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## NEWS OF THE PROFESSION

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VÁCLAV PŘÍHODA, 1889–1979

Václav Příhoda, the Czech educational reformer, psychologist, and teacher, died in Prague on November 18, 1979. He was ninety. His personal dynamism and clear thinking indelibly impressed all who knew him. It was Příhoda, more than anyone else, who introduced the teaching profession of the interwar Czechoslovak Republic to advanced American ideas in psychology, curriculum design, and school organization. These ideas stimulated a movement for educational modernization which Příhoda led in the decade before World War II and briefly after it.

Příhoda was born in Sány, near Poděbrady, on September 7, 1889, one of ten children. After studying philology at the Czech University in Prague, he taught languages in secondary schools, but then turned to pedagogy under the influence of František Krejčí, Otakar Chlup, and other academic positivists. In the 1920s he visited the United States, where he took courses at the Universities of Chicago and Wisconsin and at Columbia University with John Dewey, Franklin H. Giddings, and Edward Lee Thorndike. Impressed by these men, especially Thorndike, he returned to Czechoslovakia an apostle of the elective system, the unified school, textbook revision, standardized testing and measurement, and democratic school organization. He advocated that religion be removed from public education, that instruction be systematized, and that schools imbue democratic ideals by precept and example. Later in life he conceded his excessive enthusiasm for his beliefs, but he never abandoned them.

In the twenties and thirties Příhoda taught in Prague at the School for Higher Pedagogical Studies, the Pedagogical Academy, and Charles University, where he attained the rank of full professor in 1945. After his *Habilitationsschrift* was published in 1924 as *Psychologie a hygiena, zkoušky*, he went on to produce over four hundred articles, brochures, and books. During World War II, under the Nazi occupation, he helped an underground teachers' movement to plan for postwar educational reforms, but his hopes were dashed when the Soviet school model was imposed instead. His criticism of Minister of Education Zdeněk Nejedlý on this issue led to the closing of his university seminar in pedagogy in 1951 and his transfer to the department of psychology, where he served until retirement in 1960.

On a visit to the United States in 1924, Příhoda met and married Melissa Clark, an American artist, who became his devoted companion till her death in 1977. Well into his eighties Příhoda exhibited great mental and physical energy. He bicycled thirty-five miles daily, took Turkish baths regularly, and guided visitors on brisk walks through his beloved Prague. The fourth and final volume of his most ambitious work, *Ontogeneze lidské psychiky*, appeared in 1974, and he revised earlier volumes published in the 1960s for second editions. Thereafter he completed a book-length manuscript describing his experiences as a teacher, and, until the onset of blindness at eighty-eight, was writing his memoirs.

A foe of dogmatism, a zealous teacher, a warm friend, Václav Příhoda was an extraordinary man.

STANLEY B. WINTERS

*New Jersey Institute of Technology*

JAN MARINUS MEIJER, 1923–1980

Jan Marinus Meijer, professor of Russian philology and literature at the University of Utrecht, the Netherlands, died in Amsterdam on April 22, 1980, after a long and bravely endured illness.

Born on June 18, 1923, in Hoenderloo, Holland, Meijer graduated from Gymnasium B in Gouda in 1940 and obtained his degree in law from the Free University of Amsterdam in 1945. After serving as a barrister for four years, Meijer began Russian studies at the University of Amsterdam, obtaining his first degree in 1951 and his Ph.D. degree in 1955. His thesis, *The Russian Colony in Zurich, 1870–73*, was based on research in Zurich, Paris, London, and Amsterdam. His work as head of the Russian department of the International Institute of Social Studies in Amsterdam led to his next publication, the complete edition of the Trotskii papers, 1917–1922 (two vols. [The Hague: Mouton, 1964–71]), which the institute had acquired in 1936 and of which Harvard University obtained a typescript copy in 1940. Meijer's greatest interest, however, was Russian literature, especially that of the nineteenth century, and he turned to this increasingly when he became professor at Utrecht in 1965. His publications included essays on Pushkin, Dostoevskii, Chekhov, medieval Russian literature, verbal art as interference between a cognitive and an aesthetic structure, and the relationships between the inertia of science, the history of codes, and the dynamics of reading. A pillar of Russian studies in the Netherlands, especially as chairman of the Dutch Slavic Association, Meijer was also active as an editor, encouraging his colleagues to continue their research and helping to edit their publications.

Jan possessed an innate sense of fairness and great clarity of thought and expression. A man of wide interest and deep knowledge, he was a demanding teacher and critic who expressed his views so generously that all respected his judgments. He was "een rechtschapen man," a just man, a man of probity, a noble man.

A visiting professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in the fall of 1961 and at Queens in 1964–65, he was also at home in Moscow and Leningrad and in most European cities. He was particularly active in promoting the exchange of scholars and graduate students between the Netherlands and the Soviet Union. Enviably fluent in English, French, German, and Russian and in command of other languages as well, Meijer won affection and respect wherever he taught and worked. He will be missed by friends and colleagues in many countries.

ROBERT F. BYRNES  
*Indiana University*