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Vladimir. V. Korovin

South-West State University, Kursk, Russian Federation

“And Then We Were Entered in the Komsomol ...”: Monographic Study of the Organizational Development of the Komsomol of the Era of Stalinism

Abstract

The review of the monograph by the Tambov historian V. E. Bredikhin “Social composition of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League (Komsomol) and its regulation in the second half of 1930s – early 1950s (Materials of territorial organizations)” (Tambov, 2017) analyzes the author’s contribution to studying the issues of organizational development of the Komsomol, the greatest phenomenon of the national youth movement. According to the reviewer, this topic remains ill-studied, and is thus of scientific and practical interest. The Komsomol’s influence on the young people is still much discussed in scientific and journalistic literature; the reviewer

emphasizes the author's balanced approach to the daily problems of the Komsomol: his conclusions are based on archival and published sources and are generally original. Merits of the publication include its geographical scope: object of the study is the Komsomol as a whole, and not its territorial divisions, which seems customary in the current scholarship. The author demonstrates a deep knowledge of historiography on the issue. Considerable contribution to the studying of Komsomol construction has been made by dint of comparative analysis of the most important social characteristics of the Komsomol members and non-union youth, as it has established the validity of the organization's official status as avant-garde and educator of the Soviet youth. The author has comprehensively substantiated the existence of objective differences between the official doctrine of Komsomol construction and its practical realization in 1930s-1950s due to demographic process, political course, and Great Patriotic War. However, the book has its shortcomings. The study seems incomplete without a summarized psychological profile of the Komsomol members of mature and late Stalin era. The author ignores problems of organizational restoration of the Komsomol in the occupied territories. Party influence on the regulation of the Komsomol structure is tacked rather schematically.

#### Keywords

Stalinism, All-Union Leninist Young Communist League (Komsomol), Komsomol construction doctrine, youth, social structure, personnel policy, statistical data, disciplinary sanctions, Soviet demography.

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#### About the author

Korovin Vladimir Viktorovich, PhD in History, professor, South-West State University, constitutional rights department, professor, Russian Federation, Kursk, Russian Federation, +7-951-087-08-38, vlavikor@yandex.ru

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