

CESE IN THE PAST 25 YEARS OF COMPARATIVE EDUCATION IN EUROPE

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In qualità di Presidente della CESE, è per me un grande onore aprire formalmente i lavori della Conferenza Straordinaria per il 25° anniversario della nostra Società, e rivolgere a tutti Voi il benvenuto del Comitato Organizzativo della Conferenza e del Comitato Esecutivo della CESE.

Benché la mia relazione, come è stato programmato, sarà fatta in inglese, considero mio dovere, molto grato d'altra parte, esprimere innanzi tutto nella bella lingua d'Italia, per me così cara, il ringraziamento della CESE e il mio personale per tutto quanto è stato fatto per avviare questo promettente incontro. Il nostro ringraziamento deve andare prima di tutto alla Sezione Italiana della CESE, che ha avuto l'iniziativa, all'ISFE, che ha offerto i suoi mezzi organizzativi e che ha prodigato tutti gli sforzi necessari per renderla possibile. Il Comitato Nazionale Italiano per l'Unesco e le autorità del Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione meritano il nostro vivo ringraziamento per il loro aiuto, come lo meritano le autorità regionali e locali per la loro ospitalità e il loro cortese ricevimento.

Quando, poco prima dell'indimenticabile Congresso di Anversa, si è fatta strada l'idea di commemorare il venticinquesimo anniversario della CESE con un Congresso Straordinario, erano varie le possibilità che avevamo per quanto riguardava il luogo in cui effettuarlo. Ma, a dire il vero, non abbiamo avuto il tempo di discutere troppo questo punto, perché il nostro collega Mauro Laeng ha suggerito dall'inizio l'Italia e il suo suggerimento è stato immediatamente concretato da parte del Presidente e del Segretario Generale dell'ISFE, i Professori Winfried Böhm e Battista Orizio, che hanno gentilmente offerto questa prestigiosa istituzione come punto di riferimento del congresso. L'idea ci è sembrata così interessante che nessuno di noi ha esitato ad assumerla.

Non era certo la prima volta che la CESE celebrava il suo Congresso in Italia. Quello di Frascati, nel 1973, rimane ancora oggi ornato dell'aura di felice ospitalità e di buon lavoro che gli assicurarono gli organizzatori di allora. Ma a questo bel ricordo si univano, nel caso presente, altre considerazioni non meno promettenti. Lo sviluppo dell'educazione comparata in Italia e l'interesse che ogni volta di più suscita qui questo settore del sapere,

palesi attraverso pubblicazioni diverse ed anche nel testo stesso delle riforme scolastiche introdotte o programmate di recente, promettevano una buona accoglienza da parte dei nostri colleghi italiani. D'altra parte, l'esistenza di uno specifico Istituto per la Formazione Europea, così prossimo nel suo obiettivo di formare una coscienza europesitica ad uno dei più preziosi obiettivi della CESE, ci offriva anche una eccellente occasione di iniziare una collaborazione istituzionale, facilitata per altro dai vincoli professionali già da prima esistenti fra i membri dell'ISFE e quelli della CESE. A questo riguardo, mi sembra opportuno ricordare lo splendido lavoro svolto dal Presidente dell'ISFE, Prof. Böhm, come organizzatore dell'indimenticabile Congresso di Würzburg, insieme al Prof. Mitter. E naturalmente, c'era ancora una ragione importantissima per immaginare il probabile successo di questa Conferenza straordinaria: la scelta di un luogo così splendido, così attraente, così riposante, come questo del lago di Garda e della bella località che gli diede il nome.

Siamo finalmente qui. Parecchie difficoltà si sono presentate durante la preparazione della Conferenza, a incominciare da un indesiderato ritardo dell'edizione dell'opuscolo divulgativo e, quindi, da una iniziale informazione troppo tardiva per alcuni dei nostri associati, i quali non hanno per questo potuto ottenere i necessari sussidi e non sono oggi, purtroppo, fra noi. In quanto Presidente della CESE e membro del Comitato organizzativo, chiedo vivamente scusa a tutte le persone che hanno potuto essere danneggiate da questo iniziale ritardo e per gli altri difetti e lacune che possono avere osservato. Spero che questi non siano troppo gravi e che possano contribuire ad alleviarli la vostra gentile comprensione, l'affascinante scenario del lago e della città di Garda e, soprattutto, l'interesse per un argomento così significativo come quello scelto per questa occasione. E ringrazio vivamente tutti gli associati che, malgrado queste difficoltà, si sono sforzati di essere oggi qui, contribuendo così con la loro presenza alla riuscita di questa commemorazione e alla operosità del nostro impegno.

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished colleagues,

In my first speech as the President of CESE I dared say that twenty-five years are not very much in the life of an academic association, but they are a very significant proof of its vitality and also of its maturity. This initial conviction has strongly grown up when, in the preparation of this paper, I have had the opportunity of studying much closer the rather short but indeed profitable life of our Society. To look at the past, in the case of the CESE, has seemed to me an easy way of looking at the future, because the simple continuation of the lines already marked could show us some features of the times to come.

You probably know well the details of the CESE's foundation. The fitness of creating a European Association devoted to the comparative

studies in education had been especially felt in the years following the Second World War. A Conference organized by the Unesco Institute of Education at Hamburg in 1955 dealt namely with comparative education as a field of research, and a group of European researchers had then the occasion of discussing the suitability of a frame for frequent relationship between them. This need reappeared once again in the Conference on educational research held in Tokyo in 1959, to which several European researchers and professors had been invited. Finally, in May 1961 Professor Lauwerys had the happy idea of organizing a Conference at the University of London Institute of Education, in close cooperation with some leading members of the Unesco staff in Geneva, Hamburg and Paris. During this Conference, it was agreed to create a European Society with the aim of organizing international conferences on comparative education and putting in touch the researchers in the field between them.

A provisional board was elected at the London Conference, with Professor Lauwerys as the President and Professors Ph. J. Idenburg and Pedro Rosselló as Vicepresidents. Brian Holmes was at this time appointed as secretary-treasurer. Besides them, a provisional board of ten members was also elected, with the main task of drawing up the Society's statutes. This board included Fernig, Grue-Sorensen, Hatinguais, Hausmann, García Hoz, Kalund-Jorgensen, Katz, Mallinson, Robinsohn and Tits.

Professor Joseph Katz, of the University of British Columbia, prepared a first draft of the statutes, on the basis of those of the American and Canadian Societies. Let me please open here a bracket for including some paragraphs of the letter that Professor Katz wrote me some time ago, when he announced to me the impossibility for him to be present at this Conference in Garda. In his words, Katz refers to that initial statutes, but also expresses a wish which I am very glad to make known:

«I was fortunate to be in London at the formation of the CESE, and to help provide some perspective on the drawing up of the Constitution for the society based on the experience in both the American and Canadian societies.

It is my hope that this 25th anniversary will be used as an attempt to answer the question: what have we accomplished in the field of comparative education that has helped bring about significant reforms in education throughout the world, and to what extent have those in the field of general education and in political and economic spheres been prepared to recognise that it has been and is the field of comparative education that has clearly made all this possible?

I know that the answer will be difficult to come by, but, after all, nothing that is worthwhile is easy».

It is indeed an interesting question to be studied, but we must now continue with our historical approach.

The tentative draft prepared by Katz was studied and modified by Lauwerys and Holmes in October 1961 and amended in February 1962 on

the recommendation of Idenburg. Afterwards, in May 1962, a meeting of the provisional officers and the constitution committee was held at Sèvres to discuss and prepare an initial document to be presented to the general assembly during the next Conference, foreseen for 1963 in Amsterdam. On this occasion, after a full discussion, the Constitution of the CESE was unanimously adopted and published later in the proceedings of the Amsterdam Conference. A first Executive Committee was also elected on that occasion, formed by Lauwerys as president, Idenburg and Rosselló as vicepresidents and Husén and Robinsohn as members.

Please excuse me if I am too much insistent in the names of the first officers and counsellors of our Society. But for the life of the CESE, I feel, myself, that we are much obliged to those colleagues who have played such a leading role in early moments. The same could be said about the so called Founding members, being participants at the foundational Conference of London, 1961; among them, and besides those already mentioned, we must include Beales, Borghi, Brezinka, Bristow, Dobinson, Edlund, Elvin, Espe, Fernig, Froese, Ganders, Goodings, Halls, Heafford, Henderson, Higginson, Hill, Iwahashi, Jarman, Kerr, Edmund King, Landsheere, Male, Mallet, Niblett, Oshiba, Paneth, Pidgeon, Plancke, Röhrs, Russell, Schultze, Stellwag, Stenhouse, Suchodolski, Thabault, Waddington and Zier. I must add the names of our first Honorary members as well: Nicholas Hans, Franz Hilker, Isaac Kandel and Friedrich Schneider. At the sight of such a list, we can surely apply to our present Society an idea which was first pronounced by a medieval sage and which has been repeated in beautiful Italian by Umberto Eco in *Il nome della rosa*:

«Siamo nani, ma nani che stanno sulle spalle di quei giganti, e nella nostra pochezza riusciamo talora a vedere più lontano di loro sull'orizzonte».

From the very start, the CESE has enjoyed a fruitful relationship with Unesco and other International agencies. It is to be remembered the strong cooperation offered by the International Bureau of Education and namely by some of its leading officers like my fellow countryman, the unforgettable Pedro Rosselló. Leo Fernig, firstly as Deputy Director of Unesco in Paris, and later as Director of the IBE in Geneva, gave us much of his support and experience. Researchers from the Unesco Institute of Education at Hamburg (Robinsohn in the very early times, and later Oegren and Koelle) collaborated also in different ways. The first proceedings published by the CESE, those of the Amsterdam Conference, could be published thanks to the magnanimous help of the *Fondation Européenne de la Culture*, whose cooperation with the CESE has been without a break till now.

But, if our Society has very much received cooperation, it is also true that it has also offered a same cooperation to other agencies, institutions and societies for the development of the comparative education as a whole. I will have later the opportunity of reviewing some of these contributions,

especially operated through our conferences. At the present point, I would like to refer myself to the support always given by the CESE, from the beginning, to the *World Council of Comparative Education Societies*. The CESE was one of the founding members of the World Council, and as such participated actively in the organisation of the first World Congress, held in Ottawa in 1970 on the occasion of the International Education Year. So it did later for the following Congresses of Geneva, London, Tokyo, and Paris, and so it does now for the next Congress of Rio de Janeiro. One of the reasons which recommended us to postpone until 1988 the XIII CESE Conference, that of Budapest, is to encourage the attendance of the CESE members to the Rio de Janeiro Congress. The CESE is, on the other hand, very proud to have had among the officers and collaborators of the WC-CES some of the its most relevant scholars.

I would like also to underline the excellent relationship that the CESE has had with other international and national association devoted to Comparative Education, inside and outside Europe. The lists of the participants in our Conferences show a high rate of non-european reserchers and professors, members of important societies as, for instance, the Comparative and International Education Society of America, the Comparative and International Education Society of Canada, the Japan Comparative Education Society, the Australian Comparative Education Society, the Korean Comparative Education Society and the Comparative Education Society of India. Certainly, the CESE members have also very often participated in the Conferences of these matching and friendly societies, and I hope that such interchanges of participation will increase in the years to come. It is not necessary to say that this relationship has been and is still stronger in the case of the European national or linguistic comparative education societies, whose establishment has often been stimulated by CESE; in fact, some of these societies have begun as sections of CESE in the respective countries or linguistic zones. Furthemore, as a rule, every CESE member is engaged in the activities of his or her own national or linguistic society, and our Conferences have been sponsored or very much helped by these associations, to which the CESE is indeed very obliged.

Forgive me if I sometimes mix up the past and the present when considering the still short life of our society. Watching once again to the beginning, it seems undoubted that we have gone a long way. In a letter written to me by Brian Holmes, perhaps the only person who attended not only the 1961 London Conference but every other conference held by the Society, our former President says:

«When we set the Society up we hoped it would survive, but few of us could have visualised how in the hands of scholars from all over Western Europe the Society would have gone on, as it has, from strength to strength, and in the process, without animosity, stimulated the establishments of so many national societies. I am

proud, as I am sure you are, to have been associated with such a Society».

Some statistics could clearly show the uninterrupted progress of the CESE. In 1964, the number of the CESE members was 110, and today we have nearly tripled this number. Quoting an interesting article of Robert Cowen in the *Comparative Education Review*, Denis Kallen wrote in our *Nwsletter* several years ago, on the occasion of the CESE twentieth anniversary:

«In its early years the Comparative Education Society in Europe could be conceived of as a small club and as a gathering of senior persons within the field.

The club has grown to about 300 members. A large club, but still a small society. It is no more a 'gathering of senior persons in the field' but a mixed group of senior persons represented by the few professors and lectures in comparative education in European universities, many junior staff members from universities, staff members of research institutes, of international organisations and of education administrations.

Thus the elitist signature of the Society has been changed. Rather deliberately, as the last CESE Committees have expressly opted for an open admission procedure».

It is certainly true, but it should not be misunderstood. As a matter of fact, the CESE has never campaigned for an expanded membership, for attracting more and more people, it does not matter their real interest in the field. By the contrary, the CESE has always preserved its scholar character, the specific academic respectability given us by the founding members. If its membership has tripled, it is not because the CESE has loudly opened its doors and insistently called to every specialist working in educational affairs, but because the number of the persons actually interested in comparative education has very much increased everywhere, in a large measure thanks to the prestigious work of many CESE members. To rely on a big enough number of members is fitting to us — also for economical reasons —, but only if the number leads to a better and better attainment of our scientific and academic objectives.

The same thing should be said relating to the CESE Conferences. Also in this aspect everyone can detect a continuous increase of the participation rates. At the 1963 Amsterdam Conference there were 61 participants. The following Conferences of Berlin and Ghent saw a slight increase, but the hundred was only surpassed in Praga, in 1969. Ten years after, the Valencia Conference would be the last one with less than 200 participants (namely 179). The number rose to 206 at Geneva and reached about 250 at Würzburg and Antwerp. Here at Garda we are only about 100, but it is a special Conference, held on a very special date and in circumstances which cannot be considered as normal. We knew from the beginning that the number of the participatns of the Garda Conference could not be so high as that of the

ordinary Conferences; in this sense, it could be said that we have even surpassed the initial estimations.

This increase in the quantity has not hampered at all, in my opinion, the level of quality of the CESE Conferences. Certainly, when one looks attentively at the Proceedings of the first Conferences, one can be surprised at the high quality and even present importance of most of the papers and discussions. But this feeling is not less if one looks at whichever of the last proceedings, as, for instance, those of Valencia or Würzburg. By the way, I think it is a good occasion to remember the big contribution made to the CESE by all those who have worked in the edition of the proceedings. All of us know how hard and difficult is this task. Brian Holmes and Raymond Ryba deserve especially the thanks of the Society, since they have taken it over for several times. But our recognition goes also to the leading members of the *Instituto de Ciencias de la Educación de la Universidad Politécnica de Valencia*, to Pierre Furter, to Wolfgang Mitter and James Swift and, in general, to every person, sometimes anonymous, collaborating in the publication of abstracts, papers or proceedings.

At this point it seems fitting to me to mention the important role played, in the last development of the CESE, by our *Newsletter*, whose first number came into sight in February 1978, under responsibility of Henk Van daele. Since then, 21 issues of the *Newsletter* have been published, giving us information on the policy and activities of CESE, national or linguistic associations, other Congresses, etc. Professor Van daele deserves our gratitude for this continuous and enterprising work, to which, it must be said, the CESE members seldom collaborate as much as they could.

In reviewing our still short history of 25 years, as we want to do during these days. I think it is correct to ask ourselves to what extent the purposes included in the CESE Constitution have been pursued and reached. Let me remember for a moment the Article 3 of our Statutes:

«The purpose of the Society shall be to encourage and promote comparative education and international studies in education by:

- a. promoting and improving the teaching of comparative education in institutions of higher learning;
- b. stimulating research;
- c. facilitating the publication and distribution of comparative studies in education;
- d. interesting professors and teachers of other disciplines in the comparative and international dimensions of their work;
- e. encouraging visits by educators to study educational institutions and systems throughout the world;
- f. cooperating with those who in other disciplines attempt to interpret educational developments in a broad cultural context;
- g. organising conferences and meetings;
- h. collaborating with other Comparative Education Societies in order to further international action in this field».

It seems to me clear that the CESE has worked very much in each of these aspects from its establishment. At the present time, a doctoral dissertation on the CESE is being made at the University of Valencia, under the direction of our colleague Prof. Gomez Ocaña. This research is surely going to show the CESE's strong contribution to the development of Comparative Education in Europe and in the world. Through its Conferences, the CESE has promoted and improved the teaching of comparative education, stimulated research, facilitated knowledge of publications and up-to-date information, interested colleagues of other areas, etc. But the programme is so wide that we cannot say to have accomplished more than a small part of it. It is to be expected that many ideas will arise during the Garda Conference in order to improve our works in all these directions, and perhaps to open new ways for the nearest future. For instance, a very important aspect could be that of encouraging visits to study educational institutions and systems throughout the world. The Executive Committee is now studying a program especially devoted to young specialists in our field, whose main objectives are both a practical knowledge of the comparative methodology and a guided-visit to a predetermined education system. Further information will be given you later, but the details of the programme are still open to your suggestions.

Some innovations and improvements should probably be made in the organization both academical and material of our future Conferences, taking into account the concrete situation of our colleagues in the different countries. In some of them, the university budgets have been considerably shortened, and the support for attendance to international meetings have been reduced. We should keep in mind a more careful attention to the economical aspects in the organization of our Congresses. Another important item is the rather sparse participation both in our Society and in our Conferences of scholars from the East countries of Europe. It is to be expected that the Budapest Conference in 1988 will give us an opportunity of finding new ways for a closer contact.

Concluding, let me express finally my conviction that the variety of our scientific approach to comparative education will serve, as in precedent occasions, for a more and more enrichment of our discussions and for a further improvement of the CESE activities. I do fully share Joseph Lauwerys's opinion when, in that first CESE Conference of 1963, he said:

«Philosophers, sociologists, economists, statisticians, demographers can all contribute to comparative education. By the same token comparative educationists, whilst men of many parts, perhaps themselves fall into one or other of these groups and can best pursue their enquiries from their own particular social science skills. Yet we should not all be jack-of-all-trades, and I find the prospect of professional collaboration between various people working in the field one of the most desirable ends towards the achievement of which this Society should strive».