GEORGE HUPPERT — *Public Schools in Renaissance France*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984. Pp. xvii, 157.

The *secondaires*, once known as the *collèges*, of France have a history, as the author puts it, "bedevilled by old disputes" (p. xiii). Historians of the Third Republic, under the shadow of the great Church-State struggles of the nineteenth century, were generally inclined to take the view that education began, if not with the Revolution, at least with the Enlightenment. The pedagogy of the Catholic congregations, which dominated the sixteenth and much of the seventeenth centuries, was consigned to the outer darkness.

In 1940, with the appearance of François de Dainville's *La Naissance de l'Humanisme moderne*, a revision began. In the succeeding years a body of scholarship has developed which has rehabilitated the schooling of the Counter-Reformation congregations, and attributed to it many of the ideals, ideas and techniques that lie at the foundations of modern education. The work that best summarizes this scholarship is *L'éducation en France du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle* by Roger Chartier, M.M. Compère and Dominique Julia.

The difficulty is that, in the process of making their point, these historians have done to the preceding period — the sixteenth century — exactly what historians of republican education once did to the seventeenth: they have devalued it. The frontier of modern learning that used to stand at different points in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries, depending on one's view, was set instead at c. 1600, so becoming coincidental with the appearance of the teaching congregations, notably the Jesuits.

It is this view, which Huppert sees as the outcome of a "malign neglect" (p. xiv) of the facts, that he sets out to correct. He points out that by the end of the sixteenth century France was covered by "a network of *collèges* ...entirely owned and administered by municipalities. Among the chief characteristics of this network are its phenomenal size and density and its independence from state and clerical control" (p. 110). These colleges were designed by the bourgeoisie, and the learning that they offered was humanistic, oriented towards secular careers, antagonistic to the traditional "'gothic' learning" (p. 9) promoted by the Church.

The *collèges* were distinguished from older institutions by the sumptuousness of their buildings (p. 35) and the competence of their *régens* (p. 38). As they were municipal property, gratuity was enforced. Any *enfant de la ville*, however poor, was eligible to attend the *collège* in his city. Furthermore, the new institutions, following the latest pedagogical thinking, extended their schooling "without exception" to the very young (p. 42).

All this required a considerable outlay of money and civic effort. Several interesting chapters of the book describe how the schools were financed, administered and taught. Municipalities frequently provided seed money, anticipating that private generosity would do the rest. Qualified masters competed for the principalships, which carried, in addition to the flat fee of 200-800 *livres* paid by the city, the right to a monopoly over the *pension* attached to the college. A successful *pension*, with a sufficient number of rich boarders, could easily make up a principal's out-of-pocket expenses, which included the salaries, board and lodging of the allotted number of *régens*, or junior teachers.

"Hundreds of skilled and talented master of arts and even doctors of law and of theology" criss-crossed the country in search of positions (pp. 24-25). They were a new breed of men, trained in the "style of Paris", "...which implied a humanist orientation and an enthusiasm for good Latin and even Greek" (p. 52). They practised their profession in a newly-standardized six-class system, starting with the *abécédaires* and going through various stages of Greek and Latin to the highest class, that of rhetoric. They were new in other ways, too. They might be — indeed they might be required to be — married (p. 40). And they might be adherents to the Reformed Religion. At this point, Huppert seems guilty of something very much like sleight of hand. The vital question of the religious leanings of the *régens* is minimized. Even the location of the *collèges* under study — most of them in cities in the Midi that were centres of the reform movement in France — passes without comment.

What is more, this omission is intentional. Huppert has decided for the time being to avoid the "large and important" issue of Protestantism in education (p. xv).

This would be legitimate if he were confining his study to the building, staffing, and student population of the municipal *collèges*. His purpose, however, is to do much more: to give a qualitative description of the new pedagogy and to compare it with the conventional education of the institutions sanctioned by the Catholic Church. In this part of his work his sources are limited almost entirely to the writings of the new pedagogues themselves. It would therefore seem important to be informed about the bias of these pedagogues. Were priests "generally" neglectful as teachers (p. 69) or were they simply said to be so by their enemies? Were monks "brutal and lazy" (p. 69)? When we hear a story of a student, his mouth filled with excrement, being stripped, hung upside down and beaten half to death by monks (p. 69), should we not at least check out the confessional credentials of the purveyor of this story?

By contrast, Huppert uses the same sources to paint a glowing picture of the *collèges*. Reading from the works of the principals, he presents the new classrooms as cradles of equality in an otherwise unequal world. "The collège, unlike the real world, was not organized to discriminate on any grounds other than academic excellence" (p. 90). The "new men", both the parents and the teachers of the municipal college students, disliked physical violence. "Beating children on principle was a pedagogical method not much appreciated by bourgeois parents" (p. 71). The new *collèges* were havens of humanity — at least as their principals described them. It is strange that Montaigne's recollection of college as a "vraye geaule de jeunesse captive", where one hears the "cris d'enfans suppliciez, et de maistres enyvrez en leur cholere", is not mentioned. But then the college of Montaigne's memory was the prestigious *Collège de Guyenne*, fully municipal, humanistic and modern; so the quotation does not serve the argument.

At the beginning of the book, Huppert asks the question: why did the Catholic Church look upon the new *collèges* with such suspicion (p. xv)? His answer is that the Church was fundamentally opposed to "the dangers of unrestricted learning" (p. 117), whether the year was 1400, 1500, 1600 or 1700. The Counter-Reformation was therefore only an episode in a centuries-long process of thought-suppression. The occupation of the *collèges* by the Jesuits and Oratorians in the early years of the seventeenth century, by which the Protestant presence was struck down, was merely a preliminary to a long, delicate process: the dismantling of the municipal education system. "Every effort was made to close down *collèges* whenever possible, to make the task of thought control easier" (p. xii). Gratuity was eliminated, wherever possible, forcing the poor man "to remain within the limits of his condition, instead of trying to rise beyond the rights given to him by virtue of his birth" (p. 117).

This argument can be made only by ignoring the work of de Dainville et al., including their statistics. According to them, the population of the *collèges* continued to grow under the management of the Counter-Reformation congregations until, in the 1660s, the governing classes, thoroughly alarmed, took steps to stop the trend. The arguments against educating the poor, which Huppert here attributes to "the clerical party", came, as de Dainville was the first to show, mainly from a mercantilist élite, and included the standard complaint that all these educated peasants ended up "in idleness", in the Church. The decline of the *collèges*, which did indeed begin in the second half of the century, was thus the result of a new social and economic climate, rather than any long-range strategy of Church and State.

To this argument, which certainly does not lack for proponents and documentation, Huppert opposes not a detailed rebuttal, but a swift overview of what he calls "the taming of the educational process" (p. 142). He turns the conventional wisdom upside-down, changing the Church from the mother of education into the wicked stepmother.

This is consistent with his purpose, stated at the outset (p. xvi), to provide "a beginning" for a new approach to the history of education in early modern France. Such a beginning would be valuable: it would make us aware of the close and vital connection between the growth of the

bourgeoisie and the education of their children; it would also expose the roots of the struggle for control of that education between secular and clerical forces. But it remains for his readers to judge whether the beginning that Huppert offers us is a convincing one.

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MORRIS SLAVIN — *The French Revolution in Miniature. Section Droits-de-l'Homme, 1789-1795.* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984. Pp. xvii, 449.

As Morris Slavin points out in his preface, despite the substantial work done on the lower classes in Paris during the French Revolution, no one has traced the history of a particular neighbourhood through the whole revolutionary decade. He finds this surprising in light of the vast amount of evidence available, and remarks that it is not inconceivable that his study might be the first volume of a forty-eight volume series covering all the sections in Paris. He argues that in the meantime it is worth doing one section, Droits-de-l'Homme, on the assumption that, despite differences in topography and social composition, the sections had enough in common that what happened in one will cast light on the whole Revolution. This assumption probably has much truth in it, but surely it is going too far to claim, as the subtitle of his book suggests, that the result will be a history of the Revolution in miniature. As his book shows, one will not learn much about successive national executives, national assemblies, national armies, foreign affairs, or developments in the provinces by studying one ward of Paris *d'en bas*. In fact, a prior knowledge of such wider developments is essential to understanding his book.

Slavin proceeds with his microcosmic history in a very systematic and detailed way. He begins with a description of the physical setting of what was to become the section Droits-de-l'Homme. This reads somewhat like a tourist guide to surviving buildings in the Marais, and in fact he reproduces a modern map of the area for visitors rather than one of several contemporary maps such as that called the *Plan de Turgot*. One does, however, get some sense of the quarter. He then examines the socio-economic base, providing the reader with data about the number of buildings per street, density of population per acre, occupation, incomes, and taxes, illustrated by tables. This provides valuable insights into the material conditions of the quarter. He then traces the role of this and other districts in the storming of the Bastille, how the section Droits-de-l'Homme was created out of two original districts, and its part in the fall of the monarchy, the expulsion of the so-called Girondins, the emergence of the revolutionary government, and the overthrow of Robespierre.

In studying any organism, whether biological or social, there is always the question of whether to dissect it before looking at it in action, or to study it in motion and look at its parts later. Slavin has chosen the latter course. Examination of the problem of shortages and the struggle for price controls are treated separately, although they were involved in many events treated earlier. The administrative structure of the section — primary assemblies, electoral bodies, the civil committee, the revolutionary committee, the welfare committee, and local officials — is also treated after the events. So too are such vital matters as the armed forces and the popular society. Patriotism and religion share a brief chapter. The book ends, apart from some concluding remarks, with the popular uprisings in the last days of the Convention as it completed the conservative constitution of Year III. Like other historians of the upheaval from below, Slavin believes that the dismantling of the sectional institutions and the disarming of the sans-culottes in 1795 marked the real end of the Revolution.

Slavin's painstaking research throws new light on sectional politics, but he seems to be unwilling to draw the obvious conclusions. As the heir to the work of Mathiez, Lefebvre, Soboul, and other leftist historians of lower classes, he continually searches for a class basis for political struggles,