

# WORLD education NEWS & REVIEWS

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## TRENDS

### Caught Between Arabism and Self-Interest

Bassama Almusallam

Even before Iraq invaded Kuwait five years ago, this small Arabic country was vulnerable to outside forces.

As the early center for much of the transit trade from India, Africa and China to Europe, and because of its fresh water wells and natural harbor, Kuwait was coveted. The Wahhabies and the Turks were among early invaders who had to be fought off.

The discovery of oil at Burgan in 1938 made Kuwait a major world producer, with recoverable reserves sufficient to take the country well into the next century. Only Saudi Arabia, Russia and Iraq have more oil. The discovery also enabled Kuwait to have one of the highest per capita GNPs in the world (estimated at \$9,700 in 1989) and to develop a much envied social welfare

*Continued on page 21*

**Dr. Bassama Almusallam** is a faculty member at the University of Kuwait.

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Designer *Luba Lukova*  
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### **World Education News & Reviews**

P.O. Box 745 Old Chelsea Station  
New York, NY 10113-0745  
Tel: 212.966.6311  
Fax: 212.966.6395  
E-MAIL: info@wes.org

## **PUBLISHER'S CORNER**



### **A Rare Occasion**

This issue of WENR features articles on two countries where major political changes have recently taken place. In South Africa, the end of the apartheid system and the election of the new government have resulted in the elimination of the old two-tiered education system and the creation of a single system for people of all races. In Kuwait, education was interrupted during the occupation by Iraq. After the war ended and the former government was restored, the old education system was revived but students came back with different attitudes about themselves, their neighbors and the purpose of education and work.

It is interesting to contrast the two situations. In South Africa, the structure had to be changed first and the expectation is that with time, age-old attitudes and beliefs will also change. In Kuwait, attitudes have changed particularly towards foreigners, but the structure of education has largely remained untouched except for the decrease in the number of students now that there are limits on the number of foreigners who may live in the country and the privileges that they may be granted.

What is taking place in Kuwait and in South Africa provides us an opportunity to observe the birth of new educational systems and to watch them develop in the years to come. It is one of those rare occasions when we can really witness how educational systems are the results of the historical and political forces that shape them.

Mariam Assefa

## AUSTRALIA

### Foreign Student Growth Slows

Australia is facing a sharp decline in the rate of growth of its education export industry as universities compete for fee-paying students in the developing countries.

According to the Australian Vice Chancellors' Committee, more than 45,000 fee-paying foreign students are likely to enroll in 1995—a 15 percent rise from 1994 and an amazing 450 percent jump over the past eight years.

But the yearly percentage increase in student numbers is falling sharply. From a 250 percent rise between 1987 and 1988, annual growth dropped to 40 percent in 1989/90, 28 percent the following year, and 15 percent during the past 12 months.

A spokesman for the Australian International Education Foundation said growth was tapering off elsewhere also. In the United States, growth last year slowed to 2 percent.

Australian universities have become increasingly reliant on fees from overseas students, from whom several universities now collect more than 10 percent of their operating revenue. The sector is expected to earn a record Aus\$350 million this year from selling courses to foreign students—a 50 percent rise over the past three years alone. Fees represent a significant and expanding proportion of most university budgets.

After the federal government relaxed restrictions in 1986 on universities establishing fee-paying courses, foreign student enrollments rocketed from 1,019 the following year to nearly 17,000 in 1990 and up to 45,600 in 1995. Today, fee-paying students comprise more than 90 percent of all overseas enrollments.

Universities have also established twinning arrangements with overseas institutions. Another 20,000 students are estimated to be undertaking the first year or two of their courses in home countries before coming to Australia to complete degrees.

Figures compiled by the Department of Employment, Education and Training show that almost three out of four overseas students are from Asia and the Middle East. Among fee-paying students, those from Hong Kong have replaced Malaysians as the single largest group, with Singaporeans, Indonesians, and Chinese making up the rest of the top five.

There has also been a moderate increase in students from South Korea, Japan and Taiwan while the number from Thailand and India has doubled since 1993.

*The Times Higher 5/19/95*

## GERMANY

### Graduiertenkollegs Offered

*Graduiertenkollegs* (special postgraduate colleges) for the promotion of doctoral candidates have been in existence since 1989. This new training facility for young academics results from a recommendation made by the *Wissenschaftsrat* (Science Council) in 1988.

*Graduiertenkollegs* are designed to reduce the length of time taken to acquire a doctorate and, above all, to give gifted university graduates on scholarships a supportive environment in which to study. There are 223 *kollegs* of this type, of which 27 are in the former east Germany.

An evaluation carried out by the German Society for the Promotion of Research showed that doctoral candidates who are guided in small groups towards the acquisition of their doctorate achieve their goal much more quickly than "loners" following the customary procedure. In the biosciences, postgraduates from *Graduiertenkollegs* who obtained their doctorate were 1.2 years and, in engineering, five years younger than the average age of others acquiring their doctorate in these two disciplines. As a result of this gain in time, the average age of postgraduates obtaining their doctor's degree was just over 30, and even less in some disciplines. A third of the scholarship holders were women.

*Education & Science II/95*

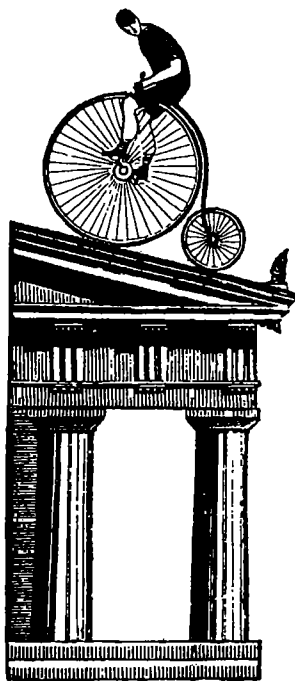
### New Selection Procedures Sought

German politicians and academics have launched a joint campaign for universities to set their own student selection procedures. It would recreate an elite higher education system by making universities compete with each other for the best students.

The reform proposal was presented to a conference in Leipzig and is named the "Leipzig declaration." It proposes that candidates apply directly to three universities and undergo aptitude tests and interviews. Only if they failed at this stage would they apply for a university place through the computerized central admissions system.

The declaration also calls for a strengthening of the *Abitur*—Germany's general certificate of secondary education that entitles students to a university place—to compulsorily include German, math, history, a foreign language and a science subject.

The *Abitur* has been the passport to university educa-



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tion in Germany for 200 years. But it has gradually become easier to pass by avoiding more difficult subjects. Each state sets its own examination and some are considerably easier to pass than others. University lecturers complain that many of the 30 percent of school-leavers who enter higher education each year are simply not university material.

*Times Higher 7/24/95*

## HONG KONG

### Polytechnic University to Offer Training

Hong Kong Polytechnic University will play a major role in training senior Chinese personnel following an agreement with the China Association for International Exchange of Personnel.

Training programs of two weeks to three months will be held in Hong Kong over the next three years for professionals from China, and joint seminars and conferences will be held to discuss economic and industrial developments. Experts from polytechnic universities are expected to also provide consultancy services in China.

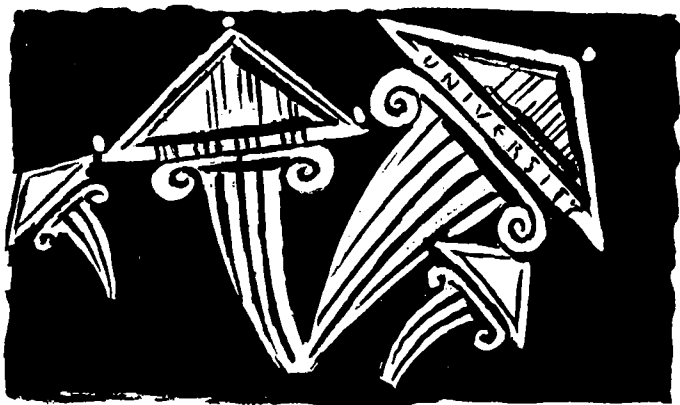
*Campus Review 8/3-9/95*

## INDIA

### More "Fake" Universities Listed

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has once again issued a warning to all states about the mushrooming growth of bogus universities, and urged them to identify such institutions and initiate legal action against them. Periodically, lists of bogus universities are released by the UGC.

The latest list was published in July: Bible University,



Ambur, North Arcot; Eastern Orthodox University, Ambur, North Arcot; Maithili University/Vishwavidyalays, Darbhanga, Bihar; Mahila Gram Vidyapith/Vishwavidyalaya, Allahabad, U.P.; Varanaseya Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya, Varanasi, U.P.; Commercial University Ltd., Daryaganj, Delhi; Globe University of Science, Kumakonam,

Tamil Nadu; Indian Education Council of U.P., Lucknow, U.P.; Gandhi Hindi Vidyapith, Allahabad, U.P.; National University of Electro Complex Homeopathy, Kanpur, U.P.; Netaji Subash Chandra Bose Open University, Acaltal, Aligarh, U.P.; Shrimati Mahadevi Verma Open University, Mughal Sarai, U.P.; DDB Sanskrit University, Putur, Trichi, Tamil Nadu; Bharatiya Shiksha Parishad U.P.; Open Vishwavidyalaya, Lucknow, U.P.; Testator Research University, Bodinayakanur, Tamil Nadu; Arya University, Srinagar, J&K; St. John's University, Kizhanattam, Kerala; National University, Nagpur, Maharashtra; United Nations University, Delhi; Vocational University, Delhi; Uttar Pradesh Vishwavidyalaya, Kosi Kalan, Mathura, U.P.; Maharana Pratap Shiksha Niketan Vishwavidyalaya, Pratrappgarh, U.P.; Raja Arabic University, Nagpur, Maharashtra; Urdu University, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

Degrees, diplomas or certificates awarded by these institutions are not recognized for purposes of employment or admission to courses of higher education.

*University News 7/24/95*

## JAPAN

### New Health Care University Opened

The International University of Health and Welfare opened in Otawara, Tochigi Prefecture, in May. It is the first four-year institution in Japan dedicated to the training of medical specialists other than doctors.

Nearly 5,000 students applied for the first class of 440. The university offers courses in nursing, physical and occupational therapy, radiological science, and speech-language pathology and audiology.

Fujio Otani, the university's president, intends the institution to help create a new society where the strong and the weak can live together in peace. Otani said, "Weaker people such as the disabled and those having chronic diseases have been treated as a burden in Japanese society, which has been oriented to efficiency under rapid economic growth. We must have a society where senior citizens and disabled people live together with healthy people, respecting each other."

Japan has only 2,000 speech and language therapists compared with 80,000 in the United States, even though speech training is one of the most important areas of rehabilitation for stroke patients.

*The Japan Times Int'l. Edition 6/12-19/95*

### Sexism is Alive and Well

It seems that only yesterday, Japanese companies were declaring the death of sexism in the workplace. But if it ever did die, the scorching yen and uncertainty about Japan's economy seem to have brought it very much back to life.

Recruit Research, one of Japan's top market research firms, says the ratio of jobs to university graduates is the

lowest since it started polling in 1984. A recent Recruit survey of more than 6,000 firms underlined the rift between male and female students looking for work after they graduate in early 1996.

It found there were 133 jobs for every 100 male graduates but only 45 jobs for every 100 female graduates.

It also found firms planned to hire about 391,000 graduates, little changed from last year, but down 53.5 percent from 1991, when graduate hiring peaked.

It was then that firms—facing a shortage of male graduates—abandoned years of opposition and gave women decision-making jobs with responsibility for the first time. Firms said it heralded a new era for Japanese labor relations and commentators called it a major step for Japanese feminism, although their enthusiasm now seems premature.

Many male students are complacent about the gender bias. They believe firms are reverting to male-oriented hiring policies because “a lot of girls get married and quit at 25.”

*Campus Review 8/3-9/95*

## NEW ZEALAND

### Watchdog Group Formed

New Zealand's proposed tertiary qualification coordinating committee is likely to have a watchdog role rather than a degree-approving role, in order to make it more acceptable to universities.

The Tertiary Action Group (TAG), set up to implement tertiary lead group recommendations on the registration of degrees on the national qualifications framework, is close to finalizing three discussion papers which will then be put to the tertiary community for comment.

The papers will deal with the nomenclature sequence for degrees, quality assurance policies and procedures, and the proposed tertiary qualification coordinating committee.

Vice-chancellors are nervous about TAG's proposal for a committee to oversee all tertiary qualifications because it would mean a loss of their responsibility for approving university degrees.

Universities are opposed to having to break down degrees into unit standards and detailed learning outcomes for registration on the framework. The new system could be introduced from next year, but will take several years to be fully implemented.

*Campus Review 8/10-16/95*

## RUSSIA

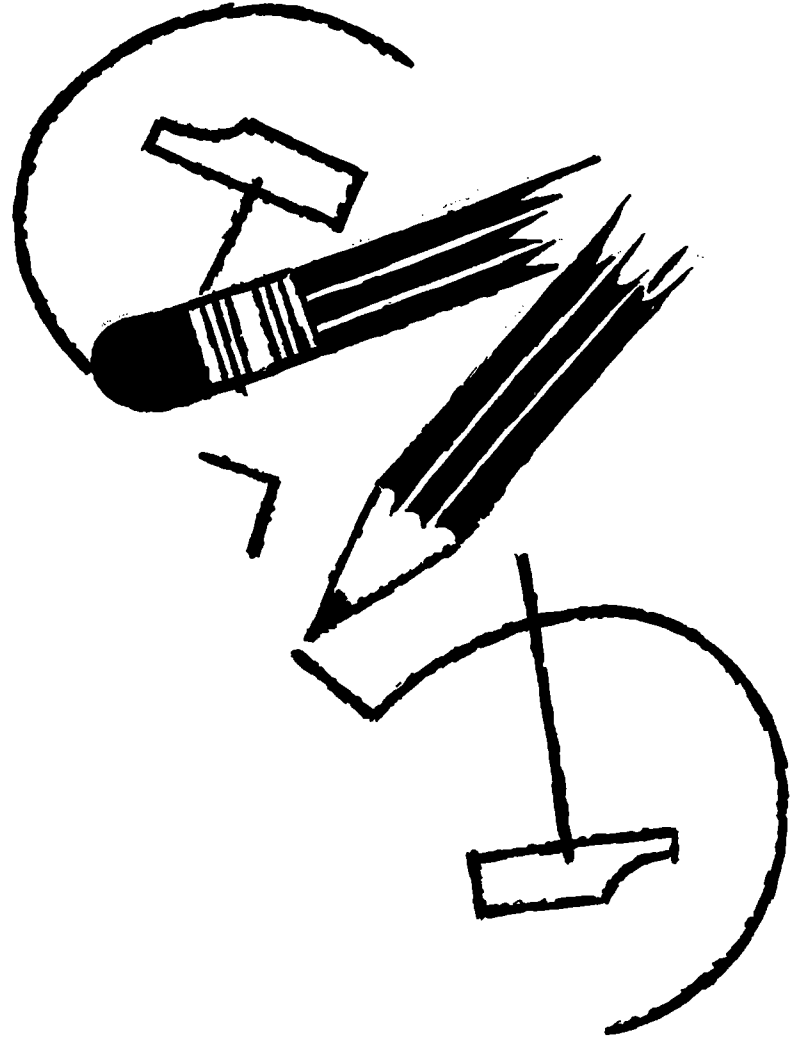
### Education Woes Mount

Education in Russia is in serious trouble. The 1993 Constitution proposal to do away with “free education for all” caused so much controversy that President Yeltsin issued a decree reaffirming that education was compulsory up to age 16.

According to the head of the Department of Information

of the Ministry of Education, “Education is almost in ruins, most schools cannot even pay their electric bills and many did not have any heat during the winter. The education budget was not totally disbursed and in some provinces, teachers have been working without pay for three or four months and are on strike.”

In the spring, elementary and secondary teachers were on strike all over Russia, including Siberia and the Moscow region. Since 1992, local governments are expected to spend 30% of their budget on education, but this is not widely practiced. In areas where corruption is rampant,



schools have been asked to pay rent or face eviction. In elementary and secondary education fewer than one out of three students has a book.

Higher education is not faring much better. The budget allocation for higher education has shrunk from 12% of the national budget in 1977 to 6% in 1985 and now 2% in 1995. The state owes higher education institutions 200 million rubles. Salaries are paid late and teachers are demoralized. In February 1994 university rectors wrote an open letter to the government, indicating that over 20,000 teachers had resigned in three years. Many joined the more than 300 private institutions that have opened recently; others started

small businesses. The median age of university faculty is 60 years and their replacements are not in sight.

Financial aid for students is 30,000 to 40,000 rubles a month, at a time when a loaf of bread costs 1,000 rubles.

A fundamental reform is being contemplated to address these problems. Instead of the traditional five-year degree, a two-year program and a four-year cycle leading to the *magister* degree are being considered. According to a recent survey, only 21% of students finishing high school expect to undertake long studies, as compared to 44% in 1987.

*Le Monde de l'Education 9/95*

## **SINGAPORE**

### **Racing to the Infobahn**

Few countries are building ramps to the Information Highway faster than Singapore.

In 1981 Singapore had 850 people working directly in Information Technology. Today there are 10,000. Virtually all government offices are now computerized, 30 percent of households have PCs, and Singapore Port can claim to be a paperless operation. In a few more years, Singapore's entire telecommunications system will be 100 percent digital.

The government is now preparing laws that by the end of the decade will require all households to have their own broadband coaxial cables connecting them to a fiber-optic network already crisscrossing the island.

George Yeo, Singapore's minister for information and the arts, recognizes that no matter how sophisticated an infrastructure of fiber optics and computers may be, it is still only a support for people who know how to use the technology. Even then, the investment will only produce a worthwhile return if these end-users can produce worthwhile information, or, better still, knowledge.

Will Singapore's sanitized, restrictive environment (where even chewing gum is prohibited) be able to attract the "interesting and creative minds" Yeo believes are necessary for the country to compete with rival cities in the future? Yeo is adamant that the government need not relax its authoritarian rule.

"We refuse to accept that the free flow of information means allowing an environment of crime and sleaze to flourish. We censor our films, books, magazines and television programs, not because censorship can ever be 100 percent effective, but because the act of censorship is itself symbolic and an affirmation to young and old of the values we hold as a community," he said.

*The Japan Times Int'l. Edition 6/26-7/2/95*

## **SRI LANKA**

### **Students Face Admission Backup**

Students who took their A-levels in August may have to wait three years before being admitted to a university.

A youth uprising from 1987-90 led to the closure of universities for nearly two years. Students were pressing for hostel accommodation. Trade union action by academics and non-academics for more pay aggravated the problem.

Sri Lankan universities are now admitting students in "double batches" each year, cutting holidays and holding weekend classes in order to satisfy demand and make up for lost time. Students who qualified for admission in 1992 are only now being enrolled. Those who qualified in 1993-94 must wait. The only way to enter university immediately is to go abroad to study, an option for only the very bright or the wealthy.

There has been no student unrest or public outcry over these delays.

*The Times Higher 8/4/95*

## **UNITED KINGDOM**

### **AICE Introduced**

Examinations for the Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE), an international pre-university curriculum and examination system, first will be held in 1997.

The AICE builds on the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), which has been in use in English-medium schools since 1986, and is now used by schools in more than 90 countries as a curriculum.

The AICE is a pre-university course of study, progressive from the GCSE. Together, the two constitute a fully integrated curriculum for students in their last four years of secondary education. AICE is administered by the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate. The examination is normally taken at the age of 18.

It is based on a broad curriculum of five full-credit courses or their equivalent, each representing at least 200 hours of specialized subject teaching. There are also half-credit courses which represent at least 100 hours of teaching time. The curriculum is not compulsory in full, allowing electives to be taken. Three subject groups are offered: mathematics and science, languages, and arts and humanities. AICE candidates must take at least one course from each subject group. The grading scale ranges from A (10) to E (2) for full-credit courses and from A (5) to E (1) for half-credit courses.

*University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate flyer*

### **University Certificate, Anyone?**

There is no money to be made by former polytechnics selling university-style certificates to their alumni, the pioneers of the scheme have concluded.

Middlesex invested 35,000 pounds (\$52,500) in setting up its project, offering impressive certificates written in calligraphy to polytechnic graduates, showing that their alma mater went on to become a university. Startup costs also included a new computer data base of past graduates' awards. Each certificate sells for 50 pounds (\$77), and only

