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Reimagining Teaching in Early 20th Century Experimental Schools

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New Education: An Experimental Era

In the early twentieth century, social reformers in many parts of the Western world, particularly psychologists and educational reformers, hoped to achieve better societies by guiding children's socialisation according to new principles based on science and an optimistic view of the possibility of social change. The term progressive is often used to describe this educational movement, which came to dominate twentieth-century Western pedagogical policy and practice. While "progressive" has often been used as a synonym for "new," the precise meaning of the term when applied to education has varied widely across cultural, political, and even individual institutional contexts.¹ Our colleague, the late Kevin Brehony, likened progressivism to the notion of enlightenment in earlier centuries and viewed it as an unstable, amorphous concept.² For this reason, we, the authors of this book, also prefer the less-freighted term new. In describing the "new education" of the early twentieth century, educational historians William Boyd and Wyatt Rawson explain that it held the personality of the child and human betterment as central

¹William J. Reese, "The Origins of Progressive Education," *History of Education Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (2001): 2.

²Kevin Brehony, "From the Particular to the General, the Continuance of the Discontinuity: Progressive Education Revisited," *History of Education* 30, no. 5 (2001): 428.

concerns, with an overall aim of bringing about “a New Era.”³ The ideas and practices of new education included both a reformist attitude and an interest in experimental curriculum and pedagogy. This book explores the ideas of new education, including the networks and knowledge transfer that allowed them to travel, by tracing how the ideas were manifested in five experimental schools that reflected them to different degrees. In “the century of the child”,⁴ much pedagogical attention was paid to reimagining the “new child” of the “new era”; focus on the “new teacher” was less explicit, although the role of a new teacher was assumed, for example, in child-centred pedagogy.⁵ The schools we highlight illustrate how teachers practised—and were thought of—in new ways.⁶

Using both within-case analysis⁷ of individual schools and transnational analysis, we consider how educational ideas developed within contexts, travelled across boundaries, and were adapted in new contexts. A network approach⁸ allows us to consider relationships across cases, identifying historical actors and the formal and informal relationships among them. Our aim is to understand the structure and context of the network(s) by examining connections, circulations, relations, and resulting formations⁹ of, for example, teaching identities, pedagogies, materials, and curricula.

³William Boyd and Wyatt Rawson, *The Story of the New Education* (London: Heinemann, 1965), viii.

⁴Ellen Key, *The Century of the Child*, 1900, trans. Ellen Key (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1909).

⁵William H. Kilpatrick, “The Project Method,” *Teachers College Record* 19 (1917): 319–35.

⁶Jürgen Schriewer, “Deweyan Thought Refracted Through Time and Space: Studies on the Transcontinental Dissemination and Culture-specific Re-contextualization of Educational Knowledge,” Chapter 1 in *The Global Reception of John Dewey’s Thought: Multiple Refractions Through Time and Space*, ed. Rosa Bruno-Jofré and Jürgen Schriewer (New York: Routledge, 2012).

⁷Barbara L. Paterson, “Within-case Analysis,” in *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*, ed. Albert J. Mills, Gabrielle Durepos, and Elden Wiebe (Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2010).

⁸Eckhardt Fuchs, “Networks and the History of Education,” *Paedagogica Historica* 43, no. 2 (2007): 185–97.

⁹Pierre-Yves Saunier, *Transnational History* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

Our specific focus on how teaching and learning meanings were pedagogised, or ascribed to materials, relationships, or settings,¹⁰ provides insights into the transfer of educational ideas through a close study of practice in historical classrooms.

Ideas about teaching and learning in the international movement for education reform included some common elements: teacher professionalism and autonomy, learning based on students' interests and participation, active learning, protection of local languages, and education that promoted both social justice and students' active participation in determining social and political change.¹¹ These components took on unique characteristics in each of the schools we explore in this book, reflecting the particular social locations of the teachers, students, place, and time, as well as the theorists who were most influential in each school, such as Friedrich Froebel, John Dewey, or Sigmund or Anna Freud. Of the theorists associated with new education, Dewey is clearly the most prominent. His international influence informed the work of subsequent education theorists and researchers,¹² and the second chapter of this book is devoted to his University of Chicago laboratory school.

While others have explored the international movement of new education through these lenses,¹³ our work stands apart due to its primary focus on teachers. It is unique as well in its range of international settings and, in several of the case studies, in its attention to intersections between psychoanalysis and progressive education. Alan Lester's review of the concepts of circuits and networks between Britain and its colonies serves as a useful frame for our study, allowing us to consider the settings

¹⁰ Bob Lingard, "Towards a Sociology of Pedagogies," Chapter 15 in *The Routledge International Handbook of the Sociology of Education*, ed. Michael W. Apple, Stephen J. Ball, and Luis A. Gandin (New York: Routledge, 2010).

¹¹ Joel Spring, *Globalization of Education: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 145.

¹² John M. Heffron, "The Transnational Context of Schooling," in *Educational Leaders Without Borders: Rising to Global Challenges to Educate All*, ed. Rosemary Papa and Fenwick W. English (New York: Springer, 2015), 167–92; Thomas S. Popkewitz, "Inventing the Modern Self and John Dewey: Modernities and the Traveling of Pragmatism in Education—An Introduction," in *Inventing the Modern Self and John Dewey: Modernities and the Travelling of Pragmatism in Education*, ed. Thomas S. Popkewitz (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 3–36.

¹³ Rosa Bruno-Jofré and Jürgen Schriewer, eds., *Dewey's Thought: Multiple Refractions Through Time and Space* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

as multiple projects appearing as bridgeheads that took shape through connections with a set of new education ideas. Thus, we examine the circuits among the settings, including the layering of newly constructed networks onto existing ones.¹⁴

Two main questions guided our study: How were the child and the teacher reimagined, and how were adults' role in relation to children, childhood, and education reimagined in different contexts? Through the course of our research, we expected to learn about teachers' development, identity, beliefs, and practices as they underwent their training and put progressive pedagogies to work in their classrooms. Many of the teachers in the schools had prior teacher training, including as kindergarten teachers, and the literature on the history of kindergarten and nursery school teacher education was relevant for our study, particularly research documenting its transnational history.¹⁵ The schools we studied, which were mainly private institutions serving children of the elite, and with staff recruited for their compatibility with new education ideas, differed from public schools in almost every way, yet they offer a window onto how teachers brought new education ideas into their practical work with children.

New education ideas shaping our exemplar school experiments emerged amidst a backdrop of turbulent political and economic times, manifested in diverse ways across the geographies of the respective school settings. With underlying discontents and causes seeded in earlier times, the slaughter of the First World War (1914–1918) hastened revolutions and new political movements: fascist, socialist, and Marxist, yielding both dictatorship and democracy, including resistance to both. The 1930s worldwide economic depression also fuelled political discontent,

¹⁴ Alan Lester, "Imperial Circuits and Networks: Geographies of the British Empire," *History Compass* 4, no. 1 (2006): 124–41.

¹⁵ Kristen Dombkowski, "Kindergarten Teacher Training in England and the United States, 1850–1918," *History of Education* 31, no. 5 (2002): 475–89; Helen May, *The Discovery of Early Childhood*, 2nd ed. (Wellington: NZCER Press, 2013); Kristen D. Nawrotzki, "'Like Sending Coals to Newcastle': Impressions from and of the Anglo-American Kindergarten Movements," *Pedagogica Historica* 43, no. 2 (2007): 223–33; Larry Prochner, *A History of Early Childhood Education in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009); Kay Whitehead, "Women Educators and Transnational Networking in the Twentieth-Century Nursery School Movement," *Women's History Review* 23, no. 6 (2014): 957–75.

including a range of political solutions towards recovery. The new education movement stretching across the turbulence of the times crossed these political borders and differences, offering education pathways as solutions to support and/or undermine new political systems and reform existing structures. New education ideals, for example, underpinned both Dewey's child of democracy in the USA and experiments towards creating the new Soviet citizen in Russia, while in Vienna, Anna Freud's school was a small haven amidst the rise of Austrofascism. The focus of our study is on education pathways rather than political ones, but the respective school experiments also reveal the interplay of new education ideas and practice amidst new political times.

OUR CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A transnational perspective allows us to examine the networks that enabled ideas of new education to travel, to adapt, to be translated, and to become, along with their authors, “indigenous foreigners” in the manner described by Thomas Popkewitz, in which ideas were “brought into new contexts in which the ‘foreignness’ of the ideas are seen as indigenous or ahistorical and ‘natural’ to that situation in which they are positioned”.¹⁶ Popkewitz used the concept to highlight the role played by a “hero” discourse, such as the one surrounding Dewey's ideas, in bringing global reforms into relation with discourses representing the values of a society.¹⁷ A “travelling library” of concepts—in this case, whether Dewey's or Froebel's or Freud's—are added to or reinscribed by local teachers and authors, contributing to indigenisation. Our study aims to illuminate the space between the local and the global, to demonstrate how the objects of educational science research were “constructed at the crossroads between international trends and local concerns”,¹⁸ as described by Eugenia Roldán Vera and Eckhardt Fuchs.

¹⁶Popkewitz, “Inventing the Modern Self,” ix.

¹⁷Thomas S. Popkewitz, “Globalization/Regionalism, Knowledge, and the Educational Practices: Some Notes on Comparative Strategies for Educational Research,” in *Educational Knowledge: Changing Relationships Between the State, Civil Society, and the Educational Community*, ed. Thomas S. Popkewitz (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000), 10.

¹⁸Eugenia Roldán Vera and Eckhardt Fuchs, “Introduction,” in *The Transnational in the History of Education: Concepts and Perspectives* (Global Histories of Education series), ed. Eckhardt Fuchs and Eugenia R. Vera (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 16.

This means that travelling ideas change in meaning as their relations shift across space. By space, we not only mean the sites where events occur and time passes. Rather, we draw upon geographer Doreen Massey's poststructural spatial theory to understand space as built through interactions in which the coexistence of ideas is key to understanding their heterogeneity and different trajectories.¹⁹ For Massey, "without space, [there can be] no multiplicity; without multiplicity, no space."²⁰ In this view, the space of school is continually under construction within relations and through objects; its multiplicity and coexistence are brought to life by material practices, and we can "imagine space as a simultaneity of stories-so-far."²¹

In this book, we endeavour to reimagine spaces, especially schools, through glimpses of their material practices personified in objects—teachers' diaries, logbooks, notebooks, and the like. Our main tool in this process is language, which is used to broaden concepts and meanings and thereby build new relations for that space. As Vera and Fuchs explain, "We are not simply describing something that exists; we are making an experience of reality intelligible and simultaneously constructing an abstract reality."²² In the process of reimagining teaching, we can approach reality, but capturing multiplicity in its full spectrum is not possible. We therefore employ the concept of space in between, which brings important methodological tools to the study of the movement of ideas and practices in a school. Specifically, our attention is on the space in between practical discourses and the "grammar of schooling," which is what David Tyack and William Tobin called the largely hidden and unexamined governing structure that resists change and ensures its own continued existence.²³ In the case of the newly invented schools that are the focus of our study, it was not so much an unexamined *existing* governing structure as it was

¹⁹ Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005). See also Jonathan Murdoch, *Post-Structuralist Geography: A Guide to Relational Space* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2006).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Vera and Fuchs, "Introduction," 2.

²³ David Tyack and William Tobin, "The 'Grammar' of Schooling: Why Has It Been So Hard to Change?" *American Educational Research Journal* 31, no. 3 (1994): 453–79. See also David Tyack and Larry Cuban, *Tinkering Toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1995).

unexamined existing expectations and assumptions about schooling that inflected even the private, experimental schools.

The hidden structure reverses and subverts what is usually taken as truth—namely, that discourses directly reach to the level of classroom practices, altering those practices, for better or worse. However, as Larry Cuban described 35 years ago, teachers have tended to persist with practices that worked in the past rather adopt new methods.²⁴ And to the extent that teachers incorporated new discourses into established practices, it resulted in entangled practices reflecting discourses in between the new and those which had been previously in use.

As Marc Depaepe and his colleagues have observed, discourses about practice produced both for teachers by academics and by teachers themselves gain life in material practices through the methodologies used.²⁵ Examining material practices helps us understand how those educators adapted and translated methodologies and concepts, and even distorted them, to use in their classrooms. In other words, the practical discourses of pedagogy—of child study, assessment, and so on—were created from material practices. According to Depaepe and his colleagues:

The practical discourse has to adapt these [new] concepts to normal classroom life—an adaptation that [is] never wholly innocent. There was always something beneath the surface, a pattern of thinking that was sufficiently powerful to twist or distort the terms of pedagogical correctness. The practical discourse not only wished to influence practice, it also partially embodied it.²⁶

Practical discourses therefore exercise an intensive appropriation involving adaptation, transformation, reproduction, and creation to bring methodologies and theories to fit certain realities or to build a new reality through a discourse calling for innovation. A new image of teaching and learning forms out of the dynamic relation that is created as aspects of

²⁴Larry Cuban, *How Teachers Taught: Constancy and Change in American Classrooms, 1890–1980* (New York: Longman, 1984).

²⁵Marc Depaepe, K. Dams, M. De Vroede, B. Eggermont, H. Lauwers, F. Simon, R. Vandenberghe, and J. Verhoeven, *Order in Progress: Everyday Educational Practices in Primary Schools, Belgium, 1880–1970* (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2000).

²⁶Depaepe et al., *Order in Progress*, 43.

ideas travel and are fitted into a complex educational space.²⁷ The coexistence of a multiplicity of ideas in the school space meant that our analysis needed to go beyond the apparent obviousness.

When we add in the idea of travelling for knowledge—to international forums, for study tours, or for graduate degrees—the space opens up beyond the nation to gain relations from distant places around the globe. A transnational approach looks across borders to gain insights into a national position within a space beyond it, where the complexity of world relations brings a dialectic movement for diversity together with diffusion, assimilation, adaptation, homogenisation, and pluralisation.²⁸ The transnational space is, however, as temporary as the personal networks, political objectives, and uses made of international forums.²⁹ As we study how actors in a nation put the travelling ideas to work and the processes they used in appropriating them, we are mindful not to make “the boundaries of the nation-state ... an analytical cage” as Daniel Rodgers cautioned in his study of progressive era international networks.³⁰

HISTORICAL CONTEXTS OF NEW EDUCATION

The new education ideas underpinning the experimental case studies in our book, illustrated first by the new-century Dewey kindergarten, can be understood in part as a rejection of “old education” practices evident in many school classrooms of the day. But there was no neat progression or timeline. The nineteenth-century movement towards public schooling for more children—and indeed all children in some countries—had travelled and transformed enlightenment ideals of new education that had

²⁷ Alessandra A. Hai, Frank Simon, and Marc Depaepe, “From Practice to Theory, Ovide Decroly for Brazilian Classrooms: A Tale of Appropriation,” *History of Education* (2016): 1–20.

²⁸ Eckhardt Fuchs, “History of Education Beyond the Nation? Trends in Historical and Educational Scholarship,” in *Connecting Histories of Education: Transnational and Cross-Cultural Exchanges in (Post) Colonial Education*, ed. Barnita Bagchi, Eckhardt Fuchs, and Kate Rousmaniere (New York: Berghahn, 2014), 21.

²⁹ Dorena Caroli, “Day Nurseries in Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: The Challenge of the Transnational Approach,” in *The Transnational in the History of Education: Concepts and Perspectives* (Global Histories of Education series), ed. Eckhardt Fuchs and Eugenia R. Vera (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 74.

³⁰ Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2000), 2.

been seeded in the eighteenth century into national education systems that could economically school the masses in an industrial age.

Thus Rousseau's child-centred ideals of learning and freedom, which inspired early-nineteenth-century educators such as Johann Pestalozzi in Switzerland, Frederic Oberlin in Alsace, and Robert Owen in Scotland, were quickly moderated by the reality of teaching groups of actual children.³¹ In turn, the new education practices trialled in these experimental outposts, which were visited by many travelling education and social reformers, were further moderated as others blueprinted aspects of the experiments into standardised formats. For example, Rev. Charles Mayo and his sister Elizabeth established a school in England using Pestalozzi's conversational methods with real objects, adapting them to foster evangelical principles and practices. Elizabeth Mayo's manual for the school, *Lessons in Objects* (1830), popularised a highly regimented version of Pestalozzi's teaching across the burgeoning teacher training institutions and classrooms, including the far-reaching Home and Colonial Infant School Society they formed in 1836.³² By the end of the century, the Mayos' standardised object lessons had become the subject of rote-learned lessons for large groups of children in overcrowded classrooms. Similarly, Samuel Wilderspin adapted Owen's New Lanark model of infant school, with its informal mix of indoor and outdoor activities, dance, and music, into a standardised method and curriculum that could be replicated by others and would be more easily accepted by working-class parents, social reformers, politicians, financial backers, and churches. Wilderspin's many manuals and classroom plans supported the establishment of evangelical infant schools across Britain, America, and beyond, including the new missionary ventures fanning the globe.³³ A lasting

³¹ Rebekka Horlacher, "Schooling as a Means of Popular Education: Pestalozzi's Method as a Popular Education Experiment," *Paedagogica Historica* 47, no. 1–2 (2011): 65–75; Loïc Chalmel, *Oberlin, Le Pasteur des Lumières* (Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue, 1999); Ian Donnachie, *Robert Owen: Owen of New Lanark and New Harmony* (Edinburgh: Tuckwell Press, 2000); Richard J. W. Selleck, *The New Education: The English Background 1870–1914* (Melbourne: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, 1968).

³² Elizabeth Mayo, *Lessons on Objects: As Given to Children Between Six and Eight in a Pestalozzian School in Cheam, Surrey* (London: Seeley and Burnside, 1830).

³³ Phillip McCann and Francis Young, *Samuel Wilderspin and the Infant School Movement* (London: Croom Helm, 1982); Helen May, Baljit Kaur, and Larry Prochner, *Empire Education and Indigenous Childhood: Missionary Infant Schools in Three British Colonies* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2014).

feature was Wilderspin's gallery, which pinned large numbers of infants into tiered seating. Although he never intended it for the whole day, the idea was adopted by many schools that soon placed children in tiered benches and desks all day. The dismantling of the classroom gallery during the early decades of the twentieth century became a symbolic indicator of the infiltration of new education ideas into public school settings. The large class sizes, however, frustrated attempts to introduce the so-called modern methods of new education.³⁴

Caught between old education practices and new education methods was Friedrich Froebel. The kindergarten he founded in Bad Blankenburg, Germany, in 1837 was a clear rejection of the regimentation and harsh discipline of much schooling, but also included Pestalozzi's kindlier conversational model of schooling, which Froebel had earlier introduced with his pupils in Yverdon between 1808 and 1810. Froebel wanted something for younger children that was livelier and child centred. This difference developed into the view that activity, rather than observation (i.e. Pestalozzi's object lessons), must be the basis of learning for young children. What started as a small-scale innovation co-opting the natural play of children in a home-like environment by a visionary but elderly educationalist became, in the space of fifty years, a successful blueprint for the early education of young children in many countries.³⁵ As Brehony points out, kindergarteners in the late nineteenth century were already promoting Froebel's methods as the new education.³⁶ Moreover, Froebel's kindergarten, with its mix of music, movement and games, gardening, "occupation" crafts, and graded block "gifts," was already infiltrating many school settings with younger children, although again constrained by the physical infrastructure of public school settings, large class sizes, poorly trained teachers, and the cost of Froebel's equipment. But, as with the earlier expansion of infant schools, the Froebel kindergarten was also blueprinted, regimented, and standardised, supported

³⁴ Helen May, *I Am Five and I Go to School: Early Years Schooling in New Zealand 1900–2010* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2011).

³⁵ Helen May, Kristen Nawrotzki, and Larry Prochner, eds., *Kindergarten Narratives on Froebelian Education: Transnational Investigations* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).

³⁶ Kevin Brehony, "A New Education for a New Era: The Contribution of the Conferences of the New Education Fellowship to the Disciplinary Field of Education 1921–1939," *Paedagogica Historica* 40, no. 5–6 (2004): 733–55.

by the mass circulation and production of kindergarten manuals and equipment.

By the turn of the new century and the birth of new education, the kindergarten, on the one hand, was still upheld as an expression of unrealised new education ideas. On the other hand, the late nineteenth-century public school iteration of Froebel's kindergarten was under attack as a model of early education in need of reform and even to be rejected, or at least modified in relation to already established educational traditions, as in the case of the Jardim de Infância da Escola Caetano Campos in Brazil described in Chapter 3. The crossover and ambivalence about kindergarten were evident in other nations as well. Far from Brazil in New Zealand, George Hogben was appointed as the inspector general of schools and he embarked on reforming the primary school syllabus. When he introduced the new syllabus in 1904, Hogben reported to the New Zealand Parliament:

We now believe with Froebel, and others of the most enlightened of the world's educators, that the child will learn best, not so much by reading about things in books as by doing—that is, exercising his natural activities—by making things, by observing and testing things for himself; and then afterwards, by reasoning about them and expressing thoughts about them.³⁷

Hogben was also embracing the ideas of Dewey, and he became one of many visitors to Dewey's laboratory school at the University of Chicago. In 1897, Dewey had organised a kindergarten conference at which he was critical of both the mechanical nature of the Froebelian games and the predetermined sequence of child's play with the gifts and occupations. He wanted to set the scene for moving forward with "the spirit" of Froebel.³⁸ In 1900, Dewey published *Froebel's Educational Principles* to clarify his own views of play and learning, and he emphasised the social context of learning.³⁹ Collectively, the case studies in our book reflect the debt the

³⁷ *Education: Conference of Inspectors of Schools and Teachers' Representatives, 1904*. Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives, New Zealand. 1904, E-1C, 2.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ John Dewey, "Froebel's Educational Principles," *Elementary School Record*, 1 (1900): 147–55.

new education owed to Froebel's kindergarten while moving well beyond its earlier methods. The five experimental sites embraced a widening range of philosophical and theoretical premises, including the emerging ideas of Sigmund Freud and the educational methods of Maria Montessori.

Cumulatively, new education ideas offered possibilities for individual (psychological, intellectual, and behavioural) and collective (sociological and philosophical) transformation, promising pathways to various new social orders. Dewey's philosophical conceptions of the relationship between education and society became a core strand of new education; elaborated in Chapter 2's case study, they best represent the collective pathway to transformation. A pathway to individual transformation was made possible through the radical insights of Sigmund Freud, who claimed that behaviour could be understood only by reference to what had gone before, particularly by probing for its causes buried in childhood experiences.⁴⁰ These insights are seminal to three of our experimental case studies, spearheaded in the first instance by Anna Freud, as described in Chapter 6, who understood the possibilities her father's ideas held for education and child rearing and who subsequently pioneered the new field of child analysis.⁴¹ Maria Montessori and her book *The Montessori Method* took the international educational community by storm in the early twentieth century.⁴² While her educational experiment at the Casa dei Bambini in Rome is not included in the book's case studies, aspects of her education method for young children and her collaborations with Anna Freud weave through several of the case studies.⁴³ Some of the settings used Montessori's designed apparatus for children and aligned with her suggested role for teachers as an observer and guide. However, none of our case study experiments would have wanted the constraints of the sternly applied Montessori blueprint. While Dewey admired her scientific approach to developing a pedagogy to support "activities of the

⁴⁰ Sigmund Freud, "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. 17, 1905, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1966).

⁴¹ Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Anna Freud* (London: Macmillan, 1989).

⁴² Maria Montessori, *The Montessori Method* (London: Heinemann, 1915).

⁴³ Anna Freud, "Foreword," in *Maria Montessori: A Biography*, ed. Rita Kramer (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1976), 5–6.

body”,⁴⁴ he criticised her as a faculty psychologist.⁴⁵ His view was also coloured by reports from his wife and daughter, who visited Montessori at her school in Rome. Alice Dewey wrote to her husband: “Montessori gave us a card to visit the school on Via Giuste. ‘Please sit still and be quiet’ is its motto.”⁴⁶

New education ideas spread and were trialled in many ways and across many sites, fostered through travel and personal contacts, as our case studies illustrate, and promoted by a flourishing publication market. Acting as a kind of international clearinghouse, one noteworthy meeting place was the New Education Fellowship (NEF).⁴⁷ A group of educators met in 1915 in the midst of the First World War keen to establish an international organisation with the optimistic view that educational reconstruction would need to be an essential part of a post-war environment.⁴⁸ The concern was that “problems threatening our civilization were basically problems of human relationships which demanded a new type of education more responsive to the requirements of a changing world.”⁴⁹ The NEF was established in 1921 at the first International Congress of New Education in Calais as an organisation to promote new educational ideas and as an international rallying point that attracted like-minded educators in Britain, Europe, the Americas, the Antipodes, Asia, Africa, and at times the new Soviet Union. Most of the country sites in the respective case studies in our book, and some of the people involved in the experimental schools, had links to the NEF. A strong view they held in common was the NEF claim that the

⁴⁴ John Dewey to William H. Kilpatrick, 3 July 1913 (09132), in *The Correspondence of John Dewey* [electronic resource on CD-ROM] (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999–2004).

⁴⁵ John J. McDermott, “Introduction,” in *Spontaneous Activity in Education*, ed. Maria Montessori (New York: Shocken), xii.

⁴⁶ Alice Chipman Dewey to John Dewey, 31 January 1914 (02048), *The Correspondence of John Dewey*.

⁴⁷ Brehony, “A New Education”; Richard J. W. Selleck, *English Primary Education and the Progressives, 1914–1939* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972).

⁴⁸ Boyd and Rawson, *The Story of the New Education*.

⁴⁹ “New Education Fellowship: Its Purposes and Activities,” undated pamphlet, WEF/A/11/91 World Education Fellowship records, Institute of Education London Archive.

mishandling of children of school age has been responsible for much of the failure of men and women to find their feet in the modern world—failure leading to apathy, resentment, lack of foresight and flexibility, aggressiveness, and lack of initiative.⁵⁰

Our case study schools, albeit with differing agendas and emphasis, were established amidst this rejection of old education ideas and practices.

The NEF embraced both the political and the psychological—that is, both collective and individual pathways to change—by promoting ideas of social reform and education and supporting the view that education must release individuals’ creative powers and awaken their social conscience. The NEF encompassed diverse strands, but there was a common agenda to support experimental schools and to promote ways of introducing the principles of progressive education into public school systems. Our case studies showcase a continuum of commitment to this agenda at the time, but the impact of new education ideas on public schooling demonstrates its long-lasting legacy. This is not to suggest that the NEF was at the forefront of the case study experiments; rather, the NEF exemplifies the milieu and networking that fuelled the ideas of those involved. Overall the NEF was successful in connecting lay enthusiasts for educational reform with the key ideas, for example, of Dewey, Freud, and Piaget that were shaping the pedagogies of new education.⁵¹ That early childhood educators such as Maria Montessori, Margaret McMillan, and Susan Isaacs saw new institutions for early childhood education as a conduit for the ideals of the NEF is evident in the cover graphic on its magazine, *The New Era* (see Fig. 1.1).

For several decades *The New Era* was a key disseminator of ideas for innovation. Its first issue, published in January 1920, included an article devoted to the Montessori method.⁵² From the fledgling Soviet Union, education leader Stanislav Shatsky contributed an article in a 1928 special issue titled “Pioneer Education in Russia,” which outlined some Soviet laboratory school initiatives that are also featured in our case

⁵⁰ “What the Fellowship Is and Does,” undated pamphlet, WEF/A/11/91 World Education Fellowship records, Institute of Education London Archive.

⁵¹ Brehony, “A New Education.”

⁵² *Education for the New Era* 1, no. 1 (1920). Subsequent issues were renamed *The New Era*.

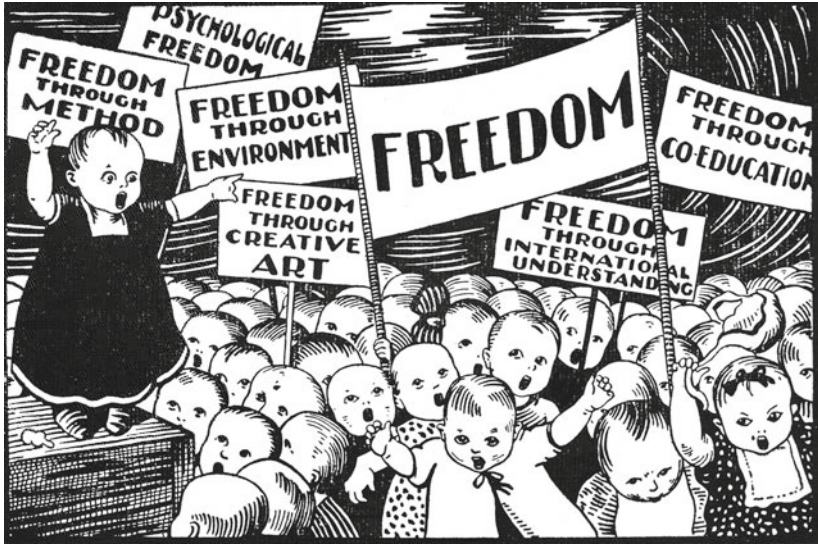


Fig. 1.1 The cover of *The New Era* 8, no. 32 (October 1927)

study in Chapter 4.⁵³ Similarly, in July 1928 *The New Era* published a special edition on British new education that included the Malting House School,⁵⁴ featured in Chapter 5. Across the many countries in our five case studies was a network of magazines associated with *The New Era*, as well as affiliated NEF branches and sister organisations such as the US Progressive Education Association, established in 1919, and its *Progressive Education* journal.⁵⁵ The NEF sponsored regional and international conferences that attracted a growing following among those who could travel, with educators attending from afar, including from Brazil. But drilling down into the NEF's archived correspondence files, particularly during the heyday of the 1930s, yields evidence of NEF branch activities of mainly classroom teachers and teacher educators who were devouring the

⁵³ Stanislav Shatsky, "The First Experiment Station on Public Education of the People's Commissariat of Education, U.S.S.R.," *The New Era* 9, no. 33 (1928): 13–15.

⁵⁴ "Malting House School," *The New Era* 9, no. 34 (1928), 72.

⁵⁵ Helen L. Horowitz, "The Progressive Education Movement After World War I," *History of Education Quarterly* 11, no. 1 (1971): 79–84.

debates and reports of experimental ventures from afar and were trying to enact new education ideas in their various classroom settings.⁵⁶

Another noteworthy institution, with members linked to several case studies, is the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA) and its various country affiliates. Unlike the NEF with its broadly based international membership, affiliations, and activities, the IPA was small scale, with selected membership of those involved in psychoanalysis. The association with its respective affiliates was a key site for debate, scientific exchange, and the sharing of research findings, but also aimed to manage and regulate the rise of the practice of psychoanalysis. The IPA was dominated by particular personalities and was sometimes brutal in its conflicts around the theory and practice of psychoanalysis, including the emerging field of child analysis that found a home under its umbrella. This was the domain that intersected across new education ventures, including the NEF, with the field of child analysis attracting lay analysts to its work, rather than those with a background in medicine.

The IPA began in 1902 when Sigmund Freud formed a small group that met on a regular basis to discuss his work. With a membership of fourteen in 1908, the group became the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society and attracted guests from other countries, including Carl Jung in Zurich and Ernest Jones in London. A first congress was held in Salzburg in 1908 at which the idea of an international association was proposed. The IPA was formally founded in 1910 and Jung was elected as its first president, a role later held by Jones.⁵⁷ Anna Freud was elected as general secretary in 1927, the first of her various roles on the executive board. She brought an educator's perspective to the IPA and, as a lay analyst herself, was caught in debates about the role of non-medical people in the field of psychoanalysis. She also represented the views of Sigmund Freud about hotly contested issues.⁵⁸

The NEF and the IPA with their affiliate organisations are cited as exemplars of international networks through which the ideas of new education spread. While the respective organisations provided formal conduits through conferences, meetings, and publications, interpersonal

⁵⁶Section Papers, WEF/1/A2, World Education Fellowship records, Institute of Education London Archive.

⁵⁷International Psychoanalytic Association, "History of the IPA," https://www.ipa.world/IPA/en/IPA1/ipa_history/history_of_the_ipa.aspx.

⁵⁸ElisabethYoung-Bruehl, *Anna Freud* (London: Macmillan, 1989).