

Decisions on the Manuals of History

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According a greater significance to the institution of the teaching of civil history in the schools of the U.S.S.R., the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. and Central Committee of the Communist Party, from the 16th May, 1934, made and published the following resolution - "On the teaching of civil history in the schools of the U.S.S.R." In this decision the Council of People's Commissars and the Party Central Committee stated that the teaching of history in the schools of the U.S.S.R. was not satisfactory.

The Council of People's Commissars and the Party Central Committee established that the principal fault of the Manuals of History and of the teaching of history was their abstract schematic characteristic : "Instead of teaching history in a living and vital form with an expose of principal events, of achievements in chronological order and with the defining of the role of the leaders, we present to the pupils some abstract definitions of social or economic systems, thus replacing the vitality of civil history with abstract sociological schema". (*Extract from the decision of the Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the 16th May, 1934*).

The Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee indicated that "the pupils cannot profit from history lessons which do not observe the chronological order of historical events, leading figures and important dates. Only a course of history of this type can render accessible, intelligible and concrete the historical material which is indispensable for an analysis and a synthesis of historical events and capable of guiding the pupil towards a Marxist understanding of history".

Consequently, it was decided to prepare for June, 1935, the following manuals of history :

- a) The history of ancient times.
- b) The history of the Middle Ages.
- c) Modern history.
- d) History of the U.S.S.R.
- e) History of modern dependent and colonial countries.

The Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the Communist Party decided to organize five groups charged with the responsibility of compiling the new manuals, and they confirmed the composition of these groups.

On the 9th June, 1934, the Central Committee and the Council of People's Commissars resolved to introduce into primary schools, and into the 1st grade of the Secondary schools an elementary course of the history of the

U.S.S.R., and they organized some groups charged with the composition of these elementary manuals of the history of the U.S.S.R.

On the 14th August, the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Council of People's Commissars approved the remarks made by Comrades Stalin, Kirov and Idanov, with respect to the summaries of the new manuals of "History of the U.S.S.R." and of "Modern History."

In these remarks, all the summaries were submitted to a detailed examination and to a severe criticism. And it was established that the one which left the most to be desired was the summary of the manual of the "History of the U.S.S.R.", which abounded in anti-scientific and crude conceptions from the Marxist point of view and manifested an extreme negligence particularly inadmissible for the constitution of a manual where "each word, each conception, must be weighted." Although fewer, the faults of the summary of the manual of "Modern History" were equally important.

The remarks of Comrades Stalin, Kirov and Idanov indicated exhaustively in which ways it would be necessary to transform these summaries and the complete manuals. However the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. and the Central Committee of the Communist Party are obliged to establish that the manuals of history that have just been presented to them, leave on the whole, a lot to be desired, and that they continue to show the same faults that have been indicated above. The books which leave the most to be desired are the manual of the "History of the U.S.S.R." presented by Professor Vanag's group as well as the manuals of the elementary course of the "History of the U.S.S.R." for use in primary schools, presented by the groups of Mintz and of Lozinsky.

The fact that the authors of these manuals continue to defend the conceptions and historical principles already denounced more than once by the Party, and of which, the deficiency is clear, conceptions and principles which are based on errors well-known by Pokrovsky, cannot be interpreted by the Council of People's Commissars as anything other than testimony to the fact that one sector of our historians, especially the historians of the U.S.S.R., persist in conceptions from anti-Marxist and anti-Leninist historical science, which are fundamentally anti-scientific, and even the negation of history. The Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the Communist Party emphasize that these harmful tendencies and these endeavours to liquidate history as a science expounded by the chief ring leader, are bound up with the presence amongst certain of our historians erroneous historical conceptions, appropriately called "the historical school of Pokrovsky."

The Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the Communist Party prescribe that the triumph over these harmful theories constitutes the indispensable necessity as much for the composition of historical manuals as for the development of Marxist-Leninist historical science, and for the historical instruction in the U.S.S.R. which is of capital importance for the cause of our State, for our Party, for the instruction of the young generations.

Consequently, the Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the Communist Party have decided to create, in order to examine and to radically improve and, in the case of necessity, to alter and correct the historical manuals already written, a commission from the Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the Communist Party composed of Comrades Idanov (President), Radek, Svadindze, Gorin, Lukin, Jakoblev, Bystrjansky, Zatonsky, Faizulla, Khodjav, Bauman, Budnov, Bucharin. This commission has the right to organize groups for the examination of each manual and to open a concourse for the composition of the manuals which the Commission will decide need to be re-written.

The Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee decide unanimously to publish in the press the remarks of Comrades Stalin, Kirov and Idanov as well as other documents concerning this question.

V. M. MOLOTOV

President of the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R.

J. STALIN

The secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

Pravda, 27 January 1936

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