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**THE NATIONAL POLICY REGARDING THE DIFFERENTIATION
OF THE ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL
EDUCATION IN UKRAINE
(END OF THE 1930s – BEGINNING OF THE 1950s)**

Nowadays, one of the priorities of the national educational policy of Ukraine is the creation of the conditions for the differentiation in the classroom, strengthening of the career guidance and core education, providing specialized education, individual educational trajectory of students’ development according to their personal needs, interests, and potential [6, pp. 335 – 336]. Considering the importance of the problem, the analysis of the past experience seems justified, namely reviewing the national educational policy of the Soviet government in the late 1930s – early 1950s, which was a difficult time of the socio-political and socio-economical changes of the pre-War, War, and post-War periods.

The historiographical analysis of the problem confirmed that various aspects of the state policy of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in the field of secondary school education within these chronological limits had been the subject of study of Ukrainian historians of pedagogy (L. Berezivs’ka, S. Loboda, O. Petrenko, O. Pometun, O. Sukhomlyns’ka, et al.). Russian scholars also devoted their works to the problem of the differentiation in pedagogical theory and practice during the above mentioned period (A. Pevtsova, 1994; A. Reznick, 2005; G. Kuvshinova, 2006). The purpose of this article is to reveal the essential features of the national educational policy of the Soviet government concerning the differentiation of the organization and content of secondary education, namely, the kinds and forms of the differentiated approach that were developed in Ukraine in the late 1930s – early 1950s.

In previous studies, we revealed that the idea of the differentiation of the secondary education was viewed by the agencies governing Ukrainian education since the end of 19th Century through 1932 as a factor of increasing the efficiency of the educational process in order to create most favorable conditions for the development of individual capabilities, aptitudes, and abilities of each student. The policy of ideologically different governments was generally aimed at the creation of the conditions for the implementation of the differentiation of secondary education in two main areas: the differentiation of its organization and differentiation of its content. At the same time, the criteria for internal and external differentiation varied, changed, and improved.

Unfortunately, in the 1930s, the Ukrainian secondary school system lost its unique features in the context of social and political transformations, subordination of the educational science to the official ideology, the reversal of Ukrainization policies and the intensification of Russification, all-Union state policy aimed at the creation of a unified secondary school (ten-year school including four years of elementary school and basic (incomplete) secondary seven-year school), common curricula, syllabi, and textbooks, the elimination of active teaching methods, professional concentrations, productive labor as an independent school subject, the transformation of schools for village (since 1930, kolkhoz) youth and seven-year factory apprenticeship schools into basic secondary comprehensive schools, strict regulation of the educational process, ignoring of the real needs and aptitudes of students, their developmental and psychological characteristics in favor of improving the quality of education. In this vein, it is worth paying attention to the fact that the People's Commissariat for Education of the Ukrainian Republic was not to act independently; its task was, mainly, to relay the all-Union educational policy, whereas secondary education in the territory of Ukraine was developing following the regulations handed down from Moscow.

Statistical data show that in AY 1940 – 1941, there were 3079 secondary schools in the cities and towns and 18593 in the villages of Ukraine. During this time, the majority of children studied in **incomplete (basic) secondary (seven-year) and**

complete secondary (ten-year) schools [2, pp. 6 – 7]. In AY 1938 – 1939, the state at its own expense founded **boarding schools for children with special needs**: for children with hearing and speech impairment – 46, for children with visual impairment – 10, for children with other disabilities – 27 (*differentiation by the criterion of physical health*) [2, p. 9].

In AY 1928 – 1939, the languages of instruction at Ukrainian secondary schools were: Ukrainian – in 18661 schools, Russian – in 2145, Moldavian – in 163, other languages (Jewish, Belorussian, Tatar, Kazakh, Turkmen, and others) – in 919 [10, p. 22].

As reported by M. Grytsenko, in addition to secondary comprehensive schools (30702), in AY 1940 – 1941 Ukraine had 179 specialized schools that operated within the system of the People's Commissariat for Education in the Ukrainian SSR, as well as specialized schools and training courses affiliated to other Commissariats: factory apprenticeship schools, mining schools, agricultural schools, vocational technical schools, industrial polytechnic schools, artisan schools, art and ceramic schools, industrial art schools, various courses of mass trades, etc. [3, p. 120]. So, in the late 1930s – early 1940s, schools were of the same type all over the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Differentiation was external only (by the criteria of physical health, nationality, and specific trades or crafts), but the number of such schools was limited.

It is worth mentioning that the Resolution “On the Introduction of the Tuition Fee in High Schools and Universities of the Ukrainian SSR and the Changes to the Procedure of Awarding Scholarships” (October 2, 1940) introduced tuition fees for students of 8th – 10th grades of secondary schools from September 1, 1940, which created additional difficulties on their way to getting education (canceled on July 6, 1956) [5, p. 45, pp. 176 – 177].

However, according to the sources, in the late 1930s, the first signals of defects in the existing secondary school system began to emerge. So, the Commissar for Education of the Ukrainian SSR F. Red'ko, summing up the results of examinations in 1938 – 1939 academic year, focused on the deficiencies that were identified:

secondary schools failed to provide students with sufficient practical skills necessary for working at the enterprises or in the public institutions, where they come after graduation; the curricula of secondary schools did not offer the subjects that would introduce students to the basics of industrial or agricultural production; syllabi are primarily theoretical, lacking application to practice and production. He believed that it was time to review the curricula and syllabi of the high school in order to introduce *special subjects and practical classes*, to ensure the preparation of high school graduates to practice [11, p. 8].

In the article “On the Practical Training of Secondary School Graduates” (1939), F. Red’ko substantiated the idea of the need to provide, along with the profound knowledge and general secondary education, “some preparation for life, for the future practical work”. This was important in the light of the national economy’s demand for skilled and educated personnel, which was stressed in the report of the Head of the Soviet government V. Molotov on the 18th Party Congress and brought about the shifting of the accents in the public school policy and the actualization of “the need to restructure education in secondary schools”, their curricula, syllabi, and textbooks [12, p. 7].

The preparation of secondary school students for future practical work was the subject of the debate during the Plenum of the Scientific and Research Institute of Pedagogy of the Ukrainian SSR (June 10, 1939), general meeting of the Commissariat for Education of the Ukrainian SSR (June 14, 1939) with the representatives of other Commissariats, enterprises, researchers, educators. It was widely discussed in the press, among parents and students. Overall, everybody agreed that “secondary school lagged behind the practical demands of life and the pace of the development of our industry” [12, p. 8]. For this reason, the Commissar for Education emphasized the need to restructure secondary school curricula and textbooks so as to establish closer ties between theoretical education and industrial production. His reasoning in this regard was the following: “Many comrades – teachers and researchers – have put forward a proposal to *furcate high school*. Obviously, this proposal brings us closer to the fulfillment of the task that we face. Of

course, we cannot return to a purely vocational system of secondary education, but we must find a place for an introduction, however small, of *special subjects* in the curriculum” [12, p. 11].

F. Red’ko proposed to eliminate the concentricity of the secondary school curriculum and to allocate time for special subjects; to introduce *practical classes in the 9th –10th grades*; to start discussions regarding training teachers for kindergartens and orphanages, drivers, tractor drivers, projectionist, laboratory technicians; to organize systematic manufacturing tours; to create classrooms and laboratories in schools to introduce *furcation*; and to pay special attention to productive labor education [12, pp. 12 – 13].

In the published article “Secondary School and Preparing its Graduates for Practical Work” (1939), which was based on the thoughts expressed by teachers, secondary school students, and workers, S. Chavdarov suggested that secondary school is largely detached from practice, and the teaching of the fundamentals of sciences is unnecessarily formalized. He summarized their thoughts in the following demands: to revise the teaching of physics, chemistry, and natural science; to introduce *concentrations* (industrial, agricultural, administrative record keeping, teaching) and *schools’ specialization*; to introduce *additional training* in certain areas upon the choice of students (*furcation*); to introduce students to various trades and professions [12, pp. 22 – 24].

As we can see, domestic scholars argued the need to return to the external and internal differentiation in the classroom.

With the beginning of World War II, the interest in differentiated instruction increased on the state level, as this was the demand of the time. Speaking about secondary school education during the War and in the post-War period, it is worth mentioning the difficult conditions of that time: evacuation, occupation, destruction, shortage of teachers, and unsystematic work of schools. In fact, in 1945 – 1958, the state policy focused on the reconstruction of schooling.

On September 1, 1943, the academic year started in many schools of the eastern regions of Ukraine. The rest of the Right-Bank Ukraine and western regions,

according to M. Grytsenko, began their school year with the liberation of these territories from the occupation, mainly since September 1, 1944 [3, p. 179].

In the wartime, there was a need to differentiate secondary school education: for working adolescents, secondary schools of a new type were organized: **schools for working youth and schools for village youth**. The emergence of a new type of secondary schools, on the one hand, was a requirement of the wartime and, on the other hand, a first step of the state in the implementation of the differentiation of secondary school education. The government wanted 8 – 16-year-old students to obtain elementary, basic, or full secondary education, to master the practical working skills in one of the branches of the national economy, which was especially important in the wartime. On October 1, 1943, the secondary schools for those teenagers who worked on the factories began to open their doors in towns. In 1944, these schools were renamed the schools of working youth. Some of them were seven-year schools (their graduates could enter specialized secondary schools), others – full secondary (giving the opportunity to enter higher educational establishments) [5, pp. 389 – 390].

The main differentiation strategies in these schools were the following: by the territory (urban and rural youth), age (14 to 18 years); the organization of specialized education (industrial in the schools for working youth and agricultural in the schools for village youth); intensive studying of certain subjects shaping the concentration (animal husbandry, plant cultivation); supplementation of the basic training in class with other forms: individual and group tutorials, residential sessions as a form of training.

In Ukraine in AY 1944 – 1945, there were 156 schools for working youth (by the end of AY 1945-1946, 98000 young people studied at these schools); 575 schools for village youth; and 500 classes affiliated to secondary schools for training those young people who had no primary, or seven-year, or full secondary education, i.e., for over-age students [5, p. 179].

The state continued to organize *schools for working and village youth*: (“The Law on the Five-Year Plan of the Reconstruction and Development of the Soviet Economy for 1946 – 1950”, March 18, 1946) to address the needs of the young

people who, because of war or temporary occupation, failed to obtain education. Along the same lines, the government expenditures on education were raised, which, among other things, increased the number of elementary, seven-year, and full secondary schools and provided general compulsory education for seven-year-old children in towns and villages [5, p. 44].

Already before the War, the nation's leadership decided to strengthen the patriotic sentiments among the population, which affected all social spheres, including the secondary school policy. At the same time, the Stalin's retinue proposed the idea of returning to **single-gender education** like in the pre-Revolutionary gymnasiums in Russia [9, pp. 80 – 83]. Initially, the innovations were of visual nature: soldier-like uniform for boys (a “gymnastyrka” shirt, a cap, and a belt). The government's plan was to introduce single-gender education by May of 1941, but the War prevented this, so its gradual implementation began only by 1943.

In September of 1943, single-gender education was introduced in several Ukrainian towns (*differentiation based on the sex, or gender, criterion*). The Resolution of the Council of People's Commissars “On the Introduction of the Single-gender Education in AY 1943 – 1944 in basic and full secondary schools of oblasts', Autonomous Republics', and Union Republics' capitals, as well as of major industrial cities” (July 16, 1943) explained the reasons for this decision: in coeducational schools, the physical characteristics of boys and girls cannot be accommodated adequately; their preparation for the work, practical activities, military service cannot be provided; the discipline of students is not maintained. To fulfill these tasks, since September 1, 1943, single-gender education was introduced in the 1 – 10 grades of all basic and full secondary schools (though, in AY 1943 – 1944, these new schools retained the curricula of their co-educational predecessors [8, p. 66]. In Ukraine, single-gender education was introduced in 660 schools, of which 314 were male (205000 students) and 346 female (240400 students) schools. In AY 1945 – 1946, about 9% of the total number of students studied separately [1, p. 69].

The quantity of educational institutions for each region was approved by the Ministry of Education of the Ukrainian SSR. The statistic data for AY 1946 – 1947 indicate that in L'viv oblast there were 909 schools with Ukrainian as a language of instruction, Russian – 36, Polish – 5; male – 23, female – 22, [14, p. 188]; in Kherson oblast, Ukrainian was adopted as a language of instruction in 788, Russian – 65, Armenian – 1, Uzbek – 21 [14, p. 192]; in Zakarpattia Oblast, 694 schools used the Ukrainian language, 5 – Russian, 101 – Hungarian, 8 elementary schools – Romanian, 1 elementary school – Slovenian [14, p.199]; in Chernivtsi oblast the Ukrainian language – 417, Russian – 15, Moldavian – 106, Jewish – 1; in Chernivtsi, there were 3 male and 3 female schools with Russian as a language of instruction [14, p. 204], and so on. These data suggest that in practice the differentiation of secondary education occurred by both *gender and national criteria*.

Various sources report that the introduction of single-gender education faced a number of challenges, such as: lack of suitable conditions, especially in the rural areas; lack of premises; shortage of trained personnel, financial support, and material means; deterioration of discipline, especially among boys, etc. In general, in 1943 – 1954, the majority of secondary schools functioned as coeducational. Sometimes, in the first shift some schools educated boys and in the second – girls.

A famine of 1946 – 1947 in Ukraine dramatically affected schooling. A large number of children stopped attending school; some turned to begging, others had to work on farms; homelessness and crime escalated [4, p. 10].

Therefore, three types of secondary schools functioned in the Ukrainian SSR: single-gender, coeducational, and blended (the first shift – as a male school, the second – a female school). It is natural that this innovation aimed at the differentiation by gender criterion had both positive and negative consequences. According to O. Petrenko, in AY 1953 – 1954 in the Ukrainian SSR, 12.25% of basic and 27.46% of full secondary schools were differentiated; in general in Ukraine, including the rural schools, this number was 10.23% [7, p. 23].

The differentiation by gender was not widespread; it was introduced to designate differentiated schools as having special, exemplary, elite status compared to

the rest of secondary schools. Thus, the Decree of the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR and the Central Committee of the Communist Party “On the Improvement of Foreign Languages Training in the Seven-year and Full secondary Schools of the Ukrainian SSR” (May 9, 1946) obligated the Ministry of Education of the Ukrainian SSR to increase in AY 1946 – 1947 the number of hours allocated to studying the English and French languages starting from the third grade in 135 seven-year and full secondary schools of regional centers, which introduced schools of yet another type – with advanced study of foreign languages. This Decree also allowed the foundation of *male secondary boarding schools with English as the language of instruction* in Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Odessa. These schools were for gifted children, mostly orphans whose parents died in the World War II [8, p. 84 – 85]. These schools became the prototype of specialized language schools.

The Resolution of the Council of People’s Commissars and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine “On the Organization of *an Additional (eleventh) Pedagogical Class* in 6 Female Secondary Schools” (September 13, 1945) allowed the People’s Commissariat for Education of the Ukrainian SSR to organize in AY 1945 – 1946 an additional (eleventh) pedagogical class for 25 students in 6 female secondary schools due to the increasing need for the qualified teachers of elementary schools. Those girls who had successfully completed ten years of study and succeeded in the pedagogical work were accepted to the pedagogical class without entrance exams [8, p. 81]. According to the Decree of the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine dated August 2, 1946, since AY 1947 – 1948, the Ministry of Education was entitled to organize the eleventh-grade *pedagogical classes* on the basis of the best female secondary schools of the Republic’s and oblasts’ capitals (175) to prepare elementary school teachers. In 1951, these classes were closed due to the rising number of pedagogical colleges that provided training of pedagogical staff [1, c. 84].

In compliance with the wishes of parents and teachers, beginning on September 1, 1954 single-gender education was abolished in Soviet schools (with the exception of the lessons of productive labor).

The curriculum in AY 1947 – 1951 included the study of logic and psychology (subject to schools having teachers trained to teach these subjects); pre-conscription training for boys of 8 – 10 grades was canceled. Curricula in AY 1954 – 1955 were changed only insignificantly, mainly due to the abolition of single-gender education and the introduction of vocational training in some schools commencing the eighth grade [1, p. 90 – 91, 5, p. 45, p. 184 – 185]. During the post-War period, for ten years, the elementary school curriculum remained virtually unchanged. Minor changes introduced in AY 1954 – 1955 concerned the introduction of practical arts classes in primary school.

Thus, the state policy of the Soviet government regarding the differentiation of the organization and content of secondary education in the late 1930s – early 1950s was contradictory: on the one hand, there was a desire to preserve a unified school within a totalitarian society, on the other hand, the urgent need to train qualified personnel for the war and post-war economy prompted the government to introduce changes. The analyzed sources indicate that the concepts of “individualization” and “differentiation” were not reflected in normative documents, but they were, however, addressed in the works of such scholars and educators as S. Chavdarov, F. Red’ko. The Ukrainian SSR operated a state, centralized, authoritarian, fee-paying, and, at the same time, differentiated by gender, territorial and age criteria, partly national, professional, social criteria, transformed under the war conditions in the context of socio-political, socio-economic, educational and cultural determinants, secondary education. Exterior differentiation of secondary school was not based on the abilities and inclination of students. It was based, first of all, on their belonging to a particular gender or nationality. Despite the ambiguity of the secondary school policy of the Soviet government, it allowed the growth of various types of educational institutions in Ukraine: (schools for working youth, schools for village youth, male and female schools, etc.) The following factors affected the content of elementary and secondary

education: state policy ideologization and Russification; the government economic policy aimed at the reconstruction of the economy on a new technological basis; demand for qualified personnel, including teachers. Earlier differentiation efforts, which were, to a certain degree, forced by the War, energized differentiation in the second half of the 1950s – the period of the de-Stalinization, relative democratization of society, scientific and technical revolution, and the reconstruction of the economic sphere, which will be analyzed in our further works.

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Березівська Л. Д. Державна політика щодо диференціації організації та змісту шкільної освіти в Україні (кінець 30-х – перша половина 50-х рр. XX століття)

У статті висвітлено особливості державної освітньої політики радянського уряду щодо диференціації організації та змісту шкільної освіти

наприкінці 30-х – у першій половині 50-х років ХХ ст. Особливу увагу зосереджено на видах і формах диференційованого підходу, що набули розвитку в УРСР у воєнний та післявоєнний періоди. Доведено, що в УРСР функціонувала державна, централізована, авторитарна, платна, водночас диференційована за гендерним, територіальним, віковим критеріями, частково національним, професійно зорієнтованим, соціальним критеріями, трансформована в умовах війни в контексті суспільно-політичних, соціально-економічних, педагогічних та культурологічних детермінант шкільна освіта. Виявлено, що державна політика радянського уряду щодо диференціації організації та змісту шкільної освіти мала суперечливий характер: з одного боку, спостерігаємо прагнення зберегти уніфіковану школу в рамках тоталітарного суспільства, з іншого – гостра потреба в забезпеченні економіки кваліфікованими кадрами у воєнний і післявоєнний період спонукала уряд до змін. З'ясовано, що, незважаючи на неоднозначність шкільної політики радянського уряду, все-таки вона уможливила збільшення кількості навчальних закладів різних типів на українських землях (ШРМ, ШСМ, чоловічі і жіночі школи та ін.).

Ключові слова: шкільна політика, диференціація організації та змісту шкільної освіти, форми і критерії диференціації навчання.

Березовская Л. Д. Государственная политика относительно дифференциации организации и содержания школьного образования в Украине (конец 30-х – первая половина 50-х гг. XX века)

В статье показаны особенности государственной образовательной политики советского правительства относительно дифференциации организации и содержания школьного образования в конце 30-х – первой половине 50-х годов ХХ в. Особое внимание сконцентрировано на видах и формах дифференцированного подхода, которые получили развитие в УССР в военный и послевоенный периоды. Доказано, что в УССР функционировала государственная, централизованная, авторитарная, платная, в тоже время

дифференцированная за гендерным, территориальным, возрастным критериями, частично национальным, профессионально ориентированным, социальным критериями, трансформированная в условиях войны в контексте общественно-политических, социально-экономических, педагогических и культурологических детерминант система школьного образования. Определено, что, несмотря на противоречивость школьной политики советского правительства, все-таки она способствовала увеличению количества учебных заведений разных типов на украинских землях (ШРМ, ШСМ, мужские и женские школы и др.).

Ключевые слова: школьная политика, дифференциация организации и содержания школьного образования, формы и критерии дифференциации обучения.

Bereziv's'ka L. D. The National Policy regarding the Differentiation of the Organization and Content of Secondary School Education in Ukraine (end of the 1930s – beginning of the 1950s)

The article uncovers the characteristics of the educational policy of the Soviet government regarding the differentiation of the organization and content of secondary school education in the late 1930s – early 1950s. Special attention is given to the types and forms of differentiation that were developed in the Ukrainian SSR during and immediately after World War II.

It is proved that the Ukrainian SSR operated state, centralized, authoritarian, and fee-paying educational system. At the same time, this system was differentiated according to gender, territorial, and age criteria; less common differentiation options included national identity, profession/vocation, and social status. Furthermore, World War II became a powerful factor of the socio-political, socio-economic, pedagogical, and cultural transformation of the secondary education of the time.

The author determines that, despite contradictory secondary school policies of the Soviet government, it contributed to the increase in the number of secondary educational institutions of different types in Ukraine (schools for the working youth,

schools for the rural youth, schools differentiated by gender (single-sex schools), etc.).

Key words: secondary school policy, the differentiation of the organization and the content of secondary education, forms and criteria of the differentiation of instruction.

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