

US National Standard in Culture

Nostredame on Work Ethic



Public Education 5

NOSTREDAME: At the turn of the French Revolution, public education became one that followed the change of laws in the Napoleonic code.

Source: The Napoleon Revolution, Robert Holtman, 1967

Under the Third Republic (1870-1940), there was repeated agitation for re-establishment of the *monopoly*, a step which would have removed the church from educational activities.

An interesting and important result of this centralization has been a decline in French contributions to educational philosophy; the centralization and systematization tend to prevent personal initiative.

In 1809, 1810, and 1811 there were almost as many students in private schools as in the lyceés (war military schools) and colleges combined, in spite of Napoleon's efforts for a University monopoly.

Marquis Fontanes: The "monopoly" was actually a good idea. What it was was to have a special group of students to enter into the university and then to commit to working in public service for 10 years afterward.

Much of Napoleon's attention to education was dictated by propagandistic motives. Yet he looked upon schools as more than a source for power; he was also aiming for a system of education which would so shape French youth that they would be reasonable and reasoning people.

Napoleon was unable to erect the kind of educational structure he wanted. His dream of directing the intellectual formation of the youth remained far from fulfilled.

Marquis Fontanes: The development of only the reasoning faculty without also concurrent the meaning of life or *raison d'être* at leaving school does not give one a sense of mission, only skills perhaps in business or science in reading documents.

Napoleon permitted church-sponsored "little seminaries" on the secondary level. In theory they were to train future priests; in actuality, thousands attended with no thought of entering the priesthood.

NOSTREDAME: Schools were of free thinking.

Fontanes favored clericals.

Marquis Fontanes: That does not have a special significance today. However back then, the teachers being clericals were able to answer questions on authority,

morality, ethics, on the meaning of life. And that is significant.

NOSTREDAME: The clericals acted as exemplars. They more than likely were higher in the Levels in the Seven Stages of Consciousness.

Under the Grand Master there were a chancellor, who was keeper of the archives and the seal, a special University treasurer, and twenty to thirty inspectors-general.

There was also a Council of the University, a body often advocated during the French Revolution. It drew up and proclaimed the decrees that formed the code which continued to govern the University even after Napoleon's day, under the restored Bourbons (1814-30) and the Orleanist Louis Philippe (1830-48).

It had 10 members chosen by Napoleon for life 6 inspectors and 4 rectors, and 20 chosen for a year by education officials from among headmasters of the lyceés, deans and professors of the faculties, and the inspectors. The Council had important powers. It decreed the budgets; heard reports of the inspectors-general; and judged all questions relative to the policing, accountability, and general administration of the schools.

Marquis Fontanes: Here there was a school board but not sited at a distance which held education in view of the objective that the student—from the beginning to the end—would go through a transformation in being that was an identifiable movement that was positive. It was not one actually of a negative movement where in the end of the university, the student was not only tired every day, overdrawn physically but was able to know that the next 3

or 4 decades would be an exploring further of what was a basic education that they had determined for themselves was of their choice for a meaningful existence.

NOSTREDAME: It was sometimes through the languages. Through the ancient languages perhaps. It was through a study of history and culture that one had the framework to decide ones own future in accountability for how one would use an adult's time day by day.

Marquis Fontanes: Learning what it meant to be an adult. You do not see that today. To many, it is but a place for more juvenile surroundings before having to step outside into the world.