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

"who's who" of the French (and European) historical profession. In one sense, it was a natural step to provide the SHE with an organic link to the National Research Council (CNRS). After all, the field of educational history had come of age. On the other hand, arrangements of this kind are difficult to cement, even in the best of times. It would have been just as easy to resist such a linkage, especially in a financially difficult moment. The strategic sense of the SHE leadership has proved equal to the task.

The 1996 *Rapport* provides a detailed overview of SHE publications (the list occupies five single-spaced pages), main lines of research, computerization of historically valuable data, and relations with "the field." The "field" includes universities and learned societies in France and elsewhere—but also schools, local historical societies, various public bodies, and private interests. The SHE has been careful to build links with the wider world, and to construct a significant internal program of studies and seminars that attracts outsiders to come to the SHE for education and advancement. One result of all this outreach is growth: the SHE was in June 1996 the research home to eleven full-time researchers and three administrative assistants, along with other part-time scholar-researchers, and helpers, all under the direction of Pierre Caspard.

I have described this institution in positive terms, and considering its contribution to the field, would stand by that claim. All the same, the SHE's organizational and structural basis is peculiarly French, and thus inimitable. Not only that, its dominant research themes are, unsurprisingly, influenced by the interests of the colleagues who happen to be working at the SHE at the moment. Although the SHE has lessons to offer, it will not be easy to apply them outside France.

When I speak of the SHE as institutionally French, I mean its nineteenth-century origins in the Musée Pédagogique (1879), an institutional daughter of the Third Republic. The Musée was as much an arm of state educational policy as it was a publisher of research (in all fields of educational enquiry). In the great campaign to make French the dominant language of the nation's many regions, the Musée played its part. In a wider perspective, one might argue that the Musée provided documents and political devices central in the campaign to popularize compulsory, secular, and public instruction. In the 1905 separation of Church and State, the Musée's function, although muted and indirect, was nonetheless important. In the lengthy controversy (1880 onward) over the introduction of natural science and of modern languages into the mainstream of French secondary education, educational reformers and political leaders could and did appeal to Musée publications to buttress their arguments.

The Musée's double role—political and scientific—became increasingly untenable as educational research grew to become a field of serious study with

university chairs, departments, and journals of its own. The rise of nationally organized educational research programs in education in the 1950s and 1960s, some of them rooted in French universities, produced conditions in which the Musée sank from sight, and new institutes and services multiplied. The history of education profited from these developments, but also benefitted from its unique position as an ancillary to the public administration of education. Administrators and officials in French education have always accepted the necessity of well-organized archives in the execution of their duties. But especially since 1968, the French have gone much further, accepting that officials can also learn much from historians, even when those historians operate at arms' length from the system they seek to understand.

If one recalls the world-wide resurgence of the "new social history" after about 1960, and adds this factor to the personal, regional, and national forces I have described, it is easier to see why the SHE came to be and to flourish. It is also easier to see why the SHE's example may not easily be adopted or imitated outside France.

It would be wrong to leave the impression that the SHE is intellectually parochial. Although it is hard to see how an SHE-like institution could appear in any other OECD country in the near future, the reasons have to do with the conjunctures of French history, particularly since 1965, and the absence of similar circumstances elsewhere—but not with its research. In fact, the research programme of the SHE has grown increasingly international in scope and a significant proportion of its publications have a comparative aspect. Christophe Charle, A. Cherval, and M. M. Compère, along with other scholars at SHE, have published nearly two dozen books touching on the comparative European history of education. In some cases, work on the history of French education at the SHE invites comparisons even if it does not manage to carry them out for want of resources and energy. The prosopographical studies of the French Inspectorate General will tempt more Canadian, British, American, Australian, and New Zealand colleagues to draw comparisons with the inspectorates and superintendencies of their own countries. And the still more recent work on time management in a half-dozen European countries, led by Mme. Compère, invites comparison with a significant body of research in the English-speaking world on the "cult of efficiency" and the nature of state regulation in the late industrial period.

The SHE's dominant preoccupation must, of course, be with history of education in France. This obligation has not prevented the SHE from running a lively programme of international and comparative studies. The curiosities of SHE staff, and their obligations to French education, have in some measure led to a certain localism in research.

For example, the SHE has been involved for several years in making an immense and lengthy catalogue of French textbook production, and publishing a thorough index of the French educational press across two centuries. Here again, it might be argued that these "national" and local projects may in the end invite analogous work in other countries, and that the only question one might appropriately ask is this: "Do these large-scale archival catalogues meet the usual standard of social-historical investigation?" To judge by reviews in reputable journals, the answer must be "yes."

A North American observer may wonder how the SHE's example could be followed outside France. Thirty years ago, the government of Ontario—in a fit of momentary monetary generosity—spent millions of dollars on a new post-graduate research body, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE). OISE included every branch of educational research, history included. It maintained a lively program of outreach activities across the entire Ontario region from the late 1960s, and was loosely federated with the University of Toronto. Despite its many successes, however, OISE was starved of funds from the mid-1970s. Its historians came perilously close to losing their jobs, and the Institute as a whole lost its autonomy, becoming an integral part of the Faculty of Education of the University of Toronto in 1996. It is unclear how the University of Toronto and the Ontario government will think about historical studies of education in the coming decade. The SHE example might have been attractive and persuasive to the governments and the universities of 1970, and might have been adopted without much argument. In the late 1990s, it will require *much* more argument. However, the French example shows that the case can be made, and the argument won.

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