

NININS 2020**International Scientific Forum «National Interest, National Identity and National Security»****OPINION OF THE MODERN YOUTH ON FALSIFICATION OF HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL FACTS**

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Abstract

The article presents the results of a study of public opinion, which has developed at present regarding the falsification of historical facts among young people. The study was conducted with the participation of 618 students of Stavropol State Agrarian University in the period from January till February 2020. In response to the falsification of historical facts by several political forces, it is necessary to monitor public opinion about events in Russian history and attempts to distort it. The organization of such monitoring at the university allows us to understand the possible level of youth involvement in the destructive processes of falsification of historical facts and to carry out appropriate activities aimed at improving educational work at the university. A review of students' opinions about some events in Russian history and attempts to distort them shows the existing problems in the system under study. They are insufficient youth awareness of the historical facts of World War II, underestimation of the situation of falsification of history, poor knowledge of the Great Patriotic War, students' insecurity in the decisive contribution of the USSR to the victory over fascism, lack of interest in historical knowledge. An analysis of cause and effect relationships showed that the key problem is the lack of students' interest in historical knowledge, including those about the Second World War and the Great Patriotic War.

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1. Introduction

The modern period of the development of informatization processes and the expansion of access to various types of information opens up new channels for promoting propaganda information that serves specific political forces. A situation has become widespread when, for escalating the situation and destabilizing the situation in Russia, promoting a negative image of our country abroad, many political forces use outright falsification of historical facts. A particularly vulnerable category for this kind of action is young people who have uncertain outlooks on life, are dissatisfied with their life situation and are not sufficiently interested in the history of their country. The practice of falsifying historical facts related to the period of the Second World War has expanded. To understand the situation and timely educate the young generation, it is necessary, first of all, to understand the possible level of youth involvement in the destructive processes of falsification of historical facts. For this, it is necessary to monitor public opinion about events in Russian history and attempts to distort it in the youth environment.

2. Problem Statement

The relevance of the study of falsification of historical facts in the modern world is determined by the growth of destructive practices in the application of this technique in politics, art, the solution of ideological disputes. It is no accident that scientists turn to the topic of falsification of facts of history, which is confirmed in the publications of several authors.

Grmusa (2009) in "The public burning: "Play[ing] games with the evidence, manipul[at]ing language itself, mak[ing] history a partisan ally?" (p. 79) considers the correlation of historical facts and artistic representation in literary prose. Based on the example of an artistic novel, a study is conducted of the process of combining facts and fabricated evidence, combining historical figures, public evidence quotes from newspapers, dates and other real data with falsifications (Grmusa, 2009). The author emphasizes that the use of such techniques allows the manipulation of public consciousness in favour of certain social groups (Ivashova et al., 2018; Tikhonovskova et al., 2019). This conclusion is relevant for our study of youth opinions on the facts of falsification of the history of World War II and the Great Patriotic War.

An example of falsification of historical facts in favour of certain forces gives in his publication Reinert (2006) "Blaming the Medici: Footnotes, falsification, and the fate of the 'English Model' in eighteenth-century Italy" (p. 430). The researcher points to the positive impact of the manipulation of public opinion on the course of historical events in Italy of the eighteenth century (summarizing the result of this falsification of historical facts).

Sluyter (1999) in "The making of the myth in postcolonial development: Material-conceptual landscape transformation in sixteenth-century Veracruz" (p. 377) speaks about the sustainable consolidation of information related to particular historical myths in the minds of citizens. The prevailing idea of a rational and progressive West and an irrational, traditional non-Western way of managing has become the cultural basis for the binary categorization of the world. The author shows by the example of studying documentary facts that the myth of postcolonial development negatively reflects on the Western

people's imagination. Falsification of facts in the affirmation of the progressive West hid the possibility of using the positive experience of colonial territories during the period of postcolonial development. Thus, we can say that the falsification of historical facts does not allow making timely and correct conclusions aimed at the effective development of socio-economic processes (Filho, 1996; Wiegert, 1995).

An undeniably important aspect of any study is its methodology, which provides the ability to collect logical chains of facts into undeniable evidence. Burawoy (1989), in his publication, convincingly proves that the rejection of explanatory theories in favour of specific facts characterizing social institutions and processes gives more reasons for objective assessments of reality. Gavin (1984) in the article "The 'will to believe' in science and religion" (p. 139) offers the results of a study of the institutionalization of religious movements based on experimental facts and a generalization of the diversity of religious experience. It is emphasized that the facts should reflect reality and the analysis of the article "Paradigms in Science and Religion" shows the influence of interpretation on data and possible falsifications in connection with certain theoretical principles.

A particularly vulnerable category for historical fraud is young people who have uncertain outlooks on life, are dissatisfied with their life situation and are not sufficiently interested and know the history of their country. That is why it is relevant to conduct the monitoring of public opinion in the youth environment (Baklanov et al., 2015; Rudenko et al., 2019).

Thus, as a result of the analysis of publications on the falsification of data and historical facts, it shows the relevance of the topic and the obvious influence not only on the understanding of history but also on the further socio-economic development and prosperity of modern society.

3. Research Questions

The research issue to which this publication is devoted is that there is not enough information about the attitude of modern Russian youth to the facts of falsification of historical events in Russia and the world. In order to establish the level of awareness of young people about the falsification of historical events, it is necessary to understand how well young people are interested in historical events and to test knowledge using specific concrete material.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of monitoring public opinion is to establish the level of knowledge of modern youth about events in Russian and world history and understanding of its distortion in the youth environment. This purpose was revealed through the following tasks: to determine the level of interest in historical events and facts, to assess the quality of students' historical knowledge, to study the attitude to falsification as a phenomenon in general and at the level of certain historical facts, to assess the scale of the phenomenon – distortion of historical facts in the studied social group.

5. Research Methods

The study of public opinion that has developed at present regarding the falsification of historical facts among young people was conducted with the participation of students of Stavropol State Agrarian

University in the period from January to February. In total, 618 people took part in it; they are full-time students at nine university faculties. Information was collected using the group survey method. The data obtained during the survey were processed using the SPSS program (version 21) and, in general, allow an objective analysis of the current situation.

6. Findings

Based on the analysis of the survey results, a number of conclusions can be made regarding the opinion of university students about some historical events and attempts to distort it.

In terms of students' self-esteem, they show a high interest in the history of Russia: 32.5 % of the survey respondents said that they were regularly interested in historical books, films, and visiting museums; another 42.8 % of students said they were more interested in historical events. About 13.2 % of the survey participants from among students of Stavropol State Agrarian University said about some and complete lack of interest.

A significant proportion of students says that they know the events of history satisfactorily – 72.7 % of the number of participants in the survey. Good knowledge of history was reported by 16.5 % of students. 8.2 % noted that they know the history of Russia poorly, and 1.5 % said that they do not know it at all. 1.0 % noted that they found it challenging to answer this question. At such faculties as economic, veterinary medicine, technology management, poor knowledge of history was said by 21.7, 18.8, and 16.7 % of respondents, respectively.

Almost half of the survey participants believe that at present facts from the history of Russia are partially distorted and falsified. Moreover, another 37.1 % of the survey participants believe that most facts of Russian history are distorted.

Among the historical events that need, first of all, protection against falsification, students name the Second World War (47.4 %) in the first place, the Stalinist repressions (28.4 %) in the second place, and the Afghan war in the third place. (23.2 %), Civil War (22.7 %), the shooting of the last Russian emperor Nicholas II and his family (21.1 %), in fourth place – an assessment of the role of some leaders of Russia in the history of the country (19.1 %) and the sale by Russia of Alaska to the United States (18.6 %). Also, 36.6 % of students believe that all historical events need protection from falsification.

About 40 % of the survey participants from among students of Stavropol State Agrarian University say that they occasionally encounter cases of intentional distortion of the facts of Russian history. Another 7.2 % are constantly confronted. In general, it turns out that almost 50 % of respondents see a situation of intentional distortion.

Among the reasons why specific political forces resort to methods of falsifying the events of Russian history, students of Stavropol State Agrarian University note the five most significant:

- changing people's consciousness, depriving them of historical memory (57,2 %);
- the positioning of Russia in the worst possible light (as an aggressor country) among other countries of the world (30,9 %);
- destruction of the cultural and historical basis of the state (27,6 %);
- escalating the situation and destabilizing the situation in Russia (25,3 %);
- to ensure the growth of anti-Russian sentiment in the world (19,6 %).

The students' opinions were divided on the issue of the adequacy of measures on the part of state authorities aimed at counteracting attempts to falsify the history of Russia: about 43 % think that such measures are enough and about 37 % think that such measures are not enough. The data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of answers to the question “Do you think that government bodies adequately resist attempts to falsify the history of Russia?”

№	Possible answers	%
1	Yes	9,8
2	Ratheryesthanno	34,0
3	Rathernothonyes	27,3
4	No	9,8
5	Difficulttoanswer	19,1

Among the most reliable sources of information about the facts of the Second World War, the survey participants called meetings with war veterans (69.1 %), museums and military memorials (40.7 %), historical literature (33.0 %), documentaries (30.9 %), the publication of archival materials of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation (25,3 %).

According to students of Stavropol State Agrarian University, the following facts from World War II are most often falsified:

- the number of victims of the Soviet people during the Great Patriotic War (32,5 %);
- the decisive contribution of the Soviet Army and people in achieving victory over Nazi Germany and militaristic Japan (32,0 %);
- salvation by the Soviet Army of the peoples of Europe from destruction and Nazi occupation (28,4 %).
- The main sources of falsification of facts and events of the Second World War, according to students, are:
 - foreign media (50,5 %);
 - Internet-sources (47,9 %);
 - art films (46,9 %);
 - computer games on the theme of the World War II (34,0 %);
 - fiction (24,2 %).

The scale of the Great Patriotic War affected almost all segments of the population of our country. In this regard, the negative is the fact that every fifth participant in the survey does not know exactly how his relatives took part in the Great Patriotic War. 5.2 % are sure that their relatives did not take part in the war. Indeed, if raising children in the family is not aimed at knowing the history of the family for at least 3–4 generations, young people do not identify family ties further than grandparents. Moreover, it turns out that the grandparents of modern 20-year-olds did not take part in the war. We see the problems and gaps in family education in Russia, including partly the demographic situation, when responsibility for the number of children in a family is shifted to the state and many relatives – this is rather bad than good, weakening of family ties.

7. Conclusion

Thus, consideration of students' opinion about some events in Russian history and attempts to distort them shows the existing problems in the system under study. Among them are a lack of awareness of the historical facts of World War II, an underestimation of the situation of falsification of history, poor knowledge of the Great Patriotic War, students' hesitation about the decisive contribution of the USSR to the victory over fascism, lack of interest in historical knowledge.

An analysis of cause and effect relationships showed that the key problem is the lack of students' interest in historical knowledge, including the Second World War and the Great Patriotic War. This fact suggests the need not only to increase the level of knowledge of the history of Russia but also to ensure the high quality of education of graduates' civil responsibility through the educational process at the university.

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