

New Sources for the teaching of history and of the Constitution in the Soviet Union: textbooks and school exercise books (1945-1965)

Dorena Caroli

Introduction

The teaching of history and of the Constitution constitutes one of the most complicated aspects of the school reforms started in the Soviet Union¹ from the October Revolution until the mid-60s². It was a slow process of ideologization of school knowledge, which has been progressively reviewed after the fall of the Regime in 1991³.

This article is aimed at analyzing the evolution of the teaching of history and of the Constitution between 1945 and 1965, since this is a little investigated period to observe the de-Stalinization of the teaching of history and of the Constitution, that is of the revision process of textbooks.

* I wish to express my gratitude to Ljudmila G. Kiseleva – former responsible of the reading room of the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF) in Moscow – who has given me the chance to examine her personal and brilliant collection of school exercise books of the '50s. I also thank Elena Poggi for the linguistic revision of the text.

¹ This article presents a part of a wider research project on the teaching of history and of the Constitution from 1917 to 1965.

² A.I. Stražev, *Prepodavanje istorii v sovetskoj škole za 40 let (1917-1957)*, «Prepodavanje istorii v škole», 5, 1957, pp. 64-74; L.P. Buščik, *Očerk razvitija škol'nogo i istoričeskogo obrazovanija v SSSR*, Moskva, Izdanie APN, 1961; A. Tchernychev, *L'enseignement de l'histoire en Russie. De la Révolution à nos jours*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2005.

³ V. Kaplan, *History Teaching in post-Soviet Russia: coping with antithetical traditions*, in B. Eklof, L.E. Holmes (eds.), *Educational reform in Post-Soviet Russia. Legacies and prospects*, London and New York, Frank Cass, 2005, pp. 247-271.

The parallel analysis of history and of the Constitution – corresponding in European schools to the Civic Education, introduced to initiate citizens into their national rights and obligations – reveals some new aspects of the history of school disciplines and of their development. Firstly, during the '30s, the particular relationship between the different school disciplines has changed in the Soviet Union following the introduction of mass literacy and then the publication of the «Stalin Constitution» in 1936. The study of the Constitution's rights and obligations substituted Sociology indeed, which had been fundamental in the teaching of historical events in the '20s. Secondly, during the '30s, the creation of the Soviet national identity was aimed at instructing Soviet citizens in the process of formation of the Russian State itself and in the «rights and obligations» of a planned economic system.

The programs of these two school disciplines underwent a radical change compared to those of the interwar period, as for the structure of the programs – periodization of historical events – and for the theoretical concept underlying the textbooks. However, the rupture with the concept of Marxism-Leninism imposed by Stalin in 1934 did not occur immediately since some textbooks of the '30s-'40s remained in use – though with some changes – until 1958 mainly because of the spirit of patriotism which intertwined always more with the «cult of the war». The Second World War and the memory of the blood shed for the Fatherland – constituted a fundamental element for the construction of the national identity after the war, by justifying the defense of the values of the Communist Party.

The analysis of the de-Stalinization process of textbooks will be carried also thanks to the development of new sources – school exercises books – which will allow us to grasp some aspects of the didactic method of the Second post-war period, characterized by an attentive control by teachers of school exercise books and of pupils' level of learning.

This article is divided into four parts not only showing how the role of teaching these two disciplines has evolved on the basis of the debates published mainly on the Soviet review «Teaching History at School» (*Prepodavanje istorii v škole*) but also explaining the new criteria applied for to revision of manuals. The first part presents the first revision of all the history textbooks of primary and secondary school⁴, based on the famous «Observations Concerning the Outlines of Textbooks on the history of the U.S.S.R.» (*Zamečanija po povodu konspekta učebnika po istorii SSSR*) drawn up by I.V. Stalin, S.M. Kirov and A.A. Zhdanov (August 14th, 1934).

⁴ From 1934 to 1958, the primary school – from the 1st to the 7th class – was called *nepol'naja srednaja škola*, i.e. incomplete school of 7 years, normally attended by students aged 7-14 years. The primary school (*načal'naja škola*) comprehended the classes from the 1st to the 4th and formed the «inferior level», while the last three classes formed the «superior level». The 8th class was added only in 1958. Later, the 9th-10th classes were part of the veritable junior secondary school (*srednaja škola*).

The second part analyses the de-Stalinization process that textbooks underwent after the XX Congress of the Communist Party (1956). This analysis will be enriched by some extracts from the school exercise books by Ljudmila G. Kiseleva – former responsible of the reading room of the State Archive of the Russian Federation (*GARF*) in Moscow – who attended the Noginsk school (Moscow region) in the '50s and took careful notes during the lessons of history and Constitution. This collection assembles 10 school exercise books some of which have proven particularly useful for the present research – in particular those of the 7th, 8th and 9th class⁵.

The third part presents the renewed interest in local history – occurred after WWII – of Nikolaj P. Kuzin (1907-1982), foremost specialist in the didactics of history and pedagogue belonging to the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences. Particular attention is paid to the war stories written by his pupils of the 1st and 2nd class of Rzhev – a city in the North-West of the city of Moscow famous for the «Rzhev battle» carried out by Soviet forces against a German salient from January 8th 1942 to March 22nd, 1943), also known as the «Rzhev meat grinder» (*Rževskaja mjasorubka*) for the heavy human losses.

The fourth part deals with the teaching of the Constitution, which should form at the same time a Soviet citizen and a loyal worker in the planned system, aware of Soviet laws regulating the functioning of the Soviet society thanks to the de-Stalinization of justice.

This analysis shows that Stalin's textbooks aimed at forming a national consciousness had a tendency – from 1945 until 1965 – to attribute a fundamental role to the teaching of history and of the Constitution in the shaping of the Soviet supranational citizenship. Thus, the citizen was conceived in his/her productive function, ready to participate in the reconstruction and the economic development of the country, symbolizing the salvation of the whole Communism. Furthermore, after the victory on Nazism, the sacrifice for the Fatherland invoked by Stalin continued to be the main value taught to Soviet citizens in schools.

1. Teaching the History after the Second World War

To better understand the development of the teaching of history in the second post-war period, it is necessary to take into consideration the evolution of this discipline from the Revolution of 1917 to the Second World War, since this was a period marked by the deep cardinal changes of the Twenties and by «Stalin's Revolution» of the Thirties.

⁵ A paper copy of these school exercise books is available at the «Centre of Documentation and Research on the History of School Textbooks and Children Literature» at the Faculty of Education of the University of Macerata.

After the October Revolution, the Soviet school pupils experienced the disappearing not only of the old Tsarist school textbooks but also of the school disciplines, which – starting from 1923-1924 – became «complexes» of learning-units concerning the different fields of the social sciences (*obščestvovedenie*) according to the conception of the historian Mikhail Pokrovsky⁶. The teaching of history should free itself of the Tsarist imperial patriotism which educated people to the values of the Tsarist autocracy, of the orthodox faith and to the patriarchal peasant family⁷ in order to pass on the consciousness of the historical materialism to the working class. For the Bolshevik school, history should indeed become a means of introducing the «new Communist man» into the class struggle, which would conduct to the triumph of the proletarian revolutionary values also among non-Russian nationalities⁸.

In this phase, the teaching of history was inspired by the Marxist scholar Mikhail Pokrovsky – Deputy Commissar for Enlightenment⁹ – who considered economic causes to be at the basis of historical changes¹⁰. At the end of the '20s, Pokrovsky was discredited since his conception was based on two postulates – the compromises between the Socialist economy and the rural world on the one hand and the denial of the role of the individual in Russian history on the other – which compromised both Stalin's economical policy and his role in history¹¹.

With the emergence of Stalinism, the school was reformed in relation to the economic development of the country thanks to the re-introduction of school disciplines and of the so-called «stable textbooks», included history textbooks. In particular, on May 16th, 1934, the teaching of history and of the Constitution regained the statute of autonomous school disciplines. The teaching of the history of native and foreign countries was then introduced according to a linear principle which was applied until the fall of Communism in 1991¹².

⁶ L.E. Holmes, *The Kremlin and the Schoolhouse. Reforming education in Soviet Russia, 1917-1931*, Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1991, pp. 61-62.

⁷ J. Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read. Literacy and Popular Literature, 1861-1917*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1985, pp. 35-58.

⁸ E.M. Balašov, *Škola v Rossijskom obščestve 1917-1927gg. Stanovlenie «novogo čeloveka»*, Sankt-Peterburg, Dmitrij Bulanin, 2003, pp. 19-30.

⁹ Michail N. Pokrovsky (1868-1932) was an historian and a disciple of Vasilij O. Ključevskij (1841-1911). He joined the Bolsheviks in 1905 and after the Revolution he was Deputy Commissar for Enlightenment (*Komissar po Prosveščėiju*) from 1918 to 1932. From 1929 he was Director of the Institute of History and was elected at the Academy of Science. See S. Fitzpatrick, *The Commissariat of Enlightenment. Soviet Organisation of Education and the Arts under Lunacharsky. October 1917-1921*, Cambridge London, Cambridge University Press, 1970; M.N. Pokrovskij, *Russkaja istorija v samom sžatom očerke (I i II ot drevnejšich vremen do konca XIX stoletija) s 3-mja kartami*, Moskva, Gosizdat, 1923, 6 ed.; Id., *Russkaja istorija v samom sžatom očerke. III. Dvatcatyj vek*, Moskva, Gosizdat, 1934.

¹⁰ H. Asher, *The Rise, Fall, and Resurrection of M.N. Pokrovsky*, «Russian Review», 31 (1), 1972, pp. 49-63.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.

¹² L.P. Bučšik, *Očerk razvitija škol'nogo i istoričeskogo obrazovanija v SSSR*, cit., p. 259; A.I. Stražev, *Nekotorye voprosy metodiki prepodavanija istorii*, cit., p. 71.

Therefore, Stalin charged some historians of the redaction of new textbooks on the basis of the famous «Observations Concerning the Outlines of Textbooks on the history of the U.S.S.R.» drawn up by I.V. Stalin, S.M. Kirov and A.A. Zhdanov¹³ and on the basis of The Short Course of the History of the Communist Party of Russia [VKP (B)], written under the direction and with the immediate participation of Stalin himself¹⁴.

Among the authors of the first Marxist textbooks who agreed to the postulates of the «Observations» were Andrei Vasilievich Shestakov (1877-1941) – who redacted the textbook for the 3rd and 4th class¹⁵ – and Anna Michailovna Pankratova (1897-1957) – a leading labor historian and academic administrator, in charge of the textbooks for the 8th, 9th and 10th class¹⁶.

These textbooks printed in the '30s presented a Marxist interpretation of history, which was abandoned or transformed in the historical sciences after the Fall of Communist Party in the former USSR¹⁷. For the lower level of primary school, «the teaching of history is presented as a means of ideological struggle, allowing to demonstrate the supremacy of the Socialist regime and of the Russian Revolution of 1917. The contrast between the “bourgeois revolution” and the “Socialist revolution” will remain the guiding line for almost other six decades»¹⁸. As for the 8th, 9th and 10th class, the three textbooks created by Pankratova presented the history of Russia in a chronological order, in

¹³ L.P. Buščik, *Očerk razvitiija škol'nogo i istoričeskogo obrazovanija v SSSR*, cit., p. 263.

¹⁴ See M.V. Pundeff (ed.), *History in the U.S.S.R. Selected Readings*, San Francisco, Chandler (Hoover Institution Publications), 1967, pp. 150-164 (p. 147). Sergei Mironovich Kirov (1886-1934) – a revolutionary Bolshevik and Russian politician – became Head of the Party organization in Leningrad. He was murdered on the 1th of December 1934 and this episode started a series of Stalin's purges against old Bolsheviks off. Andrei Alexandrovich Zhdanov (1896-1948) became the All-Union Communist Party (B) leader in Leningrad after the murder of Sergei Kirov in 1934. From 1938 to 1947, he was Chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet. In 1947, he organized the Cominform, designed to coordinate the Communist parties all over Europe.

¹⁵ A.V. Šestakov, *Kak prepodavat' istoriju SSSR po novomu učebniku*, «Istoričeskij Žurnal», 9, 1937, pp. 76-86; L.P. Buščik, *Očerk razvitiija škol'nogo i istoričeskogo obrazovanija v SSSR*, cit., pp. 261-262.

¹⁶ Pankratova was born in Odessa where she studied. During the Civil War (1918-1920) she joined the Communist Party and carried out political activities in Ukraine. In 1925 she graduated in History at the Institute of the Red Professors (*Krasnaja Professura*). She studied the history of the Labor movement and of diplomacy. She was member of the Academy of Science of Belarus from 1940 and of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences from 1944; she was also Professor at the State Institute of History (Moscow) and at the Academy of Social Science of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party. In 1952 she was elected Member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. In 1953 she became editor in chief of the review «History Issues» (*Voprosy istorii*). For her biography, see R.E. Zelnik, *Perils of Pankratova. Some stories from the Annals of Soviet Historiography*, published by the Herbert J. Ellison Center for Russian East European, and Central Asian Studies, Washington, University of Washington, 2005, pp. 12-48.

¹⁷ See for example V. Bezrogov, G. Makarewitch, *The world of adults and the world of children in present-day Russian early readings books (search for a family and an educational ideal in post-soviet Russia)*, HECL, II 1 (2007), pp. 17-34.

¹⁸ A. Tchernychev, *L'enseignement de l'histoire en Russie*, cit., p. 31.

relation on the one hand to the history of the European countries and on the other to the history of all the non-Russian populations within the Soviet Union in order to form a strong national identity thanks to the knowledge of Russia's heroic past.

These textbooks – adopted in every school of the country like the *Testo unico di Stato* in the Italian Fascist schools¹⁹ – were based on showing the contrast between revolutions and on a supranational, all-state consciousness, which persisted for several decades, also thanks to the cultural patriotism of WWII, which had indeed a great impact on the teaching of history in the Soviet Union²⁰.

First of all, the teaching of history was integrated with those topics which could mostly awaken to the patriotic consciousness Russians – who had demonstrated devotion and a spirit of sacrifice for their Fatherland throughout the centuries from the Napoleon's invasion to WWI. The decree on the «Measures for the improvement of the quality of teaching at school» – published on July 21st, 1941 that is a month after the German invasion – established that it was necessary «to educate a courageous generation, that would have all the knowledge required to defend its Fatherland», «to educate keen Soviet patriots ready to exchange books for guns to defend their Fatherland, to educate heroic combatants fighting for the honor, freedom and independence of their Fatherland», «to educate people to the heroic actions of our ancestors and of the contemporaries [...]»²¹. To that end, during the years of the war, School programs and textbooks aimed at teaching pupils the role of Russian people in the world history and Russian patriotism.

For the same reason, in 1942, the historian Pankratova urged teachers to justify the war against Germans in two ways. Firstly, she asked teachers to show the falsehoods of Nazi historians who believed that «the whole historical process was a worldwide process of diffusion of the German “Nordic” (Northern) race, doomed to by their same nature to rule over other races and populations»²². Secondly, Pankratova argued that the country was carrying on «a patriotic, redeeming and fair war» and that all their citizens including teachers wanted «to free the Soviet land from the German-Fascist scoundrels (*merzavcy*)»²³.

¹⁹ A. Ascenzi, R. Sani (eds.), *Il libro per la scuola tra idealismo e fascismo. L'opera della Commissione centrale per l'esame dei libri di testo da Giuseppe Lombardo Radice ad Alessandro Melchiori (1923-1928)*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 2005.

²⁰ See also G.I. Allaberdina, *Izučenie istorii v školach strany v gody velikoj otečestvennoj vojny*, available at the url: <http://mmj.ru/education_ahey.html?&article=519&cHash=5705d1136c> (last access: 1st July 2009).

²¹ Buščik, *Očerok razvitija škol'nogo i istoričeskogo obrazovanija v SSSR*, cit., pp. 316-317.

²² A.M. Pankratova, *Prepodavanje istorii v srednej škole v dni Otečestvennoj vojny protiv germanskogo fašizma*, «Istoričeskij Žurnal», 5, 1942, pp. 145-152 (145).

²³ *Ibid.*

The heroism and self-denial shown by the Red Army and the Soviet Navy had been inherited by the historical struggles for freedom and independency of the Soviet people. As for the history of the Russian struggle against Germans, teachers had to choose the events of the «XII-XIII centuries, and in particular heroic episodes such as the Battle of the Ice (*Ledovoe poboišče*) in which the strategic abilities of one of the first Russian leaders – the hero of the Battle of the River Neva (1240), Prince Aleksandr J. Nevsky²⁴ – had emerged». Indeed, Pankratova also added that «in his fervent appeal to the Red Army and to the Soviet people during the parade of the Red Army – on November 7th, 1941 – Comrade Stalin mentioned Aleksandr Nevsky as first among others, as one of those who could serve as an example for high courage and heroism»²⁵. Aleksandr Nevsky and other Russian heroic leaders became the symbols of the historical tradition – Dmitrij Donskoi, Kuz'ma Minin, Dmitrij Pozharsky, Aleksandr Suvorov, Michail Kutuzov – and Stalin suggested to follow their examples in such a particular period, when everyone became a protagonist of the «Big History»²⁶.

Moreover, in the war context, several changes occurred since the teaching of history was anticipated to the 4th class so that the following reforms could reorganize the periodization of the history in order to improve the didactics of teaching: the study of WWII was introduced in the 4th class. Furthermore, starting from 1944-1945, the scholar age was fixed at 7 instead of 8, and the elementary course on the Soviet Union history was left only in the 4th class. The textbook by Shestakov for the 3th and 4th class of 1937 – considered too difficult – was substituted by the reading book *Our Fatherland* by M.N. Tichomirov and V.I. Lebedev. Similarly, in the 10th class the number of hours dedicated to the «defense against the Germans» was increased as well²⁷.

In the Soviet Union – unlike what happened in Italy particular between 1946 and 1949, when all the Fascist textbooks were eliminated²⁸ – history school textbooks were submitted to an intensive revision process, which revealed an ideological change rather than the political wish to restore the statute of social science to history, since the Communist Party issued some instructions on the necessity to guarantee the hegemony (*gospodstvo*) of military patriotism, to strengthen the Party line in the Soviet science, in literature and in the art, and to increase their role in the Communist education of youth²⁹.

²⁴ A. Nevsky (1220-1263) defended the North-West of Russia from the Swedish and the Germans. He defeated the Swedish Army in the famous Battle of the Neva (1240).

²⁵ Pankratova, *Prepodavanje istorii SSSR v srednej škole v dni otečestvennoj vojny*, cit., p. 147.

²⁶ K. Klark, *The Soviet Novel. History as a Ritual*, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 1981, pp. 136-141.

²⁷ Buščik, *Očerk razvitija škol'nogo i istoričeskogo obrazovanija v SSSR*, cit., pp. 319-320; Tchernychev, *L'enseignement de l'histoire en Russie*, cit., p. 33.

²⁸ For a comparison with the Italian post-war period, see: A. Ascenzi, *Education for democracy in textbooks: the case of history texts in Italian schools in the years following the Second World War*, «History of Education & Children's Literature», II, 1 (2007), pp. 173-194.

²⁹ Buščik, *Očerk razvitija škol'nogo i istoričeskogo obrazovanija v SSSR*, cit., pp. 340-341.

The first step of the revision process of manuals was taken in 1947. The history textbook for the 4th class was the first to be modified because it did not provide the historical basis necessary for the study of the Russian literature, language and geography. The Academy of Pedagogical Sciences decided to replace this course with some episodes from the Russian history literature³⁰.

Later, when in 1949 the length of the so called «incomplete school of 7 years» became compulsory, the programs of the other classes were reviewed as well. Also the teaching of history in the 5th and 7th class was reformed in order to drastically reduce Ancient and Medieval history and to introduce a brief course of Modern history of the Soviet Union. Since “incomplete” secondary school now represented an important phase of the general education, the study of history in the 5th and 7th class had to include the events of the second half of the XVII century and the history of foreign countries after the Medieval age. It was now unacceptable that history was still limited to the Ancient or Medieval period and that it was taught till the 7th class and also that pupils finished school with no knowledge of the history of the Soviet Union³¹.

In 1949, Pankratova published an article entitled *Against the Bourgeois Objective Spirit and Cosmopolitanism in the Historical Science and in the Teaching of History* in which she pointed out that the aim of the school was to form «Soviet patriots», completely devoted to Socialism³². This patriotism was translated into the teaching of history and also in a sort of cleansing of the Soviet historiography. In her article, Pankratova shared the criticism towards post-war Soviet historiography, which was based on the two postulates of the bourgeois historiography: the «Norman theory» of the foundation of the Russian State and the Eurasian theory. According to her, these two theories tried to sap the Russian national consciousness since the first theory aimed at showing «that Slavs were a lower race, unable to develop an independent nation and culture», while the second showed «that geography and history had separated Russia from Western Europe and its civilization, thus making Russian people ‘more Asiatic than European’»³³.

Accordingly, in July 1950, the Ministry of Education of Russia decided to drastically reduce all the history textbooks in order to further extend the part dedicated to Modern and Contemporary history: the history textbook for the 4th class was reduced by 28%, the textbook on Ancient history for the 5th and 6th class by 33% and that on the Mediaeval age for the 6th and 7th class by 27.7%. However, the history textbook on Ancient history by A.V. Mishulin

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 349.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 349-350; Tchernychev, *L'enseignement de l'histoire en Russie*, cit., p. 33.

³² A.M. Pankratova, *Protiv buržuaznogo ob'ektivizma i kosmopolitizma v istoričeskoj nauke i prepodavanii istorii*, «Prepodavanie istorii v škole», 2, 1949, pp. 3-9.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

was published unchanged, while in 1949, the textbook on Medieval history was reviewed by E.A. Kosminsky – a famous specialist in Medieval history – who presented Medieval Russian history by analyzing both the problem of Western and Southern Slavs and that of the peoples of the Soviet Union. Despite these changes, teachers complained about the preponderance of Ancient history and about the difficulties pupils had understanding the features of the different religions³⁴.

These were the first steps of a change which would take place – although only partially – after 1955, that is after Stalin's death. During the All-Russian Teachers' Conference organized in December 1954, the Education Minister I.A. Kairov even quoted the famous decree of May 16th, 1934 «On the teaching of Civil History in the Schools of the Soviet Union» and on the function of the so-called «stable textbooks». During the conference, the publication of the history textbooks was decided, including that on the history of the Soviet Union for which a team – formed by A.M. Pankratova, L.V. Cherepnin, L.P. Buschik – was charged to redact all the three parts.

In 1954 and 1955 respectively, two textbooks of history of the Ancient world for the 5th and 6th class written by S.I. Kovalev and F.P. Korovkin were printed in order to replace the textbook published by A.V. Mishulin. The textbook for the 6th and 7th class by E.A. Kosminsky was revised and reduced³⁵.

The textbooks for the 8th, 9th and 10th class – published under the supervision of Pankratova – had a different fate because of the historical debates aroused in 1955 at the X International Congress for Historical Sciences in Rome³⁶. In the meanwhile, the textbooks for the 8th and 9th class were published: in 1955, the first part of the textbook on Modern history for the 8th class (by A.V. Efimov) and the second part of that for the 9th class were re-elaborated by a team of historians – I.S. Galkin, M.I. Zubok, F.I. Notovich, V.M. Chvostov and A. Ja. Manusevich. The textbooks for the 8th and 9th class both presented several inaccuracies and a new edition was required³⁷.

In 1956, S.P. Alekseev and V.G. Karcov published the textbook «A reader of history of the Soviet Union» for the 4th class, which presented the main events of the Russian history divided in episodes and containing more illustrations and also a part presenting to homework exercises³⁸.

³⁴ Buščik, *Očerk razvitija škol'nogo i istoričeskogo obrazovanija v SSSR*, cit., pp. 351-352. See also Tchernychev, *L'enseignement de l'histoire en Russie*, cit., pp. 34-35.

³⁵ S.I. Kovalev, *Istorija drevnego mira. Učebnik dlja 5-6[^] klassa*, Mosca, Učpedgiz, 1954; F.P. Korovkin, *Istorija drevnego mira. Učebnik dlja 5-6[^] klassov*, Moskva, Učpedgiz, 1957.

³⁶ Comitato Internazionale di Scienze Storiche, *Atti del 10. Congresso internazionale: Roma 4-11 settembre 1955*, edited by the Giunta Centrale per gli Studi storici, Roma, 1957.

³⁷ G.V. Zacharova i V.E. Stepanova, *Vserossijskoe soveščanie po Učebnikam*, «Prepodavanie istorii v škole», 3, 1955, pp. 119-126.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 119-120.

2. *The Revision of the History Textbooks from the 8th to the 10th Class and the School Exercise Books of Ljudmila Gennad'evna Kiseleva (1955-1959)*

In 1956, the XX Congress of the Communist Party adopted the decree on the measures «On the Overcoming of the Cult of Personality and its Consequences», which represented the starting point for the revision of historical sciences and history textbooks in particular. Further measures were published on the renewal of historical sciences³⁹.

Thanks to the new political course, from 1957, some new textbooks for the 8th, 9th and 10th class were published, more complex from the point of view of the content, as shows a comparison with the textbook of 1940, based on a rigoristic Marxist-Leninist analysis. Those textbooks for the 8th-10th class were redacted by A.M. Pankratova, together with K.V. Basilevich, S.V. Bachrushin and A.V. Focht from September 1937 to 1940⁴⁰. They included the events starting from Prehistory to 1939. The first volume for the 8th class included the history of the primitive structures in the whole Soviet area until the end of the Kingdom of the Tsar Aleksei Michailovich (XVII century). The second volume for the 9th class was consecrated to the history of the Russian State from Peter I the Great to the end of the XIX century. The third volume for the 10th class was consecrated to the history of the XX century, from 1905 until 1939⁴¹.

All the three volumes edited in 1940 presented the so-called «anti-Norman theory» of the formation of the Russian State, that is a nationalist conception denying the Norman influence in the development of the Russian State⁴². The authors linked the origin of the old word *Rus'* with the name of one of the Slav ancestry living in the South of the Slav territory and not with the ancestry of the Varangians having a Scandinavian origin. According to the author of the textbooks, the Russian State rose in the IX century thanks to the formation of the Russian tribal Principalities around the cities, where the Princes and of their guards (*družine*) used to live. Therefore, «the Trade Route from Varangians to the Greeks» was a sort of passage allowing rubbery rather than trade with Byzantium⁴³.

³⁹ Buščik, *Očerk razvitija škol'nogo i istoričeskogo obrazovanija v SSSR*, cit., pp. 368-369.

⁴⁰ A. Pankratova, A. Focht, *Ob učebnikach istorii SSSR dlja srednej školy*, «Istoričeskij Žurnal», 11, 1940, pp. 117-122.

⁴¹ Ju.V. Krasnova, *Učebnik po istorii SSSR dlja VIII-IX klassov srednej školy avtorskogo kollektiva pod rukovodstvom A.M. Pankratovoj*, in *Istoričeskij časopis. 20-50-e gody XX veka* A.M. Pankratova, Moskva, Izdatel'stvo Rossijskogo Universiteta Družby Narodov/Mosgorarchiv, 2000, pp. 139-149.

⁴² See I. Sorlin, *Les traités de Byzance avec la Russie au Xe siècle*, «Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique», 2, 1961, pp. 313-360; S. Franklin and S. Sheperd, *The Emergence of Rus', 750-1200*, London, Longman, 1996.

⁴³ Pankratova, Focht, *Ob učebnikach istorii SSSR dlja srednej školy*, cit., pp. 118-119.

The debate about the origin of the Russian State was surely one of the most controversial issues, but Pankratova has always supported the «anti-Norman theory», as did the historians who participated in the Congress of Rome of 1955⁴⁴. Indeed, in 1954, under the supervision of Pankratova, L.P. Bushchik published the first part of the new textbook *The History of the Soviet Union for the 8th class of the junior secondary school* (re-published in 1957)⁴⁵. The textbook by Bushchik presented several new aspects such as «the effort to abandon the outdated principle of the narration on the basis of Principalities and Tsars, and the focusing on the main phenomena and of the historical events and on their economical development». Bushchik let the decisive role of the masses in history emerge and presented «people as an active force supporting the Moscow policy, oriented to the unification of the Russian lands and to the demolition of the Tatar-Mongolian domination of the XV century, protesting against the oppression of the feudal serfdom and influencing the distribution of socio-political forces in the XVI century»⁴⁶.

In 1958, under the supervision and with the collaboration of Pankratova, the textbooks for the 9th and 10th class on the history of the Soviet Union were published. The textbooks for the 9th class – also edited with the collaboration of K.V. Basil'evich – covered the period from the beginning of the XVIII to the end of XIX century. The textbook for the 10th class presented the period from the Russian Revolution of 1905 to the Second World War with a brief mention of the post-war period⁴⁷.

These three manuals were organized on a concentric and chronological basis, proceeding towards the new organization of the school system. Indeed, the «Khrushchev reform» of March 9th, 1958 outlined a new revision of the school textbooks in the context of the reorganization of school disciplines. This reform divided the school into two levels: 8-year-compulsory school and two optional classes – the 9th and 10th. Therefore the history course for the 5th and 8th class was the subject of an important debate. Indeed, the reform established that the pupils who completed the 8th class should know not only the Ancient and Medieval history but also the main events of the foreign history of the period of capitalism as well as a minimum knowledge of the Russian history.

⁴⁴ See S.D. Rybakov comments, in Comitato Internazionale di Scienze storiche, *Atti del X Congresso internazionale*, cit., pp. 285-287.

⁴⁵ L.P. Buščik, *Istoria SSSR. Illustrirovannaja kniga dlja prepodavatelej 8. klassa srednej školy*. Pod red. i s pred. Akademika A.M. Pankratovoj, Moskva, Izdatel'stvo Akademii Pedagogičeskich Nauk, 1954.

⁴⁶ Buščik, *Očerki razvitija škol'nogo i istoričeskogo obrazovanija v SSSR*, cit., p. 370; V.P. Lyscov, A.N. Moskalenko, A.G. Talova, *Učebnik prochodit proverku*, «Prepodavanje istorii v škole», 1, 1957, pp. 45-49 (see p. 46).

⁴⁷ See W.K. Medlin, *Analyses of Soviet History Textbooks Used in the Ten-Year School, Teaching in the social sciences and the Humanities in the U.S.S.R.*, Washington, D.C., U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education, Division of International Education, 1959, pp. 1-18 (see pp. 15-16).

History should be presented in a concentric way in order to provide the possibility to study some methodological and didactical issues in depths. Contemporary history was introduced in the 10th class in order to provide a complete knowledge of history to the pupils⁴⁸.

In 1958 and 1959, there were several debates about the reform concerning the teaching of history and in particular about the provision of more information about Modern and Contemporary history of the foreign countries in the course of history of the Soviet Union for the 7th and 8th class, in order to guarantee a minimum knowledge of the past of these countries but also to better understand the role of the Soviet Union in Modern and Contemporary history⁴⁹.

The decree of October 8th, 1959 «On Some Changes in the Teaching of History at School» established that pupils had to be taught the episodes of the history of the Soviet Union in the 4th class; the elementary course on the Ancient world (72 hours) in the 5th; the elementary course on the Medieval Age (72 hours) in the 6th; the elementary course on the Soviet Union with important information on the social and institutional structure of the Soviet state and about Modern and Contemporary history of the foreign countries (respectively of 72 and 105 hours) in the 7th and 8th class; the systematic course on the history of the Soviet Union and on Modern and Contemporary history of foreign countries (180 hours) in the 9th and 10th class. Furthermore, the teaching of the Constitution was foreseen in the 11th class – which was not realized immediately but only later on – with information concerning civil, criminal and labor law, some other branches of Soviet law and the principles of the Constitution of the Republics⁵⁰.

In other words, these measures modified the chronological and linear development of history in order to introduce three teaching phases: the teaching of the history of the Soviet Union in the 4th class, the elementary course from the 5th to the 8th class, and a systematic and more detailed course in the 9th and 10th class. The last two years of the junior secondary school were years of in-depth analysis⁵¹.

With the decree of February 23rd, 1960 «On the Concourse of the Best School Textbooks», the Ministry of the Russian Republic started the publication of new textbooks of history. The new textbooks had to be presented before March the 1st, 1961⁵². The new textbooks introduced a new periodiza-

⁴⁸ A.I. Stražev, *Nekotorye voprosy metodiki prepodavaniya istorii v svjazi so škol'noj reformoj*, «Prepodavanie istorii v škole», 1959, 2, pp. 34-41.

⁴⁹ Buščik, *Očerok razvitija škol'nogo i istoričeskogo obrazovanija v SSSR*, cit., pp. 425-426.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 420-425. The Constitution of 1977 introduced the 10-year-compulsory education. See Medlin, *Analyses of Soviet History Textbooks Used in the Ten-Year School*, cit., pp. 1-18.

⁵¹ This division is still used nowadays, see Tchernychev, *L'enseignement de l'histoire en Russie*, cit., p. 38.

⁵² Buščik, *Očerok razvitija škol'nogo i istoričeskogo obrazovanija v SSSR*, cit., pp. 427-428, 452-453.

tion of history, different from that of the past mainly in the junior secondary school, since they had to adapt both to the new programs and to the general renewal of historical sciences. Indeed, after the XXII Congress of the Party (1961) «Pokrovsky was again rehabilitated as a good Bolshevik although some caution remained about him as a historian»⁵³.

From 1964-1965, oral and written tests were recommended – for instance using maps – or simply by asking pupils who would answer directly from their desks or at the blackboard because of the reduced length of secondary school. The oral or written test (*začet*) – always more common – was a sort of test about one wide theme or more limited ones⁵⁴. This explains why in 1965, school exercise textbooks became always more important in order to stimulate the active learning of history – through the use of plans of different essays, chronological and synchronic tables, schemes⁵⁵.

In order to better understand the way in which history was taught, it is useful to analyze the school exercise books by Ljudmila G. Kiseleva – former responsible of the reading room of the State Archive of the Russian Federation (*GARF*) in Moscow – who has granted us access to her rich collection of documents. Ljudmila was a pupil at the Noginsk school – in the Moscow region – and her exercise books demonstrate not only that she was a model pupil but also that her teacher thoroughly followed the new programs in the 7th (1955-56), 9th (1957-58) and 10th class (1958-59).

The 7th class exercise book contains the notes based on E.A. Kosminsky's textbook on Medieval history, from the Czechoslovakia during XII-XV centuries to the peasant war in Germany and to the France of the end of the XVI century. The nice calligraphy and the graphical schematization of events are so accurate that the teacher rewarded Ljudmila with a «5» (*pjaterka*) – the most desired mark by good pupils.

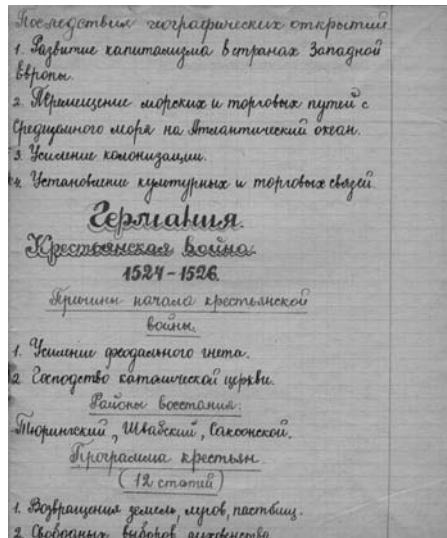
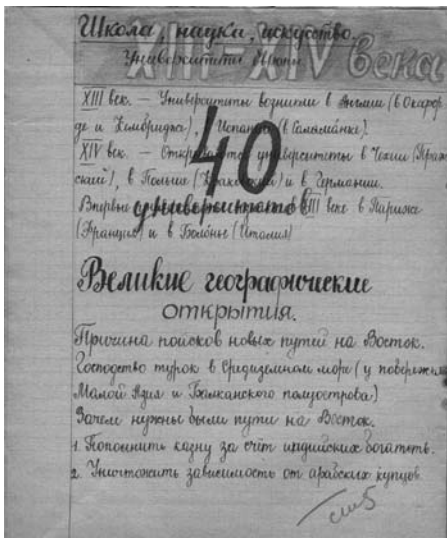
The school exercise books of the 9th and 10th class fully reflected the chronology of Pankratova's textbook, used in Soviet Union until 1963. The books for the 9th class presented indeed the topics such as the formation of the Russian empire from the beginning of the XVIII century until the Crimean war (1853-1856).

The school exercise book for the 10th class presented the years from 1900 to 1917.

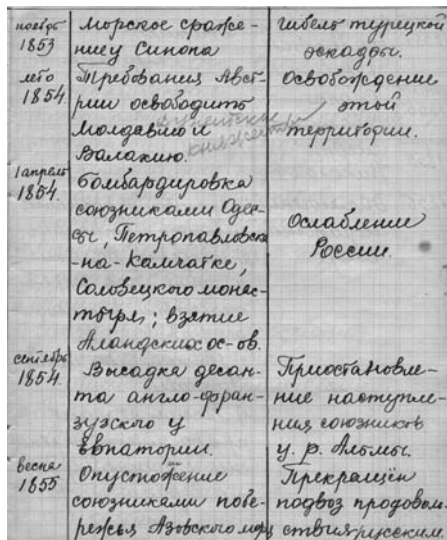
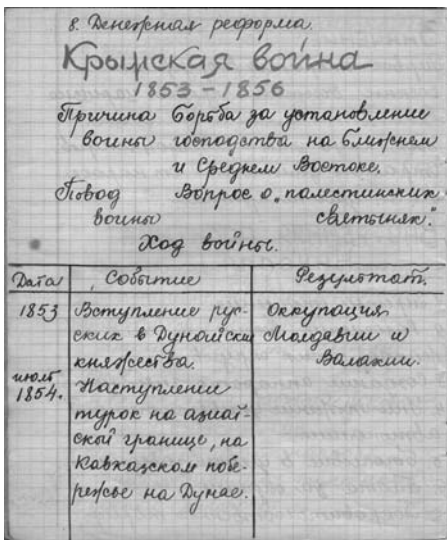
⁵³ Asher, *The Rise, Fall, and Resurrection of M.N. Pokrovsky*, cit., p. 57.

⁵⁴ P.S. Lejbengrub, *Izučenie istorii v IX klasse*, «Prepodavanje istorii v škole», 1, 1965, pp. 26-36.

⁵⁵ R.A. Abramovič, *Ispol'zovanie «tetradej dlja samostojatel'noj raboty po istorii»*, «Prepodavanje istorii v škole», 6, 1965, pp. 66-68.



Figs. 1-2. School, Science and Art. The University in Europe. The Great Geographical Discoveries. Germany. The Peasant War (1524-1526).



Figs. 3-4. The Crimean War (1853-1856).

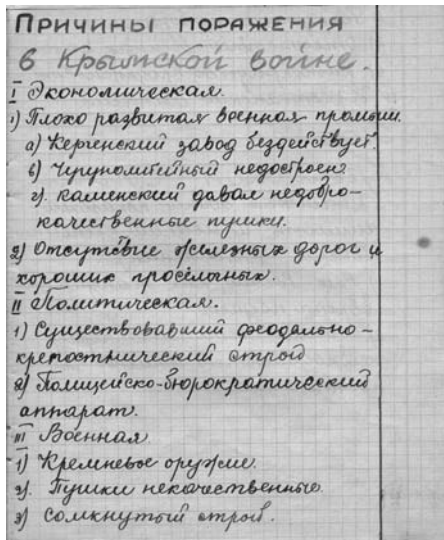


Fig. 5. Causes of the Crimean War.

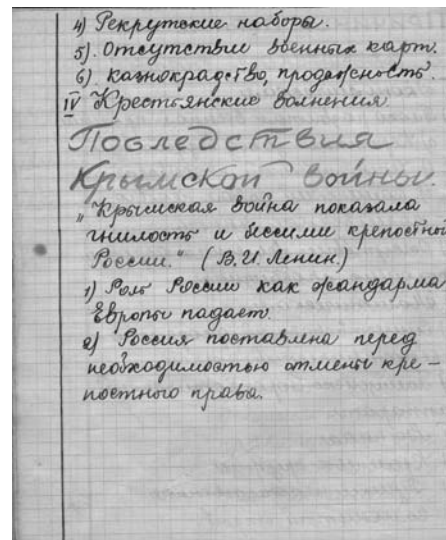


Fig. 6. Consequences of the Crimean War.

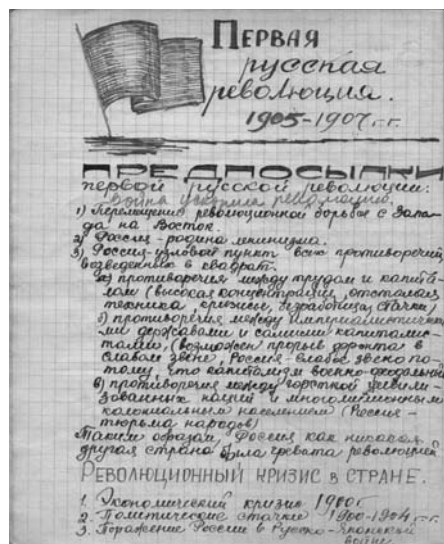


Fig. 7. The First Russian Revolution of 1905-1907. Preconditions of the First Russian Revolution. The Revolutionary Crisis in the Country.



Fig. 8. The December Armed Insurrection.



Fig. 9. The Retreat of the Revolution.

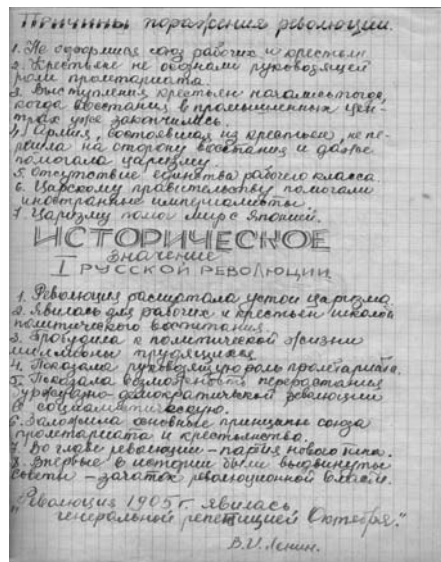


Fig. 10. The Historical Meaning of the First Russian Revolution.

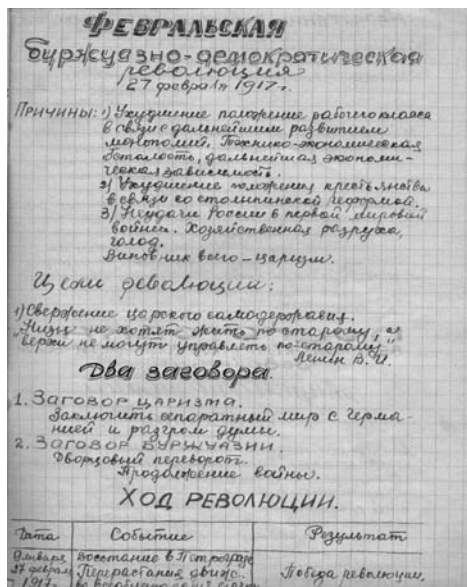
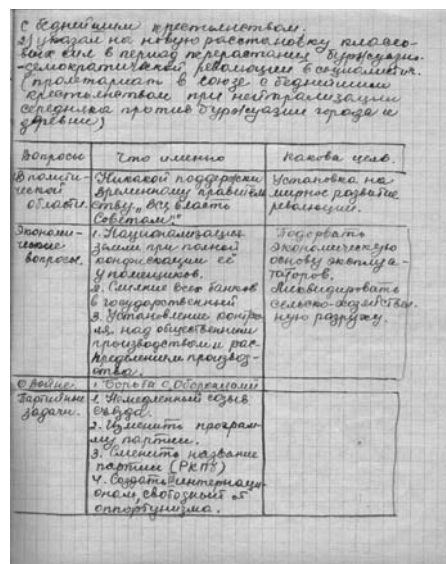


Fig. 11. The Bourgeois-Democratic Revolution of February 27th, 1917.



Figs. 12-13. *The Preparation of the Great Socialist Revolution. V.I. Lenin’s April Theses.*

Ljudmila’s school exercise textbooks – constantly awarded with a «5» – constitute a very precious source also for the 5-mark-assessment system introduced by the measures of January 10th, 1944. The school performance and the pupils’ conduct were judged on the basis of a 5-mark scale, with «1» being the lowest and «5» the highest mark⁵⁶.

3. Nikolaj P. Kuzin and the Didactics of Local History

Responsible for the re-discovery of local history was Nikolaj P. Kuzin (1907-1982) – main specialist in the didactics of history, pedagogue and member of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences⁵⁷. For Kuzin, ethnography was a very important discipline useful to renew the didactics of history following the

⁵⁶ *Postanovlenie Soveta Narodnyh Komissarov RSFSR N. 24 O vvedenii cifrovoj pjatiball'noj sistemy ocenki uspevaemosti i povedenija učajčichsja načal'noj, semiletnej i srednej školy*, «Sbornik prikazov i rasporyženija Pravitel'stva», 4, 1944, p. 58.

⁵⁷ N.P. Kuzin (1907-1982) began his pedagogical activity as Pioneer Chief in 1924. He was a secondary school teacher and graduated from the faculty of Pedagogy at the University of Moscow (MGU) in 1929. Between 1943 and 1966 he was engaged in the Communist Party activity and wrote some books on the methodology of history teaching. See his archive at the Academy of Pedagogical Science: Archiv Rao (*Rossijaskaja Akademiya Obrazovanija*), Fond 130 (N.P. Kuzin), op. 1, delo (Act) 154 (*Materialy k dissertacii*).

spirit of patriotism. The study of ethnography was an extra-curricular activity for the 8th and 9th class and had to get information from local museums. However the use of local sources revealed some contradictory aspects of the de-Stalinization of history.

In 1946 Kuzin published an article entitled *The Ethnographical Material in the Teaching of History at the Junior Secondary School* in which he outlined the great role of ethnographical activities in line with the Party politics⁵⁸.

Starting from 1948, Kuzin consecrated himself to the study of the methodology of the teaching of Russian history from Peter I the Great to the development of capitalism in Tsarist Russia at the end of the XVIII century⁵⁹. In 1962 Kuzin wrote a PhD thesis on local history⁶⁰. During his research, he also collected some stories written by the pupils of the school of Rzhev – who were children during the German occupation⁶¹ – which have not been included in the Ph.D. thesis because of the silence that had surrounded the events of WWII until the middle of the '50s⁶². As argued by Catherine Merridale in her recent book, in December 1941 «in the town of Rzhev there is a concentration camp with fifteen thousand captured Red Army soldiers in it and five thousand civilians [...]. They are holding them in unheated huts, and they feed them one or two frozen potatoes each a day. The Germans threw rotten meat and some bones through the barbed wire at the prisoners. This has made them ill. Every day 20-30 people are dying. The ones who are too ill to work are shot [...]

»⁶³. The stories written by the children of Rzhev represent not only a precious source for «the war through children's eyes»⁶⁴, but also a proof of the German atrocity and war crimes on children, which were judged only partially in the Nuremberg Trial of February 19th, 1946⁶⁵.

⁵⁸ N.P. Kuzin, *Kraevedčeskij material v prepodavanii istorii v srednej škole*, «Prepodavanie istorii v škole», 3, 1946, pp. 75-64.

⁵⁹ N.P. Kuzin, *Razloženie krepostničestva i zaroždenie kapitalizma*, «Prepodavanie istorii v škole», 1, 1948, pp. 52-69.

⁶⁰ See the abstract of the thesis. N.P. Kuzin, *Metodika primeneniya kraevedčeskogo istoričeskogo materiala v prepodavanii istorii SSSR v staršich klassach srednej školy. Avtoreferat dissertacii predstavlennoj na soiskanie učenoj stepeni kandidata pedagogičeskich nauk (po metodike istorii)*, Naučnyj rukovoditel', A.I. Stražev, Moskva, Naučno-Issledovatel'skij Institut metodov obučeniya Akademii P.N. RSFSR/Sektor metodiki istorii, 1962.

⁶¹ N.P. Kuzin, *Archiv Rao Fond 130, op. 1, delo (Act) 265*.

⁶² Buščik, *Očerok razvitija škol'nogo i istoričeskogo obrazovanija v SSSR*, cit., pp. 338-349.

⁶³ C. Merridale, *Ivan's War. The Red Army 1939-1945*, London, Faber and Faber, 2005, p. 123.

⁶⁴ Among the first works dealing with this topic, see: I. Grudzinska-Gross, Jan t. Gross, *War Through Children's Eyes. The Soviet Occupation of Poland and the Deportations, 1939-1941*. Foreword by Bruno Bettelheim. Transl. by R. Strom, D. Rivers, Stanford University, Stanford, Hoover Institution Press, 1981.

⁶⁵ For the analysis of some cases, see: F.W. Seidler, A.M. de Zayas (eds.), *Kriegsverbrechen in Europa und im Nahen Osten im 20. Jahrhundert*. Mit einem Kommentar zur Kriegsvölkerrecht von Prof. Dr. A. Steinkamm, Hamburg, Mittler, 2002, pp. 278-279.

In the eight stories chosen among thirty, three types of action accomplished by German during the occupation of Rzhev are explained: thefts, mistreatments and execution of civilians – children included. Children describe the scenes of atrocity in a particular way, describing the German enemy as *fric* (from the German nickname *Fritz*), ferocious beasts, damned dogs, dirty German, German bandits or scoundrels – all of these expression continued to be used after the war since hatred against the Germans was a constant mark of the patriotic education of the post-war period⁶⁶.

We will now present the stories which describe violent acts, including executions. In the first story, A. Suchkova – 4th class – tells us «the shooting of a little 13-year-old girl»:

When we were evacuated by the Germans from Rzhev to the Smolensk region, we lived in the district of Cholmzharkov, in the village of Jakimov. In nearby villages, the Germans drove everyone out on the streets. This was also the fate of the inhabitants of our village. While they forced the people of our village out on the street, the Germans took up a little 13-year-old girl. She was ill. The soldiers dug a hole in the snow and threw the living girl in it. The girl shouted with terror. Then a German shot her⁶⁷.

Also K. –1st class – describes «the shooting of two girls»:

[...] from the village Shestino of the Rzhev district, the Germans forced all the population out to clean the streets from the snow. When these bandits entered in the last *izba* [wooden peasant house], they found two girls aged of 10 and 12, who had remained at home. They sent them on the street for the cleaning too. Working as much as adults, children lost their forces, they were exhausted, but the Fascist bandits continued to force them, by menacing them with whips. At the end, the Germans took the exhausted girls at a certain distance from the street and they shot them. A wide surface of the snow-covered clearing was covered with some innocent victims' blood⁶⁸.

This is the story of a 1st schoolyear-girl, who describes the shooting of a child named Volodija Rumjancev:

This happened in the village of Shandalovo in the district of Rzhev. The German bandits (*fašistkie bandity*) were lodged in the dormitory of an *izba*, together with the owners. In the middle of the night, Volodija – 8 years old – repeatedly asked his mother something. He even began to cry thus breaking the quiet the fascist brutes (*fašistkie izvergi*) required. The Germans (*fricy*), without even thinking about that, took the child, brought him in the barrack and killed him⁶⁹.

⁶⁶ M. Rychlin, *Nemec na zakaz: obraz fašista v socrealizme*, in *Socrealističeskij kanon*. Pod red. H. Günther i E. Dobrenko, Sankt Peterburg, Gumanitarnoe Agentsvo/Akademičeskij proekt, pp. 815-829.

⁶⁷ N.P. Kuzin, Fund 130, op. 1, *delo* (Act) 265, ll. 6-7.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, l. 35.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, l. 28.

In the following stories, there are some cases of child mistreatments. In the first story, Nina – 6th class – wrote:

I was 13 when the Germans occupied Rzhev. They treated Soviet citizens in a very ferocious way. A German officer came at our place and informed us that four soldiers would come and live with us. No way to refuse. The soldiers arrived, they took two beds and chose the nicest crockery for themselves. Some days went by. One day the Marshal came and visited us. I was sitting in the kitchen. While he was going away, he saw me and – I don't know why – he stopped and looked straight in my face with his big colorless eyes. He looks like a barn owl, with his empty glance, but I did not look away and I stuck out my tongue. He widened his eyes even more and shouted «Ah, get out!» and started to slap me across my face with both hands. After that, he seized his collar and threw himself in the little room, where there was our bed and he left swearing and banging the door. I went to the garret and cried heavily for long: it hurt me so much, that that scoundrel behaved as he were the lord of the town, of my place, and could do whatever he wanted. I spent a long time in the garret, crying all my tears and cursing the enemies⁷⁰.

As in the previous story, Kira – 1st class – wrote:

The revolting Fascists beat me with whips. My mother and I were at home, when the Germans arrived and told us we had to leave Rzhev. My mum tried to save time because she didn't know what to take away and we stayed a little longer in order to gather our stuff. Then Germans threw all our bundles in a corner of the room, took their whips and drove us out of the apartment. We had to go from Rzhev I to Rzhev II, and all way long those infamous bandits whipped us on the head. From that moment, I've always hated Germans deeply. The word «German» is for me the most damned word⁷¹.

Not only were children killed or mistreated, but they were also starved. In the following story, A. Gavrilova – 4th class – tells us how the Germans stole her and her family their bread:

This happened during the German occupation of our city. At our place, there lived an old aunt of mine – my mother's sister – with her three children. The oldest girl was 6 years old. Once my aunt brought home some little pieces of bread – gathered by begging – from the country, and put them in the kitchen cupboard. That same night, a German knocked at our door. We thought he had dragged to our place because he had seen our light so we covered it. «Open!» – the ferocious beast (*dikij zver'*) shouted behind the door. My mother and my aunt did not open. The German exploded and shouted even louder: «Open or I'll shoot». At that moment he broke the door and burst into the apartment as a devil. He went to the cupboard. He caught all the pieces of bread and run to the door. The children begun to cry. Their mother threw herself against him and started to tear the bread up. But the German hit her on the head with his gun and run out on the street. The children cried even more. My aunt run after him and he shot in the air. She got frightened and went back home to her children. The children yelled for hunger and cried for a long time. They were hungry: they hadn't eaten since three days and nobody knew when and what they would eat

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, ll. 40-40b.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, ll. 47-47b.

again. That cursed German (*fric*) hadn't even left them the crumbs. The hungry children died some days afterwards⁷².

Even Evgenija – 4th class – described a similar scene concerning hungry people:

When our soldiers came closer to the city of Rzhev, the Germans began to drive the whole civil population out. We had to walk several kilometers until we got to the station of Rozhdestveno, and then they packed us in some cold wagons. They moved us in cold trenches. We sat down, hungry. Many children died for the cold. Near the trenches, there were piles of people, dead of cold and hunger. They beat us if we didn't work. A lot of us got ill with typhus and died. In March, the Red Army freed Rzhev from the Fascist scoundrels (*fašistkie merzavcy*)⁷³.

Valja – 1st class – wrote that in winter 1941, the Germans drove her family out of their house:

We were obliged to live in the nearby trench. One day, the Germans forced my mother and other women to work. My little sister and I, we were tremendously cold and we decided to go home, where there were the Germans (*fricy*), warming themselves with our stove. When we got there, there were no Germans inside. But after a while, a terrifying German started to shout that we should let the place near the stove free. My sister and I, we hid in the corner, no intention of going away. But that terrifying bandit pulled us and flung us to the ground. I do not remember how we reached the humid and cold trench, but I know that my little sister died soon after this fact⁷⁴.

In the other episodes, children wrote about the killing of a member of their family, or of partisans or of a civilian. Vladimir Ch. – 4th class – wrote about the theft of an old man's boots, who called the Germans «cursed dogs» (*prokljatye sobaki*)⁷⁵. Galina G. – 4th class – wrote she was evacuated from Rzhev to Timoshino, and that she saw the shooting of Njura and of her 4-year-old daughter, because she did not want to hand her sewing machine to the Germans⁷⁶.

These stories give us some examples of the German atrocity, which hit the civil population during the German occupation. In the post-war period the memory of the victims generated a «cult of war», which was an important aspect both of the feeling of national identity of Soviet people and of the patriotic consciousness of the new generation⁷⁷.

The teaching of the history of the Second World War was introduced in the 10th class thank to the revision of the textbook occurred in 1958. As for didactics, some teachers suggested to use historical local sources such as war pro-

⁷² *Ibid.*, ll. 23-23b.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, l. 37b.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, ll. 28b-29.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, ll. 11-11b.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, ll. 12-13.

⁷⁷ See for instance N. Tumarkin, *The living and the dead: the rise and fall of the cult of World War 2 in Russia*, New York, Basic Books, 1994.

paganda political posters and childhood recollections – which had displayed the hatred against the Germans during the war – which were now considered to be useful to teach people patriotism, internationalism and the love for the fellow people thanks to their emotional message⁷⁸.

4. *The Teaching of the Constitution and of the Soviet Law*

The analysis of the teaching of the Constitution reveals some new aspects of the formation of the Soviet citizen and of his/her Socialist consciousness. An evolution of this discipline has been observed, not only from the point of view of its content but also of the values it transferred. Indeed, while in the interwar period, pupils were taught the veritable Constitution, in the second post-war period, they were also taught the civil education in order to educate a new Soviet citizenship.

Published in 1922, the first Soviet Constitution was reviewed in 1924 and then in the summer 1936. As from 1937, the so-called «Stalin Constitution» was introduced as a school discipline in the 7th-10th classes, although it was later taught only in the 7th class⁷⁹.

After the introduction of the teaching of the Constitution in 1937, the course of social science was definitively abandoned because it was considered to be too redundant⁸⁰. Through the teaching of the Stalin Constitution pupils should learn that «a real democratic spirit (*demokratizm*) was possible only in the country of triumphant Socialism, where there were the conditions for the global development of men [...]. The anti-religious and international education was intensified; a respect for the working man was instilled in – the Stalin human spirit – everyone; the education of a passionate love towards the Socialist Fatherland was consolidated as well as the hatred towards class enemies and the promptness to defend the Fatherland with all their forces»⁸¹.

After World War II, several jurists dedicated their studies to the methodology of the teaching of the Constitution, in order to more concretely teach the fundamental values of the Soviet citizenship. Among them V.A. Karpinsky affirmed that the Constitution was to be taught following an inductive method, in order to facilitate the assimilation of the abstract concepts of the Constitution on the basis of «concrete facts and examples given»⁸².

⁷⁸ A.P. Ostrovskij, *Izučenie temy «geroičeskaja bor'ba sovestkich partizan»*. *Iz opyta ispol'zovanija kraevedčeskogo materiala*, «Prepodavanje istorii v škole», 2, 1959, pp. 68-71.

⁷⁹ E.N. Medynskij, *Narodnoe obrazovanie v SSSR: k 30-letiju Velikoj Oktjabr'skoj socialis-tičeskoj revoljucii*, Moskva, Gosudarstvennoe Učebno-pedagogičeskoe Izdatel'stvo, 1947, p. 21.

⁸⁰ Buščik, *Očerok razvitija škol'nogo i istoričeskogo obrazovanija v SSSR*, cit., p. 271.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² V.A. Karpinskij, *O metodike prepodavanija konstitucii*, «Prepodavanje istorii v škole», 5, 1947, pp. 77-85.

Among the teachers, some had indeed noticed that the study of the Constitution – following the inductive method – had raised the level of general learning because it helped pupils understand and meet civil rights. This method – based on concrete material – was aimed at making pupils aware of the double contrast between the old Tsarist regime and the new Soviet regime, and between the Soviet regime and the regime of the other capitalist States⁸³. In 1949, M.P. Karev published the third edition of the textbook of the Constitution⁸⁴, preserving the same values of the teaching of the history, that is patriotism, Communist consciousness which expressed itself in the military heroism of the army and of the work, the intransigence towards the enemies of Socialism, the devotion towards the Socialist Fatherland and finally the spirit of friendships between peoples⁸⁵. However, the level of learning did not immediately raise because this subject was proven to have been neglected in the first '50s: the level of teaching was weak as well as the preparation of teachers, who did not follow the inductive method and thus did not get information from the current daily press or social life⁸⁶.

Therefore, as had happened to the teaching of history from 1954-1955, the programs for the teaching of the Constitution were renewed because the teachers had to get examples from the current political and social life of Soviet Union and of the Foreign countries. The press had to be the main source for comparison of the happiness of the Soviet Union and the unhappiness of the other countries. This comparison – aimed at educating the Soviet citizen – was based first of all on the work, characterized in the Soviet Union by the typical discipline of a planned economy, while Capitalist countries were left in the hand of a disorganized market. Hence, Soviet citizens had to be educated to subordinate their personal interest to those of their country⁸⁷.

Although the Constitution was definitely based on stereotypical messages illustrating the propaganda rather than the reality of the postwar reconstruction, it insisted on the educational function of the Constitution. Also in this case, the school exercise book which Ljudmila Gennad'evna Kiseleva held in 1955-1956 during the teaching of the Constitution course, represents a very precious source for the comprehension of the role of the teaching of the Constitution in the formation of the Soviet citizen. In the 7th class, Ljudmila was made to cut out images from newspapers and paste them in her school exercise book in order to better understand the principles of the Constitution.

⁸³ N.I. Socerdotov, *O nekotorych voprosach prepodavaniia konstitucii SSSR (Iz opyta raboty školy N. 26 g. Molotova)*, «Prepodavanie istorii v škole», 2, 1949, pp. 52-60.

⁸⁴ M.P. Karev, *Konstitucija SSSR. Posobie dlja srednej školy*, Moskva, Učpedgiz, 1949.

⁸⁵ G.P. Barinov, *Vospitanie sovet'skogo patriotizma na urokach Konstitucii SSSR*, «Prepodavanie istorii v škole», 5, 1950, pp. 48-64.

⁸⁶ *Za dal'nejšee povyšenie kačestva prepodavaniia Konstitucii SSSR*, «Prepodavanie istorii v škole», 6, 1953, pp. 3-7.

⁸⁷ M.A. Eršova, *Ispol'zovanie periodičeskoj pečati na urokach Konstitucii SSSR*, Moskva, Učpedgiz, 1955.

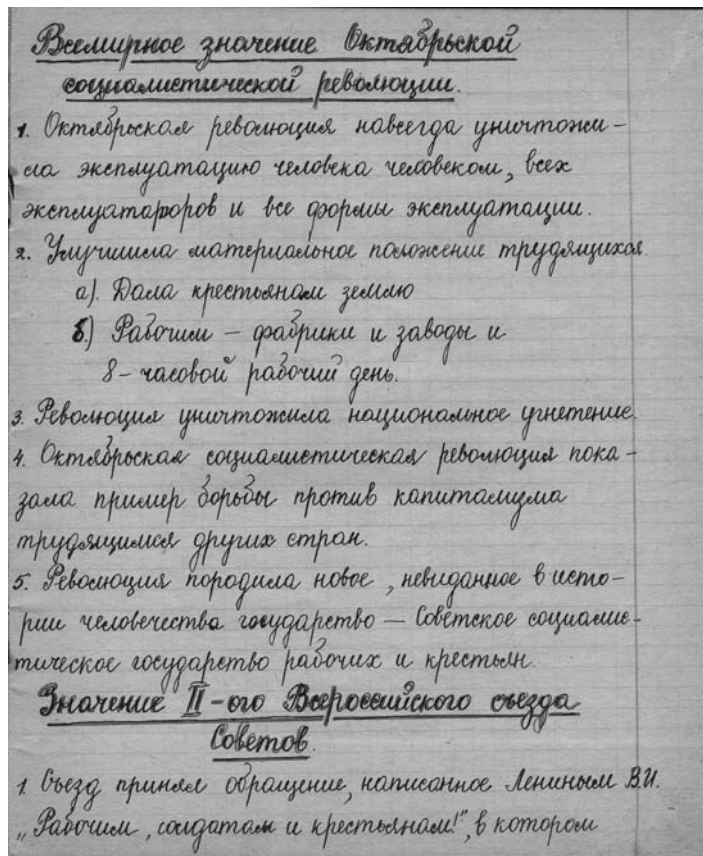


Fig. 14. The Worldwide Meaning of the October Socialist Revolution. The Meaning of the Second Congress of the Soviets.

задачи, что оппони все власти принадлежат трудящимся массам.
 а) декрет о земле
 б) декрет о рабочем
 в) декрет об образовании рабоче-крестьянского правительства.

Мероприятия, проведенные советской властью в первые дни советской власти

1. Национализированы все средства производства

а) Национализированы все фабрики, заводы, заводы, заводы.
 б) Национализированы все крупные промышленные и торговые предприятия, а также железнодорожный и воздушный транспорт.
 в) Национализировано все финансовое хозяйство.

2. Введено Всероссийское Крестьянское Кооперативное движение по борьбе с контрреволюцией.
 а) создано свои кооперативные органы — кооперативы

Рабоче-Крестьянское Красное Армию по борьбе с контрреволюцией и интервенцией

Советское государство — мощное оружие построения социализма в нашей стране.

Задачи советского народа

1. Добиться разгрома войны агрессии.
2. Создать мощную тыловую промышленность.
3. Обогатить и укрепить крестьянское хозяйство в колхозных хозяйствах — колхозы.

Политическая основа Советского Союза.

Политическую основу Советского Союза составляет Советский депутатский трудящихся (статья 2).
 Все власти в нашей стране принадлежат трудящимся рабочим и крестьянам в лице Советов депутатов трудящихся (статья 3)


Figs. 15-16. The Measures carried out by the Soviet State in the first Days of the Soviet Government. The Soviet State – a Powerful Weapon for the Building of Socialism in our Country. The Political Basis of the Soviet State.

Труд

Труд в СССР — дело чести.
 Труд в СССР — это честь.

«Кто не работает, тот не ест.»

Задачи социализма	Национализация промышленности	Восстановление и развитие промышленности и сельского хозяйства (все производство и все коммунальные услуги)
Демократическая революция	Классовая борьба	Рабочие и крестьяне
Социалистический строй	Коллективизация	Сельскохозяйственный труд



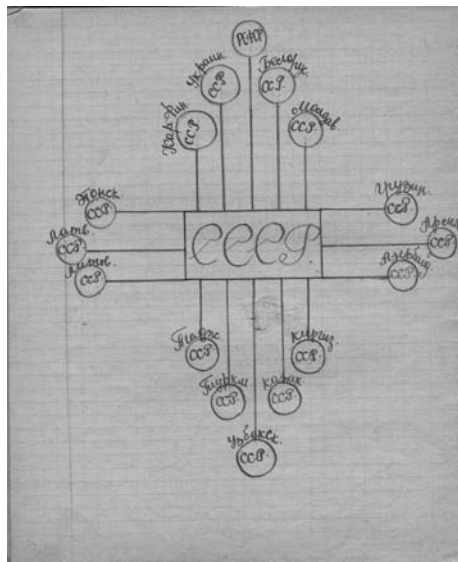
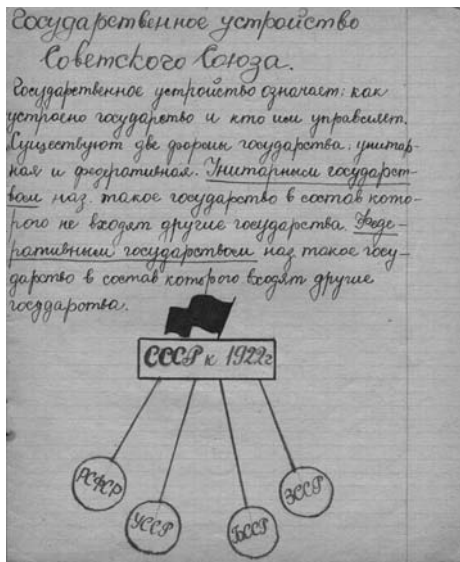
Генерал Социалистического Труда А. А. Луначарский со своим родом и представителями в Социалистическом строительстве

В социалистическом обществе.
 «Чести, доброты и геройства»
 «Созидательности и делами чести каждого способного к труду гражданина...»
 «От каждого по его способностям, каждому по его труду»

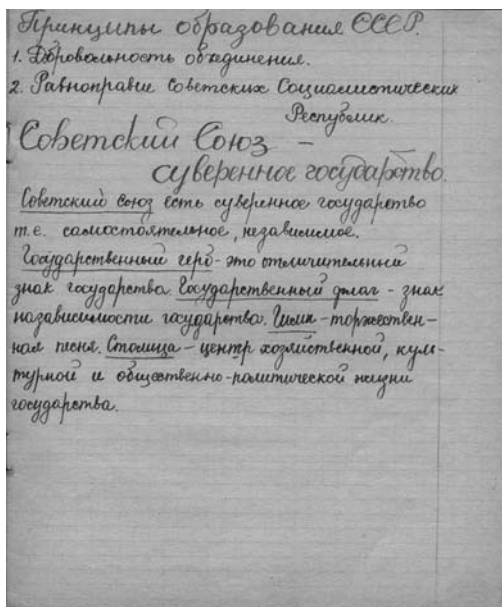



Старший аппаратчик Е. Г. Громова
 Старший аппаратчик В. П. Козлова

Figs. 17-18. The Labor in the Socialist society.



Figs. 19-20. The State Structure of the Soviet Union.

Fig. 21. The Causes of the Formation of the
Soviet Union.
The Soviet Union - a Sovereign State.

Following the school reform of 1958 – requiring the teachers to strengthen the link between school and society – the teaching of the Constitution was not longer foreseen in the 7th class but in the 10th in order to guarantee a better preparation of the pupils in the study of the main law of the Socialist State⁸⁸. The course hours doubled from 17 per year in 1958-1959 to 33 in 1959-1960, thus allowing to also include the main federal laws of the Soviet Union (*Osnovnoj zakon Sojuza SSR*) and other juridical questions in order to educate the new generation to the new Soviet law resulting from the de-Stalinization of justice⁸⁹. The increase in the number of hours dedicated to the Constitution has to be linked to the socio-economic reforms of Brezhnev, which originated not only a new ethic of work but also new social and cultural rules which had to characterize the de-Stalinization of justice⁹⁰.

One of the most used textbooks for the teaching of the Constitution – published for the fourth time in 1965 – was aimed at teaching the citizen their duties, in particular the respect of a rigid discipline of labor necessary for the fulfilling of the planned economy. The textbook was divided into three parts and presented the Social welfare of the Soviet Union (first part), the regime and the State institution (second part), the citizen's duties (third part) and, eventually, the historical meaning of the Constitution⁹¹.

In particular, in the third part, the book underlined that the Soviet society strictly punished those who violated the work discipline: «idlers, habitual absentees and grabbers who attempt to put in their pocket more money for themselves and to give less to the State». Among the others was the duty to honestly behave and to respect the rules of the Socialist common life, which also translated in acts of heroism; the respect of children towards their parents and the members of their family; the duty to take care of and consolidate the Socialist property; the military service in the Red Army; eventually the defense of the Socialist Fatherland.

The list of the Soviet citizen's duties surely reflected the atmosphere of the Cold War since the Constitution argued that there was no worse crime and bigger shame for a citizen of the Soviet Union than failure to defend the Fatherland: «the Constitution indicates that treason to the Fatherland is punished with all the strictness of the law as the gravest crime»⁹².

⁸⁸ *Obrazovatel'no-vospitatel'noe značenie kursa Konstitucii SSSR v desjatom klasse*, «Prepodavanje istorii v škole», 4, 1958, pp. 3-8.

⁸⁹ The de-Stalinization of justice started in 1958 in order to attenuate the Stalin's repressive system and relaunch the Communist project of Society reconstruction after WWII, see A.P. Sergeev, *Iz opyta prepodavanja Konstitucii SSSR*, «Prepodavanje istorii v škole», 2, 1961, pp. 55-58 (see p. 55).

⁹⁰ See for exemple D. Caroli, *Le jugement moral des tribunaux des camarades (1959-1965)*, in *Recht im Sozialismus: Analysen zur Normdurchsetzung in osteuropäischen Nachkriegsgesellschaften (1944/45-1989)*, hrg. U. Falk and G. Bender, Frankfurt am Main, Klostermann, 1999, pp. 201-231.

⁹¹ D.S. Karev, *Osnovnoj zakon sovetskogo socialističeskogo gosudarstva. Učebnoe posobie dlja 8 klassa*, Moskva, Izdatel'stvo Prosveščenie, 1965, 4 ed.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 76.

In conclusion, the analysis of the teaching of history and of the Constitution shows the limits of the post-war de-Stalinization process due from the one hand to the continuity of patriotic education supported by the «cult of war» and to the authors themselves, from the other, since they did not abandon the ideological theories of Marxism-Leninism even after Stalin's death. The veritable de-ideologization process was started only during the post-Soviet reforms. One of the most features of this process, which has accompanied the whole historiographic research, consists in the recovery of the social dimension of historical phenomena, of the everyday life, of social categories and oral history and by a way of writing history of the pupils themselves that placed «The Man in the XX Century»⁹³ at the core of historical research.

Dorena Caroli

Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Educazione e della Formazione

Università degli Studi di Macerata (Italy)

dorena.caroli@unimc.it

⁹³ P. Agmon, *The study of history teaching in contemporary Russia: Background, trends and challenges*, in V. Kaplan, P. Agmon and L. Ermolaeva (eds.), *The Teaching of History in Contemporary Russia. Trends and Perspectives*, Tel Aviv University, The Cummings Center for Russian and East European Studies, 1999, pp. 13-21; R.W. Davies, *Sovetskaja istorija v eru El'cina*, in *Evropejskij opyt i prepodavanje istorii v postsovetskoj Rossii. Materialy iz cikla seminarov podderžka regional'nych innovacij v programmach i metodach prepodavanija istorii*, Moskva, Democracy Programme Tacis, Evropejskij Universitet (Moskva), Fond Feltrinelli (Milan), 1999, pp. 44-64.