itself with the paper's basic underlying assumptions. Examples of the questions raised are:

1) Were there differences between metropolita teachers and those working in other parts of the country? If so, in what way did these two groups of teachers differ?

2) Why was such an investigation being made in the first place? Could such an investigation hope to solve the problem of educational crises? One member underlined the basic assumption of the investigation which was that teachers in cities had common characteristics and that by giving them a training of a special kind they might perhaps be better equipped to tackle the specific metropolitan problems of education and of society at large. In reply a member emphasised that the central points of education were the pupils and their schools. Hence, he asked why one should start with the teachers to settle educational problems? A further point raised was whether "constant crisis" in New York could or should be expressed only in terms of educational needs. The education of teachers could not on its own solve the various and varied problems existing in New York. A member stressed that Eckstein's investigation was aiming to discover what kind of teachers should teach in cities and how they ought to be trained.

The discussion group agreed that there was still room for defining ordinary and urban schools with greater clarity. The problems in cities, though, stemmed not from schools but from the social fabric of any given industrial society. In what way, it was asked, would the proposed investigation contribute to solving problems in the metropolis? A member replied that since the economic and social aspects of the metropolis were different from those in rural areas, so were there also differences between educational institutions in urban and rural areas.

Other problems raised in the course of the debate concerned homogeneity, or the lack of it, in cities, and the question of teachers' place of residence as having an import on the altogether complex nature of the assumptions made in the investigation.

Another aspect to the problem of characteristics of city teachers lay in examining the "variables" of a particular social group, such as the body of teachers, in order to effect comparisons with other social groups. One member referred to a consideration of the validity of systematic indicators regarding the identification of social groups. The paper aimed to emphasise differences in urban and rural teachers, so that, if differences did exist, these had then to be related to meeting the specific "needs" in the metropolitan area. Consequently, this would lead to the question of the nature of teacher training to meet the specific needs of urban areas.

The group felt that the basic assumption of the investigation should be looked into
very carefully in order to eliminate a possible danger of its going astray. For instance, a positive contribution of the investigation would surely be to find out what new aspects should be introduced into teacher training and what old ones dropped. This would make teachers acquire fresh attitudes to meet new conditions in the cities.

The terrifying experience of New York as an educative environment was mentioned by a member who at the same time believed that cities were not especially educative. It was seen as an expression of the partial failure of schools in meeting educational problems. The business of schools in cities was to present a counter-educational force to the existing reality of the forces of evil in urban areas. The crux of the problem was, however, how did one go about investigating the learning tasks of a school.

Finally, it was agreed that other types of research were needed to find out how schools could alter the status quo, otherwise Prof. Eckstein's and Prof. Noah's investigation on its own would be devoid of any dynamics.

The main points arising in the discussion of the papers of the German Working Party were:

(1) Some members of the discussion group felt that the teacher's role in school was changing, and that the concepts of professionalism was being re-thought. Thus traditional subject emphasis is being replaced by emphasis on methods, on the use of learning aids, team teaching, the combination of courses to suit individual students or groups of students, etc.

(2) It was agreed that teachers should be (and indeed are) involved in educational innovation, but views differed as to the level at which they should participate, i.e.,
   a) at the level of formulating overall goals?
   b) at the level of creating the external structure of a school system?
   c) at the level of developing courses and curricula within a school?
   d) at the level of developing classroom instruction?

Clearly, teachers are involved in innovation at level d); but should levels a), b) and c) come within their sphere of influence? Are decisions concerning overall goals and structure essentially political? Who innovates in the realm of the curriculum? It was suggested that one needs to analyse the agents of, and forces of resistance to, curriculum reform.

Three further points emerged:

(3) that the process of communication between politicians and practitioners should be a constant one, and that certain groups in society (e.g. teachers) must participate in educational decision-making because of their involvement in education, if there is to be effective democracy.

(4) that teacher training should be related to the aims of the educational system.

(5) that one should think not in terms of "the teacher" as an individual, but in terms of teacher solidarity, i.e. of teachers "en masse" making their viewpoint felt.

The discussion concerning the papers of the English Working Party centred around three related topics:

(1) *The Desirability and Feasibility of Integrating Universities and Teacher Education*

It was suggested that teacher training was post-secondary education, and that University undergraduate courses (where students often had few contacts with professional staff dealing with research) now represented a similar type of extended secondary training—with the result that there was little contrast between universities and outside institutions, and hence no problem regarding the question as to whether teacher training takes place within universities or not.

On the other hand, the point was made that universities represent a theoretical
orientation in their work, whereas teacher training is a more practical task.

(2) The Nature of Academic Freedom

Academic freedom with respect to freedom to conduct research requires financial freedom. In many instances, the impulse (both monetary and otherwise) for research comes from outside the universities. The point was also made that at various stages in their history, the universities have had their role defined for them by various institutions (e.g. the church), and hence they have followed social paths, rather than displaying autonomy.

(3) The Role of the University

There was disagreement concerning the current role of the universities. On one hand, it was felt that universities should be (and largely are) institutions sheltered from social pressures. On the other hand, it was suggested that universities neither are nor should be so sheltered. Pressure from governments, students and other forces in society to increase the social relevance of the universities was apparent.

This controversy was evident in questions concerning the research function of universities (e.g. What types of research are needed? Are they being done in universities? Can and should a distinction be maintained between theoretical—basic—and applied research?). Two contrasting trends in the structure of “higher” education were cited: a more general structure, with no hierarchy (e.g. Sweden—where all post upper secondary education is now termed “higher education”); and a binary or multi-stage structure, with the universities retaining their traditional prestige.
Groupe de Discussion II (Langue Anglaise)

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On envisagea les implications méthodologiques de la communication du Professeur Eckstein mais la majeure partie de la discussion tourna sur les hypothèses sur lesquelles est fondée cette communication. Quelles sont les différences entre les enseignants des villes et ceux des autres parties d'un pays ? Dans quelle mesure les enseignants peuvent-ils aider à résoudre les problèmes des villes et dans quelle mesure leur formation pourrait-elle être adaptée aux besoins particuliers des enseignants dans les villes ? Le groupe indiqua qu'il était nécessaire, pour plus de clarté, de définir l'école urbaine et les autres et, également, d'envisager les différentes pressions économiques et sociales qui existent dans les régions urbaines et les régions rurales. On a ressenti le besoin d'avoir une définition plus scrupuleuse de l'hypothèse de base de cette recherche et on discuta les problèmes qui se présentent lorsqu'on essaie d'investiger les tâches d'enseignement dans une école. Pour donner une dimension dynamique à l'étude, il a paru important d'entreprendre une recherche permettant de savoir dans quelle mesure les écoles peuvent aider à modifier le statu quo.

Les points principaux soulevés au cours de la discussion des exposés du groupe de travail de Berlin furent les suivants :

1) le changement de nature du rôle de l'enseignant ;
2) dans quelle mesure l'enseignant doit participer au renouveau pédagogique, non seulement en modifiant l'instruction qu'il offre en classe, mais aussi en contribuant au développement des programmes, à la réforme des structures de l'école et à la formulations des buts de l'éducation ;
3) le besoin de communication entre, d'une part, les hommes politiques qui prennent des décisions en matière d'éducation et, d'autre part, ceux qui les appliquent ;
4) l'importance de la relation entre les buts des systèmes d'éducation et la formation des enseignants ;
5) le rôle des opinions des enseignants lors de la prise de décisions.

Au cours de la discussion des exposés du groupe de travail de Londres on considéra les points suivants :

1) la possibilité d'incorporer la formation des enseignants au sein de l'université ;
2) la nature de la liberté intellectuelle et sa relation avec la liberté financière ;
3) le rôle de l'université ; dans quelle mesure elle est et doit être protégée contre les pressions sociales.