

Murphy uses contemporary educational, social, and political writers to elucidate the ethical content of Comenius's ideas in the light of political changes in central and eastern Europe. Murphy successfully presents a counterbalance to the "secularist spirit" of many Comenius investigators partly by referring to the ideas of Havel and Skvorecky. It could be argued that the citing of contemporary thinkers to reinforce historical claims stretches the historian's traditional mandate, yet its application in this context not only accords with the author's intention, but suggests intriguing methodological problems for investigation. Put differently, the mixing of historical and contemporary commentary forces the community of historians to reconsider some more-established views of historical perception and research that perhaps have in some ways limited the study of the past.

Another question Murphy raises is the topography of the history of educational thought, an approach to enquiry that straddles disciplinary boundaries of history in its more empirical orientation, the history of ideas and philosophy, and the domain of intellectual history. This crossing of research borders invites connections between ideas and events.

Murphy's insightful analysis not only challenges earlier work on Comenius's life and work, but suggests possibilities for new research and debate. His critical reassessment is an important contribution to the history of education.

Henry W. Hodysch  
University of Alberta

Byron K. Marshall, *Learning to be Modern: Japanese Political Discourse on Education*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1994. Pp. xv, 320. US\$24.95 paper.

Japan's phenomenal rise to economic superpower status in the 1980s prompted investigation of its education system as a model for academic excellence. Strangely, there has been a dearth of research into the history of that system. Byron K. Marshall's authoritative account of the intellectual and ideological debates that shaped Japanese educational policy since the Meiji era (1868–1912) goes far to remedy this lacuna. With its useful endnotes and extensive bibliography, this survey of 150 years will be of value to students of educational history and Japanese studies alike.

*Learning to be Modern* is divided chronologically into nine chapters, each dealing with two or three decades from the end of the Tokugawa period to the present. Its underlying emphasis, however, is on politico-ideological discourses since the late 1860s. To the outsider Japan's technological achieve-

ments often overshadowed its intellectual endeavours. Yet modern Japan is an ideological battleground between "progressive" and "conservative" forces.

The "progressives" embraced western ideologies and institutions, championing universal and humanistic ideals and disparaging values traditionally Japanese. With strong links to the academic world, the labour movement, and political groups like the post-war Japan Socialist Party, the "progressives" played a formidable role in determining the direction of education. In contrast, "conservatives" held fast to the fundamental tenets of the *kokutai* (national polity) philosophy combining Tokugawa/Neo-Confucian ethics with a *gemeinschaft* conception of the organic state headed by the imperial family. Because the "conservatives" often dominated the bureaucracy and some of the most influential political groups, including the post-war Liberal Democratic Party, they are the mainstay of the "establishment."

Given his broad topic, the author wisely approaches the question of education from the vantage points of three perennial issues: centralization, elitism, and moral education/nationalism.

Since the implementation of the Gakusei Plan of 1872, which defined the structure of Japanese education, the system has been highly centralized. American reformers of the Allied Occupation (1945–52), and Japanese educators have sought to transfer power from the Ministry of Education to the local level, but as Marshall argues, the debate about who should wield power often concerned peripheral matters. Instead, the place of private schooling in secondary education, the definition of academic freedom, and more recently, teacher evaluation and the place of nationalism in the curriculum, have animated the debate over centralization. The question is how much control the central bureaucracy should have over education and what adverse effects such control may have on Japan's democratic institutions.

Western nations may incorporate pluralistic and libertarian notions of individual human development into the goals of public education. But elsewhere, this has not been so. Marshall shows that Japanese across the ideological spectrum see education as a moral and spiritual endeavour. Individuals work for greater national-utilitarian objectives. Although the introduction of universal primary schooling at the beginning of the Meiji period suggested commitment to western-style egalitarianism, within three decades the system imitated the external highly stratified and hierarchical society. Similarly, the early Meiji attempt to incorporate western ideas into the moral order was largely offset by the effort to include increasingly "nativist" elements as early as the promulgation of the Imperial Rescript on Education in 1890. Although the seeds of ultra-nationalism were found in the Rescript's emphasis on filial piety and reverence for the emperor, Marshall maintains that even during the

darkest days of the war, so-called "western learning" was not completely repudiated.

With the Allied Occupation, which sought to impose an American-styled 6-3-3 comprehensive school system, debates over moral education and elitism resumed with new vigour. Like the Meiji reforms, "progressive" initiatives after 1945 would be compromised. By the 1970s the incendiary notion of a national morality based on *kokutai* philosophy became the focal point of a controversy over textbook contents and the teaching of modern Japanese history. Similarly, meritocratic elitism returned in the guise of multi-tracking, and gender-based discrimination was revived despite the adoption of co-education. A solution to these problems remains elusive even after the recent call for a "third revolution" and significant transformations in the composition and power of the two opposing groups.

Excepting the final chapter, whose analytical force leaves something to be desired, Marshall's study is strengthened by methodical use of primary and secondary sources and of engaging anecdotal evidence. Through assiduous analysis of statistical data, Marshall lays to rest many misconceptions about the history of Japan's educational development while closely attending to social issues like women's education. Although Japan can claim that an increasingly greater proportion of women enrolls in post-secondary institutions, Marshall shows that the kind of education they receive often differs remarkably from that received by men and that they are denied access to many careers.

In a work that purports to examine the education system in historical and socio-cultural contexts, Marshall draws from various historiographical traditions. In accord with much recent scholarship demonstrating how the transformations of the Meiji period accommodated early-modern values and social trends, Marshall describes a population that valued formal learning outside the home long before the start of the modern era. Nevertheless, because the Tokugawa period provided few if any useful educational models for the Meiji reformers, initial structures and systems had to be borrowed from the West.

This does not mean public education in modern Japan had shallow roots. In showing how the national education system became an integral element of Japanese cultural experience at the opening of the twentieth century, Marshall can reasonably conclude that Japan compared favourably with and even surpassed some western countries. Similarly, the West's ethnocentric notion that modernity only came to Japan with the importation of western institutions in the Meiji period and the Occupation is exploded, for Japan learned to be modern on its own terms. The pattern of change was a steady evolution, and the drastic swings of the ultra-nationalist and Occupation periods were aberrations.

tions. World War II merely added an extra dimension to a debate that began even before the Meiji Renovation.

Because Marshall strictly adheres to the idea that Japan "is not a single, monolithic culture" (p. 1), he misses some arguably important points. In concentrating on conflicts among the "elites and counter-elites at the national level" (p. 3), this study inevitably adopts a "top-down" view. The Japanese people appear as a nondescript entity readily molded by events at the top. Marshall only hints at the degree to which the debate over elitism and multi-tracking affected the average person's way of seeing Japan's "economic miracle," and how important moral education was to the war effort when "even primary school children are said to have sometimes expressed skepticism" (p. 136). The nebulous topics of popular attitudes and perceptions lie outside Marshall's brief. *Learning to be Modern* systematically deals with the issues it outlines for itself and is a seminal work that renders the past and present of the Japanese education system eminently intelligible.

Marshall salvages the history of Japanese education so that it is no longer an "aspect" of social history, but rather a subject of study in its own right. His survey of Japan's modern period is multi-dimensional; it has relevance beyond strictly educational matters. Integrally linked to the greater socio-political, intellectual, and cultural environment, the education system becomes a barometer of the nation. Indeed, in the late twentieth century, when the goals of economic and social development have taken on unparalleled urgency, especially in Pacific and Sub-continental Asia, this work offers much that is germane to discussions on non-western education and on modernity.

Darren J. Aoki  
Lethbridge, Alberta

Christine Ruane, *Gender, Class, and the Professionalization of Russian City Teachers, 1860–1914*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburg Press, 1994. Pp. x, 258. US\$59.95 cloth.

Suite à la défaite de ses armées durant la guerre de Crimée (1853–56) et conscient que la Russie ne pourra maintenir son statut de grande puissance que si elle devient un état moderne, le tsar Alexandre II introduit une série de réformes d'envergure. L'une d'elles vise à améliorer le système d'éducation en Russie et, par ricochet, contribue à l'émergence d'une nouvelle classe d'enseignants.

Quelle est donc la situation des enseignants des niveaux primaire et secondaire à St-Petersbourg et à Moscou? Leurs conditions de travail sont difficiles: