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Formations theory in soviet school textbooks on general history

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Abstract

The purpose of the article is to analyze the Soviet experience of representing the world's historical process in the framework of the theory of changing social formations via the content analysis of Soviet

school textbooks in relation to the formations-based structuring of history. As a result, the idea of a proletarian revolution was, according to the authors of textbooks, replaced by a bet on petty- bourgeois forces. In conclusion, in the USSR it was possible to create an integral model of systematic historical education in schools that allows solving current ideological problems.

Keywords: Formations, Universal history, School textbook.

Teoría de las formaciones en libros de texto escolares soviéticos sobre historia general

Resumen

El propósito del artículo es analizar la experiencia soviética de representar el proceso histórico del mundo en el marco de la teoría de las formaciones sociales cambiantes a través del análisis de contenido de los libros de texto escolares soviéticos en relación con la estructuración de la historia basada en formaciones. Como resultado, la idea de una revolución proletaria fue, según los autores de los libros de texto, reemplazada por una apuesta por las fuerzas pequeñoburguesas. En conclusión, en la URSS fue posible crear un modelo integral de educación histórica sistemática en las escuelas que permita resolver los problemas ideológicos actuales.

Palabras clave: Formaciones, Historia universal, Libro de texto escolar.

1. INTRODUCTION

The relevance of Studying the Soviet Experience of Teaching Universal History at School. The concept of state historical policy, as well as the concept of national memory policy, which is close to it, only recently entered a wide public circulation and received recognition at the scientific level. The concepts implied that in addition

to the actual cognitive function the history has another function associated with the solution of state and social problems. Today, the school history textbook is considered one of the most important tools of state historical policy. It does not only reflects the appropriate level of development of historical science, but also axiological attitudes implemented by the state - the formation of a unified identity, the motivation of society to achieve, and the legitimization of the system of the state organization.

Among these directions of the school history textbook, there is a claimed model of self-determination of the corresponding community within the framework of the world-historical process, positioning its place in the past, present, and future of humanity. It is appropriate in this regard to talking about the historiosophy of the school history textbook. In the USSR, the concept of historiosophy, as we know, was not used, being attributed to the reflection of idealistic philosophy. Nevertheless, in reality, historical materialism, which is the basis of any humanitarian and social studies educational literature, was the Soviet version of historiosophy. It provided an answer to the question about the meaning of the world-historical process and the role of the Soviet community in it (and this role was Central) (FERRO, 1992).

A wide public discussion in Russia was caused by the order of the President of the Russian Federation in 2013 to form a unified history textbook. The tasks of implementing this task are faced with the fundamental problem of adopting a particular version of the concept of the historical process and, accordingly, with the associated

with it a methodology of history. Discussions continue after the adoption of the Historical and cultural standard in 2014, which was criticized, in particular, for the lack of a coherent concept of world-historical development.

In the context of these discussions, it is appropriate to refer to the experience of Soviet history textbooks' formation. The educational content in them was built on a matrix reproduced in each year of study of the world-historical scheme of humanity's formation development (BAK, KARDIS, VALCO, KALIMULLIN, GALUSHKIN, 2019). The doctrine of five successive socio-economic formations was the main structuring principle of the educational material on universal history. In itself, this structuring, if we do not take into account the ideological aspects and adaptability of the formational approach to the real development of world-historical processes, was of great importance in terms of systematization and consolidation of students' knowledge of history. The doctrine of formations was a matrix on which new factual material acquired in the course of educational activity was strung (AVDEEV, AVDEEVA, SHAGIEVA, SMIRNOVA, MASHKIN & TARADONOV, 2019).

The presence of this matrix made it possible to have a complete vision of universal history and easily restore the details of historical fact study in memory. Today, in the absence of such structuration, as shown by monitoring the residual knowledge of students, modern schoolchildren and school gradulators have big problems in terms of forming historical consciousness and mastering the basic competencies

related to history. It seems appropriate to turn to the Soviet experience of school presentation of the world-historical process through the prism of actual challenges of teaching history at school. Turning to the Soviet practice of forming history textbooks in school does not mean calling for a new reproduction of the model of the formation-based approach. What is important in this case is the experience of implementing the principles of conceptualization and structuring of historical material. For this consideration, textbooks on General history were taken, divided in accordance with the Soviet tradition of periodization into textbooks on four historical stages-the Ancient World, the Middle Ages, Modern times and the newest times.

2. METHODOLOGY

The genesis of the Formation-Based Approach and its Implementation in Soviet School Education. We can say that the formational approach in its classical form was formed largely in the framework of solving the problems of educational transpositions of Marxism. K. Marx presented the theory of formations in Soviet textbooks on history and social science. The Creator of the Marxist doctrine himself presented the ideas of the formative approach in a sketchy way and did not express them in a rigid scheme. In the Preface to Marx's Critique of the political economy of 1859, he correlated formations with four modes of production - Asian, antique, feudal, and capitalist. This division differed significantly from the five-membered

scheme that later became classic in the Soviet educational literature (DYUKOV, 2010).

It is known that there was no Asian or ancient formation United within a single slave system. The primitive communal formation that appeared later in Soviet textbooks was also absent from Marx's list. These contradictions between the school canonized version and the actual Marxist scheme will form the basis of several methodological debates about the Asian method of production. There was also a reference in Marx's later works to another mode of production, the German method, which is also ignored in the canonical five-member model.

In modern journalism, there is a common view that the author of the doctrine of the five formations was GOLIN, KUZMENKO & LOIBERG (1963), for which there are no real grounds. The view of the five-member division of world history: primitive-communal, slave-owning, feudal, capitalist, and Communist formations, divided by the dominant industrial relations and forms of ownership, was established in reality as a canonical position only in the 1930s. Before this, some discussions revealed contradictions between the positions of Marxist Universalists and Marxists who allowed for variable models of development of individual social communities. The variation was addressed primarily to the countries of the East, where the domination of the slave-owning, feudal, and capitalist mode of production (especially the slave-owning one) was highly questionable. There were also objections about the applicability of this scheme concerning the

history of Russia, although with less active polemical intensity in view of the fact of the presence of Lenin's works, proving in a discussion with the folks the accomplished Russian transition to capitalism (ILYUSHECHKIN, 1986).

The Universalists won in the end. Not least of all, their victory was affected by the need for educational adaptation of Marxism. For textbooks, a more simplified scheme was required, with fewer exceptions, with a more accentuated proof of the validity of historical laws, and, accordingly, of the predestination of the predicted Communist future.

A famous Marxist orientalist GOLIN, KUZMENKO & LOIBERG (1963) played a particularly prominent role in the justification of the universality of the formation five-member system, who found approaches to removing the particularly acute issue of the lack of domination of slavery in the countries of the Ancient East. Struve defined Eastern societies as early slave-owning ones, treating domestic slavery as a form of slavery within large communal farms. The thesis about the early slave-owning States of the East was further emphasized in the training of teachers-historians (for example, in the textbook for teachers' institutes on the Ancient world edited by (DYAKOV & NIKOLSKY, 1952). The same idea was developed in school textbooks on the history of the Soviet republics (for example, in the textbook on the history of the Georgian SSR, with the corresponding interpretation, for example, of the Colchis and Kartli States) (BERDZENISHVILI, 1960).

The canonization of the Formational 5-membership in Soviet historiography takes place after the publication in 1938 of GOLIN, KUZMENKO & LOIBERG (1963) work on dialectical and historical materialism. With an appeal to the Stalinist position on the five formations, educational and methodical recommendations on the organization of the study of universal history in school are issued until the mid-1950s. Only after the beginning of Khrushchev's de-Stalinization did these appeals disappear, being replaced not quite correctly by appeals to the authority of Karl Marx.

Of the actual works of the classics of Marxism, the work of F. Engels the Origin of the family, private property and the state was of particular importance for the Soviet school version of the methodology of world history. The initial period of history was described in Soviet textbooks entirely according to the Genesis scheme described there. The reference point for the Soviet school version of history was Engels' position about the state as a tool in the hands of the ruling class. The state of antiquity was determined by the tool of the slaveholders to suppress slaves, medieval as a weapon of the nobility to suppress the serfs and dependent peasants, bourgeois as a tool of capitalist exploitation of wage labor.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Primitive Community Formation. Primitive community structure in the earliest versions of the school textbook on the history

of the Ancient world was given a very limited amount in the structural grid. In the textbook on the history of the Ancient world edited by GOLIN, KUZMENKO & LOIBERG (1963), four pages are devoted to the entire primitive communal system, and in the textbook of BERDZENISHVILI (1960) seven pages (AGIBALOVA & DONSKOY, 1981). As Soviet textbooks evolved, the amount allocated to the study of primitive society increased. In the fifth- grade textbook of BERDZENISHVILI (1960) on the history of the Ancient World, published in 1962, the primitive communal system has already fourteen pages of text. Prehistoric Society, due to the lack of a written historical narrative, could not be represented through the storyline of the narrative. To follow the path of presenting the General evolutionary scheme of history seemed rather risky when applied to the fifth class. As early as the 1920s, there were discussions among teachers about whether Darwin's teaching should be taught in schools since there was a danger that students would not be able to perceive the material at the level of abstractions. Nevertheless, the expansion of the amount allocated to the study of primitive society inevitably led to the strengthening of the theoretical components of education, which, in principle, the Soviet fifth-graders coped with.

In accordance with the Marxist methodology for determining the basis of the superstructure, the material was also structured. At first, students were given information about improving tools. In the textbook of GOLIN, KUZMENKO & LOIBERG (1963), it was emphasized that the ability to make tools was the main difference between a person and an animal. Thus, it was the labor understanding

of human nature (Marxist anthropology) that was taken as the basis. Next, we described social relations - the transition from the family to the neighbor-based community. The description of the primitive communal system ended with the characteristic of primitive culture. Culture in the Marxist scheme was positioned as a superstructure and this logic was given traditionally at the very end of the corresponding sections. In modern school textbooks, this tradition is preserved by inertia, although it no longer has the same methodological significance. The result of this approach is particularly significant fixed gaps in the knowledge of Russian and previously Soviet schoolchildren on the history of world culture, which is considered as the least significant part of the characteristics of historical models.

Special attention in the section of primitive culture was paid to the origin of religion. The Genesis of religious ideas was associated with the impotence of ancient man to explain the action of natural forces. It is characteristic that in the textbook edited by BERDZENISHVILI (1960) in 1943, there was no information about primitive religion at all, which can be explained by some warming in the religious policy of the USSR during the war. In subsequent versions of the Soviet school textbook on the history of the Ancient world, criticism of religion's origin, as initially false views about the world around us, increases.

Since the nineteenth century, the bourgeoisie, according to the scheme of Soviet school literature, moves entirely to counter-revolutionary positions. The author of a textbook on modern history

BERDZENISHVILI (1960), writes about the betrayal of the bourgeoisie, which was manifested in the revolutions of 1848-49. The proletariat becomes the main revolutionary force from that time, which was theoretically legitimized in the Manifesto of the Communist party. The proletarian stage in the history of the revolutionary movement begins. The Paris commune characterized the first proletarian revolution. In this connection, the textbook asserted the historical inevitability not only of the proletarian victory itself but also of the establishment of the proletariat's dictatorship because of the revolutionary struggle. Opponents of the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship in the socialist movement - followers of Bakunin and Proudhon-were criticized.

The second part of the history of new times covered the period of Soviet school textbooks from 1871 to 1917. The defining phenomenon of this period was the phenomenon of imperialism, understood as the highest and last stage of capitalism. Being connected with the legacy of V. I. Lenin, the theory of imperialism was given special attention in Soviet textbooks of New and Modern history (AVERYANOV, GALKIN, ZUBOK, MANUSEVICH, ORLOV & KHVOSTOV, 1977). It showed the inevitable internal collapse of imperialism, leading humanity to a global war. This war was, according to Soviet textbooks, the First World War (AVERYANOV, GALKIN, ZUBOK, MANUSEVICH, ORLOV & KHVOSTOV, 1980). The way out of the impasse of the inter-imperialist struggle was seen in the socialist revolution, which abolished capitalism itself. It would seem that these provisions in the theory of imperialism are

outdated, and capitalist society has found internal resources for renewal. Nevertheless, today, in the context of increasing military escalation, this theory again reveals certain cognitive potentials.

The same can be said considering the history of capitalist crises in Soviet textbooks. Capitalist crises were one of the Central themes of Soviet social science in General. It is shown that crises are inherent in the very nature of capitalist society, and their destructive effect will eventually be the destruction of the entire system of capitalism. At one time, there was a perception that the capitalist crises were a thing of the past, but the new global financial and economic crisis that broke out in 2008 led to a new update of Soviet developments in criticism of capitalism (of course, with proofreading corresponding to the changes that occurred and the accumulated knowledge).

Tsarist Russia was also assessed as an imperialist state in textbooks. It was criticized as an invading state, an imperialist, along with other world imperialists. However, the concept of tsarism was emphasized, which somewhat separated the political regime from Russia (BERDZENISHVILI, 1960).

Transition to the Communist Formation, the International System of Socialism. Modern history, correlated with the existence of socialist States in the world, was built in Soviet textbooks methodologically fundamentally different from previous historical periods. In other historical periods, Russia was removed from the world-historical process. It arose only indirectly in connection with

certain wars with its participation. In the presentation of Modern history, the USSR was the axis of world processes. The history of other States was described largely as a certain attitude to the existence of the Soviet Union and the world socialist system of States. In some cases, the USSR acted as a reference point and a source of assistance, for others, as a threat and alternative. Today, in the context of discussions about how to relate Russian history to the history of the world, the Soviet experience of presenting Modern history is of particular interest. In particular, it was possible to create a model of a Russian-centric (earlier Soviet-centric) version of world history and to avoid national peripheralization.

Communist guidelines in the vision of the future development of the world were preserved even in the late Soviet history textbooks. The textbook of Modern history, edited by FURAEV (1982), opened with a statement about the historical inevitability of the transition from capitalism to communism. The October revolution was evaluated there as the first victorious act of the world socialist revolution (FURAEV, 1982). The position of the world socialist revolution was thus preserved in textbooks in the 1980s when the public discourse was already moving in a completely different direction. A textbook on Modern history (1939-1981), also published in the early 1980s, ended with the words about the victory of communism throughout the world. It was pointed out that the contradictions between capitalism and socialism were growing. Nothing like the convergence ideas that were being spread among the Soviet elite was found in the history textbooks intended for the masses.

The October revolution was positioned as the single greatest event in the history of humanity. The victory of October, as stated in the preamble of the textbook on Modern history, changed the course of human development. Along with its social significance, the role of the October revolution in the destruction of the world system of colonialism was emphasized. A high and positive assessment was given to the activities of the Comintern. Its dissolution during World War II was explained by tactical considerations. The second most important event in world history was the creation of the world system of socialism following the Second World War. The international Communist and labor movement was positioned as an ally of the national liberation movements.

In the discussion about the origins of the Second World War, the position of Soviet textbooks was unambiguous – the main culprit is the international system of imperialism. The immediate culprit is Nazi Germany and its allies. Besides, however, the Alliance with Germany of the countries of Eastern Europe, which adopted a socialist orientation after the war, was not particularly emphasized. However, the direct aggressors were pushed to war by other imperialist powers of the West-England, France, and the United States. The behind-the-scenes subtext of the anti-Soviet conspiracy was revealed. Victory in the war was assessed in this sense not only as a victory over the axis countries but also as a victory over the forces of imperialism in General. The Second World War was thus embedded in the logic of the Formation-based scheme of history.

The theme of counter-revolution also developed concerning the period of Modern history. Anti-Soviet demonstrations in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 were considered as manifestations of counter-

revolution and attempts to restore capitalism. In both cases, the participation of Western intelligence agencies was emphasized. Extensive criticism was given concerning Chinese revisionism. The PRC was accused of replacing the Marxist-Leninist doctrine with a socialist-revolutionary platform. The idea of a proletarian revolution was, according to the authors of textbooks, replaced by a bet on petty-bourgeois forces.

The other side of the criticism was the detectable Alliance of the Chinese leadership (Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping) with the forces of international imperialism. Accusations were made of militarization and restoration of the ideology of great-power chauvinism. The authors of the 1982 textbook on Modern history remained generally on Universalist Marxist positions. They believed that all countries of the world should generally follow the path that Russia followed. The main components of the Russian revolutionary experience were first, the existence of an organized revolutionary party; second, the elimination of capitalist property; third, a planned economic system; and fourth, adherence to the principles of internationalism.

4. CONCLUSION

Of course, Soviet school textbooks in the presentation of universal history's vision were built under the existing ideology. Often this alignment was carried out in contradiction with historical facts. Of course, the Formation-based scheme in the version of the five universal socio-economic Formations did not allow us to fully reflect

the national variability of development, including the specificity of the Russian historical experience. Nevertheless, the USSR managed to create a complete, systematic model of studying universal history in school, subject to a single logic and a single concept. The doctrine of the five Formations formed the basis of the school's history course, finding its corresponding embodiment in the training programs for the respective classes. The teaching of universal history was distributed among the grades according to the Formations: grade 5-primitive and slave-owning, grade 6-feudal, grade 8-9 – capitalist, and grade 9-10 – socialist. Of course, we are not talking today about the restoration of the Formational approach in the version of Soviet textbooks, but the experience of the USSR in conceptualizing historical education deserves the most serious attention.

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