ESSAYS IN COMPARATIVE EDUCATION

KANDEL

Studies of the International Institute
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By

I. L. KANDEL, M.A., Ph.D.

PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION AND ASSOCIATE IN THE
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE
OF TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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PREFACE

THE present volume consists of lectures and articles on various phases of contemporary educational developments viewed from the comparative standpoint. They represent current tendencies in the past five years rather than an attempt at a systematic description of the educational system of any one country. Education is at present in a state of flux and it may be some little time before anything approaching stability will be reached in the post-War reconstruction that is described in the following pages. The student of comparative education may supplement the accompanying accounts with those presented since 1924 in the *Educational Yearbooks* and with the monographs issued by the International Institute that are listed on another page of this volume.

The author expresses his indebtedness to the editors concerned for permission to reprint a number of the articles that have already appeared in the *Teachers College Record*, *Independent Education*, *The Nation's Schools*, *School and Society*, *Educational Outlook*, and the *Proceedings of Schoolmen's Week* of the University of Pennsylvania.

I. L. KANDEL

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COMPARATIVE EDUCATION AS A SUBJECT OF PROFESSIONAL STUDY *

THERE are few facts in the development of the subjects that make up the professional study of education more significant than the vast and complicated array that is now offered for the student's choice. In number and variety they find no parallel in any other country, while the educator of the nineties would stand aghast at the number of the descendants from the "omnium gatherum" that was then offered under the titles of principles, methods, and school government. As I have attempted to show elsewhere,[1] this development was inevitable considering the conditions under which education and its study have grown in this country in the absence of a central governmental authority to lay down the framework and regulate the process and progress of education.

The development that has now been reached in the multiplication of subjects that are grouped under the title of education renders more difficult the introduction of new courses. Accordingly, the addition of a new subject can only be justified if it has a contribution to make to the whole round, if it is economical not in being a mere superimposition on the others but in cutting across them all, if it utilizes and reinterprets them in a practical way. To some extent, this has been and still is the contribution of the history of educa-

* This article appeared in the *Educational Outlook*, Vol. I, No. 1, November, 1926, pp. 1 ff.

[1] Kandel, I. L. (Ed.), *Twenty-five Years of American Education*. New York, 1923.

tion, but the history of education analyzes and explains the problems of education up to the threshold of the period in which we are working. Principles of education and even philosophy of education have in general dealt with one portion of the whole field, while educational sociology is virtually a new branch and somewhat uncertain in its content.

The study of comparative education fulfills most of the requirements that are needed to justify its introduction as a serious branch of the study of education in general. The history of American education in the nineteenth century shows, of course, marked traces both of the study and of the influences of foreign educational systems. How valuable such study was in the upbuilding of the American system it is unnecessary to emphasize here. Nor is it intended to derogate in any way from the overwhelmingly important part that purely native thought and development have played in making the educational system of the United States what it is. The point is, however, that in education it has not been possible to divest ourselves of interest in what was going on in the rest of the world.

And yet, although the leaders of educational thought followed developments abroad, comparative education was not crystallized into an independent study. The reason is not difficult to find. In the first place, the usual accounts of foreign educational systems were mere descriptions of administration, organization, and practices. In the second place, such descriptions were written wholly from the point of view of education alone, without any closely reasoned analysis of what the systems stood for or represented in the field of national progress and development. In the third place, either the accounts were in general not prepared in the light of their bearing on specific American problems, or, if they were prepared with this end in view, sufficient allowances were not made for differences in national environments.

Other factors which somewhat diminished interest in foreign school systems were the awakening to self-consciousness

of our national system of education and the remarkably rapid development of the professional study of education which quickly overtook and soon went beyond the opportunities that any foreign country could offer. As a result of the first cause there developed a tendency to believe that American government and society were so different from the governments and social organization of other countries that the educational systems and processes must inevitably be very different. And yet it is not unusual to find, even within the United States itself, educators from different parts of the country who similarly tend to close their eyes to what their neighbors are doing, because they believe their own problems are unique.

Conceding that there is a small measure of truth in this argument, the emergence of democracies since the War has tended to make the problems of education almost universally identical. There has probably never been a period since the Renaissance when the world of education has been inspired by the same range of ideas, ideals, ambitions, and aspirations. The problems of all thus being closely similar, the study of comparative education assumes a new aspect. Merely to study the educational machinery, the organization and administration of school systems, the curricula and teaching processes, and classroom procedures would be barren. The chief value of a comparative approach to such problems lies in an analysis of the causes that have produced them, in a comparison of the differences between the various systems, and, finally, in a study of the solutions attempted. In other words, the approach demands first an appreciation of the intangible, impalpable spiritual forces that underlie an educational system; the factors and forces outside the school matter even more than what goes on inside it. Hence the comparative study of education must be founded on an analysis of the social and political ideals which the school reflects, for the school epitomizes these for transmission and for progress. Hence, to be in a position to appreciate and

evaluate the real meaning of the educational system of a nation, it is essential to know something of her history and traditions, of the social forces and attitudes, of the political and economic situations that condition its development.

What does this mean for the student of education? It means, if properly conducted, a comparison of variant philosophies of education based not on theories but on actual practices that prevail; it means a critical approach and challenge to one's own philosophy and, therefore, a clearer analysis of the background and basis of the educational system of one's own nation; it means the development of a new attitude and a new point of view from knowing how and why other nations educate. Take, for example, the problem which is today probably the most important, the relation between education and democracy. What is the meaning of democracy? A comparison of the use and significance of this term in England, Germany, France, and Russia—to take only these four countries—cannot fail to throw into bolder relief our own conception of the meaning of democracy and its implications in the United States. The different shades of meaning that attach to this institution have their resultant effects on educational organization and practices. In other words, the greater part of the world today constitutes a species of laboratory in which, so far as education is concerned, varied types of solutions are being attempted to the same general range of problems. Now if it is claimed that education is a science or that we are endeavoring to make a scientific approach to education, the student of education cannot afford any more than the chemist or physicist to ignore the procedures that are being tried under conditions somewhat different from those in which he is working.

The significance of this thesis can best be illustrated by citing some of the problems and questions that arise in the study of comparative education. The first problem to emerge is the eternal question of the relation of the individual to the state and to society. How fundamental this problem

is may be seen from its effects on such questions as nationalism, the content of the curriculum, discipline, and methods of instruction. The changes in education that are now being evolved have their origin in the changes that have taken place in this problem since the War. In practice the different attitudes on the relation of the individual to the state and to society are today more effective and potent than the contributions of the psychologists on the nature of the individual. Educational systems accordingly are colored far more by prevailing social and political concepts than by psychological theories. How else, for example, can one explain the different educational procedures in such democracies as France, England, the United States, and in the young German Republic?

Closely associated with this problem are the varying administrative types, centralization and decentralization or localism. Here there enters not merely the problem of the relations of the individual to society but the whole group of traditions and attitudes that govern the relations between parents and children, between families and other social groups, between local and central authorities, and between a nation and her neighbors. Here, too, enter the status, implications, and effectiveness of a national *Kultur*. The group of problems in turn inevitably affects the problems involved in curriculum-making, discipline, and methods. In no small measure the problems considered in this and the preceding paragraphs affect administrative practices dealing with the support of education, the training and status of teachers, inspection and supervision. And, finally, they affect vitally the conception of progress to the extent that it is dependent on governmental or individual activity, on public and private effort, on uniformity and variety.

One of the most prominent preoccupations in the field of educational research in this country at the present time is the revision of the curriculum. The same statement may be applied to the leading countries of the world. And yet it is

doubtful whether those American educators who protest most loudly the status of education as a science are paying any attention to developments abroad. Fundamentally, the reasons for changing the curriculum are today everywhere the same; the expert in other sciences would surely not close his eyes to the efforts made by others in his own field, no matter from what country they proceed. The same unrest is proceeding in the field of methods of instruction and the relation between teachers and pupils. Here there is a fertile subject for the student who is interested in discovering the truth of the claim that more foreign countries attain greater thoroughness than is found in the United States. But this is only one of a large number of inquiries that may be made into the validity of diverse methods of instruction. At present the only standards that are considered in educational comparisons are those of attendance, length of schooling, and expenditure—standards which are extremely deceptive as guides to quality of education.

In the field of secondary education comparative study can be extremely illuminating. Today it involves a study of the meaning of equality of educational opportunity, a question that is fundamental to the organization of education beyond the elementary level. But more important, especially in view of the criticisms that are becoming increasingly numerous, is the interpretation in the light of divergent practices of the meaning of culture or liberal education. If American practice is different from all others, how can it justify itself?

Another group of questions that is fundamental to the progress of education is that which centers round the teacher. Not the least significant of these is the place of the teacher in society and in the educational system. What should be the character of teacher preparation and what should be the part of the teacher in relation to educational progress? How much freedom should the teacher enjoy? To what extent should his function be to impart a ready-made curriculum, and to what extent may he be expected to be a scientist as

well as a craftsman in education? How much supervision of teachers is desirable and by what standards should effective teaching be measured? What is the place of the textbook in teaching? The implications of these questions for curriculum and methods are obvious.

One more topic may be cited from which fruitful results may be expected from a comparative approach. In recent years the most extensive activity in the study of education in the United States has been in the field of tests and measurements. The work in this field has been almost as extensive in Germany, while valuable studies have appeared in England. A comparison of the results in the three countries, while essentially one for specialists, is worthy of consideration in its effects on setting up standards, in determining problems to be studied, in perfecting technique. And yet, up to the present, the work in this one branch of education, that professes to be scientific, has been negligible.

Finally, there is one other contribution that may be derived from the comparative study of education. This is the development of an internationalism that is not based on emotion, but arises from an appreciative understanding of other nations, from the sense that all nations in education are contributing, each in its own way, to the work of the world, from a realization and understanding of the ambitions and ideals that each nation is endeavoring to hand on through its schools. For a study of foreign education that neglects the search for the hidden meaning of things found in the schools is merely the acquisition of information about another educational system and of little value as a contribution to the clarification of thought, to the better development of education as a science, and to the building up of a comprehensive, all-embracing philosophy of education.

It may be objected, and until recently the objection was sound, that the program here outlined is too ambitious and that there is not enough material available in English for the American student whose linguistic preparation is limited

to that language. Fortunately, this objection no longer holds. In the first place, an organization like the World Federation of Educational Associations has through the reports of its proceedings an opportunity of acquainting the student with what is going on educationally throughout the world. An organization like the Progressive Education Association, both in its proceedings and in its organ, is adding to our sum of knowledge on one particular phase of educational activity. More extensive is the literature published and planned by the International Institute of Teachers College, Columbia University. One of the important activities of the Institute is to make the literature on foreign education accessible to American students. The Institute has already published reports on education in Bulgaria, Porto Rico, and the Philippines, and on secondary education in France. It has in preparation reports on recent educational developments in Germany, Mexico, South America, and in French elementary education. The aim of this series is so far as possible to place translations of official documents in the hands of American students. Through several of its students the study of special problems has been undertaken in a number of foreign countries, the results of which will be published in the course of time. Finally, the Institute issues annually the "Educational Yearbook," in which leading foreign educators present reports on their own educational systems; these reports, with the bibliographies presented, open up materials for intensive studies that have not hitherto been available. On the score of literature, therefore, there need no longer be any hesitancy. But ultimately, if any benefit is to result for American education and for the equipment of American educators, what matter more are the methods of approach and the realization that the foreign educational systems are laboratories for the solution of problems, many of which are shared by the American educational system, and that their study will contribute to the development of a philosophy of education based on a variety of experiences.

THE STATE AND EDUCATION IN EUROPE*

THE permanent question in education has always been "Who shall have the control of the education of the child?" The question is no nearer settlement today than it was when first broached from the point of view of political philosophy by Plato and Aristotle. These two philosophers already had before them the *laissez faire* practice of the Athenians, up to the period of military training, and the state-controlled system of the Spartans. Into the theoretical solutions of Plato and Aristotle it is not necessary to enter, but Aristotle's statement is pertinent to the topic under consideration. "Of all things that I have mentioned," he said, "that which contributes most to the permanence of constitutions is the adaptation of education to the form of government" (*Politics*), and "We laid it down that the end of politics is the highest good; and there is nothing that this science takes so much pains with as producing a certain character in the citizens, that is, making them good and able to do fine actions" (*Ethics*).

To these statements later developments have had little to add. During the medieval period education was controlled by the Church and from time to time decrees were issued requiring parish priests to provide and supervise elementary education; secondary education was definitely controlled and

* Lecture in a course on Contemporary Educational Movements Abroad, Teachers College, March 4, 1930; printed in *Teachers College Record*, Vol. XXXI, No. 8, May, 1930, pp. 721 ff.

supervised by the bishops in each diocese. Attempts were made from time to time by individuals to contest this supervision and by city councils to provide their own education, but these protests against an established doctrine failed. The Reformation did not result in the elimination of the control of education by the ecclesiastical authorities but in the development of a partnership between them and the State, for education, like religion, was subject to the doctrine *cujus regio, ejus religio.*

This partnership continued, especially in the field of elementary education, in most countries down to the twentieth century, but the State gradually assumed a larger share of control which increased with the emergence of the political concept of nationalism.

The theorists of the French Revolution enunciated the principle that the child belongs to the State, and Condorcet, while he accepted this principle, attempted to divorce education from politics by advocating an autonomous system of education wholly controlled by the teaching profession. Napoleon grasped the Revolutionary principle and in 1808 issued a decree to the effect that "No school, no establishment of instruction whatsoever, may be set up outside the Imperial University and without the authorization of its head." This principle Napoleon had already justified three years earlier when he wrote, "Of all political questions that (of education) is perhaps the most important. There cannot be a firmly established political state unless there is a teaching body with definitely recognized principles. If the child is not taught from infancy that he ought to be a republican or a monarchist, a Catholic or a free-thinker, the State will not constitute a nation; it will rest on uncertain and shifting foundations; and it will be constantly exposed to disorder and change." [1] These principles have survived in French education down to the present, but for somewhat different reasons.

[1] See Reisner, E. H., *Nationalism and Education since 1789*, p. 35. The Macmillan Company, 1922.

The same principle was inherent in the definitive organization of the Prussian system of education before 1800. The *Allegemeine Landrecht* of 1794 provided that "schools and universities are state institutions charged with the instruction of youth in useful information and scientific knowledge. Such institutions may be founded only with the knowledge and consent of the State." The call to patriotism and nationalism that followed the German defeat at Jena helped to give further justification to this principle of State control over education, which received a more intensive application after 1870 with the growth of political, military, and economic nationalism in Germany. The practical interpretation found its rationalization in the philosophy of Fichte and Hegel and later in the works of the nationalist historians and propagandists. The State represents the realization of reason and justice in social life; in a word the State alone, as an idealized entity above the individuals that make it up, has a mission and a destiny to fulfill and has, therefore, the right to organize that education that will realize its *Kultur*.

The principle of State control of education never took a real hold on English thought. There were among the early socialists a few, like Robert Owen and William Godwin, who advocated the organization and provision of education by the State, but on the whole conservatives were opposed to it and liberals were afraid of it. Public education developed slowly and expanded by easy stages after the first grant was made for educational purposes in 1833. The result was the creation of vested interests which had to be conserved when something approaching a national system of education began to be developed after 1902, and a further result has been the constant fear of State encroachment in the process of education.

There thus survived into the twentieth century two main principles underlying the relation of the State to education: First that the State has a right to a virtual monopoly in education, including complete control over all types of educa-

tion, public and private; and second the doctrine of *laissez faire* with the implication that the State may step in to supply deficiencies. Some changes have, however, taken place in the post-War period.

France may still be cited as the best example of centralization or State control in education. Here the Napoleonic principle survives but is beginning to be questioned. The reasons underlying this principle have been increased during the Third Republic. Centralization is justified not merely on cultural grounds but as the best protection against aggression both within and without and the best guarantee of national solidarity. It is not often realized that the French republic still lives in fear of the restoration of a monarchy, a fear which may be groundless but which still plays an important part in French life today. The restoration of the Church to political power is also an eventuality against which centralization in education is regarded as a protective safeguard despite the law against Associations passed in 1904. Fear of the development of a caste system is another element that is employed to justify State control that will hold the balance between classes and provide opportunities for the emergence of talent. Bureaucratic control of educational administration is, from another point of view, regarded as the soundest guarantee of efficiency. Hence, a system of organization in which almost every detail is controlled and prescribed by the Ministry of Public Instruction and carried out by officials directly or indirectly responsible to it. By the time the details of administration have been exhausted by the bureaucracy, so little is left for local school committees, which have a place in the scheme of organization, that many refuse to function. The opening and closing of schools, the provision of a large share of the funds, the training and certification of teachers, the approval of textbooks, curricula and courses of study, and the standards of the examinations with which the career of every Frenchman is paved—all these, the *externa* and the *interna*, belong in the last resort to

the Ministry of Public Instruction. The extent to which the power of any Minister may be carried was well illustrated in 1923–24 when the whole system of secondary studies was changed and rechanged by successive Ministerial decrees.

An appreciation of the principles underlying the State's relation to education in France is necessary to understand the status of private schools. That there is a demand for these is illustrated by the fact that about twenty per cent of French children are educated in them. But no private school may be opened without the approval of the Ministry, the inspector of an academy, the department officials, the local mayor, and the Public Prosecutor. The principals and teachers in private elementary schools must have the same qualifications as those in public schools, and all private schools must be open to inspection. After that, methods and curricula are left to the discretion of the school, an arrangement which does not work out so well in practice because advancement on the academic ladder and at times in the economic field is governed by the possession of certificates granted on the basis of government examinations. It is significant that scarcely any educational experiments of note have come from France.

There is some protest against the system from both lay and professional organizations. There is a demand for regionalism or adaptation of educational organization to local needs, for more flexibility and less control from Paris. Up to the present nothing has been done to meet this demand, except that the latest revision of the elementary course of study leaves to the teachers some room for local adaptation, subject to the approval of the inspectors. If any change of larger scope should be undertaken, it is certain that one other dominating element will not be neglected, and that is such an organization of French education as will not deprive France of her preëminent international position as a leader of thought and culture.

The new German Constitution of 1919 opens the section on