



# National Literacy Campaigns: Historical and Comparative Perspectives

*R.F. Arnove, H.J. Graff*

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We came to the task of editing this book from different disciplines and back grounds but with a mutuality of interest in exploring the concept of literacy campaigns in historical and comparative perspective. One of us is a professor of comparative education who has participated in and written about literacy campaigns in Third World countries, notably Nicaragua; the other is a comparative social historian who has written on literacy campaigns in Western history. Both of us believed that literacy could only be understood in particular As Harvey Graff has noted, "to consider any of the ways in historical contexts. which literacy intersects 'with social, political, economic, cultural, or psychological life ... requires excursions into other records.") Thus, we have set out in this edited collection to explore some five hundred years of literacy campaigns in vastly different societies: Reformation Germany, early modern Sweden and Scotland, the nineteenth-century United States, nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Russia and the Soviet Union, pre Revolutionary and Revolutionary China, and a variety of Third World countries in the post-World War II period (Tanzania, Cuba, Nicaragua, and India). In addition, we have included studies of the UNESCO-sponsored Experimental World Literacy Program and recent adult literacy efforts in three industrialized Western countries (the United Kingdom, France, and the United States).

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