

Fort heureusement, une introduction magistrale de Gérard Cholvy pose des jalons précieux, fournit une bibliographie critique et propose des avenues de recherche fécondes (origines, implantation, méthodes, encadrement, relations avec les Églises, dimensions internationales, spiritualité). Un indispensable index des noms propres, une utile chronologie, une liste des abréviations (en réalité des sigles) qui permet de se retrouver dans ce monde quelque peu ésotérique et des notes biographiques qui aident à situer le regard de chaque auteur d'article (« ancien » du mouvement, universitaire en mal de thèse, etc.) complètent cette somme indispensable de *membra disiecta*. On peut regretter que, comme beaucoup d'ouvrages publiés dans l'hexagone à l'enseigne de l'Europe, la part du pays de de Gaulle et de Pétain occupe les deux tiers de l'espace. Si la Belgique, l'Espagne et la Pologne y figurent, l'Italie en est tout à fait absente et la Grande-Bretagne n'y apparaît qu'à travers des mouvements internationaux.

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PHIL GARDNER — *The Lost Elementary Schools of Victorian England*. Beckenham, Kent: Croom Helm, 1984. pp. viii, 296.

What is a school? To the producers of the official statistics of educational organization in Victorian England the term clearly did not apply to the myriad small, local and often informal places of learning attended by many working-class children. Official statistics in consequence do not take account of the educational reality of the industrial and urban working class. In this very important contribution to the history of English education, Phil Gardner demonstrates that historians of education generally — even those on the left — have reproduced a part of the official view of working-class schooling. He sets himself the ambitious task of rediscovering and rehabilitating those educational institutions consistently derided as 'dame schools', and in my opinion he succeeds admirably. This book is interesting for the methodological issues it raises, for the empirical reality it uncovers, and for the absence of romanticism in its treatment of a subject where the temptation to romanticize is continually present.

Despite the impetus from the 'revisionist' educational history of the late 1960s and early 1970s, which encouraged researchers to raise questions about forms of educational organization, many historians of education have relied entirely upon official documentary systems to produce their accounts of educational development. This has often been from necessity — official knowledge is often the only record left to us — but often from preference as well. Yet Gardner points to real lacunae in the official documentary system of English education, lacunae which were opened both by the techniques of educational information-gathering and by the interests of information-gatherers themselves. The ways in which public authorities constituted 'educational intelligence' in fact generated the historical problem which Gardner seeks to address: the invisibility of working-class private schooling.

The statistics of educational organization in England from 1830 until the early 1900s were more or less consistently generated by groups and bodies interested in reforming working-class education. The efforts of the Statistical Societies in the 1830s and 1840s, the Educational Census conducted by Horace Mann in 1851 and the work of the Newcastle Commission produced views of popular and working-class education shaped both by class prejudice and by political interests in promoting 'public' education. A crucial part of Gardner's book is an attempt to measure the extent and nature of working-class private schooling, particularly in the city of Bristol. He attempts to correct the biases of the official record, by comparing educational censuses with population censuses, and by drawing upon other sources. Gardner shows that the official educational record consistently

underestimated the numbers of working-class private schools, and at the same time presented them in a distorted manner: as much more ephemeral and transient than they were in fact, and as less 'efficient' as educational institutions. Gardner is ingenious in this endeavour. He demonstrates ably the saturation of official educational intelligence by relations of class knowledge/power, and this should give pause to all historians working with 'official' statistics.

What were working-class private schools like in Victorian Bristol? Before 1871 especially, they were numerous. As much as a third of the population was attending such schools. They were also local, relatively small in scale, and they had 'no discipline'. Students came and went irregularly. Teachers were often engaged in productive labour in the schoolroom (itself often kitchen or parlour), students might be sent to run errands, and instruction was highly individualized. The schools had no uniform set of books, no gymnastic equipment, no lesson stands, galleries, swings or playgrounds and little respect for the rod.

Yet, Gardner shows, the schools were popular because they spoke to the needs of the students who attended them and of the parents who sent to them. Fees were flexible and geared to the fluctuations of the domestic economy. Individual instruction meant that parents and students controlled the curriculum in large measure, and obnoxious practices such as obligatory religious exercises were absent. The material and cultural level of the schools paralleled that of the working-class community generally, and many parents sought and received from the schools the visible proof of education in literacy for their friends, without the obnoxious moral regulation imposed by board schools. Students were able to play active roles in the domestic economy and to learn at the same time.

Without the moral regulatory impetus of public school teaching, private school teaching was an occupation open to many. Teaching was not clearly and completely separated from other branches of the division of labour, yet market forces ensured that only competent and effective private school teachers survived. Gardner suggests that there were many of the latter, noted for their capacity to teach without beating their students, and sufficiently effective to avoid disqualification in the first official educational inspection.

By the 1890s, these schools had largely been destroyed, and Gardner details the tactics of the official campaign against independent working-class schooling. The schools were ultimately destroyed by administrative initiatives which made a certificate of proficiency from an 'efficient' school a condition of juvenile employment. The Education Act of 1876 specified that a 'certified efficient school' was not one kept for private profit, and Her Majesty's Inspectors also classified as inefficient all schools lacking approved school furniture. While some working-class support for private schooling continued, these and other administrative initiatives fairly rapidly destroyed the institution, although in a concluding chapter Gardner details the efforts of one private school teacher to keep her school in existence even in this hostile official climate.

Gardner's analysis of the working-class school brings the political thrust of public educational reform into sharp relief. We cannot read this work and simply regard public education as a neutral and naturally 'good thing'. Since even the official opponents of working-class schools were unable to defeat them on the grounds of their strictly 'educational' productivity, we must notice that educational reform, as working-class parents saw clearly, was not simply (I would say not mainly!!) about 'skilling' the population. Public educational reform rather was about the 'civilization', the 'moralization' and the political subordination of the masses. If it did not succeed in winning the hearts and minds of the working class, at least the educational project managed largely to undermine independent working-class self-education. As one of the managers of the Dublin Normal School once remarked, education was primarily the moral regulation of the population. If this moral regulation were not present in working-class education, "it is better for themselves and safer for society, to leave them entirely uneducated; for bad as ignorance is, education without morality is a thousand times worse." A growing literature suggests that the public educational project was quite prepared to propagate certain forms of working-class ignorance. Educational reformers drew a necessary connection between the political/moral subordination of the working class and the acquisition of the skills

of literacy. Knowledge without correct political discipline was seen — accurately no doubt — to be dangerous to the bourgeois order.

Gardner's book is an invaluable contribution to the literature of working-class education and it speaks directly to anyone interested in the methodology of historical inquiry as well.

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THOMAS P. HUGHES — *Networks of Power: Electrification in Western Society, 1880-1930*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983. pp. xi, 474.

This lucid and wide-ranging study of electrification cannot be recommended too highly for historians of technology in general and of electric power systems in particular. Thomas P. Hughes describes and analyzes the changing configuration of electrical generation, transmission, distribution and consumption from the small central station systems of the 1880s to the large regional power networks of the 1920s. His approach is both comparative and theoretical. On the one hand, Hughes examines the evolution of electrical supply in the United States, Britain and Germany (only passing reference is made to Canada). On the other hand, he rests his analysis of particular individuals, inventions and institutions on the assumption that the history of all large-scale technology is a history of "systems".

According to Hughes, electric power systems evolved through five phases: invention and development; technology transfer, during which site-specific technologies were adapted to different environments; system growth, involving not only increases in size but correction of technical imbalances that obstructed fulfilment of "system goals"; the achievement of "substantial momentum" and the emergence of various organizations and political arrangements that formed what Hughes calls "the system's culture"; and a last phase when, in response to problems of large-scale planning and funding, system control came into the hands of financiers, consulting engineers and, in some cases, government agency entrepreneurs. This model enables Hughes to order a vast array of technical detail while incorporating non-technical elements into his story of systems development. It suggests a universal pattern of evolution while allowing for the isolation of those characteristics which defined a system's distinctive "style". Hughes argues that, as an explanatory device, the model is at once peculiarly appropriate to the systems outlook of electrical men such as Thomas Edison and generally applicable to the history of other modern technological systems. He suggests, indeed, that the study of technology in light of his model is revealing of the systematizing nature of modern societies.

This book, then, is ambitious in scope and purpose. While close attention is devoted to specific problems, such as the contribution of Lucien Gaulard and his English partner, John D. Gibbs, to transformer development in the 1880s, or the metamorphosis of the American firm of Stone and Webster from a partnership of consulting engineers into a large utility holding company in the 1920s, these are always discussed in the context of broader issues. In the case of Gaulard and Gibbs, their work is related to the general significance of transmission and distribution in electrical supply systems, to the phenomenon of simultaneity in the invention process and to the problem of technical imbalances in systems growth. In the case of Stone and Webster, their transformation is related to early twentieth-century structural trends in the electrical industry and to the regionalization of power systems that occurred after the World War I.

In addition to constructing a model of system formation and growth, Hughes offers certain concepts for understanding the internal dynamic of technological change, notably the military met-