



GLOBAL HISTORIES OF EDUCATION

The International Bureau of Education (1925–1968)

“The Ascent From the Individual to the Universal”

Rita Hofstetter
Bernard Schneuwly

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Rita Hofstetter • Bernard Schneuwly

The International Bureau of Education (1925–1968)

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FOREWORD

This book makes the history of the International Bureau of Education more accessible. This narrative is still largely unknown to the public (especially the English-speaking), even though, under the leadership of Jean Piaget, it was the first intergovernmental institution in the field of education. In this respect, it was a precursor of UNESCO, with which it collaborated from 1947 on, and which it joined in 1968.

The cover image could be a symbolic representation of the IBE's ambition: to build unity in diversity, by considering the way in which sedimented territories are arranged in relation to one another, by dealing with their convergences and divergences, their diverse materials and textures. Those who built the IBE were in fact driven by the universalist conviction that all the territories of the planet belong to the same and unique world constituted by the erratic plurality of their formats and cultural bases; a plurality—and the way in which it evolves and fits into the environments—that precisely intrigued these comparativists in education and specialists in developmental processes, including child development.

The IBE with its astonishing longevity has been the focus of our attention for the past ten years, as we were eager to understand how it evolved over the twentieth century, while the internationalisation of educational phenomena was accelerating and a new global governance was imposed in this field. Initiated by the work of the authors of this book, the research was founded, from 2016 on, by the Swiss National Science Fund grant (N° 100011_169747), directed by Hofstetter and Droux, and carried out by the *Équipe de recherche en histoire sociale de l'éducation* (Érhise). This has led to numerous works to which 15 other researchers, mostly

historians, some early in their careers, others more experienced, have contributed over five years.¹ The specific contributions of each of them enrich this volume, which is therefore indebted to the dense seminars of collective work. We will not fail to refer to them at the appropriate points. Three theses have also been completed. Boss (2022) approaches the IBE by penetrating the beating heart of the Secretariat: via prosopographical approaches, she sheds light on the profiles and trajectories of its members and examines their working tools and techniques, as well as their social circles and networks of collaborations. This allows her to identify how the premises of comparative education as a new disciplinary field were built up, step by step, through conferences, surveys and exhibitions. Brylinski (2022) focuses on the IBE as an intergovernmental agency, questioning its “utopia” of recommending peaceful education at a time of heightened nationalism. Her specificity resides in the critical look at the (mis)alliances, consultations and negotiations that allowed the construction of this intergovernmentalism by pointing out, thanks to enlightening network analyses, the political interferences in this forum which was supposed to be preserved from them. As for Loureiro’s thesis (forthcoming), it is distinguished by the emphasis placed on the interconnections with Latin America, in order to identify the modalities, channels and contents circulating in both directions, between the international Geneva of the interwar period and South America, which was also aspiring to identify itself on the international scene. Specific case studies, such as Brazil, also make it possible to identify how its representatives reappropriated constructed knowledge and participated in its redefinition.

International scientific seminars organised by the authors and by Érhise have provided the opportunity to discuss specific methodological,

¹ Joëlle Droux, Cécile Boss, Émeline Brylinski, Aurélie De Mestral, and Michel Christian, Anouk Darne-Xu, Blaise Extermann, Marie-Élise Hunyadi, Irina Leopoldoff, Valérie Lussi Borer, Clarice Loureiro, Frédéric Mole, Anne Monnier, Viviane Rouiller and Sylviane Tinembart.

theoretical and empirical issues with particularly qualified experts,² to whom we extend our warmest thanks. Many colleagues, through their own investigations and writings, their critical reviews and discussions, their translations and invitations, are present on these pages. This is evidenced by the many venues where we have been invited to present our work: Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Brussels, Budapest, Cadiz, Dublin, Freiburg, Geneva, Groningen, Lausanne, Lisbon, London, Lyon, Moscow, Paris, Porto, Rome, St. Petersburg, Uppsala, Warsaw, Zurich, and Chicago, New York, San Francisco, Washington, as well as Belo Horizonte, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, San Luis de Potosí, Quito and, more briefly, Bombay, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Hue.

We have also had the opportunity to submit the first results of our investigations to critical discussion in numerous formalised scientific networks, both in Switzerland (Swiss Historical Society, Swiss Society for Research in Education) and at the international level such as the conferences of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES), the European Network in Universal and Global History (ENIUGH), the European Conference on Educational Research (ECER) and the International Standing Conference for the History of Education (ISCHE).

Our investigations took advantage of the wealth of heritage preserved in a variety of sites and institutions, libraries and archival collections, first and foremost the Archives *Institut Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (AIJRR), the Jean Piaget Foundation (AJP), the League of Nations (LoN) and the United Nations (UN) and of course those of the IBE's own Documentation and Archives Centre, whose non-published documents for the period in

² Abdeljalil Akkari and Thibaut Lauwerier (University of Geneva), Iván Bajomi (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest), Jeremy Burman (Groningen University), Léonora Dugonjić-Rodwin (Uppsala University, IDHES, École normale supérieure-Paris Saclay), Joyce Goodman (University of Winchester), Martin M. Grandjean (University of Lausanne), Alix Heiniger (University of Fribourg), Daniel Laqua (Northumbria University, Newcastle), Claire Lemercier (CNRS—Centre for the sociology of organisations, Paris), Damiano Matasci (Universities of Lausanne and Geneva), Antonio Nóvoa (University of Lisbon), Emmanuelle Picard (École normale supérieure, Lyon), André Robert (University of Lyon 2 Lumière), Marc Ratcliff and his team (Camille Jaccard, Ariane Noël) (University of Geneva), Rebecca Rogers (University of Paris Descartes), Gita Steiner-Khamsi (Norrag and Columbia University), Françoise Thébaud (University of Avignon) and Sylvain Wagnon (University of Montpellier).

question have now been digitalised. It is thanks to the generous welcome and support of the people in charge of these various archives that we have been able to carry out our work, for which we thank them. Our gratitude goes to the experts (Sébastien-Akira Alix and Christian Ydesen who have carefully commented on the whole manuscript and have helped to improve its clarity and relevance). The final production of the book benefited from the specific complementary contributions of Viviane Rouiller.

Our deepest gratitude goes to Moya Jones who translated the text with unwavering expertise and readiness. Translating with such subtlety presupposes the ability, which is incomparable here, to make the problematic and the style of the authors one's own. This requirement has important advantages: it reveals forms of language that conceal paucities of thought, helping us to make our analyses clearer without compromising the complexity of the subject; it involves reviewing a text in detail in order to get a deep understanding of its general coherence, thereby highlighting inconsistencies; it contributes to the process of the circulation and internationalisation of the subject, which is particularly important when it comes to unearthing the little-known work of our predecessors.

The translation and publication of this book in open access have been financed by a grant from the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) of the Swiss Confederation (2021–2022) and the iconographic credits have been generously offered by the IBE, the AIJRR and the AJP. To them as well, we express our gratitude.

Geneva, Switzerland
15 April 2023

Rita Hofstetter
Bernard Schneuwly

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ABBREVIATIONS¹

A-IBE	Archives of the International Bureau of Education
AIJR	Archives <i>Institut Jean-Jacques Rousseau</i>
AJP	Archives Jean Piaget
CAME	Conference of Allied Ministers of Education
Érhise	Équipe de recherche en histoire sociale de l'éducation [Team of research on the social history of education]
IBE	International Bureau of Education
ICIC	International Commission on Intellectual Cooperation
ICPE	International Conference on Public Education
IIC	International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation
ILO	International Labour Office
INGO	International Nongovernmental Organisation
IO	Intergovernmental organisation
LIEN	Ligue internationale pour l'éducation nouvelle [International League for New Education]
LoN	League of Nations
NEF	New Education Fellowship
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIC	Organisation of Intellectual Cooperation
PEN	<i>Pour l'Ère nouvelle</i> [For the New Era; journal of LIEN – see above]

¹Only those abbreviations that appear in more than one chapter have been included in this list.

R	Recommendation
UIA	Union of International Associations
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WFEA	World Federation of Education Associations

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CHAPTER 1

General Introduction

The whole world puts its hope in education. It needs an energetic, active, enterprising educational organisation, able to penetrate everywhere, to put everything to work, to make the most of everything. If we do not become that organisation in a short time, another one, or others, will be created and we will have no reason to exist. It would undoubtedly only be half bad if these organisations presented the same guarantees of objectivity and of scientific serenity as the IBE, which lives in the atmosphere of pure scientific idealism of the J. J. Rousseau Institute, of political and religious neutrality which is that of the Swiss Confederation, and the advanced international spirit of Geneva. But this would not be the case, because it is impossible to find these three conditions combined elsewhere. (Marie Butts, Secretary General, Report to the Council of IBE, 21.10.1927, p. 2)¹

At the end of the Great War, the whole world would confer on education a redeeming mission. This was obvious to the Secretary General of the International Bureau of Education (IBE), who defended with conviction—here in 1927—the uniqueness of the Bureau that the *Institut Rousseau*² had just set up in Geneva (1925). According to Marie Butts, only that particular Bureau could provide all the guarantees of credibility

¹ AdF/A/1/2/36, AIJRR.

² Also called *École des sciences de l'éducation* [School of sciences of education], a centre for psychopedagogical research and documentation.

and legitimacy required of such a “sanctuary”³: strict objectivity, scientific serenity, political and religious neutrality, and an advanced international spirit.

The energetic tone of the above quotation in fact reflects the drama that was then unfolding, and which distressed Butts, who felt that if the enterprise was not better supported and directed, it would soon go under. A few months earlier, she had compared the IBE to “a budding giant” whose “growth is a little frightening [...] the time has come to make a serious effort to provide our Bureau with the financial means that are absolutely essential for its survival”.⁴ Less than two years after its creation was proclaimed loud and clear to the world, the IBE was actually on the verge of collapse.

However, we know in retrospect that the Bureau still exists today, and this book is being published in the effervescent context of preparations for its centenary, which will be celebrated in 2025: a longevity that few inter-governmental organisations created during the inter-war period have been able to achieve, with the notable exception of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and its Bureau, whom the IBE had taken as model.⁵ How, under what conditions and at what cost did this small institution of 1925, which effectively intended to merge its destiny with that of humanity, master the growth of this “budding giant” and deploy its potentialities? Have its universalist ambitions and flagship principles been maintained, and have they been able to guide its activities and productions? Such issues are among the main questions to which this book intends to provide an answer.

This introduction begins with our point of departure, namely that the IBE of the first part of the twentieth century can be seen as a matrix of educational internationalism. If we widen our time frame here, it is the resolutely universal and universalist ambition of the IBE that comes to the fore, under the aegis of Piaget, when the institution becomes intergovernmental. Hence the title of this book, which also sets out the main theme. We then briefly situate ourselves in the intense debate concerning the universal, and forge the indispensable tools for developing this critical

³These are our words, but it refers to its builders’ idea of an IBE as a space preserved from external interferences (*skoblé* in the meaning attributed to it by Bourdieu, 1997, pp. 24–26, which also underlines its ambiguities).

⁴Secretariat report for the meeting of the IBE Council, 30.5.1927, p. 3. AdF/A/1/2/28, AIJRR.

⁵For a recent overview retrospective, see Hidalgo-Weber and Lescaze (2020).

sociogenesis of the IBE’s ambitions and achievements within its relational network and the educational context of the twentieth century. We continue with a presentation of our problematic, a description of the approaches and contents of each of the five parts, and a presentation of the rich archival heritage on which our investigation is based. This introduction concludes with a few remarks designed to highlight contradictions that are still present today, and which we will take up again in our conclusion, since our research helps to shed new light on them.

THE IBE: A MATRIX FOR EDUCATIONAL INTERNATIONALISM

Our investigation of the sociogenesis of the IBE in the dense web of international organisations (IGOs and INGOs) of the first half of the twentieth century leads us to assert that this Bureau constituted a matrix of educational internationalism,⁶ with the universal in mind. Education is a nodal facet of the “cultural internationalism” conceptualised by Iriye (1997) which demonstrates the extent to which cultural phenomena—representations, values, knowledge, literature and the arts—play a central role in the process of internationalisation, which intensified in the nineteenth century, to become a veritable tidal wave during the first half of the twentieth century (Herren, 2009; Sluga, 2013). The adjective “international” plus the suffix “-ism” depicts this process as a cause to be embraced, an imperative to be implemented, an objective to be achieved. In our view, it can be interpreted as an internationalisation that becomes conscious of itself.⁷ Referring to works describing the sociogenesis of internationalism,⁸ we use the term “educational internationalism”⁹ to designate the convictions and achievements of a myriad of actors, individual and collective, private

⁶A previous collective work (Hofstetter & Érhise, 2022), the only large-scale historical research devoted to this organisation at the time, bears this title; given its importance for our book, we specify its status in our foreword and refer to it specifically in the parts which build on this knowledge base.

⁷The term was in fact used by the very people who were working and pleading at the beginning of the twentieth century for the construction of new international structures and mentalities (or were resisting or challenging them) (Geyer & Paulmann, 2001; Herren, 2009).

⁸We refer more specifically to: Clavin (2005), Laqua (2013), Reinisch (2016), Reinisch and Brydan (2021), Saunier (2013) and Sluga and Clavin (2017).

⁹See in particular our latest analysis: Droux and Hofstetter (2020), Hofstetter and Droux (2022), Hofstetter and Schneuwly (2020), Matasci and Hofstetter (2022). Matasci and Ruppen Coutaz (2023) have most recently used this concept to collectively examine the circulation of knowledge during the Cold War.

and public, who were convinced of the need to apply the methods of international collaboration to the field of education in order to pacify the world. The IBE would attempt to be the epicentre of this, by setting itself up as an international rallying point.

During the immediate post-war decade, the IBE was indeed a significant emblem of the mobilising power of civil society, as it strove to stand out as a federating body for international associations that aspired to build universal peace through education. Since 1929, set up as an independent intergovernmental organisation, the first in the field of education, it had been striving for the universality of its state partners, in order to improve education systems with them. The internationalism of which it claimed to be a part aimed to work on a global scale to universalise access to education and to define universalisable teaching methods: an educational internationalism of which it can be considered to be the matrix. It would be a matrix through the new modes of collaboration and exchange that the Bureau established: the objectivity and neutrality its founders included in the statutes of the Bureau from the outset constituted for them the tools for international action on education systems, the preserve of nations. Its partners thus profiled the IBE as an intergovernmental centre for comparative education, the first IO specializing in the description and comparative analysis of public school systems. It was in this capacity that from 1947 onwards the Bureau collaborated with UNESCO, for which it is considered a precursor. It was also a matrix in defining, studying and discussing the causes on its agenda: addressing a wide range of problems deemed crucial to the world's educational progress, it endeavoured to construct what its leaders called a charter of "world aspirations for public education". In its own way, it inaugurated what we now call the global education agenda.¹⁰

AN INCREASINGLY UNIVERSAL ORIENTATION

As we have said, the common thread running through this book is the IBE's universal ambition. Perceived and declared right from its foundation (1925), this became its primary aim once it was elevated to the status of an intergovernmental organization. The collaboration with UNESCO,

¹⁰Here we take up the notion of "globalization," historicised and theorised alongside the ones of "borrowing" and "lending", by Steiner-Khamsi (2004) later by Steiner-Khamsi and Waldow (2012).

inaugurated in the early days of the institution, was intended to bring it closer to this goal.

Over the course of the 1950s and 1960s, the number and profile of the countries participating in the IBE's activities became more diversified to include most parts of the globe, thus bringing it closer to the ideal of universality. What interests us in this context is to understand how these partners, brought together for the "supreme good of childhood", which was supposed to free them from all frontiers and discord, positioned themselves in relation to each other when they were confronted with particularly sensitive problems. We examine especially the impact of the Cold War and of decolonisation in terms of the universalist ideals in force, also appropriated by newly independent countries to make their own voices heard. We focus here on the forty years during which Jean Piaget was the director (1929–1968) and the driving force behind the International Conferences on Public Education (ICPEs), which were organised annually in order to apply the methods of international collaboration to the field of education. We examine how Piaget drew on his universalist theories of child development and the construction of intelligence as guidelines for the pedagogical surveys and positions of the IBE and how, under his leadership, the IBE positioned itself axiologically.¹¹ We also highlight how, together with Rosselló (Deputy Director), Piaget conceptualised the *modus operandi* of the ICPEs, which were designed to allow "the ascension from the individual to the universal" as well as the way in which he assumed his role as a diplomat of educational internationalism, including during the critical phases of the exacerbation of nationalisms and, later, those of the geopolitical reconfigurations of the world.

¹¹ Chapman (1988), Ducret (1984), Gruber and Vonèche (1993) remain the best introduction to Piaget's work. Ratcliff (2011) allows us to know Piaget's personality in his relationships with others, which is essential to understand his action at the IBE, but also his description of the "laboratory of simplicity" (2006), which echoes Burman's (2012) demonstration that Piaget's scientific work, far from being the product of a "great man", is the product of a "factory", a "factory" of many workers that he directs as a "boss": an image that fits perfectly with his role at the IBE (see also Ratcliff & Burman, 2017). As for Kohler (2009), his advantage is that he has worked on the impressive archival sources of the IBE (and not the *Institut Rousseau*, on which he adds nothing new); but he deploys his energy surprisingly in pointing out the contradictions in Piaget's involvement with the IBE, without, in our view, sufficiently contextualising what was at stake at the time for the IBE and all the individual and collective players at work in the creation of these new international bodies of the time. The challenge was to avoid any teleological interpretation of the tools they were trying to build step by step to achieve their ends, albeit without the hoped-for success.

Throughout the twentieth century, the orientation of the IBE towards the universal became thus more explicit and served as a flag-bearer for its designers. This is particularly evident in the quest for universality of governmental actors who contributed to the enterprise, that is, ministries of education around the world. It can also be seen in the development of a *modus operandi* that was supposed to respect the principles of reciprocity and decentralisation in order to guarantee equitable exchanges which, from the IBE's perspective, was a condition for the construction of the universal. It was simultaneously reflected in the desire to define universalisable pedagogical principles and to promote universal access to education. It is also significant that it was to Piaget, Director of the IBE and Interim Director of the UNESCO education department, that this UN agency entrusted the task of commenting on Article 26 of the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights", dedicated to the right to education.¹²

UNIVERSAL/UNIVERSALITY: CONCEPTUAL TOOLS FOR AN INVESTIGATION

The IBE was thereby part of the universalist discourse¹³ of the time which concerned both the epistemic sphere and its potential for knowledge, and the ethical sphere linked to the question of values, such as peace, justice,

¹² By the way, Piaget's paper, "Le droit à l'éducation dans le monde actuel" [The right to education in the modern world], inaugurated the "Human Rights" Collection, published by UNESCO (1949; 1951 in English).

¹³ Today, the word "universalism" is often used to refer to the whole of these discourses. This is a relatively recent term (mid-nineteenth century), applied first and foremost to the theological field. Statistics show that its use has become more frequent from the 1980s onwards, probably in connection with the questioning of the "universal" by post-colonial movements and cultural studies, against which others defend "universalism". It is thus a "meta-category" that allows for the analysis of social currents linked to universals or for the constitution of such movements under the banner of universalism (e.g. Policar, 2021; Wolff, 2019; for an English presentation of the term see Ingram 2014). Balibar seems to us to perfectly situate the meaning of universalism from a historical point of view and to relativise the use of the term: It is more useful "to attempt to analyse *the differends of universalisms* as the very modality in which the historicity of the universal, or its constitutive *equivocity*, is given" (2020, p. 56), the most massive example of these "differends" being the competing universalisms of monotheisms (one may refer here to Jasper's idea of an axial period when monotheisms were invented; Ingram 2014). We ourselves will only use universalism as an analytical category, especially as it was hardly used by IBE spokespersons, who clearly favoured universal, universality, sometimes universalist and exceptionally universalisation, universalisable.

health and freedom, to mention just a few of the IO's flagship ideals at the time. Since the IBE's quest for legitimacy in the dense network of other bodies with the same universal aims is examined here in the light of its universalist ambitions, we will briefly situate ourselves in recent historiography on this subject. These universalist discourses have been the subject of criticism in major political debates, to the extent that some have spoken of a "new quarrel".¹⁴ This will allow us to introduce some concepts that will guide us in our investigations.

Various analyses have shown that, in addition to the just and noble causes they are supposed to promote, claims to universality have also turned out to be weapons of oppression and discrimination of peoples, serving even as a pretext for exploitation and imperialist domination under the guise of a civilising mission that justified colonialism.¹⁵ This overarching universalism (Merleau-Ponty, 1960, p. 75)—of which human rights would constitute a modality—was also analysed by some as the result of a narrative, a product of the dominant historicism (Chakrabarty, 2009), which made Europe the place where the benefits of human progress had emerged and were erected as universal: European exceptionalism would embody the universalism that the rest of the world was supposed to follow (Diagne, 2018, p. 71), in other words what Bourdieu (1992) once called the "imperialism of the universal".

However, the very notion of the universal is rarely questioned on its merits, and the interpretations that critics provide of it diverge. Indeed, the universal is an "essentially contested" notion.¹⁶ This manifests itself in the antinomies that appear in the discussions devoted to it. Balibar

¹⁴Somsen (2008) presents a history of universalism in science. For a critique of epistemic universality and its possible links with power relations, particularly in the social sciences, see Wallerstein (2006). We shall see that this vision of the possibility of separating the scientific, or as it was often said, the "technical" and the political, would constitute an essential problem in the evolution of the IBE.

¹⁵See notably: Barth and Osterhammel (2005), Barth and Hobson (2020), Harrison (2019), Matasci et al. (2020), Petitjean (2005), Pomeranz (2005) and Weitz (2008). Some authors claim that the very essence of these rights would involve oppression: "Human rights' is not only about having or claiming a right or a set of rights; it is also about righting wrongs, about being the dispenser of these rights. The idea of human rights [carries within itself the idea that] the fittest must shoulder the burden of righting the wrongs of the unfit" (Spivak, 2004, p. 523).

¹⁶We are referring to a lecture by Balibar (2021). He takes up Gallie's (1956) idea of "essentially contested concepts", drawing more directly on Capdevila (2004) who analyses the notion of ideology.

identifies and explores three of them which will serve as a compass in our analysis of the IBE.¹⁷ The most well-known is that between the *vertical* or overarching universal, on the one hand, and the *lateral* universal enriched by experience of the other. The second one is between the *extensive* universal which aims first to expand itself and the *intensive* universal which operates by the force of principle or emulation. The third between the *abstract* universal which functions by subtracting particularities (Kant's categorical imperative or, essentially, human rights) and the *concrete* universal with the differences or particularities becoming components of the universal, in the sense of a totality. Any discussion of the concept of universal would lead to one positioning oneself in the contradictory field described by these paradoxes.

The discussion around these antinomies itself demonstrates that it is not so much a question of abandoning the concept of the universal in favour of particularism,¹⁸ as of enriching it according to socio-historical evolutions. Diagne writes in particular:

The plural that Bandung celebrates is not directed against the universal. On the contrary, it is its promise. That of a universal which is not an imperial imposition, but the inscription of the plural of the world on a common horizon. (2021, p. 150)¹⁹

Critical approaches assert the possibility of the construction of another type of universal, which is currently the subject of much debate.²⁰ We have identified two common characteristics which will also guide our thinking on the IBE's history.²¹ First, the universal is defined as the product of a ceaseless construction, as a process through which particularities,

¹⁷ Balibar (2020) and the lecture just mentioned.

¹⁸ Admittedly, there are positions that are clearly along these lines, particularly in the so-called decolonial movement; for a critical presentation of these movements, see, for example, Amselle (2011) and Bayart (2010).

¹⁹ As is known, "Bandung" was a conference of twenty-nine African and Asian countries held in April 1955 at which these countries decided to fight colonialism together and to stay out of great power rivalries; see a more detailed note in Chap. 17.

²⁰ Besides "lateral universalism", they are called "universal universalism" (Wallerstein, 2006), "universal supplement" (an oxymoron by Balibar, 2020), "reiterative universalism" (Walzer, 1990), "universalism as a horizon" (Laclau, 1996), "strategic universalism" (Gilroy, 2000), a "singular universality" (Badiou, 1998).

²¹ For this general characterisation, we rely in particular on Diagne (2014), himself inspired by the work of Balibar.

differences and nuances can be incorporated into the universal itself. To put it another way: what is universal is not the product of an abstract essence, but is derived from what is tirelessly constructed through the circulation of practices, knowledge, communication and understanding of particularities. Second, this implies forms of interaction that are discursive and linked to language. In this context, two approaches are adopted: that of dialogue-deliberation, based on argumentation and reasoning, an ideal that often refers to Habermas (see in particular 1983); and that of translation, a necessity arising from the fact that differences are fixed in humanity's multiplicity of languages and cultures, which in fact constitute a "multiversum" and which make possible mutual appropriation and transformation.²² It seems to us that it is possible to link these approaches to the concept of "multiversum" that Bloch once proposed in his critique of the unilateral notion of progress, of which overarching universalism is one of the most obvious incarnations:

The notion of progress does not tolerate "cultural circles" in which time is nailed to space in a reactionary manner but, instead of uniqueness, it needs a broad, elastic and fully dynamic multiversum, a permanent and often entangled counterpoint of historical voices. Thus, in order to do justice to the immense extra-European material, it is no longer possible to work in a unilinear way, no longer without bulges in the series, no longer without a new, complicated temporal multiplicity. (Bloch, 1956/1970, p. 38 [our translation])

The universal as a process of construction thus implies a multiversum.

OUR THEME: THE UNIVERSAL AND THE IBE—AMBITIONS, LIMITS AND CONTRADICTIONS

We have made the heuristic choice of taking the "essentially contested" concept of "universal" and its derivatives "universality, universalisability, universalising", as an analytical thread, since, as we stated above, it was consubstantial to the discourse and intentions of those contemporary

²²This idea appears in the texts of Diagne, Amselle, Policar, Butler quoted above, all stressing that translation cannot ignore, on the one hand, questions of dominance and, on the other hand, the transformation brought about by translation, which makes the translated and translating languages evolve (Butler, 2000, p. 38). It is Balibar who establishes the link with the "multiversum" (2020, p. 93).

actors themselves,²³ and with the IBE Secretariat in the first place, including its director, Piaget. In this regard, we will examine how the IBE positioned itself, in its daily functioning, when faced with different possible manifestations of the universal: to take up the antinomies pointed out, between the vertical universal versus the lateral, abstract versus concrete, extensive versus intensive. More specifically, how did the IBE relate to the overarching universalism that functioned as the dominant ideology with its corollary of a civilising mission? To what extent did it succeed in envisaging other modalities of constructing the universal that could come close to the conceptions being discussed and that are well summarised by the term multiversum? Can we identify any specific features of the role, mandate and positioning of the IBE in the dense network of international bodies making education their focus? In particular, we will explore the following questions: What role did the figure of Piaget and his psychopedagogical theory play in this construction, and how did he, together with his deputy director, the comparatist Pedro Rosselló, and the staff of the IBE, develop tools capable of meeting (or failing to meet) this universalist challenge? Would the application of the IBE's principles of neutrality and objectivity, if at all effective, enable it to avoid the pitfalls identified, taking it for granted that they form the basis of exchanges between protagonists with contrasting points of view? To what extent did the reconfigurations of the surrounding world, in particular the Cold War and above all the wave of decolonisation in the 1950s and 1960s, call into question the foundations of the IBE and require adjustments to the way it operated? What were the main thrusts of the "global education aspirations" concerning universal access to education and the universalisable principles developed by the IBE? Given its status as a matrix, might the IBE have been at the forefront of the development of a series of educational principles which would have contributed today to the establishment of an educational dogma by international education agencies? In fact, let us dare to go one step further: was it not precisely through its principles that the Bureau ran the risk of a vertical universalism: by not taking a position, ignoring, or even supporting practices and discourses that denied the

²³ One could say that we analyse one dimension of "the universal as reality", to take again a formula of Balibar who subsumes there the irreversible process of the appearance "of an effective interdependence between the elements or units of which one can form what we call *the world*" (1997, p. 422).

universal; by generalising to humanity as a whole²⁴ objective results that might be particular and only valid in a specific context?

The universal, claimed by the IBE itself, was thus systematically subjected to questioning. It is thus a matter of observing the different manifestations that this notion could take in the concrete reality of daily action that unfolds in contexts marked by relationships of domination, contradictory positions, and liberation movements.

In answering these questions, the book makes its own contribution to the historiography of global governance in education, which has been developing over the last few years to complement the history of international organisations (IOs).²⁵ This fascinating research will now be enriched by the history of the IBE, considered at the time to be a predecessor of UNESCO: the IBE, the first intergovernmental organisation in education, a “specialised second-level institution” affiliated to UNESCO under the aegis of a world-renowned psychologist, Piaget, who played a significant role on UNESCO’s Executive Committee and as interim director of the organisation’s education department.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK: FIVE COMPLEMENTARY POINTS OF VIEW

We thus see the IBE as a privileged observatory for identifying the conditions and convictions that led the designers of this small IO to take on the mission of contributing to the universalisation of access to education, by constructing pedagogical methods deemed universalisable, a universality

²⁴ Here we find a contradiction inherent in the claim of the “apolitism” of international organisations that bring governments together. Processes of “depoliticisation” have characterised international organisations since the end of the nineteenth century (Louis & Maertens, 2021; see also Petiteville, 2017). Scientific objectivity manifested as expertise or neutrality, but also the claim to a monopoly in a given field seem admittedly necessary to ensure the functioning of specialised international institutions such as in labour, health or, as in our case, education, but “politics strikes back” (p. 186): their contents are indeed deeply political. The IBE adopts these same general principles. The question arises as to whether the particular approaches it applies to “depoliticise” its action in its quest for the universal and universality distinguish it from other intergovernmental organisations.

²⁵ See, among others, Bürgi (2017), Elfert and Ydesen (2023) and Ydesen (2019); see also the earlier work of Maurel (2006, 2010), and Archibald (1993); for the IIC, another organisation working in the field of education, Renoliet (1999), and more recently Riondet (2020). The overview of current IOs proposed by Niemann (2022) gives yet another view of the importance of these organisations and therefore of their history.

that would be guaranteed by associating with the universality of the world's educational authorities. Our aim is to highlight their ambitions and achievements, the struggles and disputes that punctuated their daily lives, the contradictions they encountered and the ways in which they strove to overcome them in order to ensure the credibility and efficiency of their institution and the causes they espoused.

To do this, we have adopted five complementary points of view which have structured our work, varying the scales and focal points of the analysis.

A processual analysis of the building and restructuring of the IBE in this context is carried out in *Part I* of this book. We examine how the small *Institut Rousseau* mobilised to create the IBE (1925), transforming it into an intergovernmental education agency (1929), which joined forces with UNESCO (1947) in order to concretise what the UN body now calls the "world education agenda".

The management of its relational system, oriented by a principle of universality, was at the heart of the concerns of the IBE's designers and serves as a common thread in our analysis of the different regimes that were negotiated, experimented with, reorganised and institutionalised. At the same time, we highlight the multiple temporalities of this construction, with each of the reconfigurations and statutory decisions accompanying, supporting and stabilising the daily orientations and practices, which were constantly changing in order to guarantee the viability and legitimacy of the institution in the face of institutional and geopolitical changes in the surrounding world.

Here we diversify the scales of analysis, in order to understand what was lived and done on a day-to-day basis in the Bureau's small office, what was stated and negotiated in official meetings, and what was printed and circulated between bodies and beyond institutional and national borders. This also allows us to identify the possible discrepancies between global aspirations for perpetual peace and the objective conditions of exhausting experiences, where the daily work at the IBE had as its limited horizon a tiny office in which piles of complex files were managed by a small core of energetic but overworked internationalists.

How did the designers and spokespersons of the IBE manage to hold the reins of this "giant" whose growth both alarmed and excited them? What tools and mechanisms did they use to implement their ambitious programme? Under what conditions did they manage to overcome the turmoil of the war, to gain recognition from the new "World Authority for Education" that was UNESCO, and then to defy the antagonisms of the

Cold War and the multiplicity of international institutions that arrogated prerogatives in the field of education and made it a vector of development?

Part II is complementary: it adopts the point of view of a social and conceptual (micro-) history in order to elucidate the principles and axiological positions that underpinned the commitment of the IBE's project leaders. We try to understand where the members of the IBE Secretariat – including its directors – and the main bodies and personalities that defined its orientations were positioned and what they aimed to achieve.

The challenge is to determine how these actors, whose individual and collective portraits are drawn here, handled their rigorously scientific postures and their resolutely reformist commitments, making themselves also the standard-bearers of the new education and active methods; how they tried to position themselves in the face of the new intergovernmental institutions which, from one post-war period to the next, coveted childhood and education in order to manage the future of the planet. It is these competitions and rivalries—the sometimes disconcerting ostracism that ensued—but also the internal dissensions and embarrassing suspicions which we are interested in identifying in order to determine how these apparent obstacles became a springboard for action, leading the IBE spokespersons to constantly clarify their position.

We attempt here to understand the content and to identify possible developments that followed, in order to highlight what, in the IBE's principles of action, persisted over the decades or was reconfigured in order to avoid ambiguities, resistance and contradictions. How were the individual and collective convictions, ideological positions and value systems of IBE leaders expressed and how did they evolve in a world where education became the object of intergovernmental rivalries and cultural antagonisms between nations and empires? What were the theoretical underpinnings developed by the members of the IBE Secretariat—Piaget in particular—to define the IBE's central axiom: the “ascent from the individual to the universal”? This dialectic between the differential and the universal—between the abstract and the concrete universal one might also say—gives rise to reflection, and here it leads once more to a clarification of the IBE's positioning, in concertation with its partners.

The first two parts of the book contextualise the sociogenesis of the IBE and its axiological principles, going back to the beginning of the twentieth century and covering, downstream, the last years during which the institution remained independent. They set the institutional and conceptual scene of the IBE in its relational network. The next three parts focus on the forty years of the IBE under the stewardship of Piaget and

more particularly on the period when the “IBE spirit” and its *modus operandi* were consolidated around the annual International Conferences on Public Education (ICPEs), namely between 1934 and 1968. The last period, the 1960s, can be considered as its climax marked by a *modus operandi* that its very success made inoperative. This is what we will show.

Part III focuses on the ICPEs which were the trademark of the IBE since 1934; UNESCO was associated with the organisation of these since 1947, demonstrating the importance attached to these conferences at the time. How could this new “intergovernmental world forum for education”²⁶ be institutionalised by bringing together nation states jealous of their educational prerogatives? But conversely, how could an organisation claim to be completely politically neutral and strictly scientific, when its main state partners aspired to have their national school policies endorsed? In this part, we propose to define the conceptual and pragmatic contours of the “*modus operandi*” of the aforementioned conferences, conceived jointly by the two heads of the IBE, Piaget and his deputy director Rosselló, by dissecting their scenography, which was also evolving, as well as the theorisation which formed the basis of it. We are deepening a hypothesis, previously outlined (Hofstetter & Schneuwly, 2023), namely that it might be possible to find its sociogenesis by going back to the first Piagetian theorisations concerning the development and construction of the child’s intelligence. Could the principles of decentring and reciprocity not be transposed from the pedagogical sphere to the intergovernmental scene? This seems to be the mainspring of Piaget’s investment in the IBE and its ICPEs. With the comparatist Rosselló, the institution was built as they went along, its creation being original in that it contributed to the foundation of comparative education, both as an academic discipline and as a scientific method. It was hoped that international comparative surveys would provide the data to be documented and then guide what they call the “global march of education”, drawing on local and national experiences to collectively define recommendations for improving education worldwide. These recommendations would be all the more binding since they would be collegially defined and freely agreed upon and reappropriated: they would function both as extensive universals, aimed at the whole world, as well as intensive universals, with emulation often invoked as a mechanism for transformation.

²⁶Where we do not give specific references to quotations, as here, it is because the expressions quoted are scattered throughout the speeches and documents.

A utopia? A fiction? But how could such a *modus operandi* be put forward, when the world was on fire, when the intergovernmental institutions of the first half of the twentieth century were mostly doomed to disappear, to be replaced by the powerful United Nations and its numerous specialized organisations; and when in education its UNESCO takes a central place, then, more and more, economic organisations like OECD and World Bank investing which favour resolutely more constraining mechanisms of governance?

Changing scale, in *Part IV* we move on to analyse the relationships that the IBE maintained with different countries and educational authorities around the world to encourage them to participate in its activities and to manage them collectively. We analyse how the IBE implemented its theoretical principles of action and its *modus operandi* on a day-to-day basis. The transnational perspective is of particular importance here, as is the contribution of political science in identifying the contrasting forms of the relationship between politics and education in a self-proclaimed neutral and independent intergovernmental body. While the IBE claimed to be universal, not only in numerical terms but also in terms of equity of treatment and relations with its state partners, we are interested here in questioning the likely obstacles encountered, the possible compromises accepted, the inevitable differentiations established, and the transformations chosen or undergone to, depending on the interlocutors as well as on geopolitical developments.

We ask ourselves if the very aim of universality does not potentially contain its own contradictions: was the postulated impartiality tenable in the face of the rise of ideologies that were contrary to the democratic principles defended by the IBE and which, moreover, interfered in its sphere? Was it still tenable when the voices and demands of long-oppressed peoples erupted and firmly raised the question of the political basis of education, as revealed by the expansionist civilising arguments carried by the myth of development imposed by the Western empires? How did global political developments—authoritarianism, the Cold War, the emancipation of colonies—interfere with the goal of universality? Did these developments collide with the universal principles of action on which the IBE was based, thereby making it difficult to situate oneself between vertical and lateral universality?

This part thus allows us to reflect further on the way in which representatives of education on the one hand and politics on the other²⁷ negotiated

²⁷ Education is represented here by the IBE's spokespersons and the experts/partners who support them, while politics is embodied by the ministerial delegates and the states that they represent during the activities set up by the IBE. The boundaries between these two spheres are in fact porous (Fehrat, 2021; Hofstetter & Brylinski, 2023; Kott, 2008; Littoz-Monnet, 2017).

their reciprocal relations. In doing so, we will try to identify how the IBE partners played the game—or not—of depoliticising intergovernmental consultations on education; simultaneously we will try to see how socially relevant educational issues were exposed to controversies and divisions influenced by the geopolitical context.

In *Part V*, we focus on the causes defended by IBE partners, and more specifically on the general guidelines and principles that they believed could be universalised through their ICPEs. Through content analysis of the thematic surveys, the results and discussions of which were published in large volumes leading to recommendations that were disseminated worldwide, the aim is to identify which causes were favoured and in what form they were translated into recommendations of universal value. This involves closely observing the evolution of the themes and positions of the IBE's protagonists in international surveys and forums, placing them in the contexts in which they were voiced. Embracing the systematic analysis of the sixty-five surveys²⁸ which led to the nineteen ICPEs, set up between 1934 and 1968 (jointly with UNESCO from 1947 onwards), we are thus able to present the major strengths of the causes favoured by the IBE: first and foremost, universal access to the fullest possible education in order to preserve peace and international understanding. This presupposes both a broad school culture and qualified and recognised teachers.

We have chosen to examine the causes officially defined by the IBE's bodies and partners, in the order of our presentation: school content and culture, teacher training and working conditions, equal access to schooling and improvement of education systems. However, at the same time, we have also decided to take on board the cross-cutting issues that imposed themselves through their acuteness and which brought the protagonists face to face with important contradictions: beyond the beautiful and good causes supposedly common to all the world's educational authorities, how were gender and race discrimination, as well as the asymmetries between the countries of the North and the South, and between the West and the East, dealt with—stated, denounced, masked or silenced?

²⁸ Occasionally, we have included surveys that were carried out earlier or that did not result in an ICPE. In Appendix B we present the surveys discussed in the ICPEs.

Will our analysis allow us to better understand how likely it would be that the targeted abstract and general universal would run into concrete contradictions due to the fact, perhaps, that it does not take sufficiently into account the historically created conditions in which the principles must be realized?²⁹ This is what we are aiming at.

Besides this main text, we offer the reader two other ways to know parts of the IBE's history. Short *inserts*,³⁰ distributed throughout the book, shed some light on particular aspects of the context in which it emerged and worked, or they focus, as through a magnifying glass, on details of its functioning and reasoning. *Images* and their *captions* illustrate each chapter: they can be read as a form of visual history of the IBE through photographs but also copies of texts and manuscripts whose significance is explained in the short texts that accompany them.

EXPLOITING EXCEPTIONAL DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

Establishing the history of the IBE first of all required the identification of the sources that make it possible to gain intimate knowledge of its evolution and the analytical and critical interpretation that is then proposed.³¹ Our investigations were inaugurated at the *Fondation Archives Institut J.-J. Rousseau*, the institute that created the “first” IBE as a corporate association (1925–1929). They led us to the IBE's Documentation Centre, which still houses the Bureau's archival heritage in Geneva. This archive is particularly rich. Indeed, the concern for documentation—which is rooted in the IBE's founders' internationalist and encyclopaedic, pacifist and universalist convictions—led them, from the dawn of the twentieth century, to gather all the knowledge available in the world on childhood and education: to locate, classify, discuss, enrich and make it

²⁹ However, we shall confine ourselves here to the speeches made by the protagonists of the undertaking. Other studies have tried to understand the impact of the IBE's recommendations on the school policies of the different partner countries by examining how they use this body to legitimize certain orientations on their national territories; In this respect, see *Relations Internationales*, 2020, N°183, in particular the articles by Bajomi (2020) on Hungary and Robert (2020) on France; Loureiro (forthcoming) on Latin America, and the project initiated by Matasci and Hofstetter (2022) on Brazil, Cameroon, Turkey and Vietnam.

³⁰ Three of them were written by our collaborator Émeline Brylinski, whom we thank warmly here.

³¹ For the period from 1925 to 1952, documentary resources are partially the same as those used by Érhise in the 2022 volume; so we take over main elements relating to their description from Hofstetter and Droux (2022, pp. 36–39).

accessible to all, convinced as they were that universal access to knowledge and culture is a prerequisite for peace in the world. This documentary frenzy and this heritage culture were also useful for them to achieve and then establish their legitimacy, in order to prove their originality and their expertise and also to be part of history, to make history and to embody it.

Thus, in the voluminous archive preserved by the IBE³² we scoured the following resources to conduct our research: a wealth of books, journals, educational collections, and reports—in a variety of languages—that the IBE had acquired to document the evolution of education around the world; a host of responses to IBE surveys on educational reform from around the world documenting the critical issues that its leaders and partners sought to address; innumerable fact sheets prepared and translated for and by the International Conferences on Public Education, ICPEs, which were one of the original features of the IBE; and finally, an infinite variety of bibliographies, newsletters, and analytical summaries, with a view to guiding this global march.³³

We did not confine ourselves to official speeches alone, but we examined and cross-referenced a variety of sources—diaries, reports and minutes, personal correspondence, iconographic documents—with a view to capturing the effervescence of this internationalism, which was youthful in terms of both its novelty and its target population: in the final analysis, the new generations were the reference horizon for their activities. This diversity of sources has enabled us to grasp what was thought and played out on a daily basis within the IBE secretariat; to follow, day after day, the reflections and negotiations of the individuals and committees that created and reconfigured the institution over the decades. This has also allowed us to identify “from below”, right down to the work table of the secretaries and their directors, how the IBE experimented with any mechanism before it was

³²The IBE has just completed the digitisation of its manuscript archives (1925–1968, i.e. the equivalent of forty linear metres), which has greatly facilitated our work since 2021. While the collection of manuals is now partially accessible on the web, the same cannot be said of the other published sources, in particular all those that precede, accompany and follow on from the ICPEs, that is, tens of thousands of pages, which we had to search manually. This was particularly tedious for this volume, since we integrated, in addition to the sources already considered for the collective book Hofstetter and Érhise (2022), all the IBE publications from 1953 to 1969.

³³We have systematically referred to existing English translations, including the minutes of the ICPEs since 1947 and those of the Joint Commission meetings. When these translations were not complete or even wrong, we corrected them, noting this in the reference as “revised translation,” sometimes with a comment on possible ideological meanings of the translation made with the support and under the supervision of UNESCO.

formalised, reproducing its constructivist approach to education and science in many of its other activities, even administrative and diplomatic ones.

We have adopted the same methodological considerations as Kott (2021, p. 11), who stresses the “bulwark [that the official discourse may constitute] that hides from the outside world the contradictions that work” in the IOs, inviting us to carefully study the internal non-promotional documents in order to gain access to the multiplicity of divergent interests and discordant voices of which these agencies are made. We have tried to uncover the differences of opinion within the institution itself, but also the agreements that were reached, however difficult to reach, to express themselves with a unanimous voice when the members of the IBE had to represent their institution on official stages. As contemporaries did, we have used the singular in these cases, personifying in a sense the IBE, especially since the prosopographical analysis has shown that its main representatives recognise themselves in similar profiles, which are certainly the origin of their common investment in this enterprise and its causes.

It was at the majestic desk once occupied by Piaget when he was head of the IBE that we ourselves read the personal letters, as incisive as they were diplomatic, from the directors Pierre Bovet and then Piaget and Rosselló to their colleagues or competitors; the crisp and unvarnished reports of Secretary General Butts, as she rubbed shoulders with the so-called Peacemakers and Leaders of the World in the countless committees, commissions and congresses she attended, or as she drank tea and discussed strategy with their ingenious and often influential secretaries in the twilight following those ceremonial occasions.

Obviously, basing oneself on the archives of an institution that sees itself as the epicentre requires a certain amount of distance in order to avoid taking at face value the discourse that it has about itself. In doing so, it is necessary to contrast this discourse with that of other bodies, in order to better assess its audience; an audience that is certainly very small if we stick to the sources collected in the institutions that the IBE focused on: The International Labour Office (ILO), the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation (IIIC) and the other organs of the Organisation of Intellectual Cooperation (OIC), the Liaison committee of the major international associations, and of course the League of Nations (LoN) and its bodies, then UNESCO and even the UN. Among the associations belonging to the IBE’s militant relational network, we have noted in particular the International Congress of Moral Education (ICEM), the New Education Fellowship (NEF), the teacher association of French speaking Switzerland the *Société pédagogique romande* (SPR), and the World Federation of Education Associations

(WFEA),³⁴ whose archives also drew our attention. We have thus tried to interpret the less complimentary, even downright suspicious positions, as well as the silences in certain archives, in order to weigh up the role of the IBE and not simply to echo legitimising institutional rhetoric.

IN VIEW OF A CONCLUSION

Our analyses show a body of concepts and values that is interesting to analyse as a whole in the light of present-day discussions and also taking into account the contradictions they contain, the negotiations they imply, the limits they entail and the compromises they engender:

- the particular modalities of a “depoliticisation”, of an “apoliticism”, today widely questioned and criticised, adopted by international organisations;
- the strongly Eurocentric educational internationalism, including its new education orientation and its individualising presuppositions, and the possible effects of this orientation in the international bodies that extend the work of the IBE as a matrix of such bodies;
- the possibility and the limits of defining universal orientations for education—the “global aspirations in education”—in the light of the constitutive antinomies of the universal and the universality, in connection also, more generally, with the idea of progress and development;
- the question of the conditions for the construction of a “multiversum” in the field of education, which is perhaps possible, following in the line of the IBE, thanks to the idea of reciprocity but without ruling out from the start the contradiction and the political.

The IBE as international institution, unique in its constancy and longevity, precisely offers the possibility for examining these issues that are still relevant. It is by no means about bringing this discussion to an end, but only of outlining the questions that it opens up and that we will take up in conclusion (Image 1.1).

³⁴ Occasionally, we have probed into the archives of the International Peace Bureau (IPB), the International Anti-Communist Entente (IAE), the International Federation of University Women (IFUW), the International Federation of Teachers’ Associations (IFTA) and of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). However, we refer above all to the work of our collaborators who have specialised in the study of these bodies.



Image 1.1 The emblem of the IBE. A vignette drawn by children of the Bakulé school in Prague, dedicated to street and to handicapped children, famous for its children's choir. It appeared on countless publications, newsletters and correspondence. (© AIJJR)

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The IBE: An Actor of Its Time

It may seem absurd, in a world of unstable balance, in a world in which every sane mind can only worry and wonder about the destiny of every nation, that a few dreamers should be so candid as to think of the development of an international institution which presupposes peace, equilibrium and mutual confidence. [...] It is no less obvious that our work has proved viable and that, consequently, every effort based precisely on this confidence and this desire for balance and peaceful work has proved fruitful. It is therefore that, above or below political and economic struggles, it is always possible to conceive of a plan for simply technical and human collaboration. And even for realists, such a fact appears natural. [... Indeed,] whatever the antagonisms of ideologies and material conditions of life, there is one common good that everyone values more than the apple of his eye: this good is the normal development of children and adolescents, who are our hope and consolation. It is by remaining firmly attached to this collective ideal that the Bureau will achieve the task it has set itself and that, against all odds, it will live and act in the future. (Jean Piaget, Director's Report, 1937, pp. 19–20).

The first part of this book aims to identify the set of forces and circumstances that led a handful of individuals, linked to the *Institut Rousseau*, to build an international institution entirely dedicated to training and childhood, so that, through science and education, universal peace would be preserved on earth. It tells the tumultuous story of the creation of the International Bureau of Education (IBE), then its reconfiguration into an intergovernmental agency (1929), which joined forces with the UNESCO between 1947 and 1968.

In retrospect, we know that “against all odds” the Bureau that Piaget described in 1937—in the epigraph to this part—“would live and act in the future”. Can we follow him in the hypothesis that the viability of the work lies in the fact that “above and beyond political and economic struggles, it is always possible to conceive of a plan for simply technical and human collaboration” and that this even seems “natural” to those who come together to ensure, beyond the struggles of the day, the good of childhood and therefore that of humanity? If this should be so, then under what conditions? This is the main common thread of this part.

Several strong elements structure the pages of the present part, making it possible to contextualise the construction of the IBE by inscribing it in the turbulent dynamics of the middle decades of the twentieth century (1920–1970). The IBE cannot be understood without placing it in its broad relational, political and scientific networks and in the context of existing and emerging organisations, from which it sought its legitimacy: leagues and social movements, within which the first IBE was anchored; the LoN and its technical bodies, first the ILO and then the ICIC, with which relations were more conflictual; and above all UNESCO, with which it began to collaborate closely from 1947.¹ It is also a question of identifying the stratagems and issues at stake in the institutionalisation of such a Bureau, taking into account its trials and tribulations, its key principles and reconfigurations, its projects and activities as they were outlined, discarded or implemented: this is the challenge of a critical processual history, which combines thematic and chronological logics, distancing itself from an overly institutional linear approach.

There are many questions that run through our investigation and guide it. Why, as soon as it was constructed, was the institution reconfigured and its destiny entrusted to the world’s governments, even though the IBE jealously intended to preserve its freedom and neutrality, claiming to have scientific objectivity as its only tool and to shun any political compromise? What were the instruments that the IBE adopted to present itself as an

¹For an overall view of international organisations (IO and ONG) we referred to: Boli and Thomas (1999), Davies (2014), Devin and Smout (2013), Gorman (2012), Herren (2009), Iriye (2002), Petiteville (2021) and Sluga and Clavin (2017). For those mentioned in these pages, with which the IBE interacts (in particular the IIIC, the ILO, the LoN and its technical agencies) we have particularly taken into account: Dahlén (2007), Guieu (2012), Grandjean (2018), Ikonomidou and Gram-Skjoldager (2019), Kott and Droux (2013), Lespignet-Moret and Viet (2011), Marbeau (2017), Maul (2012), Pedersen (2015), Renoliet (1999) and Van Daele et al. (2009).

intergovernmental agency with universal claims, aiming at the adhesion and participation of all the sovereign countries of the planet, while the world was in flames and nationalisms were exacerbated? How and under what conditions did this institution, run by a small nucleus of persons united by similar convictions, manage to gain recognition from the designers of the nascent UNESCO and place its expertise at the service of this UN body? How did the IBE manage the arrival on the scene of countries that were newly sovereign and what tools did it appropriate to respond as much as possible to their new educational aspirations, as the Cold War and its divisions were still raging all the while and also impacting the countries of the South and their “development”?

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CHAPTER 2

The Primacy of Education to Pacify the World?

The International Bureau of Education (IBE) was the product of a collective genesis. First of all, it was the continuation of a plethora of initiatives which, already around the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, were working towards the institutionalisation of networks dedicated to education and childhood, considering that it was through the transformation of young minds that peace on earth could be preserved. The contours of the IBE were furthermore sketched out in a particular context, in effervescent post-war Geneva, at a time when the city was designated to host the League of Nations (LoN) and the constellation of agencies that surrounded it.

Here, we focus on this period and we analyse the dynamics of this genesis in order to understand what led the intellectuals, psycho-pedagogues and educators grouped around the *Institut Rousseau* to conceive of their institution as one of the international agencies representing the values of peace, international solidarity and social justice, emblematic of the “spirit

This chapter is based on our earlier work, here summarised and brought up to date: Hofstetter (2015, 2022).

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R. Hofstetter, B. Schneuwly, *The International Bureau of Education (1925–1968)*, Global Histories of Education,
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of Geneva”.¹ We pay particular attention to the way in which its promoters seized these exceptional circumstances to open up the field of possibilities in order to try to establish themselves as legitimate protagonists of events. The history of the genesis of the IBE is closely linked to that of the *Institut Rousseau*.

COMPENSATING FOR THE SHORTCOMINGS OF THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

Already long convinced of the primacy of education in order to pacify the world, many pedagogues and intellectuals were astonished and even mutinous in the aftermath of the First World War: why did children not benefit, like workers with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), from an international body concerned with their fate, when it was generally agreed that the future of mankind depended on the education of new generations? The school was also in the dock during the Great War: steeped in nationalism and devoted to obedience, it was said to have trained pupils to become brave soldiers, meekly going off to the battlefields to die as patriots.² For the pacifist and feminist educators and intellectuals who pronounced this verdict, only a profound educational reform would preserve peace: the school’s mission must be to forge responsible, free and autonomous citizens, committed to the values of solidarity and international understanding.

Calls for a permanent International Bureau of Education were included in the Memorandum that the International Council of Women (ICW), the Allied Women’s Suffragists’ Conference of the allied countries and of United States of America presented to the highest officials of the League of Nations Commission in April 1919. In vain. Convinced that peace on earth could not be built solely through diplomacy but should also include

¹One will of course recognise the title of the brochure written by Traz (1929), who sketches, not without bite, the contours of a pluralist humanism. In many studies, the role of Geneva as the seat of the League of Nations in the interwar years is problematised, also by relativising it and putting it into perspective: Droux (2018), Ghébalí (1972), Gorman (2014), Grandjean (2018), Guieu (2012), Hidalgo-Weber and Lescaze (2020), Laqua (2011) and Marbeau (2017). Regarding some facets of the educational dimension: Dugonjić-Rodwin (2022), Fuchs (2007), Haenggeli-Jenni (2017), Hameline (2002b), Herren (2000), Hofstetter et al. (2020), Meyer (2013), Mole (2021) and Moody (2016).

²We draw here on descriptions and vocabulary from: Koslowski (2013), Laqua (2013), Loubes (2001) and Siegel (2004).

the whole of civil society, requiring a transformation of mentalities, many associations and leagues mobilised to make up for the “inadequacies” of the Treaty of Versailles: they tried to bestow a mission of intellectual and educational cooperation on the so-called technical agencies of the LoN.³

The representatives of the *Institut Rousseau/École des sciences de l'éducation* [School of sciences of education]⁴ had their sights set on these movements and joined several of them, in order to have their voice and their work recognised. They now seemed convinced that they could link the destinies of their small institution with those of the world. Three of them in particular, established in Geneva while benefiting from a vast circle of intellectual solidarity, became the zealous promoters of an office aiming to preserve peace on earth through science and education. The doctor and psycho-pedagogue Édouard Claparède, holder of the chair of experimental psychology at the University of Geneva (since 1908), on whose initiative the *Institut Rousseau* was founded in 1912; the philosopher and pedagogue Pierre Bovet, who was the director of the Institute and was appointed professor of “science of education and experimental pedagogy” in 1920; the reformist sociologist and also pedagogue Adolphe Ferrière, who collaborated extensively with the *Institut*, and considered that the International Bureau of New Schools (IBEN),⁵ which he had already set up in 1899, could be the foundation on which the new international bureau could be built.⁶ They were supported by their families and close colleagues at the *Institut Rousseau*, by researchers, trade union practitioners and politicians, notably Alice Descœudres, Robert Dottrens, Max Hochstaetter, Albert Malche and Paul Meyhoffer.

³ Here we relay excerpts from Rosselló's thesis (1943, pp. 131–139); he also argues for the inclusion of women in the LoN's bodies. Grandjean (2018) has thoroughly documented these negotiations in the broader context of the construction of intellectual cooperation networks. For the history of the LoN, see the now classic Gerbet et al. (1996), Marbeau (2017) and Pedersen (2007, 2015).

⁴ See the Insert 2.1 on this institution at the end of this chapter and Hofstetter (2010).

⁵ In order to “establish scientific mutual aid between the different New schools, to centralize the documents that concern them and to highlight the psychological experiments carried out in these laboratories of the pedagogy of the future” (PEN 1923, 1, cover page).

⁶ For a fine portrait of this globetrotter of the new education and fervent cosmopolitan: Hamline (1993, 2002a).

Among their many networks of support was the Union of International Associations (UIA, founded in 1907; Laqua et al., 2019). In his *Petit Journal* Adolphe Ferrière told of how he joined the teachers' section of the international Unions' congress in September 1920 when it "addressed the wish to LoN to support education research laboratories".⁷ He nevertheless managed to get the IBEN recognised by the UIA and by the international bureaux section of the LoN, thanks to exchanges which the thinkers at the head of *Institut Rousseau* had with the Belgian pacifist internationalists Paul Otlet and Henri la Fontaine,⁸ as well as with a number of diplomats who, in the early 1920s, were beginning to converge in Geneva.

Members of the *Institut Rousseau* also focused on the activities of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF, founded in 1915⁹), which had recently been established in Geneva to enable it to more actively influence the work of the LoN. Through Claparède, Bovet and Ferrière, closer links were established with the energetic feminist Elisabeth Rotten¹⁰ who addressed the pacifists of the whole world and the representatives of the LoN in particular, urging them to ensure the "salvation of humanity" through emancipatory education. This "revolution", she claimed, required the foundation of an international bureau of education, which she recommended be established in Geneva, more precisely at the *Institut Rousseau*, which she believed would already embody "die beste Inspiration" (Rotten, 1920, p. 67). From then on, regular meetings were held on this subject at the headquarters of the *Institut*, which welcomed notables, scholars and government delegates who passed through or settled in Geneva, as the diplomatic ballet of international conferences began.

⁷ UAI, *La vie internationale*, 1921, 26, pp. 165 et 180. *Journal de Ferrière*, September 1920. AdF/D/2/3/6-8, AIJJR.

⁸ Their biographies can be found in Laqua et al. (2019), Lefebvre (2019) and Levie (2006).

⁹ For the history of this league: Confortini (2012) and Schott (1997).

¹⁰ Co-founder of the *Bund Neues Vaterland*, which became the German League for Human Rights (*Deutsche Liga für Menschenrechte*), of the *Women's International League for Peace and Freedom* in Germany, of the *Bund entschiedener Schulreformer*, an important association for progressive school reforms.

DITHERING AT THE LoN

At its first assembly in Geneva in December 1920, the LoN learned of some of these proposals and entrusted their processing to its representatives. In March 1921, the Frenchman Léon Bourgeois, president of the first LoN Council, endorsed the wish to see the LoN set up a bureau to spread the ideas of international cooperation, which were in fact in line with his philosophy of solidarity.¹¹ During the course of 1921, the project was supported by various diplomats in turn, notably the French, Belgian, Chinese, Haitian¹² and Japanese. At the same time, the UAI, led by Paul Otlet and Henri La Fontaine, mobilised at the Palais Mondial in Brussels in the summer of 1921, on the occasion of its International Congress of Intellectual Labour. Education appears in one of its resolutions in the wake of a convergent decision in favour of the “interests of intelligence”:

Appeal to the Assembly of the League of Nations to accept the demands of the Congress of Intellectual Labour and that the interests of Intelligence be represented in the Society like those of politics, finance and manual labour. [...]

[On the proposal of Ferrière] That an International Bureau of Education for the comparative study of modern pedagogical data be set up in conjunction with the League of Nations and the proposed instance for Intellectual Labour.¹³ (UAI, 1921, pp. 180, 165)

Was this request heard? Supported by a number of intellectuals, politicians and diplomats, Léon Bourgeois became its defender within the Wilsonian agency. This was evident in his report presented on 2 September

¹¹ See Berstein (2019) for an analysis of the political ideas of Léon Bourgeois; theorist of solidarism and modes of regulation between states, Bourgeois received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1920.

¹² Through the voice of one of the first people of colour to become a diplomat, Louis Dantès Bellegarde (1877–1966), professor and then, among his other political and diplomatic functions, minister of education, delegate of Haiti to the LoN, the Vatican and Geneva. From the outset, he defended, before the LoN, in 1921, the importance of an international scientific centre on childhood and education and, true to his convictions, contributed to the work of the IBE until the mid-1950s. Remember that, after tragic revolutionary struggles, the island of Santo Domingo—off the coast of Cuba—was the first free black republic in modern times to declare its independence (1804, from France), which did not spare it from bitter political struggles and then from a US occupation between 1915 and 1934.

¹³ It should be noted that this is one of the first instances of privileging comparative studies in such an office, which are then held as world-class experimental approaches.

1921 in Geneva, which suggested the appointment of a commission to study international questions of intellectual cooperation and education. Once adopted, the Bourgeois resolution was first debated in committee and then submitted to the LoN Assembly on 21 September 1921. The Assembly dismissed the educational aspect¹⁴: educational issues were the sole prerogative of states, which the LoN should not interfere with, even though the deleterious effects of nationalist teaching were recognised. After conflictual debates, only “intellectual cooperation” was chosen, laying the foundations for the creation, in 1922, of the International Commission for Intellectual Cooperation (ICIC), then, in 1925, of the International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation (IIIC), financed by France.¹⁵ Its tasks were to include, on the fringes first, school-related matters and in particular teaching the LoN’s aims to young people as well as the revision of school textbooks, including history textbooks, in order to remove any bellicose spirit.¹⁶

After the workers (ILO), here were the intellectuals endowed in their turn with an international organisation. Still nothing specifically dedicated to education and childhood? A succession of leagues and associations mobilised and worked together to fill this gap. The archives bear witness to the many steps taken in this direction, while also revealing the internal struggles and bitter negotiations to circumscribe the territories: childhood and education proved to be particularly coveted targets (Image 2.1).

¹⁴But it preserved the demand for women to be included in the bodies of the League (Marbeau, 2007, 2017; see also Thébaud, 2019). Among these women was the Secretary of the American School Citizenship League, Fannie Fern Andrews, who in 1914 had already conceived of such an intergovernmental concertation, which could not materialise because of the war; this early initiative, she was considered by the IBE as its godmother (Bovet 1928, pp. 4–7; ICPE 1934, pp. 24–27, 173. Grandjean (2018, p. 157) points out that “the representatives of the Commonwealth have distinguished themselves since the preparatory work of the LoN in their zeal to contain the budget and the Society’s capacity to interfere with its members”.

¹⁵The Organisation for Intellectual Cooperation (OIC) was recognised in 1931: Grandjean (2018), Pemberton (2012), Renoliet (1999); for a renewed analysis of the history of the ICIC, see Grandjean (2022).

¹⁶Concerning this activity, see: Giuntella (2003), Hofstetter and Riondet (2018), Roldán Vera and Fuchs (2018), Riondet (2020a, b) and Verga (2007).

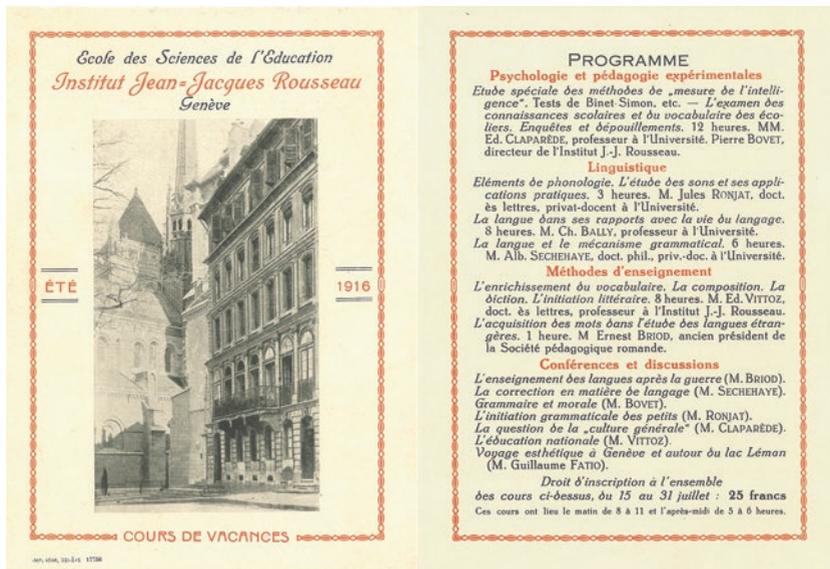


Image 2.1 The *Institut Rousseau* is the founder of the IBE (1925). Created in 1912 by Édouard Claparède, this institute aimed to train educators, teachers and researchers in all educational disciplines, hence the plural in its name “School of educational sciences”. As a precursor, it organised holiday courses (here in 1916, on the measurement of intelligence). (© AIJRR)

THE *INSTITUT ROUSSEAU*, FIGUREHEAD OF EDUCATIONAL INTERNATIONALISM?

A core group of pacifists and pedagogues from the *Institut Rousseau* decided to present themselves as legitimate founders of the International Bureau of Education. They activated their networks of relations, in particular teachers and their associations, as well as activists of the new education, the Esperanto and pacifist movements and representatives of the political and academic authorities and also certain ambassadors of the LoN and its technical agencies.

Among their most influential correspondents were Swiss political figures such as Gustave Ador, Giuseppe Motta, Friedrich Zollinger and international diplomats involved in social and educational issues such as James

Eric Drummond, Inazō Nitobé, Léon Bourgeois, Henri Lafontaine, Robert Cecil and especially Albert Thomas.¹⁷ The personalities who rallied to the cause of the *Institut Rousseau*, with it, seized on the dynamics set in motion in the salons and circles of Geneva, the “new capital of world diplomacy”. They tried to position themselves as figureheads of educational internationalism, in order to “pull the desired strings”, “to enter into unofficial contact with the delegates of the countries that we know to be interested in our subject”, as recommended in the preliminary drafts drawn up,¹⁸ when the 3rd Assembly of the LoN was held in Geneva in September 1922. However, they were cautious: above all, they kept to a scientific and educational stance; they avoided any political compromising involvement by not placing themselves under the aegis of intergovernmental agencies; they approached technical organisations and prominent scientific bodies (the ILO, universities, scientific centres and laboratories). For example, fruitful collaborations multiplied with the ILO, above all in the field of vocational guidance, a particularly socially sensitive area of research.¹⁹ Moreover, the *Institut Rousseau* mobilised the intellectuals in its vast scholarly network²⁰ to encourage those personalities and institutions likely to contribute their scientific to the project.

At the same time, on the initiative of Ludwig W. Rajchman, Director of the LoN Health Organisation, international civil servants asked the *Institut Rousseau* to create the International School (1924), that is, “a good progressive school” for the children of international civil servants based in Geneva.²¹ If Ferrière and his family were involved in this school,

¹⁷Let’s add some significant intellectuals who became the internationalists’ intermediaries between the Latin and Anglo-Saxon world, in particular Paul Monroe, William Rappard and Alfred Zimmern.

¹⁸Preliminary draft of the IBE, 1925. (181/95/44), AdF/A/1/1/36, AIJRR.

¹⁹The first ILO publication (Series J. *Studies and Documents*, Education No. 1, ILO preface) is signed by Claparède (1922) and deals with vocational guidance, a field in which the *Institut Rousseau* had specialised since 1917–1918, with the support of the Frenchman Julien Fontègne, then a war refugee. The whole brochure shows its importance for the fate of the working class, the fight against unemployment, the protection of workers against general or occupational diseases, the protection of young people and women.

²⁰Its connections extend far beyond Europe, including intellectuals and networks in both the Americas and Asia (Hofstetter, 2010).

²¹Dugonjić-Rodwin (2022) demonstrates that the aim is to create this emerging community of international civil servants from scratch and to instil within this elite, through its descendants, the spirit of global solidarity that it is supposed to embody and disseminate, thwarting through its internationalism the nationalist frictions that undermined the LoN.

known as *Ecolint*, it was to attest the internationalist and pacifist mission of the new education and their Institute. This school—nicknamed the “League of Nations in miniature” by Ferrière—claimed to be an “example and model” from which the schools of the future would be inspired.²² The first school class was established on an experimental basis, in Ferrière’s own garden, and he was the technical advisor. The *Ecolint* was sponsored by an association made up of about thirty personalities from the major international organisations and local elites whose social, financial and cultural capital served as a guarantee for the school. Among them were also the most fervent advocates of an IBE in Geneva. When it expanded, the school established its primary and secondary levels near the *Institut Rousseau*, explicitly claiming to be in the spirit of the active school in order to build the “Spirit of Geneva, this international spirit which reigned in the circles of the LoN and which the directors of the school also strove to instil in their pupils” (Dupuy, 1926, p. 18).

Having failed to obtain the resources and support needed to create the envisaged International Bureau from scratch, the leaders of the *Institut Rousseau*, once again assisted by a circle of strategic intellectuals and diplomats, agreed on a new tactic: to make people believe that the IBE already really existed. The *Institut* did in fact function as such; did not its inaugural concept present it as a centre for research, documentation and international information and propaganda for children and the preservation of their rights? Since 1912, had it not functioned as an international agency, with not only a research centre comprising a laboratory, a foreign information service, a series of publications (*Bulletins*, *Archives of Psychology*, book series) and experimental schools (including the *Maison des petits* and now the “School of the League of Nations”), but also the main functions devolved to this imagined bureau?

As the autumn of 1925 passed, the strategy of making it appear that the IBE already existed and that its formalisation depended only on recognition and available resources gained ground. In November 1925, Claparède learned that his efforts to get the *Institut Rousseau* a grant from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund had been successful.²³ This

²² Ferrière 1925, AdF/A/32/3/46, AIJRR. Indeed, as we know in retrospect, its concept would be transposed to New York (1946), at the time of setting up the UN Staff College, and it is still looked upon today as the reference for the thousands of international schools that are part of the “IB ecosystem” in most of the countries of the world (Dugonjić-Rodwin, 2022).

²³ All documentation relating to the founding of the IBE by the *Institut Rousseau* can be found at *Archives Fondation Institut Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (AIJRR): FG/BIE, 1 to 16; AdF, A/1 to 3.

*Insert 2.1 The Institut Rousseau: A “Temple Dedicated to Childhood”*²⁵

In 1912, at a time when chairs, laboratories and institutes dedicated to an experimental approach to educational phenomena were multiplying throughout the world, the doctor and psychologist Édouard Claparède created the *Institut Jean-Jacques Rousseau*. Privately owned and under the direction of the philosopher and psychologist Pierre Bovet, the Institute opened its doors in October 1912, with about twenty students and the same number of staff.

Claparède’s programmatic text (1912) indicated the Institute’s four functions:

1. A school allowing educators to orient, document and train themselves in scientific method and to collaborate in developing the science of education;
2. A research centre to ensure the progress of this new science;
3. An information centre collecting and disseminating research;
4. A centre of propaganda for educational renewal.

The interrelation of these roles was significant: like many other psychologists, doctors and pedagogues (Alfred Binet, Ernst Meumann, Ovide Decroly and Maria Montessori in particular), Claparède was convinced that education had to be reformed. Invoking the “brilliant pedagogical intuitions” of Rousseau, who was held up as a precursor, Claparède called for “functional education”: a better knowledge of the child and the laws of his or her development was essential in order to take into account his or her needs, and the child should henceforth—in a “Copernican revolution”—become the “centre of the educational system.”

Psychology was the first discipline to be called upon to enrich this knowledge of the child, even if other disciplines were also incorporated into this new “School” that was significantly named with the plural “of sciences of education”: anthropology, biology, law, history, medicine, pedagogy, philosophy, psychoanalysis, and sociology.

(continued)

²⁵This presentation draws on an exhaustive history of the Institute in Hofstetter (2010). “Temple Dedicated to Childhood” is quoted from a letter of É. Claparède to P. Bovet, 23.11.1911; Copies FG 25; AIJRR.

(continued)

In fact, the Institute was in tune with the “spirit of the age”, drawing ample inspiration from experiences elsewhere in the world, and constantly seeking information and inspiration from what was happening in Europe and the Americas, and even, from time to time, in Africa and Asia. The *Institut Rousseau* was closely connected to most of the sites (laboratories, schools, Institutes, associations, congresses) where new educational theories and practices were experimented with and tested. These circulated in a dynamic movement that transcended national, cultural and disciplinary boundaries. The members of the *Institut Rousseau* took advantage of this internationalist turn of events and the educational effervescence that characterised the inter-war period to invite educators and researchers from all parts of the world to combine their efforts in order to produce, collect, discuss and disseminate all the knowledge likely to fuel a “universalisable” educational revolution. Those involved in the Institute, both students and professors, travelled the world to examine new experiments and make their own pedagogical discoveries, in order to test, improve and disseminate them.

In 1929, an agreement linked the Institute to the Faculty of Arts of the University of Geneva. Under the direction of the triumvirate, Bovet (pedagogy), Claparède (psychology) and Piaget (administration), the newly named *Institut universitaire des sciences de l'éducation* redefined its functions: it cut back its militancy in favour of more academic commitments and henceforth took charge of the theoretical training of primary school teachers in the canton of Geneva. It moved to the Palais Wilson in 1937, together with the International Bureau of Education which it had founded in 1925, thanks to a donation by the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund. During the 1930s and 1940s, despite the worsening international situation, the Institute consolidated its achievements and enjoyed a reputation which, according to its directors, was only equalled in Switzerland by that of the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich. In Europe, moreover, while nationalism was on the rise, similar institutes were disappearing one after the other.

But the reduction and then the suppression of the Rockefeller subsidy and especially the repercussions of the Second World War,

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reducing student numbers and fees, raised the question of its survival. At the end of the world conflict, the Institute was drained, even though its reputation remained secure. Under the expert leadership of the new generation, Jean Piaget and Robert Dottrens, co-directors since 1944, a project took shape to attain full academic recognition for the Institute, its collaborators and the qualifications it awarded. Scientific research became more professional and led to disciplinary specialisations, allowing psychology in particular to expand its territory, thanks to Jean Piaget and his numerous collaborators. The Institute's substantial contribution to the theoretical and professional training of primary teachers was decisive, as the issue of their professional qualification at a time of expansion of education systems was proving crucial everywhere. Its reputation, presented as unique in Europe, was unanimously recognised for its contribution to the development of Geneva as an international city. The principle of an "Inter-Faculty Institute" soon won over academic and political authorities, as well as representatives of the Institute itself. Officially adopted in February 1948, the Institute gained autonomy by becoming inter-faculty, attached to the humanities, sciences, social sciences and medicine, all fields in which it had built up its expertise.

At the end of the 1960s, the Institute was once again faced with a difficult situation. Insufficient resources, the lack of space and the dilapidated state of the premises in the Palais Wilson were among the difficulties that hindered the smooth running of the Institute from day to day. But this situation was symptomatic of deeper problems. Indeed, the academic and administrative structures of the Institute had become inadequate and did not allow it to meet the increasing and diversifying demands of training, and still less those of research. "Why doesn't the Institute have the title of a faculty?" asked those who wanted more autonomy. With the support of both the rectorate and the State Council of the canton, this ambition was fulfilled. On 10 January 1975, the *Faculté de psychologie et des sciences de l'éducation* was created, the seventh faculty in the University of Geneva. This enabled it to gradually acquire academic credentials, especially as it experienced an impressive increase in its student population, and notably of women which, over time, would help to challenge the glass ceiling which still impinges on academic careers.

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The IBE: A Federating Platform

The *Institut Rousseau*—with this comfortable Rockefeller grant—created the IBE in Geneva as a corporate association. The Institute’s Council presented it as a platform for federating associations, leagues and groups from civil society that aspired, like the *Institut*, to build peace through education. We focus here on the way in which its builders defined the contours of the IBE and attempted to ensure its viability as an umbrella agency for “social movements.”¹ We are particularly interested in identifying the convictions and aspirations that drove them, the controversies and setbacks that punctuated their daily lives, as well as the resistance and competition they encountered (Image 3.1).²

A CORPORATE ASSOCIATION, GILDED WITH GREAT NAMES

During the winter of 1925–1926, following intense compromises outlining its concept and activities, announcements were published in the local and international press, in French and then in various other languages

¹We use this notion in reference to Neveu (1996) who evokes a “form of concerted collective action in favour of a cause [...] an intentional acting-together, marked by the explicit project of the protagonists to mobilise together” for it (p. 11), in our case in favour of education and peace.

²We have substantiated these analyses in Hofstetter (2015, 2022).

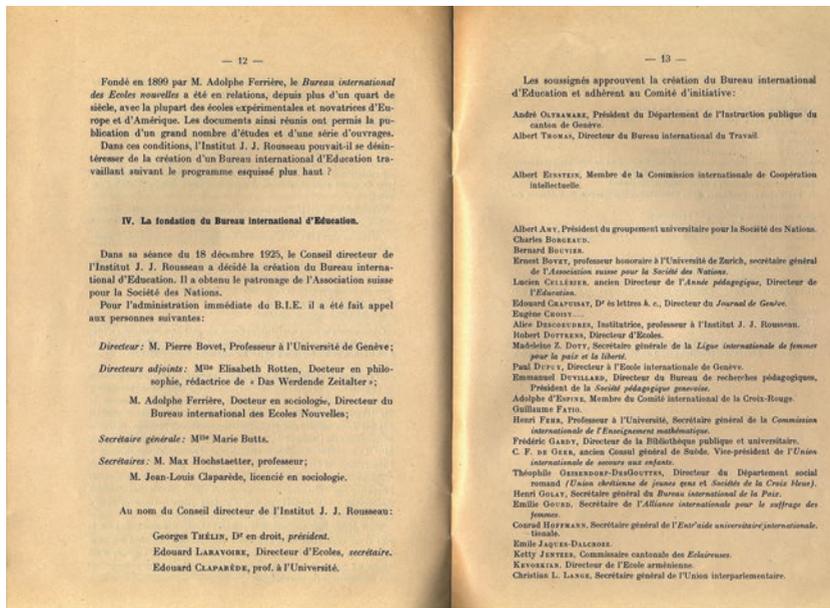


Image 3.1 The constitutive document of the IBE. By this, the *Institut Rousseau* defined its bodies and appointed the persons responsible for its functioning. The signatories approved the creation and became members of the steering committee; among them Albert Einstein and Jean Piaget. (© AIJJR)

(English, German, Spanish, Esperanto): they proclaimed the creation of the IBE, placed it within the precursory movement in its favour, described its intentions and launched an appeal for affiliations and financial support. These texts can be considered as performative, as they outlined the concept of the Bureau and constituted both the event that was supposed to found it and to legitimise it.

The builders of the IBE boasted that they had received the patronage of the Swiss Association for the LoN and an initiative committee of fifty-three personalities, in addition to the signatures of the President of the Geneva Department of Public Education, the socialist André Oltramare, the Director of the ILO, the enterprising Albert Thomas, and the pacifist scientist Albert Einstein, member of the International Commission for Intellectual Cooperation (ICIC). An administrative commission comprising seventeen members defined the mandate and the statutes. These were

adopted in 1926, before being endorsed by the General Assembly in 1927. Article 2 of the statutes states the substance:

The object of the IBE is to act as an information centre for all matters relating to education. The Bureau, which aims to promote international co-operation, maintains a completely neutral position with regard to national, political and religious questions. As an organ of information and investigation, its work is carried on in a strictly scientific and objective spirit.

Ferrière commented enthusiastically:

[The aim is to] promote the culture of humanity [...] to facilitate the rapprochement of civilised peoples, [...] to collect official or private documents, and [...] to extract the essence of this work in order to spread it and make it bear fruit for the benefit of all.³

Directors and Secretaries—including the General Secretary, Marie Butts, who served from 1926 to 1945⁴—formed the Secretariat, performing the dual functions of “linchpin” and “thinking head” of the IBE. Pierre Bovet, who was already Director of the *Institut Rousseau*, assumed the same role at the IBE from 1925 to 1929, supported by two deputy directors, Adolphe Ferrière, who was in office from 1926 to 1931, and Elisabeth Rotten, both co-founders of the New Education Fellowship (NEF, created in 1921). Overworked, Rotten resigned in 1928 and was replaced by the Catalan pedagogue Pedro Rosselló, a close collaborator of the *Institut Rousseau* who served the institution until 1968.

The prosopographical analysis of the eighty-two individuals who participated in the construction of the IBE and, after careful selection, joined its main bodies⁵ at the end of 1925–July 1926, points to the desire to

³ 1st IBE General Assembly, 17 & 18.8.1927, p. 1. 4_A-2-0-21, A-IBE. B1/env2/Ch3/docs 38-50, p. 2, AIJRR.

⁴ Four other stenographer secretaries joined her between 1926 and 1929, as well as a few volunteers, trainees and occasional collaborators, mostly women (Boss, 2022, pp. 353–390).

⁵ The main bodies of the IBE in the 1920s were: the Initiative Committee (fifty-six members), the Commission and then the Council (seventeen members, eight of whom were already on the Initiative Committee), and the Secretariat (five members, including the directors). We have added the ten members of the *Institut Rousseau's* Governing Board of December 1925, who are the authors of the dispatches founding the Bureau and ex-officio members of the Initiative Committee (Hofstetter, 2010, 2022). For an in-depth study of the profile of the central actors of the IBE (including the assistants and volunteers of the secretariat of the Bureau) and the activist circles in which they were embedded, integrating the particularly dense Quaker movements, see Boss (2022, chapter 5, pp. 353–390).

secure allies in communities considered to be strategic: intellectual networks, diplomatic circles and associative movements. Most of them were friends of the *Institut Rousseau*, experts in psychopedagogy, intellectuals, notables and philanthropists who were in favour of the principle of an IBE in Geneva and supporting the internationalist, humanist, pacifist, reformist and scientific values that such a Bureau intended to embody. Women made up a sixth of the members, such as the Polish intellectual Helena Radlińska, Alice Descœudres, teacher of children with special needs, and Marie Butts, the first secretary general of the IBE. They were joined by spokespersons for feminist movements, including prominent figures on the regional, national and international scenes, such as Émilie Gourd, Emma Pieczynska, Nelly Schreiber-Favre and Camille Vidart.⁶ It can be noted that the representation of the academic world was 1/5, and, more discreetly, of other public institutions in the field of education and the pedagogical societies was 1/10.

A quarter of this group were senior civil servants, statesmen and representatives of major associations or international organisations, whose reputation crossed borders. It is significant that several delegates of governments and LoN agencies, or their wives, were involved in the executive bodies of the IBE, such as Paul Dupuy, Fernand Maurette, Maria Sokal, Arthur Sweetser and Duncan Christie Tait. In view of their commitment, we can say that they were at that time part of the core group of actors who laid the conceptual foundations of the Bureau. Through them, the IBE Secretariat was trying to take the pulse of the LoN debate and to gain support on all continents.⁷ The IBE's publicity leaflets highlighted their responsibilities at the head of philanthropic associations, feminist

⁶In addition to the works cited above, we also refer to Deuber Ziegler and Tikhonov (2005) concerning those who have built the memory of Geneva. In this work, we draw on the following works to identify the position of women in international organisations and relations, which also allows us to note that while the *Institut Rousseau* had a relatively high percentage of women in its staff, this percentage was much lower within the Bureau, if not for the subordinate staff: Battagliola (2006), Denéchère and Delaunay (2007), Maruani and Meron (2012), Boussahba-Bravard and Rogers (2018), Hunyadi (2019), Offen (2000), Owens and Rietzler (2021) and Thébaud (2019).

⁷For example, S. Tschéou-Wei for China, M. Tamon Mayeda for Japan and even the Japanese educator Nitobé Inazō, who was none other than the Deputy Secretary General of the LoN.

leagues, cultural and denominational mutual aid and pacifist associations.⁸ The list of names on the initiative committee acted as a visiting card as if, from the outset, it were a question of attesting to the IBE's federative vocation and to its legitimising itself through the great figures of internationalism and social movements that collectively embraced its causes.

It should also be noted that the core group of people involved in the IBE's bodies had a clear democratic and liberal stance, sometimes with socialist tendencies, sometimes with more bourgeois and liberal ones, which inclined them to invest in social causes. They professed a so-called social Christianity, with Protestant affinities, which could be related to Quaker networks. This microcosm was distinguished by an unshakeable conviction in the transformative power of education, which was nourished by the Reformed faith and the Protestant duty to evangelise. Their internationalist mission, rooted in their pacifist and reformist convictions, in no way precluded a patriotic and national commitment, and for some even the certainty of their civilising responsibilities (Image 3.2).

THE PERILOUS CHALLENGE OF FEDERATING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

While claiming to be strictly neutral and objective, the IBE participants were convinced of the mobilising power of civil society; they therefore chose as partners the individuals and groups that represented it. Individual memberships grew rapidly, but fell far short of expectations (1 million had been hoped for, but there were only 300 in 1929). “Life members” were very rare, even though it was hoped that such memberships would guarantee the existence of the Bureau (a single fee of CHF 250). In fact, it was the annual membership of collective members⁹—a minimum of 20 CHF—which were the most popular. The memberships would allow the new IBE

⁸These associations include: Universal Alliance for International Friendship through Churches, International Committee of the Red Cross, International Union for Child Relief, Blue Cross Societies, International Peace Bureau, International University Aid, International Association for Moral Education, Universal Esperantist Association. General Fund (FG/BIE), Hamori Fund (2008/3) and A. Ferrière Fund (AdF A/1-3). The Ferrière fonds (AdF A/1-3), contains bundles of sheets, cross-referenced correspondence, reports and minutes of meetings, personal diaries and notebooks.

⁹See the list in Part II and the complementary analyses by Boss et al. (2022), Boss (2022) and Brylinski (2022).



Image 3.2 Participants at the 1928 IBE summer school “How to make the League of Nations known and develop the spirit of international cooperation”. At these courses, organised until 1934, women—mostly teachers—were in the majority. They were relegated to the shadows when the international conferences and its state delegates replaced these summer schools. (© IBE)

to extend its influence and position itself as a federator. The IBE had a particular legitimacy in view of its anchorage in the Geneva of the LoN and in the *Institut Rousseau*, its progenitor, whose scientific expertise would guarantee the neutrality and objectivity of the Bureau.¹⁰

But the IBE was far from enjoying the recognition expected from the most influential and therefore most coveted educational federations, which were vying zealously to establish their legitimacy and assert their supremacy. The IBE’s closeness to the *New Education Fellowship* has already been noted, but the latter was careful not to concede any pre-eminence to the IBE, except at the scientific level. The same applied to

¹⁰The continuity between all these institutions is in a certain sense materialised by their location (see Insert 3.1): the *Palais Wilson* was seat of the LoN before the IBE and the *Institut Rousseau*, among other international organisations, moved in, in 1937.

other groups, such as the International Congress of Moral Education (ICME), the International Federation of Teachers' Associations (IFTA) and the World Federation of Education Associations (WFEA).¹¹ The agreements did result in mutual recognition, which could be translated into reciprocal memberships, complementary organisations of tasks, alliances in the face of common challenges and co-organisation of congresses. But nobody accepted the supremacy of any other.¹²

It was through the work accomplished that the IBE strove to prove that it was indispensable. From the outset, its Secretariat was engaged in a worldwide documentary monitoring, synthesising, via reviews and bibliographies, everything that was being written and experienced in the world of education. In collaboration with the *Institut Rousseau* of which it was still the international branch, the IBE conducted various international surveys, the results of which were discussed in an avalanche of bulletins, articles and books, translated and distributed in many parts of the world. Among its favourite themes: patriotism, Esperanto, inter-school correspondence, family-school relations, school and teaching materials, history textbooks, children's literature, peace in schools, group work and self-government. At the same time, since 1927, the IBE set up special courses for teachers to answer the crucial question of the LoN: "How to make the League of Nations known and develop the Spirit of International Cooperation?"¹³ The Bureau organised conferences, for example on peace in Prague (1927) and on bilingualism in Luxembourg (1928). It set up exhibitions, the themes of which were supposed to provide a showcase for the diverse cultures and riches of the world's heritage. The aim was to make everyone aware of the most crucial educational problems and to equip educationalists and school leaders to help solve them.

Strengthening synergies with the LoN and its technical bodies, the ILO and the ICIC, as well as with the Liaison Committee of the major international associations, was a priority; all the more so as these were

¹¹ At the end of Chap. 9 on "facing equivocation", Insert 9.1 describes in detail the rivalry with WFEA.

¹² See Chap. 9, where some examples are given, showing how the heads of the IBE made efforts to clarify their position in order to stand out and to be recognised.

¹³ The first summer school was announced, to take place in August 1928; 87_B-2-1-53, A-IBE. These courses followed the resolution of the LoN Council in 1925 that the ICIC should coordinate efforts to make the LoN better known; Bovet and then Piaget were immediately part of the group of experts mandated to do this.

progressively setting up committees or branches dedicated to education in which IBE members hoped to play a leading role. Attending the meetings of the Liaison Committee, which were meticulously documented in Butts' reports, enabled the IBE to consolidate its legitimacy, to distribute its dispatches and publications, to document the key events in the life of the international associations and to find out where and with whom grants and subsidies were being negotiated.

FACED WITH COMPETITION, A STRATEGY TO REVIEW

The official discourse that emerged from the IBE's conferences and publications during its first three years of existence boasted of the newly acquired solidarity and the brilliant results of the activities carried out. However, there is a stark contrast between these glowing statements, which were part of a legitimisation strategy, and the alarmist observations that were made in the daily exchanges within the Secretariat and the Council. The IBE was far from easily obtaining the partnerships it aspired to, the audience it hoped to reach and the subsidies it needed to survive. And the *Institut Rousseau*, which was responsible for it, was itself struggling to stay afloat. As early as the first general assembly, in the summer of 1927, a finance committee was set up to avoid crisis and bankruptcy.¹⁴

The vital problem: to gain legitimacy and recognition but to safeguard political independence and freedom of action. For some, only a private organisation supported by autonomous personalities and associations could ensure this: any official patronage would tie up the IBE, or even compromise its spirit. It is feared that the ambivalence and even more so the distrust—particularly of certain “Americans”¹⁵—towards the LoN would discredit the IBE if it were to be set up under their supervision. For others, the viability of such a large-scale agency required a great deal of patronage: that of official bodies, representatives of public authorities in charge of education systems, but also of other influential bodies (such as the International Peace Bureau, the LoN and its technical bodies,

¹⁴ IBE Statutes, 1926–1930, Meetings of IBE's Council, 1927, BIE 4/1, FG, AIIJR; Former IBE Council 1927–1929. 43_A-2.0-21 and 22; 62_A-3-0-25 and 156, A-IBE. These events are analysed at length by Hofstetter (2022, pp. 77–111).

¹⁵ “If the Americans do not come to Geneva in 1929, it will be for political reasons (distrust of the LoN) which we cannot do much about.” Letter from P. Bovet to M. Butts, 14.7.1927. 160_correspondance-46, A-IBE.

including the ILO and the ICIC). A turning point was reached in the spring of 1928, following the announcement that Germany was preparing to offer the LoN an International Institute of Education, like France with the ICIC and Italy with the International Educational Cinematographic Institute (IECI).¹⁶ Talks were held in Geneva, within the LoN's bodies, and then even in the Swiss capital, with the highest federal authorities.¹⁷ An argument was put forward, demonstrating to the Swiss government that the IBE was already operating as a "world institution", which would only need the recognition of the Confederation to ward off its German rival, and thus guarantee that Switzerland would play its rightful role in the "concert of nations":

The creation by a major country of an International Institute of Education offered to the LoN would not only kill off the Geneva bureau, it would deprive Switzerland of the possibility of playing in the concert of nations the role most in keeping with its traditions. [...] Several foreign governments [...] would already be happy to see the International Bureau of Education in Geneva take on a more official role and are ready to give it not only moral but also material support. [...] It would be regrettable if our country, because of its federal character, were to deprive itself forever of the great material and moral advantages which the existence on its soil of an IBE could not fail to provide [...] especially as it seems quite natural that foreign governments should make their financial participation conditional on Switzerland's services.¹⁸

In order to deal with the budget deficit and the impossibility of acting as a federating body for international associations as well as counteracting the project of a German education institute, the prospect of a reconfiguration in an intergovernmental format had been seriously put to the test. Its relevance was no longer merely discussed, but now favoured. As early as

¹⁶FG.F.6/26 5.3.208 1/1, AIJRR. For the IECI, we refer to the publications of Taillibert (1999, 2020).

¹⁷In particular, Federal Councillor Giuseppe Motta, then in charge of the Political Department dealing with foreign affairs.

¹⁸Letter from A. Malche to E. Chuard, head of the Federal Department of the Interior, 12.3.1928, pp. 2–3. FG.F.6/26 5.3.208 1/1, AIJRR.



Image 3.3 The *Palais Wilson*. Headquarter of the League of Nations until 1937, this former hotel on the shores of Lake of Geneva got its name from Woodrow Wilson, leading architect of the LoN. The *Palais* was the seat of the IBE until 1984; until 1975, it was also the home of the *Institut Rousseau* both collaborating intensively. (© AIJJR)

January 1929, a finely argued report loudly proclaimed the decision to transform the IBE into an “organisation of general and public interest, whose members are drawn from governments, public institutions or institutions of public interest, and international unions”.¹⁹ States and especially their official education authorities would henceforth be the privileged partners of the reconfigured IBE (Image 3.3).

¹⁹The International Bureau of Education, January 1929, p. 6. 182/95/35-48, AIJJR.

Insert 3.1 The Palais Wilson

Confined to its location on the rue des Maraîchers since 1929, the IBE and the *Institut Rousseau*, which became the *Institut universitaire des sciences de l'éducation*, received an offer from the Geneva government to move into the Palais Wilson in 1937: the League of Nations had just left this building to move into the Palais des Nations, built especially for it, to the “pacific glory of the twentieth century,” within the majestic Ariana Park overlooking Lake Geneva.

This move is a form of consecration. The IBE’s move to the Palais Wilson bore witness to the unconditional support of the Swiss and Geneva authorities, who since the 1934 agreements²⁰ had endorsed the invitations that the IBE sent to the governments of the world to come to Geneva, at the time of the IBE’s assemblies, councils and, above all, International Conferences on Public Education. Thus, after having received its guests in makeshift premises, and also in the famous Reformation and Alabama rooms²¹ of the Geneva government, the IBE received government delegates and carried out its tasks between 1937 and 1985 in the buildings vacated by the secretariat of the League of Nations and its international diplomats.

The history of this building is now known. The Palace in which the IBE was located was part of Geneva’s architectural heritage. Opened in 1875, the Hôtel National, with its French neo-renaissance architecture, was intended to accommodate European high society, like other large hotels built on the shores of the lake (the Métropole, the Hôtel de Russie, the Beau-Rivage, the Hôtel de la Paix, the Hôtel d’Angleterre and the Richemond). In 1920, after some difficult years and then major restorations, the Hôtel National was selected by Sir Eric Drummond, Secretary of the League of Nations, to house the League’s staff (Marbeau, 2017; Sluga, 2013). Further restoration was necessary, transforming the rooms into offices, the

(continued)

²⁰See Chap. 4.

²¹Where the founding act of the International Committee of the Red Cross (1864) and the various Geneva Conventions were signed. The Alabama Arbitration Tribunal put an end to the conflict between the United States and Great Britain, which had arisen as a result of the American Civil War.

(continued)

salons into meeting rooms and the service rooms into storage rooms for equipment and archives (Kuntz, 2017, p. 29). In 1924, following the death of the President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, the hotel was renamed Palais Wilson to pay tribute to the man who was considered to be the initiator of the Peace Pact and the Treaty of Versailles, which led to the creation of the League of Nations.

In the Palais Wilson, the IBE rubbed shoulders for several decades with a number of other international organisations and charitable associations whose causes were dear to it and whose members were often well-known: the *Institut universitaire des sciences de l'éducation*, the Universal Committee of Christian Unions, the Universal Alliance for International Friendship through Churches, the International Congress of Public Health Works, the Bureau for the Protection of Migrants, the International Council of Women, the Universal Peace Convocation, the Committee for Peace and Disarmament set up by international feminist organisations, the World Jewish Congress, the Carnegie Endowment, the New Commonwealth Institute, the International Conference of Mutuality and Social Insurance, the International Service of the Society of Friends (Quakers)... to give just a sample.²² Since 1998, at the request of the Secretary-General of the UN, Kofi Annan, the Palais Wilson has housed the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. In the meantime, the IBE moved to a futuristic building in the international organisations district, opposite the ILO, where it remained for forty years.

²² Das Palais Wilson, in *Die Friedens-Warte* 38(1), 1938, pp. 44–45.

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Achieving Intergovernmental Legitimacy

How to apply the methods of international cooperation to education, the preserve of nations? How to ensure full political neutrality while seeking the patronage of nation states, especially in the explosive context of the 1930s? This chapter is dedicated to the fifteen years that followed the reconfiguration of the IBE as an international organisation, the third in Geneva, according to the creators of the IBE, after the LoN and the ILO. The statutory transformation was in itself fundamental. However, it would take time to implement it, especially as the process of approaching governments was proving more complex than expected.¹

CREATING NEW BODIES, SEALING NEW ALLIANCES

More stable legal foundations were given to the IBE in July 1929, on the joint initiative of Pedro Rosselló and Jean Piaget, now at the head of the IBE, supported by Albert Malche and Robert Dottrens, in whose hands the Department of Public Education and the management of primary education in the canton of Geneva² were placed respectively. Most of the

¹ See also Brylinski (2022a, b), Hofstetter and Schneuwly (2013, 2020) and Hofstetter and Boss (2022).

² Most of the notables, diplomats and intellectuals mentioned above continued to support and collaborate with the IBE.

power was entrusted to the academic Jean Piaget,³ who replaced Bovet at the head of the IBE; he was assisted by his two Deputy Directors Rosselló and Ferrière, who were confirmed in their functions. The management was supported by the General Secretary Butts, the archivist and documentalist J.-L. Claparède (son of Édouard), and by three to five secretaries permanently attached to the IBE, to whom were added volunteers and collaborators either on an ad hoc basis or else mandated for specific tasks.⁴

Piaget led the research, Rosselló the administration, Butts the information. Intriguingly, Ferrière's name never appears in this organisation chart, even though he would continue his mandate as deputy director for another year, but rather as a globetrotter of the new education.⁵ It is likely that his health problems (deafness) prevented him from taking on corporate responsibilities and that his decidedly activist profile was seen as not very credible in establishing the IBE's intergovernmental base, especially as he was more interested in developing and disseminating his own work, particularly on the active school.

The statutes did not change the main purpose of the IBE, which was still to “serve as an information centre for all matters relating to education”. To this end, its activities consisted, as in the past, first, of centralising documentation and second, of conducting scientific research, the results of which were brought to the attention of educators, administrators and educationalists; indeed, it was now the public schools and school systems as a whole that the IBE aimed to improve. The IBE gave up its mission of coordinating and federating international associations dedicated to education after having taken note of the limits of any overarching ambition.

The new structure of the Bureau was intended to ensure that the organisation was serious and that it had credibility and therefore the potential to act. The activism of the past, based on the personal commitment of a handful of individuals, was now replaced by a multiplication of sections, offices, councils, departments, mandates, regulations (directives, resolutions) and a staff that gradually grew, diversified, broadened its expertise

³ At that time, Piaget held the chair of history of science and was co-director of the *Institut Rousseau* from 1932 onwards, after having been its administrator for three years.

⁴ Boss (2022) analyses in detail their contrasting profiles as well as their mandates and tasks.

⁵ See detailed analyses of Ferrière's journeys in Hameline (1993), Haenggeli-Jenni (2017), Hofstetter (2017) and Loureiro (forthcoming).

and acquired a more official status.⁶ Among the main activities that continued to be carried out were newsletters, surveys and exhibitions.

At first, the surveys followed the earlier format and themes and then they became more formal and standardised. Whereas they had previously been addressed to associations and activist channels, from 1932 to 1933 onwards they requested official data from the ministries and related to the public education systems.⁷

Two types of survey were produced, the results of which provided the basic material for the ICPEs established in 1934. The first aimed to systematically collect information on reforms recently introduced in the countries surveyed and led to the *International Yearbook of Education and Teaching*; the second addressed educational issues deemed crucial in order to work together during the ICPEs to resolve them.

As for the exhibitions, they grew in size; previously thematic, they became institutionalised under the name of “*Exposition permanente de l’instruction publique*/Permanent exhibition of public education”. As Piaget explained, they were conceived as “a working instrument, a laboratory of comparative education, or at least a perpetual living illustration of what each of our investigations achieves abstractly”. The aim, he continued, was to stimulate “ever more numerous comparative research”, in order to take another step “on the road that is ours: the progressive coordination of educational results.” (ICPE 1937, p. 25) Piaget insists on comparatism but also on the coordination of results, which presupposes a scientific concertation on how to examine these results but could also imply the prospect of agreeing on the pedagogical orientations to be favored in the field.

The IBE initially maintained strategic relationships with many independent international associations, leagues and organisations. It carefully kept the lists of correspondents and collective members in its address book. Taking advantage of the scientific networks of the *Institut Rousseau* it pursued even more actively its collaborations (intellectual and pedagogical exchanges, correspondence, mutual reception) with a number of

⁶For a detailed analysis of the trajectories and activities of these staff from 1925 to 1939, see Boss (2022).

⁷In the collective work by Érhise, we have analysed these extensively. Boss (2022), on the other hand, examined how these IBE investigations and activities prefigure the disciplinary field of “comparative education” from empirical, methodological and theoretical perspectives.

researchers and scientific centres such as the Institute of Education (London), the *Institut für Erziehungswissenschaft* (Jena), the *Zentralinstitut für Erziehung und Unterricht* (Berlin), the Institute of International Education and the Teachers College (New York) and various experimental schools. While acknowledging the importance of the work of these allied scientific institutions, Piaget nevertheless prided himself on the fact that the IBE was the only one to aim for the universality of its members and to base itself on official sources, which moreover were in French, thereby appealing to Latin peoples.

But from then on, the focus would be on intergovernmental organisations. The first mandate entrusted to the young director, Piaget, was precisely to strengthen synergies with them. Already very closely linked with the *Institut Rousseau* and the nascent IBE, the bonds with the ILO became closer over time: after having conducted a joint survey on the management of the occupations of children under fourteen years of age who had been released from compulsory education,⁸ the ILO was able to establish a network of partners. A liaison committee was set up in 1931 to facilitate scientific collaboration, the circulation of data and a “harmonious distribution of tasks”. For its part, the ILO not only actively participated in the summer courses that the Bureau organised to publicise the LoN (1927–1932), but it was also constantly represented during the ICPEs as an observer. This was also the case with the LoN and ICIC, but relations with the latter become more delicate when they also invest the educational field.⁹

In reality, it was the Paris-based Liaison Committee of the major international associations that remained the privileged forum for knowing what was going on, particularly in terms of education, behind the scenes of intergovernmental agencies and associations active in education and among young populations to promote peace.

After having relied on its base in Geneva to proclaim its legitimacy, the IBE felt excluded from what was being decided in other sites and institutions, in Paris particularly, where the IIIC was based, and also in London,

⁸This survey was aimed at all countries in the world, from South to North and from East to West, including the colonies, which would no longer be the case for surveys conducted by the IBE alone. See Droux and Matasci (2012).

⁹We will return to this in detail in Part III.



Image 4.1 Secretariat of the IBE in 1930. In the centre, Jean Piaget, beside him Marie Butts, general secretary, and Pedro Rosselló, deputy director, whose activities are extensively analysed in this book. On the left, Rachel Gampert who was secretary for more than twenty years, with important responsibilities, among others, as translator, organiser of conferences, responsible for the library and for the service for war prisoners; behind her, Blanche Weber, responsible for the section of child literature for 12 years. (© IBE)

where the NEF was located. This was all the more true since the states invited to become members seemed slow to do so and the Anglo-Saxon countries were reluctant to join the Bureau (Image 4.1).

THE FIRST INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION

In 1929, the major change lay in the redefinition of the main partners of the IBE: from then on, it was governments, the first bodies interested and concerned by the evolution of education systems, which were the

legitimate members,¹⁰ and they financed, directed and controlled the IBE's activities.¹¹ What approaches and means were being used to try to achieve this ambitious challenge?

First of all, it was necessary to obtain the affiliation of as many governments as possible. However, following an all-out appeal, only three states joined the enterprise in 1929 (Spain, Poland and Geneva); then three others in 1930 (Egypt, Ecuador, then Czechoslovakia), all qualified as founders in order to broaden the base of this intergovernmental structure somewhat. There were fifteen in 1939. Was it credible to claim intergovernmental legitimacy and to present oneself as the nerve centre of education globally while representing only a handful of states in the world? The strategies deployed to win the support, membership and participation of countries and bodies in charge of education systems would be tireless. By becoming an official member of the IBE, any government acquired the right to sit on the Executive Board and vote, in order to help set the main directions of the institution. Governments were required to pay an annual membership fee of CHF 10,000¹² to join the IBE. A detailed investigation of the negotiations conducted with all the countries approached shows the arrangements proposed to avoid this fee being prohibitive.¹³ The challenge was to obtain the participation and, if possible, the affiliation of the largest number of states in the world; the aim was not only to gain an audience and legitimacy, but also to conquer universality, which would attest that educational cooperation on a planetary scale was possible beyond political differences. The future of humanity would thereby be pacified.

¹⁰The only affiliated institution was its progenitor, the *Institut Rousseau*, which in the meantime had become the *Institut universitaire des sciences de l'éducation*: it was attached to the University of Geneva in 1929 at the same time as the IBE became intergovernmental. Supported by the government of Geneva, this reconfiguration testifies to the recognition that these two institutions then acquired from the authorities. Concerning the IBE, it sealed another one: the official letters now bore mainly male signatures, not without sometimes relegating to the shadows the work of women who, like Butts in particular, were responsible for their conception and writing them out.

¹¹For the first time in history, they would argue, government representatives put their signatures to a document committing them to work together in the field of education.

¹²This sum corresponds to about half the salary of the IBE's Secretary General, which amounted to CHF 4800. In 1930, membership fees covered two-thirds of the IBE's budget (see Insert 15.1 on finance for more information).

¹³See Chap. 15.

But these negotiations also led the IBE to make arrangements with regimes that were in total contradiction with its own values (Italy, Germany, Hungary, during the 1930s), arrangements that in these troubled years also reflected certain ambiguities in Switzerland's foreign policy.¹⁴

Faced with the difficulties of obtaining these affiliations and in order to gain a wider audience, the IBE took a series of initiatives to diversify the ways in which it collaborated with governments and, through them, with the countries they represented. In short, it set out to consolidate the national relays or centres, to collect and circulate data, and to promote the IBE and its activities; to encourage ministries to respond to the IBE's international surveys and to provide basic information on specific educational developments in the country; to suggest that countries took part in events, exhibitions and above all in the International Conferences set up by the IBE in 1934.

Indeed, the real turning point came in the years 1932–1934 with the institutionalisation of International Conferences on Public Education (ICPEs), which were now to become the hallmark of the new IBE.¹⁵ It was now around this “international forum” that the Bureau, as an inter-governmental body, mobilised its forces and gained transnational legitimacy.¹⁶ During these Conferences, government delegates were invited to present and discuss the “highlights of the educational movement” in the world, based on the reports submitted by the countries participating in this process (subsequently published in the *Yearbook*). The ICPEs also aimed to examine and, if possible, resolve the most pressing educational problems. Two to three crucial topics were selected each year, on which the IBE conducted a preliminary survey, the results of which were then discussed during the summer conference, at the end of which recommendations supposed to solve the problems under discussion were collectively drawn up and adopted. Between 1934 and 1939, six conferences were organised, with an average of forty countries taking part. On the basis of surveys to which some fifty countries responded, eighteen topics were dealt with, resulting in as many recommendations.

¹⁴These ambiguities are detailed by: Altermatt (2002), Gillibert (2013), Herren (1997), Herren and Zala (2002), Jost (1986) and Ruppen Coutaz (2016). We analyse these dimensions in Part IV of this book.

¹⁵The modus operandi of the ICPEs and the theoretical background, already discussed in our earlier publications, are examined in Part III.

¹⁶The role of Switzerland in this context, and more generally for the functioning of the IBE, is analysed in Insert 4.1.

The war was to put an abrupt end to these international forums and turned internationalist hopes into a nightmare (Image 4.2).

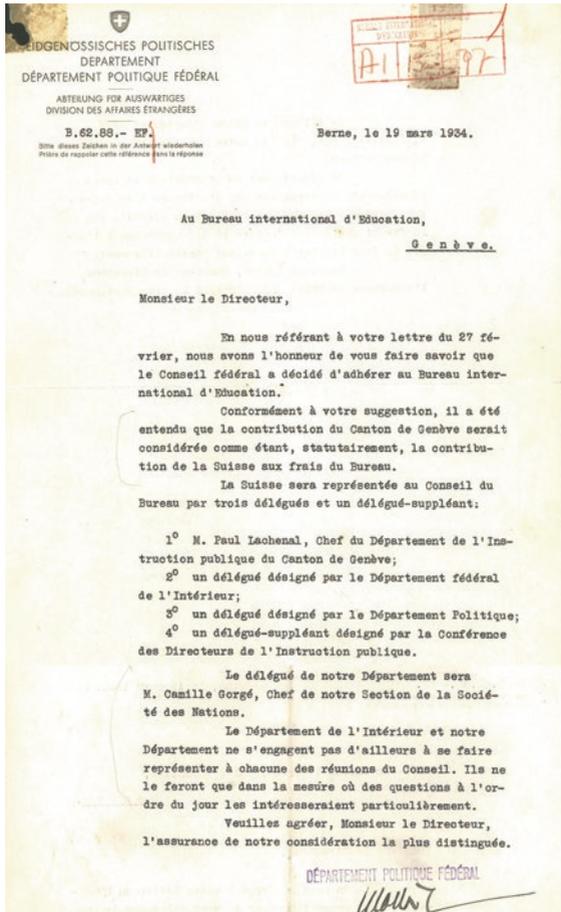


Image 4.2 Letter from the Swiss Federal Policy Department to the Director of the IBE, March 1934, informing of its membership of the IBE. Indeed, the countries invited to participate in the intergovernmental conferences found it inconceivable that the host country, Switzerland, was not a member of the IBE. This was the subject of much negotiation, as Switzerland is a federal country, and most of the educational responsibilities were previously the responsibility of the cantons. (© IBE)

Insert 4.1 Swiss Federalism, from a Threat to a “Miracle”

What was the relationship like between the IBE in Geneva and the Swiss federal authorities? From being rather distant until the end of the 1920s, they became much closer from 1930 and especially 1934, although the Confederation did not have, and never has had, a portfolio dedicated to education, which was the responsibility of the cantons.

It was thanks to the unfailing support of the Geneva authorities that the IBE first consolidated its intergovernmental base. This did not prevent the canton from being reluctant to pay its dues, especially during financial and political crises. But each time the Geneva government prevaricated, the IBE spokespersons responded that Zurich, Lausanne and Neuchâtel would be ready to host the IBE, with Geneva losing its educational pre-eminence in Switzerland. The withdrawal of Geneva’s support would also break the IBE’s momentum, said Piaget, even though the Bureau was in the process of obtaining the support of a range of other governments.

These diplomatic debates at the cantonal level raised the problem of the position of the federal authorities: how could an international institution established in Switzerland obtain the affiliation of the governments of the world, if the host country itself did not join? Conversely, how could the Swiss Federal Council authorise such an affiliation, since it was the cantons and not the Confederation that by right controlled most educational matters? This federative logic threatened to ruin the international credibility of the IBE in a first period. Especially since the IIIC and the League of Nations also dealt with educational issues. The Bureau and its associates would use this as an argument to win the support of the Federal Council step by step. They claimed that this demonstrated the real risk that another nation would build a world centre for educational documentation; after Germany, France was considering it, which would deprive Switzerland of its supremacy in the field.

Through negotiations, the Federal Council softened its stance, as it too was interested in playing a role in the “concert of nations”, provided its neutrality was not undermined: as early as 1930, Switzerland was presented as the host country of the ICPEs, even

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though it was only Geneva that was member of the IBE. Then, in March 1934, thanks to the support of the Swiss teachers' associations and the Conference of Heads of Public Education Departments (CDIP),¹⁷ the Federal Council not only agreed to be represented on the IBE Council, alongside the canton of Geneva, but above all to officially join the IBE.

Since Switzerland as a country did not have a portfolio strictly dedicated to public education, a ruse was proposed: the subsidy granted by Geneva was considered, statutorily, as that of Switzerland. The amalgam was made official by entrusting the opening of the July 1934 International Conference on Public Education (ICPE) (the first to be convened under this name) to the head of the Geneva Department of Public Education, Paul Lachenal, who was simultaneously given the role of first delegate of the Swiss Federal Council and president of the IBE's Executive Committee. As such, he demonstrated that the experience of the Confederation showed that democracies could collaborate advantageously in educational matters without losing their independence (ICPE 1934, pp. 22–23). Swiss federalism tipped over from being a threat to an example: while it initially prevented the Confederation's support for the IBE, putting the institution's credibility at risk, this federalism was then held up as a model and presented as a "miracle", attesting to the fact that states could and did benefit from cooperating without compromising their educational sovereignty.

During the Second World War, the Swiss Confederation was keen to play a role in the growing humanitarian services and made a substantial contribution to supporting the IBE's Intellectual Aid Service for Prisoners of War.

From 1945 onwards, in order to consolidate the IBE in its negotiations with UNESCO, which was in the process of being founded, the Swiss federal authorities buttressed the Bureau with substantial

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¹⁷This brought together the ministers of education and all twenty-five of the Swiss cantons, all independent regarding school matters.

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financial support. Piaget now acted as Switzerland's unofficial and later official ambassador at the constituent assemblies of the UN agency, thus rendering an important service to the political department in Bern. This support continued until 1968: in the report on the financial situation and membership fees of the member states, "Switzerland's share of 50,000 Swiss Francs" is mentioned again and again, far exceeding the 10,000 Swiss Francs that other countries were expected to pay. It should be noted, however, that the subsidy granted to UNESCO, of which Switzerland was a member from the outset, amounted to twelve times that amount.

When the IBE was dissolved by its Council in November 1968, the representative of the Federal Council, C. Hummel, recalled the important role played by Switzerland "during the period of crisis experienced by the IBE [...] and the particular responsibility that the federal authorities have always felt for this organisation, while being aware of the fact that the IBE did not belong to Switzerland but to the whole world".¹⁸ And it was not without pride that the Authorities of the Confederation and of the Canton of Geneva witnessed international institutions being established on its soil, and that international Geneva included an educational dimension in its mission.

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¹⁸ 35th Council of the IBE, 25.11.1968, p. 7. 47_A-2-1-1737. A-IBE.

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During the War, the IBE Prepares the Post-War Period

After the upheavals of the last few months, education will once again be the decisive factor not only for reconstruction, but also and above all for construction itself. It is certainly comforting to note that on this point [...] there is consensus on needs and convictions. Now, however new the tasks that await us, it is clear that we cannot avoid them: in the immense effort of preparing future generations that will be maintained, the IBE will continue to devote most of its work to that common good of all civilisations: the education of the child. (Piaget, Director's Report, 1940, p. 12)

In the midst of the cataclysm of war, was it conceivable to continue believing in and brandishing the pacifist torch of “the common good of all civilizations, namely the education of the child”? This was apparently the conviction of Piaget and the Bureau in 1940. Although the Conferences were suspended between 1940 and 1945, the international surveys, the documentation work, the collection of information, the permanent exhibition and the educational correspondence with countries, even the belligerent ones, continued. Nevertheless, the IBE's functioning and its priorities were profoundly restructured: its causes now had a humanitarian dimension, with the focus on people in captivity (Image 5.1).



Image 5.1 Preparation of books for war prisoners. During the Second World War, the IBE placed its energies at the service of a humanitarian cause consistent with its functions: the Service of Intellectual Assistance to Prisoners of War. A team of eight secretaries and seventeen trainees worked for the service, among them Rosine Maunoir, secretary of the IBE (in the centre). (© IBE)

PRESERVING ITS MISSION OF EDUCATIONAL AND INTELLECTUAL MUTUAL AID

From the autumn of 1939 and for the duration of the hostilities, after consultation with the governments affiliated to the IBE, the powers of the Council and the Executive Committee were entrusted to a Management Committee made up of representatives of the non-belligerent countries affiliated to the IBE. The chair was Adrien Lachenal, then Head of the Department of Public Education of the Canton of Geneva, and the vice-chairmanship was entrusted to the delegates of Belgium (until 1940) and Colombia.¹ The composition of this IBE management committee thus led to an “improbable meeting”, since it was initially chaired by Switzerland

¹First meeting of the IBE Management Committee, 19.12.1939. 66_A-3-2-857, A-IBE.

and included delegates from Argentina, Belgium, Egypt, Spain, Ecuador, Colombia, France, Hungary, Iran, Italy, Portugal and Romania. Belgium and France would no longer participate, as soon as they fell under the yoke of the Reich, nor would Italy as soon as it entered the war, while Hungary, Romania and Iran remained. On the other hand, the office of the Management Committee organised successive meetings with a delegation from Germany, Belgium and France (1940) and then from Great Britain (1941) to work out the collaboration of their respective countries in the new intellectual assistance service set up by the IBE for people in captivity.

Indeed, refusing to “abdicate before the destructive scourge of war”,² on the initiative of this Management Committee, the IBE set up a Service of Intellectual Aid for Prisoners of War.³ The mission of this service was to collect books and distribute these to prisoners in order to “provide them with spiritual comfort”, to keep them “in touch with the world” through culture and to allow them to use their “forced leisure time” to train and improve their skills. With the exponential growth in the number of prisoners, the number of requests exploded, confirming the IBE’s belief in the virtues of the circulation of knowledge, in this case books. From 1940 onwards, more than 200 volumes were distributed per day; by the end of the war, more than 600,000 volumes had been circulated.⁴ The IBE posed as a liaison organisation between prisoners from all countries and also between the belligerent governments, including their German, French, Italian and English partners. Although it was well aware of the impossibility of convening its annual ICPEs, the Management Committee endeavoured to preserve its links with the member states, which systematically received the minutes of the Management Committee. Although it did not continue to canvass for membership, none of the governments resigned and the IBE even obtained the membership of Finland in 1945, followed shortly afterwards by Austria (1946). The Committee made every effort to ensure that all activities likely to be undertaken by the IBE were maintained, especially as the Swiss Federal Council made a more substantial contribution to its funding.

² *IBE Bulletin* 1939, 53, p. 2.

³ To learn more about this humanitarian device of the IBE: Boss and Brylinski (2020), Brylinski (2022b) and Boss et al. (2022), who themselves have taken into account the work of humanitarian scholars, such as Herrmann (2018).

⁴ See 80_A-9-0 to 82_9-8, A-IBE; *Bulletins du BIE*, 1939–1945.

Stamps were issued by the IBE, in collaboration with the postal services, bearing images of great Swiss pedagogues (Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, Father Grégoire Girard).⁵ As with the LoN and the ILO, they were used as postage for the IBE's own mail-outs, thus providing propaganda and, thanks to the interests of philatelists, they also provided a valuable financial boost.

The Permanent Exhibition of Public Education was expanded and its visitors became more diverse (educators, schoolchildren, families, diplomats). Destroyed by an accidental fire in March 1944, its reconstruction allowed the concept to be modernised. The children's literature section also continued its work, seemingly unperturbed. What is also striking is the consistency of the international surveys conducted and even published. Nine of these were initiated during the hostilities, selected to alleviate the distresses and disasters identified.⁶ The first ones were published during the war, the next five appeared on the agenda of the International Conferences,⁷ which once again set the pace for the work of the IBE and its partners after the war. In 1946, thirty governments were represented, and about a hundred participated in the surveys on which the Conference was based.

GETTING RECOGNITION FOR THE IBE'S PIONEERING WORK

Why did the 1946 meeting exceptionally take place in April, during the Easter period? Some answers can be found in the very rich correspondence exchanged during the war between the members of the Secretariat, particularly between Rosselló and Butts. The letter the former sent to the latter in May 1945 testifies to the IBE's aspiration to demonstrate its ability to survive, act, react, and even stand out on the international scene, against all odds:

⁵ Brylinski (2022a, pp. 175–176) has highlighted the issues involved in these choices.

⁶ Here is the list of the surveys: The organisation of school libraries; Physical education in primary education; Household education in primary and secondary schools; The status of married women in education; Hygiene education in primary and secondary schools; Equal access to secondary education; Free school materials; Physical education in secondary education; Teaching of manual work in primary and secondary schools.

⁷ Those of 1946, 1947 and 1950 were therefore based on the work done during the war, some of which were completed later.

We have survived the War, we will survive the Peace. [...] We were fortunate that this meeting was the first to be held on the continent after the guns fell silent. The 9th Conference was also one of the last to be held in Geneva before the outbreak of hostilities.⁸

It was therefore a matter of proving as quickly as possible that the IBE was capable of playing a central role on the international scene, by positioning itself as a precursor of the international conferences envisaged to rebuild the world, on the still smouldering ashes of the war. Nevertheless, the very survival of the institution was at stake.

Since 1943, the IBE had taken on the mission of conceiving what it then called “post-war educational and spiritual reconstruction”, also taking the pulse of the initiatives of other international organisations. In addition to the problems dealt with in the surveys, the management committee was concerned with the training of executives who could make up for the educational shortcomings of children with incomplete schooling, training monitors for abandoned youth, making up for the shortage of educators, ensuring the reconstruction of the decimated pedagogical and scientific libraries, designing the major educational reforms to be piloted and drawing up an education charter.

Although he did not pursue his comparative world studies to the same extent,⁹ Rosselló wrote his doctoral thesis, defended in Lausanne in 1943, on *The Precursors of the International Bureau of Education. An unseen aspect of the history of education and international institutions*. The thesis of his dissertation—still upheld in the letters he addressed to Butts and Bovet¹⁰—among others—was in fact the core of his commitment throughout the war, addressing the great powers that were already emerging to build this new “World Education Authority”: “Let us avoid ‘reinventing America’ and take advantage of the experiences of the precursors; rather than wasting energy competing with each other, let us coordinate educational approaches and projects in a healthy emulation; this presupposes building on what has been tried and tested before and elsewhere and on what already exists”, by which he means the IBE in Geneva, which Rosselló presents as “the highest international educational body that has ever met” (Image 5.2).¹¹

⁸ Letter from P. Rosselló to M. Butts, 25.5.1945, p. 1. 74_A-6-1-1035, A-IBE.

⁹ The *Yearbook* was discontinued, the ICPEs were suspended, but the *Bulletins* and surveys continued, in smaller versions.

¹⁰ 178 Correspondance-277-a, A-IBE.

¹¹ Letter from P. Rosselló to M. Butts, 31.10.1944. 74_A-6-1-1034, A-IBE.



Image 5.2 Marie Butts (1870–1953), IBE’s secretary general from 1925 to 1947, flanked by Jean Piaget, director, and a diplomat. In London during the Second World War, she was the IBE’s ambassador for the preparation of the future UNESCO. She was one of the first women to be awarded the Doctorate Honoris Causa of the University of Geneva, in 1948. (© IBE)

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CHAPTER 6

“A Marriage of Convenience” with UNESCO?

The IBE emerged relatively unscathed from the Second World War and enjoyed a certain international reputation, thanks in particular to its work on behalf of prisoners of war. These were important assets when it came to dealing with a context of profound change, in which the world’s geopolitical and economic power relations were being reconfigured. A substantial reconfiguration of international organisations accompanied and precipitated its evolution, including the creation in the New York megalopolis of the powerful UN and its multiple bodies, notably UNESCO, putting an end to—and “replacing”—the then discredited LoN and the OIC-IIIC whose cultural missions were entrusted to the UN agency (Image 6.1). Would the small Geneva institution manage to survive, to preserve its autonomy as well as its principles of neutrality and scientificity?

PREPARING NEGOTIATIONS TO REMAIN AUTONOMOUS

The Second World War fundamentally changed the face of the world: in addition to geopolitical and economic transformations, new intellectual, cultural and educational issues also came to the fore on the international scene. Convinced of the significance of international collaboration in the field of education in order to maintain peace, the Conference of Allied

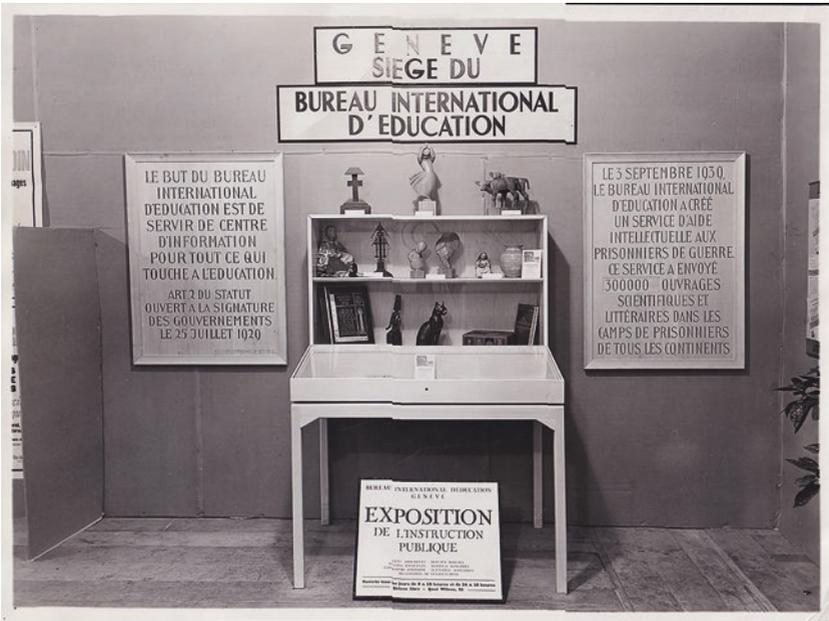


Image 6.1 IBE's stand at the entrance to the exhibition of public education (1943). On the left-hand side, article 2 of its rules; on the right-hand side, a short description of its activity for war prisoners: more than 300,000 books sent out (in 1945, more than 600,000). (© IBE)

Ministers (CAME) held a meeting in London in 1942.¹ As is known, it soon turned its attention towards setting up an international organisation devoted to education and culture.² This prospect radically transformed the situation of the IBE, until then the only intergovernmental organisation entirely dedicated to pedagogy and to the improvement of education systems. Piaget was aware of these negotiations, thanks in particular to Marie Butts—who was remained in London during the war—and he defined the possible positioning of the IBE from the outset, in 1943, by loudly proclaiming the guarantees of objectivity and impartiality that were indispensable for such a body:

¹ For the history of CAME, we referred to Intrator (2015) and Mylonas (1976).

² Duedahl (2016) and Maurel (2010) help place the IBE's initiatives in the context of the birth and early development of UNESCO.

What if another organisation were to arise elsewhere, more or less similar to ours? Either it would be inspired, as we are, solely by the desire for objectivity and collaboration, which are indispensable to peace, and we would sooner or later be able to co-ordinate our common efforts, or it would be directed towards other aims and, in the end, we would certainly need an impartial and technical body such as the International Bureau of Education in Geneva. (Piaget, Director’s Report, 1943, p. 16)

From London, the IBE Secretary General Butts became an “involuntary but capable ambassador” (Mylonas, 1976, p. 332). She grew close to the influential people working on what she called the “new world education Authority”.³ Among the dozens of contacts she made were the American Grayson Kefauver,⁴ author of the first draft of the statutes of what was to become UNESCO; W.E. Richardson, the right-hand man of the British Minister of Education; and Richard A. Butler, who was also in charge of defining the contours of the new body. Both of them inquired sympathetically about the IBE’s position on the initiative. Butts met with Fred Clarke⁵ and other members of the NEF, who were also concerned about the role their own institution might play in the nascent UNESCO. The same is true of the IIIC, whose representatives, Butts tells us, aspired to take over the UNESCO secretariat.⁶ The English Clarke advocated that an education office be established in Quebec, as “it would be in America without being in the United States, and therefore without risk of upsetting Latin America”, but “[n]ot in Geneva in any case! The Dominions don’t like Geneva, the USSR even less so”.⁷ Butts noted that this opinion was shared by many, especially as the IBE was perceived as being close to the LoN: “Besides, the United Nations do not like Geneva,

³ See her numerous letters and four Reports on the IBE in Geneva, in relation to the International Education Organisation envisaged in England and the United States. 160_Correspondance-51, 35_A-1-79-973, A-IBE.

⁴ Dorn (2006) uses in the title of his biography the epithet bestowed on Kefauver: “the World’s Schoolmaster”. Kefauver was already in contact with the IBE beforehand.

⁵ Clarke was head of the NEF and very active in all the preparations with UNESCO; see Aldrich (2009) and McCulloch (2014).

⁶ France would not be successful in its bid to make the IIIC the secretariat of the future organisation, but it would be given the honour of hosting the headquarters of UNESCO in Paris (Maurel, 2006).

⁷ Third Report on the IBE of Geneva, in relation to the proposed International Education Organisation in England and the United States, 24.1.1945. 35_A-1-79-973, A-IBE.

because of the LoN and because of Swiss opinion.”⁸ Several CAME members were also reluctant to collaborate with the IBE because of the presence of Axis countries among its members.⁹

As soon as peace was signed, the British political scientist Alfred Zimmern,¹⁰ who was in charge of the preparatory commission for UNESCO’s founding conference, sent a draft statute to the IBE for comment.¹¹ The latter suggested including the possibility of organising technical conferences, calling on specialised institutions for UNESCO and using the model of liaison committees such as those that existed between the IBE and the ILO, on the one hand, and the ICIC, on the other hand, to clarify the nature of its relationship with UNESCO. The written negotiations were accompanied by meetings in London, Geneva, Paris and the United States to test the plausibility of such synergies.¹² After UNESCO’s constitutive conference in 1946, the IBE took stock and reiterated its conditions, first and foremost its independence¹³:

All the delegations want a collaboration between the IBE and UNESCO in one form or another [...] the IBE naturally has great sympathy for the new Organisation but it must have certain reservations as to the method of integration that may be envisaged. [...] a special effort [is needed] on the part of the IBE member countries throughout the interim period, so that the UNESCO preparatory committee will find itself in the presence of a body in full vitality and with an independence that will enable it to act on an equal footing.

⁸ Letter from M. Butts to R. Gampert, 31.3.1945. Hamori collection, AIJRR.

⁹ IBE strove to remain neutral during the war and did not collaborate with any of the belligerent countries. Butts later retorted that Germany’s participation was through the *Zentralinstitut für Erziehung*: “there is a nuance” (Butt’s Third Report, p. 20).

¹⁰ On Zimmern’s role, see Toye and Toye (2010); more generally, on his thinking, see Baji (2021). As a contributor to the founding of the LoN, he is remembered for his wise counsel to the builders of the IBE. For an analysis of its activity in international forums, see Morefield (2005) and Mazower (2009).

¹¹ Letter from A. Zimmern to the IBE, 4.8.1945; Observations made by the IBE on the Draft Statute of the UNESCO, October 1945. 35_A-1-79-973, A-IBE.

¹² Report on a trip to London during the preparatory work for the Inter-Allied Conference on Intellectual Co-operation and Education, submitted by J. Piaget to the Federal Political Department, September 1945. Piaget also received a mandate from the Department to report on his observations. 35_A-1-79-973, A-IBE.

¹³ Report on the conference to create a United Nations organisation which took place in London from 1 to 16 November 1945, confidential copy, sent to the Federal Political Department and the Department of the Interior by Messrs Piaget and Weiglé. 35_A-1-79-973, A-IBE.

In order to attest to this full vitality, the IBE’s energies were invested in several areas in the immediate post-war period:

- Continued involvement of the IBE in the educational reconstruction effort that would be dear to UNESCO;¹⁴
- Seeking and obtaining official institutional and financial support from the Swiss Confederation;¹⁵
- Continuing the sale of stamps, with a surcharge to raise money and increase the IBE’s visibility;¹⁶
- As early as April 1946, organisation of the XIth ICPE to which representatives of the ministries of education of all countries of the world were invited;¹⁷
- Continuing other activities undertaken earlier, documentations, exhibitions, publication of Bulletins and Yearbooks, international surveys and ICPEs (Image 6.2).

GRANTING THE IBE “ALL THE HONOURS AS UNESCO’S ‘FATHER’ AND ASSIGNING IT THE ROLE OF ‘LITTLE BROTHER’”

The IBE was therefore ready for negotiations about its own fate, which became more intense during 1946.¹⁸ There were two opposing views. One, favoured by the UNESCO representatives, envisaged a rapid absorption, with the IBE becoming a research institute integrated into UNESCO. The other, defended in the IBE memorandum, proposed that

¹⁴ Statement by Miss Butts to the Technical Sub-Committee of the UNESCO Preparatory Commission in which she presents the various activities undertaken by the IBE, already during the war, in particular the Intellectual Aid Service for Prisoners of War (Boss & Brylinski, 2020). 35_A-1-79-973, A-IBE.

¹⁵ See part III “Considerations on the relationship between Switzerland and the IBE” in the Conference Report (note above).

¹⁶ Letter from the State Councillor A. Lachenal to the Director of the Postal Service, 20.3.1944; 68_A-4-3-4-955, A-IBE.

¹⁷ It was given special prominence by celebrating at the same time the 200th birthday of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, who was then one of the most renowned educationalists in the world.

¹⁸ See a list of early contacts in the Memorandum on UNESCO-IBE relations, written by UNESCO respondents, July 1946. 35_A.1.79.1044, A-IBE. We include here elements of Hofstetter and Schneuwly (2020, 2022) and refer to Brylinski (2022) for a more detailed analysis of the socio-political negotiations and issues.

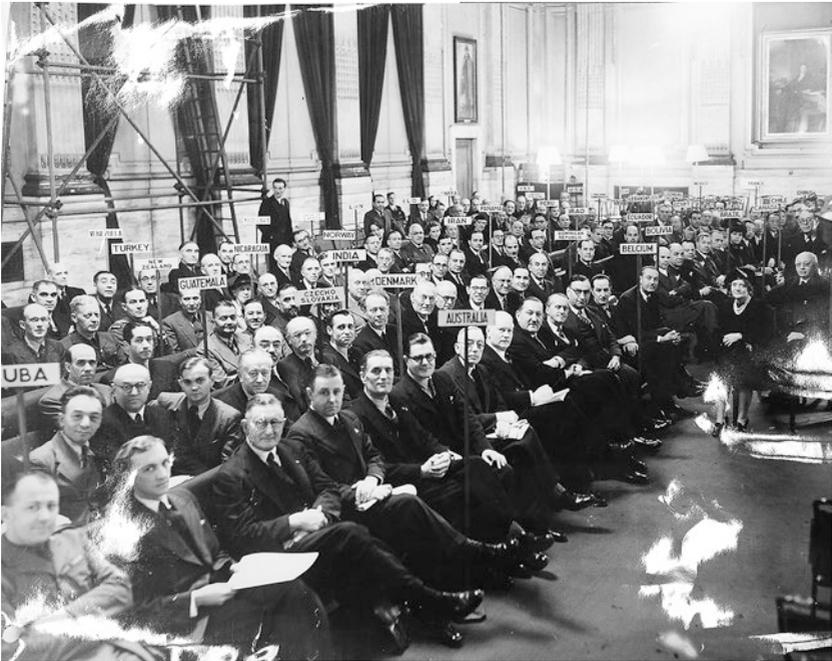


Image 6.2 Constitutive session of UNESCO in London, 1946. At the very back, one can read the acronym “IBE” besides the USA and the UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration). Jean Piaget and a Swiss colleague took part in this session, almost exclusively male. (© IBE)

the IBE should become an independent technical institution, collaborating with UNESCO on specific topics:

While it is agreed that UNESCO’s field of action should be as broad as possible, it is also agreed that UNESCO should share its tasks with other public international institutions – institutions that would thus become specialised to the second degree¹⁹ – which would thus complement UNESCO’s direct action.²⁰

¹⁹As UNESCO was recognised as a first-degree specialised agency in relation to the UN, the IBE would therefore be one of the “second-degree specialised agencies”.

²⁰Memorandum for use in negotiations between the IBE and UNESCO, drawn up by the IBE Preparatory Commission in July 1946. 35_A.1.79.1044, A-IBE.

During the negotiations, the IBE respondents accepted no compromise and sharpened their weapons: “If things do not improve by then, we will be able to fight in November”, said Piaget.²¹ After bitter discussions, which came up against UNESCO’s injunctions to its own delegates and the determination of the IBE, a transitional solution was found: to entrust the joint IBE/UNESCO commission, provided for in the talks, with the task of specifying the terms of the link. This was in fact the path recommended by the IBE and which was implemented in 1947. In a letter dated 3 January 1946, Rosselló wrote to Bovet:

I am sending you herewith the draft provisional agreement which we have obtained after a very fierce struggle with the representatives of UNESCO. [...] We are attempting a very difficult operation, that of seeing the IBE, to whom all the honours of the “father” of UNESCO are to be granted, now become its “little brother”.²²

The path proposed by the IBE was stabilised in the 1952 agreement. “The IBE is, along with the United Nations, the only intergovernmental organisation with which UNESCO has a formal agreement”, explained UNESCO’s Deputy Director Jean Thomas²³ at the first ICPE jointly convened by the two organisations in 1947 (p. 20).

“A trial marriage and a marriage of convenience” stated Piaget, the pragmatic diplomat (ICPE, 1948, p. 21); a union that was also a love match, according to the UNESCO Deputy Director General, Clarence Edward Beeby. A long engagement, one might retort, since the marriage would be validated five years after it had been tried out and renewed from year to year, in order for both parties to have time to appreciate its advantages; and moreover, the union then gained a clause allowing its non-renewal on the simple and free renunciation by one of the parties. It was as a technical agency working closely with UNESCO that the IBE found its place, which it occupied until the end of the 1960s. Considered as the

²¹ Letter from J. Piaget to P. Carneiro, Brazilian representative at UNESCO, unconditional support for the IBE position, 25.7.1946. 35_ A.1.79.1044, A-IBE. Piaget also mentions the possibility of obtaining new memberships to strengthen the IBE.

²² Letter from P. Rosselló to P. Bovet, 3.1.1946. 160_correspondence-46 A-IBE.

²³ It should be remembered that Jean Thomas was previously Deputy Executive Secretary of the UNESCO Preparatory Commission (Maurel, 2006).

“precursor of UNESCO”²⁴ in the field of education, it thus became part of the complex UN system. UNESCO carried out direct actions in education in several countries, guided by the concept of “fundamental education”.²⁵ It also had specialised second-level institutions covering various fields (cinema, libraries, adult education, etc.), including the IBE for its activities in favour of public education with a view to comparative education.²⁶

The IBE maintained its mechanisms: *Yearbook*, *Bulletin*, international surveys, ICPE leading to recommendations, as well as its permanent exhibition and collection of works, that is, school textbooks, books on psychology and pedagogy, legal and administrative texts concerning education in the world. Its work remained exclusively technical, as its respondents tirelessly pointed out; the principle of universality governed the collaboration with states, preserving the opportunity to have as partners countries initially ineligible for the UN and UNESCO.²⁷

²⁴This term is used in the Memorandum on the relations between UNESCO and the IBE, written by UNESCO respondents. 35_A.1.79.1044, A-IBE. The formula of Evans—new Director General of UNESCO in 1953—goes in the same direction: “The International Bureau of Education is older than UNESCO, and it contributed in a large part to the creation of the latter” (ICPE, 1953, p. 24). And also, in 1959, that of the Director of UNESCO, Maheu, on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the IBE as an intergovernmental organisation: “Since before the war, at a time when many doubted that education could be a matter for international and even intergovernmental co-operation, the Bureau has shown not only that such collaboration was possible, but also that it was useful and even necessary, thus justifying, before the letter of the law, a certain aspect of UNESCO” (ICPE, 1959, p. 34). According to Seth Spaulding, the IBE would even be one of the reasons for the existence of UNESCO; for this author, it would indeed be “Jean Piaget’s reluctance to place the IBE directly under the responsibility of the United Nations in 1945 which favoured the creation of UNESCO”, quoted in Maurel (2006, p. 36, n. 7). See Renoliet (1999), whose work on the ICIC considers it to be the precursor of UNESCO. His book titles the ICIC as “the forgotten UNESCO”, “forgetting”, one might say, another “precursor” of UNESCO, namely the IBE.

²⁵For an analysis of direct action, notably through fundamental education, see: Boel (2016), Lerch and Buckner (2018) and Watras (2010); see also Desgrandchamps and Matasci (2020) and Matasci (2023).

²⁶The document “Domains not touched by the IBE”, given to the negotiator of the attachment of the IBE, Wilson, Deputy Secretary General of UNESCO, in March 1946 during his visit to Geneva, circumscribes the “more specific activities” of the IBE. 35_A.1.79.1044, A-IBE.

²⁷Spain and Portugal, for example, affiliated to the IBE, could not initially be members of UNESCO. However, we shall see that the IBE would be limited in the application of this principle of universality for certain communist countries.

This collaboration gave the Bureau a new scope in terms of legitimacy, representativeness of the ICPEs and inclusion in wider networks of relations. The IBE retained its Geneva headquarters, managed its budget with relative autonomy, had an independent management, recruited its own staff—raised to the status of international civil servants once all was stabilised—and maintained its openness to any country wishing to join the Bureau.

However, this autonomy was relative. The IBE-UNESCO²⁸ agreement made provision for a “joint commission” composed of three representatives of UNESCO, on the one hand, and the IBE, on the other hand. It determined the tasks common to both bodies, and divided the others, to avoid any duplication. More specifically, it drew up the list of countries and organisations to be invited to the ICPEs, with the final decision resting with the institutions that made up the commission, that is, the governing bodies of the IBE and UNESCO respectively; it drew up the agenda of the ICPEs, selecting from among the investigations carried out by the IBE those that would be discussed; it listed the tasks that the IBE had to carry out on behalf of UNESCO, particularly in the field of documentation; it managed the distribution of financial charges and controlled the budgets.

The collaboration allowed the IBE to stabilise and increase the number of countries participating in its surveys and conferences, also carried out under the auspices of UNESCO. It should be noted that the choice of themes for the surveys to be carried out was essentially defined by the IBE’s bodies, that is, the IBE’s Executive Committee and Council, as well as the Secretariat, including its management, which was still entrusted to Piaget and Rosselló.

The IBE seemed to be developing harmoniously, following an apparently perfectly functioning system. But what happened in the mid-1950s, when world geopolitics was once again being reconfigured and the number of autonomous countries likely to join the IBE was increasing?

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²⁸ 35_A-1-79-1333a–b, A-IBE.

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Towards a Destabilising Universality: The Swan Song?

A careful analysis of all the exchanges and correspondence within the IBE's governing bodies shows that behind this ostensible harmony, which was also linked to the growth of its audience, there were tensions that would grow from the mid-1950s onwards, threatening the very survival of the IBE. The “budding giant” had indeed grown; the political context had changed profoundly. Was it still possible to operate according to the modalities invented in the 1930s, according to largely implicit rules, supported by a growing secretariat whose “dedication”¹ was perhaps no longer that of the pioneers? The tensions created by the very success of the IBE are at the heart of this chapter, which focuses on the IBE's final years as an autonomous intergovernmental agency (1955–1968) (Image 7.1).

A PROCESS FULL OF PITFALLS

The reconfiguration of the international context had immediate effects on the IBE as an intergovernmental institution, particularly from the second half of the 1950s. While the IBE always claimed to be beyond the political and economic turmoil, free from any external disturbance, it was first indirectly, and then clearly, affected by what is known as the Global Cold

¹André Chavanne, president of the last ICPE, 35th Council of 25.11.1968, p. 7. 47_A-2-1-1737, A-IBE.

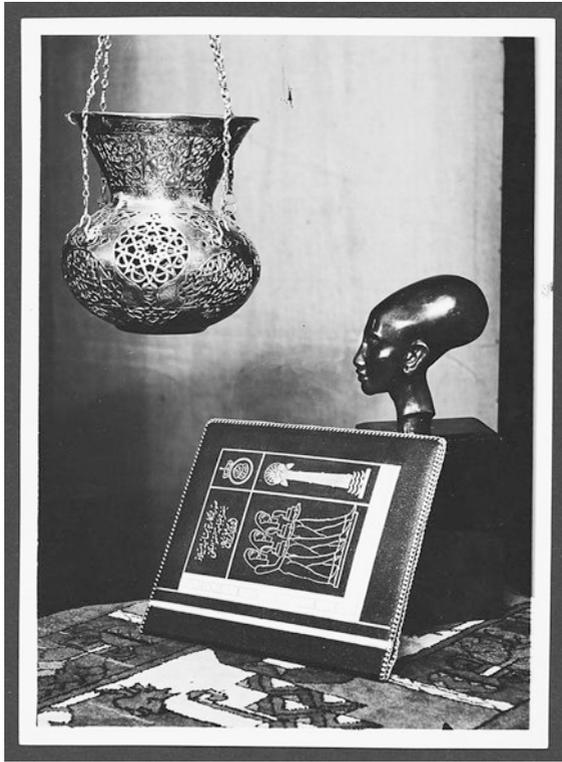


Image 7.1 Objects on Egypt’s exhibition stand. Egypt was a founder country of the IBE and participated very actively in all IBE activities during the whole period (1929–1968) (e.g. Egypt sent delegates to all ICPEs). In these exhibitions, each country highlighted national specificities, in order to allow for a “visual” tour of the educational world. (© IBE)

War² namely a conflict that was not limited to the face-off between the capitalist West dominated by the United States and the communist regimes led by the USSR, but which had various impacts on the whole planet, including the countries of the South and occupied territories where anti-imperialist struggle movements were multiplying.

²For an analysis of the Cold War in international organisations, see: Kott (2021); the indispensable classic: Soutou (2011); a renewed approach via the triptych internationalisation—reappropriation—empowerment: Faure and Del Pero (2020).

The institutional construction of the European Union³ itself was marked by this, also in its Euro-African component, as it sought to position itself as an “emerging power between East and West, going from North to South”, to compete with the marked ascendancy of the American and Asian continents (Hansen & Jonsson, 2014, p. 21). As is known, the first stage of the decolonisation process took place in the Asian countries until the mid-1950s, the second, mainly in Africa, with some thirty countries on the continent freeing themselves from the colonial yoke, especially in the early 1960s.⁴ At the same time, after the death of Stalin, the USSR and its allied countries reoriented their international policy and became more actively involved in international organisations.⁵

In this new global context, the IBE’s aspiration to strive for universality for the countries and peoples of the world contributing to its activities seemed to be coming true. At least, that is how its members saw it. The UNESCO delegate, the Yugoslavian Asher Delon, expressed it in these terms at the end of the 1965 ICPE: “The Conference has been characterised by an exceptional contribution to understanding among countries, to the elimination of the gap existing between various sections of mankind, and to the strengthening of the international community” (ICPE, 1965, p. 135).

IBE officials were unanimous in affirming that what characterised the ICPEs was the ability to address technical educational issues without ideological conflict and political interference. “Uniting the Holy See and the USSR in a common position is not the least of the Bureau’s achievements.” (ICPE, 1962, p. 70) The Chairman of the Executive Committee of the IBE, André Chavanne, Geneva’s Minister of Education, even noted in 1965:

So it is that the technical work of the Conference this year has been accomplished very smoothly and in a friendly atmosphere. We have often achieved unanimity, as we have striven to make as coherent a whole as possible out of the heterogenous collection of facts that emerges from surveys, and

³ For the relationship between the IBE and the European Union under construction, see Insert 17.1 on Europe.

⁴ See the list in Gleditsch and Ward (1999).

⁵ Stalin’s death also paved the way for the participation of the USSR in numerous international organisations, notably, in 1954, in UNESCO and the return of Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia to these same bodies (Maurel, 2006, p. 206).

to organize an ordered series of discussions which reveal how the ideas and procedures planned and executed in one country can be used in another, perhaps thousands of miles away. (p. 135)

This beautiful harmony, proclaimed in 1965, was in fact the result of an evolution in which questions, regulations, negotiations, denunciations, and even the suspension of the ICPE followed one another. We can distinguish two levels: that of the functioning of the Conferences themselves and that of the interference of geopolitical tensions on the other.

The first relates to the effects of the evolution of changing number of countries and participants on the running of the ICPEs. The doubling of the number of delegations and observers—there were 260 participants in 1965, compared to 121 in 1954⁶—made it difficult to continue the ICPEs as originally established. The partners of these conferences expressed their regrets and weariness at the slowness, repetition and superficiality of the sessions and their content. The IBE was trying to remedy this: almost every year, changes were made to improve the relevance of the Conferences and the impact of the voted recommendations, without really reaching satisfactory solutions.⁷

The second level highlights the difficulty of preserving the IBE and ICPE bodies from the geopolitical interference and tensions that were setting the world on fire. Indeed, in the context of decolonisation and the Cold War, the choice of countries to be invited became a matter of controversy: the autonomous territories of the British Empire?⁸ Taiwan or the People's Republic of China? The Federal Republic of Germany or the German Democratic Republic?⁹ Could a state that openly defended a colonial policy in education be accepted in the ICPE? In the absence of precise regulations clarifying these dimensions, and because of their acuteness, these nodal questions led to an acute crisis in 1963 and 1964, where

⁶List of the delegation members, ICPE (1954, pp. 12–18).

⁷In Chap. 11, we will return to the geopolitical stakes of this issue based on an analysis of the debates within the ICPEs, but here we shall confine ourselves to the major institutional stages of the IBE.

⁸Piaget was opposed to this so as not to create inequalities with “the hundred or so other countries, territories and colonies”, but would be outvoted, as the minutes of the 20th Council 9.7.1955 show. 45_A-2-1-1448; and of the 19th Joint Commission 18.11.1955. 36_A-1-79-1455, A-IBE.

⁹This issue was regularly discussed in all the bodies, including the BPI (see Chap. 16).

different blocs clashed, preventing even the educational debates on the ICPEs' agenda.¹⁰

“LIKE THE PHOENIX, THE IBE WILL RISE FROM ITS ASHES”

In retrospect, this glorious XXVIIIth ICPE of 1965 seems like a swan song. In fact, everything had to be reviewed, everything had to be redone, everything had to be built: the operational problems remained; the political dissensions reappeared and grew in the face of the growth of the partners, and the financial problems remained. The director of the IBE, Piaget, recognised this as early as 1966. “The expansion of the Bureau over the last ten years posed new organisational problems”;¹¹ and in fact these now challenged the very viability of the IBE.

To remedy this, two positions were developing. One, supported mainly by the communist and Arab countries, aimed to extend the activities of the IBE and maintain the greatest possible independence.¹² The other, taking into account the precariousness of the Bureau's status and its catastrophic financial situation, envisaged the integration of the IBE into UNESCO; this position was supported in particular by the African countries, among others, because they suffered more than others from the proliferation of international organisations.¹³

Both positions were expressed at the IBE Council meeting in July 1966¹⁴ and both agreed on the proposal to appoint a committee of representatives from twenty-one countries to fundamentally review the nature of the IBE: status, activities, functioning, finances. The resolution from this meeting implicitly outlines the future of the institution by listing the problems to be solved: those identified by the Director in his report concerned the status of the staff, the link with the Geneva Institute of Educational Sciences—the former *Institut Rousseau*—and the need for more in-depth

¹⁰See Chap. 16 on this subject.

¹¹IBE Director's Report to the 31st Council meeting, 4.-5.7.1966, p. 3. 46_A-2-1-1714, A-IBE.

¹²Hungary and Czechoslovakia had developed a new draft statute for the IBE; draft not found, but regularly mentioned in discussions.

¹³G. Towo-Atangana, delegate from Cameroon, mentioned “the ever-increasing number of international organisations is an overwhelming financial burden for many [African countries]”; 35th Council, 25.11.1968, p. 9. 47_A-2-1-1737, A-IBE.

¹⁴31st Council, 4.-5.7.1966. 46_A-2-1-1714, A-IBE.

pedagogical research; the dissatisfaction of many delegations with the mission, scope, working methods and more generally the statutes of the IBE; and the catastrophic financial situation of the Bureau, due to several years of fees arrears from a large number of countries and the increasingly expensive cost of ICPEs, if only to ensure simultaneous translations.

The Committee of twenty-one began its work in February 1967. The two positions clashed from the outset, especially since a relatively concrete French proposal countered the Hungarian and Czechoslovakian draft statutes.¹⁵ It provided for the IBE to be “attached” to UNESCO while guaranteeing its intellectual and functional autonomy. This solution was gradually imposed and was unanimously approved during the Extraordinary Council in December 1967.¹⁶ The resolution passed asked the Director and a select committee of ten delegates to negotiate a new agreement with UNESCO, the main aims of the IBE being

- To undertake pedagogical work and research including comparative education;
- To continue its activities in the field of documentation and information.¹⁷

It was at this precise moment in the meeting that the president of the Council “read a letter that has just been sent to him” from Piaget in which the IBE Director announced his resignation:

In the present state [...] where new brilliant perspectives are opening up for the IBE and where the Council is going to take a decision that has my full support, I feel that this resignation is not only possible without the risk of equivocal interpretations, but also necessary. [...] It is obvious that a new direction is needed, one that is oriented towards the future, while I represent the past.¹⁸

He cited his age and fatigue as the main reasons for his resignation and the desire to devote himself entirely to research. The fact that he was no longer the sole master of an organisation he had led for forty years was no doubt also a factor in his decision.

¹⁵ Minutes of the Committee of 21 meeting. 46_A-2-1-1724-1726, A-IBE.

¹⁶ 33rd Council, 13.12.1967. 47_A-2-1-1728, A-IBE.

¹⁷ 33rd Council, 13.12.1967, 3rd session, p. 7. 47_A-2-1-1728, A-IBE.

¹⁸ 33rd Council, 13.12.1967, 3rd session, p. 11. 47_A-2-1-1728, A-IBE.

The draft agreement, drawn up by the UNESCO secretariat, was discussed by the IBE Executive Committee in February 1968;¹⁹ it proposed adding three paragraphs recognising the historical importance of the IBE and appointing Laurent Pauli, then Secretary General of the IBE, as Interim Director. The Council then unanimously approved the draft agreement, regretting however that the word “annual” had been removed from the organisation of the ICPEs: “the continuity of the work [...] would be compromised if there were uncertainty about the future and the periodicity of the Conference.”

Final act: the IBE Council, the only body empowered to do so, voted unanimously to dissolve the IBE in accordance with article 17 of the 1929 statutes.²⁰ The IBE was now part of UNESCO. The Swiss representative Charles Hummel, concluded:

It seemed logical to unite two organisations with similar aims, as the IBE was in a way the UNESCO of the inter-war period. By being attached to UNESCO, the IBE should become the supreme body of reflection in the field of education. Moreover, its universal character will necessarily be accentuated.

The Swiss president of the meeting, André Chavanne, recognised that “the lack of solidity of its structure has not allowed it to overcome certain crises”.²¹ And he closed with a prediction: the IBE, “like the phoenix, will rise from its ashes. The IBE will die, long live the IBE!”

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¹⁹ 45th meeting of the Executive Committee, 27.2.1968. 65_A-3-1-1729, A-IBE.

²⁰ 35th Council, 25.11.1968, pp. 7 and 10; 47_A-2-1-1737, A-IBE.

²¹ 35th Council, 25.11.1968, p. 8; 47_A-2-1-1737, A-IBE.

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Conclusion to Part I

This part has highlighted the configurations of educational internationalism until the 1960s, based on one of its emblems, the International Bureau of Education. A host of actors and organisations met throughout these pages and worked together in transnational forums to discuss policies for the education and training of young people, in the belief that peace could be built through education. It was well anchored in this environment—which energised them and which they in turn fed—that the IBE promoters built and strove to legitimise their enterprise. They took advantage of the exceptional circumstances that momentarily made the small city of Geneva an epicentre of internationalism to try to make their voices heard in this pacifist concert in order to set themselves up as protagonists of the events.

By looking back at these founding times, we have been able to highlight the inventiveness of the promoters of the institution, from the junior secretaries to its directors and the eminent diplomats and ministers with whom they consulted.

This part also showed the organisation's ability to reform itself, its lability and flexibility, its difficulty at times in evolving and its possible accommodations, as well as its firmness and intransigence when the institution seemed compromised, challenged and criticised in its very foundations, including its stated principles of objectivity and neutrality, which would condition its universality. We have also brought to light the differences of opinion within the institution itself, and the agreements that had been

reached, however hard that may have been, so that the IBE as official spokesperson, expressed itself with a unanimous voice.

We have shown that in order to survive and distinguish itself, the IBE was reconfiguring itself so that its first partners were the authorities in charge of the world's education systems: it was thus becoming the first independent international organisation that took all the states as partners to examine their education policies in order to resolve, with them, the education problems that were considered to be most crucial. This internationality was achieved through an intergovernmentality that took universality as its horizon. The objectivity and neutrality that the builders of the IBE put on the statutes of the Bureau from the outset constitute, for them, the tools for "inter-national" action on education systems, the preserve of nations. They thus profiled the IBE as an intergovernmental centre for comparative education, the first to specialise in the description and analysis and even, through its recommendations, to the development of public school systems.

As the war raged on, the Bureau was not only trying to survive but also to build up a service that would enable it to contribute to humanitarian efforts. The challenge soon became one of shaping itself in the global reconfiguration of the international order in the immediate post-war period. How to find one's place facing the UN, in the service of peace and international security, when it integrated, via UNESCO, educational dimensions that were adjacent to or that concerned the mandate that the IBE had given itself?¹ Admittedly, this organisation was necessarily political in nature. This left room for, or even required, the existence of a technical body, a gap into which the IBE slipped thanks to tough negotiations: its range of methods and devices was now joined to another system at whose service it placed itself, while jealously preserving its independence, a condition, according to the IBE, of its neutrality, its objectivity and its quest for universality.

If the first two decades can be described as heroic, the early days of the collaboration with UNESCO appeared relatively stable, allowing the enterprise to grow. In the tense context of the global Cold War, the processes of decolonisation and the awareness of political oppression, this growth gradually gave rise to tensions and contradictions. The edifice,

¹The IBE was less concerned about the institutional construction of Europe, for which education was not one of the primary objectives and which remained too focused on one continent, according to the Bureau, which argued that its aims were resolutely universal.

based on too weak a foundation, cracked and then collapsed, as it was tirelessly plagued by functional reforms. The principles defended, the modes of operation and the logic of action could no longer be based mainly on the voluntarism of the protagonists involved.

We have shown that one-off and limited measures had not been able to resolve these difficulties. Moreover, countries that had gained their independence strongly affirmed the inseparability of politics and education. It could be the very success of the IBE that threatened its equilibrium and therefore its survival: a size that was difficult to manage, a universality that multiplied voices, especially those of former colonies, and generated unexpected imbalances, both financial and political. A radical solution was needed: to grow even more and to become totally independent. The one finally chosen was to reverse this: to integrate the IBE into UNESCO. There was no room for another instance next to an institution that had become the international reference in education and, what is more, was competing with other international institutions working in the field of education and increasingly invested by Western countries, including the OECD (Elfert, & Ydesen, 2020).

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Educational Reformism, Pacifist Internationalism, Universalist Ideals

After the first ten years, we find ourselves richer in work, collaboration, friendships and experience. However, we are once again alarmed by the total disproportion between the work that should have been accomplished and that to which the means at our disposal have necessarily limited us. Unlike animal societies, which are governed almost entirely by hereditary instincts, human societies are above all a product of the education that generations pass on from one to the next. It has to be said that today's world offers a unique opportunity for self-examination. Is this a reason to give up working? If we compare the results achieved with the hopes that each individual may have formed, with those that entire societies conceive in moments of enthusiasm, there would certainly be reason. But if we take the viewpoint of a more objective and less abused knowledge of history, we come to feel a pressing duty, which is not to despair either of man or especially of the child. (Jean Piaget, ICPE 1938, p. 139)

This part aims to better understand the positioning of the spokespersons of the International Bureau of Education between the 1920s and 1960s: the conceptions and values that animated them, the principles that guided them, the way in which they redefined their ideals with regard to their main interlocutors and to the transformations of the surrounding universe. The common thread of this section is thus an attempt to grasp what these “hopes” and “pressing duty” were that Piaget evoked in 1938, to identify how they were defined, negotiated and transformed between 1925 and 1968, in order “not to despair either of man or especially the child”.

When Édouard Claparède invoked the name of the Genevan philosopher for his *Institut Rousseau* (1912)—an institute which was the initiator of the creation of the IBE in 1925—it was with the intention of promoting on a large scale this “Copernican revolution” which consists in “placing the child at the centre” of the education system. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, as a “precursor”, would have pleaded for an education that respects the children’s own nature, so that they could develop according to the laws of their own nature, free from the yoke of a coercive education. The IBE of the 1920s was a direct descendant of the *Institut Rousseau* and this axiom, and was imbued with this same reformist impulse.

The propagandists of this revival were spread all over the world and were united in the common demonisation of the so-called traditional school, which, with its monumental structures and inherited pedagogy, would enslave the new generations by blindly worshipping obedience, passivity and memorising. For these defenders of a new era, it was conversely respect for the interests and “natural” individual needs of the child (curiosity, creativity, spontaneity, activity, etc.) that would favour their development, their autonomy, their learning and their blossoming. This new education would therefore guarantee a peaceful humanity. These were the shared hopes of a host of educational associations and leagues, with differing profiles, in which the builders of the IBE recognised themselves. We shall therefore endeavour to understand what would become of these convictions once the IBE had been raised to the status of an intergovernmental body, which now focused its attention on improving public education systems by resolutely aiming at universalising access to education. We will try to see how the reformist spirit and pacifist internationalism fitted in or not with those political and ideological confrontations, whose dramatic consequences we know in retrospect, even after the Second World War.

How did the architects of the IBE try to align their pedagogical convictions with their scientific positions? How did they reconcile their affinity with the Wilsonian internationalism of Geneva in the 1920s and their determination to remain independent, masters in their home, free from all compromise? How did they promote their reconciliatory and unifying aspirations to international associations which, like the IBE, aimed to build peace through science and education? Once reconfigured as an intergovernmental organisation, what were their strategies for gaining new legitimacy for the IBE and attesting to its impartiality in the feverish and tumultuous context of the turn of the 1930s, then of the Cold War and of the struggles for independence? How were the individual and

collective convictions, ideological postures and value systems of IBE officials expressed in a world where education, in turn, became the object of intergovernmental rivalries and cultural antagonisms between empires?

In this part, we attempt to answer these questions by focusing on the axiological positioning, as it were, of the members of the IBE Secretariat—including its directors—and of the main bodies and personalities who defined its orientations. We thus examine the evolution of the principles defended and the theories developed, as well as the spirit in which the IBE's alliances and activities were established from its foundation until the end of the 1960s.

Three chapters make up this part. The first one focuses on the principles of action that defined the first IBE, which was intimately related to the *Institut Rousseau*, where it was the component responsible for promoting the new education and educational internationalism that were supposed to reconcile humanity with itself. The second chapter identifies a number of controversies in order to show the tightrope on which these precariously balanced acrobats were striving to advance: although supported by various powerful organisations and well-known figures, they were simultaneously faced with dissension and competition, sometimes even with embarrassing suspicions and confusing ostracism. And it was in the face of these equivocations, resistances and contradictions that IBE spokespersons were obliged to clarify their positions and even evolve them. The third chapter focuses on the way in which IBE officials positioned themselves while heading an intergovernmental organisation that claimed to act, from Geneva, for the good of all humanity. It analyses and discusses the theoretical underpinnings developed by members of the IBE Secretariat—Piaget in particular—to define the IBE's central axiom: the “ascent from the individual to the universal”.

The IBE's values were imbued with a universalist content. This dialectic between the differential and the universal aims always gave rise to reflection, and once again led to a clarification of the IBE's positioning, in consultation with its partners.



CHAPTER 8

From the *Institut Rousseau* to the IBE: Promoting a New Era

As everyone knows, it was Rousseau who accomplished this revolution in our conception of education, which has rightly been compared to that of Copernicus, and which consists in regarding the child as the centre around which educational procedures and programmes should gravitate. (Édouard Claparède, 1912a, p. 10)

The so-called new education movements redoubled in vigour at the end of the Great War, endowing future generations with a redemptive mission: the *Institut Rousseau* was one of the leaders of this movement. Through an education that makes young people aware of the evils of nationalistic prejudices, introduces them to self-government and trains them in global solidarity, this reformist educational impulse was to give young people the responsibility for building a reconciled world. Education would be the primary tool for this peace-building internationalism. This chapter examines how the IBE of the 1920s conveyed this spirit, while at the same time being imbued with the Wilsonian pacifism embodied by Geneva once it was designated as the headquarters of the League of Nations. It also examines how the Bureau's leaders succeeded or failed in reconciling these resolutely committed collective ideals with the strict objectivity and self-proclaimed neutrality of the IBE, and the adjustments that such precarious balancing acts required.

A “COPERNICAN REVOLUTION” ENDORSED BY PSYCHOPEDAGOGY

From the 1920s onwards, the *Institut Rousseau* aspired not only to universalise the principles of the new education and its pacifist dimensions but also to make itself their world emblem. This is why, as we have seen, it joined Ferrière’s *Bureau international des écoles nouvelles* (BIEN) in 1923, and then founded the IBE in 1925. The Bureau’s logo is intended to attest to its ambition: “Ut per juvenes ascendat mundus” [May the world rise through youth]. It is a vignette drawn by “children who are messengers of love and goodwill among men” from the Bakulé School in Prague (Bovet, 1927, p. 4; see Image 1.1), which now appeared on a number of IBE publications, particularly on its quarterly *Bulletins*.

It was on the basis of such positions that the first international surveys of the IBE were conceived and carried out between 1926 and 1929, extending those of the *Institut Rousseau*. All of them intertwined new education and international solidarity: the teaching of Esperanto, the psychological bases of education for peace, self-educational school materials, self-government and teamwork. As for the investigation of patriotism, it would help to identify underlying mechanisms that restrict ability to understand the world.¹ Inter-school correspondence functioned as a pedagogical expression of world solidarity; it was enriched from the outset by the postulates of a school open to life, giving pride of place to creative expression, which was in vogue in the reformist movements. The IBE director, Pierre Bovet, concluded in 1928: “The principles of the active school are proving to be successfully applied in education for peace” (p. 25). This was generalised by the deputy director Adolphe Ferrière in 1930: “The active school is not just another peacemaking factor. It is the necessary condition for the birth and domination of the spirit of peace, inseparable from that of reason and justice” (p. 63).

In these “crazy years of pedagogy”, the scientific investigations of the main collaborators of the *Institut Rousseau*, and consequently of the IBE, led by their mentors Claparède, Bovet, Ferrière and Descœudres, and then

¹On this survey, see Boss (2022, pp. 165–168), which makes it possible to identify the positioning of the first builders of the IBE from the point of view of both their own perceptions of patriotism (since they played the game of personally answering the questionnaire) and the survey approaches favoured at the time.

Piaget and Dottrens, demonstrated the added value of the principles and methods of the new education. They also substantiated their positions with the support of the new psychopedagogical science. In fact, they passed on the pedological flame that lit up the first decades of the twentieth century and crossed continents.² Many scholars, in Geneva as well, aspired to find in the child the origin of humanity, in order to know the future of this same humanity—and thereby to master it (Ottavi, 2001; Depaepe, 1993).

Here there was an unprecedented pedological excitement, giving rise to the conviction that the science of the child constituted the “queen of sciences”: pedology, imbued with the hope of elucidating the original mystery, was also projected into the future, which it imagined could be made better (Schuyten, 1912, pp. 18–22). All the existing sciences were recruited to this celebration of childhood: medicine, anatomy, neurology, psychiatry, hygiene, criminology, sociology, demography, history, anthropology and philosophy; pedagogy, of course, but far behind the primary reference points and models of biology and psychology. “A single figure”, it was claimed, “had more real and permanent value than a precious library full of hypotheses” (Ioteyko, 1912, II, p. 50). This triumphalism was based on the conviction that a resolutely scientific and rational approach to the child would guarantee the development of the potential naturally contained in each individual, and thereby counter any bellicose tendency.

For the followers of pedology and of the new education, educational progressivism and its internationalist and pacifist aims were in no way biased ideologically or pedagogically. The relevance and added value of these choices were demonstrated experimentally in many places other than Geneva, as the founders of the *Institut Rousseau* and the IBE pointed out in their numerous literature reviews.³ In their eyes, there is no doubt that the principles of the new education were based on scientific evidence and

²We use here the concept of the time, which designated the study of the behaviour and development of the child, a pedology that would ensure the fusion of all the disciplines concerned with childhood (cf. the emblematic Congress of Brussels, in 1911, whose kingpin was J. Ioteyko, while O. Decroly and M. Schuyten were the presidents). See Depaepe (1993, 1997), Depaepe et al. (2022) and Friedrich et al. (2013).

³They were all the more aware of this as they regularly wrote summary notes of work carried out all over the world on this subject. Their eyes were often turned towards the Anglo-Saxon- and German-speaking regions, where the institutionalisation of pedology and experimental approaches to childhood and education became denser at the turn of the century; they did not neglect the interactions with other regions of Europe, notably the French-speaking ones (Belgium and France) but also the southern, central and eastern ones, before also grafting themselves onto the educational revivals of the southern countries. This is yet another facet of their documentary frenzy (Hofstetter, 2010; Hofstetter & Boss, 2022).

irrefutable universal laws: the achievements of the new science of the child—“pedology”, “psychopedagogy” and “educational sciences”, as they were termed in Geneva—would therefore constitute the foundations of a universalisable educational revolution.

It should be remembered that it was the director of the *Institut Rousseau*, the ardent pacifist Pierre Bovet, who was entrusted with the initial management of the Bureau (1926–1929); and it was the two co-directors of the French- and German-speaking branches of the New Education Fellowship (NEF) who shared the deputy management of the Bureau: Adolphe Ferrière (1926–1932) and Elisabeth Rotten (1926–1928). Ferrière summarised the results of the 3rd NEF Congress in Locarno, co-organised with the IBE, in these words:

From 3 to 15 August 1927, twelve hundred people gathered to participate in the Cult of Childhood, and to serve the Humanity of tomorrow [...]. They came from all over the world. They were infused with the warmth of a common enthusiasm. They shared a community of tone, and they condemned the same abuses inherent in traditional schooling; the same joy animated them about the recent achievements in theory and practice, leading to a vision of a world made better by a healthier, more balanced childhood [...].

No association in the world brings together, as we do, scientific researchers in child psychology; scrupulous analysts of experimental science and mystical synthesists of spiritualism, theorists familiar with philosophical thought and practitioners in new (private) and renovated (public) schools. (Ferrière, 1927, p. 262)

For the deputy director of the IBE, it was indeed a question of “sharing in the Cult of Childhood”, thus confirming the reconciling vision of a redemptive education for humanity and the certainty that “science and common sense”, which he made his motto, guarantee both the scientific and the ethical validity of the new education (Image 8.1).

A POSITIONING INTENDED TO EMBODY THE “SPIRIT OF GENEVA”

An analysis of the profile and positioning of the individuals who joined the IBE and worked in it up until the turn of the 1930s shows the close links with movements in civil society that campaigned for peace, solidarity, freedom, justice and law. From the outset, the members of the IBE’s



Image 8.1 Announcement of the first general assembly of the LoN in Geneva, November 1920. Forty-one countries participated, including dominions of Great Britain. The picture symbolises what later was called the “spirit of Geneva”: international collaboration for peace. (© AIJRR)

secretariat, board of directors, constituent assembly and patronage committee also identified with this spirit, which was in full swing in the 1920s, not only in the West but also in Latin America, Asia and the USSR.⁴ The proof of this is that of the 75 collective members affiliated to the IBE in 1929, two-thirds identified with reformist principles, and half of them were officially active in the new education networks (Boss et al., 2022a, p. 394). A good 20 or so were involved in pacifist and internationalist organisations, while most adhered to the values driving them. We can observe the “multi-positioning” (Topalov, 1999) of many delegates from

⁴ A global analysis of the movement can be found in Moreno Luzón and Martínez López (2019), Reese (2019), Röhrs and Lenhart (1995); for a critical social history of the concept of “progressive” or “new education”, “Reformpädagogik”, “éducation nouvelle”, “nueva educación”; see, among others: Alix (2017), Brehony (2001), Costa Rico and Marques Alves (2021), Koslowski (2013) and Oelkers (2010, 2019).

feminist, youth and teachers' associations, at the interface of several of these networks and identifying with a common liberating education, contributing to peace, justice, law, progress and freedom.

Geneva in the 1920s embodied this hope, and the IBE was in step with the dozens of militant associations that set up their headquarters in this “new capital of peace”.⁵ The values of tolerance and solidarity, which were part of the reformist spirit, were held to be universal, even more so at a time when what Robert de Traz conceptualised as the “spirit of Geneva” was being created and disseminated in 1929. We can clearly perceive a convergence between certain features of this “spirit” and that of the IBE, which was identified by contemporaries who sought to define its contours.⁶ The “International Bureau of Education [constitutes] a kind of site for pedagogical experiments motivated by the desire to propagate the idea of peace in schools”, writes the essayist de Traz; he went on to say that the IBE, like a number of other structures established thanks to civil society, “prevented the spirit of Geneva from only taking on an official form; they kept it in touch with its origins, that is to say with private initiative”, with the “vitality of individual zeal” (1929, pp. 120–121).

At the same time, the IBE nurtured and legitimised itself with the pacifist internationalism embodied in the intergovernmental agencies of the LoN as well as in the constellation of bodies and associations that surrounded them and relayed their spirit. At least, this was the conviction of Ferrière, whose writings were published extensively in the local and national press:

There is a close link between popular culture – in the best sense of the term – and its economic and social value. To feel this link, to want this reform of public education that is so urgent, to create a movement of opinion that pushes governments and the LoN to support the IBE, is a duty that falls to each of us, however humble. [...] the childhood of today is the humanity of tomorrow. No sacrifice will be too great when it contributes to a better education, more in line with science and common sense.⁷

⁵ Insert 9.1 shows how the IBE echoed these many initiatives in favour of peace in its main publication, the *Bulletins*.

⁶ This is discussed more deeply in Hofstetter and Mole (2018) and Hofstetter et al. (2020).

⁷ AdF, B1/env2/Ch3/docs 38-50, p. 2, AIJRR. The daily press and the magazines that collected their writings the most were *Le Journal de Genève*, *L'Esor*, *L'Éducateur*, *L'Intermédiaire des Éducateurs*, *Pour l'Ère nouvelle*.

The close social networks between the founders of the IBE and certain leading figures of the LoN's agencies also bore witness to this. As we have already mentioned, official representatives of the LoN and the ILO even agreed to sit on the IBE's governing bodies: in particular Fernand Maurette, Inazō Nitobé, Lucie Schmidt, Arthur Sweetser, Duncan Christie Tait and Albert Thomas. The same applied to influential Genevan notables and intellectuals whose voices carried far beyond the small city: Albert Malche, Edmond Privat, William Rappard and Georges Thélin. All of them also took part in the summer courses and public conferences of the IBE, along with many other personalities, including the leading figures of the Organisation for Intellectual Cooperation (OIC), Gustave Kullman, Gonzague de Reynold and Alfred Zimmern, who also offered to act as advisors.

A UNIFYING AND RECONCILING NEUTRALITY?

According to the IBE's spokespersons, these links between educational causes, liberal progressivism and Wilsonian pacifism were not incompatible with the principles of "absolute neutrality from the national, political, philosophical and religious points of view".

How should this self-proclaimed neutrality be interpreted? In the specific context of the period, its political dimension echoed that of Switzerland: it took for granted the principle of neutrality recognised by other nations, giving it the right and duty not to interfere nor to take part in international conflicts, except as a mediator; as we know, the logic of consensus that results from this is not immune to the dangers of accommodation, which can tip over into possible compromises, especially in times of crisis.⁸

In Switzerland, this principle of neutrality is also manifested in the relationship between the Confederation and the cantons; it would attest to the possibilities of dealing with educational issues in a way that respects different traditions and cultures, since the cantons benefit from most of the

⁸ Regarding this geopolitical, diplomatic and socio-economic positioning of Switzerland in the heart of the twentieth century, see, among others: Gillibert (2013), Herren and Zala (2002), Jost (1986, 1999) and Ruppen Coutaz (2016).

educational prerogatives. The Swiss example of federation, presented as a “miracle”, would define the conditions of possibility regarding the recognition of the diversity of points of view, and was even likely to reconcile alternatives and opposites (philosophical, denominational, ideological, cultural etc.), opposites that are neither reified nor exclusive, but considered as legitimate points of view for building a common work: we shall return to the fact that “unity in diversity” was one of the primary mottos of the IBE.

Since the IBE was presented as a technical agency, respecting strict scientific objectivity, pedagogical neutrality should flow from it: as we have just stressed, the relevance of the new education and active methods would have been demonstrated by psychopedagogical surveys, which would constitute a scientific basis. This would make it possible to adhere to it without being supposed to articulate any ideology or pedagogical doctrine. It was thus as spokespersons for a neutrality likely to reconcile all peace-loving friends of childhood that the builders of the IBE claimed to position themselves and believed they could rally a diversity of members, with highly contrasting positions and profiles.

Convinced of the mobilising power of civil society, as we have seen,⁹ the first IBE (1925–1929) constituted itself as a corporate association: its autonomy, its objectivity and its neutrality would be the base of both its originality and its rallying force. It was in this spirit that the IBE Secretariat multiplied exchanges with teaching and educational associations throughout the world; above all, it never ceased to deal with the main international leagues and federations. “Cooperation” was everyone’s watchword. If the many educational associations and leagues worked in isolation, they would squander their resources and compete with each other. The challenge was therefore to coordinate them in order to increase their potential for action: this is the mandate that the IBE gave itself, taking advantage of its particular legitimacy in view of it being based in neutral Switzerland, in international Geneva, recently elected “city of peace”, and in the *Institut Rousseau*, emblem of the pedagogical science that fostered educational renewal.

The problem, however, was that this coordinating function of the Bureau would presuppose that it alone federated the international associations dedicated to education and childhood. This claim to supremacy was

⁹ See Chap. 3.

far from being recognised, especially by the most powerful associations of the time, which were also vying for this pre-eminence.

Table 8.1 presents a list of the most important international associations and bodies with which the IBE established close correspondence; it is far from exhaustive, but it bears witness to the scope of the causes and regions under the sway of “educational internationalism”, in particular at the turn of the 1920s and 1930s.¹⁰

This web of correspondence attests to the intense exchanges and mutual solidarity that resulted in numerous joint productions. They also allow us to penetrate backstage and to perceive the tones of the less hushed discussions of these international enterprises. Although they were committed to the mission of strengthening brotherhood on earth, they competed to increase their legitimacy and the dominance of each of their leaders. The archives attest to long negotiations between the IBE and each of them to define their relations, the conditions of reciprocal affiliation, the modalities of their members’ exchanges and consequently of their contributions, the reciprocity of their services, and the outlines of their specific and possibly shared projects. Many critical voices did not hesitate to question, suspect or even denounce the credibility and ideological background of one another. When the IBE was not simply neglected, given its smallness and “weakness”,¹¹ it was subject to suspicions about its positioning, suspicions in which pedagogical, ideological and sociopolitical issues were interwoven.

For its detractors, the IBE’s unifying ambition and its proximity to the LoN contradicted both its reconciliatory aims and its principles of objectivity and neutrality. The result was a number of ambiguities that needed to be clarified and overcome in order to establish its credibility.

¹⁰Correspondence with international associations. 154-155_C_6-1; Representation of IBE at different congresses. 151-153_C-5-2, A-IBE.

¹¹It is still a corporate association with no official basis or recognition.

Table 8.1 Educational and other associations corresponding with the IBE

<i>Associations linked with education and training</i>	<i>Associations with broader scope</i>
American Council on Education	Belgian Union for the League of Nations (Brussels)
Australian Council of Education Research	Child Study Association
Congrès international d'éducation morale	College Entrance Examination Board (New York)
Education Workers' International	Friends Peace Committee
Educational Institute of Scotland	International Auxiliary Language Association
Education Office of the World Federation of United Nations Associations	International Council of Women
International Federation of Teachers' Associations	International Federation of University Women
International Professional Secretariat for Education	International Institute of Social Christianity
International Students' Union	International Peace Bureau
League for New Education	League of Nation Union
National Congress of Parents and Teachers	League of Nations Association
National Education Association (USA)	National Council for Prevention of War
National Union of Teachers	Royal Institute of International Affairs
New Education Fellowship	Save the Children International Union
Parents' National Educational Union	Universal Alliance for Friendship through the Church
Teachers' s International Trade Secretariat (World Federation of Teachers' Unions)	Universal Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations
World Confederation of Organisation of the Teaching Profession	Women international League for Peace and Freedom
World Council of Early Childhood Education	World Federation of United Nations Associations
World Federation of Education Association (WFEA)	World Union of Women for International Concord
World Student Christian Federation	
World Union of Organisations for the Safeguard of Youth	

Insert 8.1 Peace Education: A Construction from the Perspective of Internationalist Issues (1929–1932)¹²

The IBE gave a prominent place to Peace Education (PE) in its *Bulletins* during its early intergovernmental years until the advent of the Second World War. In a dedicated section, it compiled information gathered from around the world or transmitted by their informants, regarding the activities carried out by governments or individuals in the field of PE. In the following paragraphs, we analyse the *Bulletins* from 1929 to 1932.

The *Bulletins* presented PE in a holistic manner, combining various fields of intervention at the legal, structural and pedagogical levels. Some activities were permanent (reforms of school programmes), and several were repeated annually (holiday camps); sometimes they were intermittent (competitions, events). In addition, they targeted different audiences, such as young people, children and even teachers. Events, student exchanges, trips and holiday camps are the most frequently cited. Therefore, PE seemed confined to initiatives whose duration was limited, meaning that it has a fleeting nature and that few resources were allocated to it: PE depended on the initiative and the efforts of a community of peaceful individuals. Moreover, the vocabulary used underlines the nobility of such a cause, and sometimes conferred a divine and devout dimension, calling for effort and sacrifice. Thus, PE was framed as a vocation that required continuous work through which individuals could find their own salvation and also, according to the discourse, that of humanity.

International collaboration was an essential dimension of PE in the *Bulletins*. Indeed, the discourse found in this section tended to promote activities that underlined a relationship, if not a form of cooperation, between states. This approach therefore promoted a series of more or less entrepreneurial countries in the field of PE. In other words, it was a certain image of the nation that was then reinforced, more particularly for Germany, the USA and England.¹³

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¹²This text is based on Brylinski (2022, pp. 202–236); figures are compiled from the database on the survey and the CIIP of 1934, designed with Cytoscape software.

¹³In the *Bulletins*, England is considered as an autonomous entity, as are Wales and Scotland which, from the point of view of pedagogical experiences, makes sense. In the ICPEs, they are part of the UK, although the three regularly had each one delegate.

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Network analyses conducted on the PE sections of the *Bulletins* position Germany as a “prestigious actor” (Wassermann & Faust, 1994; see Fig. 8.1). The activities mentioned demonstrate active and reciprocal collaborations, and were repeated annually. They were mainly established with active pedagogical circles in PE in England and France—in other words, with its former First World War enemies. While Germany sought a place for itself on the international scene by participating in the League of Nations since 1926, it was struggling to detach itself from its status as a belligerent state (Batel, 2007, p. 28). Thus, its image disseminated in the *Bulletins*, reflected an attitude that aimed to restore its national image, giving it the reputation of a state knowing how to apply the techniques of international collaboration in the context of peace.

The German educational world is represented in the *Bulletins* as a model, as an actor of reconciliation inclined to peaceful international cooperation. A desire that was also expressed through German

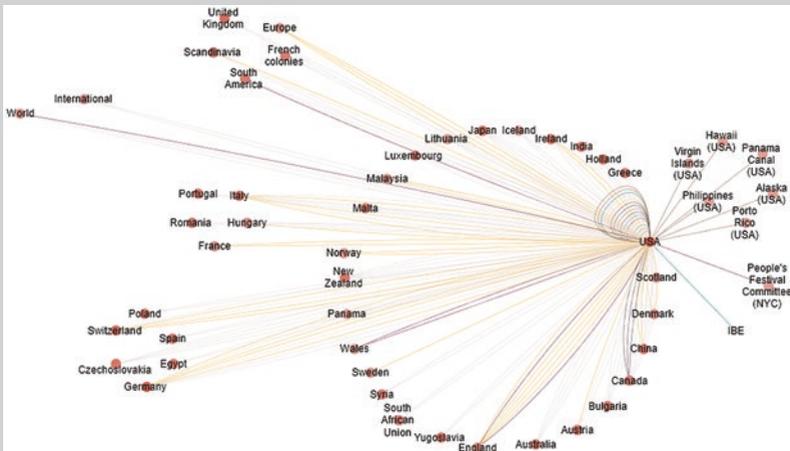


Fig. 8.1 Networks between Germany and other states in the section on peace education of the *Bulletins* from 1929 to 1932 (Note: in this presentation, we do not differentiate the contents of the links)

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youth, active in the promotion of an international democratic order (Prat, 2010) to break out of its isolation from its neighbours. It should also be noted—here we refer to the period after 1932—that the German initiatives mentioned under the banner of “Education for peace” persisted, despite the establishment of the Nazi regime. In keeping with its position vis-à-vis authoritarian regimes,¹⁴ the IBE (or at least the editors of the *Bulletin*) did not seem to adopt a particular position with regard to this political context, even if in 1936 it meant publishing a German response glorifying Hitler to the Children of Wales in a message of peace:

To us, German boys and girls a leader has arisen who has given us back confidence and the belief in the fulfillment of the message of Goodwill, who has fortified our senses for everything pure and true, and who thus is strengthening us to live and to fight for peace. (IBE’s *Bulletin* 1936, 4th quarter, p. 183)

As for the USA, true to its reputation as a global superpower, it occupies a prominent place in the discourse (see Fig. 8.2). The country is positioned as a key player in internationalism collaborating with a multitude of countries in different regions.

The USA already held a decisive place within the League of Nations, even if they did not join it and “refused any political commitment” (Portes, 2007, p. 252). The inter-war period was a prolific period for this country which “assert[ed] itself as a financial power and propagator of democratic ideas” (p. 252), also in the field of PE. This role of the USA is mentioned almost systematically until 1940, when the said section of the *Bulletin* disappeared.

Concerning England, it is mentioned 113 times out of the 149 initiatives reported during 1930–1932, which signifies a certain degree of popularity (Wassermann & Faust, 1994) and reinforced its

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¹⁴See Chap. 16.

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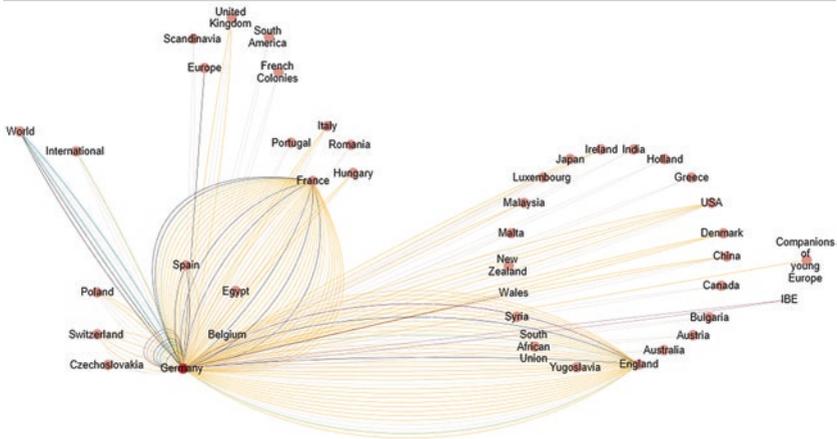


Fig. 8.2 Networks between the USA and other states in the section on peace education of the *Bulletins* from 1929 to 1932 (Note: in this presentation, we do not differentiate the contents of the links)

image as a world power. England is presented as a state collaborating with Germany, thus demonstrating an anti-belligerent approach, with the USA, thereby associated with a world superpower, with France, which in that context imposed itself as a colonial and cultural power, and also with Switzerland, which was now the embodiment of internationalism. Thus, England was centrally positioned in this network of collaboration, not without upsetting certain state hierarchies: in short, it was a power that cooperated with other powers, thus giving itself not only an international dimension but also a central place on the diplomatic scene.

The *Bulletin* therefore serves as a showcase that helped to strengthen the image of nations, or at least, of their educational environments working in PE. These collaborative networks never

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theless underlined internationalist issues, reflecting a certain organization of the world which eventually impacted the definition of PE that the IBE appropriated and globally disseminated through the *Bulletins* in the 1930s.

The countries mentioned were mostly involved in the First World War and, during the years of our study, they were not members of the IBE: it seems that there was a desire for the Bureau to show an anti-war approach rather than promoting the activities led by its member states. This echoes the negative peace approach, which, according to Galtung and Fischer (2013), means the absence of direct and physical violence. Nevertheless, positive peace education activities, although timid, were mentioned more and more over the years. These mentions were mainly about educating *for* (establishing) peace, although it is possible to observe the emergence of complementary practices such as educating *about* (such as teaching about the League of Nations, the history of peace and even international understanding), and, little by little, the advent of education *through* peace, which implies the use of progressive pedagogical and child-centred practices.

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Facing Equivocations, Tightrope Acrobatics

We focus here on the key problems at a time when the designers of the IBE were trying to make their mark in the complex web of associations and organisations that assumed the mission of preserving peace on earth.

The selection of controversies on which we focus shows the difficulty of positioning oneself without generating misunderstanding and dissension, suspicions and reproaches and, worse, blatant ostracism for the IBE promoters. Faced with certain ambiguities, they were constantly debating to clarify among themselves and in respect of their protagonists what the IBE's position was, aiming to strengthen its independence and legitimacy, without losing supportive alliances.

AVOIDING ANY AMBIGUOUS LINK ... WITH THE NEF TOO

The relationship between the IBE and the NEF and its French-speaking section, the *Ligue internationale pour l'éducation nouvelle* (LIEN), was particularly sensitive. The two institutions could be considered as blood relations: the co-directors of the IBE, Ferrière and Rotten, who had joined Beatrice Ensor to found the NEF, were in charge of editing the French- and German-speaking journals of the NEF. But if the NEF and the IBE shared similar pedagogical aspirations, each defended its specific features, territory and pre-eminence.

We have shown elsewhere how tricky these negotiations were to be over the decades (Hofstetter, 2015). While displaying a superficial alliance

and occasionally collaborating on conferences (e.g. at the NEF congress in Locarno), the two bodies were at loggerheads. The IBE strove to present itself as a research centre, attributing militancy to the NEF alone; this was far from credible, since the ardent propagandist of the new education, Ferrière, was co-founder of both and directed the journal *Pour l'Ère nouvelle* [For the New Era] (PEN), which offered hospitality to the IBE's Bulletins for three years. Piaget even stated, four months after his appointment as director of the now intergovernmental organisation (1929), that the "IBE pursues the same goal as the League": "to bring new education into the official school".¹ He wrote to Beatrice Ensor, the president of the NEF, that "it would be advantageous to signal our union and collaboration as quickly as possible".²

However, we discover in correspondence exchanges that proximity to the NEF provoked immediate criticism of the IBE since it would call into question its impartiality, as well as its pedagogy. Let us take, among many examples, the example of the International Union of Associations for the League of Nations (such as its Swiss and French federations), whose recognition and support the IBE requested as early as 1926. The Union was dubious: firstly, it considered the IBE to be an offshoot of the reformist—and overly revolutionary—NEF/LIEN; secondly, it asserted that the IBE was inevitably imbued with Protestantism, given its roots in the *Institut Rousseau* and in the city of Calvin, which had long been regarded as the "Protestant Rome".

Intense exchanges between the secretaries and representatives of these associations, and above all of its International Union,³ made it possible to overcome these "misunderstandings": the IBE obtained the endorsement of the Union, under the guarantee of the Bureau's strict neutrality and objectivity, both pedagogical and religious. The links of the new education with Protestant or related networks (evangelicals, Quakers, etc.) would nevertheless leave a lasting impression.⁴ It should be noted that the mere mention of Rousseau continued to provoke heated controversy: Catholics

¹ Letter from J. Piaget to A. Ferrière, s.d. (c. November 1929). 12_A-1-16-16, A-IBE.

² Letter from J. Piaget to B. Ensor, 8.11.1929. 12_A-1-16-16, A-IBE.

³ See in this regard the sustained exchanges between the IBE and the Catholic intellectual Ernest Bovet (160_Correspondance-45), who gave up his chair of literature in Zürich to dedicate himself to the Swiss Association for the League of Nations, of which he was secretary general for 15 years.

⁴ At the Locarno Congress of the NEF in 1927, the clergy even opposed the participation of the Ticino canton (for the relationship between the new education and Catholicism, see Gutierrez, 2008). For Bovet, Christian convictions were reflected in his pedagogical credos, allowing him to link the individual to a fraternal community that transcended him.

as well as conservatives, even from Geneva, persisted in demonising the “pamphlets” from his pen, deemed heretical and revolutionary, while Rousseau remained paradoxically elevated on a pedestal as the “Copernicus of pedagogy” by child psychologists and psychopedagogues.⁵

After the 1930s, the IBE’s reformist commitment was only rarely displayed on the institution’s pediment, and the vigour of its innovative pedagogical challenges diminished. But the links were not broken; collaborations took shape mainly through Piaget, who not only took a place on the editorial board of PEN,⁶ and regularly acted as a speaker at NEF congresses or its national branches, but also sat on the NEF Executive Board for some 40 years as director of the IBE.

Later, it was in the bodies outlining the contours and mandates of UNESCO that the heads of the IBE and the NEF met again, alongside other charismatic personalities from the world of education. Although affinities between researchers may have persisted, there is no evidence of deep solidarity between these two bodies, each trying to promote its pioneering work within the nascent UNESCO.

IN THE LoN’S COMPROMISING SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

Behind the pedagogical and denominational suspicions, there were also philosophical and political differences. Many of the teachers’ federations, which were particularly courted, rallied around the IBE, at least those which identified with the educational progressivism⁷ supposed to counteract pedagogical conservatism deemed harmful and alienating in the so-called traditional school. Even so, the IBE was not spared by the most left-wing teaching associations, including those with revolutionary connotations. They criticised the IBE’s closeness to the LoN agencies, which were considered emblems of imperialism and capitalism, particularly by the communist and independence movements. One instance is a caustic

⁵This is the term used by Claparède (1912a, b): for a historical analysis of the context of this term, see Hofstetter (2010, chapter 5) and Ottavi (2005).

⁶In the middle of the summer of 1937, Butts wrote to Piaget to inform him that the Federal Department of the Interior had come to the attention of the French section of the LIEN, whose Communist affiliations were feared. Butts was convinced of this, but did not dare to say so, since Piaget’s name was still on the editorial board, much to her chagrin, which she felt was detrimental to the IBE itself. Letter from M. Butts to J. Piaget, 14.8.1937. 73_A-6-1-250, A-IBE.

⁷The others did not even think of joining in.

diatribe by Mikhail Yakovlevich Apletin, secretary of the Education Workers' International, for whom the alleged neutrality of the IBE was tantamount to a position that would defraud even teachers:

The IBE's orientation towards the League of Nations is already pure and simple politics. Organisations such as the IBE are harmful, since they seek, consciously or unconsciously, to deceive educators, to make them believe that, through neutrality, the class struggle can be eliminated and social harmony achieved.⁸

In 1927, on the occasion of the IBE Congress "Peace through the School" held in Prague, tensions were exacerbated. An open letter to the Presidium of the Congress (under the responsibility of Bovet, director of the IBE) and signed by the General Secretariat of the EWI, denounced as a "fraud" "the attitude of mind which consists in looking upon war as the consequence of a bad education". On the contrary, capitalism was entirely responsible and should therefore be destroyed, as peace could only be achieved by "the advent of a classless society!":

It is not the child or the teacher who will give peace to the world, but the armed fist of the worker. [...] the truth must be told to the proletariat, and the EWI cannot but denounce such a pernicious attempt to obscure the consciousness of the oppressed classes. [Can we be satisfied with] recommending pacifist propaganda in schools [...] when millions of men are still slaves of colonising imperialism? [It is necessary from now on] to no longer mask the hideous face of an imperialism ashamed of itself [...], and to fight the lie of peace by way of the bourgeois school [in favour of] a renovation of the school by the advent of the classless Society!⁹

Did these vigorous challenges oblige the respondents at the IBE to face a blind spot in their positioning? Their faith in the transformative potential of new education, linked to their democratic convictions, certainly made them sensitive to the most vulnerable populations. But, in the name of

⁸Letter from M. Apletin to A. Ferrière, deputy director of the IBE, 26.6.1926, AdF/A/1/2. BIE I, 181/95/64, 1927, AIJJR. Concerning the relation between the IBE and professional associations of teachers, see Mole (2020, 2021).

⁹Open letter from the secretariat of the Internationale des travailleurs de l'enseignement (ITE)/Education International (EI) (signed Léon Vernochet) to the Presidium of the Congress "Peace through the School", attached to the letter from L. Vernochet to P. Bovet, 15.4.1927. 110_B-4-22631, pp. 1–2, A-IBE.

their political neutrality, and perhaps also of their pacifist ideals, they did not use the IBE forum to raise the issue of social discrimination, even when they were pressed to do so: in the name of the chasm that must not be crossed between “pedagogical science and politics”. But in this argumentation itself, its author, Ferrière, took a stance and revealed his biogenetic and naturalist reading of evolution and progress, thus contesting the relevance of an approach in terms of social classes:

We “intellectual workers” declare that we do not accept the simplistic subdivision into social classes. As pioneers of the New Education we see only too clearly that on the path of truth each one must advance at his own pace, to dare to believe in the success of mass appeals, by heavy blows, addressed to the masses. The “advanced” minds should understand that to impose progress from the outside on those who are not mature enough to accept it or to want it from within is to show themselves to be “backward”. (1927, p. 263)

As we have already observed, the core group of Genevan pedagogues who ran the IBE tended to be on the left of the political spectrum¹⁰ (but, not on the extreme side nor belonging to the communist party), and most of their families were involved in social and philanthropic works and belonged to intellectual and pedagogical circles committed to the promotion of peace, solidarity and democracy.¹¹ But it is clear that some of the characteristics of the spirit of Geneva and of the LoN as well as its agencies can be found in the minds of this small circle: built on Wilsonian internationalism and universalist ideals, it reflects a Eurocentrism that was not always free of civilising ambitions.¹²

As for the principle of international education, held as the common denominator of all those who joined the IBE, it was immediately qualified

¹⁰Except in the communist party; the teacher-researchers like Robert Dottrens or Alice Descœudres were members of the socialist party and of different associations close to it.

¹¹Always on a more personal register, their conferences, courses and publications, exchanged correspondences testify to their preoccupations about the chaos of the world, the extremisms which were deployed there, the decay in values and the spirit of solidarity, and the fate of the most deprived and exploited.

¹²We will return to this dimension in Part IV of this book. For a more sustained reflection on the link between new education, educational internationalism and civilising mission, see Hameline (2002), Matasci and Hofstetter (2022) and Reynaud-Paligot (2020).

by sometimes-vigorous pleas for the love of the homeland, the bedrock of all civic anchorage. Did it not seem, for some, that this ideal of international education was opposed to proletarian internationalism? When international education was not considered mystifying and astonishingly naïve at a time that nationalist feelings were being exacerbated.¹³

Although the IBE leaders—with the exception of the ebullient Ferrière—only responded officially to such criticism exceptionally, it did not fail to shake them. They constantly consulted each other to clarify their strategies and positions and to adjust their actions accordingly. The same assessment was made at the end of negotiations with the International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation (IIIC), which were particularly complex at the turn of the 1930s (Image 9.1).

CHALLENGING THE IIIC BY ADVOCATING NEUTRALITY, OBJECTIVITY AND DIVERSITY

While Piaget recounts in retrospect that “it was a very exciting sport to work in competition with powerful rivals”,¹⁴ explicitly citing the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation (IIIC), the disputes with the latter in fact confronted the IBE with one of its most serious crises. An identity crisis too. The stakes in these disputes went far beyond these two institutions and demonstrated the duplicity of diplomatic negotiations and their inevitably political nature. In this case again, the IBE seized the opportunity not only to state its point of view more precisely but also to reposition itself in its intergovernmental functions and strategies.¹⁵ Was it possible to challenge the IIIC on the basis of the principles of neutrality, objectivity and diversity, which are the only legitimate ones when it comes to thinking about education at the intergovernmental level?

Let us recall that the IIIC was “offered” by France to the LoN in 1926, to serve its International Commission for Intellectual Cooperation (ICIC); the latter was created in 1922 following appeals made by a number of

¹³Naïveté refers to the candour evoked by Piaget in 1937 in the epigraph of this part.

¹⁴25th Council, 11.7.1959, p. 6. 45_A-2-1-1559, A-IBE.

¹⁵These approaches are described in Parts I and III; here we discuss, through the example of the negotiations with the IIIC, the values and priorities that IBE respondents retained to establish their legitimacy and the specificity of their agency.

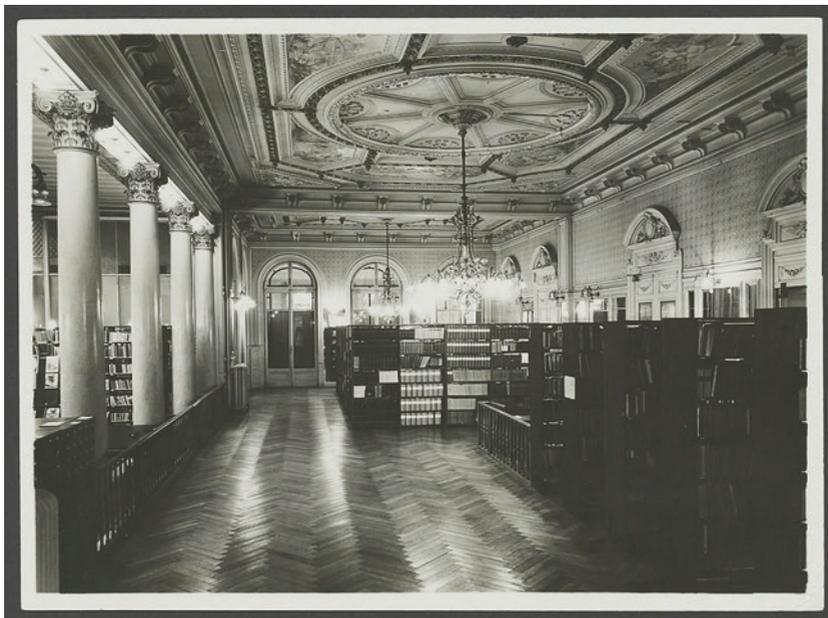


Image 9.1 The IBE library in the *Palais Wilson*. The IBE collected thousands of books, scientific and pedagogical journals, and school books which could be consulted in the majestic library of the Palais. From the beginning of its existence, the IBE collected school books from all over the world in more than a hundred languages, from 140 countries. The collection consists of over 20,000 books, currently being digitised. (© IBE)

associations and intellectuals for the LoN to also work for understanding between peoples through channels other than diplomatic ones.¹⁶ Based on the conviction that the world can only be pacified through the pacification of minds, the IIIC favoured collaboration between intellectuals. But from the outset, it questioned the scope of its educational action, and then expanded it.¹⁷ It was, by the way, often in Paris, in the very premises of the

¹⁶See Chap. 2.

¹⁷This is shown by Grandjean (2018), Renoliet (1999) and Riondet (2020a, b).

IIIC, that the Liaison Committee of the major international associations¹⁸ came together; it was there that IBE representatives conversed with delegates from other educational institutions in order to keep attuned to the pulse of international associative life.

The creation of the IIIC partly shifted the centre of gravity of educational internationalism to Paris; it also gave new resources to intellectual cooperation, under the auspices of the LoN, allowing it to expand its scope, which was envied by the IBE. Early correspondence showed reciprocal attempts to collaborate from time to time and avoid duplication. This led each of the bodies to specify its mandates, projects and approaches:

- Pedagogy and its methods were the responsibility of the IBE, while intellectual cooperation was the responsibility of the IIIC.
- The IBE was responsible for primary and secondary school networks and the professionals who worked in them; the IIIC was responsible for the intellectual community and scientific institutions.

Overlaps were inevitable, as both institutions aimed to build global brotherhood and an awareness of interdependence between peoples: the IBE's peace education¹⁹—and the “transformation of the whole spirit” it presupposed (Piaget 1931b)—in some way echoed the IIIC's “Society of Minds”. Here are just two examples, among many others,²⁰ of the overlapping work sites that required subtle negotiations. The IBE took advantage of this to position itself and to circumscribe its role and therefore the nature of its work as best as it could.

- *History teaching*. Initiated by a number of bodies and teachers' associations, this field was already at the heart of the International

¹⁸ Constituted under the auspices of the IIIC, the *Comité d'entente des grandes associations internationales* brought together the “principal international Associations interested in the formation of youth, as well as in the organisation of Peace”, and aimed at “organizing public opinion” and “accustoming the younger generations to consider international cooperation as the normal method of conducting the affairs of the world” (pp. 1–2). IIIC, Joint Committee, 145_C-5-1-124, A-IBE.

¹⁹ Insert 8.1 analyses how the IBE promoted peace education in its *Bulletins*.

²⁰ Other examples are the statistical yearbooks on education, the international vocabulary of public education, libraries and their role in schools and elsewhere, and their respective roles in the immediate post-war period with regard to CAME and the emerging UNESCO (see Chap. 6).

Congress of Moral Education of 1922 under the aegis of Ferrière, where it was the occasion for negotiating the possibility of an International Bureau in Geneva and, above all, for elucidating its concept. Now, teaching of history had been a major feature of the two institutions since their foundation. For the IBE, it was a question of how psychopedagogy and its didactic applications could contribute to world solidarity. For the IIIC, it was up to historians to define the contours and spirit of this teaching, and to write the textbooks; the Institute immediately set up a commission to purge the textbooks of any content likely to harm understanding between peoples. Although the IBE agreed to take a back seat in 1929, it nevertheless claimed that its previous initiatives should be recognised. Piaget revealed himself here as a fierce strategist in accepting the overshadowing of the Bureau and setting himself up personally as its legitimate spokesman with the IIIC in this field.²¹

- *The extension of compulsory education.* This too lay on the borderline between the two institutions. Since 1934, the IBE had been committed to ensuring that everyone in the world had the right to education and access to secondary education, the vocational purposes of which were also the subject of particular attention. The IIIC could not address the issue of intellectual work without questioning the organisation of secondary education and its programmes. Here it was agreed that the extension of compulsory education would remain an IBE task, while the questions of transitions between secondary and higher education and the working conditions of intellectuals would be the responsibility of the IIIC, in conjunction with the ILO.

The two bodies eventually agreed that they should at least keep each other informed of their work and exchange reports and publications. This shows how limited were the planned collaborations, which in any case were not always adhered to. As early as 1936, Piaget officially protested when he discovered that the IIIC was multiplying its surveys on

²¹ Piaget dismissed his colleagues at the IBE, calling them propagandists, and proposed to be the legitimate interlocutor of the IIIC on this issue, claiming to have a scientific approach and to be the first representative of the IBE. It was he who, from the beginning of the 1930s, was the main liaison between the IBE and the ICIC as well as the IIIC.

education—secondary education in particular—without taking into account or quoting the work of the IBE.²²

Although the representatives of the two organisations solicited one another as experts or invited one another to certain bodies, misunderstandings, cowardice and conflicts followed one after the other. Nothing could quench the IBE's thirst for legitimacy, as it pursued its initiatives for greater cooperation with the IIIC, which seemed rather inclined to go it alone; at least that is how the IBE's spokespersons interpreted it, constantly complaining about the exclusion they felt they were suffering.

The situation became explosive in early 1932, when the LoN announced²³ that the ICIC would make international collaboration in education a priority. Considering that the LoN was “poaching on its preserves”, the IBE clearly expressed its disapproval. An internal IBE memo—stamped confidential—disassociated itself from the LoN, which was said to be primarily concerned with its own propaganda under cover of pacifism. The note decries the expansionist logic of the IIIC, and consequently the way France used it to impose itself culturally.

After having stayed away from educational issues for a few years because it considered them to be the most sacred area of national sovereignty, the League of Nations has suddenly changed its tactics and, taking advantage of the Conference on Disarmament, is trying to bind states by means of conventions on education under the guise of “moral disarmament”. This project [...] will see the OIC in Paris play a leading role in this attempt to regulate education internationally. The LoN has not entrusted this work to its Geneva secretariat, but to the OIC in Paris, an institution financed by the

²² “From the point of view of the most basic notions of mutual trust and commitment, the OIC's attitude towards us [...] is incomprehensible [...] Such a lack of coordination after the resolutions passed on both sides is [...] impossible to present to public opinion. It would be impossible that in the enormous choice of research, our two institutions would come to clash on exactly the same point without being able to avoid this overlapping.” Letter from J. Piaget to J.-D. de Montenach, Secretary of the Organisation of Intellectual Cooperation [OIC; a LoN organisation since 1931], 10.7.1936, pp. 1–2. 12_A-17-18a, b, A-IBE.

²³ Communiqué Conf D. 98, 24.2.1932 quoted in Piaget's letter to Vignola (see next note).

French Government and headed by a French personality. All those who wish to see educational matters dealt with from a strictly objective point of view must have reservations about the influence of a given country on a delicate and important question.²⁴

From 1932, Piaget used these arguments as they stood to convince various governments to join the IBE.²⁵ After recalling the specificity of the IBE's educational and scientific mission, and then showing that the LoN—going beyond its initial purpose—was now claiming it as its own, the note criticised the French institute's "ambitions for cultural hegemony", which threatened the pedagogical freedom of the major powers:

One may ask whether such a sensitive issue as education can be dealt with objectively in a body that is inevitably subject to political influences, such as the IIIC, whether it can be dealt with in an institute that is not based in a neutral country, but in the capital of a large country where, necessarily, ambitions for cultural hegemony are very likely to exert their influence.

While fundamentally questioning the IIIC, Piaget claimed that the IBE was free from such abuses, and cited its Bureau's pre-eminence in inter-governmental conferences on education. The IBE had the triple advantage of being located on neutral ground, in a small country and, above all, of confining itself to exclusively technical and documentary work.

²⁴ "Note on the IBE and the LoN", n.d (most probably March 1932), p. 2. 30_A-1-55-357, A-IBE. We have just shown that over the course of the 1930s, tensions with the IIIC were not resolved, even though synergies were occasionally sketched out and the IBE—especially the members of its Secretariat—were sometimes consulted for their expertise.

²⁵ "Germany, Italy, United Kingdom, Hungary that the IBE courts. These countries are all the more sensitive to such sycophancy, since France actually uses the IIIC for its cultural influence, but also to combat the chauvinism of school textbooks, which offends some national sensitivities." Letter from J. Piaget to B. Vignola, Ministro dell'Educazione Nazionale Rome, 7.3.1932. 30_A-1-55-357, A-IBE.

Piaget took the opportunity to clarify officially the position of the Bureau: strict independence, objectivity and neutrality, rejection of all standardisation, and resistance to all prescription and constraint. The IBE aspired “on the contrary, to strengthen the characteristics of the educational systems of each country by making them known”. Thus, rather than competing to impose its model, each country would feel “stimulated to benefit from the experiences of others”. By limiting its activity to “scientific research and educational information [...] it [the IBE] ensures it cannot interfere with any national educational movement”.²⁶

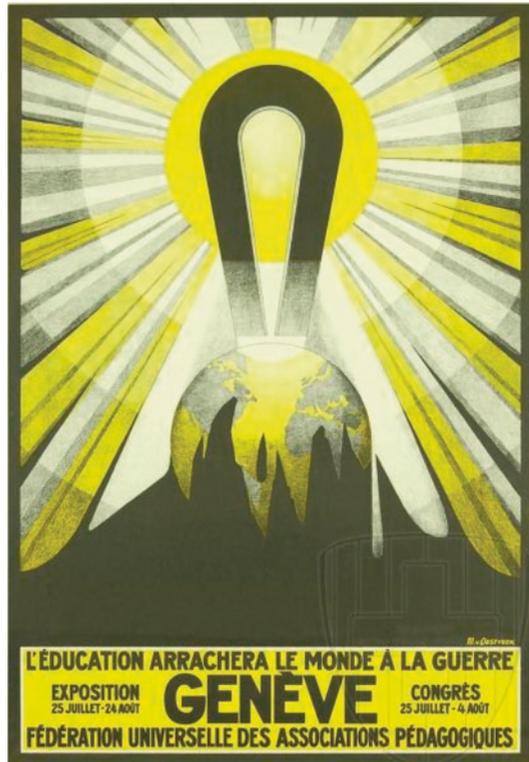
In 1959, in his account of this “exciting [...] intergovernmental adventure”, Piaget even claimed that the Organisation for Intellectual Co-operation “desired our demise”.²⁷ The archives enable us to show that the IBE authorities seized upon this contradictory dynamic—which is evidence of the intense rivalry between pacifist authorities—to clarify their own principles of action: to build “unity in diversity”, a motto that would last for decades. It is consistent with the ideological background of their psychopedagogical theories, based on the ability to reciprocate—to which we now turn (Image 9.2).²⁸

²⁶ “Note on the IBE and the LoN”, n.d, p. 2. 30_A-1-55-357, A-IBE. It should be remembered that the first two directors of the IIIC (Julien Luchaire 1926–1930 and Henri Bonnet 1930–1940) were for a long time opposed to French membership, having little regard for the IBE, which seemed to them to overlap with their own projects, even if their speeches state the contrary.

²⁷ Minutes of the 25th Council, 11 July 1959, pp. 5–6. 45_A-2-1-1559, A-IBE.

²⁸ In Part III of this volume, we will examine how they would transpose these principles and theories to the scale of their intergovernmental conferences.

Image 9.2 Poster of the congress and exhibition of the World Federation of Education Associations (WFEA) congress held in 1929 in Geneva, co-organised with the IBE and sponsored by local authorities. The slogan: “Education will take the world away from war”. (© BGE)



Insert 9.1 Conquering the United States: Rivalry with the WFEA

No universalist ambition could be confined to Europe, even if the Old World was then willingly seen as the cradle of civilised culture. The United States was from the outset in the sights of the IBE bureau. It had close contacts with various leading educators of the world—such as John Dewey (1859–1952) and Daniel Alfred Prescott (1898–1970)—and with a number of American organisations working in a similar spirit. In particular, the International Institute of Teachers Colleges, which was establishing itself as a centre for comparative education, and had been conceived as a tool for understanding between peoples, and where Paul Monroe (1869–1947), one of their most faithful supporters, worked.

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As early as 1925, the IBE began to work towards a closer relationship with the World Federation of Education Associations (WFEA), which had been created by the National Education Association of the United States in San Francisco in 1923. This World Federation was a particularly privileged interlocutor. Firstly, because the WFEA federated educational associations, namely primary and secondary teachers' societies, which were also within the scope of the IBE of the *Institut Rousseau*, were convinced of the fruitfulness of the alliance between scholars and practitioners. Secondly, because the WFEA brought together dozens of associations²⁹ and through them, potentially, several hundred thousand members. The first two biennial meetings of the WFEA (Edinburgh, 1925; Toronto, 1927) were a clear success, and extended to an audience beyond the Anglo-Saxon countries. However, within this framework, projects similar to those of the IBE were taking shape: the WFEA also envisaged the long-term institutionalisation of an office that would have a similar federating mission, driven by the same pacifist ambition. In other words, "its programme is exactly the same as the IBE's", conceded the latter in May 1927.

The IBE representatives therefore considered it essential to be recognised³⁰ and to work together, to avoid the powerful WFEA sidelining the IBE by imposing itself on the international scene. The WFEA claimed to be potentially endowed with substantial funds, which the IBE could also draw on. Couldn't the embodiment of the American dream—the extent of its reach and influence, the power of its patrons and their dollars—be transposed to Geneva and realised there? This is what the IBE officials were aiming at, supported by several delegates of the Liaison Committee of the major international associations and even by the Geneva government, interested in

(continued)

²⁹ 50 in 1929, half in the United States, others from all parts of the world, especially Great Britain.

³⁰ The IBE became a member of the WFEA in 1927.

(continued)

maintaining Geneva's reputation as a capital of educational internationalism. Indeed, it was the head of the Department of Public Education of the Geneva State Council, Albert Malche, who took the official steps to have the WFEA Congress held in Geneva in 1929 under the aegis of the IBE.

The representatives of the WFEA shared this enthusiasm. Its *News-Bulletin* of 1 April 1928 claimed that it wanted to make this "Geneva Conference the greatest educational meeting in the history of the world", in terms of both audience and outcomes:

Geneva is the ideal location for our next meeting. Its ancient renown, its incomparable scenery, and its present exalted position as the spiritual capital of the world, make it the one city of the earth [sic] best suited to be the meeting place of a world-wide educational conference. (1928, 1/3 April, p. 1)³¹

And a few months later, a document drawn up by the two bodies on 23 November 1928, carefully preserved in the archives of the *Institut Rousseau*, proposed that the IBE should fully integrate the WFEA. It should then dissolve its General Assembly and recommend to its members to join the WFEA, on condition, and only on condition, that the World Federation assumed this integration and supported the IBE by devoting an annual sum of not less than 20,000 dollars; and this for the next five years.³² This document was obviously not followed up and each organisation retained its own identity.

For two years, the IBE secretariat worked flat out to clarify the practical arrangements for the WFEA Congress in Geneva in 1929. From the outset, the problem of the delimitation of prerogatives between the two organisations arose. Both were striving to extend their activities and gain access to each other's contact lists, while

(continued)

³¹ *News-Bulletin*, 1928, 1(3), p. 1. FG/WFEA 10/2, AIJRR.

³² FG/WFEA 3/1, AIJRR.

(continued)

jealously guarding their own. Their internal deliberations approximated to a division of the world, with the IBE secretariat in Geneva aspiring to become the WFEA's instrument in the regions that the latter had not yet conquered: "We should become the executive office for Europe, South America, French Africa, etc. of the World Federation, leaving America, the United States and probably the British Empire, China and Japan for its future executive office."³³ Butts competed skilfully to present the IBE in Geneva as the host of the WFEA, ensuring that the propaganda for the conference allowed the IBE itself to stand out on the world stage, preventing publicity from being monopolised by the WFEA:

I have given a lot of thought to the question of the representation of European countries in Geneva. If we limit ourselves to delegates from associations belonging to the World Federation, we will have very few Europeans. On the other hand, if we campaign for new Associations to join the World Federation in order to be represented here, we will be working for it and against ourselves. This is something that will be very delicate to resolve [...] it would obviously be necessary for all the large and even medium-sized associations in Europe to be represented in Geneva, and moreover, it would be necessary for this to serve the interests of the IBE.³⁴

Butts suggested that the WFEA see the IBE as its representative in Europe, with the English members of the World Federation even wishing to establish their headquarters in Geneva. Within the Liaison Committee, the IBE secretariat also received broad support, as well as innumerable suggestions in which the ambivalence of the Europeans towards this "big, vague cloud",³⁵ whose scope nevertheless aroused much envy, could be perceived.

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³³ Letter from M. Butts to P. Bovet, 24.9.1927. 160_correspondence-46, A-IBE.

³⁴ Letter from M. Butts to P. Bovet, 17.9.1928. 160_correspondence-46, A-IBE.

³⁵ Report by M. Butts on her trip to Paris, 10-13.11.1927. (181/95/130), AdF/A/1/2/40, AIJJR.

(continued)

The 1929 Conference did take place, but the American dream did not materialise, at least in terms of finance, since the IBE struggled to pay off the substantial financial deficit: only a quarter (435) of the promised Americans took part in what was billed as the “World Education Forum”. Letters mention a distrust of Geneva and the overly pacifist spirit of the League of Nations; the very Anglo-Saxon spirit of the WFEA may also explain this (as they showed little interest in Europe), as well as internal dissension within the WFEA, which moreover found its federating force, and even its credibility in the United States diminished.³⁶

On the other hand, in terms of content, the archives testify to the richness of the work carried out for this conference, contributing to the institutionalisation and internationalisation of the disciplinary field of educational sciences in Europe, a field then driven by the pacifist ideal of the 1920s. These sources also show the extent of the connections consolidated or newly instituted, notably between delegates from learned societies and professional and militant associations as well as international and governmental organisations, who all rubbed shoulders for 15 days, during the administrative and scientific sessions and the receptions, as well as in the aisles of the gigantic exhibition which allowed each organisation to illustrate its work.

³⁶ Bovet and Butts exchanged information on this matter, while taking “a joint and solemn resolution not to be killed off by Mr. [Augustus] Thomas and the WF Congress”. Letter from P. Bovet to M. Butts, 25.7.1928, p. 1. 160_correspondence-46, A-IBE. Concerning the dissensions and credibility of WFEA, see Smaller (2015).

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The IBE Axiom: “Rising from the Individual to the Universal”

With links to the educational reformist movements becoming less official and more blurred, did this mean that the IBE’s leaders were disavowing their orientations? Can we deduce that the IBE was abandoning its pacifist mission by differentiating itself somewhat from the liberal internationalism that permeated the diplomatic life of the LoN’s organisations? By castigating intergovernmental rivalries and threats of cultural hegemony between empires, were the leaders of the IBE abandoning any intergovernmental mission and any guiding educational policies?

By examining here the evolution of the IBE’s activities from the mid-1930s to the late 1960s, we shall attempt to identify the spirit in which they were undertaken. We find the same dynamic as that highlighted above. It was with regard to the context, in light of its main partners or supposed competitors, that the IBE’s managers positioned themselves in order to establish the legitimacy and power of their enterprise, without betraying its founding principles.

UNIVERSALISABLE KNOWLEDGE AND TEACHING METHODS

The themes of the surveys, begun after 1932 and mainly linked to the ICPEs, reflect a fundamental reorientation. From 1933 onwards, they focused almost exclusively on public sector schools, the infrastructure, curriculum and content of primary and secondary schools, as well as the

status, profile and training of the teachers who worked in them.¹ Can we conclude from this that the reformist convictions of IBE staff were being eroded? That a clear pedagogical neutrality was now favoured? In reality, the IBE adjusted above all to the expectations of the new and main partners it had now chosen: the selection of themes and the way in which they were approached took into account the concerns and constraints of the governments and ministries responsible for public education and embraced all the crucial issues of official school systems. The IBE was presenting itself as a global platform for educational internationalism, taking on the mission of universalising access to education, a condition for real social justice. Later on, it worked symbiotically with UNESCO's appeal for the right to education (Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), and Piaget was even appointed by UNESCO to be its official interpreter and ambassador.²

Careful analysis of the orientations of the questionnaires in the international surveys, as well as the comparative syntheses and the debates and recommendations which followed on from them, allows us to state that the principles of the new education and its ideals of peace and world understanding largely persisted through the decades. Nor should it be forgotten that reformist circles, even the most ardent and long-standing opponents of the state school, now saw the possibility of propagating their principles and methods within the official network. The IBE, in this respect, became a real catalyst for stimulating and expanding this process on a global scale (Hofstetter & Mole, 2018). This dissemination was certainly accompanied by a form of dilution, which is also reflected in the rhetoric of the IBE itself. Rather than calling for a Copernican reversal, for a universalisable educational revolution, the post-war period onwards saw the prevalence of notions like pedagogical movement, literacy campaign, a boom in schooling, reconstruction and then modernisation of education,

¹These causes are discussed in detail in Part V.

²Piaget was also a charismatic figure at that time at UNESCO, where he was a member of the Executive Council and temporarily assistant director general of its education department; remember also that he was entrusted with the task of writing *Le droit à l'éducation dans le monde actuel* [The right to education in the modern world], in the series "Droits de l'homme" published by UNESCO; Piaget 1949/1951.

march towards modernity, renovation of education systems and pedagogical innovation.³

The knowledge built up and the methods tried and tested in the reformist movements were still favoured, and through them the spirit of the new education. Among the key words that were repeated like a refrain were the incentives to consider the *interests* and *needs* of young people, to arouse their *curiosity* and *activity*, and to anchor teaching material in the *concrete* and the *real*; it was a question of encouraging *experimentation* and *manipulation*, in order to develop the *potential* and *autonomy* of pupils, so that *they learn to learn* and sharpen their *critical faculties*, thus initiating them into their *responsibilities as citizens*.

With regard to the curriculum,⁴ overwork is decried, while the variety of content, the importance of observation and experimentation, as well as manual and artistic activities, which were dear to the new education, were emphasised. It was recommended that the content of school subjects should be oriented towards the potentialities and interests of the child, and, by differentiating them, should scrupulously respect the stages highlighted by developmental psychology, namely “the very laws of natural development.”⁵

How was this psychopedagogy presented to the IBE’s partners and relayed or even reappropriated by them? (Image 10.1).

COMMAND NATURE BY OBEYING IT: FROM EGOCENTRISM TO SOLIDARITY

The reference to nature has several dimensions that relate to the defining principles of new education, establishing nature as the supreme instance of harmonious development. It was therefore argued that the schoolchild should be brought into close contact with his or her environment, with nature itself, in a discourse that sometimes even had an avant-garde ecological tone. The introduction to the natural sciences, in particular, was

³New terms were emerging, revealing a less idealised vision of modernity, while the vogue for -isms (progressivism, reformism, educational internationalism), particularly emblematic of the 1920s, was fading. But behind these new terminologies, the ideology of growth and development was also emerging as an alternative or variant of that of progress.

⁴See Chap. 18.

⁵An expression then commonly used during the ICPes, relayed by the *Institut Rousseau* and the first IBE, then also by the experts and national delegates and representatives of UNESCO.



Image 10.1 A collection of children's literature books. The IBE organised several surveys on children's literature (Marie Butts was herself an author). The last one was financed by the Rockefeller Foundation in Latin America during World War II. (© IBE)

supposed to be done with “respect for natural resources, which if wasted, make population growth a paradoxical danger”, was the plea by Bodet, the UNESCO director, at the 1949 ICPE co-organised by UNESCO and the IBE. He concluded: “We command nature only when we obey her” (1949, p. 23), an expression emblematic of the principles of the new education, which the UNESCO director took almost verbatim from the earlier writings of Bovet, Claparède, Ferrière and Piaget.

One no longer thinks in terms of a particular pedagogical movement opposed to the so-called traditional school. The principles of a renewal of school and pedagogy have been absorbed and naturalised becoming, as it were, a spontaneous way of thinking. This “naturalisation” in the discourse was based on child psychology, more particularly on genetic psychology and moral judgement which Piaget, in the wake of his fellow workers at the *Institut Rousseau*, had been studying in depth since before he took up his post as head of the IBE. In the early 1930s, he summed up

this general orientation of international education with a succinct formula: “to lead the child from the individual to the universal” and “thereby transform their egocentrism into objectivity”:

The only way to do this is to “command nature by obeying it”, i.e. to use the psychology of the child. Now, by an unexpected and almost moving encounter, it turns out that this *ascent from the individual to the universal* corresponds to the very processes of the child’s intellectual and moral development. [...] *The individual is childish egocentrism, the universal is cooperation, i.e. internal solidarity.* (Piaget, 1931a, p. 26; italics are ours)

In particular, Piaget’s theorisation of self-government and teamwork demonstrates that cooperation between individuals leads to mutual criticism and progressive objectivity, which gives access to a kind of “morality of thought”, rooted in solidarity.⁶

We should note that these enthusiastic words are however tempered by reflections on social evolution in which Piaget transposes his analyses of the evolution of the child onto the chaos of the world, inverting, as it were, the recapitulationist theory: it is not the child who is going through the stages of humanity again, but rather it is humanity which is not realising the highest possibilities of psychological development. “Why, internationally, are we still at the ‘primitive’ childish stage? [...] The spirit of cooperation has not yet penetrated the whole of society. And why? It is because of education” (Piaget, 1932, p. 312). That is what has to be transformed in order to perfect humanity. This mission always seemed to meet with the unanimous approval of the IBE and of its international conferences, as shows the following remark by Oliveiras Guimaraes, general inspector of Private Education in Portugal:

It is incumbent on us to pass on the torch that lights the course of human destiny to those whom we will shape to continue our task. May the brighter future forming on the horizon make for the happy resolution of the dark concerns of the present time. (ICPE, 1935, p. 74)

This “youthful zeal” that was called on even in 1939, despite the world’s various anxieties and troubles, was to rally the IBE partners around the “same goal and desire”: “to prepare a better and happier youth, and

⁶Piaget developed this theory in detail in his work *The Moral Judgment of the Child* (1932/1948).

thus a better humanity” (p. 88).⁷ In the immediate post-war period, the IBE’s mission of “lighting the world with the torch of education” (ICPE, 1949, p. 97) was lyrically repeated.⁸ This refrain was reiterated over and over again by the ministers who came to Geneva for the World Education Forum. Imbued with this reconciliatory psychopedagogy, they give the educator a semi-godly power: “the world can only save itself through the efforts of educators. [...] thanks to them, man will become capable of forging his own destiny” (ICPE, 1953, pp. 134–135).⁹ Furthermore, in summing up the 25 years of his leadership of the IBE, Piaget concluded, “These recommendations are the glory of our IBE and no supporter of the new education, not even a psychologist, could be ashamed of them”¹⁰ (1954, pp. 27–28).

Far from being perceived as an allegiance to a militant movement, for these IBE representatives respect for the natural development of the child would thus encourage the development of the potentialities contained in each individual, and the possibilities of relating to the universal and, in fact, of gaining access to moral judgement, necessary for forming oneself into a responsible citizen (Image 10.2).

DEMOCRACY AND CONFLICTS OF RECIPROCITY

International solidarity remained on the IBE’s agenda, even during the explosive 1930s, during the new global outbreak of war, in the immediate post-war period and then during the Cold War. We note, however, that the pacifist zeal was fading, partly in view of the controversies surrounding it. This was true from the turn of the 1930s. In 1934, Marie Butts set the tone by recommending more pragmatism and rationality to convince young people who, en masse, would oppose all pacifism and answer to the beat of the nationalist drum. Written in her small office at the IBE and in its name, the secretary general’s message was published in the widely read columns of the *World Peace* magazine:

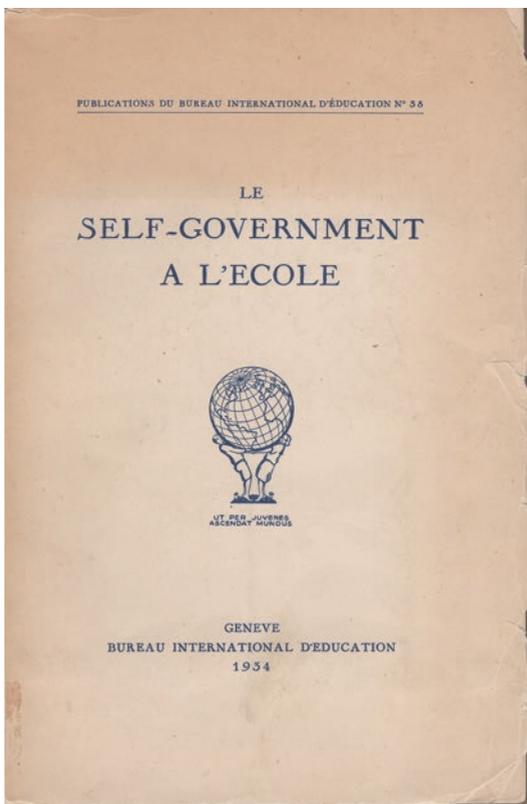
⁷D. Karadjoff, minister plenipotentiary and delegate of Bulgaria to the LoN.

⁸Mohammad Anas, vice chancellor of Kabul University, delegate of Afghanistan.

⁹Fouad Galal, former Egyptian minister of social affairs and former professor of psychology at Cairo University.

¹⁰In an interesting reflection on the particular-general relationship in historical discussions of “progressive education”, including Piaget’s contributions, Oelkers (1998) shows the ambiguity of the term and tries to extract its central conceptual core by proposing the term “child-centered”.

Image 10.2 IBE publication on a central theme of new education. In the first years under its new status of 1929, the IBE continued to officially promote ideas of new education as shown by the publication on self-government in school (another publication was on team work in school). It contains important contributions by Jean Piaget on educational questions he would refer to in all his later pedagogical texts. (© AIJJR)



The task that faces the educational organisations of the world today is the elaboration of a practical programme for international education. It is unsound psychology to endeavour to fight against the ardent nationalism of the young by scoldings and lecturings. Positive, dynamic, creative methods must be discovered to harness the enthusiasm of nationalistic young patriots-in-their-teens to the business of studying facts seriously and learning to think creatively according to their own individual possibilities, in order to fit themselves for elaborating new ways of managing the affairs of their country so as to secure its real prosperity and happiness. (*World Peace*, 1934, April)

Over the decades, the more consensual terms of solidarity, fraternity, understanding, cooperation and interdependence had taken over from the earlier dominant pacifism, which was decried as naive, idealistic,

condescending and even too bourgeois in the 1920s. These notions infused the IBE's entire pedagogy. Unwilling to be satisfied with internationalist orations alone, above all the IBE's promoters multiplied pedagogical approaches in order to build this international spirit on the basis of real-life experience. In line with Ferrière,¹¹ Piaget became its spokesman: he rejected the supposed "remedies of a receptive nature" "in the form of lessons" and "appeals to sensitivity and imagination" in favour of sharpening the critical sense of pupils, by means of their active responsibility: "only" the technique of soliciting "the activity of the pupil" was likely to have "happy results":

Social relations should be instituted among children, and particularly among adolescents; an appeal should be made to their activity and sense of responsibility. Thus material help to the children of war-devasted countries might be encouraged, also correspondence between pupils in different countries and, above all, clubs where children could take some part in adult society, could discuss it, criticize it, and become associated in active youth politics. (ICPE, 1949, p. 36)

The IBE's spokespersons aimed to transform classrooms into a space where democracy was lived and constructed on a daily basis, a condition for responsible citizenship aware of the global issues. As Piaget explained, the classroom, like everything in social life, was exposed to "conflicts of reciprocity". Learning to work together would make it possible to overcome this, thanks to the acquisition of the deep understanding of others that it presupposes:

But above all, it is only through a system of advanced educational methods ["*méthodes actives*" in French], laying the main stress on common inquiry (team work) and the social lives of the pupils themselves (self-government in the schools) that the study of national and international viewpoints and the difficulty of co-ordinating them can take on any real significance for the

¹¹ As early as 1921, Ferrière demonstrated that it was a matter of taking advantage of this "vital force" that is mutual aid and solidarity, which allow the construction of a responsible citizenship, the foundation of any republican spirit. Grouping schools into communities, making the classroom a society in miniature and the school a federation of small, more or less autonomous republics, depending on the age of the pupils and the degree of responsibility that can be entrusted to them, this is the solution that many wise pedagogues in different European and American countries have envisaged and put into practice (Ferrière, 1921/1947, p. 10).

pupils [...] international relations are the arena, though on a different level, in which the same conflicts are fought out and the same misunderstandings made as in social life as a whole [...] once a social life is organised amongst pupils themselves it is possible to extend it to the international sphere, with international exchanges of students and event joint group studies of specific international problems. (Piaget, 1949/51, pp. 115–116)

It would even be a “conversion of the whole mind”, Piaget explained. By encouraging decentration, this education in reciprocity would provide a springboard for initiation into international collaboration, which was presented as “international civic spirit” at the last ICPE in 1968, after Piaget and Rosselló had resigned. But peace was still conceived as the primary mission of the IBE, which was itself presented as an emissary of a universal ambition as stated by Tena Artigas, delegate from Spain, professor and president of the ICPE: “Peace, – ideal and object of an almost perfect human condition – peace, heroine of all the philosophies and religions, appears to us everywhere and at all times as a universal ambition” (1968, p. 35).

If the aims of better education for a more peaceful humanity are indeed common, how is the universalist intention reflected in them?

UNIVERSAL AIMS: CULTURAL DIVERSITIES VS WORLD CULTURE

Clearly, the IBE’s values were imbued with a universalist tone: it was the future of the entire planet that was the focus of its actions, aiming at “fruitful conclusions for all humanity”.¹² It was a question of promoting the quality of education for all young people, wherever they lived, whatever their background. Moreover, we have just pointed out the redemptive dimension of this education, which is both emancipating and reconciling. First, let us recall that the IBE fully recognised the principles of Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that the UN defined and adopted in 1948, establishing the “universal right to education”.

In our attempt to understand their position, we detect a possible paradox between the universal for which IBE respondents pleaded and their conviction of the intangible individuality of each person and the diversity

¹²This is the kind of expression that kept being reiterated in the ICPEs.

of viewpoints and cultures. How did they negotiate what may seem to us to be a contradiction between two of the axioms they always claimed to hold?

- The postulate of the irreducible individuality of each person, also defined by their environment, which implies a pedagogical differentiation taking into account the individual specificities and grounding of each person, which echoes an always distinctive rooting, which is in fact also patriotic and national, and
- The postulate of a community of destiny of individuals as well as nations, supposedly subsuming particular, patriotic and national interests under an internationalist quintessence sometimes presented as universalist.

While wishing to establish themselves from Geneva as protagonists of events on the whole planet, how did they deal with the patriotic and national chord that also vibrated within them and that they discovered among their students, their various social circles and their governmental partners?

At all times, this dialectic between differential and universal aims—personalistic and communitarian, to use the later expression of the director general of UNESCO Torres Bodet (ICPE, 1949, p. 26)¹³—prompts reflection, and here again it led to a clarification of the IBE's position, in consultation with its partners.

As early as 1927, the resolutions adopted at the end of the Prague Congress “Peace through Schools”, reported by Bovet, deemed that there should be “no opposition between the attachment of each individual to his homeland and the love of each and every one of us for humanity”, but “that the patriotism of the majority of children and teachers in all countries can be elevated and purified”; the Congress endorsed the Declaration of the Committee of Understanding of the Major International Associations:

[It is a matter of] rooting the child in their natural environment [but] solidarity with their family and their country [...] neither can nor should stop at national borders, for civilisation has been and remains the common work

¹³This is our translation; the English text says, “the individual and the community”.

of all peoples, including those who have been hardest hit by history. (Bovet, 1927, pp. 144 and 147)¹⁴

In the early 1930s, a psychological theorisation was proposed by Piaget for whom “internationalism is essentially a psychological problem”:

The spontaneous tendencies of our mind push us [...] either to set up our national egocentrism as an absolute, or to dream of an abstract and ideal humanity. These two attitudes amount to the same thing, because the second absolute is basically only the first, projected into the heavens. (Piaget, 1931b, p. 65)

The “malignant genius of nationalism” and the “hegemony of national cultures” would testify to the “emotional and intellectual poverty of man” and the “lack of universality from which human reason still suffers”. It is therefore necessary to build a “new intellectual and moral attitude, made up of understanding and cooperation, which, without leaving the relative, achieves objectivity by putting together the particular points of view themselves” (p. 92). Far from requiring the “standardisation of diverse points of view”, this implied, conversely, the “coordination of distinct perspectives”. These psychological principles were to constitute the theoretical basis of the IBE’s positioning; its axioms echoed them, as we have just mentioned: “the ascent from the individual to the universal”, “unity in diversity”.

However, international collaboration could not deny national and regional roots, which are the basis for the construction of individualities, as well as their particularities and diversities. Familiar with Swiss compromises, the delegate of the Swiss Federal Council and president of the IBE’s Executive Committee, Alfred Borel, translated this in 1958 by juxtaposing two maxims: “Education tailored to the child”, quoting Claparède and his first fellow workers at the *Institut Rousseau*, but, he added straight away, an education that was at the same time “tailored to the peoples” (p. 26).¹⁵ Appreciated in its formulation, the compromise was however questioned

¹⁴Here, Bovet takes up the issue of history teaching, already invested by the teaching societies, the Carnegie Foundation, the *Institut Rousseau* and now in the hands of the IIC, in order to fight against the warmongering textbooks (see in particular Prudhommeaux, 1927).

¹⁵This is our translation from French; the English version says, “Education must be ‘within the scope of the child’” but must also be “within the scope of nation” (p. 30).

because it did not solve the equation since above all it insisted on differentiation.

What about the guarantees that everyone, in all parts of the world, would have fair opportunities to benefit from a broad education, linked to global solidarity?

A conciliation is seen in the possibility of seizing “the data of the environment while serving the cause of the national unification with the aim of reaching the stage of the mutual understanding and the bringing together of all the men and all the people” (ICPE, 1958, p. 61). From local to international via national? The issue at stake was the consolidation of national unity, which continued to dominate educational policies and was not without its own claims in respect of identity. Thus, far from rejecting the love of the homeland and the solid foundation of the national soil, both of which guarantee prosperity, it was a question of broadening horizons in order to build a world citizenship, to use expressions common in 1958. Joaquin Tena Artigas, delegate of Spain and director general of Primary Education, made, for instance, the following proposal:

A possible solution to reconcile these two opposite points of view would be the use of environmental material for teaching, while serving the cause of national unity and aiming at mutual understanding and reconciliation among all men. (p. 63)

In contrast to some of the UNESCO controversies at the time (Maurel, 2010), it was only rarely that the idea of a “world culture” was mentioned at the IBE. Convinced of the need to build global understanding, international civic-mindedness and brotherhood between peoples, the IBE did not choose the option of shaping and above all universalising a so-called world culture. There was agreement on the need to reconcile a patriotic spirit constitutive of national and regional identities (sometimes described as localism) with the promotion of a global citizenship; but at the same time, there was resistance to any cultural hegemony and a rejection of any levelling of differences and particularities. Let us be clear, however: the very process of claiming—from little Geneva, representative of the Western culture of the industrialised countries—to improve the education of the planet had a universalising, even civilising aspect.¹⁶

¹⁶Even if they do not position themselves as explicitly refractory to “civilising processes” that were the order of the day.

While the dialectic remained intrinsic to the psychopedagogical positions of the IBE’s leaders, who drew on it to refine their theories, we can see a clear evolution in their positions as they faced translating their principles into an instrument for intergovernmental negotiations on educational and cultural policies.¹⁷

Educational internationalism was gradually no longer encapsulated, one might say, in reformist aims, progressive ideologies, pacifist orations or psychopedagogical theories. In the post-war decades, it gradually materialised in the quest for universal access to education that met the cultural aspirations of peoples: the positive values were the development of the personality of each individual, social harmony, democratisation and the improvement of international cooperation, and, thanks to the school, were aiming in the long run at no more and no less than “a world reorganisation” under the aegis of solidarity, freedom and peace. For them, universality was the basic principle of any democracy, and they hoped to rally all the peoples of the world to it.

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¹⁷In the following parts, we analyse the translation of these principles into concrete approaches and actions.

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Conclusion to Part II

The aim of this part was to analyse how the IBE positioned itself from the point of view of the values it defended, the principles that guided it and the relations it maintained with other associative and political actors with whom it interacted. Emerging from an institution that was the standard-bearer of educational renewal understood as a real “Copernican revolution”, and considered to be based on solid scientific achievements, it was first and foremost concerned with contributing to the universalisation of this approach by wanting to federate individuals, movements and associations which were defending the same ideal.

This renewal was also a response to the atrocities of war and was conceived as a necessary condition for achieving universal peace, which was the declared aim of the LoN created in Geneva, a city that embodied the Wilsonian internationalist spirit with the multitude of associations that worked there. Located in this city, the IBE was ideally placed to promote universalist aims in the field of education that could not escape the antinomy that deeply characterised the Geneva institutions founded and dominated by imperial powers. From the outset, however, the IBE was characterised by principles which distinguished it from other political and educational organisations and which sustained it throughout its existence as an autonomous entity: on the one hand, its belief in scientific objectivity as a tool to contribute to the clarification of social issues on a rational, universally recognised basis; on the other hand, made possible by this position, an absolute philosophical, political and religious neutrality in order

to federate actors with sometimes diametrically opposed positions and to contribute to reconciling them in a common ideal of a peaceful humanity.

This positioning developed in a period and a place full of internationalist enthusiasm soon came up against external obstacles and internal contradictions which forced the IBE, without denying its fundamental orientations, to clarify and qualify them. Without in any way renouncing the ideas of pedagogical reform and the orientation towards international understanding and universal peace, the IBE left militancy to other associations, in particular the NEF and the WFEA. It renounced the display of its reformist commitment and insisted even more on its scientific objectivity and political neutrality, all the more so as it oriented its action increasingly towards governmental political actors and public education. But it did so in a context that remained one of an internationalism imbued with the spirit of Geneva, which was opposed by revolutionary internationalism.

The belief of the IBE's supporters in the potential of education for universal peace and the importance given to political neutrality kept them in a position that did not take class contradictions into account—for which they were reproached; in fact, they adopted a kind of abstract universalism, of which their belief in scientific objectivity was a part which, given the context, was not devoid of a certain Eurocentrism, or even of civilising ambitions. Another obstacle was to enable the IBE to give its still-abstract universalist orientation a more concrete form. Its rivalry with the IIC, an institute strongly dependent on a potentially hegemonic imperial France, and which attempted to intervene in the field of education, even though this was reserved for the IBE by agreement, led it to specify, by contrast, its principles of action in order to develop a universalisable approach to education: building “unity in diversity”, thereby finding an original path, somewhat different from liberal internationalism.

These clarifications and reorientations, carried out in continuity with previous values and principles, transformed the very essence of the IBE's action. Educational reformism was now linked to what had become the dominant theme of the IBE's work, the guarantee of access to the widest and highest possible education for all, a universal educational principle if ever there was one, with all its efforts directed towards developing the

knowledge and methods that could be universalised to achieve this.¹ These elaborations were underpinned by a powerful psychological and psychopedagogical theory with a universal aim, since it claimed to be rooted in nature, which must be respected in order to enable the child to overcome their egocentrism and to “lead the child from the individual to the universal”.

The universal was thus present in two ways: through the supposedly natural foundation of children’s development, which must be obeyed, and through the purpose of this development, which allowed access to the universal, a concept that undeniably bore a cultural marking. At the same time, and almost paradoxically, the universalist aims of education had to be reconciled with local and cultural, and more specifically national grounding, especially as the IBE’s partners were the ministers of education of countries throughout the world. Therefore, contrary to certain of UNESCO’s wishes, it was not a question of building a one-world culture² but of seeking to reconcile local, national and even patriotic points of view, and by building international understanding through reciprocity and by bringing together of different points of view—implemented concretely in educational situations—and so fostering “the ascent of the individual to the universal”.

¹It should be noted that here too the IBE, as the first intergovernmental institution in education, played the role of a matrix. These orientations would be those of many international institutions working in the field of education, including UNESCO (Watras, 2010, points this out for the fundamental education programme); Robertson (2013) shows the OECD’s constructivist approach (p. 86); Beech (2011) mentions, in a short paragraph (p. 78), that UNESCO, the OECD and the World Bank promote competencies like “learning to learn, working in groups and problem solving”. There is obviously no cause-and-effect relationship, but there is no doubt that Piaget’s worldwide authority, particularly through his action within the framework of UNESCO, had played a favourable role. On Piaget’s audience and control of his image in this period, see Noël (2020).

²Maurel (2003) discusses UNESCO’S impossible mission of constructing a “one-world culture”.

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The Modus Operandi of the ICPEs

When it is asserted, and rightly so, that educational problems are universal, that they are everywhere the same, it is their essence that is meant, for actually and in practice a pedagogical problem varies from one country to another in the same way as social, political and economic factors. This is why – and it could not be otherwise in view of the nature, composition and scope of our Conference – our recommendations should conserve a general character, establish main lines of guidance and constitute, so to speak, a common denominator of the different trends which become manifest in an assembly with such wide and varied representation as ours. (Alfred Borel, Head of the Geneva Department of Public Education and President of the ICPE, 1959, p. 33)

When the IBE became an intergovernmental institution in 1929 (linked to the immense UNESCO¹ since 1947), its partners, structures and working methods were fundamentally transformed as was the nature of the Bureau's activities. Did this mean that the principles and logic of action of the first Bureau were no longer its mainspring? Not at all: the challenge was paradoxically for it to place itself under the aegis of governments in order to ensure that neutrality and objectivity prevailed in international cooperation. This is evidenced precisely by the modus operandi of the International Conferences on Public Education (ICPEs), which were the hallmark of the Bureau's intergovernmental vocation since 1934, throughout the "reign" of Jean Piaget and Pedro Rosselló. But how could an organisation claim to be completely politically neutral and strictly

¹ See Chap. 6; and for the early years of UNESCO, Maurel (2006).

scientific, when each of its main partners aspired to have their school policies endorsed? How could this new “intergovernmental world forum for education” be institutionalised through associating nation states which were jealous of their educational prerogatives?

The 1937 ICPE president, Constantin Kiritzesco, secretary general of the Ministry of National Education of Romania, which had just joined the IBE, put it like this:

We have discussed, we are discussing and we will certainly continue to discuss, the meaning of internationalism, the influence of international thinking on the lives of certain peoples, and what some call “the interference of others” in personal affairs. But if there is one area where the need for international collaboration cannot be disputed, it is surely that of instruction and education. (p. 21)

From his presidential position, the Romanian professor and education expert presented the Conference as a “new League of Nations” whose mission would be to campaign “for the ‘disarmament’ of bad instincts, the consequences of ignorance and lack of culture” (p. 22). The statement corresponds to the situation at that date, since for the first time the IBE was holding its meetings in the Palais Wilson to which the Bureau had just moved since the LoN itself had just settled into the sumptuous premises of the Palais des Nations in the verdant Ariana Park. But did the expression “new League of Nations”—which was formulated in 1937, when nationalist tensions and socio-economic conflicts were exacerbated in face of a League of Nations considered as powerless—correspond to the spirit of the Conferences as conceived, concretised and led by Piaget and Rosselló?

In this part, which is devoted to the analysis of the scenography and the modus operandi of the Conferences, we will answer this question by attempting to grasp how these two directors, whose profiles and stances were in such contrast, jointly conceptualised the conference foundations. In so doing, we will be paying particular attention to examining the kinds of tools that Piaget and Rosselló forged so they could work alongside the authorities responsible for education systems in order to obtain greater international cooperation. How to encourage states, which were so jealous of their prerogatives in this area, to collaborate collegially in the elaboration of recommendations with a universal aim, which themselves committed them in their own national field?

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Scenography of the First Intergovernmental Parliament on Education

In 1934, Jean Piaget, IBE director, and Paul Lachenal,¹ representing the Swiss Confederation which hosted the ICPEs, both spoke with one voice to specify the issues and the modus operandi of the Conferences. Over the decades, the general principles drawn up by them were repeated over and over again, and would guide all the succeeding ICPEs, even though the terminology evolved according to the context, the partners present and the speakers.

Let us enter further into the scenography proper of these Conferences (Fig. 11.1 gives a schematic overview), in order to then tackle the two main aims that these meetings examined, which were, on the one hand, the progress made in schooling around the world, and, on the other, the most crucial pedagogical problems that needed to be resolved (Image 11.1).

AN ALMOST PERENNIAL RATIONALE

These Conferences were designed as a “forum” where, through their delegates, the “leading school authorities” on the planet would regularly set out their “pedagogical preoccupations”, their “ambitions”, their “realisations” and sometimes also their “disillusions”. It was a question of

¹ Head of the DIP of the Canton of Geneva, who, because of this function, was president of the Executive Committee of the IBE and first delegate of the Swiss Federal Council.



Image 11.1 The second meeting of the IBE Council July 1931. It took place in the famous Alabama room where the mediation between the USA and Great Britain concerning the vessel “Alabama” was signed (1872) and where the International Red Cross was created (1864). (© IBE)

“highlighting the scattered and often unrecognised national assets”, of encouraging “healthy emulation between countries so they could improve their school systems” and of identifying “the most important problems in common in order to try to resolve them collectively”.² The range of expressions used to describe the ICPEs and to state their aims has grown over the decades, but the spirit has remained unchanged. In this “first world parliament” or these “intergovernmental meetings on education”, also presented as “international school for adults”, “a week of regeneration of minds and souls”, it is a question of defining together, “collegially”, how “the intellectual, physical and moral lot of the child can be

²Collected here are expressions used at the ICPEs (1934, pp. 21–30, 92–98, 1935, pp. 28–31).

improved”. As those “responsible for the educational destiny of the planet”, “in charge of the future of tens of millions of young people on earth”, their duty is to work together “putting aside our worries and differences” to “jointly guarantee educational justice on earth”.³

Inaugurated in 1934,⁴ the ICPEs were held over 5 to 15 days in the summer, and they kept going continuously until 1968.⁵ Apart from the Conferences suspended during the Second World War, there are two changes to be pointed out: first, the ICPEs were organised jointly by the IBE and UNESCO as soon as their collaboration agreement was signed in 1947; second, the number of participating countries rose significantly from 1955 onwards, thanks to various independence and decolonisation movements. This would lead to adjustments being made particularly in the format of the invitations to attend and in the way exchanges were organised,⁶ without, however, directly impacting the very foundations of the scenography and even less so the *modus operandi* of these Conferences when they discussed pedagogy. However, we will see in the following parts that the new configuration of the world would have an impact on the way

³We are repeating here terms that were reiterated over and over again in the ICPEs between 1937 and 1968. This was even the case in 1938 and 1939, when war seemed imminent.

⁴It was then qualified as the IIIrd. Noting that the Councils of 1932 and 1933 had been all the more fruitful as non-member countries had participated in their work, the IBE’s management repeated the experience from then on; the first real International Conference was therefore counted as the IIIrd ICPE. This sleight of hand was supposed to have an attractive effect: attesting that the train of this new internationalist saga was already moving, each government was encouraged to take it promptly so as not to remain alone on the platform. The issue was also one of competition with the IIIC: by anticipating the inauguration of such international meetings, proof would be given that the IBE was establishing itself as an inter-governmental forum for education, without even needing to resort to the support of this institute, which was much better endowed than the IBE. This latter was reproducing here a tactic that had already been tried and tested, in which “trial and error”, “experimentation” and the principle of “fait accompli” coexist. The *Bulletin* (1933, N°28, p. 107) explains this.

⁵In fact, they would continue until 2008, under the name of International Conference on Education (ICE); but the methods and spirit of such conferences would then change profoundly, also in view of the global reconfiguration of the world governance of education. Cf. Brylinski (2023). Appendix C presents the states that participated at the ICPEs and the number of times they did so.

⁶At the 1948 conference, this principle was challenged by Mr Nouss (Syria) and Mr Mikaoui (Lebanon), who wished to be able to “reply” (p. 37) to their counterparts’ interventions. Moreover, since 1959, the reports were no longer read to save more time for exchanges.

in which delegates used the ICPEs to make their voices and positions heard in the concert of nations.⁷

Here we present the general scenography of the ICPEs, as conceived during the 35 years in which Jean Piaget and Pedro Rosselló were the main conductors, assisted by meticulous secretaries, interpreters and translators, whose amateurism was gradually giving way to more technical specialisation, while the ICPEs were gaining in audience.

In the year preceding the opening of any ICPE, the IBE Secretariat, under the aegis of the Bureau's Executive Committee and, from 1947, of the UNESCO-IBE Joint Committee, carried out a threefold task, inviting school authorities to join in their efforts:

- Using an increasingly detailed survey grid, but whose content remained broadly the same, the IBE surveyed the authorities in charge of education systems in order to document their recent educational reforms.
- Through an in-depth questionnaire, the Bureau made surveys regarding the position of these same bodies on the three, and then (since 1946) two, crucial educational problems placed on the agenda, which changed each year.
- The IBE encouraged and supported its ministerial partners to contribute to the Permanent Exhibition of Public Education, whose stands were national and which were progressively linked to the themes discussed at the Conferences.

In the opinion of the survey designers, all the data collected helped “to get an idea about the progress of education in the world” (ICPE, 1946, p. 7) and to contribute to this. This perspective gave rise to exchanges during the ICPE: each Conference member was thereby invited to discover the innovations initiated in other countries and the responses provided for the educational problems discussed, so they could take advantage of them in the orientation of their own school policy. The exhibitions themselves helped in this by providing visual access to some of the specificities of the exhibiting nations.

Like a ritual, the format and substance of the invitations and the opening and closing ceremonies of the Conference were also perennial.

⁷With two exceptions, which are discussed in Part IV.

The letter of invitation and the inaugural speech were entrusted to the representatives of the inviting body, Switzerland, until 1946, then to UNESCO and the IBE together. Once the election of the president and vice presidents of the Conference was completed,⁸ it was they who led the discussions in the assembly and who wound them up.⁹ The closing ceremony always systematically included speeches and thanks expressed by the highest-ranking dignitaries present, including from the IBE board and UNESCO. There were also receptions and informal activities on the programme to allow less formal exchanges where undoubtedly certain dialogues and definitely certain negotiations were carried on in a more relaxed manner. However, unfortunately, there are no records of these.

All the documentation used for and produced during the Conference (such as minutes, recommendations, reports and analyses) were published. There were hundreds of publications (324 had been counted by 1968¹⁰) and over one hundred thousand pages contained the contents of these ICPE debates. Thus, it was stated as early as 1937 that Geneva “is tending to become a world centre for documentation, verification and dissemination of the best ideas and suggestions on educational matters” (Image 11.2). In 1939, Karadjoff, minister plenipotentiary and delegate of Bulgaria to the LoN, presented the 68 volumes produced by the end of the first six Conferences as

an invaluable, indeed inexhaustible, source of knowledge for governments and educators [...] and even] in the future an intangible monument to the efforts made in all countries to educate a better youth, and hence a better world. (p. 87)

⁸Those who had served in this capacity in the previous year submitted names to the assembly; since 1947, it was the joint UNESCO-IBE commission that chose the members of the ICPE Presidency (also known as the ICPE Bureau) and made suggestions for the names of the rapporteurs.

⁹Insert 11.1 analyses some features of the debates that took place in the ICPEs.

¹⁰Including the first international surveys before the IBE was institutionalised and the translated versions, but not counting the quarterly *Bulletins* and the international bibliographies.



Image 11.2 The “third” ICPE 1934. It was the first international conference to which all ministers of “sovereign” states in the world were invited by the Swiss government on behalf of the IBE. Thirty-eight countries sent delegates. In the far background, Jean Piaget, Pedro Rosselló and Marie Butts, and the two presidents Paul Lachenal (Switzerland) and Marcel Nyns (Belgium). Two other women are entitled to sit in this Conference, a secretary-typist (at the far right, this must be Blanche Weber) and, in front of her and wearing a hat, Dr Fannie Fern Andrews, secretary of the American School Citizens League, part of the US delegation. (© IBE)

ADJUSTMENTS FOR A LARGER AUDIENCE

As soon as the collaboration agreement between UNESCO and the IBE was signed, the successive directors of UNESCO were invited to take part in the ICPEs. Until 1965, the replies were affirmative, except for Julian Huxley (UNESCO director from 1946 to 1948), who was replaced by a deputy director; the faithful Torres Bodet (1949–1952) and Luther Evans (1953–1958) contributed systematically to the ICPEs held in Geneva; Vittorino Veronese (1958–1961) was often replaced, for health reasons,

by interim director René Maheu,¹¹ who became director general of UNESCO in 1961 until 1974, but who, from 1966 onwards, appointed the assistant director general for education to stand in for him.

From the beginning of the ICPEs, observers were invited to attend in order to officially testify to the solidarity between institutions, to pass on information in a reciprocal manner and to come to agreement over the causes to be promoted. Up until 1953, this only concerned intergovernmental bodies; the ILO did not miss a single ICPE between 1934 and 1968; the LoN was always present and was replaced by the UNO from 1947 on. Some other specialised institutions also attended, especially the WHO, and from time to time, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (linked to the World Bank) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation. Other intergovernmental organisations were invited, such as the Arab League, the Council of Europe, the Ibero-American Bureau of Education and the OECD since 1962. From 1953 onwards, NGOs representing teachers' associations and universities participated continuously. At the same time as there was a jump in the number of invited countries, the range of NGOs increased considerably: in 1965, for example, 12 organisations were observers, as varied as the World Union of Rural Women, the International Catholic Education Office or the Commission of the Churches for International Affairs, a heterogeneity which persisted until 1968 (Fig. 11.1).

The regular presence of these observers testifies both to the growing audience of these ICPEs and to the multiplication of international organisations—governmental or otherwise—involved in the field of education. Some of these organisations were clearly based on an economic logic: they aimed to adjust schooling to economic imperatives. Others, on the other hand, considered themselves to be invested in causes for the public good, representing Christian, feminist and professional associations, which considered that education was part of their mission. In this respect, we can even deduce that the IBE of the 1950s and 1960s had rediscovered a facet

¹¹ Significant absences, however: that of Huxley, who was not very interested in educational issues (Sluga, 2010; unlike his rival Zimmern, aiming for peace education), and who favoured direct action through what would become “fundamental education” (Toye & Toye, 2010); that of Maheu, perhaps due to the fact that the IBE was losing importance to other international bodies, notably the OECD, which was becoming the reference institution, also in relation to UNESCO (Elfert & Ydesen, 2020; Sorensen et al., 2021).

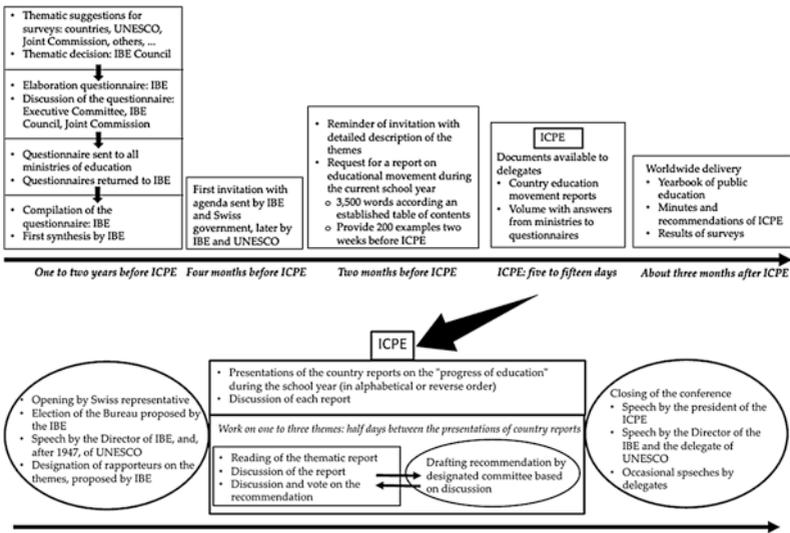


Fig. 11.1 General schema of the ICPEs’ scenography (1934–1968): global organisation and zoom on the course of the ICPEs

that it had intended from the outset: to enable all “entities”, whether political, social or even trade union, to converse within the same conference hall, the good of the child transcending all possible divergences.

If the logic of the ICPEs remained essentially perennial, the massive increase in the number of participants had an effect on their progress and quality. The Joint Commission received several letters of complaint in this regard. As early as 1955, the Israeli government denounced the boring nature of some of the discussions;¹² even more radically, in 1957, while the UNESCO programme was being discussed, the American delegation considered that the subjects were too diverse and extensive, which did not allow for in-depth analysis, especially as there was a lack of real experts.¹³ In response to these criticisms, a number of changes were introduced:¹⁴ the need to give an account in the national reports on the measures taken

¹² Letter from the Government of Israel to the Joint Commission. 19th Joint Commission 18.11.1955, appendix to the minutes. 36_A-1-79-1455, A-IBE.

¹³ 23rd Joint Commission 15.11.1957, appendix to the minutes. 36_A-1-79-1520, A-IBE.

¹⁴ They relate primarily to the conduct of meetings on the proposal of the Joint Committee following the proposals of a sub-committee formed for this purpose. 25th Joint Committee, 3.11.1958; 36_A-1-79-1535, A-IBE.

to implement, on the ground, the recommendations voted earlier; the discussion of surveys and recommendations split in two separate sections, with the informed support of experts identified in the delegations; the formulation of written questions for the discussion of the national reports, as the oral presentation of the reports was abandoned. Almost every year, further changes would be made to improve the relevance of the ICPEs and the impact of the voted recommendations. Moreover, in his report to the Joint Committee¹⁵ the director of UNESCO's Education Department proudly emphasised in 1961 that more and more specialists were involved in the ICPEs, which were attracting more and more interest and whose results were now having an impact on practice in the field.

The ICPEs began working exclusively in French but soon recognised English as an official working language. In view of the substantial increase in the number of delegates from the countries of the south and the east, thanks to the support of UNESCO and following sustained negotiations started by delegates demanding recognition of their language and culture: Russian and Spanish were recognised from the mid-1950s onwards, which required an increasingly dense and expert service of translators and interpreters.

As usual, changes were recorded in the guide sent to all invited countries with a detailed agenda, without formal inclusion in a statute or regulation. In fact, the IBE remained a simple association, its functioning being defined in its statutes of 1929 and by some general indications specified in the collaboration agreement between the Bureau and UNESCO. This allowed flexibility and adaptability in a small organisation where the staff were now more qualified (Image 11.3).

ANALYSING THE MAIN FEATURES OF THE EDUCATION WORLD

On the basis of the reports previously submitted by the countries participating in this process, the delegates were invited to present and discuss “the highlights of the educational movement” in the world.¹⁶ At the end

¹⁵Report of the director of the Education Department of UNESCO for the 31st meeting of the Joint Committee, 10 November 1961. The profile of ICPE delegates was indeed becoming more specialised, leading to a growing proportion of researchers, ministers, directors, advisors and diplomats specialised in education, as demonstrated statistically in Brylinski's thesis (2022). The role of experts in international organisations is the subject of various analyses, which have enriched our own: Kott (2008) and Littoz-Monnet (2017).

¹⁶Where we do not give specific references to quotations, as here, it is because the expressions quoted are scattered throughout the speeches and documents.

Image 11.3 A cabinet displaying the four main types of IBE publications: result of surveys; minutes and recommendations of the ICPEs; *International Yearbook of Education*; *Bulletin of the IBE*. (© A. Bourquin; Érhise)



of these Conferences, these national reports were subsequently published in the *International Yearbook of Education* along with an analysis and a comparative summary by Rosselló. Whereas 35 countries had contributed to the first *Yearbook* in 1933, there were 53 contributors in 1934, 63 in 1947 and 96 by 1968.¹⁷

These *Yearbooks* were introduced by the chief editor, Rosselló, as a kind of evolving map of education around the globe. In order to ensure that the results were comparable in time and place, the questionnaires, which were the template for the national monographs, became increasingly formatted so that they would only refer to objective data. They were sent to the same recipients—the ministers for public instruction or else to similar bodies.

¹⁷ See Part IV and Appendix A for more information.

The *Yearbooks* edited by Rosselló translated the data received by the IBE into comparative tables so that each state could compare its own efforts with those in all the other countries that had participated in the study. Schooling statistics gave rise to summary tables, and also public finances set aside for education, and in this case the banks supported the effort so that the exchange rates could be adjusted in real time.

The comparison was in no way aimed at the uniformisation of systems, but on its own it was meant to serve as a kind of “emulation” so that each country could take from it what was needed to develop its education system. Marion Coulon, the Belgian delegate, summed up the spirit of this in 1953, not without some base flattery of the international city of Geneva which hosted them:

For the education authorities in the different countries, the consideration and discussion every year of the reports on educational developments were an invaluable means of stock-taking and led to more intensive endeavour, amicable emulation, and the birth of new ideas. Revered as the capital city of the nations, Geneva, through the sessions of the International Conference on Public Education held annually within its walls since 1934, had also become the capital city of the world’s education. (ICPE, 1953, p. 134)

In order to gain a wider audience, from 1947 on, the *Yearbooks* were translated into English. Unstintingly every year Rosselló wrote the introduction to these volumes, outlining the main educational ideas that had emerged around the world during the previous year. Comparative analyses preceded each country report and tables of comparative statistics concluded the volume.

RESOLVING THE CRUCIAL EDUCATION PROBLEMS OF THE PLANET

The vocation of the ICPEs was also to scrutinise and help resolve those problems in education that were deemed to be the most pressing. Crucial themes were identified each year in which the IBE carried out a preliminary enquiry, the results of which were then discussed during the summer Conference. These problems needed to have general characteristics, which meant that the “essence”¹⁸ had to be universal in order to respond to the

¹⁸See the epigraph of this part.

concerns of partner states and to be inscribed in the universalist objective that the IBE had adopted, in concertation with UNESCO from 1947.

The criteria for the selection of these themes and the manner in which they were chosen were variable: while it was claimed that any member of the IBE could propose a topic and take part in defining it, some delegates (and therefore the state represented) and IBE representatives as well as leading UNESCO committees (via a mixed UNESCO-IBE commission) had a considerable weight in these choices. Such selections were also strategic in order to legitimise the validity of these bodies, to attract countries which it was hoped would join, to honour those who were already members and publicly display the relevance and the originality of the IBE's work. For example, the *Organisation of Rural Education* (1936), which transmitted the needs of particularly sought-after regions of Latin America, was placed on the agenda of the ICPEs at the same time as Argentina joined the IBE. These themes were also in tune with current social, economic and educational events, as shown by the 1934 enquiry into the question of economies imposed on public education. The IBE and its partners (including the ILO), noting with alarm the deleterious effects of the stock market crash on the budgets set aside for education; the topics of teacher training and teacher pay, which are the conditions of quality schooling, immediately followed (1935, 1938, 1939).

It was in order to solve the acute problems of the war that, in the middle of the conflict, there were enquiries into *The Teaching of Hygiene, Equality of Opportunity for Secondary Education* (on the ICPE's agenda in 1946), *Physical Education* and *The Free Provision of School Supplies* (ICPE of 1947). Rebuilding the school system implied an in-depth reflexion about financing, buildings, school programmes and their content as well as the teaching methods to adopt (ICPEs of 1955, 1957, 1958, 1960). Following the explosion in schooling in the 1960s, attention was paid, in turn, to the struggle against hardship among teaching personnel (including that of teacher trainers and administrative staff) and advanced training (ICPEs of 1957, 1959, 1963, 1967), as well as to restructuring systems via education planning, to the organisation of school and professional orientation and to that of pedagogical research (ICPEs of 1962, 1963, 1966). All this was intended to contribute towards guaranteeing access to education for everyone, whatever their social background, profile or origins, and this in turn led to a greater visibility of particularly vulnerable populations.

Table 11.1 Number and percentage of surveys and recommendations discussed in the ICPEs in function of three main categories (1934–1968)

	N	%
1. School programmes and school subjects	21	32.3
2. Training, status and recruitment of teachers	15	23.1
3. Structure, organisation of systems and management of school cohorts	29	44.6
<i>Access to education for all</i>	(13)	(20.0)
<i>Material infrastructures, organisation, finances</i>	(16)	(24.6)
Total	65	100.0

Table 11.1, inspired by the one produced by Rosselló himself (1961/1978), summarises all of the 65 themes tackled between 1934 and 1968.

For each one of these themed surveys,¹⁹ a specific questionnaire was sent out to all the public education ministries (or similar bodies). These surveys were discussed in great detail within the IBE Secretariat and overseen by IBE executive commissions in order to find out how each authority broached the subject and, when applicable, how they approached the issue and resolved it. It was the answers to these questionnaires that formed the basis of the summary report that was qualified as a comparative study and was drawn up by the IBE research department, sometimes with the help of external experts. For the ICPE, the issue was to develop articles of recommendations likely to answer the problem. At the end of a Conference, the minutes—which required numerous negotiations to perfect the content—summarised the different positions and supplied the reports and the recommendations adopted.

These were subsequently submitted for scrutiny to the Conference participants, who discussed them, amended them and adopted them.²⁰

¹⁹For a better understanding of how these surveys were produced, see Boss (2022).

²⁰As we have seen, since 1959, the conference was divided into two sections, each with a mandate to deal with one of the topics on the agenda, based on the provisional draft of the recommendations. The draft was then discussed in plenary.

Insert 11.1 Showcasing and Intergovernmental Strategies for Debate²¹

During the general discussions at the ICPEs, state delegates mobilised various strategies to get their ideas centre-stage during the debate, for this could, ultimately, influence the final drafting of the recommendation submitted to the vote. While their exchanges were compiled in a series of minutes published at the end of each Conference, techniques of network analysis make it possible to illustrate the various positions, as well as the strategies, adopted by the representatives on the educational subjects retained on the agenda. To illustrate this point, we present an analysis of the 1934 and 1951 ICPEs, both of which dealt with the question of the extension of compulsory schooling.

The main strategy observed was that of self-presentation, which accounted for 80% of interventions on educational content in 1934 (see Fig. 11.2), compared to 67% in 1951. The delegates spoke mainly to show the national model they represented. The diversity of solutions was compiled in the final recommendation. This recommendation therefore took on the appearance of a showcase of solutions and generated little dialogue on educational content.

The second strategy, mobilised rather more in 1951, was that of citation (or “mention”) to better centralise an idea or an educational model in the discussion so that the recommendation took it into account. This approach constitutes a grouping of interests demanded by a number of states. A staging of states then took shape, since delegates positioned their countries in relation to each other. This positioning—here visualised in networks—results from cooperation strategies at work in the speeches, using citations to highlight the experience of a third-party state, exploiting controversy to generate reactions, or even deploying forms of sycophancy to solicit some attention.

During the discussion on the extension of compulsory schooling (1951), the most cited educational models were those of the USA

(continued)

²¹ This text is based on Brylinski (2022), more particularly Chap. 7. Graphics are produced from the database “presence and interventions of States and their delegates at CIIPs (1934–1958)”, designed with Cytoscape software.

(continued)

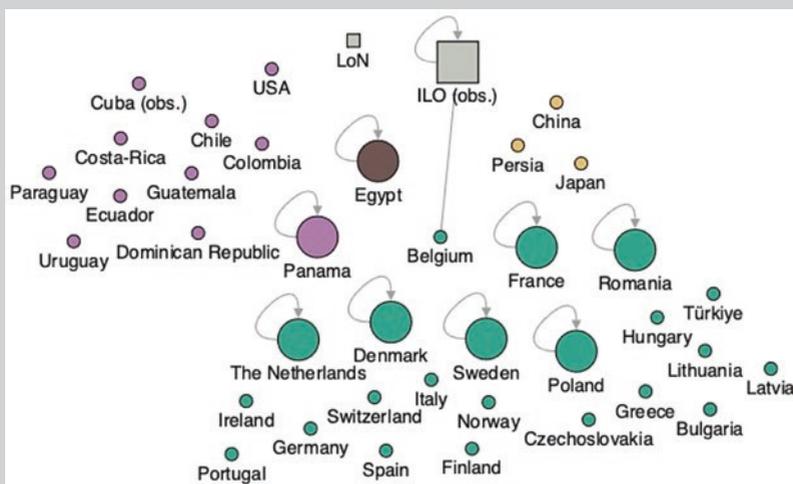


Fig. 11.2 References to educational models during the 1934 ICPE, by state

and the UK, which allowed these actors to place themselves centrally in the debate, thus conferring a form of prestige on the anglophone education systems.

The graphic representations which make it possible to visualise these citations sometimes reflect a vision that reinforced global pre-conceptions. Indeed, some alliances were ideological, translated by scenographic arrangements which placed states in opposition, for example Soviet and Western countries,²² but also Northern and Southern states, or even East and West more generally. Also, many regional alliances were forming, which can be illustrated with the positioning of Ceylon, India, Israel and Pakistan, which coordinated their interventions to form a unit in the debate (Fig. 11.3b).

(continued)

²² See also Chap. 16 on the Cold War.

(continued)

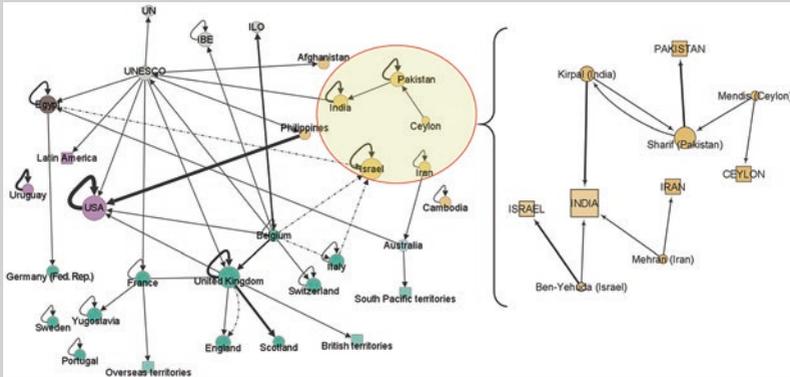


Fig. 11.3 Graphical representation of quotes on the issue of compulsory schooling (ICPE, 1951). (a) Unimodal network (1951), extracted sub-network, based on citation links that “value the educational experience of states.” (b) Bimodal network, subnetwork selected from Ceylon, India, Iran, Israel and Pakistan tops

The tensions seem minimised in all the minutes published between 1934 and 1958, only 0.7% of the interventions expressed an opposition or a disagreement. That being said, is not the absence of a reference also a sign of tension, or sidelining? Silences and absences can be a relevant indicator of political issues, sometimes more than speeches, as is the case, for example, of the People’s Republic of China, reported in this book. As such, many absences reflect geopolitical tensions and a divided world and the same can be true for the silences that tend to translate a hierarchical world. The conference therefore became permeable to these issues: this was a limit of the IBE’s undertaking. Nevertheless, analysing these behaviours allows us to have a better understanding of how knowledge is disseminated and circulated (or not), and how, therefore, recommendations are produced, by integrating which knowledge, at the expense of which other knowledge.

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A Commitment That Was All the More Binding Because It Was Freely Chosen

Did these recommendations really have no binding value? In any case, they were not at all like conventions or prescriptions, as the partners were afraid of interfering with the prerogatives of nation states in educational matters.

MAKING FREEDOM A RESPONSIBILITY

To begin with, already in 1934, Piaget had specified the significance of the resolutions (later known as recommendations) in a speech which would hardly age until 1968.

We are not expecting categorical resolutions from the Conference. It does not seek to impose anything of any sort, and this is for three reasons:

1. Countries and their national organisations are too different;
2. This meeting is not a congress but a conference of responsible delegates who will commit their country and cannot vote lightly;
3. When one tries to impose, one provokes resistance, an essential pedagogical truth of which diplomats need no reminding.

The Resolutions of our Conference will be more of a catalogue of possible solutions [...] a call for emulation, in the noble sense of this word. (ICPE, 1934, p. 30)

Through this “noble emulation”, it would be a matter of overcoming prejudices and differences to build mutual understanding and knowledge.

Let us make no mistake. There is a subtle argument for turning this freedom into a responsibility. It was in the interest of every state to have the best possible education system, which guaranteed the intellectual and economic performance of the country. Emulation between countries would be sufficient, each being stimulated to learn from the experience of others. The greatness of the cause in which they invested would also incorporate partisan interests, since it was a question of working, through education, to improve the future of humanity as a whole.

This responsibility extended to all of the IBE’s partners and bodies, and this was constantly recalled during the ICPEs as illustrated by this quote by Piaget from 1936, selected from among dozens of others of a similar nature:

One of our greatest concerns is to associate ourselves through our means of research and information with the educational progress of the member countries of the Bureau. And you will easily understand this concern since, to a certain extent, we feel morally co-responsible for the education of the school population of all these countries whose total population amounts to roughly 250 million. (p. 145)

Exercising responsibility implies the availability of accurate and objective data in order to avoid arbitrariness and to inform the decisions taken. This was why the IBE expanded and formalised the empirical material collected and why it refined and systematised its analyses using the conceptual and methodological tools of comparative pedagogy. Nevertheless, as the reports were collected from the school authorities themselves, the latter retained ample room for manoeuvre to present their reforms and the results they drew from them as they saw fit.

It should be emphasised that during the debates everyone was free to state their positions and to amend or oppose the recommendations. The process was supposed to guarantee, at all times, to each delegate, on an equal basis, without any pressure, free participation in the definition of the recommendations.

But the counterpart of this freedom was clearly stated: by their presence, their writings, their interventions and their votes on recommendations, state delegates were involved and, in so doing, committed the government they represented. The commitment would therefore be all the more demanding as it was freely given.

As early as the post-war period, Piaget and Rosselló considered these recommendations to be the most “innovative and effective” action of the Conferences:

These recommendations form a set of more than a thousand articles and constitute a sort of International Charter or Code of Public Education, a body of pedagogical doctrine whose scope cannot be underestimated.

Although they did not have the imperative character of conventions, the fact that they had been voted on by delegates from more than 70 governments gave these recommendations unquestionable moral weight. The authority they enjoyed among school authorities and educators was also due to their balanced spirit: without being utopian, and while recognising the possibilities of each particular country, they constituted an educational ideal of a universal kind that should be strived for. (Rosselló, 1959, p. 243)

It should be noted that the idea of a code¹ as mentioned here contained the idea of regulations and the injunction, even though it was of a moral kind, was well and truly present in the proposals of the ICPE’s two leaders. The notion of a charter, which was more commonly used, reduced its prescriptive scope and this corresponded better to the spirit of the IBE: it was about disseminating “an educational ideal of a universal type”, in the hope that this ideal would be sustained by the aspirations of the peoples of the world and would be able to meet these. If the notions of utopia and ideals ran through a number of speeches, being consubstantial to the progressive convictions of the IBE they were systematically linked to the conditions of what might be possible for the school authorities.

These recommendations were essential parts of the Conferences’ modus operandi and could be considered as the product of a process of discursive distillation: based on these broad international surveys, a substantial report proposed a summary, which was discussed in the ICPE with a view to producing a brief recommendation. This recommendation was submitted to the participants for approval. It set out a number of possible

¹In his opening speech at the 1949 ICPE, UNESCO Director-General Jaime Torres Bodet pleaded, contrary to the IBE respondents, for more binding measures: “The collection of recommendations [...] would undoubtedly be an excellent code if they could all become law” (p. 21; our translation). The official English version gives a different sense than the original French one: “The recommendations [...] would no doubt form an excellent code of law if all those recommendations could be put into practice.” Interesting: in English, the code of law follows the practice; in French, the recommendations can directly become law.

ways of solving the problem addressed and could be considered as the common denominator of the countries represented and it would gradually be presented as such.² The whole thing was interpreted as a collective commitment to ensure that everyone on earth might have access to educational opportunities tailored to their needs, without distinction—at least in principle—of race, gender or class. The hope for the betterment of humanity, also through international understanding, was perceived in the form of quality public education (Image 12.1).

FIRMER CONTRACTUALISATION, UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF UNESCO

From the post-war period, the number of government delegates attending the Conferences increased. UNESCO then endorsed the recommendations made during the ICPEs and widened their audience: thanks to its own tools and resources, the recommendations (but not the minutes of the ICPEs) were translated into ten languages, a translation that constituted both the internationalisation process and the internationalist ideal.³ At the same time, UNESCO was pushing for the implementation of its demands and expectations, aiming for more normative and realistic principles. As early as 1949, pressure was being exerted from ICPE's presidential rostrum by Paolo Carneiro, a delegate from Brazil and also a member of UNESCO's executive board, whose expectations he relayed:

The words which had been spoken during the Conference must now be translated into acts. Each of the delegates must feel like they are a messenger of this assembly and take back to their country a little of the human fraternity they have experienced in these places. (p. 99)

²At that time, many other international organisations used conferences and legislative procedures leading to recommendations in order to obtain the broadest possible support from states (see, in particular, for the ILO, Guérin (1996), Kott and Droux (2013), Le Hovary (2015); for the BIET [Bureau international de l'enseignement technique / International Bureau of technical teaching], Matasci, 2012); the IBE was certainly largely inspired by them. The originality of the IBE lies in the fact that it used this approach exclusively: building on surveys of all ministries, in a sense from the bottom up; issuing only recommendations.

³It should be noted that the list of recommendations was already being translated into ten languages in the 1930s. In addition, many countries translated them into the languages of their populations.

<u>Israël</u> Mr. E. Haran	<u>Katar</u>	<u>Burundi</u> André Nyamaye	
<u>Japon</u> Mr. Y. Kita	<u>Viet-Nam</u>	<u>Haïti</u>	<u>Algérie</u>
<u>Liban</u> Mr. Y. Yazbeck	<u>Jordanie</u> Mr. Ramadan	<u>Iran</u> S. Sami	<u>Hongrie</u> Mr. F. Karasz
<u>Maroc</u> Mr. [unclear]	<u>Koweït</u> Mr. Al-Ansari	<u>Irak</u> Mr. A. Al-Ani	<u>Guinée</u> Mr. Touré
<u>Niger</u>	<u>Liberia</u>	<u>Guatemala</u> Mr. Dupont-Willémin	<u>Grèce</u> Mr. Petropoulos
<u>Panama</u>	<u>Mexique</u> Mr. A. de Icaza	<u>Ghana</u> Mr. Grant	<u>France</u> Mr. J. Thomas
<u>Philippines</u>	<u>Nigeria</u> Mr. S. J. Osoke	<u>Finlande</u> Mr. Mäntakanen	<u>États-Unis</u> Mrs. Tandler
<u>Portugal</u> Mme Leite da Costa	<u>Pérou</u> Mr. Ed. Letts	<u>Espagne</u> Mr. Pena Artigas	<u>Équateur</u> Mr. R. de Icaza
<u>Royaume-Uni</u> Mr. Allcock	<u>Pologne</u>	<u>Répub. Dominicaine</u>	<u>Costa-Rica</u> Mr. Donnadieu
<u>Roumanie</u> Mr. [unclear]	<u>Répub. Arabe Unie</u> Mr. H. Fawzy	<u>E. ARABIE</u>	<u>Corée (Rép. de)</u> Mr. [unclear]
<u>Sénégal</u>	<u>Sierra Leone</u> Mr. [unclear]	<u>Colombie</u> Mr. Arango	<u>Chine (Rép. de)</u> Mr. Kuo
<u>Thaïlande</u> Mr. Saenruatruam	<u>Soudan</u> Mr. Shawi	<u>Chili</u> Mr. Frans	<u>Cambodge</u>
<u>Tchécoslovaquie</u> Mr. Pleva	<u>Tunisie</u> Mr. Bakir	<u>Caméroun</u>	<u>Bresil</u> Mr. Cabral de Melo Netto
<u>Venezuela</u> Mr. Aguilera	<u>Italie</u> Mr. G. Gale	<u>Bulgarie</u> Mr. G. Bano	<u>Belgique</u> Mr. Couloer
<u>Ukraine</u> Mr. Karpetschuk	<u>Biélorussie</u> Mr. Sointseva	<u>Bolivie</u> Mme Fellmann	<u>Arabie Saoudite</u> Mr. Al-Fawil
<u>U.R.S.S.</u> Mr. Markouchévitch	<u>Unesco</u> Mr. Halconrui	<u>Argentine</u> Mr. [unclear]	<u>Rép. Féd. d'Allemagne</u> Mr. Reimers

BIE Président Directeur

Image 12.1 Placement of the delegates for the 1964 ICPE. The Executive Committee was in charge of adopting the proposal for managing the arrangement of the states around the tables to encourage exchanges between everyone, without causing tension: quite a delicate question. (© IBE)

But whose job was it to do this? Didn't the ICPEs have to problematise the essence of the problems and therefore stick to general principles, inspired by an "ideal of progress" like those of law, peace and justice? Conversely, did they remain credible if the Conferences were indifferent

to what was happening on the ground in the practices themselves, where young people were shamelessly discriminated against and illiteracy was generating a “new form of slavery”;⁴

A shift was gradually taking place, moving towards a firmer contractualisation of agreements. Invited to the Conference as school leaders, the ministerial delegates were encouraged not to give up on their ideals, in other words, while the realistic dimension of the recommendations was being reinforced, in other words to “have their feet solidly planted on the ground while at the same time scanning the horizon” (1960, p. 29).⁵

By the end of the 1950s, the IBE-UNESCO Joint Committee expected countries to explain how the recommendations voted on had been taken into account. Moreover, from 1961 onwards the monographs written for the *Yearbooks* had to indicate the follow-up that each state had given to the recommendations voted the previous year. Subsequently, these assessments would cover recommendations adopted some ten years earlier in order to better identify possible progress.⁶ In other words, the aim was to attest to the seriousness and credibility of the commitment made.

Piaget qualified this by pointing out that “in fact and in practice, an educational problem varies from one country to another in the same way as social, political and economic factors” (ICPE, 1961, p. 14). It was up to others, the IBE director pointed out, to examine in greater depth and above all to adjust the articles of the recommendations “to the social, political, economic or historical realities” of each state or group of states (ICPE, 1959, p. 31).⁷

If the *modus operandi* of the ICPEs remained similar in the broad outlines, had the meaning and spirit of the enterprise changed in this alliance with UNESCO? It is definite that the IBE was progressively adjusting and even rallying to the responsibilities that the UN agency was taking on, with a view to translating speeches into concrete interventions on the

⁴This problem runs through Chap. 21.

⁵It is Alfred Borel who speaks, who assumes the double function of head of the Department of Public Education of Geneva and spokesman for the Swiss Confederation which remained the host of the ICPEs, which incited him to a constructive and appeasing speech.

⁶This would be the case, for example, for the issue of women’s education; see V.3.

⁷In 1961, Piaget insisted again on this point, praising the initiative of the “United Arab Republic to convene regional and national meetings to take up these recommendations and adapt them to the situations of each region or country” (p. 122).

ground. Undoubtedly, the discourse of international educational modernity is prefigured in these Conferences and in the attempt to collectively construct a succession of recommendations. Conceived as an inventory of possibilities, the articles of each of these recommendations would gradually form the basis of a new world governance of education. In 1953 moreover, the Director-General of UNESCO, Luther H. Evans, addressed his audience by stating bluntly: “he who draws up the plans is the master builder” “all together, you are the leaders of the educational movement in the world” (ICPE, 1953, p. 25.) This was repeated over and over again by the acting Director-General of UNESCO, René Maheu, who went on to head the UN agency between 1961 and 1974:

The concern to provide practical assistance to underprivileged countries, which has characterised UNESCO’s programme from the outset, like that of all the agencies of the United Nations system, has directed international co-operation towards concrete tasks outside the realm of mere academic concerns. (ICPE, 1959, p. 35)

Maheu therefore urged experts and scholarship holders “to become the bearers, one might even say missionaries, of certain ideas, tried out and accepted internationally” (p. 38) and was convinced of the need to reinforce “methodical normative action”. He therefore suggested seizing the “consensus of opinions” that were the recommendations, with a view to “codifying” them, not at all to “establish dirigisme” but “in order to show certain norms which would act as indications pointing out the progress still to be accomplished” (p. 38).⁸ Just before leaving the organisation (p. 168), Piaget came round to a form of pragmatism, but not without insisting on the major role devolved to governments: by voting “more and more effective and better informed recommendations” the IBE provided “governments with a kind of capital or potential energy which they can transform into kinetic energy, into effective achievements for the greater good of schools” (Closing session, Piaget, 1968, p. 14) (Image [12.2](#)).

⁸We shall see in part V that these positions immediately aroused reservations and even criticism, warning against standardisation and even a form of Western imperialism (delegate from Pakistan, ICPE, 1957, p. 48).



Image 12.2 A commemorative session: the 25th ICPE 1962. 224 delegates from ninety states were present (many countries sent two or more delegates); fifteen international organisations were also represented. The sessions were held in the Palais Wilson. (© IBE)

“HYPOCRISY, A TRIBUTE PAID BY VICE TO VIRTUE?”

But what is the objective value of the facts presented? Clearly, national reports from ministries presented educational decisions and changes in their countries in the most advantageous light. For a body that prided itself on working in a strictly scientific manner, is it not evidence of astonishing credulity that these data were taken as being objective? Not without bitterness, Rosselló retrospectively reported that they had been criticised over this issue, only to retort:

While it is true that these national reports have been criticised for being overly optimistic, it is possible that some of the exaggerations may have had a constructive aspect because of the emulation they induced between the

various countries. [...] And if it is true that not all the participants in the conference were educators, as many countries were represented by diplomats posted to Berne or Geneva, the contribution of these non-specialists, as parents, often gave the conference a realism that was sometimes absent from other meetings. (1969, pp. XIII–XIV)

Rosselló therefore accepted that a certain exaggeration could be seen in the government reports, where only the emulative and optimistic dimension was pointed out, suggesting that there was no competition or nationalistic tendency. Curiously, he argued for the realistic contribution of non-specialists (i.e. parents) over that of specialists, whereas Rosselló usually appealed to experts in the field of education, who had adequate training in methodology. Did parental realism compensate here for the tendency of ministerial ambassadors to present their policies too flatteringly?

Indeed, government delegates did not fail to describe their school management in the best possible light, embellishing their reforms, going beyond the effects of mere announcements, clearly out of step with actual practices.⁹ The issue was regularly raised within the IBE and problematised in the ICPEs themselves. Does exaggeration and anticipation not amount to a “constructive lie?” even Piaget wondered, distinguished as he was by a rhetoric whose diplomacy did not exclude frankness, since he was not fooled by the hypocrisy underlying certain assertions:

But, as one of us said, if there are untruths, they will be constructive ones. Hypocrisy, says La Rochefoucauld, is the tribute vice pays to virtue, and it is thus unwittingly constructive; so indeed is the sometimes fallacious but often fruitful optimism of the theorist in advance of his time. (p. 28)

This act of faith, dare we say it, by Piaget on the status of theory, or rather on the power and fecundity of mental operations, is far from exceptional: it reflects the humanist, internationalist and scientific convictions that guided him throughout his term in office, striving to encourage his partners. However, we can point out here the duplicity of this diplomat of educational internationalism, who, while playing with a rhetoric that seems to amuse him and with a dominance that he undeniably

⁹This is what was demonstrated by several investigations that compared what was played out on the ground and what was stated in this international debating chamber. See in particular Bajomi (2020) and Robert (2020) for Bulgaria and France, respectively.

appreciated, in fact contributed to underpinning certain power games, artifices, exaggerations, untruths, and even impostures that undoubtedly criss-crossed these intergovernmental arenas.

AN ORIGINAL SIN: THE INSTRUMENTALISATION OF EXPERTISE?

When it came to taking stock, Rosselló complained that the field of education was the target of more persistent and sharp criticism than other fields and disciplines. He deplored that the administrative and official roots of the sources used for his surveys would taint these data from the outset “with an original sin” which would automatically invalidate their relevance, only to retort, in 1963 in particular, that most international surveys on production, economic life and social achievements are also based “on official data without their probative value being contested a priori!” (p. 206)

Indeed, while many of the emerging social sciences intended to consolidate themselves scientifically on the basis of statistics, they relied on administrative data, provided by the established authorities. Statistics were then conceived as tools to access an objective knowledge of social facts and problems, possibly also contributing to their resolution.¹⁰ Quantification would make it possible to move from the individual and the singular to the collective and the general. And this was in fact the aim of comparative pedagogy, as promoted by Rosselló.

The social sciences (sociology, law, economics, political science, and also industrial science) were developing at the same time as the modern state and appeared as critical voices and expert bodies, providing knowledge capable of implementing rational, justifiable and profitable public policies, while at the same time providing nation states with instruments of control, evaluation, harmonisation and planning that helped consolidate them. The historicisation of the construction of educational sciences bears witness to this, showing that it went hand in hand with the growing function of expertise. According to their specific temporalities and modalities they too have been used, like other sciences, by the established powers

¹⁰What these authors demonstrate, on which we base our assertions: Bonneuil and Pestre (2015), Desrosières (2000, 2008), Desrosières and Kott (2005) and Prochasson (2004).

to document, compile, count, classify, measure, compare, demonstrate, explain, justify, legitimise and decide, but also to evaluate, standardise and prioritise.

All these social sciences were indeed faced with a possible instrumentalisation, from the collection of data to their analysis and exploitation. Rosselló was aware of this, and insisted that the pedagogical field was blamed more for this original sin than other disciplines. The difficulty in rationalising educational phenomena (e.g. pedagogical practices) and the fact that education is one of the most sensitive social issues and has been a powerful but expensive¹¹ instrument of governments since the nineteenth century for building the nation, shaping children's mentalities, shaping teachers and social practices, and selecting elites, contributed to the suspicion regarding the scientific nature of the data and analyses of the educational sciences. Rosselló deplored the fact that this suspicion also affected comparative education, even when it was based on statistics, and even more so when it was amalgamated with international education, as was still the case in the twentieth century.

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¹¹ See the special issue on the history of school finance reforms edited by Cardon-Quint and Westberg (2022) that demonstrates, through different examples, the extent to which the education portfolio is an integral part of the construction of the teaching state and has an impact on a number of issues that go well beyond school-related matter.

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“Raising Comparative Education to the Level of Intergovernmental Cooperation”

The conceptual and theoretical backgrounds of the two leaders of the ICPEs, Rosselló and Piaget, were rooted in different fields, although they were both united in their firm belief in the primacy of scientificity. A field pedagogue who became an administrator and then a theoretician in educational sciences, Rosselló embodied comparative pedagogy and essentially referred back to this discipline; for his part, Piaget, as a developmental psychologist, geneticist of intelligence and sociologist of science, relied on his empirical and theoretical work on moral judgement and intellectual development. We assume that it was this dual scientific foundation and, above all, the ability to articulate the two approaches that underpinned the conceptual originality of the ICPEs’ modus operandi. Referring to the first years of the IBE’s work, in the 1959 ICPE Maheu, the acting Director-General of UNESCO, considered that “by its customs and methods, conferences, inquiries and reports of member countries [the IBE had] raised comparative education to the level of intergovernmental cooperation” (p. 37).¹ And this was its preliminary aim (Image 13.1).

¹And he added: “Even before the war, at a time when many were doubtful whether education could be the subject of international and even inter-governmental cooperation, the IBE showed not only that cooperation was possible but also that it was useful and even necessary, so justifying in advance one of the aspects of UNESCO’s work” (p. 37). Insert 13.1 describes the many activities of documentation that were carried out below the surface in order to make international cooperation possible.



Image 13.1 Pedro Rosselló, deputy director of the IBE, specialist in comparative education, at the ICPE 1938, discussing with Robert Dottrens, co-director of the *Institut Rousseau* and responsible for the financial commission of the IBE for more than twenty years. (© IBE)

ROSSELLÓ'S DYNAMIC COMPARATIVE PEDAGOGY

How does Rosselló theorise the comparative pedagogy he claims? Although he recognised militancy as legitimate—evoking the pacifist aims of the LoN and then of UNESCO—he defended the primacy of scientific objectivity. His writings (correspondence, reports, thesis, publications) contain elements that are the theoretical and methodological foundations of comparative pedagogy. He conceived it as a model for the functioning of both scientific research and intergovernmental collaboration. According to him, comparative education was the key instrument to enable both small and large powers to meet, to share their concerns, to benefit from the experiences of others and to develop together solutions to educational problems in the world, based on objective data collected in the school domain.

Claiming that he was wary of any kind of hegemony, Rosselló problematised the relation between the particular and the universal. He postulated that only by taking into account local data and their objective analysis could international and/or universal prospects be drawn up, and that these data could be translated into scientific theories (comparative education as a scientific discipline) or pedagogical recommendations (comparative education as an approach and as the result of work between governments). These theories and recommendations were non-binding and therefore should have been pertinent at international, national and regional levels, which presupposed that to be applied they would be adjusted to local contexts. Local characteristics even found themselves reinforced because of the fact that they could be made public and discussed or even valorised and appropriated by others.

According to Rosselló this was the main role of the IBE as he saw it and he shaped it in this way as a worldwide centre for comparative education, removing any spirit of caste or class. This was something which various members of the ICPEs highlighted, recognising the IBE explicitly as one of the top centres of comparative education in the world.² In Rosselló's opinion, it was by basing itself on the surveys carried out by correspondents in the field who documented the pedagogical realities in countries that were eminent just as much as in those parts of the world that were somewhat “remote” that the IBE could provide a space that was free from any external interference from partner governments. He even declared that it was this autonomy, with regard to politics, which had allowed the IBE to work in an atmosphere that was quite different to that at the LoN where political negotiations and interferences would in fact have dominated. The same was true regarding the thematic surveys which led to the concerted composition of the recommendations that provided a synthesis

²For a historicisation and conceptualisation of comparative education: Caruso (2019), Noah and Eckstein (1969), Nóvoa (1998), Manzon (2011, 2018), Schriever (1992, 1997) and Wolhuter et al. (2013).

of the directions likely to solve the issue in question, but without any interference in education policies.³

Later on, when Rosselló would also be working in synergy with UNESCO,⁴ he shored up his analyses of the contributions made by comparative education. He reckoned that this “science of educational realities”—and the term is not anodyne—has three main roles:

- pedagogical documentation and information
- education planning
- sending experts out on missions.⁵

In fact, for Rosselló (1960, 1963), comparative pedagogy was likely to supply the tools to test for better school planning.

He distinguished clearly between descriptive comparative education, as evidenced in the *Yearbooks*, from explanatory comparative pedagogy which, as he pointed out, was the most exciting for a comparatist, since it could provide the philosophical, historical, geographical, political and socio-economic causes of such or such a phenomenon. It was in this sense that he gradually tried to orientate the exchanges within the ICPEs.

This really was the direction that he championed during his time spent as deputy director of the IBE: Rosselló was determined to promote comparative pedagogy that was dynamic rather than static, shedding light on what changed and what was permanent in order for them to be

³Perhaps schematically, Beech (2011) argues that, until the 1960s, two positions can be distinguished regarding transfer in the field of comparative education: (a) one, in the line of Jullien de Paris, which sees it as possible and desirable; (b) the other, in the line of Sadler, for whom it is not possible and desirable (p. 45). According to Beech, international agencies are in fact in the first line, with an insistence on ‘lending’—one could speak of a ‘vertical universalism’, while many historians of comparative educational studies (for instance, Caruso & Maul, 2020; Cowen, 2018; Schriewer, 2021; Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2012) analyse how processes of “borrowing” ideas “are resisted, modified or indigenized” (p. 47). Our presentation of the IBE and its approach (at least in the concept of its *modus operandi*) places it on the side of ‘borrowing’, referring to an intensive universalism with a horizontal emphasis. We will return in parts IV and V to the question posed by Carnoy (1974), and other authors following him, of comparatism as a potential “cultural imperialism”: working in the contradictory real never allows for pure action and leads to inevitable “civilising” tendencies for an institution that claims to be “universal”.

⁴He became a member of the UNESCO Secretariat.

⁵Letter from P. Rosselló to L. Fernig, 8.4.1963. 38_A1-79-1606a, A-IBE.

understood. He thought that this was one of the greatest virtues and the originality of the *Yearbooks* since they offered a global observatory on the evolution of education over several decades.⁶

For Rosselló (for instance ICPE, 1948, p. 110), comparative education deserved to feature prominently in training programmes for educators and administrators of the education world, since it guaranteed objective knowledge of the realities of that field, of its needs and of the possible and diverse solutions to problems that were identified. It also broadened the minds of these people by allowing them a glimpse of what was being thought and done on a global level, thereby favouring worldwide citizenship and a universal perspective. It also constituted, let us recall in this part dedicated to the modus operandi of the ICPEs, the functional conditions necessary for any intergovernmental cooperation. The issue at stake was pedagogical, ethical, functional and, above all, scientific (analytical and explanatory); as such, comparative education has been regarded as the first discipline to provide large-scale potentially objective data to the educational sciences (which in this respect is complementary to psychology, which focuses on individual data) (Image 13.2).

PIAGET’S PSYCHOPEDAGOGICAL THEORIES TRANPOSED TO THE ICPEs⁷

Complementary to Rosselló’s comparative approaches, Piaget’s psychological theories also provided a conceptual basis for the modus operandi of the ICPEs, shaping both the modalities of intergovernmental exchanges and their aims. We have shown that Piaget combined the dual position of scholarly psychologist and diplomat of educational internationalism (Hofstetter & Schneuwly, 2022). In his scientific writings of the 1920s,⁸ his theorisation of *self-government*—inherited from his colleagues at the *Institut Rousseau*, in particular Bovet, Claparède and Ferrière, and also by

⁶It should also be noted that researchers still use *Yearbook* data to try to identify and explain the evolution of school systems in the world over the long term, such as: Benavot and Riddle (1988), Kamens and Benavot (2007), King (2016) and Pettersson et al. (2019).

⁷This section draws on an analysis conducted as part of the Archives Piaget lectures (Hofstetter & Schneuwly, 2022). See Xypas (1997) for an analysis of Piaget’s moral education.

⁸See Chap. 10.



Image 13.2 The IBE director Jean Piaget and the deputy director Pedro Rosselló were friends also in their private life (with their families) as this picture and many others show. (© AIJRR)

Cousinet⁹—demonstrated that collaboration allows access to a kind of “morality of thought”, an “internal solidarity”, that respects particular points of view, thereby testifying to an aptitude for reciprocity (Piaget, 1931a, p. 26).

For Piaget, what applied in the field of education would also apply in other fields, including that of international and intergovernmental cooperation. The Director of the IBE therefore invited the government delegates to adopt the same position: to work, to engage in dialogue, to cooperate and to place themselves in a dynamic of reciprocity in order to understand others and to learn from their experiences. A detailed analysis of the *modus operandi* set up in these ICPEs allows us to state that Piaget was experimenting with the methods of cooperation—teamwork—and self-government, which he had already shown favoured the passage from

⁹This is fully recognised by Piaget; for the influence of Cousinet, see Ratcliff (2022).

egocentrism to reciprocity in children, thereby allowing access to moral judgement, rationality and truth, all at the origin of intelligence. These are the same postures and virtues that Piaget endeavoured to transpose within the walls of these intergovernmental meetings.

Delegates—and, through them, states—were thus encouraged to come to an understanding of others, and, by doing so, to make this “ascent from the individual to the universal” (Piaget, 1931a, p. 26) which corresponds to the very processes of a child’s intellectual and moral development (Piaget, 1931a, p. 26). Why should it not be the same for adults? Such an ascent presupposes a reduction in this egocentrism, which is seen as the cause of abuses of power on the planet, as evidenced by nationalist, racist, chauvinist and imperialist excesses. For egocentrism, as Piaget demonstrated, reduces the possibilities of developing autonomous thought, a condition for access to full intellectual awareness and civic responsibility. Here too, what applies to the child applies to the adult, and what applies to the individual also applies to collective entities, in this case nations:

Any conquest of a wider horizon is counterbalanced by the resurgent mental inertia characteristic of egocentrism. This is the general and human explanation of the disorder that reigns in our minds with regard to internationalism. [...] We have made absolutes of the very products of our efforts to coordinate, and the homelands we have constituted, by laboriously disciplining our egocentrism, find themselves resurrecting it by simply elevating it to the rank of a collective egocentrism, and all the more tyrannical for it. (Piaget, 1934, pp. 22–23)

This “ascent of the individual to the universal” echoes another “universality”,¹⁰ a technical one, which was that of including all the countries in the world in the Conferences.¹¹ Their individual points of view (or more specifically, their “national” and “local” and “regional” perspectives), present in their diversity, would moreover make it possible, through reciprocity and mutual understanding, which are the basis of autonomous moral judgement, to construct yet another universality: that which presupposes the (re-)knowledge of each other’s points of view. This would be the IBE’s motto: “unity in diversity”:

¹⁰“This is the instrument that we have built”, wrote Piaget, who was pleased that, “from a technical point of view, the Bureau has achieved universality” (Report of the Director, 1934–35, p. 8). And twenty years later, he confirmed: “In a purely technical conference such as ours, this return to or, more precisely, this access to real universality is a precious encouragement for our work” (ICPE, 1934, p. 27).

¹¹See Part IV.

The identity of concerns under the multiplicity of conditions; hence the impression of *unity in diversity* that emerged each time from the Conference and which could provide a motto for the Bureau itself in its wish to respect the point of view of everyone while coordinating the efforts of all. (Piaget, ICPE 1936, p. 31; our italics)

This “instrument” benefited from a powerful theoretical foundation which Piaget had already laid down at the first ICPE in 1934 and ceaselessly recalled so his partners in this enterprise might grasp its meaning and appropriate its principle:

This is our method, which is all about reciprocity: no attempt at standardisation, but mutual information on all the special issues raised by the reports. Delegates were struck by the atmosphere of cooperation and mutual understanding at the conference. (Director’s report 1934, p. 29)

Again the following year, Piaget specified: “these methods can be easily characterised in two words: objectivity and reciprocity; or, if you prefer, mutual information and reciprocal understanding, that is, the scientific method” (1935, p. 28). One cannot help but be struck by the vocabulary chosen in these passages, which bears a striking resemblance to that used in his theoretical work on moral judgement and solidarity: it is not a question of abandoning one’s own point of view, but of understanding that of the other. We can take note that in 1968 (pp. 31–44), these same writings by Piaget would be quoted, to highlight their fruitfulness in the education field as well as in defining the spirit and the way the ICPEs operated.

However, in the meantime, the world had changed, and many new international organisations had taken over the production of knowledge on educational issues, perceived as challenges to development and economic growth, and the OECD and the World Bank were among them. Their instruments, their technicality, their expertise and resources were much more extensive than those of the IBE, which had hardly changed since 1955 and especially the early 1960s. This may have been an original *modus operandi* in the 1930s, or even in the beginning of the 1950s, but it no longer seemed to meet international standards or those of educational sciences.¹²

¹² Bürgi (2017) shows this immense growth of an internationally professionalised expertise in education in the OECD. In her view, this organisation imposes a technocratic and positivist approach independent of local and national contexts. Its cult of expertise risks undermining democratic processes of negotiation (p. 212); the exact contrary, one could say, of the IBE, where expertise was in the service of negotiation.

Insert 13.1 The Documentation Frenzy of the IBE: Work Below the Surface

The documentary mission of the IBE was constitutive of the internationalist ideal that drove its members. It was a matter of documenting what was happening at the local, regional and national levels in various cultural areas, in order to highlight innovative experiments, specific traditions and national mentalities. This would make for better knowledge and understanding of others, promoting international understanding and universal solidarity. This documentalist approach was considered to be a method at the cutting edge of scientific progress and characterised many other technical organisations. It was a furthering of the encyclopaedic ambition of the eighteenth century and of the cross-border connections between learned communities and militant associations of the nineteenth century: in itself, the dissemination of knowledge thanks to the emulation it made possible (which contained the idea of intensive universalism) would have an emancipatory and pacific tendency. Doing this, the IBE identified itself as a knowledge factory, with the artisanal techniques and reformist aspirations of a laboratory of educational internationalism. And its working tools and methods of dissemination were manifold.

The IBE's *Bulletins*, published quarterly between 1925 and 1968 (172 in all), constituted the heart of the collection's activity, centralising, synthesising and disseminating information. They made possible distillation of innovative experiments and publications from around the world. What was being done and written in the Soviet Union and the United States, as well as in China, Asia, Japan, Latin America and Oceania, were documented side by side, even if Europe was given a special place. The data were either provided by the IBE's national centres and its partners around the world (colleagues, associations, ministries), or compiled by members of the IBE secretariat, which subscribed to most of the world's educational journals. They were then selected and synthesised, and often by countries surveyed or themes covered.

The secretariat quickly realised that this was an enormous undertaking, in terms of costs (acquisition and mailing costs), human and

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linguistic resources (only three to four people to manage four to ten languages), and the space available for storing publications and information. Over time, journals were increasingly subordinated to thematic bibliographies; negotiations to avoid purchasing and mailing costs for publications were reinforced and there was increased recourse to external correspondents for the translation of documents produced by the IBE.

After having organised a whole series of thematic exhibitions (on inter-school correspondence, the teaching of reading or peace education), since 1927 the IBE had initiated the *Permanent Exhibition of Public Education*. These exhibitions served as instruments for exhibiting emblematic material and experiments, offering a showcase for the diversity of cultures and the richness of the world heritage, raising awareness of the most crucial educational problems and equipping educationalists to solve them. Within the IBE itself and at the sites where its conferences were held, any visitor could swiftly take in the evolution of the educational world, and become familiar with foreign countries, in order to better link their own experience to that of other peoples. In its 1967 Bulletin, the IBE advertised its exhibition in this manner: “36 countries represented: school activities, handicrafts, children’s drawings, applied arts, textbooks, children’s books, organisation of education” (*Bulletin* 1967, 165, p. 224).

A huge volume of objects was thus accumulated, which were gradually integrated into the *International Library of Pedagogy*. In 1934, one read “[b]ooks received for review or for our Permanent Exhibition: 84 (in Dutch, English, French, German, Esperanto, Italian, Norwegian, Spanish, Swedish, Polish and Russian)”; there were 1154 in the last quarter of 1968. (*Bulletin*, 33, p. 207; 169, p. 234) “The whole of its documentation enables the IBE to respond to a good number of requests transmitted to it by UNESCO, in particular by the Information Centre regarding education,” wrote Piaget in 1965 in his report to the Joint Committee.¹³ Publicity for the library proudly announced:

(continued)

¹³ IBE director’s report to the Joint Committee, appendix to minutes. 37_A-1-79-1505-c, A-IBE.

(continued)

Collection of works on pedagogy, educational psychology, comparative education and school organisation (36,000 volumes). Textbook collection from 104 countries (25,000 volumes). Children’s literature collection from 52 countries (27,000 volumes). Collection of educational journals (650 journals from 70 countries, received regularly). (*Bulletin* 1967, 165, p. 224)¹⁴

There was also an immense collection of documents on education law. The centralisation and collection of information was the main task of the secretariat, which in 1956 consisted in eight people out of the fifteen employed by the IBE, the others being divided between administration and research.¹⁵ The description of their tasks was set out in the weekly plans: “combing” the journals and books to “collect news” and “write reports”; then “filing the files and news in the bulletin” and of course “translating them into several languages”. It was necessary to “collate” and “catalogue” all the books received and “sort out the magazines”: a veritable swarm of educational documents from all over the world. Not always an easy job, as described with a touch of humour by a long-time secretary, Nadine Reymond, in her activity plan for 23–28 April 1956: “Collating in the morning and afternoon until exhaustion (of the stock and the person concerned). Eventually (and how!) dealing with the records of informal meetings (1955 conferences)”.¹⁶

Documentation frenzy: more than 100,000 books on the field of education in the library; about 15,000 bibliographic records and as many short news items published on the world education movement; thousands of exhibits. This was the IBE’s continuous underground work, its hidden side behind the showcase of the ICPEs.

¹⁴The IBE still has a huge collection of textbooks that is being digitised.

¹⁵Composition reconstituted according to the information given in “Weekly Activity Plans, January to May 1956”. 231_A-7-3-1444, A-IBE.

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Conclusion to Part III

Despite the social turbulence of the world, despite ideological antagonisms, despite political and economic struggles and despite even the fratricidal wars of the twentieth century, its conceivers, Piaget and Rosselló, strove to present the ICPEs as a space that could be preserved from political, social and economic convulsions. The proposed *modus operandi* would allow the delegates of the ICPE to come together for the supreme good of childhood, and therefore of humanity, to discuss the world's educational problems and to identify a range of possible solutions, without external interference, in a fraternal and collegial spirit that would guarantee unity in diversity. The successive presidents of these assemblies, as well as the delegates who followed through, unanimously agreed that in this world of distressing instability, where the destiny of each nation is in jeopardy, there would be a safe place to share educational concerns and to try to resolve them in a collegiate manner, in total confidence and serenity, and with a spirit of exclusively technical intergovernmental collaboration.

A utopia? Of course.

Obviously, also a prerequisite for the viability of the enterprise.

Neutrality and decentration—thanks to reciprocity—would be the condition for the so-called technical work of the IBE, based on objectivity, on systematic scientific comparison. This presupposed a universality (equity) of the conditions of expression, and a universal perspective, shared and thought out on a global scale, of the problems and the possible solutions put forward. This would enable governments with sometimes diametrically divergent political positions to meet in the same forum, to

inform each other of the reforms each had initiated without prejudice and to draw up recommendations to define together the educational ideals towards which they should strive. Within the Conferences, each country, regardless of its size and status, regardless of its political choices and cultural traditions, would have the same rights of participation, with no conditions attached.¹

It was in this respect that the image evoked in the introduction to this section by the professor of Romania presenting the 1937 ICPE as a “new League of Nations”, although it was not without relevance,² could not be accepted by its architects since they were concerned precisely with invoking neutrality and objectivity in order to set up these intergovernmental meetings in a time-space sheltered from socio-economic convulsions and political negotiations.³ We could also deduce that Piaget’s ideal of self-government, which—in his theories on moral judgement—similarly combines freedom and responsibility, could be interpreted as his recognition of the fundamental right of peoples to govern themselves. Sustained by diversity, the universal for which he pleaded, along with Rosselló, could imply this, even though it is undeniable that international bodies—including the IBE—had also seized upon it to universalize their *own* theories, values, norms and practices, which were considered universal.

¹This does not exclude large disparities, as shown by Brylinski (2022).

²Beyond the fact that the IBE occupied Palais Wilson after the LoN, power issues were not absent from the IBE.

³It is as if the principles of the “herrschaftsfreie Diskurs” [domination-free discourse] defined by Habermas were accepted as a common fiction by all the participants in the Conferences, thus allowing, in a well-defined space and time, a certain inter-understanding between worlds that are very distant from each other. Here is the definition: “[Es] muß jede gültige Norm der Bedingung genügen, daß die Folgen und Nebenwirkungen, die sich jeweils aus ihrer *allgemeinen* Befolgung für die Befriedigung der Interessen eines *jeden* Einzelnen (voraussichtlich) ergeben, von *allen* Betroffenen akzeptiert (und den Auswirkungen der bekannten alternativen Regelungsmöglichkeiten vorgezogen) werden können” (1983, p. 75). [Any valid norm must satisfy the condition that the consequences and side effects which (presumably) result from its *general* observance for the satisfaction of the interests of *each* individual can be accepted by all concerned (and be preferred to the effects of the known alternative regulatory options).] Global communication submits these norms to the possible contestation of interlocutors of all origins and backgrounds, thus testing their universal validity (2001). Let us recall that Habermas was inspired by Piaget’s idea of decentration and reflective abstraction. (Kesselring, 1997; Nunes, 2020)

The conditional tense is appropriate in this paragraph. It is ours. It is difficult to see clearly how Piaget, like Rosselló, managed to combine such contrasting functions as the leadership of this international forum—necessarily impregnated with the geopolitical and socio-economic tensions of the time, as was, even more massively, the LoN and as UNESCO still remains—with their personal convictions, including their confidence in the educability of individuals and in the resilient and emancipating virtues of science and democracy. We have shown elsewhere that Piaget distinguished himself as a diplomat of educational internationalism, a fine strategist in achieving his goals, striving to avoid—not without contradictions and not without playing an obvious duplicitous role himself—that the compromises made would translate into compromises.⁴

The analysis of the way in which certain protagonists exploited this forum to make their voices heard in the concert of nations or to challenge opposing positions shows how difficult it is to avoid political interference, including on educational issues, all the more so when these are dealt with by the political bodies involved in struggle. This is precisely what guides our questioning in Part IV of this book, and then in the conclusion.

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⁴ See also Part IV of this book, where we examine his courting of states, even fascist Italy, throughout the 1930s.

Focusing on Universality: Geopolitical Issues

In the beginning, there were nine countries, sometimes reticent, while today there are ninety and enthusiastic. Nothing could rejoice our hearts as old Europeans more than to welcome among us on an equal footing and who share our work, these young nations of Asia and Africa whose arrival here sometimes appears as a consecration of our work. (Marion Coulon, Belgian delegate, ICPE, 1962, p. 76)

We believe that the African peoples whom the Portuguese now keep under cruel subjection are also entitled to the good things of this life; they are entitled to enjoy the freedom which is the right of every man and of every nation; and they are entitled to be relieved, as other peoples have been, of their long burden of oppression so that they too may stand up on their own feet and rise in the light of freedom to the fullness of the stature of dignity of men. This is a thirst and a craving which almost all the nations whose flags now fly proudly and securely in this Conference Hall have felt and experienced at one time or another in the long history of the struggle of the human spirit against man's inhumanity to man. The struggle sadly goes on in some corners of the world and it would be unpardonable of those who have come up to the surface to turn their backs upon the few who are still trapped under the pit [*sic*]. (Aja Nwachuku, Nigeria, Chairman for African Delegations, ICPE, 1964, p. 150)

An ambition for universality underlies the IBE's educational internationalism. While initially the IBE pursued this aim by endeavouring to federate as many international associations interested in education as possible, from 1929 onwards it turned towards an intergovernmental strategy in order to secure the alliance of authorities managing education systems. In the eyes

of the IBE universality was an objective, technical fact, but it was also aware that this was hard to achieve: it was a matter of obtaining the widest possible participation in its activities (surveys and conferences), from the point of view both of the number of states (governments, countries¹) and of the cultural areas in which they were rooted. Political neutrality on the one hand and scientific objectivity on the other were, as we have emphasised, the conditions for achieving this universality. Ultimately, universality aims to construct the universal:² to further knowledge and define orientations and to design methods and agree on universalisable values. Comparative education was thought of as an instrument for moving from the local to the global, from the particular to the general and from the individual to the universal, while encouraging reciprocity through constructive emulation, where each person and even collectivities, could be inspired by the specific experiences of others.

In the preceding part, we similarly highlighted the *modus operandi* designed around the ICPEs, in order “to strive for universality, without seeking uniformity” (ICPE, 1934, p. 158), an expression frequently repeated over the years. Let us now examine how this quest for universality evolved in relation to geopolitical context and the contradictions that flowed from that. We trace this evolution from four points of view:³ the participation of sovereign countries in the IBE’s activities, which were set up to extend possible interactions; the mixed success in terms of the number of countries becoming members, indicative of the IBE’s place in the geopolitical arena; contradictions between certain countries in the northern hemisphere, with divergent positions that were sometimes at odds with the IBE’s own ideals; and the emergence onto the international scene of new independent countries which questioned the principle of separating politics from education.

More generally even, we ask the following questions: How did the Bureau react to global geopolitical developments? Did it take a stand and

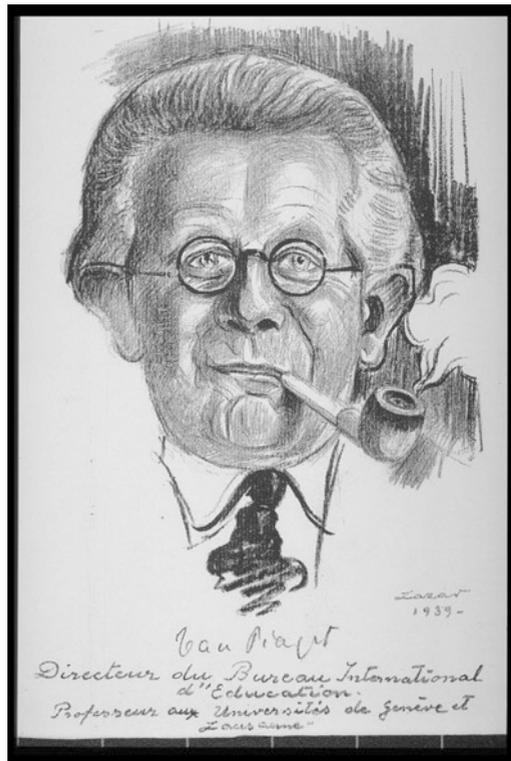
¹These designations evolve, although all are regularly used; in the case of the ICPEs; for example, between 1934 and 1954, the list of “governments” appears on the cover of the minutes, and from 1955 onwards it is the “states represented” that are listed. Addressing their ministerial representatives in their exchanges, there is then a reference to “your country” and when lists of reports are presented; they are referred to as countries.

²See our general introduction for a discussion of these concepts in relation to the international literature.

³A recent analysis of the evolution of IBE intergovernmental relations covering the years 1934 to 1952 has been carried out by Christian et al. (2022) and Brylinski (2022): we integrate these results in Chaps. 14 and 15, including, on our part, the following two decades, newly studied.

was it challenged, prompted or even forced to act or at least react? Did a fiercer nationalism and the rise of authoritarian regimes at the very time that the Bureau was setting up its modus operandi prompt it to take positions? As the Cold War split the world deeply, were reflections of this evident within the IBE, and especially in its relationships with the governments with which it sought to collaborate? What was the impact of the processes of independence and decolonisation that were changing the map of the world? How, in this world whose geopolitics were so drastically redrawn and where the number of sovereign states multiplied, did the IBE simultaneously manage its insistent quest for universality and its founding principles of neutrality? These are the questions that guide our analyses in this fourth part, which, by focusing on the IBE's interconnections with states, also questions the question about the possible depoliticisation made by international organisations such as the IBE (Image IV.1).

Image IV.1 Caricature of Jean Piaget, director of the IBE, 1939. At this moment, he was also professor at the universities of Geneva and Lausanne, as written in the caption, and co-director of the *Institut Rousseau*. At the age of 43, he was already well known: his books were translated into several languages; he was invited by many universities and received an honorary doctorate from Harvard in 1936. (© AJP)



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Towards a Universality of Voices

The purpose of this chapter and chapter 15 is to examine the evolution of the countries interacting with the IBE over time. We distinguish four main possibilities for interaction:¹ participation in the IBE's thematic surveys, the drafting of a national report for the *Yearbook*, representation at Conferences and membership of the Bureau. In this chapter, we focus on the first three possibilities: to what degree did they conform or not to the IBE's objective universality (even partially)? What configurations did this universality take according to the context and time? In Chap. 15, we will analyse in detail the fourth possibility: the evolution of IBE membership, which had other implications.

STEADY GROWTH IN THE NUMBER OF COUNTRIES INTERACTING WITH THE IBE

Figure 14.1 summarises the number of countries active within the IBE from 1934—the date of the effective establishment of the ICPEs—to 1968, the end of Piaget's reign.² We do not include the period of the

¹We therefore do not take exhibitions into account here, nor occasional scientific collaborations, such as contributions to Bulletins, requests for information, translations, reciprocal invitations, conferences, etc.

²See also Appendix C, which presents the countries that participated at least one time in an ICPE and the number of times they did so.

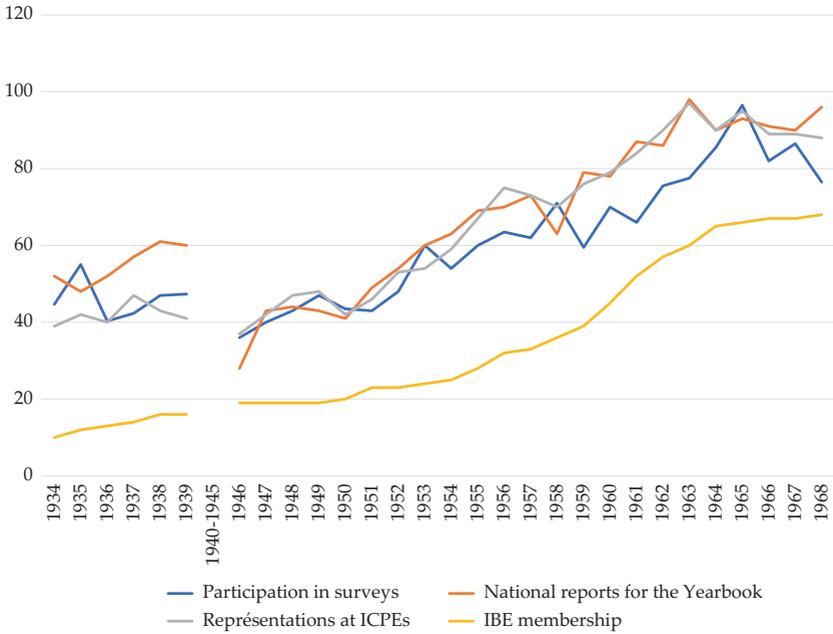


Fig. 14.1 Participation in surveys (yearly average), national reports in the *Yearbook*, presence at ICPEs, membership in the IBE from 1934 to 1968

Second World War when many activities were suspended (ICPEs, publication of the *Yearbooks*), even though the IBE continued its surveys and exchanges, but in other formats.³

We observe a comparable increase in three of the four types of interaction: participation in surveys and national reports for the *Yearbook* and representations to the ICPEs, which roughly double from 1934 to 1968. The curves are relatively close to each other. Equally constant is the gap between the number of memberships, the fourth indicator and the other activities: it always remained lower, even if the curve followed a more notable rise than the others from the 1960s onwards, as we shall see later (Image 14.1).

³ See Chap. 5.

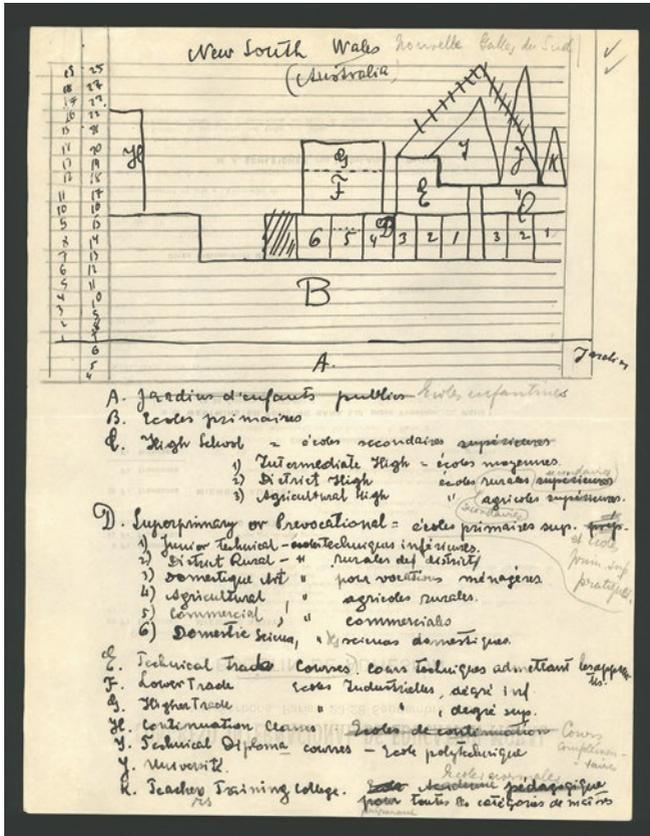


Image 14.1 New South Wales response to the survey concerning school systems (1931). This survey, the first worldwide on public education, was published in French in 1933 under the title “The Organisation of Public Education in 53 Countries”: an important step in comparative education. (© IBE)

A MORE INCLUSIVE UNIVERSALITY

We can therefore see growth in the first three types of interaction. However, this should be put into perspective from the outset, since many regions of the world are not represented, which testifies to the IBE’s difficulty in achieving real universality. The members of the Secretariats and the main bodies of the Bureau were aware of this from the start and

regularly identified countries with which they wished to intensify their relations. With this in mind, let us examine the different phases of this evolution on the world map.

Participation in IBE activities was at a relatively high level from the beginning. Some forty countries met at the first ICPEs and as many responded to the surveys; even more provided national reports. The 1935 survey on primary teacher training, discussed at the ICPE received as many as 64 replies; in 1938 and 1939, sixty and fifty-nine countries respectively provided a report for the *Yearbooks*. We note that at that time this represented almost all the so-called sovereign countries that maintained diplomatic relations.⁴ From this point of view, universality seems to have been almost achieved; the delegations themselves noted this throughout the ICPEs and declared themselves delighted with it. Surveys and *Yearbooks* attracted ministries from all over the world and also led them to participate in ICPEs insofar as it was economically and technically possible for them; the countries that least attended the conferences were from Latin America, for just such reasons.⁵

Let us not deceive ourselves: the limitations of this ‘universality’ are apparent from a geopolitical analysis: thirty European and nineteen Latin American countries make up the majority of the countries, plus the United States and Canada and eight Asian countries (including the ‘giants’ India, still under British rule, China and Japan). With the exception of the Union of South Africa, which was dominated by white settlers, the whole of South-East Asia, a large part of the Middle East and the whole of sub-Saharan Africa were absent: that is, the regions colonised by Europeans.⁶

⁴ See in particular Gleditsch and Ward (1999), and more recently Butcher and Griffiths (2020) who define a “state” as follows: “(1) A population of at least 10,000. (2) Autonomy over a specific territory. (3) Sovereignty that is either uncontested or acknowledged by the relevant international actors” (p. 295).

⁵ For an analysis of the interactions between Latin American countries and the IBE and the reasons for their active participation, see Loureiro (forthcoming). Extending the investigations conducted by Dumont (2020), she shows in particular that on the Geneva scene the promotion of Latin American countries was an integral part of the development of multilateralism.

⁶ Conversely, let us recall that, in a survey carried out by the IBE for the ILO in 1927–1928, the Secretary General of the Bureau, Marie Butts, addressed not only the educational authorities of 69 countries, but also those of colonised countries and those under the protectorate of Great Britain, Belgium, France, Spain, Italy and Portugal. B.2.0-42, A-IBE. This testifies to the possibilities of investigating these territories, albeit sometimes with great difficulty.

After the Second World War, despite sustained cooperation with UNESCO, curiously the number of participants in IBE activities did not exceed the pre-war level and even decreased in the *Yearbooks*: there was a stagnation, or even a decline, from the point of view of world representativeness, since the total number of countries had increased in the post-war period, in particular thanks to their winning independence especially in Asia.⁷ Put another way, if considered in terms of the percentage of sovereign countries represented, universality was even more incomplete than before. Among the reasons for this were irregular participation, notably by a number of particularly disadvantaged Latin American states, such as Paraguay, Haiti and Honduras, plus the absence of the communist bloc countries which boycotted a number of international organisations, including the IBE between 1950 and 1953.⁸

From the 1950s onwards, the number of states participating in the IBE's activities took off again. The organisers were delighted with this development:

This year, the conference realizes a decisive step towards universality, since several countries that never participated took part for the first time in the work of the Conference and others, absent since 1950, once more took their place in participating. (ICPE, 1954, p. 9)

Several newly independent Asian, Near and Middle Eastern and North African countries now became active in the IBE.⁹ Moreover, after Stalin's death, the communist countries returned to the IBE, just as they also reversed their policy towards other international organisations.¹⁰ This beginning of a take-off was confirmed in the second half of the 1950s, thanks to the spread of independence movements in the Near and Middle East, in North Africa and, more tentatively, in sub-Saharan Africa.

⁷According to the list in Gleditsch and Ward (1999), these were Bhutan, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Israel, Jordan, North and South Korea, Lebanon, Burma, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Syria, Taiwan.

⁸Countries were withdrawing from many other international organisations; Kott (2021, p. 55). Added to this was the disappearance of the Baltic countries, absorbed by the USSR, but this does not affect the percentage with regard to the sovereign countries represented since they were not considered as sovereign any more.

⁹In chronological order: Lebanon, Honduras, Syria, Burma, Ceylon, Pakistan, Israel, Monaco, the Philippines, Cambodia, Korea, Laos, Vietnam, Indonesia, Jordan.

¹⁰Joining the ILO in 1953, then UNESCO in 1954: Archibald (1993, p. 231), Kott (2021, p. 68), Maurel (2006, p. 231), more generally Gajduk (2012) and Porter (2018).

At the beginning of the 1960s, there was a real leap forward, both quantitatively and geographically: twenty-five African countries were by now active in the IBE.¹¹ The year 1965 was a kind of culmination:¹² 105 countries took part in the survey on modern languages, ninety-six in the ICPE, ninety-three in the *Yearbook*. The twenty or so countries which did not respond to the invitation were among those which, due to a lack of resources, collaborated once in every two or three occasions; and there was still the problem of the non-invited countries of the communist bloc, as we shall see. These developments show that the IBE had in reality almost achieved its goal of universality (as it understood it), allowing it to rely on data provided by a large majority of the world's existing governments.

Despite this obvious success, relatively few countries had become members of the IBE: how can this be explained?

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¹¹The process of decolonisation in Africa and the study of Africa are examined by Clapham (2020), Hargreaves (2014) and Jeppesen and Smith (2017). For an analysis focusing on the whole of the twentieth century, and wider cultural areas but with a clear focus on education: Desgrandchamps and Matasci (2020) and Caruso and Maul (2020).

¹²Referred to in Chap. 6, but this “culmination” can also be interpreted as a swan song.

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Joining the IBE? The Influence of Global Power Relations

The large discrepancy we have noted in Fig. 14.1 between the number of countries that participated in the IBE's activities and those that joined it could be a key to reading the IBE's positioning from a geopolitical point of view. We should contrast both these facts as countries that interacted with the IBE could be considered potential members. We shall study canvassing undertaken by the IBE and confirmed affiliations, in order to understand the reasons that may have discouraged or favoured membership. We shall then describe this same process in terms of its geopolitical distribution. On this basis, a typology of members and non-members can be established and possible explanatory factors outlined.

LOBBYING: A MATTER OF SURVIVAL¹

On 19 December 1930, the Executive Committee of the IBE decided to send a circular letter concerning the existence of the IBE to all the ministries of education in the world. It enclosed documentation on the history, activities and statutes of the IBE to encourage governments to join:

¹The importance of membership fees for the financing IBE, and more generally the evolution of its finance is analysed in Insert 15.1.

In thus bringing to your knowledge the official existence of the Bureau, the Executive Committee is anxious to intensify the technical and administrative relations existing between your Ministry and or Institution, and an international organisation of universal interest, created in order to carry out technical collaboration in the field of education, while maintaining a completely neutral position with regard to political and religious questions. [...] We are at your disposal to give you any information concerning the relations between the International Bureau of Education and the states who desire, by becoming members, to contribute to the development of international collaboration in the field of education.²

The responses to this circular letter did not live up to expectations: only four reached the IBE (Belgium, China, Romania and Bolivia, the latter being the only one to indicate a wish to join (Director's Report 1930, p. 21).³ A similar approach was undertaken for South American countries, with an equally disappointing result (Loureiro, [forthcoming](#)). Another strategy was therefore set in train: "to proceed with individualised steps to obtain the accession of new countries",⁴ in other words to contact states and their ministries one by one.

From that point on, lobbying a wide range of governments was continued and intensified. This was done mainly through the personal contacts of the members of the secretariat, initially mainly with Western European countries. As early as 1930, Secretary General Marie Butts made use of her wide network of contacts in Belgium, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Norway, with personalities often close to the Ministries of Education.⁵ At the same time, in the course of his own travels and lecture tours, Piaget took the opportunity to engage in discussions with scientists and diplomats who had influence on a relevant ministry (education, foreign relations, finance), notably in France, the UK and Italy. And close links already existed with Central and Oriental Europe, thanks to former students and lecturers of the *Institut Rousseau* (Hofstetter, 2010, pp. 291, 486). Thus, the ground there was favourable, especially as Poland, close to

²An extract from the circular letter, in this case the one sent to the UK on 4.5.1931. B21_A.1.29.282, A-IBE. See in this regard Christian et al. (2022) and Brylinski (2022, chapter 1).

³Bolivia would not join until 1950.

⁴Resolution passed at the 3rd meeting of the executive committee on 17.4.1931. A.3.1.290-378, A-IBE.

⁵See letters in the dossiers concerning the steps to membership: Norway: 31_A.1.62.364; Belgium: 17_A.1.23.207; Netherlands: 31_A.1. 64.366; UK: 21_A.1.29.282, A-IBE.

the other Slavic countries, was a founding member. Iran was also approached through an acquaintance of Butts and Piaget: thanks to a regional argument since Egypt was a member and Turkey (here too the links with the *Institut Rousseau* were essential) was about to become one,⁶ it seemed easy for Iran to become the “voice of the East”.⁷ In Asia, it was above all Japan that was actively courted, with the Secretary General also activating her networks by evoking other “Asian” alliances, with Persia having promised its participation.

The arguments in favour of membership were always the same. Emphasising that membership allowed participation in the definition of the content covered and the orientations of the Bureau—which suggests additional powers in the organisation and thus on the international scene—its spokespersons insisted first of all on the Bureau’s function of documentation and comparison in the field of education; then they underlined the neutrality of the IBE and even its independence with regard to Geneva’s international organisations, particularly the LoN. But, in addition, the message was also specially adapted to its addressees:

- To powers considered as in the second rank, it was stated that the IBE being based in a neutral country made it possible to avoid the tutelage of great powers.
- The educational tradition of each invited country was shown respect, by appealing to national qualities.
- References to countries that were culturally or ideologically close were intended to be attractive, by suggesting possible alliances.

One of the main obstacles to membership was the fee, which was set at 10,000 Swiss francs for each country, regardless of its size and wealth.⁸ The IBE quickly realised that it had to compromise to allow any country

⁶In the end, diplomatic incidents were to prevent Turkey’s accession at that time.

⁷The sources can be found under “Persia: steps towards membership”. 32_A-1-65-367, A-IBE. We draw here on the data collected by Leopoldoff-Martin. See also Brylinski (2022, chapter 3).

⁸This apparently equitable principle was strongly contested in the 1960s by the African countries. In 1966, the IBE drew up two proposals for a scale of contributions on the basis of the UNESCO scale, which classified countries according to their means available (Appendix Minutes of the 31st meeting of the Council, July 1966). No decision was finally taken, given the planned dissolution of the IBE.

to join. It therefore de facto lowered the amount of the contribution, or proposed that it be paid “in kind” by sending a collaborator who would work simultaneously for the IBE and for the country concerned.⁹ Participating in the International Exhibition of Public Education then became the equivalent of making a contribution in kind.¹⁰ It is apparent that financial arrangements did not seem to be a problem at first. They were partly compensated by subsidies from foundations. But the habit of paying less, or not paying at all, would eventually lead to an existential crisis.¹¹

This intense individual lobbying even during the war (e.g. of Japan or Finland¹²) became rarer and then disappeared after the collaboration agreement with UNESCO in 1947. It is true that the IBE and its officials regularly reminded states of the possibility of joining, on the occasion of the ICPEs, incidentally in letters and by sending material describing the history and activities of the institution, but there was no longer any trace of a systematic and sustained approach. Collaboration with UNESCO and its regular financial participation probably made the question of membership less pressing (Image 15.1).

THREE WAVES OF MEMBERSHIP

Analysis of summary Figure 14.1 in the preceding chapter shows that only a quarter of the countries that participated in IBE activities were members in 1934. This difference diminished over time, to half in 1968, but the gap between participation and membership remained significant.

We can distinguish three waves of membership. The first, not very intense, corresponded to the inter-war period and included only European (11) and Latin American (3) countries, plus Egypt and Iran. A second

⁹ Solution found for various countries including Germany; see letter from J. Piaget to the Reich’s Foreign Minister, 6.3.1932. 21_A-1-32-293, A-IBE.

¹⁰ This is, for example, the proposal made to Burma: Letter from J. Piaget to A. Campbell, Deputy Director of Public Education, 8.4.1939. 42_A-1-103-780, A-IBE. It should be remembered that, conversely, in order to exhibit, one had to be a member of the IBE.

¹¹ On the evolution of the financial situation, see Insert 15.1. on finance. The crisis that led to the IBE being attached to UNESCO in 1969 also had a budgetary dimension; however, it was not due to a lack of membership, but to the fact that many countries did not pay their dues at all or only in part.

¹² 27_A.1.50.352, IBE; Finland joined at the end of the war.

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	A	B	C	D	E	F	G		
	Chiffres	Détachés	Recevements	Rece. par l'Etat	Rece. par l'Etat	Rece. par l'Etat	Rece. par l'Etat		
Janvier	1250	-	155 55	225 55	40 05	50	-		45 861 11
Février	490	-	200 55	75 44	8	-	-		3 784 48
Mars	-	-	280 30	364 25	4 40	250	-		45 841 89
Avril	6 250	-	307 45	25 05	-	150	-		1 236 03
Mai	-	17 799	369 65	51 15	31 30	50	-		50 858 82
Juin	-	-	216 65	63 26	-	2 700	-		208 43
Juillet	1250	-	146 50	160 60	67 55	857	-		47 877 01
Août	-	-	44	122 55	6 50	125	-		6 752 83
Septembre	5000	-	-	30 30	200 60	675	-		50 800 50
Octobre	-	-	-	8 50	-	-	-		2 521 05
Novembre	2 500	-	26 50	120 95	-	-	10 000	-	13 501 60
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period, the IBE grew from sixteen to thirty-three members by 1957. Then the third wave, which took place over a decade, was by far the most impressive, with the arrival of thirty-five new countries, Pakistan being the last to join during the period under review.

REGIONS OF THE WORLD UNEVENLY REPRESENTED

In order to analyse the IBE's presence in the world from the point of view of membership, the best indicator seems to be to calculate, by region, the percentage of members in relation to the countries that participated in the institution's activities and were therefore eligible for membership. The three regions that reached a membership rate between 70% and 75% comprised Europe, Latin America and, what is sometimes classified as WENA,¹³ namely West Asia and North Africa. These regions included all the founding countries, including Ecuador for Latin America and Egypt for WENA, along with Geneva. In Europe, a clear pattern emerges from the analysis: northern European countries, including the Netherlands and Luxembourg, were not members.¹⁴ Despite being the most regular participants in IBE surveys and ICPEs and despite the IBE's strong lobbying before the Second World War, these states resisted joining. The same was true of Oceania and Canada, which participated in almost all the Bureau's activities. The United States and the UK, also very assiduous, became members relatively late, in 1958 and 1960.

To understand this phenomenon, let us look at other regions. Among the Latin American countries (Loureiro, *forthcoming*), the three Central American neighbours (Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador) and two southern countries (Paraguay and Uruguay) were not members, nor was the former British colony Jamaica. It is difficult to detect a common reason for this. However, we should not overlook the Anglo-Saxon influence: apart from the proximity of the first three, Nicaragua and Honduras were long subject to the dictatorship of the dollar, under the influence of the United States, while the impact of the British Empire—whose reluctance we have already pointed out—was very durable in Jamaica.

As far as WENA is concerned, there was a high membership rate, attributable to two factors: on the one hand, countries colonised by France tended

¹³We use WENA following the proposal of some authors, notably Adib-Moghaddam (2010), which is followed by other specialists (e.g. Hofius et al., 2014). These scholars of international relations, close to post-colonial studies, consider the term MENA 'Middle East and North Africa' to be Eurocentric; admittedly, Bilgin (2004), who provides a thorough critique of it, continues to use it (see his note 1).

¹⁴Leaving aside a few micro-states: Monaco, the Vatican, Liechtenstein.

to join more quickly and readily (we will come back to this); on the other hand, the fact that Egypt was a founding country certainly facilitated the membership of Arab countries, particularly from the Persian Gulf. It should be remembered that Egypt had already had a close relationship with the founders of the IBE before 1929, in particular with Édouard Claparède.¹⁵

Fifty percent of the countries in the East of WENA (including Afghanistan) became members. The first to join as soon as they gained independence, as we have seen, were Cambodia and Vietnam (1952¹⁶): perhaps significantly, both had been French colonies. Japan followed, courted by the IBE from the time of its foundation, which had been supported by the Japanese diplomat Tamon Mayeda, vice-president of the first IBE's board of directors. The other countries, including India, the Philippines and Thailand¹⁷ became members only in the 1960s, during the large wave of new membership.

Following their independence, the countries of sub-Saharan Africa showed a real enthusiasm for the IBE's activities, which curiously was only modestly reflected in membership: only nine of the thirty-five countries participating in the IBE's surveys and ICPEs joined. The countries that did join were mainly in West Africa (Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone), with Cameroon close by and Burundi, a former Belgian colony, further away. It is difficult to draw a clear conclusion, but it is not impossible that the strong French, or even French-speaking, presence in this region, even though it also included former British colonies, may have facilitated the affiliation.¹⁸

The phenomenon of three waves of membership and the geographical distribution of members highlighted here allow an interpretation from the point of view of the universality which the IBE aimed for. The first wave was characterised by a strong Latin orientation at the European and

¹⁵In fact, Claparède was commissioned in 1928–1929 to examine ways of reforming the school system in Egypt and worked on this for a year. On this subject, see Matasci and Hofstetter ([in press](#)). This was then the case of Albert Malche, professor at the *Institut Rousseau* and Geneva Minister of Education, who became an advisor to the Ministry of Public Education in Ankara from 1932 to 1934 in order to reorganize the country's university, the Darülfünun in Istanbul. Berkurt ([in preparation](#)) shows the ambiguity of this position of expertise, which is found in other contexts, highlighting the power relations between North and South.

¹⁶After the partition of the country (De Tréglodé, 2018) only South Vietnam would be invited to the ICPEs.

¹⁷We have to remember that the Philippines had been a colony of the USA since the end of the nineteenth century and that Thailand was its close ally.

¹⁸These issues form part of our new research programme: Matasci and Hofstetter (2022).

American level, by an obvious presence in Oriental Europe and by an opening towards the WENA countries. This can be explained by the close links that the *Institut Rousseau*—founder of the IBE—already had with representatives of these countries and from which the Bureau would be able to benefit. The English-speaking countries, including Australia, New Zealand and Canada (despite Quebec being Francophone), did not affiliate with it, although constantly participating in the IBE’s activities; this was also the case for the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands, whose closeness to the Anglo-Saxon countries is well known.

This cultural and geographical orientation was reflected in the second wave, which saw an expansion mainly to Oriental Europe and Asia. It was not until the third wave that we see a broader universality, with the accession of the United States in 1958 and the UK in 1960, India in the same year and many other Asian and African countries. We should also stress that the time lag between independence and accession is relatively large for the Philippines, South Korea and Pakistan, all of which were under Anglo-Saxon influence. Curiously, the states of Northern Europe did not follow this trend (even though the Council of Europe—eager to consolidate its entity—strongly recommended it in 1957¹⁹); nor did those of Eastern, Central and Southern Africa: cultural gaps seemed to persist.²⁰

¹⁹ “Noting with regret that some European countries are not members of this Bureau [...] Recommends that the Committee of Ministers take the necessary steps to ensure that all the Member States of the Council of Europe become full members of the International Bureau of Education”. Strasbourg, 9 May 1957. 16_A-1-20-1337, A-IBE. The following countries were designated: Denmark, Ireland, Iceland, Luxembourg, Norway, Netherlands, Sweden, Turkey and the UK that became members in 1960.

²⁰ This difference in membership follows the same two ‘clans’ that existed within UNESCO since its inception, the “Anglo-Saxon” and the “Latin clan”, according to the terminology used in the diplomatic archives. (Maurel, 2006, p. 67) The first was led by the United States, with the UK, the members or former members of the Commonwealth (New Zealand, Australia, Canada, South Africa, India), as well as the northern European states, including the Netherlands. The other clan followed France and included, in addition to the countries of southern Europe, the Latin American countries and the Near East. This two-way split was also evident in the ICIC, more under the aegis of the Latin clan, which still included Eastern Europe, before its domination by the USSR, and from which the Anglo-Saxon clan was separating itself (Renoliet, 1999, p. 330). It should be noted that this reluctance to join was not apparent in other international organisations set up after the Second World War, mainly under Anglo-Saxon leadership. On the other hand, we need to recall the absence of the United States of America from the League of Nations, even though it was its initiator; but Tournès (2011, 2016) shows clearly that this emerging superpower then had other instruments of influence (geopolitical, economic, scientific), including philanthropic foundations.

Insert 15.1 Evolution of the IBE Finances²¹

The IBE's finances evolved substantially during the forty-three years of its existence as an independent institution (1925–1968). Analysis of expenditure and income and the structure of budgets and financial statements²² offers a striking perspective on the evolution of its operations, and leads to a better understanding both of its dissolution and integration with a new structure into UNESCO and of the gap between ideals and reality.

Analysis of revenues (see Table 15.1) reflects the structural evolution of the Institution. From a balance sheet by decade, we see that revenues consistently grew (by a factor of 20).

Figure 15.1 shows that at the outset the IBE depended mainly on private resources: those of the *Institut Rousseau* which became the *Institut universitaire des sciences de l'éducation* in 1929, and various donations and contributions, including those of members. Indeed, major US foundations like Rockefeller, Carnegie and Payne donated important sums for IBE projects; the Nobel Committee also allocated a significant grant. Although the direct subsidy from the Institute (12,000 Swiss francs initially) later decreased substantially, that was compensated by contributions in cash (provision of trainees, collaborators, secretaries, premises, sharing of the library). The share of donations decreased but still played a considerable role, not least in the

Table 15.1 The revenue of the IBE in Swiss francs from 1929 to 1967 by decade

Year	1929	1930	1939	1946	1949	1959	1967
Revenues	35,337	68,874	89,715	144,686	244,270	442,500	695,386

(continued)

²¹This text includes analyses and data from the insert “Budget et financements du BIE” by De Mestral and Boss (2022, pp. 524–525).

²²The information was compiled from a large number of documents, which are widely dispersed. In particular, we consulted the minutes of the bodies which discussed the accounts and budget (but often the appendices are missing), namely the Council: 43 to 46_A-2-1-249 to 1737, A-IBE, and the Executive Committee: 62 to 65_A-3-1-290 to 1729, A-IBE; the contracts between the IBE and UNESCO 191_A-1-79-1607 to 1608, A-IBE; and the donations listed in 79_A-8-0-236 to 685, A-IBE. In spite of our research, we do not have the complete series of budgets and accounts.

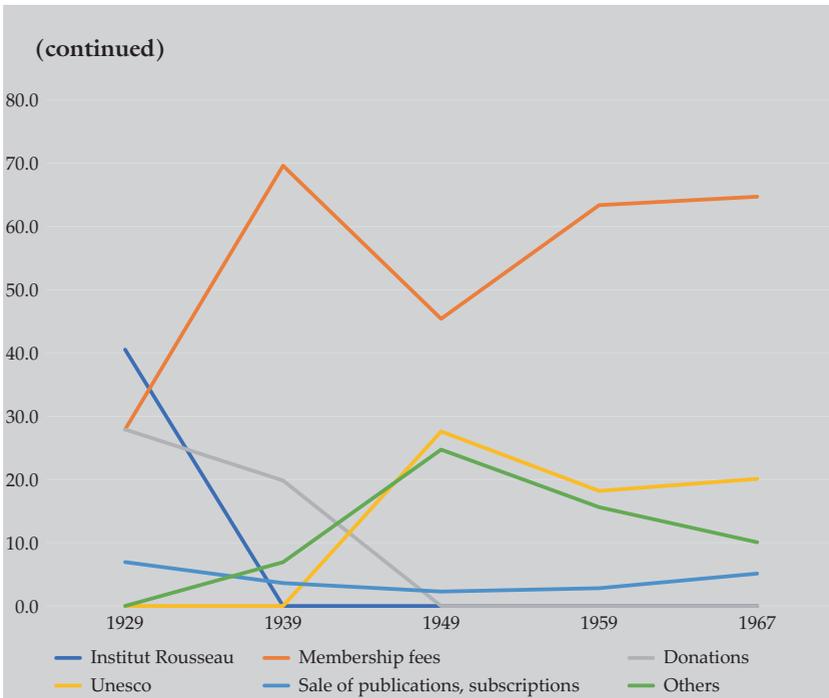


Fig. 15.1 Structure of revenue from 1929 to 1967 by percentage

orientation of surveys. From the 1930s onwards, government contributions were the main source of income, including the contributions from the Swiss Confederation and the Canton of Geneva, which covered the costs of the premises. The financial structure changed fundamentally with the collaboration with UNESCO (initiated in 1947 and then formalised permanently), whose contribution stabilised at around 20% (especially for the ICPEs and translations). The leaps between 1949 and 1959, on the one hand, and in the 1960s, on the other hand, were the direct effects of a massive increase in the number of members each contributing, in principle, CHF 10,000 per year. The Swiss Confederation, on the other hand, contributed 50,000 Swiss francs from 1946 onwards (when it also became a member of UNESCO; this translated into a much higher annual

(continued)

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contribution of CHF 600,000 for this UN organisation). Sales of publications and subscriptions yielded an average of 5%, with no significant change. The line “Other” includes, among other things, contributions from stamps, exceptional contributions for the permanent exhibition and services in kind in the form of interns.

As for expenditure, the structure remained relatively stable over time. “Salaries” was still the most important item, even if it tended to decrease in favour of “publications”, which accounted for a quarter of the expenditure following the collaboration with UNESCO, which contributed mainly to translations. General expenses (mailings, office equipment, etc.) fluctuated around 15%. A more detailed analysis of salaries shows that in 1967, not including the directors and their secretariat, two-thirds of the salaries were allocated to posts in charge of the development of educational documentation collections and the permanent public education exhibition, and one-third to paying people who organised the ICPEs and conducting surveys. This proportion was relatively stable from the middle of the century onwards. It precisely mirrored the IBE’s mission to document the world educational movement, to conduct scientific research in comparative education and to promote intergovernmental co-operation in order to solve the world’s most crucial educational problems.

By 1966, alarm bells were ringing. The Director announced that, in view of the major expansion of the Bureau, it was no longer possible to continue without a substantial and lasting increase in the budget, which was already in deficit: the secretariat had to recruit more staff, who had to be both better qualified and better paid so that the IBE could fully carry out its mandate. The financial crisis also stemmed from the fact that although the membership fee had remained the same for forty years, many countries did not pay it, even though the poorest were allowed to pay only half (i.e. CHF 5000; only nine countries were concerned). In 1966, nineteen member countries (out of 66) did not pay their dues. The resulting

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shortfall was enormous. Appeals to these countries went unheeded. The Director was fully aware of the depth of the crisis and the difficulty in surmounting it:

If the Bureau has overcome various crises, it is in part due to the spirit of service of its founders and their successors, which they instilled into all their collaborators, whose dedication has made it possible to maintain the activities of the Bureau.²³

The catastrophic financial situation was in fact only one aspect of a deeper crisis that required a complete overhaul of the institution: this was achieved through the dissolution of the IBE in December 1968 and its incorporation with a new structure into UNESCO in 1969.²⁴

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²³ Director’s Report 31st meeting of the IBE Council, 1966.

²⁴ See Chap. 6.

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Contradictions Linked to the Universalist Aim

The aspiration to have all the countries of the world join,¹ regardless of their political and ideological orientations, contained the seeds of contradictions. These became more acute as nationalist tensions rose and with the Cold War and its political and economic conflicts. How did the IBE position itself with respect to authoritarian regimes in the 1930s and then in the face of confrontations between communist and capitalist blocs?²

AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES AND THE CALL FOR DEMOCRACIES

Invited, upon his appointment, to make the IBE the legitimate intergovernmental body for education, Piaget as Director appealed to all countries recognised as sovereign, as we have already noted. In the troubled 1930s, he courted both authoritarian and fascist countries.

His letters to countries invited to join the IBE were tailored to each one, not without some heavy flattery. Stressing the importance of making known the great pedagogical tradition of the invited country was his usual practice and is perfectly exemplified by the figure of Montessori in

¹Insert 17.1 analyses the place Europe has in the debates of the ICPes.

²No further lobbying took place during the war, but as early as 1945 and 1946, Finland and later Austria and Guatemala applied for and obtained membership.

Mussolini's Italy.³ And Piaget did not hesitate to use arguments that could be considered political, which is ironic given the neutrality on which he prided himself. We can take for example Hungary⁴ in 1937, which Piaget tried to draw in by evoking the "faithful" presence of its German and Italian allies:

Perhaps I might remind you, Minister, that the International Bureau of Education is the only official international institution in Geneva which has retained all its members and whose meetings continue to be attended by German and Italian delegates; those two countries are still members of the International Bureau of Education and continue to take part in its activities and work.⁵

And in 1939, Italy and Germany took the opportunity to display their solidarity at the IBE table publicly, agreeing that

In so far as everyone bases education on the genius of their own people so all peoples will come to understand and respect each other better [...], for without a sense of nation there can be no true humanity.⁶ (ICPE, 1939, p. 62)

This formulation by the German ministerial delegate, Dr Südhof, seems to refer to Herder's conception of the difference between nations and languages as a great asset for humanity as long as they communicate and interconnect.⁷ In the context of Germany's entry into the war and Italy's colonial depredations in Africa, these phrases, particularly that of "national genius" (ICPE, 1939, p. 88) obviously take on a special colouring which would be used to justify devastating warfare.

In his more theoretical writings, in particular in 1934, Piaget went so far as to demonstrate that any regime, even an authoritarian one, could

³No doubt Piaget knew that Fascist Italy valued Geneva as a central place to develop its international relations and promote its imperialist ambitions (Tollardo, 2016).

⁴For an analysis of relationships between Hungary and the IBE, see Bajomi (2020).

⁵Letter from J. Piaget to the Hungarian Minister of Education B. Homan, 7.5.1937. 29_AI-54-356, A-IBE.

⁶We see here a manifestation of fascist internationalism, analysed by Herren (2016).

⁷See in this regard Balibar (2020) who takes up these ideas to think afresh about the idea of the universal; we refer to him for the evocation of this notion here taken as a main thread of our analysis (see our introduction and general conclusion).

benefit from the educational line promoted by the IBE, in particular through self-government, based on the methods of autonomy and cooperation:

Whether in the various types of liberal democracy or in the many varieties of authoritarian regimes, the self-government of schoolchildren remains a preparation for life as a citizen [...it may] take parliamentary democratic form [...] or insist on the principle of leaders. [...] The essential thing [...] is the general fact that, in the methods of self-government and cooperation, youth educates itself. (Piaget, 1934, p. 107)

Was this only a compromise? Its quest for universality—aiming at a non-judgemental reciprocal cooperation between the differing approaches of partner countries—placed the IBE in a delicate situation. Did it not risk being suspected of dubious collaboration? This was certainly a preoccupation.

Concerned that liberal and democratic tendencies did not predominate among the affiliated countries, the IBE Secretariat assiduously courted republican regimes.⁸

Although the IBE had been resisting the imperialist aspirations of the Paris-based ICIC, France had been in its sights from the start. France's initial reluctance may have been linked to tensions between the IBE and the ICIC—due to the overlap of some of their activities, suggesting possible competition—which led its director Julien Luchaire to use his veto. In Geneva, they did not give up and campaigned with colleagues they had met in their many social circles and pedagogical or scientific networks. Piaget pleaded, with the inspector Paul Barrier in particular who was supportive of the IBE, for the affiliation of France in order to preserve “a certain political balance to help foster the objectivity of the Bureau”.⁹ In the Memorandum advocating French membership of the IBE, the concluding sentence clearly suggests the need for a rebalancing in the face of the fascist powers:

⁸ For this reason, among others, the IBE successfully negotiated the support of the Swiss Confederation, which joined in 1934 through Geneva's membership of the IBE and thenceforward, as host country, issued official invitations to the ICPEs.

⁹ Letter from J. Piaget to P. Barrier, 4.11.1937. 31_AI.-7-353, A-IBE.

Although political influences have never been felt within the International Bureau of Education, there is no doubt that the adhesion of Italy and Germany to our institution is likely to give pause to a country that practises the policy of participating in intergovernmental organisations.¹⁰

Piaget was sending an almost subliminal message here: the IBE was not political, but the resolute presence of Italy and Germany should prompt republican France to function as a counterweight to authoritarian regimes. France was to take up membership in 1938, along with Hungary.

In the face of the rise of the fascist countries, the appeal to the United States—“the world’s largest democracy”—in its turn became more urgent. Why should the United States not join, since it systematically participated in IBE activities? Presuming an opening following the recent re-election of Franklin Roosevelt, Piaget addressed the US Commissioner for Education¹¹ in November 1936 and repeated his approaches in the following years:

We would be extremely pleased if [...] you would consider again the possibility of the United States reinforcing, with the authority of the world’s largest democracy, our effort to maintain educational progress in the world in which we now live.¹²

This was to no effect. Private pleas went further: in January 1939, Secretary General Butts entreated Harold L. Ickes, the Secretary of the Interior in Washington, for America to support the IBE and thereby the whole world, which had become “mad and dangerous”:

I [...] am greatly concerned in having the great Western democracies represented on the Council of our Bureau. Education holds out, more than ever before, the only hope of saving the world and education in the totalitarian countries is not taking the road that can help to save it. Therefore, it seems to me tragic that, of the great democracies, only France and the Argentine should have shown sufficient interest to join our Bureau.¹³

¹⁰Memorandum on the possible membership of the IBE by the French government, n.d. (probably January 1938). 28_A-1-51-352, A-IBE. For more on the relationship between France and the IBE, see Robert (2020).

¹¹Letter from J. Piaget to John W. Studebaker, 10.11.1936. 22_A-1-30-292, A-IBE.

¹²Letter from J. Piaget to J. W. Studebaker, 8.4.1938. 22_A-1-30-292, A-IBE.

¹³Letter from M. Butts, “private and confidential” to H. L. Ickes, United States Secretary of the Interior, 6.1.1939. 22_A-1-30-292, A-IBE.

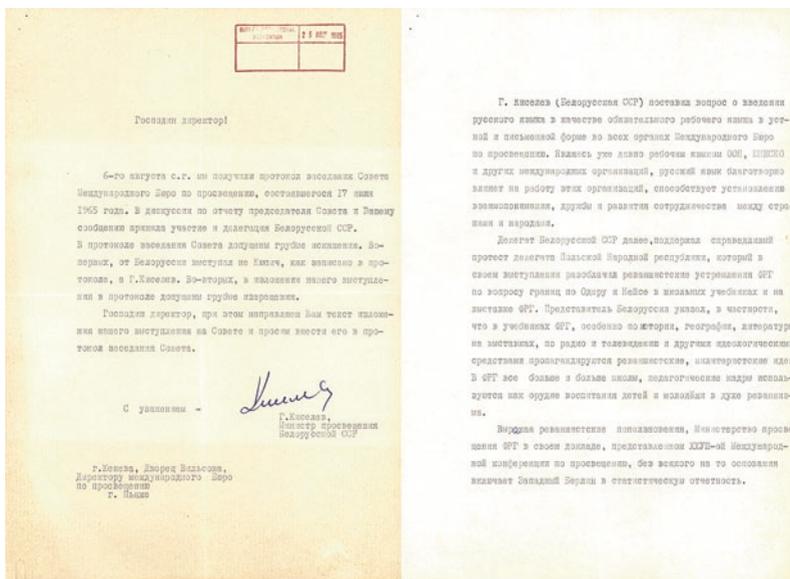


Image 16.1 Draft for asking for correction of the intervention of the Byelorussian delegate in the minutes of the IBE Council 1965. He complained that the question of translation into Russian was not on the agenda of the IBE Council. Similar letters can be found for Spanish, German and Arabic. Such requests led to a survey by the IBE to determine which languages should be given priority, and to ask states to finance these translations. No one was willing to cover these costs. The delegate addresses also the issue of borders on the Oder and Neisse rivers, revanchist and militarist ideas being promoted in school textbooks and exhibitions of the Federal Republic of Germany which considered itself as the only German state. (© IBE)

These anguished cries from the heart bore no fruit. It was not until 1958, as we have said, that the United States joined the IBE. In the meantime, the geopolitics of the world had been greatly reconfigured (Image 16.1).

INTERFERENCE OF THE COLD WAR¹⁴

The Cold War manifested itself first through the question of the countries to be invited to the ICPEs.¹⁵ In 1954, once the countries of the communist bloc were again actively participating, the Polish representative “expressed its surprise to see China represented at this Conference by a delegate from Taiwan”. (p. 29)¹⁶ The delegations from Russia and Hungary expanded on this:

Only the reactionary policy of support of the Kuomintang renegades pursued by some states and the U.S.A. in the first place, made it possible that the Kuomintangites, contrary to common sense and historical justice, should still attempt in vain to pose as representatives of China in a number of international organisations, including UNESCO. (p. 29)

And again in 1956, there were protests by the USSR delegate at the exclusion of a country with “600 million inhabitants and an ancient culture where astonishing progress has been made in the field of education” (1956, p. 28).

Each year the IBE Council returned to the question of inviting the People’s Republic of China; affiliated to the Bureau since 1955, the USSR, Ukraine and Belarus spoke out in favour of the invitation, along with other supportive countries (Egypt, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia). Piaget faithfully relayed the request to the joint UNESCO-IBE Commission, which had the mandate to draw up the list of states to be invited to the ICPEs: “The IBE is interested in the development of

¹⁴Kott (2021) provides an in-depth discussion of the functioning of the Cold War in international organisations, which she approaches as “magnifying glasses through which the world’s balances and imbalances could be observed” by also viewing them as actors in the world, “structured around common causes”, which also made it possible to “move away from the Soviet-US face-off” to identify the emergence of other countries and alliances (pp. 11–13, and chapter 2). What was at stake at the IBE, which the historian does not deal with, confirms her analyses and thus makes it possible to extend them to the field of education. Insert 16.1 shows an example of the effects of Cold War on a debate in ICPE.

¹⁵One can also mention, on another level, UNESCO’s opposition to Spain’s participation in the ICPEs, at the instigation of the USSR; or Egypt’s opposition to Israel’s entry into the IBE.

¹⁶On this matter, see Kott (2021, p. 56); and more broadly Gajduk (2012).

education in all countries regardless of their political regime. Thus, when Spain was not a member of UNESCO, it always insisted that it be invited.”¹⁷ The problem seemed insoluble.¹⁸ The position of the Director of UNESCO’s Education Department remained unchanged:

China features on the list of states to be invited to the Conference; it remains to determine which China that is. As far as UNESCO is concerned, the question of China’s representation was raised at the Eighth Session of the General Conference (Montevideo), which decided in favour of the Republic of China.¹⁹

When it came to putting the admission of the Republic of China, that is, Taiwan, on the Council’s agenda, Piaget objected, explaining that this would block any possibility of inviting the People’s Republic of China to the ICPEs. South Vietnam nevertheless proposed that the inclusion of the Republic of China (Taiwan) be on the agenda and it was admitted, as countries allied with the United States were in the majority.²⁰

¹⁷ 17th Joint Commission, 25.3.1955, p. 4. 35bis_A-1-79-1333a, A-IBE.

¹⁸ This opposition to inviting China corresponds to the repeated refusal to admit the People’s Republic of China to UNESCO; see “The question of the admission of the People’s Republic of China” in Maurel (2006, pp. 233–235).

¹⁹ 17th Joint Commission, 25.3.1955, p. 4; 35bis_A.1.79.1333a A-IBE. Let us note the ambivalence or resistance of UNESCO: “the Executive Committee of the Bureau decided that if the Executive Council of UNESCO subscribed to the invitation of the People’s Republic of China, it would accede to this proposal”; yet, Piaget lamented in 1958, “at the meeting of the Executive Council of UNESCO this spring however, none of the members of this Council asked that this question be included in the agenda” (ICPE, 1958, p. 37). From 1950 on, following the defeat of Chiang Kai-Shek by Mao, and his subsequent flight to Taiwan and seizure of power and dictatorship, the United States prevented the entry of the Communist People’s Republic of China in favour of the Republic of China. Taiwan was thus completely integrated into the US geopolitical system of encircling the People’s Republic in East Asia, a system based on a chain of authoritarian, unpopular, largely externally subsidised regimes: South Korea, the Philippines, South Vietnam, Thailand and Taiwan. UNESCO always followed this policy (see in this regard Barrett, 2019; Yarong, 2020; Kott, 2021). Archibald (1993, p. 144, based on Laves & Thomson, 1957) goes so far as to claim that the West, and in particular the United States, was trying to make UNESCO an instrument of anti-communist propaganda; see also Gajduk (2012, pp. 195–202). China joined the UN in 1971.

²⁰ 24th Council, 12.7.1958. 45_A-2-1-1544, A-IBE.

Paradoxically, the argument of political neutrality was referred to Piaget to support this state of affairs: when in 1965 the Russian delegation denounced the illegality of the representation of the Republic of China on the Executive Committee, the Chinese delegate from Taiwan retorted that “the participants in this meeting are there to discuss the activities of the IBE and not to raise political problems”.²¹ As we can see, each group attributed undue “politicisation” to the other: the presence of the Republic of China was said to be the result of political interference, from which UNESCO was not exempt, whereas for the opposing party it was its absence that would be political and the claimed neutrality of the IBE required its presence.²²

The case of the divided Germany is likewise instructive.²³ At the 30th meeting of the IBE Council in 1965, Poland and Belarus complained about West Germany’s extensive propaganda on education, because West Germany included Berlin in this, as if the city which had been split in two were an integral part of the country. More broadly, in a response to a West German missive claiming the right to assimilate Berlin, the delegations of the USSR, Belarus and Ukraine jointly criticised:

As regards the attempt of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany to be considered as the only German government legitimately constituted, it cannot but be considered as a clumsy attempt to take this desirable state of things as reality. [...] The existence of the sovereign German State – German Democratic Republic – is a real fact that cannot be reckoned with.²⁴

However, the German delegate was adamant and pointed out:

²¹ 42th Executive Committee, 9.2.1965, p. 2.65_A-3-1-1690, A-IBE.

²² We share the conclusion drawn by Brylinski (2022), who conducted a parallel investigation on this point: “In the end, we can stick to the fact that the weight of this so-called ‘political’ decision is carried by the agency that fully assumes itself to be ‘political’, i.e. UNESCO, but has implications for the IBE’s original aim of keeping political issues out of the assembly” (p. 145).

²³ UNESCO was also always opposed to the GDR’s membership; see the section “La question de l’admission de la RDA” [The question of admission of GDR] in Maurel (2006, p. 234); Kott (2021), recalls that the GDR remained excluded from the UN until 1973 (p. 56).

²⁴ Appendix to the minutes of the 30th Council of the IBE, July 1965. 46_A-2-1-169, A-IBE.

East Germany is merely an occupied portion of German territory. The so-called German Democratic Republic in East Germany is a regime imposed upon and not chosen by the population. The freely elected Government of the Federal Republic of Germany is the only Government entitled to speak for the German people in international affairs.²⁵

Supported by several members, the President of the IBE Council, the Swiss socialist André Chavanne, once again invoked the neutrality of the IBE in 1965 to justify a decision of a political nature; he recalled that “they should avoid all questions of a political nature and eliminate anything which could give rise to such discussions”²⁶

These problems were not resolved until after *détente* in the early 1970s, despite the fact that the delegations of the USSR and its allies spoke out tirelessly about them, while the FRG maintained its position.

It is evident that IBE institutions were riddled with political interference, even if the minutes remained ambiguous in this respect or deliberately avoided such contradictions in order to promote overall harmony.

While it is true that debate between opposing positions was part of the practices recommended by Piaget and Rosselló, these were pedagogical and scientific contradictions, not political ones. In fact, it is quite rare in the sources studied that we find direct interference from politics in the discussion of pedagogical issues (as we shall point out). It is certainly no coincidence that it was on the subject of the role of geography in international understanding that explicitly contrary positions emerged at the ICPE in 1949. Thus, delegates from communist countries insisted that it was necessary, in this school subject, to draw the attention of pupils to the fact that the world was divided into social classes and that this should not be hidden under the cover of a soothing discourse, which could delude them and weaken their power of resistance.²⁷ The Polish delegate took a clear stand against the dangers of capitalism and stated:

²⁵ Letter from the delegations of the USSR, Belarus and Ukraine 22.7.1965 and letter of response from the German delegation to the President of the Council of the IBE; appendices to the minutes of the 30th Council of the IBE, July 1965, 23.7.1965. 46_A-2-1-1699, A-IBE.

²⁶ 30th Council, 17.7.1965, p. 3. 46_A-2-1-1699, A-IBE.

²⁷ In this regard, refer to the study of the ICPEs positioning with regard to the geography by De Mestral et al. (2022).

Geography was an important factor in the development of international understanding, if taught honestly, in such a way as to combat chauvinism, nationalism and racial prejudice. Geography could also develop active solidarity between workers throughout the world. It was necessary not only to draw attention to the facts which united men and nations, but also to those which separated them, facts such as exploitation and racial discrimination. (ICPE, 1949, p. 35)

To which the representative of France, speaking on behalf of the other countries, retorted, entirely in line with the supposed neutrality of the IBE:

Obviously, one could not close one's eyes to the fact that the world was divided. The different economic systems should be explained to the pupils but they should not be told that only one of the systems was good. [...] The teaching of geography should guarantee freedom of thought. (ICPE, 1949, p. 41)

The communist countries abstained from voting on the recommendations and did not circulate the UNESCO report on which they were based,²⁸ deeming that their voices had not been heard, as the phenomena of exploitation and discrimination were not sufficiently addressed in these documents.

The Cold War, of which we have just seen some manifestations, did not cease to haunt the debates behind the scenes. But given the process of decolonisation, it took another form through the play of alliances,²⁹ notably between states which had formerly been colonised and overtly communist countries.

²⁸ Contrary to the usual practice, the recommendations concerning geography were not based on an IBE survey, but on a UNESCO report; see Chap. 18. For her part, Brylinski (2022) hypothesises that in addition to this ideological opposition, there was a reluctance to discuss subjects chosen by UNESCO, which was criticised for its universalism, the tone of which was perceived as standardising.

²⁹ In the case of pre-school education, Christian (2022) shows that the alliance played off countries of different blocs: those of the West most in favour of it were joined by the countries of the East, which led to a recommendation by the IBE in 1961 that was much more ambitious than that of 1939.

Insert 16.1 The Discussion of the Financing of Education in the Grip of the Cold War³⁰

How did governments manage to debate education funding in the midst of the Cold War in the 1955 ICPE? Despite a defined modus operandi to protect the ICPEs from political issues, Eastern States acted in solidarity, building a unity to face what was perceived as a Western bloc.

While a total of 146 delegates attended the assembly, reflecting the participation of sixty-five states and observers from seven organisations, only about 27% of the representatives intervened in the debate. Among them, the majority of stakeholders (60.5%) reaffirmed the initiatives and progresses made in the nation they represented, as

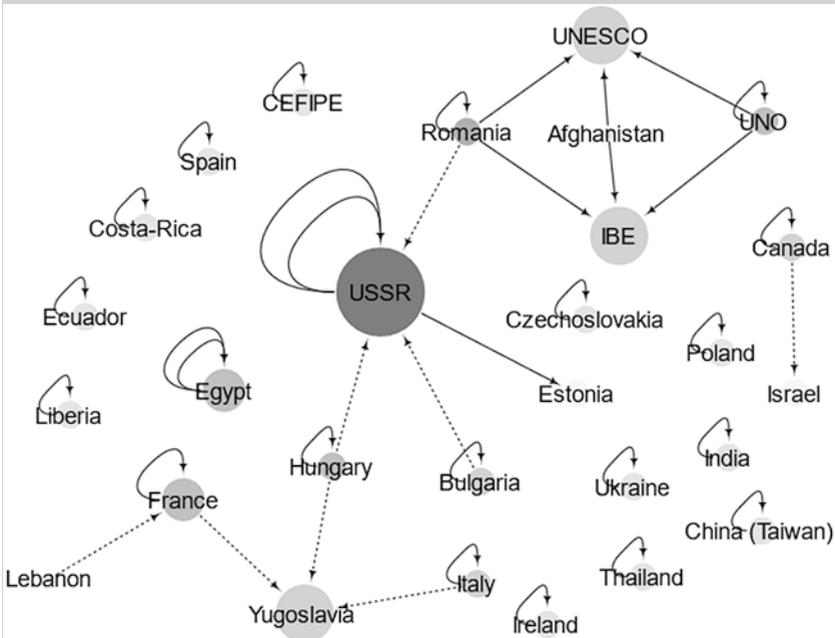


Fig. 16.1 Graphic representation of the mentions, during the general discussion of the ICPE of 1955, on the financing of education. Source: compiled from the database “presence and interventions of states and their delegates at ICPEs (1934-1958)”, design of the network produced with Cytoscape software

³⁰Source: Brylinski (2022, pp. 260–266).

(continued)

shown by loops in Fig. 16.1. This network, produced from the references and alliances mentioned by the participants, reveals a certain staging: a number of mentions position the experience of Eastern European States centrally in this discussion, more precisely that of the Soviet Union States and members of the Warsaw Pact, signed barely two months before this Conference.

In the depths of the Cold War, this debate on the financing of education opened with the presentation of the rapporteur, Clayton D. Hutchins, US delegate and specialist in the field. During the discussion, representatives of Eastern Bloc states took turns highlighting how the education system was funded in their countries. The USSR proclaimed, not without pride, that “the education budget occupies the second place” and that it is “supplied by three sources [which] increase constantly, the school services are [thus] assured and guaranteed” (ICPE, 1955, p. 31). As for Vladimir Václavík, Deputy Minister of National Education of Czechoslovakia, he assured that “the increase in the education budget is in harmony with the planned development of the national economy” (p. 33).

The USSR offered technical and administrative solutions, illustrated by its own initiatives. This approach was contested by France (although the delegate described the French model), the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany, who considered that a comparison was impossible to establish in this field, and that technical answers could therefore “divert attention from the problem itself” (p. 36). A certain tension crept into the discussion, to the point where Rosselló took the floor to recall the objective of this debate that aimed to expose “the opinions of Delegations on the main problems of the educational finance” (p. 37). Thus, the deputy director of the IBE took the risk of directing the content of the discussion by listing a series of questions and subjects to be broached, although it was rare for him to intervene in inter-state discussions. Despite this, the Ukrainian delegate took up the tone used by the USSR by evoking the progress made thanks to the “assured” financing (p. 37): according to her, proof of this was that in ten years, there had been an increase in the schooling of pupils in Ukraine, and “Ukrainian educators were continuing to raise the people’s level

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of education in order to inculcate in the rising generation a spirit of understanding and respect for others” (p. 37). Again, a delegate from the USSR intervened to explain the prosperous situation in Estonia. On these remarks, one of his colleagues bounced back to insist on the specificity of the USSR, which would not experience any difficulty with regard to the education budget because the Ministry of Finance and that of Education would act in “unity” that “always made it possible to reach a fair solution to any possible differences of opinion and to bring about a steady increase in the educational budget” (p. 41). Romania joined in “referr[ing] to the great progress achieved by his country in the field of education” (p. 44) and aligned itself with the USSR’s statement. It was seconded in this same spirit by Bulgaria and by Hungary, which recalled “that the Hungarian constitution guaranteed workers the right to [free] education” (p. 46).

While many of them evoked the idea that “the Conference should state clearly in its Recommendation that expenditure on education should have priority over military expenditure”, this “proposal made to that effect by the Delegation of the U.S.S.R.” (p. 44) was retained in the very introduction to the recommendation. However, even if France and Italy also subscribed to this idea, their representatives attributed this point to Yugoslavia alone. Perhaps because the latter was confined to the policy of neutrality established by Tito? Would it be possible for Western states to signal agreement with an idea put forward by a country from an ideologically opposed camp? In any case, the minutes do not record it.

While the reading of the minutes seems to reflect a balanced discussion grasped by a series of states, each to promote its own model, although there was a preponderance of presentations from the Western bloc (fourteen interventions against ten made by the Soviet states), the graphic representation of the mentions demonstrates that ideas from the Soviet camp were positioned centrally in the discussion. Indeed, states which were part of—or close to—the Soviet Union formed strategic alliances to build a “bloc”; nevertheless, and despite everything, the educational initiatives in favour of a socialist-communist ideology struggled to set themselves up as an alternative model for dissemination.

Émeline Brylinski

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Education Is a Political Issue

A close reading of all the minutes between 1934 and 1968 shows the intensification of questions relating to inequalities between countries and especially between large divisions of the world, while many newly independent states participated in the ICPEs in their own right.¹

The vocabulary used corresponds to the divisions of the time, distinguishing in a binary and hierarchical manner between developed, industrialised, rich, advanced and civilised countries and underdeveloped, developing, deprived, undeveloped, backward, dependent, less advanced and exceptionally backward countries. The Occidental–Oriental categorisations used in the 1930s were gradually replaced by those of West–East and North–South, but also by industrialised, developed versus developing countries—later called the Third World, after 1950 and even more so after 1960.² In a quest for friendliness and resilience, descriptions such as young, creative, inventive and newly independent countries come to the fore.

¹ On the processes of decolonisation from a general point of view we referred in particular to: Betts (2007), Chamberlain (2014), Droz (2009), Hauck (1997), Jansen and Osterhammel (2017), Jerónimo and Pinto (2015), Martin et al. (2015), Peyroulou and Le Goff (2014), Rothermund (2006) and Shipway (2008).

² “Underdeveloped countries” seems to be the most commonly used term. For an overview of possible terms: <http://cadtm.org/Sud-Nord-Pays-en-developpement-pays-developpes-De-quoi-parle-t-on>

LOOSENING THE COLONIAL STRAITJACKET

The demands to loosen the colonial straitjacket became much more forceful after the Bandung Conference (Indonesia, April 1955), which gave new legitimacy to the independence of Asian and African countries.³ The number of new sovereign states joining the IBE was increasing. Even though they were in the minority, critical voices with a clear political source were being heard.

In no way trivial, criticism bore on the functioning of the ICPEs themselves. The influence of the most favoured countries on everything, from the type of problems posed to the solutions put forward, was now clearly denounced.⁴ Among the most significant reactions was that of Pakistan's education minister, Sheikh Zahiruddin, who took exception to the fact that the poorest regions were isolated from the cultural alliances and connivances of the West, while concerns in "other regions, such as Asia, the Middle East and Africa (which for historical reasons had a lot of catching up to do⁵) were different" (1957, p. 52).

Stressing the "glaring contrasts" between peoples, he was surprised that "the Conference was discussing questions of television, wireless and theatres in fine architectural surroundings, but it should also consider the erection of one-room bamboo huts, with only a blackboard as equipment in remote Asian villages". The delegate from Pakistan therefore appealed to the universal mission proclaimed by the leading bodies of the Conference:

³The "Bandung Conference"—"the end of the colonial era: the damned of the earth reinvent the world" wrote Lacouture (2005) to characterise it—had an undeniably transformative effect (for a review, Acharya & Tan, 2008). It can be seen as a transitional event rooted in the liberation movements that emerged between the wars and the fundamental reorganisation of the international order through massive decolonisation after the Second World War that accelerated in the late 1950s and early 1960s (Phillips, 2016; Umar, 2019). The representatives of twenty-nine Afro-Asian countries expressed their solidarity, their emancipatory demands and their "neutralism", refusing to be used as a battleground for the great powers. The assembled Asian and African countries considered independence to be consubstantial with the principle of equality in the UN Charter, under which they asserted their right to self-determination and opposed any policy of racial segregation (Acharya, 2016).

⁴"If the problems are universal, the solutions must be national or even local. I would like to remind you once again that our aim is not to standardise, but to inform" (Piaget, ICPE, 1956, p. 27); here this assertion by Piaget was clearly challenged.

⁵This passage is omitted in the English translation made by UNESCO. This is still another example revealing a tendency, in translations, to erase positions that were too explicit.

UNESCO and the International Bureau of Education should see that the gulf was bridged between the privileged and under-privileged countries [...] if economic aid helped to correct the disequilibrium between the prosperous countries and the poorer ones, educational aid should mean that the Conference would no longer have to bring together on the same platform a world of television and a world of bamboo huts.

This intervention clearly raised the question of the role to be played by a Conference that claimed to have “a responsibility to all its participants”. For the representative of Israel,⁶ attention should be focused on “those regions where the need was greatest, that is, in Asia, Africa and Latin America, in which 200 million children of school age were without schools” (1957, p. 54).

In the same vein, the Indian delegate⁷ stated that “the thing that struck him most was that, among the family of nations, people who had recently risen to independence had an extremely urgent mission to perform in the field of education” (1960, p. 117). Taking seriously the supposed spirit of solidarity of the ICPEs, he called on his colleagues to take up the challenge collectively in 1960:

For the world cannot develop in harmony if half its population is illiterate while the other half enjoys all the advantages of education, or if half the world is poor while the other half is rich. A more satisfactory balance must be sought, in which nobody would lose anything for “who gives, receives”. The spirit of unanimity which was one of the features of the work of the Conference should serve as a lesson to all. He expressed the hope that the delegates would not lose sight of their responsibilities towards youth and towards the community as a whole and would strive to bring about a better world.

There were no direct responses to these speeches, undoubtedly because of the *modus operandi* in force in the ICPEs, which had its limitations: how could there be in-depth dialogue on such important issues between more than 200 people, at that time representing 78 states, with such a

⁶ Moshe Avidor, Director General at the Ministry of Education.

⁷ N. S. Junankar was speaking as Secretary of the Education Department of the High Commission for India, based in London.

meticulously planned agenda:⁸ It is unfortunate that the official minutes so rarely provide any clues, however small, as to the atmosphere in the Chamber, which was sometimes heavy, sometimes convivial; we can imagine how much discord would have prompted commentary behind-the-scenes; correspondence exchanges sometimes provide traces of this, particularly in the tense context of the early 1960s.⁹

Similar calls against divisions and discrimination in the field of education were now regularly heard: the ICPEs were thus witnesses to the power relations that were played out between developed/prosperous countries and underdeveloped/poor countries; between dominant countries and those that were subjugated; between countries that were leaders from the scientific point of view and those in which there was lamentable illiteracy.

The fact that such positions were expressed—obvious denunciations—proves the impossibility of eradicating all political interference, which is inevitably embodied in the socio-economic issues that permeate the entire field of education. A favourable reading of the working methods of the ICPEs could prompt the retort that if such conclusions could be voiced, then that is proof that the Conferences played their role, allowing all to express their point of view in a respectful reciprocity, to confront in solidarity the most crucial problems, arising in the world in all their diversity. On the contrary: a euphemising of power relations was not only expected but even demanded of the delegates, which could also be interpreted as a requirement to muzzle denunciations and to drive conflicts elsewhere, to avoid disrupting the Conference, which was a very real threat, as we shall see (Image 17.1).

⁸ It was indeed thanks to this scrupulous planning—which gives everyone the floor, according to the same principles—that the exchange was initially easy. What was possible with forty delegations could not be repeated with twice that number, and with more translations.

⁹ At the end of conflicts, certain messages attempted reconciliation; when drawing up the minutes, the number and substance of the corrections requested were also indications of what was being negotiated between partners, beyond the official language. The IBE Secretariat and the members of the IBE Council then wrote letters that were as courteous as they were firm in order to avoid offending sensitivities and generating disagreements.

political issues and to pretend that scientific objectivity guaranteed impartiality, or even that it was attainable in the field of education?

Convened as usual by the UNESCO-IBE Joint Committee, the July 1963 ICPE was attended by ninety-seven states and chaired by Bedrettin Tuncel, former Minister of Education of Turkey and member of the Executive Board of UNESCO. Following a proposal by the official delegate of Nigeria,¹¹ a draft resolution from the African states was read out by the ICPE President. The resolution explicitly demanded the “exclusion [...] of Portugal, whose colonialist policy violates dignity” and offends “human and children’s rights and the sacred principles of education” (p. 73). The authors contended that “it is impossible for African states and obviously difficult for all countries that have respect for human dignity” to sit alongside a country that “keeps African populations thirsting for culture and dignity permanently under a regime of subjection, ignorance and destruction”. The conclusion expressed the hope that Portugal, once “humanised”, could resume its place “at the side of genuine educators with a heightened sense of the status of man” (pp. 72–73).

On one side of this argument were those who felt that this protest, which invested great seriousness in issues which were above all educational,¹² should be on the agenda (in order: Nigeria, Algeria, Mali, Yugoslavia, Ukraine, Sierra Leone, the United Arab Republic and Uganda), particularly as no case history excluded it (Mali). On the other side, were those who opposed this for formal and judicial reasons (Spain, Portugal); they considered that the ICPE could not interfere with the mandates of the joint UNESCO-IBE commission. This position was echoed by a request for clarification of the respective competences of the organisations

¹¹ Aja Nwachuku, Secretary of State for Education. The extent of its economic and demographic resources gave Nigeria a special weight; it played a leading role in pan-African unity. The intervention of the African states was situated in a very specific context. At the Addis Ababa conference, several resolutions were passed concerning South Africa, Southern Rhodesia and Portugal. With regard to the latter, a resolution asked the UN Security Council to examine the situation in the territories it dominated. It should be noted that the Security Council passed a resolution in July 1963 in line with the African request. The Organisation of African Unity (OAU), created at the end of this conference, was henceforth to function as a pressure group of African countries forming a monolithic bloc (Jerónimo, 2015; Ruzić, 1963).

¹² We come back to this in Chap. 22.

(United States, France, Australia, Argentina).¹³ Was the protest political or not? This would be the object of, (or the pretext for?) the dispute, since politics was supposed to be strictly excluded from the assembly. Interpretations differed here too: for the former, it was including Portugal that constituted political interference, while the latter believed that it was the protest itself that was a danger signal for the Conference. Against the proposal of the ICPE bureau, a clear majority of the ICPE delegates decided to place the issue on its work agenda. The bureau's position was rejected by forty votes—thanks to the alliance between the African continent and the Eastern countries—against twenty-one in favour and sixteen abstentions (ICPE, 1963, p. 55). The plenary sessions on 3rd and 4th of July were therefore entirely devoted to the discussion of this protest.

Politics obviously interfered with all the debates here, since the educational issue was central to the confrontations relating to colonialism, to the power relations between the governing nations and the occupied territories, within the Cold War and to the socio-economic confrontations of the 1960s. Cameroon, through the voice of its delegate Josué Tetang, Secretary of State for Education, went so far as to deem that:

UNESCO, in inviting the governments to take part in the Conference, has implicitly exercised a political choice and that it would be artificial to dissociate politics from culture under the present circumstance. He questioned the value of education given in a colonialist context, which contradicted all the principles enunciated in the International Conferences of Public Education which had taken place since 1934. (ICPE, 1963, p. 58)

Opponents of Portugal's "colonialist policy" used the Assembly to demonstrate the absurdity of a watered-down vision of colonial issues, which muzzled the debate on relations of domination, particularly between races, ethnic groups and classes, thereby flouting human rights. Believing that they were safeguarding "professional ethics", these critics of Portugal took refuge behind the charters of the United Nations and UNESCO to place themselves on the side of law, justice and dignity and to implicitly relegate their opponents to the side of Portugal. The latter defended themselves against this charge and all of them, even the most powerful

¹³The question remained as to whether the Assembly had the right to change the agenda of the Conference and to determine its own guests, and even to exclude a country.

empires, unanimously condemned colonialist abuses and violence while firmly adhering to their formal arguments.

Nothing could restrain the “irreversible determination” (p. 56) of the African continent claimed the Mali delegation:¹⁴ the exclusion of the Republic of South Africa from the Executive Council of UNESCO was mentioned in its favour; as was the fact that Portugal was not a member of the organisation.¹⁵ Through the voice of Abdoulaye Diallo, Director of Cabinet at the Ministry of National Education, member of the Niger delegation, the peoples of Africa again expressed their disappointment with UNESCO, having invested in it “the highest hopes for a more human world, based on children’s rights and non-discrimination in education” (p. 57), while Portugal in Africa denied all its principles. Strengthened by this community of suffering, there was a succession of vehement and vibrant pleas in favour of the peoples of Africa, who had been oppressed for too long. Only the delegations from Austria, Australia, Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Argentina and Italy sought to counter these criticisms, which were powerful in themselves and in the alliances they created. These delegations claimed to be trying to save the ICPE without ever taking sides with Portugal, which still claimed to offer all “its” overseas peoples the same rights and opportunities.

THE FORMALIST POSITION CHALLENGED IN THE NAME OF HUMAN DIGNITY

Just before the vote, the representatives of the authorities who had convened the ICPE took a stand. Director Maheu declared that UNESCO had no business pronouncing on the policy of a country, Portugal, which was not a member of the UN agency: was he not thus dissociating himself from the ICPE? In addition to his legalistic clarifications however, Maheu firmly reiterated the condemnation of colonialism and the unconditional support of UN agencies for the processes of emancipation and independence. The speeches of Piaget and Chavanne, who represented Switzerland,

¹⁴ Abdoulaye Singapore, Minister of National Education, stands out for his firmness.

¹⁵ On the other hand, the Frenchman Jean Guiton, representing UNESCO, reported that at the UNESCO Executive Board “the proposal to exclude Portugal from the list of non-Member States of UNESCO to be invited to the Conference was rejected. This decision was taken by 14 votes to 7, with 4 abstentions” (p. 66).

the host country of the Conference and the seat of the IBE, suggested that the very survival of the ICPEs and therefore of the IBE, was at stake in this debate. The president made a final appeal to the assembly's farsightedness, believing that the existence of the IBE was at stake, but he also pointed out that the invitations had been sent out before the Addis Ababa conference, which showed that it was aware of the change in direction the meeting was taking (pp. 70–72).¹⁶

Despite this, the African delegations succeeded in having their resolution adopted by roll call on 4 July 1963: forty votes in favour, twenty-three against with seventeen abstentions. The countries that voted in favour of the resolution represented the African continent, the Middle East, India and the communist regimes of the USSR and its allies. Opposition came from Western European countries, North America and Australia, with a few Latin American votes (El Salvador, Colombia), Japan, Thailand and Turkey. The abstentions came mainly from Asian countries, which in a way formed a third group of countries, with some Latin American votes. Seventeen countries were absent from the vote, five of which were African.¹⁷

The result of the vote clearly disavowed the ICPE's overarching institutions: two-thirds of the voters supported the protests of the African delegations. However, it is important to take into consideration the substantial proportion of abstentions (17.5%) and the proportion of delegates who left the room before having to vote (16.5%): a third of the delegations thus showed their distance or even distrust of the direction taken by the talks, or testified to their powerlessness and inability to take a position. But the choice to withdraw could also signal disapproval of the instrumentalisation of the Conference, by clearly opposing the ICPE's voting on matters which lay outside its competence. It remains to be seen whether the abstentions and absences could also be understood as a form of disinterest, or even cowardice, in order not to offend any sensitivities and to preserve other interests (socio-economic and political) deemed to be prevalent in

¹⁶Indeed, the conference at which the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was created, opened on 23 May. One of the aims of this organisation was to eradicate all forms of imperialism and colonialism from the African continent (see a classic history of this organisation which shows the issues at stake at the time: Boutros-Ghali, 1969). This could not fail to have an effect on the positions taken by African countries at the ICPE in July of the same year.

¹⁷They were Congo (Brazzaville), Gabon, Ghana, Nicaragua and Uganda (ICPE, 1963, pp. 66–68).

these sensitive diplomatic negotiations. The ICPE continued its work, in an apparently serene spirit (on the surface at least), adopting the recommendations on the agenda as usual, without returning to contentious issues. However, the Director of UNESCO announced an internal ruling to clarify the procedure for inviting countries and the internal functioning of the ICPE.

THE EXPULSION OF PORTUGAL, A SERVICE TO "ALL HUMANITY"

Convened as was customary by both the Director of UNESCO, Maheu, and the Director of the IBE, Piaget, the 1964 ICPE included Portugal among its ninety-three delegations. This was immediately denounced by Aja Nwachuku, Minister of Education of Nigeria, who wondered "why they wanted to disturb the assembly in this way, especially the African delegations" (p. 44). It was not only Portugal and its "retrograde and colonialist policies" that was placed in the dock. The ICPE's umbrella institutions were also sent there, for not having respected the "sovereignty of the Assembly" that had excluded Portugal and consequently not having taken into consideration the aspirations of the oppressed people and thus also having flouted Human and Children's Rights. "To the masters of the mine who are more concerned with the minerals than with the wellbeing of the miner, the whole world has appealed for just and charitable treatment of the people under their rule: but they have not heeded" (p. 48), the African delegations insisted in their appeal. How could bodies that spoke up for fraternisation, law, justice and access to education invite Portugal, which constantly and repeatedly flouted the fundamental principles of human dignity? And the delegate from Algeria¹⁸ concluded: "The expulsion of Portugal was a service rendered not only to Africa but to the whole of mankind" (p. 50).

The negotiations continued for a week without any of the educational items on the agenda being discussed. The meetings were suspended, motions of order and compromise proposals were made. A draft resolution from the Latin American delegations¹⁹ attempted conciliation; at the

¹⁸Through the voice of Abdellah Benharrats, Director of Cultural Affairs at the Ministry of National Orientation.

¹⁹The delegations of Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Uruguay and Venezuela proposed to give priority to the work on the agenda. They also justified their vote as a matter of legality.

suggestion of the Philippine ambassador, the “75 developing countries” group met but could not find a solution: “The controversy was an insoluble political problem”, said one of its spokesmen²⁰ (p. 67). The representative of Sierra Leone²¹ cited as evidence against Portugal an extract from an official Portuguese bulletin stating “[t]hat the aim of education was ‘to bring the natives out of a state of savagery to civilization’” (p. 62). Whereas the Pakistan delegate²² “said that his country had a past similar to that of Asian and African countries [...] that education should play a vital role in shaping the modern world and that it should enable man not only to conquer space but also to be victorious over himself” (p. 65). In turn, the delegate from the United Arab Republic²³ “appealed to the conscience of the delegations present asking them to respect the basic principles of democracy” and challenged the distinction between education and politics; it proposed an alternative to the IBE motto, which postulated that as a necessary and possible distinction and held it to be the only legitimate one:

He was astonished that some members of the Conference considered politics taboo, a way of thinking which was quite apart from and foreign to practical life, whereas politics constituted a mental activity indispensable for every reasonable human being. As a philosopher had said, man is a political animal. Cultural, economic and educational life were inseparable from any form of government. No constitution in the history of the world had been able to refuse a minimal right to primary education to its people and a decent life to every citizen. Education could, therefore, not be separated from politics because only education made it possible to penetrate the thought of youth and to inspire it with noble ideals. The problem before the Conference was, in fact, one of an educational character or, if they liked, political, but within the above definition. (p. 68)

This was the only ICPE where the claimed neutrality of the IBE was questioned in this way, the umbrella bodies of the Conferences being suspected of making politics a taboo. Not only because all educational issues had a political dimension, but also because the refusal to grant everyone

²⁰The Cambodian Samereth Soth, Under-Secretary of State for National Education.

²¹Lettie M. Stuart: she was a senior official in the Ministry of Education.

²²A. T. M. Mustafa, Minister of Education.

²³Mahmoud Mahmoud, Dean of English Inspection.

the right to education and a decent life was a political position. To tolerate this in an intergovernmental conference—and under the aegis of bodies claiming to embody human rights—would be tantamount to endorsing them. The universalism advocated by the UN agencies was being mirrored back to them; *de facto*, this dispute called into question the right of the UN agencies alone to act as custodians of the legitimate definition and they were thus faced with their own contradictions.

“THE FACT THAT WE ARE WEAK POLITICALLY [...] IS
THE STRENGTH OF OUR OBJECTIVE AND ACTIVE NEUTRALITY”

The IBE Director and the UNESCO Deputy Director, the Colombian Gabriel Betancur-Mejia, both deplored this interference as illegal and self-destructive, instrumentalising the Conference and causing it to lose its qualities of technicality, objectivity and universality. They announced their intention to withdraw—together with their secretariat—which would suspend the work of the Conference if it did not respect its mandate. The African delegations once again succeeded in having their draft resolution voted on, reasserting tirelessly that a country that still defended colonialism could not be accepted and that the technical and the political could not be dissociated.

Before the president put the text to the vote, forty-one delegations left the room to avoid taking a position and to express their distance from or disapproval of the process, which was considered illegal. The resolution was accepted on 13 July 1964 by forty-three votes (out of ninety-one) from the same countries which had been favourable in 1963. There were seven abstentions, all from Asian countries (p. 76).

The interim president of the Conference²⁴ regretted that he was faced with “a crew which deliberately drives its ship onto the rocks”. Not being a “miracle worker”, he felt he could not act “without the cooperation of all those present”. “His powers ceased wherever intransigence occurred, whether on one side or the other” (p. 53). The expression was striking, suggesting as it did for the first time explicitly in a session, the impasse encountered in the IBE’s *modus operandi*, the impossibility of

²⁴Fouard Sawaya, Director General of the Lebanese Ministry of National Education.

dissociating the political from the educational in this situation and including all the protagonists of the debate in its denunciation of intransigence.

Before suspending the session and leaving, Piaget asked himself, “Why then choose the International Conference on Public Education in order to bring about its [Portugal’s] downfall” and answered this rhetorical question,

Because its Secretariat is weak, one may suppose and that has even been stated. But, Gentlemen, the fact that we are weak politically, is the very reason hitherto of our moral strength and the strength of our objective and active neutrality. (pp. 77–78)

At the end of the ICPE, the delegations that had supported the resolutions of the African peoples addressed the Director General of UNESCO and Piaget, through the acting president of the 1964 Conference: they justified their actions and positions and denounced those of their interlocutors, the respondents from UNESCO and the IBE (represented at the time by the members of the Joint Committee). The chairman of the said committee, Daniel Gagnebin, a senior civil servant in the Swiss government’s Federal Political Department and Chairman of the Joint Committee, responded and demonstrated again and again the legality of the decisions of those bodies. UNESCO was supposed to act as a judge and it had already taken a position and would confirm its support for the ICPE organisers and, through them, for the IBE itself.

The next Conference began its work in the summer of 1965, but not without adopting statutes and regulations confirming its *modus operandi* and main tasks. The procedures for defining the composition of the ICPE were the most talked about, in all the institutions in fact. The IBE’s Executive Committee finally agreed to submit to the supreme power of UNESCO, granting it the right to impose its choices on countries that were not affiliated to it.²⁵ However, the question of Portugal did not go away; indeed, the country continued to pay its dues to the IBE faithfully until 1968 (for the year 1967) and to correspond with it; it even

²⁵Texts governing the organisation of the ICPE (1965, pp. 144–150). Statute and rules of procedure. The procedure to be followed in determining the composition of the ICPE was adopted by UNESCO institutions and the IBE Executive Committee alone at its session of 10.2.1965, A-IBE.

participated occasionally in its surveys. Moreover, Portugal decided to join UNESCO in 1965, which led the UN agency to undertake an investigation of its educational policy in its colonies,²⁶ and the Joint Committee decided not to invite Portugal again until the results of that were known.²⁷ Again in July 1966, at the IBE Council (not in the ICPEs), the delegates from Nigeria, Francis Archibong, and Cameroon, Gaspard Towo-Atangana, proposed a resolution to exclude Portugal as long as it applied a retrograde colonial policy. The resolution was passed with seventeen votes in favour, six abstentions and seven who did not contribute to the vote: the discussions revealed the same divisions as had the ICPEs.

The Conferences eventually managed to return to their original function and subsequently focused their work and exchanges on educational issues, approached from a technical point of view; this preserved the

Insert 17.1 Europe, a Privileged Route or a Diversion in Building “Educational Internationalism”?

How did the IBE’s geopolitical location—on the Western edge of Switzerland, itself “at the heart” of Europe—impact on its history and the way its protagonists represented it? And what sort of relationship existed between the IBE and Europe, when in the immediate post-war period Europe was remaking itself as a new political entity, and also bringing Africa into this process at the interface of what were then known as the two blocs? Did this Europe constitute a privileged route or a diversion for the development of the IBE in the second half of the twentieth century?

(continued)

²⁶ In June 1965, the IBE even notified Portugal that it was withdrawing the invitation addressed to this country (in April 1965) to participate in the ICPE of July 1965, because the UNESCO Conference had decided that only its members could join the Conferences; Portugal having decided in the meantime to join UNESCO, the latter was carrying out an inquiry into the status of education in the Portuguese colonies and would not endorse its presence in these international conferences until the inquiry was completed. Letter from J. Piaget to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Portugal, 16.6.1965. In vain, the Permanent Mission of Portugal to the European Office of the United Nations, in a letter of 12.3.1966 addressed to the President of the Executive Committee of the IBE, vehemently protested against the fate it was suffering, believing that it had demonstrated that Portugal was in no way violating the fundamental principles of the United Nations and the Declaration of Human Rights, as its overseas citizens were not discriminated against. Portugal: relations in 1960–1968. 17_A-1-22-1595, A-IBE.

²⁷ 39th Joint Commission, 12.7.1965. 37_A-1-79-1505, A-IBE.

(continued)

As there are curiously few sources available for answering these questions, we have carried out a survey of all the digitised sources of the IBE between 1925 and 1968.²⁸ A keyword search of 2575 dossiers yielded the following results: “International” appears everywhere,²⁹ whereas “Europ*” features in only sixty-seven dossiers (“European” appears in forty).³⁰

Only two dossier headings include “Europe”. The first is the result of an inventory of correspondence with ministries by continent; the other refers to the Council of Europe (CE) (Strasbourg).³¹ Of the 244 pages in this file, one-third are strictly administrative, and one-third the result of duplication; only the remaining eighty pages are cross-referenced documents dealing with content. Three main points are addressed:

1. The two bodies invite each other to attend each other’s meetings as observers, which is done on an ad hoc basis, on common issues (such as educational and vocational guidance).
2. As soon as it was set up, the CE³² requested the IBE’s expertise, bibliographies and specific surveys; an agreement was even signed on 20 August 1951 in this regard.³³ Although the IBE

(continued)

²⁸Which therefore do not include the IBE’s finalised publications, but sometimes the manuscripts that prepare them.

²⁹This can be explained by the fact that they all refer to the *International* Bureau of Education.

³⁰This is about references to “reports” or “budgets” listing those of countries in continental Europe, as is the case for the other continents. For other concepts: Suisse: 317 (Switzerland 106, more than other countries because it was the host of the ICPEs); Genève 196 (Geneva: 150; idem); “univers*”: 46 (universel: 23; universalité: 7; universality: 1); ‘mondial’: 29 (mundial: 8).

³¹Council of Europe (Strasbourg) 1950. 16_A-1-20-1337.

³²Via its General Secretariat and on behalf of the Bureau of the Committee of Cultural Experts of the Council of Europe.

³³The subjects taught, their distribution in the curricula, the methods of teacher training, the place reserved for notions of the interdependence of European peoples, and then for school subjects such as writing, reading and natural sciences.

(continued)

was willing to comply during the 1950s and 1960s, Piaget refused to carry out specific investigations on Europe (or on Africa, which was included in the initial Eurafrika project; Hansen & Jonsson, 2014), but instead provided, for a fee, data from European countries collected during his international surveys. Piaget justified this by asserting that the IBE's focus was resolutely "universal".

3. On 9 May 1957, the Consultative Assembly of the Cultural Commission of the Council of Europe invited European countries that were not members of the IBE to join it.

Analysis of these sources shows that the geographical entity Europe—even when it constitutes itself as a body and takes initiatives in the broad field of training—was not a privileged interlocutor of the IBE, any more than the IBE was of Europe. As an institutional entity, going by way of Europe could even be perceived as a diversion (in terms of the IBE's "progress" to the international level). As for the Council of Europe, it could be seen as a competitor, soon to be more recognised by its member countries than the IBE when it put educational issues on its agenda, given its financial, technical and human resources and its incentive and coercive powers.

At the same time, we re-read all the published minutes of the International Conferences on Public Education (ICPEs).³⁴ In 4600 pages (about 2,300,000 words on the whole), we found ninety-four occurrences of the term "Europe". We examined all of them; by placing them in their enunciative contexts, and identified their connotations (neutral, negative, positive and emphatic). Figure 17.1 summarises our findings.

Let us specify the connotations identified.

(continued)

³⁴This was a very tedious task, since these data, although published, have not yet been digitised to allow systematic recognition of the characters. We have not retained the preliminary pages which list the participants and those in the appendices which list the IBE publications.

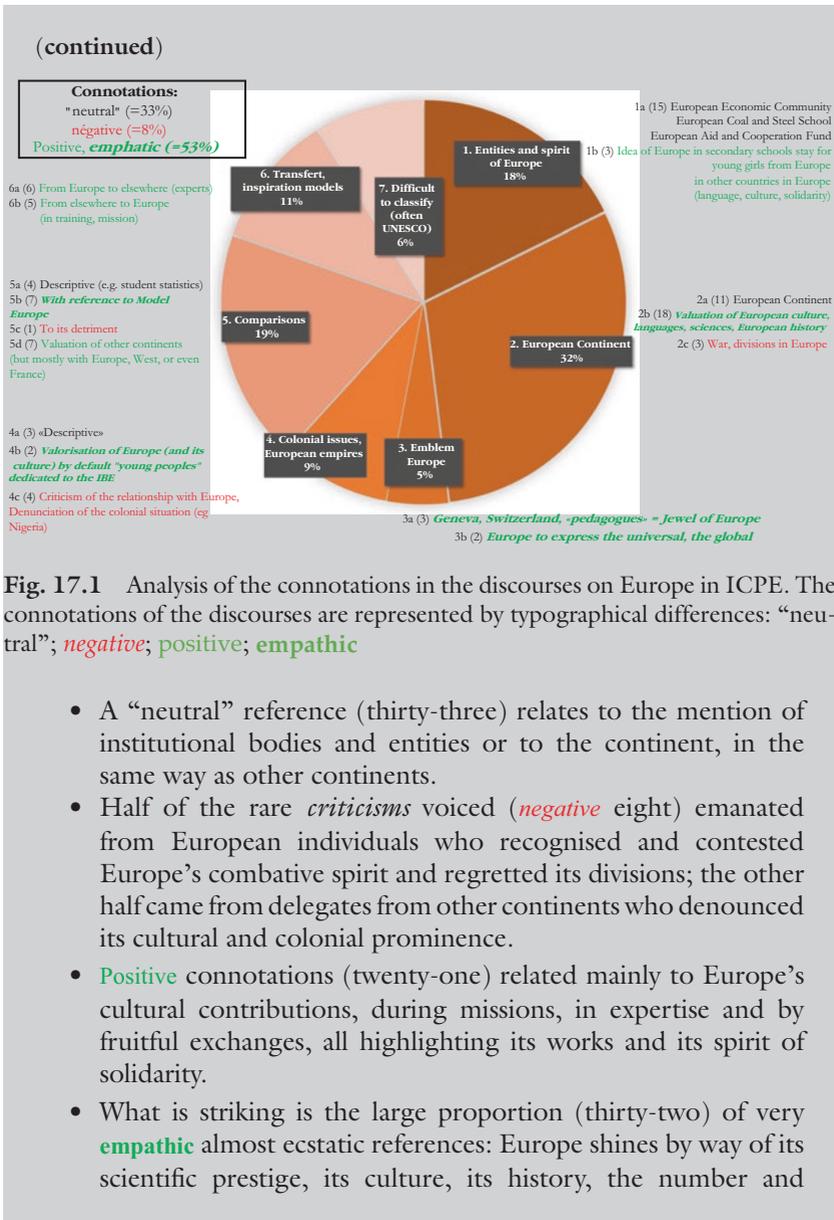


Fig. 17.1 Analysis of the connotations in the discourses on Europe in ICPE. The connotations of the discourses are represented by typographical differences: “neutral”; *negative*; *positive*; **empathic**

- A “neutral” reference (thirty-three) relates to the mention of institutional bodies and entities or to the continent, in the same way as other continents.
- Half of the rare *criticisms* voiced (*negative* eight) emanated from European individuals who recognised and contested Europe’s combative spirit and regretted its divisions; the other half came from delegates from other continents who denounced its cultural and colonial prominence.
- **Positive** connotations (twenty-one) related mainly to Europe’s cultural contributions, during missions, in expertise and by fruitful exchanges, all highlighting its works and its spirit of solidarity.
- What is striking is the large proportion (thirty-two) of very **empathic** almost ecstatic references: Europe shines by way of its scientific prestige, its culture, its history, the number and

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wealth of its languages; it constitutes a model from which the world can draw inspiration, and for some it expressed what pertains to the common and universal good. Such emphatic utterances were articulated by Europeans and by delegates from other continents.

The passages that are more difficult to classify (six) usually emanate from UNESCO representatives, who try to reflect the needs of all the people in the world, whose discourses do not avoid hierarchies, however tenuous or implicit.

The result of our analysis is first of all striking in the extremely meagre reference to Europe throughout these ICPEs. The whole illustrates the diplomacy with which one expressed oneself in this gathering, where power relations, although perceptible, were minimised, even while tensions and crises were tearing the world apart (in particular during the Cold War and the decolonisation processes). Clearly, through this in-depth investigation of the ways in which the term Europe is used in all the minutes, it is not possible to see, first of all, Eurocentrism (because the term is rarely used) but rather a hierarchy of continents, countries and cultures.³⁵

substance of the *modus operandi* devised by its two main conductors, Piaget and Rosselló, until their departure at the end of the ICPE in 1968.

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³⁵We are continuing our investigation in this regard by analysing the representations that actors from the South have of Europe and the IBE, not only in the IBE archives but also in their own (Matasci & Hofstetter, 2022).

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Conclusion to Part IV

As a notion used by contemporaries to examine the representativeness of the IBE and its activities with regard to the so-called sovereign countries, the universality of the IBE constituted an objective that was constantly stated and aimed at. This goal governed its functioning and its purpose as a centre of comparative education when it undertook surveys throughout the world in order to identify and accelerate what it called “the world march of education”. Quantitatively, as we have seen, the IBE was rapidly approaching this goal; but large regions were absent, already because subordinate countries were not themselves taken into account and others were under the influence of empires less inclined to engage as full partners. This was a deeply truncated universality. The IBE was aware of the problem but refrained from intervening, always focused on its political neutrality.¹ It was the colonial liberation movement itself that created the conditions for a more effective universality.

The IBE was further away from its goal of universality from the point of view of its affiliated members. The reasons for this are difficult to identify precisely. A more general contrastive analysis reveals a trend: Latin countries, including Latin America, or countries formerly colonised by

¹As mentioned above, in its first surveys conducted with the ILO in 1928–1929, the Bureau explicitly addressed countries that were still “colonised” and under protectorate. Despite this early experience, the IBE did not pursue this path, confining itself to exchanges with sovereign countries maintaining diplomatic relations with others. This distance taken with the colonised territories or under mandate could have resulted from its claim of political neutrality, not wanting in any case to interfere in the geopolitics of the world; it constituted in fact a form of taking position, by copying the decisions of the occidental countries only.

France or Latin countries, but also Eastern and Central Europe, seemed more inclined to join the IBE. Reluctance, or even simply indifference, was more widespread in countries oriented towards or reputedly close to Anglo-Saxon culture and its international political positions. Clearly, the Latin and Anglo-Saxon clans that existed in UNESCO and before that in the ICIC were echoed within the IBE: as a result, the general orientation of the Bureau would be more strongly marked by a tendency to favour the definition of universalisable principles over a more practical and economic approach.²

Although the IBE always aspired to allow any country to participate in its activities, it ran up against the principles of the Cold War and its bars against international organisations. A whole series of communist regions, including the People's Republic of China, remained excluded. Finally—and here again, the Bandung conference was also an indicator of a profound change—the newly independent countries seized on this forum to make their voices heard and to demand that the IBE's partners complied with the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: the eradication of slavery and human degradation in favour of an emancipatory education followed on from this; countries that did not comply should be excluded from the IBE. They also made known their demand that proclaimed principles should be translated into reality on the ground, in the face of the destitution of indigenous populations and the glaring and unjust shortcomings of their education systems. As soon as education becomes an instrument of oppression, the question of boundaries between politics and education cannot legitimise silence, which would be tantamount to condoning such abuses.

Universality: a gamble that had in fact been partially won, but at the price of compromises, sometimes even perhaps compromising involvements, tensions and even contradictions with the founding principles of the IBE. The model that held the distinction between education and politics to be plausible and even indispensable had given way to the aspirations of formerly colonised countries, which had undergone an education imbued with politics under the aegis of the civilising mission of the empires, which were now confronted with their abuses. By taking their own places and speaking in these forums, the new countries demonstrated

² It is not impossible that in UNESCO, where similar oppositions could be observed as mentioned above, the resistance to the economic turn of educational thinking was based on similar orientations (see Elfert, 2019, pp. 49–50).

that the problems addressed and the solutions proposed were far from being as universal as the IBE and UNESCO proclaimed. This tension translated into an open conflict about the misdeeds of an alienating colonial enterprise, which was considered to violate the very dignity of man: Portugal whose former African colonies demanded its exclusion.

Clearly, the newly sovereign peoples were able to assert their determination: we can interpret this as a demand for a more radical change in order to resolve the educational problems in their territories; but we have not found any trace of resistance on their part to the documentary logic and the comparative methods promoted by the IBE. Nevertheless, the outbreak of the crisis was more than an isolated event: it signalled the end of the IBE's customary procedures (it remains to be seen whether the causes it promoted were affected by this). As we have seen, the IBE in association with UNESCO, would continue the ICPEs in an almost unchanged format for a few years, but those concerned were aware of this: safeguards had given way and politics was taking over this sphere, which was supposed to be preserved from it. The ICPEs could no longer embody (even if it were only in principle) the Piagetian postulate of decentring, guaranteeing the collective construction, through the reciprocal recognition of points of view, of "the ascent from the individual to the universal".

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The Universalisation of the Benefits of Education?

We have a supreme duty – to help, as teachers, to organize a society in which every man will be able to shake hands, in brotherly trust and friendship, with his kinsmen from Europe or Asia, to clasp the ebony hand of the man from Africa and the bronze hand of the Indian from America. All races, all peoples, all national aspirations must find expression in this post-war world. If a single voice were to be silent, if a single right were to be trodden under foot, humanity would have shed its blood in vain in those great battles. (Jaime Torres Bodet, Director of UNESCO, ICPE, 1949, p. 25)

The under-developed countries were simply poor countries, but poverty was no shame, especially as those countries were determined to put an end to their poverty. Moreover, those countries had once been rich and their cultural heritage had helped countries which were now civilized and advanced to build up their present wealth. [...] Assistance to under-developed countries was the payment of a debt by the West to the East, by rich countries to poor countries. (Ali Djamalzadeh, Cultural Attaché to the Permanent Delegation of Iran to the International Organisations, ICPE, 1957, p. 96)

The notion of “cause” captures “horizons of engagement, defined, defended, contested, embodied, embraced as issues of ‘general interest’ or even ‘universal’, as a result of social and intellectual work aimed at demonstrating that addressing them requires working across territories and

sovereignties” (Saunier, 2012, p. 29).¹ This definition by Saunier, the critical historian of the “world of causes”, is well suited for analysing the IBE’s positioning with regard to what it referred to itself as “causes” on its work agenda. In this we can observe the dual social and scientific roots of its partners, who were mobilised, as they themselves insisted, to solve the planet’s most crucial educational problems and, in so doing, to preserve peace on earth, the ultimate goal that subsumed all other causes.

The flame that impelled the director of UNESCO, the Mexican Jaime Torres Bodet, in the 1949 epigraph that introduces this part, demonstrates the concordance between the causes borne by the IBE and UNESCO that were reinforced by the connivance between Piaget and Torres Bodet, both of whom were distinguished by their profound humanist convictions which was reflected in their flamboyant speeches.

The question arose, however, as to how far the causes invested in on both sides would manage to be reconciled over time, in the tense years of the Cold War and during the struggles linked to the decolonisation processes. From the outset, the ambition to find operational solutions was a priority for the first builders of the Bureau; but we have noted that they were more ambivalent about their own role in the field itself, considering that it was the national and regional authorities that must adapt their recommendations so that the solutions fitted the needs of the country by taking into account its own culture, traditions, economy, geopolitics and the expectations of the populations concerned. Earlier in this publication we have already pointed out a divergence at this level because of the positioning of UNESCO, which had made it its duty to ensure the development of the countries of the South, with education gradually being considered also as an economic investment in the service of the alliance of peoples, yet without the interests of the various parties being neglected.²

Here, we are interested in how the IBE and its partners, including UNESCO since 1947, defined and debated these causes and tried to agree on the general orientations of education systems, by defining collegially

¹We have also followed his astute critique of the historiography of the “world of causes” to examine both the workings and mechanisms (Part I) that made this mobilisation possible and the ethos or positioning of the key individuals who rallied to the IBE, captured in their relational networks (Part II), which we also attempted collectively in Hofstetter and Érhise (2022).

²This is particularly evident in the speeches of the director of UNESCO, for example Maheu (ICPE, 1961, p. 35).

the recommendations supposed to improve education, this “cornerstone of the very existence of the state”.³

We have identified five causes⁴ which structure this part of our study.

In the first chapter, we focus on the content of education. This is the very mandate of the school systems as they were progressively built and then generalised at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries,⁵ aiming at the training and education of pupils through the transmission of school knowledge. However, on a planetary scale, is it conceivable to agree on the global purpose of education? The main agents of this transmission are the teachers, who are the focus of the second chapter. The teaching profession cannot fulfil its mission with dignity if there is no clarification of its status, mandates and training, where the training and education of pupils through the transmission of school knowledge is the aim. The protagonists of the ICPEs were convinced of this, but could they find common denominators to circumscribe these problems and find solutions that could be transposed from one context to another? The status of women in the teaching profession, and then more generally in education, is one of the fundamental issues that runs through the twentieth century. Yet, curiously, women’s education was the subject of only one IBE conference, for reasons that have yet to be determined.

In the third chapter, which is devoted to gender issues, we will examine some of these reasons in order to understand how invisibilisation,

³ Ruiz Guiñazú, Minister Plenipotentiary of the Argentine Republic in Bern and Permanent Delegate to the League of Nations at the 7th Council meeting, 1936. 44_A-2-1-717, A-IBE.

⁴These five causes correspond to three of the four categories identified in Chap. 11. The issue of physical infrastructure (finance, buildings, canteens, etc.) and administrative organisation (inspectorate, specialised services, etc.) is discussed more briefly in the Insert 21.1 on material and institutional infrastructures. The table in Appendix B of this book provides the wording of the ICPE themes corresponding to the four categories. Our team has already studied some of these causes; see Part II of Hofstetter and Érhise (2022) for the period 1934–1952, to which we then refer in more detail in the following chapters. As for the other two causes, without materialising in formally defined themes, they impose themselves as cross-cutting issues.

⁵The emergence in the nineteenth century, particularly in connection with the industrial revolution, of what we call the “modern school form” (Hofstetter & Schneuwly, 2018), a concept close to what Tyack and Tobin (1994) have described as the “grammar of schooling”, has been the subject of numerous studies (let us cite a few classics: Green, 1997; Muller et al., 1987; Ramirez & Boli, 1987; more recently several studies in Rury & Tamura, 2019). This form is characterised in particular by the organisation of content into school subjects which have the contradictory functions of making knowledge accessible but distributing it unequally between pupils and school streams (Schneuwly, 2018).

assignment and discrimination occurred on this stage too, and how the IBE partners positioned themselves in relation to them. Conversely, access to education for all seemed to be the subject of unanimity throughout the decades under review; we dedicate the fourth chapter to it. It was seen as a guarantee of lasting peace, balanced development for all and global solidarity, as well as a source of economic prosperity.

However, behind these obvious facts, we have tried to identify the stubborn contradictions that supported or even reinforced sociocultural inequalities in education. As an extension of this analysis, the fifth chapter examines in greater depth one of the most sensitive points of the causes taken up by the IBE: even though the Bureau clearly aimed to universalise the benefits of education, its conferences during the inter-war period only rarely addressed the problem of illiteracy in the colonies, essentially only in passing; we observe a similar silence on the subject of discrimination linked to race as well as on the asymmetries between the countries of the North and South. We are therefore interested in examining how these international foundations would evolve, or not, as a result of the independence movements that led to the increasingly visible presence of newly sovereign countries.

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School Subjects in the Service of Peace and the Individual

The question of what to teach, how to teach it and for what purpose formed an essential part (30%) of the topics addressed by the ICPEs.¹ This may seem like a minefield: what was taught in schools was closely related to nation-building: the school was mandated to build up the citizen, in particular so that they identify with their native or adopted territory and recognise themselves in this cultural belonging. How did the IBE deal with this issue? What content was given priority and what was left out? How did it relate to the organisation of the curriculum and the hierarchy of its constituent disciplines? How could recommendations be established that were acceptable to all in a field that the nation states had hitherto invested in and considered as belonging to their exclusive prerogatives?

¹For an in-depth analysis of these contents between 1934 and 1952, see De Mestral et al. (2022) and Hofstetter and Schneuwly (2013), from which we draw on here.

SCHOOL SUBJECTS: CONTRASTED AND COMPLEMENTARY

As early as 1935, the IBE Executive Committee decided to carry out investigations into the place of the “different subjects”² in the primary and secondary school curricula. The choice of subjects covered was far from trivial: mathematics, natural sciences and modern languages were discussed twice.³ In addition to these core subjects there were physical and sports education, writing, reading, handicrafts and the arts.⁴ There is a clear hierarchy in this list: mathematics and natural sciences take centre stage, as well as modern languages, the knowledge of which “can have a great influence on improving international understanding and understanding between peoples” (R 59, 1965, recital 4⁵).

This bipartite division is also apparent in the delegates’ speeches. During the 1955 Conference for example, the delegate from Austria⁶ claimed that languages, mathematics and science have to be differentiated from:

subjects which appealed, not so much to the intellect, as to feeling. [...] One could not discuss the aims and methods of art teaching without bearing in mind its ties with other subjects, especially with music, literature and physical education. (p. 66)

To this list should be added manual work, linked to the visual arts, modern languages, linked to literature, and geography and history whose emotional—ideological?—weight was regularly invoked.

Surveys of school subjects followed a similar pattern: their place in the curriculum (time allocation, levels at which they were taught, separate

²One of the specific characteristics of the IBE was that it paid crucial attention to school disciplines from the outset, and it used these concepts very early on, even though in the 1950s and 1960s it also championed interdisciplinarity.

On the disciplinary organisation of school content and its history, see Schneuwly and Hofstetter (*in press*), who discuss the international literature; decisive contributions on this question are given by Cardon-Quint (2014), Goodson (1993), Polenghi (2014) and Viñao (2010).

³Geography was also addressed in two ICPEs, but the second time was on the basis of a survey conducted not by the IBE, but by UNESCO.

⁴It should be noted that the IBE also carried out a survey on household work, but it was not the subject of an ICPE.

⁵By “R 59, 1965, N°3” we refer to Recommendation 59 discussed in the 1965 ICPE, more particularly its third article.

⁶Heinrich Taubner, Advisor to the Ministry of Public Education.

branch with a particular name), their aims and contents, the methods used (including textbooks and other materials), the teaching staff (preparation and further training in the subjects and methods), recent or planned changes. In 1958 and 1960, two sessions of the ICPEs were devoted to primary and secondary school curricula as a whole: they synthesized, as it were, the work on the individual disciplines.

This overview shows that some subjects were never placed on the agenda of the ICPEs. While it was at the heart of the concerns of the *Institut Rousseau* and the first IBE, the teaching of ‘history’, as we have seen, was left to the ICIC, which was anxious to reserve this field for itself.⁷ We cannot exclude the possibility that the IBE—once established as an intergovernmental body—may have consented to this to avoid being confronted with the ideological and political burdens of this discipline.⁸

Even more surprising is the absence of “mother tongue”, which is the most important part of all school curricula around the world. It is true that writing and reading are addressed, but primarily from a technical point of view: respectively with an emphasis on visual and motor skills for writing,⁹ decoding and the ability to access the meaning of a written word or sentence for reading.¹⁰ Grammar, spelling and vocabulary were not mentioned, nor were literature and text writing.¹¹

This absence is significant, but nevertheless it was never discussed or justified. The request made during the 1954 ICPE by Belarus (p. 86), and backed by several other delegations, for it to be included in a future conference, was never followed up. It should also be noted that the use of the mother tongue—also known as the vernacular language—was regularly problematised in national reports, constituting a real concern, particularly in multilingual countries. Take the ICPEs of 1954 and 1960 as an example: the USSR claimed to teach in sixty languages; Thailand had switched to Thai, as had Ethiopia to Amharic; the Arab countries were trying to

⁷ See Chap. 2 on the dithering of the LoN and II.2 on the rivalries with the IIC in this regard, and the related analyses.

⁸ With regard to the national function of the first language subject, see: Bonfiglio (2010), Gardt (2011) and Ivo (1994).

⁹ Dottrens, the author of the report, specialised in the question of the most suitable writing for learning (see 1931).

¹⁰ More general recommendations on the mother tongue (reading books; the press at school) appear only in the margin.

¹¹ The IBE’s intensive work on children’s literature was carried out without a direct link to teaching; see Schneuwly et al. (2022).

develop a “new living Arabic language” for teaching; Ghana, on the other hand, with its seven languages, taught English from primary school onwards; Liberia also advocated English, as the teaching of vernacular languages could create disagreements between “tribes”.¹² Why then should it not be a topic for discussion? Might this be explained by the IBE’s fear of meddling in nation states’ domestic policies. In fact, more than any other issue, the “mother tongue” topic had a direct link with the building of national identity. Besides, its name suggests this with a reference to the motherland.¹³ Also, there were important problems regarding domination by the languages of the colonisers, linked to the choice of the languages used for teaching and its cultural references.¹⁴

DIFFERENT METHODS ACCORDING TO THE TYPE OF SUBJECT

The observed division of disciplines is reflected in the recommendations concerning teaching methods. Of course, a common principle emerged in the recommendations: it was advisable to use “active methods” which constituted the general pedagogical background of the IBE.¹⁵ However, the concrete approaches arising from this general principle were not similar for the two sets of subjects.

For mathematics and the natural sciences, the knowledge to be learned can be constructed directly from action on reality. Piaget’s formulations were emblematic in this respect:

a truth which was merely learnt was only a half-truth, the whole truth being reasoned out, reconstructed or rediscovered by the pupil himself. It was easier for the pupil to re-invent arithmetical or geometrical rules than grammatical rules. [...] Child psychology showed the wealth of logical

¹² Respectively ICPEs (1954, p. 82, p. 83, 1960, p. 155, p. 99, 1954, p. 104).

¹³ The plurality of ‘national languages’, especially in African countries, would cause this ideological term to break down, and later in Western countries. It should be noted that the term ‘vernacular language’ was often used in country reports, especially in former colonies. For an attempt to rehabilitate this term from a human rights perspective, see Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (2012).

¹⁴ UNESCO took the lead on this issue, having written a report on mother tongue education in trust territories (Evans, ICPE, 1954, p. 88). On the use of vernacular languages, also known as ‘national languages’ in education, see Skutnabb-Kangas and Heugh (2012); for Africa, Aeby Daghe et al. (2017, Chap. 2).

¹⁵ We explained this in Chap. 10.

mathematical and physical constructions reached spontaneously. (ICPE, 1950, p. 32)

This principle would only work for those disciplines whose notions, according to Piagetian theory, are constructed by abstraction from action on reality or from the properties of actions themselves; this is not possible for others. During the 1952 Conference, Piaget therefore distinguished these disciplines from those of history and languages:

It was never possible for the pupil to rediscover by himself a historical truth of the structure of language, whereas in suitably organising certain experiments and in learning to reason precisely on the facts he discovered, he could spontaneously re-establish certain scientific truths. (pp. 30–31)

For mathematics, Piaget went so far as to postulate, in 1956, a possible parallelism between the new structures described and the logic of pupils' actions, a parallelism that should therefore be put to good use in teaching:

There has been great evolution in the structure of mathematics. As a result of the work accomplished by many mathematicians, Bourbaki in particular, mathematics has so to speak been set up on a new basis. Its basis now consists of three types of structure. [...] Should secondary teaching be inspired by this recent recasting of mathematics? It certainly should. [...] convergence is possible between the conciliation of the structures and the recognition of the role of operations and action. (p. 31)¹⁶

The transformation of the architecture of mathematics, as Piaget's thesis stated, made it possible to base teaching on the spontaneous development of mathematical knowledge in the child from action and its internalisation, by implementing the active method. It is not insignificant that the delegate from the USSR, Alexis Markouchevitch, who was none other than the vice-president of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, contested this supposedly pre-established harmony:

¹⁶ Piaget had an excellent knowledge of recent developments in mathematics and often refers to them in his work on child development; here he proposes to apply these notions directly to teaching. Details and references on the influence of mathematical developments and of Piaget on teaching can be found in Bjarnadóttir et al. (2015).

It should also throw some light on their relationship between mathematics as science and mathematics as a school subject. As a school subject mathematics was made up of aspects of the science of mathematics, selected in the light of educational aims, mathematical principles, teaching methods, and psychology [a selection of elements of the science of mathematics, selection founded on the aims of school and adapted not only on principles related to mathematics, but also to didactics and psychology]. In this connection it was to be noted that the system put forward by N. Bourbaki did not appear to be suitable for teaching, as it led directly to abstraction and neglected applications. (p. 74)

In this debate, two conceptions of how to define school content clash: that of Piaget, who believed that this content could be deduced from the reference sciences, mathematics and child psychology, especially since, according to him, there is a correspondence between the structure of this content and the child's thinking and development; the other believed that it is the school's goals that govern the choice of content, as do didactic considerations as well.

Natural sciences and mathematics were also discussed in terms of their social values. Natural sciences contribute to "making him [student] love nature and her beauties" and to "protecting and conserving nature", the recommendation stated (R 27, 1949, N°3). Delegate Kanthia Kularatnam from Ceylon exemplified this by stating:

That he had been struck by a point in the report on the introduction to natural science: the passage concerning the way in which this teaching could be used in the conservation of natural resources. It seemed to him that it was a world problem. For example, in his country where the sub-soil was extraordinarily rich, there was no feeling among the public that the mineral riches of Ceylon should be conserved. The capitalists who exploited the land thought only of acquiring wealth as rapidly as possible. (ICPE, 1949, pp. 49–50)

Mathematics, in turn, must be linked to practical life and the environment in which the child lives. J.H. Goldsmith, the UK delegate, expressed his complete agreement with the 1950 report's conclusion: "Mathematics education must become a living thing, which must be interwoven with the life, the environment and the active interests of the child" (p. 80).

The moral viewpoint was not forgotten on this same day. Gerardo Florès, the delegate from the Philippines, supported by William John Weeden, from Australia:

Florès was anxious that the moral aspects should be emphasized, since it was not enough to know how to add and to become a banker or an owner, but it was important to be an honest banker or owner. (p. 80)

The role played by active methods was conceived differently for the other group of subjects: art, music, physical education, manual work and languages in particular. In these subjects, children do not discover and construct rules, concepts and knowledge: they already practise them. For these subjects, the starting point is the spontaneous needs of the pupils, to which are grafted techniques given from outside which enable them to develop. In 1955, the Italian delegate Carlo Leoni, head of the Fine Arts Division and also a painter, noted for example: "Children made spontaneous drawings at the kindergarten stage and then progressively did more technical and advanced work. Pupils studied the different types and techniques of the great masters" (p. 69). As Piaget stated, "There are subjects such as history, French or spelling whose content has been developed or even invented by the adult and whose transmission raises only problems of better or worse information technique" (1965, p. 44). Active methods therefore seem to have limitations that Piaget made clear. The difference in their implementation according to the binary division of disciplines was a symptom of this.

The delegates insisted on the general educational value of these subjects: they were concerned with the identity of the individuals, the construction of their image of the world, the broadening of their artistic culture and the development of their manual and sensory skills. The manual work discussed at the 1950 conference is an eloquent example of this, claims Torres Bodet:

I know not what barbarous folly and prejudice branded manual labour as something that dishonours man. [...] It has, moreover, an extraordinary educative power which the schools are tending to utilise increasingly. Teachers seeking to train the senses of very young children have found no better means than handicrafts, and the development of project and activity methods has made this even clearer in recent years. (p. 24)

Several delegates emphasised the importance of these subjects in providing access to regional and national cultures of craft, art, folklore, literature; these disciplines would aim to develop “aesthetic taste”, as they were oriented towards what is often called culture.

Geography also plays an essential educational role:¹⁷ “We try to make the environment known by means of excursions and trips and to develop the love of the homeland”, emphasised the Romanian delegate.¹⁸ The Bulgarian Minister Plenipotentiary, E. Karadjoff, claims that “what kills is not only the gun or the dagger, but also silence and ignorance”, and that this ignorance could be combated by geography, which enabled people from different nations to get to know one other (p. 66). In the considerations of the recommendation concerning geography, an attempt was made to articulate the more national and international visions: “while fostering love of one’s country, engendering feelings of esteem for all other peoples and so increasing understanding and collaboration between nations”, a compromise quite in line with the values defended by the IBE¹⁹ (R 18, 1939, recital 2).

However, there was one area where the principle of active methods was unavoidable, and that was in reading.²⁰ The report presented in 1949 by Ruth E. McMurry, a delegate from the United States, supported by several other delegations and Piaget himself, defended the global and analytical approach to teaching reading, which would start from the needs of the child so as not to start with the pure abstraction represented by the letter. The Colombian Nieto Caballero added that

the sentence method had given extraordinarily good results in Colombia. Learning to read had become a pleasure since this method had been used.

¹⁷The role of geography as school subject has been extensively analysed. Mortimer and O’Donoghue (2021) give an excellent overview on the Anglo-Saxon literature; Chevalier (2017) analyses the French history of this school discipline; the educational role is discussed for instance by: Chevalier (2003) and Marsden (1989).

¹⁸Nicolae Dascovici, Secretary General of the Romanian Ministry of Education, recalling that King Carol I, founder of the Romanian dynasty, had introduced geography into the national curriculum.

¹⁹Concerning the values of homeland and internationalism, see Chap. 10.

²⁰Cf. the age-old debates on the teaching of reading that have crystallised around the ‘global’ and ‘analytical’ approaches, the former advocated by the new education, the latter being part of the dominant tradition. For a historical presentation see: Chartier (2011), Monaghan and Saul (2018) and Noack (2015).

This method was perhaps slower, but it was better to teach children to observe rather than to teach them to read too soon. (p. 71)

When they did not plainly defend the synthetic method, representatives from Luxembourg, Czechoslovakia, the United Kingdom and Italy invoked differences in language, tradition and training to argue in favour of openness, without opposing these clear-cut positions head-on.²¹ No doubt in order to avoid any controversy, they stated that the question of method should not be given too much importance, and that the teachers should be left to their own discretion in this matter.

The recommendation concerning the matter was a skilful compromise which both defended the position of the global approach, in line with active methods, and immediately relativised it, thus masking fundamental differences of opinion:

Recognising [...] that b) methods based on psychology (the so-called sentence or “global” methods), conform more to the mental capacity of a child, and enable the teaching of reading to be correlated to a greater degree with general class activities, but call for a fuller training of the teacher. [...] Believing that the choice of reading methods is influenced among other things by the structure of language and by the school organisation of each country, etc. (R 28, 1949, recital 2)

This consideration, although very explicit, corresponded well to the fundamental credo of the IBE and more particularly to Piaget’s conceptions but did not, however, lead to any precise position concerning the active method, which was rare. As a compromise solution, the ICPE recommended that school authorities were concerned to “improve the relevant teaching methods through research and experiment” and a little further on that “methods of teaching children to read incorporate the findings of educational theory” (R 28, 1949, N°1 and 4).

²¹The debate on methods has been raging since the nineteenth century. It has sometimes taken on the dimensions of national dramas: the “great debate” (Chall, 1967) in the 1950s and 1960s with the famous “Why Johnny cannot read” appeared (Flesh & Sloan, 1955); there was even talk of a “reading war” in the United States between defenders of the phonic approach or the approach based on the meaning of the language (Nicholson, 1992), with numerous statements calling for the “ending of the Great Debate”, or even “the reading wars” (Castles et al., 2018). Similar “debates” and “wars” took place in other countries, like France (Goigoux et al., 2005).

CONTENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD

The credos of active methods were matched by the idea that, when defining subject content, the stages of development highlighted by psychology should be taken into account. In mathematics, the indications provided for the construction of the curriculum are deduced from developmental psychology: “That even in the nursery-infant school, a child be given opportunity, through his own activities, to discover the elementary relationships (that the part is contained by the whole, order, similarity, etc.) of number and space” (R 31, 1950, N°2). “In visual arts, the various stages of the mental growth of the young child and of the adolescent, as well as their interests, should be taken into account when drawing up the art syllabus and teaching methods” (R 41, 1955, N°10). This principle applied more generally to the design of study plans:

In drawing up syllabuses for successive grades, children’s capacity to understand and assimilate at various stages of growth should be taken into account in order to ensure that they receive a well organised intellectual education proceeding at a normal pace. (R 46, 1958, N°5)

And one should not forget the critical intervention made by Piaget during the 1948 ICPE on geography as he feared that if the report

were read hastily, it might give the impression that competent, intelligent and honest geography teaching would of itself embrace international understanding. With regard to such an understanding [it] should be borne in mind, the egocentricity of a child which makes him believe that his own country was the centre of the world. (p. 36)

Seemingly pulling all the IBE and its ICPEs in his wake, Piaget considered the programmes and not just the subject itself—“with competent, intelligent and honest [...] teaching” from the teacher who mastered the content of their subject—but also by taking into account the development of the child and the adolescent. The Copernican reversal²² was imposed as a way of thinking: “The advances made in educational psychology and experimental teaching suggest the possibility of methods progressively better adapted to the latent capacity of the child”²³ (R 23, 1948, N°4).

²² See Chap. 8 on this topic.

²³ About taking into account the “natural” development of the child, see part II.1.

This approach was raised to the level of a general principle, globally accepted and recognised, including for secondary education. The logic of the school programmes was subject to a developmental thinking powerfully nourished by psychological research.

BALANCE IN THE TEACHING CONTENT

The two global studies on the 1958 and 1960 curricula confirm critically the already noted dominance of languages, mathematics, natural and social sciences, with the other subjects occupying roughly one quarter of programmes.²⁴ On the other hand, there was a theme in the tendency of the reforms to increase the number of concepts to be learned, inevitably leading to overload. These observations and the need to adapt the curricula to social changes and to progress in knowledge in the educational sciences led to a concern for a better balance between intellectual training, on the one hand, and moral, physical and artistic education, on the other hand (see, e.g., ICPE, 1960, p. 127).

The construction of the subjects was not in question; what was on the agenda was the balance between disciplines. How was this achieved in practice over the forty years under scrutiny? The documents and debates show a tendency towards transforming the place of subjects by acting on their value, as defined by their compulsory or optional character, the number of hours allocated to them and the weight of examinations. This move did not take place without encountering resistance. The general aim of these possibilities of transformation is summarised in Recommendation 50 of 1960 entitled “Preparation and issuing of general secondary school curricula”; it constitutes a sort of high point of the ICPEs’ work on content and subjects:

- 2) [...] it is nevertheless recommended that a proper balance should be maintained in the relative importance given in curricula and syllabuses to such things as the pupils’ intellectual, moral, social, manual, physical and aesthetic education, in order to ensure the complete and harmonious development of the individual child.
- 3) In order to achieve this balance, it is desirable to bear in mind when drawing up curricula the varied contribution which each subject can make not only to the pupil’s store of factual knowledge, but also to the develop-

²⁴ Dominance that the IBE itself reproduced through the frequency of its many surveys, as we have seen.

ment of his personality and to his attitude to the world around him. (R 50, 1960, N°5)

The various disciplines—recognised by all as organisers of school knowledge—contribute to the development of both the pupils' mastery of knowledge and their personal development as a whole. In addition to this, the main mission of the IBE is recalled in Article 6 of Recommendation 50: “the contribution which the teaching of some subjects can make to good relations, peace and understanding between nations and races”.

An analysis of the series of content-related surveys conducted after 1960 reveals a significant shift in emphasis. There was no longer a discussion of disciplines but of overarching themes, with the various subjects contributing to each of them in “interdisciplinary activities” (R 65, 1968, N°12): health education, studying the environment, and education in international understanding. “Generally speaking, the study of the environment is much more a means, a method, than a discipline” (ICPE, 1968, p. 154). In fact, the environment, to take this example, appears to be present everywhere and nowhere in the concert of subjects: “Any subject can give rise to the study of environment, for this is in fact a constraint. It is essential if the school is to prepare the child for life” (p. 154). Conversely, as UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Education, Carlos Fleixa-Ribeiro of Brazil, pointed out:

Environment rapidly becomes for the child not a certain fact, direct, close at hand, rough and homogeneous, but as a bond woven by the interaction of complex forces, some of which, he must learn very quickly, arising from the exact and natural sciences and others from social and human ones: to undertake environmental study is to make, very early, an inter-relation of subjects, to bring home to the child the complexity of the world in which he lives. (p. 42)

Let us recall that Piaget would ardently defend the need for an interdisciplinary approach, for example, in his text on the future of education (Piaget, 1972, p. 31). On this point, as on many others, the OECD would follow the lead of the IBE in popularising the concept of interdisciplinarity.²⁵

²⁵ See the report written by D'Hainaut (1986) for the OECD.

A final and essential point is in order. A constant feature of the ICPEs' long work on content is that curricula should not define in detail what the teacher should do in the classroom, in the subjects and more generally. The recommendations were in fact only "a guide and a concrete orientation" (R 50, 1960, N°36)²⁶ which needed to be adapted, leaving teachers, whatever their rank, "a wide scope for adapting these programmes to local and regional requirements" (R 35, 1952, N°3b). Teachers had a key role to play here and were therefore central to the IBE's thinking. Let us take a look (Image 18.1).



Image 18.1 A double page from a Spanish school atlas, 1961. This atlas is part of the IBE's school book collection. The question of geography was discussed in the 1939 and 1949 ICPEs, with strong stress on international comprehension and against racial prejudices, to be banned from textbooks. Obviously, the double page of the atlas proceeds otherwise. (© IBE)

²⁶This article was added at the request of the Italian delegation (p. 94).

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Teachers: “Architects of the Future of Humanity”

The issues surrounding the teaching profession, its role, status and training were raised in almost all the surveys and debates.¹ But they were also addressed as a cause in themselves through no fewer than 15 recommendations corresponding to as many investigations published in the form of volumes, summary reports and discussions at the ICPE. Two issues dominated:² teacher training was dealt with seven times, and teacher status and salary five times. These issues were on the agenda at the first ICPEs in 1935 and 1938 and were taken up again 15 years later,³ in parallel for primary and secondary education. The issue of training was also discussed

José Martínez-Cobo, Director of the ICPE, delegate from Ecuador, former minister of education at the ICPE (1957, p. 26).

¹It was evoked when dealing with economics and finance and their effects on the status of teachers; on the occasion of systems planning in the face of too many or too few teachers; in the context of subject didactics and the preparation of teachers for their implementation, etc. Insert 21.1 presents more generally the discussion in the ICPEs concerning the material and institutional infrastructures necessary in order to guarantee universal access to education.

²The term appears several times, as early as the 1930s, and in the recitals of the recommendation concerning the status of primary teachers (1953); it is the reference of the “World Confederation of the Teaching Profession”, a regular guest of the ICPEs since 1953.

³It was during a brief discussion of the *Teachers’ Charter*, drawn up by UNESCO, that the Mexican delegate suggested surveys of the teaching profession (ICPE, 1947, p. 53), a proposal that was immediately accepted by the IBE director.

in a more specialised manner: the role of psychology, the education of primary teacher educators and the further training of primary teachers.

The central themes were therefore examined twice over time, distinguishing between primary and secondary schools. This allows us to observe the evolution before and after the Second World War as well as the differences between teachers at the two school levels, and both factors can be cross-matched. Given the huge disparities between countries in terms of status and treatment, how would it be possible to define a common denominator? Could it be the same in these different periods and for teachers at the first and second levels?⁴

A HIGH LEVEL OF PEDAGOGICAL TRAINING

By the 1930s, it was clear that the training of primary school teachers had to be of a high standard, taking advantage of the new knowledge available so as to keep pace with the profound economic, social and political changes. The 1935 ICPE therefore noted that “the present economic and social conditions, and the development of knowledge have made the task of elementary school teachers much more difficult and more complex” (R 4, 1935, recital 1). Moreover, teacher training reforms were underway in most countries.

The tone was quite different with regard to secondary school teachers, still in 1935. It was as if the need for training had finally been recognised.

In fact [the rapporteur notes], high intellectual qualities are most important for secondary education and it is only in recent years that the need to provide secondary teachers with professional and pedagogical preparation has proved to be more and more essential. (p. 101)

However, the concrete proposals remained cautious and few in number.

The context changed fundamentally after the war. The delegates once again invoked rapid and profound social changes to advocate longer and more in-depth training. New advances in educational science would also give “teachers” tools to improve their teaching methods (R 36, 1953, N°33).⁵ For secondary education, the argument for vocational training

⁴A more in-depth analysis of these issues for the period 1935–1957 can be found in Tinembart and Lussi Borer (2022).

⁵We return to the issue of educational sciences later.

took a completely different turn. E. Löffler, first delegate of the Federal Republic of Germany,⁶ put in the core of his report in 1954—in line with the policy of wider access to secondary education—the observation that

A large number of present-day students at the secondary level had no intention of continuing their education in the universities; and the school must fit itself to cater for their needs. Changes of that sort exercised an influence on the qualifications required for the teaching profession and on training as a teacher. (p. 63)

This observation is taken up in various forms, for example by the Chilean delegate Humberto Díaz Casaneuva, who highlighted the need for structural change in the system and called for a transformation of training:

Without marring the existing character of the high school, it was necessary to modify it to meet its new social functions. Accordingly, the secondary teacher must be trained in such a way that high school would become an institution meeting the challenge launched by modern society. (p. 56)

These reflections went as far as calling for the same training for all secondary school teachers: Martha Shull (USA) stated that “there was a growing trend towards giving all teachers the same basic training, beginning with a broad, liberal international and humanitarian background” (p. 57). This would not be included in the recommendations, probably because it was too progressive and at odds with the dominant representations.

TRAINING ALL TEACHERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Which institutions were best suited to provide this training? For primary school teachers, as early as 1934, the delegates advocated the separation of the time of acquisition of a broad general culture within a secondary school and that of professional training; there is “a current opinion in favour of training elementary school teachers in Universities or University

⁶He was president of the School Commission of the Standing Conference of Ministers of Religion.

Institutes of Education, or in Teachers' Colleges" (R 3, 1934, N°2), without entirely excluding the "*école normale*" in France, or the German *Lehrerseminar*. For secondary school teachers, there was general agreement on the need for university training in the subjects of their future teaching which however "should not be limited" (R 3, 1934, N°3) to these; the institutional anchorage of this professional training was not specified. However, positions were curiously more cautious in 1953, perhaps due to an awareness of the difficulties of implementation in low-income countries, which were more represented in the ICPE. Certainly, "the ideal to be gradually reached is training at university level" (R 36, 1953, N°10; see also R 45, 1957, N°2), but as Robert Dottrens the Swiss rapporteur explained in 1953:

The facts must be faced however. The ideal [is the] separation between the general and professional aspects of primary teacher training [...] this is far from being the case over a very large part of the globe. In the majority of countries, primary teacher training establishments are at secondary level or between secondary and university level. (p. 142)

As far as secondary education was concerned, the requirement for high-level vocational training was clear, and the recommendations were that it should take place in higher education structures: either in universities or in specialised institutions such as pedagogical academies.

EDUCATION SCIENCES: THE PROFESSION'S REFERENCE DISCIPLINE

A comparison of the content of training recommended before and after the war reveals a key difference. In 1935, the proposals for both primary and secondary schools were terse: theoretical training in the field of educational science and its auxiliary disciplines, particularly psychology, and practical training, if possible, in training schools.

After the war, the issue of "curricula" for teacher education became central. The aim was to address both child and adolescent psychology and pedagogy from a theoretical point of view as well as a practical one which included the history of education, courses on the organisation of schools, administration and legislation and also the educational problems of the country concerned, general didactics, "special methods of teaching the

various subjects”, to which was added comparative education, a field embodied by the IBE itself:

the study of comparative education⁷ [that] should enable teachers-in-training to grasp *the universal nature of certain educational problems*, and at the same time to realize the necessity of adapting principles to national, regional and local conditions. (R 36, 1953, N°3; our italics)

For secondary school teachers, we also notice an extension, even if the share of professional training was reduced regarding the disciplines. In 1954, Dottrens proposed to complete the article on educational sciences: “Such courses should also include experimental education (evaluation techniques) and sociology”, a proposition accepted by a sizeable majority (p. 90). These options also derive from the evolution of the said sciences, in particular experimental pedagogy or pedagogical psychology or educational psychology⁸; it should also be noted that as sociology emerged, it progressively found its place in the training programme.⁹

Psychology, however, remained in prime position. The VIth session of the ICPE in 1937 was even concerned with the teaching of psychology in the training programme of primary and secondary school teachers, and more particularly teaching the understanding of the child’s and the adolescent’s thinking, to the detriment of tests and evaluation methods. “Scientific knowledge is not enough. The teacher must know how to

⁷The inclusion of comparative education perhaps follows on from an intervention by Rosselló at the tribute to Marc-Antoine Jullien from Paris at the ICPE held in 1948: “Why not take the opportunity of this centenary to take the decision to introduce or develop in the curricula of the teacher training colleges and in the pedagogical institutes the teaching of comparative education? What better means of international understanding could there be than to provide teachers with the opportunity to understand and respect what is being done educationally in foreign countries” (p. 110).

⁸On these academic disciplines, see Watson (1961) and Charles (1976); on the development of experimental pedagogy, De Landsheere (1981); more generally, Depaepé (1993); on this discipline in the French and German-speaking countries to which Dottrens, professor of experimental pedagogy in Geneva, refers: Hofstetter and Schneuwly (2020). The socio-historian Robert (2020), for his part, hypothesises that the IBE-UNESCO recommendations could have accelerated the deployment of educational sciences in France, especially as several French pedagogues were then involved in the structures of these two bodies.

⁹The importance of Durkheim is well known, but it was not until after the Second World War that the sociology of education was really established. Elements of a history of the sociology of education can be found in Floud and Halsey (1958), later in Lauder et al. (2009); for France, in Chapoulié (2010).

understand the pupils and must be aware of the psychology of youth” (ICPE, 1935, p. 42), stated the Norwegian delegate. By listing the psychologies to be studied (differential, general and genetic), Piaget specified in the same Conference:

Finally, the most important part of psychology, for educators, relates to the development of the child, i.e. genetic psychology. [...] In contrast to the notions on which traditional education was based, according to which the child would have ready-made faculties at the outset, which it would be a matter of using and furnishing, development is a long construction and presupposes an active pedagogy. The new pedagogy based on activity is in line with the discoveries of psychology. (p. 47)

Later on, the Italian delegate claimed enthusiastically: “Psychology is like the air, it must be present everywhere” (p. 33).¹⁰ Here we find the ideological background of the IBE which underpinned the thinking on teacher education.¹¹

In discussions on the general objectives of teacher education, many delegates emphasised the importance of morality. In 1935, a recommendation stated “that the selection of candidates should not depend solely on knowledge acquired, but that moral, intellectual and physical aptitudes should be seriously taken into account” (R 4, 1935, N°3). This attention remained constant: in 1953, the delegates unanimously adopted the Spanish proposal to add “moral” to “psychological and physical training” (p. 101). One year later, the representative from Lebanon

stressed the need for providing prospective teachers with a moral and spiritual training as Mr Picot [the Swiss delegate] had already pointed out. It was regrettable that the questionnaire had failed to deal with that matter; he accordingly trusted that the omission would be rectified in the draft recommendations. (1954, p. 40)

Along with others, the French delegate, Brunold, agreed, stating:

Bearing this in mind, the training of teachers, who were the shapers of humanity, should be governed by [...] stress on moral training because

¹⁰ Here, we refer to the French text, since, curiously, this sentence does not appear in the English translation.

¹¹ See Chap. 15.

present-day life called for very strong qualities of character and persistence in man, as well as a team spirit, isolated actions don't exist any more. (p. 57s)

As the delegates saw it, the teaching profession was thus subject to the double imperatives of a high intellectual training requirement, ensured on a scientific basis, and a moral imperative that would build leading personalities, which appeared much more difficult to make operational.

OPPOSING IDEOLOGIES SUBTLY EXPRESSED

Behind the unanimity of the votes on the recommendations, there were nuances in the different positions. The significance of national dimensions is a good example. In the 1930s, delegations from fascist countries insisted: "The teacher must therefore be given the necessary knowledge, but above all the notion of what constitutes the foundation of national life" (ICPE, 1935, p. 34), as the former Italian Minister of Education Balbino Giuliano said. "Develop above all the spirit of community (by means of Hitler Youth, civil service, camps)" (p. 45), declared the German delegate Alfred Huhnhauser. For him: "professional training must be such as to ensure that future teachers are in close contact with the people" (p. 49), an addition refused and replaced by the wording of the French delegate Barrier: "professional training must be such as to ensure that future teachers have close contact with the populations among whom they will have to teach" (p. 49). We find traces of an anti-democratic ideology also during the 1954 ICPE. Indeed, Article 14 submitted for discussion stated:

The professional training of secondary teachers should include [...] special courses involving for instance a study of social phenomena and relationships, professional ethics, international understanding, etc. so as to foster a spirit of democracy, freedom and brotherhood of mankind. (p. 89)

The Portuguese delegate Maria Irene Leita da Costa replied that she could not agree. She therefore proposed replacing the expression "a spirit of democracy, freedom and brotherhood of mankind" with "the realisation of the aspirations of all the peoples", implying that, in her view, there were peoples who did not aspire to democracy and freedom; she was no doubt thinking of her own country, which was under dictatorship. The amendment was rejected by 19 votes to 7 (p. 90).

THE STATUS OF TEACHERS

The ICPEs had consistently advocated for better status and better treatment for teachers. This was particularly the case in times of shortage. Referring explicitly to the 1938 recommendations, the 1967 ICPE unanimously proposed:

Steps should be taken to ensure not only that secondary school teachers' salaries and social security conditions compare favourably with those of other professions requiring similar and equivalent qualifications, but also that their conditions of living, work and employment as well as their professional prospects are such as to attract and retain in the teaching profession an adequate number of fully qualified persons. (R 62, 1967, N°13)

This is evidence that this was a reflection that had been taken for granted over the decades, especially since the teacher shortage could also be explained by the unsatisfactory and sometimes miserable conditions that affected the profession. These are certainly speeches but their perpetuation until the 1960s is a clear indication of the gap between principles and recommendations and their application.

Let us go back 30 years. The Conference of American Member States of the ILO, meeting as early as 1936, asked the ILO and the IBE¹² for an enquiry into the "living and working conditions of teaching personnel in primary and secondary education being agreed upon". The former received little response, whereas the IBE's approach provided a clear picture of these conditions, resulting in two recommendations, one for primary and one for secondary education, with little difference between the two in substance. The 1938 report addressed many issues related to salaries and social welfare, which were far from being agreed (p. 75ss). Some, like the Swiss delegate Borel, believed that the teacher should not have any material concerns, and even that "his modest situation encourages him to better understand the difficulties faced by the parents of pupils" (p. 26): a plea for alignment with the lower social classes, workers and peasants, who formed the majority of the population. The proposal made by the drafters of the recommendation is in a completely different vein:

Moreover, it is important for his moral authority, as well as for the maintenance of his good state of mind, that an unfavourable comparison should

¹²We have seen that a collaboration on other issues had already begun previously: Chap. 3.

not be made between his material situation and that of the liberal or manual categories of a corresponding social level. (p. 33)

This wording is clearly aimed at aligning teachers’ wages with socially valued professions. This article would be strongly watered down and would become “that he should receive a salary enabling him to maintain his dignity and his good state of mind” (R 13, 1938, N°3). The explicit refusal of any comparison with other professions and social classes in fact left governments room for manoeuvre: a typical compromise in the debates and recommendations of the ICPEs, supposedly reconciling opposites, but avoiding contradictions. A universal by abstraction one might say.

Another discrepancy emerged in relation to gender pay. In his report presented in 1939, the rapporteur wrote cautiously: “Often male and female teachers are paid the same, but sometimes they are paid differently. Almost all Anglo-Saxon countries fall into this second category” (p. 98). Indeed, in the 1938 ICPE the UK proposed to delete the article providing for equality of treatment, and succeeded in getting the phrase: “no difference should be made” to be replaced by “in particular, it would seem desirable that there should be no difference between the salaries of men and women teachers” (p. 41; R 13, 1938, N°3). And in 1939, Scotland came back to the topic, calling for the deletion of the article providing for equality.

On the other hand, Mexican delegate Pajma Guillen argued for this requirement to be strengthened (p. 53). Both of these would be reduced, in favour of the previous year’s compromise solution. A similar “consensus” was reached on equal treatment for nursery school teachers and all primary school teachers. The Belgian delegate Marcel Nyns had reservations about this, and the absolute requirement would therefore be watered down with the clarification “when the duration of school service is of a comparable order” (p. 41).¹³ These skirmishes were conducted along lines that at first sight seem surprising: it was the Anglo-Saxon countries, reputed to be more advanced in terms of gender equality, that refused equal treatment. The operation of school systems which were decentralised and more governed by local authorities and less by a central legal framework (Lawn, 2013) undoubtedly made unification in this area more difficult.

¹³The issue of women and education is explored further in the next chapter.

The definition of the legal status of primary and secondary teachers did not lead to such dissension. Whether they were civil servants of the state, the provinces or the local authorities, a teacher who met all the formal requirements for their work could only be “deprived of it for serious misconduct” (p. 37 for primary, p. 46 for secondary school). Could it be that there was only a facade of unanimity, with no one daring to contradict the principle, despite practices that were obviously contrary to it in many countries? It is difficult to say, especially as there was no debate. Fifteen years later, the 1953 and 1954 Recommendations concerning the salary and status of primary and secondary school teachers confirmed the positions developed before the war; they clarified them by systematically introducing a comparison with professions with high-level qualifications, training and responsibilities, and also provided for remedies. The principle of equal treatment for men and women was no longer contested, including for women teachers in kindergartens.

In terms of content, the most important change was that from now on the delegates advocated for the systematic participation of representatives of the profession in the drafting of contracts and directives and in appeal bodies. In order to promote this, a rule was introduced: “Teachers should have the right to join freely whichever professional organisations they prefer, which would be qualified to represent them on all occasions” (R 37, 1953, N°11), a rule which was still generalized in 1954 and stated that secondary school teachers “should freely enjoy all civic rights” (R 39, 1954, N°5).

This demand for recognition of teachers’ associations also applies to the IBE and its ICPEs: from 1953 onwards, the *Comité d’entente des fédérations internationales du personnel enseignant* and the World Confederation of Organisations of the Teaching Profession were systematically invited as observers, representing tens of millions of professionals (Image 19.1). The representative of these associations expressed his satisfaction by pointing out:

the presence of an observer from the Joint Committee at this Conference marked a new stage in the fruitful collaboration which had been built up over the past five years between UNESCO and the International Bureau of Education on the one hand, and the international organisations of educators which, as a Secretary-General of the Joint Committee, he had the honour to represent on the other. (p. 55)

The image shows a handwritten draft of a table titled 'Budget International de l'Éducation - 1933'. The table is organized into two main sections: 'Budget National' and 'Budget International'. Each section lists countries with their respective expenditures in francs and as a percentage of their GDP. The countries listed include Belgium, India, Belgian Congo, Tunisia, and various other nations. The table is handwritten and shows some corrections and annotations.

Païs	Budget total	Pourcent de l'Indice des produits	Pourcent
Belgique 1933	34.558.595	39,10 000	12,5
Belgique (Colonies) 1933	4.888.675.625	884.238.725	18,2
Inde 1933	1.385.335.366	155.340.143	11,2
Belgique Congo 1933	4.598.006.915	132.955.715	2,9
Belgique 1933	286.131.408	35.233.189	12,3
Belgique Congo 1933	233.482.558	30.211.093	12,9
Tunisie 1933	2.803.186.360	184.550.611	6,6
Tunisie 1933	95.281.180	17.293.400	18,2
Tunisie 1933	268.280.000	35.351.000	13,2
Tunisie 1933	1.034.141.980	687.155.000	66,6
Tunisie 1933	259.110.880	10.220.000	3,9
Tunisie 1933	259.219.000	68.282.000	26,3
Tunisie 1933	59.812.760	100.160.000	167,2
Tunisie 1933	8.110.520	1.346.520	16,5
Tunisie 1933	5.328.860.000	338.488.000	6,2
Tunisie 1933	126.268.370	22.848.000	18,1
Tunisie 1933	10.058.000	19.760.000	197,6
Tunisie 1933	58.750.104	5.816.036	9,9
Tunisie 1933	312.081.000	15.860.700	5,1
Tunisie 1933	4.602.050.720	470.119.500	10,2
Tunisie 1933	4.412.817.846	200.201.611	4,5
Tunisie 1933	464.231.046	11.038.000	2,4
Tunisie 1933	795.079.250	107.600.000	13,5
Tunisie 1933	871.151.780	184.455.920	21,2
Tunisie 1933	64.452.273	13.387.726	20,8
Tunisie 1933	44.801.811	10.347.141	23,1
Tunisie 1933	45.811.141	10.971.024	23,9
Tunisie 1933	46.008.232	10.817.100	23,5
Tunisie 1933	44.610.000	24.888.816	55,8
Tunisie 1933	4.434.100.000	194.885.247	4,4
Tunisie 1933	402.109.988	10.432.105	2,6
Tunisie 1933	56.871.193.790	1.524.621.000	2,7
Tunisie 1933	824.321.820	62.855.390	7,6

Image 19.1 Draft for the table of expenditures for education per country, 1933. This table is part of the first survey discussed in an ICPE (1934), published in French on the question of budget savings in education. Note that the inquiry also included colonies like India, Belgian Congo, Tunisia, etc. (© IBE)

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On the Fate of Women: “Equality Does Not Mean Identity”

Of the 65 problems selected for treatment by the ICPEs between 1934 and 1968, only one was entirely devoted to the situation of women in education, and this was only in 1952, on the initiative of the women’s NGOs supported by UNESCO (Hunyadi, 2022, pp. 452–59). Of course, in all the previous surveys—behind the statistics, the rational speeches, the liberating pleas—the feminine was hidden behind the masculine. But this silence is surprising: the IBE’s mission was to leave no one, least of all the most vulnerable,¹ on the sidelines of the conquering march of education, held to be a condition for social justice, equality and subsequently for the emancipation of individuals and peoples. Moreover, several of the IBE leaders and their close relations (especially wives) as well as the main secretaries of the Bureau² moved in women’s networks which were well

¹Girls were not the only ones to be included in the invisibilised populations; the working classes and colonised populations were rarely mentioned during the first half of the twentieth century. In contrast, juvenile populations in rural areas or those suffering from mental and intellectual deficiencies were already the subject of specific investigations in the inter-war period (Droux et al., 2022).

²Marie Butts, Rachel Gampert, Anne Hamori, Elisabeth Rotten and Blanche Weber; see the work done by Boss on this topic (2022a, b).

represented by the collective members of the Bureau and those who appeared on its committee for initiatives.³

How then can we understand this silence? The subject may seem too controversial, as is suggested by the speeches on the regularly mentioned boundless differences between countries, traditions and cultures regarding the “conditions of women”. There was certainly little detection and, consequently, little awareness of the extent of the segregations suffered in the field of education, and also because of their insidious subtleties that led to this “invisibilisation”.⁴

In this context, what were the positions and initiatives taken by the stalwarts of the IBE? What developments were taking place in the treatment of gender issues in the ICPEs? How were contradictions—if they were identified—dealt with by this chorus of diplomats and experts who had long been essentially male, but whose voices were meticulously transcribed and translated, day and night, by discreet but efficient secretaries who were almost exclusively female?

PIONEERING INTERNATIONAL SURVEYS

Looking at sources other than those of the ICPEs, we can see first of all that the decision-making bodies of the IBE had integrated the gender issue into their concerns and that several international surveys had been carried out but without leading to an international Conference.

The Bureau was one of the first international public law institutions to initiate regular international surveys on the status and salaries of women

³Alice Descœudres, Fanny Fern Andrews, Émilie Gourd, Émilie Pieczynska, Helena Radlinska, Maria Sokal, Nelly Schreiber-Favre, Camille Vidart and Marguerite Wagner-Beck. Boss (2022, pp. 473–476) shows that the IBE had a higher representation of women in its structures and positions of responsibility than other IOs of this period. More generally, on the construction of women’s history and on the analysis of their agentivity at the transnational level: Ashworth (2021), Denéchère and Delaunay (2007), Getachew et al. (2022), Giomi and Zerman (2018), Gubin et al. (2004), Marbeau (2007); Miller (1994), Owens (2018), Owens and Rietzler (2021), Rogers (2018) and Thébaud (2019); on their functions as secretaries and the societal transformations resulting from these “revolutions: of paper”, see Gardey (2001, 2018).

⁴This could explain women’s associations’ low investment in the IBE (which clearly contrasted with their interest in the work of the League of Nations and the ILO) and the lack of lasting collaboration between these entities, although informal exchanges were dense, at least at a low, small secretarial level (Hunyadi, 2022). On these notions of invisibilisation: Arrivé (2020), Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach (2008) and Spivak (2015).

teachers in the public school system, starting in the late 1920s.⁵ Then, in 1932, in collaboration with the ILO,⁶ the IBE conducted a pioneering survey on *La situation de la femme mariée dans l'enseignement officiel* (*The situation of married women in official education*): 42 replies were collected from Ministries of Public Education and were published in 1933, highlighting the discrimination suffered by wives in the education market.

Moreover, in December 1939, the management committee—which had just been set up so that the IBE could survive the war—devised a survey on home economics in primary and secondary schools: it was then taken for granted that only women were concerned, even though it was recommended that this subject should be included in the curriculum for young men. It is worth noting the concern to give a broad and above all theoretical definition to this “home economics”, presented as a way for young girls to gain access to other subjects such as political economy, civic education, public hygiene, history and geography (*L'enseignement ménager dans les écoles primaires et secondaires*, 1941, p. 29).

It should also be observed that while the preparatory surveys for the ICPEs dealt with the teaching profession, from 1935 onwards explicit mention was systematically made of women. Admittedly, women were still discriminated against in managerial positions as well as in the secondary school network (there was hardly any mention of higher education,⁷ which was left to the ICIC in their division of tasks). It is noted that women were gradually gaining more and more positions in primary education, acquiring rights in pre-school, and many voices were raised to welcome this and to advocate for wage equivalence.

One more salient point: as soon as peace was achieved, the IBE Council decided to update its data on the rights of married women in the teaching profession. Launched in May 1946, this time the survey focused on the right of women teachers to continue to work in the public sector after they were married.⁸ Of the 45 countries that responded, 40—like the USSR—stated that these rights were guaranteed, but at the same time they cited specific clauses that sometimes reflected social provisions in their favour

⁵ Also including investigations into the treatment of kindergarten teachers.

⁶ It was the liaison committee between the two institutions which drew up the survey.

⁷ This could explain the IFUW's low interest in the IBE which, following agreements with the ILO and the ICIC, was focused on compulsory education and the professionals working in it. See Hunyadi (2019).

⁸ A brief summary of the survey results is published in *The World's Children*, November 1947, pp. 198–200.

(maternity leave, sometimes in return for a reduction in salary, etc.), and sometimes practices that were inconsistent with these rights (a married woman could only work if her husband's salary was insufficient to support the family, or if she had no children, etc.). It was usual at that time to consider marriage as an act of resignation or to translate it into salary reductions or the withdrawal of benefits. Beyond the legal position, there was also stifling moral pressure for the woman to stay at home with her own children, rather than "hogging" a job at the expense of a father with a family.

Among the few countries that mentioned gender distinctions was Switzerland, hitherto hailed as a land of democracy and a Mecca of pedagogy: without justification. Almost half of the Swiss cantons reported they required the resignation of a married woman, unless there were exceptional circumstances, including widowhood or divorce. These two outcomes were therefore the "laissez passer" to keep one's job! These discriminatory laws dated mainly from the crisis of the 1930s and several cantons, such as Geneva, mentioned that they no longer corresponded to practice or had just been modified.⁹

MALE BASTIONS SOLIDLY PRESERVED

A comparison of the results of the two international surveys on the fate of married women shows that little change in the case for greater equity was noticeable between 1933 and 1947. In the meantime, however, the war—which had just afflicted a third of the responding countries—had fundamentally reconfigured gender relations, including in the labour market. For six years, women replaced the men who had been mobilised: of course, they took on domestic activities, including work in the fields, on the farm, in craft industries and in shops; but they also worked in schools, factories, workshops, hospitals and administrations, when they were not mobilised in the Resistance or at the front.¹⁰ The ICPEs' half-hearted acknowledgement of women's abilities and valour in these particular circumstances is clear.

⁹ Geneva provided extracts from its legislation, attesting to the exclusion of married women from the cantonal administration and education in 1937 (with exceptions), and the repeal of this law in 1946.

¹⁰ The role and work of women during wars and other crisis situations are now well documented and inspired our analyses: Falquet et al. (2010), Maruani and Meron (2012) and Schweitzer (2002).

But this double IBE survey also makes visible the relentless crusade to confine women to the private sphere. The documentation gathered in the two inquiries shows that in times of public budget cuts, civil servants were directly targeted:¹¹ the so-called double salaries controversy, which was initiated or reinforced following the 1929 crash and tirelessly revisited during the 1930s and 1940s, had a lasting effect on women teachers, especially within the state sector (status of civil servant couples).¹²

The deliberations allow us to highlight the strategies of the state, the employers and, at times, supported by the unions,¹³ to keep women in subordinate positions and statuses (including lower salaries, insurance, benefits); often there is only support for them if it does not jeopardise the social order, male economic and political strongholds or male supremacy in the labour market.

In light of the trends revealed by these data, some answers can be given to our initial question about the invisibilisation of women within the ICPEs. Silence can function as a rallying compromise. It is about pretending to be in harmony, or at least of having possible arrangements, allowing one to openly plead for educational justice and equality for all (where all would be included), without having to denounce the injustices and discrimination about which one is aware, or to claim a feminist stance that was little recognised in these circles, when it was not outright discredited. For a long time, people were content to ensure that school jurisdictions did not ostensibly discriminate against girls; examining the realities on the ground was more rarely ventured, and this was disastrous in so many “remote and savage” regions, but these realities were also likely to oblige countries that proclaimed themselves to be “civilised” to face their own contradictions.

We do not exclude that the IBE’s partners could *de facto* subscribe to certain distinctions on account of the very principle of adjusting to the profiles of the populations to be schooled and to the specific nature of each, which was eagerly recommended by the reformist movements; the IBE itself regularly advocated these differentiation approaches.

¹¹ And this was the case in nearly all the countries that took part in the survey (1933, pp. 6–11).

¹² See the works of Schoeni (2012) including a specific analysis of Switzerland.

¹³ Who may have viewed women as unfair competitors because they encouraged downward pressure on wages.

Thus, it was under strong external pressure that the IBE tackled the perennial issue of women's equal access to education.

1952: PUTTING AN END TO RELEGATION “THE SANCTUARY OF THE FAMILY”

In 1952, it was no longer in the background but in the spotlight that women appeared. Not only was this ICPE prepared by women's associations, mandated by UNESCO, it was also the first to be chaired by a woman: Margaret Clapp, US delegate and dean of Wellesley College.¹⁴ This Conference was the only one with so many women, apart from secretaries, interpreters and typists. They were delegates from ministries and IOs/NGOs (32%), and they spoke out extensively. For the first time again, vocational (post-secondary) and higher education were addressed (levels usually reserved for either the ILO or the ICIC, then UNESCO).

This ICPE also initiated a new way of dealing with gender issues, by confronting head-on the discrimination suffered by women, as well as within the public school environment. A dam seems to have been breached; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights “governed” the issue: UNESCO's director, Torres Bodet, who was used to flamboyant pleas to protect the most disadvantaged, introduced the debates by stating that the tradition summarising the female mission as “Kinder, Küche, Kirche” was being demolished. Yet Torres Bodet focused his speech on UNESCO's commitments to “fundamental education” (not secondary, vocational or higher education) and made it clear in 1952 that “equality does not mean identity” (pp. 25 and 30). The spirit of this slogan permeated all of the ICPE.

¹⁴Hunyadi (2022) showed the importance of the solidarity built around UNESCO as early as 1947, thanks to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNESC), which also investigated women's access to education and examined this issue annually (2022, p. 453); moreover, it was women's NGOs that took the initiative of dedicating an event such as the ICPE to it. She also pointed out that this was the only time that these associations (eight in all) and women had played such an expert role, both in the preparatory commissions (which also included representatives of the WHO, the UNESCO Commission on the Status of Women, the ILO and the Food and Agriculture Organisation) and in the working groups responsible for drafting the reports and recommendations (pp. 445–460). The general study was written by IBE staff member Maddalena Pagano, while Henriette Surgen had the dual task of presenting the introductory report and leading the group responsible for drafting the recommendations.

The protagonists were encouraged in this by Piaget himself,¹⁵ and from the outset declared themselves to be aware of the difficulty of the task in view of the diverging positions and the lingering prejudices. The warnings went on and on; it was important to be patient, to avoid being too enterprising, to guard against overly radical solutions, as "a misuse of these principles could compromise progress more seriously than inaction", explained an honorary professor of educational sciences from Belgium Mlle A. de Loneux (ICPE, 1952, p. 37). As we shall see, this message calling for compromise was heard, right down even to the recommendations adopted.

As far as the positions taken were concerned, we might have expected an alliance between women, or a clear distinction between the sexes, but this was by no means the case. Although firm, the representatives of the delegates of women's or feminist associations showed restraint: Was this in order to guarantee even a slight change in the mentalities of this predominantly male hemicycle? To avoid any implosion? Or even because they themselves had made it their mission to have certain specificities of women recognised? The tensions and contradictions were obvious, but they were far from being confined to cultural, religious and ethnic boundaries, or to political and educational orientations.

THE ESSENTIALISATION OF DIFFERENCES...

Beyond the weight of traditions and prejudices, beyond the socio-economic imponderables (to which we will return), the first culprits were quickly pointed out: "it was especially the women who had not benefited by the facilities of the access of women to education who were the most hostile to their daughters benefiting by it to-day", insisted the delegate of the United Kingdom's Colonial Office, F. H. Gwilliam (p. 36). This makes it possible, in counterpoint, to respond to the urgency of providing more training for young girls: it was up to them to change and reduce prejudices, since the transformation of mentalities was their responsibility and

¹⁵ Piaget, who would only be present at the beginning of the ICPE due to illness, foresaw this with insight: this was one of the most difficult problems, because "the more important the question is, the more chance there was that the those political, philosophical and religious differences which conditioned it might influence the common pedagogical and technical denominators" (1952, p. 33). This fear could also explain why the IBE itself did not take the initiative for an ICPE dedicated to women's education.

depended on their own attitudes and aptitudes, notions which were crucial in the debates.

Populations in so-called underdeveloped contexts or under colonial rule were grouped together. It was the speech of the Indian delegate, Ms Ashadevi Aryanayakam, which widened the breach—opened by the director of UNESCO with the distinction between equality and identity—into which the representatives of several empires successively rushed. She carefully problematised the distinction between education and instruction, and then asserted that “In India, the women, though illiterate, were not un-educated in the true sense politically, socially and culturally. This had been proved by the important part they played in the non-violent struggle for freedom and in the recent election”. India would thus demonstrate that schools only make sense if they are in harmony with the national traditional culture and education, the artistic and folkloric heritage, of which women as the primary educators would be the guardians (p. 38). In this context, her argument cannot be questioned. Nevertheless, as women are assigned by their biological nature to the perpetuation of traditions that embody the specificities of a people, they are confined to their original environment, their land and folklore.

It is only a short step from there to presupposing that they embody what constitutes the most instinctive and emotional part of the human being; and some people took this step to state that women represent the least civilised, most primitive, most savage part of the human being; women show the human being in his or her “natural state”.

The comparison and even the assimilation between women and savages, whose very nature is essentialised, were the subject of various statements, first and foremost by delegates of the great empires in the territories under their jurisdiction: the United Kingdom, France and Portugal. The representative of the Colonial Office of the United Kingdom, already quoted, proclaimed that “it was for the population of a country to decide itself upon the type of education it desired” (p. 55); she clearly announced the intention to facilitate these people’s access to autonomy and women’s access to secondary and higher education. Two speeches in the name of France pointed out that “insofar as overseas territories were concerned, it was the responsibility of France to lead them to full knowledge of the modern world without, however, cutting them off from their roots” (ICPE, 1952, p. 44), nor uprooting them from their environment, which required favouring basic education, confined to agriculture, hygiene and

literacy.¹⁶ Henriette Surgen, general inspector of infant schools, author of the preliminary report and, as such, an influential expert in the debate, expressed an even more radical view of the indigenous peoples, doubting their ability to build themselves as individuals. She deduced that France must “prepare the territories confided to it for autonomy”; this implied that the education of girls “was begun at the youngest stage possible [which] presented the following advantages”:

The possibility of combating the innate clumsiness of the local inhabitant in manual activities in the field; the possibility also of struggling against the almost unhealthy affectivity, the blind submission, the difficulty of the native to see himself as an individual, and the lack of social life which was due to this attitude. (p. 52)

Then it was the turn of António Ferro, the delegate from Portugal, to speak passionately about “correcting this age-old injustice”, but he immediately moderated his terms, to avoid

not going to the other extreme and particularly not contributing to mutilating and destroying nature’s masterpiece, woman. [...] The chief reason which prevented them from competing with men in number was precisely their superior creative genius, for it affects life itself [...] under pretext of devoting themselves entirely to tasks which were altogether inferior to their fundamental condition of creators of life and of the sublime mothers of men. (pp. 68–69)

While they all recognised the specificity of women’s identity, contained in their reproductive and maternal functions, the speakers did not draw the same conclusions. For some, this biological difference, justified by nature, allowed its legitimisation and sealed the inevitability of the distinctions that result from it. This was the verdict of the delegate from Spain:¹⁷ “motherhood and the education of their children. No other function could ensure the maximum development of their personality, and the

¹⁶ Marcel Abraham, president of the IBE Council, delegate for France, speaking as director of the University Foreign Relations Department. Matasci (2023) shows that this is a reformulation of the principle of education adjusted to the supposed specificities of this public, conceived and put into practice as early as the 1920s. This notion of adjustment is completely in line with that of differentiation, which the spokespersons of the new education movements advocated.

¹⁷ Segismundo Ryo Villanova, undersecretary of state at the Ministry of Education.

extent of their influence on society” (p. 70). Others, like the French delegate Marcel Abraham, stated that one could not subscribe to such “nostalgia” about femininity and motherhood, which “presents many aspects which are cruel for women today and which are sometimes blind to masculine egoism”. Discrimination was radically denounced, but the watchword remained intangible: “equality whilst respecting differences”. For his part, he clearly insisted on the importance of offering every woman “the chance of living fully and realising her potential” (p. 72). By essentialising these differences, by invoking the immutable order of biology, it was the socially constructed and historically instituted dimensions that were masked, blocking any possible evolution (Image 20.1).¹⁸

EQUALITY, BUT UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS?

One can see the difficulty of taking a stand in the middle of the twentieth century, where opinions plainly assimilating women to their biological reproductive functions faced clearly heard demands for equality in education. For the most part,¹⁹ these claims were justified because “A society which obliged women to work should enable them to do so under the same conditions as men” (p. 72), the French delegate stated firmly. The number of reports and speakers who denied the reality of this discrimination should be noted: sometimes because they did not understand its nature or did not have the data; maybe they did not see other possibilities, did not think it was natural and could not measure its radical nature. A succession of delegates at least claimed that equality had already been achieved in their countries: this was the case in Italy, Cambodia, Liberia, Burma and Turkey (ICPE, 1952, pp. 53, 54, 70, 71 and 72). In the case of Pakistan, it was stated that as soon as it had gained independence, the country had been able to establish democracy and give full rights to women (p. 44; this would be reiterated in 1962, p. 115). Here independence is clearly presented as a stepping stone to greater equality for women in education.

Even though it was unanimously recognised that endemic poverty is the cause of the under-education of girls in the world, it was the socio-economic and political repercussions of equality that seemed the most

¹⁸ See in particular the work of: Arnot and Weiler (1993), Duru-Bellat (2004), Owens and Rietzler (2021) and Schoeni (2012).

¹⁹ A few isolated voices spoke up against the violence of such claims.



Image 20.1 Discussion during the 1952 ICPE on women in education. In this first conference dedicated to the crucial issue of access of women to education, the role and place of women were meaningful for the first time. Women’s NGOs and UNESCO were the instigators of this topic. (© IBE)

intolerable. In this respect, we can say that the socio-economic issues were the backdrop of the debates, but few of them went into the causes in depth, simply mentioning class relations and the misdeeds of capitalism, certainly in order to avoid political interference (class struggles, issues of colonialism, aftermath of the war).

Equal access to education presupposes equal access to diplomas, at all levels, which are the key to fairer access to the labour market. Certainly, the conviction that their aptitudes and tastes “naturally” lead women to fields that correspond better to them remained reassuring, to the teaching profession in particular, where employment had long been regulated, as we have seen, by salary distinctions, reinforced by the horizontal hierarchies of the fields and vertical hierarchies of the school grades. There was a lingering threat of the dismantling of male bastions in the economic world which were the structuring principle of horizontal segmentations

between the activities of men and women and of hierarchies between qualified and unqualified positions (Schoeni, 2012). Even as the rights of women, of peoples and of the most vulnerable were readily proclaimed, although barriers were not actually being erected against them, the speeches nevertheless revealed how much the economic, social and political emancipation of these groups seemed to be disturbing.²⁰

IN A “DEMOCRACY OF UTOPIA”...

In her preliminary report and then her concluding assessment, Henriette Surgen presented herself as “by profession a teacher of girls”, “a feminist through love of justice and reason”; she recognised that in “a democracy of utopia” (pp. 121 and 125)²¹ equality would be guaranteed in educational, professional and civic terms. She clearly pointed out the existing psychological, the social and also the economic resistance, especially after compulsory education. By calling for special attention to be paid to this transitional period, where the most drastic selections are made, she was more proactive than the UNESCO director, who focused on fundamental education. Surgen tactfully stated her positions in the form of questions, which contained the intended guidelines. She concluded her report by saying that “the principle of more justice for women is established, the solution is on the way” (p. 127). The emancipation of women through education would thus constitute a shared horizon of expectation. It would be utopian to pretend that there was a common position on rights and status.

The select committee in charge of drawing up a first version of the recommendations (of which Surgen was rapporteur) would take into account the precautions suggested at the very beginning of the ICPE. The proposed recommendations attempted to reconcile the contrasting positions of the partners at the 1952 Conference. The recommendations did not compromise on questions of equity, but the latter was tempered by the criteria of aptitude and the differentiation of psycho-physiological developments. Organised in six chapters, the articles called for in-depth investigations to better define the most appropriate measures that would accelerate the movement in favour of women’s access to education. Then

²⁰ Particularly at the level of educational management, school administration and political circles (also in relation to education).

²¹ “In an ideal democracy” is the English translation.

the next five chapters set out a succession of solutions applicable to all types of education, fundamental education, vocational education and higher education, and specific to teaching staff. All recommendations used the conditional tense,²² even for fundamental education, in order not to impinge on any state prerogatives. By the end of all the debates, including those concerning the recommendations, the principle of envisaging equality of access to secondary, professional and higher studies was unanimously adopted.²³ Yet still with the support of educational and vocational guidance services, which undoubtedly played the role of border guards: through these services, it was a question of “taking into account the characteristics of each sex and individual aptitudes, and the conditions of the labour market” (R 34, 1952, N° 30). Women’s measured access to qualifications clearly remained conditioned by socio-economic requirements.

THE TIPPING POINT TOWARDS RAISING AWARENESS OF GIRLS’ RIGHTS TO EDUCATION?

Did this Conference mark a turning point in the approach to “equal access by women to education”, which was the title of the ICPE of 1952? Looking at the evolution of the proportion of women delegates,²⁴ we can clearly affirm the number of speeches on gender issues and the pleas for greater gender equity. We can observe an increased awareness of the

²² This was common in the recommendations, but less systematically.

²³ The delegate of the Vatican’s International Secretariat of Pax Romana, the Australian Rose-Marie Goldie, who was based in Fribourg at the time, even reinforces the content of the document with regard to access to higher education (ICPE, 1952, pp. 103–104); it should be noted that she would be the first lay woman to work in the Vatican Curia. *Pax Romana, Memory and Hope, 1947–1987*. <https://www.icmica-miic.org/2020/07/pax-romana-remembered/>

²⁴ The number of women delegates never exceeded 10%; exceptionally (as in 1953), they were given the status of vice president, which was not without arousing certain jealousies. At least this is what Maria Irene Leite da Costa clearly states in her letter of 29 June 1960 to the IBE, where she takes offence at the fact that such “national jealousies” exclude her from being president and also prevent her from assuming her duties as delegate of the Portuguese National Assembly to the United States of America. 17_A-1-22-1595. A-IBE.

But women now participated more regularly in the groups, mandated to draft reports. Those who were present were not inactive, since it should be remembered that the secretaries, translators and stenographers, who were ever more numerous, were mainly women who worked virtually day and night during the conference sessions, as in the office. See Boss (2022, chapter 2).

injustice suffered by girls and women, both in access to courses of study and to diplomas. The transformations were certainly tenuous; were they the result of the conciliatory logic of this gathering in search of fraternal agreements? The evolution was perceptible on the issues of equal access but with respect for differences, and also on the possible scholarships, compensatory offers and specific courses of study for girls (with primarily practical content), which corresponded, as we know, to diversionary courses of study.²⁵ Equality of opportunity, equality of achievement, equality of access to the most sought-after higher education qualifications, equality in the labour market—with the not insignificant exception of managerial positions in education (to stick to the causes in which the IBE invested)—were much more rarely addressed or problematised and, even less, defended.

However, a few voices, sometimes dissonant, denounced these differentiations and the severe discrimination that ensued, but these stances were far from reaching a consensus.

When the 1967 *Yearbook of Public Education* was compiled, the 90 countries that contributed to it were asked to give a follow-up to the 1952 recommendation.²⁶ Forty countries did so, two-thirds of which had just gained independence or undergone a revolutionary change of regime (*Yearbook*, 1967, p. LXXX). Most of the responses stated that formal equality had been achieved but that practices were being slow to adjust to it: states clearly used this forum to justify their jurisdictions and school policies. They declared that they were striving to rescue women from their level of inferiority and even servitude, claiming that they had to fight against habits and prejudices that had been ingrained for centuries, not to mention the economic and social difficulties that were especially detrimental to women. The UN Assembly Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination of 7 November 1967 was mentioned. Among the countries that the IBE summary presented as the most committed were Cuba, India and Iran; curiously, Japan was not mentioned in the introduction, although it too provided detailed evidence of the initiatives taken. Some, such as Cyprus, Ethiopia, Finland, Korea, Guyana, Hungary, Kenya,

²⁵For a critical analysis over the long term of such channels that allow certain socio-economic demands to be met while maintaining social discrimination, see: Chapoulie (2010), Garnier (2010), Kafka (2019), Petitat (1982), Skelton et al. (2006) and Wisdom et al. (2019).

²⁶The practice of asking governments to state in their national reports on how they are adjusting their educational policies to the recommendations of the ICPEs was introduced in 1956.

Ireland, Monaco, Poland, Romania, Singapore and Uganda, stated, sometimes with statistics, that this issue had been resolved in their country. Others, such as Cuba, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania and Togo, pointed out that education, neglected under “foreign occupation”, had made a great leap forward since then, with the undisguised intention of attesting to their ability to pursue a fairer education policy. These pages showed the gap between principles and practices and between speeches and realities on the ground, but also how much the perception of the role and rights of women differed according to countries, faiths, ethnic groups and cultures.

During these years, the 1950s and 1960s, links were more clearly established between poor regions (whether rural or urban, in the countries of the North or the South) and illiteracy, which still hit women hard. It was precisely these hundreds of millions of illiterates in the world that constituted the main cause taken up by the International Conferences on Public Education between 1934 and 1968.

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From Educational Justice to Social Justice

The nineteenth century can boast of having abolished slavery by law, and the twentieth century should devote its efforts to the abolishing of another form of slavery – illiteracy. (Jaime Torres Bodet, Director of UNESCO, ICPE, 1949, p. 22)

The mission that the IBE set itself when it established itself as an inter-governmental body and then institutionalised its ICPEs in 1934 was to universalise access to schooling; its aim was to cover the entire planet. None of the 65 international surveys linked to the ICPEs examined for this book deviated from this “act of faith”: whatever its form, schooling was held to be a benefit with pacifying, integrating and even emancipating aims. The discourse on the hundreds of millions of people who had not been able to benefit from these advantages bore witness to this and echoed certain tones of the civilising discourse of the nineteenth century. Unfairly excluded from the march of progress and therefore deprived of the means to integrate socially, these people would find themselves embittered in the

This chapter extends Hofstetter and Schneuwly (2013) and builds on Hofstetter and Monnier (2022), to which the present analysis additionally incorporates the period of the 1950s and 1960s. These lines also echo the chapter with the particularly significant title, which also applies to our pages: *Différencier pour reconstruire un universel* [To differentiate in order to reconstruct a universal] by Droux et al. (2022).

face of a “foreign” and “hostile” universe, and would consequently fall into a dark misery and, inevitably, into decay, delinquency and violence.

This universal principle was, however, accompanied by a host of precautions which, as we shall see, also testified to the contradictions and dead-ends to be overcome. Schooling was in fact the preferred instrument for integrating and pacifying the masses, guaranteeing social order and economic expansion, by disseminating the benefits of a broad culture that would contribute to the formation of well-integrated and productive citizens, aware of their rights and above all their duties. It was therefore a question of using school not only to achieve autonomy and build a critical mind but also to “format” the population and future citizens.

While all surveys and ICPEs contributed in some way to this broad campaign for schooling, 20 surveys were more specifically concerned with solving the problems associated with the generalisation of access to education. This chapter focuses on these surveys, examining in turn certain paradoxes of the undertaking: how to manage numbers at school while taking into account both equality in education and the needs of the market and the economy? How to ensure the dissemination of an adequate culture while respecting individual and “community” specificities? How could democracy and justice be consolidated through the school, when, throughout the twentieth century, certain social sciences have shown that this institution itself reproduces, supports and even reinforces divisions and discrimination?

A PROACTIVE POLICY FOR EDUCATING THE WORLD

The 1930s exemplify this voluntarist policy of schooling to which the IBE invited governments and their ministerial delegates, who in turn were to rally their own administrations and populations. This is evident in the choice of themes addressed as well as in the exchanges and recommendations that followed. Although they all declared themselves to be in favour of schooling, during the ICPEs the school authorities were urged to better assume their responsibilities in order to work for “school justice” as an “indispensable corollary of social justice”:¹ the obligation of education and its prolongation, which presupposed free education as well as the

¹Josep Lauwerys, professor of pedagogy at the University of London, *Rapport sur l'égalité d'accès à l'enseignement du second degré* [Report on equal access to secondary education] (ICPE, 1946, p. 39).

extension and generalisation of access to secondary education, constrained not only the juvenile population and their families but also the political authorities. The state was now obliged to guarantee sufficient education for everyone, regardless of their abilities and background, by means of legal measures and adequate schooling and finances. The ICPEs' recommendations also obliged employers to comply with laws against child exploitation.² The dramatic context amplified the concerns and recommendations: both in the 1930s and after the war, there was talk of unemployment, social conflicts, poverty and school drop-out rates in rural areas. The delegates were invited to adopt proposals that encouraged their governments and employers' organisations not to sacrifice youth on the altar of their own interests.

Among the main problems faced by governments were that of matching the age of completion of compulsory schooling with the age of admission to work; that of increasing the number of schooling opportunities to be provided to the new school-going population; the issue of linking curricula between educational institutions; and the question of the conditions of access to school for everyone and, for longer studies, for deserving but needy pupils (exemptions from school fees, scholarships, school buses, canteens, etc.).

The management of school numbers during the depression of the 1930s was a delicate matter and appeared to be the preferred instrument for regulating the labour market: adjusting education to the determining interests of the region; reducing the rural exodus and the attraction of the cities; absorbing the influx of students into overcrowded fields and professions; avoiding any social downgrading and, conversely, containing educational ambitions deemed to be excessive.³ With regard to admission to secondary school (1934), while most of the delegates argued for a common first cycle, many of the positions taken on the second cycle were characterised by school Malthusianism. The delegate from Guatemala, Professeur L. Martinez Mont, suggested that it would be preferable to

²In this respect, the IBE's surveys were clearly linked to those of the ILO, as both bodies were concerned to ensure that the end of compulsory schooling was in line with youth labour legislation. The common challenge also lay in the need to ensure that everyone received a satisfactory educational and technical culture, while reducing early unemployment as much as possible. Apart from the minutes of the mixed IBE-ILO commission, see Droux and Matasci (2012).

³The fear of "failures" is all the stronger as it would amplify demoralisation and discontent, and even social violence (ICPE, 1934, pp. 122–123).

concentrate efforts on improving the primary level—which was under-attended—rather than expanding the secondary level (ICPE, 1934, p. 67). Should selection not be strengthened and barriers built between school streams to reduce overcrowding in some streams and the resulting unemployment?⁴ The debate was focused in particular on the definition of the elites, the plural form being resolutely claimed (France), in order to enhance the value of the less-prized professions and the importance of the branches of education: middle schools, upper primary schools, practical schools and vocational schools. The nature and scope of school culture as well as its aims were negotiated, depending on whether secondary education—which was gradually becoming the focus of reforms in many countries—was the prelude to the world of work or a preparation for higher education.

FROM THE RIGHT TO BE DIFFERENT, TO THE DIFFERENCE IN RIGHTS

These debates reveal governments' dual discourse concerning the populations themselves, testifying to the ambivalence of the policies towards them: sometimes there were complaints about the hostility of the populations towards schooling and other times the complaints were about their abusive educational aspirations.

Following the example of Russia, campaigns were encouraged, to convince families not to give in to the temptation of immediate gains, sacrificing, out of greed, the development of their children, who were themselves tempted by this paid freedom.⁵ Marcel Nyns⁶ concluded in his general report on the question that to reach the “masses” only constraint would be effective (ICPE, 1934, pp. 114–115). At the same time, there was a desire to channel social demand and the aspirations of the population to

⁴Turkey and Egypt insisted on these points. The general report by Édouard Cros (Poland) on *Admission to secondary schools* wrote at length about the task of selection, “the natural distribution of pupils among second level schools”, it was advisable that this should be done “according to the level of intelligence, the aptitudes, the character, the knowledge acquired and physical condition, all the while taking into account the needs of the state and society, such as the special conditions of the candidate (origin, material situation, parents' professional situation)” (ICPE, 1934, p. 125).

⁵By refusing to obey the order to go to school in order to earn a few pennies which, it must be noted, were often indispensable for survival.

⁶General Secretary of the Ministry of Public Education of Belgium.

enjoy a better life through the sometimes-ill-considered quest for educational qualifications. In particular, there was alarm at the massive proportion of pupils admitted to secondary school who left without completing it (an average of 45%, varying between 10% and 90% depending on the country), thus wasting their youth, their potential labour and public funds (p. 122).⁷

A more appropriate educational and professional orientation appeared to be the solution to these risks. The moralising dimension of schooling was required to instil a taste for work, contentment with one's lot, and to fight against the "attraction of sprawling cities" (ICPE, 1936, p. 22).⁸ Even when it came to primary schooling, at the request of French delegate Barrier, the resolutions gave precedence to "the dominant rural, industrial and commercial interests of the region", and not to "the interests of the child" (pp. 53 and 58), as the US delegate had suggested in vain.⁹

These clearly stated socio-economic issues¹⁰ also relate to the geographical contexts concerned. Rural and mountainous regions, with low population densities, immediately raised numerous questions, which is why they were included on the agenda of the 1936 Conference.¹¹ There was the dual challenge of bringing the benefits of modern civilisation to these isolated regions, marked by poverty, and often by austerity and aridity, and at the same time recognising the full value of the rural and alpine populations, "which it is necessary to safeguard in integrity" (R 8, 1936, recital 1). Simplicity, wisdom, dignity, robustness and ancestral know-how were praised. As a messenger of progress when it promoted the "world march of education", the IBE was all the more successful in adjusting its message because it remained impregnated with a Rousseauist naturalism that held

⁷Report drawn up by the Polish delegate, Professor at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland.

⁸Paul Lachenal, at that time, first delegate of the Swiss Federal Council and head of the IBE Executive Committee.

⁹George F. Zook, Commissioner at the Education Department, in Washington.

¹⁰These issues therefore run through all the debates, regardless of the era. After perceiving youth as a capital to be developed, from the second half of the twentieth century onwards, the theory of human capital (seen as all the productive talents and skills of the worker) became widespread: by investing in it, individual productivity could increase and promote collective growth. The debates in the ICPEs are clearly marked by this, taking for granted that economic growth also stems from investment in education. This approach would be applied, not without contradictions, to the countries of the South, to ensure their modernisation and "development"; for the IOs such as UNESCO, see Matasci (2023).

¹¹On this topic, see Droux et al. (2022).

country life as a privileged space for respecting the natural development of each individual. The Colombian delegate boasted that his country followed Dewey and, in so doing, sought to “ruralise all schools [...] even urban schools [...] designed to give all children a love of the countryside [...] the notions of hygiene, agriculture, [...] a spirit of cheerfulness, simplicity and work” (ICPE, 1936, p. 46).¹²

While we can clearly see the concern to ward off any social deregulation by fixing populations on their native soil and in their environment—a fixation which would also embody a so-called natural selection—the IBE also expressed itself in terms of school justice. It aimed to detect the specificities of all child populations, in order to guarantee them access to an appropriate education: for nomads, children of sailors, boatmen and families in desert, oceanic, tropical and polar areas, sometimes also evoking families of specific ethnicities and religions; few specific surveys were dedicated to them, but the evocation of these populations permeated the Conferences.¹³

It was a question not only of taking into account and adjusting to conditions and environments but also of respecting the diversity of aptitudes and interests of each individual, in order to recognise their specific identity. The attention paid to special education and the plea for the educability and recognition of the dignity of “blind, deaf-mute and mentally unstable children” are evidence of this. They too would be entitled to appropriate measures to “be trained like other children to profit by the moral, artistic and intellectual riches which give to human life its true value” (R 7, 1936, recital 2).

These specificities were presented as facts, even if it was felt that they could lead to poverty, which must be combated. Rather than “reducing them to inequalities”, the IBE—in keeping with the basic principles of the *Institut Rousseau* and the new education—sought to recognise and adapt to them. Adjusting to such specificities, in the name of the right to be different, as we know in retrospect, contains the possible pitfall of a differentiation of rights, by referring everyone to their origins and characteristics (Droux et al., 2022). In the post-war period, this contradiction would become more apparent in the IBE, which was also a sounding board for

¹²Nieto Caballero, director of education.

¹³In 1938, Belgium asked the LoN and the ILO for information about the children of boatmen. This request was sent to the IBE, which carried out an investigation on this topic in Germany, France, Great Britain and the Netherlands, which were the most advanced in the matter: Teaching the children of boatmen. 100_B-2-4-836, A-IBE.

educational debates around the world, which it reconfigured and relayed in its turn (Image 21.1).

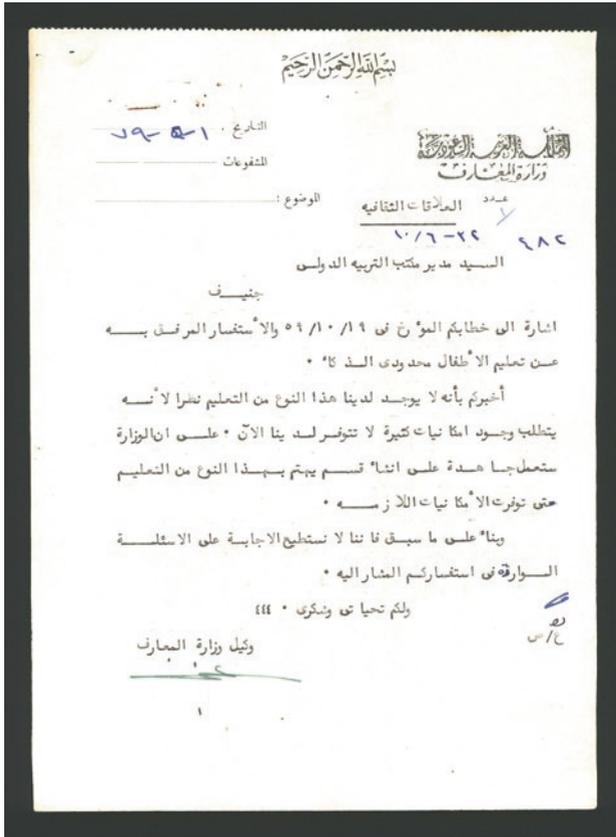


Image 21.1 Response of the Minister of Education of Saudi Arabia of 31 October 1959 to the IBE survey on the organisation of special education for mentally deficient children. The minister replied that this type of education required special teacher skills which the country did not have at that time. However, the Ministry planned to establish a department for this type of education as soon as resources permitted. The IBE had first investigated this problem in 1936. The 1959 survey focused on “educable” and “recoverable” mental retardation. Seventy-one countries responded, and 79 participated in the 1960 Conference on the subject and produced Recommendation N° 51, which aimed to improve early diagnosis and “special education for the mentally retarded” through appropriate structures, methods, programmes and professionals. (© IBE)

FIGHTING ILLITERACY, SYMBOL OF MODERN SLAVERY

“Let all who believe in the power of education and place their hopes in it [unite] to combat the unleashed powers of evil and political passions” (p. 20). Such was the programme of the IBE’s 1946 Conference, the organisation of which was begun on the still-smouldering ashes of the war. The challenge lay in the “pedagogical rebuilding of the world”. The impassioned speeches closely linked social justice and educational justice “in order to meet the peoples’ new political aspirations” (p. 20). But what was particularly worrying in the eyes of the IBE was the gigantic problem of millions of people left to their own devices in the deepest ignorance, powerless and uncultured, and whose bitterness and aggressiveness were likely to destabilise peace and democracy. Ignorance begat poverty which provoked social unrest and “leaves the way open to false prophets”, as much a threat to democracy as to international security (Torres Bodet, ICPE, 1950, p. 31).

Modern education could not accommodate illiteracy, which is a form of slavery, in formal contradiction with democratic principles and human rights. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), once adopted, constituted the reference and guided the discourse of the umbrella bodies of the ICPEs, namely UNESCO and the IBE, which were now associated in the convening of conferences.

We have a supreme duty – to help, as teachers, to organise a society in which every man will be able to shake hands, in brotherly trust and friendship, with his kinsmen from Europe or Asia, to clasp the ebony hand of the man from Africa and the bronze hand of the Indian from American. All races, all peoples, all national aspirations must find expression in this post-war world. If a single voice were to be silent, if a single right were to be trodden under foot, humanity would have shed its blood in vain in those great battles. (Torres Bodet, 1949, p. 25)

There was constant advocacy for the free development of the human person and “the right to education at all levels, the right to culture in all its forms” (p. 29) and the right to speak, regardless of ethnic, religious, social, racial or sexual affiliation, whatever may be the aptitudes, aspirations and interests of each individual.

BEHIND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL, A TENACIOUS IDEOLOGY OF MERIT

Comparisons between the debates of the 1930s and those of the post-war period are instructive, in order to identify how the management of similar problems evolved or not. At the turn of the 1940s and 1950s, the key words of social justice and equality of opportunity were used as if they were self-evident and that the “march of progress in education in the world”¹⁴ was concrete proof of this.

Access to secondary schools is a striking example of this, and also allows the identification of certain ambivalences at a time when the question of the concretisation of these principles was being raised. The titles themselves were adjusted: “admission to secondary school” (1934) was replaced by “equal access to secondary school” (1946). Rejecting the elitist definition of secondary education, which was sometimes even considered outdated, there was a plea for the unification of the school organisation chart and the widening of recruitment in secondary education, thanks to the improvement of selection, differentiation and orientation methods. There was a strong plea to delay the age of diagnoses in order to avoid repeating and amplifying the discrimination linked to cultural and social origins. It was a question of better guiding pupils in their choice of studies and profession, in order to “help to democratise as well as universalise secondary education as a result of which there should be fewer misfits and wastages”, the director of UNESCO concluded in 1954 (p. 22).

This did not prevent contradictory debates on the definition of equality (social or of intelligence) and merit, contradictions behind which the perennial fear of social downgrading and of an embittered intellectual proletariat can sometimes be perceived.

Better educational and vocational guidance rallied most of the protagonists, especially when it came to thinking about the reorganisation of secondary education. It should be noted that Piaget and his fellow travellers at the *Institut universitaire des sciences de l'éducation* of the University of Geneva were specialised in this field and constantly demonstrated the benefits of this orientation, especially if it was not too early. The recommendations that concluded the debates regularly advocated striving to achieve this “ideal of equal educational opportunity for all” (R 19, 1946, recital

¹⁴An expression, such as “a world tour of education”, was first used in the IBE Secretariat before it became generalised throughout the ICPEs (for example, Borel, ICPE, 1955, p. 26).

2), improving both the principles of selection and differentiation, and increasing the nature of support for the gifted and even more so for the exceptionally gifted. The director of the Indian Bureau of Psychology, Lieutenant Colonel Sohan Lall, based in Allahabad, was enthusiastic about the possibility of screening the most gifted, “for the country had an urgent need throughout its economy of first class brains” (ICPE, 1948, p. 52). However, when it came to the role of school psychologists (1948), which was so highly praised by Piaget, a few dissenting voices were heard. The Czech delegate, Josef Vaná, was particularly concerned about this dangerous psychologisation, which risked reinforcing prejudices against less intelligent children, without taking into account their living conditions and environment: “Psychology thus risks becoming a differentiation of social classes” (1946, p. 49).¹⁵

A reading of the minutes from the two decades that followed shows that there was an acute awareness of the interrelationship between social origins and educational destiny, as well as a concern to reduce the impact on disadvantaged groups. The ideology of merit, which was already very much in evidence in the inter-war period, was sometimes confirmed and sometimes challenged.¹⁶ For some, compensatory offers to the disadvantaged but truly deserving populations were seen as constituting equality in education, offering the possibility to all those who really had the aptitude to gain access to extended schooling and the diplomas that follow. Others, however, made more drastic demands, so that democratisation did not remain an act of faith and a delusion, but would be transformed into real equity in the conditions of schooling and access not only to diplomas but also to the most recognised jobs. Even if they were rarely explicitly called upon, the sociological theories of reproduction shine through in the debates, calling into question the ideology of merit which, in fact, sanctions, supports and amplifies sociocultural hierarchies.¹⁷

¹⁵Josep Vaná was then director of the J.A. Comenius Institute of Pedagogical Research, in Prague.

¹⁶For a historical analysis of meritocracy as popular belief, Mijs (2018), and of course the satirical description of *The rise of the meritocracy* by Young (1958); Sardoč (2022) gives an interesting general overview on the question of meritocracy and education; for an experimental study of the educational effects of the belief in meritocracy, see Darnon et al. (2018). Our research programme aims to examine how the issue of school justice, initially focused on relations between individuals, will later be extended to relations between peoples, under the pressure of independence and decolonisation movements (Matasci & Hofstetter, 2022).

¹⁷Theoretical references were rare, but the concepts developed by the social sciences, including the educational sciences, were used in the debates, particularly by certain experts.

Insert 21.1 Universal Access to Education Implies Material and Institutional Infrastructures

It would be idealistic and naïve to devote an intergovernmental organisation to promoting access for everybody to quality education, without addressing the problems of infrastructure and the material and institutional conditions that bear on bringing this about. Taking into account all the IBE surveys, they are the subject of some 16 specific investigations (cf. Appendix B).

The conditions were first global, concerning society and the state as a whole. It was not at all by chance that one of the first three surveys discussed by the ICPE (1934) concerned savings in public education, and sought to “demonstrate that most of the cuts [...] threaten the future of the people in a particularly dangerous way” (p. 134). These financial issues were a common thread in the concerns of the IBE, which continued investigating the subject—the 1955 ICPE was dedicated to this—and it advocated that a specified percentage of gross domestic product should be allocated to education, even at the expense of war budgets!

Material infrastructures relate particularly to the number of schools needed to keep up with the demographic explosion and the increased length of schooling and also to the need to take into account the provision of buildings and study spaces. At the XXth ICPE in 1957, the French delegate Roger Franck, rapporteur of the survey on school buildings, gave some sense of this:

Twenty-four countries concerning which we have fairly precise information and which represent almost a quarter of the world’s population, are together preparing to build new primary and secondary schools with accommodation for 40 million pupils [...] Consequently, whether future ranks of school children taken as a whole have, under suitable conditions, the possibility of equipping themselves for the world, depends partly upon us. (p. 147)

Free educational supplies were also needed for proper teaching and to give everyone access to learning at all levels: “Equal opportunity in education raises material difficulties, not least the high price of textbooks and school supplies”, argued Butts in the summary of

(continued)

(continued)

the IBE's 1934 study of the economics of public education (p. 10). Accordingly, the ICPE adopted the following resolutions in the immediate post-war period:

[The ICPE] believes on the one hand that the principle of the free provision of school supplies ought to be considered as the natural and necessary corollary of compulsory schooling, and on the other hand that the application of this principle to young people attending non-compulsory types of education, should be considered as the human ideal towards which one ought to aim. (R 21, 1947, N°1)

Similarly, the problem of school canteens and changing rooms was addressed as the war had faced public authorities with the hardships of young people living in miserable conditions, hungry and ill-clothed, without the mental and physical resources to benefit from the "advantages of school".

Institutional conditions were also pertinent. School councils and inspections were dealt with in three ICPEs in 1935, 1937 and 1956, and were also considered essential to quality education. It was specified from the outset that this was not so much a question of checking teachers' work as of working with them in order to preserve their energies, aptitudes and convictions, anticipating, as it were, the notion of life-long learning:

Inspection should contribute to the expansion of education designed to bring about the all-round education of children and youth, through their moral, intellectual and physical development in the service of their mother country, and to further democracy, peace and friendship among nations. (R 42, 1956, N°3)

The increasing complexity and diversification of the school system also necessitated the creation of new structures, based on the social and educational sciences in particular: psychological services for the guidance of pupils, mentioned in many ICPEs and the subject of resolutions in 1948 and 1963, and this time also including professional guidance and educational research centres, adopted in 1966, which aimed to "establish theoretical and scientific bases constituting short and long-term educational goals suitable for the country in question" (R 60, 1966, N°2).

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From the 1960s onwards, the problems of educational planning were at the fore, aiming to make rational choices in all parts of the world to provide long-term educational opportunities adapted to demographic and migratory trends, to socio-economic imperatives, to social expectations and to increasingly rapid social change:

If education is to be planned [...] it is because we live in times which have no longer the single-minded outlook of peaceful eras when it is possible to advance solely by the force of inertia; it is now a matter of living development with many dimensions which its very progress carries forward with irresistible impetus. (ICPE, 1962, p. 44)

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The “Family of Nations” and Its Racial, Cultural and Colonial Discriminations

The question of the world’s great divisions, which had been touched on in the ICPEs¹ in the 1930s, relating to the rights of peoples, was thrust to the forefront in the post-war period. From the outset, reference was made to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the shared reference horizon. Of course, this Declaration itself could be read and has been interpreted² as a “civilising mission”, given the context of its pronouncement, its contents and its aims, in other words the “overarching

¹ In its quest for universality, the IBE wanted to bring together all the world’s regions and all the continents, and in its councils insisted on collaboration between East and West, even switching viewpoint, which demonstrates well the civilisation issue in the comparison: “this people of Persia, which at one time knew knowledge at a time when the spot of land where our Council meets today, was inhabited only by barbarians” (Piaget, ICPE, 1935, p. 124).

² Posner (2014), for instance, writes: “With the benefit of hindsight, we can see that the human rights treaties were not so much an act of idealism as an act of hubris, with more than a passing resemblance to the civilising efforts undertaken by western governments and missionary groups in the nineteenth century, which did little good for native populations while entangling European powers in the affairs of countries they did not understand”. For a defence of human rights against “radical” criticism, Lacroix and Pranchère (2018, p. 74); see also in our introduction the references concerning the discussions on human rights from the point of view of the universal.

universalism” (Merleau-Ponty, 1960, p. 76)³ which characterised UN agencies and their educational policies at that time.

At first, the issue of educational justice was focused on relations between individuals, but due to the pressure of independence and decolonisation movements it was extended to relations between peoples:⁴ the IBE and its conferences were presented as a “family of nations” (ICPE, 1960, pp. 117)⁵ whose interdependence presupposed that there was a place for all of them. But how to adjust to the new aspirations of peoples and also claim to offer a podium to all of them, in a world marked by cultural, social and ethnic prejudices? A world where, moreover, the great powers presented themselves as emblems of civilisation and its principles of justice, while at the same time appropriating the planet as a field for their confrontations, endangering populations which had long become invisible and were reduced to silence.

THE EQUALITY OF RACES AND CULTURES, A “FINE THEME FOR SPEECHES BUT DISCRIMINATION REMAINS”

Already mentioned in the 1930s (in the IBE’s *Yearbooks* and *Bulletins* much more than in the ICPEs), the link between the rights of peoples and the responsibilities of public powers was reinforced from the middle of the century. In fact, these rights clearly implied “the duty to provide equal access to education to all, regardless of race, sex, class or economic and social situation”, demanding of the major colonial powers that they meet this requirement so that the ponderous speechmaking would be transformed into action. “The equality of races is a fine theme for speeches but racial discrimination still remains”, as Torres Bodet, UNESCO director, asserted in 1951, he who had had tirelessly appealed for an “imperative call to action” to finally put an end to the “timidity of routine-based administrators and the temerity of demagogues” (pp. 22–23); and to confirm that it was about building a dynamic peace which would allow schools to adjust to the period’s changing context. We might even surmise that the director was calling on his audience to stop being complacent regarding the list of their country’s past successes, to project themselves into the future and to speed up the fundamental reconfiguration of education policy.

³ See the introduction for discussion of the question of the universal.

⁴ See in this respect the programmatic work inaugurated by Matasci and Hofstetter (2022).

⁵ N. S. Junankar, secretary of the India Education Department in London.

With regard to racial issues, all those who spoke were offended, but with contrasting points of view: the dominant argument (United Kingdom) was indeed to pacify people; through Barbag’s intervention,⁶ Poland seized on it to denounce chauvinism, nationalism, labour exploitation and racial discrimination in the same breath (ICPE, 1949, p. 35). The United States seemed to be among the first countries to acknowledge its responsibility, but not without generalising and diluting the problem. Indeed, in 1955, at the time of the Bandung Conference, the Afro-Asian Conference of unity against colonialism, American delegate Henri I. Willett reported on the difficulties of applying the Supreme Court’s decisions on racial segregation in his composite and decentralised country. Even though the Court had struck down all discrimination, he said that 17 out of 48 states still had laws allowing it or requiring it in public schools; some even claimed that “they would seek to maintain segregation by all legal means at their disposal”. After pointing out that “the status of the Negro has improved consistently in American life”, the delegate concluded that “the same problem exists wherever people with different cultures and backgrounds are brought together [...] Even in the southern states however, the status of the Negro can be compared with the status of minority groups elsewhere in the world” (ICPE, 1955, p. 72).⁷

Above all, this generalisation was tactical in order to avoid his country being singled out, in order to dilute the problem, or even to state the inescapable nature of segregation, when it was not to support the principle outright. Year after year, progress was reported, recognising the persistence of racial prejudice. In 1960, the US delegate⁸ stated that most states would not differentiate between white and coloured children (1960, p. 72). By 1965, the principle of integration would have been accepted in all states, and schools that refused it would now be deprived of financial support from the Federal Government (1965, p. 97).⁹ It was as if, since that date, the question of racial segregation had been settled and was no

⁶ Józef Barbag, director of the Cabinet of the Minister of Public Education.

⁷ Henry I. Willett, school director and president of the American Association of School Administrators.

⁸ Samuel Brownell, director of Education in Detroit.

⁹ Oliver J. Caldwell, acting associate commissioner of the IBE. We could multiply the case studies: it was indeed a forum where problems are identified and discussed, in order to define ways of solving them (Part III); but the detailed analysis of the arguments clearly shows a concern to offer a constructive image of the country, which inevitably goes hand in hand with a form of doublespeak aimed at concealing the problems and contradictions.

longer mentioned. This was not the case: in 1967, only 2.4% of 14-year-olds were illiterate; but a year later, it was stated¹⁰ that “statistics are no longer kept on minorities, with the exception of the Indians” (ICPE, 1968, p. 103); as was the case before. As for the Native Americans, they remained in a separate world, discriminated against under the assimilationist policies that were then strongly contested,¹¹ questions which were not tackled by the ICPEs.

The struggles of countries to combat illiteracy often revealed decades of alienation and discrimination, sometimes within a country itself. This was the case of Brazil, whose delegate, Sandra Calvalcanti, stated in 1961 that it was “until recently a country with a colonial economy and an importing mentality”: there were still two Brazils, one industrialised and, thanks to its schools and universities, composed of a cultivated population, and the other, “somewhat forgotten”, where the mostly illiterate and underprivileged populations resided (60% of the country’s inhabitants) (ICPE, 1961, p. 76). Hence the call, which was heard, for adult literacy which the IBE would relay especially from the 1960s onwards (a 1965 survey was specifically dedicated to it) (Image 22.1).

THE COLONIES: FROM INVISIBILISATION TO A RAISING OF AWARENESS

Henceforth, in the precincts of the ICPEs, there were also the injunctions of the UN requiring empires to clarify their position with regard to their colonies and dominions, while the mandate states had to gradually bring the territories entrusted to them to self-government.¹² It even cited the imperative for all states party to the UN Covenant to establish a plan of action

to achieve the full implementation of the principle of compulsory primary education for all [...] providing all the children in their territories with free and compulsory primary education without distinction of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. (Torres Bodet, 1951, p. 26)

¹⁰ Ralph C. M. Flynt, deputy assistant secretary for Education.

¹¹ It was specifically in 1968 that President Johnson put an end to this with a view to encouraging the autonomy of peoples.

¹² For an analysis of these policy directions, we have referred to: Chabbott (2002), Matasci (2023) and Maul (2012).

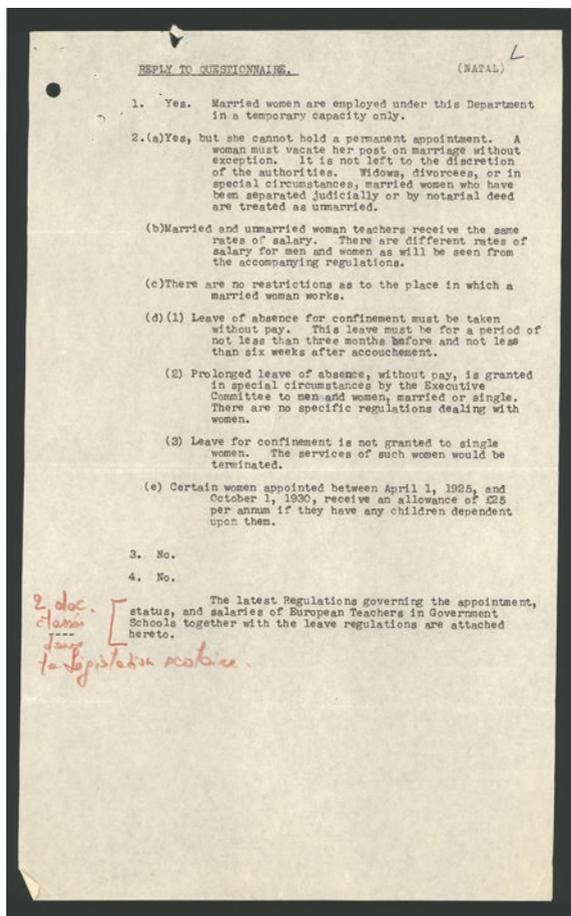


Image 22.1 Natal's answers to the IBE inquiry about the situation of married women as teachers (1932). IBE organised international surveys from 1927 on, in this same year together with the ILO on child labour. The IBE invited as many countries as possible to participate, including provinces in federal states, and some colonies. (© IBE)

As the number of delegates from countries that had gained their independence multiplied, and this was systematically welcomed, the Western empires now included in their annual reports the educational situation of the territories still under their control. A gap was opened up discreetly at

first to evoke these regions presented as distant, little known and underdeveloped, with indigenous populations readily described as savage or even rebellious, the objects above all of projections and fantasies.

Circumscribed both by their distance and by their radical otherness, this Other became more present over the years. Their figure, previously undifferentiated, had taken on more precise and more diversified contours. Delegates were now called upon to problematise ethnic issues and to recognise the sovereignty and self-determination of peoples. And this was done with real people, from the peoples who had won their independence, who now sat alongside them, in the very councils, assemblies and receptions of the IBE.

Literacy for the masses was no longer just a supposedly disinterested social and humanitarian cause but was seen as an investment to increase and intensify growth, as schools must adjust to the needs of the economic world that transcends borders. While awareness of the interdependence between peoples and the link between economic development and literacy was growing, a half-spoken threat could be perceived: mistrust of the possible outbursts of the claims of the dangerous working classes now encompassed these populations, which were still considered immature, savage and untameable, and which needed to be accompanied in order to help them “rise” and join the civilised world. Without endangering the so-called developed, if not to say civilised, countries.

Behind a relatively consensual generic discourse, positions could diverge radically. In 1951 Portugal, for example, considered that it “was one of the countries which had most successfully dealt with the problem of compulsory primary education”, and asked rhetorically if there was “not room, alongside the complex beings who needed to be educated to the utmost limits of their abilities, for the common, plain man”. And the delegate Antonio Ferro, Portuguese minister plenipotentiary, continued in 1951:

Alongside *the man of knowledge*, should there not eternally be found *the man of feeling*, with a minimum of instruction, and of strong instinct. [...] Would it not be as well to remember the purely spiritual and imponderable things that maritime and all other great civilisations can offer? (pp. 71–72, italics in the source)

This was Portugal, whose colonising enterprise,¹³ as we have already shown,¹⁴ would cause the most serious conflict which the IBE had to face in the ICPEs, endangering its own survival.

Discussions of annual country reports to the *Yearbook* regularly provided details of the educational situation of peoples either migrant, indigenous, colonised and/or on the road to independence. From the mid-1950s onwards, the data was documented and problematised.

For example, Belgium responded to questions about education in the Belgian Congo¹⁵ by pointing out, just before independence, that “desegregation in Belgian Congo schools, which was begun in 1948 with half-castes, has been continuing steadily since 1952 with natives”. He then rejoiced that the “conditions of entrance for African children to schools formerly for Europeans have been progressively broadened, so that nowadays any child who fulfils the general requirements for entrance is eligible for admission” (ICPE, 1959, pp. 67).¹⁶ In other words, the Belgian delegate proudly announced that “the mention of two communities at the basis of the introduction of a dual educational system in the Belgian Congo, namely, a European and a native community, with their respective ways of life and intellectual standards, is now merely a historical fact” (p. 68).

In his report on the Congo in 1961, the delegate from Brazzaville, the former secretary of state for Youth and Sport, Jean Biyoudi, stated that, following independence, the programmes had to be modified to better adapt them to the country’s needs and resources (1961, p. 50). Everything happened as if every initiative were translated into progress, according to a logic that eluded barely perceptible conflicts because the delegates reappropriated the logics of discourse and the expected principles of justice: reconciling peoples, ensuring the benefits of a common schooling for all while adjusting to the specificities of communities.

¹³ In 1961, its delegates unashamedly stated that “As the Portuguese are scattered throughout the five continents and belong to very varying races, it is necessary to study the characteristics of these races, the conditions of adaptation to the regions in which they live and in which they must spread” (ICPE, 1961, p. 86). Maria Irene Leite da Costa, professor of pedagogy at the Institute, and Mario Pacheco, head of the General Directorate of Overseas Education.

¹⁴ See Chap. 17.

¹⁵ For an analysis, see the overview in Depaepe (2017).

¹⁶ Marion Coulon and André Prignon, respectively inspector general in Belgium and Advisor at the Ministry of the Belgian Congo and Rwanda-Burundi.

BETWEEN RESILIENCE AND COMMUNITY OF SUFFERING?

Encouraged in this by the ICPEs' logic which aimed to enhance successful experiences so that others could benefit from them, some countries, such as Uruguay, boasted that they could not be faulted, the duties of states being all the more easily assumed because, according to its delegate, the country had never experienced any indigenous, racial or religious problems (ICPE, 1951, p. 81).¹⁷ Others, recently independent, were working assiduously to rehabilitate their traditions and cultures, as soon as they were admitted to the IBE, but not without pointing out the inadequacy of concepts imported from the West:

Universal education existed in countries with an agricultural civilization like old Vietnam. One hundred years ago, there was a school in each village or at least in each canton of the country. [...] to be a complete man, one had to be an educated man. The Western notion of compulsory education had no more sense for the Vietnamese than compulsory eating, drinking and breathing. (1958, p. 65)

The Vietnamese delegate¹⁸ continued to emphasise the fundamentally peaceful nature of his people's culture, which was reflected in their history and tradition, as well as their peaceful relations with their neighbours. This might even go so far as to assert that relations with their former colonisers were free of hostility, while more subtly demonstrating the extent to which independence had rehabilitated the rights of each. Tunisia,¹⁹ for example, reported that it now offered equal education to girls and boys and that it had fundamentally redesigned its curricula without showing any aggression towards the previous ones, imposed by the colonial power (p. 44).

How could one express oneself without being accused of engaging in a head-on²⁰ political conflict in the hushed atmosphere that this fraternal parliament should be, and that the Good of childhood would transcend? After the Second World War, Mexico's strategy was to show solidarity between peoples who had experienced similar tragedies. Rather than

¹⁷ And the entire population of the territory, including foreigners, would have the right to free access to all levels of education, including professional qualifications.

¹⁸ NguYên-Huy-Bxo, dean of the Faculty of Letters.

¹⁹ Ahmed Abdesselem, director of the École Normale in Tunis.

²⁰ For these, see our analyses in Part IV. The particular challenge of Brylinski's thesis is to examine how, within the ICPEs and especially within the debates on the recommendations, political interference can be identified (2022a, chapter 6; also see Brylinski 2022b).

denouncing oppression, its representative showed cultural openness, broadmindedness and a community of suffering with all those who had suffered tragedies:

[Mexico] had received her tradition from Spain, her inspiration from France and was in communion with the peoples of the Orient through similar tragic experiences. [...] Mexico forms part of a large continent, full of resources and readily welcomes the peoples of suffering Europe. (1947, p. 90)²¹

Evoking a distant past and successes would also testify to such resilience. This was the view Mongolia expressed, whose delegate in 1962 emphasised the ability of the country in achieving literacy for its people through a left-wing policy once it had gained its independence over 40 years previously:

Before the revolution in Mongolia, the people lived in poverty and hunger and their cultural standards were extremely low. Under such circumstances, there could not be a uniform system of public education. The number of literate people made up a very small percentage of the whole population. [...] It was only after the revolution in 1921 and the establishment of a people’s democracy that the rapid development of Mongolia’s economy and culture were secured. (p. 114)

We can see that a political position, in itself, seemed less muzzled, if it did not offend others, in this case the imperialism of the great powers. The voices seemed to become freer over the years, depending on the history of the peoples and the issues addressed. In 1968, the voice of Awono Félix Tsala, the director of the teacher training college in Cameroon, expressed his difficulty in building the cohesion of his people who had been torn apart, after independence had been sought and then won under the armed influence of the West and at the cost of fratricidal wars between regions under tutelage that were themselves locked in struggle (Great Britain, France). The denunciation is clear. Its outcome: ruralising the population again and “checking the rate of educational development in the south in order to foster it in the Northern Regions”, since the country must be developed in a harmonious fashion (p. 116). Thus would the cultural unification of the country be built. In other words, in order to assume its

²¹ Esperanza Balmaceda, university professor and professor at the Pedagogical Institute of Mexico.

independence and rebuild the unity of its country destabilised by the unbridled colonisations of the great so-called civilised empires, Cameroon unhesitatingly asserted that it needed to put a stop to the schooling of certain populations. This was quite extraordinary in an assembly that considered schooling to be an emblem of peace and emancipation, and had never ceased to work towards it against all odds.

Some states thus used this audience to bear witness to the insults suffered under the impact of the great empires and during the wars. The great divisions of the world were reproduced and problematised as such.

THE DEBT THE WEST OWES TO THE EAST AND THE SOUTH

It was in the context of international financial aid—that is, of objectively identifiable problems—that voices were more openly expressed in defence of the most deprived peoples and even in denunciation of unjustly suffered aggression.

Following on from earlier debates (1955) and decisions taken in UN bodies, in 1957 the director of UNESCO, Luther Evans, pleaded for urgent international financial assistance (loans, grants, in the form of bilateral or multilateral agreements) (p. 28). The Israeli delegate asked for an international fund to be set up with contributions from all nations, under the aegis of the United Nations. Already accepted in 1955, this request for international aid was adopted without the slightest reservation in the recommendation on school buildings, one of the main causes of the IBE, since it concerned school buildings and the basic material infrastructure of any school. It was stated that these so-called soft loans would be emphasised for countries with the greatest shortage of schools. Technical assistance to “underdeveloped countries” was planned, with the participation of UNESCO experts from South-East Asia, the Middle East and Africa.²² The analysis of the results of such initiatives, which were also critical, is now well documented and remains highly topical in social and scientific terms.²³

²² Eight articles in Recommendation 44 of 1957 listed the details of this international aid (Articles 34–42). We should note that this was the first time that such material aid had been envisaged, no doubt as a result of pressure from countries in the south.

²³ See in particular the collective work currently being published by Matasci and Ruppen Coutaz (2023).

Far from being satisfied with condescending aid, fed by pity, which contained the pitfall of reproducing the logics of power that it was supposed to curb, the argument to justify this support sent Western countries back to the injustice on the basis of which they had built their wealth and power. They received their divided view of the world in return, a boomerang that made them responsible for it and for the consequences. In 1957, the delegate from Iran emphasised how timely the help of UNESCO and the United Nations was in the fight against illiteracy, which was close to 80% (ICPE, 1957, p. 96). Ali Djamalzadeh acted as the spokesperson for the poor countries of the East, demanding a redistributive justice that considered this financial aid to be the repayment of a debt, while problematising “the cultural aspect of this aid to so-called underdeveloped countries”:

If under-developed countries were poor today, it was because they had remained agricultural and their production had made it possible for European countries to advance. Tribute should be paid to the science and efforts of the rich countries, but the decisions which they were now being asked to take in relation to the under-developed countries should not be regarded as flowing from a feeling of pity but one of justice. [...] It meant giving back to under-developed countries what was due to them, at least, in part. Iran required 45,000 small schools in an equal number of scattered villages. In helping to build them rich countries would be merely doing a duty.²⁴

Was it once more to stick to a fraternal discourse that a tribute was paid to science and to countries that had become rich? Did addressing the problem by highlighting its cultural stakes mean avoiding the accusation of having summoned its political dimension? Nevertheless, this was an uncompromising argument, which demanded that the West pay a debt to the poorer countries on which it had based its power, without denying the pillaging they had suffered. A detailed serial analysis of all the comments shows a progressive evolution of the discourses. Shared expressions are voiced, and “common denominators” presented as such are outlined, built by aggregation and sedimentation. The expressions in vogue in other organisations and the results of the social sciences were more regularly called upon, as if the Conferences were progressively opening up to other

²⁴ Remarks made by Damalzadeh, cultural attaché to the Permanent Delegation of Iran to the International Organisations.

worlds, or that this forum, which had long been deliberately conceived to remain preserved from external interference, was now endeavouring to echo the expectations of the social world, even in its contradictions.

“AN UNFORTUNATE HUMAN RACE” CLINGING TO A LITTLE ROCK

The last ICPEs bear witness to this. While the one held in 1968 had as its theme apparently the most consensual topic possible—international understanding, the very basis of the IBE and UNESCO—several speakers, and not the least prestigious, adopted positions that were akin to manifestos. For example, the socialist André Chavanne, head of the Ministry of Education in the Canton of Geneva and who led the Swiss delegation, was well known for his flamboyant speeches. As president of the 1968 ICPE Chavanne called for educational policies to resonate with the legitimate demands of the student movements, arguing that the IBE should be more in tune with the social world:

In all countries in which they have demonstrated, the young people have raised two vital questions in an urgent manner: “Isn’t the world you adults propose to us an absurd world, is it not an unjust one?” [...] absurd, that is to say, is there not a contradiction between what you say and what you do? [...] unjust to the extent to which the unheard-of evolution brought about by science and techniques benefits only a few countries while many others literally suffer from them. They have asked it [...] about all the points where war and sometimes atrocious war is being waged on this planet, on this little rock. [...] And the young, who have not lived through the circumstances in which this new world was created, ask us – as well they might: “What are you doing to the human race, this human race in which we shall live? What shall we be in the year 2000, when we have taken your places and are the people responsible? Are you sending us into a world in which people will continue to kill each other, into a world of war?” (p. 53)

We must emphasise how this physicist, a former secondary school teacher, also knew how to captivate his audience with metaphors that relativised these same social conflicts. From his presidential seat, Chavanne insisted that there is “only one human race”, inviting his audience to rise above the “little rock that can be circled in 90 minutes [...] thrown into the set of stars [...] on which this ‘unfortunate human race’ is clinging”. And to conclude with a fervent plea for “the right of peoples to have

peace, to develop without having to hate each other, without having to detest other peoples" (p. 38).

Rather than leaving the last word to the responsible bodies (UNESCO, IBE, successive presidencies) which competed with each other in their zeal to preserve the consensus, and legitimise their *modus operandi* and the causes on their agenda, let us give the floor to the delegate from Cuba. Not only because these are also the conclusions of the last ICPE included in our corpus, the final one under Piaget's leadership; but above all because she wisely expressed the impasse of a single catechisation of the ideal of international understanding, that internationalist mystique already evoked by Butts and Piaget in the early 1930s. In 1968, the dissenting voice of Cordelia Navarro Garcia resolutely challenged the idyllic representation of the world in school curriculums. This enabled her to denounce what she still considered to be the shameless alienation of oppressed peoples, who were thus deluded, and whose strength of resistance would then be weakened, leaving room for the renewal of abusive imperialist exploitation. She stated that "her delegation shared fully mankind's aspirations for international understanding, the respect of human rights and the establishment of true and honourable peace". But she immediately took exception to the recommendations adopted:

the document [...] was not equal to their desired objective and that if it were to become an integral part of the school curriculum, without reservations, it would evoke in the minds of pupils an idyllic conception of the world we live in and would create illusions among developing countries about the role played in the international field by world organisations mentioned in it; the consequence would be a slackening of the spirit of struggle and endeavour among peoples. [...] for the least two-thirds of mankind, still in a state of underdevelopment as a result of colonial exploitation, it would not be possible to insist on the full and complete respect for human rights and international understanding until the last vestiges of such exploitation had been removed. (ICPE, 1968, p. 129)

Thus, Cordelia Navarro Garcia justified her abstention from the vote on the recommendations on international understanding. This political stance can be interpreted not as a disagreement with the IBE's main goal of global solidarity but as a denunciation of the imperialist and therefore socio-economic and political arguments that underpin the rhetoric and even the action programmes of international organisations.

She was thanked for explaining the reasons for her abstention.

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Conclusion to Part V

In this part we have examined five sets of causes¹ to which the IBE was committed. According to the Bureau, these defined the “global aspirations” in education to which it had sought to give substance by speaking for all the countries of the world, attempting to determine, through this universality of voices, what is universalisable in education. It thus aimed to outline universalisable solutions to the problems deemed most important by those responsible for public education around the world.

Comparing these causes from the point of view of their dynamics, but also from the point of view of the voices that put them forward and carried them, allows us to understand in a different way their place in the work of the IBE and its own evolution in one of the central fields of its activity.

Some 20 ICPEs sessions dealt with teaching content and 15 examined the teaching profession: their analysis paints a picture of great consensual continuity. When the same themes were taken up again, the recommendations were adapted and deepened, but without any change in general orientation. While the 15 ICPEs devoted to the issues of access to education and school justice showed a similar continuity, at first sight, our analysis shows that there were significant changes in perspective, directly linked to the social and economic context. During the inter-war period, schools were conceived as stabilising factors according to a predominantly Malthusian conception. After the war, a powerful discourse emerged which perceived schools as an essential factor in social and economic

¹This is in addition to the one described in Insert 21.1 on material and institutional infrastructures.

development: the “race for education”, a condition for economic prosperity, was now part of the economy of a global market which “managed” “human capital” according to principles similar to other kinds of capital.

The other two causes addressed were imposed on the IBE from below, through social forces that used the ICPEs to ensure contradictory voices were heard and to plead for the placing on the agenda of causes which were neglected by the bodies that dominated this scene, even though they claimed to be in tune with global aspirations. The women’s issue, which was first taken up by women’s organisations, was the subject of only one ICPE in 1952. However, this conference seems to have had a certain impact over time: the cause of women no longer seemed taboo; but the assignment of women to their maternal role and functions was under scrutiny throughout the period.

Still other voices were defending their causes with increasing vigour: those of countries liberated from colonialism which denounced the racial and cultural discrimination they had suffered for decades, even centuries. While the IBE had seized upon politics to increase its audience and efficiency, politics in turn seized upon the ICPEs to shape educational debates: education is the result of power relations that cannot be ignored, so the former colonies and their allies asserted. The countries that allied themselves against the colonial empires considered that education for international understanding could not be achieved without denouncing the inequalities generated by age-old exploitation. By their very difference, the origin and evolution of the causes gave a different view of the transformation of the IBE, understood here in its context and relational network. There were almost comparable causes of public education which were constant in their general orientations: the disciplinary organisation of contents, their hierarchy, their necessary diversity, their didactic approach; the status of the teaching profession, for which only security and independence could ensure the quality of the work as well as a high level of training; and finally, the guarantee of access to education for all and the extension of schooling. In this respect, however, social and economic demand required a change of direction towards more open, dynamic and differentiated structures. New voices were emerging from social movements: those of women who were making their precarious status visible in the field of education, which was supposed to eliminate all discrimination and which, moreover, was conceived as the very ground for women’s development. Even more forceful were the voices of countries that had won their independence, which resolutely raised the question of the

shameless injustices of empires in the territories they had unduly appropriated. The excesses of an imperialist universalism, even if it was pronounced in the name of human rights, were thus called into question.² It was impossible in this new context to preserve the space-time of the ICPEs from political interference: the universal needed to include, in its very formulation, the contradictions it concealed as long as it was carried out from above. This did not necessarily call into question the universality of the principles that had been developed—indeed, they were hardly contested by the new voices that were being heard in the IBE chamber—but it did mean that the power relations that prevented their effective universalisation had to be taken into account.

The systematic analysis of the causes dealt with by the ICPEs and the overall evolution of the debates shows that the cycle that began in 1934 ended before 1968, when Piaget and Rosselló left. The last conferences changed in terms of the content dealt with and even the ideologies underpinning them. Issues of access to education were no longer addressed, infrastructures were no longer centrally thematised, disciplines were put on the back burner in favour of cross-cutting issues such as hygiene, the environment, interdisciplinarity and international understanding; the organisation of pedagogical research and the planning of education were now dominant. Another era was beginning: that of the IBE as an integral part of UNESCO, driven by the imperatives of school system effectiveness.³

² Such critics show that the IBE's action, on certain dimensions, was perceived as a possible part of a civilising mission (see the introduction for a short discussion of this concept): a tendency that indeed was not explicitly rejected by the IBE as we have shown, although its *modus operandi* aimed at acting against it. We will come back to this question in our general conclusion.

³ This is a trend that would be reinforced by the appearance of the OECD, which, from 1968, intervened in education, with the CERI, with an economist's point of view; through its leadership, it also impacted on the positioning of UNESCO, which strove to maintain its humanist orientation (Beech, 2011, pp. 60–72; see also Addey, 2021). For a critical approach on the ideological orientations of OECD and similar organisations that form a “global governing complex” (Ydesen, 2019); see for instance: Bürgi (2017), Smith and Benavot (2019) and Sorensen et al. (2021).

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GENERAL CONCLUSION

The plural that Bandung celebrates is not directed against the universal. On the contrary, it is its promise. That of a universal which is not an imperial imposition, but the inscription of the plural of the world on a common horizon. (Souleyman Diagne, *Le fagot de la mémoire* [The bundle of memory], 2021, p. 150)

This volume has highlighted one expression of educational internationalism based on one of its flagship organisations, the International Bureau of Education, embedded in its context and its relational network. This perspective was imposed because the nature of the actions carried out and the knowledge produced by the IBE was inseparable from the spirit of the age and the patterns of relationship in which it evolved: dependent on these contexts and connections, the IBE's existence was enriched by them to justify and concretise its objectives, while it had also contributed to shaping and expanding them.

Previously, we have already been able to demonstrate that the Bureau could be considered as a matrix of educational internationalism. By now placing it in a wider time frame (1920–1970), in this book we have been able to highlight, through the extensive analysis of numerous sources, the way in which the paradoxes that plagued the field of education in the era of its increasing globalisation over the course of the twentieth century have been reflected in it. In this conclusion, we propose a rereading of

these paradoxes in the light of the issues at stake in the notion of the universal, thus returning to our questioning in the introduction which is now nourished by the rich literature available on the subject.

EDUCATION'S FIRST INTERGOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTION: FOCUSING ON UNIVERSALITY

Created by the *Institut Rousseau/École des sciences de l'éducation* [School of sciences of education] in Geneva and sponsored by illustrious pedagogues and intellectuals, the IBE was both a precursor and an actor of its time. As we have shown, its initial ambition was to federate all the international associations which, like itself, aimed to build peace through education and science, but rivalries between pacifist associations soon thwarted this overarching aspiration. Strengthening its universalist aim thus led the IBE to transform itself into an intergovernmental organisation—the first in the field of education—in order to get together all the states around the world as a way to gain in efficiency and to apply the methods of international collaboration in order to debate on crucial problems of education systems. This bold gamble of bringing together protagonists with different positions was backed by an alliance sealed with the nascent UNESCO, of which the IBE could be considered a predecessor. They worked together from 1947 onwards, for more than 20 years, before the IBE was fully incorporated into UNESCO (1969), at a time when Piaget withdrew from the organisation after 40 years as its director.

While the founders of the IBE took advantage of the exceptional circumstances that briefly made the small city of Geneva an epicentre of internationalism to set themselves up as actors in international events, we have also noted the difficulties of such an undertaking: the strategic inventiveness deployed after the time of its founding was equally requisite for overcoming the dismantling of the institutions of the League of Nations (and the reconfiguration of Geneva's role), the geopolitical divisions, the deadly wars and the global impact of the divisions of the Cold War. We have shown that the IBE's response was to reinforce its principle of universality. This took a variety of forms: aiming for universal access to education and promoting universalisable teaching methods that would foster solidarity and understanding between peoples; sending its surveys to all the world's governments to guarantee the universality of knowledge acquired in order to document the global progress of education; ensuring

that each of the aforementioned governments had access to the International Conferences on Public Education in order to broaden the audience and disseminate the results throughout the world, so that they would be available to all.

Paradoxically, it was this universalist ambition and its progressive realisation which not only generated endless reconfigurations but also, finally, contributed to creating the insurmountable difficulties which caused the dissolution of the IBE as an autonomous entity, and its incorporation into UNESCO. Each of the manifestations of universality carried its own contradictions. In order to understand them, we have also analysed the foundations of the edifice by scrutinising the positioning of its partners.

THE INTERPENETRATION OF UNIVERSALIST IDEALS

Identifying the IBE's position by determining the pedagogical and ideological convictions of its spokespersons has enabled us to confirm that the IBE was part of the new education movement, based on the postulate of a need for a "Copernican revolution" placing the child at the centre of the education system. Its promoters argued that this educational reform was backed by psychopedagogical science and the study of the supposedly universal natural development of the child; it was therefore conceived as being universalisable. Echoing the "spirit of Geneva", whose Eurocentric dimensions are recognised today, the pacifist aim and the liberal internationalism that enriched it strengthened the conviction that an education based on the spirit of solidarity would harmonise humanity. Confronting other international associations and organisations (such as the International Institute for International Cooperation and the WFEA), the IBE even claimed that it alone embodied a neutrality that would allow educational issues to be debated at the intergovernmental level without reflecting the cultural imperialisms and nationalist struggles that were engulfing the world in the middle of the twentieth century.

Believing that active methods were the right tools for constructing knowledge and developing thought, the IBE's spokespersons advanced the possibility of overcoming egocentrism in order to access that solidarity which was a prerequisite of peace on earth. We have been able to decipher the IBE's democratic credo, presupposing the reciprocity of points of view—which lies at the heart of the Piagetian theory of moral judgement—and the taking into account of cultural diversity.

We have thus seen how the IBE's leaders and partners expressed these positions, in which their pedagogical, ideological and political convictions intertwined and marked their universalist ideal. While maintaining the principles of scientific objectivity and strict neutrality, as well as the general aim of international solidarity, the IBE's action was directed towards a universal that could be described as more abstract. Subsumed by the universal ideal of the good of the child, extracted from concrete pedagogical aims, which were necessarily divergent, the action aspired to be above the fray: Did this imply an overarching attitude? Would analysis of its approaches and *modus operandi* answer this awkward question?

THE ICPEs MODUS OPERANDI: A “HERRSCHAFTSFREIER DISKURS”?¹

Analysis of the *modus operandi* of the International Conferences on Public Education enabled us to describe the scenography of these ICPEs, which had been the specific trademark of the IBE since 1934. Let us recall their scenographies and features. All deliberations were based on international surveys: one on the world march of education, and others on educational problems considered pressing and needing to be solved; potentially, all the countries of the world could participate. As a showcase for their concerns, these materials were central to the work of the delegates from all governments invited to the ICPEs. The results of discussions on the educational problems addressed were then synthesised into supposedly non-binding recommendations, which were put to the vote, reflecting a near-unanimity of the protagonists. By the very fact of having an equal right to speak and vote, each delegate would commit his or her country, a commitment that was all the more binding because it was freely given.

We have shown how the comparatist Pedro Rosselló and the psychologist and epistemologist Jean Piaget, with their complementary profiles and positions, jointly forged this *modus operandi*, to which the partner countries subscribed:

- Making comparative data available was deemed to be objective: coming from all the countries of the world, whatever their importance and status, was supposed to allow the construction of the universal from the local through a process of abstraction and generalisation: an

¹ Domination-free discourse.

abstract universal one might say. This comparative education approach was intended to allow for exchange, learning and emulation between the participants of the ICPEs.

- Based on Piaget's theorising, the ICPEs were founded on the principle of reciprocity of points of view: it was the condition for the ascension from the individual to the universal; not by adhering to other points of view tending towards standardisation, but by the capacity to decentralise and thus create unity in diversity; the presupposition—the fullest possible universality of the points of view present.

We have indicated how this echoes Habermas's concept of the "herrschaftsfreier Diskurs" (domination-free discourse)—by the way, inspired by Piaget, among others—whose main defining characteristics are similar rights for all communication partners, the same opportunity to express themselves, a symmetrical situation and decisions based on the best argument. These constitute the conditions enabling rationality to be exercised in a decision-making process that is acceptable to all, respecting the principle of universality. More generally, global communication is a kind of life-size test of universal validity, since norms and principles that transcend the particular context are exposed to possible contestation, regardless of the origin and profile of the interlocutor.

In their conception of ICPEs, those who built the IBE sought to create such conditions:

- The Bureau was not an emanation of selected state representatives like almost all other international organisations;
- This form of neutrality was intended to be reinforced by the guarantee of the host state, Switzerland, whose federal education system was considered as embodying the possibility of respecting a diversity of systems and principles;
- As the material submitted for discussion was the result of an approach that itself intended to give voice to all the sovereign countries of the world, the challenge was to build the universal from the local, the general from the particular—principles elaborated on Piaget's theory of moral judgement;
- The principle of the IBE's independence from any overarching body was supposed to protect it from external interference, especially since the IBE itself was conceived as a structure with a well-defined scope and objectives.

If, in principle, this *modus operandi* was supposed to protect the debates from any political interference, did it work in practice? This is another question that we have tried to answer.

THE REALITY OF UNIVERSALITY SHATTERS THE FICTION OF TECHNICAL NEUTRALITY

Certainly, from 1929 onwards, the IBE aimed at the participation in its activities of all countries, as a guarantee for building universality, and indeed most existing countries joined their project. But we have seen that although the majority of sovereign countries took part in the surveys and attended the International Conferences on Public Education from the 1930s onwards, this universality was only very partial, as large parts of Asia and Africa were still under the yoke of colonial empires. The number of states that became members of the IBE remained very small, with countries under Anglo-Saxon influence abstaining for a long time. We have pointed out that differential elective affinities—which later, in UNESCO, resulted in the Latin and Anglo-Saxon clans—already structured the IBE and had as a consequence that countries under authoritarian regimes gained in importance within this body that claimed to embody liberal democracies, law, peace and justice. Universality was further marred after the Second World War by the systematic non-invitation of a number of communist countries, including China, imposed by UNESCO under the diktat of the dominant North American forces in international organisations.

Although blatant to those who analyse this institution in retrospect, the presence of politics was for a long time muted, in the sense that it rarely interfered explicitly in the educational debates of the ICPEs. The massive arrival at the turn of the 1950s and 1960s of countries that had freed themselves from colonial domination radically changed the situation: the conditions of education systems was the direct product of the exploitative colonial regimes, as the young states energetically proclaimed. This irruption of politics strongly disrupted the ordinary functioning of the institution and left a lasting mark on it, casting doubt on the credibility of its apolitical stance. The IBE's decision-making bodies, the Committee and Council, made up of its members, were themselves far from meeting the principle of universality.

It was the real emancipation movement of the colonised countries that gradually allowed this so-called internationality to come closer to the ideal

of universality. Paradoxically, was it not this very form of universality of voices that sounded the death knell for an IBE hooked on the fiction of apoliticism? The liberation of colonised countries who had long been invisible confronted the IBE delegates with the problems of racial and cultural equality. No longer able to avoid political issues, they found themselves faced with their own contradictions, while voices were raised denouncing old servitudes, socio-economic exploitation between countries and the colonial straitjacket imposed in the very name of a civilising mission. This sharp contradiction rendered the principle of reciprocity unrealisable: the construction of the universal had to take into account contradictory voices that were nevertheless mutually exclusive here.

The universal as represented by the IBE's leaders and their partners, themselves anchored in their own time and caught up in its dominant representations, undeniably took on dimensions of verticality: Do we not also detect in it the generalisation of an educational model embodying the "excellence" of the West? This is at least a possible deduction from our examination of the school form the IBE promoted.

THE AGENDA FOR EDUCATIONAL INTERNATIONALISM: A WORK OF UNIVERSAL RELEVANCE

Basically, since the 1930s, the IBE had as its reference and model of thought the school system built in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, under the pressure of the industrialisation processes and the democratic movements that were part of the construction of nation states. Although diversified and differentiated, this school system met the needs of industrialised countries. It included infrastructures that were material (buildings, school equipment) and administrative (management and testing), governed by curricula that defined content in terms of school disciplines or subjects. This system was progressively translated into age groups and scholarly rankings, particularly primary and secondary, where meritocracy was supposed to be the foundation of democracy. Professionalised teachers, often elevated to the status of civil servants and placed under established authorities, passed on the dominant norms. For IBE respondents and most delegates attending the ICPEs, this system could be redeployed by other regions of the world, provided that it was adjusted to local conditions and needs. By avoiding standardisation, the path of emulation was supposed to foster intensive universality.

Although they were widely supported within the ICPEs, these solutions were also the subject of intense contradictory debates: the demand for solid infrastructures highlighted the persistent problem of poverty, the disproportion between the number of schools and the mass of population to be educated and the gap between the popular pedagogical principles and inappropriate school supplies, resulting in prioritisation within often inadequate education budgets. The recommendation of broad access to schooling, regardless of the social, cultural, ethnic or sexual origins of individuals, was thwarted by cultural traditions and countered by the need to prioritise quality and the extension of primary education, when it was not a matter of imposing an educational and social Malthusianism, in order to adjust to socio-economic imperatives. The principles of balanced curricula including diversified school subjects to generalise access to a broad culture were resisted by those who aimed at a useful secondary education above all, adapted to the needs of the masses and not at fostering inappropriate social aspirations.

Tensions between universalist ambitions and a differentiating logic intended to include the most vulnerable sometimes led to a shift from a right to difference to a difference in rights. There was an essentialisation of female nature, always relegating women to the sanctuary of the family, while the problem of discrimination against them in education remained invisible for a long time, and their voices were silenced in this educational forum with universalist ambitions. The demand for teachers to have a status guaranteeing job security and a decent salary, as well as high-level training, came up against both shortages and a superabundance of teachers, as well as divergent visions of their societal functions, sometimes emancipating and sometimes normalising.

We have been able to show that the question of educational justice, initially focused on distinctions between individuals, had been extended to discrimination between peoples, under the pressure of the decolonisation movements and the countries of the South, united in their victimhood to assert their new rights. How to adjust to the new aspirations of peoples and claim to offer them a real forum in a world full of cultural, racial and ethnic prejudices, where the great powers presented themselves as emblems of civilisation, with its principles of justice, while appropriating the planet as a stadium for their confrontations?

VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL UNIVERSALISM: AN ATTEMPT
AT A “MULTIVERSAL” APPROACH

As we have just seen, the IBE was caught up in political issues. Like most international organisations, it resorted to strategies of “depoliticisation”, which were all the more necessary because it could not act without the premises of apoliticism, neutrality and reciprocity of points of view, given that education remained the substratum of the construction and legitimisation of nation states. This “depoliticisation” was carried out according to strategies similar to those of other international organisations—we briefly presented them in the introduction: the postulate of the neutrality of technique as well as science; the leitmotiv of the functional necessity of apoliticism from the point of view of universal rights and the requirement of strict neutrality as a rallying principle, guaranteeing the legitimacy of decisions taken.

We would however willingly defend some special features of the IBE. To demonstrate this would of course require solid comparative empirical studies on the concrete functioning of various international organisations. However, on the basis of our analyses, we can state from the outset that unlike most other international organisations, the IBE’s work did not seem to be based on any expansionary or monopolising project. On the contrary, there was a constant desire to confine itself to well-defined problems, leaving it to others to deal with them in the field; the expertise was not outsourced, but assumed by the institution itself, under the control of the Council of which all IBE members were part, and, since 1947, of the IBE-UNESCO Joint Committee; the contents and methods of the surveys were drawn up and controlled by the IBE’s internal and external partners and the same applied to the recommendations resulting from collegial discussions. But obviously, this apolitical approach was not without tensions, as we have seen: the frontiers between education and politics are porous.

It is true that the IBE aimed at an intensive universalism, through operating on the basis of “unity in diversity”, through its strategy of “depoliticisation” and through its principle of emulation and free will. But it by no means escaped the pitfalls of universalism: the increasingly explicit positions taken by the representatives of countries of the South, freshly freed from the colonial yoke, exposed fundamental questions that remained insoluble: emulation can also be read as the imposition of a model, including a civilising tendency, as a form of vertical universalism, since its

recommendations did not treat the conditions for their own fulfilment, and the possibilities of differential fulfilment were not fully developed. It should be noted that this view never really challenged the “global aspirations” that the recommendations were seen to represent as distillations of the many solutions developed to solve educational problems common to all school systems. It was the inequalities of gender, race and culture that were pointed out, leaving aside social struggles and not taking into account problems of poverty. The horizontal universal to be constructed would have required a construction that integrated these dimensions more systematically.

* * *

The universal was the focus from the very beginning of the IBE’s existence. We could even recognise the conditions conducive to the construction of a horizontal universal, a “multiversum” to use Bloch’s concept, through dialogue and the translation of points of view, which Piaget conceptualised in his theory of moral judgement as the overcoming of egocentrism.

However, as our analyses have shown, the theoretical principles of universality were confronted with contradictions in practice: as agents in their own times, each of the partners found itself caught up in strategic predicaments. Comparative education methods became more technical; the criteria for objectification still needed to be perfected; no space-time could be absolutely preserved from political interference, least of all in the field of education. Authoritarian positions could intrude, ideological contradictions were expressed and the models of the de facto dominant countries imposed themselves.

Nevertheless, the IBE was a fascinating laboratory for observing with a magnifying glass the functioning of approaches to international dialogue that were in some ways different from others, and this in the field that is most coveted and protected by nation states: education. In this respect, it could be perhaps seen as an antithesis to current trends—certainly dominant—which, as many research studies we have quoted show, function as a “global governing complex” of education, considering this as a global market, subject above all to the logics of economics (Image 1).



Jean Piaget, approbation,
c. 1976.

Mise en route

Image 1 Jean Piaget in 1976 on his 80th birthday. (©AJP)

APPENDICES

Appendix A Members of the IBE from 1929 to 1968

<i>Year</i>	<i>Membership of countries</i>	<i>Cumulative number</i>
1929	Ecuador, Poland, Geneva (until 1934, Geneva's membership is equivalent to Switzerland's)	3
1930	Spain, Egypt, Czechoslovakia	6
1932	Germany, Belgium, Colombia	9
1934	Portugal, Switzerland	10
1935	Iran, Italy	12
1936	Argentina	13
1937	Romania	14
1938	France, Hungary	16
1945	Finland	17
1946	Austria, Guatemala	19
1950	Bolivia	20
1951	Israel	21
1952	Cambodia, Vietnam	23
1953	Yugoslavia	24
1954	Greece	25
1955	Belarus, Ukraine, USSR	28
1956	Bulgaria, Japan, Morocco, Tunisia	32

(continued)

(continued)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Membership of countries</i>	<i>Cumulative number</i>
1957	Lebanon	33
1958	Chile, Dominican Republic	36
1959	Haiti, Liberia, Panama	39
1960	Brazil, Ghana, India, Kuwait, UK, Venezuela	45
1961	Saudi Arabia, Costa Rica, Iraq, Mexico, Niger, Philippines, Thailand	52
1962	South Korea, Guinea, Jordan, Nigeria, Sierra Leone	57
1963	Cameroon, Peru, Sudan	60
1964	Algeria, Burundi, Qatar, Mauritius, Senegal	65
1965	Cuba, Ireland	67
1967	Pakistan	68

Appendix B Themes of the ICPEs in Four Sets: Surveys, Recommendations, Rapporteurs

<i>School subjects and curriculum</i>	<i>N°</i>	<i>Rapporteur in ICPE</i>
	<i>R</i>	
1937	The teaching of modern languages	11 Graefer, Germany
1938	The teaching of classical languages	14 Balbino Giuliano, Italy
1939	The teaching of geography in secondary schools	18 F. Quicke, Belgium
1946	The teaching of hygiene (health education) in primary and secondary schools	20 Pierre Favreau, France
1947	Physical education in secondary schools	22 Joseph Vána, Czechoslovakia
1948	The teaching of handwriting	23 Robert Dottrens, Switzerland
1948	The development of international understanding among young people and teaching about international organisations	24 Paulo Carneiro, Brazil
1949	The teaching of geography as a means of developing international understanding	26 Louis François, France
1949	The introduction to natural science in primary schools	27 Augustin Nieto Caballero, Colombia
1949	The teaching of reading	28 Ruth E. McMurry, USA
1950	The teaching of handicrafts in secondary schools	30 Roger Gal, France
1950	Introduction to mathematics in primary schools	31 Giovanni Calo, Italy
1952	Teaching of natural science in secondary schools	35 D.D. Anderson, UK

(continued)

(continued)

<i>School subjects and curriculum (continuing)</i>		N° R	<i>Rapporteur in ICPE</i>
1955	The teaching of art in primary and secondary schools	41	Louis Machard, France
1956	The teaching of mathematics in secondary schools	43	W. Servais, Belgium
1958	The preparation and issuing of the primary school curriculum	46	Robert Dottrens, Switzerland
1960	Preparation and issuing of general secondary school curricula	50	J.G.M. Allcock, UK
1965	The teaching of modern foreign languages in secondary schools	59	Stanislaw Dobosiewicz, Poland
1967	Health education in primary schools	63	Joseph Majault, France
1968	Education for international understanding as an integral part of the curriculum and life of the school	64	P.N. Kirpal, India
1968	The study of the environment in school	65	Mohamed Bakir, Tunisia
<i>Training and status of the teacher profession</i>		N° R	<i>Rapporteur in ICPE</i>
1935	The professional training of secondary school teachers	4	S. Maciszewski, Pologne
1935	The professional training of elementary school teachers	5	Oliveira Guimaraes, Portugal
1937	The teaching of psychology in the training of elementary and secondary school teachers	12	S. Myslakowski, Poland
1938	The salaries of elementary school teachers	13	Paul Barrier, France
1939	The salaries of secondary school teachers	16	Klausmann, Germany
1939	The international interchange of teachers	29	F.K. Stewart, Canada
1953	Primary teacher training	36	Robert Dottrens, Switzerland
1953	The status of primary teachers	37	Percy Wilson, UK
1954	Secondary teacher training	38	E. Löffler, FRG
1954	The status of secondary teachers	39	AL. Moore, Australia
1957	The training of primary teacher training staffs	45	Francis Keppel, USA
1962	Further training of primary teachers in service	55	Mohammed Bakir, Tunisia
1963	The struggle against the shortage of primary teachers	57	Fouad Sawaya, Lebanon
1966	Teachers abroad	61	D.J.S. Crozier, UK
1967	The shortage of secondary school teachers	62	Stephen Awokoya, Nigeria

(continued)

(continued)

<i>Access to education</i>		N°R	<i>Rapporteur in ICPE</i>
1934	Compulsory schooling and the raising of the school-leaving age	1	Marcel Nyns, Belgium
1934	Admission to secondary schools	2	Augustin Nieto Caballero, Colombia
1936	The organisation of special schools	7	Jadwiga Michalowska, Poland
1936	The organisation of rural education	8	Augustin Nieto Caballero, Colombia
1939	The organisation of pre-school education	17	Paul Barrier, France
1946	Equality of opportunity for secondary education	19	Joseph, A. Lauwerys, UK
1951	Compulsory education and its prolongation	32	Jean Debiesse, France
1952	Access of women to education	34	Henriette Sourgen, France
1958	Facilities for education in rural areas	47	Matta Akrawi, Irak
1960	Organisation of special education for mentally handicapped children	51	César Santelli, France
1961	Organisation of pre-primary education	53	Suzanne Herbinière-Lebert, France
1963	The organisation of educational and vocational guidance	56	Hans Nowotny, Austria
1965	Literacy and adult education	58	Ahmed Annabi, Algeria
<i>Material and institutional infrastructures</i>		N°R	<i>Rapporteur in ICPE</i>
1934	Economies in the field of public education	3	Edouard Cros, Poland
1935	Councils of public instruction	6	Paul Lachenal, Switzerland
1936	Legislation regulating school buildings	9	Rodolphe Llopis, Spain
1937	School inspection	10	Verheyen, Belgium
1938	The drafting, utilisation and choice of school textbooks	15	Constantin Kiritzesco, Romania
1947	The free provision of school supplies	21	Louis Verniers, Belgium
1948	The development of psychological services in education	25	G.W. Parkyn, New Zealand
1951	School meals and clothing	33	E.T. Boyesen, Norway
1955	The financing of education	40	Clayton D. Hutchins, USA
1956	School inspection	42	Finis, E. Engleman, USA
1957	The expansion of school building	44	Roger Franck, France

(continued)

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<i>Material and institutional infrastructures</i> (continuing)	N° R	<i>Rapporteur in ICPE</i>
1959 Preparation, selection and use of primary school textbooks	48	Joaquim Tena Artigas, Spain
1959 Measures to increase facilities for the recruitment and training of technical and scientific staff	49	Marion Coulon, Belgium
1961 Organisation of one-teacher primary schools	52	Ras, O. Johnson, USA
1962 Educational planning	54	Joaquim Tena Artigas, Spain
1966 The organisation of educational research	60	Stanciu Stoian, Romania

Appendix C Number of Times States Participated in ICPEs

Afghanistan	22
Albania	5
Algeria	6
Argentina	23
Australia	25
Austria	23
Belarus	15
Belgium	29
Bolivia	13
Brazil	21
Bulgaria	24
Burma	11
Burundi	2
Cambodia	16
Cameroon	7
Canada	23
Central African Rep.	5
Ceylon	5
Chad	5
Chile	22
China	26
Colombia	28
Congo (Brazzaville)	8
Congo (Leopoldville)	5
Costa Rica	14
Côte d'Ivoire	7
Cuba	20
Cyprus	3

(continued)

(continued)

Czechoslovakia	23
Dahomey	2
Danzig	0
Denmark	22
Dominican Republic	25
Ecuador	20
Egypt	29
El Salvador	15
Estonia	5
Ethiopia	6
Finland	21
France	29
Gabon	6
Germany	24
Ghana (Gold Coast)	11
Greece	27
Guatemala	26
Guinea	3
Guyana	1
Haiti	7
Honduras	10
Hungary	25
Iceland	4
India	24
Indonesia	10
Iran/Persia	29
Iraq	19
Ireland	26
Israel	20
Italy	29
Jamaica	2
Japan	24
Jordan	2
Katar	6
Kenya	4
Korea	14
Kuwait	10
Laos	14
Latvia	6
Lebanon	20
Lesotho	2
Liberia	17
Libya	5
Liechtenstein	0
Lithuania	5

(continued)

(continued)

Luxembourg	23
Malagasy Republic	7
Malawi	3
Malaysia	4
Mali	3
Malta	3
Mauritania	4
Mauritius	3
Mexico	25
Monaco	21
Mongolia	1
Morocco	13
Nepal	1
Netherlands	29
New Zealand	3
Nicaragua	19
Niger	8
Nigeria	10
Norway	23
Pakistan	20
Panama	18
Paraguay	4
Peru	16
Philippines	17
Poland	25
Portugal	24
Romania	23
Rwanda	3
Saudi Arabia	12
Senegal	6
Siam/Thailand	20
Sierra Leone	9
Singapore	2
Somalia	7
Spain	24
Sudan	12
Sweden	26
Switzerland	29
Syria	20
Tanganyika/Tanzania	4
Togo	7
Tunisia	13
Turkey	27
Uganda	4
Ukraine	15

(continued)

(continued)

Union of South Africa	5
United Kingdom	26
United States	29
Upper Volta	5
Uruguay	23
USSR	15
Vatican	17
Venezuela	23
Vietnam	17
Yemen	1
Yugoslavia	28
Zambia	4

SOURCES

PUBLISHED SERIAL SOURCES

Yearbooks

- *Annuaire international de l'éducation et de l'enseignement* (1933–1947). IBE.
- *Annuaire international de l'éducation et de l'enseignement* (1948–1952). IBE, UNESCO.
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Bulletins

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- *Bulletin du Bureau international d'éducation* (1929–1953). IBE.
- *Bulletin of the International Bureau of education* (1929–1968). IBE.

ICPEs: Files

- IIIrd 1934 and Vth ICPE 1936: 48-49_A-2-1-604-721.¹
- IXth 1946 and XXXIth ICPE 1968: 51-61_A-2-1-1052–1735.
- The files of the IVth ICPE 1935 and VIth to VIIIth ICPE 1937–1939 are missing.

ICPEs: Publications

- *Conférence internationale de l'instruction publique, procès-verbaux et résolutions* (1934–1939, 1946). IBE.
- *International Conferences on public education convened by UNESCO and the IBE. Proceedings and recommendations* (1947–1968). IBE, UNESCO.

ICPEs: Surveys and Recommendations

- See the list of surveys and recommendations in Annex 2.
- The surveys are at disposal in the IBE library; the recommendations are on <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/international-conference-education/archive-ice-sessions-and-recommendations>
- We refer to recommendations with their number: “R 59”.

Meetings of the Council of IBE

- First meeting 1930 to 35th meeting 1968: 45-47_A-2-1-249-1737.

Meetings of the Executive Committee of IBE

- First meeting 1930 to 45th meeting 1968: 62-65_A-3-1-290-1729.

Meetings of the Joint Commission

- 1947–1950: 35_A-1-79-1152.
- 1951–1955: 35bis_A-1-79-1333-b.
- 1956–1968: 37_A-1-79-1505-c.

¹All non-printed documents in the IBE archives are digitised and accessible on <https://ibeunesco.tind.io/?ln=en>

Reports of the Director of IBE

- From 1930 to 1944: published in *Le Bureau international d'éducation*. IBE.
- The 1945 and 1946 reports are in the minutes of the Council.
- From 1947 on, since the collaboration with UNESCO, the reports are annexed to the minutes of the meetings of the Joint Commission.

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