

## Bringing Psychohistory to One of France's Biggest Eco-Fairs

by Marc-André Cotton\*

***Abstract:** The IPA is educating the general public about psychohistorical issues through efforts such as the one described in this article. Our work has never been more timely, as supportive parenting and the adverse influence of violence in education are being debated in France and the Council of Europe is advocating a general ban on corporal punishment of children.*

In February, for the second year in a row, the IPA had a booth at Lyon's annual Eco-Fair, one of France's biggest gatherings of environmental and social activists. This thirtieth fair featured more than five hundred exhibitors and thirty thousand visitors in a three day long jubilee around progressive solutions for a sustainable future ([www.salonprimevere.org](http://www.salonprimevere.org)).

Last year, I was honored to lecture on Greed: Why Do Rich People Get Richer, from a psychohistorical point of view, at a meeting that attracted more than two hundred people; this may be viewed in French on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4gDC630ib2I>). This year, along with fellow therapist Sylvie Vermeulen, we shared an information stand on the PH perspective, displaying books in French and English as well as copies of PEPS magazine, our French quarterly on positive parenting.



*The IPA booth at the Lyon's Eco-Fair, February 2016.*

Since we were placed next to the *Amnesty International* information stand, I made up a poster with this question *Why Do We Torture?* and a brief five-point explanation of the origin of torture in traumatization and mental dissociation. This served as a conversation piece with passersby about the global consequences of violence in childrearing and the major contribution of our field in understanding human violence in general. Most people have never heard of psychohistory, some mention the fictional *Foundation Trilogy* (1951-1953) by Isaac Asimov as sole reference, but all pay close attention when I state that humans are not violent by nature. Discussion begins and many confide their own problems as former victims or concerned caretakers.

One serious obstacle is the language barrier: the French generally don't read English, the language in which most PH literature is written. These past years, I've made efforts to translate some PH concepts in French and to adapt them to a European audience, notably through our website *Regard conscient* ([www.regardconscient.net](http://www.regardconscient.net)). Readers of PEPS magazine are also familiar with psychohistory as my quarterly column regularly deals with PH notions in parenting. Books in French, such as Dr Ludwig Janus's *Introduction à la psychologie périnatale* (2015), or my own *Au nom du père, les années Bush et l'héritage de la violence éducative* (2014), do sell a bit. But visitors most often leave with a free copy of the many articles available on the stand.

This work was part of my wider effort to spread information on psychohistory and supportive parenting in the Francophone world. It should be noted that the general public is increasingly aware of the adverse influence of violence in education, as the Council of Europe moves towards a general ban of corporal punishment by its member states. The French government itself, which has been reluctant to adopt specific legislation on this matter, has just published a *Parent's book* stating that "*hitting a child has no educational value*" (Le Figaro, 4/4/2016). The Minister of Women, Family and Childhood, Laurence Rossignol, will send this booklet promoting benevolent childrearing practices to all future parents.

Recently, I've also been active on Facebook, posting PH related material within various social groups, occasionally generating a good response by users. The French translation of an article on the psychological impact of C-sections, by Greek colleague Olga Gouni, was shared more than six thousand times ([www.regardconscient.net/archi16/1603impactcesarienne.html](http://www.regardconscient.net/archi16/1603impactcesarienne.html)). These good results are an encouragement to further inform and share, a common objective to which I'm honored to contribute. All the best from Europe!

**Marc-André Cotton**

***\*Marc-André Cotton is a teacher, Geneva-based psychohistorian, and the IPA's International Vice-President. He can be reached at [contact@regardconscient.net](mailto:contact@regardconscient.net)***