

and its domestic Muslim allies from the purview of “true” Islam: modernists who also vehemently rejected madrasa education and Sufism. Notwithstanding editor Renat Bekkin’s assurance that Shagaviev “ranks among the most original Islamic theologians in contemporary Russia” (8), the piece has a partisan flavor in the best clerical tradition.

Other contributions advance interesting arguments that certainly merit attention from specialists. Rezeda Saifullina-Ibragimova’s article on Sufism in Tatarstan surveys different understandings of the term, while highlighting the popularity of the Cypriot Naqshbandi (some would say neo-Naqshbandi) Shaykh Nizam al-Hakkani (1922–2014) among Tatar businessmen. Zilia Khabibullina places Bashqortostan’s Islamic scene in dialogue with nationalists whose heyday in the 1980s came to an abrupt end after 1991. As a whole, the volume constitutes a valuable document concerning the rich field of debate about “traditional” Islam in Russia over the past two decades, even if the reader comes away suspecting that “nontraditional” has become an uninspiring bogeyman and fitting successor to the *qadimchi* (traditionalist) epithet deployed by modernists a century ago.

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A History of Education in Modern Russia: Aims, Ways, Outcomes. By Wayne Dowler. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022. x, 238 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Figures. \$119.00, hard bound. doi: 10.1017/slr.2023.215

In this richly detailed book, Wayne Dowler harnesses the findings of existing specialist literature on Russian education to document the policies of successive regimes and their impacts on teaching and learning in schools and tertiary instruction from the eighteenth century to the present. Beginning with Peter the Great’s inheritance of Muscovite practices, the content of each chapter is clearly signposted: an overview of political, economic, and social developments backlights Dowler’s discussions of education policy, the rationale for reform and the specifics of curricula in state, church, military, private, *zemstvo*, non-Russian and girls’ schools. Just how these measures played out is addressed in Dowler’s closing remarks on the day-to-day experience of the classroom in the given period.

As far as the imperial era is concerned, the dominant picture to emerge from Dowler’s survey is one of repeated short-circuited attempts by successive governments to modernize the educational system and varying degrees of non-compliance, whether for reasons of inertia, some resistance, or the realities of insurmountable financial burdens on the part of teachers, pupils, their parents, and local communities. On a policy level, the period witnessed repeated pendulum swings between principles of social estate integration and segregation (the latter fostered the creation of technical–vocational schools and classical gymnasia) and, likewise, a lack of clarity in government messaging regarding the ethos of education itself. The promotion of child-centered learning, for example, was repeatedly stalled by the practice of rote learning to which government authorities defaulted as a pre-emptive measure against the dangers supposedly associated with the awakening of intellectual curiosity in secondary school pupils.

Albeit in a different register, this pattern more or less repeated itself in the Soviet and post-Soviet eras. On Iosif Stalin’s watch the original merger of all existing school and tertiary level instruction into a single system of free, coeducational practice as

announced in the 1918 Declaration on the Unified Labor School was revoked, and early experiments in problem-based learning combining intellectually and socially useful manual work within the collective dropped in favor of the dual vocational and academic system. The effect was lasting; the conditions for the formation of a new Soviet intelligentsia engaged in “mental labor” were created, and, in line with Stalin’s conception of the school as “a microcosm of a disciplined and hierarchical society,” education became a conduit for indoctrination, conformity, and unquestioning loyalty to the Party and its leader (144). Later reforms by Nikita Khrushchev (1958) and Mikhail Gorbachev (1984) to revive the original Bolshevik principle of linking life to learning through labor by promoting professional-technical schools and compulsory labor training in general schools (for pupils up to age fifteen) ultimately failed to dislodge the two-track vocational and academic structure.

Works of synthesis are notoriously challenging undertakings not least because of their inbuilt constraints on coverage and the demands of narrative coherence. If, here and there, the level of background detail provided by Dowler strays into the territory of a Russian history primer, the book demonstrates quite powerfully the central importance of education as a site for understanding the mechanisms of socio-political change, the economy, top-down and center-periphery dynamics, even the cultural transfer of ideas (in this case, pedagogical theories) across borders. Perhaps, though, the real value of this study lies in its findings regarding the culture of learning. As Dowler mentions in his introduction, in most countries, education has a dual function: to develop knowledge, know-how, and intellectual understanding, but also to help foster good moral behaviors, a sense of self, and shared values as citizens. It is well known that the Russian language distinguishes between these functions, but the point to note is that while the terms *obrazovanie* and *obuchenie* (formal education, instruction, or training) are fairly straightforward, the meaning ascribed to *vospitanie* (moral upbringing, character building) is indicative of regime interests and priorities. From its original “enlightenment” context, where it was linked to ideas concerning individual empowerment and ideals of (secularized) citizenship (true, also, of some nineteenth-century liberal thought), *vospitanie* became, in the idiom of Soviet ideology, a byword for indoctrination and state control. Today, in Vladimir Putin’s vision of Russia, education qua upbringing is the pathway to national unity and patriotism based on shared Russian historical values and culture. “The line between upbringing and indoctrination,” Dowler writes, “is fine; there is room for disagreement as to when it is crossed” (2). Given the current climate in Russia one might wonder if there is any need.

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A Full-Value Ruble: The Promise of Prosperity in the Postwar Soviet Union. By Kristy Ironside. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2021. 293 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Chronology. Glossary. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Figures. Tables. \$45.00, hard bound.
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Story of the ruble in the postwar Soviet Union economy

Kristy Ironside’s book *A Full-Value Ruble: The Promise of Prosperity in the Postwar Soviet Union* focuses on the attempts to increase living standards and create prosperity during Iosif Stalin’s late leadership and the Nikita Khrushchev era. The book argues that money—in the case of the Soviet Union full-value ruble—was essential