

## Froebel & the Hitler Jugend: the Britishing of Froebel

PETER JACKSON<sup>1</sup> and SANG-WOOK LEE<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Froebel College, Roehampton Institute, UK

<sup>2</sup> Woo Suk University, South Korea

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Having worked long and hard on the life and work of Friedrich Froebel, we intended to refresh ourselves by revisiting educational controversies of the early twentieth century as recorded in *Child Life*, the organ of the Froebel Society from 1931–1939. The eye catching title of an article from 1933 drew us into the world of British froebelians and there, as we read on, we became aware of a process of transformation whereby Froebel's quintessentially German idealist philosophy became British empiricist froebelian theory.

Froebel inspired the educational innovators of Third Reich, according to Dr Blochmann, a prominent teacher trainer in the early thirties. Writing in the 1933 edition of the English journal *Child Life* she claimed that his ideal of womanhood was about to be realised: the National Socialist Movement had repudiated what it called 'the intellectual woman', declaring itself in favour of 'the warm-hearted mother, practical in word and deed'. In 'The Froebelian Outlook in Germany' she spelt her message loud and clear to her British readers:

Far and wide in Germany the Froebelian Training Colleges have won the highest repute ... the training they give in hygienic, aesthetic and pedagogical subjects has been made the model for the new Schools for Women ... the National Socialist Movement in Germany is developing a new ideal for womankind ... possibly, Froebel's ideal of a real cultivation of the native possibilities of the womanly life as such may be carried towards its realisation on the current of the great German popular movement

(1933, 'The Froebelian Outlook in Germany', *Child Life*, vol. XXXV, no. 161, pp. 75–76).

But if Dr Blochmann's article was an attempt at rallying the Froebelian community in Britain to the new order it was misconceived on two counts: first, because the sheer obnoxiousness of Nazi educational ideas was — even at that early stage — startlingly evident to many British educators and second, because

Froebel's ideas and practice had already been so anglicised that there was little more than passing resemblance between the Germanic and the British varieties.

On the first count the rebuttal was swift, decisive and magisterial. In the very next issue J.J. Findlay recalled an 1892 trip with Madame Michaelis, the first Principal of the Froebel Educational Institute. Somewhat in the spirit of a pilgrimage their aim was to visit the haunts of Froebel in South Germany and converse with the enlightened German educators who were working in his tradition. Findlay then contrasted this experience with his recent work in Berlin between 1930 and 1933, just prior to Hitler's rise to power. No-one could mistake the change, he wrote, the intentions of the Nazis were already evident and their callousness to minorities quite blatant. He went on:

Many who, like myself, have lived among the German people and learned to respect and even to love them, are inclined to despair of humanity when we see to what depths a noble nation can sink when overwhelmed for twenty years by war and conquest. We may well attach much of the blame to the conquerors, including ourselves, equally guilty with the rest of Germany's foes. Yet we must not, in pity for the madness which has befallen them allow our own judgements to be distorted by their hallucinations. One can only use such an epithet in exposing Frau Dr Blochmann's defence of the Nazi revolution as allied to the advancement of women which was advocated by Pestalozzi and Froebel.

(1954, 'Friedrich Froebel and Hitler Jugend: A Reply to Frau Dr Blochmann', vol. XXXVI, no. 162, p. 12).

The subsequent history of Frau Dr Blochmann remains to be told but is certain to be instructive. Dazzled and entranced by Hitler as were so many, was she sincere? Or did she, knowingly, calculatingly, strike a Faustian bargain with the new regime, exchanging conscience for reward? Either way, her reading of British educators was badly mistaken and directly exposed her to Findlay's deadly response.

But the damage the printed reply wrought was nothing as compared to the remorse which subsequent events must have brought her. As Jebb reports (Jebb, 1958, p. 7), even before the war the Froebel Institute was already taking in Jewish refugee students from Germany. When the conflict was over, only poems like Celan's *Deathfugue* could put the eldritch experience into language.

Our concern is more common-or-garden. The second of the two counts — the divergence of British Froebelianism — is a rather different matter, because it is part of a general misconception that is as endemic today as it was then. It is this that we wish to address in the rest of this paper.

Earlier this year (1995) Sang Wook Lee and I undertook a cataloguing of one of the journals in the Froebel Archive in London for the Froebel Educational Trust. Managed by archivist Jane Read on behalf of the National Froebel Foundation it is housed in the Early Childhood Centre at Froebel College, Roehampton Institute, South-West London. The Trustees kindly allowed us (and indeed gave us a small

grant) to examine the run of the journal *Child Life* from 1891 to 1939. This present paper is the result of a summer's reflection on that work.

The journal should first be placed in its context. Of the many organisations promoting the Froebel movement in Victorian England the two main ones were the Froebel Society founded in 1874 and the Manchester Kindergarten Association started even earlier, each with its core of ardent workers. There was also the body which oversaw examinations and standards: the National Froebel Union.

*Child Life* first appeared in 1883 as *The Journal of the Froebel Society* but soon became known as *Child Life*. With very slight variations of title it lasted until 1938 when the Froebel Society was amalgamated with the National Froebel Union and the National Froebel Foundation was born. Thereupon the publication was given a more eponymous title, *The National Froebel Foundation Bulletin Journal*. Its run lasted until 1964. The following year *The Froebel Journal* appeared in its place and continued until 1974.

Thus, in different guises there is the better part of a century of reflection and commentary upon educational matters as they appeared to educationists committed to the Froebelian perspective. The subject matter is extensive, ranging from classroom matters to memoirs of leading educationist but as is already evident the continuity of publication is confusing. Changes of name seemed to make sense at the time but border on the inexplicable to later generations, and guides are indispensable. We divide the history of *Child Life* into six phases, listing the headings below and consigning the details to the Appendix:

1. Beginnings (January 1891–December 1892)
2. Relaunch (January 1897–November 1897)
3. Rebirth (January 1899–October 1934)
4. New Series (January 1935–December 1939)
5. After amalgamation, renamed (January 1940–December 1964)
6. Renamed again (March 1965–Autumn 1974)

The classification considered the period 1891–1939 when the words *Child Life* appeared in the title. We chose five themes under which to group the articles: (i) Froebel and Froebelians, (ii) Froebel's Educational Ideas (iii) the Curriculum and Subjects, (iv) the Kindergarten Movement, and (v) Teacher Training. It was a fairly rough and ready classification — many articles could be regrouped and we make no claims to definitiveness — but the results are quite illuminating.

In fact so fascinated are we by them that — to an extent which is probably clear to our readers — this paper is still rather raw. We have been able to annotate our groupings and indicate our interpretations of the material only up to and including 'Mathematics' in 'Curriculum and Subjects'. Discerning readers will therefore notice a discontinuity at this point. In drawing attention to it here, we take the opportunity of making clear our belief that the processes of

transformation are to be found within the later categories also. It is the old old story: pressures of time and obligations of teaching mean that we have to make the most of what time we can snatch and vow to return. We have to live with intermittence.

#### FROEBEL AND FROEBELIANS

The first thing which struck us was that while a number of articles deal with Froebel himself and his followers in England, the members of his close circle — his own contemporary friends and colleagues — remain at most shadowy and at least virtually invisible. As our earlier research (1994, *Early Child Development & Care*, Vols. 100, 101) showed quite clearly, Henrietta Hoffmeister (1780–1839) Froebel's first wife, Wilhelm Middendorf (1793–1853), Heinrich Langenthal (1792–1879), Johannes Barop and others were his constant companions. Kriege (1876, p. 14) remarked that, like the first Christians, the group lived as a tight community, sharing goods and ideas.

Yet in spite of their pioneering importance the 'good companions' scarcely figured in *Child Life*. The picture which emerged from the journal was of Froebel as a solitary visionary individual in Germany and a later vibrant generation of enthusiasts at work in this country.

This is an interesting phenomenon. As with the Steiner fellowship and the Montessori Movement there seems to have been a tendency to accredit one individual with all innovation and to emphasize disjunctions between that person and his own times. This may be unavoidable — indeed Joachim Liebschner commented (Liebschner, 1991, p. 29) that by 1874 very few of Froebel's writings had been translated into English and the Society's members had to rely 'heavily' on those who read and understood German — but it is also how personality cults were formed.

Whatever the truth of the matter is, it is undeniable that *Child Life* played a significant role in presenting Froebel as a misunderstood, solitary, highly original and somewhat tragic figure, while foregrounding the leading members of the British movement. The following titles hint at the content (the first page numbers of the articles are given):

#### Froebel and Froebeliens

*Claude Montefiore, 1858–1938: A few appreciations* (1938, vol. IV, no. 8)

*A Few Words by Madame Michaelis* (1892, vol. II, no. 9 p. 135)

*Frau Henrietta Schroder and her relations with Friedrich Froebel* (1900, vol. II, nos. 5, 6, 7, pp. 39, 120, 180)

*Frau Luise Froebel* (1900, vol. II, no. 6, p. 82)

*Fräulein Heerwart's 'At Home'* (1904, vol. VIII, no. 32, p. 194)

- Fräulein Heerwart's 'At Home'* (1907, vol. IX, no. 35, p. 119)  
*Friedrich Froebel* (1926, vol. XXVIII, no. 1, p. 74)  
*Froebel's spirit and influence* (1905, vol. VII, no. 26, p. 68)  
*Froebel Yesterday and Tomorrow* (1909, vol. XI, no. 48, p. 117)  
*Froebel's place as an educational thinker* (1899, vol. I, no. 2, p. 83)  
*Herr Kurt Hahn at Edinburgh* (1935, vol. I, no. 9)  
*In Memoriam: Claude J. Goldswid-Montefiore* (1938, vol. IV, no. 8)  
*In Memoriam: Madame Michaelis* (1905, vol. VII, no. 25, p. 5)  
*In honour of Froebel* (1891, vol. I, no. 6, p. 95)  
*Madame Michaelis* (1902, vol. IV, no. 13, p. 5; 1905, vol. VII, no. 26, p. 62)  
*Miss E.R. Murrey* (1938, vol. IV, no. 8)  
*Miss Blow on Froebel's philosophy of education* (1900, vol. II, no. 5 p. 27)  
*Our greatest modern Froebelian* (1932, vol. XXXIV, no. 157, p. 37)  
*Reminiscences of Frau Luise Froebel* (1891, vol. I, Nos. 1–5, pp. 4, 20, 36, 52, 68)  
*The relation of Froebel's philosophy to his theory of education* (1901, vol. III, no. 12, p. 220; 1902 vol. IV, no. 13, p. 10)

#### FROEBEL'S EDUCATIONAL IDEAS

Self-activity, creativity, freedom, play are well-known dynamic themes but informing their educational purpose for Froebelians is his principle of unity — Froebel's certainty that there is an overall integrity in which everything is connected and everything — including mankind — is in harmony, could we but appreciate it.

Froebelian philosophy emphasized self-knowledge, the developing sense of inner psychological and outer material harmony, and the place of all things psychological and natural within the divine order. This metaphysical conviction echoes Hegel (who was satisfied he had *proved* it) and foreshadowed Steiner (who claimed he had *seen* it), whereas for Froebel it was a religious *faith* which science appeared to be in the process of demonstrating to be true.

Among many articles, none dealt by name with 'the law of unity' but this should not be taken as meaning that it was ignored. Rather, it was held as an article of faith, taken for granted by the contributors, but seldom addressed directly. This contrasted markedly with the emphasis given to it in Froebel's own work. These are some of the articles which bear on this.

Fröbel's Educational Ideas

- A few words from Fröbel on child life* (1891, vol. I No. 1, p. 11; no. 2, p. 27)
- A plea for a new lease of life for Fröbelian methods* (1903, vol. V, no. 18, p. 62)
- Application of Fröbel's principles* (1904, vol. VI, no. 23 p. 136)
- Child activity* (1913, vol. XV, no. 81, p. 153)
- Comparison of Fröbelian and Montessori methods* (1914, vol. XVI, no. 89, p. 156)
- Continuation of Fröbel's principles in the school* (1891, vol. I, no. 6, p. 91)
- Criticism of Fröbelian pedagogy* (1903, vol. III, no. 12, pp. 184–203)
- Distinction between work and play* (1902, vol. IV, no. 13, p. 33)
- Education through activity and experience* (1935, vol. I, no. 9)
- Educational value of kindergarten games* (1892, vol. II, no. 4, p. 58)
- A few words on free spontaneous play* (1892, vol. II, no. 5, p. 72)
- Freedom in education* (1937, vol. III, nos. 10, 11, 12; 1938, vol. V, no. 1)
- Fröbel and the place of industrial training in education* (1904, vol. VI, no. 23 p. 121)
- Fröbel methods of education in the upper school* (1939, vol. V, no. 7)
- Fröbel and the life of the community* (1934, vol. XXXVI, no. 165, p. 118)
- Fröbel's influence on education* (1905, vol. VII, no. 25, p. 41)
- Fröbel's attitude towards happiness* (1903, vol. V, no. 17, p. 5)
- Fröbel's educational principles* (1903, vol. III, no. 9, p. 5)
- Fröbelian methods in the classroom* (1903, vol. V, no. 19, p. 150; no. 20, p. 186)
- Fröbelian principles* (1914, vol. XVI, no. 88, p. 102)
- Fröbelian principles applied to the education of children from five to twelve years of age* (1904, vol. VI, no. 23, p. 141)
- Fröbelianism* (1905, vol. VII, no. 26, p. 71)
- How to balance the demands of continuity and of connectedness in planning out a scheme of work for a kindergarten* (1899, vol. I, no. 1, p. 37)
- How far is it possible to adopt the kindergarten system to public elementary schools as now existing?* (1903, vol. V, no. 19 p. 137)
- Imaginative play* (1938, vol. IV, no. 10, p. 11)
- Play* (1906, vol. VIII, no. 30, p. 58)

- Play in childhood* (1934, vol. XXXVI, no. 164, p. 76)
- Play in childhood* (1935, vol. I, no. 8)
- Play with children after kindergarten* (1911, vol. XIII, no. 62, p. 49)
- Play, work and the bridge between parents in school* (1935, vol. I, no. 1)
- Psychology and kindergarten method* (1907, vol. IX, no. 34, p. 59)
- Some characteristics of free play* (1911, vol. XIII, no. 62, p. 51)
- Some further remarks on Froebel's gifts* (1909, vol. XI, no. 45, p. 14)
- Some leading principles of Froebel's educational methods* (1891, vol. I, no. 6, p. 84)
- The gospel of play by an unrepentant Froebelian* (1929, vol. XXXI, no. 146, pp. 9, 154)
- The influence of Froebel in the secondary school* (1904, vol. VI, no. 21, p. 14)
- The permanent value of Froebel's teaching* (1934, vol. XXXVI, no. 162, p. 6)
- The place of Froebel in modern education* (1939, vol. V, no. 2)
- The psychology of play* (1913, vol. XV, nos. 79, 81, pp. 78, 123, 146)
- The reconciliation of opposites* (1907, vol. IX, no. 36, p. 191)
- The stimulus given to education by Pestalozzi and Froebel* (1903, vol. V, no. 19, p. 131)
- The true meaning of freedom in school* (1918, vol. XX, nos. 110–112, pp. 34, 85, 118)
- The value of kindergarten method* (1903, vol. V, no. 18, p. 83)
- The vital revelation of Froebel* (1907, vol. IX, nos. 35, 36, pp. 115, 172)
- Thoughts upon the Froebel games* (1899, vol. I, no. 2, p. 91)
- Toy play in the infant school* (1913, vol. XV, no. 81, p. 148)
- True and false applications of Froebel's principles* (1905, vol. VII, nos. 26, 27, pp. 76, 138, 142)
- Unorganised play* (1935, vol. I, no. 6)
- What led Froebel to invent kindergarten occupation?* (1891, vol. I, no. 2, p. 22)

#### CURRICULUM AND THE SUBJECTS

Many surfers in that wave of child-centred progressive education which reached the shores of state education in the sixties invoked Froebel as the spirit of the new

age. Both they and their sceptics on the beach seemed to assume that he bade the teachers to let the dead bury the dead — to leave the curriculum behind and follow the child's inclinations. The truth is otherwise and unequivocal. Froebel wrote:

Since man is destined to know and to see clearly, human education requires the knowledge and appreciation of religion, nature (mathematics), and language in their intimate living reciprocity and mutual causality. Without the knowledge and appreciation of the intimate unity of the three, the school and we ourselves are lost in the fallacies of bottomless self producing diversity.

(Froebel, 1892, p. 210)

Religion and religious instruction, natural science and mathematics, language and art were the three main groups. Froebel regarded them as central for two reasons. First because together they constituted the powerful unity of epistemological enquiry needed to comprehend what Heidegger in his major work *Being and Time* called *Sein und Dasein* — Being and Humankind's place within Being — and second because they accord with human nature: we are *made* like that:

There is either a tendency to inward repose, or a tendency to the study and comprehension of the external, or a tendency to direct representation of the internal. The first is the prevailing tendency of religion; the second, of the contemplation of nature; the third, of self-development and self-contemplation.

(Froebel, 1892, p. 226)

These adamant justifications are supported by a pedagogical principle, which the progressivists — and indeed most later educationists — affirm wholeheartedly:

No new subject of instruction should be brought to the pupil unless he feels at least vaguely that it is based, and has some idea how it is based on previous work; that it satisfies a mental need and that it is capable of fruitful application.

(Froebel, 1892, p. 314)

The certainty which one finds in Froebel's writings is largely absent from the articles in the journals, replaced by a kind of British tentativeness. The contributors adopt more of a piecemeal approach to the curriculum — more trees than wood, so to speak. The advocacy of free-form improvisation and the mockery of an authoritative curriculum that were so characteristic of the later sixties are simply not to be found in Froebel's own work. The journal did its work in diluting to the British taste Froebel's Kantian forthrightness.

*Particular Subjects**Religion*

One aspect of Froebel's thought which has few reverberations in the articles of *Child Life* is religion. It is well known that Froebel had problems with the religious authorities of his day. It is probably true to say that his religious beliefs had more in common with modern inclusive cosmology than with the often narrow sectarianism of mid nineteenth century Europe but it should not be supposed that there was anything meek and mild about his convictions. He had a passion and certitude about Christianity that blazes through his writings. He was adamant that school should instruct children in the belief and conduct of Christianity:

Christian religion is the eternal conviction of the truth of the teachings of Jesus, and a firm, persistent conduct in obedience to this conviction . . . every human being, as proceeding from God, existing through God and living in God, should raise himself to the Christian religion — the religion of Jesus. Therefore, the school should first of all, and above all, give instruction in the Christian religion; everywhere, and in all zones, the school should instruct for and in this religion.

(Froebel, 1892, p. 150)

This already unequivocal message was spelt out yet more starkly in principles (Froebel, 1891, pp. 310–311):

- Every form of education which is intended to be really fruitful, must be based upon religion, . . .
- The Christian religion, the religion of Jesus, satisfies to perfect completeness the mutual relations of God and man; and indeed creates them. . . .
- Every form of education which is not based upon the Christian religion, the religion of Jesus, is deficient and limited.
- Through Jesus came to us that deepest of all truths, and that profoundest of all experiences — God is our Father.

However, the journal reflected little of this. Although hymns and songs were often introduced, the article relating to Religious Education do not appear until 1903 and there were few after that. This is an interesting anomaly, suggesting that the anglicising of Froebel brought with it a diminution of Froebel's Christian intensity.

Was this because such fierce conviction was at odds with an English lukewarmness with regard to Protestant Christianity — regarding it as a gentle socio-spiritual matter rather than a Kantian imperative? Did it emanate more from a wish to avoid the denominational conflicts about religion which beset British education in the first decade of the twentieth century? Or did it, perhaps, have to do with the views of a powerful Jewish element in the early Froebel movement in this country?

Whatever the explanation might be, between the articles of the journal and Froebel's own writing there is a marked difference over the significance of religion in Froebelian education: invariably *Child Life* substitutes religious convention for religious conviction.

#### Religious Education

*Help in telling Bible stories* (1907, vol. IX, nos. 33–36, pp. 34, 77, 122, 197)

*Projects in religious teaching* (1937, vol. III, no. 1)

*School prayer for younger children* (1937, vol. III, no. 12)

*Some aids for Old Testament teaching* (1908, vol. X, nos. 43, 44, pp. 235, 263; 1909, vol. X, no. 45, p. 12)

*The Approach to the Bible* (1936, vol. II, no. 12)

*The Bible and school prayers* (1938, vol. IV, no. 1)

*The Bible and the child* (1938, vol. IV, no. 2)

*The morning hymn in the kindergarten* (1903, vol. V, no. 18, p. 88)

*The morning hymn in the kindergarten* (1930, vol. XXXII, no. 152, p. 94)

*The teaching of Scripture to young children: the choice material* (1936, vol. II, no. 12)

*Training children in worship* (1939, vol. V, no. 4)

#### Science

Froebel believed that nature was God's creation and its laws were God's will. This is hardly a commonplace assumption in contemporary education since it seems to imply that laws are edicts what shall happen rather than descriptions of what does. Nevertheless, many scientists did hold similar views (and some still do, if the present predilection for talking of 'the mind of God' is anything to go by) and find it not incompatible with the systematic testing of hypotheses which, as Liebschner attests (1992) was part of Froebel's own method.

Thus, although Froebel's overall justification was typically religious — *'How much more, then, should we endeavour to know nature, the work of God to acquaint ourselves with the objects of nature in their life, their significance, in their relation to the spirit of God'* (Froebel, 1892, p. 158) — his aim for science in the curriculum command respect. He had a genuinely scientific curiosity and regarded the scientific enterprise as one of grandeur. He insisted on systematic empirical methods and the vital importance of scientific imagination.

It is somewhat ironic that his enterprise of the understanding of nature should, in the pages of the journal have been scaled down to the rather more mundane activity of nature study. To coin a phrase, *Child Life* took to nature study like a duck to water.

**Science Education**

- Children and nature study* (1938, vol. IV, no. 11)
- Educational value of geology* (1891, vol. I, no. 5, p. 69)
- Froebel's gardens for children* (1914, vol. XVI, no. 87, p. 78)
- Geography comes to life* (1938, vol. IV, no. 3)
- Geography for children under eleven* (1936, vol. II, no. 7)
- Geography through literature* (1936, vol. II, no. 7)
- Life in the pond* (1936, vol. II, no. 7)
- Nature notes for the kindergarten* (1900, vol. II, no. 7, p. 152)
- Nature study for young children* (1899, vol. I, nos. 3, 4, p. 124, 202)
- New aspects of nature study* (1938, vol. IV, no. 11; 1939, vol. V, nos. 1, 2)
- Planning the children's garden* (1927, vol. XXIX, no. 141, p. 112)
- The children's gardens* (1927, vol. XXIX, no. 140, p. 76)
- The study of natural science from the student's standpoint* (1892 vol. II, no. 5, p. 70)
- The teaching of nature study in infant and junior schools* (1936, vol. II, no. 6)

**Mathematics**

It is something of the same story with regard to mathematics: it is essential to understanding Being and Dasein: what there is and man's place in what there is. Froebel believed that mathematics mediated between man and reality, between the inner and the outer world, between thought and perception (Froebel, 1892, p. 205). Since number was the expression of diversity, and since form and magnitude found their explanation only in diversity, then a knowledge of number was the necessary foundation of knowledge of form and magnitude — of a general knowledge of space.

Fully aware of the difficulty of mathematics, he employed many different ways to develop children's concept of number and to teach them how to count, such as the drawing of objects, language exercises, the use of the gifts and play activities. In calling mathematics 'the science of learning' he was able to conclude:

Education without mathematic (at least without a thorough knowledge of numbers, supplemented by occasional instruction in form and magnitude) is, therefore, weak, imperfect patchwork; it interposes insuperable limits to the normal culture and development of man.

(Froebel, 1892, p. 208)

By this stage of this paper reductionism will easily be anticipated. There are few articles directly on mathematics in *Child Life* and what there are shy from the misty (and mystic) heights of Platonism where Froebel dwelt.

It should be borne in mind that the Gifts and Occupations were frequently used as vehicles to comment on the substance and pedagogy of the subject and there are indeed many references to these. It is true to say, however, that the British (and the Americans) were the first to feel uncomfortable with the Pythagoreanism of Froebel's explanations of their use. Thus the Gifts were reduced to utilities for learning commonplaces, rather than portals for initiation into mysteries, and once that happened, methods more relevant to changing generations of children were preferred.

#### Mathematics Education

*Froebel's gifts in the light of modern mathematical teaching* (1908, vol. X, no. 44, p. 267)

*Froebel's gifts in the school room* (1908, vol. X, no. 42, p. 199)

*Mathematics of young children* (1934, vol. XXXVI, no. 162, p. 17)

*Modern thought on Froebel's 'Gifts'* (1908, vol. X, no. 39, p. 87; no. 40, p. 130)

*Number in the kindergarten* (1902, vol. IV, nos. 14, 16, pp. 73, 196)

*Symbolic education* (1899, vol. I, no. 4, p. 214)

*The sequence in Froebel's occupations: its value as training in logic* (1891, vol. I, no. 8, p. 116)

#### Language

The development of language, like many other aspects of behaviour, was insufficiently understood in the thought of the nineteenth century skewed as it was on the referential theory of meaning and Froebel, with his propensity for favouring *in print* the metaphysical explanations of his times rather than trusting to his faith in perceptions of what people normally did, inclined to lofty rhetoric which these days, as the British philosopher Gilbert Ryle was wont to say, butters few parsnips.

Froebel maintained (Froebel, 1892, pp. 209–212, 216) that language:

- represented the unity of all diversity, the inner living connexion of all things
- was the self-active outward expression of the inner
- revealed the attributes and phenomena of life
- expressed the human mind as nature expressed the divine mind.

This is the point at which our commentary effectively finishes. The principle has, we feel, been sufficiently demonstrated. Our contention is that in this and later categories the processes of transformation continue to be revealed. They will be addressed at a later date, within a more complex framework.

Language Education

*Dramatic work in school* (1938, vol. IV, nos. 2, 3, 4)

*Fairy stories and the child* (1938, vol. IV, no. 4)

*Lecture on teaching reading* (1892, vol. II, no. 1 p. 4)

*Play production* (1935 vol. I, no. 12)

*Stories for the kindergarten and school use* (1902, vol. IV, no. 16, p. 190)

*Teaching languages in the kindergarten* (1891, vol. I, no. 12, p. 190)

*The choice of plays* (1935, vol. I, no. 12)

*The place of reading and writing in kindergarten and infant schools* (1914, vol. XVI, no. 8, p. 58)

**Art**

Art meant music, drawing and modelling in Froebel's curriculum. He believed children had a desire to express their ideas and what they see around themselves by one of the arts even at early stages of childhood (Froebel, 1892, p. 227). He claimed that music instruction helped children's development of ear and voice simultaneously and gave children another medium in which to express their feelings.

However Froebel was careful to point out that his advocacy of art and its appreciation did not imply belief that children were to be taught to become artists. Rather, art education was to be used to:

secure to each human being full and all sided development, to enable him to see man in the universality and all-sided energy of his nature, and particularly, to enable him to understand and appreciate the product of true art.

(Froebel, 1892, p. 229)

Again, as in the case of language, there were many articles on the subject in *Child Life*, of which the following titles are representative:

Art Education

*Art for under eight* (1936, vol. II, no. 10)

*Art for infant and junior schools* (1938, vol. IV, nos. 3, 4)

*Clay modelling; and how it should be taught to little children* (1901, vol. IV, no. 14, p. 92)

*Clay modelling for little ones* (1892, vol. II, nos. 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, pp. 72, 90, 104, 117, 159, 175)

*Colour and the child* (1935, vol. I, no. 8)

- Connectedness and continuity in musical education* (1899, vol. I, no. 3, p. 121)
- Educational continuity as applied to hand-work* (1903, vol. V, no. 18, p. 66)
- Froebel's 'Mutter- und Kose-Lieder'* (1907, vol. IX, no. 36, p. 182; 1908, vol. X, nos. 38, 41, 43, pp. 53, 173, 239; 1909, vol. XI, no. 48, p. 106)
- Handwork in relation to other subjects* (1935, vol. I, no. 11)
- Kindergarten music from the ethical and intellectual point of view* (1899, vol. I, no. 1, p. 18)
- Material for the child artist* (1938, vol. IV, no. 6)
- Music in the kindergarten* (1910, vol. XII, no. 59, p. 207)
- Music and rhythm* (1935, vol. I, no. 9)
- Poems and pictures to illustrate the songs and games of Friedrich Froebel Mother-play* (1899, vol. I, no. 1, p. 58)
- The Mutter-und-Kose Lieder* (1937, vol. III, no. 6)
- The place of handwork in school* (1935, vol. I, no. 11)
- The training of the colour sense in children* (1907, vol. IX, no. 35, p. 119)
- Why brush work should be included in all kindergarten time-tables* (1899, vol. I, no. 4, p. 222)
- Young children's music* (1927, vol. XXIX, no. 140, p. 74)

#### THE KINDERGARTEN MOVEMENT

A strong feature of *Child Life* is its consistent concern with the development of kindergarten and nursery and infant schools, both nationally and internationally. The coverage was extensive, including, as well as England, establishments in Germany, America, South Australia, India and China. It goes without saying that the international comparison of the ways Froebel's ideas were assimilated into national culture would be deeply informative. The following is our selection:

##### Kindergarten

- A fortnight in Bad Liebenstein, Thuringia* (1925, vol. XXVII, no. 135, p. 84)
- A hundred years of kindergarten education* (1937, vol. III, no. 6)
- A kindergarten in China* (1927, vol. XXIX, no. 140, p. 62; 1927, vol. XXIX, no. 141, p. 114)
- A lecture on the kindergarten* (1892, vol. II, no. 4, p. 53)
- A plea for free kindergartens in London* (1891, vol. I, no. 6, p. 107)

- A short history of infant schools and kindergartens in England* (1911, vol. XIII, nos. 61, 68, pp. 7, 43, 72, 108, 141, 167, 199, 230; 1912, vol. XIV, nos. 69, 70, pp. 10, 50)
- Advantages of kindergarten teaching* (1891, vol. I, no. 8, p. 125)
- American kindergarten* (1906, vol. VIII, no. 29, p. 19)
- Blankenburg* (1902, vol. IV, nos. 13, 14, pp. 17, 70)
- Discussion on kindergarten games* (1901, vol. III, no. 12, pp. 176–184)
- Educational issues in the kindergarten* (1909, vol. XI, nos. 45–47, pp. 19, 54, 77)
- England's debt to Froebel* (1928, vol. XXX, no. 142, p. 14)
- English students's impressions of American kindergartens* (1900, vol. II, no. 6, p. 97)
- Evangelisches Froebel seminar in Cassel* (1909, vol. XI, no. 45, p. 22)
- A few months in a German kindergarten* (1892, vol. II, no. 8, p. 123)
- Friedrich Froebel and Hitler Jugend* (1934, vol. XXXVI, no. 162, p. 12)
- Froebel and modern education in Germany* (1937, vol. III, no. 6)
- Froebel's kindergarten founded on his philosophical principles* (1899, vol. I, no. 3)
- Froebel's principles and current idealism in England* (1909, vol. XI, no. 52, p. 231)
- From nursery to preparatory* (1919, vol. XXI, no. 114, p. 39)
- Fundamental factors in the making of a kindergarten curriculum* (1909, vol. XI, no. 49, p. 135)
- Games in the kindergarten and traditional class* (1899, vol. I, no. 2, p. 96)
- How it all began — In Bad Liebenstein* (1937, vol. III, no. 6)
- How to start a kindergarten* (1891, vol. I, nos. 3, 4, 7, pp. 37, 54, 100)
- Kindergarten as the home of justice* (1891, vol. I, no. 1, p. 8)
- Kindergarten books* (1891, vol. I, nos. 3, 6, 8, 12, pp. 46, 109, 126, 188)
- Kindergarten by the sea* (1892, vol. II, nos. 3, 5, pp. 36, 76)
- Kindergarten games* (1891, vol. I, no. 4, p. 57)
- Kindergarten games* (1909, vol. XI, no. 46, p. 43)
- Kindergartens in America* (1907, vol. IX, no. 35, p. 131)
- Kindergarten in Germany* (1937, vol. III, no. 6)
- Kindergarten in India* (1891, vol. I, no. 8, p. 125)
- Kindergarten material* (1891, vol. ? no. 12, p. 189)

- Kindergarten union in South Australia* (1908, vol. X, no. 40, p. 147)
- Lecture on the principles and practice of kindergarten* (1891, vol. I, no. 11, p. 172)
- Life in the kindergarten* (1914, vol. XVI, no. 89, p. 142)
- Moral education in the kindergarten* (1909, vol. XI, no. 49, p. 140)
- Nations and nurseries* (1914 Supplement to November number of *Child Life*)
- Nursery schools of tomorrow and their effect on education in schools* (1919, vol. XXI, no. 113, p. 21)
- On kindergarten games* (1901, vol. III, no. 12, p. 169)
- Reminiscences of kindergarten days* (1891, vol. I, no. 4, p. 57)
- Some aspects of the kindergarten as viewed by an outsider* (1904, vol. VI, no. 22, p. 72)
- Some notes on current objections to the kindergarten* (1903, vol. V, no. 19, p. 121)
- The world federation of educational associations and preschool child* (1925, vol. XXVII, no. 135, p. 74)
- The babies in the kindergarten* (1900, vol. II, no. 6, p. 102)
- The Blankenburg commemoration* (1899, vol. I, no. 4, p. 221; 1900, vol. II, no. 6, p. 102)
- The education of young children in France* (1933, vol. XXXV, no. 160, p. 50)
- The first nursery school in London* (1930, vol. XXXII, no. 151, p. 56)
- The Froebelian outlook in Germany* (1933, vol. XXXV, no. 161, p. 74)
- The influence of Pestalozzi and Froebel upon American education* (1903, vol. V, no. 19, p. 154)
- The influence of Froebel on infant school* (1937, vol. III, no. 6)
- The kindergarten* (1897, vol. I, no. 1, p. 5)
- The kindergarten band* (1917, vol. XIX, no. 94, p. 40)
- The kindergarten commemoration festival in Blankenburg* (1900, vol. II, no. 7, p. 163)
- The kindergarten in America* (1900, vol. II, no. 5, p. 3)
- The kindergarten, its weeds and its flowers* (1891, vol. I, no. 9, p. 137)
- The kindergarten movement in America* (1900, vol. II no. 7, p. 158)
- The kindergarten of the jungle* (1919, vol. XXI, no. 115, p. 88)
- The kindergarten work in Sydney* (1900, vol. II, no. 5, p. 18)

- The modern development of the kindergarten system* (1913, vol. XV, no. 78, p. 42)  
*The place of the kindergarten in a complete scheme of education* (1903, vol. V, no. 19, p. 143)  
*The use of kindergarten games* (1899, vol. I, no. 8, p. 126)  
*Visit to some Swiss kindergarten* (1922, vol. XXIV, no. 125, p. 50)  
*What we do in the kindergarten* (1906, vol. VIII, no. 30, p. 61)

### TEACHER TRAINING

The kindergarten movement needed the support of parents and teachers. Froebel demonstrated his ideas in child-care and similar institutions and made personal contacts with influential men and women on the continent. In Britain the Froebel movement promoted teacher training through many organisations and institutions and *Child Life* recorded its activities assiduously. But, typically, British educators, even at this early stage, put their shoulders to the cause of *organisation* rather than *aims*. The following are representative:

#### Teacher Training

- A few words to kindergarten trainers and students* (1891, vol. I, no. 7, p. 110)  
*False kindergartens, and the danger of inadequate training* (1900, vol. II, no. 5, p. 43)  
*Froebel Educational Institute: Opening Address* (1902, vol. IV, no. 13, p. 6)  
*Hinderances in the training of kindergarten students* (1903, vol. V, no. 20, p. 195)  
*Ideals of training for Froebelian teachers* (1903, vol. III, no. 10, p. 89)  
*Ideals of training for kindergarten teachers* (1905, vol. III, no. 10, p. 83)  
*On being more Froebelian than Froebel* (1911, vol. XIII, no. 65, p. 135)  
*Psychology and the teacher* (1938, vol. IV, no. 9)  
*Some problems of infant teachers* (1919, vol. XXI, no. 113, p. 12)  
*Summer school for kindergarten teachers* (1913, vol. XV, no. 79, p. 90)  
*The nursery-school teacher* (1918, vol. XX, no. 110, p. 37)  
*The personal relationship of teacher and child* (1938, vol. IV, no. 3)  
*The training of Froebelian teachers* (1905, vol. VII, no. 27, p. 128)  
*The training of kindergarten teachers in the United States* (1906, vol. VIII, no. 31, p. 124)

*The training of teachers* (1936, vol. II, no. 9)

*The value of kindergarten training* (1892, vol. II, nos. 7, 8, pp. 106, 119)

*The watchword of Froebelianism* (1913, vol. XV, no. 81, p. 137)

*Training Colleges of the future* (1911, vol. XIII, no. 64, p. 105)

*Why and how to work out occupations* (1897, vol. I, no. 2, p. 45)

## CONCLUSION

*Child Life* was published in various formats for more than 40 years from 1891 to 1939. Apart from the selected articles listed above it carried much else; notes, correspondence, inquiries, in memoriam, stories, news, reviews and notices. It was a successful medium of communication within the movement.

But it is only when the multitudinous messages its pages contained have lost their contemporary relevance that the deeper significance becomes discernible. Now, more than half a century after publication ceased, the cost of safe haven in Britain for Froebel's ideas is revealed. The certitude of the original group, the apparent apodeicticity of the principles, the intensity of purpose: all this weakened in the pages of *Child Life*.

The historical view shows that — for better or for worse — time, place and perhaps nationhood transformed the froebelian approach during these years, to the degree that by the outbreak of World War II it was demonstrably different from that proclaimed and practiced by Froebel and his friends a century before. And yet, contemporary educators — both insiders and outsiders — did not doubt the uniqueness of froebelian practice in Edwardian Britain. The changes had been accompanied by a sense of continuity that was almost palpable.

Time changes people and movements, and not always for the better. But whereas some legatees of pioneering educational adventurers frown on deviations, cleaving to the letter of their inheritance, those in the British Froebel movement treated the work of Friedrich Froebel and his friends as inspirational rather than authoritative. A softer, more diffuse purpose which celebrated young children's present lives began to emerge. As issue followed issue, that original hard white gemlike flame mellowed to an Edwardian amber glow of childhood education.

It is, we are pleased to say, only too evident that Dr Blochmann's fervour would not have motivated British froebelians. It was not just the all too obvious fact that the Hitlerian ideal for women was a travesty of Froebel's views — that calm certain conviction of his that educated mothers were the principal means by which progress and enlightenment might be assured. Even without J.J. Findlay's splendid and decisive challenge, Dr Blochmann simply mistook the zeitgeist.

APPENDIX: THE HISTORY OF *CHILD LIFE**1 Beginnings*

On December 15th, 1890 the Froebel Society decided to issue *Child Life: A Kindergarten Journal* 'as the medium of communication among the subscriber of the Froebel Society'. Launched with the help of George Philip & Son it was published monthly for one year until December 1892. Thus there are twenty-four issues (up to vol. II no. 12). It contains details of lecture series, general news about the progress of the kindergarten movement, reports of the society's meetings, and information on examinations.

*2 Relaunch (January 1897–November 1897)*

Backing was withdrawn in 1892 and it was some six years later at the beginning of 1897 that the Michaelis Guild revived it. This association for former students of the Froebel Educational Institute was named after the first Principal of the College Madame Michaelis. The journal was published three times — in January, May and November of 1897, numbered volume I, Numbers 1, 2 and 3.

*3 Rebirth (January 1899–October 1934)*

About a year later the Froebel Society rediscovered its resolve and launched a new series starting in January 1899. It was called *Child Life* and subtitled *A Magazine for kindergarten teachers, parents, and all interested in the education and development of young children*. The patterns of publication were as follows:

- (i) From January 1899 to October 1907 it was issued four times per year. Thus the nine volumes each contained four issues, coming out in January, April, July and October each year.
- (ii) From January 1908 (Volume X) to December 1915 (Volume XVII) there were eight issues per year, coming out in January, February, March, May, June, September, October and December. The December issue of Volume XII is numbered 60 and is marked by a new declaration on the front cover: 'Published for the Froebel Society of Great Britain and Ireland'. The December issue of XVII is numbered 100.
- (iii) From January 1916 (Volume XVIII) to December 1920 (Volume XXII) there were four issues per year, coming out in January/February, May, October and December. Number 117 recorded that the Junior Schools Association had joined the Froebel Society in backing the journal. The December issue of Volume XXII is numbered 120.
- (iv) From 1922 (Volume XXIII) to 1927 (Volume XXIX), there were three issues per year. From 1922–1926 they came out in March, June and October, and in

1927 they appeared in January, 'Summer' and 'Autumn'. The Autumn issue of XXIX is numbered 141.

- (v) From 1928 (Volume XXX) to 1929 (Volume XXXI) there were four issues per year, coming out in Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. The Winter issue of XXXI is numbered 149.
- (vi) From 1930 (Volume XXXII) to 1933 (Volume XXXV) there were three issues per year, coming out in Spring, Summer and Autumn. The Autumn issue of XXXV is numbered 161.
- (vii) Volume XXXVI consists of four issues: Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter of 1934. Its last issue is numbered 165.

#### 4 *New Series (January 1935–December 1939)*

A new series of *Child Life* was announced, subtitled 'A monthly magazine for the teachers of boys and girls of 5–11 years'. It was published by the Froebel Society and Junior Schools Association for four years, and its numbering begins again with Volume I. From January 1935 to December 1939 there were 48 issues in its five volumes.

#### 5 *After amalgamation, renamed (January 1940–December 1964)*

After the two organisations merged to form the National Froebel Foundation the new body retitled the journal, somewhat ingloriously: *Child Life* disappeared and was replaced by *The National Froebel Foundation Bulletin*. From January 1940, it was issued bi-monthly until December 1964 when its last issue was numbered 151. The earlier issues starkly reflect the troubled times: *Psychiatric Treatment of Difficult Evacuees* and *Studies of Froebelian Schools in War-Time* are two characteristic titles.

#### 6 *Renamed again (March 1965–Autumn 1974)*

In the Spring of 1965, child-centred education began to gain acceptance in British mainstream early childhood education and the National Froebel Foundation responded by relaunching a more substantial journal of ideas. *The Froebel Journal* as it was called began in March 1965. Three issues per year were maintained and it lasted until Autumn 1974 when worries began to surface about the large-scale adoption of child-centred methods by teachers untrained (and unselected) for the purpose. The last issue was numbered 30.

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