**Radicalizing pedagogy: Geography and libertarian pedagogy between the 19th and the 20th century**[1]

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**Abstract.** *This paper analyses the role played by anarchist geographers like Élisée Reclus (1830-1905) and Piotr Kropotkin (1842-1921) in the movement of libertarian pedagogy, popular schools and university extensions between the 19th and the 20th century, as well as in the debates of that time on the foundation of the systems of public and secular education.*

*During their exile in Switzerland, these scholars worked in network with other militants and scientists like Charles Perron (1837-1909), founder of the Geneva Cartographic Museum and protagonist of the debates on popular education, and kept international relations with educators like Francisco Ferrer y Guardia (1859-1909), Paul Robin (1837-1912) and Henri Roorda van Eysinga (1870-1925).*

*The movement of libertarian pedagogy, which founded at that time "modern schools" in countries like Spain, France, Switzerland, Great Britain, Italy, United States, Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil, is considered to have influenced the following experiences of pedagogic activism and "liberation pedagogies", as well as authors like Célestin Freinet or Paulo Freire. If many historiographical works exist on this movement, the role of geographers in it is still little studied. To understand it, it is necessary to deal with two other scholars, James Guillaume (1842-1916) and Ferdinand Buisson (1841-1932), protagonists of the transmission of secular and popular education among different nations and different political milieus, who contributed to build the French public school by works like their mammoth Dictionary of Pedagogy, with the collaboration of geographers like Franz Schrader and Reclus, and anarchist educators like Paul Robin.*

*In this paper, I argue that anarchist geographers had a primary role in the theoretical and practical definition of libertarian pedagogy, and that some anarchist educators (thanks also to the scientific prestige of figures like Reclus, Kropotkin and Guillaume) gave a still little-*

[1] The definition "libertarian pedagogy" translates here the original definitions of "pédagogie libertaire" and "pedagogia libertaria" and has nothing to do with the North-American "Libertarians", whose right-wing positions are completely extraneous to the communist-anarchist tradition that I address in my works. Here, "libertarian pedagogy" is synonymous of "anarchist education" in the sense of Reclus, Kropotkin and Ferrer y Guardia.

*known contribution to establish the systems of public and secular schools in several countries. I discuss my hypotheses dealing with the works and archives of the cited authors, with the aid of the existing literature on geography and anarchism.*

**Keywords:** Élisée Reclus; Piotr Kropotkin; James Guillaume; Ferdinand Buisson; Libertarian Pedagogy ; Public School; Geography and Anarchism

**Introduction: emancipation through knowledge**

This paper is inserted in the frame of the recent literature rediscovering the historical and present relationship between geography and anarchism. In recent years several conferences and publication have addressed these themes, aiming explicitly at 'reanimating anarchist geographies', as in the case of the 2012 special issue on Anarchist Geographies published by *Antipode*. Among many others publications and conferences, other notable contributions include the special issue dedicate to anarchism and 'heterodox Marxism' by *ACME* in 2012, and the sessions on "Demanding the impossible" that took place at the RGS-IBG International Conference in London in 2013. According to the editors of the *Antipode* special issue, anarchist ideas deserve full consideration for the building of a social and plural geography, producing non-dogmatic knowledge in relation with social struggles (Springer et al. 2012).

The promoters of these experiences draw explicitly on a 'genealogy' (Springer, 2013) starting from the early anarchist geographers Reclus and Piotr Kropotkin. According to Marcelo Lopes de Souza, these two authors inaugurated an historical tradition within Urban Geography that has led directly to present debates on autonomy and federalism, inspired by Murray Bookchin and Cornelius Castoriadis (Souza, 2012 and 2014).

Authors like Philippe Pelletier have addressed the specificity of anarchism for spatial thinking in relation to other traditions, like Marxism, that have proven to be less fit to deal with geographical issues. Pelletier argues that a Marxist radical geography is something of an oxymoron, because for a large part of the history of contemporary geography the exponents of radical geography were mainly anarchists like Reclus, Kropotkin and Metchnikoff, and not Marxists, a fact that points up the traditional difficulty of Marxism to think spatially (Pelletier, 2013). A recent debate between Simon Springer and David Harvey has showed all the effectiveness of this problematic (Harvey, 2015; Springer, 2014a and 2015).

I should stress the importance of anarchism, and anarchist geographies, for critical social theory, which was widely involved with space in the last decades. One of the first attempts to

trace this link, and accordingly to build a critical geography, was the experience of Reclus, Kropotkin and colleagues, which thus deserves to be better studied and better known in order to gain a stronger understanding of the strategic role that geography played, and should play again, to inspire critical thinking.

In the 3rd International Conference of the Anarchist Studies Network, held in Loughborough in September 2014 and including sessions on Geography,[2] several presenters argued for interdisciplinary studies on the transnational and transcultural nature of the concrete anarchist movement, drawing on its anticolonial and postcolonial networks (Anderson, 2007; Hirsch and Van der Walt, 2010), its present cosmopolitanism (Gordon, 2008) and Reclus's legacy (Ferretti, 2013). In this chapter, I argue that education and libertarian pedagogy is another important field for the transnational circulation of anarchist ideas, which is demonstrated by the international scientific networks that I address below.

In the field of education studies, recent research analyzes the spaces as constitutive elements of alternative and radical education (Kraftl, 2012 and 2013). Nevertheless, in these recent works it is difficult to find references to the rich tradition of libertarian pedagogy: only the well-known Summerhill school, founded by Alexander Neill and inspired by anarchist education (Neill, 1990), is cited sometimes.

It is worth stressing that the movement of libertarian pedagogy opened up several experimental and self-managed 'free schools' all over the world in the first decades of the 20th century. The most famous examples took place in Spain, Switzerland, France, Great Britain, Italy, United States, Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil. These experiences are considered to have exercised direct and indirect influences on the successive experiences of pedagogic activism and 'liberation pedagogies' involving authors like Célestin Freinet and Paulo Freire (Codello, 2005; Rosa Da Silva, 2013). With respect to historians, we find a rich literature on the libertarian schools in Italy, Switzerland, France and Spain (Codello 2005; Rosada 1975; Heimberg 1996, 2006 and 2009; Wagnon 2009) and on the similar experimentations in Anglophone countries (Avrich 2006), as well as in Latin America (Romani 2006). There are specific studies on the schools which inspired more directly the European libertarian educators, like the Cempuis orphanage (Brémand 1992 and 2008; Demeulaneare 1994), the Barcelona *Escuela Moderna* managed by Francisco Ferrer, the freed school *La Ruche* managed by Sébastien Faure, and the Clivio 'Modern School' in Italy (Landolfi, 2000).

[2] See the conference's site : http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/phir/research/seminars/asn-3.0/

In this chapter I want to address the role of anarchist geographers, particularly Élisée Reclus (1830-1905) and Piotr Kropotkin (1842-1921), in the foundation of the movement of anarchist schools, popular universities, and university extensions in Europe between the 19th and the 20th centuries, as well as in the debates on the consolidation of the European public education systems in the same period (Ferretti 2014a; Heimberg 2013).

Reclus, Kropotkin and other anarchist geographers like Léon Metchnikoff (1838-1888) had met each other in the years 1870, when they were all political exiles in Switzerland, escaping either the Tsar regime either the repression of the French government after the 1871 Paris Commune (Ferretti, 2014a). During their stay, they got in touch with other scholars and militants who shared with them the same educational engagement. One of these collaborators was the Swiss cartographer Charles Perron (1837-1909), who opened the Geneva Cartographic Museum, an experience-based pedagogical museum aiming to reach a popular audience (Ferretti, 2014b). Perron subsequently published one of the first pamphlets that advocated for the establishment of alternative anarchist schools (Perron, 1868). This network of geographers was directly linked with anarchist educators like Francisco Ferrer y Guardia (1859-1909) and Paul Robin (1837-1912), who are considered as the founders of libertarian pedagogy. In Switzerland, they directly inspired the educators implied in the Lausanne Ferrer School (1919-1921), like Jean Wintsch (1880-1943). This connection came about due to another anarchist educator trained by Reclus, Henri Roorda van Eysinga (1870-1925), author of pedagogical works fuming at the teaching methods based on notions, memory and uncritical accumulation of notions for which anarchists mocked the traditional teachers, calling them *bourreurs de crânes* [craniums' fillers] (Lenoir, 2011).

If libertarian schools have a rather rich literature in the field of the history of international anarchist movement, few studies address the specific contribution of geography and anarchist geographers in their formation. Another topic which deserves to be clarified is the international collaboration among anarchist scholars and other radicals, like socialists, liberals, anticlerical and free-thinkers, in the name of common belonging in secular, popular and non-directive education. The first example, in this sense, was the popular work of James Guillaume (1842-1916) and Ferdinand Buisson (1841-1932) (the former a Swiss anarchist, the latter a French radical-socialist), in the assembly of the mammoth Dictionary of Pedagogy and Primary Education (*Dictionnaire de pédagogie et d'instruction primaire*). This work, considered as the symbol of the establishment of the French system of secular education (*éducation laïque*), was the fruit of a transnational transfer of knowledge, from the

experiences of the Swiss Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) and the German Friedrich Fröbel (1782-1852) into a public debate on France . The dictionary was co-authored by a very heterogeneous bunch of authors, including anarchist scholars like Guillaume, Élisée Reclus and his brother Elie (1827-1903), the anarchist educator Paul Robin, and a group of geographers close to Reclus who were defined by Jean-Pierre Chevalier as 'the Schrader system', from the name of Franz Schrader (1844-1924), cousin of Reclus and author of several entries on geography and maps in the dictionary (Chevalier, 2003).

In this chapter, I seek to advance two main hypotheses. The first is that the Anarchist geographers played a more important role than what has been generally acknowledged in the construction of libertarian pedagogy's ideas and praxes. The second is that although little known, libertarian pedagogy, thanks also to the scientific prestige acquired by scholars like Guillaume, Reclus and Kropotkin, made a major contribution to the construction of contemporary European systems of public and secular education. I begin my discussion of these hypotheses by analyzing the works and the archives of the quoted authors and militants with the aid of the existing literature on anarchist schools, the history of anarchism, and on anarchist geographers themselves. In the first part, I analyze the specific contribution of anarchist geographers to the spatiality of emancipatory education. In the second part I address the collaboration among Buisson, Guillaume and Robin for their pedagogical dictionary. In the third part, I discuss the example of the Lausanne Ferrer School before offering some concluding thoughts.

**The Geographers: Élisée Reclus, Charles Perron, Piotr Kropotkin**

One of the first expressions of the teaching approach characterized by anarchist geographers towards the end of the 19$^{th}$ century took place some decades earlier thanks to an educator who was nor an anarchist nor strictly a geographer: Heinrich Pestalozzi. Pestalozzi's works were of great interest to James Guillaume, an anarchist polymath, who consecrated to him a biography (first published as a long entry in the *Dictionnaire de Pédagogie*, and then as a volume edited by Hachette). Guillaume considered the celebrated experience of the orphanage that Pestalozzi opened in Yverdon (near Neuchâtel, in French-speaking Switzerland), as one of the models for developing an active children's education.

In his work, Guillaume stressed the visits that Carl Ritter (1779-1859), one of the fathers of European geography, had periodically made to Yverdon, defining himself as a 'Pestalozzi's disciple'. According to Guillaume, "Pestalozzi came twice to Yverdon in

September 1807 and January 1809, and then, during his stay in Geneva in 1811-1812, he visited the orphanage managed by Pestalozzi several times". Forty years after his stays in Yverdon, Ritter said to the historian Louis Vuillemin: "Pestalozzi knew almost nothing about geography, but it was in talking with him that I took conscience of the importance of natural methods. He opened my horizons, and all what I do owes somehow to him"' (Guillaume, 1890, p. 223).[3]

Guillaume also stressed the Vuillemin's testimony on the natural methods employed by Pestalozzi for the primary teaching of Geography:

> The first elements of Geography were taught to us in the field. Firstly, we marched in a straight valley where a stream called Buron flowed. The masters made us walk several times along this path, observing both generalities and details, until we had its complete and correct understanding. Then, they asked us to make provisions of an argyle which lied in layers on the valley's flanks, with which we filled great baskets that we had brought for this. Coming back to the castle, every pupil reproduced on a great table, with this argyle, the relief of the valley which we had studied. In the following days, we made a new walk, a new excursion every time, always on a higher standpoint, and each time a new extension was given to our work. We continued in this way till we completed the study of the Yverdon Valley, observing it from the top of the mountain and completing its relief. Only at that point we passed from the relief to the map, which we started to draw only after having known the territory (Ibid., p. 227-228).

The frequency of Ritter's references to the Earth as the 'home for the education of humankind', his antipathy for uncritical use of maps, for enumerations and for pedagogical dogmatism, as well as his engagement with the building of the German system of instruction, all owe much to Pestalozzi. The importance of Ritter for the formation of European geography in the 19th century is widely acknowledged, and the transfer of his ideas to several geographers who worked for public education is well known both in the French-speaking world (Girard, 1827; Fischer, Mercier and Raffestin 2003; Huber, 1997) and in Great Britain (Daniel and Elliot, 2006). It is clear that the anarchist geographers immediately endorsed the so-called natural methods as the alternative to an ideological education, which makes sense considering that Reclus attended Ritter's courses at the University of Berlin (Ferretti, 2013).

Guillaume also dedicated a chapter to Pestalozzi in his book Revolutionary Studies (*Études révolutionnaires*) dealing with topical figures in the construction of the idea of secular

[3] All quotations in French have been translated by the author.

education during the French Revolution. Guillaume provided a rather original interpretation of Pestalozzi, investigating his little known participation in the revolutionary movement at the end of the 18th century, as well as his contribution to the spread of Enlightenment ideas in Switzerland. Pestalozzi was acknowledged, in 1792, as a French citizen (*Citoyen français*) form the Paris *Assembée nationale*, which endorsed him as 'one of the men who contributed the most, both for their writings and for their braveness, to the cause of freedom and to the liberation of peoples' (Guillaume 1908, p. 438). According to Guillaume, Pestalozzi 'was the most original and the bravest among all the thinkers and writers (but also among the men of action) in German Switzerland in the 18th century' (Ibid., p. 427).

Pestalozzi's project for the education of popular classes inspired both the establishment of public school systems in the second half of the 19th century and anarchist schools like the Cempuis orphanage managed by Robin, the Barcelona *Escuela Moderna* and the French *Universités populaires*, a radicalized version of the British University Extension.
The first geographer who addressed the strategic value of popular education for revolution was accordingly Charles Perron in a pamphlet entitled 'On Compulsory Education' (*De l'obligation en matière d'instruction*), which was first presented in the 1868 Brussels Congress of the International Workingmen association. 'Ignorance: here you are the organic vice, the first cause of disorder! It is there that we have to strike, and strike hard, because if we succeed in eliminating this leprosy, the true and definitive revolution will be realized' (Perron 1868, p. 9). Perron, trained as a draughtsman and an enamel painter and then cartographer for Reclus's *New Universal Geography*, was a founder of the international anarchist movement within the IWA and then in the Swiss *Fédération jurassienne*. From 1868 to 1871, he was the closest collaborator of Mikhail Aleksandrovič Bakunin (1814-1876) in Switzerland. Moreover, Perron's own realizations as the Raised-relief of Switzerland and the Geneva Cartographic Museum (Ferretti 2014b) are at present the object of a collective research project in the University of Geneva, within the project 'Writing the World Otherwise: Geographers, Ethnographers and Orientalists in French-speaking Switzerland, 1868-1920: Heterodox Discourse' (*Écrire le Monde Autrement : géographes, ethnographes et orientalistes en Suisse romande, 1868-1920, des discours hétérodoxes,* FNS div. 1, 2012-2015).[4]

Élisée Reclus was involved, in the last years of his life, in the construction of the self-managed Brussels *Université Nouvelle*, which was equally linked with local experimentations

[4] http://www.unige.ch/ses/geo/recherche/projets/EMONA.html

of emancipatory education for the University staff's children (Schmidt di Friedberg, 2007). Formerly, he played an important role in the quoted 'Schrader system' in the *Dictionnaire de pédagogie*. If his direct contribution to it was very marginal (just one entry on Scandinavia), Reclus was nevertheless the main inspiration for those geographers who worked for Buisson and Guillaume. According to J. P. Chevalier, Reclus' contribution to French educational geography was thus more important and lasting than what was currently said: in this sense, Reclus is considered, 'together with Emile Levasseur,[5] [as] the father of French educational geography' (Chevalier 2009, p. 250). Other authors stressed the same concept on the basis of the number of Reclus' quotations found in the Dictionary. Reclus, along with Levasseur, 'was the most quoted author in the entry on Geography by Schrader' (Denis and Kahn 2003, p. 111).

Inspired by Pestalozzi's activism, his approach to activities in open-air and pedagogy on the field, and considering this general perspective as very consistent with the anarchist thinking of Bakunin and Proudhon, Reclus emphasized Pestalozzi's 'didactic and natural' method in works like the History of a Mountain (*Histoire d'une montagne*): 'The true school has to be the free nature, with its beautiful landscapes which we can admire and with its laws which can be understood by direct observation, but also with its obstacles to overcome. It is not in narrow rooms with grilled windows that brave and honest people can grow' (Reclus, 1880, p. 248). The pedagogical walks in the Yverdon valley organized by Pestalozzi are among the origins of a geographical model, which had a great impact in regional studies between the 19th and the 20th centuries: Patrick Geddes 'Valley plan of civilisation' or 'Valley Section' was clearly inspired by this model, also through the Reclus's influence on the Scottish scholar (Geddes 1925; Matless 1992 and 2000; Robic 2001). Several studies have stressed that the Geddes's idea to use the valley as an historical and geographical apparatus to study human regions owed directly to the geographers with whom he collaborated directly: Reclus and Kropotkin (Ferretti 2012b; Dunbar 1978; Raffestin 2007). Geddes also used the dimension of the walk in the valley as the first step of his idea of geographical education, stating that the esthetic impression stimulated in children by their contact with nature anticipates and founds rational knowledge (Geddes, 1902).

Reclus dedicated a chapter of his last work 'Man and the Earth' (*L'Homme et la Terre*) to emancipatory education. His Geographical Institute in the *Université Nouvelle* was one of the

[5] Emile Levasseur (1828-1911) was the protagonist of the remaking of Geography programs in French School, starting from his famous 1872 Report (see: Clerc, 2007).

references for the teaching of geography in schools like the Barcelona *Escuela Moderna*, where Francisco Ferrer corresponded with Reclus about the possibility of writing a geography manual 'freed from the religious and patriotic poison' for primary level teaching. They also collaborated for the construction of didactic materials, like globes, for the Barcelona school.[6] The paper that Reclus wrote for the *Boletín de la Escuela Moderna* contained all the typical arguments of the campaign that he made in those years to promote the utilisation of globes, raised-reliefs and three-dimensional geographical objects as an alternative to flat maps, considered to be false and not fit to geography teaching. In a famous presentation that Reclus made in London in 1903 for the Royal Geographical Society, the anarchist geographer pleaded for the exclusion of flat maps in primary education, because they induce in the children false ideas on shapes and proportions of the world's countries, which are very difficult to correct in the adulthood, even for the most expert geographers:

> At the outset I think maps ought to be entirely tabooed. They must be tabooed, because maps are made on different scales, and that being so, it is quite impossible to compare them; and if you cannot compare them, it is only waste of time and trouble. I do not believe there is a geographer in the world (I do not know of one) who is quite conversant with the different scales of the various maps. We who have a certain reputation as geographers have just the same trouble as other people, because when we study distant countries on various maps - take, for example, Java and the Netherlands - the maps of Java are always small and the maps of the Netherlands are large, and therefore it causes a great confusion in one's mind. Therefore, in all well-conducted schools, globes should be used, and children ought to be entirely forbidden the use of maps (Reclus 1903, p. 290).

Even recently, in anarchist geographical literature, one can find similar claims for a questioning of the cartographic pretension to accuracy and of the idea that the map's one is a privileged standpoint to see the world. According to S. Springer, 'to envision a human geography without hierarchy, we must ultimately reject the Archimedean point by leaping out of the Cartesian map and into the world' (Springer, 2014b, p. 411).

Reclus and the anarchist geographers were equally involved in the education of adults belonging to popular classes, with the same aims for emancipation by education that motivated their engagement in children's education. In Switzerland, Reclus participated in the

[6] Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Manuscrits Occidentaux, Nouvelles Acquisitions Françaises (BNF, NAF) 22914, ff. 216-218, F. Ferrer to E. Reclus,

first Geneva 'popular conferences' organized by the local socialist group (Heimberg 1996, p. 544), successively animated by geographers involved in popular education like William Rosier (Ferretti, 2012a; Fischer, Mercier and Raffestin, 2003). In 1875, Reclus was invited to Geneva by Auguste Baud-Bovy to talk on historical and geographical topics for workers education.[7] These conferences, still little studied, were nevertheless well registered by French police, who evidently used informants. To understand the police attention on these conferences, we have to consider that Reclus was then an exile from the 1871 Paris Commune, and Geneva was one of the major European centers for the gathering of French and East-European refugees.[8]

Pëtr Kropotkin was equally inspired by natural methods, and stated their importance for an education that did not aim to indoctrinate children, but to stimulate the growing of their autonomous faculties. His 1885 paper *What Geography Ought to Be* (Kropotkin, 1885) was an answer to John Scott Keltie's (1840-1927) enquiry on geographical teaching published in his 1886 *Report on Geographical Education*. Kropotkin wrote his paper when he was imprisoned in France and its contents, fruit of his exchanges with Reclus (Ferretti, 2014b), are still considered to be something like a manifesto for anarchist geographical education (Springer, 2012).

**Ferdinand Buisson, James Guillaume and Paul Robin: a network of libertarian educators**

James Guillaume and Ferdinand Buisson were the protagonists of cultural exchanges between the different national and political contexts of France and Switzerland. They frequented people of different political tendencies, as they were both immersed in the milieus of the Internationalists and exiles in Switzerland in the 1860s and 1870s and then, by the end of the 1870s, in the Paris offices of the French Ministry Jules Ferry and of the publisher Hachette, all involved in the mammoth project to build the new French system of secular and public education. Today, in France one assist to a spectacular rediscovery of Ferdinand Buisson (Denis and Kahn 2006; Peillon 2010), but relatively few studies are dedicated to James Guillaume, despite the fact that he was a key figure in the production of the *Dictionnaire de Pédagogie* (Brunet, 2014). In the 1870s, Guillaume was also a protagonist of the foundation of the *Fédération jurassienne*, the first anarchist organisation in history in which the role

[7] Bibliothèque de Genève (BGE), Département des Manuscrits, Archives Baud-Bovy, Ms., 237, f. 437-438, E. Reclus to A. Baud-Bovy, 19 November 1874.
[8] Centre d'Accueil et de Recherche des Archives Nationales (CARAN), Dossier Élisée Reclus, BB 24/732.

played by Guillaume, according to Marc Vuilleumier, was even more important than that of Bakunin (Vuilleumier 2012). Guillaume was a teacher of history and literature in the lyceum of Locle, and lost his appointment for political reasons. In 1877, before his departure for Paris, he was one of the first to endorse a political document sent by the Internationalist Vevey section, coordinated by Reclus and Perron, who proposed to organise free schools as an alternative to state ones.

> We are far from having assured the education that we need to struggle successfully against our oppressors. For a bloody irony, we need them to approve the contents of our education. The majority of us are compelled to send children to schools where men paid by the bourgeoisie work to pervert common sense and morality by teaching not scientific issues, but the impure fables of religion; not the truth of free men, but the practices of the slaves (Guillaume 1985, vol. IV, p. 147).

In these pioneering years for libertarian pedagogy, the Internationalists who had settled in Switzerland decided to reprint a short book by Guillaume, Historical Sketches (*Esquisses historiques*), which aimed at enlightening proletarians and young people about the new scientific tendencies on prehistory and ancient history, contradicting the biblical tales which were still taught in many schools (Guillaume 1874). This historical book, according to Marcel Dubois, was written by Guillaume 'in a simple style, avoiding all theological or monarchist superstition' (M. Dubois 1914, p. 235). The second part of the project, the Geographical Sketches (*Esquisses géographiques*), equally conceived for popular education, was to be written by Élisée Reclus. Kropotkin participated in the debate, proposing to divide the work in two parts: according to the Anarchist Prince (quoted by Nettlau): 'The first one, a Physical Geography, has to attack what religion teaches on the origins of earth, species and men (…) the second part, a Social Geography, is a work which only can be realized by Socialists' (Nettlau 1930, vol. II, p. 49-50).

It is worth stressing the anti-religious value of physical geography, corresponding to a mobilization of natural sciences and geological history as an alternative to all the theological explications of Creation (Ferretti, 2014). On the other side, we find in Kropotkin's sentiments an early occurrence of the expression 'Social Geography', which Reclus would assume in 1905 as his own disciplinary definition with *L'Homme et la Terre* (Reclus, 1905). Finally,

money lacked to print the book and even Reclus was overwhelmed by his work for the publisher Hachette, so this project was not realized (Guillaume 1985, vol. IV, p. 148).

To put forward other examples of the strategic value that the Jura revolutionaries attributed to free teaching, I can quote some episodes concerning the meeting between Guillaume and Buisson, the latter of whom was voluntarily exiled in Switzerland between 1866 and 1871, as a Republican opponent to the French Second Empire (Tomei, 2004; Hayat, 2009). Buisson came from a protestant family, and dedicated his doctoral dissertation to Sébastien Castellion, a 16th century heretic persecuted by Calvin and his Geneva followers, who were also responsible of the murder of Michel Servet. As a teacher in the University of Neuchâtel, when he knew Guillaume and Robin, Buisson had suddenly serious clashes with the local Calvinist Church, as witnessed by letters sent by bigoted students, who envisaged boycotting Buisson's courses to protest against his public speeches where he argued for the abolition of catechism in public schools. 'We have to protest against the impious lecture of Saturday night by Mr. Buisson; for this reason, we can no longer attend his courses in the Academy, because we feel that the first necessity is to acknowledge God's truth.'[9]

Buisson, in Switzerland, attended the Congresses of the League of Peace and Freedom, which were also frequented by militants like Bakunin, Perron and the Reclus brothers. He was already close to the milieus of anarchists and radicals in France, as witnessed by his collaboration with the 1871 Paris Commune in the organization of an orphanage in the Paris *XVII Arrondissement*. In the same neighborhood, his brother Benjamin Buisson was one of the protagonists of the Commune movement and a friend of the Socialist leader Benoît Malon (Tomei, p. 271). The same milieus were then frequented by the Reclus brothers, involved with Malon and Buisson in the publication of the internationalist journal of Batignolles and Ternes, *La République des Travailleurs* (1871). Considering Ferdinand Buisson's participation in these publications and in the activities of the corresponding internationalist section, Martine Brunet also put the hypothesis that he advocated for to the International Workingmen's Association (Brunet, 2014). In the last period of his career, Buisson remained the target of the most conservative parts of French society for his pacifist and anticlerical engagement as a deputy of the Radical-Socialist group.[10]

In 1877, it was Guillaume's turn to leave for a volunteer exile in Paris, being deprived of his work through political repression. In 1878, he agreed to help Buisson with editorial work

[9] Archives de l'État de Neuchâtel, UNI 6, Dossiers des Professeurs, M. Ferdinand Buisson, M.-F. Louve and T.-L. Maltez to the Head of Faculty, 7 December 1868.
[10] Pierrefitte sur Seine, CARAN, Dossier Buisson, F7/15937/2

on his Dictionary, which is still considered to be a major symbol of the French Third Republic's politics (1870-1940) on public and secular education (Nora, 1984). According to Patrick Dubois, 'during all the years of its publication', the Dictionary, 'was one of the official voices of new educational politics' (P. Dubois, 2002, p. 14). As Buisson was very busy with many other institutional functions, 'Guillaume was thus the kingpin of the Dictionary, assuming at the same time the secretariat of the *Revue Pédagogique* for the publisher Delagrave' (ibid., p. 82). Working in the archives of Hachette, the Dictionary's publisher, I found a document that elucidates the importance of the Guillaume's material work: it is a letter where he renegotiated his salary for the second edition of the Dictionary (Buisson, 1911), which he worked on from 1906 to 1911, detailing his functions:

> 1. For the old papers by other authors that I have to reread, edit and update, five francs per column; 2. For my own papers, the new and the old ones, five francs per column; 3. For my translations of papers by foreign collaborators (from German, Spanish, Portuguese, English), two francs per column; 4. For the work of secretariat (correspondence with authors, conferences, services), five francs per page; 5. For all further works, like volume printing, proofs reading, manuscripts revision, etc., fifty francs per page.[11]

The editorial work was clearly more important for the first edition, as Guillaume wrote not only the 40 entries he signed, but hundreds of anonymous entries as well, being credited by Patrick Dubois as a 'titanic editorial and redaction work' (P. Dubois 2002, p. 18). In this sense, this work should be called not *Dictionnaire Buisson*, but *Dictionnaire Buisson-Guillaume*, as all sources agree on the fact that Guillaume's work was more important than Buisson's.

After the end of the publication of the first edition (1878-1887) Guillaume started another great work: a critical edition of the mammoth proceedings of the *Comité d'Instruction publique* established in 1792 by the French revolutionary Convention. This was the first step for a projected history of public education from the 1789 revolution onwards, which interested Buisson and all those working on secular education, including the minister Jules Ferry. On Guillaume's side, the political stakes are clear, as the educational debate in these years was 'the central issue of a political and cultural conflict' (Ibid, p. 18) between clericals and laics. Some historians observe that Guillaume, addressing the revolution of the previous

[11] Institut Mémoire de l'Edition Contemporaine (IMEC), Fonds Hachette, HAC 16.3, Fonds James Guillaume, J. Guillaume to G. Bréton, 4 November 1910.

century, 'made a classical historian's operation, building a history which was inseparable from his present concerns' (Ayoub and Grenon 1997, p. 6-7).

The Dictionary was presented as a free voice open to all ideas, as the contents of all voices were considered the responsibility of respective authors. This became a symbolic model and basic tool for all the experiences of public and secular education targeting the popular classes. All the teachers could find in its pages both elements for their pedagogic formation and contents for their daily teaching. Many anarchists participated in this movement because one of their aims was to get rid of priests and churches in public education: in this field, they didn't have problems in making associations with liberals, free-thinkers and other radicals.

Among the many collaborators of the Dictionary, Paul Robin wrote thirty entries. He was also appointed by Buisson as director of the Cempuis orphanage, where the methods of libertarian pedagogy were experimented for the first time. He was one of the main actors involved in this experience: exiled in Switzerland during the Second Empire like Buisson, his stay in Geneva in 1870-71 was fundamental for his political and scientific formation, because it was there that he became a close friend of Bakunin, Guillaume and Perron. He was also, with Perron, one of the first militants involved in the debates on popular education within the International Workingmen's Association. In the 1866 Geneva Congress and in the 1867 Lausanne Congress, the AIT proposed to realize a study on the problem of the education of workers' sons, and enlisted Robin to realize it. The 1870 Franco-Prussian War temporarily interrupted his work, but the debates continued in the following years (Devresee, 1999).

In Cempuis, Robin's anarchist ideas and his neo-Malthusian propaganda for voluntary birth control provoked the protests of the conservative press. In 1894 a conservative minister used as pretext a supposed 'lack of morals' in the school to close Cempuis, in spite of the protests of Buisson and Pauline Kergomard. Benjamin Buisson wrote on this occasion that 'people went to Cempuis like formerly one went to Yverdon to meet Pestalozzi' (Brunet, 2012). A few years later Robin participated, together with the Reclus brothers, in the Brussels *Université Nouvelle*, where he gave a course on 'Integral education' for the academic year 1895-1896 (Codello, 2005; Demeulenaere-Douyère, 1994). The definition of integral education was inspired by Proudhon, stressing the necessity to develop all the children's faculties, including the practical ones, and to therein refuse the precedence of intellectual activities over physical or technical ones (Codello, 2005; Lenoir, 2011).

From the beginning of the 20th century, Guillaume was involved in the struggles of revolutionary syndicalism inspired by Pierre Monatte. He considered this involvement as a sort of continuation of the *Fédération jurassienne*, to which he dedicated in these years his famous four volumes of *Documents et Souvenirs* (Guillaume, 1985 – 1st Ed. 1907). Guillaume also worked in geographical publishing, being the secretary for the journal of the *Club Alpin Français* and for the second edition of another important publication by Hachette (Dubois, 1992, p. 82), the 'Geographical Dictionary of France' (Joanne, 1905), together with Franz Schrader and Elie, Élisée and Onésime Reclus. In the same period he wrote a book, which remained unpublished, on the exploration of the Swiss Aar glacier by Louis Agassiz and Edouard Desor. This 1899 manuscript, which I have found in the archives of the Amsterdam International Institute of social History, was only recently published in Switzerland (Guillaume, Perron and Reclus, 2015).

**The Lausanne Ferrer School and the Swiss pedagogical networks**

There was a direct affiliation between the Reclus brothers' networks in French-speaking Switzerland and the important experience of libertarian pedagogy that took place in the Lausanne *Ecole Ferrer* (1909-1919). In 1877, the cosmopolite milieu of the 'Swiss littoral' between Clarens and Montreux attracted, among many other foreign intellectuals, the Dutchman Sikko Roorda van Eysinga (1825-1887), (father of Henri Roorda), who moved to Clarens, where he became a friend and a collaborator of Reclus for the New Universal Geography. He was considered as a precious source of information about the Netherlands and Indonesia, on which he also gave public speeches in the Geneva Geographical Society (*Le Globe*, 1878, pp. 113-123).

The documents of the Ferrer School, mainly its *Bulletin* and the writings of its animators like Jean Wintsch, present an image of this libertarian and self-managed experimentation that is very far removed from the assumed isolation of anarchists from society that was commonplace at the time. On the contrary, the Ferrer School aimed explicitly to engage a dialogue with other pedagogical experiences of that time, even institutional, whether public or secular. In a pamphlet which had a clear influence on the Ferrer School, 'The Pedagogue doesn't like Children' (*Le pédagogue n'aime pas les enfants*), Henri Roorda praised warmly the public school of that time. According to him, the target of experimental anarchist education was not the destruction of the existing public school, but the strengthening of the principles and practices of public education (Roorda, 2012, p. 7-13). Wintsch also

stated that 'we have invented nothing and we do not pretend to make any extraordinary thing' (Wintsch, 2009, p. 53).

So, the commonplace assumption of anarchist isolation cannot be applied to situations like the Lausanne Ferrer School. The existing sources witness a reality that mobilized networks and debates far beyond its little dimensions. In fact, in any given year, the school only had a few dozens of pupils and a small core of very motivated teachers like Théodore Matthey, Théodore Rochat e Louis Avennier. The example of Pestalozzi was put forward several times by these educators as one of their pedagogic references; they also stressed that the Yverdon orphanage, in spite of its great notoriety, was an experience partially outside of formal institutions, as it was recognized by the Canton of Vaud, but not by Swiss Federal Government (Girard 1950; Huber 1997).

A typical aspect of anarchist education as practiced in the Ferrer School was its cosmopolitanism; this confirms scholars' recent statements on the anarchist movement as a privileged field for the application of the Transnational Turn at different scales (Bantman and Altena, 2015). The School was founded in 1909, in a period of public commotion over the murder of Francisco Ferrer, who was killed by the Spanish government on behalf of the Church (Wagnon, 2013), against which also Buisson publically fumed, expressing full solidarity and sympathy to Ferrer, defined by Buisson as 'the pioneer of French Revolution in his country'.[12] One of the main journals that inspired Ferrer, Roorda and Wintsch was the *Education Intégrale,* published in France by Robin. Their links to the international anarchist movement passed not only through Reclus, who played something like a father's role in the intellectual formation of Henri Roorda (Reclus, 1925; Roorda, 1907), but also through the direct collaboration of Luigi Bertoni (1872-1947) with the Lausanne Ferrer School. Bertoni, editor in Geneva of the bilingual anarchist journal *Il Risveglio/Le Réveil*, was also a correspondent of Kropotkin and Guillaume, and a militant well inserted into the international anarchist networks (Bottinelli 2012). Like Robin, Roorda made the experience of superior teaching in the Brussels *Université Nouvelle* under Reclus invitation (Reclus 1925, p. 168-169).

In the Roorda and Wintsch's writings we find frequent comparisons between libertarian education and the movement of the so-called New Education (*Education nouvelle*), an approach to pedagogic activism which was then based in the Geneva Jean-Jacques

[12] Pierrefitte sur Seine, CARAN, Dossier Buisson, F7/15937/2, 'Contre la réaction espagnole : une lettre de M. Ferdinand Buisson', undated document.

Rousseau Institute. Roorda warmly praised the Institute's director Édouard de Claparède (Roorda 2012, p. 77). Moreover, it is worth to stress that, when a polemic arose between the Ferrer School and another leader of the New Education, Adolphe Ferrière, their controversy seemed to draw more on the elitist character of the school proposed by Ferrière, considered to be too expensive for workers' sons, than on the respective pedagogical method. Nonetheless, although Ferrière had a confrontation with the Ferrer School (Ferrière, 1916), he still considered anarchist education as one of his references, as witnessed by his necrology of Francisco Ferrer (Ferrière, 1909). Finally, an important issue for the Ferrer School was the teaching of geography according to 'natural methods'. In the *Bulletin*, we often find drafts form Reclus's books and photos of excursion and activities in the field, including visits to markets and factories evoking a modern 'social fieldwork', whose pedagogical value was clearly endorsed.

Lastly, in Switzerland anarchist educators also exchanged ideas with teachers involved in the building pf public schools, including geographers. In the second half of the 19th century, three pedagogical journals were founded, representing the three official languages of the Helvetic Confederation: *L'educatore della Svizzera italiana* (ESI); *Éducateur et bulletin corporatif: organe hebdomadaire de la Société Pédagogique de la Suisse Romande*; *Schweizerische pädagogische Zeitschrift*. These revues published many contributions on geographical teaching, and in the case of the Italian-speaking journal of Canton Ticino they are often translations or commentaries from Reclus (ESI 15, 1873; 17, 1875), affiliates of the local pedagogical association (ESI, 4, 1905, p. 207), and from the Italian 'anarchist geographer' of that time, Reclus' fiend, Arcangelo Ghisleri (ESI, 63, 1921), who had been voluntarily exiled in Switzerland. Equally, the French-speaking pedagogical journal *Éducateur et bulletin corporatif* published contributions by Wintsch.

**Conclusion**

This research shows that geography was a central issue for the 'invention' of anarchist education in continental Europe, and generally in the experiences drawing on popular education which were organised in several countries by workers movements between the 19th and the 20th centuries, like the Ferrer Schools, the French and Italian *Universités populaires*, and the Spanish *Ateneos libertarios*. This owed mainly to the great scientific popularity of geographers like Reclus and Kropotkin, combined with their efforts to write 'a geography for all' (Ferretti, 2012c).

In this chapter I have demonstrated that anarchist educators played an important role in the construction of public secular scholar systems. Indeed, they were not isolated or marginal scholars, but rather they engaged regularly in dialogue with some of the most famous exponents of their disciplines and even with ministers, exercising a still underestimated influence on the pedagogical practices of that time. The classic clashes between the priest (*curé*) and the teacher (*instituteur*) that occurred very frequently in all the French villages during the Third Republic have to be read in this context. This debate was recently renewed within the institution in 2012, by the former French Minister Vincent Peillon, who wanted to see compulsory courses on Secular Ethics (*Morale laïque*), explicitly recalling the Buisson's legacy and whose difficult application has yet to be evaluated by contemporary scholars.[13]

It is also worth noting that, assuming the questionings put forward by Peter Kraftl on the spatiality of alternative education, I can affirm the hypothesis that historical libertarian pedagogy had a specific spatiality, based on 'open-air' or field activities with their own dynamics, namely the direct discovering of the world through excursion, for which specific places like the rivers and streams shores were preferred. Precise places were thus explicitly refused, like 'closed school-rooms' with 'grilled windows (Reclus, 1880, p. 248) This last aspect can open several research lines on the study of spatial dispositive displayed both by the experimental libertarian schools and by the first public schools whose teachers were inspired by Buisson, Pestalozzi, and Guillaume.

The main contribution of this history for present struggles for free, alternative and radical pedagogies is that it highlights the importance of geography as a discipline and a series of practices that can aid the autonomous development of critical individuals starting from primary education. These historical experiences demonstrate the possibilities for critical teachers to work either in alternative and self-managed schools or in state public ones. While not all teachers have the good fortune of working in alternative milieus, all have the possibility to struggle in public educational systems. Here they can still work to carve out spaces for an education that will equip the individual with the necessary critical tools, free from indoctrination. Such pedagogy is free and available for all, should we be willing to engage it, which rids us of the ideological and dogmatic knowledge that continue to dominate most educational systems.

[13] See the research blog of radical French teachers of History and Geography : http://aggiornamento.hypotheses.org/

**Acknowledgments:** This research was founded by the Swiss National Fund for Scientific Research, within the project *Geography, public education and libertarian pedagogy in Switzerland and in Europe (XIX-XXI centuries)*, FNS, Interdisciplinary Division 2014-2017, grant number 150119. Many thanks to the editors of this book for their re-readings and their suggestions.

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