Hermann Röhrs and Volker Lenhart, eds. *Progressive Education Across the Continents.* Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1995. Pp. 446.

As I concluded my reading of *Progressive Education Across the Continents,* I thought of a professional meeting I attended several years ago at which Lawrence Cremin, noted authority on progressive education in the United States, was the featured speaker. Cremin had been asked by the program committee to reflect upon his book *The Transformation of the School* and to identify aspects of the progressive education movement which he thought he had overlooked or given insufficient treatment in his influential work. Among the four topics he noted was the international dimension of progressive education.

Although a variety of scholars have attended to specific developments in the progressive movement outside of the United States, none, to my knowledge, has taken on the daunting challenge of providing a systematic and thorough coverage of the development and growth of progressive education throughout the world. Given the scope and expansive nature of the topic, it is not surprising that the first major attempt to fill the scholarly lacuna Cremin noted has appeared thirty-five years after Cremin's own work and has required the collective labours of nearly thirty authors.

Hermann Röhrs and Volker Lenhart, respected scholars and authorities on progressive education, have collected and organized the contributions of this large writing team. They label the manuscript a *handbook,* thereby creating the expectation that their book will offer its readers a basic reference on matters pertaining to the movement. The claim is somewhat pretentious and unfortunate in view of gaps in the coverage and of the pronounced unevenness of treatment across the various articles. The editors acknowledge the challenge they faced of achieving the unified, consistent effect expected of a handbook while dealing with the individual orientations of so many different team members. They recognize that they were unable to achieve the level of standardization and systematization they sought, finding value, instead, in the individuality of their contributors.

Although it is reasonable to have expected more of the editors in ensuring a consistent standard of treatment and a focused investigation of predetermined themes or questions, it is apparent they chose less prescription and more individual latitude for the authors. Thus the reader is left with the responsibility for sorting substance from dross. The reader's labour will bear fruit, as there are some very valuable and worthwhile contributions within the book. Despite the shortcomings and the difficulty of fulfilling the requirements of a handbook, the work is a valuable addition to scholarship on progressive education.

The editors claim several purposes for the book in addition to the overriding consideration of providing a basic sourcebook or references on the international nature of the progressive education movement. They indicate that the book considers the evolution of the theory behind progressive education over the past one hundred years. Further, they claim the writings fill a critical gap in scholarship dealing with the origin and development of progressive education on each continent. Finally, they seek to affirm internationalism as a critical and overlooked dimension of the progressive education movement.

As I read the handbook, I looked for evidence that the three stated purposes of the editors had been achieved. As to the evolution of the theory behind progressive education, it was difficult to find in the book trends or developments beyond those well established by historians dealing with the first sixty years of the movement. The opening article, "Internationalism in Progressive Education and Initial Steps Towards a World Education Movement," by Hermann Röhrs, raises ideas which could have been profitably explored in much greater depth. He writes of a distinction between educational changes resulting from direct influence of the progressive education movement and other changes occurring from indirect influences which arose without explicit reference or allegiance to the movement.

In effect, he introduces an issue which strikes at the heart of what the book undertakes. Given that schooling and reform initiatives pertaining to schooling continue to draw upon ideas central to the movement, well beyond the years of its acknowledged demise, to what extent can these more recent manifestations be acknowledged as progressive education? This consideration becomes particularly relevant when many of the contemporary reformers are unaware of the antecedents of the reforms they advocate. Sol Cohen's article, "The Influence of Progressive Education on School Reform in the U.S.A.," could have been used to good advantage in framing the influence of progressive education. The tradition lives on. Changes in practice and philosophy owe much to the earlier movements toward child-centred learning, education of the whole child, and activity-based pedagogy. Not only does the book fail to connect more recent developments to those of the earlier movement, it neither clarifies nor enhances definitions of these phenomena. One finds in the pre-1950 years distinct developments (child-centredness, social reconstruction or activity learning, and social or life adjustment), but this book does not show what has happened more recently to these same movements.

The book claims to be a source that will fill a void, dealing with the origin and development of education on each continent. Of the three stated purposes for the book, this one produces the most valuable and important contributions. However, the treatment is spotty and uneven and as a result, problematic. I grant that the editors had to be selective. Yet the rationale for the selection of

countries to be treated is unclear. As a way of approaching the question which countries should be considered and what relative weighting should be given to development on various continents, I reviewed data pertaining to countries most heavily represented in the graduate student enrollments at Columbia's Teachers College during the halcyon days of the progressive education movement, a time when educators worldwide were looking to Dewey, Kilpatrick, and others at Columbia for new ideas on educational reform. Students attending graduate school during this period were important in diffusing the ideas and practices of progressive education. Canada, as one might expect by virtue of its close geographical proximity to the United States, was heavily represented at Columbia for the thirty-year period between 1918 and 1948. Other countries well represented, especially in the pre-1930 era, included China, France, Great Britain, Germany, India, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, Switzerland, Turkey, and Palestine. Although several of these countries are considered in the handbook, conspicuous in their absence are Canada, China, and Russia. The editors decline to consider reform in Russia, because of the constraints imposed by Stalin's regime, yet Russia was for a time an integral and important part of the reform movement. Patricia Graham's *Progressive Education: From Arcady to Academe* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1967), goes so far as to claim that in addition to the United States "the only other nation that attempted national education reforms along 'progressive' lines was the Soviet Union" (p. 36). There is no reference in the Röhrs-Lenhart volume to Canada's nationwide interest and extensive involvement in the ideas and practices of the movement. Had Professor Röhrs examined the relationship between the New Education Fellowship and the Progressive Education Association for his article on the subject by referring to the minutes of the Progressive Education Association (Minutes of the Board of Directors, 19–20 November 1938), he would have found that Canada played a prominent role in linking the two organizations and that the link opened the door wide for influence of the PEA in Canada.

The editors wish to establish internationalism as a neglected yet central aspect of the progressive education movement. There is no doubt international conversation about progressive education occurred relatively early and continued to expand during ensuing years. Formal organizational links were created, and ideas shared across national and continental boundaries. One cannot assume that international involvements, however strong, do not necessarily justify the conclusion that the philosophy of progressive education was distinguished by a commitment to internationalism, as it was, for example, to child-centredness or activity-based education.

The two representative organizations of the movement, the PEA and the NEF, sought to build the bond and relationship between them, thus affirming

an international linkage in the movement. Graham concludes this internationalism was expedient in building membership in the organization, not driven by belief in internationalism. The records of the PEA, especially those of its Committee on International Cooperation, reveal that by the late 1930s the PEA was prepared to declare it needed (minutes of the Board of Directors, 9–10 January 1937) to be "more active in the international field." The same set of minutes expressed an interest in working with the NEF as a strategy to help promote "international mindedness" in the United States. These minutes further note that when the Committee on International Cooperation was established it was charged "to promote and conduct such activities as shall create an international point of view among the members of the Progress Education Association." This charge, if anything, shows that internationalism was not a shared philosophical tenet among PEA members. They had to be stirred to show interest in international involvement.

One link between the philosophy of progressive education and international participation can be substantiated by the clear commitment of progressive educators to democracy. Therefore, when the world events of the 1930s and 1940s evidenced the threat to democracy represented by fascism and communism, leaders of progressive education sought to extend their educational ideas to safeguard against this threat.

In Röhrs-Lenhart, uneven treatment of the movement in different parts of the world produces another problem. The articles have a heavy European emphasis, leading the reader to believe that the movement was more pronounced in Europe than elsewhere. Graham, in the previously cited *Progressive Education: From Arcady to Academe,* claims "the movement never reached the proportions in Europe that it did in the United States."

The handbook could have benefited from considerably more direction by the editors to the writers. It is far more a collection of writings on a related topic than it is a handbook formally and systematically treating a number of common concerns that have surfaced worldwide.

Highlights are the articles by Röhrs and Cohen, both of which raise important considerations for further exploration and discussion. Among other articles that stand out for their thoroughness of treatment and their originality in scholarship on progressive education are two articles by Hermann Röhrs, "The New Education Fellowship: An International forum for Progressive Education" and "International Response to the Educational Ideas of M. Montessori as Exemplified by their Influence on Progressive Education in the United States." Theodor Klaben's "Jena Plan Education in an International Setting" and Michael Knoll's "The Project Method—Its Origin and International Influence" also deserve attention, as they enrich our knowledge of these two important models of progressive education.

In his article "Is Progressive Education Obsolete," published in *School and Society* (1947), Boyd Bode claimed that "if democracy is here to stay, then the spirit of progressive education can never become obsolete." *Progressive Education Across the Continents* affirms the validity of Bode's claim. The spirit, though not the movement, of progressive education lives on and will continue to influence thought and practice in education as long as people struggle to sustain democratic values.

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Service d'histoire de l'éducation. *Rapport scientifique, 1992–1996.* Paris. Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique/Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1996. Pp. 159. No price given.

The Service d'histoire de l'éducation (SHE) is surely the most productive institutional network of historians of education in the world. In this, its latest summary report, we have evidence of the reasons for its record of research and publication, and some grounds for thinking the next quadrennial report of the service may tell a story of equally striking productivity. Of course, the French government's latest austerity drive bodes ill for the SHE, as for so many state enterprises. As elsewhere, officially supported and sanctioned social science research in France has its share of uncertainties, not just because there are fewer French francs to go around, but also because the rules of the game are changing. The way to get and keep public funds is to compete vigorously for them. The difficulty is to calculate far in advance which are the most effective strategies to remain a major player. This new *Rapport* strongly suggests that the SHE has found reliable strategies, will weather the current fiscal storm, and will maintain—and further diversify—its research and other scholarly services.

The SHE has since 1989 been linked to France's National Research Council and to the National Institute for Educational Research. This double alliance was possible because of the continuing and intense interest of French historians in educational history stimulated by the SHE itself. Previous *Rapports* have shown how educational history has moved from the edge to the centre of historical writing, teaching, and research in Europe. Any doubt about this would be allayed by consulting the SHE's journal, *Histoire de l'éducation,* which publishes each year a bibliography of work in the field. Last year's bibliography ran to some 2,099 items, the majority references to works published in France. The authors of these articles and books constitute a