

Tasks etc. This extremely formal organization makes *Chinese Educational Policy* a dry and difficult book to read. The rather frequent infelicitous phrases and some spelling errors add to this difficulty.

Sana'i's Persian poem "The Blind Men and the Elephant" ends thus:

Each had but known one part, no man all;
Hence into deadly error each did fall.
No way to know the All man's heart can find:
Can knowledge e'er accompany the blind?

Jan-Ingvar Löfstedt has tried very hard to know all the parts of Chinese educational policy. But his and our attempts to understand China are, perhaps, somewhat like the attempts of blind people to describe an elephant by examining only those parts of the animal near them.

Mathew Zachariah
The University of Calgary

Thomas, R. Murray (ed.) *Politics and Education: Cases From Eleven Nations*. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1983. 295 pp. \$17.95 (U.S.)

On a worldwide scale the 20th century nation-state, in all its various manifestations, has tried to control its respective populations. Whether the purpose of control is ideological purity, technological superiority, cultural uniformity or national unity, the school figures as a central institution in the molding process. Each country has declared its ideological base, set forth its policies and constructed its educational system to reflect those values that it cherishes. As the governments change, so the educational system undergoes some modification; whether the change is gradual or abrupt depends upon the nature of the circumstances. But no state however disposed to mold its population has been able to use its educational system to enforce total compliance to its own will. This is not for want of trying — and some regimes have shown themselves totally unrealistic — but rather, that educational systems are seemingly incapable of being totally organized for the purposes designated. Mass education has still not created mass mind but nations continue to exert great pressure through educational systems to effect conformity to their particular brand of nationalism.

In reading *Politics and Education: Cases From Eleven Nations* one becomes acutely aware how contemporary politics and education have become thoroughly entwined. Each case exemplifies the degree to which control of education — from the regulation of a single institution within a society to the complete identification of the educational with the political and social system — is seen necessary to carry forward the ideals of that particular society. No society is exempt; on a continuum one could allocate a place for every nation in the world using the criteria of a political domination over educational systems. There exists no wall of separation between the State and Education: everywhere State control is defended as being for the benefit of the people. Every child has a right to be educated but the State determines the exercise of that right. Education is the prerogative of the State.

Politics and Education is a compilation of eleven case studies prepared for the Comparative and International Education Society's (U.S.A.) western regional conference in 1981. As a compilation of such cases, the book produced is far better than most having been planned seemingly well in advance allowing for the kind of integration which few conferences are able to produce. Each case study has a referent in the introduction, and the conclusion is an analysis based only on the cases discussed. The editor, R. Murray Thomas, has clearly delineated the scope of the book and carefully set out the parameters within which the observations should be interpreted. In the concluding chapter, Laurence Iannaccone presents a "re-analysis" of cases and develops a typology to interpret the results. The book contains a useful map, reference at the end of each chapter, and an index; a short biography on each author is found in the preface. [Note: I am a firm believer in waste management but the Pergamon Press seems to be carrying things a mite far. The book quite literally disintegrated in my hands. I claim no special destructive powers, intentional or otherwise, so that the reader is well advised to scan the book as quickly as possible before bio-degradation sets in.] The main body of the book is divided into three sections each with its own country and case illustration. Thus, the first section is entitled Strategies For Using Education To Achieve Political Ends (West Germany, Zaire, Nicaragua, The United States of America); the second is Patterns of Majority — Minority Group Relations (The People's Republic of China, Malasia, Jamaica); the third is Multiple Group Influences On Educational Decisions (Israel, England and Wales, Canada, Cameroon). Quite plainly the scope is broad, ranging

over first, second and third world countries; but the focus is clearcut — the interaction between politics and education.

The image of the state developed by Thomas is dynamic, aggressive and interventionist regarding education. In none of the cases is the concept of benign neglect even alluded to. Even in the West German case, where, according to Hans Weiler, the state attempts to justify curricular decisions by involving groups in society to participate in the decision making process to effect "compensatory legitimation", state bureaucratic control of the educational system is not thereby tangibly weakened. In Thomas' definition politics is "the process of exercising power" and the latter is equated with wielding influence "by groups to promote their beliefs or welfare in relation to other groups." It is the struggle of wills for dominance in the field of education. For the purposes of this discussion education is conceived of as learning which is limited to "changes in mental processes and overt behavior." It is affirmed that a reciprocal relationship exists theoretically between the two, but as all the cases indicate, politics is paramount. Borrowing from biology, the relationship is further described as symbiotic, intimating from Aristotelian precedent, that an interdependence exists, that the one is not vivified except by the other. That theoretically the inferior organism can also be parasitic eg. education as consumption, is not explored. Both education and politics are processes, shaping and shaped by the societies they animate; Cremin's ecology of education encapsulates the whole.

In the concluding chapter, Iannaccone structures the eleven case studies on the basis of degrees of politicization of education systems within each country. In re-classifying he adds the dimension of "expansion of political conflicts" over education in scale, intensity and scope. He also strongly avers that "within education conflicts" overflow educational structures to become salient issues in the political arena. One could have expected Iannaccone, given his own background, to argue strongly and with justification in the examples he cites from the eleven cases, that this dimension must also be included. On his scale, England and Wales, and Israel, fall in the category of Low-Low Politicization of education; the USA, Canada, and West Germany are in the Low-Medium range; Malaysia, Cameroon and Jamaica are Medium-High; and Zaire, Nicaragua, and China are High. In the last case education is an isomorph of the state in that there is no meaningful difference between the general and educational politics of a nation.

The parallel with a theocratic states comes immediately to mind. In a theocratic state there exists a relationship of identity between church and state so that church laws and state laws share an identity of interest and the superior force of state power is used to enforce church law. In a similar view in an 'educratic' state education laws are made and implemented by government bodies. [I am as averse to neologisms as any Ciceronian, but if we must put up with theocratic, then let us also have educratic.] And in one sense we have identity of interest in every existing state where the political ideology of the state is *de lege* and in many instances *de facto* the ideology of the school system. And if a trend is to be observed, it is in the direction of even more government intervention in the school system than less — the present policies of the U.S. federal government excepted. And since Iannaccone indulges in historical antecedents in justifying his conclusions, so also it might be appropriate to observe that the Roman Empire, according to Marrou, sought to make teaching compulsory during its decline in the 4th century A.D. No historian has yet claimed the establishment of state control of education was a reason for the Empire's demise. Perhaps the most that can be said is that where all else failed, the populace was forced to undergo education in desperation to shore a crumbling edifice, and to no avail.

Iannaccone's schema refers explicitly to the eleven case studies in the book and only to those elements found within each study. No argument is made that those elements are the most representative of the politics-education nexus, nor are they the most prominent in professional and public awareness. The West German case study for example zeroes in on curriculum formation whereas the recent federal election there was in part over comprehensive schools. In the England and Wales case study comprehensive education is mentioned, but nothing is said of Margaret Thatcher's first initiative as prime minister to stop further development along this line. This very political act alone is sufficient to question Iannaccone's placing England and Wales in the lowest politicization category. The Israel case study concentrates on vocational education and the change in structure from 8-4 to 6-3-3; but Palestinian education and the political decisions as to what kind of schooling would be permitted on the occupied West Bank are omitted. This later consideration would certainly militate against a low politicization category. To re-iterate, the case studies proceed only a short distance into the examination of the politics and education within each country, they are not meant to be understood as

archetypes in their respective areas. In consequence, Iannaccone's schema for classification is valid only in so far as it pertains to the descriptions at hand.

In the Nicaraguan case study, the tone is one of breathless immediacy. The author, Richard J. Kraft, was a participant in American educational aid to that country and his first-hand account narrows the range of objective interpretation. There is a good deal of breast-beating over American involvement and reluctant acknowledgement that some American initiative was beneficial. Of course, in his view, Nicaragua is only another instance of the spirit of national liberation over imperial bondage, or the people vs. the Somoza family, as American surrogates. He does admit that there were massive enrolment increases in the 60's and 70's and that the literacy campaign was succeeding. He is too innocent, however in objecting to the cultural baggage accompanying the educational aid. Any and every literacy campaign carries with it social, political, cultural and religious values in the real historical context in which it operates. Literacy is not disembodied pure form but includes real-life content and is value-laden. With the Sandinista reform, the literacy campaign will continue and the several thousand Cuban "teachers" imported will see to it that the "right" values are instilled. Kraft's argument that the country is predominantly Roman Catholic and that several of that faith hold prominent government positions thereby justifying the non-Marxist aspect of the reform is vacuous. The Pope delivered a public reprimand to "Catholic" government ministers during his visit there. The parallel with Poland is too obvious where the overwhelming majority of that country's citizens are Roman Catholic yet they are ruled by a clique of Communists. With the Solidarity reforms, Marxist indoctrination was tossed out of the schools, but with martial law the atheistic dogmas were immediately re-imposed. So much for popular national liberation. (See Viet Nam).

On the other hand majority rule has its prerogatives and its drawbacks: the Malaysian study is a case in point. It highlights compensatory education for the majority who happen to be Malays in the process of ordering their own country for their own benefit. The country is in the process of redressing the balance among the major ethnic groups Malay, Chinese and Indian. During the period of British colonialism, the Chinese and Indian ethnic groups were permitted economic power and influence far out of proportion to their actual numbers. With independence, the Malays have taken over in government, education, the economy and religion. The Chinese educational "system" with its erstwhile Maoist orientation has been disassembled. English as the language of the "powerful" has been downgraded and replaced by Malay. The educational system has been structured to allow Malays to compete successfully for the top positions in every national institution. In consequence, economic power now is being transferred to Malays, and out of the hands of the Chinese minority. Islam has been proclaimed the national religion and is taught to all children in the school system. All this has been accomplished without violence, and with grudging acceptance by the minority. Thomas thinks that the continuous growth of the standard of living over the last decades and the perception by the minorities that they still have a prominent, albeit attenuated, role to play in a national life has restrained overt opposition to the reforms. The parallel with Quebec comes immediately to mind; the rights of a minority are what the majority say they are.

Iannaccone's conclusion is to the effect that the stronger the legitimacy of the state, the clearer the institutional separation between education and politics. One could take this to its logical extension, as has Ilich, and propose that education be taken entirely out of the hands of the state and left entirely to the people. In this minimalist conception of the state, advocated by political philosophers such as Robert Nozick, the state intervenes out of necessity, leaving the widest latitude for individual and group action outside legal structures. Conversely, when government is least secure, education becomes fully politicized, an isomorph of the state. From its ideological underpinnings to its practical manifestations at every level in the educational structure, learning is whatever government says it is. In societies where one man rule is/was the norm (Zaire, Maoist China, Cameroon) education is what the Leader says it is. If one were to guess in which direction the political-education relationship was heading, one could make a solid case for further politicization with attendant ramifications.

Stephen T. Rusak
University of Toronto

Thompson, Norma H. (ed.) *Religious Education and Theology*. Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1982, 254 pp. \$12.95 (U.S.) paper.

Under a quiet and unassuming title, Norma Thompson has assembled a provocative collection of widely contrasting views about the relationship between religious education and theology. Each of the