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***A HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN MODERN RUSSIA, AIMS, WAYS, OUTCOMES***, By Ayse Dietrich\*, Published by Bloomsbury, Written by Wayne Dowler, Year of Publishing: 2022. Subject Area: History of Education, Book Type: History. Total Number of Pages: 238. ISBN: 978-1781350101326, hardback, \$76.50.

This book examines education in Russia from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the 21<sup>st</sup> century within the scope of Russian schools, schooling policies toward the non-Russians, state language policy, the outcomes of schooling policies and practices, and their reception by the public.

Chapter I deals with the beginnings of state, private, and military educational policy in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and the efforts promoted by Peter the Great in particular. Dowler emphasizes that Peter the Great saw education as an instrument that prepared people for state service, and the loss of control over schooling that Peter envisaged due to deficiencies and limited resources in the educational system, among them the lack of trained personnel in the state services to supervise the educational system.

In Chapter II, the author examines the state, church, and private schooling systems during the reign of Catherine the Great; her educational reforms, strict regulations on the operation of schools, the creation of the Commission on Public Schools, her enthusiasm for Enlightenment experimentalism in education and opening schools for girls, and the strong adverse reaction from the public. Dowler states that Catherine's Enlightenment experiment took on a more conservative character and she became more reactionary and harsh on opponents who criticized her governance and neglect of education.

Chapter III discusses the state, private and military schooling system and schooling for girls under Alexander I and Nicholas I, how the system was affected by contact with the West, and the Decembrist uprising in 1825, and the reasons for increased limits in the scope and the nature of learning. Under Alexander I education was placed under the control of a central authority and the main goal was to raise the level of competence of civil servants at all levels. The chapter also put

forward the weaknesses of the education reforms, such as lack of funding and competent teachers due to military expenses. The author states that education under Nicholas I also served the interests of the state and the general aim of all schools was to give a moral education, while the purpose of the universities was to train capable men for all branches of state service.

In Chapter IV, the author explores the Great Reforms introduced by Alexander II, the liberation of the serfs, and his reforms in the judiciary, military and education. This chapter gives detailed information on state, zemstvo, private, military, and professional-vocational schooling, as well as the challenges in teachers' training, schooling for women, the "women question" in the 1860s and schooling for non-Russians. The author states that while the main purpose of the education was to increase the skills of the people that were needed to compete with European countries, the government also feared the consequences for the existing political order of an education that promoted Western liberal ideals. The author states that although Alexander II realized the need for further reform to appease public opinion, there was a growing number of professionals that were critical of his governance and demanded more practical approaches to public education.

Chapter V deals with the conservative and reactionary ruler Alexander III and his educational reforms. The chapter provides information on the elementary, secondary, and university schooling systems; education of women for higher courses; professional-vocational, and church schooling during the reigns of Alexander III and Nicholas II. The author states that Alexander III's tutor Konstantin P. Pobedonostsev opposed constitutional forms of government and advocated autocracy, and for him Alexander II's reforms were responsible for student discontent. He also believed that education should not impose international academic standards on the school system, but should be favor Russians and the Orthodox over non-Russians and other religions, and the Church should have a larger role in education. In addition, this chapter discusses social conditions, revolutionary activities, political organizations that sought constitutional reforms, the disastrous war with Japan, the coercive powers of the regime and worker strikes.

In Chapter VI, the author discusses the development of educational policies in the interlude of semi-parliamentary government in Russia, the conservative State Council's efforts to slow down educational reforms, their fears that science undermined religious belief, the closure of the universities and all other institutions of higher education after the Bloody Sunday event in 1905 and the succeeding Revolution of 1905, the reactions of universities against the new order and growing civic consciousness, the government ban on all student organizations, the ban on women from universities in 1908, the sharp decline of university funding, the strict control over teachers, the problems in elementary, secondary, and higher education, and education in non-Russian schools.

Chapter VII examines the consequences on education of the humiliating defeat of Russia in WWI, the beginning of the breakdown of authority, demonstrations, the abdication of Nicholas II and the establishment of Provisional Government. The author states that the Provisional Government pledged to grant the universities autonomy, ended the role of the Church in public education and guaranteed instruction in the native languages, but the difficulties the government faced prevented these plans from being realized. The radical changes in the educational system implemented by the Soviet Union, the cultural revolution of 1928 to 1931, the functions of Narkompros and the problems with their policies, the divisions of the radicals over the purposes of scientific knowledge are all discussed in this chapter.

Chapter VIII explores the period from Stalin to Chernenko, the deficiencies of the Soviet education system, the failure of the planned economy to meet the needs of the schooling system in the Soviet Union, and the problems in elementary, secondary, professional-vocational schools and higher education. The author states that while schooling under Stalin witnessed an explosion both in the number of schools and school attendance, human needs were neglected and the focus of education became material production in which individuals were reduced to minor players in an ideologically driven system. The chapter also provides information on the achievements obtained between the mid-30s and the mid-80s, and examines the quality of education, the physical conditions in schools, and the failing efforts of the regime to build a communist upbringing in education, ideological disorientation, korenizatsiia, nationalism and ethnic tensions.

In Chapter IX, the author explores the educational system under Gorbachev who became chair of the school reform commission, the school reform of 1984 which was an adaptation of the existing system to the economic and social needs within the context of communist upbringing, decentralization and democratization of the schooling system. The Chapter also examines the circumstances after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, political restructuring, the Law on Education of 1992 that was against the centralized, egalitarian and politicized school system, the failure of the reformed school system, and the recentralized administration of the Russian Federation in education and its consequences.

This scholarly written book delivers much detailed information on education during the late Tsarist Russia, and the Soviet and Post-Soviet eras. It is a valuable reference work on Russian education and is highly recommended for anyone interested in any aspect of education in Russia during the periods discussed.

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