**SWG REFORPRO 2018 report**

In ISCHE 40 in BERLIN, the SWG Reforpro has organized 3 sessions and heard 13 communications (see the details below) from:

Go (France)

Henriquès (Portugal)

Kahn (France)

Kolly (France)

Forestier (France)

Mole (Switzerland)

Monin (France)

Namora and Pintassilgo (Portugal)

Ottavi (France)

Riondet (France)

Serina-Karsky (France)

Verneuil (France)

Wagnon (France and Belgium)

Each panel has gathered 20-25 auditors.

**NB: 8 contributions have been selected for a special issue of *Revista Lusofona de Educaçao* about the theme Reformism, progressivism, conservatism in education (André Robert coordination).**

**Panel 1**. **The debate about progressivism in several political and educational contexts**

**Chair**: F. Mole and A. Robert

**FORESTIER** Yann, Amiens (France) CAREF – EA 4697

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**Looking for the Internal Coherence of Junior High School Teachers’ Progressivism:**

**a Comparison between France and Finland**

Fifty interviews of French and Finnish Junior High School teachers have been conducted for our study. These interviews clearly show the teachers’ will to link professional commitment to progressive views. However, they have to adjust these political or philosophical views when confronted to the reality of everyday life and to the development of widely broadcast educational debates, like the ones about the recent reforms concerning the Junior High School level in both France and Finland, conducted at the time of the interviews (2016 and 2017). These adjustments, linked either to the circumstances or to practical realities, challenge the internal coherence of their ethical choices. This paper shows that the reference principles and the practical implications of such choices are not asserted as sharply in France and in Finland.

**HENRIQUES** Raquel Pereira (Portugal)

Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas (FCSH) da Universidade Nova de Lisboa / Instituto de História Contemporânea (IHC)

**Do teachers learn to innovate or to preserve? Some reforms and educational practices in Portugal (1969-2014)**

I analyse some of the main Portuguese reforms on the initial training of secondary school teachers that took place since the mid-20th century, namely those of 1969, 1988, 2007 and 2014. Do these reforms highlight the need for change, or do they carry on favouring conservative working methodologies? Do they encourage an actual transformation of practices or is this an absent issue? How do teachers make their didactic choices? Do they adapt or do they transform their work into a creative process, different to the usual one and in accordance to new political and educational times?

Those are the questions that guide the analysis I propose, which resorts to two types of sources:

1. Legislation on the initial training of secondary school teachers; the *Basic Education System Law* and work methodologies proposed by History programmes of study.
2. Reports/testimonies produced by teachers, in both roles of trainees and trainers in initial career stages.

In Portugal, the end of the sixties of the 20th century was a period of major educational reforms, some of which anticipated the revolutionary period that lasted mainly from 1974 until the enactment of the *Basic Education System Law*, in 1986.

In fact, there were many proposals, some of which aimed at the economic, social and cultural progress of the population. But legal changes do not always transform practice, because the fast pace of legislation is not always translated into innovation. Viñao Frago states that "theory, law and practice do not match" (2007, 131), and indeed so it is. Resistance to change is often visible in the insistence with which a particular matter is subject to legislation and, nearly always, neither the personal perspectives of students (Mollo, 1978) nor those of teachers (Henriques, 2010) are taken into account.

Initial teacher training has been subject to specific legislation. I will analyse some key-moments, mentioned above, and will show that these legal documents do not question if teachers should or should not be innovative. This absence must be questioned. Surely, institutions have an extremely conservative nature (see Dubet, 2002), they reproduce internal organisation systems that have acquired great strength and prestige. Changes in these systems affect a chain of various transmitters and receivers, which includes not only students, teachers, staff and parents but also professional associations, external evaluation institutions, publishers of school materials, departments within the Ministry of Education, educational policies, and political power.

Whether or not one is an educator who guides, who reinvents, creates and applies different resources and methods can be more or less disturbing, both to oneself and to those with whom one works (Cros, 2001, 13). I will analyse these questions from what has been legislated and from the testimonies of teachers, but also based on the reflection of Antonio Nóvoa on a future school, a school that must integrate that which already exists and at the same time will have to change (Nóvoa, 2015).

**OTTAVI** Dominique (France) Université Paris Ouest-Nanterre-La Défense

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**Educating to democracy, between Progressivism and Conservatism**

We should add to the history of education (XX th century) the analysis of an emblematic controversy : in the second part of the twentieth century, this controversy has concerned the supporters of the Progressive education and those of a new humanism, who explained their ideas through forgotten books. The Progressive Education (a subject recently studied by Sébastien Akira-Alix), mainly John Dewey and his followers, has emphasized the development of the Child and his activity, with a double stake: the emancipation of the children, make them free from the authoritarian teaching, and, in the future, to make free the citizen too, giving him early a democratic *hexis,* with the desire and the skills to be responsible.

Could the knowledge to be taught and the teaching methods to become an obstacle for getting this *hexis* ? John Dewey ask the question in The Child and the Curriculum ; but, Progressive Education contains the risk of a loss of consistency and accuracy of learning. So, several authors have criticized the progressivism. For example, Arthur Bestor wanted the School to transmit the traditions. Schematically, this shows a fixed tension between two positions which haunt the educational modernity: to privilege the development and the activity of the individual vs the transmission of the culture. We Europeans have inherited this puzzling alternative and the harsh controversies, till the first part of the XXI th century. Is it a legacy? Or, a broad question that transcends the historical conditions of its emergence?

We must read again the important legacy of the new humanism. Progressivists and their opponents, considering themselves as humanists, have proposed different theories of human nature, with a great complexity. We need a precise knowledge about this complexity, in order to build a contemporary progressivism.

**PINTASSILGO** Joaquim, **NAMORA** Alda (Portugal)

Instituto de Educação, Universidade de Lisboa

**SÉRGIO NIZA AND THE “COOPERATIVE SELF-TRAINING”: REFLECTIONS ON THE TRAJECTORY OF A PORTUGUESE EDUCATOR AND HIS PROJECT FOR TEACHER TRAINING, WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE PORTUGUESE MODERN SCHOOL MOVEMENT**

This presentation is based on a research project whose purpose is to study experiences of pedagogical innovation developed in Portugal during the 20th century, with a special focus on its second half. The Portuguese Modern School Movement (Movimento da Escola Moderna in Portuguese, hereafter MEM), which evolved under the inspiration of the Freinet pedagogy from the 1960s onwards, was one of the great protagonists of this pedagogical renewal effort. Its influence is perceptible in numerous school experiences that were born since then and it still has prominent presence in the Portuguese educational system. This makes it an excellent example to study the constitution of “innovation traditions” (Peter Burke), in this case a “progressive tradition” (Philip Jackson). In addition to its original inspiration, the MEM deepened its theoretical grounds by incorporating theses of a certain sociocultural constructivism, which also leads us to reflect upon the relationship between “tradition” and “innovation”.

Born in Campo Maior in 1949, (Alentejo, Portugal), Sérgio Niza became MEM’s main figure and one of the most important educators of the contemporary Portuguese pedagogical arena. His personal trajectory coincides with the MEM’s course, but his thinking spreads also out of that concrete context. Being a primary school teacher, Sérgio Niza dedicated part of his professional life to the educational integration of children and young people. At an early stage, he was concerned with the dissemination of the so called “Freinet techniques”, but his “pedagogical model” gradually became more autonomous, borrowing from other contributions and thus building its own coherence and originality. The construction of a democratic school and of a democratic society is one of the purposes of this model, hence the valorisation of participation, dialogue, cooperation and contracting of decisions. The importance attached to educational practices, as well as the encouragement given to a shared and collective reflection upon those practices, is a central feature of Niza’s thinking that is present in the MEM’s “pedagogical model”. MEM is a context for the training of educators in which educators themselves are the protagonists of their own training, in dialogue with their peers and with reference to the experiences developed. Hence the concept of “cooperative self-training” coined by Sérgio Niza, which emerges from his reflections on the process of teacher training. The idea of a “socially-centred” teacher training highlights the favouring of social interactions as a training strategy. The aim of this presentation is, therefore, to promote a reflection on the project of educators training, as well as on its underlying concepts, as developed by Sérgio Niza and embodied in the MEM. We will use as sources the writings Sérgio Niza has been dedicating to the subject of teacher training throughout his trajectory.

**Panel 2**. **French political and educational controversies about progressivism and conservatism**

**Chair**: A. Robert

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**KAHN** Pierre (France) CIRNEF Université de Rouen

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**“Sauver les lettres”, save the school: a "left" defence of traditional education?**

The existence of a traditionalist movement in teaching matters has been on the run in France since the beginning of the seventies. The aim iis to fight an educational progressivism soon described pejoratively as « pédagogisme » through which we can perceive the end of the specific requirements due to normal transmission of academic culture. From the eighties, these literature is growing. It is easy to perceive in it the expression of a conservative thinking of school. The point is not really to make an analytical inventory of the themes of this approach, but rather to understand why it is sometimes supported in the name of a political progressivism (cf « Sauver les lettres »).

**MOLE** Frédéric (Suisse) ERHISE Université de Genève

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**Progressive social and political convictions looking conservative when confronted with school reforms? (France, Switzerland, 1900-1930)**

Curricular and pedagogical methods reform projects periodically provoke debates within faculty, and more broadly in society. These debates involve complex forms of argumentation. When primary aims of announced reforms are to promote a wider access to knowledge , and to democratize the transmission of culture, they give rise to two kinds of opposition.

The first category of opposition, on the side of social and political conservatism, is to reject any reform that could jeopardize the recruitment of elites. According to this point of view, the demands of the programs and the discriminating effects of the methods appear as the condition of a legitimate selection of pupils. The other opposition comes from actors who claim to be socially and politically progressive republicans; it consists in denouncing the perverse effects of reforms that would reduce the demands of the school system and it predicts that such reforms would actually run counter the interests of the largest number.

The difficulty of studying these controversies is that antagonistic political positions are sometimes expressed through very similar rhetoric: lowering of requirements, loss of taste for effort, democratic illusion, talk of decline, etc.

Focusing on various debates developed in France and Switzerland between 1900’s and 1930’s, mainly in the political or education press, the communication will seek:

1 / to compare and differentiate politically opposed rhetorics

2 / to understand the controversies between promoters and detractors of reforms who share the same democratic ideals.

**RIONDET** Xavier (France) Université de Lorraine

Equipes *Normes et Valeurs*, LISEC EA 2310 and ERHISE, Université de Genève

**Is it possible to be the opponent of reformists and progressives both? Back to some althusserian productions about the school in the 1970s**

We can understand what is a reformist position or a progressive position in education when we understand what these positions don't be. In this regard, it is not uninteresting to examine the work of Christian Baudelot (1938-) and Roger Establet (1938-) entitled The Capitalist School in France (1971) by restoring the intellectual, political and editorial context of this book, which had a A certain impact in the educational and academic circles. This book extended and supplemented in a more empirical way the theoretical work of Louis Alformer (1918-1990) on ideological apparatuses of state and the question of the contribution of the school, the central « AIE », to the reproduction of social domination in a Capitalist system of production. The authors ' comments were distinguished by a vehement attack on the reformists, especially the supporters of the Langevin-Wallon Plan, and the progressive ideology. This book is also to be relocated in the context of the French Communism, since this book is finally published at Maspero and not in the editions of the party, the social editions, in an environment where Cogniot and others are still ubiquitous and Influential.

On this occasion, we would like to grasp the complexity of the contexts at stake by taking the backstage of this publication. Announced in a manuscript of Althuser (later published under the title on reproduction) under the name "Schools" (Althuser, 1995, N. 57, p. 114), it was originally intended to be a collective project led by the Spinoza group, composed of members of the « PCF », Maoists, and members of the « PSU », including Etienne Balibar (1942-), Renée Balibar (1915-1998), Pierre Macherey (1938-) and Michel Tort. Group founded in 1967, the work of this seminar on the school was published, but finally co-signed by Baudelot and Establet, "for reasons of political divergence", according to Althise (1992/2013, p. 399).

Through this dive in this production, the challenge is to contribute to a better cartography of reformist and progressive thoughts and their opposites, controversies and fracture lines that characterise the thoughts in education at the time of school democratization.

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**Social conservatism and pedagogical reformism: the case of the CNGA after May 1968**

The “Confédération nationale des groupes autonomes de l’enseignement public” (CNGA) was born on June 20, 1968. It brings together teachers who were exasperated by the events of May-June 1968. It calls for a return to order and denounces politicization in high schools and universities. That's why this teacher union is generally considered conservative. However, the CNGA is in favour of educational reforms. It is true that it deplores the "demagoguery" of the reforms decided by Edgar Faure; but it admits that the cause of the events of May 1968 lies in the maladjustment of the school system. So it is not a reactionary union that would like to return to the situation before May 1968. This differentiates it from the SNALC. It is actually an example of a conservative trade union from a political point of view, but reformist from a school point of view. As Jean-Philippe Vincent remarks, conservatism is not opposed to reformism, but to progressivism.

**Panel 3. New Education, modern pedagogies and the question of progressivism**

**Chair**: J. Pintassilgo and A. Robert

**GO** Henri-Louis, (France) Université de Lorraine, Equipes *Normes et Valeurs*, LISEC

**The "Élisian pedagogy": a conservatory of progressive education**

Élise Freinet is known to have been part of the Modern School movement, heir to the eighteenth-century discovery of a land-new, childhood (Philonenko, 1967). But his position in educational thought presents a paradox. His writings emphasize the rigor required by pedagogical action. She considered that the "part of the master" was the essence of the "Freinet pedagogy", while the vulgate of this pedagogy puts forward the autonomous activity of the child. The publications I study show Elise Freinet's relationship between the spirit of pedagogy, the correct practice of the techniques of this pedagogy, and the productions of the students who attest to it: "If you do not think to make articles but to propose documents which allow the practice of a Freinet pedagogy which thanks to the writings of Freinet can go reinforcing, taking the height and the broad one. It is necessary to disencumber oneself of this concern of literature which in the period of intense richness and fight that we live is gone".

From 1966, the main issue of Élise Freinet's action was to position herself for a safeguard of "Freinet pedagogy" as a practice, reminding educators that they have a reference for it:

"To move forward, be communicative and convincing, you have at your fingertips the active and critical thinking of Freinet. It's a precious legacy that you'll be able to grow."

Indeed, according to Élise Freinet, it is the lack of demand in the practices that leads militant teachers to practice what they call bluffing (Freinet, É., 1966, pp. 33-34). Its position can be understood, in the context of the late 1960s, as an educational "anti-laxism". The way not to go into lax drifts is to work the reference. Hence the idea that his vision of training is that of a progressive conservatory that I will strive to support on publications and archival documents.

**KOLLY** Bérengère (France) Université Paris Est Créteil, Laboratoire Lettres, Idées, Savoirs (EA 4395)

**The techniques of "grace and courtesy" in Montessori pedagogy : progressivism or conservatism?**

This communication aims to study progressivism or conservatism in education starting from the history of pedagogy, and by entering through a specific practice of schooling, the exercises of "grace and courtesy" proposed in Montessori preschools. Conservative in their form, progressive in their objectives and effects: these exercises demonstrate the possible coincidence between conservatism and progressivism, or, perhaps, their situation beyond these two definitions. They will be the occasion to draw several types of reflections: what are the possible progressive evolution in school, within this act by essence conservative of transmission ? What in this context would be Montessori’s place in the history of pedagogical ideas?

**MONIN** Noëlle (France) ) ECP 457, Université Claude Bernard, Lyon 1

**From the hero to the actor of education policies, the progressive in question. Gilles Ferry (1917-2007)**

The tributes to Gilles Ferry unanimously celebrate the progressive pedagogue. In the July 4, 2007 edition of *Le Monde*, P Meirieu praises a "great figure of the sciences of education ... ..a major reference ... a great educator in our groping modernity: an educator at the level of man". In his post-face of the book *Le trajet de la formation* G Ferry published in 1988, P Meirieu writes "It traces a way ... ..extending the great educational tradition of Pestalozzi Paulo Freire, Makarenko Illich .... the one who remains, in my eyes, one of the few true pedagogues of the last fifty years. "In *Nouvelle revue de psychosociologie* (2008/2, n ° 6), J C Filloux considers that G Ferry seeks to" make live another pedagogy ". G Vigarello, evokes, the "major figure of the sciences of education ... author of several texts widely recognized, matured and innovating at the same time" (*Esprit*, of December 2007). In reference to the book *l’Expérience d’une formation de chefs. Le stage de six mois à l’école nationale des cadres d’Uriage* (1945) adds "This reflection on Uriage contains in germ the great educational issues that will mark our time." B Comte (1991, 547) adds "Gilles Ferry, who played an important role in Uriage, as the Amiens conference, 20 years later, said" Uriage has developed a real educational model, which was inspired then without knowing explicitly the existence ""

What sense should be given to this process of heroism that makes G Ferry a progressive pedagogue? In what way did his commitment to the Petainist school of Uriage executives, between 1940 and 1942, contribute to paradoxically build this identity of man of progress? What is this "educational model" whose reputation is made that would have marked the educational policy between 1945 and 2007, or even later.

Several sources will allow us to answer these questions: the content analysis of about twenty of his publications, the documents kept in the departmental archives of Isère, those of the archives of the family of G Ferry, the testimony of

his entourage:  
This communication will attempt to deconstruct the process of heroism linked to the figure of G Ferry and reconstruct the trajectories and networks of the actor of the school system erected as promoter of progress.

**SERINA-KARSKY** Fabienne (France) CIRCEFT-HEDUC Université Paris 8 Vincennes Saint-Denis and LIRDEF Montpellier

**The French pre-school after the First World War, a Montessorian melting pot?**

After having studied last year in this SWG the meeting points and tensions between progressivism shown by kindergartens, particularly from the point of view of the early childhood professionals training, and the French school institution between 1919 and 1939, we propose to continue our research by questioning the rise of Montessorism within the French pre-school after the First World War. The reconstruction of schools is accompanied by a "major renovation of early childhood education that is emerging in our country of old pedagogical organization" as affirmed in 1921 by Mrs Bardot, inspector of nursery schools of the Seine.

Indeed, it is through the simultaneous action of an American philanthropist, Miss Cromwell, who endows the “Ecoles Normales” and some of the Seine schools with Montessori equipment and furniture, and with the decree of July 15, 1921, which modifies in particular the time schedule in public pre-schools and calls for the use of a "sensory material", that we see the institution open, for a time, to the progressivism displayed by the methods of New education. According to the periodical press of the times, the French pre-school of Pauline Kergomard becomes a melting pot of Montessorism, relayed by personalities such as Suzanne Brès, Emilie Flayol, then director of the La Rochelle’s Ecole Normale, and also Paul Lapie, Minister of Public Instruction, who prefaces the first translation by Miss Cromwell of the work of Maria Montessori, published in 1918 by Larousse. Miss Cromwell receives the “moral approval” of Ferdinand Buisson to continue her work, especially with schools most affected by the war that need to be completely reorganized with little means.

Using a corpus made up of public archives (National Archives, Archives of Fontenay-aux-Roses, library of “Père Castor”) and private (Émilie Brandt school, New School of Antony), and by a socio-historical approach, we propose to trace the path of this “Apostle of Montessorism” and her disciples in order to better understand how the Montessori method tries to establish itself in the French pre-school without revolutionizing it, and also to question its reception in class and its impacts on the professional practices of teachers.

**WAGNON** Sylvain (France) Université de Montpellier LIRDEF

**"Mental hygiene" and eugenics: two notions at the heart of the reflection between interest of the child and interest of the State?**

Mental hygiene and eugenics, these two notions remain complex because of their representations. They must be put in context to be elements of reflection. We will analyse, in the reflections of the Belgian pedagogue Ovide Decroly (1871-1932), the elaboration of the notions of mental hygiene, social prophylaxis and eugenics. Founding member of the Belgian eugenic society in 1912, one finds in his writings the tension between interest of the child and interest of the State? Can this position be considered as a progressist one?

The convenors: **A. Robert (France), F. Mole (Geneva), J. Pintassilgo (Portugal)**