

Université de Montréal

**Soviet History in Hindsight:
A Comparative Study of History Textbooks in Russia, Ukraine and
Estonia between 1980 and 2010**

par

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Abstract

Our work will examine the crucial rupture between Soviet and Russian history from 1985 (1991 in some cases) through 2010, during which rival political leaders of Ukraine, Estonia and Russia had an opportunity to develop and attempt to impose their visions of their respective national identities and their history.

The main goal of this study is to provide a new understanding of the connection between history, ideology, and development of national consciousness. The focus of the previous research in this domain concentrated on each studied country in particular. Mainstream historiography left unnoticed particularities in the development of new political discourse in the peripheral states that emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union. The proposed study project will examine the consequences of the dissolution of the USSR on the socio-political situation in Eastern Europe. It should shed light on the effects the collapse of the Soviet Union had on the intensification of ethnic, nationalist and religious discourse in several former socialist republics.

We conducted a comparative study of recent history textbooks in several countries of Eastern Europe (in Russia, Ukraine and Estonia) and analyzed the new content of post-Soviet history textbooks used in Eastern European Secondary schools. Each of these countries followed a distinct path; therefore we aimed to reveal their particular search for a new national identity and citizenship during the transitional period.

Keywords: History – USSR; History – Russia; History – Ukraine; History – Estonia; Postcommunism; Education – History – 1980-2010; Nationalism; Ethnicity

Résumé

L'effondrement du communisme en 1991 en Russie a conduit à la révision des manuels scolaires d'histoire en Russie et dans les anciennes républiques de l'URSS. Ce travail propose d'évaluer l'histoire récente post-communiste enseignée dans les classes supérieures du secondaire dans trois pays post-communistes. Nous allons s'attarder sur la présentation des divers périodes historiques de l'histoire Soviétique dans les manuels scolaires d'histoire en Russie, Ukraine et Estonie. Ce travail tente également d'examiner les diverses approches dans l'enseignement d'histoire dans ces trois pays, ainsi que de répondre à la question comment les nouveaux manuels redéfinissent la perception de la culture et d'histoire des élèves dans chaque pays.

Mots-clés : Histoire – URSS; Histoire – Russie; Histoire – Ukraine; Histoire – Estonie; Postcommunisme; Enseignement – Histoire – 1980-2010; Nationalisme; Ethnicité

Резюме

В рамках данной работы мы изучили преподавание истории в школах трёх постсоветских государств: России, Украины и Эстонии. Было также уделено внимание восприятию истории XX века населением этих стран. Были собраны, частично переведены с национальных языков и проанализированы около 50 школьных учебников истории для старших классов из России, Украины и Эстонии. Изученные учебники являются наиболее массовыми и иногда даже единственными в своём роде в школах этих государств.

Анализ школьных учебников истории, приведённый в этой работе, этих стран показывает, что в отличие от России, Украина и Эстония пошли по пути преподавания подрастающему поколению националистической трактовки истории, основанной на мифах о древности своего народа, о высокой культурной миссии предков и о «заключённом враге». Россия, в свою очередь, сделала ставку на патриотическое воспитание нового поколения, умалчивая неприятные эпизоды из прошлого и предлагая новый, «позитивный» подход к изучению истории.

Эта работа ставит цель не только проанализировать сложившуюся ситуацию в школьном образовании в Восточной Европе после распада Советского Союза, но и оценить роль преподавания истории в создании особенной, уникальной и, зачастую, националистической идеологии.

Ключевые слова: История – СССР; История – Россия; История – Украина; История – Эстония; Посткоммунизм; Образование – История – 1980-2010; Национализм; Идеология

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A Note on Transliteration

The citations' original orthography is preserved and may vary depending on the editor or/and edition of a source. The translations were performed by me, unless noted otherwise. I used *The Library of Congress' ALA-LC Romanization Tables* for transliteration.

Les citations rapportées dans ce mémoire respectent l'orthographe et la mise en forme telles qu'elles se présentent dans la source imprimée du texte original, et varient donc selon les différents éditeurs. Toutes les traductions sont les miennes sauf avis contraire. *The Library of Congress' ALA-LC Romanization Tables* ont été utilisés pour translittération.

Оригинальная орфография авторов сохранена и может отличаться от приведённой ниже в зависимости от издания и/или издательства. Переводы произведены, в основной своей массе, мной. Транслитерация в работе выполнена посредством использования таблиц романизации Библиотеки Конгресса США.

Introduction

At the end of his book, *Postwar*, Tony Judt tells us a popular Soviet-era joke: one day, there is a call on the "Armenian Radio." 'Is it possible', a caller asks, 'to foretell the future'? 'Yes,' comes the answer. 'No problem. We know exactly what the future will be. Our problem is with the past: it keeps changing'.¹ Indeed, ever since the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia in October 1917, history ceased to be simply a scholarly enterprise and has turned into a powerful tool of politics. The historians were no longer free to interpret history on their own terms; instead they had to follow instructions from the Government. In fact, no branch of learning was as tightly controlled in Stalinist and post-Stalinist Russia as history.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 not only resulted in the creation of independent national states, but also opened the door to new historical research, an opportunity to write a 'different' Soviet history, which prior to 1985 (and even to 1991) was impossible because of restrictive Soviet policies. However, the authors of school history textbooks have had a hard time approaching

¹ Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*, New York, Penguin Press, 2005, p. 830.

Russia's past. On one hand, the collapse of communism in Russia necessitated the revision of past historical lessons; on the other hand the authors were unprepared and scared to tackle the subject. But in 2007, a sensational new textbook of Russia's modern history, a collective work by 43 authors headed by Professor Andrei Borisovich Zubov called *A History Of Russia: The 20th Century* (*История России XX век. Istoriiia Rossii: XX vek*) was published in Moscow. It covered Russia's past from the accession of the last tsar, Nicholas II, in 1896 to the events of 2007. This new book rejected the traditional nationalism that depicted Russia as the invariable victim of foreign aggression. Thus, the so-called Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of 1939 is fully described, as is the subsequent Soviet invasion and occupation of eastern Poland. So is the Katyn massacre of Polish officers. The book does not describe the building of the Berlin wall and the deployment of Soviet missiles in Cuba. The new term emerges: 'positive history'. According to Alexander Filippov, the author of the controversial history text book, Joseph Stalin was a "contradictory" figure, while some people consider him evil; others recognize him as a "hero" for his role in the Great Patriotic War and his territorial expansion.² In his interview to the *Times Magazine*, Filippov insisted that:

²A. Filippov, *New History of Russia. 1945-2006*, Moskva, Prosveshcheniye, 2007.

,It is wrong to write a textbook that will fill the children who learn from it with horror and disgust about their past and their people. A generally positive tone for the teaching of history will build optimism and self-assurance in the growing young generation and make them feel as if they are part of their country's bright future. A history in which there is good and bad, things to be proud of and things that are regrettable. But the general tone for a school textbook should still be positive.³

We think that this thesis should address the indicated developments in Russia. Moreover, the comparative character of the research will also try to reveal certain tendencies peculiar to each of the former republics. One can argue that the destruction of the Soviet Union did not yield a new, liberal post-Soviet ideology. As a consequence, the ex-communist countries are now facing the challenge of writing their own history. Their experiences are different, maybe even simpler than in Russia, for their 'recovered' histories can rely on the common themes of occupation, cultural repression and national resistance. Also, the collapse of the Communist bloc left a void in educational systems of the former Soviet republics.

³ The Times Magazine, December 1, 2009.

In fact, in 1989, several Soviet republics passed a law on national language.⁴ This law put the national languages in first place, and left Russian in second. In Ukraine, the introduction of Ukrainian as the sole state language and unique language of instruction, despite a high number of Russian citizens and citizens preferring to use Russian, raised some questions. And lately, since the *Orange Revolution*, Russian media, politicians, and political scientists, have never stopped criticizing Ukrainian textbooks – for a lack of academic content and international tolerance, for xenophobia and anti-Russian tones sometimes with the apologists of fascism, nationalism, and other unpardonable items.

Baltic-Russian relations also have been complicated and tense since the collapse of the USSR and the restoration of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian independence, especially in the matters concerning their collective memory. Since the beginning of the 1990s, Europe has witnessed a series of heated and politicized debates that question the ‘truth’ about painful episodes in the recent past. The breakdown of the old political order east of the Iron Curtain suddenly released long-suppressed controversies about ethnic conflict, political and intellectual culture, and past atrocities. Several case-studies examined links between identity, memory politics and foreign policy in Baltic region. They also

⁴ Usually the official status of the language was written into the new Constitution. For example, *Decision on status of the Latvian Language (Supreme Council Latvian SSR, 06.10.1988)* or *Article 13, Line 1 – of Constitution of Republic of Moldova*.

analyzed and explained developments in Baltic-Russian relations after both NATO and EU enlargement, and focused on the incompatibility of Baltic and Russian post-Soviet national identity constructions. (Golubeva, 2010; Tomiak, 1992; Wulf and Grönholm, 2010) However, no comparative studies have been conducted on new content of school textbooks in Estonia. In the 2000s, Putin's regime started consciously to restore and rehabilitate the Soviet symbols and Soviet version of history. But the Baltic States had a different truth and a different memory, which should find its reflection in its new school history textbooks. We should expect the shift in history education in Estonia to be rather striking.

Methodology

While evaluating the new versions of Eastern European post-communist history taught in schools, we will attempt to focus our attention on the different interpretations of social and political changes, as well as on following significant events:

1. October Revolution of 1917, its consequences, by what means people tried to preserve social, cultural, and economic order of the society, especially between 1917 and 1945, the importance of cultural heritage, and traditional values;
2. Stalin's mass repressions of the 1930s, its impact on people lives and memory. Focus on Estonia, where repressions and the mass deportations were carried out by the Soviets;
3. *Holodomor* in Ukraine;
4. Post-war 'Soviet occupation' years;
5. The collapse of the Soviet Union and its impact on the development of its three former republics. An ideological re-positioning of post-Soviet representation of the historical narrative with the emphasis on cultural heritage, tradition, and patriotism in each of these countries.

Recent and continuing public and political debates in the USA, China, Japan, and elsewhere, dealing with understandings of a nation-building and national identity, point out to parallels between the political significance of school history and the global historical debates.⁵ International research on school history has been done by the UN, the Council of Europe, culminating in its latest publication is *History Education in Europe: Ten Years of Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Council of Europe* (2006). The Council of Europe's major three-year project (1999-2001) *Learning and Teaching about History of Europe in the 20th Century* (2001) resulted in the final report *The 20th Century: an Interplay of Views* (2001). However, no works had previously compared, studied or analyzed the content of history textbooks in these three former Communist countries. Upon completion of this research, we expect to reveal several peculiar characteristics in each country's historical education, which would allow us to discover new tendencies in the forming of national identities, as well as discover whether history in post-Soviet countries is still dominated by prejudice, propaganda, and state ideology.

⁵ J. Zajda, *The Politics of Rewriting History: New School History Textbooks in Russia*, In J. Zajda (Ed.), *The International Handbook of Globalisation and Education Policy Research*. Dordrecht, Springer, 2005.

Sources

Our work will examine the crucial rupture between Soviet and Russian history from 1985 (1991 in some cases) through 2010, during which rival political elites of Ukraine, Estonia and Russia had an opportunity to develop and attempt to impose their visions of their respective national identities and their history. It will focus mainly on popular history, including the material taught in schools, exhibited in museums and discussed in the press. Textbooks for ninth, tenth and eleventh grades will be analyzed because these are the grades in which Communist and post-Communist history is presented in textbooks. The complete list of the selected textbooks can be found at the end of this work, where at first they are regrouped by the country of origin and then listed in alphabetical order.

We limited our study to officially approved textbooks, which are used as part of the national curriculum in three countries. For example, in Russia, The Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation compiles an annual list, the Federal Set⁶, of textbooks that are officially accepted by the Russian government.

We studied books recommended and authorized in this list and therefore used in

⁶ *"Об утверждении федеральных перечней учебников, рекомендованных (допущенных) к использованию в образовательном процессе в образовательных учреждениях, реализующих образовательные программы общего образования и имеющих государственную аккредитацию, на 200X/20XX учебный год.*

any school in Russia. Schools are obliged to use the officially approved textbooks, but are free to use any kind of additional materials. However, teachers usually have the last word on which book they prefer to use in their class as well as on the approach to teaching Soviet and post-Soviet history.

The same criteria were applied to choosing Ukrainian textbooks: they were all officially approved by the Ukrainian Ministry of Education. After gaining independence, Ukraine chose to continue the centralized Soviet approach to history education by issuing detailed national curricula and by closely supervising the textbook adoption, production and distribution process. Each year The Ministry in cooperation with the National Academy of Sciences, the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences and private publishers and foundations organizes competitions for new textbooks. The awarded textbooks are first tested in schools and then revised several times if necessary before being officially recognized. Like in Russia, schools have no choice but to use the approved textbooks, but are free to decide on approach and on use of any additional materials.⁷

⁷Jan Germent Janmaat, 'The Ethnic 'Other' in Ukrainian History Textbooks: the Case of Russia and the Russians,' *Compare*, vol. 37, no. 3 (June 2007), p. 313.

In Estonia the provision of general education at all levels of education is carried out on the basis of common national curricula irrespective of the language of instruction. Schools prepare their own curricula on the basis of this national curricula. Basic education can be acquired partially in primary schools (grades 1–6), in basic schools (grades 1 – 9) or in upper secondary schools (grades 10 – 11).

Compulsory basic school subjects include Estonian or Russian Language and Literature, two foreign languages (English, Russian, German or French), Mathematics, Natural Science, Geography, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, History, Human Studies, Social Studies, Music, Art, Physical Education, Manual Training. Studying Estonian as a second language is obligatory in schools using Russian or another foreign language as the language of instruction. In order to successfully graduate from basic school, students are required to complete the curriculum and successfully pass three basic school graduation examinations, which include an examination in Estonian language and literature or Estonian as a second language.⁸

'Russian schools' in Estonia use the very same textbooks that are used in Russian schools in Russia and will be analyzed in Chapter I of our work. Estonian

⁸ Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, <http://www.hm.ee/index.php?1510024>.

textbooks used in Estonian-language schools are usually published in Estonian language (although there are some that are adapted to 'Russian schools' in Estonia) and approved by the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research. These textbooks will be studied in Chapter III of the present work. Moreover, since there are not so many different versions of the history textbooks in Estonia, the textbooks' syllabi will be compared and analyzed.

The data for this research, gathered during my fieldwork in Moscow, Kiev and Tallinn in May – June 2010, includes: Russian-language history textbooks, Ukrainian history textbooks (in Ukrainian), Estonian history textbooks (in Estonian), newspaper articles, books, general field observations, museum exhibitions (such as the *Museum of Occupation and of Fight for Freedom* in Estonia and the *Ukrainian National Museum of History*). My fieldwork in Estonia took place in Tallinn, at the National Library of Estonia (Eesti Rahvusraamatukogu). In Moscow I used sources from the *Russian State Library* (Российская государственная библиотека), the *State Scientific Pedagogical Library* (Научная педагогическая библиотека имени К. Д. Ушинского) along with purchasing several books from *Dom Knigi* bookstore. Finally, in Kiev I worked at the *Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine* (Національна бібліотека України імені В. І. Вернадського), the largest library in the country.

Dissertation Structure

In each chapter, we will examine the materials at three levels. First, we will lay out the historical patterns in high school education in each country and will try to find similarities in the development of teaching history. Second, we will look at how things changed since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Third, the detailed investigations and the case studies will follow, focusing in particular on the differences between these three countries. Together, these three chapters speak to the broader question of how the former Communist countries are constructing a historical narrative that must encompass all spheres of life.

More precisely, in the first chapter we will develop an argument about the role of school history texts in the shaping and transformation of national identity, using the example of the latest history textbooks in Russia. In this chapter, we should confirm the existence of the three most significant issues defining the re-positioning of the politically correct historical narratives – preferred images of the past, patriotism and national identity.⁹

⁹ Joseph Zajda (2004)

In the second chapter, following an examination of Russia's post-Soviet history taught in schools, we will discuss the resulting issues of searching for a new national identity in Ukraine, its emergence as a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual state, its search for a new „ethnic other.”¹⁰ We will see whether the profound reforms of the Ukrainian educational system and structure succeeded in solving the existing dilemmas in creating a new identity in this country or did they, on the contrary, enhance ethnic intolerance and Russophobia in the country. This chapter will also shed light on teaching one of the most complex and controversial pages in Ukrainian history, the famine of 1932-1933, the *Holodomor*.

In the third chapter, we will trace how official history-teaching in Estonia changed from Soviet period and after national independence was regained in 1991. Contrary to expectations, the collapse of the Soviet Union did not automatically lead Estonian historians to pursue freely the research of their own history. Instead younger historians were asked to write new history textbooks from a nationalist point of view.¹¹ Last chapter will address these issues and will examine the following transformations. When we consider the chapters together,

¹⁰ Jan Germen Janmaat, “The ethnic „other” in Ukrainian history textbooks: the case of Russia and the Russians,” *Compare*, vol. 37, no. 3 (June 2007), pp. 307-324.

¹¹ Meike Wulf and Grönholm, Pertti, “Generating Meaning Across Generations: The Role of Historians in The Codification of History in Soviet and Post-Soviet Estonia”, *Journal of Baltic Studies*, vol. 41, no. 3 (September 2010), p.352.

it will be possible to detect broader shifts in teaching Soviet history in the post-communist context.

Chapter I

Soviet History in Transition

„Historians are dangerous and capable of turning everything topsy-turvy. They have to be watched.“

N. S. Khrushchev, First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, 1956

Russian Empire: Enlightenment, Education, Opportunities

In the Russian empire, education was made a state concern in the eighteenth century; it started developing rapidly, which led to an establishment of a university¹², an Academy of Sciences¹³ and of secondary schools¹⁴. The Ministry of Education was created in 1802, and the Great Reforms of the 1860s encouraged the education of newly liberated serfs' as well as expanding

¹² In 1775.

¹³ The Saint Petersburg Academy of Sciences was founded in 1724 by Peter the Great.

¹⁴ In 1701, Peter the Great opened the first school in the world with a non-classical curriculum (Judge, p.127).

educational opportunities for women.¹⁵ In the beginning, Russian educational norms and traditions were derivative of European approaches; later, however, they were fully elaborated and developed by the great Russian educational writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁶

At first, religion and language posed problems for teachers:

„Many progressive thinkers insisted on the right to use local languages in the schools, yet most also believed in the civilizing mission of empire and argued that the Russian language should also be taught. Reformers were overwhelmingly secular in orientation and believed that the Orthodox Church had no place in the schools. Yet many, believing in cultural autonomy, argued that local populations should be allowed to establish private confessional schools, whether Catholic, Muslim, or Orthodox. The practical problems involved in implementing such policies (teachers facing a classroom with children from a half dozen minority groups, for example) were never confronted, and tensions over ethnic and linguistic issues mounted in Russia’s borderlands after 1900.’¹⁷

¹⁵ B. Eklof, L. Holmes and Vera Kaplan, *Educational reform in post-Soviet Russia : legacies and prospects*, London, F. Cass, 2005, p. 4.

¹⁶ The writings of Mikhail Lomonosov, Vissarion Belinsky, Nikolai Chernyshevsky, Nikolai Dobrolyubov, Konstantin Ushinsky, Dmitrii Pisarev and Lev N. Tolstoy contributed to the development of new Russian approach to education.

¹⁷ Eklof, B., Holmes, L. and Vera Kaplan, *Educational reform in post-Soviet Russia : legacies and prospects*, London, F. Cass, 2005, p. 6.

But when the Russian Revolutions of 1917 swept away the remains of the old tsarist empire and the brutal civil war¹⁸ destroyed the state and social order, the new Bolshevik leaders started creating a new, secular, democratic and progressive school system. Open access to free education was guaranteed by the State for all workers and peasants.

1917 – 1985: Imprisoned History

The Stalinist school system created after 1931 imposed a uniformity and hierarchy upon education across the vast territories and ethnically diversified populations of the Soviet Union (Estonia was not a part of the USSR yet). By 1953, whether in Ukraine, Russia, or Moldavia, all schools followed the same lesson plans, textbooks were exactly the same and teaching methods were indistinguishable.¹⁹ In Moscow and Leningrad, Vologda and Yekaterinburg, teachers were not allowed to produce any versions of history different from the one of their leadership. Slavery, feudalism, capitalism and socialism were interpreted with the help of *Marx's theory of history*. The Russian Marxists were

¹⁸ 1918-1921.

¹⁹ B. Eklof, L. Holmes and Vera Kaplan, *Educational reform in post-Soviet Russia: legacies and prospects*, London, F. Cass, 2005, p. 7.

the ‚leading interpreters of historical development‘. According to the historian Marc Ferro, ‚since they held sole power after the October revolution< they counted as true prophets who had been right all along. Other socialist bodies objected to this view, and they could easily show that Russia had not passed through the stage of capitalism and so was not ripe for socialism. Thereafter, the political debate became a historical one, and the Bolsheviks did not mean to let historians‘ history invalidate the leader’s own judgments as to the history was about to happen‘.²⁰

In the USSR, the past was never left to chance. Academic research was tightly controlled, public access to information was limited, but most importantly, history-writing and teaching was overseen by the State. The Communist Party became both the source and the incarnation of history. Soviet leaders, people and children were educated in accordance with the *Short History*²¹ which was written with Stalin’s assistance in the 1930s. Historian Catherine Merridale wrote:

‚There was one single history textbook for all schools. Students were required to learn it more or less verbatim. They were examined orally

²⁰ Marc Ferro, *The Use and Abuse of History, or, How The Past Is Taught*, London, Boston, Melbourne and Henley, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984, p.115.

²¹ "A Short History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union," *Encyclopædia Britannica, Encyclopædia Britannica Online Academic Edition*, Encyclopædia Britannica, 2011. Web: 29 Apr, 2011.

at the end of the year, and marks were awarded for accurate renditions of its contents.²²

Stalin personally read and commented on historical publications, and maintained strict censorship over history-writing. A number of historians who refused to tow the government line were persecuted by the State. In 1931 alone, over 100 historians were arrested, some of whom were executed, and others emigrated.²³ Some of the remaining historians were required to align their work with the principle of *partiinost'*²⁴.

Later, in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s this course was used as well, though both Khrushchev and Brezhnev altered it in order to legitimize their actions, views and policies. Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign led to the omission of Stalin's name from the school manuals. For example, in the fourth-class textbook of 1956 Stalin appears only twice between 1917 and 1953.²⁵ But while Stalin was criticized, Lenin's Revolution, Civil War measures, imposition of single-party rule and the harsh collectivization were still beyond approach. Khrushchev's *thaw* was revolutionary, but it failed to free history from its official

²² Catherine Merridale, 'Redesigning History in Contemporary Russia', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 38, no. 1 (2003), p.15.

²³ Arup Banerji, *Writing history in the Soviet Union: making the past work*, New Delhi, Social Science Press, 2008, p. 35.

²⁴ Party line was the official way to think, to act and to proceed.

²⁵ Marc Ferro, *The Use and Abuse of History, or, How The Past Is Taught*, London, Boston, Melbourne and Henley, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984, p.116.

bounds.²⁶ After Khrushchev's fall, in 1964, some aspects of Stalinist history were reinstated. Once again it became forbidden to publish new information unless it had already appeared in print somewhere else; and several young historians, who were successfully published in Khrushchev's time, had suddenly become unprintable and their promotions were blocked.²⁷

The main aim of the system, however, remained the same – to produce a man who subscribes to a particular type of morality – communist or socialist, the New Soviet man. This man would be free from both, ethnic or cultural affiliations, devoted to the motherland, would have the good of society at heart and would work for the wealth and happiness of future generations. This goal was achieved, but the results were devastating: while creating the New Soviet man, the Soviet educational system successfully produced a new Soviet-type mentality, which remains detrimental to Russian society even today. Nevertheless, the achievements of the Soviet school were significant. First, it was effective in delivering full literacy under Stalin and, later, under his successors it gave access

²⁶ Kathleen E. Smith describes in detail history in the *thaw* period in Smith, Kathleen E. *Remembering Stalin's Victims: Popular Memory and the End of the USSR*. Ithaca, London, Cornell University press, 1996, in chapter 2: Khrushchev's Thaw.

²⁷ Catherine Merridale, „Redesigning History in Contemporary Russia“, *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 38, no. 1 (2003), p.16.

to a complete secondary education to the population of a large, ethnically and linguistically diverse country.²⁸

Perestroika, Glasnost, Freedom of Speech?

But by the end of the Brezhnev era²⁹, the Soviet school system was in crisis. It suffered from chronic under-funding, lacked amenities and was overcrowded and outdated. The teaching profession had lost its prestige, while underpaid and overworked teachers left in large numbers. So there was no surprise, when in 1986, a year after Mikhail Gorbachev came to power, a dynamic reform movement emerged in education. Soon after Gorbachev was appointed General Secretary of the Communist Party, a new policy of *glasnost*³⁰ was launched. And immediately millions of Soviet citizens became passionately involved in the rediscovering of their own history. Previously banned historical literature was becoming extremely popular. New publications appeared every

²⁸ B. Eklof, L. Holmes and Vera Kaplan, *Educational reform in post-Soviet Russia: legacies and prospects*, London, F. Cass, 2005, p. 8.

²⁹ 1964-1982.

³⁰ *Glas* – voice (Russian). It was the policy of maximal openness, and transparency in the activities of all government institutions in the Soviet Union, guaranteed by the freedom of speech, press and information.

day and aroused immense interest among the Soviet reading public. Books, short stories and newspaper articles became important source of historical information. Nonetheless, it is important to mention, that the rate of progress of *glasnost* was different in each Soviet republic: ,the Baltic Republics were well in front, the Ukraine in the rear. But in every republic during 1988 the delicate issue of the history of the nationalities, and of national repression under Stalin, has increasingly come under scrutiny`.³¹

Everyone understood that school history textbooks were no longer credible. The school curriculum needed to be revised. History became front-page news and politicians, journalists, teachers and parents joined in collective effort in order to find the best way to present Soviet history to the new generations.

In December 1991, the Russian Republic emerged and the Soviet Union officially ceased to exist. Russia, now a fully independent state set a new course in the direction of ,inward-looking nation building`.³² However, the collapse of communism did not set history free. Numerous attempts have been made since

³¹ R. W. Davies, *Soviet History in the Gorbachev Revolution*, Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1989, p. 10.

³² John B. Dunlop, *The Rise of Russia and The Fall of The Soviet Empire*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1993, p.285.

1991 to reinvent history: „It was by turns a source of legitimation for new governments, a generator of transformatory rage, a set of falsified details to be put right, and a sort of consolation for those who feared that their society had preserved few cultural resources beyond its bitter memories and loss.³³

The Yeltsin Years: Difficult Transition

The first President of Russia, Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin had difficulty deciding what to do with the Russian and Soviet past. Transitioning a communist state to a democratic one, a command economy to a market economy, and a large multiethnic empire into a nation-state proved to be an extremely difficult task. Yeltsin’s address which called for atonement and admission of guilt for Communist crimes failed to find popular approval. Russia in transitional years lacked the „surge of social solidarity³⁴ that characterized other East European societies. People in those other countries saw themselves as victims of Moscow’s domination and strived for self-determination. Georgia, Hungary, the Baltic

³³ Catherine Merridale, “Redesigning History in Contemporary Russia”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 38, no. 1 (2003), p.13.

³⁴ Tatyana Volodina, “Teaching History in Russia after the Collapse of the USSR,” *The History Teacher*, vol. 38, no. 2 (February 2005), p. 181.

Republics, along with other states, accused the former Soviet leadership of having repressed them and directed their resentment against the Russian version of Soviet history. As a result, during his nine-year presidency, Vladimir Putin began constructing his version of Russia's history by emphasizing the need for reforms and strong leadership to help Russia in troubled times.

Putin and Medvedev: New Historical Perspectives

Putin spoke early in his term about how a new historical perspective was needed to help form a national idea that would unify Russia and he took a personal interest in the history taught in school, specifically concerning the textbooks Russian students were using. He reintroduced into political discourse theories of Russia's historical uniqueness and reminded Russians about their past great ancestors such as Catherine the Great, Peter the Great, and also, controversially, Joseph Stalin.

President Dmitry Medvedev continued on the path set out by his predecessor, even going a step further by engaging the legal field to protect Russian history. In 2009, Medvedev created a new committee, *Presidential*

Commission of the Russian Federation to Counter Attempts to Falsify History to the Detriment of Russia's Interests, and signed a law that is supposed to protect Russia from falsifications of its own history.³⁵

It is important to stress, that Russia has, for centuries, been and remains the most important Slavonic country, largely because of its size, cultural heritage, population, economy and history. Also Russia occupies the largest territory, nearly twice the size of China. The country began its territorial growth in the seventeenth century, when the Tsarist empire expanded greatly in all directions, adding to its crown many non-Russian territories in Eastern Europe and Asia, inhabited by people of very diverse ethnic origin, race and religion. In the twenty-first century Russia remains a multi-national country. According to the 2002 census, over 160 separate ethnic groups populate its vast territory. Of the total population of 140 million, 80 per cent are Russian.³⁶ Russia is, geographically, demographically, culturally, historically and ideologically, both European and Asiatic. In 1837, in attempt to better explain Russia's uniqueness, one of the most prominent Russian philosophers, Pyotr Yakovlevich Chaadaev

wrote:

³⁵ *Комиссия при президенте Российской Федерации по противодействию попыткам фальсификации истории в ущерб интересам России*. The decree was issued in order to "defend Russia against falsifiers of history and those who would deny Soviet contribution to the victory in World War II. The President of Russian Federation decree 15.05.2009, no. 549 (Указ Президента РФ от 15.05.2009, no. 549).

³⁶ Edwin Bacon, *Contemporary Russia*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 48.

„Situating between the two great divisions of the world, between East and West, with one elbow leaning on China and the other on Germany, we should have combined in us the two great principles of intelligent nature, imagination and reason, and have united in our civilization the past of the entire world. But this is not the part which Providence has assigned to us – Historical experience does not exist for us.“³⁷

Using these characteristics, ever since 1991, Russia’s government has actively sought to recreate Russian national identity, based on „a particular narrative emphasizing Russia’s distinctiveness among European nations“. ³⁸ Today, politicians are constantly invoking the *nation*, in attempt to unite and inspire people, but at the same time they avoid defining its meaning.³⁹ They do assert, however, that a common language, political discourse and written texts (especially in schools) play a crucial role in the creation of a national identity, mainly by creating a sense of solidarity.

Historians agree: „For centuries, Russia’s national identity rested on its position at the center of a geographical and ideological empire – As a result, Russian and Soviet identities were closely intertwined. The conceptual

³⁷ Pyotr Chaadayev, *Philosophical Letters & Apology of a Madman*, Knoxville, The University of Tennessee Press, 1969, p. 41.

³⁸ Edwin Bacon, *Contemporary Russia*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 2.

³⁹ The distinctions have to be drawn between русские (*russkie*) – ethnic Russians, российскийские (*rossiiskie*) – belonging to the Russian State, and Россияне (Rossiiane) – Russian citizens of the Russian Federation.

relationship between the two entities became increasingly complex and can be linked to the disintegration of the USSR.⁴⁰ After 1991 politicians in Russia made several attempts to 'de-ideologize' the curriculum by allowing the use of different historical sources, by introducing sociology, philosophy, global education, by teaching Russian law (Constitution) and even religion. Central authorities have allowed the regions and municipalities to choose what they will teach and how they will teach it. However, due to lack of funding, schools continued to use old Soviet textbooks throughout the 1990s. Another subject of great interest was the teaching of history. Narratives of conquest, expropriation, deportation, exploitation, and even genocide were long banished from school textbooks, and the creation of the Russian empire was often described in fairy-tale terms.⁴¹ Furthermore, Russian school textbooks paid (and still pay) little or no attention to the Soviet repressions and mass deportations of ethnic groups, actions against minorities, the Red Army's wartime atrocities, and continuous injustices towards its own citizens.

⁴⁰ Benjamin Forest and Juliet Johnson, 'Unraveling the Threads of History: Soviet-Era Monuments and Post-Soviet National Identity in Moscow', *Annals of Association of American Geographers*, vol. 92, no. 3 (2002), pp. 528. The same view is expressed by Zubov (2009), Kotkin (2000), and others.

⁴¹ Vera Kaplan, 'The reform of education in Russia and the problem of history teaching; Education in Russia', *The Independent States and Eastern Europe*, vol. 17, no. 1 (1999).

At the same time, the new history textbooks in Russia portray a new, post-Soviet national identity. It is the first time since the 1920s that attempts have been made to redefine and to re-position core values of Russian society. It is also the first time when a student is asked to engage his critical approach to history. In the following pages we will examine the abovementioned duality of Russian historical narrative in school.

Patriotism, Nationalism or both?

The new history textbooks that appeared in Russian schools in the mid-nineties had a reproachful, anti-communist tone. Revolutionary heroes were dethroned, the conservatism of the Soviet politicians was denounced and the entire Soviet period was portrayed as a chain of terror. The communist leaders were either depicted as tyrants (Stalin, Yezhov, Beria, Lenin), or narrow-minded bureaucrats (Khrushchev and Brezhnev). According to the historian Tatyana Volodina, „learning from these books, students too readily concluded that, as the proverb goes, every nation gets the government it deserves. In other words, perhaps the main trouble was not the government but the Russian people

themselves.⁴² Often the importance of remembering one's history in order to avoid repeating past mistakes was highlighted:

The Revolutionary way is wrong for Russia; it leads not to a national unity but to the catastrophe for people. A person who forgets its past is destined to repeat it. The most important condition for a country's stability is patriotism. This feeling can be painful, but is never denigrating. The history of the XXth century proved wastefulness of hysterical patriotism, based on humiliation of other nations, on despise and jealousy. On the contrary, it is clear now that the idea of strong, stable country is unifying.⁴³

In the textbooks of the 2000s, the spirit of patriotism, nationalism and other significant images are used to depict Russian national and cultural identity. For example, in several textbooks students are reminded about Russia's greatness and about the significant role it played in history:

⁴² Tatyana Volodina, "Teaching History in Russia after the Collapse of the USSR," *The History Teacher*, vol. 38, no. 2 (February 2005), p. 182.

⁴³ V. P. Ostrovskii and A. Utkin, I., *Istoriia Rossii. XX vek. 11 kl.*, Moscow, Drofa, 1998, pp. 3-4.

„To treasure this heritage *Russian history, culture and traditions+ – means to cultivate within oneself the love for the Motherland, the feelings of patriotism, and citizenship.“⁴⁴

„XIX century finally created Russia into a great nation in the world< This was achieved through our people’s sufferings and won by complete defeat in the war 1812< Not a single issue of the world’s politics could be decided without Russia.“⁴⁵

„In XXth century Russia played exceptional role in the history of humanity< In several decades, the USSR became the world’s superpower. Soviet Union had surpassed its other competitors, as well as the United States, in different branches of science and technology.“⁴⁶

Similar discourse can be found in *Istoriia Rossii, konets XVII-XIX vek: uchebnik dlia 10 klassa obshcheobrazovatel’nykh uchrezhdenii* (History of Russia, XVII-XIX Centuries: Grade 10 Secondary School Manual):

„Everything that was achieved – was the fruit of the efforts by the Russians. However, taking into the account of the collective achievements of the whole population of the Russian empire, one also

⁴⁴B. Rybakov and A. Preobrazhenski, *Istoriia Otechestva: uchebnik dlia 8 klassa srednei shkoly*, Moscow, Prosveshchenie, 1993, p. 273. Translated by Joseph Zajda in Zajda, J., *The Politics of Rewriting History: New School History Textbooks in Russia*, In J. Zajda (Ed.), *The International Handbook of Globalisation and Education Policy Research*. Dordrecht, Springer, 2005.

⁴⁵ A. Danilov and L. Kosulina, *Istoriia Rossii: XX vek*, Moscow, Prosveshchenie, 2002, p.253.

⁴⁶ N. Zagladin and al., *Istoriia Otechestva: XX vek*. Moscow, Russkoe Slovo, 2006, p. 383.

needs to consider the contributions of its leading individuals< the history of Russia is infinite , excitingly interesting, full of mysteries and 'blank pages'.⁴⁷

The abovementioned history textbook is recommended by the Ministry of Education and is widely used in schools. Books by other authors invite Russian youth to use an individual, critical and analytical approach to history:

„The crucial periods of the past will pass by our reflective gaze: Russia with its bright and dark pages of life prior to 1917<the depressing shadow of massive repressions<the growth of our Fatherland, with great achievements and unforgiving errors<More than ever before it is necessary for you to explain<the inner logic of a historical process, and find the answers to the questions why such events occurred< You need to understand historical facts for what they are, rather than guessing and rushing to categorize them in ideological schemes.⁴⁸

Or again,

„In your hands you have a new history textbook. With its help we suggest that you consider a complex and contradictory past of our country<We hope that you will develop your own view point<Let's

⁴⁷ V. Buganov and P. Zyrianov, *Istoriia Rossii, konets XVII-XIX vek: uchebnik dlia 10 klassa obshcheobrazovatel'nykh uchrezhdeni*, Prosveshchenie, 2000, p. 10. Translated by Joseph Zajda.

⁴⁸ A. Levandovskii and Y. Shchetinov, *Rossiiia v XX veke*, Moscow, Prosveshchenie, 2001, pp. 3-4. Translated by Joseph Zajda.

reflect together about our past, so that we could walk bravely the path towards democratic and humane society.⁴⁹

Civil War - Red Terror- Stalinism

In the key school texts (of the 1990s and 2000s; by Danilov and Kosulina, Zharova and Mishina, Kreder, Ostrovskii, Denisenko, Zagladin, Pashkov and Shestakov) Russian students learn about Russia at the end of the XIXth century, two Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917, the Civil War, Stalinism and totalitarianism, World War II, the after-war reconstruction, Khrushchev's *thaw* and Brezhnev's stagnation, the *perestroika* years of 1985-1991, and 'The New Russia'.

The events of February and October 1917 are often described in a couple of paragraphs. Young readers are told that tsar Nikolai had 'missed his last chance' for transformation and therefore failed to make it less painful for the country to transition into a new phase of history. Some books introduce the most charismatic revolutionary leader, Lev Trotsky⁵⁰; some do not mention him at all⁵¹.

⁴⁹ V. Denisenko, V. Izmozik, V. Ostrovskii and V. Startsev, *Istoriia Otechestva*, Saint- Petersburg, SpetsLit, 2000, p. 5. Translated by Joseph Zajda.

⁵⁰ For example, the new edition of *Istoriia Rossii* by Danilov and Kosulina, or Kreder (1992)

⁵¹ Pashkov, Volobuev and Zagladin textbooks.

The Civil War chapter usually describes first Soviet legislation, White movement, the situation in Ukraine (which in some books is described as an attempt to „sit on two chairs“⁵²), the Red Terror, and the national politics in satellite countries. The liquidation of the Romanovs is presented as one of the worst pages in Russian history:

„On July, evidently by the order from the *Sovnarkom*, the Ural regional Soviet had decided to execute Nikolai Romanov and his entire family. During the night of 17 July a bloody tragedy occurred. Nikolai, together with his wife, his five children and servants were executed – eleven people in total. Earlier, the tsar’s brother Michael was executed in Perm. Also were executed and thrown down the mine shaft were eighteen members of the Royal family.“⁵³

Surprisingly enough, the textbooks of the nineties do not talk about these events. I was not able to find a single mention of the executions of the Army officers in any of them (for example, in Zharova and Mishina’s textbook, published in 1996⁵⁴, or in Kreder’s and Ostrovskii’s manuals, published in 1996 and 1998, respectively). However, this fact can be explained by the difficult historical climate of the nineties: Boris Yeltsin and his contemporaries simply did

⁵² I. Mishina and L. Zharova, *Istoriia Otechestva.*, Moscow, Russkoe Slovo, 1999, p. 212.

⁵³ A. Danilov and L. Kosulina, *Istoriia Rossii: XX vek*, Moscow, Prosveshchenie, 2001, p. 115.

⁵⁴ L. Zharova and I. Mishina, *Istoriia Otechestva: 1900-1940*, Saint-Petersburg, Harford, 1996.

not know how to begin to address the deep Soviet past. Only in 1998, when the remains of the Royal family were officially identified, it was decided to give the last Russian Tsar, his wife, and their five children a proper burial. In the early 2000s the first mentions of these events started to appear in the textbooks.

World War II: Painful Memories

The Soviet victory in WWII was a unifying event in the Russian historical narrative. But in the nineties it was no longer a source of pride. New textbooks concentrated on the devastating results of the war. It was reported that dozens of millions of people lost their lives to protect their country. Russia lost more than twenty million people in four years, while Germany, which fought longer and on larger territory, lost fifteen million. The Soviet regime won the war but at a tremendous cost. At the same time, former Soviet republics were producing their own versions of the twentieth century history, stating that Stalinism was no better than Nazism and did, in fact, produce as many crimes on their territories. Russians started feeling guilty, inferior and indebted. They soon, however, grew tired of it and a new ,positive` approach to history started gaining ground.

In the Soviet textbooks, fascism is presented as the ultimate evil. The whole history of the twentieth century is remembered through the patterns of historical trauma of 1941-1945. The Red Army soldier is portrayed as a hero and liberator of Eastern Europe, not as an enemy or an occupant. The war is memorialized not as the World War II but as the Great Patriotic War. The years 1939 – 1941 are downplayed: there is no mention of an alliance between the Soviet Union with Nazi Germany, of Molotov-Ribbentrop pact or of any repressions against the Armed Forces command.

In the post-Communist narrative, there are two extremes: National Socialism and Communism. World War II is described as a tragedy, which cost 28 million lives.⁵⁵ At the beginning, the textbooks avoid mentioning the cost of victories. Later, however, the truth comes out: twenty Soviet soldiers died for every German soldier killed⁵⁶. Equally important, the section on Stalin's Repressions is usually limited either to a single paragraph (in the nineties), or only a couple of pages (in 2001 and later). The 1999 textbook for Grade 10, *Istoriia Otechestva* [History of the Fatherland], is one of the few books providing a more

⁵⁵ V. Shestakov, M. Gorinov and E. Viazemski, *Istoriia Otechestva: XX vek*, Moscow, Prosveshchenie, 2002.

⁵⁶ Richard Overy, *Russia's War*, London, Penguin, 1999, p. 117.

detailed account of the arrest and execution of the top leadership in the party and the Armed Forces.⁵⁷

The book by Dmitrienko, *Istoriia Otechestva - XX vek* describes how the repressions began following the murder of Kirov and how later they turned into mass hysteria in the 1930s:

,Three quarters out of the 1 961 Party members of the XVII Party Congress were executed< 45 % of the Army Command were repressed. Over 40 000 people were cleansed from the ranks of the Red Army< Terror was happening in every Soviet Republic. Among the repressed were Russians, Ukrainians, Jews, and Georgians<`⁵⁸

,Even the former heads of the NKVD—Yagoda and Yezhov, who both played a major role in the Red Terror, were executed,` - mention Mishina and Zharova in their Grade 10 and 11 textbook.⁵⁹ The book by Danilov and Kosulina opens its chapter on Repressions by asking a question ,What is totalitarianism?`⁶⁰

It then proceeds to answer this question:

⁵⁷ I. Mishina and L. Zharova, *Istoriia Otechestva.*, Moscow, Russkoe Slovo, 1999, pp. 386-387.

⁵⁸ V. P. Dmitrienko, *Istoriia Otechestva - XX vek*, Moscow, Drofa, 1999, pp. 237-243.

⁵⁹ I. Mishina and L. Zharova, *Istoriia Otechestva.*, Moscow, Russkoe Slovo, 1999, pp.386-387.

⁶⁰ A. Danilov and L. Kosulina, *Istoriia Rossii: XX vek*, Moscow, Prosveshchenie , 1998.

,Totalitarianism is a political system that existed in the USSR in the 1930s<By the mid-thirties Marxist-Leninist ideology became the official State ideology. But it was not enough, in order to support itself the totalitarian system employed a large number of repression mechanisms< Prisons were overcrowded< In the army alone 40 000 officers were executed. ^61

Then students are asked to answer the following questions: ,What are the main reasons for the establishment of the totalitarian regime in the USSR? Are there any examples of resistance to Stalin's regime? Please prove that the CPSU⁶² was the main axle of the totalitarian system. ^63

However, the discussion of the repressions, once nonexistent in the Soviet Union, remained limited in the 1990s and the 2000s. The Great Patriotic war glorified war veterans and justified the sacrifices of millions. Each student, who joins the classroom discussion on this period of time, has a grandfather or a grandmother who fought in the war, but no one seems to have a relative who was a member of the NKVD⁶⁴. Also, while the textbooks acknowledged the Stalin government's early mistakes during the conduct of the war, as well as the

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 178-184.

⁶² Communist Party of the Soviet Union

⁶³ A. Danilov and L. Kosulina, *Istoriia Rossii: XX vek*, Moscow, Prosveshchenie , 1998., pp. 184-185.

⁶⁴ Soviet secret police.

heroism of the people in an unequal battle, they left the role of the minorities in the Soviet victory unspecified.

Stalin's Politics and Mass Repressions

As it was mentioned earlier, the discussions and debates about Russian history textbooks became front-page news in June 2007 when a teacher's manual by A.V. Filippov, *The Contemporary History of Russia, 1945-2006*, was released. In 2009, a textbook for students based on this teacher's manual, *History of Russia: 1945-2008: 11th Grade* was also published.

The controversial section of Filippov's text about Stalin begins by acknowledging that Stalin is a ‚polarizing` figure and that some view him as a ‚hero` and others see him as ‚the embodiment of evil itself`⁶⁵:

‚Iosif Vissarianovich Stalin (Jughashvili) remains one of the most polarizing figures in the politics and history of our country; it is difficult to find another personality in Russian history who is subjected to so many contradictory interpretations, both during his

⁶⁵ A. V. Filippov, *New History of Russia 1945-2006*, Moscow, Prosveshchenie, 2007. Translated by Anatolii Karlin.

rule and after. For some, he is the hero and orchestrator of victory in the Great Patriotic war; to others, he is the embodiment of evil itself.`

Filippov then proceeds to justify Stalin's legacy and methods:

„One of the most famous views on the historical significance of Stalin was held by Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister of Great Britain during World War Two, and a man hardly known for his pro Stalin sentiments: „Stalin came to Russia with a wooden plough and left in its possession nuclear weapons`.

„During Stalin's life the first view predominated; after his death the second became conventional wisdom, primarily because of revelations about Stalin's organizational role in the political repressions of the 1930'-s and 1940'-s. Evaluating Stalin's historical significance requires looking at him in a wider historical context, beyond just the chronological framework of the Soviet period. This approach reveals many similarities between Stalin's policies and those of preceding Russian sovereigns.`

„The guiding light of these principles was concentration of authority in one center and strict centralization of the administrative system. The power of Russia's paramount leader was traditionally absolutist, drawing in all resources and subordinating all political forces to itself.`

What was the cause of the repressions? According to Filippov, Stalin's black and white view of the world` was to blame:

,Of course Stalin's personal qualities informed the intense drama and stresses of the Soviet period. Contemporary accounts and later psychological investigations show that the defining feature of Stalin's personality was his black and white worldview (which explains his perception of the people around him as either friends or enemies), a perception that he was in a permanently hostile environment, characterized by cruelty, and a drive to dominate. However, the influence of Stalin's psychological idiosyncrasies was most likely of secondary importance relative to the role of objective factors. Carrying through a program of accelerated modernization required a certain system of power and the creation of an administrative apparatus up to the task. In many ways these reasons explain the scale and spirit of Stalin's 'revolution from above'.⁶⁶

He does mention the price the Soviet population had to pay for Stalin's policies, but then tries to justify its scale:

,But Stalin's rule had another side. His successes – and they are acknowledged by many of the Leader's opponents – were achieved through the ruthless exploitation of the population. During Stalin's rule the country went through several waves of large scale repressions. The initiator and theorist behind this 'heightened class struggle' was Stalin himself. Entire social classes like the landed peasantry, the urban petit bourgeoisie, the priesthood and the old intelligentsia were liquidated. Furthermore, on occasion many people completely loyal to power suffered from the harsh laws. It is not even worth going into the safety of life during the Stalin years. Quality of

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

life remained low, especially in the villages. All this did not promote the strengthening of the country's moral climate.⁶⁷

As for the numbers, according to Filippov, 786 000 people were condemned to death from 1925 to 1953. In fact, even today it is hard to estimate how many died, because historians have found it difficult if not impossible to gain access to the secret police archives. The estimates of Terror victims killed range from 3 million to more than 20 million. Interestingly enough, one more history textbook came up with the same number for Stalin's victims. Dmitrienko's *History of the Fatherland* states that 786 000 people were sentenced to death, and from 1930 to 1953 a total of 18 million people were sent to labour camps.⁶⁸

But unlike these manuals, the other textbooks talk about collectivization, repressions and deportations:

„Stalin proclaimed the necessity of destroying kulaks as a social group altogether< Historians estimate that 10 to 15 million peasants were shot, deported or lost their property. „⁶⁹

„The 1930s became the darkest page in Russian history< Almost all of the Bolshevik's previous political opponents *the Mensheviks and the Socialist Revolutionaries] were killed or sent to the prison

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ V. P. Dmitrienko, *Istoriia Otechestva - XX vek*. Moscow, Drofa, 1999, p. 242.

⁶⁹ L. Piatnitskii, *Istoriia Rossii, XX vek*, Moskva, Moskovskii Litsei, 1999, p. 149.

camps< 40 000 Red Army officers were repressed< In the 1930s the 'population' of the Gulag amounted from 4.5 million to 12 million people< In Ukraine 300 000 people were arrested and deported by 1950< In the Baltics, 400 000 Lithuanians, 150 000 Latvians and 50 000 Estonians were displaced< ^70

Zagladin's 2006 textbook reveals that in the post-war period alone, 6.5 million people were repressed. The author suggests, however, that these numbers can be justified by the Cold War context.⁷¹

We should mention that once it was published, Filippov's textbook was harshly criticized by historians, teachers and the general public, but it should be noted, that some of the passages and phrases that were the most controversial were later edited and watered down, such as the phrase describing Stalin as an 'effective manager.'⁷² Still today, Filippov's text remains among a dozen or so approved texts for history classes in school.

⁷⁰ A. Danilov and L. Kosulina, *Istoriia Rossii: XX vek*, Moscow, Prosveshchenie , 1998., pp. 178-185, 262-265.

⁷¹ N. Zagladin and *al.*, *Istoriia Otechestva: XX vek*, Moscow, Russkoe Slovo, 2006, p. 238.

⁷² Miguel Vázquez, Liñán, 'History as a propaganda tool in Putin's Russia,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, vol. 43, no. 2 (2010), p. 174.

Post-Communist Russia

The other event, described briefly in history textbooks, is the storming of the Parliament House (also referred to as the White House) on 4 October, 1993. It was staged by the members of the Upper House, who opposed Yeltsin's dismissal of the entire government – the House of Representatives (*Deputaty*) and the Upper House (*Verkhovnii Sovet*):

The Speaker (of the Upper House) Khasbulatov, and the majority members of the Constitutional Court declared the President's actions unconstitutional and relieved him of his duties. Vice-President Rutskoi assumed the office of President and commenced the formation of the parallel government. President Yeltsin issued his ultimatum (to the opposition) to leave the 'White House' before 4 October.

On October 4, the 'White House' was subjected to artillery bombardment, which resulted in catastrophic fire and death. In the end the building was occupied by the army and the leaders of the opposition were arrested.⁷³

⁷³ Joseph Zajda, J., *The Politics of Rewriting History: New School History Textbooks in Russia*, In Joseph Zajda (Ed.), *The International Handbook of Globalization and Education Policy Research*, Dordrecht, Springer, 2005.

According to historian Joseph Zajda, „the students are not told that this incident was far more serious than we are lead to believe. Furthermore, the students are not likely to know the full story of this tragic event, and other yet to be disclosed excesses of the ancient regime. More people were killed during the October 1993 ‘crisis’ than during the storming of the Winter Palace back in 1917. This event became another form of ‘characteristic amnesia’.”⁷⁴

In 2010, academics Jim Butterfield and Ekaterina Levintova conducted a study of 47 Russian history textbooks. They limited their study to textbooks that are officially approved and used as part of the national curriculum (The Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation compiles an annual list, the Federal Set, of textbooks that are officially approved by the Russian government⁷⁵).

Levintova and Butterfield noted in their study that, when the 1990s and the Yeltsin presidency were compared with 2000s and the Putin government, that „by all measures, the latter was portrayed as substantially better.”⁷⁶ The 1990s are

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ For example, *Приказ Министерства образования и науки РФ №379 от 9 декабря 2008 г.*

“Об утверждении федеральных перечней учебников, рекомендованных (допущенных) к использованию в образовательном процессе в образовательных учреждениях, реализующих образовательные программы общего образования и имеющих государственную аккредитацию, на 2009/2010 учебный год (Act №379 on 9 December, 2008 recommends textbooks for the 2009-2010 school year).”

⁷⁶ Ekaterina Levintova and Jim Butterfield, „History education and historical remembrance in contemporary Russia: Sources of political attitudes of pro- Kremlin youth,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, vol. 43, no. 2 (2010), p. 144.

portrayed as a controversial period full of uneven growth and development and challenges to Russia's territorial integrity, economic turbulence, questionable political stability, and societal tensions. The first Chechen War is described in school textbooks as 'a disgrace for Russia, its president, and its military,' 'the most difficult trial,' and 'the national tragedy, the biggest, since the Afghan war mistake by the country's leadership.' Overall, the 1990s revealed a lack of a 'national idea or ideology that could unite the government and people.' With Vladimir Putin as Russia's president, economic conditions improved and textbook descriptions of the period mostly praised Putin's leadership. In textbooks that compared the Putin and Yeltsin periods, the critique of the Yeltsin era was even more critical than in earlier textbooks. At the same time, Levintova and Butterfield noted, that when textbooks presented criticisms against the Putin government, the critiques were often minor or made before other comments that would then praise Putin.

Indeed, in the 2006 textbook by Zagladin more than twenty pages are consecrated to the 'new stage in Russia's development. The situation in Chechnya is described in a couple of lines. At the same time, twenty something pages talk about Russia's rapid development, professional army, and high rates of the Gross Domestic Product, quality of life and science development in the

twenty-first century.⁷⁷ The events of the last decade of the XXth century are mentioned very briefly in the textbook.

Conclusion

We have seen that while textbooks in the 1990s under Yeltsin allowed for a plurality of opinions, textbooks under Putin and Medvedev have consolidated around a central government narrative of patriotism. Russian school texts stress the importance of a ‚personal perspective` on Soviet history:

‚We have attempted to depict the specifics of history as a humanistic discipline to be viewed through a personal perspective. For this reason there is no need to be afraid of incorrect answers. Questions are designed for discussions during lessons and do not require the singular ‚correct` answer. It is not the answer to the question that is important but rather the importance of the question that leads you into other questions and reflection.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ N. Zagladin and *al. Istoriia Otechestva: XX vek.* Moscow, Russkoe Slovo, 2006, pp. 355-385.

⁷⁸ I. Mishina and L. Zharova, *Istoriia Otechestva.*, Moscow, Russkoe Slovo, 1999, p. 3. Translated by Joseph Zajda.

Readers are encouraged to use an individual, critical and analytical approach to history, to ask questions and look for answers:

„Do you engage in arguments with your family, and friends concerning Russia’s future development? What is dominating during such discussions: arguments or emotions? Do you believe that your generation is likely to play a crucial role in the political, economic and moral and spiritual rebirth of Russia?“⁷⁹

The textbooks of the nineties tend to have an anti-Communist tone, they shed light on Stalin’s repressions, injustices, difficult social climate, national politics, but do not mention Romanov’s execution. School history textbooks of the 2000s emphasise the historical greatness of the Russian State. Soviet Union is displayed as a super power, Stalin’s crimes are justified, and Stalin is compared to the great Russian leaders: Catherine the Great, Peter the Great, and Piotr Stolypin.

The war is memorialized not as World War II but as the Great Patriotic War. In the nineties, the years 1939 – 1941 are downplayed: usually there is no mention of an alliance between the Soviet Union with Nazi Germany, of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact or of any repressions against the Armed Forces command. However, in the 2000s, these events appear in textbooks, as the Great

⁷⁹ V. Denisenko, V. Izmozik, V. Ostrovskii and V. Startsev, *Istoriia Otechestva*, Saint- Petersburg, SpetsLit, 2000, p. 376. Translated by Joseph Zajda.

Patriotic War continues to remain a rallying point in Russian history. There is also an attempt to teach the love of one's country through the study of history:

„Knowing the history of one's Motherland is important for every human being. History is correctly called the people's memory and the teacher of life. The most important thing in the study of history of one's Motherland—is learning to love her. To love the Fatherland means to love the country, the geographic space where a person was born. To love the Fatherland means loving one's people, norms, customs, culture and native tongue.“⁸⁰

The politicians of the nineties did not know how to approach Soviet history. And it is obvious, that the Russian government today is still trying to fight off certain images of the Soviet past while at the same time embracing others, especially the Soviet victory in WWII. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, history has become an important instrument in building a new Russian national identity in the post-Soviet world and creating an image of a once again strong and powerful state. Consequently, in the 2000s, theories of Russia's historical uniqueness were reintroduced as an antidote to the post-Soviet senses of guilt and humiliation of the nineties.

⁸⁰ A. Preobrazhenski and B. Rybakov, *Istoriia Otechestva*, Moscow, Prosveshchenie, 2001, pp. 5-6. Translated by Joseph Zajda.

Chapter II

Search for a New National Identity in Ukraine

*"Historians are to nationalism what poppy-growers
in Pakistan are to heroin addicts: we supply the
essential raw materials for the market."⁸¹*

Eric Hobsbawm, historian

National Consolidation, Languages and Education

National consolidation is one of the first priorities of new states. By educating young people in the national language, especially when teaching history and culture, the politicians of new states expect to strengthen national unity and patriotism, and abate divisions in the society. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, several countries of the ex-USSR modified school curricula and altered the language of instruction. In Ukraine a number of measures were taken to limit the use of Russian and to make Ukrainian the main language of public

⁸¹ Eric Hobsbawm, „Ethnicity and Nationalism in Europe,“ *Anthropology Today*, vol. 8, no. 3 (1992).

spheres. Even Russian-speaking Ukrainians were encouraged to study in the national language. As we will discuss further, Ukraine had undergone several language reforms over the centuries. At first, under Peter the Great and Catherine the Great Ukrainian language lost its status of the national language. Later, in 1876, an imperial decree issued by Tsar Alexander II of Russia prohibited printing and importing of Ukrainian books. And in the beginning of the twentieth century, the Bolsheviks' attempt at the policy of *korenizatsiia* or nativization reintroduced promotion of native cadres, languages and culture in Ukraine. This attempt, however, was short-lived and ineffective.

All these years geo-historical division of Ukraine made the situation even more complicated: contemporary Ukraine is made up of several large regions, each having a history of its own. Galicia, Transcarpathia, Poltava, the Crimea, the Donets Basin, Kiev, Kharkov, Odessa, Lvov, Sevastopol⁸² – all these and many other regions and cities of Ukraine have different histories and sometimes even languages. In fact, there are three major linguistic groups in Ukraine: Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainians in the West, Russian-speaking Ukrainians in the East, and

⁸² See map of Ukraine in *Maps*.

Russians concentrated mainly in the North, East and South. However, it is important to mention that the majority of the population is bilingual.⁸³

After becoming an independent State in 1991, Ukraine conducted profound economic, political, cultural and educational reforms. The aim was to create a society with distinctly developed national identity and culture. According to the historian Tetyana Koshmanova, in Ukraine „< identity is a sense of who you are and where you are from – is commonly understood as a highly developed level of nationalistic consciousness: the Ukrainian speaking majority who stand for the dominant Ukrainian culture, traditions and welcomes Catholic or Orthodox religion.⁸⁴ In the nineties a new Ukrainian identity was required to replace the Soviet identity, which was no longer valid for the state and was unable to unify the society.

We have discussed in chapter I that through education (especially in history, languages, literature, civic education and culture) the state attempts ,to root national identity in the past and nurture youngsters in a historical narrative

⁸³ Tetyana Koshmanova, „National Identity and Cultural Coherence in Educational Reform for Democratic Citizenship,` *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2006), p. 108.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

that legitimizes state independence and the cultural politics of the state'.⁸⁵ Indeed, in Ukraine, the first reforms aimed to create a new national identity for all Ukrainian citizens as well as to democratize the out-dated educational system.⁸⁶ The new recipes for national identities were not original. They involved inventing ,deep historic, even pre-historic roots for a people, fashioning new historical heroes, constructing versions of history that stress glory and achievement,⁸⁷ as well as introducing a common foreign enemy.

National Identity and the Orange Revolution

The Orange Revolution of 2004 revealed an existing conflict between the Russian-speaking East and Ukrainian-speaking West of the country.⁸⁸ The 2004 pre-election campaigns included anti-Russian and anti-minorities contents. The country was split into two. ,The Orange Revolution fuelled transformation and

⁸⁵ Jan Germent Janmaat, ,The Ethnic 'Other' in Ukrainian History Textbooks: the Case of

Russia and the Russians,' *Compare*, vol. 37, no. 3 (June 2007), p. 308.

⁸⁶ For the modern-day Educational system in Ukraine, see Figure 2.

⁸⁷ Tatyana Volodina, ,Teaching History in Russia after the Collapse of the USSR,' *The History Teacher*, vol. 38, no. 2 (February, 2005), p. 184.

⁸⁸ For more information on the Orange Revolution see Andrew Wilson's *Ukraine's Orange Revolution* (2005), Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul's *Revolution in Orange: the Origins of Ukrain's democratic breakthrough* (2006), or again, Paul D'Anieri's *Orange Revolution and Aftermath: Mobilization, Apathy, and the State in Ukraine* (2010).

originated a new social phenomenon – European identity in Ukraine.⁸⁹ For Ukraine Europe was becoming a model for the future development.

In post-Soviet Ukraine, attempts to revise history have been polarizing and contradictory. Still today, Ukraine does not have an official or prevailing concept of its national history, mostly because, as we have explained earlier, of its geographical, historical and linguistic attributes.

According to the historian Jan Germen Janmaat, „an important aspect of history education in Ukraine is the treatment of ethnic others.⁹⁰ He stresses that usually, in history textbooks harmful effects of contact with „ethnic others` are highlighted whereas positive results are downplayed or omitted.⁹¹ He continues on to suggest that there are four functions of this negative stereotyping: first, it distinguishes the „in- from the out-group.` Second, by stressing the hostility of the out-group, it conceals conflicts within the in-group. Third, it provides justification for a „liberation struggle against a foreign ‘oppressor’`, justifying at once the establishment and consolidation of an independent state. And finally, it acquits the leaders of a newly independent state from the past and from their

⁸⁹ Tetyana Koshmanova, „National Identity and Cultural Coherence in Educational Reform for Democratic Citizenship,` *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2006), p. 111.

⁹⁰ Jan Germen Janmaat, „The Ethnic ‘Other’ in Ukrainian History Textbooks: the Case of Russia and the Russians,` *Compare*, vol. 37, no. 3 (June 2007), p. 308.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

previous actions.⁹² In the same way, some Ukrainian historians today explain the country's history like this: ‚Ukraine was created by God who worked through the hands of our enemies‘.⁹³ For Ukraine it was easy to find an acceptable ‘ethnic other’: Russia and the Russians became an obvious choice.

Teaching History in Ukraine

Like their Soviet predecessors, post-Soviet public schools usually take a strictly chronological approach to the teaching of history. Starting in the fifth grade, when the children are approximately ten - eleven years old, they begin with Ancient Greece and Rome and continue on until they finish the eleventh grade (when they are sixteen - seventeen years old) in contemporary times. In the 2000s they are taught a ‚condensed‘ version of history of Soviet Ukraine, much like the one that can be found in the Soviet textbooks on the history of Ukraine, and which almost never mentioned developments in Ukrainian language, culture, and social life.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Citation from Medvedev, Roy, ‚History and Myth,‘ *Russia in Global Affaires*, vol. 4, no. 3 (July-September 2006), p. 172.

In the 1980s, the Soviet authorities only allowed 'History of Ukraine' to be taught as an 'additional' subject. However, in light of continuous calls for a reappraisal of historical events in the late 1980s, the former Ukrainian Communist leadership was forced to reconsider the approach. Following this, a programme was initiated to develop historical research in Ukraine, which led to a single 'History of Ukraine' course being introduced in schools by 1989-1990.⁹⁴ At the same time, the name of the publishing house, responsible for school history textbooks was transformed from *Radyans'ka Shkola* (The Soviet School) to *Osvita* (Education). By the mid-1990s, *Osvita* was joined by a second publishing house, *Geneza*, although both continued publishing work of the same historians.⁹⁵

Still, in the 1990s, because of the economic crisis, there was a shortage in the new Ukrainian language history textbooks. The first history textbooks to be revised were the texts for the fifth and eleventh grades. But, because of the difficult financial situation, neither government, nor the schools were able to afford to buy the new books. Moreover, sometimes, even the revised history textbooks would still make the use of the 'Soviet language' and concepts. But later, more and more authors would break with the Soviet version of the *History*

⁹⁴ Peter W. Rodgers, 'Compliance or Contradiction? Teaching 'History' in the 'New' Ukraine. A View from Ukraine's Eastern Borderlands.' *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 59, no. 3 (May 2007), p. 507.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

of *Ukraine* and alter historical interpretations to fit the political and ideological shifts of statehood.

Russian researchers Lyudmila Moiseyenkova and Pavel Martsinovsky came to the same conclusion, after they studied and analyzed about 20 textbooks on the history of Ukraine, issued in 1995-2002 in various Ukrainian cities in the Russian and Ukrainian languages.⁹⁶ They concluded:

„We see that Russia, and everything related to it, is depicted in Ukrainian school textbooks as the source of the historical tragedy of the Ukrainian people, as the center of evil and Asiatic insidiousness. Relations between Ukraine and Russia are described as continuous confrontation, sometimes even military confrontation. Throughout their history the Ukrainians are portrayed as fighters for independence. The Ukrainian people had overcome all hardships, survived and preserved their culture and individuality despite the difficult occupation by the Russian/Soviet Empire; they have not lost their aspirations for freedom, independence and statehood.“

The researchers went on to say:

⁹⁶ Lyudmila Moiseenkova and Pavel Martsinovskii, „Rossiia v Ukrainiskikh uchebnikakh istorii: novoe videnie ili proiavlenie konkurentssii na ideologicheskom rynke? Vzgljad iz Kryma,“ *Skepsis Online Journal*, http://scepsis.ru/library/id_2169.html, consulted on 4 May, 2011.

,The main objective of the authors of these textbooks is to eliminate the students' perception that Ukrainian history is a part of Russian history: this connection never existed in the past, and will not exist in the future.⁹⁷

In order to agree or disagree with their conclusion, we will conduct a study of Ukrainian school textbooks and will determine whether Ukrainian representation of the Soviet period is impartial or whether Ukraine's history is only presented through the continuous struggle with Russia and the Russians.

From Kievan Rus' to being a Part of the Russian Empire

The three eastern Slavic nations, Ukraine, Belorussia and Russia originated in Kievan Rus'. Kievan Rus' included nearly all of present-day Ukraine and Belarus and part of Northwestern European Russia, extending as far north as Novgorod and Vladimir. At the time of the christening of Kievan Rus' in the tenth century⁹⁸, differences among the tribes that later evolved into separate nations were not great.⁹⁹ But the Tatar invasion of the early thirteenth century began the historical, cultural and ideological split between these territorial entities. At first, the lands of present-day Ukraine and Belarus were controlled by the Lithuanians.

⁹⁷ Translated by Roy Medvedev.

⁹⁸ In year 988.

⁹⁹ Michael Rywkin, *Moscow's Lost Empire*, Armonk, London, M. E. Sharpe, 1994, p. 21.

In the fourteenth century Lithuania joined Poland and accepted Christianity¹⁰⁰. Later, in the sixteenth century, Ukraine came under Polish rule, while Belarus remained with Lithuania until the dissolution of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795. The Muscovite Russia, on the other hand, remained under Tatar domination for centuries while Ukraine and Belorussia enjoyed the relative freedom in the Polish-Lithuanian State.

This period and its importance to the origins of the Ukrainian and Russian nations are still highly contested across Russia and Ukraine.¹⁰¹ Soviet historiography defined this period as the beginning of Russian state, Kiev being the 'mother of Russian cities'. In Ukraine, however, numerous attempts have been made since 1991 to legitimize Kievan Rus' as essentially 'proto-Ukrainian state'.¹⁰²

In the fifteenth century, after gaining freedom from Mongol invasion, the Grand Duchy of Moscow sought to expand its territory. At the same time, the Ukrainian road to nationhood and independence began in the borderlands

¹⁰⁰ Christianization of Lithuania began in 1387.

¹⁰¹ Peter W. Rodgers, 'Compliance or Contradiction? Teaching 'History' in the 'New' Ukraine. A View from Ukraine's Eastern Borderlands.' *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 59, no. 3 (May 2007), pp. 509.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

between Poland, Russia, and Crimea – often in under populated areas: as the Tatars retreated, the liberated territories were resettled by Cossacks. Cossacks were the free men, who lived in the steppes, acknowledged no authority and practiced various trades while living off hunting, fishing, and armed forays.

The history of the Ukrainian Cossacks had three distinct aspects: at first, their struggle against the Tatars and the Turks in the steppe allowed them to take control over the territories, become stronger and more numerous, start tilling the land. Second, their support of the Ukrainian people in their fight against the power of the Polish magnates, contributed to the building of the autonomous Ukrainian state. It was during the seventeenth century wars, carried by the Cossacks against the Polish state that Ukrainian national consciousness first emerged. The Cossacks unified the population under *hetman*¹⁰³ Bohdan Khmelnytsky in fighting the Poles. However, Khmelnytsky's decision to seek Moscow's support and protection against Warsaw sealed the fate of Ukraine. Instead of remaining under control of weak Polish states in a decentralized and therefore somewhat tolerant state, the Cossacks soon found themselves subjects of the Russian autocracy.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Hetman (гетьман) – the title used by Ukraine's Cossacks from the sixteenth century. The highest military office, the head of state.

¹⁰⁴ Michael Rywkin, *Moscow's Lost Empire*, Armonk, London, M. E. Sharpe, 1994, p. 22.

At the beginning, Moscow tolerated Cossack liberties and their strong desire of independence, but soon it began to tighten its hold on Eastern Ukraine: serfdom was reaffirmed; hetman was no longer elected but appointed. Russian nobles were given land grants at Cossacks' expense. They were almost broken by Tsar Peter the Great, then resettled further to the east by Catherine the Great and reduced to being the 'instruments of Russia's colonial expansion'. New Cossack territorial army units were created in the North Caucasus, the Urals and Siberia. After the fall of Crimea and the removal of the Cossacks, Ukrainian lands became provinces of the Russian empire; Ukrainians were no longer considered as a separate nationality and were referred to as 'Little Russians'.¹⁰⁵

The elimination of the semi-autonomous Cossack state by Catherine the Great in 1775 is an important event in Ukrainian historiography. It is often used by the Ukrainian authors to describe the first steps of Russia's government toward total subjugation of the Ukrainian people to Russian rule which was achieved by the reinstatement of serfdom and a retreat of the Ukrainian language from public affairs. It is often stressed, that while the Russian language was becoming dominant in the region, Ukrainian lost its attraction and was

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

considered a dialect, thing of a past, appropriate only for peasant chatter, old songs and other manifestation of Ukraine's cultural past.¹⁰⁶

While this historical period is not analyzed in this work, however, it is important to mention that these events are vividly described in Ukrainian history textbooks. They stress that the conditions of Ukrainian peasants and Cossacks worsened under Catherine's rule and often meant the imposition of taxes, the re-introduction of labour duties, harsh regulations tying peasants to the land and unreasonable language policies. Also, for the first time, the history of Ukraine is presented in the textbooks as the history of opposition to the foreign power.

In 1876, the *Ems Ukaz*, an imperial decree, issued by Tsar Alexander II of Russia banned the use of Ukrainian language in print with the exception of re-printing the old historical documents. Despite this, during the nineteenth century, Ukraine experienced a national-cultural awakening. Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko's works contributed to the revival of the Ukrainian language and culture and became the embodiment of what was understood as the Ukrainian national revival. His writings became the foundation for the modern Ukrainian

¹⁰⁶ Jan Germent Janmaat, 'The Ethnic 'Other' in Ukrainian History Textbooks: the Case of Russia and the Russians,' *Compare*, vol. 37, no. 3 (June 2007), p. 313.

literature. Ukrainian historiography appeared, stressing the separate path from the Russian history and condemning 'Russian historical imperialism'.¹⁰⁷

Ukraine remained incorporated in Russia for centuries. But while the western third of the Ukrainian ethnic lands remained at first under Polish, then Austro-Hungarian, and then again Polish rule until 1939; eastern Ukrainians experienced the process of nation-building within the Russian Empire. During these years, many state and cultural leaders of Ukrainian independence carefully preserved Ukrainian collective histories in hope of one day bringing people together, to foster solidarity, give people sense of home and belonging.

¹⁰⁷ Michael Rywkin, *Moscow's Lost Empire*, Armonk, London, M. E. Sharpe, 1994, p. 23.

From Ukraine to the Ukrainian SSR

It has to be said that historians in Ukraine devote very little attention to the history of their lands when they were part of the Russian Empire. Instead, they focus on the events of 1917-1920 when a sovereign Ukrainian state – the Ukrainian People’s Republic – which was established and later attacked and destroyed by the Bolsheviks.

When talking about the Revolution of 1905-1907, they usually put emphasis on its uniquely *Russian* character. According to the Ukrainian historians, the Revolution originated in Russia’s capital, but had an impact on some of Ukraine’s regions:

,This Revolution was a consequence of Russia’s development. Tsarist regime’s apathy and inaction made this Revolution inevitable. It was so in the centre, but also in Russia’s provinces, as for example in Ukrainian Podneprovskaia region. ¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Fedir Grigorovich Turchenko and V. M. Moroko, *Istoriia Ukraini (kinets XVII - pochatok XX st.): pidruchnik dlia 9 kl. sered. zagal’nosvit. shk.*, Kiev, Geneza, 2003, p. 331.

The two authors then proceed to describe the national struggle for liberation from Russia's political oppression:

„In 1905, the national struggle for liberation in Ukraine was almost unnoticeable. In this difficult context, Ukrainian politicians could not decide whether they should join Russian political parties and hope that later on their national interests would not be forgotten, or whether they should follow their distinct path. Ukrainian Deputies were suggesting the transformation of the Russian Empire into Federal State, then Ukraine would become an autonomic State with its own government. Large numbers of people, especially Ukrainian peasants, made the achievements of the national liberation movement possible.“¹⁰⁹

The 1917 Revolution and the establishment of Bolshevik rule in the early 1920s are described as particularly traumatic events in Ukrainian history. The books discuss the Bolsheviks' engagement in a struggle with the Central *Rada*¹¹⁰ and argue that the latter was the only legitimate political body representing the Ukrainian nation. The Bolsheviks are shown as a foreign power that imposed its rule on Ukraine against its wishes:

„Four times the Central *Rada* attempted to gain national independence. But in the beginning of XXth century it was made

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 351-352.

¹¹⁰ A Ukrainian parliament created in March 1917.

impossible. In December 1917 – February 1918, *Rada* lost control over the biggest part of Ukraine. Well-coordinated actions conducted by the Red Army and the Bolsheviks defeated the Revolution.¹¹¹

Turchenko's textbook also points out that the Bolsheviks used force to establish power. The author accuses them of eliminating democracy, persecuting Ukrainian traditions and culture, pillaging and terrorizing the population. He argues that their actions only provoked more resistance:

,The establishment of Bolshevik power in Ukraine, by means of deceit, violence and direct interference from abroad, inevitably had to become and became the object of nationwide opposition.¹¹²

Other textbooks (Kul'chitskii and Shapoval) present a more cautious account of these events. They note that the Bolsheviks became very popular because of their slogans calling for an immediate end to the war and an unconditional handover of land to the peasants. Still, the undemocratic nature of Bolshevism is highlighted and it is suggested that the revolutionaries only adopted populist slogans to gain followers and to organize a successful coup d'état.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Fedir Grigorovich Turchenko, *Novitnia istoriia Ukraini. 10 klas: pidruchnik dlia 10 kl. sered. zagal'nosvit. shk.*, Kiev, Geneza, 2004, p. 104.

¹¹² Fedir Grigorovich Turchenko and Nadiia Kostiantinivna Kosmina, *Novitnia istoriia Ukraini. 11 klas: Didaktichni materialy (tematichni testi) do pidruchnikov F. G. Turchenka ta in. 1998-200 rr. vidannia*, Zaporozhzhia, Prosvita, 2001, p. 97.

¹¹³ Stanislav Vladislavovich Kul'chitskii and Iurii Ivanovich Shapoval, *Novitnia istoriia Ukraini (1914-1939): Pidruchnik dlia 10 kl. zagal'nosvit. navch. zakl.*, Kiev, Geneza, 2003, p. 69.

The textbooks say little about the establishment of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic within the Soviet Union. According to Turchenko's 2004 textbook, it was a result of continuous ‚aggression` from Soviet Russia:

‚The Bolsheviks captured Ukraine very fast< When the Bolsheviks returned to Ukraine for the third time, they did everything in order to assure their lasting control over the territory< As previously, the political line for Ukraine was developed in Moscow and represented the interests of the Bolsheviks. These interests demanded the unification of Ukraine, which had to follow Russia's pre-established rules and norms< The party line of the CP*b+U¹¹⁴ ignored Ukrainian language and Ukraine's national culture<¹¹⁵

Later, during the post-revolutionary years Ukraine witnessed unprecedented terror during the Civil war, and then lived through a short period of recovery under Lenin's New Economic Policy. An attempt at a policy of *korenizatsiia* or nativization followed and for a short time allowed Ukrainians claim even more leadership positions and promoted national languages and culture. But the Stalin era brought in Ukraine ruthless campaign of collectivisation, which meant deportation for many *kulaks* (more prosperous peasant families), purges and famine.

¹¹⁴ Communist Party (the Bolsheviks) of Ukraine.

¹¹⁵ Fedir Grigorovich Turchenko, *Novitnia istoriia Ukraini. 10 klas: pidruchnik dlia 10 kl. sered. zagal'nosvit. shk.*, Kiev, Geneza, 2004, pp. 154-155, 175.

Holodomor –Genocide of Ukrainian People?

Discussion of the Famine was first included in the Soviet editions of the textbook in the late 1980's.¹¹⁶ It was a part of a new policy of *glasnost'*, which we have talked about earlier, an effort to fill in the blank spots of history. The overall tone of the texts was forthright and unapologetic. Amid a discussion of the 'collectivization of rural agriculture' there was a detailed description of the various decrees of the time. It was explained when they were signed and why. The first attempts to estimate the number of victims were made as well.

An issue of responsibility for the outcomes inflicted by the Famine was a critical factor in approaching this historical period. For a while it seemed like it was resolved by putting the entire blame on Stalin's policies and by exonerating Party cadres because of their powerlessness to challenge Stalin's power. For example, one of the texts states:

'Party, Soviet and agricultural workers who stopped storing bread saw the tragedy of the situation with their own eyes. Most of them

¹¹⁶ Catherine Wanner, *Burden of Dreams: History and Identity in Post-Soviet Ukraine*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, Pennsylvania, 1998, p. 95.

were no more than a small screw in a state machine without a soul.¹¹⁷

Indeed, many of the Party officials were aware of the ongoing tragedy in the 1930. Some even witnessed and documented the widespread starvation and sufferings. They tried to protest against the policies, but were accused of sabotage and eventually lost their positions and were persecuted. However, it is obvious, that for a famine of this scale to occur, many local and high-level officials had to participate or at least not to intervene in the application of the policies.

Both, textbooks of the 1990's and of the 2000's state that it was forbidden for the peasants to leave their villages (their passports and work documents were taken away from them), regardless whether they surrender their grains, vegetables, and livestock. Brigades of workers and soldiers were assigned to the trains and train stations to search the luggage of the peasants traveling to or from the regions hit by the Famine. Usually, the peasants would buy food for very large sums of money, after having sold valuable possessions, in effort to delay hunger in their families. The provisions found by the brigades would be confiscated and the peasants would return home missing both, money and food. The most gruesome aspects of the Famine are described as well. The widespread practice of

¹¹⁷ M. V.Koval and *al.*, *Istoriia Ukraini*, Kyiv, Osvita, 1991, p. 204. Translated by Catherine Wanner.

abandoning children, the reported cases of cannibalism and the digging up of dead bodies for food are often mentioned without any specific commentaries and are accompanied by photographs.

The last Soviet text (Koval and *al.*) depicts Stalin as neither innocent nor ignorant of what was going on in Ukraine thanks to his policies. The text cites his speech to the *All-Union Congress of Collective Farm Workers and Stakhanovites* on February 19, 1933, during which he said:

,In any event the hardships which our workers endured ten to fifteen years ago, compared to those they have today, comrade collective workers, seem like children's toys.¹¹⁸

The text exonerates local officials of responsibility and Stalin is held responsible for the tragedy:

,There is no doubt that millions of peasants were brought to death by the cold-blooded decision of Stalin to seize all edible provisions from Ukrainian peasants and then to wrap the starving in a veil of silence, to forbid them any kind of help from either the international or Soviet communities. In order to prevent the arbitrary escape of a huge mass

¹¹⁸ M. V. Koval and *al.*, *Istoriia Ukraini*, Kyiv, Osvita, 1991, p. 204. Translated by Catherine Wanner.

of starving people beyond the boundaries of the republic, a barrage of troops were stationed on the borders.¹¹⁹

The first post-Soviet textbook, written by the same group of authors in 1992 extends the description of the Famine by one page. The book goes in greater detail on how famine conditions were created and conducted. The new text describes the Famine as ‚evidence of the barbarism of a totalitarian state during extreme conditions of economic catastrophe`.¹²⁰ The book does not blame one person anymore; it accuses both, the state and the existing system for the events of the 1930's.

The newer narrative attempts to link high grain requisitions to the rapid rise of mortality in the regions. Moreover, the texts detail the scale of confiscations: they were not only gathered from the collective farms or *kolkhozes*, but they were forcefully taken away from the peasants themselves. Authors explain:

‚Confiscation was ordered as punishment for ‘kulak’ sabotage of grain supplies.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ M. V. Koval and *al.*, *Istoriia Ukraini*, Kyiv, Osvita, 1991, p. 203. Translated by Catherine Wanner.

¹²⁰ M. V. Koval and *al.*, *Istoriia Ukraini*, Kyiv, Raiduha, 1992, p. 281. Translated by Catherine Wanner.

¹²¹ M. V. Koval and *al.*, *Istoriia Ukraini*, Kyiv, Raiduha, 1992, p. 281. Translated by Catherine Wanner.

In the 1992 textbook we can find a new paragraph on the Soviet practice of erasing history. In fact, this most recent addition to Ukraine's history textbooks reveals that in Soviet historiography numerous attempts had been made to conceal the events of the 1930s from the new generations of both, Russia and Ukraine:

„Of that which ended in Ukraine in 1933, not one word made it into official documents. The reason was that Stalin ordered the Famine to be regarded as a nonexistent phenomenon. Even in the stenographic records of the plenary session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine the word ‚famine‘ was never mentioned during this whole period.“¹²²

Once again, the authors not only blame Stalin for what happened in 1932-1934, but they also suggest that Stalin failed to acknowledge the consequences of his own policies and tried to conceal them.

In general, the first post-Soviet textbooks provide rather expanded version of the events than the one that can be found in the Soviet books. While the Soviet texts try to put the entire blame on Stalin and his policies, the post-Soviet books tend to blame the entire Soviet system for allowing a tyrant to conduct rather unnecessary and fatal reforms.

¹²² *Ibid.*

Today still much is written about the horrible famine in Ukraine in 1933, and it is often depicted only as a ‚Ukrainian famine` or, moreover, as genocide against the Ukrainian peasants. Understandably, the Ukrainian textbooks are critical of the role of the Soviet command in these events, arguing that the main reason for pursuing the policy of collectivization was ‚an easy extraction and control over resources` and that the famine was ‚artificial, being caused by food confiscation campaigns rather than natural events, and that it was a deliberate instrument of the authorities to crush the opposition of the Ukrainian peasantry to the collectivization drive:’¹²³

‚The Soviet regime was successful in conducting economic reforms by using force and command. The agrarian way of life in Ukraine was destroyed. Ukraine became an industrial country. New large manufacturing cities appeared. By the end of the 1930s, one-third of the Ukrainians lived in the cities. During the collectivization, millions of peasants were displaced.’¹²⁴

‚The co-existence of communism with the needs for the national development of Ukraine proved to be impossible. Anyone, who would resist or would prove to be an enemy of Stalin’s regime, was persecuted without pity. Many Ukrainians became victims of *Holodomor* in 1932-1933. Ukrainian peasantry and national

¹²³ Jan Germent Janmaat, ‚The Ethnic ‘Other’ in Ukrainian History Textbooks: the Case of Russia and the Russians,` *Compare*, vol. 37, no. 3 (June 2007), p. 315.

¹²⁴ Fedir Grigorovich Turchenko, *Novitnia istoriia Ukraini. 10 klas: pidruchnik dlia 10 kl. sered. zagal’nosvit. shk.*, Kiev, Geneza, 2004, p. 327.

intelligentsia were hit the most. They felt the consequences of ‚ukrainization‘, policy, which aimed to strip Ukrainians off their collective memory, to kill their aspirations for independence in their everyday life.¹²⁵

Turchenko’s text uses harsher tone in describing Stalin’s regime. He also argues that the whole Ukrainian nation suffered from these policies, not only the peasantry. He starts his chapter on the Famine with the following statement: ‚One of the cruellest crimes committed by Stalinism against the Ukrainian nation was the Famine of 1932-1933.¹²⁶ In the concluding paragraph he writes:

‚The tragedy of 1932-1933 decisively crushed the resistance to the Kolkhoz-feudal system and essentially eliminated the forces that stood up for the vexed national rights. Precisely this is what totalitarian regime aimed for, what its representatives in Ukraine cynically discussed.¹²⁷

On one hand, this extract reinforces the idea that the Soviet regime had clear and predetermined plan of suppressing the Ukrainians and of forcefully impose on them its will. But on the other hand, the state and party officials are

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 328-329.

¹²⁶ Fedir Grigorovich Turchenko, *Novitnia istoriia Ukraini. 10 klas: pidruchnik dlia 10 kl. sered. zagal’nosvit. shk.*, Kiev, Geneza, 2002, p. 279.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 282. Translated by Jan Germent Janmaat in ‚The Ethnic ‘Other’ in Ukrainian History Textbooks: the Case of Russia and the Russians,‘ *Compare*, vol. 37, no. 3 (June 2007), p. 315.

not labeled as ‚ethnic others‘ – Russian or Jews. However, the participation of the Ukrainians in the application of the collectivization policies is omitted from the textbooks, so the texts leave overall impression that ethnic Ukrainians were the victims and never participated in the collectivization campaigns.

So what impact do the new history textbook have on teaching of *Holodomor* period in Ukraine? In 2007, Peter W. Rodgers conducted dozens of interviews with Ukrainian history teachers in Eastern Ukraine. He asked them to share their opinions regarding key events and figures throughout Ukraine’s history and towards representation of ‘Russia’ in the textbooks. He found that Ukrainian teachers would often ‚subtly change the accent or focus away from the ‘nationalist’ stance toward Russia, as found in the school history textbooks, to a more tolerant stance which aims to promote rather than negate Ukraine’s historical interactions with Russia.’¹²⁸

Also, in these interviews, teachers shared, that the *Holodomor* period was the most difficult to teach in school. Teachers felt that the Ukrainian history textbooks used a ‚very ‘negative’ historical narrative‘ when describing the Famine events. Teachers also stated that this period of history was particularly

¹²⁸ Peter W. Rodgers, ‚Compliance or Contradiction? Teaching ‘History’ in the ‘New’ Ukraine. A View from Ukraine’s Eastern Borderlands.‘ *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 59, no. 3 (May 2007), p. 503.

difficult to teach because of the on-going debates on the subject. Often, they said, it was hard to talk about something that was still fresh in people's memories, something that children would question, after having learnt alternative perspectives of the events from outside sources, from the real witnesses of history, such as their parents or grandparents.

Many teachers expressed the view that when they received their education during the Soviet period, coverage of this event did not exist at all. But now, while they agree that the lengthy description of the Famine in the books is the step in the right direction, they also feel uncomfortable with the use of this event by Ukrainian authorities for political purposes. They also seemed to agree that the famine was a great example of the Stalinist regime atrocities, but stressed that there was no need to use the rather 'nationalist' approach.¹²⁹ For example, the school director from Luhans'k argued:

„Today, there are lots of problems concerning the Great Famine. There is an opinion that the famine was caused by the Russians. But the famine was ideological. It is written in the textbooks that *Moskali*¹³⁰ ruined the Ukrainian people. But here Russians were ruined

¹²⁹ Peter W. Rodgers, „Compliance or Contradiction? Teaching 'History' in the 'New' Ukraine. A View from Ukraine's Eastern Borderlands.' *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 59, no. 3 (May 2007), p. 511.

¹³⁰ *Moskal'* – is a historic reference word for Russian, or literally *Muscovite* (a person from Moscow or Muscovy). The name *Moskal'* for Muscovite, was coined in Lithuania and

themselves, together with Ukrainians; millions of people perished. The ideology formed this situation. Somebody earned some money from this. You know, bread was sold to Europe. Europe bought this bread. It is possible to ask a question, why did Europe, knowing we had a famine, buy this bread? And we say it was the Russians. I am also a *Moskal*, a Russian, a Don Cossack, therefore should I be kicked every year because the famine took place?¹³¹

This passage allows us to examine the rising issues of nationality and ethnicity in Ukrainian society. In this case, an ethnic Russian, who was born and lived his whole life in Ukraine, expresses his views. He feels that the Ukrainian state is shifting towards a more ethnic interpretation of history. He feels that he is being left out of the discussion on this historical period. He thinks that, on the basis of his ethnicity, he is being alienated from the education reform process taking place in Ukraine. Therefore, it can be argued that in spite of the state efforts to unite rather than divide the population by offering a new version of Soviet history, several language and ethnic minorities cannot find a place for themselves in this new system.

Poland when the Grand Duchy of Muscovy claimed leadership in Russian affairs, after the destruction of Kiev by the Mongols in 1240. The kings and dukes of the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth refused to acknowledge the Russians who were subject to Moscow as Russians, maintaining that the only Russians were those that they ruled. (Толковый словарь русского языка: В 4 т. Под ред. Д.Н. Ушакова, Москва, Гос. ин-т "Сов. энцикл.", ОГИЗ, Гос. изд-во иностр. и нац. слов, 1935-1940.) It is used in several Slavic languages: Belarusian, Polish and Ukrainian, today it is considered largely an archaism and an ethnic slur.

¹³¹ Cited in Peter W. Rodgers, 'Compliance or Contradiction? Teaching 'History' in the 'New' Ukraine. A View from Ukraine's Eastern Borderlands.' *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 59, no. 3 (May 2007), p. 512.

The Second World War or the Great Patriotic War?

Another emotionally charged period for the Ukraine's population perception of history is the Second World War. As we explained in chapter I, the Russian textbooks usually discuss in great detail the last five years of the war and refer to it as the 'Great Patriotic War'. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union numerous attempts have been made to move away from the Soviet conception of this period and to simply approach it as World War II. However, the Red Army's victory over fascism, the massive devastation of the lands and suffering of the Soviet people during this war became a grand myth of patriotism, sacrifice and heroism which supported the idea of greatness of Soviet and, later, of Ukrainian people.

Not all Ukrainian authors use the term 'Great Patriotic War'. Kul'chitskii and Shapoval call it the 'Soviet-German War'.¹³² Moreover, a book by Burakov, Kiparenko and Movchan states that the World War II was a direct result of Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, and both, Germany and the USSR, were to blame:

¹³² Stanislav Vladislavovich Kul'chitskii and Iurii Ivanovich Shapoval, *Novitnia istoriia Ukraini (1939-2001): Pidruchnik dlia 11 kl. zagal'nosvit. navch. zakl.* Kiev, Geneza, 2005, p. 23.

„In order to instigate the beginning of the war between western countries, the Soviet command refused to begin political negotiation with Great Britain and France in 1939 and went on to sign the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact with Germany, which would divide Eastern Europe into spheres of influence. By doing so, the Soviet Union changed the balance of power in Europe in favour of Germany and its allies. The first victim of Hitler’s and Stalin’s agreement was Poland.”¹³³

Then, at the end of the chapter, the students are asked to answer the following questions:

„How did the Soviet command succeed in signing the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact in the beginning of war? Why the actions of the Soviet command were detrimental to the national interests of the other countries and to Russia’s people in particular? What would you call a country, which signed a pact for collaboration with an aggressor?”¹³⁴

Turchenko, Panchenko and Timchenko argue that the Second World for Ukraine began on September 17, 1939 (the day Red Army entered Polish territory):

„The beginning of the Second World War was preceded by the conclusion of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact on the 23rd

¹³³ Yu. V. Burakov, G. M. Kiparenko and S. P. Movchan, *Vsevitnia istoriia. Novitni chasi: Pidruchnik dlia 11 kl. zagal'nosvit. navch. zakl.*, Kiev, Geneza, 2006, pp. 4-5.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

of August, 1939. The secret agreement between the Germany and the USSR made a graphic display of the imperial essence of both powers and the cynical dropping of the generally used international relations principles by its leadership. The Soviet-German pact allowed Adolf Hitler's to start the aggression in Europe. On the 1st of September, 1939 the Nazi troops invaded Poland. England and France, having the inter-allied agreements with Poland, declared the war on Germany. These actions gave a start to the Second World War.¹³⁵

September 17th in agreement with the German authorities, the Red Army crossed the Polish-Soviet border and entered Polish territory. This meant the beginning of war for the Soviet Union.¹³⁶

In September of 1939 the Ukraine entered the Second World War. Having sustained severe losses, the Ukrainian nation made an honourable contribution into the victory of the United Nations over the aggressor.¹³⁷

The pre-war period is given in a very abridged and peculiar way. There is no mention of the "Munich plot" or "Anschluss", or the intensive "pacifying policy" of the Anglo-French politicians who were successively yielding Hitler everything and anything he needed to create the engine of war.

¹³⁵ Fedir Grigorovich Turchenko, Petro Panteleimonovich Panchenko and Sergii Mikhailovich Timchenko, *Novitnia istoriia Ukraini (1939-2001): Pidruchnik dlia 11 kl. zagal'nosvit. navch. Zakk.*, Kiev, Geneza, 2006, pp. 4-5.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.

5.
¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.
68.

Also, many efforts were made in order to re-interpret the role of an independent Ukrainian state and of the Banderites in World War II. The Banderites were supporters of Stepan Bandera, the leader of the *Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists* (OUN). On June 30, 1941, surrounded by German armies, the OUN declared Ukraine an independent state. The Nazis repressed the OUN by arresting its leader, and drove the organization underground. In the fall of 1942, OUN re-emerged as the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UIA) and fought against both, the Germans and the Red Army. For some time the UIA succeeded to control Galiciia region, but later failed to resist the Soviet Red Army and finally lost its influence.

The UIA continued a guerrilla war for the Ukrainian independence until 1953, when Soviet authorities finally succeeded in getting rid of the organization. Soviet propaganda demonized Stepan Bandera and his followers and omitted his name completely from newspapers and textbooks. UIA's activities were condemned and laden with descriptions of evil and danger.¹³⁸ But while during Soviet years, these movements and their leader, Stepan Bandera, were depicted in the most negative terms, the new Ukrainian historical narrative tried to provide a more objective interpretation of events, highlighting OUN and UIA role in trying to gain Ukraine's independence:

¹³⁸ Catherine Wanner, *Burden of Dreams: History and Identity in Post-Soviet Ukraine*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, Pennsylvania, 1998, p. 164.

„The NKVD destroyed all political parties and unions, and even highly respected *Prosvita*. Actions of the repressive regime supported by the Red Army weapons convinced population of the Western Ukraine that the future of the Ukrainian people lays not in the Soviet Union but in an independent Ukrainian state.”¹³⁹

The glorification of the UIA is often resented by Eastern Ukrainians, who perceive themselves as the „enemy” against whom the partisans fought. Many call for a more objective appraisal of these events and urge the Ukrainian state to create a ‘united’ view concerning events during wartime across the whole Ukraine.

Overall, the Second World War is presented as a continuous struggle of two national resistance movements. The independent OUN movement would fight for the national independence and the Soviet partisans would fight for the Soviet idea:

“The independent OUN movement posed great threat to the occupation regime. Comparing the range of the OUN and the Soviet resistance in the Ukraine, German command had to admit in its secret order dated the 31st of December, 1941: ‘There is not a single rebellious organization in the Ukraine that would be capable to threat

¹³⁹ Fedir Grigorovich Turchenko, Petro Panteleimonovich Panchenko and Sergii Mikhailovich Timchenko, *Novitnia istoriia Ukraini (1939-2001): Pidruchnik dlia 11 kl. zagal'nosvit. navch. Zakk.*, Kiev, Geneza, 2006, p. 8.

the German regime, except the OUN-B group'. Despite the heavy losses, OUN members continued to fight until the last days of the occupation".¹⁴⁰

„Soviet authorities supported both resistance movements. In these conditions, OUN/UIA had to fight on two fronts without any help from outside.“¹⁴¹

This new revised version of the Ukrainian history of the Second World War was often perceived by the teachers, students and their parents as a „direct outcome of western Ukrainians gaining political power in Kiev and using it to foster their own historical views onto the rest of Ukraine.“¹⁴²

In 2011, the term „Great Patriotic War“ for the Soviet War against Nazi Germany returned in several textbooks. According to an article in Ukrainian Russian-language journal *Segodnya*, in the new history textbook which will be taught in class from September 2011, the term „Great Patriotic War“ for the Soviet War against Nazi Germany is used (instead of the use of World War II). The term ‘Orange Revolution’ has disappeared, and the section on the Organization of

¹⁴⁰ Fedir Grigorovich Turchenko, Petro Panteleimonovich Panchenko and Sergii Mikhailovich Timchenko, *Novitnia istoriia Ukraini (1939-2001): Pidruchnik dlia 11 kl. zagal'nosvit. navch. Zakk.*, Kiev, Geneza, 2006, pp. 69-70.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² Peter W. Rodgers, „Compliance or Contradiction? Teaching ‘History’ in the ‘New’ Ukraine. A View from Ukraine’s Eastern Borderlands.“ *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 59, no. 3 (May 2007), p. 514.

Ukrainian Nationalists and Ukrainian Resistance Army (UIA) has been reduced. The tender was originally won by three books – those of Olena Pometun, Oleksy Stukevych and Stanislav Kul'chytsky. The latter book by a historian known for his studies, among other things, on *Holodomor* (which he considers genocide) was removed, leaving history to be taught using two textbooks.¹⁴³

According to the newspaper *Segodnya*, the textbooks have changed a lot: the term ‚Great Patriotic War` is given pride of place as title to the relevant section (the section was previously called ‚Ukraine in the Second World War`). While the information about OUN-UPA is reduced, *Segodnya* does not see any pronounced anti-nationalist line – the struggle by the UPA and that by Soviet partisans is presented in roughly equal amounts. The participants in the nationalist movement are called fighters against Stalinist totalitarianism, but at the same time are mentioned among the list of collaborators.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Tatiana Negoda, ‚V uchebniki vernuli Velikuiu Otechestvennuiu, a OUN urezali,` *Segodnia*, 27.08.11. Consulted online at <http://www.segodnya.ua/print/news/14282486.html> on 29.08.2011.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

Ukrainian SSR after 1945

The Khrushchev's Thaw period which followed Stalin's death is usually well perceived by the Ukrainian historians. They recognize it as a promising change to the suffocating regime of the Stalinist era. It stands out for its sudden openness, rehabilitation of Stalin's victims, flowering of the national cultures and rising standards of living. However, the period is also remembered for the return of Russification, failed agricultural experiments and rushed diplomacy.¹⁴⁵

On one hand, in the textbooks, there is genuine appreciation for reforms. For instance, Turchenko *et al.* (1995, 2004) notes that the economic decentralization led to modernization of industry, development of different types of industries and that standards of living rose sharply in the second half of the 1950s. Similarly, the relative freedom of expression allowed a resurrection of Ukrainian culture, but for a short period. On the other hand, it is argued that these reforms were merely a compromise in order to attain other objectives:

,The party leadership realized that without a certain measure of democratization it would not be possible to modernize the country,

¹⁴⁵ Jan Germent Janmaat, 'The Ethnic 'Other' in Ukrainian History Textbooks: the Case of Russia and the Russians,' *Compare*, vol. 37, no. 3 (June 2007), p. 318.

accelerate its economic development and maintain its status as a military superpower.¹⁴⁶

Turchenko *et al.* constantly remind the reader that freedom of expression was very limited. Moreover, they claim that a renewed Russification campaign, launched by Khrushchev only further weakened the position of the Ukrainian language in education and many other domains. Moreover, the authors continue to define the Soviet State as the totalitarian power, despite Stalin's death in 1953:

,The totalitarian regime was not interested in developing national cultures, because it was much easier to control one ,mass`, or ,Soviet people` than to deal with each nation separately. Nevertheless, the Communist Party continued on its policy of ,internationalism`, which in reality meant russification of the Ukrainians and other nationalities of Ukraine. As a result, the cause for the national resurrection for the Ukraine's minorities was taken on not by the Communist Party or by the Ukraine politicians, but by the opposition.¹⁴⁷

In the same manner the books address the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. ,Who is to blame?` – ask the texts. The Soviet textbooks would usually detail the catastrophic ecological situation and then blame the Ukrainian scholars and specialists who failed to ensure the safety of atomic energy:

¹⁴⁶ Turchenko *et al.*, 1995, p.56 and 2004, p. 124.

¹⁴⁷ Turchenko *et al.*, 2006, pp. 223-224.

„Criminal was the position adopted by the former Minister of Health Protection of the Ukrainian SSR, A. Iu. Romanenko, and many other responsible figures who for a prolonged period remained silent regarding the real danger to people’s health due to the accident in Chernobyl. It is true that there were independent medical teams in Ukraine who immediately saw the threat of the Chernobyl catastrophe to the health of people and did everything to provide emergency medical help. These were the specialists of the military-medical service of the KGB of the Ukrainian SSR. The top medical leadership in Moscow and Kiev did not abide by the results of their scientific research and medical training. For years the leadership ignored the successful work of their colleagues and the laws of nature as well.”¹⁴⁸

The indictment of individuals in this passage represents a radical break from traditional practices of Soviet historiography, where important Party officials would be irreproachable and „enemies of the people” would be found and blamed for the incident. But the post-Soviet Ukrainian textbooks rarely gave detailed description of the events. Already, in 1992 textbook, there is only one reference to the Chernobyl disaster, in a section entitled „Ukraine on the Path to Freedom and Independence”:

¹⁴⁸ M. V. Koval and *al.*, *Istoriia Ukraini*, Kyiv, Osvita, 1991, p. 343. Translated by Catherine Wanner.

,The administrative-command system repressed any kind of progressive beginnings. Even when the economic crisis of the country was obvious, the plenary session of the Twenty-Seventh Congress of the Communist Party of Ukraine, the First Secretary of the Central Committee, V. V. Shcherbitskii continued to assert that the economy of Ukraine had made the great progress< But one had to respond and support Moscow even when nature sneered during a flowering April, and even during events surrounding the Chernobyl Atomic Nuclear Station near Kiev.¹⁴⁹

Chernobyl is still given startlingly little attention in the Ukrainian school textbooks. This could be explained by the energy politics of Ukraine, which have become, especially in the last ten years a sore point of contention, for Ukraine has to purchase energy from other countries. Ukraine has amassed a massive debt to Russia for energy supplies and has to rely on its own sources, which include four nuclear power plants (one of which is the largest in Europe).

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, both, the West and Russia lost interest in Ukraine for a while. Russia was preoccupied with its own problems of domestic socio-economic and political stabilization and consolidation and could not at the time conduct an active foreign policy towards Ukraine as well as

¹⁴⁹ M. V. Koval, *Istoriia Ukraini*, Kyiv, Raiduha, 1992, p. 465. Translated by Catherine Wanner.

towards other former Soviet Union countries. Moreover, there was no necessity of conducting a more active policy: the majority of Russians did not take Ukraine's separation seriously, assuming that it would sooner or later reintegrate in Russia. But according to some history textbooks in Ukraine, by the end of the 1980s,

,The Ukrainian population was convinced that the Soviet Union was not worth saving. This conviction was fundamental for the national liberation movement growing at that time. It was made possible thanks to the rise of national idea in Ukrainian society of the time, the birth of Ukrainian dissident movement and rise of awareness on the part of Ukrainian *nomenklatura* (which became exhausted to deal with Soviet Government).¹⁵⁰

,The attempt to save the USSR by the conservative powers was not supported by the Ukrainian population. After the *putsch* was suppressed, the Ukrainian republic became even more motivated to become independent, and a new, independent, self-sufficient country appeared – Ukraine!¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Turchenko et al., 2006, p. 272.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

Conclusion

During the last fifteen years, Ukraine has been through the great changes, including the Declaration of Independence of 1991 and the Orange Revolution of 2004. While independence was achieved enthusiastically, the Ukrainians now had to deal with economic and political instability on all levels of society. In order to unite the country and to bring stability, the Ukrainian state adopted a new and revised historical narrative, adopting school history textbooks to the new historical narrative.

This new narrative has been since widespread across Ukraine and did not meet much opposition. In fact, the lack of protest on the part of Russophone population can be seen as evidence that more 'nationalist' historical narrative is not rejected by Ukrainian population. However, the numerous conflicts have occurred in recent years in several ex-Soviet republics. These developments highlight the importance of ethnic tolerance in post-communist societies.

After becoming an independent State in 1991, Ukraine conducted profound economic, political, cultural and educational reforms. The aim was to create a society with distinctly developed national identity and culture. Still,

Ukrainians remain as separated as ever. Even today, Ukrainian identity is often a sense of who you are and where you are from – is commonly understood through a highly developed level of nationalistic consciousness.

The Ukrainian history textbooks have changed many times over the years. The most conspicuous feature of the texts, however, remained the same. The textbooks would unanimously condemn the foreign ruler – Russia in the years prior to the October Revolution and the Soviet Union later on. To the Russian and Soviet authorities were attributed malicious intentions, irrespective of their actions and their consequences for the Ukrainian nation. The Russian or Soviet rulers always seemed to care to improve Russia's well-being at the expense of the Ukrainian population.

The books clearly show that the only motivation these rulers had was to tighten Russia's grip on power and to subjugate Ukraine to Russian interests. The books also stress that neither Russia, nor Soviet Union were democratic regimes and therefore their actions, motivated by power considerations, were inconsiderate of people and often resorted to use of force. These exceptionally critical accounts of foreign rulers aim to foster patriotism amongst younger population of Ukrainians. These texts somehow suggest that freedom for the

Ukrainian people can only be guaranteed by an existence of an independent Ukrainian state.

An important aspect of history education in Ukraine is the treatment of 'ethnic others'. For Ukraine it was easy to find an acceptable 'ethnic other': Russia and the Russians became an obvious choice. And while the majority of the authors refrained from putting ethnic labels on historic individuals or organizations, many authors would struggle to portray non-Ukrainians (Russians or Jews) in positive light.

All these years the geo-historical division of Ukraine influenced the politics of education in Ukraine. Contemporary Ukraine is made up of several large regions, each having a history and sometimes even language of its own. Often, teachers in the different regions of Ukraine have to adapt certain historical interpretations to their own views on history. They tend to subtly change the accent or focus away from a 'nationalist' or 'negative' stance toward Russia to a more tolerant view and in doing so they reinforce a particular regional understanding of past events.¹⁵² Therefore, we can see that the task of creating a unifying rather than a divisive national history so far is proving to be extremely

¹⁵² Peter W. Rodgers, 'Compliance or Contradiction? Teaching 'History' in the 'New' Ukraine. A View from Ukraine's Eastern Borderlands.' *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 59, no. 3 (May 2007), p. 517.

difficult for the Ukrainian officials and historians. In today's Ukrainian society a deep desire to learn about their country's past is shared among many people. But as long as there is no unifying version of the events every individual has to learn about history of Ukraine on his own terms.

Chapter III

Post-Soviet Narrative in Estonia

*“It remains an empirical question when and to
what extent modern populations understand
themselves as a nation based on ethnic membership,
or as a nation of citizens.”*

Jürgen Habermas, philosopher

Separate Schooling – Different History?

The school is always a starting point of production of the officially authorized version of a country's history. However, the ways in which this 'official history' is taught in the classroom are not necessarily the same in all schools in a given country. The Estonian school system is characterized by a separate schooling of students from different ethnic, linguistic and religious

backgrounds. The result is a different curriculum for students from different communities.

Following the collapse of the USSR, Estonia inherited the Soviet system of separate schooling for students from major ethnic and linguistic groups in the country. But one of the first goals of the newly-independent Estonian government was to create a school system that would facilitate the integration of Estonian minorities. The Estonian government wanted to use education as a tool to transform Estonia's minorities into groups that would understand and identify with Estonian history, culture, and language.¹⁵³

First, in the early 1990s, in order to promote a civic Estonian identity, the Estonian government passed the legislation to protect and disseminate Estonian language. Estonian became the only official language in the country and the primary language used in government organizations, higher education, and public spheres. However, even today in Estonia Russian-speaking parents mostly send their children to so-called Russian schools.¹⁵⁴ Still, the educational system in

¹⁵³ Kara Brown, „The Education of Russian-Speakers in Estonia” in *Educational reform in post-Soviet Russia: legacies and prospects* by Ben Eklof, Eugene Larry Holmes and Vera Kaplan, New York, Frank Cass, 2005, p. 176.

¹⁵⁴ The schools where Russian is the main language of instruction.

Estonia today is not completely divided. According to Estonian data, before 2007 about 5 000 students whose mother-tongue was not Estonian were studying in schools where Estonian was the main language of instruction, and about fifty Russian pre-schools and basic schools joined the Estonian language immersion program.¹⁵⁵

In post-Soviet Estonia, Russian-speaking parents have two choices: one option is to enrol their children in Estonian school. This ensures fluency in Estonian, but can lead to assimilation – an outcome many Russian-speakers do not want. The second choice, taken by the majority of Russian-speaking parents, is enrolment in Russian schools. This option guarantees a child's ability to speak Russian properly and introduces the student to Russian cultural traditions. However, enrolment in most Russian schools essentially relegates the child to an inferior position in Estonian society; the majority of Russian schools do not adequately develop students' Estonian skills and without them a young person's future educational and employment opportunities are limited.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ T. Matlik cited in Golubeva, Marina, „Different History, Different Citizenship? Completing Narratives and Diverging Civil Enculturation in Majority and Minority Schools in Estonia and Latvia,“ *Journal of Baltic Studies*, vol. 41, no. 3 (September 2010), p. 317.

¹⁵⁶ Kara Brown, „The Education of Russian-Speakers in Estonia“ in *Educational reform in post-Soviet Russia: legacies and prospects* by Eklof, Ben, Larry Holmes, Eugene, and Vera Kaplan, New York, Frank Cass, 2005, p. 178.

Nonetheless, the tendency remains for Russian-speaking parents to send their children to 'Russian schools'. The culture of education in these schools remains essentially Russian. Moreover, these schools use the same history textbooks that are used in Russia. Each year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia sends textbooks to all Russian schools abroad (including Canada¹⁵⁷) in order to support education in Russian-speaking communities over the world. Russian schools are encouraged to use Estonian history textbooks in their classes; however, they often fail to do so.

Estonian Education System

In Estonia the provision of general education at all levels of education is carried out on the base of common national curriculum, irrespective of the language of instruction. Schools prepare their own curricula on the basis of this

¹⁵⁷ In fall 2009, I worked as a substitute history teacher in Russian-language school in Montreal. At the beginning of the year, the school would receive from Russia the new textbooks on many subjects ranging from biology and geography to history and literature. The books needed to be obtained from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia in Moscow or from the Ministry of Education of Russia in Moscow. The Ministries would not send the books directly to the schools in Montreal, but they would gather them and make them available for a pick-up in Moscow. The school then had to find someone who could bring the books to Montreal; otherwise shipping fees would make it impossible to acquire them.

national curriculum. Basic education can be acquired partially in primary schools (grades 1–6), in basic schools (grades 1 – 9) or in upper secondary schools (grades 10 – 11).¹⁵⁸

Compulsory basic school subjects include Estonian or Russian Language and Literature, two foreign languages (English, Russian, German or French), Mathematics, Natural Science, Geography, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, History, Human Studies, Social Studies, Music, Art, Physical Education, Manual Training. Studying Estonian as a second language is obligatory in schools using Russian or another foreign language as the language of instruction. Estonian can also be studied as a second language in Estonian language schools by pupils whose mother tongue is other than Estonian.

In order to successfully graduate from basic school, students are required to complete the curriculum and successfully pass three basic school graduation examinations, which include an examination in Estonian language and literature or Estonian as a second language.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ For more details see Figure 3.

¹⁵⁹ Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, <http://www.hm.ee/index.php?1510024>.

Recently, Estonian government took steps to make important changes in its education system. It was decided that, as of the 2011-2012 academic year, Estonian will be the only language of instruction in all upper secondary schools in Estonia. The schools can choose the ,Estonian curriculum or Estonian as a second language curriculum as the basis for teaching Estonian, and organize the state examination necessary for graduation according to the curriculum they have chosen (either a composition in Estonian or an examination in Estonian as a second language)., The upper secondary school curriculum will contain a minimum of 57 courses where Estonian for the first time since almost hundred years will be used as the main language of instruction.¹⁶⁰

Estonian Pre-Soviet and Soviet History

Estonia's drive for independent statehood is understandable: the country remained under foreign rule for centuries. First, the Estonians fell under Danish, German, and Swedish influence. Then the country was annexed by Peter the Great in the early eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century, the country was

¹⁶⁰ Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, <http://www.hm.ee/index.php?1510031>.

dominated by Baltic German nobility and remained outside the Russian cultural sphere.¹⁶¹

After the October Revolution, the Bolsheviks gave up Russia's Baltic possessions in March 1918, when they signed a separate peace with Germany at Brest-Litovsk. Following the signature, revolutionary Russia was then forced to recognize the independence of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia once the World War I ended. In the beginning, Estonia was successful in maintaining its independence. And, for a while, it was a part of the French-organized „*cordon sanitaire*“, metaphorical barrier intended to isolate Soviet ideology from spreading in the West. But the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact of 1939 ended Estonia's independent existence. Estonia was assigned to the Soviet sphere of influence. Soviet troops were placed and remained on Estonian territory until the break-up of the Soviet Union.

After 1939, Estonia went through the period of mass deportation of its citizens during Stalin's repressions; German conquest at the beginning of the German attack of the USSR; initial collaboration with the Germans; and finally, re-conquest by the Red Army. These events were accompanied by more

¹⁶¹ Michael Rywkin, *Moscow's Lost Empire*, Armonk, London, M. E. Sharpe, 1994, p. 30.

deportations, several partisan movements (against both, the Germans and the Soviets), forced collectivization, and the arrival of numerous Soviet settlers in the area. Originally, the settlers would be sent by Moscow, in hopes of consolidating Moscow's hold on the republics, but later they would remain in Estonia (even after 1991) attracted by the higher living standards and more Western way of live.

¹⁶² Indeed, throughout the years, Estonia managed to maintain a higher standard of living than anywhere else in the Soviet Union and somehow keep its national spirit.

Estonia gained its 'real' independence for the first time after the collapse of the August 1991 Moscow putsch. However, the withdrawal of Soviet troops proceeded very slowly and Estonians had to co-exist with the 'Soviet presence' on its territory. At the same time, the country had to overcome economic problems, declines in production, a difficult housing situation and out-dated infrastructures. Also, there was the psychological legacy of Soviet life: bureaucracy, low productivity, corruption, and high levels of graft and theft.¹⁶³

¹⁶² Michael Rywkin, *Moscow's Lost Empire*, Armonk, London, M. E. Sharpe, 1994, p. 31.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

Following the Collapse

According to the Western media, in 1980 in Tallinn almost 2 000 Estonian school students rallied against Soviet rule and demanded freedom for Estonia. They were opposed by the Russian students living in Estonia.¹⁶⁴ The antagonism continued until 1985, when Mikhail Gorbachev's new policy of openness, *glasnost*, was launched. The policy suggested to 'fill the blank spots in history' and to begin history discussions across the Soviet Union. The issues of historical truth deeply touched Estonian people. Once a seemingly united socialist country, Estonia was breaking up into separate nations. History started being used to reinforce the new national identity.

The new, revised history was presented bit by bit. Often, the exile historiography contributed to the change. It was very political and meant to destroy the Soviet identity in Estonia. 'Estonians wanted to be Estonians, with roots in Estonian history.'¹⁶⁵ The issue of the share of national history rose to prominence at the Riga conference on history in the Soviet Union. Unlike some

¹⁶⁴ Sirkka Ahonen, *Clio Sans Uniform: A Study of the Post-Marxist transformation of the History Curricula in East Germany and Estonia, 1986-1991*, Helsinki, Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1992, p.101.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

countries, which already had national history as part of their curriculum, Estonia had only bits of its history integrated into teaching of the USSR history.¹⁶⁶

Moscow insisted on considering Soviet history as the native history. But the Estonians wanted to make their own decisions on education. After many debates, it was decided to revise the school curriculum. The curriculum of 1986 was still very Soviet in its content and tone. But work continued and the 1988 old Moscow-outlined curriculum was reprinted with some changes: first, there was a reference to *glasnost*; the chapters on the Estonian nineteenth century were expanded; but overall the curriculum remained as Soviet as it used to be.¹⁶⁷

The 1987 teaching conference had renounced the old curriculum and textbooks. It was also decided that the ‚false` history education should not be reinforced by pupils taking exams on it; and history examinations were forbidden in 1988. The main goal was to establish a national history. The approach had to be Estonian and not to borrow and foreign curricular ideas.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.* In Estonia there was a maximum of 55 lessons of Estonian history out of a whole

612 history lessons in the eleven years of school.

¹⁶⁷ Sirkka Ahonen, *Clio Sans Uniform: A Study of the Post-Marxist transformation of the History Curricula in East Germany and Estonia, 1986-1991*, Helsinki, Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1992, p.105.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

The Revolutions Reconsidered

Let us begin our study of Estonian textbooks by comparing two Estonians syllabi, one from 1988 and the second from 1990:

1988	1990
<p>Our country' from the bourgeois revolutions of 1905 and 1917 to the Great October Revolution; the Revolution, the civil war and the foreign intervention in Estonia; the building of the socialist society in Russia up to 1937; the bourgeois dictatorship in Estonia 1920-1940. Capitalist countries in the inter-war period.</p>	<p>Estonian history from prehistory to the present, including the periods: Prehistory – the Middle Ages – The Swedish rule – the national movement in Estonia – the Estonian independence – Estonia under the Soviet Union.</p>
<p>Soviet Union from the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945 to the present. The Estonian people in the Patriotic War:</p>	<p>Contemporary history from 1937 to the present: World War II. The world, 1945-1975, developments in the big</p>

<p>the collaboration of the bourgeoisie with Germany. The liberation of the Estonian people. The accomplishment of the socialist society in the USSR.</p>	<p>countries. The world after 1975: the Western world, the socialist countries, the Third World.¹⁶⁹</p>
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The Soviet syllabi stressed the Marxist idea of the crucial importance of revolutions as the engines of history and agents of positive change. But the reformed 1990 syllabi did not treat the two revolutions (of 1905-1907 and 1917) as a consequence of the French Revolution. The Stalinist interpretation of the events implied the association of the Estonian independence of 1918-1940 with the participation in the socialist world revolution. This interpretation of the events was completely reviewed. According to 1991 textbook by Adamson and Valmaad,

„In 1905, Estonian people learnt their first serious political lesson in order to continue their struggle for freedom. Estonians

¹⁶⁹ Sirkka Ahonen, *Clio Sans Uniform: A Study of the Post-Marxist transformation of the History Curricula in East Germany and Estonia, 1986-1991*, Helsinki, Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1992, p.111.

gathered their forces< without 1905 the Estonians would not be able to fight for independence in 1917-1920.¹⁷⁰

Estonian historians further destroyed ‚the October legend` by regarding Russian Revolution as a coup rather than a true revolution.¹⁷¹ They argued that there the October Revolution was ‚bloodless` and that Estonia attempted, but missed its chance to gain independence from the Soviets:

‚Estonian nationalists attempted to conduct the necessary reforms. But since the political and national idea had not formed yet in order to gain complete independence, they decided to continue their struggle for autonomy within Russian State.¹⁷²

‚< Red Terror is a myth. The opposition had a chance to do anything. During the November election three-quarters of

¹⁷⁰ ~~Andres Adamson and Sulev Valmaad, *Eesti Ajalugu, gümnaasiumile*, Kirjastus, Koolibri, 1991.~~

¹⁷¹ Sirkka Ahonen, *Clio Sans Uniform: A Study of the Post-Marxist transformation of the History Curricula in East Germany and Estonia, 1986-1991*, Helsinki, Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1992, p.108.

¹⁷² Mati Laur, Ago Pajur and Tonu Tanneberg, *Eesti Ajalugu II*, Tallinn, Avita, 1997, p. 38.

Estonians supported the Socialists< It will take seventy years for the next 'free' elections in Russia to take place.¹⁷³

In the new syllabi Russia started being portrayed as a foreign country and the events of 1917 were presented as a sequence of sporadic changes. The Civil War description had changed as well. In fact, the term 'Civil War' was not used by many authors. The period is referred to as a 'struggle for liberation'. The authors mention 'Soviet intervention' several times:

'The Soviet authorities tried to mask Soviet intervention and present it as the Civil War by using Estonian Bolsheviks, which escaped the Germans by running to Russia, as their means.'¹⁷⁴

'Even today Russia ignores Treaty of Tartu¹⁷⁵. The Estonian's right for its own independence has more important basis for it than Tartu peace, it is people's right for self-determination that should decide destiny of Estonian people.'¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ Andres Adamson and Sulev Valmaad, *Eesti Ajalugu, gümnaasiumile*, Kirjastus, Koolibri, 1991, pp. 159-160.

¹⁷⁴ Mati Laur, Ago Pajur and Tonu Tanneberg, *Eesti Ajalugu II*, Tallinn, Avita, 1997, p. 46.

¹⁷⁵ Treaty of Tartu – the treaty with Bolshevik Russia, which recognized Estonia's independence.

¹⁷⁶ Andres Adamson and Sulev Valmaad, *Eesti Ajalugu, gümnaasiumile*, Kirjastus, Koolibri, 1991, p. 174.

Estonian Annexation or Occupation?

The Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and the USSR divided the Baltic States between the two powers. In the Estonian SSR syllabus of 1988, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was presented with the excuse of it being a consequence of the Western policies of *appeasement*. In the new syllabi of 1990 the excuses were left out and the secret protocol, which predetermined Estonian history for several decades, was included. Additional accounts on 1940 in Estonia were presented. What previously was called ‚revolution` was called ‚occupation`:

1986	1990
<p>The extension of the fraternal family of the Soviet peoples< The resumption of the power of the Soviets in Estonia 1940. The deepening of the revolutionary crisis. The ultimatum of the Soviet government in June 16th. The revolutionary demonstrations of</p>	<p>The end of Estonian independence. The beginning of World War II and its significance to Estonians. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and its secret protocol. The mutual assistance pact of September 28, 1939. The complete occupation of the country on June 17,</p>

workers. The suppression of the fascist government. The making of the people's government. The declaration of Soviet power in Estonia and the reception of Estonia into the unity of the Soviet Union.	1940. The annexation of Estonia to the Soviet Union.
Socialist construction in the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic, 1940-1941. The creation of a Soviet state on the basis of the constitution of the Estonian SSR. The nationalization of lands, industries and banks. The opposition of the bourgeoisie. Reshaping of cultural life and education.	The destruction of all structures of the Estonian state. The collapse of the economy. The destruction of the cultural institutions of the Estonian republic. The decline of culture. The Red Terror in Estonia. The 14 th of June 1941 [first mass deportation of Estonians]. ¹⁷⁷

The 1990 interpretation divided history of Estonia in three 'blocks' – Russian, German and Soviet occupation. The emphasis was put on the forceful annexation of Estonia:

¹⁷⁷ Cited in Sirkka Ahonen *Clio Sans Uniform: A Study of the Post-Marxist transformation of the History Curricula in East Germany and Estonia, 1986-1991*, Helsinki, Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1992, p.121.

„On June 17, 1940 80 000 soldiers of the Red Army entered the territory of Estonia. The Soviet occupation began and lasted for almost half a century. According to the international laws of the time, the actions of the Soviet authorities in Estonia were illegal.“¹⁷⁸

Estonia under Soviet Rule

The biggest credibility gap in history education in the USSR was caused by the blank spots, historical events or acts which have been deliberately omitted to suit the current version of ‘official’ history. In order to build a ‘second’, ‘real’ history of Estonia, the authors often referred to the common memories. They also tried to describe periods which were earlier not included in the textbooks more vividly and opposing Estonians and the ‘others’:

„Many factories, power stations and facilities, which Estonia did not really need, were built in Estonia. The goods, manufactured there, were shipped to the East. The waste and the workers, who

¹⁷⁸ Andres Adamson and Sulev Valmaad, *Eesti Ajalugu, gümnaasiumile*, Kirjastus, Koolibri, 1991, p. 207.

could not even speak Estonian, with their strange mentality, character and traditions, - remained in Estonia. Estonia became an annexed country with many military bases on its territory. The retired officers would remain in Estonia for good. One of the goals of the Kremlin was to mix people, to make the Estonians a minority in their own country and to russify them. The Soviet authorities wanted to destroy political, cultural, and intellectual elites of Estonia in order to create new, Russian-speaking cadres. It was partly accomplished: many „strangers“ who moved to Estonia forgot their own language, people and history, they are homeless travelers. People like this, who forgot their home and their fathers, are usually despised.¹⁷⁹

The post-Soviet discourse implied complete rejection of Stalinism. With *glasnost* the information of the Stalinist purges became open. In Western historiography the massive purges had been talked about since World War II. In the Soviet Union the rehabilitation of the Stalin's victims started at the XXth Communist Party Congress, but more revelations came later, after Brezhnev's death. It was finally acceptable to speak about Stalin's victims in the media and to start composing a new version of that period.

¹⁷⁹ Andres Adamson and Sulev Valmaad, *Eesti Ajalugu, gümnaasiumile*, Kirjastus, Koolibri, 1991, pp. 224-225.

In Estonia the first victims of the regime were Estonian communists who had moved to the Soviet Union in the 1930's and were liquidated as suspected spies and traitors by the end of the decade. Later, more Estonians died in the deportations of the 1940's. Deportations of Estonians by the Soviet regime play an important role in Estonian family histories, the number of people amounting to as many as 140 000.¹⁸⁰ The first wave of deportations took place in 1941, the second followed the restoration of the Soviet rule in 1944 and the last happened in 1949. The 1988 textbooks already recognized the purges concerning Estonian communists happening in the USSR in the 1930's. The later books of the 1990's ascribed the massive killings to Stalin:

,Twenty to twenty-five percent of the pre-war population of the Baltic countries became victims of the repressions.¹⁸¹

The Second World War is blamed on Stalin as well. Like their Ukrainian colleagues, Estonian historians do not use the term 'Great Patriotic War' to describe the period of 1941-1945. The term 'World War II' is usually used and the period is generally painted very negatively. Usually, the date of signing of the

¹⁸⁰ Sirkka Ahonen, *Clio Sans Uniform: A Study of the Post-Marxist transformation of the History Curricula in East Germany and Estonia, 1986-1991*, Helsinki, Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1992, p.124.

¹⁸¹ Lauri, Vahtre, *Eesti Ajalugu, gümnaasiumile*, Kirjastus, Ilo, 2004, p. 33.

Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact considered being the date of the beginning of the Second World War:

„World War II became an incredible hardship for Estonia, which can be only compared to the loss of independence. Neither the Estonian soldiers bravery nor the suffering of people could make up for the mistakes the Estonian authorities made in the beginning of the war.“¹⁸²

„We have to admit, that Estonia was one of the countries, which lost in the Second World War. The result of the war was Estonia’s loss of independence. All the decisions, concerning Estonia were from then on made in Moscow.“¹⁸³

Also it is important to mention that during the 1940s there were several resistance movements in Estonia. They were mainly presented by the small scale nationalist partisan movements. The partisans lived in the forests and used to fight against the communist and even Nazi regimes in Estonia. They would often provide aid to those who tried to flee from the country and hide abroad. The stories of the Estonian partisans were not omitted from the 1980’s textbooks.

¹⁸² Andres Adamson and Sulev Valmaad, *Eesti Ajalugu, gümnaasiumile*, Kirjastus, Koolibri, 1991, p. 221.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

However the only partisans the ESSR textbooks mentioned were those who resisted the German occupation of 1941-1944. But in the 1990's they were introduced in the context of the Stalin's terror:

In spite of defeat, the Forest Brothers' struggle was not in vain. Partisan warfare had the national and unifying effect on Estonia. The twelve year struggle would not be possible without population's support. This means that Estonians did not give up, they resisted, which proves once again, that Estonia did not wilfully join the Soviet Union.¹⁸⁴

The repressions continued. The most active fighters for independence were arrested and publicly persecuted.¹⁸⁵

The period of stagnation, together with the description of the Estonian partisan movement and massive deportation of Estonians, belonged to the themes that were only handled by Western historiography. The stagnation in the Socialist society was impossible; therefore it was not dealt with in the textbooks. The first mention of the problems in the development of the Soviet economy appears in the 1986 syllabi. In the 1990's textbooks the period 1956-1968 was portrayed as an

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 227-228.

¹⁸⁵ Mati Laur, Ago Pajur and Tonu Tanneberg, *Eesti Ajalugu II*, Tallinn, Avita, 1997, pp. 130-132.

improvement in quality of life in Estonia. Stagnation was recognized as a background to the necessity of change. It finally led to *perestroika*, *perestroika* led to an alternative Estonian development:

„Soviet authorities did not have any new ideas, success was rare, real enthusiasts were long gone. The system could try to survive by establishing repressive measures and by cultivating hatred towards the West. The question was, - when will the system die, and will its death become a cause for a great war?‘

„On August 20, 1991, the Estonian Command decided to declare independence and to re-establish Estonian statehood de jure and de facto.‘¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶ Laur, Mati, Pajur, Ago and Tonu Tanneberg, *Eesti Ajalugu II*, Tallinn, Avita, 1997, p. 145.

Conclusion

Several years ago Tallinn was in the headlines when riots sparked across the small Estonian capital over the fate of a statue in honour of the Soviet soldiers who fought against the Nazis in World War II. The so-called 'Monument of the Soldier-Liberator' - which pays tribute to those Soviet soldiers who perished at the hands of the Nazis in Estonia - has become the figurehead of the complicated, worsening relationship between Estonia and Russia. Tallinn's ethnic Estonian community has long regarded the monument to be an unwelcome reminder of fifty years of Soviet oppression. Estonia's ethnic Russian community, which comprises a significant third of the country's entire population, regarded the monument as a symbol of Russia's sacrifice during World War II and a tribute to the Russian soldiers who died fighting Nazi Germany.

According to the new history textbooks in the Baltics, for Estonia, the Second World War began two years earlier in August 1939, when Stalin and Hitler divided Europe in half with the secret Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. The textbooks in Estonia describe Russia's re-entry into the country in 1944 as an act of occupation - a regime change from one oppressive occupying force to another.

Indeed, during my trip to Estonia in summer 2010, the theme of the Soviet occupation was omnipresent in Tallinn. Right next to the National Library of Estonia one can find a modern glass building: the *Museum of Occupation and of Fight for Freedom*. The permanent exposition of the *Occupations Museum* opened in 2003, and now reflects developments in Estonia from 1940 to 1991, when Estonia was „alternately occupied by the Soviet Union, Germany, and by the Soviet Union once more.“

The objective of the museum’s expositions is to re-examine the issues at the heart of Estonia’s recent history: „Who are our heroes? Who are our friends? Who are the nation’s enemies? The aim is to help determine identity, to define and consolidate the national consciousness, and to teach others to assess the importance of statehood for a small nation.“¹⁸⁷

And later, when collecting material for this work in the *National Library of Estonia*, I asked a librarian to help me find recent history textbooks dealing with Soviet period. „Oh,, – she said, –„you need the books on the history of the occupations?, Interestingly enough, it took less than twenty years to completely

¹⁸⁷ Primary research areas and priorities of the Museum of Occupation and of Fight for Freedom as stated on the museum’s official website:
<http://www.okupatsioon.ee/en/activities>.

change people's view on their own history. What previously was called the „Great Patriotic War, is today referred to as „annexation, and „occupation,.

Recently, Estonian government took new steps to make important changes in its education system. It was decided that, as of the 2011-2012 academic year, Estonian will be the only language of instruction in all upper secondary schools in Estonia. The upper secondary school curriculum will contain a minimum of 57 courses where Estonian for the first time since almost hundred years will be used as the main language of instruction.¹⁸⁸

Estonia's Russian population - imported in large numbers during Soviet rule - faces many challenges today due to both their voluntary failure to integrate themselves in the rapidly changing society, and discriminatory national policies. Also, Estonia is often pressured to change its policy requiring fluency in the national language in order to receive Estonian citizenship, which has resulted in half of Estonia's enormous Russian population not having the full rights and benefits of proper citizenship. The diplomatic relations between Russia and Estonia are complicated and Russian population in Estonia has no one to turn to for help in order to protect their rights.

¹⁸⁸ Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, <http://www.hm.ee/index.php?1510031>.

General Conclusion

During the Soviet period, the history of the peoples of the USSR was rewritten several times to suit changing political demands. Both, the Red Army and tsarist Russian army were glamorized, whilst the unfitting past of all the nations, and Russia itself, was erased. The historical role of both individuals and states was minimized while the history of the masses was emphasized.

In the 1930s a substantial reinterpretation of history took place. Russian expansion was now presented as liberation from foreign domination or colonial conquest by other European powers. This „rehabilitation“ of Russian territorial growth was carried through the 1940s in the cause of mobilizing patriotic sentiment against the Nazi invasion.¹⁸⁹

But throughout the twentieth century national histories received little attention in the school curricula. Ukrainian and Estonian children were supposed to learn Soviet version of history as their own. The official histories of the USSR

¹⁸⁹ Michael Rywkin, *Moscow's Lost Empire*, Armonk, London, M. E. Sharpe, 1994, p. 134.

used in schools focused on the history of Russia, paying little attention to the republics.

World War II, which radically altered the situation in Europe, became the center of the history education first, in the USSR, and later in Russia. The Soviet victory in WWII became a unifying event in the Russian historical narrative. While in the nineties it was no longer perceived as a source of pride, the new history textbooks of the 2000s, on the contrary, emphasised the historical greatness of the Russian State. The terms employed to describe the events were also different in each of the ex-Communist countries we studied. In Russia, the war is memorialized not as World War II, but as the Great Patriotic War.

In both Ukraine and Estonia, several attempts have been made since the collapse of the Soviet Union to move away from the Soviet conception of this period and to simply approach it as 'World War II'. In Ukraine, the revision of this period proved to be quite difficult. The Red Army's victory over fascism, the massive devastation of the lands and suffering of the Soviet people during this war became a grand myth of patriotism, sacrifice and heroism which supported the idea of greatness of Soviet and, later, of Ukrainian people.

In Estonia, both the Nazi and Red Army soldiers are viewed as occupiers. The secret protocols of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact are in the center of the War discussion. Furthermore, the dates of the Soviet deportations of the Balts in 1941 and 1949 are memorized. In Estonia, the national day of mourning (June 14) is officially dedicated to those who were persecuted, deported and murdered in the Gulag. The main themes in Estonian history education are linked to occupation, deportation, and the demographic changes caused by the Soviet policies.

During the 1980s, and especially following *perestroika*, the restoration of the national past became an essential part of national revival in the republics. At first, the revival of national self-assertion in the republics started around the issue of national languages. In Ukraine a number of measures was taken to limit the use of Russian and to make Ukrainian the main language of public spheres. After 1991, even Russian-speaking Ukrainians were encouraged to study in the national language.

In Estonia in the early nineties, the legislation was passed by the government to protect and disseminate Estonian language. Estonian became the only official language in the country and the primary language used in government organizations, higher education, and public spheres.

The textbooks in each of the three countries also changed a lot since the last generation of the Soviet literature on the subject. In each of the three countries, and especially in Russia, history became an important instrument in building a new national identity in the post-Soviet world and creating an image of a once again strong and powerful state. Consequently, in the twenty-first century Russia, theories of Russia's historical uniqueness were reintroduced in history textbooks as an antidote to the post-Soviet senses of guilt and humiliation of the nineties.

The Ukrainian history textbooks have changed many times over the years. However, they remained exceptionally critical of the foreign rulers. They aimed to foster patriotism amongst younger population of Ukrainians by suggesting that freedom for the Ukrainian people can only be guaranteed by an existence of an independent Ukrainian state. The treatment of ethnic others became an important aspect of history education in Ukraine. The new history textbooks concentrate on harmful effects of contact with 'ethnic others' and the positive results of such encounters are often downplayed or omitted.

In Estonia, the 1990 interpretation divided history of the country in three 'blocks' – Russian, German and Soviet occupation. Ethnic Estonian and Russian-speaking students in Estonian schools still follow this historical chronology. But

at the same time in Estonia, unlike in Ukraine or Russia, the new history conception was not necessarily tied to the nation-building. It was mostly influenced by the 'exile' historiography; it was an attempt to find truly Estonian roots. However, as we have mentioned earlier, ethnic intolerance, being a component of a national identity, can become a major obstacle to the development of truly democratic society in any country of the former Soviet Union. The numerous conflicts have occurred in recent years in several ex-Soviet republics and these developments indicate the importance of ethnic tolerance in post-communist societies. The nationalization of either Russian, Ukrainian or Estonian education may prove to be detrimental to these societies.

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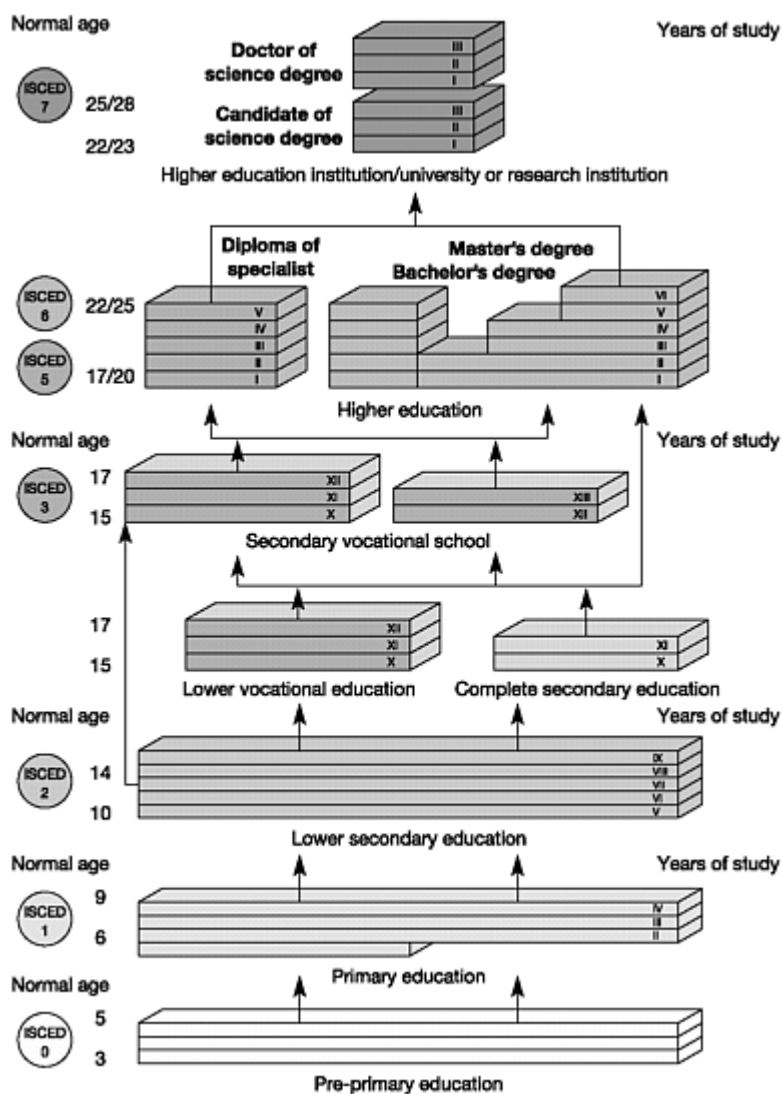
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Tables and Figures

Figure 1. Russian education system



Source: OECD, *Reviews of National Policies in Education: the Russian Federation*, p. 170. Copyright OECD, 1998.

Figure 2. Ukrainian educational system:

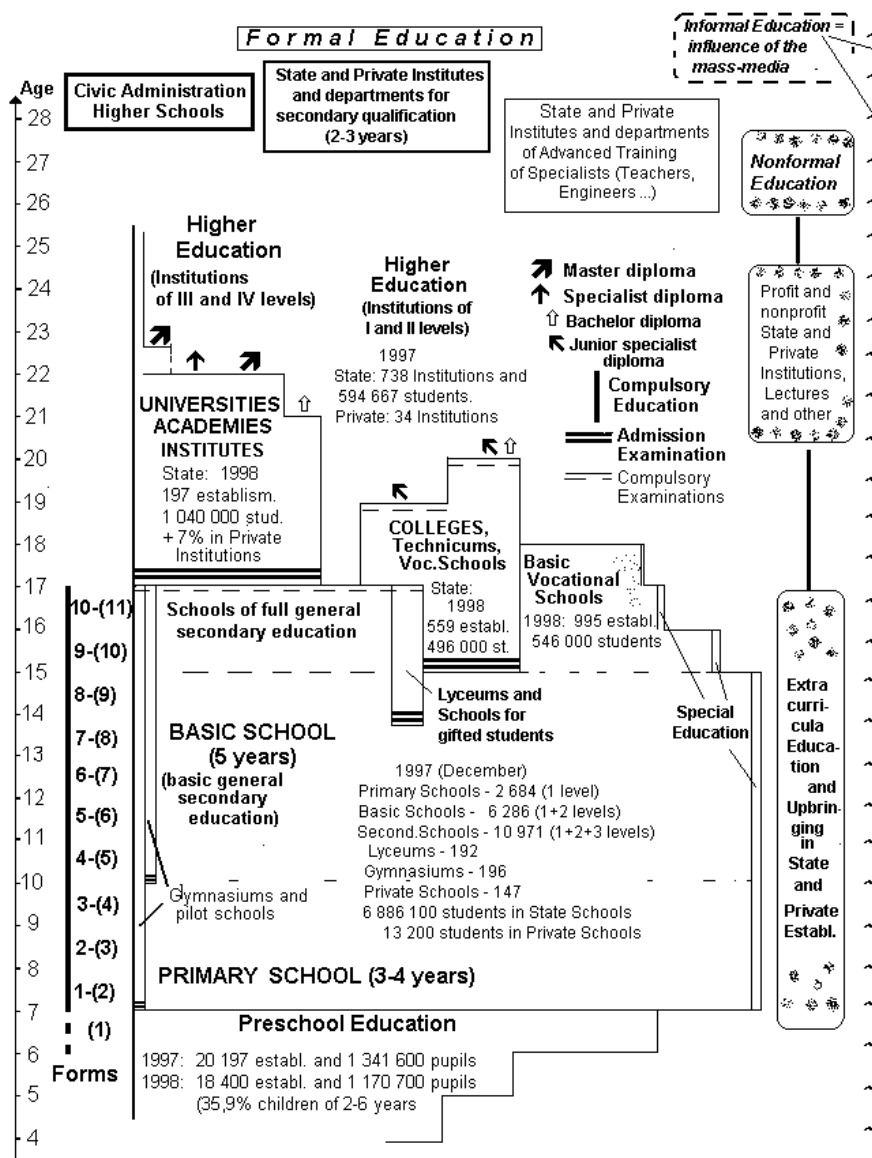


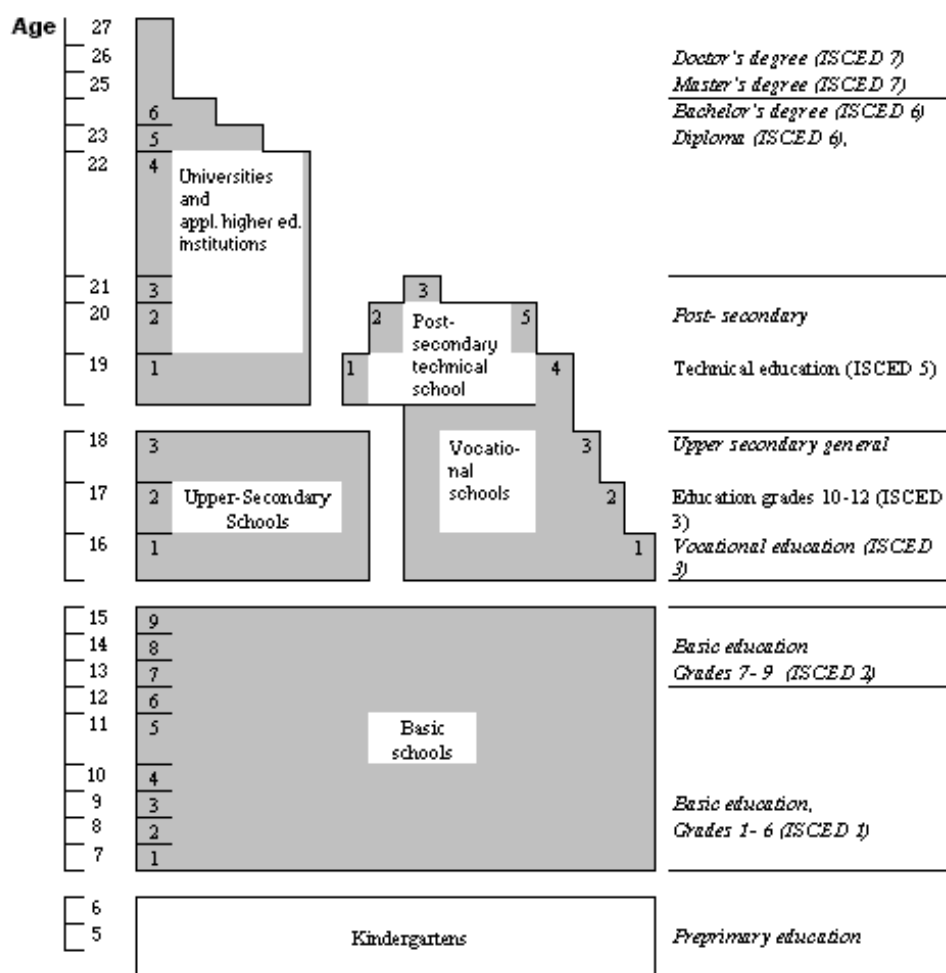
Chart 2. UKRAINE: structure and characters for system of formal, nonformal and informal education (1997-1998 school year)
(Only 11 years of studies for full secondary education since 1999)

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Source: UNESCO,

<http://www.unesco.org/education/wef/countryreports/ukraine/Image219.gif>

Figure 3. Estonian Educational System:



Source: Leonardo da Vinci Pilot Project, *Competenze Interculturali per formatori e consulenti che lavorano nel campo dell'orientamento professionale*,

<http://www.arzinai.lt/intcomp/images/stories/database/english/estoniaed.png>

Table 1.1 Russian population distribution in Russian Federation, Ukraine and Estonia, by 1989 (in thousands of persons). Source: 1989 population census.¹⁹⁰

Republic	Total Population	Russian population	Russian percentage of total population
Russian Federation	147 000	119 865	81.5
Ukraine	51 425	11 356	22.1
Estonia	1 565	475	30.3

Table 1.2 Number of students of special secondary schools and institutions of higher education receiving education in the languages of the Soviet nationalities, by September 1990 (in thousands of persons).¹⁹¹

Republic	Special secondary schools - number	Special secondary schools-percent of all students
Russian Federation: In Russian	2 261	99.6
Ukraine: In Ukrainian	160	21.2
Ukraine: In Russian	501	66.2
Estonia: In Estonian	12	65.4
Estonia: In Russian	7	34.6

Table 1.3 Percentage distribution of students receiving education in the state languages of their republics by September 1990.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Cited in Khazanov, Anatoly M., *After the USSR: Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Politics in the Commonwealth of Independent States*, Madison, Wisconsin, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1995, p. 247.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 249. Source: *Vestnik statistiki*, vol. 12 (1991), pp. 53-54.

Republic	Secondary schools	Percentage of the titular nationality in the entire population of the republic (per 1989 census)
Russian Federation – in Russian	98.1	81.9
Ukraine – in Ukrainian	47.9	72.7
Estonia – in Estonian	63	61.5

Table 2.1 Languages in Ukraine in 2001 (in thousands of persons).

Group	Population	Native	Ukrainian	Russian
Ukrainians	37 542	31 971	31 971	5 545
Russians	8 334	7 994	328	7 994

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 251. Source: *Vestnik statistiki*, vol. 12 (1991), p. 247.

Table 2.2 Language and identity in Ukraine (in per cents).¹⁹³

Language/ identity	Ukrainians	Russians	Other	Total
Ukrainian	71.3	2.8	7.8	54.4
Russian	14.9	87.6	36.6	30.4
Ukrainian and Russian	13.6	9.5	6.3	12.4
Other	0.2	0.1	49.3	2.8
Total	100	100	100	100

Table 2.3 Historical comparison of the population in Ukraine (in per cents).¹⁹⁴

	1991-1994	1995-1999	2000-2003
Ukrainians (Ukrainophones)	41.2	46.3	45.4
Ukrainians (Russophones)	32.6	28.2	30.9
Russians (Russophones)	19.7	17	16.5
Other groups	6.5	8.5	7.2
Total	100	100	100

¹⁹³ State Statistics Committee of Ukraine, 2001, Khmelko, 2004, cited in Polese, Abel, „The Formal and the Informal: Exploring ‘Ukrainian’ Education in Ukraine, Scenes from Odessa, *Comparative Education*, vol. 46, no. 1 (February 2010), p. 49.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

Table 3.1 Number of students by language of instruction: 1990-2002 in Estonia.¹⁹⁵

Academic year	Estonian	Russian
1990/1991	138,288	80,519
1991/1992	137,274	79,691
1992/1993	137,133	73,058
1993/1994	138,996	70,020
1994/1995	142,151	70,224
1995/1996	145,276	69,286
1996/1997	148,316	67,345
1997/1998	151,478	66,023
1998/1999	153,848	63,729
1999/2000	154,747	61,094
2000/2001	154,499	57,685
2001/2002	153,304	54,308

¹⁹⁵ Haridus Ministeerium, 'Üldharidus', www.hm.ee.

In order to facilitate future research in this area, I have decided to include several chapters from the history textbooks analyzed in this work. This material cannot be found in Montreal's libraries and represents a valuable addition to the research work.