

A. Babs Fafunwa and J.V. Aisiku (Eds.) *Education in Africa*,
George Allen and Unwin, London, 1982, pp.270, £5.50

Education in Africa: A Comparative Survey is a welcome but disappointing collection of contributions by Africans about Africa. Babs Fafunwa, one of the editors, provides a broad perspective which traces the pre-colonial and indeed pre-Islamic and pre-Christian indigenous educational system. However he tends to equate 'education' with 'socialization' and consequently spends most of the introductory chapter itemizing the goals of traditional African education. The Islamic influence in North Africa and its spread to West Africa meant that thirty-five out of forty-five African countries would retain into the twentieth century distinct evidence of Islamic influence. The Qur'an, Hadith and Shari'a are still taught in many parts, and the Qur'anic school system has many distinctive features. The period of colonialism meant that the educational system was dominated by the interests of foreign missions and the evangelicals, and this later became a secular promulgation of colonialism. Throughout, the colonial powers were anxious to 'de-Africanize' the African, none more than the French.

Solomon Shy looks at the chequered history of education in Cameroon under British, German and French domination. Shy examines, without much critical analysis, various sectors of education, providing an abundance of statistical data. The University of Yaoundé, for example, has over 8,000 students and 400 lecturers giving 1:20 ratio. Females gain only 15% of the places in higher education. In Egypt Abdelaziz Soliman gives us the statistic that 25% of higher education places belong to women while in schools the pupil teacher ratio is 37:1. Again, in Ethiopia Germa Amare presents us with a bewildering array of facts and figures but with a glimmering of an attempt at analysis. Education in Ghana (AL Asiedu-Akrofi) and Kenya (Filomina Indire) is treated in a factual rather than in an analytic fashion. Lesotho (J. Mohapeloa) and Liberia (M. Brown Sherman), together with Mali (A. Toure) and Nigeria (O. Ukeje and J. Aisiku), are treated little better.

It is with some relief that we come to Julius Nyerere's chapter on Tanzania which is a thoughtful questioning of major issues such as 'What Kind of Society Are we Trying to Build?' Although written in 1967 we can only assume that the sentiments and worries still remain.

The final 'Progress and Prospect' perspective is presented by Fafunwa and Aisiku which, not surprisingly, links education in Africa quite firmly with development. The book as a whole is dry and boring and lacking in any real analytic/sociological perspective. One can only assume that the editors have issued a formula for each chapter which the author follows. The mere presentation of figures and percentages taken from government reports, without analysis, does little to help the reader, and like all such facts and figures it is very soon out of date.

KENNETH JONES
Institute of Adult Education
University of Botswana