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V. A. Petrova

ABSTRACT

The article deals with the process of changing the vector of state policy in the field of foreign language learning in the 20-50s of the XX century. After the October Revolution, they stopped the study of a foreign language because they regarded it as a relic of the past, an antagonistic society with a pronounced and irreconcilable class inequality. However, in 1923, Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya denied the need to study Esperanto on a national scale in her article "Teaching Foreign Languages" and described the practical significance, main goal and priority method of teaching a foreign language and more than that her own position about the role of foreign languages, thereby laying the foundation for its study for many decades. The article analyzes teaching foreign languages culturological idea, as it was represented by V.I. Lenin, N.K. Krupskaya, I.V. Stalin, as well as some public and scientific figures. We pay particular attention to the founder of "new language doctrine" Academician N.Ya. Marr's linguistic ideas.

Keywords: culture, foreign languages, soviet education, linguistics, japhetic theory.

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Teaching Foreign Languages Culturological Idea in Russian Socio-Political and Scientific thought in the 20-50s of the xx Century

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The article deals with the process of changing the vector of state policy in the field of foreign language learning in the 20-50s of the XX century. After the October Revolution, they stopped the study of a foreign language because they regarded it as a relic of the past, an antagonistic society with a pronounced and irreconcilable class inequality. However, in 1923, Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya denied the need to study Esperanto on a national scale in her article "Teaching Foreign Languages" and described the practical significance, main goal and priority method of teaching a foreign language and more than that her own position about the role of foreign languages, thereby laying the foundation for its study for many decades. The article analyzes teaching foreign languages culturological idea, as it was represented by V.I. Lenin, N.K. Krupskaya, I.V. Stalin, as well as some public and scientific figures. We pay particular attention to the founder of "new language doctrine" Academician N.Ya. Marr's linguistic ideas. Their reflections and statements about foreign languages educational and cultural potential, their definition of the purpose of their study not only laid the foundation for domestic language education in the young Soviet state, but also determined the vector of studying foreign languages in the future.

Keywords: culture, foreign languages, soviet education, linguistics, japhetic theory.

I. INTRODUCTION

The revolutionary events of 1917 in Russia caused not only radical political changes, but also a

change in the cultural paradigm, in which the study of foreign languages was seen as a relic of the bourgeois past that did not correspond to proletarian culture. However, the growth in the construction of enterprises, the rise of all spheres of the national economy, and the strengthening of the position of the state in the international arena revealed the need for qualified personnel with foreign language knowledge. Thus, the state was faced with the task of foreign languages integrating into the process of educating the "Soviet man".

Vladimir Lenin paid special attention to the role of new languages in his report "Critical Notes on the National Question" at a party workers meeting in the fall of 1913 in Pronin (Poland). He said: "Language is the most important means of human communication; the unity of the language and its unhindered development is one of the most important conditions for a truly free and wide trade turnover corresponding to modern capitalism, a free and wide grouping of the population according to all separate classes, and finally, a condition for the close connection of the market with each and every owner or proprietor, seller and buyer" [7, p.119].

According to Lenin, knowledge of foreign languages should have contributed to the strengthening of international ties and could help in using the achievements of foreign science. Soviet newspapers began to call young people to learn French, German, and English, because the success of the country's industrialization depended on this knowledge.

In 1923 N.K. Krupskaya (Lenin's wife and politician) published an article "On the Teaching of Foreign Languages", which described the role of this discipline in the formation of the student's

personality: "Language is a means of communication, and therefore, naturally, knowledge of languages acquires a very special meaning, it becomes an urgent need and will continue to receive more and more and greater value" [6, p.70].

In this work, Nadezhda Krupskaya expressed strategic thoughts on the need for further teaching of a foreign language in the new school of the young Country of Soviets:

- The practical significance of this discipline is the education of a whole generation of truly internationalists;
- The main goal is to develop the ability of students to understand foreign speech and the ability to speak target language;
- The priority method of teaching a language is the method of associative teaching of a foreign language. It is important to note that for natural assimilation, the material must meet the interests of children and be accessible to them: games, small plays, skits, choral singing in a foreign language;
- The primary task is to form the level of auditory and visual representations necessary for students in the field of a foreign language;
- Grammar is not the basis for learning a foreign language, but serves to understand the native; by establishing common ground in both languages, students form the foundation for learning any language;
- The importance to study not only foreign language, but foreign language country history.

N.K. Krupskaya expressed the opinion that any artificial international language is bookish. In living foreign languages, she rightly saw a reflection of the centuries-old history and culture of the country.

She emphasized the special importance of studying a foreign language in the context of the country's culture, namely its history, economic and political life: "Studying the country of the language should be the same goal as studying the language technique. Only then the student will be

able to capture the spirit of the language, embrace its treasure" [6, p.73].

It is not surprising that the next important step of the government was to change the state policy in the field of learning foreign languages. In 1927 a major campaign "Foreign Languages for the Masses" began, in which foreign language study became a mandatory component of the school curriculum, in the amount of 2 - 3 lessons per week.

The Decree of the All-Union Communist Party of 1929 "On the organization of the study of foreign languages by party activists" was a new course reflection towards the country industrialization and, as a result, the urgent need to join international scientific experience.

According to the Decree of August 25, 1932 "On Curricula in Primary and Secondary Schools", each school graduate must have at least one foreign language knowledge [9].

In 1932, the newspaper Vostochnosibirsky Komsomolets published an appeal to the general working community to learn a foreign language in order to gain new knowledge, raise the cultural level and get the opportunity to "read in the original the works of Marx, Engels, the masters of the artistic word Shakespeare, Heine, Goethe and others" [4].

In 1933 Soviet government adopted the Decree "On increasing attention to the teaching of foreign languages at schools", declaring the importance of the academic discipline and calling for the creation of courses at enterprises and the mandatory study of a foreign language at all schools and universities.

According to the Decree of September 16, 1940, "On the Teaching of German, English and French", every Soviet student from the 5th grade must learn a foreign language. It is relevant to mention that this Decree didn't lose its force even during WWII.

In 1949, a new school curriculum was adopted based on the ideas of academician L.V. Shcherba, according to which foreign language study began

from the 3rd grade or from the 5th grade [3, p.407].

During these years, Russian sophist S.I. Gessen developed the concept of education as a spiritual process, which proclaimed the idea of becoming a person in the process of growth of creative freedom and familiarization with cultural values. The scientist was convinced that the fundamental goal of education should be the preservation and reproduction of the spiritual and material culture of society.

However, he believed that the formation of an advanced spiritual culture in a society went far beyond the certain model framework recognized as a standard in society and implied not only copying and reproduction, but also the presence of an element of inner conscious life and an impulse for spiritual self-development and dialogue with culture. According to his ideas, the basis of true education was not the transmission of “ready-made cultural content” to students, but giving them the right vector of movement to create their “own new content culture” [5, p.39].

S.I. Gessen said that culture, being a metasocial and spiritual process based on its own foundation, in many aspects surpasses “the formation of an individual as a social event”. [5, p. 178].

Special attention should be paid to the linguistic ideas of one of the most prominent Russian Orientalists at the turn of the century, the creator of the “new doctrine of language”, academician N.Ya. Marr (1864–1934), who, according to the Soviet philologist V.I. Abaev was “without a doubt, if not the most famous, then the most dominant name in the history of Soviet linguistics” [1, p. 93].

In 1931, one of the most resonant works by Nikolay Marr, “Issues of Language in the Coverage of Japhetic Theory,” was published. In this article he pointed out the unity of language and the historical and cultural process: “Language is a communication tool that arose in the labor process, more precisely, in the process of creation of human culture, i.e. economy, society and worldview. The language reflected all the ways

and all stages of the material and super-structural culture development” [10, p. 251].

N.Ya. Marr emphasized that language is linked with “the history of material culture, society and worldviews in their genetic sequence”, thus the method of dialectical materialism and historical materialism became the basis of Japhetic theory. The scientist was also convinced that the language undergoes constant changes like human thinking [10, p. 279].

In addition to the fact that each language is constantly changing along its own unique development path, N.Ya. Marr pointed to the commonality of all the world languages and the presence of class within one language. He wrote: “The languages of the same class of different countries, with the same social structure, reveal more typological affinity with each other than the languages of different classes of the same country, the same nation” [12, p. 27].

The thesis about the class nature of the language was not supported and was widely disputed by the scientific community, since it contradicted the foundations of Marxist ideology. So, according to V.M. Alpatov, at first “N.Ya. Marr was called a genius, compared with Copernicus, Darwin, Mendeleev, later they named him a quack; some believed that he created the science of language, others - that his contribution to this science was zero” [2, p. 232].

In 1950, an extensive discussion on the issues of Soviet linguistics unfolded on the pages of the Pravda newspaper, including the one put forward by N.Ya. Marr the idea of a class language, one of the main opponents of which was I.V. Stalin.

In his article “Regarding Marxism in Linguistics,” Joseph Stalin gave an extremely negative assessment and asked linguists to rid the science from professor Marr: “. N.Ya. Marr introduced into linguistics an incorrect, non-Marxist formula about language as a superstructure and confused himself, confused linguistics” [13, p. 35].

In addition to criticism, Stalin described the place of language in the structure of society, emphasizing that language is inextricably linked

with all spheres of social life, especially with production activities: "Language serves society as a means of communicating people, as a means of communicating thoughts in society, as a means of giving people the opportunity to understand each other and to establish joint work in all spheres of human activity - both in the field of production and in the field of economic relations, both in the field of politics and in the field of culture, both in public life and in everyday life ... Language, being a tool of communication, is at the same time an instrument of society struggle and development" [13, p. 37].

Then, on June 20, 1950, the work of Stalin "Marxism and questions of linguistics", which determined the vector of teaching foreign languages in the secondary and higher schools of the USSR for the next decade. This work refuted the idea that knowledge of a foreign language is a class prerogative:

- Emphasized the unity and commonality of the language for all members of society;
- Dialects and jargons were considered as offshoots of the common language;
- The formula about the class nature of the language was recognized as an erroneous, non-Marxist theory [14, p.4].

It is worth noting that in this work, Joseph Stalin, answering the question about the structure of the language, indicated that the basis of the language is its "grammatical structure" and "vocabulary fund" [14, p. 5]. This statement determined the grammar-translation method as the basis for teaching a foreign language.

Stalin emphasized the special significance of learning a foreign language in the context of culture: "Language is one of the social phenomena that have been operating throughout the entire existence of society. It is born and develops with the birth and development of society. It dies with the death of society. There is no language outside of society. Therefore, the language and the laws of its development can be understood only if it is studied in close connection with the native-speaker history" [14, p. 7].

Thus, the attitude in society to foreign languages as a "bourgeois relic" in the 20s - 40s stated to lose its power. Representatives of the Marxist-Leninist ideology understood the importance of foreign languages and also recognized them as a means of educating real internationalists, as well as enriching them with new experience and new knowledge.

The main ideologists of Marxism V.I. Lenin, N.K. Krupskaya, J.V. Stalin, as well as their adherents, pointed to the cultural potential of foreign languages, outlined the strategic importance of their teaching in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, thereby laying the foundations for their study for many decades and creating serious prerequisites for a significant increase in the role of the discipline "Foreign language", improving the teaching foreign languages quality in the domestic school, both in this historical period and in the future.

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