A year before Froebel’s death in 1852 the Prussian government issued a ban on kindergartens. Ironically, political repression had the effect of spreading Froebel’s kindergarten pedagogy far and wide; as political activists fled across Europe and to America, many of them carrying Froebel’s ideas with them, an international Froebelian movement began to develop (Wollons, 2000; Prochnor, 2009). This chapter offers a summary of key developments.

Froebelian pedagogy crosses the globe

The 1850s was a key decade for the introduction of Froebelian pedagogy in Britain as German émigré families arrived and settled in London and elsewhere, including some who had worked with Froebel or had been taught by him (Brehony, 2000b; Read, 2000). A major educational exhibition organised by the Society of Arts in London in 1854 provided an opportunity for Froebelians to bring the kindergarten to the attention of the British public. One of these was Baroness Bertha von Marenholtz-Bülow, a key propagandist for Froebel’s pedagogy, who had observed Froebel playing with children. Looking beyond the derisive nickname, the ‘old fool’, given to Froebel, she used her influence with the Duke of Meiningen to obtain for him a country house at Marienthal for training teachers (Michaelis and Moore, 1891). Visiting London in the early 1850s, the Baroness was one of the first to lecture on Froebel, and she sent samples of the Froebel ‘Gifts’ to the 1854 exhibition. During her travels between 1854 and 1861 she also visited Paris, Belgium, Holland and Italy (Murray, 1912: 52). After returning to Germany, Marenholtz-Bülow continued to train teachers, including Emile Michaelis, first Principal of the Froebel Educational Institute [FEI], which opened in London in 1892, and Adèle de Portugall, who worked first in Manchester, then in Switzerland and Italy, where founder of the FEI Julia Salis Schwabe set up a Froebel training college and kindergarten in Naples in 1873 (Albisetti, 2002).

A second key figure in the introduction of Froebelian pedagogy to Britain was Bertha Ronge, who trained under Froebel in Hamburg and fled to England, marrying her radical second husband, Johannes, after their arrival in London in 1851. The kindergarten she opened in their home in Pond Street, Hampstead, in September 1851 was the first in Britain and catered initially
for the children of local German émigré families (Read, 2003). Their move to Tavistock Place in central London in 1853 was significant for the establishment of the Froebelian movement in Britain as it also catered for English children and Ronge began training kindergartners. Together with her husband, she opened an Association School for older children, which encouraged parent involvement, in line with Froebel’s vision. Ronge also lectured on the kindergarten at the Society of Arts exhibition in 1854 and the Society of Arts journal published an article she wrote. During the exhibition, the Tavistock Place kindergarten was open to the public, providing an exemplar of kindergarten practice which attracted visitors including Charles Dickens, who lived in nearby Tavistock Square. Dickens became an early advocate of kindergarten education and his journal *Household Words* published articles on it by its editor Henry Morley. A year later, the Ronges published the first English language guide to the kindergarten, *A Practical Guide to the English Kindergarten*, book which was reprinted several times. A translation of Marenholtz-Bülow’s *Woman’s Educational Mission* was also published in 1855. Those who trained and worked at Tavistock Place with Ronge took Froebelian pedagogy across Britain and overseas. Miss Barton opened a kindergarten in Manchester in 1857 and employed Eleonore Heerwart, who had trained under Froebel’s second wife, Luise, at Keilhau and later took Froebelian pedagogy to Dublin (Liebschner, 1991). In Britain, Manchester became second only to London in importance as a Froebelian centre, and Ronge moved there to lecture and develop training in 1859, before returning to Germany in 1860.

The third key figure in the first wave of German Froebelians who came to Britain was Beata Doreck, who arrived in 1857. Doreck formed important links with other women pressing for improved education for women, notably with Frances Mary Buss and Emily Davies (Read, 2004a); these educated, middle-class women were to become the core Froebelian kindergartners. In 1874, Doreck was instrumental in establishing the Froebel Society and was its first President until her early death in 1875; the establishment of the society undoubtedly secured the long-term future of Froebelian pedagogy in Britain.

Elsewhere in Europe, kindergartens opened in St Petersburg in 1868 and Budapest in 1869. Kindergarten initiatives known as *barnehage* (Norway) and *børnehaver* (Denmark) began in the late nineteenth century; as in Britain, these were a private enterprise for middle-class children. Training programmes for kindergarten teachers developed alongside them. The first Swedish kindergarten teachers were trained by Froebel’s great-niece, Henriette Schrader-Breymann at the Pestalozzi-Froebel-House in Berlin, an important centre for the development of Froebel’s ideas. Early in the twentieth century, the Froebel Institute was one of the first training institutes in Sweden and the Swedish Froebel Foundation began in 1918. Further afield, in the Far East, American Christian missionaries introduced the kindergarten to Japan in 1876 where it was attached to the Tokyo Women’s Normal School; here a particular cultural interpretation of Froebelian pedagogy was forged to meet the Japanese government’s preference for a Confucian kindergarten model. It was this interpretation which China subsequently adopted from 1903 (Wollons, 2000).

In America, German émigrés arrived in the mid-1850s, some coming directly from Germany and others after working elsewhere first. Some of these were associated with Ronge and her two London kindergartens. Her sister Margarethe, also trained by Froebel, came to help her run the Pond Street kindergarten. She met German fugitive Carl Schurz, and the two fell in love and decided to emigrate to America where she established the first kindergarten in Water-town, Wisconsin, in 1856 (Read, 2004b). Like Ronge’s first kindergarten in London this served German-speaking immigrants. The first kindergarten for English-speaking children in America was opened by American kindergarten pioneer Elizabeth Peabody in 1860 in Boston; like the first British kindergartens, this was private. Peabody travelled to Germany to study Froebelian pedagogy and was editor of the influential *Kindergarten Messenger*. Another significant link for the
development of the kindergarten in America associated with Ronge followed the visit by Henry Barnard, Superintendent of Schools in Connecticut, to the Society of Arts exhibition and to Ronge’s kindergarten in 1854. Barnard subsequently published an article in the *American Journal of Education* in 1856 which introduced Froebelian pedagogy more widely to the Americans and described the practices he had witnessed in London. Later in the 1850s, Maria Boelte (later Krause-Boelte) came to Britain to work with Ronge in Manchester after training with Luise Frobel in Hamburg. Ronge sent her to develop practice at the Tavistock Place kindergarten. In the early 1860s she returned to Germany and opened a kindergarten in Lubeck before travelling to New York in 1872 to run a kindergarten and training programme for mothers at the request of Peabody. With her American husband, Professor John Kraus, Kraus-Boelte opened a training college for kindergartners with a model kindergarten and published a series of handbooks on the Gifts and Occupations (Kraus-Boelte and Kraus, 1891). Publicly funded kindergartens were opened in Boston in 1870 and in St Louis in 1873 by another key American pioneer, Susan Blow.

In Australia and New Zealand, the driving force for the kindergarten movement came in the 1890s with concern for the lives of poor children. In Australia, this lead in 1895 to the founding of the Kindergarten Union in New South Wales, led by the feminist educator Maybanke Anderson; subsequently the first free kindergarten opened in 1896. Further developments came in Adelaide through the efforts of the Kindergarten Union of South Australia, which appointed Lillian de Lissa to open a free kindergarten and establish training in the Adelaide Kindergarten Training College. After becoming acquainted with Montessori pedagogy, de Lissa modified her Froebelian practice. It was this blended approach that she brought to England in 1917 as Principal of the newly-formed Gipsy Hill Training College (Whitehead, 2016). In New Zealand, a pamphlet published in 1879 proposed schools based on Froebelian pedagogy, but 10 years passed before the kindergarten movement began there, following a public meeting in Dunedin in 1889 and the opening of a free kindergarten three months later (May, 2013).

**Froebelian pedagogy re-visioned**

Froebel’s pedagogy was developed before the discoveries of Darwin on human evolution and the work of American child study psychologists such as Granville Stanley Hall, Earl Barnes and John Dewey. Their studies of young children provided insights into their mental development which supported Froebelian principles but challenged some of the ways they were being implemented (Brehony 2009). The rigid practices which developed in kindergartens in the later nineteenth century denied children opportunities for their own experimentation and were implemented by kindergartners who did not fully understand Froebel’s intentions and by teachers working with poor children. In the latter case, teaching practices reflected broader socio-political views of how working-class children should learn in preparation for their future as productive workers (Read, 2006). Also of significance for the development of revisionist Froebelian pedagogy were the psychoanalytic understandings of children’s behaviour which followed from the work of Sigmund Freud from the 1890s (see Chapter 7). In Britain and America these new understandings began to be expressed in revisionist Froebelian pedagogy from the beginning of the twentieth century (Brehony, 2000b).

**Froebelian pedagogy in the twentieth century**

In Britain, two significant early years pioneers, Margaret McMillan and Susan Isaacs, took Froebel’s ideas forward, each reflecting how Froebelian pedagogy adapted to take account of new scientific knowledge of young children’s development. However, they were not alone as many
lesser-known teachers and lecturers were also making vital contributions, first of all in infant schools and later with older children in junior schools (Brehony, 2000b; Read, 2013, 2017). Margaret McMillan (1860–1931) is renowned for her nursery school work, firstly in Deptford in south–east London and then as President of the Nursery School Association, reflecting growing interest in the education of children under 5 from the poorest families (Steedman, 1990). In 1900 the first free kindergarten opened in Woolwich (Murray, 1912). These kindergartens, providing poor children with the Froebelian experiences enjoyed by their middle–class peers since the early 1850s, were quickly re–named nursery schools (Read, 2011b). McMillan’s interest in the wellbeing of young children began in Bradford in the 1890s where her friendship with Dr James Kerr gave her insight into the impact of poor nutrition, lack of cleanliness and tiredness on children’s ability to learn (Bradburn, 1989; Steedman, 1990). Her conception of the vital importance of outdoor play in the nurturing environment of a Froebelian garden was entirely at odds with provision for these children in the babies classes of the Public Elementary Schools and McMillan became the mouthpiece for an alternative vision (McMillan c. 1923). Rachel McMillan Open-Air Nursery School at Deptford in south–east London was an exemplar of good practice and McMillan wrote extensively on the nursery school (McMillan, 1930) as well as training teachers and lecturing for the Froebel Society.

In the 1920s, Susan Isaacs (1885–1948) developed her Dewey–inspired Froebelian pedagogy from a different perspective, in her case infused with Freudian psychoanalytic conceptions learnt largely from Anna Freud and from Melanie Klein, in particular (Willan, 2009). Her school, Malting House in Cambridge, catered for a small group of children largely drawn from wealthy Cambridge families. It is particularly renowned for the experimental approach it adopted towards children’s behaviour, which gave them freedom to express themselves in word and action, with very few rules (Lawrence, 1949; Graham, 2009). Isaacs’ intention was to observe how they negotiated this freedom and its impact on their social, emotional and intellectual development; her findings formed the basis of two seminal texts (Isaacs, 1930, 1933).

In America, Patti Smith Hill (1868–1946) played a major role in promoting revisionist practice and restoring to children the creativity in using the Gifts and Occupations which was a central feature of Froebel’s practice; she recognised children’s natural drive to learn through their own efforts in the process of free play. Hill studied the work of Stanley Hall, John Dewey and others, but it was Dewey’s progressive educational principles which were of particular influence and she rejected the practice of purists who were intent on following Froebel’s prescriptions to the letter. Instead, Hill took forward Froebel’s conception of block play at the Horace Mann Kindergarten, Teachers College, New York, where she introduced the ‘Hill Kindergarten Floor Blocks’ in 1905 (Prochner, 2011). What was unique about these blocks was their size, 16 times larger than Froebel’s building and designed for floor use. Unlike Froebel’s free–standing blocks, Hill’s blocks utilised pegs, holes and grooves as a fixing mechanism, providing much needed stability for the large structures built by the children. Hill’s blocks proved an inspiration for further block developments, notably the unit blocks created by Caroline Pratt for use in the experimental Play School she opened in New York in 1914 and which became the City and Country School in 1921. During her subsequent career as lecturer and later Professor at Teachers College, Columbia University, Hill developed a curriculum for young children grounded in Froebelian pedagogy which emphasised the importance of the child’s direct contact with nature for creative expression. Pratt’s associates, Lucy Sprague Mitchell and Harriet Johnson, also made significant contributions to the dissemination of Froebel’s pedagogy, Mitchell through the Bureau of Educational Experiments and work at Bank Street College of Education, and Johnson through her experimentation with blocks in the nursery school associated with the Bureau and the City and Country School (Johnson, 1928).
Froebel's kindergarten pedagogy has travelled across the globe, taking on elements of local culture and practice as well as responding to the welter of new ideas and theories from different disciplines. Rather than becoming an increasingly outdated pedagogy, this ability to incorporate new conceptions about young children's growth and development while remaining true to core Froebelian principles has ensured its continuing relevance for teachers and practitioners into the twenty-first century.