

A LITERATURE REVIEW: DURHAM UNIVERSITY'S COLONIAL LEGACY

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INTRODUCTION

Durham University's history is intertwined with the **Church of England**, which founded it in **1832** and financed it until 1908.

This influenced its affiliations with missionary colleges **Fourah Bay** in Sierra Leone and **Codrington** in Barbados, with graduates awarded the Durham degree.

The use of education as a colonial instrument to **evangelise, civilise and control** reflects the tenuous affiliations which **benefitted primarily Britain** in its imperial quest. As such, Durham aided in **curtailing 'the production of a highly educated class'** (Borsali, 1983, p.115) to **prevent future self-governance** in the colonies.



FINDINGS

The periods of affiliation were marked by **local calls for secularisation** away from missionary education. Durham's **indifference** in supporting the Colleges reflects the **sponsor-client relationship** of the affiliation, present only in setting curriculum and marking exams.

Demands for educational independence aligned with local calls for **political independence**. When the affiliations no longer benefitted Britain, they were severed. The Colleges were thus '**socio-cultural microcosms**' (Paracka, 2003, p.5) through which colonial control and resistance was effected.



FOURAH BAY COLLEGE 1876-1967

The Christian Missionary Society controlled FBC and encouraged the affiliation to enable colonial rule **under religious pretence**. Despite Durham's absence, financial troubles and the near closure of FBC in 1908, the College **survived**, becoming the now **University of West Africa**.

While education was used to subjugate, it also **empowered graduates to collectivise for independence**, achieving secularisation and breaking away from Durham's '**dead hand**' (Fyfe, 1971, p.12).



CODRINGTON COLLEGE 1875-1965

Codrington was under the control of the **SPG*** when the affiliation occurred. Despite two Education Acts in the 19th century, Codrington's **Anglican authorities** prevented any attempts to give it **national character** (Simmons, 1968)

Being isolated from the local context by Durham's imposition of an **alien curriculum was debilitating**, prolonging educational dependence and preventing **the creation of ideas challenging authority**. Codrington thus never became a secular College.

*Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts

Literature cited

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