

Education Is a Natural Right of Every Human Being

Al-Nida, 21 April 1953.

Dr. Taha Hussein's Opinion

I met Dr. Taha Hussein at the celebration held by the Journalists' Syndicate in honor of the Arab journalists, and put to him the idea of restricting medical education in its three faculties — limiting the number admitted to two hundred for the Cairo Faculty of Medicine, and a hundred each for the Abbasiya and Alexandria faculties of medicine.

Against Restricting Any Kind of Education

He said: I have not heard of this matter, nor do I believe that the mere proposal of such an idea binds the faculties to it without its being submitted to the Higher Council of Education and approved by it ... and in any case, education is a natural right of every human being, and a passing idea cannot stand in the way of those who desire education obtaining this right ... and I, personally, am against restricting any kind of education, whatever the circumstances and the reasons.

Expanding Education Achieves the Goal

I said: And what is your opinion of the excuses by which the faculties justify carrying out this idea of restricting medical education — namely, the shortage of professors and laboratories, the cramped buildings, and the decline in the standard of education?

He said: These excuses and reasons do not justify restricting any kind of education, and medicine in particular; for the country needs many times over the current number of doctors ... and whatever shortage exists in teachers, buildings, and laboratories can easily be made up by every possible means.

The Three New Faculties

I said: And what is your opinion on halting the projects to establish the three new universities at Assiut, Tanta, and Mansoura, and the three faculties of medicine at each of them?

He said: No one has said that such projects can be dispensed with, in keeping with the expansion of education policy and its facilitation for the various classes of the people, and I believe the new era aims at facilitating education, not restricting it, and that halting the establishment of these universities and those faculties does not accord with this policy ...

The Shortage of Professors

I said: The complaint at the existing faculties of medicine is of the shortage of professors and the decline in the standard of medical education, and this may perhaps have been the reason for halting the new faculties. He said: There is no doubt that increasing and expanding the levels of education helps greatly in producing teachers and professors, and provides, gradually, what this expansion requires, and as I mentioned to you, a shortage in some area cannot be remedied and made up by halting that area's activity — rather, completeness can be achieved by many means within the reach of those responsible; and in any case, the matter is no more than a proposal put forward by one of the doctors among the members of their syndicate, and it has not been submitted to the Council of Education, so that it cannot be considered a settled matter or one obligatory to carry out.