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Summary: Boris N. Chicherin on Russian history : (state school as a historiographic and social phenomenon)

In: Šaur, Josef. *Boris N. Čičerin o ruských dějinách : (státní škola jako historiografický a společenský fenomén)*. Vydání první Brno: Filozofická fakulta, Masarykova univerzita, 2015, pp. 269-270

ISBN 978-80-210-8051-5

Stable URL (handle): <https://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/134834>

Access Date: 19. 02. 2024

Version: 20220831

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9 SUMMARY: BORIS N. CHICHERIN ON RUSSIAN HISTORY (STATE SCHOOL AS A HISTORIOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL PHENOMENON)

Boris N. Chicherin (1828–1904) has an essential place in Russian scholarly and socio-political thinking of the 19th century. He was one of the leading representatives of Russian liberalism. Together with Konstantin D. Kavelin, he formulated the first complex liberal program at the beginning of the reign of Alexander II. He actively participated in the activities of zemstvo in Tambovskaya Guberniya and Municipal Duma in Moscow. Here he also functioned as a mayor for a short time. He was a teacher of an untimely deceased successor to the throne, Nikolai Alexandrovich, and he was giving lectures on state law at Moscow University. His works on politics and philosophy of law are published even today.

The second chapter focuses on the present state of the research on Chicherin and his thoughts. In the shadow of Chicherin's social involvement and impressive works in the field of jurisprudence, there is his research on Russian history. In the present historiography, not much focus has been put on these works (compared to the rest of Chicherin's activities). The major focus was put on Chicherin's works on Russian history by Soviet historiography. Soviet historicists treated Chicherin solely as a part of the so-called state school, a historiographical stream of the 1840s–1860s. Nevertheless, their treatment of the state school was one-sided and ideologically conditioned. Although this conception was repeatedly criticized in last two decades, a new, complex approach towards this school has not been offered yet. That is why the aim of this thesis is a consistent mapping of Chicherin's views on Russian history in the context of the state school.

In the third chapter, the beginning of Chicherin's interest in history and his university studies, during which his scholarly and socio-political views were formed, are depicted. It was in the time of Chicherin's studies, in the mid 1840s, when the state school was formed. The circumstances of its rise are depicted

in the fourth chapter in detail. Konstantin D. Kavelin, Sergei M. Solov'ev and Timofei N. Granovskii became its representatives. These young historians took up the previous research of Johann Ewers and the critique of sources by Mikhail T. Kachenovskii. Inspired by Hegelian philosophy of history, they opposed Slavophilic narratives of Russian past and historical concept of Mikhail P. Pogodin.

The fifth chapter deals with the way in which Chicherin's concept of history took up the aforementioned representatives of the state school. Chicherin elaborated on their views on Russian history in the mid 1850s in his dissertation thesis, and in an important article on contract documents and testaments of sovereigns. In these works, Chicherin described historical development as an organic process of perfection composed of mutually interconnected stages. In accordance with organic view of history, he refused to acknowledge the reforms of Peter I. as a historical milestone. On the contrary, he saw the activities of Peter I. as deducible and resulting from the preceding course of Russian history. Chicherin also advocated a theory that historical process is driven by universally valid rules and because of that Russian history must go through the same phases as European history.

The fifth chapter also depicts the way in which Kavelin and Chicherin contributed to the debate about the Russian future in the new contemporary circumstances. They were able to compile the outcomes of their historical research into a complex description of contemporary Russian maladies and collection of the proposals how to solve them. Their texts were given an unexpected response and they influenced contemporary opinion of the society.

The sixth chapter deals with the depiction of the state school and Chicherin's scholarly opinions from the 1860s. At the end of the 1850s, there arose disagreements between Kavelin and Chicherin. These disagreements became one of the reasons of the recession of the state school's activities in the next decade. An important issue was that Chicherin and Kavelin were leaving aside the topic of Russian history gradually and they abandoned it completely after 1866.

The last, seventh chapter is focused on Chicherin's scholar and social activities after 1866 and it shows a gradual transformation of his views. In the 1850s and the 1860s, Chicherin believed in reformation potential of tsarist autocracy, but he was gradually abandoning this view and he eventually became the main critic of Russia's central government and representative of constitutional thoughts.