

## Pupils Teaching Teachers

THE most recent issue of *Colonial Cinema*, the organ of the Colonial Film Unit, gives an interesting example of Africanisation. For in it Mr. G. B. Odunton, of the Gold Coast Film Unit, takes the Colonial Film Unit in London to task for its rules for making films for Africa, rules which Odunton says "were subsequently sanctified and given the name of 'Specialised Technique'". "All films so made followed a common style: there was no scope for the free play of the imagination. Anything more intricate than a rudimentary and simple plot was avoided . . . the moral was always painfully obvious . . ." In contrast he takes *Amenu's Child* made by the Gold Coast Film Unit for the same audiences as the C.F.U. used to serve. He agrees that it is too soon to say how successful it is. But he knows that it is imaginative, not dull, using local story-telling idioms.

"In all our films," he says, "from purely educational and instructional films on hygiene and health, agriculture and forestry to story documentaries, we want to apply as far as possible the local idiom of the story-teller. We are determined not to make our films dull. We want to say all the things that need to be said on a given subject as effectively as we can, and in the light of such social and human data as are available. To this end we hope to enlist the help of African composers, musicians, sculptors, painters and teachers—in fact anyone who is curious to experiment with this new and exciting technique—and use it for education to responsible citizenship. We want to appeal to the emotions of our audiences, rather than their reason, for what is art if it fails to appeal to the feelings?"

This is then, an attack on the whole theory of the Colonial Film Unit. What makes it doubly interesting is the fact that after leaving Oxford Mr. Odunton was trained at the Colonial Film Unit. And in *Colonial Cinema*, one of his former teachers, Mr. George Pearson, replies to him, more in sorrow than in anger, a reply which, like Mr. Odunton's article, may not mean much to people who don't know the two types of film under discussion.

Mr. Odunton, I think, has got something. And since at present public money is being spent on a large scale on making films following the rules of the two schools of thought, it is very necessary to find out which is right—for some of the money may be wasted.