

## **The Role of History Textbook for the Creation of Multicultural Educational Model in Russia**

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**Abstract:** The urgency of the problem under investigation is determined by the ongoing modernization of history education in our country. The aim of the study is to analyze the trends in the development of educational and methodological basis of the historical education during the post-Soviet period (the end of XX beginning of XXI centuries) and the specific region (Republic of Tatarstan). The main method of this problem study is the comparative historical method. The study presents, the results showing that a significant portion of the available textbooks on Russian history does not regard Russia as a multinational, multi-confessional state and does not contribute to the formation of a harmonious ethnic and cultural consciousness. The study materials may be useful in the current public debates about the place of a history textbook in a multicultural educational space of Russia as well as during the writing of new textbooks.

**Key words:** History textbook, educational model, multicultural education, ethnic and religious diversity, Russia, Tatarstan

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The modern Russian education is in the process of reform and restructuring, poses the problem of historical education modernization for historical science. The problem is not only widely discussed by scientific and educational community but also highlighted by the President of Russian Federation Putin (2012) as one of the most important areas of the “Russian Federation national policy strategy” implementation. In his speech Putin (2012) noted that “it is necessary to show that the fate of Russia was created by the union of different peoples, traditions and cultures by concrete examples”. And this problem shall solve and is solved by historical science using textbooks written on the basis of historical science data. And the history and the historical events that are described in textbooks as well as their evaluations are not only for the creation of an educational basis but are the basis of the historical memory development. And “the image of other people or your own image which lives in our soul depends on the methods of story teaching”. This results in the “matrix of each country history: it is the dominant, embodied in the collective (historical) memory of the society” (Mark, 1992). And this is not surprising, since, according to Berdyaev (1990), “memory (and textbooks, including also an imprinted memory) is not just a passive reproduction of the past but this is the kind of “spiritual activity”, electing and creative one, directed not only to the understanding of the past but also to its transformation”.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The analysis of the discussions and debates on the issues of Russian historical education modernization shows its unresolved aspects and allows to hypothesize that a primary importance for this problem solution is related to the preparation of a new history textbook which should reflect the achievements of science and respond to the needs of society.

The article study was based on educational and methodical complex of historical education during the post-Soviet period.

To test the hypothesis, the general scientific theoretical methods of analysis, synthesis, analogy as well as the comparative historical method were used which most fully reveal the methodological principle of historicism.

The analysis showed that in fact the majority of history textbooks should follow the old stereotypes does not use the latest achievements of academic research and do not promote the formation of a harmonious multi-cultural consciousness. At the same time, a positive regional experience is shown in particular of the Republic of Tatarstan which may be widely used during the creation of a new educational complex.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The founder of historical memory theory is considered to be the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs. In his research “Collective Memory” he

argued that history and historical memory in many ways opposite: “the story usually begins at the moment with the end of the tradition when social memory dies or breaks. Also, there are no strict divisions in the historical memory (into the periods or schemes). Memory is a continuous train of thought and it remains only in the minds of the group that supports it. Forgetting of events and figures is caused not by antipathy, aversion or indifference but by the disappearance of those groups that kept the memory about them” (Halbwachs, 2005).

The interest in historical memory issue increased after the Second World War. Historical memory was considered in the context of the Hitler regime responsibility for the war and war crimes in the works of Theodor Adorno, the leader of the so-called “Frankfurt School”. Another reason that influenced the growing interest in historical memory was the emergence of philosophical postmodernism. One of its founders, Michel Foucault rejected the traditional view of science as the driving force for progress. With respect to the history Foucault applied the concept of “antimemory” considering that historians do not seek for objective knowledge, and service the power “designing” the story within the contemporary discourses.

His interpretation of historical memory was offered by British historian the marxist E. Hobsbaum in his book “Invented tradition”. He wrote that some of the traditions “that seem ancient sometimes invented ones” (Anonymouse, 2003). This “invention” is characteristic of New epoch during the period of rapid changes new societies, creating a new culture needed some basics, guides which they found in the relationship with the past. People feel the need for stability in a rapidly changing lifestyle situation. So traditions had to be invented. “The invention of a tradition is the process of formalization and ritualization which is related to the past, even if it happens at the expense of obligatory repetition”. To these techniques Hobsbaum relates the establishment of new memory days, the teaching according to new textbooks, sports, looking for new heroes and symbols. And one more very important observation made by Hobsbaum: the invention of tradition happens in societies that maintain the illusion of democracy (Kolyagina, 2010). And like some kind of conclusion, the French writer Pierre Nora said that “history kills memory” (Sokolova, 2008).

The Russian historian Repina *et al.* (2004) is not agreed with the opposition of history and historical memory as history is the process of the past study, including the selection and preservation of information about it and this is one of historical memory manifestations. Three factors are important for the formation of historical memory:

- Forgetting of the past
- Different ways of same facts and events interpretation
- Discovery of the past phenomena

The interest to which is caused by the actual problems of the current life (Repina *et al.*, 2004). People tend to forget some events and exaggerate the importance of other events. And the reasons according to which society “remembers” one event and “forgets” the other, allows us to understand how this society sees itself in history. At that the forgetfulness of historical facts may occur both naturally and as the result of public consciousness deliberate manipulation by politicians and ideologists.

At the same time, forgetting is an essential element of the historical memory. Although on the one hand, it distorts the image of the past but on the other hand, without such a cut-off of the “extra information” a coherent, logical pattern of events can not be restored and history will become a chaotic jumble of facts.

The problem of relation to the past in the historical memory becomes, especially relevant during the period of great socio-cultural changes, breaking of the traditional standards and stereotypes of thinking when opposing value systems occur in the minds of people. And at this time, there is a rethinking of history and specific historical events and the evaluations of many historical characters also change. Moreover, different images of the past and the narrative methods of the past may simultaneously coexist in the collective memory. Each of these stories may provide the same characters and plots but their semantic content will be different.

The result is the reconstruction of the past, its interpretation as well as deliberate “forgetting”. And according to Etkind (2004) “fighting for the historical memory content is like the theater of military operations where strategic and tactical actions are performed by different forces and means”.

The creation of a new historical memory in post-Soviet Russia experienced several stages. First, the “pendulum” of historical research towards “clean”, “ideal” liberalism, then in the direction of the same “ideal” conservatism. The creation of new mythology started, at that advantages were very often replaced by disadvantages during the evaluation of a person (it is enough to remember how the evaluation of such historical figures as Lenin, Stolypin, Kolchak, Denikin changed) or a historical event (e.g., Civil War). And all this was reflected not only in the history books but also in literature and art and contributed to the formation of social consciousness, based on the ideological interests of the political elite.

Considering all mentioned above during the solution of educational problems a great importance is hidden in

the educational literature which is used for the preparation of classes. There is a number of books on the history of Russia (Barsenkov *et al.*, 2006) which are recommended by the Ministry of Education and Science of Russian Federation. They all have one thing in common ethnocentrism and Russia is the country in which the tradition of interaction between cultures are deep into the centuries. The Russian State was formed as a multinational one, however, this process was not adequately addressed in the academic literature. Textbooks on the history of the country do not regard Russia as a multiethnic, multi-confessional state. The history of Russia is described by the authors only as the history of the Russian people, the very mention of the Russian state multinational nature and its federal structure is rare. These problems are considered only in a small part of the textbooks and as a rule, published in the regions (Izhevsk, Kazan, Ufa, Khabarovsk) (Galimova, 1999). Therefore, one of the most important tasks today is the inclusion in the course of Domestic history the national histories and above all, the history of national cultures, each of which has its own unique features but it is always connected not only with the world culture but also the cultures of neighboring peoples. Whereas:

- In many Russian textbooks there is a bias in the description of statehood, life and culture of Russian non-Russian peoples. Information about non-Russian ethnic groups is contained mainly in the form of a story about the “connected people” and “developed areas”
- During the description of the economic and cultural interaction of the Russian and non-Russian peoples in ancient and medieval times their mutual influence, mutual enrichment, inter-ethnic family relations, mutually beneficial trade is mentioned poorly
- Textbooks revive some stamps and statements of imperial historiography of pre-revolutionary Russia. For example, almost all textbooks on Russian history says only about the negative role of the “Golden Horde yoke” and a traditional estimate of the period 1237-1480 is presented: the ruin of Russian lands, preservation of political fragmentation, slow cultural development (S.M. Solovyov, V.O. Klyuchevsky). But today, there is no former unity on this issue among historians concerning the content or the assessment of that period or its results the creation of a centralized state (L.N. Gumilyov, A.T. Fomenko, G.V. Nosovsky)

When we talk about the dialogue of cultures and ethnic groups in the Volga region the role of the

University of Kazan should be mentioned. The discoveries made by such scientists of Kazan University as N.I. Lobachevsky, N.I. Zinin, A.M. Butlerov and others are described in all textbooks. But none of the recommended textbooks does not address the impact of the Kazan gymnasium and the University of Kazan on the development of culture and education among all peoples living in the Kazan region. Although, Kazan gymnasium was the first academic institution where Oriental languages were studied, including the Tatar one. Besides, in 1769 the gymnasium opened Tatar class where Tatars taught in particular, Khalfin family. Since 1836, Muslim students were allowed to study at the University of Kazan. A special role in the development of domestic Oriental science and the regional culture belongs to the multinational pool of professors and teachers of the Kazan University Esat Department and the rectors N.I. Lobachevsky and I.M. Simonov. Khalfins worked at the university and the gymnasium under their guidance. M. Makhmudov, A. Daminev, S. Murtazin, Ahmed Bin Hussein of Mecca and Hodge Mir Abutalib Mir-Mominov of Mezenderana, Abdyusettar Kazem-Bek of Derbent, the first Buryat scholar Dorjee Banzarov. All of them are “combined the European education with thorough theoretical and practical knowledge of Oriental languages”.

Believing in the power of public education, Kazan Orientalists combined research and educational work as “knowledge and education are not aware of any national or linguistic borders” (Sh. Marjani). In close contact with Orientalists of Kazan and St. Petersburg (in 1854 the East Department was transferred to St. Petersburg) the scientific and creative activity of prominent Tatar educators K. Nasyri, Sh. Mardzhani and others took place. It is difficult to overestimate their efforts in the promotion of education, literature and the press, not only among Tatar but also among Chuvash, Mari, Mordvin and other peoples of the region (Musharova, 2010).

Also, in a multi-confessional society one of idea development factors about the “other” is the education in general and religious education in particular. The established system of Islamic education in TR now covers different levels including the Russian Islamic Institute (RII) with a secular organizational and legal status. The most difficult problem in the creation of this system was the establishment of the religious education based on tradition with the theological heritage of the great Tatar theologians of the late XIXth early XXth centuries (Nabiyev, 2010). Although, it is known that the pre-Soviet cultural and political elite of the Tatars belonged to the clergy or came from it. But today in Russia no textbook is prepared written according to the local traditions of

Muslims, despite the fact that the work takes place. This research is represented by scientific and practical conferences, round tables, seminars, the organization of which is performed by scientists, the representatives of various government agencies, religious confessions of the country. Therefore, modern Tatarstan is recognized by UNESCO as the regional model of peacemaking which is certainly a great merit of all participants in the process of inter-ethnic and inter-religious dialogue (Nabiyev, 2013). The Republic of Tatarstan is also included in the composition of the federal experiment that holds the Department of the state policy in the sphere of upbringing, additional education and social protection of children of the Russian Federation Ministry of Education and Science. Under the terms of the project "Multicultural education as the basis of the Russian civil identity development among the secondary school students" the concept and models of multicultural education in three regions of the Russian Federation is tested. Tatarstan was not accidentally chosen for the participation in this project as in 1990-2007, the whole complex of urgent practical problems was successfully resolved in the country:

- The content of humanitarian education on the bilingual and bicultural basis was developed, the principles and mechanisms of intercultural interaction were developed
- Organizational and managerial mechanisms ensuring the implementation of the state guarantees, the availability of education taking into account the local language and socio-cultural specificity
- The regulatory support was brought into line with the objectives and priorities of education policy
- The improvement of the professional training and the qualifications of the teaching staff, providing theoretical and methodological development of ethnic and religious problems in education was reached

Thus in the RT has the conditions for the further development of education on the basis of a multicultural education model that will help to solve the problem of the Russian civil identity development and the preservation of national and regional education content (Lotfullin, 2012).

In 2011-2013 under this program, the educational-methodical complexes for pre-school and primary education were developed, the content of which is aimed at the development of a child sense of belonging to his people, the historical and cultural heritage of the peoples of Tatarstan, Russia to the world's spiritual values. After a successful testing the implementation of preschool and primary education model in other regions of the Russian Federation begins. Now, the development

of teaching materials for the next stage of school education (general education) and then a higher education takes place.

## CONCLUSION

Summing up, it should be noted that despite the great work that was performed by the historic community of post-Soviet period for the change of the educational-methodological basis of historical education Soviet textbooks were in a wide use for a long time and they (i.e., their content) have a serious impact on new books published in the late XXth early XXIth centuries. Based on the content analysis of textbooks about Russian history, published in Russia during recent years, the authors concluded that a significant part of the publications follows the old stereotypes does not use the latest achievements of academic science and still considers Russian history as the history of mainly Russian people and not as the history of a multinational, multi-confessional state which ultimately does not lead to the development of a harmonious and a tolerant consciousness of pupils does not help to achieve the goal set in the "Concept of the Russian Federation National Education Policy". And, today, the main vector of the historical community professional activity (researchers and teachers) should be directed to bring together the efforts for the sake that research results of Russian and foreign historians were reflected in the academic literature and in general works that will eventually change the history of Russia course content and will contribute to the harmonization of interethnic and interconfessional relations, not only in a classroom but also outside of it. At that one may and should use the experience of the University of Kazan and its work on the development of culture and education of all peoples living in the Volga-Ural region, its cultural bivalence at which the European standard of education is combined with Eurasian and Eastern cultural specificity.

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