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Russia Removes Peace Symbol from School Textbook Cover

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Russia has removed the image of a dove of peace from the cover of its official high school history textbook, Vladimir Medinsky, a senior aide to President Vladimir Putin and co-author of the textbook, said Friday.

The change is the latest in a series of symbolic and editorial changes aligning education more closely with the Kremlin's narrative.

The image of the dove of peace, as seen in a mural at the UN headquarters in Geneva, is now replaced by an illustration showing the 1975 docking of the Soviet Soyuz and American Apollo spacecraft.

In a post on his Telegram channel, Medinsky said the new image was more "clear and simple" for students than the dove design, which he claimed had been "universally disliked" by those involved in producing the book.

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The updated cover also includes a background image from the historic U.S.S.R.-Canada hockey Supercup match, which he said reflects Russia's belief that "conflict should take place only in the realm of sports."

Medinsky added that the space docking scene was intentionally set above the Elbe River, where Soviet and American troops met in April 1945. He claimed that cosmonaut Alexei Leonov, the first person to walk in space, shared this anecdote with him personally.

Medinsky concluded with what he called "the irony of history," noting that U.S. Declaration of Independence co-authors Thomas Jefferson and John Adams died on the same day, July 4, 1826, exactly 50 years after the signing of the document.

"Clio, the [Greek] muse of history, thus marked the chief accomplishment of their lives," he wrote in the Telegram post published on U.S. Independence Day.

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The 11th-grade history textbook, written on Putin's orders, presents a version of modern Russian history that reflects the Kremlin's views.

It characterizes the 1990s as a time of chaos and national decline, describes the annexation of Crimea and parts of eastern Ukraine as a "return of historical lands," and includes Putin's assertion that the fall of the Soviet Union was "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century."

One section, which originally justified Stalin-era deportations of Chechens, Ingush, Crimean Tatars and other ethnic minorities on the grounds of alleged Nazi collaboration, drew strong objections from Chechen authorities.

Following the backlash, the Education Ministry revised that portion of the text.

Medinsky has also said that the textbook now includes "significantly fewer dates, numbers and statistics," which he argues makes it more accessible to students.

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