

Ukraine's State Policy in the Field of School History Education in the 1990s – 2000s

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Abstract

The article examines Ukraine's state policy in the field of school history education in the 1990s – 2000s. Issues of school history courses content filling with new visions; normative and legal support of their teaching; and search for this process best models have been the subject of attention of state authorities, research institutions, teachers, and the public of Ukraine since independence. For almost two decades, their solution has been generally progressive. A return to the 1990s – 2000s state policy principles in the field of school history education took place in Ukraine after the Revolution of Dignity. Therefore, the study of this policy, in particular, on the history rethinking, the creation of a regulatory framework for students' study of this subject, and public perception of the process is of great practical significance today.

Key words: general secondary education institution, school history education, textbook, syllabus, curriculum, civil society, competence approach

Ukraine's policy on school history education in the period under study was the result of the proclamation and establishment of an independent Ukrainian state, a powerful process of historical past rethinking that began in the 1980s and 1990s. Ukrainian society's unprecedented interest in national history, the urgent need of government agencies, research and educational institutions to update school history education were its results. Factors that contributed to this policy implementation were the unknown documentary sources introduction and historical facts accumulation, national historians' rejection of ideological paradigms of Marxist historiography and their methodological reorientation, the impact of the Council of Europe on the formation of a single European historical and cultural space [2].

An effective means of reforming the education sector in general and school history education in particular was a strong legal framework. It consisted of the Constitution of Ukraine, laws of Ukraine, decrees and orders of Presidents of Ukraine, legal documents on education, orders of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, local authorities, international and interstate agreements, treaties and etc. A special place here belongs to the decrees and orders of Presidents of Ukraine, L. Kravchuk, L. Kuchma and V. Yushchenko, on

significant and memorable events in the history of Ukraine, its historical and cultural heritage, which became an effective means of forming historical memory among students.

The general trends of school history education renewal are democratization and depoliticization of its content, filling it with national component, development of draft state standards in this field, introduction of a competency-based approach to its content, humanization, implementation of ideas of variability and many more. The results of rethinking of the historical past of Ukraine and the world were reflected in the school historical education content. As a result, issues related to Kyevan Rus, the Ukrainian people's Liberation War in the mid-seventeenth century, Ukrainian national consciousness revival in the nineteenth century, the events of the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917-1921, the NEP, and others began to be considered in the school course of Ukrainian history in a new way. For the first time in teaching this course, materials about the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine, unknown facts about World War II, the postwar period, and others were published. The school course of world history was changed to a lesser extent. However, such topics as “The Origin of Capitalism in England”, “Great Geographical Discoveries”, “Completion of the Industrial Society Formation in the World Leading Countries in the late 19th - early 20th Centuries”, “World War II”, “The World after World War II”, “Eastern European Countries”, etc. got corrected [4].

During the 1990s and 2000s, Ukrainian school history textbooks were modernized and became more logical and consistent in conceptual and semantic terms. There were attempts to create textbooks that would successfully perform the main functions – educational, developmental, managerial, research; adhere to the logical, psychological, genealogical (inheritance of structural components from previous textbooks) principles in the educational material content formation; focus on the students' personality, develop their logical and critical thinking, etc. [11].

Such representatives of the academic science and pedagogical community as N. Yakovenko, I. Hyrych, J. Hrytsak, L. Zashkilniak, O. Udod, O. Karlina, O. Pometun, K. Bakhanov, I. Koliada, V. Mysan, and others actively participated in the optimization of content and history courses teaching in secondary school. Thanks to their work, the concept of presenting a new vision of history in the school was developed; textbooks were prepared; proposals to improve school history education were made [1].

An important aspect of Ukraine's policy in the field of school history education in the 1990s – 2000s was the activities of state bodies, representatives of scientific, educational institutions, and the public to ensure its proper provision with history syllabi, textbooks and manuals.

Since the History of Ukraine stood out as a separate course, there was an increase in the amount of educational material for this subject. New approaches to the coverage of historical events, facts and the historical process in general emerged. It became clear that the 1989 program did not meet the needs of Ukrainian society. The proclamation of Ukraine's independence required a radical reformatting of history syllabi [10]. Therefore, since 1992, absolutely new syllabi primarily in the history of Ukraine have started to appear. Their content, structure and distribution of the number of topics and teaching hours per academic year have been constantly changing. The syllabi content was built on the principles of humanization and a combination of formational, civilizational and cultural approaches. With this in mind, school syllabi reflected the latest advances in historical science. On the other hand, the syllabi served as a source of studying changes in historical science in the most concentrated form. The syllabi maintained a linear approach to the presentation of the educational material content [3].

New high school textbooks and manuals began to appear as the syllabi developed. The main factors that led to this were the emergence of a sovereign Ukraine in the historical arena, the development of the process of national and world history rethinking, the introduction in the early 1990s of two independent courses (Ukrainian history and world history), which required new content; the development of continuing historical education concepts and state standards in the field of school history education; and the approval of new syllabi [9].

Ukrainian history textbooks and manuals published during the 1990s and 2000s focused on democratic values and priorities of civil society, consideration of historical events in national, European and global contexts, dialogical form of communication between the author and readers, effective selection of facts and their presentation, coverage of different views and interpretations, a variety of documents and didactic materials, creative and problematic nature of cognitive tasks, etc. They were aimed at enabling the student to learn to think critically and understand what exactly, why and how has changed over time in the interpretation of the past. Largely due to such history textbooks and manuals, national history education at school in the 1990s – 2000s acquired a Ukrainian studies orientation, i.e. preference was given to teaching

the history of Ukraine. The content of national history education gradually acquired a character and orientation, which objectively reflected the general trends of the original and self-sufficient Ukrainian historical process, especially the formation of the Ukrainian nation, its life at different stages in the context of world history [8].

Scientists, representatives of creative intelligentsia, teachers, and students' parents were concerned with issues of school history education development. They set out their views on them in many periodicals. The public's subject of discussion and criticism were issues of objectivity in teaching history, updating the content of its courses, the preparation of textbooks and manuals and proper provision of schools with them, the introduction of new pedagogical technologies into the educational process.

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