with the introduction of new concepts into China’s traditional system. The introduction of ideas of social and class conflict provided China with perceptual tools that helped to undermine the old order in China. Finally, George Alexander Lensen concludes that Russia’s impact on Japan over the past century “has been remarkably slight in terms of direct effect on Japanese institutions.” Only in the area of literature, where the Japanese recognized the supremacy of the Russian novel, did the Japanese borrow freely.

In general, Russia and Asia is well-written and provides an excellent introduction to the subject of Russian relations with the Asian peoples of the “empire.” The excellent documentation of several of the articles will be of special benefit to the neophyte, and the detailed index will facilitate use of the book for reference purposes.

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The main themes of this monograph are outlined in the preface and comprehensively restated in the book’s concluding chapter (chapter 8). According to Sinel, Tolstoi was a centralizing bureaucrat who unswervingly worked to make Russia’s educational system equal to the best in Europe, to meet the needs of reforming Russia, and to safeguard autocracy. What he in fact achieved was a “series of compromises that advanced Russian education, yet antagonized much of the literate society and still did not prevent the elite of the state so carefully trained from flowing in ever-increasing numbers into the revolutionary movement.” (p. 257)

Professor Sinel sees in Tolstoi’s “strategy” the prime reason for this failure. Of the major policy alternatives available, he points out, only the establishment of “rigorous state control over faculty and students . . . truly appealed to Tolstoi.” (p. 258) For the sake of quality, the minister resisted pressures on behalf of gentry interests and caused the percentage decline in upper-class students between 1866 and 1881. In pursuit of his own convictions, he ignored the public mood and placed reliance upon bureaucratic controls and repressive measures without ever having the manpower required to insure the success of such an approach. One problem, according to Sinel, was that Tolstoi held to the “erroneous assumption that the causes of unrest and disaffection were primarily to be found in the youthful ego’s susceptibility to the blandishments of professional agitators and not in the existing conditions in Russia or in the nature of the educational system.” (p. 261) In the end, Tolstoi’s refusal to recognize a need for public support brought about his dismissal from the Ministry of Education but not the collapse of the system his policies had created. And as this volume makes clear, despite its shortcomings, the Tolstoi system contributed significantly to the advance of the concept of quality public (classless, i.e., merit) education.

Sinel offers his monograph as “a more balanced assessment of one of tsardom’s most important bureaucrats.” (p. viii) He reminds his readers that, official and semificial accounts excepted, Tolstoi has customarily been assessed very negatively by pre- and post-revolutionary Russian scholars and contends that most western scholars accepted such views too uncritically. He accepts Patrick Alston’s conclusions (Education and the State in Tsarist Russia) as closest to his own but finds Alston’s topic too broad to permit the depth attempted in his monograph. Nicholas Hans (History of Russian Educational Policy), in Sinel’s judgement, overstated his case when he presented Tolstoi’s policies as a logical sequence to those of Alexander Golovnin’s, Tolstoi’s “liberal” predecessor. For Tolstoi—in continuing to emulate the Western, primarily German, educational approach—ignored what to Sinel is a crucial fact: With his accession to governmental power, the issue for many Russians was no longer how much Russian policies were in line with Europe but to what extent they were an attack upon the policies of Golovnin which by then had come to be regarded as the Russian “norm” against which to measure progress and reaction. (p. 128) Support for Tolstoi became tantamount to supporting reaction. This is a significant point and Sinel develops it cautiously in his assessment of the first four years of Tolstoi’s ministry. In his conclusions, however, Sinel’s position becomes more categorical than the evidence presented warrants. To say the least, one would have liked to see Sinel’s arguments developed more directly in the context stressed by Alston and others, namely that the effect upon Russia of the unification of Germany had much to do with emotional attitudes. Did foreign policy developments or Golovnin’s “liberal” policies, in the last analysis, induce Russians to search for Russian “norms”? Indeed, Sinel’s own analyses often warn against his pronounced tendency to offer categorical juxtapositions or conclusions concerning given issues.

Although not formally so, this study consists of two major parts: Chapters 1 to 3 (85 pp.) set the historical, political, biographical, and administrative stage for the Tolstoi reforms. Chapters
to 7 (168 pp.) examine in detail Tolstoi’s educational policies with the specific objective of determining “just how well his department managed to resolve the dilemma of educational progress. . . .” (p. ix) Policies affecting secondary education deservedly receive the most attention. Sinel wisely adds a word of caution: While intended as a thorough examination of the ministry’s major institutions of learning, his study “makes no attempt to survey every aspect of Russian education.” (p. ix) Private, female and technical schools, the military schools, and the schools in the Russian borderlands merit little attention either because they enrolled relatively few students, were outside the sphere of control of Tolstoi’s ministry, or because it would “take a separate monograph to explore adequately the unique problems of educating the non-Russian nationalities and the great variety of projects introduced.” (p. x) These “jurisdictional limits” of the Tolstoi ministry offer a “logical boundary” for Sinel’s study, but his thesis demands expansion of the “chronological limits (1866-1880),” to include a comprehensive review of Golovnin’s programs and an analysis of the university legislation of 1884. The latter “was basically the same plan he had submitted to the State Council in 1880, an integral part of his educational reforms.” (p. x) One can sympathize with the author as he seeks to reduce the wealth of his materials to manageable proportions. But can a discussion of Tolstoi omit the question of female education without peril to balance and thoroughness? And would not Sinel’s emphasis upon Tolstoi’s refusal to transform his schools into institutions for indoctrination demand no less an answer to questions about the minister’s educational policies within the broader context which includes Russia’s borderlands? There, indoctrination was not only a conscious policy but also had important repercussions for the heartland. Through the offer of substantially higher salaries Russian teachers were enticed to accept positions where the government wanted them for political reasons even though this meant that Russian schools, already suffering from teacher shortages, were left with greater problems. (Page 233 speaks of large sums committed to the border regions. These were in part used for such purposes! )

The question of indoctrination has more dimensions than this monograph admits and Sinel, in his pursuit of main themes, at times tends to treat crucial issues too tangentially. His determination to limit the scope of his investigation too often forces him to restrict himself to pointing out his personal awareness of a broader context. He reminds the reader that his study belongs in a broader frame; that Russia throughout her history always did maintain a pluralistic approach to education; that the Ministry of Education controlled less than half of Russia’s schools; (p. 84) etc. But how much were Tolstoi’s policies really less personal and more a manifestation of the autocracy’s general attempt at recentralization as it realized the political impact of the Emancipation upon its own position? (p. 73) Criticism of Tolstoi, of his unpopularity, was admittedly often not a question of fundamental philosophical disagreement but disagreement over approach. The battle between the classroom and the chancellery, between public opinion and autocracy, included the debate then in progress everywhere in Europe over the respective merits of “realism” and “classicism” and of local initiative and centralization. But precisely because Russian intellectuals were participating in the mainstream of Central and Western European thought, even though their country’s social and economic development and political structure were still closer to where Europe had been generations earlier, more attention to the social and economic matrix was required than this study offers.

Sinel’s consideration of specific problems often would have been more satisfactory, and the conclusions offered more acceptable, had the author developed them more consciously within this broader and deeper context. His account is rich in perceptive insights. This is its strength and value despite the lingering feeling that its implicit value judgments at times more than the author realizes reflect the persuasiveness of the very sources (especially memoirs) against which he warns in his introduction. Did the context in which a specific comment was made truly justify its use as proof? A separate, or at least a longer monograph, perhaps, would have satisfied more fully the questions raised here and there in the reader’s mind. Nonetheless, the book deserves recognition as a thorough analysis of Tolstoi’s policies based on extensive use of published Russian, English, and German primary and secondary sources. For the Tolstoi period (but not for Golovnin, although no less accessible), the monograph also taps unpublished doctoral dissertations completed at American universities in the last decade. Some of Sinel’s conclusions relating to Tolstoi’s personality may strike some readers as too sweeping for such narrow foundation, but information about Tolstoi’s personal life is sparse and is brought together here as fully as seems possible without access to archives. Sinel’s study makes clear that the German educational experience is important to a proper understanding of Russian education.

The author does cite German sources. One only wishes that a work so admirably free of typographical errors in its Russian transliterations and its text (only minor slips such as “o uchitel’-skikh”, instead of ob, ch. 7, fn. 16; Russian titles in footnotes are sometimes translated, other times not. This inconsistency is not explained.) had also resisted the temptation to declare war on