



Routledge Contemporary Russia and Eastern Europe Series

EDUCATION AND THE POLITICS OF MEMORY IN RUSSIA AND EASTERN EUROPE

INFESTED WITH HISTORY

Edited by *Sergey Rumyantsev*



Education and the Politics of Memory in Russia and Eastern Europe

This book examines both formal and extracurricular education, and the politics of memory and historical narratives in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, and Ukraine.

The misalignment between memory politics and history politics forms a central theme of this book. Structured in three parts, it focuses on school education in the post-Soviet states over the 30 years between the collapse of the Soviet Union and the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine. The chapters inquire as to how post-Soviet school education, politics of memory, and history politics became active participants in the production of state-approved ideology, patriotism, and a state-prescribed understanding of the national past. Armed conflicts in the territory of the former USSR saw not only numerous victims and refugees but also the emergence of new borders and unrecognized (de-facto) states, and the annexation of territories. They also contributed to the creation of new sites of memory, generated their own traditions of commemoration for the heroes and victims of these confrontations, and led to the reconstruction of historical narratives and the construction of new national myths. The research in this book foregrounds how the nationalization of the public space and the reconstruction of national historical narratives in the independent states reflect a desire to monopolize the power to interpret the past, with low tolerance of alternative accounts. In this light, the book covers issues such as the nation-state, Sovietization, national history creation, memory politics, religion, mass media, nationalism, and patriotism, and analyzes the relationships of Azerbaijani and Armenian, Russian and Ukrainian societies with their histories and pasts.

A timely study on memory and history writing, this is a valuable contribution to the field of Post-Soviet history and Russian and Eastern European Studies.

Sergey Rumyantsev is a sociologist. From 2003 to 2014, he was a Research Fellow at the Institute of Philosophy, Sociology and Law of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (Baku). Since 2015, he has been a co-founder of Centre for Independent Social Research (CISR Berlin) and leads projects on peaceful conflict transformation. His main areas of research include diaspora and migration, nationalism, politics of memory, history politics, Soviet studies, and conflicts in the post-Soviet space. He is the author of *Migration and Diaspora-Building in Post-Soviet Azerbaijan: Main Tendencies and Dominant Discourses* (2014) and the editor of *Non-Objective Conflicts: Political Practices of Sharing the Common Past. Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and Transnistria* (2017).

Routledge Contemporary Russia and Eastern Europe Series

- 108 Regional Leadership in Post-Soviet Eurasia**
The Strategies of Russia, China, and the European Union
Edited by Irina Busygina and Svetlana Krivokhizh
- 109 Dagestan - History, Culture, Identity**
Robert Chenciner and Magomedkhan Magomedkhanov
- 110 Media and Masculinities in Contemporary Russia**
Constructing Non-heteronormativity
Olga Andreevskikh
- 111 Russia and Latvia**
A Case of Sharp Power
Andis Kudors
- 112 Reassessing Russia's Security Policy**
Nurlan Aliyev
- 113 Exploring Russia's Exceptionalism in International Politics**
Edited by Raymond Taras
- 114 The Political Economy of Extreme Poverty in Eastern Europe**
A Comparative Historical Perspective of Romanian Roma
Enikő Vincze, Cornel Ban, Sorin Gog and Jon Horgen Friberg
- 115 Education and the Politics of Memory in Russia and Eastern Europe**
Infested with History
Edited by Sergey Rummyantsev

Education and the Politics of Memory in Russia and Eastern Europe

Infested with History

Edited by Sergey Rumyantsev



Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2025
by Routledge
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2025 selection and editorial matter, Sergey Rumyantsev; individual chapters, the contributors

The right of Sergey Rumyantsev to be identified as the author[*s*] of the editorial material, and of the authors for their individual chapters, has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

The Open Access version of this book, available at www.taylorfrancis.com, has been made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives (CC-BY-NC-ND) 4.0 license.

Any third party material in this book is not included in the OA Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. Please direct any permissions enquiries to the original rightsholder.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-032-82711-7 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-032-82713-1 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-1-003-50582-2 (ebk)

DOI: [10.4324/9781003505822](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003505822)

Typeset in Times New Roman
by KnowledgeWorks Global Ltd.

Contents

<i>List of Tables</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>List of Contributors</i>	<i>viii</i>
<i>Foreword, Eckhardt Fuchs</i>	<i>xi</i>
1 Infested with History: An Introduction	1
SERGEY RUMYANTSEV	
PART I	
Concepts of Patriotic Education	15
2 The Routes of the Post-Soviet Historical Imagination: Between “Civilization” and the “Nation-State”	17
VICTOR SHNIRELMAN	
3 So Ashamed Not to Know “Our” History: Conflicts, Memory Politics, Humanities, and the School in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, and Ukraine	48
SERGEY RUMYANTSEV	
4 Historification in Literature Education in Armenia	89
MARIA KARAPETYAN	
PART II	
Myths and Mythologization in Textbooks and Curricula	109
5 “The World of Islam” and the Secular Political Regime: How Religion Is Taught in Azerbaijani Schools	111
SEVIL HUSEYNOVA	

6	“Azerbaijani Genocide”: Memory Politics and National History in Schools	137
	JAFAR AKHUNDOV	
7	Planted Flags? The Political Life of Trees and Arboreal Patriotism in Armenia	157
	TSYPYLMA DARIEVA	
8	National, European, or Multicultural?: Ukrainian History Textbooks Reimagine the Country’s Past	172
	SERHY YEKELCHYK	
9	Guarding Against the Future: Socio-Political Contexts of the “List of One Hundred Books” for Russian School Students in the 2010s	186
	ILYA KUKULIN	
PART III		
	History Policy and Politics of Memory	207
10	History as a Political Language	209
	IVAN KURILLA	
11	Memorial Practices in Donetsk: From the Establishment of Soviet Power to a Full-Scale Russian Invasion of Ukraine from 2022	225
	OKSANA MIKHEIEVA	
12	The Memory of the Great Patriotic War in the “Donetsk People’s Republic”: Commemoration, School, and Mass Media	246
	DMYTRO TYTARENKO	
13	Fluid Narratives, Evolving Discourses: Armenian-Turkish Dialogue in a Changing Political Context	272
	PHILIP GAMAGHELYAN	
14	Patriotic Education Outside and After School: Concluding Thoughts	289
	SERGEY RUMYANTSEV	
	<i>Index</i>	298

Tables

13.1	Historical Timelines Created by Participants of the Turkish-Armenian Dialogue Group of Boston. November 2005	276
13.2	Historical Timelines Created by Participants of the Capturing the Mountain Project. June 2012	280
13.3	Historical Timelines Created by Participants of the Turkish-Armenian Dialogue and School of Conflict Transformation. January 2015	284

Contributors

Jafar Akhundov studied history at Nasir al-Din al-Tusi College of Education. He taught secondary-school history and then completed his Master's degree at the Department of New and Modern History of America and Europe at Baku State University, Azerbaijan. His research interests revolve around nationalism, state propaganda, military-patriotic education, and the militarization of education, primarily in schools.

Tsypylma Darieva is a social anthropologist at the Center for East European and International Studies (ZOiS) in Berlin, Germany. As a senior researcher, she heads the research focus area on Migration and Diversity. Her research interests include the anthropology of migration, transnational diaspora communities, urban cultures, and religious diversity in post-Soviet Eurasian societies. She is a co-founder of the ZOiS Caucasus Network and a member of the scientific advisory board of the Jena-Cauc project *Resilience in the South Caucasus* (FSU Jena).

Philip Gamaghelyan is an Associate Professor and Director of the MS Conflict Management and Resolution Program at the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies, University of San Diego, USA. He teaches courses in conflict analysis, mediation, media, nationalism and conflict, intervention design, and program design, monitoring, and evaluation. He is a conflict resolution scholar-practitioner and the author of *Conflict Resolution Beyond the International Relations Paradigm: Evolving Designs as a Transformative Practice in Nagorno-Karabakh and Syria* (2017).

Sevil Huseynova is a Project Manager at the Center of Independent Social Research (CISR) in Berlin, Germany. Having studied law at Baku State University, Azerbaijan, she completed her PhD in European Ethnology at the Humboldt University of Berlin, and worked at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Academy of Sciences, Azerbaijan. Her research focuses on urban anthropology, memory, and migration studies.

Maria Karapetyan has been a Member of the National Assembly of Armenia since 2019. Previously, she worked at the Imagine Center for Conflict Transformation as well as for the *Caucasus Edition: Journal of Conflict Transformation*

for several years. She was also an educator at Quality Schools International, and a Fellow and Board Member of the Association “Rondine Cittadella della Pace.” She has a Master’s degree in Peace Studies from the University of Roma Tre and a Master’s degree in European Studies from Yerevan State University.

Ilya Kukulin is a lecturer in Slavic languages and literatures at Stanford University, USA. He is also a literary critic, cultural historian, and historian of education, and the author of *Machines of the Noisy Time: How the Soviet Montage Became an Aesthetic Method of the Unofficial Culture* (2015) and *The Breakthrough to an Impossible Connection* (2019), and co-author of *A Guerilla Logos: The Project of Dmitry Aleksandrovich Prigov* (2022, with Mark Lipovetsky). He has been a co-editor of five collections including *Utopian Islands: Social and Pedagogical Projects in the Postwar School* (2015).

Ivan Kurilla taught at Wellesley College, Massachusetts, and Bowdoin College, Maine, USA, in 2024 and 2025. Previously, he was Professor of History and International Relations at European University, St. Petersburg, Russia, and taught at St. Petersburg State University and Volgograd State University. His research focuses on the history of US–Russian relations and the use of history in contemporary societies.

Oksana Mikheieva is Professor of Sociology at the Ukrainian Catholic University (Lviv), and has been a guest research at the Centre for East European and International Studies (ZOiS) in Berlin since September 2023. Previously, she was a DAAD Professor at the European University Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder), Germany, Visiting Professor for Ukraine-European Dialogue at the Institute for Human Science (IWM, Vienna), and a Eugene and Daymel Shklar Research Fellow at the Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University, USA.

Sergey Rumyantsev is a sociologist and a researcher and board member of the Center for Independent Social Research (CISR) e. V. Berlin. He was Visiting Professor of the Georg Arnhold Program on Education for Sustainable Peace at the Leibniz Institute for Educational Media | Georg Eckert Institute, in 2015/2016, and has also held positions at the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, and the Imagine Center for Conflict Transformation. His main areas of research include nationalism, politics of memory, diaspora and migration, and Soviet studies, with a focus on conflicts in the post-Soviet space.

Victor A. Shnirelman is a Senior Researcher at the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow, Russia. He is the author of more than 500 publications, including more than 30 books. His research focuses on the politics of the past, social memory, textbooks in history in the post-Soviet states, Neo-paganism, racism in the Soviet and post-Soviet world, anti-Semitism, eschatology, and conspiracy.

Dmytro Tytarenko is Professor of History at Kryvyj Rih State Pedagogical University and currently a research fellow at the University of Heidelberg, Germany.

Previously he was Professor of History and Political Science at the Donetsk State University of Internal Affairs, which relocated to Kryvyi Rih/Mariupol in 2014 because of the war in Donbass. His research focuses on the history of Ukraine during World War II and politics of memory.

Serhy Yekelchik is Professor of History and of Germanic and Slavic Studies at the University of Victoria, Canada. Having studied at the University of Kyiv and the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, he gained his PhD in history from the University of Alberta. His book *Ukraine: Birth of a Modern Nation* (2007) was the first Western history of Ukraine to cover the Orange Revolution and was translated into five languages.

Foreword

This volume investigates how post-Soviet school education, politics of memory, and history politics intertwine in the production of state-approved ideology, patriotism, and a state-prescribed understanding of the national past in Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Armenia. Although the essays in this volume are based on a conference that took place in collaboration with the Heinrich Böll Foundation in Berlin some time ago in 2016, they are of particular importance in view of the current situation. After the end of the war between Russia and Georgia in 2008, a new wave of territorial conflicts has since broken out in the post-Soviet space before Russia's invasion in early 2022 heaved the region into the epicenter of international attention. Hopes that the list of conflicts unleashed during the fall of the Soviet Union would end with the events in the Caucasus and Moldova have thus proved misplaced. There are many answers to the question as to why new conflicts and wars have broken out decades after the collapse of the USSR and as to why they often have broad public support in the aggressor countries. One of them is linked to the rise in nationalist ideologies that can be observed in public and education discourses. In particular, it is the school as a state institution that serves the production of national identities, disseminating militaristic practices, patriotic discourses, and rituals of remembrance. The two subjects of "History" and "Civic Studies" are of critical importance in the consolidation of nationalist or patriotic ideologies and their capacity to provide justification for these new conflicts and wars. There is no doubt that the current war will further affect memory politics and relations between Ukraine and Russia, as well as with their neighbors and regions further afield, for decades to come.

In light of this recent background, the volume draws directly on the production of history textbooks and their formation of fixed, homogenous structures of memory and history politics, drawing links with the ethnocentrism of nation-building processes and the construction of ethnic and political "others" via a centralization of the state in history narratives. The misalignment between memory politics and history politics thus forms a central theme of the collection. Armed conflicts in the territory of the former USSR saw not only numerous victims and refugees but also the emergence of new borders and unrecognized states, and the annexation of territories. They also contributed to the creation of new sites of memory, generated their own traditions of commemoration for the heroes and victims of

these confrontations, and led to the reconstruction of historical narratives and the construction of new national myths. This volume foregrounds how the nationalization of the public space and the reconstruction of national historical narratives in the four countries reflect a desire to monopolize the power to interpret the past, with low tolerance of alternative accounts. For the most part, contemporary political regimes with considerable public support continue to exert control over public spaces. This is true in Ukraine and Armenia and, to a larger extent, in Russia and Azerbaijan.

I would like to thank Sergey Rumyantsev and Martina Schulze, who convened the original symposium together with the Heinrich Böll Foundation under the umbrella of the Georg Arnhold Program on Education for Sustainable Peace coordinated at the Georg Eckert Institute. Special thanks are due to Saida Azizova and to Yulia Ostropalchenko, who provided invaluable editorial support, and to Wendy Anne Kopisch, Senior Editor at the Georg Eckert Institute, for her coordination. Many thanks also to Dorothea Schaefer, Saras Narayan, and Nashra Khan at Routledge, translators Elene Kobidze and Kateryna Miachina, and to James Barber, Kristen Barrett-Casey, and Patrick Groves.

Eckhardt Fuchs, Brunswick, Germany, June 2024
Director, Leibniz Institute for Educational Media | Georg Eckert Institute

1 Infested with History

An Introduction

Sergey Rumyantsev

In February 2023, during the Munich Security Conference, the heads of the three internationally recognized South Caucasian republics¹ participated together in a plenary session for the first time. Ilham Aliyev, President of Azerbaijan, in response to a question from a Ukrainian journalist, described his notion of the “correct” recipe for resolving long-term armed nationalist conflicts. He had in mind, of course, an example close to home: that of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.² Because negotiations can take an unreasonably long time, he explained, the most effective method was the use of military force: war. Successful implementation of this method, however, depends on one important condition, he continued: “We were growing a new generation, which came and liberated lands they had never seen because they were young. They had not even been born yet when Armenia occupied our lands.”³

The fundamental ingredient of his recipe is thus the “correct” education of the younger generation. A convincing, if not the only, criterion for measuring the effectiveness of such a policy is victory on the battlefield; in this particular case, in the Second Karabakh War. According to this logic, the chances of achieving victory grow in proportion to the readiness of citizens (above all, young representatives of the post-Soviet generation) to take up arms at the first call to the front, their confidence in being on the “right” side of history, a clear understanding of who their enemy is, and a clear idea of their duty to the state (motherland, fatherland) and to the nation of which they consider themselves members. In other words, a “well-grown generation,” in a situation of prolonged interstate conflict, means young people who are prepared to die—and kill—for the national homeland. To cultivate such beliefs and teach the necessary competencies, curricula are designed and, with varying degrees of persistence, put into practice for the patriotic education of young people.⁴ But are such ideas and practices of nurturing new generations exceptions to the rule, something out of the ordinary? Is the president of Azerbaijan the inventor of a previously unknown recipe for “resolving” armed conflicts? And what components play a key role in patriotic narratives and discourses?

Patriotic Education Curricula and Instruction: The Geographical Scope of the Book

In many countries, “patriotic education” curricula, many of which contain militaristic components, are developed and implemented at the state level, often with the support of various civilian associations, political parties, and major enterprises. Seth Kershner and Scott Harding note in reference to the United States that “[s]chools are a primary site for socialization into societies that support war.”⁵ Analyzing the education reforms implemented by the “Law and Justice” party that governed Poland in 2017 (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, PIS), Elżbieta Mach observes that such an approach

assumes the dominance of Polonocentric patriotic education, a one-sided arrangement of educational contents, creating a belief in the superiority of one’s own homeland over those of other people, an endeavour to maintain the conservative and traditional status quo of social life, for example, division of social roles, family model, gender roles.⁶

The authors of the chapters in this collection are engaged in research in post-Soviet countries. The geopolitical scope was determined by the geography of tensions, primarily the Nagorno-Karabakh (Armenia and Azerbaijan) and Russo-Ukrainian conflicts,⁷ two protracted confrontations that in recent years have escalated into full-scale wars. All chapters in the collection explore the impacts of long-term armed conflict on education, on the contents of historical and literary narratives intended for “growing a new generation,” and on the politics of history and memory. They demonstrate that the political regimes in all four post-Soviet countries are concerned in one form or another with the education, upbringing or nurturing of new generations of citizens ready to fulfill their patriotic duty.⁸ Memory and historical policies are formed and implemented in very similar ways in these states: special curricula aim to produce obedient, patriotic citizens for whom the nation-state is the supreme value and the willingness to lay down one’s life on its altar is a collectively approved form of behavior; a true achievement. In other words, one effect of prolonged armed conflict is increased investment in the development of curricula, narratives, and practices designed to produce patriotic citizens in a nationalistic and militaristic spirit.

The most dramatic revisions of recent years have been undertaken in schools and universities of the Russian Federation. With the realization that the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian army would lead to a protracted war, the political regime became concerned about the situation in its schools and introduced a new special curriculum, “Important Things to Discuss,” in September 2022.⁹ In addition to promoting modern nationalist myths and perceptions, it also seeks to teach children and young people to speak “correctly” about the reasons for going to war, ideally adopting the official viewpoint as their personal stance. With the same goals in mind, a course titled “Fundamentals of Russian Statehood” had been launched for university students by September 2023.¹⁰ And around the same time in Azerbaijan,

albeit very much under the radar of media attention, a new course titled “History of Victory” was introduced in schools.¹¹

Patriotic education curricula are complemented by courses in humanities subjects (national history and literature), which are dominated by nationalistic narratives that instill a belief in the alleged greatness of this or that “imagined community,”¹² nurturing a sense of ownership of national triumphs and traumas. Compulsory schooling in the humanities subjects, the most accessible to the control of political regimes, is an essential component of national and patriotic education. In the process of growing up, a school student learns not only the laws of grammar or mathematical formulae, but also the national anthem and the rules around singing it; learns to take pride in national culture and history; participates in collective commemorative rituals; and acquires discursive skills for dividing the world into friendly and hostile. In many post-Soviet countries, and especially in those where wars and armed conflicts are recent or ongoing, school education is becoming increasingly militarized. It is not by chance that patriotic and military-patriotic instructions are practically indistinguishable in propaganda texts. These concepts often complement each other and become synonymous.¹³

“Le mort saisit le vif”

Inspiration for contemporary nationalist and patriotic discourses is drawn from the past; from narratives whose contents, in the words of Michel Foucault, reflect “the rapidly changing history of governments, wars, and famines.”¹⁴ Events of the—often distant—past are invoked to legitimize possession of a hitherto independent state in the present. The same mythologized past is also instrumentalized to justify nurturing contemporary feelings of collective pride.

All national communities and ethnic groups that received different statuses during the years of the USSR (union republics, territorial autonomies, etc.)¹⁵ are habitually imagined as historical. By the time the Soviet Union collapsed, detailed narratives had long since been established that reconstructed the history of these communities as beginning in Antiquity and continuing uninterrupted into modernity¹⁶; every resident of the Soviet state was assigned to a community, and schools and universities provided them with access to an “appropriate” canon of knowledge about its history.

The USSR attributed great importance to history and historical scholarship. Indeed, the historical process itself was invoked to prove the inevitability of the advent of socialism, followed by the “culmination” of history in communism.¹⁷ This uncritical dogmatism, established in Soviet institutions by the mid-1930s, stifled any attempts to build upon—or beyond—Marxist theory. It created far fewer obstacles, however, for the process of nationalizing the past. The origins of nations, the direct ancestors of modern Armenians and Azerbaijanis, Russians and Ukrainians, were persistently sought and found in the distant past.

The last years of the Soviet Union and the first years of independence were also a moment of radical historicization of the political discourse. In all internationally recognized nation-states that succeeded the USSR, historicism, along with the

4 *Education and the Politics of Memory in Russia and Eastern Europe*

primordialist understanding of the phenomenon of nationhood,¹⁸ became the most important component of the independence narratives. Both of these stances underpinned patriotic mobilization and populist political discourses, and were actively used to create the enemy imagery that the Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetian, Abkhazian, Russo-Georgian, and Russo-Ukrainian conflicts were perceived to demand.

Thirty years after the collapse of the USSR, not much has changed. A public meeting of the heads of state of Armenia (Nikol Pashinyan) and Azerbaijan (Ilham Aliyev), at the international security conference in Munich in February 2020 (three years before the historic meeting of the three states mentioned above) took place only a few months before the outbreak of the Second Karabakh War. Intended as an opportunity to discuss prospects for a peace agreement, the meeting became the scene of mutual recriminations and heated arguments over aspects of history,¹⁹ once again confirming that references to past events and figures, such as King Tigranes II the Great (140–155 BCE) are still considered relevant to debates on a contemporary conflict between two independent nation-states that appeared on the world map in 1991.

The appeal of the past in supporting the arguments of political leaders regarding the state of affairs in the present has long since become a common practice. Russian President Vladimir Putin has been keen to seize rare opportunities to present his reasons for invading Ukraine to a “western” audience, largely turning them into history lessons that are little understood by an international audience. In Putin’s version, the reasons for the invasion of Ukraine by his regime can be traced back to the year 862, a symbolic date from which the origins of modern Russian statehood are found, he claims, in medieval Kyivan Rus.²⁰ Putin (among many others²¹) uses this argument to claim a significant portion of the territory of modern Ukraine as the land of “historical” Russia.

In turn, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky finds proof of his right to certain territories and to a separate nation-state independent of Russia in the same distant past. In the summer of 2021, shortly before the Russian invasion, he addressed the nation on the anniversary of the baptism of Kyivan Rus, briefly referring to the involvement of modern Russia in the same medieval state. Emphasizing that it was “Ukraine that is heir to one of the most powerful states of medieval Europe,” he informed his listeners that “great-nephews and very distant relatives need not encroach on its inheritance, attempting to prove their involvement in the history of thousands of years and thousands of events, despite being thousands of kilometers away from where they took place.” Since the outbreak of the war, this kinship has been largely ignored, and in the summer of 2022, Zelensky categorically declared that modern Ukraine was “the only legitimate heir of Kyivan Rus.”²²

The confrontation on the battlefield thus fires in unison with heated historical disputes between Russian and Ukrainian politicians over the ownership of an early medieval entity that ceased to exist in the mid-thirteenth century. The struggle for control over the past, for a monopoly of the nationalized historical narrative²³ is unfolding parallel to the military confrontation. Politicians act as historians, and highly influential ones at that, while historians actively participate in the politicization and nationalization of the past.²⁴ Political scientists, journalists, bloggers, and

numerous citizens of all imaginable professions, ages, and genders active on social networks have also become irretrievably embroiled in the skirmish, passionately debating on history and past heroes.

Not a single significant (semi)mythical character of a very distant past “has the slightest chance of escaping the commemorative radar,” as Pierre Nora would say.²⁵ In 1853, a monument to Prince Vladimir was erected in Kyiv with the approval of Emperor Nicholas I. “Undoubtedly, the most important event,” notes Igor Danilevsky, “associated with the name of the Kyiv prince Vladimir Svyatoslavich, was his adoption of Christianity as the state religion.”²⁶ After the collapse of the USSR, the monument dedicated to this legendary figure from the late tenth to early eleventh centuries remained in the capital of another state. Over the years, the struggle for control over the past only intensified and in 2016 (after the annexation of Crimea and the beginning of the conflict in eastern Ukraine) a monument to Prince Vladimir was unveiled in Moscow on National Unity Day (November 4). “The new monument,” Putin declared in his speech for the occasion, “is a tribute to our outstanding ancestor, a particularly revered saint, statesman and warrior, the spiritual founder of the Russian state.”²⁷ It is therefore hardly surprising that, on the anniversary of the baptism of Kyivan Rus, the same prince is remembered as a hero of Ukrainian history.

Contemporary historical narratives, memory discourses, national myths, and historical politics are methods, practices, and resources for justifying and intensifying armed confrontations. They do not simply become powerful obstacles to peaceful conflict transformation; they also rekindle hotbeds of conflict that were assumed to have been all but extinguished, or create new knots of tension where none had been before. The historicization of contemporary conflicts—their transformation into historical disputes—is a key strategy for crushing hopes of peaceful coexistence. An Azerbaijani first-year history textbook, for instance, berates the short-sightedness of Azerbaijani rulers of the early nineteenth century: “They forgot the sacred words bequeathed to us by Dede Gorgud: ‘An old enemy will never become a friend!’”²⁸ Methods and practices of historicizing contemporary conflicts are used widely in schools and even kindergartens, bringing up entire generations in support of war.

Contents of the Collection

Analyzing school textbooks, narratives, practices, and rituals thus becomes a crucial task for researchers, and even more so for those of us who seek to contribute to the peaceful transformation of armed conflict. Scholars and practitioners find themselves with the tasks of observing what is happening in schools, critiquing it loudly, deconstructing myths, and unveiling taboos. Most of the chapters in this book are based on papers presented at the Georg Arnhold Symposium on Education for Sustainable Peace, held at the Heinrich Böll Foundation in Berlin in 2016 on the subject *Education and Conflicts in the Post-Soviet Space: Institutions, Narratives, Dominant Discourses and Historical Myths*. Working on a book of this nature parallel to ongoing armed conflicts and, later, full-out war was an experience that almost

warrants a chapter of its own. While the ongoing conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the slowly escalating situation between Russia and Ukraine since our symposium brought about significant delays in the preparation of the book, it has also been instructive to reflect on our roles and responsibilities as scholars, impacted as we are by our unavoidable positionalities, practical challenges such as the time-constraints shared by all academics, and the need to compartmentalize between objective scrutiny and human sorrow in the face of continued violence. The authors in this book focus on different aspects of the narratives fostered and propagated in schools, pointing to the diversity of discursive images and portrayals designed to produce “proper” citizens. What knowledge, according to the authorities and textbook authors, should every citizen of a certain country possess?

The collection opens with **Victor Shnirelman**’s discussion of the “civilizational” approach, its evident poverty and inconsistencies that resulted in its proving ineffective in school education. He also analyzes nationalist projects that were its competitors and the “anticolonial discourse” of the post-Soviet textbooks with their diverse interpretations of the same historical events and processes as well as their production of enemy imagery. Shnirelman also interprets key historical events in the Russian textbooks and textbooks of the neighboring post-Soviet states to demonstrate that ethnocentric presentations of history in the new post-Soviet states are directed not only at Russia but also at their nearest neighbors, rendering a consensus around the most painful historical issues highly unlikely.

In my chapter, I critically examine the practices of patriotic education, considering how school education determines behavior and perceptions in later life. The contents of textbooks have long been of interest to researchers, these media being easily accessible and important sources that clearly present the goals and objectives set by authorities. But while a textbook allows us to familiarize ourselves with the official narrative, it does not tell us whether the secondary school is in fact an effective institution or to what extent it actually fulfills the tasks it is set by the state. I therefore propose the method of comparative analysis of biographical interviews with adult high-school graduates and citizens of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, and Russia.

Maria Karapetyan discusses the importance of the historical novel as a genre in Armenian schools. She analyzes the Armenian Language and Literature curriculum with its historical fiction, and closely interprets three major historical novels that are mandatory in schools, are often referenced in everyday life, and influence popular culture: Raffi’s *Samvel* (1886), Demirchyan’s *Vardananq* (1943), and Muratsan’s *Gevorg Marzpetuni* (1896), the first two portraying Armenia’s struggle under Persia in the fourth and fifth centuries AD and the last narrating Armenia’s struggle with Arab invaders in the tenth century. Karapetyan shows how these works are woven into the larger discourses and narratives around Armenian history and identity, and how, while history is politicized in educational practices, literature is “historified.” Together the two reinforce the sealing-off of the state-promoted narrative from alternatives.

What are children told about Islam in Azerbaijan and in Azerbaijani schools? Using the categories developed by José Casanova, **Sevil Huseynova**’s chapter

demonstrates how the political regime in Azerbaijan can be described as not strictly secular but existing in accordance with the myth of secular neutrality. Huseynova shows how, in Azerbaijan as in all parts of the world, the process of a “deprivatization” of religion is perceptible: while officially a secular state, the authorities promote the popularization of Islam as a key component of national tradition and historico-spiritual heritage. Huseynova shows how attempts of the authorities and those loyal to them (intellectuals, journalists, and others) to nationalize Islam, often in an undiplomatic manner and not always successfully, are becoming increasingly evident and is reflected—as an approach to a “national religion”—in school textbooks.

Jafar Akhundov, focusing on portrayals of the Azerbaijani genocide that amount to mythologization strategies, considers the school not only as an educational space, but also as a site where the politics of memory, collective rituals, and commemorations are put into practice. He shows how an important aspect of the state ideology is representing the Azerbaijani community as the victim, in accordance with the decree of March 26, 1998, “On the Genocide of Azerbaijanis,” signed by then president of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev. The decree has served as an additional and important reference point for subsequent historical research in the field and promoted its total ideologization. Akhundov shows how authorities hurled all efforts and resources into creating an enemy discourse and fueling its mass popularization. This discourse has entered all sectors of society and plays an important role in educational curricula, particularly in the subjects of history and the social sciences in secondary schools, designed to accompany “proper citizens” and “true patriots” their whole lives.

Tsypylma Darieva’s chapter examines metaphors from the natural world that have been instrumentalized as national symbols, such as the apricot, the pomegranate, and the pine tree, and how these are disseminated through biology and geography textbooks. Based on the analysis of data collected in the period between 2013 and 2017, she shows how this strategy results in these symbols becoming firmly embedded in Armenian national narratives about the “historical homeland” and the country’s “exceptional” cultural heritage and landscape. Darieva’s chapter examines the ways in which representations of the ancestral homeland are visualized in contemporary Armenian educational sources, with a focus on children’s textbooks and the activities of a new educational center for sustainable ecology established in northern Armenia.

Serhy Yekelchyk addresses traces of Soviet thought in Ukrainian history textbooks. He identifies topics that required new approaches and new interpretation: Russo-Ukrainian relations in Ukrainian textbooks and the concept of the Ukrainian “national revival.” He also explores how the theme of nation-building is developed in textbook narratives.

Ilya Kukulin’s chapter examines the nature, emergence, and impacts of Putin’s so-called “List of 100 books,” fiction recommended for reading by secondary school students. The history of this list begins in 2012; Kukulin describes the process by which it came about, and which arguments were raised for the books it included. These processes can tell us a lot about the specifics of the current political regime in Russia, as well as about the task of educating young people. As the author explains,

the chapter was written and revised between 2017 and 2021, an example of the challenge of conducting research and publishing findings during a process of escalating conflict. Although the sociopolitical situation has shifted, the significance of the list's emergence and implementation is highly instructive for understanding how education has been instrumentalized for shaping the identity of young people even some time before the contemporary Russo-Ukrainian war was unleashed.

A number of articles in the collection address history policy and the politics of memory. **Ivan Kurilla** addresses “history wars,” the use of history as a political weapon. He explains how the focus of Russian politicians on examples from history is an attempt to instrumentalize history for modern purposes. He shows how a peculiarity of the situation in Russia is the refusal to develop the language of politics, instead handing over this task to historians. I would venture to add that Tucker Carlson’s interview of Vladimir Putin mentioned above is a convincing illustration of this strategy.

Oksana Mikheieva focuses on the vicissitudes of memory politics in Donetsk. She shows how its contradictory nature reflects the complex situation in this area of Ukraine post-2014. The chapter presents a detailed historical overview of the formation of sites of memory in Donetsk, relating historical events to the specifics of the memory politics employed in recent years.

Dmytro Titarenko offers a comprehensive analysis of the commemoration of the Second World War (or rather the Great Patriotic War) in Donetsk. He addresses discourses in the media, analyzes the situation in schools, and rituals and discourses of memory. The memory of the war has gained new traction following the events of 2014–2016, when Russian influence in the region increased and an armed separatist movement began, and more recently since the Russian invasion of 2022.

Finally, **Philip Gamaghelyan**’s chapter explores the concept and implementation of dialogue, a key aspect of peace education. He discusses how dialogue on the Armenian genocide was engaged in by citizens of Armenia and Turkey, addressing further a number of important discursive strands that permeate almost all the chapters. Gamaghelyan shows how the changing political context influences the content and course of dialogue, the purpose of which is to try to understand the positions of the parties involved when discussing complex issues of the traumatic past.

Final Remarks: Infested with History

In conclusion, we find ourselves pondering the largely rhetorical chicken-and-egg question as to what came first. Given that all post-Soviet communities have long lived their universal secondary education under the constant influence, and often rule, of historical and memory politics, should we look for the causes of conflicts and wars in this? Or are educational curricula and memory politics rather a reaction to conflicts that have already happened? Educational media research suggests that it is a circular process, the one responding to the other in a vicious circle that is—in the words of Alan Bradley—“infested with history.”²⁹ It would certainly be an exaggeration, however, to say that the whole problem is only about history and “wrong” interpretations of the past. Although these aspects are crucial factors, they

are by no means the only causes of nationalist-flavored conflicts, but primarily provoked by the very system of dividing the world into nation-states and dominant nationalist ideologies.³⁰

It is probably impossible, from either point of view, to give any kind of reasonable answer to this question. And yet the very act of asking such a question is useful. In seeking responses to it, we find confirmation that remaining within the cognitive framework of these kinds of policies and discourses drastically restricts the chances of peaceful conflict transformation. What can be stated with absolute certainty is that significant work remains to be done in the areas of school narratives, memory politics, and history policies if post-Soviet societies are not to be doomed to endless conflict.

Notes

- 1 Along with Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, two de facto states existed in the region by early 2024: Abkhazia and South Ossetia. A third de facto state, the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, ceased to exist in the fall of 2023, when, after a brief, bloody military operation, the territory came fully under the control of the Azerbaijani authorities. The debate on how to designate these kinds of unrecognized states has been going on for many years now: “A myriad of terms have emerged to describe the phenomenon, including ‘de facto states’, ‘unrecognised states’, ‘pseudo-states’, ‘states within states’, ‘para-states’, ‘quasi-states’, ‘phantom states’, ‘contested states’, and ‘informal states’.” The proliferation of terminology is in part due to the highly politicized character of the debate. Donnacha Ó Beacháin, “Elections and Nation-Building in Abkhazia,” in *Nation-Building and Identity in the Post-Soviet Space: New Approaches and Tools*, edited by Rico Isaacs and Abel Polese, 206–25 (London & New York: Routledge, 2016), 441. I favor the term *de facto state* as “the most appropriate and most neutral” John O’Loughlin et al., “Inside Abkhazia: Survey of Attitudes in a De Facto State,” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 27, no. 1 (2011): 1–36; here, 2. For more on the specifics of *de facto* states, see also Charles King, “The Benefits of Ethnic War: Understanding Eurasia’s Unrecognized States,” *World Politics* 53, no. 4 (2001): 524–52; here, 525. <https://doi.org/10.1353/wp.2001.0017> and Scott Pegg, *International Society and the De Facto State* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 37–38.
- 2 For more on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict see: Ronald G. Suny, *Looking Toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), 192–212; Thomas de Waal, *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2003), and Sergey Rummyantsev, “‘Otečestvennaja vojna’ za Karabah: predposylki i posledstviya,” *Ab Imperio*, no. 3 (2023): 199–243.
- 3 İlham Aliyev attended a plenary session on “Moving Mountains? Building Security in the South Caucasus” in Munich on February 18, 2023. <https://president.az/en/articles/view/58996> (accessed June 2024).
- 4 See, for example, *Gənclərdə vətənpərvərlik və vətəndaşlıq hisslərinin yüksəldilməsi. Proqramın təsdiq edilməsi barədə*. <https://e-qanun.az/framework/5195>; *The Propaganda of The “Nation-Army” Ideology in RA Education System*. https://uic.am/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Nation-Army-Education-system_eng.pdf; Федеральный проект «Патриотическое воспитание граждан Российской Федерации». <https://edu.gov.ru/national-project/projects/patriot/>; Концепція Державної цільової соціальної програми національно-патріотичного виховання на період до 2025 року. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1233-2020-%D1%80#Text> (all accessed June 2024).
- 5 Seth Kershner and Scott Harding, “Militarism goes to school,” *Critical Military Studies* 5, no. 3 (2019): 191–194; here, 191. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23337486.2019.1634321>

- 6 Elzbieta M. Mach, “Between Patriotism and Nationalism: National Identity in the Education Policy of Law and Justice. Comments on the 2017 Education Reform.” In *The Right-Wing Critique of Europe: Nationalist, Sovereignist, and Right-Wing Populist Attitudes to the EU*, edited by Joanna Sondel-Cedarmas and Francesco Berti, 228–42 (New York: Routledge, 2022), 236. In the Central and Eastern European context, another obvious example of a country where we can observe similar phenomena is Hungary. See: Anita Komuves, “Hungary: A Smooth Way to Better Patriotism,” *VSquare*, January 18, 2019. <https://vsquare.org/hungary-a-smooth-way/> (accessed June 2024), <https://vsquare.org/hungary-a-smooth-way/> (accessed June 2024); and Eszter Neumann, “Education for a Christian Nation: Religion and Nationalism in the Hungarian Education Policy Discourse,” *European Educational Research Journal* 22, no. 5 (2023): 646–65. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14749041211072691>. Unlike the United States, neither Poland nor Hungary has been in a state of direct armed conflict in recent years. While ongoing conflict creates conditions for the promotion of patriotic and nationalist ideologies and discourses, it is not the only reason for their growing popularity.
- 7 See the chapters in this volume by Victor Shnirelman and myself, where parallels are drawn with other post-Soviet countries, such as Georgia. The chapter by Philip Gaghelyan discusses remembrance of the Armenian genocide not only in Armenia but also in contemporary Turkey.
- 8 This statement is also relevant for other post-Soviet countries. See, for example: On Approval of the Concept of Military-Patriotic Education of Youth until 2030. Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated November 24, 2023, No. 1039. <https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/P2300001039>; Patriotic Education Curriculum for the Population of the Republic of Belarus for 2022–2025. <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=C22100773&p1=1>; on measures to enhance the effectiveness of work on the military-patriotic education of young people (Uzbekistan). <https://lex.uz/uz/docs/6519073?ONDATE2=16.01.2024&action=compare> (all accessed June 2024).
- 9 “Razgovory o vazhnom” <https://razgovor.edsoo.ru/> (accessed June 2024).
- 10 See: <https://minobrnauki.gov.ru/press-center/news/novosti-ministerstva/72464/> (accessed June 2024).
- 11 P. Ağalarov et al., *Ümumi təhsil müəssisələrinin 9-cu sinifləri üçün Zəfər Tarixi kursu üzrə dərslər vəsaiti*. Baku: Elm və Təhsil Nazirliyi, 2022. This “invisibility” is largely due to the long-standing and deeply rooted practice in international relations and organizations of dividing conflicts into more and less important ones. While it is obvious that, in Ukraine, the area of direct armed confrontation is much larger and the number of people involved in it more numerous than in the South Caucasus, the notion of measuring the depth of traumatization of communities so crudely is problematic. A lack of attention to “secondary” conflicts can in some instances lead to the emergence of new hotbeds of armed confrontation and, thus, “primary” conflicts.
- 12 See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London & New York: Verso, 2006), 6–7.
- 13 See, for example: N. Khekert, “Konzeptyalnyiye položeniia voenno-patrioticheskogo vospitaniia uchascchikhsiiia molodezhy na osnove rossijskikh sportivnykh traditsij”. *Mir nauki, kultury, obrazovaniia* 97/6 (2022): 69; I. Buriev and M. Mamasaliev, “Patrioticheskoe vospitanie mladogo pokoleniia.” *Vestnik nauki i obrazovaniia*, 22/100 (2020), 37–39; here, 38; Tamila Hasanova, “Aktualnost temi patrioticheskogo vospitaniia podrastayushchego pokoleniia v Azerbaidzhane I puti resheniia voznikavshchikh problem,” *Vestnik ekonomicheskoi bezopasnosti* no. 4 (2021): 288–89.
- 14 Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse of Language* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 3.
- 15 For more on Soviet nationality policy, see: Yuri Slezkine, “The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism,” in *Becoming National: A Reader*, edited by Geoff Eley and Ronald G. Suny, 202–238 (Oxford: Oxford

- University Press, 1996); Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005); Ronald G. Suny, “Making Minorities: The Politics of National Boundaries in the Soviet Experience,” in *The Construction of Minorities: Cases for Comparison Across Time and Around the World*, edited by André Burguiere and Raymond Grew, 249–50 (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2000); Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001).
- 16 The process of establishing historical schools (in the modern sense) in the Russian Empire and later in the USSR stretched from the mid-nineteenth to the first half of the twentieth century. Of the four post-Soviet countries studied in this volume, the academic culture in Azerbaijan was formed last.
 - 17 I refer here to the application of the theory of socio-economic formations. See: A. Gurevič, *Istorija – neskonchaemyj spor* (Moscow: Russian State University for the Humanities, 2005), 366–87.
 - 18 “What I mean by ‘historicism’,” noted Karl Popper, is “[...] an approach to the social sciences which assumes that historical prediction is their principal aim, and which assumes that this aim is attainable by discovering the ‘rhythms’ or the ‘patterns’, the ‘laws’ or the ‘trends’ that underlie the evolution of history.” Karl Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 3. Vladimir Malakhov clarifies this notion in the context of the discourse on nationalism. “Historicism [...] is the belief that it is possible to understand the present from the past. It is the belief that the key to the meaning of events happening today lies in history. [...] Nationalism scholars who share this attitude assume in the phenomena they study ‘nations’—the existence of primordial ties that remain valid throughout the ages and that can be traced back centuries.” Vladimir S. Malakhov, *Nacionalizm kak političeskaia ideologija* (Moscow: KDU, 2005), 52–54.
 - 19 İlham Aliyev and Nikol Pashinyan, *An Update on Nagorno-Karabakh*. Munich Security Conference 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vF_NpbCl0cw&feature=emb_logo (accessed June 2024).
 - 20 Vladimir Putin in interview with Tucker Carlson. <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/73411> (accessed June 2024).
 - 21 My observations, and interviews I conducted with Ukrainian citizens between 2017 and 2021, including people who described themselves as ethnic Ukrainians, several of whom were residents of Donbass and Crimea, revealed that many also held such views, even today. A discussion of their reasoning would require a separate publication; suffice to say here that such views have been around much longer than Vladimir Putin. The origins of the emergence and spread of ideas around collective (national) rights to certain territories should be sought in the nineteenth century.
 - 22 “Ukraine—Kyivan Rus—1033”: address by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on the anniversary of the baptism of Kyivan Rus’. July 28, 2021. <https://www.president.gov.ua/ru/news/ukrayina-kiyvaska-rus-1033-zvernennya-prezidenta-volodimira-69757> (accessed June 2024).
 - 23 “The history of our country is uninterrupted, a constant flow,” Putin asserts. And this maximalist saying can be put into the mouth of any other head of any of the post-Soviet states. It fully corresponds to the ideas dominating in (not only) political spheres about the history of the heir states of the USSR. The origins of modern statehood and national communities, their continuity in history, in full compliance with the dominant primordialist notions, are found in the deep past. See: “Meeting with historians and representatives of traditional religions in Russia,” <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/69781> (accessed June 2024).
 - 24 I do not, of course, mean all professional historians. But this trend is influential and has numerous supporters; see, for example, Andreas Kappeler, “Russia as Multinational

12 *Education and the Politics of Memory in Russia and Eastern Europe*

- Empire”: Some Reflections after Eight Years since the Publication of the Book,” *Ab Imperio* 1-2 (2001): 9–22; here, p. 17.
- 25 Pierre Nora, “The Era of Commemoration,” in: *Realms of Memory: The Construction of French Past. Volume III: Symbols* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 617.
- 26 Igor Danilevsky, *Istoriia Ukrainy* (Saint Petersburg: Aletejja, 2016).
- 27 <http://special.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/53211> (last accessed June 2024).
- 28 *Kitabi Dede Korkud* (book of my grandfather Korkud) is a medieval dastan (folklore work, epic) from the tenth and eleventh centuries and the result of a long development of the oral poetic tradition of the Oghuz Turks. For the textbook citation see: Y. Mahmudlu, R. Khalilov, and S. Agaev, *Otečestvo. Učebnik dlja V klassa Tret'e izdanie* (Baku: Takh-sil, 2003), 11.
- 29 Flavia de Luce, a member of an old British aristocratic family and protagonist of the Alan Bradley series of novels, remarks one day with bitter irony: “The problem with we de Lucas, I decided, is that we are infested with history in much the same way that other people are infested with lice.” Alan Bradley, *The Weed that Strings the Hangman's Bag: A Flavia de Luce Mystery* (New York: Delacorte Press, 2010), 285.
- 30 See also: Rogers Brubaker, “Myths and Misconceptions in the Study of Nationalism,” in *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*, edited by John A. Hall, 272–306 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 279–80.

Bibliography

- Ağalarov P., N. Quliyev and H. Cabbarov. *Ümumi təhsil müəssisələrinin 9-cu sinifləri üçün Zəfər Tarixi kursu üzrə dərs vəsaiti*. Baku: Elm və Təhsil Nazirliyi, 2022.
- Aliyev, İlham and Nikol Pashinyan. *An Update on Nagorno-Karabakh*. Munich Security Conference 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vF_NpbCl0cw&feature=emb_logo (accessed June 2024).
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London & New York: Verso, 2006.
- Bradley, Alan. *The Weed that Strings the Hangman's Bag: A Flavia de Luce Mystery*. New York: Delacorte Press, 2010.
- Brubaker, Rogers. “Myths and Misconceptions in the Study of Nationalism.” In *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*, edited by John A. Hall, 272–306. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Brubaker, Rogers. *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Buriev, I. and M. Mamasaliev. “Patrioticheskoe vospitanie molodogo pokoleniia.” *Vestnik nauki i obrazovaniia*, no. 22/100 (2020): 37–39.
- Danilevsky, Igor. *Istoriia Ukrainy*. Saint Petersburg: Aletejja, 2016.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse of Language*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972.
- Gurevič, Aron. *Istoriia-neskonchaemyj spor*. Moscow: Russian State University for the Humanities, 2005.
- Hasanova, Tamila. “Aktualnost temi patrioticheskogo vospinatiia podrastayushchego pokoleniia v Azerbaidzhane i puti resheniia voznikaiuschikh problem.” *Vestnik ekonomicheskoi bezopasnosti*, no. 4 (2021): 288–89.
- Hirsch, Francine. *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005.
- Kappeler, Andreas. “Russia—a Multinational Empire: Some Reflections after Eight Years since the Publication of the Book,” *Ab Imperio* 1–2 (2001): 9–22.

- Kershner, Seth, and Scott Harding. "Militarism goes to school." *Critical Military Studies* 5, no. 3 (2019): 191–94. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23337486.2019.1634321>.
- Khekert, Nikita. "Konzeptyalnye polozheniia voenno-patrioticheskogo vospitaniia uchascchikhsiiia molodezhy na osnove rossijskih sportivnyh tradicij." *Mir nauki, kultury, obrazovanija* 97/6 (2022): 69–71.
- King, Charles. "The Benefits of Ethnic War: Understanding Eurasia's Unrecognized States." *World Politics* 53, no. 4 (2001): 524–52. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ywp.2001.0017>.
- Komuves, Anita. "Hungary: A Smooth Way to Better Patriotism." *VSquare*, January 18, 2019. <https://vsquare.org/hungary-a-smooth-way/>.
- Mach, Elzbieta M. "Between Patriotism and Nationalism: National identity in the education policy of Law and Justice. Comments on the 2017 education reform." In *The Right-Wing Critique of Europe: Nationalist, Sovereignist and Right-Wing Populist Attitudes to the EU*, edited by Joanna Sondel-Cedarmas and Francesco Berti, 228–42. New York: Routledge, 2022.
- Mahmudlu, Y., R. Khalilov, and S. Agaev. *Otechestvo: Uchebnik dlia 5 klassa Tretie izdanie*. Baku: Takhsil, 2003.
- Malakhov, Vladimir S. *Natsionalizm kak politicheskaya ideologiia*. Moscow: KDU, 2005.
- Martin, Terry. *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001.
- Neumann, Eszter. "Education for a Christian nation: Religion and nationalism in the Hungarian education policy discourse." *European Educational Research Journal* 22, no. 5 (2023): 646–65. <https://doi.org/10.1177/147490412111072691>.
- Nora, Pierre. "The Era of Commemoration." In: *Realms of Memory: The Construction of French Past. Volume III: Symbols*, translated by Arthur Goldhammer. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.
- Ó Beacháin, Donnacha. "Elections and Nation-Building in Abkhazia." In *Nation-Building and Identity in the Post-Soviet Space: New Approaches and Tools*, edited by Rico Isaacs and Abel Polese, 206–25. London & New York: Routledge, 2016.
- O'Loughlin, John, Vladimir Kolossov, and Gerard Toal. "Inside Abkhazia: Survey of Attitudes in a De Facto State." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 27, no. 1 (2011): 1–36.
- Pegg, Scott. *International Society and the De Facto State*. New York: Routledge Revivals, 2019.
- Popper, Karl. *The Poverty of Historicism*. London and New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Rumyantsev, Sergey. "Otechestvennaya voina za Karabakh: predisilki i posledstviya." *Ab Imperio*, no. 3 (2023): 199–243.
- Slezkine, Yuri. "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism." In *Becoming National: A Reader*, edited by Geoff Eley and Ronald G. Suny, 202–38. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Suny, Ronald G. *Looking Toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993.
- Suny, Ronald G. "Making Minorities: The Politics of National Boundaries in the Soviet Experience." In *The Construction of Minorities: Cases for Comparison Across Time and Around the World*, edited by André Burguiere and Raymond Grew, 249–50. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2000.
- Waal, Thomas de. *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War*. New York and London: New York University Press, 2003.



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

Part I

**Concepts of Patriotic
Education**



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

2 The Routes of the Post-Soviet Historical Imagination

Between “Civilization” and the “Nation-State”

Victor Shnirelman

The post-Soviet period was a challenge to the professional community of historians. First, the former political unity had fallen apart into many fragments, which sought legitimacy by referring to events from history. Second, new states needed to develop and substantiate new identities, which demanded a radical revision of the very basis of traditional historical discourse. Third, the former Great Narrative with its universal explanatory model has become a thing of the past and had to be substituted with a new paradigm. Finally, almost all of the new states maintained multi-ethnic diversity, and in many cases the Russian-speaking community proved to be the largest minority.

Ethnic minorities, on the one hand, demanded social equality, and on the other hand, wanted to secure their identities based not only in terms of language and culture but also on their own views of history, which more often than not challenged the historical imagination of the dominant majority. At the same time, almost all the new post-Soviet states have chosen a model of a unitary nation, which did not leave any room for federalism. Following the Soviet tradition, a nation was imagined in ethnic, rather than civic terms, which instigated ethnocentrism and created the threat of ethnic discrimination. In some cases, this caused interethnic clashes and wars that undermined the new states, or even led to their collapse. This occurred in Georgia and Azerbaijan, where a growth of ethnic nationalism resulted in a separation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in the case of the former, and Nagorno-Karabakh in the latter until it was recaptured by Azerbaijan in September 2023. In Russia, similarly bloody ethnic clashes took place between the Ossetians and Ingush in 1992 in the Prigorodny District of North Ossetia. In all these cases, each of the conflicting parties had its own view of history, with each view differing drastically from one other.¹

The Regional Textbook and Ethnocentrism

Already beginning during the Soviet period, the large regions demanded a development of a common view of local history. The authorities requested that historians create a unified regional history to overcome ethnocentric views of the past that were popular in particular republics.² A comprehensive research program was initially developed in the 1970s, uniting the efforts of specialists from the

DOI: [10.4324/9781003505822-3](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003505822-3)

This chapter has been made available under a CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0 license.

Caucasian republics and placing a large emphasis on the study of ethnogenesis. Yet, it focused only on the Armenian, Georgian, and Azerbaijani ethnogenesis, and neglected other ethnic groups who lived in the South Caucasus.³ This ambitious project could not meet the demands of its organizers and was discontinued without a single corresponding publication ever having come into fruition. This unfortunate experience was then repeated in the Northern Caucasus, where the production of a common history also proved to be problematic. Soviet scholarship was unable to escape the vicious circle of ethnocentric views, and, thus, all such projects were doomed to fail.

The trouble with Soviet history education was its evidently Russocentric presentation of history that failed to meet the demands of the republics. This approach was a result of not only assimilatory and Russificatory intentions of the authorities, but rather of technical considerations. Indeed, by contrast to other titular peoples, the Russians lacked any special courses in Russian ethnic history, and their history merged with that of the state: first that of Russia, followed by that of the USSR. Being educated with such a presentation of history, Russians became hostages of the statist mentality—they identified themselves with the state and almost never took into account the representatives of other nations who also participated in its creation and development. They were prepared to show tolerance to these nations and even assist them in one way or another (in education, healthcare, economics), but in the context of such cooperation they saw themselves as the “big brother.”

The dissolution of the USSR has caused a radical turnaround in historiography, which shifted toward ethnic nationalism because public consolidation took on an ethnic, rather than a civic, form and it was this that local elites were primarily interested in. The framing of nation was treated in primordial terms, and history was imagined as a movement of an eternal and homogenous national body along the flexuous tracks of time toward a wonderful future. As a result, Russocentric views of the past have been replaced by ethnocentric ones that were searching for national roots in the ancient times, overstating the political and social development of the “native” people in the past, exaggerating their cultural achievements, greatly extending their former territorial borders, and providing unreliably high numbers for their ancestral communities.⁴

Therefore, a new joint project aiming for a general textbook of Caucasian history, launched in Tbilisi in 1997–1998 under the auspices of the European Council, suffered the same deplorable fate as its Soviet predecessors. An attempt to develop a joint textbook of Caucasian history (The Tbilisi Initiative) by a team of Armenian, Azerbaijani, Georgian, and Russian authors failed due to overly contrasting interpretations of the sensitive issues surrounding a “common history.”⁵

Ten years later, this experiment was repeated in Kazakhstan and Central Asia with the same poor results, as its participants realized that “it was a rather difficult and sensitive task to formulate a unified concept of the historical development of the region.”⁶ Indeed, as in the Caucasus, they had to deal with the relationships between titular nations and ethnic minorities, “hegemony” of larger republics, and Islamic radicalism. Yet some experts were reliant on salutary images of the “uniform Turkic-Persian culture” with its “deep cultural-historical code.” Notably,

Kazakhstan, with its enthusiasm for this “civilizational approach,” proved to be the main advocate of the general regional textbook.⁷ Some other enthusiasts also sought to use this approach, actively exploited in Russia by that time. A Centre of Islamic civilization promoting Islamic culture and history in Central Asia was opened in Tashkent (Uzbekistan) in 2024.

A “Civilizational Approach” and its Obvious Pitfalls

In the late eighteenth century, “civilization” became an important element of the evolutionary scheme, represented by the triad “savagery, barbarism, civilization.” Yet, a hundred years later the scheme was revised, and there arose a temptation to view humanity as an aggregation of civilizations that developed side by side, were extraneous to each other, and never overlapped.⁸ It took several decades before Arnold Toynbee began to pay great attention to contacts between civilizations. However, even he presented them as well-integrated bodies that could come into contact and engage in dialogue with each other, but were unable to merge or exchange human resources. According to Toynbee, trying to do so would be very risky.⁹

It is with this set of ideas that a “civilizational approach” survived to this day. It was not met with great enthusiasm in the West and was rejected by most scholars. Yet, after the collapse of the Communist regime, it received a second lease of life in Russia, from where it expanded to other CIS nations. Its popularity in Russia was based on the fact that there, despite Toynbee’s hopes, it was closely associated with nationalism and anti-Western sentiments.¹⁰

The “civilizational approach” has gone through an interesting metamorphosis in modern Russia. In the 1980s, it was picked up by certain medievalist and orientalist Soviet historians with the hope that it would help to overcome the Marxist dogma with its emphasis on the dry sociological schemes at the expense of multi-dimensional social life and, especially, human identity. Indeed, the value of the latter was one of the most important slogans of the *Perestroika* period. Scholars also suggested paying special attention to ethnic factors, ethnic stereotypes of behavior and traditional forms of consciousness, including myths, in the development of particular civilizations.¹¹ An idea of a “historical code of civilization” became embedded in school education.¹²

Over time, this system of thought included such notions as the “people” and their “spiritual lives” based mostly on religious beliefs. The people were viewed as an integrated body with its own behavioral norms and mentality, that crossed social class borders and was invulnerable to social divides. As a result, the subject of historical development was not an individual but a collective personality—the people, nation, ethnic community.¹³ Hence, a class ideology has been substituted by a nationalist one with its organicist outlook. Some authors have even endowed “civilization” with a sense of unified identity though they were unable to prove it.

The term “civilization” is imbued with a special significance in the Russian discourse. First, the dissolution of the Soviet Union has discredited an idea of empire and the idea of democracy completely removed it from the discursive field.

However, in a multi-ethnic Russia, a national state could not be imagined as an ethnonational one either. Intellectuals as well as major politicians and officials were well aware of this in the 1990s. Therefore, a view of “civilization” as an integrated multicultural space where various cultures developed in fruitful cooperation met great demand. In fact, this was Orwellian language, where the image of the “state-civilization” was exploited to replace an image of empire, which, despite its embellishment by the Russian statisticians, could not avoid negative connotations. In this context an obsolete Eurasianism has returned from oblivion and has come back in to fashion.¹⁴

Second, identification with a civilization feeds nostalgia for the former glory and allows Russia to preserve the image of a great state, if not politically, then culturally. A status of “civilization” provides it with high prestige by elevating it above the level of an ordinary country. This restores Danilevsky’s claim for the equal status of Russia with Europe rather than with particular European states.¹⁵ Third, while emphasizing a special historical path, a “civilizational approach” withdraws Russia from a universal evolutionary scheme based on socio-economic criteria. Thus, a comparison with other societies as well as the terms “backwardness” or “delayed modernization” become irrelevant for Russia.¹⁶ Therefore, a rhetorical tool is used to convert real problems into symbolic capital.

While discussing integration, advocates of this approach never explain precisely what they mean, or how religious diversity can survive within the “Russian Orthodox civilization,” and how various languages and cultures can blossom side-by-side with the “Russian cultural dominance.” For example, how can pluralism of historical ideas fit together with a uniform history textbook? And how can the European choice peacefully agree with the Eurasian one? The extent to which this rhetoric diverges from reality is demonstrated by the extent of the Russian authorities’ anger over the European choice of Ukraine, which found its ultimate expression in the Russo-Ukrainian war unleashed in 2022.

Finally, such a “civilizational approach” actually delegitimizes the Russian state, which for centuries incorporated various regions dominated by non-Orthodox and non-Christian religions, i.e. in terms of a “civilizational approach,” pockets of other civilizations incompatible with the Russian Orthodox religion. If so, they have all the reasons to demand for a separation from Russia and join their “genuine civilizations.”¹⁷ Moreover, by reifying cultures and building up high walls between them, a “civilizational approach” contributes to the development of “cultural racism.”¹⁸

Evidently, for all these reasons many Russian historians dropped the “civilizational approach” and in the early 2000s it seemed to have gone out of fashion. A concept of the new curriculum on Russian history adopted in 2013 viewed this history as an integral part of the world historical process, and there was no mention of the term “civilization.” Only a co-existence of “various peoples different in civilizational terms” was mentioned,¹⁹ but it was not explained how this fits together with a unified civilization. Perhaps the term “Russian civilization” was abandoned by historians in hope of avoiding uncomfortable enquiries. Yet this concept took root in both political and religious discourse. It was picked up first by the Russian Orthodox Church in the early 1990s, and later on by the Russian President since

2012.²⁰ It made up the core of the official historical concept in contemporary Russia and was deliberately introduced into the new textbooks in history in the 2020s.

The “civilizational approach” spread to post-Soviet states as well. In Estonia, it aimed to incorporate the country into “Western civilization” and thus distance it from its “backward eastern neighbour,” historical relationships with whom are imagined in terms of a “clash of civilizations.”²¹ In turn, to overcome tense relationships and conflicts in the Caucasus, an attempt was also made to build up an image of a “single civilization” with a common character, temperament, and ideals,²² although it seems that this attempt was unsuccessful. The “civilizational approach” was welcomed in Kazakhstan, where the image of a “nomadic civilization” helped the Kazakhs to distance themselves from “backward Asia,” as they had previously been viewed by Soviet historians. Simultaneously, it helped Kazakh historians to feel like “independent participants in the process of historical research.”²³

Production of Historical Narratives and Education Literature in the Post-Soviet Period

The post-Soviet period began under a slogan of “national resurrection” and a “return of true history.”²⁴ Yet, as George Mosse once noted, during processes of nation-building, national history wants to play an instrumental role through a strategy of the “nationalization of mass consciousness.”²⁵ In these circumstances, history is viewed as a hard struggle for the acquisition and maintenance of the nation-state, which is waged by primordial ethnos with its age-old traditions and imperishable value system. One of the main elements of such a narrative is ethnogenesis, which allows one to find remote ancestors as far back in the past as prehistory, to depict the borders of their primordial homeland (the wider, the better), to construct their ancient statehood, and to provide them with great cultural achievements.²⁶ It is in this way that one strives to achieve national consolidation for a successful movement toward a bright future.

The writing of national historiography in various post-Soviet states took place under completely different conditions. First, in some countries, e.g. the Baltic States and, to some extent, Georgia, politicians left this field for historians alone, yet, in others—Armenia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan—the production of “historical truth,” especially in textbooks, was controlled by governmental bodies. This shift took place in Russia in the early 2000s.²⁷ Therefore, political ideology affected textbooks in a different way, and to different extents. For example, whereas in Armenia the authorities constrained the textbook authors’ emotions, in Azerbaijan they encouraged them. Second, several generations of textbooks were replaced during the post-Soviet period. On the one hand, they still retained a lot of Soviet heritage, which was often combined with the influence of the diaspora from where completely different versions of history originated. The canons of national historiographies began to be shaped only since the late 1990s. Third, there were historical dynamics caused by radical changes in the political environment, for example, in Georgia where the educational field was emancipated after 2003, or in Moldova, where the communists revised the former politics of Romanization in the

early 2000s. The general tone of textbooks was also influenced by foreign-policy reorientations of regimes, as in Uzbekistan after the Andijan revolt of 2005, or in Kyrgyzstan after the April 2010 revolution. Finally, historians were challenged by alternative histories produced by amateur authors, including politicians, who disseminated highly politicized and ideology-driven views of the past.

In addition, while discussing textbook content and its impact on students, the teachers' key role should be considered. Teachers, first, differ in competence and in their political views, and second, can control their own emotions to varying degrees. Besides, in Russia—as well as other countries—of the 1990s (and in some places even later), teachers suffered from impoverishment, and this produced a nostalgia for the Soviet past, which inevitably affected the teaching process.²⁸ Therefore, knowledge of history received in school and an evaluation of historical facts by schoolchildren are not only a result of textbook content but of education practices and especially teachers' political positions,²⁹ and also in extra-curricular sources of information—formerly TV broadcasting and nowadays the Internet.³⁰

In some regions, historical memory is transmitted within families. For example, according to one sociological survey, a positive attitude toward the Soviet past was dominant in Kazakhstan and Central Asia in spring 2009 in spite of its negative coverage in the textbooks. The historical imagination of the younger generation, especially in relation to the Soviet past, was shaped by families rather than by textbooks.³¹

Nationalist Historical Projects

As a rule, a national post-colonial myth consists of three components. First, memory of the recent past produces victimization. Indeed, the legitimization of the post-Soviet states (except Russia) demands an emphasis on suffering under “foreign rule.” The new historical narratives therefore commonly refer to trauma, designed to induce sympathy from the global community. Second, an image of the great ancestors that has to elevate dignity and to charge people with a positive energy makes up a core of the national myth. Third, such a myth usually contains an image of an age-old enemy who is most often identified with the former empire.³²

The authors of the reviews of educational literature of the first post-Soviet decade have repeatedly noted that history textbooks have not so much radically changed the paradigm, but only changed the grades—what was previously perceived as positive became “evil” and vice versa.³³ Moreover, the official historiographers were sometimes former Soviet workers of the “ideological front,” who were once engaged in “scientific communism” or “the history of the CPSU.” And the heads of new states often became the customers and curators of the formation of post-Soviet historiography.³⁴

“Anti-colonial discourse” in the textbooks of the new post-Soviet states inevitably leads to a new reductionist view of history, and sometimes to the creation of an image of an “enemy.” This enemy was usually represented by Russia, and the textbooks almost never drew a distinction between the Russian empire and the

Soviet Union—both of them were accused of “imperialist policy” and “colonialism.” Nation-building in the ruins of the former empire was accompanied with accusations that referred to “invasion,” “occupation,” “colonialism,” “exploitation,” and “oppression.” The term “occupation” was preferred in the Baltic States. “Occupation,” “annexation,” and “colonization” were used interchangeably in Georgia, and “colonization” was more common for historiography in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. In any case, national ideologists including historians found nothing positive in the common imperial heritage.³⁵ The former emphasis on social class was replaced almost everywhere with an evaluation of history from the point of view of the “titular nation.”³⁶ This view creates a “lubok print,”³⁷ a far cry from the more complex and multi-dimensional picture in reality.³⁸

Although post-Soviet historians claim that they restore the “objective truth” by erasing former falsifications, the new national narratives also suffered from biases.³⁹ While reasonably criticizing the negative impacts of the imperial rule, they did not aim at redressing a balanced pattern and declined to see anything positive in the imperial legacy.⁴⁰ While directing their resentment at the Russian imperial bureaucrats and Soviet political figures, nationalist ideologists still showed respect to the local actors who served the tsarist regime or Soviet powers. For example, while accusing the Soviet rule of “colonialism,” Georgian historians avoided criticizing native bureaucrats who developed and implemented Soviet policy. Anger toward the former empire sometimes aims at its dominant majority who also suffered from both the imperial rule and the totalitarian regime. In certain post-Soviet states, these people turned into an ethnic minority, sometimes numerically large. They have their own view of history and perceive a condemnation of the empire personally. Yet, although certain Western scholars viewed the Soviet Union as an “incubator of nations”⁴¹ or an “affirmative action empire,”⁴² some native historians treat it in terms of a “genocide” that was carried out against their own people. At the same time, native inhabitants are imagined in the post-Soviet historiography as heroes rather than martyrs and victims. In Armenia, the events of the Karabakh conflict contributed to this in many ways.⁴³

The image of Russia in textbooks was also highly dependent on the current political climate. If a state was interested in close relationships with Russia (Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan), the image of Russia was depicted in a nuanced way—both positive and negative aspects of the relationship are discussed. For example, in Armenia and Kazakhstan, a distinction was drawn between the Tsarist and Soviet bureaucrats, who were criticized, and Russians, with whom friendly relationships were highlighted. Long historical contacts between the Kyrgyz and the Russians were emphasized in Kyrgyzstan. It is noteworthy that the terrible famine of 1932–1933, which led to mass deaths in Kazakhstan, did not become the basis for accusations of the Kremlin of “genocide,”⁴⁴ which differs sharply from the position of modern Ukraine in relation to the “Holodomor.”⁴⁵

The textbook authors select and discuss historical facts in such a way that could best meet the demands of the national idea. For example, Latvian textbooks depict the Soviet Union as a permanent threat to independent Latvia but nearly all of the textbooks omit the fact that Soviet Russia was the first to recognize its

independence. During the Soviet period, Lithuanian historians condemned the Polish occupation of part of Lithuania in the early 1920s and interpreted events of 1940 as a “voluntary entry,” whereas nowadays they treat Soviet politics as an “occupation” but refrain from using this term for the incorporation of Vilnius into Poland. In the late 1990s, certain Lithuanian textbooks justified the German war against the USSR as a chance for Lithuania to restore its independence. The justification of the war was dropped later on, but a condemnation of the Soviet guerrillas survived.⁴⁶

One Armenian analyst acknowledges that Armenian textbooks “invent tradition”: certain facts and themes appear anew, yet others disappear without a trace.⁴⁷ Russia is imagined in these textbooks as an age-old ally, although not entirely reliable. There is also a shift in evaluations over time. Thus, the Armenian involvement in the USSR and the Bolsheviks’ policy was discussed more positively in the textbook of 2008 than in the textbook of 1994. This was first explained by close political and economic relationships between contemporary Armenia and Russia, and second, by the public acknowledgment of Soviet Armenia’s achievements.⁴⁸

Key issues of national history were also re-evaluated in Azerbaijan, where the image of the past was placed in service of the state ideology that legitimizes the political regime and aims to shape a “national person” in place of the former “Soviet person.”⁴⁹ Key terms include such notions as the “antiquity of Azerbaijan,” “superiority of national culture,” “love of the Motherland,” “willingness to die for the Motherland,” a “desire to reunite with Southern Azerbaijan,” and of course the “enemy.”⁵⁰ The national narrative refers to ethnogenesis, and whereas many other nationalisms claim that the people cannot exist without their own language, in Azerbaijan they argue that the people cannot survive without their own statehood. Hence, there is an emphasis on state continuity, rooted in the ancient Near Eastern states. At the same time, the textbooks underline the foundational role of language, and it is the Turkic language which is imagined as an inalienable attribute of the people, although in the Soviet period local historians acknowledged that the population experienced language changes many times. The third foundation of this unity is autochthonism, which firmly binds the ancestors to their primordial territory virtually from Paleolithic antiquity (Azykh cave in the case of Azerbaijan) onward. In addition, a textbook for the sixth grade argues that Azerbaijan was an “ancient land” where humans emerged in the Lower Paleolithic, and the African homeland of humans gets ignored.⁵¹ A textbook for the fifth grade begins as follows: “One of the most ancient inhabitants of Europe, one of the most ancient peoples in the world—my people, my dear Great Azerbaijani people.”⁵² At the same time, this category includes only Turkic-speaking Muslims rather than all the citizens of Azerbaijan. The rest are excluded from “my people.”⁵³ Heroism is found alongside victimhood and suffering in the textbooks, which aims to instill in young people a willingness to die for their homeland.⁵⁴

If, in the 1970s and 1980s, historiography in Azerbaijan was represented by a struggle between “dogmatists” and “revisionists,” the latter finally gained victory in the 1990s and history textbooks began to draw on pan-Turkism.⁵⁵ According to an Azeri teacher, history presented in schools refers to all the standard mythical

schemes I identified in the late 1990s.⁵⁶ Whereas in the Soviet period historical heroes were identified with ordinary people and their leaders, nowadays they are replaced by the founders of the states and their rulers,⁵⁷ which demonstrates the priority of statehood in the Azeri identity. Meanwhile, Soviet atheism is substituted for Islam, being of an enduring value and one of the major cornerstones of national identity.⁵⁸

Historical facts that contradict the new (nationalist) view of history are completely ignored. For example, while discussing the wise policy of Javanshir, the ruler of the Caucasian Albania, who stopped an invasion by the Arab-Muslims, the textbook authors fail to mention his Christianity. Instead, they claim that Islam was beneficial for Azerbaijan.⁵⁹ On the one hand, they talk of the disastrous wars waged by the Arabs on the Caucasian Albania's territory, but on the other hand, they emphasize the respectful attitude of the Arabs to local inhabitants and the humanity of Islam.⁶⁰ Therefore, the fierce struggle of the local residents against the Caliphate remains inexplicable. The authors claim that Islam replaced idolatry, and they diminish the role played by earlier Christianity. They even ignore certain outstanding Christian churches which have survived to this day. Is it necessary to argue that the textbook justifies Turkic conquests in the Southern Caucasus, while Georgian and Armenian resistance is condemned? The vast territory of the Southern Caucasus is called the "Azeri lands," and the Turkic conquest of the former Iranian territories is welcomed.

While doing their best to clean the Muslim unity of any problems, the local authors ignore the Karabakh treaty of 1724 between the Shia Muslims and the Christian Armenians aimed against the Sunni Muslims.⁶¹ They also do not mention that Turks served both the Russian empire and the Soviet Union, and that many Azeri enlighteners were officers of the Tsar or Russian (Soviet) scholars.⁶² Instead, having destroyed the Soviet monuments of well-known Bolsheviks in 2009, the Azeris secured a monument to Nariman Narimanov.⁶³ Thus, a long struggle against the most treacherous enemy in the form of the Russian empire is legitimized. According to one analyst, Russia is represented in the new Azeri textbooks "in stages as a 'robber,' a 'neighbor-partner,' a 'conqueror-colonizer,' and finally a 'Northern neighbor'."⁶⁴ The roots of this "Russian greed" are found in the early Middle Ages, when the natives suffered from the raids of the "Russes" in the tenth and eleventh centuries. A whole chapter discussed the Slavic raids in the South-East Caucasus where they were depicted as deadly attacks.⁶⁵ No less destructive Arabic, Turkic, and Mongol conquests, Tamerlane's disastrous raids, and the Ottoman invasion were never covered this way in the textbooks. Instead, the teachers had to pay special attention to the Slavic raids and to discuss them extensively with the students.⁶⁶ The beginning of a continuous struggle of the Azeri people against the Northern conquerors is dated to the eighteenth century, and the Gulistan (1813) and Turkmenchay (1828) treaties are viewed as one of the most disgraceful chapters in the country's history. Russia is accused of not only liquidating the "Azeri state" but also of disintegrating the united Azeri people. To ensure that schoolchildren do not forget this unity, a textbook for the ninth grade covers the history not just of Azerbaijan, which is called "Northern Azerbaijan," but also of "Southern Azerbaijan."⁶⁷

A regime established by Russia is called a “military occupation,” and its policy is a colonial one, aimed at a shameless plundering of the people. It is blamed especially for the Armenian resettlement of the Azeri territories.⁶⁸ The Azeri authors see no benefits of joining the empire and reduce the discussion of economy to a transformation of Azerbaijan into a “raw-material appendage” of Russia. To be clear, certain authors did acknowledge the benefits of the bourgeois reforms implemented by the authorities and underline a positive role of the Russian rule in economic modernization. However, they constantly claim that the higher positions in management went mainly to Christians.

The textbook emphasizes that “all our natural resources were in the hands of foreigners.” However, further on it is revealed that there were Azeris among major businessmen, including oil owners (and all the oil industry turns out to belong to the Azeris in the chapter covering the events of 1918). The textbook authors strive to make them a source of pride, while keeping silent about their participation in the brutal exploitation of the local population. The authors accuse the Russian authorities of oppression—yet they themselves mention that the rebels stood against both the Tsar’s officials and local beys. However, they avoid getting into these details and claim that the people revolted because of the national-colonial oppression. On the other hand, they present local bourgeois leaders as the fighters against the Russian empire, despite those politicians being modest reformers dreaming of a constitutional monarchy at best. Notably, even in spring 1917, the Azeri nationalists promoted federalism and did not dream of independence.⁶⁹ The authors go as far as to distort the reality when they claim that the Bolsheviks did not aim to liberate the peoples of empire from national oppression but only fought for the rights of the working class. They ascribe to the Bolsheviks the slogan of a “united and indivisible Russia,” which was actually a slogan of the White army. Moreover, they depict the political struggle of the Bolsheviks against the “Musavat” party as though it were a struggle against all the Azeri people.

The textbook authors applaud all those who stood against the Russian empire but the Bolsheviks, and they place special emphasis on the role of Islam in this. They pay more attention to politics rather than economy, and Russian culture is covered quite concisely.⁷⁰ At the same time, the relationships between Azerbaijan and the Kremlin in the Soviet period are discussed in terms of ethnic culture (Turks vs Slavs) and religion (Islam vs Christianity) rather than politics,⁷¹ which refer to the concept of the “clash of civilizations.” The Turkification policy toward ethnic minorities implemented in Azerbaijan for decades does not prevent the textbook from accusing Iran’s “chauvinist policy” of the “Iranianization” of the people of “Southern Azerbaijan.”⁷²

A similar pattern can be observed in Georgia. Although local scholars believed that by filling in the “blank spots in history” they overcame the former ideological bias in favor of an “objective view” of the past, they still produced “blank spots of history,” albeit different ones.⁷³ The Georgian path to independence is depicted as a tireless national-liberation struggle that either manifested itself in open revolts and public protests, or retreated underground. As a Georgian analyst notes, the “textbook authors mainly paid attention to the Russian occupation of Georgia, which

gradually turned into an annexation in the 1920s.”⁷⁴ Further, students are invited to compare the colonial policies of Russia and the United Kingdom, so that the latter looks more attractive than the former. Georgia is depicted as a colony, yet young people are unaware that its social and cultural environment in the Soviet period was much better than in many regions of the Russian Federation. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Georgian textbook authors focused on nation-building and entirely ignored a large group of the Georgian functionaries who took an active part in the administrative apparatus both in the Russian empire and the USSR. The Georgian authors accused Russia of all misfortunes and deflected blame away from their own compatriots. They associated the history of Georgia with Georgians alone, while neglecting non-Georgian ethnic minorities.⁷⁵ They paid no attention, for example, to the ideas of social-democracy flowing into Georgia from St. Petersburg.

The third generation of textbooks published in Georgia after 2005 were changed significantly. The term “savage tribes” (formerly used for highlanders) disappeared, and special sections on various ethnic and religious cultures were introduced. At the same time, the Caucasus was discussed as an integrated cultural-historical region.⁷⁶ However, Russia was still depicted as the main source of troubles, and ethnic minorities were presented as the “fifth column.”⁷⁷ A sociological survey carried out in spring 2009 revealed that both the revolution of 1917 and all the events of the Soviet history were perceived negatively in Georgia.⁷⁸ One textbook refers to the first Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia’s claim that the recent conflicts were instigated from abroad.⁷⁹ Yet, the key role of Georgian nationalists, including Gamsakhurdia himself, who called for “Georgia for the Georgians,” was omitted.⁸⁰ Under President Mikheil Saakashvili, the Georgian authorities made attempts to elaborate an inclusive view of a civic nation, which would embrace all those who are fluent in Georgian, yet they proved unable to destroy the religious and historical barriers that prevented the integration of minorities.⁸¹ Even Georgian scholars were forced to acknowledge that “national minorities are not depicted as an integrated part of society and its history” in the new textbooks.⁸²

Coverage of relationships with the Abkhazians reveals the double standards in the new Georgian textbooks. Whereas Georgian authors view themselves as the victims of oppression from Moscow, they cannot agree with the fact that Abkhazians also depict themselves as the victims of oppression but, in this case, from Georgia. The Georgians emphasize the ethnic diversity in the Georgian state to legitimize integration of the Abkhazians, but they are indignant that the Soviet authors used the same argument to legitimize inclusion of the Georgians into the USSR.⁸³ While rejecting Russification, the Georgian authors proudly point to assimilation of the non-Georgians in Georgia, calling it an “innovative approach” to school education.⁸⁴ And, while emphasizing the negative role of Russia in their history, they are dissatisfied with the fact that the Abkhazians address this same accusation against Georgians. Finally, while blaming the Abkhazian textbook for “projecting modern reality back onto the past in order to legitimize it,”⁸⁵ certain Georgian authors ignore the same trend in the Georgian textbook.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, they accuse the Abkhazian and South Ossetian “separatists” of an “instrumentalizing history.”⁸⁷

In Uzbekistan, everything is done to erase the existence of the republic in the Soviet period from people's memory,⁸⁸ and the textbooks fail to mention the fact that the CIS countries were part of the same state until very recently. One does not find any reference to the Fergana and Osh-Uzgen events in the textbooks: the Meskhetian Turks suffered from pogroms in the former case, and there were bloody Uzbek-Kirgiz clashes in the latter.⁸⁹ In the 1990s, to block school children's access to undesirable information, the Uzbek authorities banned all the Soviet and Russian textbooks both in the humanities and in the natural sciences.⁹⁰

Such a reductionist approach causes tensions between the titular nations and ethnic minorities. For example, whereas their own independent state is of great importance for the Estonians and they view "imperial sentiments" negatively, local Russians view the Soviet past as "their own."⁹¹ Estonians cannot applaud Stalin's popularity in contemporary Russia, and do not share Russian nostalgia for the USSR.⁹² At the same time, the Russians decline to share in the Estonian admiration for their compatriots who took part in the Second World War on the side of the Nazis. It is noteworthy that this glorification, together with the Estonians' lack of proper attention paid to the Holocaust, shocked one French historian,⁹³ and that certain Estonian intellectuals advocate for a balanced approach to history and a tolerant attitude to different views.⁹⁴

In Latvia, the historical views of most Russian-speakers (who account for about 25 percent of the population) also differ drastically from the dominant historical discourse. According to Kevin Platt, "groups of the population, living side by side in the same space, have to forget and to remember different things to maintain the foundations of their identities." Various "modes of memory" co-exist in such a society as a result.⁹⁵

These tense ethnic relationships result in opposite views of the same history in Georgia as well.⁹⁶ For example, whereas Georgians perceive the dissolution of the historical Georgian state as a tragedy, the Abkhazians applaud the emergence of a separate Abkhazian principality as liberation from foreign rule. If the nineteenth century was a period of suffering for the Georgians, the Abkhazians point to an endowment of Georgians with privileges for their participation in the Caucasian war on the Russian side.⁹⁷ Whereas the Georgians are disappointed about the decline of the Georgian population in Georgia in the tsarist period,⁹⁸ the Abkhazians condemn the Georgian mass migration to Abkhazia in the late nineteenth century that caused the catastrophic decline of the Abkhazian population there.⁹⁹ In addition, while covering the Abkhazian struggle for independence in 1917–1921, the Abkhazian textbook refers to the Georgians as the "occupiers" and "assimilators."¹⁰⁰ Aside from the Abkhazians, the Ossetians, Armenians, and Azeri inhabitants of Georgia have their own views of local history. And the Lezgins, Talysh, and Kurds, not to mention the Armenians of the Nagorno-Karabakh, also have their own views of history in Azerbaijan.

In Kazakhstan, Russian-speakers also have their own versions of history and refuse to imagine the Soviet period in entirely negative terms.¹⁰¹ Tensions between the Kazakhs and the Russian-speakers were among the reasons for the Kazakhstan authorities to turn to the concept of "Eurasian civilization," designed to unite people

who share common history regardless of their ethnic roots, language, or religion. The idea was warmly welcomed by the first president Nursultan Nazarbaev, who used the terms of the “people of Kazakhstan” and “Kazakhstani nation” in his speeches.¹⁰² A special status of a “titular nation” is out of the question in Kazakhstan.

Textbooks and Interethnic Relationships in the Caucasus

In certain new states, an ethnocentric presentation of history is directed at close neighbors rather than Russia alone. This is especially evident in the Caucasian region. A new historical narrative in Armenia developed under a great impact of the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, and certain Armenian authors point to the “Karabakhization” of national history. In other words, a territorial conflict has become the trigger that actuated a struggle for independence. It was the Kremlin rather than Russia that caused negative feelings as the enemy’s ally. Moreover, the main enemy (together with traditional Turkey) was Azerbaijan.¹⁰³ The former peoples’ friendship has disappeared without a trace, to be replaced in the post-Soviet textbooks by a discussion of contested borders and ethnic conflicts.¹⁰⁴ At the same time, from the end of the twentieth century to the early twenty-first century, i.e. before the new wars from the early 2020s, the pain of the Karabakh issue relaxed. Armenian historians tried their best to control their emotions and used “diplomatic language” to avoid negative stereotypes.¹⁰⁵ Nonetheless, “Karabakhization” affected public discourse and the media, where heavy battles continue to be waged around “falsifications of history.”

In Azerbaijan, national enemies are identified first with the Russian empire and the USSR, and second with the Armenians. If the former harbor historical significance, the latter are imagined as an eternal evil guilty of almost all the Azeri misfortunes throughout history. As a result, an image of an anti-Turkic plot is constructed.¹⁰⁶ The Armenians are depicted as invaders who persistently encroached upon the Azeri lands.¹⁰⁷ In this sense, a “Karabakhization” of history affects Azerbaijan as well, where Soviet internationalism was replaced by post-Soviet ethnonationalism.¹⁰⁸ There is also a trend toward merging the “enemy” imagery into one and the same “Christian block”¹⁰⁹ that inevitably leads to the construction of a “clash of civilizations.” To describe ethnic riots and massacres of Muslims both in March 1918 and during the Karabakh war in the early 1990s, the Azeri historians use the term “genocide,”¹¹⁰ legalized by President Heydar Aliyev in March 1998. Ever since, it has acquired an unjustifiably broad meaning.¹¹¹ However, the Armenian pogroms of autumn 1918 as well as that in Sumgait in 1988 are entirely ignored.¹¹² Moreover, the textbook authors acknowledge that the Azerbaijani Bolshevik Meshadi Azizbekov was a member of the Baku Council, which contradicts the theory of genocide.

It is the Armenians, as ardent Bolshevik allies, who are accused of the failure of the first Azerbaijan republic, and a whole chapter is devoted to the struggle against the “Armenian aggression” of 1918. However, this “struggle” consists, in particular, in the fact that the Azerbaijan republic has recognized an independence of the Republic of Armenia, which was approved by the Ottoman state, and the authors

underline that this republic was established on the “Azeri lands.” Moreover, Armenia allegedly unreasonably claimed Karabakh and Zangezur, where, as the authors acknowledge, the Armenians lived. Thus, it turns out that the Azeri *beys* defended the latter from the “Armenian aggression.”¹¹³ In other words, the textbook authors translate political and social problems into ethnonational and religious ones. Notably, while manifesting an aspiration to unite with “southern Azerbaijan,” allegedly still suffering under “foreign rule,” the Azeri authors declined to acknowledge legitimacy of the Armenian aspiration to unite with their relatives in Nagorno-Karabakh. At the same time, according to some Azerbaijani historians, “national history corresponds to the demands of the current moment,” and a “moderately critical attitude” prevails in it.¹¹⁴ Some Azerbaijani teachers believe that the rejection of pan-Turkist construction will certainly benefit the enemies.¹¹⁵ The enemies are described in highly emotional language and are demonized. These sentiments peaked when the current president Ilham Aliyev demanded that all references to Armenian figures and their cultural contributions should be erased from the National Encyclopedia as though Armenians were non-existent in the history of Azerbaijan.¹¹⁶ These are evidently double standards, which characterize a nationalist view of history. An instrumental usage of history is unavoidable in this environment.

A similar trend is evident in Georgia, where historiographical revisionism is particularly prevalent in the public sphere. An ideology of ethnic conflicts was elaborated there by historians in particular, who used their knowledge to serve nationalist goals.¹¹⁷ The core idea of the Georgian national narrative was the historical trauma caused by both an elimination of the Georgian state after Kartlo-Kakheti (Eastern Georgia) was annexed in 1801 to the Russian Empire, and also a destruction of the democratic republic by the Red Army in 1921. In addition, there was a dissatisfaction with the creation of autonomous political units that was treated in Georgia as Kremlin’s cunning policy. Living in a “foreign state” was depicted as the darkest period in history.¹¹⁸ Certain Georgian historians claim that it is “difficult to find enemy imagery in the current textbooks on Georgian history.”¹¹⁹ Furthermore, they accuse the Abkhazians and South Ossetians of “propaganda of hatred and enmity.”¹²⁰

The Abkhazian and South Ossetian political claims, and even the Armenian aspiration to mark their presence in the history of Georgia, are perceived by Georgians as an encroachment upon the territorial integrity of their state. At the same time, they reveal intrigues of the “northern neighbor” behind the back of “separatists,” which adds fuel to the fire of Russophobia.¹²¹ After 2005, measures were taken in Georgia to mollify the “hate speech” toward Abkhazians and South Ossetians in the textbooks. The South Ossetians are presented as “an ethnic minority” who came to Georgia partly at the invitation of the Georgian rulers themselves, while the Abkhazians are referred to as the “indigenous population” of north-western Georgia, and their contribution to the formation of Georgian culture is acknowledged.¹²² Yet, the problem of ethnocentrism is still not over. By autumn 2011, a collection of teaching materials had come out in Tbilisi under the title of “How We Lived Together in Tbilisi in the 20th Century,” with the support of the European Association of History Teachers, designed to help teachers teach history in Grades 9–11 in Georgian secondary schools, with its multicultural and multi-confessional environment.

The project, launched after the August 2008 war, was designed to instill tolerance in schoolchildren. The collection was published not only in Georgian, but also in Russian, Azerbaijani, and Armenian, with training organized for teachers of various ethnic and religious backgrounds.¹²³

The book contained recollections of how peacefully the neighbors lived before and about the decent lives of the Russian Dukhobors in Georgia (and the statistics that by 2010 they had completely left Georgia are not mentioned in any way), about the good neighborly relations between Georgians and Armenians in the village of Baraleti and about the multinational population of Tskhinvali in the past.¹²⁴ Unfortunately, the book failed to avoid ethnocentric biases. Its authors accused the Kremlin of the turmoil of March 9, 1956, but failed to criticize its participants who then demonstrated loyalty to Stalin.¹²⁵ Consequently, the condemnation of the personality cult was called into question. They discussed how Georgia gave refuge both to Spanish people during the civil war, and then, to refugees of World War II. But they did not mention that all this has been an implementation of the Kremlin's decision rather than an initiative of Georgian authorities. When the Georgian government itself had to make a decision on the return of the Meskhetian Turks from exile, this provoked resistance to such an extent that even those who managed to come back were pushed out by the Georgian nationalists in 1989–1991.¹²⁶ The Georgian authorities developed a program for the Meskhetian repatriation only in 1996,¹²⁷ but later the European Council had to intervene for it to be implemented.¹²⁸ While the discrimination against Meskhetian Turks in the Krasnodar Krai in Russia was emphasized, Georgia's unwillingness to accept them was not discussed as well as the fact that the problem remains unresolved (it is noted that even in 2010 a great part of the Meskhetians still wanted to come back). All of these facts do not fit the narrative of an inborn Georgian hospitality and tolerance, and are nowhere considered.

The authors recall that Jews formerly lived in Tskhinvali, but fail to note that they left years ago. Children are informed that the local cemetery was destroyed in the 2008 war, but they are not told that this was caused by a Georgian bombardment, which entirely destroyed the historical Jewish quarter where the Ossetians tried to save themselves in the oldest synagogue in Europe. The collection describes the suffering of the orphan children, the victims of the recent ethnic conflicts, but mentions only those children who found refuge in Georgia; those from the other side were ignored. Thus, schoolchildren are tempted to accuse the others of the conflict and the sad fate of the orphans. The documents about the Georgian-Ossetian relationships in the 1980s–1990s placed an emphasis on the “Ossetian and Abkhazian separatists,” yet no documents are provided on the chauvinist propaganda of the Georgian nationalists led by Zviad Gamsakhurdia.¹²⁹ A photo of the Soviet soldiers in Tskhinvali was published, but nothing is said of the Georgian nationalist rallies and their aggressive slogans.¹³⁰ Instead, the declaration of the Georgian Parliament about the “terror and apartheid” was referred to as allegedly organized by the “Abkhazian separatists.”¹³¹ As a result, the “tolerant textbook” proves to be open propaganda, detailing the “image of enemy.” A reasonable criticism of Soviet politics is combined with an apologetic stance toward Georgia. Thus, while outside agents are accused of the dissolution of the state, the contribution of Georgian nationalists

is not up for debate. Yet, it is healthy self-criticism that might help to overcome radical ethnocentrism and to inculcate tolerance in young people. Moreover, the events of 1992 and 1993 are taken in Abkhazia as the “Patriotic War,” which helped Abkhazia to assert its right to be a sovereign state.¹³²

I have quite intentionally placed emphasis on Georgia because, in recent years, it moved closer toward democracy than many other post-Soviet states. Yet even there the problem of ethnocentrism (including in textbooks) is still not removed from the agenda. Thus, educational literature in most of the post-Soviet states still suffers from ethnocentrism. To be sure, in most cases this literature aims at internal consumption and does not affect international relationships. The most complex situation is observed in regions with frozen conflicts. This applies mostly to the Southern Caucasus and Moldova, with the more recent addition of Ukraine. At the same time, the problem is not only with ethnocentrism. The history of most of the new states is very complex and controversial. In addition, the dominant historical narrative competes with the particular views of the past manifested by ethnic minorities. It does not seem like this problem would disappear soon. Yet, this is not just a post-Soviet problem. It affects many countries, including the United States. Therefore, as Arthur Schlesinger pointed out, in this environment, national identity cannot be based on some shared national narrative, let alone a “cultural code.” It makes more sense to base it on common institutions somehow linked to cultural values.¹³³ However, such institutes are mistrusted because they do not work at all or do not work properly in most of the post-Soviet states. This is the major problem to be solved to prevent further conflicts, and therefore is the direction in which further research in this area should be carried out.

Acknowledgment

This chapter was prepared in the framework of a research grant funded by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation in the mid-2010s (Grant ID: 075-15-2022-328).

Notes

- 1 Victor Shnirelman, *The Value of the Past: Myths, Identity and Politics in Transcaucasia* (Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 2001); Victor Shnirelman, *Byt Alanami. Intellektualy i Politika na Severnom Kavkaze v XX Veke* (Moscow: NLO, 2006).
- 2 Albrecht Martiny, “Das Verhältnis von Politik und Geschichtsschreibung in der Historiographie der sowjetischen Nationalitäten seit den sechziger Jahren,” *Jahrbücher für die Geschichte Osteuropas* 27, no. 2 (1979): 267–68.
- 3 Gregory Areshian and Levon Abrahamian, “Soveshhanie v Otdelenii Istorii Akademii Nauk SSSR,” *Vestnik obshchestvennykh nauk AN Armianskoj SSR* 6 (1988): 93–96.
- 4 Victor Shnirelman, “Natsionalnye Simvoly, Jetnoistoricheskie Mify i Etnopolitika,” in *Teoreticheskie Problemy Istoricheskikh Issledovanij. Vyp. 2*, edited by Yefim Pivovar, 118–47 (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Moskovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 1999); Victor Shnirelman, “The Myth of Remote Ancestors and Ethnic Identity,” in *Monuments and Identities in the Caucasus. Karabagh, Nakhichevan and Azerbaijan in Contemporary Geopolitical Conflict* (Texts and Studies in Eastern Christianity), eds. Haroutioun Khatchadourian and I. Dorfmann-Lazarev, 179–205 (Leiden: Brill, 2023).

- 5 Nino Chikovani, "Narrativ Edinogo Kavkaza: Popytki Preodolenija Konfliktnoj Pamjati," in *Mnogolikaja Klio: Boi za Istoriju na Postsovetskom Prostranstve*, edited by Viktor Shnirelman, Zhulduzbek Abylhozhin, and Sergey Abashin, 99–112 (Braunschweig: GEI, 2010), 109.
- 6 Abdumomun Mamaraimov, "Ideia Napisanija Obshej Istorii Centralnoj Azii: Vzgliad iz Kazakhstana," *Fergana.ru*, May 26, 2009. Accessed June 2024. <http://www.ferghana.ru/news.php?id=12038>
- 7 Abdumomun Mamaraimov, "Ideia Napisanija Obshej Istorii Centralnoj Azii: Vzgliad iz Kazakhstana," *Fergana.ru*, June 10, 2009. Accessed June 2024. <http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=6199>
- 8 Nikolai Danilevsky, *Rossija i Evropa: Vzgliad na Kulturnye i Politicheskie Otnoshenija Slavjanskogo Mira k Germano-Romanskomu* (Saint Petersburg: N. Strahov, 1895); Oswald Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes: Umriss einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte* (Wien: Verlag Braumüller, 1918–1922).
- 9 Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History, 1934-1961* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961).
- 10 For more on this, see: Victor Shnirelman, "Civilizatsionnyj Podhod kak Natsionalnaia Ideia," in *Natsionalizm v Mirovoj Istorii*, edited by Valerij Tishkov and Viktor Shnirelman, 82–105 (Moscow: Nauka, 2007); Moshe Gammer and Vera Kaplan, 'Post-Soviet Narratives of the Conquest of the Caucasus', *Jahrbücher für die Geschichte Osteuropas* 61, no. 1 (2013): 34–36.
- 11 Mihail Barg, "O Kategorii 'Tsvivilizatsiia'." *Novaiia i novejshaia Istorii* 5 (1990): 25–40; here, 39–40.
- 12 Victoria Ukolova, "Mezhkulturnyj Dialog v Shkonykh Kursakh Istorii," in *Otvetstvennost Istorika: Prepodavanie Istorii v Globalizirujushhemsia Obshestve: Materialy Mezhdunarodnoj Konferencii, Moskva, 15–17 Sentjabrja 1998 G.*, edited by Karl Pellens, 37–43 (Moscow: Izd-vo Instituta vseobshhej istorii RAN (IVI), 2000), 43. See also: Vera Kaplan, "History Teaching in Post-Soviet Russia: Coping with Antithetical," in *Educational Reform in Post-Soviet Russia*, ed. Ben Eklof, Larry Holmes, and Vera Kaplan, 247–71 (London: Frank Cass, 2005).
- 13 Mihail Barg, "Tsvivilizatsionnyj Podhod k Istorii. Dan Konjunktury ili Trebovanie Nauki?" *Kommunist* 3 (1991): 27–35.
- 14 Marlène Laruelle, *Russian Eurasianism: An Ideology of Empire* (Washington D. C. and Baltimore: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).
- 15 Nikolay Danilevsky, *Rossija i Evropa. Vzgliad na Kulturnye i Politicheskie Otnoshenija Slavjanskogo Mira k Germano-Romanskomu* (Saint Petersburg: N. Strahov, 1895), 69.
- 16 Gennady Zyuganov, "Doklad na IV Sezde KPRF." *Ekonomicheskaja gazeta* 3 (1997), 3; Aleksandr S. Panarin, "Evrazijskij Proekt v Global'nom Mirostistemnom Kontekste." *Vostok* 2 (1995): 71.
- 17 This issue already alarmed Count Nikolai Trubetskoi in the 1920s. See: Victor Shnirelman, "Evrazijskoe i Nacional'nyj Vopros." *Etnograficheskoe Obozrenie* 2 (1997): 112–25; here, 118.
- 18 Victor Shnirelman, "New Racism, 'Clash of Civilizations' and Russia," in *Russian Nationalism and the National Reassertion of Russia*, ed. Marlène Laruelle, 125–144 (London: Routledge, 2009); Victor Shnirelman, "Porog Tolerantnosti": *Ideologija i Praktika Novogo Razizma, vols 1–2* (Moscow: NLO, 2011).
- 19 "Konceptsiia Novogo Uchebno-Metodicheskogo Kompleksa po Otechestvennoj Istorii." *Rossijskoe istoricheskoe obshhestvo*, August 13, 2015. Accessed June 2024. <http://rushistory.org/proekty/kontseptsija-novogo-uchebno-metodicheskogo-kompleksa-po-otchestvennoj-istorii.html>
- 20 Victor Shnirelman, "Russia Between a Civilization and a Civic Nation: Secular and Religious Uses of Civilizational Discourse During Putin's Third Term," in *Russia as*

- Civilization: Ideological Discourses in Politics, Media and Academia*, ed. Kåre Johan Mjør and Sanna Turoma, 59–86 (London: Routledge, 2020).
- 21 Olga Vendina, Vladimir Kolosov, and Alexander Sebentsov, *Javljaetsja li Pribaltika Chastyu Postsovetskogo Prostranstva?* (Moscow: Russkaja kniga, 2016), 18–19.
 - 22 Nino Chikovani, “Narrativ Edinogo Kavkaza: Popytki Preodoleniia Konfliktnoj Pamiaty,” in *Mnogolikaia Kliio: Boi za Istoriju na Postsovetskom Prostranstve*, edited by Viktor Shnirelman, Zhulduzbek Abylhozhin, and Sergey Abashin, 99–112 (Braunschweig: GEI, 2010), 106–107.
 - 23 Nurbulat Masanov, “Rossiia v Kazakhskikh Uchebnikakh Istorii,” in *Rossija i Strany Baltii, Tsentralnoj i Vostochnoj Evropy, Juzhnogo Kavkaza, Central’noj Azii: Starye i Novye Obrazy v Sovremennyh Uchebnikakh Istorii*, edited by Falk Bomsdorf and Genadij Bordjugov, 301–12 (Moscow: AIRO-HH, 2003), 301.
 - 24 Kaplan, “History Teaching in Post–Soviet Russia,” 247–71.
 - 25 George Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses* (New York: Fertig, 1975).
 - 26 Shnirelman, “Natsionalnye Simvoly,” 118–47; Victor Shnirelman, “Etnotsentricheskie versii istorii i konflikty,” in *Puti mira na Severnom Kavkaze: nezavisimyj ekspertnyj doklad*, ed. Valery Tishkov, 113–18 (Moscow: IJeA, 1999); Victor Shnirelman, “V poiskah prestizhnyh predkov. Etonatsionalizm i shkolnye uchebniki,” in *Otvetsvennost Istorika: Prepodavanie Istorii v Globalizirujushhemsja Obshhestve: Materialy Mezhdunarodnoj Konferencii, Moskva, 15–17 Sentjabrja 1998 G.*, edited by Karl Pellens, 151–66 (Moscow: Izd-vo Instituta vseobshhej istorii RAN (IVI), 2000); Victor Shnirelman, “Mif o proshlom i natsionalizm,” in *Populiarnaia literatura: opyt kulturnogo mifotvorchestva v Amerike i v Rossii*, ed. Tatiana Venediktova (Moscow: University of Moscow Press, 2003): 68–79; Victor Shnirelman, “Ocharovanie sedoj drevnosti: mify o proishozhdenii v sovremennyh Uchebnikakh,” *Neprikosnovennyj zapas* 37 (2004): 79–87; Victor Shnirelman, “The Myths of Descent: The Views of the Remote Past, and School Textbooks in Contemporary Russia,” *Public Archaeology* 3, no. 1 (2003): 33–51; Victor Shnirelman, *Pogone za predkami: Jetnogenez i politika* (Moscow: Nestor-Istoriia, 2024).
 - 27 Victor Shnirelman, “From Pluralism to Monochrome Society? How School Historical Education was Shaped in Putin’s Russia,” *Dimensioni e problemi della ricerca storica* 1 (2021): 99–126.
 - 28 Stephen Webber, *School, Reform, and Society in the New Russia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 68–72, 96–98; Irina Zhukovskaya, “Chemu My Uchim, Prepodavaia Istoriju.” *Prepodavanie istorii v shkole* 9, no. 40 (2002): 40; Damira Umetbaeva, “Paradoxes of Hegemonic Discourse in Post–Soviet Kyrgyzstan: History Textbooks’ and History Teachers’ Attitudes Towards the Soviet Past,” *Central Asian Affairs* 2, no. 3 (2015): 303–304; Idem. “Official rhetoric and individual perception of the Soviet past: implications for nation building in Kyrgyzstan,” *REGION: Regional studies of Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia*, vol. 4, no. 1. (2015): 89–92.
 - 29 Ilham Abbasov, “O Polze i Vrede Istorikov dlia Zhizni ili Uroki Prepodavanija Natsionalnoj Istorii v Srednej Shkole.” *EuroKaukAsia*, November 17, 2010. Accessed June 2024. http://www.eurokaukasia.de/529/%D0%BE_%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%BB%D1%8C%D0%B7%D0%B5/; Bahodir Sidikov, “Zwischen Bourdieu und postkolonialer Theorie: zur Analyse postsowjetischer Schulbücher für das Fach Geschichte (am Beispiel Aserbaidshans),” in *Jahrbuch Aserbaidshansforschung. Beiträge aus Politik, Wirtschaft, Geschichte und Literatur*, vol. 2, ed. Mardan Aghayev and Ruslana Suleymanova, 222–47 (Berlin: Dr. Köster, 2008); Umetbaeva, “Paradoxes of Hegemonic Discourse,” 300–304.
 - 30 Philip Chapkovsky, “Uchebnik Istorii i Ideologicheskii Defitsit,” *Pro et Contra*, 1–2 (2011): 117–33.
 - 31 Maria Yanovskaya and Tilav Rasul-Zadeh, “Ih Vyrastil Stalin. Otnoshenie k Sovetskoj Istorii v Tsentralnoj Azii,” *Fergana.ru*, December 24, 2009. Accessed June 2024. <http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=6414>
 - 32 Victor Shnirelman, “Poleznye Mify? Shkolnye Uchebniki Istorii i Natsionalizmy v Tsentralnoj Azii i na Kavkaze,” in *Mnogolikaja Kliio: Boi za Istoriju na Postsovetskom*

- Prostranstve*, edited by Victor Shnirelman, Zhulduzbek Abylhozhin, and Sergey Abashin, 9–34 (Braunschweig: GEI, 2010).
- 33 Victoria Ukolova, “Mezhkulturnyj Dialog v Shkolnyh Kursakh Istorii,” in *Otvetstvennost Istorika: Prepodavanie Istorii v Globalizirujushhemsja Obshhestve: Materialy Mezhdunarodnoj Konferencii, Moskva, 15–17 Sentjabrja 1998 G.*, edited by Karl Pellens, 37–43 (Moscow: Izd-vo Instituta vseobshhej istorii RAN (IVI), 2000), 40.
 - 34 Artjom Ulunjan, “Istoriia Central’noj Azii: Slishkom ‘Bolshaja Igra.’” *Fergana.ru*, March 16, 2007. Accessed June 2024. <http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=4985>; Victor Shnirelman, “Prezidenty i Arheologija, ili chto Ishhut Politiki v Drevnosti,” *Ab Imperio* 1 (2009): 279–323.
 - 35 Karl Ajmermaher and Gennadij Bordjugov, eds. *Natsionalnye Istorii v Sovetskom i Postsovetskikh Gosudarstvakh* (Moscow: Friedrich Naumann Foundation, 2003); Falk Bomsdorf and Gennadij Bordjugov, *Rossia i Strany Baltii, Central’noj i Vostochnoj Evropy, Juzhnogo Kavkaza, Tsentralnoj Azii: Starye i Novye Obrazy v Sovremennykh Uchebnikakh Istorii* (Moscow: AIRO-HH, 2003); Falk Bomsdorf and Gennadij Bordjugov, *Natsionalnye Istorii na Postsovetskom Prostranstve – II* (Moscow: Friedrich Naumann Foundation, 2009).
 - 36 On the ethnicization of all information in the Estonian media, see, for example: Vendina et al., *Javljaetsja li Pribaltika Chastyu Postsovetskogo Prostranstva?*, 14–16.
 - 37 A *lubok* is a type of Russian popular print, using simple and often sequential graphics derived from religious and popular stories.
 - 38 “Periferijnost ‘Tsentra’ v Sovremennykh Natsionalnykh Istoricheskikh Narrativakh,” *Ab Imperio* 1 (2012): 47–101.
 - 39 Kaplan, “History Teaching in Post–Soviet Russia,” 261.
 - 40 Zhanat Kundakbayeva, “V Poiskakh Istoricheskogo Narrativa Kazahstana: ‘Dialog Pamjatej ili ‘Natsionalnaia Pamiat,’” in *Natsionalnye Istorii na Postsovetskom Prostranstve – II*, edited by Falk Bomsdorf and Gennadij Bordjugov, 265–96 (Moscow: Friedrich Naumann Foundation, 2009), 280–81; Maria Yanovskaya, “Uzbekistan: Sovetskaia Istorii v Pervom Chtenii,” *Fergana.ru*, November 16, 2008, Accessed June 2024. <http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=5959>; Sergey Abashin, “Recenzija na Uzbekskie Uchebniki Istorii: Vzgliad iz Rossii,” in *Mnogolikaja Klio: Boi za Istoriju na Postsovetskom Prostranstve*, edited by Victor Shnirelman, Zhulduzbek Abylhozhin, and Sergey Abashin, 41–51 (Braunschweig: GEI, 2010).
 - 41 Ronald Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993).
 - 42 Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001).
 - 43 Alexander Iskandaryan and Babken Harutyunyan, “Armeniiia: ‘Karabahizaciia’ Natsionalnoj Istorii,” in *Natsionalnye Istorii v Sovetskom i Postsovetskikh Gosudarstvakh*, edited by Karl Ajmermaher and Gennadij Bordjugov, 147–60 (Moscow: AIRO-HH, 1999), 156.
 - 44 Zhanat Kundakbayeva and Didar Kassymova, “Remembering and Forgetting: The State Policy of Memorializing Stalin’s Repression in Post–Soviet Kazakhstan,” *Nationalities Papers* 44, no. 4 (2016): 611–27. The mood is changing, however, in contemporary Kazakhstan; see: Zhulduzbek Abylhozhin, M.L. Akulov, and A.V. Caj, eds. *Zhivaia pamiat. Stalinizm v Kazahstane—Proshloe. Pamiat. Preodolenie* (Almaty: Dajk-Press, 2019), 71–83; Golod Asharshylyk, “1928–1934. Dokumentalnaja hronika,” in *3-h tt. Pod*, edited by M. Ashimbaeva and N. Abdirova (Almaty: Atamyra, 2021).
 - 45 Oleg Khlevniuk, *Hozjain: Stalin i utverzhdenie stalinskoj diktatury* (Moscow: ROSSPJeN, 2010), 131. Also see: Robert Kindler, “Opfer ohne Täter. Kasachische und ukrainische Erinnerung an den Hunger 1932/1933,” *Osteuropa* 62, no. 3 (2012): 105–20. In Ukraine, the attitude towards the Holodomor was until recently far from unambiguous. See the research project “Восприятие молодежью новых независимых государств истории советского и постсоветского периодов,” (April–May 2009), and a short analytical report: Issledovatel’skii Proekt, “Vosprijatie Molodezhju Novykh Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv Istorii Sovetskogo i Postsovetskogo Periodov,” *Evrasijskij monitor* (2009), 19.

- 46 Arunas Vishnauskas, “Rossiia v Litovskikh Uchebnikakh Istorii,” in *Rossiia i Strany Baltii, Tsentralnoj i Vostochnoj Evropy, Juzhnogo Kavkaza, Tsentralnoj Azii: Starye i Novye Obrazy v Sovremennykh Uchebnikakh Istorii*, edited by Falk Bomsdorf and Gennadij Bordjugov, 149–64 (Moscow: AIRO-HH, 2003).
- 47 Tigran Matosyan, “‘Inventing Tradition’: The Theme of Sovietisation in History of Soviet and post-Soviet Armenia,” in *Myths and Conflict in the South Caucasus. Volume 1. Instrumentalization of Historical Narratives*, ed. Oksana Karpenko and Jana Javakhishvili, 54–71 (London: International Alert, 2013).
- 48 Matosyan, “‘Inventing Tradition’: The Theme of Sovietisation in History of Soviet and post-Soviet Armenia,” 67–68. The situation has recently begun to change, however.
- 49 Yasemin Kilit Aklar, “Nation and History in Azerbaijani School Textbooks,” *Ab Imperio*, 2 (2005): 469–97.
- 50 Yasemin Kilit Aklar, “Nation and History in Azerbaijani School Textbooks,” *Ab Imperio*, 2 (2005): 477–78.
- 51 Veli Aliyev et al., *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana. Uchebnik dlja 6-go Klassa Obshheobrazovateknykh Shkol* (Baku: Təhsil, 2017), 7–18. On this, see: Kilit Aklar, “Nation and History in Azerbaijani School Textbooks,” 478–81; Sergey Rummyantsev, “Kak Rasskazyvajut Nacionalnuju Istoriju Detjam v Azerbajdzhanе,” *EuroKaukAsia*, November 17, 2010. Accessed June 2024. <http://www.eurokaukasia.de>. This trend emerged in the late Soviet decades, and its supporters had strong positions in the main universities of Azerbaijan, while their opponents were associated with academic science. The pan-Turkist concept won in the early years of independent Azerbaijan, when the leaders of the People’s Front who shared it came to power. See Arif Yusunov, “Mify i Obrazy ‘Vraga’ v Istoricheskoj Nauke i Uchebnikakh po Istorii Nezavisimogo Azerbajdzhana (I),” *Nauchnoe obshhestvo kavkazovedov*, October 11, 2011. Accessed June 2024. <http://www.kavkazoved.info/news/2011/10/11/mify-i-obrazy-vraga-v-istoricheskoy-nauke-azerbajdzhana-i.html>
- 52 Yagub Makhmudlu, Rafik Khalilov, and Sabir Agayev, *Otechestvo. Uchebnik dlja 5 Klassa* (Baku: MoE, 2003), 5.
- 53 Sevil Huseynova, “Azerbaijan in the Late 20th–Early 21st Centuries: Ethnic Boundaries in the Context of Relations with ‘Neighbours’,” in *The South Caucasus and Turkey: History Lessons of the 20th Century*, ed. Sergey Rummyantsev, 120–44 (Tbilisi: Heinrich Böll Foundation, 2012), 132.
- 54 Kilit Aklar, “Nation and History in Azerbaijani School Textbooks,” 484.
- 55 Arif Yusunov, “Mify i Obrazy ‘Vraga’ v Istoricheskoj Nauke i Uchebnikakh po Istorii Nezavisimogo Azerbajdzhana (I),” *Nauchnoe obshhestvo kavkazovedov*, October 11, 2011. Accessed June 2024. <http://www.kavkazoved.info/news/2011/10/11/mify-i-obrazy-vraga-v-istoricheskoy-nauke-azerbajdzhana-i.html>; Arif Yusunov, “Mify i Obrazy ‘Vraga’ v Istoricheskoj Nauke i Uchebnikakh po Istorii Nezavisimogo Azerbajdzhana (II),” *Nauchnoe obshhestvo kavkazovedov*, October 12, 2011. Accessed June 2024. <http://www.kavkazoved.info/news/2011/10/12/mify-i-obrazy-vraga-v-istoricheskoy-nauke-azerbajdzhana-ii.html>.
- 56 Victor Shnirelman, “Natsionalnye Simvolj,” 118–47; Ilham Abbasov, “O Polze i Vrede Istorikov dlja Zhizni ili Uroki Prepodavanija Natsionalnoj Istorii v Srednej Shkole.”
- 57 Eldar Ismailov and Ilgar Niftaliyev, “Problemy Razvitiya Natsionalnoj Istorii v Azerbajdzhanе,” in *Natsionalnye Istorii na Postsovetskom Prostranstve – II*, edited by Falk Bomsdorf and Gennadij Bordjugov, 201–24 (Moscow: Friedrich Naumann Foundation, 2009), 206.
- 58 Kilit Aklar, “Nation and History in Azerbaijani School Textbooks,” 484–85.
- 59 Yagub Makhmudlu et al., *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana. Uchebnik dlja 7-go Klassa Obshheobrazovateknykh Shkol* (Baku: Təhsil, 2014), Chaps 2–3. On this see: Ilham Abbasov and Sergey Rummyantsev, “Sposoby Uvekovechit Proshloe: Analiz Obrazov Drugikh v Uchebnikakh Istorii Azerbajdzhana,” in *Sovremennye Uchebniki Istorii na Juzhnom Kavkaze*, edited by Ljubosh Veseli, 33–55 (Prague: Asociaciija mezhdunarodnyh vo-prosov, 2008), 41–42.

- 60 Yagub Makhmudlu et al., *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana. Uchebnik dlja 7-go Klassa Obshheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*, Chap. 3.
- 61 Arif Yunusov, *Islam v Azerbajdzhanе* (Baku: Zaman, 2004), 86; Yunusov, “Mify i Obrazy ‘Vraga’ v Istoricheskoi Nauke i Uchebnikakh po Istorii Nezavisimogo Azerbajdzhana (I).”
- 62 Yagub Makhmudlu et al., *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana. Uchebnik dlja 9-go Klassa Obshheobrazovatelnykh Shkol* (Baku: Sharg-Garb, 2016).
- 63 Ilham Abbasov, “The History of Azerbaijan: Deconstructing the ‘Age-Old Friendship’ and the ‘Deadly Feud’ Myths,” in *The South Caucasus and Turkey: History Lessons of the 20th Century*, ed. Sergey Romyantsev (Tbilisi: Heinrich Böll Foundation, 2012), 33. A 2009 opinion poll also showed a positive attitude of Azerbaijani residents towards Narimanov and other Soviet figures-Azerbaijanis. See “Vospriiatie Molodezhu Novykh Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv Istorii Sovetskogo i Postsovetskogo Periodov,” *Evrazijskij monitor*, 2009, 37.
- 64 Shargiya Mammadova, “Rossiia V Azerbajdzhanskih Uchebnikakh Istorii,” in *Rossiia i Strany Baltii, Tsentralnoj i Vostochnoj Evropy, Juzhnogo Kavkaza, Tsentralnoj Azii: Starye i Nove Obrazy v Sovremennykh Uchebnikakh Istorii*, edited by Falk Bomsdorf and Gennadij Bordjugov, 223–35 (Moscow: AIRO-HH, 2003), 223.
- 65 Makhmudlu et al., *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana*, Chap. 8.
- 66 Leila Guseynova and Sevil Bakhranova, *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana 7. Metodicheskoe posobie* (Baku: Təhsil, 2018), 51–53.
- 67 Makhmudlu et al., *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana. Uchebnik dlja 9-go Klassa Obshheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*, Chaps. 11, 28, 35, 38, 45.
- 68 Makhmudlu et al., *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana. Uchebnik dlja 9-go Klassa Obshheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*, Chap. 1.
- 69 Makhmudlu et al., *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana. Uchebnik dlja 9-go Klassa Obshheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*, Chap. 1.
- 70 Shargiya Mammadova, “Rossiia V Azerbajdzhanskih Uchebnikakh Istorii,” 223–35; Kilit Aklar, “Nation and History in Azerbaijani School Textbooks,” 485–86.
- 71 Sevil Huseynova, “Azerbaijan in the Late 20th–Early 21st Centuries: Ethnic Boundaries in the Context of Relations with ‘Neighbours’,” 134–37.
- 72 Sevil Huseynova, “Azerbaijan in the Late 20th–Early 21st Centuries: Ethnic Boundaries in the Context of Relations with ‘Neighbours’,” 141.
- 73 Oliver Reisner, “Interpreting the Past—From Political Manipulations to Critical Analysis?” *Caucasian Analytical Digest*, 8 (2009): 3–4; Nino Chikovani, “The De-Sovietisation and Nationalisation of History in Post-Soviet Georgia,” in *Myths and Conflict in the South Caucasus. Volume 1. Instrumentalization of Historical Narratives*, ed. Oksana Karpenko and Jana Javakhishvili (London: International Alert, 2013), 78–79.
- 74 Nina Tsikhistavi, “Rossija v Gruzinskih Uchebnikakh Istorii,” in *Rossiia i Strany Baltii, Tsentralnoj i Vostochnoj Evropy, Juzhnogo Kavkaza, Tsentralnoj Azii: Starye i Nove Obrazy v Sovremennykh Uchebnikakh Istorii*, edited by Falk Bomsdorf and Gennadij Bordjugov, 243–69 (Moscow: AIRO-HH, 2003).
- 75 Oliver Reisner, “Interpreting the Past—From Political Manipulations to Critical Analysis?” 3.
- 76 Nino Chikovani and Ketevan Kakitelashvili, “Gruziia. Izobrazhenie ‘Drugikh v Uchebnikakh Istorii dlja Obshheobrazovatelnykh Shkol,’” in *Sovremennye Uchebniki Istorii na Juzhnom Kavkaze*, edited by Ljubosh Veseli, 57–82 (Prague: Asociacija mezhduarodnykh voprosov, 2008).
- 77 Reisner, “Interpreting the Past—From Political Manipulations to Critical Analysis?” 4.
- 78 Research Project, *Vospriiatie Molodezhu Novykh Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv Istorii Sovetskogo i Postsovetskogo Periodov* (NP ‘Evrazijskij monitor,’ 2009), 18.
- 79 Nino Chikovani and Ketevan Kakitelashvili, “Gruziia,” 76–77.
- 80 George Hewitt, “Abkhazia and Georgia: Time for Reassessment,” *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 15, no. 2 (2009): 183–96.

- 81 Nino Chikovani, "The De-Sovietisation and Nationalisation of History in Post-Soviet Georgia," 84–87; Christofer Berglund, "Forward to David the Builder! Georgia's (Re) turn to Language-Centered Nationalism," *Nationalities papers* 44, no. 4 (2016): 522–42.
- 82 Nino Chikovani and Ketevan Kakitelashvili, "Gruziia," 81.
- 83 Ketevan Kakitelashvili, "Rekonstruktsiia Proshlogo v Abhazskikh i Gruzinskikh Shkolnykh Uchebnikakh po Istorii," in *Mnogolikaja Klio: Boi za Istoriju na Postsovet-skom Prostranstve*, edited by Victor Shnirelman, Zhulduzbek Abylhozhin, and Sergey Abashin, 75–98 (Braunschweig: GEI, 2010), 76.
- 84 Ketevan Kakitelashvili, "Rekonstruktsiia Proshlogo v Abhazskikh i Gruzinskikh Shkolnykh Uchebnikakh po Istorii," in *Mnogolikaja Klio: Boi za Istoriju na Postsovet-skom Prostranstve*, edited by Victor Shnirelman, Zhulduzbek Abylhozhin, and Sergey Abashin, 75–98 (Braunschweig: GEI, 2010), 78.
- 85 Ketevan Kakitelashvili, "Rekonstruktsiia Proshlogo v Abhazskikh i Gruzinskikh Shkolnykh Uchebnikakh po Istorii," in *Mnogolikaja Klio: Boi za Istoriju na Postsovet-skom Prostranstve*, edited by Victor Shnirelman, Zhulduzbek Abylhozhin, and Sergey Abashin, 75–98 (Braunschweig: GEI, 2010), 81; Nino Chikovani, "The De-Sovietisation and Nationalisation of History in Post-Soviet Georgia," 87–88.
- 86 Giorgi Maisuradze, "Time Turned Back: On the Use of History in Georgia," *Caucasian Analytical Digest* 8 (17 July 2009): 13–14.
- 87 Otar Janelidze and Giorgi Siamashvili, "Po Sledam 'Belykh Piaten' Istorii Gruzii," in *Natsionalnye Istorii na Postsovetiskom Prostranstve – II*, edited by Falk Bomsdorf and Gennadij Bordjugov, 244–64 (Moscow: Friedrich Naumann Foundation, 2009), 256–57.
- 88 Kalandar Sadykov, "Esli Ty Streljaesh v Istoriju iz Pistoleta, to Ona Vystrelit v Tebia iz Pushki. Opros Obshhestvennogo Mneniia ot 'Fergany.Ru'." *Fergana.ru*, October 29, 2004. Accessed June 2024. <https://www.fergananews.com/article.php?id=3267>.
- 89 Yanovskaya, "Uzbekistan."
- 90 Yuri Chernogaev, "Novye Uzbekskie Uchebniki po Istorii Imejut Antirossiiskuiu Napravlennost," *Fergana.ru*, March 12, 2003. Accessed June 2024. <http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=1467>
- 91 Andres Adamson, "Natsionalnaia Istoriiia Estonii v Kontekste Evropeizacii Proshlogo i 'Vojny Pamiatnikov'," in *Natsionalnye Istorii na Postsovetiskom Prostranstve – II*, edited by Falk Bomsdorf and Gennadij Bordjugov, 187–94 (Moscow: Friedrich Naumann Foundation, 2009).
- 92 Toomas Karjaharm, "Nekotorye Problemy Prepodavaniia Istorii Estonii v Shkolakh s Russkim Jazykom Obuchenija," in *Povorotnye Momenty Istorii Estonii*, edited by Toomas Karjaharm and Andres Adamson, 7–16 (Tallinn: Argo, 2008), 10–11.
- 93 Jean-Pierre Minodieu, "Dve Pravdy o Poslednej Vojne," in *Povorotnye Momenty Istorii Estonii*, ed. Toomas Karjaharm and Andres Adamson, 72–75 (Tallinn: Argo, 2008).
- 94 Toomas Karjaharm, "Nekotorye Problemy," 7–16; Jaan Kaplinski, "Nashe Neizbezhnoe Protivostojanie," in *Povorotnye Momenty Istorii Estonii*, edited by Toomas Karjaharm and Andres Adamson, 76–78 (Tallinn: Argo, 2008).
- 95 Kevin Platt, "Okkupacija vs. Kolonizacija: Istoriiia, Postkolonialnost i Geograficheskaja Identichnost. Sluchaj Latvii," *Neprikosnovennyj zapas* 3, no. 71 (2010): 49–62; Kevin Platt, "Okkupacija protiv kolonizacii: kak Istoriiia postsovetiskoj Latvii pomogaet provincializirovat' Evropu," *Politicheskaja kontseptologija*, 2 (2013): 100–13. See also: Viktor Makarov, "Boi za Istoriju v Latvii," in *Natsionalnye Istorii na Postsovetiskom Prostranstve – II*, edited by Falk Bomsdorf and Gennadij Bordjugov, 148–52 (Moscow: Friedrich Naumann Foundation, 2009).
- 96 Ketevan Kakitelashvili, "Rekonstruktsiia Proshlogo v Abhazskikh i Gruzinskikh Shkolnykh Uchebnikakh po Istorii," in *Mnogolikaja Klio: Boi za Istoriju na Postsovetiskom Prostranstve*, edited by Victor Shnirelman, Zhulduzbek Abylhozhin, and Sergey Abashin, 75–98 (Braunschweig: GEI, 2010), 75–97; Nino Chikovani, "The De-Sovietisation and Nationalisation of History in Post-Soviet Georgia," 88–91. Cf.: Victor Shnirelman, *The Value of the Past. Myths, Identity and Politics in Transcaucasia*, 215–97.

- 97 Ketevan Kakitelashvili, "Rekonstruktsiia Proshlogo," 85.
- 98 Nina Tskhistavi, "Rossiia v Gruzinskikh Uchebnikakh Istorii."
- 99 Oleg Bgažba and Stanislav Lakoba, *Istoriia Abhazii. S Drevnejshikh Vremen do Nashikh Dnej. Uchebnik dlja 10–11 Klassov* (Suhum: MoE, 2015), 270–72; Ketevan Kakitelashvili, "Rekonstruktsiia Proshlogo," 86–87.
- 100 Oleg Bgažba and Stanislav Lakoba, *Istoriia Abhazii. S Drevnejshikh Vremen do Nashikh Dnej. Uchebnik dlja 10–11 Klassov* (Suhum: MoE, 2015), 270–72; Ketevan Kakitelashvili, "Rekonstruktsiia Proshlogo," 320–53.
- 101 Murat Sembinov, "Stanovlenie Natsionalnoj Istorii Kazahstana," in *Natsionalnye Istorii v Sovetskom i Postsovetskikh Gosudarstvakh*, edited by Karl Ajmermaher and Gennadij Bordjugov, 179–94 (Moscow: AIRO-HH, 1999), 184; Zhanat Kundakbayeva, "V Poiskah Istoricheskogo Narrativa Kazahstana," 273, 284–85.
- 102 Murat Sembinov, "Stanovlenie Natsionalnoj Istorii Kazahstana," 192.
- 103 Alexander Iskandaryan and Babken Harutyunyan, "Armenii: 'Karabahizatsija' Natsionalnoj Istorii," in *Natsionalnye Istorii v Sovetskom i Postsovetskikh Gosudarstvakh*, edited by Karl Ajmermaher and Gennadij Bordjugov, 147–60 (Moscow: AIRO-HH, 1999); Mikayel Zolyan, "Writing the History of the Present: The Post-Soviet Period in Armenian History Textbooks," in *The South Caucasus and Turkey: History Lessons of the 20th Century*, ed. Sergey Rummyantsev (Tbilisi: Heinrich Böll Foundation, 2012), 148–49, 158–59.
- 104 Tigran Matosyan, "'Inventing Tradition': The Theme of Sovietisation in History of Soviet and post-Soviet Armenia," 60.
- 105 Mikayel Zolyan and Tigran Zakaryan, "Armenii: Obrazy Sebia i Obrazy Drugikh v Uchebnikakh Istorii Armenii," in *Sovremennye Uchebniki Istorii na Juzhnom Kavkaze*, edited by Ljubosh Veseli, 11–32 (Prague: Asociacija mezhdunarodnyh voprosov, 2008), 27–28; Zolyan, "Writing the History of the Present," 165. See also: Alexander Iskandaryan, "Armenii: Udrevlenie Moderna," in *Natsionalnye Istorii na Postsovetskom Prostranstve – II*, edited by Falk Bomsdorf and Gennadij Bordjugov, 225–43 (Moscow: Friedrich Naumann Foundation, 2009), 231–35; Mikayel Zolyan and Tigran Zakaryan, "'My—Narod Nebolshoj, no...' Obraz Sebia, Obraz Drugogo i Obraz Vraga v Shkolnyh Uchebnikakh po Istorii Armenii," in *Mnogolikaja Klio: Boi za Istoriju na Postsovetskom Prostranstve*, edited by Victor Shnirelman, Zhulduzbek Abylhozhin, and Sergej Abashin, 53–74 (Braunschweig: GEI, 2010), 69–70.
- 106 Ilham Abbasov and Sergey Rummyantsev, "Sposoby Uvekovechit Proshloe," 43–46.
- 107 Ilham Abbasov and Sergey Rummyantsev, "Sposoby Uvekovechit Proshloe," 47; Arif Yunusov, "Mify i Obrazy 'Vraga' v Istoricheskoy Nauke i Uchebnikakh po Istorii Nezavisimogo Azerbajdzhana (I)," and, by the same author, "Mify i Obrazy 'Vraga' v Istoricheskoy Nauke i Uchebnikakh po Istorii Nezavisimogo Azerbajdzhana (II)." See also: Kilit Akklar, "Nation and History in Azerbaijani School Textbooks," 490–93; Sevil Huseynova, "Azerbaijan in the Late 20th–Early 21st Centuries: Ethnic Boundaries in the Context of Relations with 'Neighbours'," 135–37.
- 108 Zaur Gasimov, "A Short Sketch of One Century of Azerbaijani History Writing," *Caucasian Analytical Digest* 8 (17 July 2009): 7; Abbasov, "The History of Azerbaijan," 28; Sevil Huseynova, "Baku in the First Half of the 20th Century: The Space of 'Friendship Between Peoples' and Inter-ethnic Conflicts," in *Myths and Conflict in the South Caucasus. Volume 1. Instrumentalization of Historical Narratives*, ed. Oksana Karpenko and Jana Javakhishvili, 41–53 (London: International Alert, 2013).
- 109 Ilham Abbasov and Sergey Rummyantsev, "Sposoby Uvekovechit Proshloe," 37, 42–43.
- 110 Aslan Khalilov, *Genotsid Protiv Musulmanskogo Naseliniia Zakavkazja v 1917–1920 Godakh v Istoricheskikh Istochnikakh* (Baku, 2000); Eldar Ismailov and Ilgar Niftaliyev, "Problemy Razvitiia Natsionalnoj Istorii v Azerbajdzhane," in *Natsionalnye Istorii na Postsovetskom Prostranstve – II*, edited by Falk Bomsdorf and Gennadij Bordjugov, 201–24 (Moscow: Friedrich Naumann Foundation, 2009), 205; Yagub Makhmudlu et al., *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana. Uchebnik dlja 9-go Klassa Obshheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*

- (Baku: Sharg-Garb, 2016), Chap. 22. On this, see: Ilham Abbasov and Sergey Rumyantsev, "Sposoby Uvekovechit Proshloe," 40, 49–51; Arif Yusunov, "Mify i Obrazy 'Vraga' v Istoricheskoy Nauke i Uchebnikakh po Istorii Nezavisimogo Azerbajdzhana (II)"; Kilit Akklar, "Nation and History in Azerbaijani School Textbooks," 482–83; Abbasov, "The History of Azerbaijan," 22–23, 33, 37–38; Huseynova, "Baku in the First Half of the 20th Century," 35–36, 45–49.
- 111 This fits a contemporary trend towards a "search for the lost genocides," i.e. an aspiration to narrate suffering of own countries as a "genocide." See: Evgeny Finkel, "In Search of Lost Genocide: Historical Policy and International Politics in Post-1989 East Europe," *Global Society* 24, no. 1 (2010): 51–70.
- 112 Ilham Abbasov, "The History of Azerbaijan," 37–40; Huseynova, "Baku in the First Half of the 20th Century," 39.
- 113 Makhmudlu et al., *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana. Uchebnik dlia 9-go Klassa Obshheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*, Chap. 25.
- 114 Ismailov and Niftaliyev, "Problemy Razvitiia Natsionalnoj Istorii v Azerbajdzhanе," 217.
- 115 Abbasov, "O Polze i Vrede Istorikov."
- 116 "Stenogramma Zasedaniia Kollegii Azerbajdzhanskoj Natsionalnoj Entsiklopedii." Day.az, April 9, 2004. Accessed June 2024. <http://news.day.az/politics/6292.html>.
- 117 George Hewitt, "The Role of Scholars in The Abkhazians' Loss of Trust in the Georgians and How to Remedy the Situation," in *Caucasus: War and Peace. The New World Disorder and Caucasus*, ed. Mehmet Tütüncü, 115–25 (Haarlem: SOTA, 1998); Victor Shnirelman, *The Value of the Past. Myths, Identity and Politics in Transcaucasia*, 302–304, 307–309, 314–18; Bruno Coppieters, "In Defence of the Homeland: Intellectuals and the Georgian-Abkhazian Conflict," in *Secession, History and the Social Sciences*, ed. Bruno Coppieters and Michel Huysseune, 89–116 (Brussels: VUN Brussel University Press, 2002); Maisuradze, "Time Turned Back: On the Use of History in Georgia," 14.
- 118 Yuri Anchabadze, "Natsionalnaia Istoriiia v Gruzii: Mify, Ideologija, Nauka," in *Natsionalnye Istorii v Sovetskom i Postsovetskikh Gosudarstvakh*, edited by Karl Ajmermaher and Gennadij Bordjugov, 161–78 (Moscow: AIRO-HH, 1999), 163–66; Chikovani and Kakitelashvili, "Gruzija," 68, 76.
- 119 Ketevan Kakitelashvili and Nino Chikovani, "Neskolko Soobrazhenij po Obsuzhdaemym Voprosam," in *Mnogolikaja Klio: Boi za Istoriju na Postsovetskom Prostranstve*, edited by Victor Shnirelman, Zhulduzbek Abylhozhin, and Sergey Abashin, 113–16 (Braunschweig: GEI, 2010), 114.
- 120 Otar Janelidze and Giorgi Siamashvili, "Po Sledam 'Belyh Piaten Gruzii,'" in *Natsionalnye Istorii na Postsovetskom Prostranstve – II*, edited by Falk Bomsdorf and Gennadij Bordjugov, 244–64 (Moscow: Friedrich Naumann Foundation, 2009), 257.
- 121 Yuri Anchabadze, "Natsionalnaia Istoriiia v Gruzii," 174.
- 122 Nino Chikovani, "The De-Sovietisation and Nationalisation of History in Post-Soviet Georgia," 87.
- 123 Klara Baratashvili, "V Gruzii Vyshel v Svet Sbornik Sholnykh Uchebnykh Materialov po Istorii 'Kak My Zhili Vmeste v Gruzii v XX Veke,'" *Kavkazskij Uzel*, September 21, 2011. Accessed June 2024. <https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/192883/>
- 124 "Kak My Zhili Vmeste v Gruzii v HX Veke," Tbilisi, 2011. Accessed June 2024. www.imsa.ge.
- 125 Timothy Blauvelt and Jeremy Smith, eds., *Georgia after Stalin: Nationalism and Soviet Power* (Routledge, 2015).
- 126 Guram Mamulia, "Kontsepciiia Gosudarstvennoj Politiki Gruzii v Otnoshenii Deportirovannykh i Repatriirovannykh v Gruziju Meshov. Istoriiia i Sovremennost'," *Centralnaja Azija i Kavkaz* 1 (1999): 152–60.
- 127 Guram Mamulia, "Kontsepciiia Gosudarstvennoj Politiki Gruzii v Otnoshenii Deportirovannykh i Repatriirovannykh v Gruziju Meshov. Istoriiia i Sovremennost'," *Centralnaja Azija i Kavkaz* 1 (1999): 159–60.

- 128 Guram Mamulia, “Kontsepcii Gosudarstvennoj Politiki Gruzii v Otnoshenii Deportirovannykh i Repatriirovannykh v Gruziju Meshov. Istoriia i Sovremennost,” *Centralnaja Azija i Kavkaz* 1 (1999): 72.
- 129 Victor Shnirelman, *The Value of the Past*, 305, 309–10.
- 130 “Kak My Zhili Vmeste v Gruzii v XX Veke,” 90–93.
- 131 “Kak My Zhili Vmeste v Gruzii v XX Veke,” 104.
- 132 Oleg Bgažba and Stanislav Lakoba, *Istoriia Abhazii. S Drevneishikh Vremen do Nashikh Dnej. Uchebnik dlia 10–11 Klassov*, 392–405.
- 133 Arthur Schlesinger Jr., *The Disuniting of America. Reflections on a Multicultural Society. Revised and Enlarged Edition* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1998).

Bibliography

- Abashin, Sergey. “Retsenziia na Uzbekskie Uchebniki Istории: Vzgliaid iz Rossii.” In *Mnogolikaja Klio: Boi za Istoriiju na Postsovetском Prostranstve*, edited by Victor Shnirelman, Zhulduzbek Abylhozhin, and Sergey Abashin, 41–51. Braunschweig: GEI, 2010.
- Abbasov, Ilham. “O Polze i Vrede Istoričkov dlia Zhizni ili Uroki Prepodavaniia Natsionalnoj Istории v Srednej Shkole.” *EuroKaukAsia*, November 17, 2010. Accessed June 2024. http://www.eurokaukasia.de/529/%D0%BE_%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%BB%D1%8C%D0%B7%D0%B5/.
- Abbasov, Ilham. “The History of Azerbaijan: Deconstructing the ‘Age–Old Friendship’ and the ‘Deadly Feud’ Myths.” In *The South Caucasus and Turkey: History Lessons of the 20th Century*, edited by Sergey Rummyantsev, 20–46. Tbilisi: Heinrich Böll Foundation, 2012.
- Abbasov, Ilham, and Sergey Rummyantsev. “Sposoby Uvekovechit Proshloe: Analiz Obrazov Drugikh v Uchebnikakh Istории Azerbajdzhana.” In *Sovremennye Uchebniki Istории na Juzhnom Kavkaze*, edited by Ljubosh Veseli, 33–55. Prague: Asociaciia mezhdunarodnyh voprosov, 2008.
- Abylhozhin, Zhulduzbek, M.L. Akulov, and A.V. Caj, eds. *Zhivaia pamiat. Stalinizm v Kazakhstane—Proshloe. Pamiat. Preodolenie*. Almaty: Dajk-Press, 2019.
- Adamson, Andres. “Natsionalnaia Istoriia Estonii v Kontekste Evropeizatsii Proshlogo i ‘Vojny Pamiatnikov’.” In *Natsionalnye Istории na Postsovetском Prostranstve – II*, edited by Falk Bomsdorf and Gennadij Bordjugov, 187–94. Moscow: Friedrich Naumann Foundation, 2009.
- Ajmermaher, Karl, and Gennadij Bordjugov, eds. *Natsionalnye Istории v Sovetskom i Postsovetских Gosudarstvakh*. Moscow: Friedrich Naumann Foundation, 2003.
- Aliev, Veli, Iljas Babaev, Idajat Dzhaferov, and Aida Mamedova. *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana. Uchebnik dlia 6-go Klassa Obshheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*. Baku: Təhsil, 2017.
- Anchabadze, Juri. “Natsionalnaia Istoriia v Gruzii: Mify, Ideologii, Nauka.” In *Natsionalnye Istории v Sovetskom i Postsovetских Gosudarstvakh*, edited by Karl Ajmermaher and Gennadij Bordjugov, 161–78. Moscow: AIRO-HH, 1999.
- Areshjan, Grigor and Levon Abramjan. “Soveshhanie v Otdelenii Istории Akademii Nauk SSSR.” *Vestnik obshchestvennykh nauk AN Armjanskoj SSR* 6 (1988): 93–96.
- Asharshylyk, Golod. “1928–1934. Dokumentalnaia khronika.” In *3-h tt. pod*, edited by M. Ashimbaeva and N. Abdirova. Almaty: Atamyra, 2021.
- Baratashvili, Klara. “V Gruzii Vyshel v Svet Sbornik Shkolnykh Uchebnykh Materialov po Istории ‘Kak My Zhili Vmeste v Gruzii v XX Veke’.” *Kavkazskij Uzel*, September 21, 2011. Accessed June 2024. <https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/192883/>.
- Barg, Mihail. “O Kategorii ‘Tsivilizatsia’.” *Novaia i novejšaia Istoriia* 5 (1990): 25–40.
- Barg, Mihail. “Tsivilizacionnyj Podhod k Istории. Dan Konjunktury ili Trebovanie Nauki?” *Kommunist* 3 (1991): 27–35.
- Berglund, Christofer. “‘Forward to David the Builder!’ Georgia’s (Re)turn to Language-Centered Nationalism.” *Nationalities Papers* 44, no. 4 (2016): 522–42.

- Bgzhba, Oleg, and Stanislav Lakoba. *Istoriia Abhazii. S Drevneishikh Vremen do Nashikh Dnej. Uchebnik dlja 10–11 Klassov*. Suhum: Ministerstvo obrazovanija i nauki RA, 2015.
- Blauvelt, Timothy, and Jeremy Smith, eds. *Georgia after Stalin: Nationalism and Soviet Power*. London: Routledge, 2015.
- Bomdsdorf, Falk, and Gennadij Bordjugov. *Rosiia i Strany Baltii, Tsentralnoj i Vostochnoj Evropy, Juzhnojo Kavkaza, Tsentralnoj Azii: Starye i Novye Obrazy v Sovremennykh Uchebnikakh Istorii*. Moscow: AIRO-HH, 2003.
- Bomdsdorf, Falk, and Gennadij Bordjugov. *Natsionalnye Istorii na Postsovetskom Prostranstve – II*. Moscow: Friedrich Naumann Foundation, 2009.
- Chapkovsky, Philip. “Uchebnik Istorii i Ideologičeskii Defitsit.” *Pro et Contra* 1-2 (2011): 117–33.
- Chernogaev, Jurij. “Novye Uzbekskie Uchebniki po Istorii Imejut Antirossiiskuju Napravlennost.” *Fergana.ru*, March 12, 2003. Accessed June 2024. <http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=1467>.
- Chikovani, Nino. “Narrativ Edinogo Kavkaza: Popytki Preodolenija Konfliktnoj Pamiati.” In *Mnogolikaja Klio: Boi za Istoriju na Postsovetskom Prostranstve*, edited by Viktor Shnirelman, Zhulduzbek Abylhozhin, and Sergey Abashin, 99–112. Braunschweig: GEL, 2010.
- Chikovani, Nino. “The De-Sovietisation and Nationalisation of History in Post-Soviet Georgia.” In *Myths and Conflict in the South Caucasus. Volume 1. Instrumentalization of Historical Narratives*, edited by Oksana Karpenko and Jana Javakhishvili, 72–91. London: International Alert, 2013.
- Chikovani, Nino, and Ketevan Kakitelashvili. “Gruzii. Izobrazhenie ‘Drugikh v Uchebnikakh Istorii dlja Obshheobrazovatelnykh Shkol.’” In *Sovremennye Uchebniki Istorii na Juzhnom Kavkaze*, edited by Ljubosh Veseli, 57–82. Prague: Asociacija mezhduarodnykh voprosov, 2008.
- Cihstavi, Nina. “Rossiia v Gruzinskikh Uchebnikakh Istorii.” In *Rosiia i Strany Baltii, Tsentralnoj i Vostochnoj Evropy, Juzhnojo Kavkaza, Tsentralnoj Azii: Starye i Novye Obrazy v Sovremennykh Uchebnikakh Istorii*, edited by Falk Bomdsdorf and Gennadij Bordjugov, 243–69. Moscow: AIRO-HH, 2003.
- Coppieters, Bruno. “In Defence of the Homeland: Intellectuals and the Georgian-Abkhazian Conflict.” In *Secession, History and the Social Sciences*, edited by Bruno Coppieters and Michel Huyseune, 89–116. Brussels: Brussels University Press, 2002.
- Danilevsky, Nikolai. *Rosiia i Evropa. Vzgliad na Kulturnye i Politicheskie Otnosheniia Slavianskogo Mira k Germano-Romanskomu*. Saint Petersburg: N. Strahov, 1895.
- Dzhanelidze, Otar, and Georgij Siamashvili. “Po Sledam ‘Belyh Pjaten Istorii Gruzii.’” In *Natsionalnye Istorii na Postsovetskom Prostranstve – II*, edited by Falk Bomdsdorf and Gennadij Bordjugov, 244–64. Moscow: Friedrich Naumann Foundation, 2009.
- Finkel, Evgeny. “In Search of Lost Genocide: Historical Policy and International Politics in Post–1989 East Europe.” *Global Society* 24, no. 1 (2010): 51–70.
- Gammer, Moshe, and Vera Kaplan. “Post–Soviet Narratives of the Conquest of the Caucasus.” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 61, no. 1 (2013): 26–46.
- Gasimov, Zaur. “A Short Sketch of One Century of Azerbaijani History Writing.” *Caucasian Analytical Digest* 8 (2009): 5–10.
- Gusejnova Lejla, and Sevil Bahramova. *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana 7. Metodicheskoe posobie*. Baku: Təhsil, 2018.
- Halilov, Aslan. *Genocid Protiv Musulmanskogo Naseleniia Zakavkazja v 1917–1920 Godakh v Istoricheskikh Istochnikakh*. Baku: Azerneshr, 2000.
- Hewitt, George. “The Role of Scholars in The Abkhazians’ Loss of Trust in the Georgians and How to Remedy the Situation.” In *Caucasus: War and Peace. The New World Disorder and Caucasus*, edited by Mehmet Tütüncü, 115–25. Haarlem: SOTA, 1998.
- Hewitt, George. “Abkhazia and Georgia: Time for Reassessment.” *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 15, no. 2 (2009): 183–96.

- Hlevnjuk, Oleg. *Hozjain: Stalin i utverzhdenie stalinskoj diktatury*. Moscow: ROSSPJEN, 2010.
- Huseynova, Sevil. "Azerbaijan in the Late 20th–Early 21st Centuries: Ethnic Boundaries in the Context of Relations with 'Neighbours'." In *The South Caucasus and Turkey: History Lessons of the 20th Century*, edited by Sergey Rummyantsev, 120–44. Tbilisi: Heinrich Böll Foundation, 2012.
- Huseynova, Sevil. "Baku in the First Half of the 20th Century: The Space of 'Friendship Between Peoples' and Inter-ethnic Conflicts." In *Myths and Conflict in the South Caucasus. Volume 1. Instrumentalization of Historical Narratives*, edited by Oksana Karpenko and Jana Javakhishvili, 41–53. London: International Alert, 2013.
- Iskandaryan, Alexander. "Armenia: Udrevlenie Moderna." In *Natsionalnye Istorii na Post-sovetskom Prostranstve – II*, edited by Falk Bomsdorf and Gennadij Bordjugov, 225–43. Moscow: Friedrich Naumann Foundation, 2009.
- Iskandaryan, Alexander and Babken Harutyunyan. "Armenija: 'Karabakhizatsiia' Natsionalnoj Istorii." In *Natsionalnye Istorii v Sovetskom i Postsovetskih Gosudarstvah*, edited by Karl Ajmermaher and Gennadij Bordjugov, 147–60. Moscow: AIRO-HH, 1999.
- Ismailov, Jeldar, and Ilgar Niftaliev. "Problemy Razvitiia Natsionalnoj Istorii v Azerbajdzhanе." In *Natsionalnye Istorii na Postsovetskom Prostranstve – II*, edited by Falk Bomsdorf and Gennadij Bordjugov, 201–24. Moscow: Friedrich Naumann Foundation, 2009.
- Issledovatel'skii Proekt. "Vosprijatie Molodezhju Novykh Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv Istorii Sovetskogo i Postsovetskogo Periodov." *Evrasijskij monitor*, 2009.
- Janovskaja, Marija. "Uzbekistan: Sovetskaja Istoriiia v Pervom Chtenii." *Fergana.ru*, November 16, 2008. Accessed June 2024. <http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=5959>.
- Janovskaja, Marija, and Tilav Rasul-zade. "Ih Vyrastil Stalin. Otnoshenie k Sovetskoj Istorii v Tsentlralnoj Azii." *Fergana.ru*, December, 24 2009. Accessed June 2024. <http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=6414>.
- Junusov, Arif. *Islam v Azerbajdzhanе*. Baku: Zaman, 2004.
- Junusov, Arif. "Mify i Obrazy 'Vraga' v Istoricheskoj Nauke i Uchebnikakh po Istorii Neza-visimogo Azerbajdzhana (I)." *Nauchnoe obshhestvo kavkazovedov*, October 11, 2011a. Accessed June 2024. <http://www.kavkazoved.info/news/2011/10/11/mify-i-obrazy-vraga-v-istoricheskoj-nauke-azerbajdzhana-i.html>.
- Junusov, Arif. "Mify i Obrazy 'Vraga' v Istoricheskoj Nauke i Uchebnikakh po Istorii Neza-visimogo Azerbajdzhana (II)." *Nauchnoe obshhestvo kavkazovedov*, October 12, 2011b. Accessed June 2024. <http://www.kavkazoved.info/news/2011/10/12/mify-i-obrazy-vraga-v-istoricheskoj-nauke-azerbajdzhana-ii.html>.
- Kakitelashvili, Ketevan. "Rekonstrukciia Proshlogo v Abhazskih i Gruzinskikh Shkolnyh Uchebnikakh po Istorii." In *Mnogolikaja Klio: Boi za Istoriju na Postsovetskom Prostranstve*, edited by Victor Shnirelman, Zhulduzbek Abylhozhin, and Sergey Abashin, 75–98. Braunschweig: GEI, 2010.
- Kakitelashvili, Ketevan, and Nino Chikovani. "Neskolko Soobrazhenij po Obsuzhdaemym Voprosam." In *Mnogolikaja Klio: Boi za Istoriju na Postsovetskom Prostranstve*, edited by Victor Shnirelman, Zhulduzbek Abylhozhin, and Sergey Abashin, 113–16. Braunschweig: GEI, 2010.
- "Kak My Zhili Vmeste v Gruzii v XX Veke." Tbilisi, 2011. Accessed June 2024. www.imsa.ge.
- Kaplan, Vera. "History Teaching in Post-Soviet Russia: Coping with Antithetical." In *Educational Reform in Post-Soviet Russia*, edited by Ben Eklof, Larry Holmes, and Vera Kaplan, 247–71. London: Frank Cass, 2005.
- Kaplinskij, Jan. "Nashe Neizbezhnoe Protivostojanie." In *Povorotnye Momenty Istorii Jestonii*, edited by Toomas Karjahjarm and Andres Adamson, 76–78. Tallinn: Argo, 2008.
- Karjahjarm, Toomas. "Nekotorye Problemy Prepodavaniia Istorii Estonii v Shkolakh s Russkim Jazykom Obucheniia." In *Povorotnye Momenty Istorii Estonii*, edited by Toomas Karjahjarm and Andres Adamson, 7–16. Tallinn: Argo, 2008.

- Kilit Aklar, Yasemin. "Nation and History in Azerbaijani School Textbooks." *Ab Imperio* 2 (2005): 469–97.
- "Kontsepcija Novogo Uchebno-Metodicheskogo Kompleksa po Otechestvennoj Istorii." Rossijskoe istoricheskoe obshchestvo, August 13, 2015. Accessed June 2024. <http://rushistory.org/proekty/kontsepsiya-novogo-uchebno-metodicheskogo-kompleksa-po-otchestvennoj-istorii.html>.
- Kundakbaeva, Zhanat. "V Poiskakh Istoricheskogo Narrativa Kazakhstana: 'Dialog Pamiatej ili 'Natsionalnaia Pamiat.'" In *Natsionalnye Istorii na Postsovetskom Prostranstve – II*, edited by Falk Bomsdorf and Gennadij Bordjugov, 265–96. Moscow: Friedrich Naumann Foundation, 2009.
- Kundakbayeva, Zhanat, and Didar Kassymova. "Remembering and Forgetting: The State Policy of Memorializing Stalin's Repression in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan." *Nationalities Papers* 44, no. 4 (2016): 611–27.
- Laruelle, Marlène. *Russian Eurasianism: An Ideology of Empire*. Washington D.C. and Baltimore: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008.
- Mahmudlu, Jagub, Sabir Agaev, Babek Hubjarov, Hadzhar Alishova, Lejla Gusejnova, and Sevil Bahramova. *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana. Uchebnik dlia 7-go Klassa Obsheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*. Baku: Təhsil, 2014.
- Mahmudlu, Jagub, Gabil Aliev, Mehman Abdullaev, Leila Gusejnova, and Hafiz Dzhubarov. *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana. Uchebnik dlia 9-go Klassa Obsheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*. Baku: Sharg-Garb, 2016.
- Mahmudlu, Jagub, Rafik Halilov, and Sabir Agaev. *Otechestvo. Uchebnik dlia 5 Klassa*. Baku: MoE, 2003.
- Maisuradze, Giorgi. "Time Turned Back: On the Use of History in Georgia." *Caucasian Analytical Digest* 8 (2009): 13–14.
- Makarov, Viktor. "'Boi za Istoriju' v Latvii." In *Natsionalnye Istorii na Postsovetskom Prostranstve – II*, edited by Falk Bomsdorf and Gennadij Bordjugov, 148–52. Moscow: Friedrich Naumann Foundation, 2009.
- Mamaraimov, Abdumomun. "Ideia Napisaniia Obshej Istorii Tsentralnoj Azii: Vzgljad iz Kazakhstana." *Fergana.ru*, May 26, 2009a. Accessed June 2024. <http://www.ferghana.ru/news.php?id=12038>
- Mamaraimov, Abdumomun. "Ideia Napisaniia Obshej Istorii Tsentralnoj Azii: Vzgljad iz Kazakhstana." *Fergana.ru*, June 10, 2009b. Accessed June 2024. <http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=6199>.
- Mamedova, Shargija. "Rossiia V Azerbajdzhanskikh Uchebnikakh Istorii." In *Rossiia i Strany Baltii, Tsentralnoj i Vostochnoj Evropy, Juzhnogo Kavkaza, Tsentralnoj Azii: Starye i Novye Obrazy v Sovremennykh Uchebnikakh Istorii*, edited by Falk Bomsdorf and Gennadij Bordjugov, 223–35. Moscow: AIRO-HH, 2003.
- Mamulija, Guram. "Kontsepsiia Gosudarstvennoj Politiki Gruzii v Otnoshenii Deportirovannykh i Repatriirovannykh v Gruziju Meshov. Istorii i Sovremennost." *Tsentralnaia Azia i Kavkaz* 1 (1999): 152–60.
- Martin, Terry. *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001.
- Martiny, Albrecht. "Das Verhältnis von Politik und Geschichtsschreibung in der Historiographie der sowjetischen Nationalitäten seit den sechziger Jahren." *Jahrbücher für die Geschichte Osteuropas* 27, no. 2 (1979): 238–72.
- Masanov, Nurbulat. "Rossiia v Kazhskikh Uchebnikakh Istorii." In *Rossiia i Strany Baltii, Tsentralnoj i Vostochnoj Evropy, Juzhnogo Kavkaza, Tsentralnoj Azii: Starye i Novye Obrazy v Sovremennykh Uchebnikakh Istorii*, edited by Falk Bomsdorf and Gennadij Bordjugov, 301–12. Moscow: AIRO-HH, 2003.
- Matosyan, Tigran. "'Inventing Tradition': The Theme of Sovietisation in History of Soviet and post-Soviet Armenia." In *Myths and Conflict in the South Caucasus. Volume 1. Instrumentalization Of Historical Narratives*, edited by Oksana Karpenko and Jana Javakhishvili, 54–71. London: International Alert, 2013.

- Minode, Zhan-Per. "Dve Pravdy o Poslednej Vojne." In *Povorotnye Momenty Istorii Estonii*, edited by Toomas Karjahjarm and Andres Adamson, 72–75. Tallinn: Argo, 2008.
- Mosse, George. *The Nationalization of the Masses*. New York: Fertig, 1975.
- Panarin, Aleksandr. "Evrazijskij Proekt v Globalnom Mirosistemnom Kontekste." *Vostok* 2 (1995).
- "Periferijnost 'Tsentra' v Sovremennykh Natsionalnykh Istoricheskikh Narrativakh." *Ab Imperio* 1 (2012): 47–101.
- Platt, Kevin. "Okkupatsiia vs. Kolonizatsiia: Istorii, Postkolonialnost i Geograficheskaia Identichnost. Sluchaj Latvii." *Neprikosnovennyj zapas* 3, no. 71 (2010): 49–62.
- Reisner, Oliver. "Interpreting the Past—From Political Manipulations to Critical Analysis?" *Caucasian Analytical Digest* 8 (2009): 3–4.
- Rumyantsev, Sergey. "Kak Rasskazyvajut Natsionalnuju Istoriju Detiam v Azerbajdzhanе." *EuroKaukAsia*, November 17, 2010. Accessed June 2024. http://www.eurokaukasia.de/530/%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%BA_%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%81%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%B7%D1%8B%D0%B2%D0%B0%D1%8E%D1%82/.
- Sadykov, Kalandar. "Esli Ty Streljaesh v Istoriju iz Pistoleta, to Ona Vystrelit v Tebia iz Pushki. Opros Obshhestvennogo Mneniia ot 'Fergany.Ru.'" *Fergana.ru*, October 29, 2004. Accessed June 2024. <https://www.fergananews.com/article.php?id=3267>.
- Sembinov, Murat. "Stanovlenie Natsionalnoj Istorii Kazahstana." In *Natsionalnye Istorii v Sovetskom i Postsovetskikh Gosudarstvakh*, edited by Karl Ajmermaher and Gennadij Bordjugov, 179–94. Moscow: AIRO-HH, 1999.
- Schlesinger Jr., Arthur. *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society. Revised and Enlarged Edition*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1998.
- Shnirelman, Victor. "Evrazijsstvo i Natsionalnyj Vopros." *Etnograficheskoe Obozrenie* 2 (1997): 112–25.
- Shnirelman, Victor. "Natsionalnye Simvoly, Etnoistoricheskie Mify i Etnopolitika." In *Teoreticheskie Problemy Istoricheskikh Issledovanij. Vyp. 2*, edited by Yefim Pivovarov, 118–47. Moscow: Izdatelstvo Moskovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 1999.
- Shnirelman, Victor. "V poiskakh prestizhnykh predkov. Etnonatsionalizm i shkolnye uchebniki." In *Otvetstvennost Istorika: Prepodavanie Istorii v Globalizirujushhemsja Obshchestve: Materialy Mezhdunarodnoj Konferentsii, Moskva, 15–17 Sentjabrja 1998 G.*, edited by Karl Pellens, 151–66. Moscow: Izd-vo Instituta vseobshhej istorii RAN (IVI), 2000.
- Shnirelman, Victor. *The Value of the Past: Myths, Identity and Politics in Transcaucasia*. Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 2001.
- Shnirelman, Victor. "The Myths of Descent: The Views of the Remote Past, and School Textbooks in Contemporary Russia." *Public Archaeology* 3, no. 1 (2003): 33–51.
- Shnirelman, Victor. "Mif o proshlom i natsionalizm." In *Populjarnaja literatura: opyt kulturnogo mifotvorchestva v Amerike i v Rossii*, edited by Tatiana Venediktova. Moscow: University of Moscow Press, 2003.
- Shnirelman, Victor. "Ocharovanie sedoj drevnosti: mify o proishozhdenii v sovremennykh uchebnikakh." *Neprikosnovennyj zapas* 37 (2004): 79–87.
- Shnirelman, Victor. "Byt Alanami: Intellektualy i Politika na Severnom Kavkaze v XX Veke." Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2006.
- Shnirelman, Victor. "Tsvivilizacionnyj Podhod kak Natsionalnaia Ideia." In *Natsionalizm v Mirovoj Istorii*, edited by Valerij Tishkov and Viktor Shnirelman, 82–105. Moscow: Nauka, 2007.
- Shnirelman, Victor. "Prezidenty i Arheologija, ili chto Ishhut Politiki v Drevnosti." *Ab Imperio* 1 (2009a): 279–323.
- Shnirelman, Victor. "New Racism, 'Clash of Civilizations' and Russia." In *Russian Nationalism and the National Reassertion of Russia*, edited by Marlène Laruelle, 125–44. London: Routledge, 2009b.
- Shnirelman, Victor. "Poleznye Mify? Shkolnye Uchebniki Istorii i Natsionalizmy v Tsentralnoj Azii i na Kavkaze." In *Mnogolikaja Klio: Boi za Istoriju na Postsovetskom*

- Prostranstve*, edited by Victor Shnirelman, Zhulduzbek Abylhozhin, and Sergey Abashin, 9–34. Braunschweig: GEI, 2010.
- Shnirelman, Victor. “Porog Tolerantnosti”: *Ideologiya i Praktika Novogo Rasizma*. Vol. 1–2. Moscow: NLO, 2011.
- Shnirelman, Victor. “Russia Between a Civilization and a Civic Nation: Secular and Religious Uses of Civilizational Discourse During Putin’s Third Term.” In *Russia as Civilization: Ideological Discourses in Politics, Media and Academia*, edited by Kåre Johan Mjør and Sanna Turoma, 59–86. London: Routledge, 2020.
- Shnirelman, Victor. “From Pluralism to Monochrome Society? How School Historical Education Was Shaped in Putin’s Russia,” *Dimensioni e problemi della ricerca storica* 1 (2021): 99–126.
- Shnirelman, Victor. “The Myth of Remote Ancestors and Ethnic Identity.” In *Monuments and Identities in the Caucasus. Karabagh, Nakhichevan and Azerbaijan in Contemporary Geopolitical Conflict* (Texts and Studies in Eastern Christianity) edited by Haroutioun Khatchadourian and I. Dorfmann-Lazarev, 179–205. Leiden: Brill, 2023.
- Shnirelman, Victor. *Pogone za predkami: Etnogenez i politika*. Moscow: Nestor-Istoriia, 2024.
- Sidikov, Bahodir. “Zwischen Bourdieu und postkolonialer Theorie: zur Analyse post-sovietischer Schulbücher für das Fach Geschichte (am Beispiel Aserbaidshans).” In *Jahrbuch Aserbaidshanchenforschung. Beiträge aus Politik, Wirtschaft, Geschichte und Literatur*. Vol. 2, edited by Mardan Aghayev and Ruslana Suleymanova, 222–47. Berlin: Dr. Köster, 2008.
- Spengler, Oswald. *Der Untergang des Abendlandes: Umriss einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte*. Wien: Verlag Braumüller, 1918–1922.
- “Stenogramma Zasedaniia Kollegii Azerbajdzhanskoj Natsionalnoj Enciklopedii.” *Day.az*, April 9, 2004. Accessed June 2024. <http://news.day.az/politics/6292.html>.
- Suny, Ronald. *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993.
- Toynbee, Arnold. *A Study of History, 1934–1961*. London: Oxford University Press, 1961.
- Ukolova, Viktoriya. “Mezhkulturnyj Dialog v Shkolnykh Kursakh Istorii.” In *Otvetstvennost Istorika: Prepodavanie Istorii v Globalizirujushhemsja Obshhestve: Materialy Mezhdunarodnoj Konferentsii, Moskva, 15–17 Sentjabrja 1998 G.*, edited by Karl Pellens, 37–43. Moscow: Izd-vo Instituta vseobshhej istorii RAN (IVI), 2000.
- Ulunjan, Artjom. “Istoriia Tsentralnoj Azii: Slishkom ‘Bolshaja Igra’.” *Fergana.ru*, March 16, 2007. Accessed June 2024. <http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=4985>.
- Umetbaeva, Damira. “Paradoxes of Hegemonic Discourse in Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan: History Textbooks’ and History Teachers’ Attitudes Towards the Soviet Past.” *Central Asian Affairs* 2, no. 3 (2015): 287–306.
- Vendina, Olga, Vladimir Kolosov, and Aleksandr Sebencov. *Javljaetsja li Pribaltika Chastju Postsovetskogo Prostranstva?* Moscow: Russkaja kniga, 2016.
- Vishnjauskas, Arunas. “Rosiiia v Litovskih Uchebnikakh Istorii.” In *Rosiiia i Strany Baltii, Tsentralnoj i Vostochnoj Evropy, Juzhnogo Kavkaza, Tsentralnoj Azii: Starye i Nove Obrazy v Sovremennykh Uchebnikakh Istorii*, edited by Falk Bomsdorf and Gennadij Bordjugov, 149–64. Moscow: AIRO-HH, 2003.
- Webber, Stephen. *School, Reform, and Society in the New Russia*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000.
- Yanovskaya, Maria. “Uzbekistan: Sovetskaia Istoriia v Pervom Chtenii.” *Fergana.ru*, November 16, 2008, Accessed June 2024. <http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=5959>.
- Yanovskaya, Maria, and Tilav Rasul-Zadeh. “Ih Vyrastil Stalin. Otnoshenie k Sovetskoj Istории v Tsentralnoj Azii.” *Fergana.ru*, December 24, 2009. Accessed June 2024. <http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=6414>.
- Zhukovskaja, Irina. “Chemu My Uchim, Prepodavaia Istoriiju.” *Prepodavanie istorii v shkole* 9, no. 40 (2002).

- Zoljan, Mikajel, and Tigran Zakarjan. "Armenija: Obrazy Sebia i Obrazy Drugikh v Uchebnikakh Istorii Armenii." In *Sovremennye Uchebniki Istorii na Juzhnom Kavkaze*, edited by Ljubosh Veseli, 11–32. Prague: Assotsiatsia mezhdunarodnykh voprosov, 2008.
- Zoljan, Mikajel, and Zakarjan, Tigran. "'My—Narod Nebolshoj, no...' Obraz Sebia, Obraz Drugogo i Obraz Vraga v Shkolnykh Uchebnikakh po Istorii Armenii." In *Mnogolikaja Klio: Boi za Istoriju na Postsovetском Prostranstve*, edited by Victor Shnirelman, Zhulduzbek Abylhozhin, and Sergej Abashin, 53–74. Braunschweig: GEI, 2010.
- Zolyan, Mikayel. "Writing the History of the Present: The Post–Soviet Period in Armenian History Textbooks." In *The South Caucasus and Turkey: History Lessons of the 20th Century*, edited by Sergey Rummyantsev, 145–69. Tbilisi: Heinrich Böll Foundation, 2012.
- Zyuganov, Gennady. "Doklad na IV Sezde KPRF." *Ekonomicheskaja gazeta* 3 (1997).

3 So Ashamed Not to Know “Our” History

Conflicts, Memory Politics, Humanities,
and the School in Armenia, Azerbaijan,
Russia, and Ukraine

Sergey Rumyantsev

It is quite right to separate our national history from the course of world history.
(Nikolai Kareev¹)

In an episode of the popular 1960s film, *We'll Live Till Monday* (Dozhivem do ponedel'nika), protagonist Ilya Semenovich Melnikov, a teacher in an ordinary Moscow school,² begins an emotional discussion with his old comrade, the director of the same facility and fellow historian. Melnikov poses a rhetorical question: “Isn’t history a science³ that makes humans citizens?” “It is,” agrees his colleague and superior without hesitation. The protagonist, however, is full of doubt, having lost faith in his ability to “correctly” conceive of their allegedly obvious common purpose as the two science teachers of young people. And textbooks, which are subject to constant and highly questionable revisions, do little to improve his confidence: “Here is the textbook of the current year. Current! [...] Have you ever thought about the great importance of paper? We shall bow to its infinite endurance!” exclaims Melnikov.

It is no accident that the role of Ilya Melnikov’s primary adversary throughout the whole narrative falls to Svetlana Mikhailovna, a teacher in Russian language and literature. All these “sciences” are assigned the task of “properly” raising Soviet citizens. However, unlike Melnikov, who has lost faith in his pedagogical abilities, Svetlana Mikhailovna always knows how to act in unconventional situations. She reminds Melnikov of the history teacher’s mission and calls him to “return to service ... You turned to yourself and developed pessimism! And you are a historian ... This is inconvenient even from a political point of view!”

These two very different characters do share, however, a primary ideology. Both the witty intellectual Ilya Semenovich and the grounded “Smooth Babette”⁴ Svetlana Mikhailovna predictably attribute educational and politico-ideological functions to the humanities with which they have been educated. And they are certainly right in doing so. By the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s, the height of the film’s popularity, the subject of history in secondary schools (particularly “History of the USSR” and its complementary history of Soviet national republics), as well as of Russian language and literature (as much as for all the courses of national

literature and languages of the then Soviet peoples) were for many years attributed the ideological function of educating citizens and patriots.⁵

More than half a century has passed since this film was aired on Soviet screens, and for the last three decades of this period, the country in which the plot develops has no longer existed; nevertheless, the same subjects of the school curriculum continue to serve the purpose of propagating a sense of identity and belonging. The secondary school remains an important state institution, serving the stability of any given post-Soviet nation-state as well as generating national identities, historical myths, patriotic sentiments, and state-approved images of the past. Over the course of the intervening period since the fall of the USSR 30 years ago, teachers in the now-former Soviet republics working between the same walls of these previously Soviet schools have meticulously played the role of social agents, forming citizens and patriots, giving rise to updated historical narratives and patriotic discourses. While neither Marxism, nor Leninism nor Babettes may be fashionable today, this cannot be said of the renewed historical narratives and patriotic discourses in the context of the "nationalizing" projects of newly independent (or newly reconfigured) states.⁶

"Unforgettable Years": The Secondary School and State Ideology

"To have a national identity," argues Michael Billig, "is to possess ways of talking about nationhood."⁷ For the citizens of the USSR successor states, doing so would also imply a similar understanding and interpretation of historical and literal plots and images.⁸ Secondary schools, in the post-Soviet, political regime-controlled⁹ countries, remain effective institutions from the very early stages, introducing as they do all citizens-to-be to the content of official discourses about the nation, national culture, "sanctified vernaculars and canonized national bards,"¹⁰ "national character," the index of the key "national heroes," and "historical enemies."¹¹ In secondary schools, students are introduced to verbal, visual, and behavioral texts included in "the foundation of collective representations, the general alphabet or lexicon of culture which unites the speakers of modern Russian," as well as the Azerbaijani, Armenian, and Ukrainian languages and "allows us all to speak about us, of sons and daughters of the Nation, as the community of the 'subscribers' of its discourse, the community of agents of its practice."¹²

"To be recognizably brim-full of patriotism," continues Michael Billig, "one must have discourses of patriotism – that is, the phrases and stances which can be conventionally identifiable as 'patriotic'."¹³ The main mission of the humanities subjects in secondary schools is the inoculation of all future citizens to become capable of understanding patriotic discourse and after finishing school to voluntarily take part in the process of its routine, everyday reproduction. Ideally, such abilities rely on skills of sincere demonstration or, to a smaller extent, on a proficient imitation of patriotic sentiments. Ideally, such abilities rely on learning how to sincerely demonstrate, or at least skillfully imitate, patriotic emotions.

Most, if not all, components of the patriotic discourse are painted in the opposing positive and negative tones. "Love of the Homeland," the compulsory admiration

of “national culture,” and “love of the native language” goes hand in hand with the “hatred of its enemies” and vigilant tracking of attempts of “ill-wishers” who question “our” heroic actions or accomplishments in the field of culture. One of the most important goals of such education and upbringing appears in the preparation of the population to mobilize in case of a conflict-induced emergency. Certainly, secondary schools are far from being the only institutions with this kind of function but undoubtedly, they appear to be one of the most influential and effective. The robust support within Russia for the annexation of Crimea in 2014, or no less substantial backing of the military operations in Azerbaijan and Armenia in the autumn of 2020 during the days of the Second Karabakh War, and, finally, less indisputable but nevertheless mass support of the Russian war in Ukraine from 2022, as well as the readiness of the Ukrainians to fight “until victory,”¹⁴ are some obvious and bright examples of the effective patriotic upbringing in secondary schools.

The years spent in school, whether they are remembered with nostalgia, as one of the best periods in a person’s life or with a fair amount of skepticism and (self) irony, coincide with the difficult time of one’s first independent social interactions and are imprinted in the memory of every child and teenager. The biographical interview allows researchers to observe how bright, lively, and detailed memories of the years spent in school can be, often several years after graduation.¹⁵

A mandatory component of the public discourse that developed in the post-war Soviet years about the school contains various forms of gratitude. In their public speeches, modern politicians and bureaucrats continue the Soviet tradition of glorifying the labor of teachers and routinely reproduce banal thoughts about their contribution to the education of new generations of citizens. The president of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, reopening the newly built elite “School N°6” in Baku, where he studied in the same period as the Soviet audience was introduced to “We’ll Live Till Monday,” had every reason to assert that, for him, “As for each human, the school years are the most unforgettable of years. I am grateful to my teachers for the knowledge I obtained and will forever cherish their memories in my heart.”¹⁶ Similarly, when speaking about the celebratory “Teacher’s Day” established in the Soviet years, President Zelenskyy of Ukraine emphasized that being a teacher meant “the ability to spread good and light exponentially. Because he or she alone can inspire hundreds, thousands, and even tens of thousands of people to try and change our world for the better.”¹⁷ And in turn, congratulating the winners of the “Russian Teacher of the Year” contest, Vladimir Putin agreed that “Today’s children, adolescents, are they who build, develop, lead their native country forward, and the role of a teacher in bringing up competent, responsible local scholars, politicians, and citizens of our Homeland is truly grand and invaluable.”¹⁸

A “Question of National Security”: Memory Politics and Historical Policy

The analysis of different cases of contradicting and conflicting memory politics and historical policies complements and expands the subject of teaching history and literature in schools. On the whole, the memory politics and historical policy implemented in Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, or Armenia, are in many respects the

direct heirs of the equivalent Soviet politics, still discursively and aesthetically fueled by the sources of those times. It would not be possible to discuss in one chapter about the actions of all the institutions (museums, TV and Media, Academia, etc.) involved in the education of patriotic citizens. While attempting to outline the boundaries of schooling's influence on citizens' perceptions of the past and their neighbors, I will try to outline the impact of memory politics and historical policy on schooling as well. In this way, I have tried to emphasize that despite the enormous influence of the school on the formation of ideas about national history and culture, the popularization of national myths and the inculcation of skills to reproduce patriotic emotions and discourses, this institution of education is far from being the only player in this field.

The term "memory politics" points to the active utilization of modern constructs of the past, relevant for political purposes. A similar term, "historical policy," is used to designate the phenomenon of "a sharp intensification of the use of history for political purposes, which—according to Alexei Miller—in the first years of XXI century became characteristic to all (post-Communist) countries in Eastern Europe."¹⁹ Aleida Assmann argues that the problem of the past as a construct dominates in modern scientific research on memory and thus underlines the captivity of a traumatic past and the impossibility of distancing oneself at his or her discretion.²⁰ For Ukraine, such a past remains the Second World War and Victory Day (May 9). The Ukrainian authorities put a lot of effort into reconstructing the discourse of the war by popularizing new symbols and new heroes (red poppies, as counter-symbols to the Russian Ribbon of Saint George; the main figures of the nationalist movement)²¹ and moving the date from May 9 to May 8, when the Second World War is commemorated in the countries of the European Union (EU). In Russia, the "normalization of the Soviet past"²² instigated by Vladimir Putin when he came to power conceived of the totalitarianism of Stalin and mass political repression as examples of an "inconvenient" plot. In Armenia and Azerbaijan, victim imagery supplants the memory of mutual acts of violence.

The post-Soviet years were marked not only by the deconstruction of the Soviet monumental inheritance, sites of memory, and the forgetting of different forms of public memorial culture. In the second half of the 1990s, with constant stabilization of the economic situation and political regimes, the period of the most extreme implementation of the upgraded memory politics and historical policy began. In the 2000s, the fashion of political public monuments returned, playing the former role of "visual symbols of power."²³ With each year, the collective mass rituals of commemorating the victims and warriors for independence become increasingly popular, as did remembering the participants of the ongoing post-Soviet armed conflicts.

Different kinds of official mass demonstrations, supported by the political regimes, are organized and carried out with the active participation of various state institutes, using administrative resources to mobilize large groups of the population (kindergartens, secondary schools, universities, academic institutions, different security agencies and ministries, factory administrations, and so forth.). Often, such demonstrations are dedicated to traumatic events of the recent past, and their urgency is notably fueled by some modern conflicts (Holodomor Victims

Remembrance Day in Ukraine, Memory March of the victims of Khojaly Massacre, and Armenian Genocide Victim Remembrance Day).

Numerous grassroots initiatives not only fail to negate the official nationalizing of nationalism and memory politics but also augment and even enrich them with new celebrations and rituals. “Vyshyvanka Day,” popular in Ukraine, was initiated by the students of the Chernivtsi National University. Mass movements of the “Immortal Regiment” in Russia began with demonstrations organized by the journalists of the Tomsky media group.²⁴ The Saint George Ribbon, intended to become “a means that could materialize respect, gratitude, pride and recognition” for victory in World War II, was invented, apparently, by *Ria-Novosti* journalist Natalia Loseva, who “explained in an interview that the idea emerged ‘by chance’ [*v kakoi-to mere sluchaino*].”²⁵ New operas and symphonies, poems and novels, theatre productions, documentaries, and fiction cinema have been written not only within the framework of the state order but also enthusiastically dedicated to state-relevant plots from the past. Many active users of social networks (Facebook and Telegram) are eager to enter the online battles, defending and willingly promoting their own “historical truth.”²⁶

According to Elena Omelchenko and Hilary Pilkington, “Patriotic packaging of the ideas of political and civil activities—is on its own a kind of indicator of today’s Russia. [...] On the one hand, the rhetoric and practices of official actors of patriotic ‘echelons,’ and on the other hand—different civil initiatives and new variants of patriotic ‘bellows.’”²⁷ Adjusted to the situation specifics in any given country, this thesis can also well characterize the circumstances in Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Ukraine.

The increasingly asserted nationalization of public spaces and cultural landscapes, as well as the reconstruction and nationalization of official narratives of history – have been the most evident tendencies of memory politics and historical policies in the last three decades. As specified by Georgiy Kasyanov:

Nationalization of the past is, on the one hand, the assignment of certain fragments of this past to a collective subject, reaching the self-determination (in this case, a nation), and on the other hand, officializing these fragments into a coherent master-narrative, which is also the nationalization of this narrative, assigning it to the society that represents the nation. Nationalization of the past captures history (master narrative), as well as the collective/historical memory. The main goal of nationalizing the past is to transform the nation into, with the most general sense, “historical,” turning it from an object of history into its main subject.²⁸

The new stage of monument construction in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Ukraine, and Russia can be placed into a broader historical and international context:

Large numbers of monuments, competition between commissioners and artists, and complex commissioning processes and public debates, also characterized waves of statuomania after the French Revolution and during the

rise of nationalist movements in the nineteenth century, but also the National Socialist and Communist dictatorships in the twentieth century and new nation-states established following the dissolution of the Soviet Bloc in central and eastern Europe.²⁹

Sergiusz Michalski, in turn, argues that:

With the western world becoming wary of political public monuments and the Communist bloc ceasing to exist, the main center of gravity seems to have shifted to the Third World. Countries mostly ruled by non-democratic governments, if not by outright dictators, have to grapple with the problems of fusing their national traditions and myths with the dominant model of western-style art.³⁰

In this statement, made in 1997 when his monograph was published, Michalski named Korea and Iraq among the countries with actively realized politics of setting "public political monuments." Some of the post-Soviet successor states over the course of two decades could also be added to the list of such countries, first and foremost Turkmenistan, where a cult around President Turkmenbashi (Saparmurat Niyazov) blossomed until 2006. On the death of Niyazov, there was already a full-scale memorial cult around Heydar Aliyev (who had died in 2003) in Azerbaijan and interest in establishing the new, albeit subjectively and aesthetically relatively monotonous "public political monuments" grew significantly.

Political public monuments are widely popular in neighboring Armenia as well as in Russia and Ukraine. The main difference is not in terms of the quality and/or quantity of new monuments but the selection of images and events. In Armenia, and especially in Ukraine, priority is given not only to various historical figures (Tsars, Hetmans, and so on) but also to the mandatory presence of opponents to the Soviet power (Stepan Bandera and Garegin Nzhdeh). In Russia, the popularity of scenes from World War II (Rzhevskiy Memorial, opened on the 75th anniversary of the victory) and characters from the not-so-distant past (emperors and their closest associates) remain extremely popular.

In recent years, the most large-scale events in the field of memory politics have taken place in Ukraine, where after the "Euromaidan" or, as it is also commonly called, the "Revolution of Dignity" (a protest movement in the late autumn and winter of 2013–14), the annexation of Crimea, and the beginning of the armed conflict in the east of the country, government control over the public discussion of complex events of the past became noticeably stricter. The Ukrainian example is important in that the aspirations of post-revolutionary powers to implement major reforms to democratize the country and tighten control over the past were largely initiated and actively supported from below, first and foremost by various far-right parties, unions, and groups.

In December 2013, the Lenin monument was destroyed in Kyiv. In the following months, hundreds of new monuments were installed, designed to perpetuate the memory of Vladimir Ilyich. These events, neatly referred to as "Leninopad,"³¹

became something of a prelude to the official politics of “de-communization,” approved in May 2014 by a package of four memorial laws.³² After seven years, the chairman of the “European Solidarity” party, Petro Poroshenko (President of Ukraine 2014–2019) claimed that de-communization “was and remains an issue of national security.”³³ In other words, without the implementation of a memory and history policy that meets the national interests of the Ukrainian people as Poroshenko and his entourage understand them, the “imagined community”³⁴ of Ukrainians is in danger. It is in the same spirit of alleged national security that politicians in Russia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia act and justify their intentions regarding memory politics and national history.

Such a wide interpretation of security noticeably measures limits, if it does not suppress completely and even criminalize, any attempts at a critical reading of the past. But this understanding of security is also a reflection of an alarming tendency seen in many if not all EU and post-Eastern bloc countries. By 2019, “[m]emory politics had been ‘securitized,’” as Alexei Miller notes, in other words:

It was conceptualized as an area directly related to security issues: states, nations, democracy, and the EU. Previously, in conversations with neighbors about the past, they looked for reconciliation—Germans with the French, Russians, Polish, and Russians with the Polish. Now everyone anticipates aggression from one another, and maybe an aspiration to undermine the entity of states, both in the national community and in the EU.³⁵

Conflicts and the Militarization of Patriotic Upbringing

Just like their demolition, the rehabilitation of parts of Soviet memorial heritage, and the creation of new landscapes of memory in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Russia, and Ukraine, is not only framed by procedures of nationalizing the past but also in the context of long-lasting armed conflict. This stimulates and gives additional recourse to the authoritarian regimes of Russia and Azerbaijan in their attempts to monopolize power, speculate on the past, and control public spaces in their countries as much as possible. When the “nation is in danger,” the calls for unity and criticism of the opposition or of any alternative ideas sound much more convincing. In Ukraine and Armenia, claims to democratization appear more significant as politicians act with similar methods and strive for similar goals. The level of patience with alternative interpretations of canonizing historical events and figures, as well as critical views on the nationalist past, is low in all four countries.

The armed conflicts on former USSR territories have not only been accompanied by numerous victims and refugees, the rise of new borders and non-recognized societies, and the annexations of various territories. They have also promoted the emergence of new sites of memory, given birth to the tradition of commemorating the heroes and victims of battles, pushed the reconstruction of historical narratives, and constructed new nationalist myths.

Landmarks of Life

The image we construct of other peoples, noted Marc Ferro:

or of ourselves for that matter, reflects the history we are taught as children. This history marks us for life. Its representation, which is for each one of us a discovery of the world, of the past of societies, embraces all our passing or permanent opinions, so that the traces of our first questioning, our first emotions, remain indelible.³⁶

Taking into consideration that school education is both mandatory and universal, and the long study of national history (or mythologized and glorified national past) is its crucial component, it would seem difficult to disagree with Ferro. Following the logic of his research, the analysis of educational narratives allows an examination of the specifics of the collective understanding of "national" history in any country in which secondary school education is mandatory. Also embedded in this logic is the aspiration of political regimes and different state institutes, to one degree or another, to insistently control the content of history textbooks in almost any nation-state. It is not a surprise that the majority of the research is conducted in line with the methodological approach proposed by Ferro.³⁷

The appeal of the textbook to researchers can be justified for several reasons. The school remains a conservative institution, access to which is quite often limited to researchers. At the same time, textbooks are the most important, mass-produced and available study resources with which all future citizens of a particular country must become acquainted. The analysis of these textbooks is research into dominative narratives, state-supported historical myths, and official discourses. Statistics on secondary school students' performances and final examination results can be reviewed as an additional rationale for reasoned conclusions.

And vice versa. The representatives of power can easily identify deviations from the official line by tracking the contents of textbooks. The frequency with which high government officials appeal to history instruction emphasizes the importance attached to historical politics in any given country. In April 2021, Vladimir Putin in his annual epistle to the Federal Assembly lamented on what he referred to as "incorrectly" written textbooks on the history of Russia that can give young people wrong (i.e., not patriotic enough) landmarks in life:

You know, I have opened some textbooks and have been surprised to see what is written there, as if it is not even about us. Who writes these things, who allows such studies? It is amazing! They can write anything about the "second front," only nothing is said about the Battle of Stalingrad—this happens. Just amazing!³⁸

In July 2021, the formation of the Interdepartmental Commission for Historical Education was announced. One of the tasks with which the new institution was

entrusted was control over the “preservation of historical memory, coordination of the doings of state bodies, scientific-educational and cultural societies to develop a unified approach to the implementation of historical studies and education, as well as to prevent attempts to falsify historical facts.”³⁹ The commission was created in order to “uphold national interests” as understood by the Russian political regime and was led by the author of popular Russian history book and the historical novel *The Wall*, chairman of the Russian Military-Historical Society Vladimir Medinsky, who from 2012 to 2020 governed the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation and is known for his notoriously conservative views.⁴⁰

However, no matter how “surprising” the textbooks were or how intently the government tried to control their content, research has faced difficulties in investigating how deeply secondary school students actually absorb the versions of national history and literature presented to them, or what they remember from what they were “taught as children” into adulthood. How detailed are memories of school and university studies regarding history, over a duration of five or even ten, twenty years after completing one’s education? How much is the knowledge of history and national literature acquired in school and/or later during higher education actually required and relevant for adult life? Is it necessary to remember all details of school or university courses on national history, to enthusiastically respond to the mobilization calls of political regimes, and to believe in the possession of “historical rights” to any particular territory? Or to believe that “historical truth” is on “our” side? Or is it easier to popularize national myths and plant patriotic sentiment in an environment with more superficial memories? Statistics of student performance in the subjects of history, literature, and their first language, in turn, do not serve as a yardstick of patriotic sentiment.

These, and many other, questions cannot be answered on the basis of analyzing school textbooks alone. These kinds of questions require broader research on complex practices of secondary school education but also university courses, historical policies, and so on. In other words, attempts should be made to understand the interplay between various factors pertaining to a certain time and place: political and economic stability or times of dramatic changes,⁴¹ the level of a particular school (elite or ordinary educational facility in a poorer region of the city), the influence of teachers (a bright intellectual such as Ilya Semenovich or a boring formalist in the tradition of Svetlana Mikhailovna), the quantity and quality of out-of-school activities (most likely dependent on the initiative or passivity of those teachers), cinema and television, the atmosphere of family conversations, and many other aspects.

Biographical interviews allow researchers to observe how lively and detailed memories of the years spent in school can be, often many years after graduation. Biographical, problem-oriented interviews with people of different age groups who have completed their school education allow us to determine important tendencies and formulate several theses connected to the subjects and questions raised in this chapter. My findings are based on 97 interviews conducted between 2015 and 2022. My interview partners were people of different age groups, citizens of Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia,⁴² who either graduated from school in the Soviet years, studied during the fall of the USSR or in the years that

followed. At the time of their respective interview, each interviewee was either in the midst of university studies or had completed their higher education. Seven respondents were educated at secondary schools in two different states. For instance, a citizen of Azerbaijan studied for eight years in Russia and then moved to Azerbaijan, where he completed his 11-year secondary education. Four interviewees, having completed school in one country, enrolled for higher education in another, perceived as a "historical homeland." For example, an ethnic Russian and citizen of Kazakhstan applied to a Russian university after completing school. Another respondent, Georgian by origin, continued her studies in Tbilisi, having moved there from Moscow. The varying experience in two different national spheres is particularly interesting when evaluating the influence of education on their ideas about the past of their "own" imaginary societies, as well as the effectiveness of practices for inspiring patriotic sentiment.

Difficult Efforts by "Serious People"

Highlighting several key points will indicate the specifics of both continuity (from Soviet to post-Soviet) and changes in the system of patriotic upbringing, the content of the official historical discourse, and a set of educational narratives. The first is related to the transformation of the status of the historian as a profession and, to a lesser degree, philologist, in the countries of Soviet heritage. In the postwar years between 1950 and 1990, the profession of the historian, as a specialist of both "sciences" and philosophy (*Diamat*)⁴³ and mired in Soviet ideology, was prestigious and for many ambitious young people paved the way not only to the spheres of education and science but also to the ranks of nomenclature, administrative-bureaucratic structures, and intelligence services. Echoes of this tradition are still heard today. In an article published in December 2020, Sergei Naryshkin,⁴⁴ head of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service since 2016 and chairman of the Russian Historical Society, underlined that:

A professional – either in history or intelligence – over time, develops intuition, the ability to immediately determine the patterns in many random events that are first invisible to the eye. Such systematic, analytical thinking is in demand in various areas of human activity. First of all, of course, in politics and the arts of public administration.⁴⁵

Naryshkin was not entirely at odds with the truth. Many representatives of the profession with the competence to detect invisible patterns have found themselves in the "arts" he mentions. Heydar Aliyev and Eduard Shevardnadze, First Secretaries of the Republican Communist Parties, are among the most famous representatives of the Soviet-post-Soviet ruling elite – who differently ended their careers as presidents of independent Azerbaijan and Georgia respectively in 2003.⁴⁶ Elsewhere, Alexander Lukashenko, President of Belarus for nearly three decades (since 1994), is a qualified history teacher. The president of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev (2003–present), is a candidate of historical sciences (*kandidat istoricheskikh*

nauk),⁴⁷ as is the orientalist Abulfaz Elchibey, who held this position briefly before the Aliyevs (June 1992–September 1993).

Vladimir Medinsky, mentioned above, also holds a doctorate in history, as does Olga Vasilyeva, the first female Minister of Education in the history of Russia (2016–2020), who at the dawn of her career worked for some time as a history teacher in a Moscow secondary school. General Vasily Gritsak, who (2015–2019) headed the Security Service of Ukraine under President Petro Poroshenko, is also a qualified history teacher. The candidate of historical science, Ararat Mirzoyan, leaving the position of chairman of the National Assembly of Armenia, headed the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in August 2021. Suren Papikyan, who worked as a history teacher in secondary schools for some years, continued his career as Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure and Vice-Premier, and in 2021 headed the Ministry of Defense of Armenia. The list of high-ranking politicians and bureaucrats who are also qualified historians seems endless.

At the beginning of the 1990s, historians in some post-Soviet republics found themselves in competition with representatives of another “patriotic” science – philology. In two South Caucasian republics, those same philologists advanced to the position of president. Zviad Gamsakhurdia in Georgia, with a PhD in philology (April 1991–January 1992), and his colleague philologist and historian Abulfaz Elbichey in neighboring Azerbaijan introduced notions of far-right nationalism and Pan-Turkism to public policy. Levon Ter-Petrosyan, a well-known intellectual in Armenia with a PhD in philology, held his high position until 1998. Later, this tradition was continued by philologist Serzh Sargsyan, who governed the republic from 2008 to 2018. The current leader of Armenia, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, studied at the Department of Philology of Yerevan University, majoring in journalism.

Philologists were generally associated with Soviet ideology and nomenclature to a lesser degree, yet often mastered the language of ethnonationalism popular in the post-Soviet years. In spite of notable examples (Sargsyan and Pashinyan), philologists and literary scholars in the highest positions of power are rather the rare exception. After the fall of the Soviet Union, much has changed for historians as well. Climbing the career ladder as a party figure, bureaucrat or intelligence officer was no longer dependent on a higher education degree. From now on, lawyers and political scientists tend to compete mainly with economists or business executives.

As a direct consequence in higher educational institutions, the status of historical faculties was significantly shaken, yielding its positions to legal, newfangled international relations and political sciences. But even after the fall of the USSR, just as in the Soviet years, the secondary school remains the main refuge for representatives of a still very large army of certified historians and philologists:

It seemed to me that historians were such serious people [memories of studies in school, in one of the largest cities in central Ukraine at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s]. [...] History appeared in the fifth grade. I remember, such a serious subject. [...] At first, you don't understand how seriously or strictly this subject is taken by the teachers. But when the first grades appear, or they call you for the first time to the board, or you see how he [history teacher]

teaches and how he asks, you learn that this subject is taken very seriously indeed. I remember from the fifth grade how it all went in a serious direction, history especially. It was the first serious subject in school. And then [after changing schools], we had a teacher in history, also very, you know... Some of these people are still right. [...] She was controlling, and would ask, and give a lot to study. Yes, it was all on a very serious level.

(Female, 35, Berlin, May 2016)

The memories of the interviewees reflect the hierarchical structure of the subject. In secondary school, the “absolutely right” mandatory syllabus is divided into two main courses in national and universal history.⁴⁸ The national narrative is given obvious priority, and memories of respondents’ schooling thus relate, first of all, to the experience of studying a course in national history, as the main, most important and detailed part of the educational narrative.

At the secondary school level, in all post-Soviet years, the relatively high status of national history, as well as “native language⁴⁹ and literature” (*rodnoj jazyk i literatura*), was also maintained by the procedure of final examinations. All these subjects remained mandatory for admission to universities to study the humanities and social sciences. However, while good grades in a subject can influence pragmatic career plans, they say very little about the degree of patriotism of their holder. It is not necessarily the case that, along with a set of knowledge about historical dates, events, and characters, mandatory for passing those examinations, the student also inevitably acquires a version of “love of the homeland” as encouraged by the authorities.

In each specific case, the level of respect for and interest in the subject depends to an enormous extent on the personal charisma and professional skills of a teacher as well as on the level of any given school. The asceticism of Ilya Semenovich, the devotion of teachers’ lives to the upbringing of young generations, and the continuous, long-term seniority in the same institution are now a thing of the past, as are the heroics and prestige of the profession, despite the attempts of politicians, bureaucrats, and cultural activists to maintain these in the discourse.⁵⁰ The majority of teachers who qualified in the post-Soviet generation approach their profession more formally and consider it something temporary:

My childhood coincided with a difficult period in the country, where the vector [i.e., the direction of social transformations or reforms] was changing drastically [meaning the beginning of the 2000s and a small town in eastern Ukraine]. My first history teacher, who was around seventy years old, [...] although he taught us the history of ancient times, for some reason would go off on some political tirades. This was the difficult period of 2004–2005.⁵¹ And at some point, for example, he would tell us some things about Banderites⁵² killing the Red Army soldiers. [...] At home, Dad told me that he is an old idiot and that I should not listen to him. He cannot have a proper opinion in this regard, as he is a Soviet teacher. Although when he died everyone felt sorry. Then there was a good guy who got fired because of his relationship with a student. I am still in contact with him. He now works as

a journalist. [...] He was very, let's say, democratized in a European way. The next teacher did not care for any of this. Because when you are being bullied for your braids and are mocked in every possible way, there is no time to talk about Banderites. Well, she was laughed at by kids. [...] They were insulting. [...] We were considered a school with which ... Well, to put it in a more vulgar way, a bandit school. Although nothing terrible was happening there. Just as all schools – it was quite bad. Just a bad school. [...] The fourth teacher was very liberal. On some level, she didn't care. [...] And therefore, in the wake of, say, young protest moods, I remember I wrote a report "Stepan Bandera – the hero of Ukraine", or something like that. And, essentially, it was well received by her. Kind of like, I don't care.

(Male, 23, Kyiv, October 2016)

This instance of a situation in teaching history, in a secondary school in a small eastern Ukrainian town, should not, of course, be considered typical of the 2000s. What is typical, however, are its separate components. Teachers with experience in Soviet schools are unlikely to change their views, and often they refuse to reevaluate them. The possibility of choice turned many with a long experience in the Soviet Union into conservatives who defended the truth of past narratives that had lost popularity.

The current political situation around the power struggle in any particular post-Soviet state is inevitably accompanied by attempts to monopolize the rights to "correct" interpretations of the past, including at the school level. In other words, a humanities component of secondary education remains deeply politicized. However, with the fall of the USSR, there arose a feeling of more freedom in different interpretations of historical processes and events and the assessment of historical figures. From now on, without fear of persecution, it seemed possible to voice alternative opinions to express critical thoughts and theories within the school space.

At different moments in the three-decade long post-Soviet period in various USSR successor countries, history and literature teachers held and are still holding a certain degree of freedom, no matter the extent of the ideological dictatorship in the Soviet years. Nevertheless, the freedom of a teacher is limited by several factors, rules, and conditions. A compulsory curriculum is imposed in all post-Soviet schools, regardless of the skepticism of a particular teacher. The textbooks are approved by government officials in ministries, and very often different versions are not different at all. Many teachers with a Soviet past are not ready for a critical reevaluation of the narrative, and their younger successors are most often unable to break the boundaries of nationalist discourses, especially in situations of armed conflict. Access to up-to-date research and involvement in current critical debates remain considerably low. The post-Soviet political regimes aim to produce loyal national patriotic projects, for which the image of the "enemy" remains an important resource for mobilization. Progress in critical thinking, an objective declared in the school curricula of all post-Soviet states, is unachievable under these conditions.

The example from the life of a Ukrainian school student at the beginning of the 2000s pushes us to also think about the trajectory of the development of practices

of teaching history in other post-Soviet republics. At the beginning of the 2000s, Russia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia were already publishing second (if not third) editions of post-Soviet textbooks and there, the "vector" of the nationalization of the narrative was quite steady. In the countries of the South Caucasus, both then and now, schools were allowed only one version of each textbook, preapproved by the ministries of education. In Ukraine and Russia, secondary schools used different versions of textbooks. Before the armed conflict with Ukraine and confrontation with the collective "West," there was much less state control over the educational narrative in Russia.

Criticism of Soviet ideology contributed to the fact that the power of historians, who had hitherto claimed the rights to discourse on the consistent "road to Communism" as active interpreters of the past, present, and inevitably "bright future," was considerably undermined. Even in secondary schools, history teachers, who had formerly been appointed as directors of secondary educational institutions rather than teachers of other subjects, to a certain extent lost their position and authority:

Here at our school [regional center, eastern Ukraine] the school director was also a historian. In those times, mainly all directors were historians. For some reason. Well, most likely, it was considered that they are politically savvy. Well, he [...] when Perestroika happened and we met at a seminar, he said: "It is easier for you. In math, two plus two remained two plus two. In chemistry, H₂O is still H₂O. In physics, there was Ohm's law, and so it remains. So now tell me, how should I look you in the eye?! When all my life I taught you that this is an indestructible brotherhood of nations, and now look into your eyes and say a different thing. Do you understand?! [...] But we believed in that [in Soviet ideology and official version of history.]"

(Female, 61, Berlin, April 2016)

Even after 30 years, it is not possible to precisely measure the level of trust in the Soviet historical narrative and ideology nor the degree of "friendship between nations." We suggest that for an absolute majority of Soviet citizens, busy with daily activities, it was a matter of convention, of established views about the past and the norms of public patriotic utterance. Within the frames of the official historical discourse, ideological protagonists were able to voice critique in private conversations in the late Soviet years. Yet it was not customary to publicly doubt official biographies nor, moreover, to criticize them conceptually. In the opinion of Alexei Yurchak, the literal meaning of patriotic rituals and ideas about the past was not as important as the reproduction of their form, the standard language of speaking about "our" history and patriotism.

Did the situation change drastically in the post-Soviet period? Thanks to the omnipresent involvement of most Soviet people in the reproduction of ritualized acts and the expression of authoritarian discourse, the feeling emerged that the system was monolithic, unchangeable, and eternal.⁵³ As such, historical narratives seemed destined to justify socialism. At the end of the 1980s, when the dominant ideology was publicly criticized, many historical myths and heroes were declared fictitious.

Soviet citizens, including historians, found themselves in the unfamiliar situation of having to choose between different versions of the past and between loyalty to various national projects.

Historians Have Their War

The menu of versions of the past, however, seemed rather scant. Any deep rupture with the established historiographical tradition, and even more so the creation of a fundamentally new narrative, required time; new methodological, theoretical, and ideological approaches; more intellectual efforts; and, if not support, then at least some sympathy from the state. At the beginning of the 1990s, the conditions for such painstaking work were unfavorable. Political elites, especially in situations of conflict, required the population to support national projects and were in search of the means of legitimacy necessary to new regimes. As a result, in Soviet heir states, all resources were directed to reconstructing collective identities on the basis of a predominant ethnonationalism ideology. Where conflicts occurred, images of the enemy played a significant role in mobilizing discourses.⁵⁴

The practice of nationalizing historical narratives as quickly and deeply as possible proved to be the most desirable. All the necessary resources existed to achieve this goal: ready-made narratives, institutional structures (National Academy of Sciences, universities, and mass secondary education), and an “army” of historians and philologists. In the Soviet years, historians with academic degrees not only actively cultivated state ideology but also decorated bureaucratic and party institutions. Many were occupied with their everyday responsibilities, such as researching, producing historical narratives, and teaching in higher educational facilities.⁵⁵ When, after the fall of the USSR, they had lost the right to the Soviet discourse about the ultimate goal of history, in many ways they were able to participate in creating new state ideologies and nationalist discourses, via the reconstruction, popularization, and total nationalization of historical narratives as well as influencing the formation of views of new generations of citizens by teaching in schools and universities. At the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, the stormy emergence of mass media and social networks presented historians with an opportunity to reach wider audiences.⁵⁶ But in this field, they found more competitiveness (journalists, citizens with strong opinions, bloggers, numerous amateur historians,⁵⁷ and others).

In former Soviet national republics, changing the trajectory from Marxist to nationalist was not hard to accomplish. Using the same frames which had preserved the positivist and essentialist approaches, the narratives created in the USSR years were rapidly modified for new requirements. The most attention was paid to the last century: Imperialist Russia, the formation of different nationalist parties and ideologies (Armenian, Azerbaijani, Ukrainian, and others), and the Soviet years. The “brotherhood of nations” myth was replaced by that of the Soviet occupation. The criticism of colonialism was extended to the Soviet period and the USSR became, to a large extent, a continuation of Imperialist Russia. The Communist movement, promising an inevitably bright future, was rapidly substituted by a

process of attaining national freedom. Conveniently, this process, which according to historians had stretched over centuries and millennia, was for the most part already described in Soviet textbooks. The culmination of the history of a particular community was the moment in which an independent nationalist society was formed, i.e., the happy present. The main difference between this and the Soviet narrative was that here the future had already arrived: historians in Russia now enjoyed a certain standing, the concept of the civilizing mission of an empire was reinforced, and less attention was paid to the peripheries.⁵⁸

The majority of professional historians now consider their mission a self-sacrificing service to political regimes and nationalist communities (between which the equals sign is often placed). The difference is that, after the fall of the USSR, there was no longer a need to demonstrate symbolic commitment to the ideas of Marxism and Leninism, and use of (ethno)nationalistic language became possible. Since then, the public-approved image of a historian has been that of a patriot encouraging "nationalist interests." In his doctoral dissertation, Medinsky openly states: "The first question to which historical science must respond is how a particular event or a private matter corresponds to the interests of the country and its people. Weighing the scales of Russia's national interests creates an absolute standard of truth and credibility."⁵⁹ His colleague in Ukraine, Liliya Hrynevych, head of the Ministry of Education and Sciences prior to Poroshenko, speaking on the subject of teaching national history and the conflict situation in Russia, almost continues Medinsky's ideas: "To form in a child the love of his nation, patriotism, is a massive assignment and it should not be separated from educational lessons. All content of education must serve this purpose."⁶⁰ In other words, the actions of numerous scholarly historians and researchers, teachers and lecturers remain deeply politicized and ideologized. The long-term armed conflicts only strengthen these tendencies and feed these mindsets. A venerable Azerbaijani scholar, director of the Research Institute of the Academy of Historian Sciences and recently a parliamentary deputy, Yaqub Mahmudov, commented as follows at his meeting with the President:

Today, Azerbaijani historians, following your demand, instructions and recommendations are leading an informational war with Armenian aggressors. We all, including the awarded historians, are your soldiers. In keeping with your command, we gave up in a battle with those who falsify our history. In all your statements, you give high estimates of our effort, our battle.⁶¹

His colleague in Ukraine, speaking in an interview about saving architectural monuments in Odesa even before the Russian invasion and bombing of cities, reproduces similar patriotic war rhetoric:

They burned my car and my house because of my activism. And I got through it all. [...] Well, we live in a war. This is war. It is how it is. Somewhere, right now, someone is under the fire of a sniper. Here I am executing my task in my home front. Historians have their war.

(Male, around 50, Odesa, July 2021)

As the warriors of ideological and informational battles, a significant niche that historians seek to occupy is control over the interpretation of past events as well as the reproduction of “objective” historical discourses and narratives, destined to assure the legitimacy of political endeavors and the requirements of a particular imaginary society. Today, their most important task is to raise good patriots. In this sense, historians are certainly fighting a war of their own and, having lost a significant number of privileges granted to them in the Soviet years, seem unwilling to retreat from this last frontier.

New Textbooks

The speed with which new academic studies and textbooks were produced is also indicative of the fact that no in-depth review of the historical narrative ever really took place. New textbooks appeared as early as the mid-1990s. The mass release was delayed due to financial difficulties rather than the unwillingness of specialists to produce them. By the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, the mass production of new textbooks had been achieved. In the experience of a student at a secondary school in Baku between 1991 and 2001, in the “Azerbaijani Sector,”⁶² the situation changed as follows:

First of all, we did not have a textbook. From the fifth, or say the fourth grade⁶³ we started using exercise books [*tetradki*]. She [the history teacher] would recite some texts to us. We learned. Parallel to this, as my father is a historian, there was a kind of critical attitude to the fact that we are only learning history from the fifth grade. Manna, Atropatena⁶⁴ – well, these subjects were. [...] The textbook appeared in the 6th grade. [...] And since then, they have always been around [meaning in the mid-1990s].⁶⁵ [...] For the general subject of history, the textbooks were from the Soviet era, – but the history of Azerbaijan we learned from new textbooks.

(Female, 31, Gori, August 2015)

The process of creating new textbooks unveils certain aspects of the subject itself. The textbooks for nationalist history, for instance, required significant changes. The successor states of the USSR needed historical legitimization, and the nationalized post-Soviet ideology needed to be reflected in educational historical narratives. All other subjects and textbooks could wait. Even books for the national languages in most post-Soviet nationalist states were significant in terms of the linguistic component:

Well, these were already new textbooks in Ukrainian [in Ukraine, the beginning of the 2000s]. Yes, these were of course Soviet textbooks. They could only be in general subjects. In physics, for example. Physics had not changed much since the fall of the Soviet Union. But the textbooks appeared new in one way or another. I even remember the Soviet textbooks in Ukrainian. It was just that we did not do exercises where there were suggestions about

Lenin. [...] And oh, did our teachers ignore this fact. And to be honest, it did not harm anyone that those drawings in those books were with the pioneers. Although none of the pioneer organizations have existed here since [19]91.

(Male, 23 years old, Kyiv, October 2016)

Turning to nationalism, historians quickly reclaimed their right to interpret the past, present, and future. Historical processes regained meaning and purpose. From now on, its culmination was not communism but an independent nationalist society. Students of Azerbaijani schools see, on the first pages of the textbooks, Heydar Aliyev and his deeply thoughtful statements, such as his speech on how "state independence of Azerbaijan is eternal, strong, unbreakable and we will never give it up."⁶⁶ The mission of historians is to find justification for such populist claims, and the modern historical narrative is intended for storytelling, from the depths of centuries, about consistent and uncompromising battles of particular "nations" for their freedom.

The genre of the textbook narrative suggests a straightforward representation of ideological constructs. Declared in all school curricula created for post-Soviet states, the development of skills for critical thinking in the context of national history is in no way being implemented. This, however, is not surprising. If school subjects are destined to raise patriots that are loyal to national projects, then a critical viewpoint of the past can become an obstacle to realizing this purpose. Critical thinking can question the interpretation of the historical process as a centuries-long battle for national independence to which historians find no counter-argument:

All is designed so that anyone believing that the inclinations of Ukraine once were thus, will believe in this as well. Because, how to say, Kyivan Rus', the battle of Bohdan Khmelnytsky for Ukraine's independence at the beginning of the twentieth century, was the impulse to form an independent Ukrainian state. [...] I think that history, most likely, was one of the subjects for which they had to re-write books or publish new books for that matter. Because I already studied new books after the fall of the Soviet Union. It was taught as if Ukraine were an independent state, and everything comes down to this, and finally, we have succeeded. Something like this.

(Female, 35 years, Berlin, May 2016)

Raising patriots was more or less effective in a relatively stable political regime. The textbook is a genre that does not involve a deep, sharp, or diverse transformation in the memory of a generation. If such a thing does occur, the content and "objectivity" of each textbook are often questioned:

In any case, the textbooks for history, national history, are the opposite of objective in these countries. Well, this is simple... They are rewritten every day. As soon as the government changes... In Ukraine, it often happens... Government changes, that is it! We rewrite textbooks in history following

the new, state-dictated views. Hop! Again, the government changes and everything goes back. They rewrite textbooks. There is no textbook that, you know, was accepted, in ... I don't know, [19]94 and they would add new events to that book. No such thing. They are *all* non-objective.

(Female, 27, Moscow, December 2019)

Mistrust in textbooks, in their quality, and content are widespread among those who went to school in the 1990s. This was a time of vociferous criticism of imperial/Soviet narratives, the declaration of nationalization of historical discourses inherited from the USSR, and the creation of new textbooks. At the beginning of the 2000s, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Russia approved the new official narrative. Any subsequent changes and “improvement” in quality can be considered insignificant. Georgia, in the years of Mikheil Saakashvili’s governance, had the greatest number of large-scale experiments compared to other post-Soviet states (except for the Baltics). The authors worked intensively on the design, methodology, and content of textbooks with the purpose to bring them closer to “European” standards. However, the overall national narrative was not reevaluated. This was that same primordial and positivist approach to nationalist history, a storytelling of “golden centuries” of medieval statehood and the following centuries-long battle for national independence that was supposed to foster love of the homeland. Overall, textbook reforms were in vain. New versions of textbook narratives transformed into more effective instruments for achieving traditional goals.

In Ukraine, where the change in power was often accompanied by a certain corruption of state ideology, textbooks also changed in the 2000s. But for the most part, these changes were limited to different interpretations of some events of the Soviet past: Holodomor in Ukraine at the beginning of the 1930s, the events of the Second World War, and others. The dominance of one or other interpretations of the imperial and Soviet past reflected the results of the internal political struggle in Ukraine. But with all rulers, or all versions of textbooks, they were destined to serve the same tasks, just as in Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, or Georgia. For example, when comparing the textbooks in Russia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, one can conclude that:

There are no differences because propaganda works here, there and everywhere. Especially in the textbooks of Russian history. [...] You can tell that there are nationalist sentiments everywhere. It kind of appears on its own, to implement patriotism in children. [...] This is the only thing in which they are so similar. For instance, the history of Armenia and Azerbaijan strongly contradict one another, and so do the maps for that matter. Full-on confusion. [...] You have to believe in what they give you to learn. This was the only way out for an entrant who was trying to get into a university in Azerbaijan.

(Male, 22, Batumi, August 2017)

The majority of the official and most influential discourses and narratives are designed to convince both children and adults of a certain “truthful” and

"objective" long-term history of the nation. Otherwise, for various reasons, persuading students is not so easy. Then comes the necessity of a formal reproduction of a standard language, speaking about "our" history. This is demanded by the whole education system.

At the same time, critical views on the quality of narratives and the principles of teaching history are not equivalent to a critical understanding of the ideological purposes inherent to the subject. In a discursive space within a nationalist state, love of the homeland (as well as hatred for the enemy) is considered a norm. The school, as the space for raising patriots, just as the textbooks of history, is – like history textbooks – most criticized whenever it does not successfully cope with these tasks:

History ... is a subject such that, no matter what you write, that can be true too (laughs). Well, the history of Ukraine was also taught with patriotic colors, and that's true too. As in, those kids who studied the country's history during the independence of Ukraine, of course I think they were raised more patriotically than those who grew up and worked in the Soviet Union.

(Female, 35, Berlin, May 2016)

In a discursive space of nationalist states, homogenization is approving the maximalist idea that every citizen needs to meet certain criteria: the skill of the literary language, the knowledge of the "national" history and culture, and love of the homeland. Formalized, mass school education allows for the creation and support in everyday life of the idea of solidarity and the popularization of myths about historical enemies. At the basis of these influential ideas and myths lies patriotic upbringing in schools.

Historical Ignorance: Shame and "Incompetent Citizens"

Formalized, systematic, and ideologized mass school education is the primary condition for constructing a political and sociocultural space, within the borders of which, a secondary school qualification is enough to prove the necessary competence to join an imaginary society. Or, expressed otherwise, the power of a system rests on the universal belief that formal attendance of school courses in national history, literature, or the "mother" tongue, *a priori* turns everyone into patriots. The skills imparted by the lessons in these subjects firstly define the level of patriotic competence of teenagers, entering adult life and becoming fully fledged members of the imagined community. It can be argued that schools, as well as teachers, strongly differ in the quality of their teaching. Children learn with different amounts of eagerness and reach different levels of success. But after completing their studies, all these differences quickly lose their meaning. In adult life, the people around you are generally uninterested in one's good school grades; nor is there (generally) the necessity to demonstrate certain knowledge about national history or the nationalist literature canon on a regular basis.

The national history courses in the USSR successor countries can hardly be differentiated in their theoretical and methodological approaches, but they do diverge significantly in their content. Each nationalist narrative presents a selection of historical events and characters. Interpretations of the same event are very often incomparable. Designed to serve the interests of nation-states, native history, along with the state language and national literature remain subjects that distinguish the school in a post-Soviet country from the secondary educational facility in another:

I came here [from a Russian city to Baku], and did not know anything. That summer when we came, I slept cuddling the Azerbaijani history textbook. I was studying. My mother insisted. [She] bought textbooks – go read them. She did not let me outside. I was reading, reading, reading, studying. It turned out, that [...] in the first quarter of the ninth grade, there were the Olympic games in history [of Azerbaijan], and I gained first place in my school. You should have seen the faces of my teachers and classmates! [...] They were just... They were in a state of shock! How can this small boy make such a big step? Well, I explained to them that that summer I read everything. I had a better memory than those kids did. The same happened in the first history lesson when the teacher was asking us simple questions about the past. [...] From the sixth grade. I was the only one who answered. [...] Every other subject, they were somehow... I already had some kind of basis. But the history of Azerbaijan was like a dark forest to me. I would be in trouble if I did not start studying that summer. So, yes. This was the only subject that was new to me. That is why I had to learn it. [...] I also did very well in the subject of [the] history of Russia. Another funny thing is that I was one of the few excellent students in Russian history in my class. In Russia, in a Russian school, here he is, a non-Russian, who knows history better than I do. This is how it looked from the outside.

(Male, 22, Batumi, August 2017)

In this particular case, the requirements for the Azerbaijani language and literature were minimized. The interview partner was awarded a place at one of the most prestigious Russian schools in Baku. His efforts to rapidly study the course of “native history” became a sufficient basis for integration into the national community, outside of which he had lived most of his life. He showed all his teachers and classmates that he was a “real” Azerbaijani by learning not physics, chemistry, or math but the history of Azerbaijan.

In a school in Russia, he was a leading student in humanities subjects. But in the frameworks of ethnonationalism ideologies that dominate the post-Soviet space, this did not make him a fellow national. His broad knowledge of the school course in the history of Russia is no more than an incidental anecdote in his biography. For an Azerbaijani, possession of knowledge that determined patriotic competence only allowed him to feel some superiority over his Russian classmates who

represented a dominant ethnic group. Eagerness to learn Azerbaijani history was connected to the wish to uphold his status as top of the class in the subject. At the same time, however, close acquaintance with the course of Azerbaijan's history becomes proof of his patriotic competence as a member of a national community with which he identifies.

In some cases, we can argue that the required level of competence is yet to be achieved. But here, the thirst for knowing "native" history builds self-esteem:

In school, I had Russian language as a subject, from the fifth [or] sixth grade [in a school in Kazakhstan]. Therefore, I am still shy to speak, but also to write in Russian. Writing – that's a problem. [...] Teaching [in a school in Kazakhstan] was in Russian. These were the [19]90s, a time of experiments. Our headmistress created a wonderful school. As most Russian schools were closing, and many teachers were either losing jobs or leaving the country, she found an opportunity to bring together the best of the community. And she created the school with her program. [...] And this school, eventually, gave me a lot of incredible things. So, when I came from [town N, Russia] and applied to the best secondary school, [...] I had two issues. One was the French language, which I had never previously studied. [...] And [second], well, that was related to Russia. As in, Russian language and literature. Because when I came and wrote the introductory dictation, I got the lowest grade. But in everything else I had good results. I was told – let's not take risks. In one year, you will learn. Russian history I learned in one summer through all the textbooks I could find. Or it was maybe a university book – it had a blue cover. So, when I came, I was sort of entertained by this, and in the end, I participated in the Olympic games in history and some science conferences as well. In the 11th grade I won at one of those conferences.

(Male, 37, Berlin, May 2022)

Schools of post-Soviet countries still teach Russian language for the purposes of mobility of students and graduates. It is therefore now possible to move to Georgia after studying for eight years in a Moscow school and finish the last two years in Tbilisi in Russian, which will equally require competencies in the humanities – the subjects that are claimed to turn schoolchildren into citizens and patriots. Otherwise, new arrivals may be considered "incompetent Georgians":

My mother is a historian and she told me about the history of Georgia. To be honest, I was not very interested. I was studying world history in a Russian school, as well as that of Russia. I only approached Georgian history seriously from the 10th grade, just as I moved from Moscow to Tbilisi. [...] I was fourteen. [...] Each Georgian must know, well at least I think... (hesitates) about that battle in Didgori, when the power of David the Builder appeared,⁶⁷ and respectively Georgia... That was the beginning of the twelfth century. I think around 1112 if I am not mistaken (laughs in embarrassment). See, not

knowing this date – is shameful. Overall, I am not an expert in Georgian history. I have to... Even though I actively studied there [Tbilisi school] during these two years. Then I passed the exam, with good results. But I have not gone back to it in the last eight years, so I feel that I don't know it very well.
(Female, 24, Bakuriani, July 2018)

Discursive space in Georgia, as in any national USSR successor society, is designed so that an “incompetent” citizen suffers shame. Not knowing the “most important milestones” of national history or basic language rules can give rise to such accusations. The Battle of Didgori happened in August of 1121. My interviewee perhaps knew that I am not ethnically Georgian or a citizen of Georgia and thought that I was not aware of the exact date of the battle. She was embarrassed, not certain of the right answer. However, this was not such a strong feeling of shame that every “real Georgian” might feel on forgetting such a thing. It can be suggested that, in a different context of interaction with competent members of Georgian imaginary society, the embarrassment would be replaced by shame. But in her life after finishing school, she does not have to prove her patriotic competence. Her confidence in her proficiency is based on the last two years of her study at university. “Good results,” achieved at the moment of socialization as a citizen and patriot in a Tbilisi school, allow her to believe that she knows “native” history. Forgetting does not mean not knowing.

The secondary school remains, essentially, the only institution that guarantees on a mass scale the level of a standard, ministry-approved education, the knowledge of “native history,” a literature canon and literary language, and one that leads the processes of socialization of children and patriotic sentiments among the citizens of the country. Marina⁶⁸ moved with her family at one-and-a-half years of age from Baku to Yerevan because of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Her family spoke no Armenian and, when at the proper age, she went to a Russian school in Yerevan, run by the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation. The school did not have studies in Armenian nor did they teach the history of the Armenian people. Upon completion of her school studies, she did not speak Armenian but applied to a Russian-Armenian Slavic University, where everything was “way too Russian,” but she could learn the history of the Armenian people:

All of this made me quite isolated in multiple ways. Armenian reality, Armenian issues and the problems of its people were also factors. The whole region played a role, to be honest. I wasn't even interested [in history and language]. To tell you the truth, again, this [history course] did not cause any curiosity in me. I thought, that... (thinks) In Armenia there are a lot of tears. [...] They cry and tell you about problems, they blame others. It would be better if they sat and thought about what can they improve in their lives. So, there's that. [...] The interest in history is on its way. But I can't say that it is my weakest point – knowing Armenian history. The same was true when I was still in school. Then, in principle, it was never intertwined with my profession... Here. It is not a stain, but rather something insignificant, let's

just say that. Some historical debates I will never enter into. [...] I was never good at memorizing who killed how many people. [...] Unfortunately. This is, of course, nothing to be proud of, but I am being honest, that this is my weak point.

(Female, 29, Tbilisi, May 2017)

Marina demonstrates a different strategy for explaining "incompetence." She diligently explains that it is more about her conscious choice rather than a specific situation in which she involuntarily found herself after being forced to move to Yerevan. While her escape from the feeling of shame is an ostentatious flaunting of her incompetence, regret breaks through. Her incompetence in many ways disqualified her as a "real Armenian," isolating her from the society that she found herself a part of.

Unlike Marina, Victor was born and finished school in Kazakhstan, and learned his country's history as opposed to that of Russia. He then moved to Russia where he applied to a university:

[In school] we were preparing for the exam in Kazakhstan history. Alas. [...] Well, the history of Kazakhstan I never really learned. I find it super hard. It is hard because it contains these state or ethnic studies, which were part of the modern-day Kazakhstan territory... forever. The history of Kazakhstan starts from the Upper Paleolithic Era. Two million, it seems, five hundred years B.C. (with notable skepticism) [...] What the ancient times were like. Ancient times – they are very important. [...] Yes, I think that I did not know anything about Russian history; and it seems like that to this day. [...] Where to learn Russian history, I do not know. Now I do not have enough time. I never have time, and I think I never will. So, everything remains on a fragmented level. Say, you visit Saint-Petersburg. You know, that Peter opened the window to Europe. But this notion is on a primitive level. How I... [...] How I would like to know more... Perhaps I can apply to one of the school courses (with a smile). What can you do... Read textbooks?

(Male, 20, Berlin, December 2016)

Victor never devoted enough time to studying the history of Kazakhstan. Being ethnically Russian, and knowing that after finishing school he would move to Russia, he thought that such knowledge was unnecessary and non-compulsory. Strategies of justification can differ; however, in this case, it is the demanding nature of the narrative. Such a strategy refers to another side of substantial changes in the narratives of native history. New textbooks in the post-Soviet years were not only nationalized but they became larger in volume and greater in detail, unlike those used in national republics during the Soviet Union. This has to do with the fact that the purposes of the authors of these textbooks often do not coincide with the tasks which schools are destined to solve.

The system of mass secondary education in the post-Soviet space is organized in such a way as to provide the necessary minimum of knowledge. An effective

school narrative, ideally, should be simple. The textbook is not destined for in-depth explorations of history or literature. The school courses in humanities subjects suggest a mere selection of information, necessary, in the opinion of authors, to future citizens. Superficial, non-critical knowledge of important milestones, events, and names, which historians found necessary to include in the official narrative, remains an important means for raising patriots. If a political regime requires demonstrations of mass support, it turns to this “innermost” mythologized notion, turning adolescents into members of an imagined community – into citizens or patriots.

This moment of mobilization is a reference to a general conventional notion. As a rule, this means more popular plots, historical myths, sites of memory, or ideologized images. For example, in the case of Russia, these images are those of Alexander Nevsky or Peter the Great,⁶⁹ heroes of the Great Patriotic War.⁷⁰ At the moment of the annexation of Crimea, mass mobilization was built not only around the myth of the peninsula but also around its history as part of Russian territory. It was a reference to a particular site of memory – a “heroic city,” “Russian sailors” – Sevastopol.⁷¹

In the summer of 2022, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy referred in a public speech to more historical characters, including several who were mythologized:

It [Ukrainian society] dates back at least 1,500 years. The date, officially recognized by the UN and UNESCO, is when Kyi, Shchek and Khoryv founded the capital of Ukraine, which is the only legal successor of Kyivan Rus'⁷², achieved and asserted by our righteous rulers. Askold and Dir, Oleg the Prophet, Prince Igor, equal to the apostles, Olga of Kyiv, Sviatoslav I, Vladimir the Great, Yaroslav the Wise, Vladimir II Monomakh, King Danylo, etc.⁷³

In the fall of 2020, during the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War, an important site of memory for Azerbaijanis was the city of Shusha, on which its successful attack granted Azerbaijan military advantage.⁷⁴ Around the same time, the officials of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh referred to the memory of “great ancestors” and to an important site of heroic memory: the battle of Sardarabad (May 1918) and the memory of the Armenian genocide.⁷⁵

These mobilizing strategies utilize brightly colored sentiments around mythologized events and images, traumatic or triumphal experiences, but not systematic, critically analyzed deep knowledge. On the contrary, the more superficial and vague the memories of the former students are, the fewer questions arise about the narrative they learned in their youth, thus rendering the mobilization more effective. This in turn reinforces control by the ruling powers as well as the energy and sentiments of the society toward supporting their projects and actions. The mobilizing discourse thus advocates for the use of contrasting black-and-white images and myths, half-forgotten yet still familiar from childhood, in school narratives about heroic ancestors on the side of truth and justice.

The attempts made during the interview to remember and describe the main events and heroes of national history take the interviewees back to their school years. This uncomfortable situation reminds us of taking examinations for which, it seemed, they were relatively well prepared. National history was taught in schools for years and many of the respondents were good or excellent at it. But, as it turns out over the course of the interviews, the majority of the details are forgotten over time. In a situation where it appears difficult to distinctly outline "important milestones" and name main characters, the interview partner begins to look for arguments to justify his or her incompetence. "I can't say that I loved history. I loved, for instance, historical movies, documentaries, and some foreign books that I found at home, but the subject I hated until the 11th grade. The history of Azerbaijan was way more boring [than any other subject]. Quite bad, huh?" (Female, 31, Gori, August 2015). The better the interview partner was in school (good or excellent), and essentially, the more confident in their knowledge of "native history," the greater was their discomfort, embarrassment, or even shame when they failed to recall dates or names. In other words, when their level of competence as a member of an imagined community was called into question:

Well let's say I have a memory that I was once ... Especially when I was preparing for final exams [at university], I was studying very seriously. But now, seems like I've forgotten everything. Ask me something ... (embarrassed laugh) Would be of course ... Of course, uncomfortable. I forgot so much already. The knowledge which you don't use much is easy to forget. Things get lost. [...] You know why am I so uncomfortable? (Nervous laughter) Because I ... I learned history very thoroughly back then [during my school years]. Especially in the lyceum. I took part in the Olympic games in history, and in 1998 won third place in the Olympics in all-Ukrainian history [...]. If you think about it, a lot must have stayed in my memory because of that. [...] I should have said [before the interview], that I ... I overlooked some of Ukraine's history. [embarrassed laugh] Honestly, I am now a little uncomfortable. You know you prepare, and then ... You are shocked by how little you know. Let's say, I see the subjects like physics ... somehow as more useful. Well, that which happens or occurs in everyday life. Especially when kids ask questions. You think, my God(!), I was there and I studied everything! How can I forget such banal things! With history it is worse, as you don't use it as much. [...] Yes, I have forgotten a lot. If I looked at, say, Wikipedia, I would say, God(!), what an idiot I am! (embarrassed laugh) How many famous... Well, what we learned, what went into history [...] Now I have to remember... Honestly, I do not remember anyone [except for Hetmans Maksym Kryvonis and Ivan Mazepa].⁷⁶ I should have prepared. (laughs) God(!) such an idiot!

(Female, 35, Berlin, May 2016)

The system of raising citizens and patriots, in the frames of which the school conducts its most important functions, does everything possible to keep students away

from discursive resources that might take them beyond the boundaries of dominant, state, and political regime-approved nationalist ideology. It seemed that, with the fall of the USSR, any person living in post-Soviet countries was exposed to more opportunities to escape the influence of the official discourse. By the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, interest in history had grown significantly. All habitual knowledge was shaken by doubt and criticism. Printed media tried to satisfy this sudden emergence of interest and critical mindsets. Later, in the mid-2000s, with access to the Internet, alternative information was more readily available.

But the historical discourses, narratives and myths that were criticized during the collapse of the Soviet Union have been replaced by their national counterparts. One historical myth was replaced by another, all created within post-Soviet nationalistic ideologies. Furthermore, the information presented on the Internet was easily deleted. Political regimes and active nationalists were, in the same way, using the Internet for access to publicity, just as much as their opponents and critics. What is more, few people actually maintain their interest in studying history into their adult life. Others will be satisfied with their school knowledge, media publications, fiction and documentary films, and historical novels:

I am ashamed, yes! [...] Well, ashamed ... Because, I want to know and have opinions, and ... For some reason, I am not ashamed about physics. For chemistry, yes I am. For the history of Russia, yes, I feel shame, as I cannot answer any questions.

(Female, 48, Berlin, October 2016)

Conclusion

Even in a situation of steady peace between post-Soviet nation-states, a critical review of “native history” or literary heritage requires serious effort. In a state of armed conflict over several years, when mobilizing discourses against the enemy are created and presented by highly qualified historians and writers, public intellectuals, and politicians, the chances for a critical understanding of the past are slim. A critical position often becomes one that is threatening. For many years, not only political markers have been used to marginalize opponents but also ethnic markers: pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian, pro-Armenian, or anti-Azerbaijani. All of these categories are destined to define “national traitors” or “enemies of the nation,” as supporters of peace are increasingly described.

The formalized system of mass secondary education and the upbringing of citizen-patriots survived the fall of the USSR. Various experiments, the aim of which was to create more modern schools and raise more critically thinking citizens, were never widely accomplished. Nationalistic ideologies not only maintained their power but also gained a greater influence in the context of decade-long conflicts. In all countries that were part of those armed conflicts, no matter whether they were considered the victims of aggression or the initiators of the opposition,

democracies, or autocracies, political regimes use conflict discourses to strengthen their positions and mobilize the populations over which they rule.

Images of the enemy and conflictual historical myths are created, cultivated, and propagated through schooling. In post-Soviet states, decades-long armed conflict was and remains an exclusively domestic factor. Appropriately, interpreted interests of nation-states and myths around the possibility of full sovereignty provide politicians with all the discursive resources needed to justify their actions.

All nationalism-fueled conflict, whether with an imperial flavor or otherwise, necessarily adopts a prolonged character. Rogers Brubaker points out six “pernicious postulates” or six myths and misconceptions in the study of nationalism. The first is the “architectonic illusion” that “if one gets the grand ‘architecture right’—if one discovers and establishes the proper territorial and institutional framework—then one can conclusively legitimate nationalist demands and thereby resolve nationalist conflicts.” Brubaker continues: “Against the architectonic illusion, then, [...] that nationalist conflicts are susceptible to fundamental resolution through national self-determination,” and asserts a kind of impossibility theorem:

that national conflicts are in principle irresolvable; that ‘nation’ belongs to the class of ‘essentially contested’ concepts; that chronic contentedness is therefore intrinsic to nationalist politics, part of the very nature of nationalist politics; and that the search for an overall ‘architectural’ resolution of national conflicts is misguided in principle, and often disastrous in practice.

In other words, “National conflicts are seldom ‘solved’ or ‘resolved’. [...] they are more likely to fade away, to lose their centrality and salience as ordinary people—and political entrepreneurs—turn to other concerns, or as a new generation grows up to whom old quarrels seem largely irrelevant.”⁷⁷

After the Second Karabakh War and the violent invasion of Russian armed forces in Ukraine, the situation in the post-Soviet space is developing in such a way that counting, in the nearest future, on politicians or citizens to turn to *other concerns* is impossible. It could be said, however, that even before these dramatic events, optimism would have been somewhat out of place. The school continues to fulfill its task of spreading nationalism, patriotism, and military-revanchist thinking and to prepare new generations of citizens for this and future armed clashes and wars for the foreseeable future.

Notes

- 1 *Notes on Teaching History in High Schools* (Saint Petersburg: Typography I. N, Skorokhodova, 1900), 24–25.
- 2 See V. Mikhajlin and G. Belyaeva, “Istorik v isterike, ili o vnezapnom poyavlenii uchitelya istorii v sovetskom shkolnom kino rubezha 1960-1970-kh,” *Neprikosnovennyj zapas* 5/85 (2012): 119–36.

- 3 The term *nauka* in Russian applies in equal measure to the natural sciences and the humanities. Within the framework of Soviet ideology that was established by the 1960s, the official historical narrative could no more be questioned that could generally recognized mathematical theorems or laws of the natural sciences.
- 4 In the late-Soviet film, the so-called Babetta haircut is associated with semantics of conservatism and communality: teachers and Communist Party members appear on screens with such haircuts. “So a smooth Babetta in *We’ll live Till Monday* (1968), a tough, older teacher with an unsuccessful personal life, is the character of Nina Menshikova.” T. Dashkova, “Babetta idet na Moskvu: ekspansiya zarubezhnogo kino v sovetskuyu povsednevnost’,” *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie* 2/56 (2020). https://www.nlobooks.ru/magazines/teoriya_mody/56_tm_2_2020/article/22420/ (accessed June 2024).
- 5 On the dynamics between power and historians, and traditions of utilizing historical scenarios and narratives for ideological purposes in the USSR years, see Brandenberger, David, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931–1956* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002); Platt, Kevin, and David Brandenberger, eds, *Epic Revisionism: Russian History and Literature as Stalinist Propaganda* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005); Thomas Sherlock, *Historical Narratives in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Russia: Destroying the Settled Past, Creating an Uncertain Future* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); N. Koposov, *Pamyat’ strogogo rezhima: Istoriia i politika v Rossii* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2011), 77–128; A. Dubrovskij, *Vlast i istoricheskaia mysl v SSSR (1930-1950-e gg.)* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2017); and Arup Banerji, *Writing History in the Soviet Union: Making the Past Work* (London: Routledge, 2018). On the continuation of traditions using historical instances and myths for political purposes, the relationship between historians and power, and the specifics of reconstructing historical narratives in the post-Soviet period, see Ronald Grigor Suny, “Constructing Primordialism: Old Histories for New Nations,” *The Journal of Modern History* 73 (2001): 862–96; Kathleen E. Smith, *Mythmaking in the New Russia: Politics and Memory during the Yeltsin Era* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2002); Victor Shnirelman, *Vojny pamiati: mify, identichnost i politika v Zakavkaze* (Moscow: Akademkniga, 2003); Ben Eklof et al., *Educational Reform in Post-Soviet Russia: Legacies and Prospects* (London: Frank Cass, 2005); David R. Marples, *Heroes and Villains: Creating National History in Contemporary Ukraine* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2007); Peter W. Rodgers, *Nation, Region and History in Post-Communist Transition. Identity Politics in Ukraine, 1991–2006* (Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2008), 87–136; Andrii Portnov, *Uprazhneniya s istoriej po-ukrainski* (Moscow: OGI, 2010); Koposov, *Pamiat strogogo rezhima*, 129–227; Sergey Rummyantsev, “Kak rasskazyvayut natsional’nyuy istoriyu detyam v Azerbajdzhanе,” in: *Konfliktogennyj potentsial natsionalnykh istorij: Materialy Mezhdunarodnogo nauchno-metodologicheskogo seminaru*, edited by A. Ovchinnikov (Kazan: YUniversum, 2015), 113–34; James C. Pearce, *The Use of History in Putin’s Russia* (Wilmington: Vernon Press, 2020); and Grigory Vaypan and Ilya Nuzov, *Russia: “Crimes against History”: Report no. 770a* (Paris: International Federation for Human Rights, 2021).
- 6 Rogers Brubaker, analyzing the situation “in the new nation-states of post-Communist Eastern Europe,” notes “several kings of nationalism” who “have flourished as a result of the reorganization of political space along the ostensibly national lines.” The most relevant, in my opinion, is the “nationalizing of nationalism.” According to Brubaker, “[n]ationalizing nationalisms involves claims made in the name of a ‘core nation’ or nationality, defined in the ethnocultural terms, and sharply distinguished from the citizenry as a whole. The core nation is understood as the legitimate ‘owner’ of the state, which is conceived as the state of and for the core nation. Despite having ‘its state,’ however, the core nation is conceived as being in a weak cultural, economic or demographic position within the state. This weak position is seen as a legacy of discrimination against the nation

before it attains independence. And it is held to justify the ‘remedial’ or ‘compensatory’ project of using the state power to promote the specific (and previously inadequately served) interest of the core nation.” Rogers Brubaker, “Myths and Misconceptions in the Study of Nationalism,” in: *The State of the Nation*, edited by John Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 272–306, 276–77. See also Brubaker’s *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 43–66 and “Nationalizing States Revisited: Projects and Processes of Nationalization in Post-Soviet States,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 11, no. 34 (2011): 1785–814.

- 7 Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 2014), 8.
- 8 The majority of today’s popular scenarios and images was created as early as in imperial times. After some revision, they then entered the Soviet textbooks. See, for example, N. Ustryalov, *Rukovodstvo k pervonachalnomu izucheniyu russkoj istorii* (Saint Petersburg: Tipografiya SHTaba Voenno-uchebnykh zavedenij, 1854); Nikolay Kostomarov, *Istoricheskie monografii i issledovaniia Nikolaia Kostomarova* (Saint Petersburg: Tipografiya tovarishchestva «Obshchestvennaya polza», 1872); V. A. Abaza, *Istoriya Armenii* (Saint Petersburg: Tipografiya I. N. Skorokhodova, 1888); M. Grushevskij, *Illyustrirovannaja istoriia Ukrainy* (Saint Petersburg: Knigoizdatelskoe tovarishchestvo «Prosveshchenie», 1913); Frithjof Benjamin Schenk, *Aleksandr Nevskij: Heiliger – Fürst – Nationalheld: eine Erinnerungsfigur im russischen kulturellen Gedächtnis (1263–2000)* (Köln: Böhlau, 2004); A. Senkyna, “Kniga dlia chteniya v 1920-kh godakh: staroe vs novoe,” in: *Uchebnyj tekst v sovetskoj shkole*, edited by C. Leonteva and K. A. Maslinskij (Moscow: Institut logiki, kognitologii i razvitiya lichnosti, 2008), 26–47; and N. G. Fedorova, “Vospitanie istoriej» po gimnazicheskim uchebnikam v pervoj polovine XIX veka,” in: *Istoricheskaya kultura imperatorskoj Rossii: formirovanie predstavlenij o proshlom*, edited by A. Dmitriev (Moscow: Izdatelskij dom Vysshej shkoly ekonomiki, 2012). In the USSR context of the elimination of illiteracy and Soviet national politics, for the first time in history, practically all national communities inhabiting the former Russian Empire made, to quote Ernst Gellner, “the enormous and costly educational machinery” of universal secondary and higher education, including for the national languages. Ernst Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals* (London: Hamish Hamilton 1994), 106–7. About Soviet nationality policy, see Yuri L. Slezkine, “The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism,” in: *Becoming National. A Reader*, edited by Geoff Eley and Ronald G. Suny (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 202–38; Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca & London, 2001); and Jörg Baberowski, *Der Feind ist Überall: Stalinismus im Kaukasus* (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2003), 184–552.
- 9 Over the course of three post-Soviet decades, political regimes in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Ukraine, and Russia differed, but they were, and in my opinion, remain, on a different level authoritarian. The important difference is that while Russia and Azerbaijan have established personalized electoral autocracies (the Putin and Aliyev regimes), Armenia and Ukraine have experience of real change in the top leadership. Even the shortest analysis of the situation in all four countries would require separate texts; therefore, for more details about the political transformation and processes, I am referring to the rich research literature. See, for example, Ronald Grigor Suny, *Looking Toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993); Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine: State and Nation Building* (London: Routledge, 1998); Marina Ottaway, *Democracy Challenged: The Rise of Semi-Authoritarianism* (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment International Peace, 2003), 51–70; Gerard J. Libaridian, *Modern Armenia: People, Nation, State* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2004); Serhy Yekelchuk, *Ukraine: Birth of a Modern Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Thomas de Waal, *The Caucasus: An Introduction* (Oxford:

- Oxford University Press, 2010); Brian D. Taylor, *State Building in Putin's Russia: Policing and Coercion after Communism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Suha Bolukbasi, *Azerbaijan: A Political History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011); Anton Steen, *Political Elites and the New Russia: The Power Basis of Yeltsin's and Putin's Regimes* (New York: Routledge, 2018); and Paul D'Anieri, *Ukraine and Russia: From Civilized Divorce to Uncivil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019).
- 10 As Yuri Slezkine aptly puts it in his book *The Jewish Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019), 100, "normal" nationalisms began from this. I would add that it not only began but also manifested in the new generations of citizens of most nation-states.
 - 11 The criticism of educational narratives for their insufficient patriotism and effectiveness in performing ideological functions serves more or less apparent statements of this thesis. For instance, the authors of the "research" published in "The Centre of Problem Analysis and Public Management Department of Social Sciences of RAS" (Russian Academy of Sciences) conclude that the presently used school textbooks of history barely meet the tasks of patriotic upbringing. The textbook authors' explanation is primarily a lack of formulated patriotic concepts that they could consistently mirror. See V. Bagdasaryan et al. *Shkolnyj uchebnyk istorii i gosudarstvennaya politika* (Moscow: Nauchnyj ekspert, 2009), 322.
 - 12 I. Sandomirskaya, *Kniga o rodine. Opyt analiza diskursivnykh praktik* (Vienna: Wiener Slawistischer Almanach, 2001), 17–18.
 - 13 Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 2014), 18.
 - 14 The criticism of the methodology, and permitted doubts about the results of a public opinion in the countries with authoritarian regimes, especially during an armed conflict, do not detract from the fact that support of military measures in solving conflicts is imbued with a mass character, particularly where a certain country considers military operations a success. See Levada-Center. Do you support the annexation of Crimea into Russia? <https://www.levada.ru/2021/04/26/krym/>; Sociologist group "Ranking." Result of the all-national polls in Ukraine. <https://ratinggroup.ua/ru/research/>. For polls on support of the war, see <https://re-russia.org/6c314cc0da9d4f2686718cdf22f61037> (accessed June 2024).
 - 15 Attempts to assess the (non)reliability of such memories are meaningless. More importantly, even decades after graduating from high school, school years are often remembered as the most important period in one's socialization process.
 - 16 İlham Aliyev took part in the ceremony of commissioning school №6 (on September 15, 2011). <https://ru.president.az/articles/3096> (accessed June 2024).
 - 17 Zelenskyy congratulated the teachers on a professional holiday and told them about a father-mentor, <https://www.ukrinform.ru/rubric-society/3325454-zelenskij-pozdravil-pedagogov-s-professionalnym-prazdnikom-i-rasskazal-ob-otceprepodavatele.html> (accessed June 2024).
 - 18 The meeting with the laureates and finalists of the contest "The Teacher of the Year of Russia," <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/66859> (accessed June 2024).
 - 19 Alexei Miller, "Istoricheskaya politika v Vostochnoj Evrope v nachale XXI v," in: *Istoricheskaya politika v XXI veke*, edited by Alexei Miller and M. Lipman (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2012), 7. See also Alexei Miller, "Rossiya: vlast' i istoriia," *Pro et Contra* 3–4/46 (2009): 6–23; here, 6–7.
 - 20 Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit: Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik*. München: C. H. Beck, 2006, 16.
 - 21 While this initially suggests one of the leaders of the Stepan Bandera movement, it could also apply to numerous other characters. For more detail, see T. Amar et al., *Strasti za Banderoyu* (Kyiv: Grani-T, 2011) and Georgiy Kasyanov, *Ukraina i sosedi: istoricheskaya politika. 1987–2018* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2019), 400–407.

- 22 O. Malinova, *Aktualnoe proshloe: simvolicheskaja politika vlastvuyushchej elity i dilemmy rossijskoj identichnosti* (Moscow: Politicheskaja entsiklopedija, 2015), 68–87.
- 23 Sergiusz Michalski, *Public Monuments: Art in Political Bondage 1870–1997* (London: Reaction Books, 1998), 107.
- 24 Ivan Kurilla, “The ‘Immortal Regiment’: A ‘Holiday through Tears,’ A Parade of the Dead, or a Mass Protest? Arguments over the Meaning and Future of a New Holiday Ritual,” *Russian Politics & Law* 57, no. 5–6 (2020): 150–65; A. Ponomareva, “Ogosudarstvlenie» grazhdanskikh initsiativ v praktike politicheskogo ispol’zovaniya proshlogo (na primere dvizheniya «Bessmertnyj polk»),” in: *Politika pamyati v sovremennoj Rossii i stranakh vostochnoj Evropy. Aktory, instituty, narrativy*, edited by A. Millera and D. Efremenko (Saint Petersburg: Izdatel’stvo Evropejskogo universiteta v Sankt-Peterburge, 2020), 188–201.
- 25 Serguei Alex Oushakine, “Remembering in Public: On the Affective Management of History,” *Ab Imperio* 1 (2013): 269–302; here, 284–86.
- 26 When the initiative on the lower level comes into opposition with the politics carried out by the ruling powers, typically, they get suppressed in all four countries. Public spaces in Russia and Azerbaijan are more tightly controlled. According to Alexei Miller, by the autumn of 2014, “the platforms and the form of a dialogue and co-operation in the field of historical consciousness were destroyed and the memory politics ended up in the deepest crisis in the history of post-Soviet Russia.” Alexei Miller, “Politika pamyati v Rossii: god razrushennykh nadezhd,” *Politiya* 4, no. 75 (2014): 49–57; here, 51. This crisis happened as a result of the annexation of Crimea and aggravations of relationships with the EU and United States. In Azerbaijan, the authoritarian regime, greatly under the influence of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict since at least the late 1990s, consistently refused space for dialogue. In Ukraine and Armenia, while political regimes do not have enough resources to influence all the activities described below, a significant role in controlling public spaces is played by the nationalist right and far-right parties, whose authority grew largely in the context of these conflicts.
- 27 E. Omelchenko and K. H. Pilkington, “Vmesto vvedeniya. Lyubit, gorditsya, uezzhat’? Rossijskaya molodezh v patrioticheskom labirinte,” in: *S chego nachinaetsya rodina: molodezh v labirintakh patriotizma*, edited by E. Omel’chenko and K. H. Pilkington (Ul’yanovsk: Izdatelstvo Ul’yanovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 2012), 5–30, 7–8.
- 28 Kasyanov, *Ukraina i sosedj*, 305.
- 29 Peter Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory Cultures in France and Germany since 1989: The Origins and Political Function of the Vel’ d’Hiv’ in Paris and the Holocaust Monument in Berlin* (New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005), 17.
- 30 Michalski, *Public Monuments*, 190.
- 31 According to Andrii Portnov, *Leninopad* (the demolition of Lenin monuments), which commenced on December 8, 2013 with the destruction of the monument at the Besarabskyi Market in Kyiv, reached its culmination on February 22, 2014 in the center of Dnepropetrovsk and continued on September 28, 2014 in the center of Kharkiv. If, in the oblasts of eastern Ukraine in the early 1990s, the demolition of Lenin monuments was mainly carried out by communal services and following the decision of local unions, in the years 2013 and 2014, these actions were carried out by groups of (typically right-wing radical) activists at night, with no interference by law enforcement agencies whatsoever. Andrii Portnov, “Majdan posle majdana,” *Ab Imperio* 3 (2014): 209–17; here, 214.
- 32 On the specifics of the memorial laws in Ukraine and Russia, see Nikolay Koposov, *Memory Laws, Memory Wars: The Politics of the Past in Europe and Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 1–24, 177–299.
- 33 Petro Poroshenko on the anniversary of de-communization: “It is a matter of national security,” <https://eurosolidarity.org/2021/04/09/poroshenko-dekomunizacziya-cze-py-tannya-nacziionalnoyi-bezpeky/> (accessed June 2024).

- 34 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 2006).
- 35 Miller, Alexei. “Vrag u vorot istorii. Kak istoricheskaya pamyat stala voprosom bezopasnosti,” 2020. <https://carnegie.ru/commentary/81207> (last accessed June 2024).
- 36 Marc Ferro, *The Use and Abuse of History: Or How the Past Is Taught to Children* (New York: Routledge, 2003), ix.
- 37 Marc Ferro, *The Use and Abuse of History: Or How the Past Is Taught to Children* (New York: Routledge, 2003), ix. In other words, the majority of researchers and research on the Soviet and post-Soviet practices of teaching history (or literature) in schools is limited by the analysis of the text within the textbooks. This conclusion applies to studies in other countries as well. Such an approach is permitted by numerous conditions. For instance, judging from the perspective of themes or issues touched on in this chapter, the very same school textbooks in history as well as the subjects “Citizen and Society” (formerly “social sciences”) and “Literature” reflect the specifics of the official version of conflicts, publicly gathered discourses, and politics of commemorating wars in which a particular country participated. See, for example, Karl Ajmermakher and Gennadij Bordyugov, eds, *Istoriki chitayut uchebniki istorii. Traditsionnye i novye kontseptsii uchebnoj literatury* (Moscow: AIRO-XX, 2002); Falk Bomsdorf and Gennadij Bordyugov, eds, *Obraz Rossii i stran Baltii v uchebnikakh istorii* (Moscow: AIRO-XX, 2002); Ajmermakher, Karl, and Gennadij Bordyugov, eds, *Natsional’nye istorii v sovetskom i postsovetskikh gosudarstvakh* (Moscow: AIRO-XX, 2003); Bojana Petric, “History Textbooks in Serbia after 2000: Signs of Educational Change?” *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 28, no. 2 (2006): 177–96; Vladimir Rouvinski, “‘History Speaks Our Language!’ A Comparative Study of Historical Narratives in Soviet and Post-Soviet School Textbooks in the Caucasus,” *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 29, no. 3 (2007): 235–57; Ryota Nishino, “The Political Economy of the Textbook in Japan, with a Particular Focus on Middle-School History Textbooks, ca. 1945–1995,” *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 30, no. 1 (2008): 487–514; Falk Bomsdorf and Gennadij Bordyugov, eds, *Natsionalnye istorii na postsovetskom prostranstve II* (Moscow: AIRO-XXI, 2009); A. Danilova and A. Filippova, eds. *Osveshchenie obshej istorii Rossii i narodov postsovetskikh stran v shkolnykh uchebnikakh istorii novykh nezavisimyykh gosudarstv* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennyj klub, 2009); Gennadij Bordyugov and V. Bukharaev, *Vcherashnee zavtra: Kak «natsionalnye istorii» pisalis v SSSR i kak pishutsya teper’* (Moscow: AIRO-XXI, 2011); Joseph Zajda, “Russian History Textbooks: An Analysis of Historical Narratives Depicting Key Events,” *Curriculum and Teaching* 28, no. 2 (2013): 73–100; Linda Chisholm, “Comparing History Textbooks in Apartheid South Africa and the German Democratic Republic, 1950–1990,” *Southern African Review of Education* 21, no. 1 (2015): 80–93; and Alexandra Binnenkade, “What You See Is What You Get: The Algerian War, French Textbooks and How Violence Is Remembered,” *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 10, no. 2 (2018): 129–48.
- 38 The epistle of the president to the Federal Assembly, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/65418>
- 39 Order of the President of the Russian Federation, July 30, 2021, no. 442, <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202107300042> (accessed June 2024).
- 40 For details on these Medinsky ideas, see Nikolay Poselyagin et al., “State Ideology in Russia as a Generator of International Conflicts,” in: *Non-Objective Conflicts: Political Practices of Sharing the Common Past. Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and Transnistria*, edited by Sergey Rummyantsev (Saint Petersburg: CISR, 2017), 23–52, 44–47.
- 41 For the countries that were part of the USSR, the process of the fall of the Soviet empire was the moment of a dramatic change, reflected in the content of textbook narratives. The second such moment was that of the armed conflicts (Nagorno-Karabakh, eastern Ukraine, and other violence).
- 42 The selection of countries was based on the geography of post-Soviet armed conflicts.

- 43 “Diamat,” a portmanteau of the Marxist theory of “dialectical materialism,” the official philosophy of Soviet communists.
- 44 The assignment of Naryshkin tells us a great deal about the specifics of history politics in modern-day Russia. Numerous professional historians continue to reproduce and spread the official ideology and myths about the heroic past, orchestrated (with their loyalty monitored) by the head of the intelligence service, a trained radio-mechanical engineer and economist, Sergey Naryshkin. Biography: <https://historyrussia.org/sergey-naryshkin/biografiya.html>
- 45 Sergey Naryshkin, *The work of a historian – is intelligence in time*, <https://historyrussia.org/sobytiya/rabota-istorika-razvedka-vo-vremeni.html>
- 46 Aliyev only left his position as leader by going to “another world.” Shevardnadze was forced to turn down the presidency by pressure from the opposition during the “Rose Revolution.”
- 47 This Soviet-adopted academic title is roughly equivalent to a PhD in history.
- 48 In the post-Soviet years (for example, in Georgia at the beginning of the 2000s), a unified course in geography and history was created experimentally by integrating the narratives with both national and world history. In some countries, and especially in Russia, additional courses were designed on the history of cities and regions. Until the Second Karabakh War, Azerbaijani schools provided a supplementary course on the history of Karabakh. After the war, the textbook *History of Victory* was implemented.
- 49 Or “mother tongue.”
- 50 The competition ‘Teacher of the Year’ is popular in the post-Soviet space, as one of the more obvious examples of attempts by the ruling powers to reward loyalty. See The meeting with laureates and finalists of the competition “The Teacher of the Year of Russia,” <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66859>; President on a meeting with the workers of the educational field and winners of the international Olympic games: The teacher is someone who fills another human with sense, light and values: <https://www.president.gov.ua/ru/news/prezident-na-zustrichi-z-osvityanami-ta-peremozhchymy-mizhna-70877>
- 51 Meaning the times of the “Orange Revolution” in Ukraine. See Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine’s Orange Revolution* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2005) and Paul D’Anieri, ed., *Orange Revolution and Aftermath: Mobilization, Apathy, and the State in Ukraine* (Baltimore: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2010).
- 52 Domestic designation of members of the organization of Ukrainian nationalists who fought in the ranks of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) and other opponents of the Soviet power.
- 53 See Alexei Yurchak, *Eto bylo navsegda, poka ne konchilos. Poslednee sovetskoe pokolenie* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2014), 71–79.
- 54 In a Ukraine-Russia context, until the armed conflict of 2014, Russia had been merely a “significant other.” According to numerous Ukrainian politicians and historians, many “ordinary” people of the two countries needed to be told that Ukrainians and Russians were two different imaginary societies. For instance, “What a civilization—in the words of the former president, Viktor Yushchenko—did Ukraine bring to the world.” See Yushchenko considers Repin, Tchaikovsky, and Dostoyevsky, the domain of Ukrainian culture: <https://ukranews.com/news/469252-yushhenko-schytaet-repyna-chaykovskogo-y-dostoevskogo->; see also (Kuchma, 2003, 9–29). In Russia, until 2014, the Soviet discourse of “brother nations” was widespread. In this context, “conventional” Ukrainians were portrayed as “ungrateful brothers.”
- 55 The majority of qualified specialists remained in academia and/or were occupied with teaching. But this kind of choice did not mean more freedom from ideological frames. It was practically impossible to criticize the concept of historical formations and class structures of society or the national historical narratives constructed for the postwar years.

- 56 Many historians were involved in creating and popularizing the official discourses and narratives in the role of public “enlighteners.” In the words of Volodymyr Viatrovych, former director of the Institute of National Memory in Ukraine, “the best place for historians – and this is their mission – is not to sit in their offices but to go to people and tell them the real history of Ukraine. We studied for this, and we are aware of how to interpret the past, how to understand it, and I think that the mission of modern Ukrainian historians is to help others to do the same thing.” See “History – when the truth is somewhere in between”: <https://uinp.gov.ua/pres-centr/novyny/volodymyr-vyatrovych-istoriya-ce-ne-toy-vypadok-koly-pravda-mozhe-buty-des-poseredyni>
- 57 “Unlike in the West,” Leonid Kuchma, the second president of Ukraine, notes in his book, “it is not considered unusual when people of technology and science are simultaneously amateurs, if not experts, in the humanities. I myself have always been partial to them. [...] Up until high school I was immersed in books on history, not only of Ukraine and Russia, but also of various other countries” (Kuchma, 2003, 9).
- 58 Academic researchers enjoyed a significant increase in freedom and access to alternative information that had previously been unavailable to them. However, not all were keen to take advantage of these new opportunities. Russian historians have tended to do so more, and in the post-Soviet period, the results of modern research were published in large numbers. Ukrainian scholars have made use of this opportunity to a far lesser extent. South-Caucasian historians never really breathed “the air of freedom”: although modern studies are available to qualified individuals, their impact on the school narrative remains minimal.
- 59 See Vladimir Rostislavovich Medinsky, *Problemy obektivnosti v osvveshhenii rossijskoj istorii vtoroj poloviny XV-XVII* (diss., Moscow, 2011). <https://www.prlib.ru/item/872413>
- 60 “The Minister of Education wants to revise the textbook of history of Ukraine,” <https://bykvu.com/ua/bukvy/39101-ministr-obrazovaniya-khochet-obnovit-uchebnik-istorii-ukrainy/> (accessed June 2024).
- 61 From the speech of the director of the Institute of History named after A. Bakikhanov, National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan, Yaqub Mahmudov, about presenting the Azeri State Prize to a group of scientists at a reception in honor of “Republic Day” (May 28, 2012). *Bakinskiy Rabochi*, May 30, 2012, p. 2–3.
- 62 In Azerbaijan, the two main languages are Azerbaijani and Russian. In the post-Soviet years, the “Azeri Sector” practically forced out the “Russian Sector.” The discussions about the necessity of either keeping or resisting the “Russian Sector” continue to this day.
- 63 In the late Soviet years, the ten-year system of education was officially replaced by the 11-year plan. The serious preparations for reforms, however, were never implemented. Thus, in reality, in the 1990s, education was still a ten-year project with students being transferred from the third grade to the fifth.
- 64 The ancient states were located mainly on a territory that the official Azerbaijani historical narrative refers to as “Southern Azerbaijan” (northwest Iran). Accordingly, these states are called ancient Azerbaijan states.
- 65 In the 1990s, many teachers of Azerbaijani history used the first of a three-volume academic edition prepared by a group of authors in the postwar Soviet years. The first book presented history from the primitive communal system to the XVII century. See I. A. Huseynov et al., *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana*, vol. 1 (Baku: Akademija nauk Azerbajdzhanskoj SSR, 1958). In the mid-1990s, representatives of the late-Soviet generation of Azerbaijani historians prepared the first textbooks for secondary schools. Y. A. Makhmudov et al., *Istoriya Azerbajdzhana: 7 klass* (Baku: Maarif, 1997); Y. U. Yusifov et al., *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana: 6 klass* (Baku: Maarif, 1997).
- 66 Speech given by Heydar Aliyev, president of Azerbaijan, at the official gathering on behalf of the American-Azerbaijani Chamber of Commerce and the Houston Society for Cooperation. Houston, August 2, 1997, <https://lib.aliyev-heritage.org/ru/1804214.html> (accessed June 2024).

- 67 David the Builder, who reigned from 1089 to 1125. In the battle, the army of David fought with the Seljuks and won. In the history of the Seljuk Empire, this battle was an insignificant episode. See Claude Cahen. *Pre-Ottoman Turkey: A General Survey of the Material and Spiritual Culture and History, c. 1071–1330* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1968), 91–95 and Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 20–62.
- 68 The names of all interviewees have been changed or withheld to protect their privacy.
- 69 In June 2022, Russia celebrated the 350-year anniversary of Peter the Great. Vladimir Putin drew direct and ingenuous analogies between the military activity of the first Russian emperor at the beginning of the eighteenth century and the war that he had himself unleashed in Ukraine in February 2022. “See, Peter the Great waged the Great Northern War for 21 years. It seemed, as he fought with Sweden, that he rejected something ... He didn’t reject anything! [...] He returned and strengthened – that is what he did. Apparently, it became our duty as well to return and strengthen.” See <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/68606> (accessed June 2024). Regarding images of Alexander Nevsky and Peter the Great, see Schenk, *Aleksandr Nevskij*; Paul Bushkovitch, *Peter the Great: The Struggle for Power, 1671–1725* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); James Cracraft, *The Revolution of Peter the Great* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003); and E. Anisimov, *Petr Velikij: lichnost i reformy* (Saint Petersburg: Piter, 2009).
- 70 On the day of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Vladimir Putin did not fail to announce in his public speech that “lately in the West, more and more words are being heard that suggest that the documents signed by the Soviet totalitarian regime that secured the results of the Second World War should no longer be implemented. What are we to make of this? How should we respond to this? The results of the Second World War, as well as the sacrifices made by our people at the altar of victory over Nazism, are sacred.” Speech of February 24, 2022, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67843> (accessed June 2024).
- 71 On the memory-rich landscape of Sevastopol, see Karl D. Qualls, *From Ruins to Reconstruction: Urban Identity in Soviet Sevastopol after World War II* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2009), 124–156.
- 72 About Kyivan Rus’ and others mentioned, see Aleksei Tolochko, *Ocherki Nachalnoj Rusi* (Kyiv & Saint Petersburg: Laurus, 2015) and I. N. Danilevsky, *Predystoriia Ukrainy. V: Istoriia Ukrainy* (Saint Petersburg: Aletejja, 2016), 6–99.
- 73 All stages of the statehood of Ukraine can be described with the following sentence: We were, appear and will be – speech by Volodymyr Zelenskyy on the Day of Ukrainian Statehood, July 28, 2022, <https://www.president.gov.ua/news/vsi-etapi-istoriyi-derzhavnosti-ukrayini-mozhna-opisati-odni-76705>
- 74 The year 2022 was named the “year of Shusha” in Azerbaijan. “Shusha—the wreath of Karabakh, a sacred and precious place for our people. Love of Shusha is an integral part of being for each Azerbaijani citizen. [...] The victory in Shusha, leading to the surrender of Armenia, was the triumph of the heroic spirit of our people, which went down in history as the Day of Victory.” <https://president.az/ru/articles/view/55197>
- 75 Richard G. Hovannisian, *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times, Volume II: Foreign Dominion to Statehood: The Fifteenth Century to the Twentieth Century* (New York: St. Martin Press, 1997), 299–301; Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 111–179. Arayik Harutyunyan, then president of the unrecognized Nagorno-Karabakh Republic of Artsakh, stated in his speech: “We will be loyal to our Great Ancestors, to all who centuries ago sacrificed their lives in Armavir, on the fronts of Great Patriotic War, in the Artsakh Liberation War, in April 2016, in the battles of July 2020 [...] We will be responsible to current and future generations, so as not to allow the centuries-old enemy to once again commit genocide and bring the scimitar over our existence and dignity.” <https://rus.azatutyun.am/a/30871698.html> (accessed June 2024).

- 76 See Natalija Yakovenko, *Ocherk istorii Ukrainy v srednie veka i ranee novoe vremia* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2012), 522–56.
- 77 Brubaker, “Myths and Misconceptions,” 279–80.

Bibliography

- Abaza, V. A. *Istoriia Armenii*. Saint Petersburg: Tipografiya I. N. Skorokhodova, 1888.
- Ajmermakher, Karl, and Gennadij Bordyugov, eds. *Istoriki chitayut uchebniki istorii. Traditsionnye i novye kontseptsii uchebnoj literatury*. Moscow: AIRO-XX, 2002.
- Ajmermakher, Karl, and Gennadij Bordyugov, eds. *Natsionalnye istorii v sovetskom i post-sovetskikh gosudarstvakh*. Moscow: AIRO-XX, 2003.
- Akhundov, Jafar. *Conflicts and Militarization of Education. Part I. Azerbaijan. Military-Political Discourse and State Youth Policy in Azerbaijan*. Berlin: CISR, 2020. <https://p-s-urban.cisr-berlin.org/en/conflicts-and-militarization-of-education-part-i/>
- Amar, T., I. Balinskij, and Y. A. Gritsak. *Strasti za Banderoyu*. Kyiv: Grani-T, 2011.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London and New York: Verso, 2006.
- Anisimov, Evgeniy. *Petr Velikij: lichnost i reform*. Saint Petersburg: Piter, 2009.
- Assmann, Aleida. *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit: Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik*. München: C. H. Beck, 2006.
- Baberowski, Jörg. *Der Feind ist Überall: Stalinismus im Kaukasus*. Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2003.
- Babich, Ksenia. *Conflicts and Militarization of Education. Part IV. Russia. Totalitarian Institutions in Secondary Schools and in the System of Extracurricular Education. Military-Patriotic Education in Russia: Cadets and Young Army Cadets*. Berlin: CISR, 2020. <https://p-s-urban.cisr-berlin.org/en/conflicts-and-militarization-of-education-part-iv-russia/>
- Bagdasaryan, V., E. Abdulaev, V. Klychnikov, et al. *Shkolnyj uchebnik istorii i gosudarstvennaya politika*. Moscow: Nauchnyj ekspert, 2009.
- Banerji, Arup. *Writing History in the Soviet Union: Making the Past Work*, London: Routledge, 2018.
- Billig, Michael. *Banal Nationalism*, London: Sage, 2014.
- Binnenkade, Alexandra. “What You See Is What You Get: The Algerian War, French Textbooks and How Violence Is Remembered.” *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 10, no. 2 (2018): 129–48.
- Bomsdorf, Falk and Gennadij Bordyugov, eds. *Obraz Rossii i stran Baltii v uchebnikakh istorii*. Moscow: AIRO-XX, 2002.
- Bomsdorf, Falk and Gennadij Bordyugov, eds. *Natsionalnye istorii na postsovetskom prostranstve II*. Moscow: AIRO-XXI, 2009.
- Bordyugov, Gennadij, and V. Bukharaev. *Vcherashnee zavtra: Kak «natsionalnye istorii» pisyalis v SSSR i kak pishutsya teper*. Moscow: AIRO-XXI, 2011.
- Brandenberger, David. *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931–1956*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002.
- Brubaker, Rogers. “Myths and Misconceptions in the Study of Nationalism.” In: *The State of the Nation*, edited by John Hall, 272–306. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Brubaker, Rogers. *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Brubaker, Rogers. “Nationalizing States Revisited: Projects and Processes of Nationalization in Post-Soviet States.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 11, no. 34 (2011): 1785–814.

- Bushkovitch, Paul. *Peter the Great: The Struggle for Power, 1671–1725*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Cahen, Claude. *Pre-Ottoman Turkey: A General Survey of the Material and Spiritual Culture and History, c. 1071–1330*. London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1968.
- Carrier, Peter. *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory Cultures in France and Germany since 1989: The Origins and Political Function of the Vel’ d’Hiv’ in Paris and the Holocaust Monument in Berlin*. New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005.
- Chisholm, Linda. “Comparing History Textbooks in Apartheid South Africa and the German Democratic Republic, 1950–1990.” *Southern African Review of Education* 21, no. 1 (2015): 80–93.
- Cracraft, James. *The Revolution of Peter the Great*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003.
- D’Anieri, Paul, ed. *Orange Revolution and Aftermath: Mobilization, Apathy, and the State in Ukraine*. Baltimore: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2010.
- D’Anieri, Paul. *Ukraine and Russia: From Civilized Divorce to Uncivil War*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Danilevsky, Igor. N. *Predystoriia Ukrainy. V: Istoriiia Ukrainy*. Saint Petersburg: Aletejja, 2016.
- Danilova, A., and A. Filippova, eds. *Osveshchenie obshchej istorii Rossii i narodov post-sovetskikh stran v shkolnykh uchebnikakh istorii novykh nezavisimyykh gosudarstv*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennyj klub, 2009.
- Dashkova, Tatiana. “Babetta idet na Moskvu: ekspansiya zarubezhnogo kino v sovetskuyu povsednevnost.” *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie* 2/56 (2020). https://www.nlobooks.ru/magazines/teoriya_mody/56_tm_2_2020/article/22420/
- Dubrovskij, Aleksandr. *Vlast i istoricheskaia mysl v SSSR (1930-1950-e gg.)*. Moscow: Rosspen, 2017.
- Eklöf, Ben, Larry Eugene Holmes, and Vera Kaplan. *Educational Reform in Post-Soviet Russia: Legacies and Prospects*. London: Frank Cass, 2005.
- Fedorova, N. G. “Vospitanie istoriej» po gimnazicheskim uchebnikam v pervoj polovine XIX veka.” In: *Istoricheskaya kultura imperatorskoj Rossii: formirovanie predstavlenij o proshlom*, edited by A. Dmitriev. Moscow: Izdatelskij dom Vyshej shkoly ekonomiki, 2012.
- Ferro, Marc. *The Use and Abuse of History: Or How the Past is Taught to Children*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Gellner, Ernst. *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1994.
- Goffman, Erving. “On the Characteristics of Total Institutions.” In: *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*, edited by Erving Goffman, 1–124. New York: Anchor Books, 1990.
- Grushevskij, Mikhail. *Illyustrirovannaia Istoriiia Ukrainy*. Saint Petersburg: Knigoizdatel'skoe tovarishchestvo «Prosveshchenie», 1913.
- Hovannisian, Richard G. *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times, Volume II: Foreign Dominion to Statehood: The Fifteenth Century to the Twentieth Century*. New York: St. Martin Press, 1997.
- Hovhannisyán, Eviya. *Conflicts and Militarization of Education. Part II. Armenia. “Nation-Army” Ideology in the Armenian Educational System*. Berlin: CISR, 2020. <https://p-s-urban.cisr-berlin.org/en/conflicts-and-militarization-of-education-part-ii/>
- Huseynov, I. A., A. S. Sumbat-zade, A. N. Gulieva, and E. A. Tokarzhenskij, eds. *Istorija Azerbajdzhana*, vol. 1. Baku: Akademija nauk Azerbajdzhanskoj SSR, 1958.
- Kasyanov, Georgiy. *Ukraina i sosedi: istoricheskaia politika. 1987–2018*. Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2019.
- Koposov, Nikolay. *Pamyat strogogo rezhima: Istoriiia i politika v Rossii*. Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2011.

- Koposov, Nikolay. *Memory Laws, Memory Wars: The Politics of the Past in Europe and Russia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Kostomarov, Nikolay. *Istoricheskie monografii i issledovaniia Nikolaia Kostomarova*. Saint Petersburg: Tipografiya tovarishchestva «Obshchestvennaya polza», 1872.
- Kurilla, Ivan. "The 'Immortal Regiment': A 'Holiday through Tears,' A Parade of the Dead, or a Mass Protest? Arguments Over the Meaning and Future of a New Holiday Ritual." *Russian Politics & Law* 57, no 5–6 (2020): 150–65.
- Kuzio, Taras. *Ukraine: State and Nation Building*. London: Routledge, 1998.
- Libaridian, Gerard J. *Modern Armenia: People, Nation, State*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2004.
- Makhmudov, Y. A., Y. U. Yusifov, and R. Aliev. *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana: 7 klass*. Baku: Maarif, 1997.
- Malinova, Olga. *Aktualnoe proshloe: simvolicheskaia politika vlastvuyushchej elity i dilemmy rossijskoj identichnosti*. Moscow: Politicheskaja entsiklopediia, 2015.
- Mann, Michael. *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Marples, David R. *Heroes and Villains: Creating National History in Contemporary Ukraine*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2007.
- Martin, Terry. *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2001.
- Medinsky, Vladimir Rostislavovich. *Problemy obektivnosti v osveshhenii rossijskoj istorii vtoroj poloviny XV–XVII* (diss., Moscow, 2011) <https://www.prlib.ru/item/872413>
- Michalski, Sergiusz. *Public Monuments: Art in Political Bondage 1870–1997*. London: Reaction Books, 1998.
- Mikhajlin, V. and G. Belyaeva. "Istoriik v isterike, ili o vnezapnom poyavlenii uchitelya istorii v sovetskom shkolnom kino rubezha 1960–1970-kh." *Neprikosnovennyj zapas* 5, no. 8 (2012): 119–36.
- Miller, Alexei. "Rossiya: vlast i Istoriia." *Pro et Contra* 3–4/46 (2009): 6–23.
- Miller, Alexei. "Istoricheskaia politika v Vostochnoj Evrope v nachale XXI v." In: *Istoricheskaya politika v XXI veke*, edited by Alexei Miller and M. Lipman. Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2012.
- Miller, Alexei. "Politika pamyati v Rossii: god razrushennykh nadezhd." *Politiya* 4, no. 75 (2014): 49–57.
- Miller, Alexei. "Vrag u vorot istorii. Kak istoricheskaia pamyat stala voprosom bezopasnosti." 2020. <https://carnegie.ru/commentary/81207>
- Myachina, Katya. *Conflicts and Militarization of Education. Part III. Ukraine. Conflict and Militarization of Non-Formal Education in Ukraine*. Berlin: CISR, 2020. <https://p-s-urban.cisr-berlin.org/en/conflicts-and-militarization-of-education-part-iii-ukraine/>
- Nishino, Ryota. "The Political Economy of the Textbook in Japan, with a Particular Focus on Middle-School History Textbooks, ca. 1945–1995." *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 30, no. 1 (2008): 487–514.
- Omelchenko, E. and K. H. Pilkington. "Vmesto vvedeniya. Lyubit, gorditsya, uezzhat'? Rossijskaya molodezh v patrioticheskom labirinte." In: *S chego nachinaetsya rodina: molodezh v labirintakh patriotizma*, edited by E. Omelchenko and K. H. Pilkington, 5–30. Ulyanovsk: Izdatelstvo Ulyanovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 2012.
- Ottaway, Marina. *Democracy Challenged: The Rise of Semi-Authoritarianism*. Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment International Peace, 2003.
- Oushakine, Serguei Alex. "Remembering in Public: On the Affective Management of History." *Ab Imperio* 1 (2013): 269–302.
- Pearce, James C. *The Use of History in Putin's Russia*. Wilmington: Vernon Press Pearce, 2020.
- Petric, Bojana. "History Textbooks in Serbia after 2000: Signs of Educational Change?" *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 28, no. 2 (2006): 177–96.

- Platt, Kevin, and David Brandenberger, eds. *Epic Revisionism: Russian History and Literature as Stalinist Propaganda*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005.
- Ponomareva, Anastasiia. “Ogosudarstvlenie» grazhdanskikh iniciativ v praktike politicheskogo ispolzovaniya proshlogo (na primere dvizheniya «Bessmertnyj polk».)” In *Politika pamyati v sovremennoj Rossii i stranakh vostochnoj Evropy. Aktory, instituty, narrativy*, edited by A. Millera and D. Efremenko, 188–201. Saint Petersburg: Izdatelstvo Evropejskogo universiteta v Sankt-Peterburge, 2020.
- Portnov, Andriy. *Uprazhneniya s istoriej po-ukrainski*. Moscow: OGI, 2010.
- Portnov, Andriy. “Majdan posle majdana.” *Ab Imperio* 3 (2014): 209–17.
- Poselyagin, Nikolay, Yaryna Zakalska, and Artem Elimov. “State Ideology in Russia as a Generator of International Conflicts.” In: *Non-Objective Conflicts: Political Practices of Sharing the Common Past. Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and Transnistria*, edited by Sergey Rummyantsev, 23–52. Saint Petersburg: CISR, 2017.
- Qualls, Karl D. *From Ruins to Reconstruction: Urban Identity in Soviet Sevastopol after World War II*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2009.
- Rodgers, Peter W. *Nation, Region and History in Post-Communist Transition. Identity Politics in Ukraine, 1991–2006*. Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2008.
- Rouvinski, Vladimir. “History Speaks Our Language! A Comparative Study of Historical Narratives in Soviet and Post-Soviet School Textbooks in the Caucasus.” *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 29, no. 3 (2007): 235–57.
- Rummyantsev, Sergey. “Kak rasskazyvayut natsionalnyu istoriyu detyam v Azerbajdzhanе.” In: *Konfliktogennyj potentsial natsional’nykh istorij: Materialy Mezhdunarodnogo nauchno-metodologicheskogo seminara*, edited by A. Ovchinnikov, 113–34. Kazan: Yuniwersum, 2015.
- Sandomirskaya Irina. *Kniga o rodine. Opyt analiza diskursivnykh praktik*. Vienna: Wiener Slawistischer Almanach, 2001.
- Schenk, Frithjof Benjamin. *Aleksandr Nevskij: Heiliger – Fürst – Nationalheld: eine Erinnerungsfigur im russischen kulturellen Gedächtnis (1263–2000)*. Köln: Böhlau, 2004.
- Senkyna, Anna. “Kniga dlja chteniya v 1920-kh godakh: staroe vs novoe.” In: *Uchebnyj tekst v sovetskoj shkole*, edited by C. Leonteva and K. A. Maslinskij, 26–47. Moscow: Institut logiki, kognitologii i razvitiya lichnosti, 2008.
- Sherlock Thomas. *Historical Narratives in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Russia: Destroying the Settled Past, Creating an Uncertain Future*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Shnirelman, Victor. *Vojny pamyati: mify, identichnost i politika v Zakavkaze*. Moscow: Akademkniga, 2003.
- Slezkine, Yuri. *The Jewish Century*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019.
- Slezkine, Yuri L. “The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism.” In: *Becoming National. A Reader*, edited by Geoff Eley and Ronald G. Suny, 202–38. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Smith Kathleen E. *Mythmaking in the New Russia: Politics and Memory during the Yeltsin Era*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2002.
- Steen, Anton. *Political Elites and the New Russia: The Power Basis of Yeltsin’s and Putin’s Regimes*. New York: Routledge, 2018.
- Suny, Ronald Grigor. *Looking toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993.
- Suny, Ronald Grigor. *The Making of the Georgian Nation*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994.
- Suny, Ronald Grigor. “Constructing Primordialism: Old Histories for New Nations.” *The Journal of Modern History* 73 (2001): 862–96.
- Taylor, Brian D. *State Building in Putin’s Russia: Policing and Coercion after Communism*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Tolochko, Aleksei. *Ocherki Nachalnoj Rusi*. Kyiv & Saint Petersburg: Laurus, 2015.

- Ustryalov, N. *Rukovodstvo k pervonachalnomu izucheniyu russkoj istorii*. Saint Petersburg: Tipografiya Shtaba Voenno-uchebnykh zavedenij, 1854.
- Vaypan, Grigory, and Ilya Nuzov. *Russia: "Crimes against History": Report no. 770a*. Paris: International Federation for Human Rights, 2021.
- Waal, Thomas de. *The Caucasus: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Wilson, Andrew. *Ukraine's Orange Revolution*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2005.
- Yakovenko, Nataliia. *Ocherk istorii Ukrainy v srednie veka i ranee novoe vremia*. Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2012.
- Yekelchik, Serhy. *Ukraine: Birth of a Modern Nation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Yurchak, Alexei. *Eto bylo navsegda, poka ne konchilos. Poslednee sovetskoe pokolenie*. Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2014.
- Yusifov, Y. U., I. Babaev, and I. Dzhafarov. *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana. 6 klass*. Baku: Maarif, 1997.
- Zajda, Joseph. "Russian History Textbooks: An Analysis of Historical Narratives Depicting Key Events." *Curriculum and Teaching* 28, no. 2 (2013): 73–100.

4 Historification in Literature Education in Armenia

Maria Karapetyan

Introduction

“The image of the poet is the manifestation of the collective intellectual genius of the people.”¹ This excerpt from a state-approved Grade 11 textbook of Armenian literature captures the driving philosophy for the discipline of literature in the country’s educational system. Armenian literature, as many national literatures around the world, is understood as a reflection of the “unique” character and experience of the Armenian people. The claim that literature is the mirror of the nation remains largely unchallenged in the educational environment in Armenia. The above textbook citation has a second part to it: “the image of the people is the historical memory contained into a single time.”² This second part makes the statement considerably more convoluted. Following the logic of this hallmark phrase, the poet encapsulates the genius of the people, and the image of the people condenses history into a single time. My aim in this chapter is to scrutinize how this link between literature, people, and history is forged through the teaching of Armenian literature in the country’s education system.

In the past few years, a number of researchers have critically engaged with history education and early education in Armenia. These critical studies have covered textbook writing and approval process, the content of textbooks, the pedagogy of these subjects, and their influence on the production and reproduction of nationalist and conflict discourses in educational settings.³ I build on these studies by examining the institutional framework for the subject of literature and the content of state-commissioned literature textbooks. I look at how literature education is woven into the larger dominant discourses and narratives around Armenian identity and history.

Through my critical examination, I demonstrate that while history is *politicized* in educational practices in Armenia, literature is *historified* and *historicized*, and together they reinforce the severance of the state-promoted narrative from alternative narratives or even alternative interpretations of the same narrative.

In this chapter, I consider how the discipline of literature and literature textbooks *historify* literary works; that is, literature education records works of literature as works of history writing. The textbooks also *historicize* literature. In contemporary literary criticism, historicization would imply raising questions about how literary value was determined in different eras, exploring the definition of what counted

as “literature,” and discovering novel ways to place literary works in relation to other kinds of texts. Or, in other words, “historicizing text and textualizing history.”⁴ However, the current textbooks for Armenian literature apply an older definition and method of historicization; that is, literature education emphasizes the historic context as a stable environment into which a work of literature can be inserted. At the same time, the textbooks present works of art as “timeless,” bringing up themes and issues as unchanging and perpetual, and thus using a rather ahistorical approach.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

I draw the conceptual framework of this chapter from Michael W. Apple’s approach to official curriculum and textbooks, which he calls “official knowledge.”⁵ As Apple puts it, “the curriculum is never simply a neutral assemblage of knowledge [...]. It is always part of a selective tradition, someone’s selection, some group’s vision of legitimate knowledge.”⁶ In this chapter I intend to decipher the “legitimate knowledge” that the general education system instills in the minds of young citizens through the subject of Armenian literature.

Another theoretical framework that I subscribe to is Benedict Anderson’s view of nations and nationalism.⁷ Anderson’s constructivist paradigm considers print media and literature as the two forms that “provided the technical means for ‘re-presenting’ the *kind* of imagined community that is the nation.”⁸ Therefore, starting from the end of the eighteenth century, mass media and education have been the institutions through which nations and nationalisms have come into being. Novels in particular, as Anderson argues, provide the narrative structure for weaving together multiple stories into a complex whole. In this chapter, I aim to use the constructivist approach to nation, nationalism, and national literature to scrutinize how the subject of Armenian literature performs a discursive and imaginative function of representing the nation.

I rely on critical discourse analysis for my methodology, which Teun van Dijk defines as an attempt to “*uncover, reveal or disclose* what is implicit, hidden or otherwise not immediately obvious in relations of discursively enacted dominance or their underlying ideologies.”⁹ Norman Fairclough argues that critical discourse analysis aims to investigate how practices, events, and texts “arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power” and to “explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony.”¹⁰ In this sense, the discursive power of official textbooks, including those of literature, is applied to construct a sense of (historic) reality and to circulate that reality as widely as possible throughout society. National literature is therefore constructed through specific political criteria that are used to elevate the status of some texts while devaluing others.¹¹

Analysis of State Documents

To analyze the official vision for literature education, I reviewed several state documents that regulate the teaching and study of this subject in Armenian schools. I examined the overarching goals that the Ministry of Education and Science (MoE)

sets for the subject area¹² of Armenian Language and Literature in the “State Standard for General Education” (henceforth: “State Standard”).¹³ I looked at the “Teaching Plan and List of Subjects”¹⁴ that breaks down these areas into subjects and hours for different types of schools. Finally, I looked at the specific objectives of the high school¹⁵ course on Armenian literature in the “Subject Standard and Syllabi” (henceforth: “Subject Standard”).¹⁶

Following these state documents, I examined the high-school textbooks for Armenian literature for the humanities stream.¹⁷ According to the “List of Authorized Textbooks”¹⁸ issued every academic year, two sets of textbooks were authorized for the subject of Armenian Literature for the academic year 2016–2017. The first set is produced by the publishing house *Manmar* for the high school General Stream and Natural Sciences/Mathematics Stream. The second set is produced by the publishing house *Arevik*¹⁹ (Grade 10 in 2014,²⁰ Grade 11 in 2015, and Grade 12 in 2016²¹). I chose this second set of textbooks because it is used for the high school humanities stream and would therefore give a more comprehensive idea of the kind of narrative promoted through education targeting the social sciences.

Before delving deeper into the critique of the historification of literature, a few general characteristics of the composition and layout of the three textbooks examined are necessary. The textbooks, in accordance with the compulsory core content of the “Subject Standard,” are periodized: the Grade 10 textbook deals with “Old Literature,” literature of the Middle Ages, and “New Literature”; the Grade 11 textbook deals with literature in the 1890s and 1900s, and “The Emergence of Armenian Literature of the Newest Period”; the Grade 12 textbook covers Armenian Literature between 1941 and 2011, Armenian writers who wrote in other languages, and concludes the three-year course with a section titled “The Historical Significance of Armenian Literature.”

All three textbooks have a similar internal structure: each period is divided into chapters presenting a specific writer, with their biography and a single-voiced interpretation of their works with occasional quotes from the works themselves. Each chapter is followed by a list of 5–25 questions for the student that are usually based on extracting an answer from the text. Each textbook is an analysis of writers’ works spanning over 200 pages, produced solely and independently by the textbook’s authors. The textbooks do not contain a glossary of literary terms, an index, a list of literature upon which the authors of the textbook might have compiled their analysis, or any other sources and features that could help students develop skills and competencies in the discipline of literature. Against the backdrop of this general lack of basic tools and methods to study literature, the students are offered an unequivocally authoritative reading of literature texts.

Analysis of the State’s Vision for Literature Education

Since the subject of literature is obligatory for all school levels, one would expect this discipline to utilize such plenitude of time to cover a variety of literature—from local to global. In elementary school and the first two grades of middle

school, students study “integrated”²² literature alongside the Armenian language. For the rest of middle school and high school, they study literature separately. In middle school where the subject of literature is generic without the marker “Armenian,” students study only one author from world literature per grade. Moreover, the study of these authors only takes place toward the end of the school year, with the rest of the year comprising of Armenian authors. These are the same authors, albeit with different works, that are later studied in high school, where there is only “Armenian Literature.”²³ This drawback for high school is also noted by a study carried out at the request of the MoE’s Center for Educational Programs within the World Bank-funded *Education Improvement Project*.²⁴ Thus, the study of literature primarily boils down to the study of Armenian literature across all grades, with world literature given marginal attention.

The “State Standard” sets the general paradigm of the subject of Armenian literature in purely essentialist terms. It purposes the following goal to the subject area of Armenian language and literature: “comprehension of the role of Armenian literature as an indicator of national thinking and psychology.”²⁵ This general purpose is what drives the subject-specific standard to further show that Armenian literature is an instrument that can “discover the essence,” or the core, defining an unchanging set of qualities of the Armenian nation. Following the lead of the “State Standard,” the “Subject Standard” for Armenian literature for Grade 10 proclaims the following goal: “comprehension that the essence of Armenian literature are the ideas of patriotism and the perpetuation of the nation.”²⁶ The idea of the existence of a “national fate” is also provided in the “Subject Standard”; within the value system, the student is expected to gain the “ability to comprehend his/her people’s life and fate through the grasp of the ideological and psychological richness of Armenian literature.”²⁷

The “Subject Standard” ignores any post-structuralist or constructivist paradigms that would argue that social identities do not predate language and culture and that they are a product of dominant discourses of a particular time. Despite this, the “Subject Standard,” in the section on “Methodological and Pedagogical Literature,” does list the Armenian language manual for teachers titled “Constructivist Methodology of Teaching,” produced by the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) in 2002.²⁸

The historicification of literary works within the subject of Armenian literature—the central focus of this analysis—is provided by the conceptual introduction of the “Subject Standard.” The study of literary works needs to “show [...] struggle for the sake of sublime/noble ideas, to underline their contemporary resonance, the complex and multifaceted internal link between the past and the current time” and “to contribute to the comprehension of the historic fate of the Armenian people.”²⁹ The “Subject Standard” also states that “the study of Armenian Literature in the different streams of high school should mean the study of the history of Armenian Literature.”³⁰ Thus, the state’s vision for literature education in high school is to focus only on *Armenian* literature with an essentialist paradigm and creating a congruence between history and literature.

An Analysis of Textbooks: From an Essentialized Nation to a Primordialized Literature

The perennial and essentialist view of a perpetual and unchanging Armenian nation is at the core of the textbooks.³¹ Moreover, the textbooks claim that the unchanging essence of the nation is revealed through its literature. The Armenian legends are believed to show the “mythological thinking of the Armenian people,” their “vivid imagination, main traits of character, freedom-loving spirit, dreams and aspirations towards the beautiful, the light, and science/knowledge.”³² Similarly, the Armenian epodes are thought to reveal “the essence of the Armenian people, the formation and development of its statehood, its victorious liberation struggle.”³³ Coming into modernity, this continues as twentieth-century authors’ “search and discovery of the secret of the perpetuity of the Armenian people that lies in the faithful love for culture and the worship of work and creation.”³⁴ It is a deep conviction of the textbook authors that the Armenian nation is not only ancient and constant, but also possesses a “politico-historical” or “national fate.”³⁵ The infinite nature of the existence and creative work of Armenians presented constitutes the perennial view of nation and literature, and the search and discovery of the enduring essence of the Armenian nation is what makes this view essentialist.

These conceptualizations of the Armenian nation are further projected onto the phenomenon of literature itself, presenting it as equivalent to the history of the Armenian nation in time and essence. The textbook does this by presenting oral tradition as part of literature, which assumes the former exists as written text. This oral “literature,” an oxymoron, gives reason for the periodization of Armenian literature before the creation of the Armenian alphabet. According to the textbook, therefore, “old Armenian literature” spans from “time immemorial” until the creation of the alphabet and “includes the beliefs and oldest history of our millennia-old people.”³⁶ Even though the textbook admits that in philology, “old Armenian literature” is considered to span the first centuries *after* the creation of the Armenian alphabet, it argues that since these centuries—fifth to tenth—belong to the historic period of early Middle Ages, they should be considered as “early middle Armenian literature.” The primordialist view of Armenian literature and the attempt to present it as congruent with the periodization of history is what prompts the central claim of this chapter that literature is historified in school textbooks in Armenia. History and literature are superimposed and made to coincide in time and space.

Conflated History Writing, Historiography, and Literature

In modern scholarship, differentiating between history writing and historiography—“the study of the way history has been and is written”³⁷—is an accepted practice. Historiography is thus not the study of “the events of the past directly, but the changing interpretations of those events in the works of individual historians.”³⁸ Besides this differentiation of the type of activity, modern scholarship also poses

the question of the professionalization of such activity. The writing of history and the study of that writing transitioned from an avocation to a profession in the period of the general institutionalization of scholarship in the nineteenth century.³⁹ In Armenian literature textbooks, however, these two types of activity are conflated—history writing and historiography—and no differentiation is made between history writing as an activity in the Middle Ages and as a separate branch of knowledge and scholarship emerging much later.

The textbook does enumerate, albeit without much elaboration or definition, three types of activity profiles associated with history: *patmich*, a word meaning “historian” that is used especially for the early historians, including those of fifth century, literally meaning “teller, narrator”; *patmagir*, another word meaning “historian” and literally meaning “writer of the telling”; and *patmaget*, a scholar who studies historiography. However, the textbook puts these words next to each other only to completely ignore historiography’s development as a separate discipline in the nineteenth century. Thus, the textbook qualifies the fifth-century history writer Movses Khorenatsi as a “scientist historian” and a scholar of historiography.⁴⁰ Khorenatsi, along with two other fifth-century history writers Eghishe and Ghazar Parpetsi, is presented as a writer of “critical” history.⁴¹ While Khorenatsi wrote his work in the 480s, about seventy years after the creation of the alphabet, the book claims that he adopted and developed the best traditions of Armenian historiography.⁴²

This conflation of history writing and historiography raises a question: if these are historiographic works (which they are not), why are these historians made part of the Armenian literature syllabus? If it is because these are the first writings in the Armenian language that simply happen to be about events in the past or in the times when those authors lived, then the textbook should avoid the argument of historiography (especially its critical branch) and view these as texts with a literary value. It would, of course, be useful to then attempt to analyze the motivation behind these texts, to explore the self-understanding and worldviews of the authors, or, in other words, to analyze these works critically or, even better, offer the students the opportunity to do so by providing them with the necessary theoretical framework and tools.

Rather than acknowledging that history writing—and certainly not the historiography in which these authors engaged—was a branch of philosophy and theology in the Middle Ages, the textbook goes into a further inadequate conflation of this “historiography” and literature. It does state that since fifth-century historians wove together the factual and the fictional, “history writing is an important type of the literary prose of the middle ages.”⁴³ It would be entirely appropriate if the textbook stayed consistent with this proposition that history writing in the Middle Ages was a genre of literature. It would also be appropriate to state that works of art can reveal a great deal about a particular historical period and the authors’ worldviews; they can serve as an account of what people thought and did at the time of the authors’ work and as reflected in the authors’ words. However, the textbook does neither. Instead, its purported understanding of history writing is one that bears truth and it is literature that serves as a branch of history writing resulting in historical fiction.

On many occasions, the textbook claims a face-value truthfulness of history writing. This understanding starts with Movses Khorenatsi, who is said “to have restored historical truth from ancient sources.”⁴⁴ This continues throughout the literature course and while the examples are numerous, I illustrate this adherence to historified literature through a critique of the textbook’s discussion of three major historical novels: Raffi’s *Samvel* (1886), Derenik Demirchyan’s *Vardananq* (1943), and Muratsan’s *Gevorg Marzpetuni* (1896). The first two novels portray Armenia’s struggle with Sassanid Persia in the fourth and fifth centuries, while the last narrates Armenia’s struggle with Arabs in the tenth century.

When presenting Muratsan’s approach to history writing and literature, the textbook differentiates between the two but through the writer’s own analysis puts “ideological truth” above “historical truth”:

Muratsan is looking for “ideological truth” in history. The scientific research into history is different from the literary depiction: “The most primitive rule of the literary art is,”—writes Muratsan—“that a poet’s writings should give primacy not to the historical truth but to the ideological truth, and his call must be not to confirm truth but to show it.” [...] The writer is free in front of the historical fact, and historical truth is only a means for the confirmation of the ideological clause that is of interest to the writer.⁴⁵

In the light of this, it would make sense to abolish all claims that the historical reality of the time is depicted in Muratsan’s *Gevorg Marzpetuni* and to make a short note that the book is loosely based on a historical period. Yet, the textbook persists with the blend of history writing, literature, and even nature: “Muratsan’s philosophy of history can be generalized into viewing history in the realm of nature; that is, he gives a national, moral content to history.”⁴⁶

The textbook does not remain consistent in acknowledging that “ideological truth” governs historical fiction writing in the analysis of Demirchyan’s *Vardananq* either. Here, the textbook introduces the concept of “historicity”:

The grasp of the spirit of the century, of the events and the course of their development, of the logic and thinking of people, and of the general spirit [– all of this –] brings to historicity. This means that a certain phenomenon might not be accurate but be generally true in the spirit and thinking of the time.⁴⁷

This concept of historicity is used to describe not only *Vardananq* but also the works of fifth-century historians Eghishe and Ghazar Parpetsi, whose works Demirchyan used as a source for his historical novel. With an affirmation that the novel “is saturated with great historical and vital truth,”⁴⁸ the textbook once again blurs the lines between historiography and literature.

In Raffi’s *Samvel*, the main character is praised for committing the ultimate sacrifice and killing both of his parents as their views on the future of the nation diverged from the presumed consensus. In the analysis of the story, the textbook also attempts to justify him and recalls that the Catholicos of the time, Sahak Partev and

Mesrop Mashtots, the latter most commonly known as the inventor of the Armenian alphabet, gave their consent to what Samvel had planned to do.⁴⁹ The textbook fails to stress that these were fictional representations of Catholicos Sahak Partev and Mesrop Mashtots. The textbook does state earlier that there is but one brief mention of a Samvel in Pavstos Buzand's history; however, in all of its analysis of the novel, the textbook treats it as a real story. One example of this is when the book assures that had Samvel not killed his father there is no doubt that his father would have killed him. The extent to which the book discusses the story from the perspective of actual reality is surprising, as it also suggests other possible developments of the scenario.

Samvel and *Gevorg Marzpetuni* were written in the nineteenth century, and under the influence of German Romanticism, were part of the Armenian literary tradition aiming to lay the cultural foundation for the nation-building process of a future Armenian nation-state.⁵⁰ *Vardananq*, written during the Second World War, is considered by Armenian literary critics as being intended to raise the morale of the Armenian soldiers fighting the Nazis.⁵¹ All three project into history the modern concept of the nation, advancing the notion of an unwavering allegiance to the latter through personal sacrifices and a relentless fight against the "external enemies" and their presumed collaborators depicted as traitors.

Curiously, the textbook does not conflate historiography and literature when it comes to the writers of the school of realism. The section on a twentieth-century writer Stepan Zoryan starts with a quote from the writer's reflections about himself: "It seems to me that I am a historian, a humble annalist."⁵² The textbook then goes on to stress that this role of the writer as a historian applies only to the events contemporary to the writer's life—an approach that would be more acceptable toward other writers as well. Zoryan's historical fiction⁵³ is not given the same appraisal as that of Raffi, Muratsan, and Demrichyan. While I would argue that this is because of the writer's choice of realism as a literary direction and his anti-war writing, the textbook argues that "he, unlike the romantics, did not look for the confirmation of his ideas in history."⁵⁴ Zoryan's writing also contradicted the writings of Pavstos Buzand and Movses Khorenatsi, giving a different and a more positive interpretation of King Arshak II and King Pap's characters and actions. The textbook approves of Zoryan's rehabilitation of the reputation of King Pap explaining that "the religious historians" (targeting Pavstos Buzand only) decried King Pap because of his politics toward the Church.⁵⁵ It would be very useful if the textbook could use the exposure of religious or other biases in the writings of the early historians to demystify their narration in other instances as well.

Conflated Past and Present and Retrospective Prophecies

Since a sort of worship of the past is the guiding principle of the textbook, even the present is historified. Analyzing the works of Shirvanzadeh, a realist writer that wrote about his immediate environment, the textbook squeezes in the word "history," claiming that "in his *syuzhets* he reflected life as current history."⁵⁶ This results in the conflation of the past and the present and the only value of the present is assumed to be in its potential to become history.

The bridging of the past and the present and the “historical truth” with “ideological truth” culminates in the analysis of Raffi’s work:

Raffi thinks that history repeats itself and there is a striking similarity between the past and the present. History is not only the mirror of the past but also the advisor of the present. [...] Raffi seeks out an ideological truth within history that departs from historical truth combining in itself literary imagination and scientific knowledge.⁵⁷

Raffi’s *Samvel* is said to have provided an excellent solution to the unity of science and art⁵⁸ and to have become “a criterion for the scientific and literary interpretation of history.”⁵⁹ Through this systematic conflation of disciplines, genres, and concepts, the textbook constructs a chronotope⁶⁰ of Armenian literature where all time and space become congruent, with a pantheon of authors inhabiting this single time and space.

The conflation of the past and the present happens also through retrospective projections of modern phenomena and concepts into the past. The textbook claims that Movses Khorenatsi was able to “educate the people as a virtuous nation state” and that “his message is relevant in our times as well.”⁶¹ By making a reference to a “nation state” existing in the fifth century and then protracting this message to the present day, the authors of the textbook create a loop in time. Another instance of confusion of temporality or anachronism is when the textbook justifies Raffi’s fourth-century hero Samvel’s “ethical choice” of killing his parents because his “citizen spirit has taken over his human nature.” In harmony with the perennial view of the Armenian nation, the textbook employs concepts such as “nation state” or “citizen” to describe the early Middle Ages. Similarly, the textbook claims that the “civil image of the Armenian writers was defined in the 5th century.”⁶²

These anachronisms are characteristic not only of the textbook but also of the writing of the historians of the Middle Ages whose works are central to the subject of Armenian literature. Ashot Hovhannisyanyan, historian of the early Soviet period, speaks about these “retrospective prophecies” in his book *Episodes from the History of Armenian Liberation Thought*.⁶³ These historians, writing about their own time, often depicted contemporary events as prophesized by earlier actors of power—the clergy and the king. According to Hovhannisyanyan, in the practice of the Armenian history writing of the Middle Ages it was accepted to transfer the political problem of that time into the mouth of a saint as predictions or visions about the future. Therefore, the present—moved to the past—was acting as the future. This retrospective movement to the future is political by nature and provides a “logical” progression of events to the present.

This retrospective movement serves another function as well—one oriented toward the future as viewed from the time of writing. Art historian Vardan Azatyan, in his analysis of Ashot Hovhannisyanyan’s work says that the Armenian liberation legend provides visions that embody aspirations for the future and which are born out of the present that they want to edit through the vision. According to his analysis, the historiographers put side by side (a) events of the recent past that actually happened, (b) the present as predictions of the future from the past, and (c) those

aspirations, dreams, and expectations of the future that are not yet present. Azatyan continues to say that these dreams gain qualities of reality and are legitimized as such when they appear side by side with the “holy” prophecies and the actual events that happened. Azatyan also notes that the present facts also legitimize the actors of power that articulated those facts as predictions and that under these circumstances, it becomes impossible to distinguish the legend from reality.⁶⁴

The textbooks draw heavily on a similar methodology of conflation between the past and the present, and it is here that the discursive power of the subject of literature in constructing the vision for the present day is revealed.

A Pantheon of Writers: Cross-Reference and Self-Reference

Despite the periodization of Armenian literature into old and middle, new and newest, the textbook creates a space populated by authors who are in a perpetual symphony of recurring themes of national liberation and acts of heroism aimed at evoking “patriotism” and occasional lament against degrading mores and the disgraceful betrayal of a few.

For outlining literary movements or understanding the influence of authors on each other, it is of course useful to name professional links within literary circles or even across different literary traditions and eras. Such are the examples of the use of a history writer’s work as inspiration for a novel or the influence of the German or French philosophers on the education of certain authors. However, these links sometimes create dubious instances of affiliation or impact. For example, Movses Khorenatsi’s fifth-century *Lament* is claimed to have become the nourishing source for the *Lament* of a tenth-century writer Grigor Narekatsi. The textbook does not elaborate on the issue of Narekatsi being familiar with Khorenatsi’s version. There are also doubts expressed about this in literary analysis on the two works in other sources.⁶⁵

In the textbook, the writings of one writer are cited as sources of the biography or the greatness of another writer or offered as analysis of the other writer’s works. This self-referential style of presenting and discussing Armenian literature is done both explicitly and implicitly through discursive means. For example, the textbook uses the phrase “ever-tolling bell tower” that is the title of a poem by the twentieth-century poet Paryur Sevak to describe Grigor Narekatsi’s tenth-century *Book of Lamentations*.⁶⁶ The textbook fuses the texts of various authors together, reinforcing the ideas of one by those of another and constantly looping in self-reference. Sometimes, it reaches absurd levels such as when a real writer Mikael Nalbandyan who died in 1866 is said to have “a literary archetype” in Raffi’s *Hamre*, a fictional story written in 1883–1887.⁶⁷

The textbook also reinforces the closing circle of characters and authors across different movements in literature:

Shirvanzadeh [an author of the realist school] starts where Raffi [an author of the romantic school] left off. The link is direct and inheriting the literary characters of the previous author, Shirvanzadeh

cleanses them of the romantic idealization [...].⁶⁸

These interventions mediate the possible conflicts between the divergent or even conflicting movements and ideologies in literature and seal off any possibility for the students to expose and view various ways of conceptualizing the world through a critical lens.

The textbook systematically cites one author's opinion about another, creating harmony and agreement between what these authors put in their work. It is of course only natural that some of the authors of a particular literary tradition read and analyzed the works of other authors of that literary tradition. However, the textbook systematically underlines agreements between the authors that are selected for inclusion in the textbook, fulfilling its mission of creating a sense of consensus and symphony of voices. For example, the textbook stresses that a character in one of Muratsan's stories reads Khachatur Abovyan's *Verq Hayastani* to "reinforce his will with ideological signals."⁶⁹ In doing so, the textbook justifies its selection of these rather than other works.

The cross-reference becomes absurd in the analysis of the poem "The Song of the Italian Girl."⁷⁰ In the poem, the Italian lady gives a flag she waved to her brother who is on his way to war. In the analysis, the textbook references a different writer of a different literary genre and period. However, the syntax of the sentence renders this parallelism or, perhaps, contrast very bizarre: "The idea of the poem is to replicate the behaviour of the Italian girl, or where are the 'pampered women' described by Eghishe that gave spirit to the Armenian soldier on the battlefield of Avaryr?"⁷¹ In this way, the song of an Italian lady, inspired by Giuseppe Garibaldi, is made to echo the works of a fifth-century Armenian historian.

Sealing Off Alternative Interpretations

The textbook does not often speak of alternative interpretations of events and social phenomena. Neither does it present alternative readings and analyses of literary works, characters, or plots. In the rare cases when these alternatives do ooze onto the pages of the textbook beyond the qualification of "betrayal," there are other means with which they are dismissed without proper scrutiny. For example, at least twice, the textbook refutes disparate readings of characters in a literary work, describing them as a "vulgar sociological interpretation/literary criticism."⁷² In one case, the textbook dismisses an alternative interpretation of two characters in Shirvanzade's *Chaos* as carriers of "exploitative and anti-humanistic nature of the bourgeoisie."⁷³

The theme of betrayal in the writings of Armenian authors has been under discussion for the last several years if not decades. Attempts have been made to make the discourse on heroes and anti-heroes more inclusive of alternative sources and revise the approach of turning the view of one author into an absolute account. Fifth-century Prince Vasak Syuni's character is one such revisited topic. History writers of this period, Eghishe and Ghazar Parpetsi, did label Vasak Syuni as a traitor. Another fifth-century history writer, Movses Khorenatsi, did not tag him with such an epithet; while the writer, Koryun, glorified him as an intelligent and far-sighted prince. However, the widespread view of this figure is that of a traitor,

who, in pursuit of his own egoistic ambition, wanted to draw the Armenian people onto the path of conversion to Zoroastrianism. The textbook reinforces this view of Vasak Syuni, disregarding the variations accounts historians gave about his personality. The textbook claims that “in the historic memory of the people, Vasak is perceived as the symbol of a traitor.”⁷⁴ It remains uncertain how this historic memory of the fifth century has been transmitted among people if not through the texts of historians favored by mass education.

Sealing off alternative interpretations also occurs within the works of the same author. Derenik Demirchyan wrote his drama *Vasak* in 1912, earlier than *Vardananq*, which describes Vasak as a traitor. In the former work, the author attempted to depict a complex character who is not a “traitor” but one that is struggling to find solutions and is in a clash with other characters that have divergent views. However, these different treatments of the same subject remain beyond the textbook’s attention.

Conclusion

As Aldous Huxley once said, “[n]ations are to a very large extent invented by their poets and novelists.”⁷⁵ In the study that led to the research in this chapter, I analyzed the methodological conflation of works of literature and works of history writing present in literature education in Armenia. As the institutional framework is mandatory for all schools and only the authorized textbooks can be used, I interrogated the narrative that the state is promoting through this discipline. I used Michael W. Apple’s approach to “official knowledge” and van Dijk and Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis to assess the institutional framework and curricula and some of the state-approved textbooks of literature education. My aim was to draw out how literature is *historified* and *historicized*, presenting the state-promoted narrative in isolation from alternative narratives and interpretations.

The literature course in Armenian schools manufactures history out of the literary texts. First, literature is periodized to fit the historical eras of ancient, medieval, and modern. Second, literature, history writing, and historiography are methodologically fused together. Works of early history writing are presented as historiography yet studied in the subject of literature. Works of historical fiction are presented to capture “ideological and historical truth.” Works of literature are constantly inserted into a historical “reality” that is depicted as a stable host of literary works. And the latter, in turn, are believed to capture and reflect that “reality.” This results in a failure to treat historiographic material and literary material with their own tools and methods.

Parallel to history education, where the Armenian nation is viewed as having existed unchangingly from times immemorial until the present time, literature education also views the nation and literature through perennial, essentialist, and primordialist lenses. As Anderson notes:

the idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogeneous, empty time is a precise analogue of the idea of the nation, which also is conceived as a solid community moving steadily down (or up) history.⁷⁶

The textbooks use the terms *ethnos*, *nation*, and *people* interchangeably, molding time and space. Applying historicist explanatory schemes, the textbooks select authors and works to be covered in the textbook that support, or are interpreted as supporting, these views.

The textbooks also eschew differences in literary movements and schools, blur inconsistencies and silence alternative views that could somehow challenge the monolithic block of ideological consensus within literature and history. The by-products of this process are the “internal enemies” that populate the pages of the narrowly selected literary works and their unambiguous analysis by the textbook authors. The textbook employs the concept of “the true Armenian writer” in the singular, and this singular actor is believed to have created the “logbook of temporal memory” of the nation.⁷⁷

The disciplines of history and literature reinforce each other in embedding nationalism into the minds of the students. If the discipline of history is meant to teach nationalism appealing to the realm of rationality with a claim to factuality and truthfulness, then the discipline of literature often appeals to the realm of emotion, inciting nationalistic sentiment and internalizing history into the knowledge and emotive system of the students. Literature education can be an important contribution to the students’ ability to read and criticize the wider “text” of institutions, politics, and the media. However, in its current form and content, literature education in Armenia takes away the potential of yet another educational discipline from the students that would allow them to develop critical thinking and apply corresponding skills and methods. Instead of engaging in the educational processes as active producers of knowledge and competence, students and teachers are expected to internalize and re-produce a ready-made, unequivocal narrative.

Notes

- 1 Zhenya Kalantaryan and Davit Gasparian, *Armenian Literature 11 (Humanities Stream)*, ed. Vazgen Gabrielyan (Yerevan: Arevik, 2015), 201.
- 2 Zhenya Kalantaryan and Davit Gasparian, *Armenian Literature 11 (Humanities Stream)*, ed. Vazgen Gabrielyan (Yerevan: Arevik, 2015), 201.
- 3 See: Mikayel Zolyan and Tigran Zakaryan, “Representations of ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ in History Textbooks of Post-Soviet Armenia,” *International Textbook Research*, 2008; Satenik Mkrтчyan, “The Republic of Armenia’s Neighbours in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries in Contemporary World History Textbooks,” in *The South Caucasus and Turkey: History Lessons of the 20th Century*, ed. Sergey Rummyantsev (Tbilisi: Heinrich Böll Foundation, 2012); Philip Gamaghelyan and Sergey Rummyantsev, “Armenia and Azerbaijan: The Nagorny Karabakh Conflict and the Reinterpretation of Narratives in History Textbooks. Vol. 1,” in *Myths and Conflict in the South Caucasus*, ed. Oksana Karpenko and Jana Javakhishvili (London: International Alert, 2013); Tigran Matosyan, “‘Inventing Traditions’: The Theme of Sovietisation in History Textbooks of Soviet and Post-Soviet Armenia. Vol. 1,” in *Myths and Conflict in the South Caucasus*, ed. Oksana Karpenko and Yana Javakhishvili (London: International Alert, 2013); Satenik Mkrтчyan, *Formation of National Identity through Primary Education (Yerevan and Tbilisi Schools)* (Tbilisi: IJTSU, 2013); Mikayel Zolyan, “Writing the History of Present: The Post-Soviet Period in Armenian History Textbooks,” in *The South Caucasus and Turkey: History Lessons of the 20th Century*, ed. Sergey Rummyantsev (Tbilisi:

- Heinrich Boell Foundation, 2014); Iveta Silova, Mikael Mead Yaqub and Garine Palandjian, "Pedagogies of Space: (Re)Mapping National Territories, Borders, and Identities in Post-Soviet Textbooks," in *(Re)Constructing Memory: School Textbooks and the Imagination of the Nation*, ed. James H. Williams, 103–28 (Rotterdam: Sense, 2014); Garine Palandjian, "The ABC's of Being Armenian: (Re)Turning to the National Identity in Post-Soviet Textbooks," in *(Re)Constructing Memory: School Textbooks and the Imagination of the Nation*, ed. James H. Williams, 247–67 (Rotterdam: Sense, 2014); Oksana Karpenko et al., *Problemy i Perspektivy Podgotovki Uchebnikov i Prepodavanija Istorii na Juzhnom Kavkaze* (Tbilisi: Imagine Center, 2014); Bülent Bilmez et al., eds, *History Education in Schools in Turkey and Armenia: A Critique and Alternatives* (History Foundation Tarih Vakfı and Imagine Center, 2017), and others.
- 4 Thomas Vernon Reed, "Re-Historicizing Literature," in *A Companion to American Literature and Culture*, ed. Paul Lauter (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2010), 96, 102.
 - 5 Michael Apple, "The Politics of Official Knowledge: Does a National Curriculum Make Sense?" *Teachers College Record* 95, no. 2 (1993): 1.
 - 6 Michael Apple, "The Politics of Official Knowledge: Does a National Curriculum Make Sense?" *Teachers College Record* 95, no. 2 (1993): 222.
 - 7 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006).
 - 8 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 25.
 - 9 Teun Van Dijk, "Aims of Critical Discourse Analysis," *Japanese Discourse* (1995): 18.
 - 10 Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis. The Critical Study of Language* (New York: Routledge, 1995, 2013), 93.
 - 11 Sarah Corse, *Nationalism and Literature: The Politics of Culture in Canada and the United States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 16.
 - 12 Subject areas are general umbrella terms such as "nature," "natural sciences," "arts," "Armenian language and literature," "foreign languages," etc., that are then broken down into separate subjects.
 - 13 The "State Standard" is developed by the MoES and is approved by the Government of the Republic of Armenia. At the time of writing, the current one was approved in 2010, with the latest revision in 2012 (Government of Armenia, "Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia on the Formation and Approval of the State Standard for General Education," *Arlis (Armenian Legal Information System)*, 8 April 2010. <http://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?docid=77183> (in Armenian).
 - 14 The "Teaching Plan and List of Subjects" is approved by the MoE every year.
 - 15 I chose the high school course for both "Subject Standard" and textbooks because at that school level, literature education focuses on Armenian literature rather than literature in general.
 - 16 The "Subject Standards" are developed by the Curricula Center of the MoE and approved by the MoE.
 - 17 High school education is carried out in various streams: General, Humanities, and Natural Sciences/Mathematics. In the humanities stream, the study of Armenian literature is allocated three hours per week in Grade 10, four hours per week in Grade 11, and five hours per week in Grade 12. In Grade 12, half of the hours are dedicated to revision and preparation for the exams. In the General Stream and Natural Sciences/Mathematics Stream, the study of Armenian Literature takes up three hours and two hours, respectively.
 - 18 The "List of Authorized Textbooks" is approved by an order of the Minister of Education and Science every year.
 - 19 Grade 10 is authored by Henrik Bakhchinyan and Sergey Sarinyan; Grades 11 and 12 are authored by Davit Gasparyan and Zhenya Kalantaryan. All three textbooks are edited by Vazgen Gabrielyan.

- 20 The Arevik 2009 edition was used here since the Textbook and Information Communication Technologies Revolving Fund that displays the current textbooks on its website did not have the 2014 edition at the time of writing.
- 21 The Arevik 2011 edition was used here since the Textbook and Information Communication Technologies Revolving Fund that displays the current textbooks on its website does not have the 2016 edition as of this writing.
- 22 It is called “integrated” because it is supposed to merge the two components of language and literature as well as other subjects such as music, art, technology, and social sciences.
- 23 In the “Subject Standard” for Armenian literature for high school, the learning goals include the study of “foreign literature” while the syllabi components of the “Subject Standard” (and therefore the textbooks) completely overlook this aspect.
- 24 EV Consulting and Ayb Educational Foundation, *Final Report. Need Assessment for the Revision of State Standard for General Education, Subject Standards and Syllabi within the “Education Improvement Project”* (Yerevan: Curriculum Center, MoE, 2016), 93. <http://www.cfep.am/files/legislation/538.pdf> (in Armenian).
- 25 Government of Armenia, *Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia on the Formation and Approval of the State Standard for General Education*.
- 26 Center for Educational Programs, *Subject Standard and Subject Syllabi for Armenian Language and Literature for High School Grades 10–12*.
- 27 Center for Educational Programs, *Subject Standard and Subject Syllabi for Armenian Language and Literature for High School Grades 10–12*.
- 28 Center for Educational Programs, *Subject Standard and Subject Syllabi for Armenian Language and Literature for High School Grades 10–12*.
- 29 Center for Educational Programs, *Subject Standard and Subject Syllabi for Armenian Language and Literature for High School Grades 10–12*.
- 30 Center for Educational Programs, *Subject Standard and Subject Syllabi for Armenian Language and Literature for High School Grades 10–12*.
- 31 The analysis in this section concerns the textbooks identified in the section “Reviewed Materials.” For ease of reading, the analysis refers to these as “the textbook” or “the textbooks.” The citations indicate specifically which textbook instance is the basis for the argument.
- 32 Henrik Bakhchinyan and Sergey Sarinyan, *Armenian Literature 10 (Humanities Stream)*, edited by Vazgen Gabrielyan, (Yerevan: Arevik, 2009), 4.
- 33 Henrik Bakhchinyan and Sergey Sarinyan, *Armenian Literature 10 (Humanities Stream)*, edited by Vazgen Gabrielyan, (Yerevan: Arevik, 2009), 4.
- 34 Zhenya Kalantaryan and Davit Gasparyan, *Armenian Literature 11(Humanities Stream)*, 213.
- 35 Zhenya Kalantaryan and Davit Gasparyan, *Armenian Literature 11(Humanities Stream)*, 192, 196, 251.
- 36 Henrik Bakhchinyan and Sergey Sarinyan, *Armenian Literature 10 (Humanities Stream)*, 5.
- 37 Conal Furay and Michael J. Salevouris, *The Methods and Skills of History: A Practical Guide* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), 223.
- 38 Conal Furay and Michael J. Salevouris, *The Methods and Skills of History: A Practical Guide* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), 223.
- 39 Stuart Macintyre, Juan Maiguashca and Attila Pók, *The Oxford History of Historical Writing: Volume 4: 1800–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
- 40 Henrik Bakhchinyan and Sergey Sarinyan, *Armenian Literature 10 (Humanities Stream)*, 29.
- 41 Henrik Bakhchinyan and Sergey Sarinyan, *Armenian Literature 10 (Humanities Stream)*, 29.
- 42 Henrik Bakhchinyan and Sergey Sarinyan, *Armenian Literature 10 (Humanities Stream)*, 35.
- 43 Henrik Bakhchinyan and Sergey Sarinyan, *Armenian Literature 10 (Humanities Stream)*, 6.

- 44 Henrik Bakhchinyan and Sergey Sarinyan, *Armenian Literature 10 (Humanities Stream)*, 30.
- 45 Henrik Bakhchinyan and Sergey Sarinyan, *Armenian Literature 10 (Humanities Stream)*, 210.
- 46 Henrik Bakhchinyan and Sergey Sarinyan, *Armenian Literature 10 (Humanities Stream)*, 218.
- 47 Zhenya Kalantaryan and Davit Gasparyan, *Armenian Literature 11 (Humanities Stream)*, 214.
- 48 Zhenya Kalantaryan and Davit Gasparyan, *Armenian Literature 11 (Humanities Stream)*, 216.
- 49 Henrik Bakhchinyan and Sergey Sarinyan, *Armenian Literature 10 (Humanities Stream)*, 195.
- 50 Kevork B. Bardakjian, *A Reference Guide to Modern Armenian Literature, 1500–1920: With an Introductory History* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000), 105; Boghos Zekiyian, “Personal Tragedy and Cultural Backgrounds in the Poetry of Bedros Tourian,” *Review of National Literatures: Armenia* (1984); Victoria Rowe, *A History of Armenian Women’s Writing: 1880–1922* (London: Cambridge Scholars Press Ltd, 2003), 86.
- 51 Nishan Parlakian and Peter S. Cowe, *Modern Armenian Drama: An Anthology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 256.
- 52 Zhenya Kalantaryan and Davit Gasparyan, *Armenian Literature 11 (Humanities Stream)*, 243.
- 53 He is the author of a trilogy: *King Pap*, *Armenian Fortress*, and *Varazdat*, with all three being about the fourth century, which is also the setting for Raffi’s *Samvel*.
- 54 Zhenya Kalantaryan and Davit Gasparyan, *Armenian Literature 11 (Humanities Stream)*, 251.
- 55 Zhenya Kalantaryan and Davit Gasparyan, *Armenian Literature 11 (Humanities Stream)*, 251.
- 56 Henrik Bakhchinyan and Sergey Sarinyan, *Armenian Literature 10 (Humanities Stream)*, 238.
- 57 Henrik Bakhchinyan and Sergey Sarinyan, *Armenian Literature 10 (Humanities Stream)*, 191.
- 58 Henrik Bakhchinyan and Sergey Sarinyan, *Armenian Literature 10 (Humanities Stream)*, 193.
- 59 Henrik Bakhchinyan and Sergey Sarinyan, *Armenian Literature 10 (Humanities Stream)*, 201.
- 60 The chronotope, according to Bakhtin, is the “intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature.” Michael Holquist, ed., *The Dialogic Imagination. Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981 [2008]).
- 61 Henrik Bakhchinyan and Sergey Sarinyan, *Armenian Literature 10 (Humanities Stream)*, 30.
- 62 Zhenya Kalantaryan and Davit Gasparyan, *Armenian Literature 12 (Humanities Stream)*, ed., Vazgen Gabrielyan (Yerevan: Arevik, 2011), 217.
- 63 Ashot Hovhannisyan, *Episodes from the History of Armenian Liberation Thought*, Vol. 1 (Yerevan: Publishing House of the National Academy of Sciences of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic, 1957). Pavstos Buzand, for instance, who allegedly wrote his history in the fifth century after the fall of the Arshankuni Dynasty, ascribes the prophecy of the fate that “awaited” the dynasty to Catholicos Nerses Partev. In Buzand’s history, Nerses Partev cursed the Arshakuni Dynasty after one of its last kings, King Pap, poisoned him. Movses Khorenatsi also speaks of this curse, addressing it to Pap’s father. Ghazar Parpetsi speaks about Nerses Partev’s curse as well. He also speaks about the Catholicos Sahak Partev, who sees not only the fall of the Arshakuni and Lusavorich Dynasties but also their return in his “vision” or “dream.” There are also claims that these visionary predictions of the future are the results of revisions of the writings of these historians.

- 64 Vardan Azatyan, *Armenian Political Utopias*, 2012. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hq_S267pC90&t (in Armenian).
- 65 Shushan Nazaryan, “Moses Khorenatsi’s ‘Lament’ is the literary hymn to the idea of independent Armenian statehood, and Grigor Narekatsi’s *Book of Lamentations* has connections with his work,” *Echmiadzin* (1996).
- 66 Henrik Bakhchinyan and Sergey Sarinyan, *Armenian Literature 10 (Humanities Stream)*, 74.
- 67 Henrik Bakhchinyan and Sergey Sarinyan, *Armenian Literature 10 (Humanities Stream)*, 151.
- 68 Henrik Bakhchinyan and Sergey Sarinyan, *Armenian Literature 10 (Humanities Stream)*, 226.
- 69 Henrik Bakhchinyan and Sergey Sarinyan, *Armenian Literature 10 (Humanities Stream)*, 208.
- 70 The poem has become the text of the national anthem of the Republic of Armenia.
- 71 Henrik Bakhchinyan and Sergey Sarinyan, *Armenian Literature 10 (Humanities Stream)*, 146.
- 72 Henrik Bakhchinyan and Sergey Sarinyan, *Armenian Literature 10 (Humanities Stream)*, 215, 232.
- 73 Henrik Bakhchinyan and Sergey Sarinyan, *Armenian Literature 10 (Humanities Stream)*, 232. It seems this could be an artifact of the interpretation of the Soviet period.
- 74 Zhenya Kalantaryan and Davit Gasparyan, *Armenian Literature 11 (Humanities Stream)*, 220.
- 75 Aldous Huxley, *Texts and Pretexts: An Anthology with Commentaries* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1932).
- 76 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 26.
- 77 Zhenya Kalantaryan and Davit Gasparyan, *Armenian Literature 12 (Humanities Stream)*, 216.

Bibliography

- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 2006.
- Apple, Michael. “The Politics of Official Knowledge: Does a National Curriculum Make Sense?” *Teachers College Record* 95, 2 (1993): 222–41.
- Azatyan, Vardan. *Armenian Political Utopias*, 2012. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hq_S267pC90&t (in Armenian).
- Bakhchinyan, Henrik, and Sergey Sarinyan. *Armenian Literature 10 (Humanities Stream)*. Edited by Vazgen Gabrielyan. Yerevan: Arevik, 2009.
- Bardakjian, Kevorg B. *A Reference Guide to Modern Armenian Literature, 1500–1920: With an Introductory History*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000.
- Bilmez, Bülent, Kenan Çayır, Özlem Çaykent, Philip Gamaghelyan, Maria Karapetyan and Pinar Sayan. *History Education in Schools in Turkey and Armenia. A Critique and Alternatives*. History Foundation (Tarih Vakfi) and Imagine Center for Conflict Transformation, 2017.
- Corse, Sarah. *Nationalism and Literature: The Politics of Culture in Canada and the United States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Curriculum Center. *Subject Standard and Subject Syllabi for Armenian Language and Literature for High School Grades 10–12*. Yerevan: National Institute of Education, 2008.
- Curriculum Center. “Subject Standard and Subject Syllabi for Armenian Language and Literature for Elementary and Middle School Grades 1–9.” *National Institute of Education*, 2011.

- EV Consulting and Ayb Educational Foundation. *Final Report. Need Assessment for the Revision of State Standard for General Education, Subject Standards and Syllabi within the "Education Improvement Project."* Yerevan: Curriculum Center, 2016. <http://www.cfep.am/files/legislation/538.pdf> (in Armenian).
- Fairclough, Norman. *Critical Discourse Analysis. The Critical Study of Language*. New York: Routledge, 2013 [1995].
- Furay, Conal, and Michael J. Salevouris. *The Methods and Skills of History: A Practical Guide*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1988.
- Gamaghelyan, Philip, and Sergey Romyantsev. "Armenia and Azerbaijan: The Nagorny Karabakh Conflict and the Reinterpretation of Narratives in History Textbooks. Vol. 1." In *Myths and Conflict in the South Caucasus*, edited by Oksana Karpenko and Jana Javakhishvili. London: International Alert, 2013.
- Government of Armenia. *Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia on the Formation and Approval of the State Standard for General Education*. Yerevan: Arlis, 2010. April 8. <http://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?docid=77183> (in Armenian).
- Holquist, Michael, ed. *The Dialogic Imagination. Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*. Translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008 [1981].
- Hovhannisyán, Ashot. *Episodes from the History of Armenian Liberation Thought*. Vol. 1. Yerevan: National Academy of Sciences, 1957 (in Armenian).
- Huxley, Aldous. *Texts and Pretexts: An Anthology with Commentaries*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1932.
- Kalantaryan, Zhenya, and Davit Gasparyan. *Armenian Literature 12 (Humanities Stream)*. Edited by Vazgen Gabrielyan. Yerevan: Arevik, 2011.
- Kalantaryan, Zhenya, and Davit Gasparyan. *Armenian Literature 11 (Humanities Stream)*. Edited by Vazgen Gabrielyan. Yerevan: Arevik, 2015.
- Karpenko, Oksana, Philip Gamaghelyan, and Sergey Romyantsev. *Problemy i Perspektivy Podgotovki Uchebnikov i Prepodavanija Istorii na Juzhnom Kavkaze*. Tbilisi: Imagine Center for Conflict Transformation, 2014.
- Macintyre, Stuart, Juan Maiguashca and Attila Pók. *The Oxford History of Historical Writing: Volume 4: 1800–1945*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Matosyan, Tigran. "'Inventing Traditions': The Theme of Sovietisation in History Textbooks of Soviet and Post-Soviet Armenia." In *Myths and Conflict in the South Caucasus*, edited by Oksana Karpenko and Yana Javakhishvili. London: International Alert, 2013.
- Minister of Education and Science. "Order on Approval of Exemplary Teaching Plans for the School Year 2016–2017 for Educational Institutions Carrying out the Main General, Specialized, and Special State Programs of General Education." Yerevan: National Institute of Education, 2016a.
- Minister of Education and Science. "Order on Approving the List of Textbooks Authorized for Use in General Educational Institutions for the Academic Year 2016–2017." Yerevan: National Institute of Education, 2016b.
- Mkrтчyan, Satenik. "The Republic of Armenia's Neighbours in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries in Contemporary World History Textbooks." In *The South Caucasus and Turkey: History Lessons of the 20th Century*, edited by Sergey Romyantsev. Tbilisi: Heinrich Böll Foundation, 2012.
- Mkrтчyan, Satenik. *Formation of National Identity through Primary Education (Yerevan and Tbilisi Schools)*. Tbilisi: Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, 2013.
- Nazaryan, Shushan. "Movses Khorenatsi's 'Lament' is the literary hymn to the idea of independent Armenian statehood, and Grigor Narekatsi's 'Book of Lamentations' has connections with his work." *Echmiadzin*, 1996.
- Palandjian, Garine. "The ABC's of Being Armenian: (Re)Turning to the National Identity in Post-Soviet Textbooks." In *(Re)Constructing Memory: School Textbooks and the Imagination of the Nation*, edited by James H. Williams, 247–67. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2014. <http://hear.unr.edu.ar/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/reconstructing-memory-Complimentary-Copy.pdf>.

- Parlakian, Nishan, and Peter S. Cowe. *Modern Armenian Drama: An Anthology*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.
- Reed, Thomas Vernon. "Re-Historicizing Literature." In *A Companion to American Literature and Culture*, edited by Paul Lauter, 96–109. Oxford: Blackwell, 2010.
- Rowe, Victoria. *A History of Armenian Women's Writing: 1880–1922*. London: Cambridge Scholars Press Ltd, 2003.
- Silova, Iveta, Mikael Mead Yaqub, and Garine Palandjian. "Pedagogies of Space: (Re) Mapping National Territories, Borders, and Identities in Post-Soviet Textbooks." In *(Re) Constructing Memory: School Textbooks and the Imagination of the Nation*, edited by James H. Williams, 103–28. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2014. <http://hear.unr.edu.ar/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/reconstructing-memory-Complimentary-Copy.pdf>.
- Van Dijk, Teun. "Aims of Critical Discourse Analysis." *Japanese Discourse* 1 (1995): 17–27.
- Zekiyan, Boghos. "Personal Tragedy and Cultural Backgrounds in the Poetry of Bedros Tourian." *Review of National Literatures: Armenia*, 1984.
- Zolyan, Mikayel. "Writing the History of Present: The Post-Soviet Period in Armenian History Textbooks." In *The South Caucasus and Turkey: History Lessons of the 20th Century*, edited by Sergey Romyantsev. Tbilisi: Heinrich Böll Foundation, 2014.
- Zolyan, Mikayel, and Tigran Zakaryan. "Representations of 'Us' and 'Them' in History Textbooks of Post-Soviet Armenia." *International Textbook Research* 30 (2008): 785–95.



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

Part II

Myths and Mythologization in Textbooks and Curricula



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

5 “The World of Islam” and the Secular Political Regime

How Religion Is Taught in Azerbaijani Schools

Sevil Huseynova

Introduction

The process of the de-privatization of religion,¹ as well as the modern secular regime in post-Soviet Azerbaijan, the countries traditionally appointed the “World of Islam” are attributed specific characteristics. At the end of the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s, the religious institutes, practices, and discourses that had been widely marginalized and repressed in the privatized sphere in Soviet years² rapidly returned to the public sphere. The growth of their influence was perceived as a sign of decreased control on the part of political regimes over the everyday lives and thoughts of the people, as well as a reappearance of an almost lost national tradition. According to Tadeusz Swietochowski, in the post-Soviet period:

as opposed to the tendency of transforming Shia Islam into a nationalistic idea and mixing it with the state—what we see not only in Iran, but also in Iraq and Libya—Azerbaijan made the choice in favour of “national Islam” concept, which already arose at the beginning of the 20th century, in which Islam is viewed as an integral part of the national consciousness, independent from the measures of religiousness of certain citizens.³

To continue this thought, this trend was poured into official politics and different practices of the nationalization of Islam, conducted by the secular regime. The “choice” itself, of which Swietochowski speaks, was made by the political regime and was supported by the numerous public intellectuals cooperating with the authorities. At the same time, many believers opposed to the nationalization of Islam remained outside this “choice” (Shiite, as well as Sunni Salafis).

In this difficult situation following the fall of the USSR, various institutional, political, and social practices were shaped, as well as the discursive modes of the relation between the authorities seeking to preserve the secular neutrality of the power, on the one hand, and the religious institutions and varying groups of believers, entering the public space, on the other hand. With time, especially since the end of the 1990s and in the 2000s, the compromises between the two ideological models—secular (with the “national Islam”) and religious state—became more and more difficult. The relationships between secular power and various religious

DOI: [10.4324/9781003505822-7](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003505822-7)

This chapter has been made available under a CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0 license.

communities are adopting a more competitive and even conflicting character. In the 2000s in Azerbaijan, several armed incidents took place, the victims of which were not only the Sunnite and Shia Muslims but also the representatives of the law enforcement agencies.⁴

Officially, the secular political regime, willingly and quite persistently tries to control all religious institutions, communities, and informal networks of believers, as well as to monopolize the autonomy of the “right” interpretation of the Islamic discourse. On the one hand, the regime is attempting to monopolize control over the places of collective gatherings and public discourses, relying on successfully counteracting the radicals. On the other hand, it aspires to use the resources of the religious institutional structures and discourse of “national Islam” to gain control over the religious views of the population. However, whether the secular political regime has enough power (bureaucratic or discursive) to effectively implement control and maintain the monopoly over the only “right” interpretation of religious norms is still under question. I do not set the task upon myself to find a comprehensive answer to this question. In this paper, I concentrate on the analysis of narratives presented in school textbooks, on which the process of the de-privatization of religion had a significant impact.

Educational institutes, and above all high schools, are becoming public spaces in which the attempt of the political regime to establish control over religious discourses and narratives appears in the most striking form. The main question which I try to answer is what feeds the content of the educational narrative in a situation where the state tries to monopolize control over both the religious institutions and the content of the public religious discourse; when alternative religious discourses and groups seek to go beyond marginalized frameworks and participate in the de-privatization process; and when the radicalization of the active Muslim occurs.

Within the frameworks of the suggested analysis, I try to avoid opposing secularism and religiousness as the two extremes and instead pay attention to how the secular state and religion (Islam) coexist (as well as how they compete and conflict) in modern Azerbaijan. Therefore, I investigate the questions of the “*public religion*”⁵ sphere, and what place is allocated to Islam in such a public and officially secular space of compulsory high school education.

The Political Regime and the Myth of Secular Neutrality

Casanova noted that the “most utilized terms are pretty much always approximate. This includes even religious terms, which are readily thought to have a precise meaning”⁶ and indeed this is well observed for the narratives of textbooks published in post-Soviet Azerbaijan. Touching upon the issues of history and the value of Islam for Azerbaijani identity, the authors of textbooks become specifically “approximate,” if not confused and ambiguous. To paraphrase Blok, examining the religious map of Azerbaijan, we can attend to some of the nuances rather than just the simplistic label “Muslim.”⁷

Regardless of the popularity of these “labels,” the political regime in Azerbaijan officially remains secular. After the collapse of the USSR, in secular Azerbaijan,

"Shia Muslims, Sunnites, as well as the Russian Orthodox Church and Judaists, received a status of traditional faiths, with complete freedom of religion."⁸ At the same time, the majority of the republic's population is traditionally attributed to Shia Muslims. A widespread version of the statistics of Sunnites and Shia Muslims suggests their ratio is around seventy to thirty percent. According to official statistics, more than ninety percent of the country is Muslim. The (self) attribution to the "World of Islam" leans toward the orientalist discourse of the "East-West," in the context of which, Azerbaijan is exoticized and represented as an Eastern country.

The renaissance of Islam, which can also be observed in the post-Soviet period of the "nationalising nationalism"⁹ epoch, largely defines the ambiguity and contradiction of the relationship between the secular regime and the religion of the majority. The authorities strictly position Azerbaijan as a secular state and consider religious structures of the country its own ancestral fiefdom, while religious discourse appears as part of the national tradition (the "true" Azerbaijanis being Muslims). The ruling regime uses religious discourse as a resource for its own legitimation, thereby promoting the

active circulation of religious symbols, moral principles, and discourses within the public sphere. Secular state power remains an important sponsor of religious institutions, simultaneously entering different kinds of conflicts with numerous networks and groups, regarded as illegitimate (radical).¹⁰

To draw once more on Casanova, the political regime of Azerbaijan is not strictly secular, but rather lives in compliance with the myth of secular neutrality.

With the help of the bureaucratic apparatus of the state, working with the religious organizations and the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of the Caucasus (led since the Soviet period by Sheikh Allahshukur Pashazadeh), the authorities seek to control all citizens practicing Islam. While the political regime supports (and promulgates) the idea that Azerbaijanis are Muslims by birthright, it also aspires to tightly control the actions of the most active believers and define the degree to which public demonstration of one's commitment to Islam is admissible. In particular, this statement concerns the Sunnites-Salafi, who do not consider Pashazadeh their spiritual leader. In this situation, the high school becomes one of those institutions by means of which the government seeks to impose the "correct" ideas on the population about Islam and control the level of permitted religiousness.

Chosen Narratives

The year 2007 was also marked by the (unrealized) decision of the administration to include theology lessons in schools all over Azerbaijan. However, despite the fact that the theology course still has yet to become a reality at the time of writing, certain notions of religion—its variations, origins, social and cultural meanings, and so on—have long been present in school narratives on history, as well as in the "Humans and Society" (*İnsan və Cəmiyyət*) and "Knowledge of the World" (*Həyat Bilgisi*) courses. The subject of Azerbaijani history has held its position in the school

curriculum for a long time now. The course “Humans and Society” was already included in high school education when Azerbaijan left the USSR in the 1990s, but initially only for the ninth, tenth, and eleventh grades. This novelty assumed a certain innovation; it was claimed that this subject would become new by its content, as did the social sciences course, which was accepted in the Soviet years. By the 2018 school year, this course had been abolished once and for all and replaced by the eclectic subject “Knowledge of the World” in the first to ninth grades.

It was only fair to expect that the religion of the majority, Islam, to would be mentioned in one way or another in the Humans and Society/Knowledge of the World textbooks. Both courses have the objective of patriotic upbringing of children and teenagers (significantly seasoned with a militaristic aftertaste), and Islam, especially in the post-Soviet circumstances, is declared one of the most important foundations of Azerbaijani national identity. The very fact of the absence of religion in the public sphere in Soviet Azerbaijan became one of the reasons for its fast-growing popularity in the post-Soviet condition. As indicated by Ernest Gellner, “nationalistic and modern political movements can appear anti-religious if the previous religion was tightly connected to the former regime.”¹¹ Islam, on the other hand, as is commonly believed in the post-Soviet years, always opposed Soviet rule.

Official Azerbaijani nationalism appeals to Islam as one of the most important (alongside language) foundations of Azerbaijani identity. To paraphrase Seyla Benhabib, to “have a culture” in post-Soviet Azerbaijan; that is, “to be one of our own” in the cultural group of Azerbaijanis, means, among other things, to be Muslim.¹²

In countries with Islam being the main religion, its power over people has not weakened over the last hundred years, and in some cases got even stronger. [...] At the same time, religion is equally strong both in countries with traditionalist regimes and in countries that have chosen a path of radical social experimentations.¹³

The value of Islam in post-Soviet Azerbaijan constantly increases, which is surely reflected in the content of the textbooks. The choice of the subjects “Human and Society” and “Knowledge of the World” for analyzing changes in the narrative surrounding the role of Islam in Azerbaijani society is not accidental. I can only agree with Kenneth Wain that “the most contradictory aspect of teaching” such subjects is declaring their “political neutrality.”¹⁴ These are those school subjects that (besides patriotism) are designed to instill the “right” ideas among children and teenagers about the norms of “our” culture, behavior, morals, and so on. The ideas about the norms and stereotypes of behaviors are represented to high school students in the context of the modern ideology of “nationalising nationalism.”

These “spiritual” norms (whatever this means) are designed to promote the subjects “Humans and Society” and “Knowledge of the World” among students. It must be said that, in research on the post-Soviet space, little attention is paid to this subject (unlike history, for instance). However, studying “Humans and Society” “allows us to reconstruct collective representations of social reality, which are assigned the status of *objective knowledge*, of what is *actually real*.”¹⁵ In the

post-Soviet period, two editions of the textbook for “Humans and Society” were developed: the first at the beginning of the 1990s, to be replaced by a second in 2000. In addition to the listed narratives, I focus on the latest version of the textbook for “Knowledge of the World.”

“Humans and Society”: The First Edition

A large group of humanities scholars with degrees in philosophy gained during the USSR years participated in developing the first edition of the textbook. The authors included well-known specialists who were academics and professors (I. Rustamov, R. Azimova, R. Badalov, A. Sukurov, and others), and the group changed slightly each school year, led throughout, however, by Jamil Ahmadly, a professor. The texts of these books fully reflect the biographies of their authors, who for the most part were not actual specialists in developing textbook narratives for high schools. The texts are therefore quite difficult to follow and permeated by dialectical materialism and philosophy, as was taught in the Soviet higher educational institutions and, up to the end of the 1990s, in the universities of independent Azerbaijan, by the authors of these textbooks themselves. The textbook thus presents a simplified variation of the Soviet philosophical discourse.

The former Soviet philosophers, leading specialists of the research institutes (now the National Academy of Sciences) and thus tutors of the finest higher educational institutions of the country, were obliged to focus on the issue of religion. However, in the first edition of the textbook, the discussion on the role and value of religion for Azerbaijani society was not given particular attention. Instead, the authors concentrated on the origins of human beings (the theory of evolution). The students are reminded several times and in different contexts that “humans [are] distinguished from anthropoids (human-like monkeys) by natural selection.”¹⁶ All three textbooks (for the ninth, tenth, and eleventh grades) speak of the ideas and representations of various Ancient Greek and medieval philosophers, as well as scholars of the New Modern Era. The authors constantly reproduce, characteristic of the Soviet philosophical discourse, semantic and evaluative categories, referring, for instance, to Giordano Bruno as “an irreconcilable enemy of Catholicism, scholasticism, and religious obscurantism.”¹⁷

The authors mention religion in the same textbook for the ninth grade, but without (and this concerns all three school years) the tendency to focus on Islam. While discussing different issues, the authors talk about Islam only among numerous monotheist religions or other religious representations (for instance, those of Ancient Greek, Romans, or inhabitants of India). Therefore, the subject of religion only appears when discussing the issue of human origins. The authors refer to the myths about the origins relying on the Uyghur version of “Oghuz” and the Bible. They summarize a long description with a single phrase that mentions Islam: “The story of Adam and Eve, in a form very close to the Bible, is described in the Quran.”¹⁸

Then the authors once again switch to the version of human origins, suggested by modern science. In the same paragraph, discussing the issues of “life and death,” “faith and destiny,” etc., the authors periodically return to religious ideas,

once again mentioning Islam only alongside various other beliefs. “Destiny is not accepted unconditionally in either Christianity or Islam; both religions take into account personal freedom that is excluded by destiny.”¹⁹ The longest tirade, dedicated to Islam, reads as follows:

Allah, the creator of the universe and humanity in Islam, also allows alternative human actions and behaviours and provides considerable freedom. The Holy Quran teaches us to choose such actions and behaviours so to avoid suffering in the afterlife. The Quran tells us that Allah, through his prophet and the Quran, sets all falling to His grace on the right path, bringing them out of the gloom of non-belief to the light, and indicates the right direction.²⁰

Islam is reviewed in this passage, however indirectly. Religious texts of Christians or Jews are never given the epithet “holy.” Moreover, “His” (i.e., that of “Allah”) “grace” is given a capital letter. All religious views in textbooks are described as a positive evolution from the primitive to the more developed.

People witnessed that their body dies, turns into ashes, blends with the soil. However, they could not reconcile with the idea that with death, a human body dies eternally and nothing remains. That is why they formed a thought that only the body passes away, and besides a body, there is something eternal in a human, something undying. [...] All of this concluded with humans forming the idea of a soul in all of us.²¹

The issues of religion are thoroughly discussed only in textbooks for the eleventh grade. In the paragraph “Spiritual Life and the Heritage of the Past,” the authors speak about the opposition of atheism and the religious world view in the Soviet years. Criticizing “false ideas about our past” (a subject perpetually popular since the end of the 1980s), they, among other things, indicate that:

As a rare exception, the books with atheist content were included in the list of educational and recommended humanitarian literature. Meanwhile, the efforts of religious thinkers were either reduced by the ideology dominating at the time or were ruthlessly criticized. Because of such anti-national politics, many pearls of spiritual wealth, which are true pride of people, were excluded from the treasury of our science and culture. “Avesta,” created by the wise Zardusht, dated to the ancient times (sixth century B.C.), the religious and mythological monument, which incorporated the highest achievements of philosophical thinking of the Ancient East, is a good example of that.²²

Alongside the Avesta, the Turkic heroic epic *Kitabi Dede-Gorgud* (Book of My Grandfather Korkut) is also mentioned. Citing *Avesta* is, without a doubt, not accidental and needs to be reviewed “in relation to the new rise in patriotic sentiments,” just as it happened in neighboring Iran under the rule of Raza-Shaha.²³ Iranian and Azerbaijani nationalisms appeal to the ancient religion of Zoroaster as

the religion of the great ancestors. *Kitabi Dede-Gorgud* and its representation in the Soviet years play an important part in demonstrating the great past of Azerbaijanis. In the post-Soviet period, the epic was assigned a significant role in the national discourse. This way, the authors create the text, first of all, focusing on the context of nationalism. Islam for them is only one of the components of the national identity of Azerbaijanis, but not the most important one. Subsequently, nothing is said about the Quran in this regard.

Religious issues are addressed in some of the sections of the textbooks for the eleventh grade. At the same time, the section “Religion and its Place in Social Life” is preceded by rather anticlerical epigraphs, such as: “If there was no God, He would have to be invented,” “God is always on the side of the great forces” (Voltaire), or “The paradox of God: God is almighty. But could He create a stone so heavy, even He could not lift it up?”²⁴ These discussions in the fashion of “Soviet atheism” constantly appear in the text. Then, in the paragraph on “What is Religion?” the authors suggest the following definition:

Religion [...] means belief in the presence of supernatural force or forces. These forces are not submitted to the rules of nature, but on the contrary, they define the changes in nature and its development. That is why the supernatural force is not cognizable by the power of reason; it becomes accessible to a person only through deep conviction and faith.²⁵

The authors discuss the specifics of religion and religious beliefs, while avoiding definite religious systems and only speak about the common aspects characteristic to all religions. Only in the paragraph, “Polytheistic religions under a primitive-communal system,” they somehow connect religion to Azerbaijanis, but yet again, in the context of nationalism: “Turks are one of the ancient peoples of the world. Among them was spread one of the most ancient religions—Totemism.”²⁶ Authors devote a considerable part of their reflections on the phenomenon of the religion to the Ancient Azerbaijanis and Turks. Finally, they come to a (well known in the Soviet course of philosophy) conclusion, that “ancient people, not capable of opposing natural forces, diseases, disasters, but striving to hinder them, called for help from the more powerful forces—the Gods. Thus, religions arose.”²⁷

The authors define the next paragraph as a “dialogue between atheists and believers,” with this being an attempt to reconcile the two views of the world, and, at the same time, an aspiration to correlate their own, Soviet atheist philosophers’, ideas with the transformed context, where choosing Islam becomes the only right choice. For the authors, both sides of the “dialogue” appear in a positive light. The authors claim that “both the pseudo-believers and pseudo-atheists are equally dangerous because in both cases their beliefs are not impartial and not disinterested.”²⁸ Afterward, they refer to a private matter, which for them appears as “natural”:

[W]hat kind of relationship should religion and atheism have in democratic Azerbaijan? In Azerbaijan, there must be civilized interactions between the

two established parts. People with different positions should remember that the disputes between religion and atheism would never stop or end in the victory of one side or the other. Only our culture will benefit from these disputes. Because atheism forces believers to address religion creatively, to look for and find new arguments in their favour. And believers, theologians, finding these arguments, respond to the critique of atheists. At the same time, criticism of atheism induces atheists to develop their ideas, and find new pieces of evidence.²⁹

In this way, the authors come to a rather paradoxical conclusion: the role and importance of atheists is to make the believers more certain of their faith and the atheists to become surer of their own ideas.

It is only in the tenth paragraph that the authors describe monotheist religions and provide general information about Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. None of these religions is significantly emphasized; however, a slight emotionally positive assessment of Islam is perceptible: “Islamic norms, religious relationships between nations and individuals, its democracy and tolerance [...], high appreciation of sciences, knowledge, wisdom, demand to be fair, loyal, human, truthful to people’s expectation, stored in depths of their hearts.”³⁰ Understanding Islam as having the qualities of “democracy” and “tolerance” becomes significant in the post-Soviet context. Islam is “good” because it never tarnished itself with relations to the Soviet totalitarian state and it ties in well with the modern democratic society, which is declaratively being built in Azerbaijan. No discussion about “our” religion arises. Finally, the authors feature one more veneration toward the “religion of the state” by emphasizing that Islam is “currently one of the most widespread religions in the world. According to the latest data, up to one billion people in the world practise Islam.”³¹ The discussion on religion concludes in the paragraph “Religion and Morals,” where the authors, speaking of the benefits of religious prohibitions, mention that “some prohibitions are kept for the sake of prohibitions,” and wonder:

[W]hy it is forbidden to eat pork in Islam, what harm or evil does it prevent? We cannot speak about the harm of the pork meat due to the hot climate in Arabia as in many African and Asian countries, with an equally hot climate, pork is eaten easily, without any fear. [...] It is obvious that these prohibitions have only one benefit: they accustom people to be disciplined, to avoid things that is said ‘no’ to. Any morality, culture starts from here. Only after humans learn not to do the prohibited, they can regard the prohibitions as something beneficial for spirituality and morals. That is what God does.³²

Thus, the logic of God, which authors consider necessary to rethink rationally, is the explanation of the discipline through the discipline itself. Here they do not notice the contradiction of the thesis about the democracy of Islam. In conclusion, they once again reproduce the thesis of the usefulness of the dialogue between theologians and atheists. As summarized by the authors, “each religion is a distinct

route leading to the only God. God gives every nation a religion, corresponding to their psychology, nature so that they can get to the one Allah themselves.” Finally: “now, among Judaist and Christian theologians, who do not recognize Mohammed’s prophecy, that he brought to the people the ideas delivered to him by God, there are science-theologians who agree with the fact, that both Mohammed and Buddha had a divine gift.”³³

The last feature of these texts worth noting is the interest of authors in the short aphorisms of some “credible” characters. In this version of educational narratives of the subject “Humans and Society” in all three textbooks, without an exception, these are aphorisms only of some famous philosophers, scholars, writers, poets, such as Rene Descartes, Francois Rabelais, Socrates, Pierre Beaumarchais, Nizami Ganjavi, and so on. This random choice of aphorisms is what is most apparent when being acquainted with the first version of these textbooks.

“Humans and Society”: The Second Edition (2000s)

In the textbooks of the second edition, published in much larger print-runs in the 2000s, the discourse of the role and importance of Islam undergoes many changes. The collective of authors changes almost completely, with the head becoming the Doctor of Sciences, Professor Bakhtiar Aliyev, who got his basic psychological education in the Moscow State University (MSU) in the late Soviet years. Since 2000, he is head of the Psychology department in the Baku State University (BSU), a member-correspondent of the Academy of Sciences and twice elected to the Parliament of the Republic (National Assembly).

In the context of the authors’ collective of the second version of textbooks it makes sense to talk about the new generation of science and educational workers, whose professional careers were mainly built in the post-Soviet years, in a significantly different context of relations between the authorities, on the one hand, and religious institutions and groups, on the other hand. Unlike the collective of authors of the first version of textbooks, some of whom allowed themselves to criticize the political regime, the second version was written by specialists loyal to the authorities. The head of the authors’ collective is also a government representative. As a result, the textbooks reflect not only the ideas of philosophers that spread in the years of Soviet rule, but also the present official discourse.

By the 2000s, Islam held a strong position in the public sphere, and in the following years, this continued to strengthen. Complicated relationships between the political regime and religious institutions, networks or groups, reflect the futility of both the attempts made by the authorities toward total control of the public sphere, as well as the efforts of opposing Muslim parties and groups trying to gain wider influence in the political field and control over public space. The Shiite Islamic party, whose key electorate is concentrated in the Nardaran settlement near Baku, was created in 1991. The Nardaran population is known for its conservative views, anti-Western radicalism, and sympathies toward the Iranian regime. In May 1996, five of the party leaders were arrested. The party endured the next take-off at the start of 2007 when Movsum Samedov, a doctor educated as a professional theologian

in Iran, became its leader. Samedov strengthened the anti-Western direction of the party activities even more, at the same time allowing himself to ruthlessly criticize the authorities. In autumn of 2011, more arrests followed. The residents of the settlement conducted numerous public demonstrations, unauthorized by the authorities. Armed conflicts with the representatives of the authorities occurred a number of times on its territory. The last and the most serious one took place in November 2015, when during a military operation, two police officers and four members of the Muslim Unity were killed. The majority of Muslim activists prefer not to create parties, but rather a consolidated circle of spiritual leaders and Mosques. In August 1992 in Baku, one of the most influential groups of Shia Muslims, known as the community of the Juma Mosque, was created. Its leader became the face of Shia Islam in the country—Haji Ilgar Ibrahimoglu, a professional theologian who studied at the Tehran University. He allows himself to criticize the most important institution of power—Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of the Caucasus. In 2000, the “Center for the Defence of Freedom of Conscience and Religion” (DEVAMM) was created, becoming the first religious human-right defense organization in Azerbaijan. In this difficult moment for the regime following the death of Heydar Aliyev in 2003, power was passed to his son, Ilham Aliyev, with the heads and the activists of the community openly supporting the oppositional party “Musavat.” During the following repressions, some of the leaders and activists left the country.

Since the 1990s, Sunni Salafists have become more visible in Azerbaijan. Among them are many radicals, who participated in the conflicts on the side of the Taliban, fighting for the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq. In the 2000s, some of the mosques where Salafists gathered were shut down (Schidler and others). Many Muslim activists were obliged to leave the country or were arrested. Repressions led to Salafists’ departure from public platforms. Dozens of Salafists were either arrested or killed as a result of special operations of the security forces.³⁴

In the 1990s, the officially secular regime was thus represented as simultaneously Muslim. Both Aliyev presidents, as well as bureaucrats of the highest rank, cultural and scientific figures, publicly demonstrated their commitment to Islam. The inauguration ceremony of the president is accompanied by an oath sworn not only to the Constitution but also to the Quran. Already in 1994, President Heydar Aliyev and his son visited Mecca. By 2009, Baku played the role of the capital of the Islamic culture. In the same year, with the help of state funds, the grand reconstruction of the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of the Caucasus was completed, along with the Taza Pir Mosque. Ilham Aliyev, in honor of his father, the former KGB general and the head of the Communist Party of the SSR Azerbaijan, built the republic’s biggest Heydar Mosque in 2014 with state funds. In his speech at its opening, Aliyev, once again, spoke about the commitment to “our national and religious traditions.”³⁵ In 2015, President Ilham Aliyev completed another Hajj, this time accompanied by his family.³⁶

Thus, in the 2000s, the majority religion, Islam, was finally approved in official discourse and state rituals as an integral part of the national tradition. Official nationalism in modern-day Azerbaijan is penetrated by populism. The same populism is also demonstrative of the commitment of the authorities and public intellectuals

to Islam. Nevertheless, to remain as the key player in the religious field, populism is not enough, and the state increasingly has to resort to different forms of violence. The changing context was neither reflected in the content of educational curricula. The subject “Humans and Society” was taught in the last four years of school, whereas now, religious issues are already discussed in the first school year. Addressing the standards of behavior, the authors highlight all emphases at once, at the same time mentioning Islam as “our” religion:

In our religion, to drink alcohol is a sin. The Holy Quran categorically forbids the devout to consume drinks that stupefy the human mind. Carrying in itself the highest moral qualities, at the same time, it is a fundamental commandment that forces a person to take care of their own health.³⁷

A discussion of the numerous religious prohibitions in different religious traditions is absent in the texts. The norms of behavior described in the Quran and represented as the only right and rational behavior becomes the norm for all ethnic Azerbaijanis (the dominant group). The first passage reproduces the key element of the official discourse, stating that “true Azerbaijanis” are those who adhere to “our” religion—Islam. Thereby, citizens of the republic who are not committed to Muslim traditions remain outside the “us” framework. Educational texts of the second generation are noticeably contradictory. On the same page, the authors suddenly claim that “the ability to drink, knowing your own norm, is one of the parts of the culture.” Avicenna said: “A little vodka is a medicine, in excess it is a deadly poison.”³⁸ The medieval doctor and philosopher, playing a significant symbolic role of a leading figure of the “Muslim East” or “Islamic Civilization” in all textbooks, discusses the norms that, according to the authors, contradict the Quran.

The subject of “our” religion once again arises in the paragraph with the emotional title: “Without Loving the Homeland it is Impossible to Be Called a Human.” “Our great Prophet said: ‘Love to Homeland comes from the faith in Allah’.”³⁹ It is only after describing Mohammed as the “great” one and “our” prophet that the authors address the narrative, which holds an important position in the concept of the modern Azerbaijani nationalism—the *Book of Dede Korkut*. The emphases are placed differently: statuses of Islam and the Quran are changing and becoming more significant. In the narrative of the second version of textbooks, the Turkic epic concedes its symbolic position to “our” religious texts. In the twenty-first paragraph, which bears the promising title “Tolerance,” this time the authors directly address the subject of religion: “What is religion? Religion is a path connecting people to a more important reality that hides behind the actuality perceived by the sense organs. This path is a godly path that teaches people of great morality, virtue, and rejection of evil.”

This description clearly differs considerably from that in the first version of textbooks, where religion was represented as faith in the supernatural. Authors of the first version gave students the freedom to choose whether to accept such ideas. In the second version of textbooks, it is the “more important reality,” certain “right” and “godly path,” which all “proper” Azerbaijanis should follow. Rejection

of religious rules is equated to the refusal of moral norms and love of the homeland. Overall, in the first passage of this paragraph, the authors do not focus on Islam, but rather suggest the definition of the conditional religion, once again falling into certain contradictions. According to the authors, religion

is not the consequence of the helplessness of primitive people before the forces of nature, but it is their desire to reveal the secrets of the surrounding world. Because of the absence of sufficient intelligence and consciousness in humans to answer the questions that arose in regard to the natural phenomena unclear to them, they began to connect their causes to invisible forces—the spirits. As a result, religion arose.⁴⁰

Proposing mutually exclusive definitions, the authors indicate that there are two different approaches when it comes to the explanation of the phenomena of religion—either it “has a divine nature” or it is “created by people.” The concept of atheism, as an alternative to faith in God and commitment to religious norms and practices, is absent from the textbook pages. We speak only of the conditional religion represented in specifically positive forms. This is the desire to know the world, and it is religion that demonstrates the “model of true perfection” and “religious practice opens up the way to the perfect divine love, the perfect eternal truth.” God is the certain eternal truth, a perfection, whereas the religious practices and rituals are the ways to get closer to that perfection. At the same time, all the answers to “mysterious phenomena” will be subject to research within religious postulates, until “there are scientific answers to the posed questions.”⁴¹ The authors remove this next contradiction through the passage where the answers suggested by science are represented as confirmations already described in the Quran. This way, they once again return to the starting point, Islam, as “our” religion. It is in the text of the Quran, according to their version, that the ideals of religion and science are unified.

The Holy Quran is one of the greatest monuments of world culture. Being a religious-philosophical, legal source of Islam, the Quran represents an encyclopaedia that provides scientific interpretations to many questions. The Quran [...] predicts many of the future events or scientific discoveries. The verses of the Quran, which not yet been sufficiently solved, report about future discoveries incomprehensible today.⁴² [...] Islam is the most widespread religion in world today. This religion gains power and increases the number of its followers on the basis of its inherent values, moral norms, and cultural potential.⁴³

Thus, every Azerbaijani becomes a member of the widest community, behind which, according to the authors, rests the future of humanity. The authors see the proof of the dominance of this religion and value systems in the increasing number of followers of Islam all over the world.

Especially important in this context is the growth of the interest in “the West and in America,” where the “intelligentsia started showing more interest in

Islam.”⁴⁴ The orientalist approach inspires a search for proof of the importance of “our” religion in the “West”—the most important imaginary reference to which Azerbaijan and Azerbaijanis aspire to be equal someday. At the same time, achieving equality, according to the authors’ logic, is inevitable due to a simple reason that “our” system of religious norms and values, as well as “our” holy text, are extremely advanced. In the meantime, the comparison to the imaginary “West” is limited by the need to maintain “our” identity within the situation of globalization. Islam once again comes to the rescue: “Islam, in principle, accepts the processes of integration, globalization, but decisively refuses the standards that are not corresponding to its moral norms and criteria of values.”⁴⁵

Here, the authors suddenly remember that the main subject of the paragraph is the discussion of tolerance, and they note that all believers must be forbearing to one another and that Azerbaijan is a good example and demonstration of such a state of affairs. However, the creators of the educational narrative emphasize that “Azerbaijan is a Muslim country, with more than 90% of the population being Muslim,” and “Islam is no less important in fostering tolerance in Azerbaijan.” The denotation of “our” religion claims that “for each of you, we have established one Sharia and one way” and “in principle, religious pluralism is considered acceptable.”⁴⁶ The image of Islam as a religion of tolerance is also acknowledged in the imaginary “West,” by the authoritative and “famous European historian, Adam Mez.” In fact, the authors are primarily concerned with the representation of Islam (which does not actually need it), whereas tolerance in the country (the subject of the section), is, to a large extent, limited to the illustration “The Pope in Azerbaijan.”

Finally, in the concluding paragraph of the textbook, “Generosity and Mercy,” special attention is paid to the prophet Mohammed, who, according to the authors, is an example of qualities cited in the previous section.

The Prophet Mohammed, the most worthy person, was a model of high nobility. As recognized by his spouse, the morality of the Prophet consisted of the highest goodness—the Quran. In other words, his spiritual and external beauty was unseen in any other person before him. His purity and beauty were reflected in his face. His was extremely welcoming. After seeing him once, no one wanted to part from him.⁴⁷

Thus, the prophet represents an embodiment of a perfect man, a certain version of which for Azerbaijanis is Haji Zeynalabdin Taghiyev, the famous millionaire-patron who lived in Baku in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and made a fortune in oil production. The latter is also described in a similar fashion. Unlike the texts of the first version, the authors not once focus on Buddhism; however, Judaism and Christianity are mentioned in barely memorable short passages. The topic of freedom of religion is not emphasized in the text. Azerbaijanis are attributed to the world of Islam a priori due to their ethnicity and birthright. It is also important that in the second version of textbooks, the discussion about the freedom of conscience, as well as that of atheism, is absent.

At the same time, the whole text of the books, albeit indirectly, is still permeated with the personified competition between the ethnic and religious components of the constructed identity of Azerbaijanis. This competition is reflected in the selection of aphorisms and familiar phrases (“sayings of wise men”), located at the end of each paragraph. Competition to the sayings of Prophet Mohammed, and, to a smaller extent, those from the Quran (referring to that very same character), is only represented by the aphorisms of Heydar Aliyev, the President of the Republic in 1993–2003: neither of which were included in the first version of the textbooks. The former president, just like the Prophet Mohammed, is a version of an ideal man, but also an ethnic Azerbaijani, in the context of the official nationalism representing the “great” and “nationwide leader.” It must be said that, so far, the prophet rather loses the competition. Overall, Azerbaijan, in which Islam becomes more and more noticeable not only in the public, but also in the private sphere, still remains a secular state.

“Knowledge of the World”: Transition to “Tolerance” and a Politics of “Multiculturalism”

The year 2018, was the last year for teaching the subject “Humans and Society” in middle schools. Consequently, this narrative was replaced by the “Knowledge of the World” course, the content of which reflects the new politics of “tolerance” and “multiculturalism” more and more persistently carried out by the political regime. The year 2008, when by the initiative of the President Ilham Aliyev the so-called “Baku process” commenced, is a symbolic starting point. This process laid the foundation for the hosting of numerous international forums and conferences in Baku. In the official discourse of multiculturalism, the ideas of “global intercultural dialogue” and “concepts of intercivilizational dialogue”⁴⁸ become more in demand. The discursive model that explains why Azerbaijan and Baku have to become the centers of such “dialogue” is based on “three pillars.”

The first is the unique imaginary geography of the country as a whole, and of Baku in particular. The capital represents a bridge between East and West, or “Asia and Europe.” This particular area combines two, as stated by the creators of these politics, completely different and accurately separated cultural fields, which in the context of the multiculturalism discourse are reduced to the world of Islam, on the one hand, and to “Western” Judeo-Christian civilization on the other. Baku, as the capital of Azerbaijan, had to become the showcase of these politics. The example of tolerance of the followers of Islam (which, according to the official version, is the vast majority of the country’s population), is their ability to peacefully coexist with the Christian and Jewish minorities. In his speech at the VII Global Forum of Baku (March 2019), the official author of the Azerbaijani multiculturalism politics, Ilham Aliyev, depicted the first “pillar” as follows:

[A]s a demonstration of our efforts we successfully held the 4th Islamic Solidarity Games two years ago. Two years before Azerbaijan was the country which held the First European Games. Can you imagine in two years in one

city we had the European Games and the Islamic Solidarity Games—this is actually a reflection of our role in the international arena and our efforts to bring countries and civilizations closer.⁴⁹

Second, the imaginary border is complemented with the essentialist discourse about the unique features of “Azerbaijani people.” In the context of this discourse, *the people and the nation* are the two key concepts, appearing as synonyms, as well as the designations of different types of communities. Quite often, *people* is a much wider category—*multinational Azerbaijani people*. At the same time, ethnonationalism of Azerbaijanis represents only the dominant group of Muslim Turks. More rarely, in the spirit of civil nationalism, all the residents of the country are attributed to Azerbaijanis.⁵⁰ However, Azerbaijanis themselves, as an ethnonational community (Turk-Muslims), are a group discursively gifted with unique features and exclusive rights to create an atmosphere of tolerance and multiculturalism in the country. The very coexistence with the ethnic Azerbaijanis imparted on those ethnically and religiously “different” the “proper (i.e. tolerant) rules of living.”⁵¹ In the words of İlham Aliyev:

In Azerbaijan, there are the most civilized norms of national and religious coexistence, a tolerant environment; the state-religious relationships in the country are an example for the rest of the world.⁵²

Third, in the frameworks of the subject of this article, it is necessary to emphasize that the official policy of tolerance and multiculturalism, which implies a dialogue between the world of Islam and the “West,” is particularly aimed at preventing “religious extremism” within the education of Muslims—the citizens of the republic. For instance, in the textbook of “Knowledge of the World” for the fourth grade, this thesis is submitted as follows:

Islam is against terrorism. A person who calls themselves an Islamic terrorist, killing innocent people, thereby greatly damages the Islamic religion, as their crime impacts the attitude of people of other faiths to the Islamic religion. In reality, Islam urges peace and equality. That is why each person, practicing any religion, has to behave decently and therefore not discredit the faith, which millions of people follow.⁵³

The main partners of the authorities—the local hierarchies of Russian Orthodox Church, Rabbis, and heads of the Russian and European communities—represent the very opportunity of the peaceful coexistence in Azerbaijan. It is possible to say that this “multicultural” triumvirate, reflected in the textbooks, reproduces to some extent a Russian prototype. Only this time, for obvious reasons, Muslims, and not the Orthodox Church, have the dominant role. All the remaining ethnic groups and faiths play a supporting role in the “intercultural dialogue.”

It is obvious that the loud tolerance and multiculturalism policy with all its contradictions inevitably had to reflect on the textbooks of “Knowledge of the World,”

especially in the sections devoted to religious topics. The group of authors who prepared this textbook differs considerably from those who created the material for the subject “Humans and Society.” From this point, almost all the authors are teachers of schools and lyceums, whose professionals whose careers occurred in independent Azerbaijan. One of the most remarkable figures is Nushaba Mamedoba, one of the authors of the textbooks for the fifth to ninth grades, the winner of the contest “Best Teacher of the Year,” and recipient of the *Tərəqqi* (progress) medal by order of President İlham Aliyev himself, for her contribution in the development of educational institutions.

As usual, the sections dedicated to religious themes are all about “our morality,” or about the cultures, civilizations, and dialogues between them, and finally, about the same tolerance and multiculturalism. In the framework of the subject “Knowledge of the World,” religious issues are discussed from first grade with an opportunity to observe how the subject of Islam dominates the narrative:

Religion—it is a way of people worshipping God. Most people in our society are Muslim. The religion of Muslims is Islam, and the prophet is the venerable Mohammed. Islam is a religion of the world, science, purity, truth. People who converted to Islam are called Muslims. For Muslims, God is one. We love God. People are free to choose their religion. There are others in Azerbaijan who practice Christianity and Judaism. In our country, there are places of worship characteristic to all religions. Independent of their religion, all citizens of Azerbaijani Republic are equal in their rights. The biggest pilgrimage place for Muslims is Kaaba, located in the city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia.⁵⁴

Here, the visual material dominates over the text. The illustrations, the main part of which is dedicated to the world of Islam, represent, nevertheless, that symbolic triumvirate: Kaaba in the moment of Hajj, the building of Mecca, Orthodox Church, as well as the Quran, the Bible, and the Torah. Despite obvious priorities, the authors strive for greater balance. The two other main permitted religions are mentioned from the first grade and authors do not forget to note, though casually and out of place, the freedom of religion. This narrative slightly changes in the subsequent school years. With different variations and details, the other three religions and ceremonies allowed by the state, are repeated for the second, or, for instance, the sixth grades.⁵⁵

It therefore makes sense to address the last year of teaching “Knowledge of the World” when the discussion of the religious issues becomes a significant component of the extensive section of “Culture and Tolerance.” This section, paradoxically, begins with the St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre (August 1572, Paris), described as a “bloodshed on religious grounds” which left an “indelible stain not only on the history of France but also of all Europe.”⁵⁶ Furthermore, the authors emphasize that the St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre is not the only crime of this kind, and recall the Spanish Inquisition, as well as the United States, which “for

several centuries oppressed Black people⁵⁷ and Indians because of their race,” as well as the most horrific crime—the Holocaust.⁵⁸

All examples from the history of European countries, as well as other international laws and documents (Universal Declaration of Human Rights and others), precede the story about the invariable tolerance and multiculturalism of Azerbaijanis. The authors, however, do not forget to make numerous reverences toward the government, which despite the innate ability of Azerbaijanis to be tolerant, is the only guarantor of compliance with the standards of multiculturalism.⁵⁹

The most accurate definition of the concept of tolerance, we learn, belongs to Heydar Aliyev. He said: “Tolerance, patience is a very broad concept. It concerns many aspects of human relationships, including intercommunal, interethnic and interreligious relationships ... It is not only the tolerance of religion to one another but also the tolerance of other traditions, moral norms, and cultures.”⁶⁰

However, visual materials suggest that everyday life, especially in European countries and in the United States (“the West”), is permeated by violence. In the meantime, the illustrations of the Islamic world—Kazan Kremlin and Istanbul—contradict the idea of violence and demonstrate the instances of tolerance. Authors often discuss how a tolerant society only occurs in democratic circumstances.⁶¹ Therefore, the authoritarian Azerbaijani regime discursively transforms into one of the most liberal and democratic in the world. Finally, in summary, they come to the somewhat vague conclusion that “a tolerant society is a multicultural society dominated by pluralism.”⁶²

Recognition in the “West” of government efforts to instill tolerance, remains a significant part of its legitimacy in Azerbaijan itself. The main “test” is passed in the imaginary West and, according to the textbooks authors, the acknowledgement of the “West” in the successes of multiculturalism policy transforms it into a partner of the regime and supports it with the whole of its authority, as illustrated in the following: “The seminar conducted in 2001 in the House of Lords of the United Kingdom, under the title *Coexistence of Religion in a Secular State: Positive Experience of Azerbaijan*, showed, that our state for a ten-year period of independence, managed to create an image of itself as an example of religious tolerance and patience.”⁶³ The discourse of (self) orientalization is also observed in the attempts to speak of the superiority of “our” cultural achievements over “Western” ones. “Cultural practices have fed one another in the past. For instance, works by Islamic scholars greatly influenced the cultural development in Europe.”⁶⁴ The students are only left to predict the reverse influence.

Overall, through the whole nine-year course, the list of cited religions is much more detailed than in the narrative of the second version of “Humans and Society.” Alongside the recognized triumvirate, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Shinto, and Confucianism are mentioned, though Islam is always situated in a dominant position. Similar to the “Humans and Society” course, the authors do not tire of

reminding the consumers of the textbooks that, by birthright, they belong to the Muslim traditions:

Azerbaijani people⁶⁵ adhere to the Islamic religion. Islam played a big part in the formation of our national consciousness. [...] Islamic religion made our nation co-religionist with all the Muslims in the world. It is not an accident, that Islam, since the beginning, showed itself as a democratic and tolerant religion, showing patience for all previous monotheist religions.⁶⁶

The authors try several times to offer a definition of the phenomenon of religion, falling into the usual contradictions. At last, in a ninth-grade textbook, they again give priority to religion over science, in fact reproducing an already familiar passage from the second version of textbooks of “Humans and Society”: “Science is unable to answer all questions that confront humanity, whereas religion has solutions to all of them. In this sense, religion is not the embodiment of helplessness of a human before nature; it is an attempt to reveal its secrets.”⁶⁷ The concept of atheism also appears on the textbook pages. However, this term suddenly appears in a question and is not explained in any way in the textbook: “What are the distinctive features of the atheist worldview from a materialistic one? Explain.” The “Knowledge of the World” course does not offer any alternative to religion. This narrative is not about the freedom of conscience, but rather about a conditional freedom of choice of religion.

In reality, everyone’s attitude to religion is expressed in two ways. One of them is an unconditional acceptance of religion, historically confessed by families, people, and nations; the other—arbitrarily chosen by a person according to their beliefs and morality. In the first case, a person, accepting this belief as an integral part of their national identity and customs, adopts the religion according to the beliefs of their parents. In the second case, a person voluntarily chooses the faith, independent of national identity and realizes the demands of religious rites, the meaning of religion, or accepts it because of religious propaganda.⁶⁸

The rejection of the “historically professed” religion reflects a certain gap between the “people” and “nation,” which, again, are synonymous concepts. The textbooks, on the other hand, are designed to cultivate respect for “our” traditions, and, first of all, for Islam. Here, remembering Swietochowski’s thesis about “national Islam,” it is necessary to point out the typical inconsistency of the narrative. Islam is an opportunity to become a part of the wider “civilized” Muslim community but is also a tradition restricted by the framework of the nation. Authors several times return to the subject of the “wrong” practice of Islam:

Not everyone today unconditionally recognizes the religious tolerance in Islam. Sometimes, under the slogans of Islam, certain forces commit acts of extremism and terrorism, which threatens humanity as a whole.⁶⁹ [...]

Azerbaijan always condemned religious intolerance, closely cooperating with other countries and organizations while fighting terrorism and extremism that seek to disrupt the stable religious and social situation. In turn, harmful religious literature, propaganda of information, religious-radical appeals, unfamiliar for the national consciousness of our nation, are prevented from being imported; activities of some religious organizations connected to the religious-terrorist groups in foreign countries are under control.⁷⁰

The subject of “religious extremism” only arises in two cases: in stories about medieval Europe (the Inquisition, St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre), and when discussing the specifics of modern Islam. Including religion in the set of criteria defining the nation suggests the refusal of extremism and terrorism. In this case, such behavior will only be directed against the nation and their own “imagined community.” The question remains as to whether the discursive nationalization of Islam will help in opposing extremism, the slow but obvious growth of which is an obvious concern for the authorities.

Conclusion

The narrative of Islam in textbooks developed for high schools in an officially secular society, apparently cannot avoid being internally contradictory. Once having included the majority religion in a symbolic set of components of the national identity, the authorities are forced to show its commitment to Islam. However, it is a field in which the regime is urged to compete with the very effective alternative discourses and practices. Does the government possess enough resources for a successful competition?

The authoritarian political regime tries to block any alternative discourses, not allowing groups, communities, religious activists, or public intellectuals (Shia or Sunnites), whose loyalty is in doubt, to exist in the public sphere. This control is extended to high schools as well. The textbooks of the subjects “Humans and Society” and “Knowledge of the World” not only reflect the official nationalism politics of Islam but also serve as an instrument to form “proper” citizens (i.e., Muslims). If we remember that hundreds of Azerbaijanis went to Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria,⁷¹ and many thousands are part of different networks, belonging to various communities, in fact, uncontrollable to the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Caucasus, we can suggest that the school copes poorly with the functions of control.

However, it would make sense to say that in the religious field, the officially secular school has little chance of winning. The gray narrative of textbooks cannot become an efficient alternative to the ardent speeches of preachers. The authorities have no chance in outplaying the practicing Muslims in their own field. Neither should the secular authorities be occupied with this. It cannot offer an alternative to religion and faith. However, for atheists or agnostics, or for simply non-religious people, there is no place in the educational narrative or the official discourse.

The educational narrative is conservative. Textbook texts change slowly. However, in the context of events such as war, especially those characterized

as “victorious” and “patriotic,” there is an increased motivation to support and promptly publish new textbooks, which can include the most topical incidents. The events of the Second Karabakh War that took place in the autumn of 2020⁷² were already reflected in the texts for the 2022 academic year. Such improvements did not require a complete rewriting of all textbooks. An additional textbook was quickly created for schools—History of Victory (*Zəfər Tarixi*). But the topic of religion is practically not touched upon in it. The textbook contains only a very short account of the religious buildings destroyed as a result of the armed confrontation. Not only mosques, but also churches, which the Azerbaijani side considers ancient Albanian and perceives as the historical heritage of Azerbaijanis.⁷³

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which began in 1988, was initially and remains to this day a nationalist and territorial conflict, a struggle for the right to control certain territories that the main parties to the confrontation (Armenia and Azerbaijan) consider their “national” and “historical” lands. But the war has also emphasized the increased significance of religious connotations.

Two opposing sides, Christian Armenia and Muslim Azerbaijan actively used the factor of religious differences at the time of the armed confrontation. In Armenia, the myth of the country as a heroic outpost of Christianity on the border with a vast Muslim world has acquired additional relevance. Officially, Azerbaijani politicians denied any religious constituent of the conflict. Yet, in their appeals to the internal audience, also redirected to “brotherly” Turkey, which actively supported Azerbaijan in the war (and, more broadly, to the “Muslim world”), considerable attention was paid to Islam. The story of the “barbarity” of Armenians who turned mosques into pigsties or completely destroyed Muslim religious buildings became an essential component of the mobilization discourse.⁷⁴ The war and post-war commemoration of victory are accompanied by increased attention to the religious component of the discourse on national identity. Not only monuments and museums, but also restored or newly built mosques were to become symbols of victory. In the moment of euphoria caused by the victory in the war, the political regime is able to quickly convince of its ability to effectively solve all problems. However, when the first euphoria passes, the mosques are repaired and built, the government may find itself in a situation where it will need significantly more resources to control believers and religious institutions.

Notes

- 1 By the “‘de-privatization’ of religion in the modern world” José Casanova means “the fact that religious traditions throughout the world are refusing to accept the marginal and privatized role which theories of modernity as well as theories of secularization had reserved for them.” For more details see: José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 5–6.
- 2 On Soviet politics in relation to the religious institutions and faithful Muslims in the period of the World War I, see: Jörg Baberowski, *Der Feind ist Überall: Stalinismus im Kaukasus* (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2003), 599–608, 633–62.
- 3 Tadeuš Svetoxovskij, “Islam i Natsionalnoe Samosoznanie na Pogranichnykh Territoriyakh: Azerbajdzhan,” in *Religii i Politika na Kavkaze*, ed. Aleksandr Iskandaryan (Yerevan: Institut CMI, 2004), 26.

- 4 See, for example: “V Khachmaze Likvidirovany Vooruzhennye Radikalnye Islamisty,” *Sputnik*, 7 March 2018, <https://az.sputniknews.ru/incidents/20180307/414334933/hachmaz-islamisty-terror-likvidirovany.html>; “Sluzhba Gosbezopasnosti Unichtozhila Chetyrekh Terroristov,” *Turan*, 1 February 2017, <https://www.turan.az/ext/news/2017/2/free/Social/ru/59836.htm>.
- 5 Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, 40–74.
- 6 Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* (Glasgow: Manchester University Press, 1992), 138–39.
- 7 Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* (Glasgow: Manchester University Press, 1992), 138–39.
- 8 Tadeuř Svetoxovskij, “Islam i Nacional’noe Samosoznanie na Pogranichnykh Territoriakh: Azerbajdzhan,” 23–24.
- 9 On the expression “nationalising Natsionalnoe,” see Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge Core, 1996), 23–26.
- 10 Sergey Rumyantsev, “Uskolzayuchaia Sovremennost: Postsovetskaia Modernizatsiia Azerbajdzhana. Sotsiologicheskoe Esse,” *Historians*, 30 September 2015, <http://www.historians.in.ua/index.php/en/doslidzhennya/1641-sergej-rumyantsev-uskol-zayushchaya-sovremennost-postsovetskaya-modernizatsiya-azerbajdzhana-sotsiologicheskoe-esse>.
- 11 Ernest Gellner, *Muslim Society* (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 58.
- 12 Seyla Benhabib, *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002), 7.
- 13 Ernest Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and its Rivals* (London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd, 1994), 25.
- 14 Kenneth Wain, “Otsenka Uchebnikov po Istorii i Grazhdanovedeniui. Chi Kriterii v Samom Dele Znachimy,” in *Uchebnik: Desiat Raznykh Mnenii*, ed. Evaldas Bakonis (Vilnius: Esinija, 2000), 164.
- 15 Oksana Karpenko, “Obuchenie ‘Natsionalnym Razlichiiam: ‘Narod v Shkolnykh Uchebnikakh Obshchestvovedeniia,’” in *Rasizm v Ilazike Obrazovaniia*, eds. Viktor Voronkov, Oksana Karpenko, and Alexander Osipov (Spb.: Aleteia, 2008), 51.
- 16 Rafiga Azimova, *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 9 Klassa Russkikh Shkol* (Baku: “Maarif,” 1997), 31, 99–100.
- 17 Rafiga Azimova, *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 9 Klassa Russkikh Shkol* (Baku: “Maarif,” 1997), 15.
- 18 Rafiga Azimova, *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 9 Klassa Russkikh Shkol* (Baku: “Maarif,” 1997), 19.
- 19 Rafiga Azimova, *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 9 Klassa Russkikh Shkol* (Baku: “Maarif,” 1997), 21–22.
- 20 Rafiga Azimova, *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 9 Klassa Russkikh Shkol* (Baku: “Maarif,” 1997), 22.
- 21 Rafiga Azimova, *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 9 Klassa Russkikh Shkol* (Baku: “Maarif,” 1997), 49.
- 22 M. C. Alizade, ed., *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 11 Klassa Russkikh Shkol* (Baku: “Maarif,” 1998), 11–12.
- 23 Mary Boyce, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), 262.
- 24 Alizade, ed., *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 11 Klassa Russkikh Shkol*, 27–28.
- 25 Alizade, ed., *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 11 Klassa Russkikh Shkol*, 28.
- 26 Alizade, ed., *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 11 Klassa Russkikh Shkol*, 30.
- 27 Alizade, ed., *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 11 Klassa Russkikh Shkol*, 34.
- 28 Alizade, ed., *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 11 Klassa Russkikh Shkol*, 37.
- 29 Alizade, ed., *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 11 Klassa Russkikh Shkol*, 36–37.

- 30 Alizade, ed., *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 11 Klassa Russkikh Shkol*, 39.
- 31 Alizade, ed., *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 11 Klassa Russkikh Shkol*, 39.
- 32 Alizade, ed., *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 11 Klassa Russkikh Shkol*, 41.
- 33 Alizade, ed., *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 11 Klassa Russkikh Shkol*, 44.
- 34 See: Svante Cornell, *The Politization of Islam in Azerbaijan* (Washington: Silk Road Way Paper, 2006); Sofie Bedford, *Islamic Activism in Azerbaijan: Repression and Mobilization in a Post-Soviet Context* (Stockholm: Department of Political Science, Stockholm University, 2009).
- 35 “President Ilham Aliyev attended the opening of Heydar Mosque in Baku,” AZERTAC, 26 December 2014. <https://azertag.az/en/xeber/821215#>.
- 36 In 2018, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva became the first vice president of the country.
- 37 Azhdar Agaev, ed., *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 8 Klassa* (Baku, “Aspoligraf,” 2006), 50.
- 38 Azhdar Agaev, ed., *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 8 Klassa* (Baku, “Aspoligraf,” 2006), 50.
- 39 Azhdar Agaev, ed., *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 8 Klassa* (Baku, “Aspoligraf,” 2006), 95.
- 40 Azhdar Agaev, ed., *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 8 Klassa* (Baku, “Aspoligraf,” 2006), 100.
- 41 Azhdar Agaev, ed., *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 8 Klassa* (Baku, “Aspoligraf,” 2006), 101.
- 42 Azhdar Agaev, ed., *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 8 Klassa* (Baku, “Aspoligraf,” 2006), 101–2.
- 43 Azhdar Agaev, ed., *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 8 Klassa* (Baku, “Aspoligraf,” 2006), 102.
- 44 Azhdar Agaev, ed., *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 8 Klassa* (Baku, “Aspoligraf,” 2006), 102.
- 45 Azhdar Agaev, ed., *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 8 Klassa* (Baku, “Aspoligraf,” 2006), 102.
- 46 Azhdar Agaev, ed., *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 8 Klassa* (Baku, “Aspoligraf,” 2006), 103, 104.
- 47 Azhdar Agaev, ed., *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 8 Klassa* (Baku, “Aspoligraf,” 2006), 135–36.
- 48 The civilization discourse takes one of the most dominant positions in the narrative. The authors suggest the following explanation for the term: “The great cultures are called civilizations. For instance, the ancient civilization, Western civilization, Islamic civilization, Turkic civilization, and so on.” Azhdar Agaev, ed., *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 8 Klassa* (Baku, “Aspoligraf,” 2006), 92.
- 49 “7th Global Baku Forum Kicked Off,” *Official website of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan*, 14 March 2019. <https://en.president.az/articles/32373>.
- 50 Here is one of the rare passages: “On January 5, 2001, at the meeting with the Russian Orthodox community, the nationwide leader Heydar Aliyev said: ‘Azerbaijan reflects the rich spiritual heritage of high moralistic values of all monotheist religions of the world. Therefore, every Azerbaijani, independent from their religion and ethnicity, completely supports calls for dialogue. In our country, where there was always an atmosphere of friendship and cooperation, religious tolerance became a certain way of living for the people.’” Nushaba Mamedova, Kēnul’ Makhmudova, and Sevil’ Bakhranova, *Uchebnik po Predmetu Poznanie Mira dlia 9-go Klassa Obsheobrazovatelnykh Shkol* (Baku: Sharg-Garb, 2016), 98.
- 51 Such passages can be viewed as typical for the multiculturalism and tolerance discourse: “Azerbaijan, located at the joint area of different civilizations, through many centuries, became known as a place where the national-cultural diversity formed, where the representatives of the different nationalities and faiths live together in peaceful atmosphere and prosperity, as well as mutual understanding and dialogue. Multiculturalism and

- tolerance, historically inherent to the image of Azerbaijani living, became integral features of the everyday life of each citizen of Azerbaijani state, independent of nationality, language, and religion.” For more on this subject, see: *Azerbaijani Multiculturalism. General Information*. https://multiculturalism.preslib.az/en_a1.html.
- 52 “Azerbaijani Multiculturalism.” <https://multiculturalism.preslib.az/en.htm>.
- 53 Guiliar Mekhtieva and Bakhar Kerimova, *Uchebnik po Predmetu Poznanie Mira dlia 4-go Klassa Obshcheobrazovatelnykh Shkol* (Baku: Aspoliqraf, 2015), 45.
- 54 Aïbeniz Ibragimova and Sameddin Ibragimov, *Uchebnik po Predmetu Poznanie Mira dlia 1-go Klassa Obshcheobrazovatelnykh Shkol* (Baku: Sharg-Garb, 2018), 48.
- 55 Sometimes, in the sections dedicated to religion, practically, the only topic touched upon is Islam. As, for instance, the section in the textbook for the fourth grade: “How did the Islamic religion come about?,” “The spread of the Islamic religion” and “What is Prejudice?” (Mekhtieva and Kerimova, *Uchebnik po Predmetu Poznanie Mira dlia 4-go Klassa Obshcheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*, 42–47). More-or-less balanced is the textbook for the eighth grade, where the authors discuss “national-moral values.” In their discussion, the authors choose Zoroastrianism and the Avesta, the book of Moses, the Ten Commandments, and of course, the Hadith and the Quran. However, here too, they pay more attention to Islam than to Zoroastrianism and Judaism (Nushaba Mamedova and Sevil’ Bakhranova, *Uchebnik po Predmetu Poznanie Mira dlia 8-go Klassa Obshcheobrazovatelnykh Shkol* (Baku: Sharg-Garb, 2018), 58–61.
- 56 Mamedova, Makhmudova, and Bakhranova, *Uchebnik po Predmetu Poznanie Mira dlia 9-go Klassa Obshcheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*, 82.
- 57 Despite the fact that this section of the textbook is dedicated to the subject of tolerance, the authors use the word *zancil*, a pejorative term for people of color.
- 58 Despite the fact that this section of the textbook is dedicated to the subject of tolerance, the authors use the word *zancil*, a pejorative term for people of color, 83.
- 59 “President of Azerbaijan İlham Aliyev and his spouse Mehriban Aliyeva do everything possible to transform Azerbaijan into a global, cultural example of diversity and cultural tolerance.” Mamedova, Makhmudova, and Bakhranova, *Uchebnik po Predmetu Poznanie Mira dlia 9-go Klassa Obshcheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*, 97.
- 60 “President of Azerbaijan İlham Aliyev and his spouse Mehriban Aliyeva do everything possible to transform Azerbaijan into a global, cultural example of diversity and cultural tolerance.” Mamedova, Makhmudova, and Bakhranova, *Uchebnik po Predmetu Poznanie Mira dlia 9-go Klassa Obshcheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*, 85.
- 61 “President of Azerbaijan İlham Aliyev and his spouse Mehriban Aliyeva do everything possible to transform Azerbaijan into a global, cultural example of diversity and cultural tolerance.” Mamedova, Makhmudova, and Bakhranova, *Uchebnik po Predmetu Poznanie Mira dlia 9-go Klassa Obshcheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*, 87.
- 62 “President of Azerbaijan İlham Aliyev and his spouse Mehriban Aliyeva do everything possible to transform Azerbaijan into a global, cultural example of diversity and cultural tolerance.” Mamedova, Makhmudova, and Bakhranova, *Uchebnik po Predmetu Poznanie Mira dlia 9-go Klassa Obshcheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*, 88. Limited by the frameworks of the given subject, in my analysis I omit the continuous “dialogue” with neighboring Armenia. Not only “religious extremism,” but also the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is an incentive for designing the discourse about invariable tolerance of Azerbaijanis and their commitment to multiculturalism. In the context of this policy, Azerbaijan and Azerbaijanis are represented as completely opposite to Armenia and Armenians. “Every nation has a different attitude towards tolerance.” In Armenia, the textbook claims, “there are no tolerant values” while “the Azerbaijani people perceive tolerance as part of their national consciousness” (“President of Azerbaijan İlham Aliyev and his spouse Mehriban Aliyeva do everything possible to transform Azerbaijan into a global, cultural example of diversity and cultural tolerance.” Mamedova, Makhmudova, and Bakhranova, *Uchebnik po Predmetu Poznanie Mira dlia 9-go Klassa Obshcheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*, 89). In

- the context of the armed political conflict, Islam remains an important resource for the legitimization of the official position. “Overall, Azerbaijan was historically a tolerant country. Besides the territorial claims of Armenia to Azerbaijan, there were no conflicts in our country on religious and national grounds. People always lived in conditions of national and religious peace. It should be noted that in such tolerance of our people, the role of Islamic religion is great. This thought was also confirmed by the national leader Heydar Aliyev” (“President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and his spouse Mehriban Aliyeva do everything possible to transform Azerbaijan into a global, cultural example of diversity and cultural tolerance.” Mamedova, Makhmudova, and Bakhranova, *Uchebnik po Predmetu Poznanie Mira dlia 9-go Klassa Obshcheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*, 103).
- 63 “President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and his spouse Mehriban Aliyeva do everything possible to transform Azerbaijan into a global, cultural example of diversity and cultural tolerance.” Mamedova, Makhmudova, and Bakhranova, *Uchebnik po Predmetu Poznanie Mira dlia 9-go Klassa Obshcheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*, 110.
- 64 “President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and his spouse Mehriban Aliyeva do everything possible to transform Azerbaijan into a global, cultural example of diversity and cultural tolerance.” Mamedova, Makhmudova, and Bakhranova, *Uchebnik po Predmetu Poznanie Mira dlia 9-go Klassa Obshcheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*, 94–95.
- 65 Here the frames of the category of “people” once again narrow down to and only concern ethnic Azerbaijanis.
- 66 “President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and his spouse Mehriban Aliyeva do everything possible to transform Azerbaijan into a global, cultural example of diversity and cultural tolerance.” Mamedova, Makhmudova, and Bakhranova, *Uchebnik po Predmetu Poznanie Mira dlia 9-go Klassa Obshcheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*, 100–01.
- 67 “President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and his spouse Mehriban Aliyeva do everything possible to transform Azerbaijan into a global, cultural example of diversity and cultural tolerance.” Mamedova, Makhmudova, and Bakhranova, *Uchebnik po Predmetu Poznanie Mira dlia 9-go Klassa Obshcheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*, 108.
- 68 “President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and his spouse Mehriban Aliyeva do everything possible to transform Azerbaijan into a global, cultural example of diversity and cultural tolerance.” Mamedova, Makhmudova, and Bakhranova, *Uchebnik po Predmetu Poznanie Mira dlia 9-go Klassa Obshcheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*, 108.
- 69 “President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and his spouse Mehriban Aliyeva do everything possible to transform Azerbaijan into a global, cultural example of diversity and cultural tolerance.” Mamedova, Makhmudova, and Bakhranova, *Uchebnik po Predmetu Poznanie Mira dlia 9-go Klassa Obshcheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*, 102.
- 70 “President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and his spouse Mehriban Aliyeva do everything possible to transform Azerbaijan into a global, cultural example of diversity and cultural tolerance.” Mamedova, Makhmudova, and Bakhranova, *Uchebnik po Predmetu Poznanie Mira dlia 9-go Klassa Obshcheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*, 104–05.
- 71 Timur Rzaev, “Madat Guliev: “Okolo 900 grazhdan Azerbajdzana prisoodenilis k teroristam v Irake i Sirii””, *lnews.az*, March 3, 2017. <http://www.lnews.az/society/20170303114413735.html>.
- 72 On the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the war of 2020, see: Waal de, Thomas. *Black Garden: Azerbaijan and Armenia through Peace and War* (New York: New York University Press, 2003), Philip Gamaghelyan and Sergey Rumyantsev, *The Road to the Second Karabakh War: The Role of Ethnocentric Narratives in the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict* (Brill: Caucasus Survey, 2021).
- 73 Pərviz Ağalarov, Niyaməddin Quliyev, Hafiz Cabbarov, Talib Talıblı, Ramil Tanrıverdi, *Ümumi təhsil müəssisələrinin 9-cu sinifləri üçün Zəfər Tarixi kursu üzrə dərs vəsaiti*, Bakı: Azərbaycan Respublikası Elm və Təhsil Nazirliyi 2022.
- 74 “President Ilham Aliyev Addressed the Nation,” *AZERTAC*, October 4, 2020. <https://azertag.az/en/xeber/1603781>.

Bibliography

- 7th Global Baku Forum Kicked Off. *Official Website of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan*, March 14, 2019. <https://en.president.az/articles/32373>.
- Agaev, Azhdar. ed. *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 8 Klassa*. Baku: Aspoligraf, 2006.
- Ağalarov, Pərviz, Quliyev, Niyaməddin, Cabbarov, Hafiz, Talıblı, Talib, and Tanrıverdi, Ramil. *Ümumi təhsil müəssisələrinin 9-cu sinifləri üçün Zəfər Tarixi kursu üzrə dərş vəsaiti*. Baku: Azərbaycan Respublikası Elm və Təhsil Nazirliyi, 2022.
- Alizade, M. ed. *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 10 Klassa Russkikh Shkol*. Baku: Maarif, 1997.
- Alizade, M. ed. *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 11 Klassa Russkikh Shkol*. Baku: Maarif, 1998.
- Azerbaijani Multiculturalism. <https://multiculturalism.preslib.az/en.htm>.
- Azerbaijani Multiculturalism. General Information. https://multiculturalism.preslib.az/en_a1.html.
- Azimova, Rafıga. ed. *Chelovek i Obshchestvo. Uchebnik dlia 9 Klassa Russkikh Shkol*. Baku: Maarif, 1997.
- Baberowski, Jörg. *Der Feind ist Überall: Stalinismus im Kaukasus*. Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2003.
- Bedford, Sofie. *Islamic Activism in Azerbaijan: Repression and Mobilization in a Post-Soviet Context*. Stockholm: Department of Political Science, Stockholm University, 2009.
- Benhabib, Seyla. *The Claims of Culture. Equality and Diversity in the Global Era*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002.
- Bloch, Marc. *The Historian's Craft*. Glasgow: Manchester University Press, 1992.
- Boyce, Mary. *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979.
- Brubaker, Rogers. *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge Core, 1996.
- Casanova, José. *Public Religions in the Modern World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.
- Cornell, Svante. *The Politicization of Islam in Azerbaijan*. Washington: Silk Road Way Paper, 2006.
- Gamaghelyan, Philip and Sergey Romyantsev. *The Road to the Second Karabakh War: The Role of Ethnocentric Narratives in the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict*. Brill: Caucasus Survey, 2021.
- Gellner, Ernest. *Muslim Society*. London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- Gellner, Ernest. *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals*. London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd, 1994.
- Ibragimova, Aïbeniz, and Ibragimov, Sameddin. *Uchebnik po Predmetu Poznanie Mira dlia 1-go Klassa Obshcheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*. Baku: Sharg-Garb, 2018.
- Karpenko, Oksana. *Obuchenie Nazionalnym Razlichiam: : “Narod” v Shkolnykh Uchebnikakh Obshchestvovedeniia*, in Rasizm v Iazuke Obrazovaniia, eds. Viktor Voronkov, Oksana Karpenko, and Alexander Osipov. Spb.: Aleteïia, 2008.
- Mamedova, Nushaba and Bakhranova, Sevil. *Uchebnik po Predmetu Poznanie Mira dlia 8-go Klassa Obshcheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*. Baku: Sharg-Garb, 2018.
- Mamedova, Nushaba, Makhmudova, Konul, and Bakhranova, Sevil. *Uchebnik po Predmetu Poznanie Mira dlia 9-go Klassa Obshcheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*. Baku: Sharg-Garb, 2016.
- Mekhtieva, Gular and Kerimova, Bakhar, *Uchebnik po Predmetu Poznanie Mira dlia 4-go Klassa Obshcheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*. Baku: Aspoligraf, 2015.
- “President İlham Aliyev attended the opening of Heydar Mosque in Baku.” AZERTAC, 26 December 2014. <https://azertac.az/en/xeber/821215#>.

- “President Ilham Aliyev Addressed the Nation.” *AZERTAC*, 4 October 2020. <https://azertag.az/en/xeber/1603781>.
- Rumyantsev, Sergey. “Geroicheskiy Epos i Konstruirovaniye Obraza Istoricheskogo Vraga.” *Ab Imperio* 2 (2005).
- Rumyantsev, Sergey. “Uskolzayushchaya Sovremennost: PostSovetskaya Modernizatsiya Azerbaidzhana. Sotsiologicheskoe Esse.” *Historians*, September 30, 2015. <http://www.historians.in.ua/index.php/en/doslidzhennya/1641-sergej-rumyantsev-uskolzayushchaya-sovremennost-postsovetskaya-modernizatsiya-azerbajdzhana-sotsiologicheskoe-esse>.
- Sluzhba Gosbezopasnosti Unichtozhila Chetyrekh Terroristov. Turan*, February 1, 2017. <https://www.turan.az/ext/news/2017/2/free/Social/ru/59836.htm>.
- Svetoxovskij, Tadeuš. *Islam i Nacionalnoe Samosoznanie na Pogranichnyx Territorijah: Azerbajdzan*, in *Religii i Politika na Kavkaze*, ed. Aleksandr Iskandaryan. Erevan: Institut CMI, 2004.
- V Khachmaze Likvidirovany Vooruzhennye Radikalnye Islamisty. Sputnik*, 7 March 2018. <https://az.sputniknews.ru/incidents/20180307/414334933/hachmaz-islamisty-terrorlikvidirovany.html/>
- Waal de, Thomas. *Black Garden: Azerbaijan and Armenia through Peace and War*. New York: New York University Press, 2003.
- Wain, Kenneth. *Otsenka Uchebnikov po Istorii i Grazhdanovedenii. Chi Kriterii v Samom Dele Znachimy*. In *Uchebnik: Desiat at Raznykh Mnenij*, edited by Evaldas Bakonis. Vilnius: Esinija, 2000.

6 “Azerbaijani Genocide”

Memory Politics and National History in Schools

Jafar Akhundov

Introduction

The fall of the USSR, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict¹ and Azerbaijan’s independence were followed by heated discussions about the preservation of national ideology.² In a feverish haste, new national narratives and historical myths³ were constructed. During this reorganization process, one of the central components of national and historical discourse became the “memory wars,”⁴ fanned with great fervor by intellectuals from both Azerbaijan and Armenia. Within this context, already at the beginning of the 1990s, more and more persistent attempts were made to represent Azerbaijani society⁵ as a victim.

The decree of March 26, 1998, concerning the “Azerbaijani Genocide,”⁶ signed by the President of the Republic, Heydar Aliyev (1993–2003), played a key role in this respect. From this moment on, the historical myth about the nation that survived a “genocide” adopted an official status and became an important component of state ideology. The presidential decree served as an additional reference point and significant stimulus for subsequent historical research and promoted their ideologization and mythologization. In late March and early April 1918, in Baku thousands of civilians, mainly Muslims, were killed during clashes between Bolsheviks and Armenian Dashnaksutyun groups, on one side, and the nationalist forces of the “Musavat” party on the other (which took on the role of spokesperson for the interests of Muslim and Turkic communities). These tragic events became an essential part of the victim discourse. In historical literature, these events are referred to as the March Clashes or March Slaughter, whereas in Azerbaijan they are regarded as the March Genocide.⁷

The traumatic consequences of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict pushed political analysts and researchers toward discovering the reasons for the defeat in the particular cruelty and unscrupulousness of the “eternal enemy” (the collective image of Armenians), demonstrated throughout the entire history of relations between the two imagined communities. All the existing power resources were concentrated on realizing the new historical politics,⁸ as well as constructing the image of the “historical enemy” and its mass popularization. Moreover, such policy was met with the broadest understanding and readiness to cooperate on the part of many professional historians, journalists, and, in a general sense, public intellectuals. Subsequently,

DOI: [10.4324/9781003505822-8](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003505822-8)

This chapter has been made available under a CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0 license.

high schools became one of the key institutional conductors of this policy. Conflicting discourses and myths, from “nation as a victim,” “historical enemies,” and “centuries-old opposition” to “peaceful Armenians” penetrated into all sectors of society⁹ and played important roles in educational programs, especially in programs of national history—the subject of “Human and Society” and “Understanding of the World”¹⁰—developed for high schools in the post-Soviet years.

For all the versatility of the problem, the broad field of research poses the following question: why does the propaganda of “the image of an enemy,” spread so simply and frankly, find such a wide reception among diverse sectors of society, including the older generation, who, it seems, were raised with completely different ideals? To quote the Italian historian, Carlo Ginzburg, it is never enough to expose the “lie” or the fake. It is important to show why such “lies” (or, in this case, historical myths), work so effectively.¹¹

History of Azerbaijan in High Schools

The analysis presented in this chapter will focus on the narrative of the “History of Azerbaijan,” a subject taught from fifth grade. During the first year, students are acquainted with all the important events since the ancient period to the present day. In sixth grade, there are two subjects: “History of Azerbaijan” and “General History” each consisting of one-hour lessons per week (34 hours per year). Starting from eighth grade, the number of hours for teaching History of Azerbaijan increases to two hours per week (68 hours per year; going up to three hours per week from 2021, i.e., 102 hours per year). In addition, the history of the Karabakh region is also taught in the form of elective classes. For teaching, there is only one line of textbooks, approved by the Ministry of Education, selected following a process of tender. In 2018, comprehensive schools completely conceded to the National Curriculum system. Accordingly, new editions of textbooks for the 11th grade were published. The subject that interests us the most is best shown in textbooks for the fifth, ninth, and eleventh grades. From the 68 hours provided for the History of Azerbaijan course in fifth grade, 10 hours are allocated to the themes of genocide and the definition of the image of an enemy. Consequently, in ninth grade there are 68 and 14 hours, whereas in the 11th grade—68 and 10 hours per week, respectively. The subject of “History of Azerbaijan” is not included in the final exams; however, it appears compulsory in admission to higher educational institutions in the II and III groups of specialties (economics and the humanities).

The “April War” and the Rise of Militaristic Sentiments

The so-called Four-Day “April War” in Karabakh, which died down in 2016,¹² exposed the problem of the drastic polarization of Azerbaijani society and demonstrated the massive disproportion in the distribution of forces that joined the opposing camps. Only an insignificant segment of society condemned the inflamed military operations, which led to numerous victims, describing them as an “adventure” on both sides. A consolidated and populous community was located on the other side of

the barricades, acting from unified national-patriotic positions. The breaking news about the shift of the personnel, who until the “April War” spoke peacefully and presented themselves as liberals, peacekeepers, and human rights activists to the national-patriotic camps was to some extent unexpected. They called upon their audience to forget all disagreements and to rally around national interests understood as “wars until the victorious end.” The situation became a clear indication of the revanchist and military sentiments dominating Azerbaijani society.¹³

By April 2016, one could claim that state ideological propaganda had borne fruit, despite how roughly, directly and tastelessly it was carried out. Not a single spokesperson risked appearing outside of patriotic circles, including the former peacekeepers (and there were very few of them before the “April War”), not to mention the absolute majority of the republic’s population unfamiliar with the peacekeeping initiatives to begin with. Already at the time of international competitions held in Baku—the Eurovision Song Contest 2012 and the First European Olympic Games (2015)—critics of the regime were accused of participation in the “fifth column,”¹⁴ as well as racist attacks on the presence of “alien elements” with “wrong impurities” in their blood. They were accused of congenital hostility toward the ruling regime, unceasing despite the “obvious successes.” It is not surprising that similar accusations gained wider popularity as the conflict escalated.

The questions I will try to answer in this chapter are as follows: why, to refer to Carlo Ginzburg, does an “obvious lie” attract such popularity in society? Why did the euphoria regarding a “small victorious war” so quickly overwhelm the Azerbaijani community? Why is the image of an enemy so popular and influential? Why do the numerous experts, journalists, and human rights activists neglect even the thought that an escalation such as that during the “April War,” is a long-proven and reliable way of avoiding any discussion about the socio-economic problems that have exacerbated since the economic and financial crisis of 2014? Why, while the discourse of “the homeland is in danger” dominates in the public space, do we hear the demands about the need to bring more new victims (Shahids) to the altar in the name of a common future victory, when even the peacekeepers rapidly join patriotic clubs and refuse to criticize actions of the regime in any way?

“The Homeland Is Indivisible, Shahids Are Immortal!”

In order to try to answer these questions, it is necessary, first, to address the foundations of the problems and turning points that led up to and defined the current context. Similar to other post-Soviet countries, the elites who came into political power set the tone and defined the tasks of historical politics. On the one hand, the task was to seek resources for the legitimacy of the regime and its right to stay in power. On the other, the opponents and allies’ choices also had to be substantiated in the frameworks of the new historical narrative. The authorities attempted to establish historical policy within the cultural and educational fields. One of the features of the nationalization stage was achieving the required results in the shortest time.

The key components of the national discourse were the ideas of returning to the roots as well as the restoration of the trampled “historical justice” densely seasoned

with religious themes. Representation of the Soviet past included narratives of continuous oppression, destruction of the colors of the nation, and so forth. The following two fragments from the textbook of History of Azerbaijan for the ninth grade, clearly illustrate this approach:

The education system, introduced by the Russian authorities in Northern Azerbaijan, was aimed at the Russification of our nation and educating it in the spirit of devotion to the imperial regime. At the same time, the representatives of the Tsarist government never intended to provide quality education to Azerbaijani youth, not even in the Russian language. The Tsarist government, in official documents, referred to the Azerbaijani Turks as “Muslims” or “Tatars”. Thus, the ruling circles were trying to make us forget our historical name. In every possible way, they interfered with the people’s awareness of their ethnic origins. The result of such politics was that Azerbaijanis, to the question about their national identity, most frequently responded with “I am a Muslim”.¹⁵

At the beginning of the 20th century, all segments of the population were dissatisfied with the national oppression and discriminative politics of the Tsarist government: Intelligentsia, the national bourgeoisie, as well as workers and peasants. Christian nations of the South Caucasus had the opportunity to open churches and schools, to publish magazines and newspapers. But the Azerbaijanis were deprived of the right to run schools in their native language and/or publish newspapers. In response to the demand of Azerbaijani Intelligentsia for permission to publish newspapers in Azerbaijani language, Saint Petersburg answered as follows: “It would be better if the intelligentsia read the newspapers in Russian and let the others graze the sheep”.¹⁶

Paradoxically (contradiction can be considered as one of the main features of the educational narrative), the same period is represented as the moment of the blossoming of national cultural progress and economic development.

In the later Soviet period, a significant exception was made in favor of Heydar Aliyev, the former KGB general, who governed the republic in the years 1969–1982 as the head of the Communist Party. Since then, it is widely regarded that not only did he achieve huge success in the cultural and economic fields, but also purposefully created the conditions for obtaining independence in the near future, simultaneously fighting for the territorial integrity of the nation.

The government of the Armenian SSR, at the instigation of the Armenian Gregorian Church in the 1970s, once again addressed the USSR government regarding the joining of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia. Having learned about this, Heydar Aliyev took decisive actions to prevent Armenian political aggression. He instructed the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Azerbaijan SSR to prepare a scientific certificate saying that the Karabakh region has been, since ancient times, an Azerbaijan territory. Heydar Aliyev referred to KP Central Committee to discuss this issue and came to

the decision about the groundlessness of claims of Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic government. This decision was submitted to the leader of USSR, L. Brezhnev, and thus succeeded in preventing the Armenian intrigues.¹⁷

All the successes and achievements described within the educational narratives are interpreted as completed contrary to Moscow’s policy, and even as a direct confrontation with it, in parallel opposition from the neighboring Armenian SSR. Thus, the ideological order determined the methods of nationalization of the past, adopted after the fall of the USSR—its total mythologization. The method allowed, to some extent, to distract the population from the growing socio-economic problems, explaining them as the actions of Russia/USSR and Armenia. In the context of the total collapse of the economy, this path may have been predetermined by the prevailing socio-political conditions.

The more they were guided by the primordial concept of the origin (ethnogenesis) of the Azerbaijani nation, the faster new mythological constructs were being created, many of which had already existed in Soviet national policies. At the same time, the official *Soviet national politics*¹⁸ were exposed to comprehensive criticism and seen as proof of the initial hostility of certain forces toward Azerbaijani people. The criticism of such nature allowed the Azerbaijani politicians to find simple explanations for numerous failures in the initial stage of independence. At the same time, due to the modern interpretation of the past, the consumer of official myths was brought to ideas concerning a predetermined future, in which a significant place was allocated to the essentialist division of the world into friends and enemies.

During the Soviet years, ethnonationalist rhetoric was under strict state control and existed in a contradictory way with Soviet Internationalism. Already during Perestroika, however, ethnonationalist rhetoric in Azerbaijan was becoming dominant, and in the context of conflict, was supplemented with a radical reconstruction of the historical narrative. From the very start of the Karabakh conflict each of the rival parties began to appeal to the past, accusing the Soviet leadership of bias and complicity to the opposing party. Any kind of compromise in conditions of such historical policy was not possible, with concessions regarded as a defeat and betrayal of the national interests and age-old aspirations of the Azerbaijani people.

The unsteady status quo¹⁹ in Karabakh as a result of the war predetermined the future situation of deadlock. In the case of a conflict, where there is absolutely no possibility of constructive dialogue, an interim agreement on the cessation of military operations could not become a starting point from which the movement toward peace could begin. The losing side, unwilling to admit the defeat and explaining it by means of conspiracy theory, reinterprets the current situation within revanchist categories. The entire ideology is directed toward feeding the faith in the inevitable victory in the future, the achievement of which requires consolidation of the imagined community in the present, with the aim to solve the most important task—the preparation of conditions for revenge. The conflict was initially a significant resource for seizing and maintaining power in Azerbaijan. The discourse of compulsory solidarity in the face of the “cruel and hypocritical enemy” allowed for

any kind of criticism of the ruling regime to be treated as a wish of defeat for one's own nation, as well as a call to renounce former greatness.

It was no accident that the popular motto reproduced by many citizens of the republic, from pensioners to elementary school students, sounded like: "Shahids are immortal, the homeland is indivisible!" ("Şəhidlər ölməz, Vətən bölünməz").²⁰ This slogan, reflecting the popularity of the heroic narrative, holds, at the same time, a representation of the Azerbaijanis as a nation-victim. The Muslim term "Shahid" in the modern context also acquires national connotations. This is a hero who accepted a martyr's death in the war for independence and territorial integrity. The motto was created, first of all, to mobilize the population of the country. At the same time, the authorities were trying to represent it in the broadest way possible outside the republic, competing with the opponents for the status of a victim and opposing the Armenian genocide with "our very own" genocide. The logic of such ideological opposition is impregnated with primordial and essentialist ideas (the nations being either victims or criminals).

Discourse of a Nation-Victim and the Image of an Enemy

The myth of the nation-victim leans toward numerous narratives created in the post-Soviet years of countless attacks by allegedly ever-insidious neighbors—Armenians—on permanently tolerant and peaceful Azerbaijanis. Another significant part of this is the important role that had fallen onto Azerbaijanis, who never allowed the geopolitical map to change in favor of the "Christian World." This motif penetrates the narratives of the glorious heroic history of noble and powerful ancestors. The failures in opposing the aggressors are consequences of a large number of enemies and a lack of national unity. It is in this context that the past offers explanations for the present as well as the prognoses for the future.

"We" were always oppressed but "we" never stopped fighting. And if there were powerful states on Azerbaijani territory in the past, then triumph would surely replace the current difficult period. All the events capable of breaking this logic are either distorted or ignored and excluded from the historical narrative. The sensational nature of the new "openings" of historians is eclipsed by their emotional background to the obvious insufficiency of these arguments. Statistical discourse also comes to the rescue—the manipulation of the scale of losses suffered, growing from year-to-year. If "our genocide" began with tens of thousands, now people talk about hundreds of thousands of victims and centuries of prosecutions and violence.²¹ The modern national ideology is mostly built on the image of an enemy and is created not only by the authorities but also by the political opposition. This is the only, though rather symbolic, overlap of interests, and a demonstration of the nationwide solidarity that the political regime seeks to build. It is the type of solidarity (the unification against a common enemy), that was possible to observe in the days during the April 2016 escalation. Such nationalism contains simple and easy answers to inconvenient questions, directly indicating that the only entity responsible for all the troubles is an external, "eternal enemy."

The image of an enemy is intersectional. The problem of a severe defeat to enemies, though insidious but much weaker (Armenians) is explained through the involvement of Russia and Russians. Only thanks to Russia was it possible for a “cowardly enemy,” who throughout the centuries was given a worthy repulse, to temporarily succeed. This explanatory model is represented not only in the case of the modern Nagorno-Karabakh conflict but also, in regard to the tragic events of March 1918. It is possible to establish a direct cause-effect relationship and association between the two events that happened at different times and in very different sociopolitical and cultural contexts.

Formation of a New Identity

Nationalist discourse imposes a corresponding political dominance of historical and cultural memory. In the process of constructing the new identity, the approaches which Ernest Renan already pointed out in the 21st century²² inevitably became prominent. Among these, the most significant appear to be the moments of grief in history (with more affective influence than triumphs), representing oneself as a victim, and, at the same time, the need to obfuscate the difficult and burdensome periods of the past that do not provide reasons for pride. As a result, it is possible to observe some version of a tacit agreement among historians regarding the inexpediency of conducting new historical research in a conflict situation, the results of which call into question the constructed myths and narratives.

The image of a victim is inseparably connected to the image of an aggressor—a permanent enemy. For the last 300 years of narration, these are Russian and Armenian invaders. According to the authors of this narrative, their main motivation is the destruction of the Azerbaijani population and occupation of the ancient Azerbaijani lands. The scale of the centuries-old hostility and the number of the victims among Azerbaijanis, as specified earlier, were constantly growing until they reached the level of genocide.

Azerbaijani historians—and the authors of school textbooks—focus their attention on the fact that there needs to be a conversation about several acts of the genocide. As their main task, they consider representing March 1918 events as the turning point with regard to the Azerbaijani-Armenian relationship. These events are presented as proof of unreasonable bloodthirstiness and invariable hostility of all Armenians in relation to all Turkic peoples. All the resources available to historians were involved in popularizing this understanding of the 1918 events. One example is the publication of selected fragments of interrogations in the case of March events, held by the Emergency Investigation Commission of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR, 1918–1920 years).²³ The details of the atrocities committed by the “Bolshevik-Dashnaksutyun formations” are listed in the texts of interrogated witnesses. These details are followed by the wide publications of photographs, depicting killed Muslims (this visual material is granted a significant place in educational programs for those studying in high schools), as well as publications of numerous articles, books, documentaries, and conducting a TV show,

where the “experts” only gather with the purpose of once again retelling the long-known truth to each other, and sharing their own, new “openings.”

It can be assumed that one of the reasons for signing the official decree on the genocide of March 1918 was the relative instability of the political regime created by Heydar Aliyev. In October 1998, another (the fourth for Azerbaijan) presidential election was held, and yet it was still far from the stream of oil-money. It was still too early for the regime to boast about total control over the republic. By this moment, the opposition parties had not yet managed to lose their credibility and confidence. Heydar Aliyev took a number of steps to improve his own image in the country and abroad as a Democrat and a supporter of liberal values. This included the cancellation of censorship in the press, the abolition of the death penalty, the creation of the Constitutional Court, as well as the adoption of laws to ensure the rights and freedoms of citizens: freedom of religion, assembly and movement.

In this regard, the decree “On the Azerbaijani Genocide” could be understood as an attempt to mobilize and unite around the figure of the current president of a nationalistically oriented part of the electorate. This decree was intended to increase the popularity of Heydar Aliyev, who, on his part, acted as a patriot fighting to restore the “historical truth,” reconstructing a heroic image in all completeness, but at the same time full of deprivations and sufferings in the history of Azerbaijani people. With this declaration, he monopolized the role of a politician, capable of conveying the “truth” of the suffering of Azerbaijanis to international communities. The decree became a significant milestone in creating the new ideology of Azerbaijan nationalism—Azerbaijanism” or “Azerbaijanity” (Azer. *Azərbaycançılıq*), the author of which, is officially considered to be the same Heydar Aliyev.

It is important to ask why the events of March 1918 were highlighted over the bloody clashes of 1905–1906,²⁴ at times designated as the “first Armenian-Azerbaijani War”? It is evident that in educational narratives there is no specific number concerning the number of victims of the 1905–1906 clashes. The abstract “thousands and thousands” or “many thousands” are, however, often mentioned. Perhaps the reason lies in the fact that in the Revolution years of 1905–1907, there were no attempts made to create an independent state, while the clashes of 1918 can be represented as an attempt to hinder the formation of an independent Azerbaijani state. Within the framework of the given narrative, a direct connection and direct parallels are being created and drawn with the modern situation. Then, as now, the Armenians played a negative role and prevented the formation of the Azerbaijani statehood. For the Baku tragedy²⁵ of 1918, the exact number of minimum losses was set at 12,000 people. The number of losses among Armenians and Russians was never provided, despite the battles lasting for three days. This approach concentrates on a unilateral destruction of the defenseless and peaceful Muslim population and confirms the narrative of the genocide.

The sources by which minimum losses are determined, refers to the authorities of the Azerbaijan Nationalistic Party “Musavat” as well as the conclusive report of the “Emergency Investigation Commission,” created in summer 1918 to thoroughly examine the March events. During the post-Soviet period, the number of victims in

Baku, Baku province, and across all of Azerbaijan was constantly growing. In the textbook on History of Azerbaijan for the 11th grade, the total loss of the Muslim population in all regions reaches 50,000 people. Contrastingly, in an interview to the website of the ruling party “Yeni Azerbaijan” (“New Azerbaijan,” YAP), the vice-president of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (ANAS), Jabi Bairamov declared the new count at 700,000 people,²⁶ without bothering to explain the methods by which this colossal figure was determined.²⁷

The March events are also effective in representing the jointly hostile behaviors of Russians and Armenians (collective image of an enemy). One more argument in favor of choosing this very date could sound rather banal, its favorable position in the calendar. The anniversary of the March events could be celebrated in Azerbaijan and the rest of the world slightly earlier than the April commemorations of the Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire. The events conducted outside of Azerbaijan with the help of the diaspora’s focus on Azerbaijanis being victims of the everlasting aggressions of Armenians. The success of such propaganda can automatically call the Armenian Genocide into question, persistently denied in Azerbaijan.²⁸

Michael Smith analyses this myth through the prism of a “vicious cycle of defining enemies and creating victims” by Omer Bartov,²⁹ which transforms into an elementary law of international competition. In order to hold a position on the international field, it is necessary to prove to the whole world, that “our” nation has deserved it due to the sacrifices it was brought to. Genocide and ethnic cleansings turn into symbolic capital, which helps to oppose the image of the “long-suffering” Armenia.³⁰ It can also be said that “our genocide” is represented as one of a far larger scale. Over time, this concept was modernized by the efforts of historians, politicians, and publicists. Since then, the conversation does not focus only on the destruction of Azerbaijani Turkic people. The Tatars, Lezgins, and Jewish populations are also listed among the victims of Bolshevik-Dashnaktsyun groups.

In this context, the fragments of testimony often quoted within the Azerbaijani mass media, given by a Baku Jew Anatoly Naumovic Kvasnik to the Emergency Investigation Commission, are very revealing. It is easy to detect all the components of the official genocide discourse in these testimonies. One of the typical examples of interpreting such documents is the article by an employee of the Institute of History of ANAS, the historian Ilgar Niftaliyev,³¹ who conducted the procedure of selecting the most emotional fragments, capable of causing the most aversion. The author, a widely-known specialist on the subject of the Azerbaijani genocide, never mentions the words of Kvasnik, that prior to March events the two nations were in peace with one another as they had nothing to divide. He does not try to understand why Kvasnik’s testimony came across as memorized, and never indicates that the testifier refused to sign his own statements, as he supposedly feared for his life.

However, this testimony is dated to January 1919, when Baku had already been under the control of Ottoman troops and ADR authorities for several months. It only lists the moments confirmed by the official genocide discourse. It notes that Kvasnik’s testimony was entitled: “A bloody plot organized by the Armenian population against Muslims with the purpose of their physical destruction, first in

the city of Baku, and then in the outskirts, in order to capture all of their properties and naturally transit all the welfare and political prevalence into the hands of Armenians.”³²

School Ritual

One of the components of historical politics is the official ritual, developed with the purpose of commemorating the victims of March 1918. Among the obligatory events at the state level are conferences, presentations of new historical research and documentaries, “Soviet-style” collective meetings of “Soviet examples,” by means of which achievements in the research of acts of genocide are brought to public attention. In such gatherings, the role of Heydar Aliyev as a restorer of historical justice is emphasized. Similar events are duplicated abroad with the involvement of activists from the diaspora.

The school ritual conducted during mourning events directly connects to the common concept of a military-patriotic upbringing. In accordance with the concept, the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, conducts various events in middle, specialized secondary, and higher educational institutions, aimed at strengthening both patriotism in a militaristic sense and a “national-spiritual consciousness,” whatever this is supposed to mean.

The theme of genocide appears in school ritual not only in March but also in relation to the nationwide mourning of the tragedy of January 20, as well as the tragic events of February 26, 1992, the “Khojaly Massacre.” Students, as a rule, dress in military uniforms complimented with dummy submachine guns. There are varying theatrical performances, the leitmotif of which is the readiness to sacrifice lives in the moment of need for freedom and independence, just as the Shahids once did. Public declamation of patriotic poetry is an obligatory part of the ritual in which students of all ages take part. These events are complimented by exhibitions of children’s drawings, which often depict tanks, firearms, soldiers, crying mothers, and also, funeral carnations.

“Our Genocide” and New Places of Memory

New places of memory also play a significant role in the commemoration of tragic events. The main place for the remembrance of March 1918 victims is located in the Shahid Alley (Martyr’s Lane), the former Nagorno cultural and recreational park of S.M. Kirov. During the month of March, tens of thousands of residents of the capital, including specially organized school collectives, visit the lane. There are several places of remembrance in Martyr’s Lane itself that have acquired significant relevance in modern-day Azerbaijan. In the official historical narrative, an important emphasis is made on the fact that the victims of March 1918 were buried on this territory. The Chemberekend cemetery lay on the site of the future park area. The victims of the January 1990 tragedy are buried in Martyr’s Lane (which started the nationwide memorial), as well as the Shahids of the Karabakh War (1991–1994).

The religious term “*Shahid*” intends to underline the fact that all these sacrifices were made on the altar of independence and freedom. Its usage allows for a construction of a unified narrative about victims and heroes. In this context, the generalized images of enemies—Russians and Armenians—represent a component of an alien and hostile Christian world. The term *Shahid* does not extend to those killed during the War of 1941–1945; however, the ritual of celebrating May 9 is also attached to Martyr’s Lane, as well as to the nearby monument of the Soviet hero, the major-general Hazi Aslanov. Another place of remembrance has appeared in recent years, the Quba Genocide Memorial Complex, in the city of Quba, Northern Azerbaijan, which has rapidly become an object of pilgrimage. According to the official version, a mass grave was discovered on the territory of the future complex during land works in 2007. In a statement from the General Prosecutor’s Office of Azerbaijan it is noted that right after discovering the site with a numerous randomly placed human remains in 2010 (skulls, femoral and pelvic bones, ribs, limbs as well as other parts, belonging to persons of both sexes and various ages), the staff of the Prosecutor’s Office, as well as of those of Ministry of National Security, Archaeology and Ethnography Institute of the ANAS, alongside the workers of the forensic medical examination and pathological anatomy, were sent to Quba.

Despite the fact that in the beginning, the president of ANAS, Mahmud Kerimov, urged the public not to jump to conclusions, suggesting that the mass deaths could have been caused by an epidemic,³³ the discovery was immediately placed into the ideological context of memory politics. The reports of foreign experts never saw the light of day either, but over time, allusions were made in the mass media that the experts had determined both the race and ethnicity of the remains. The dead were identified as local Muslims (Azerbaijanis), as well as Lezgins and Jews. According to the demands of the general prosecutor, an additional operational survey of a number of Quba residents was carried out. As a result, according to the official version of events, recalling stories from parents and elderly relatives, locals claimed that the buried were the victims of a mass slaughter conducted by the retaliatory group consisting of Armenians during an attack on Quba in May 1918. Consequently, a new place of memory for the genocide appeared on the Azerbaijan map.³⁴

At the end of 2009, the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev issued an order about creating a memorial complex on the place of the burial, which opened in September 2013.³⁵ Quba Memorial Complex was designed to show the atrocities of Armenians. The visitors are able to appreciate the scale of the crimes committed. This place of memory is determined to construct the overall feeling of grief and solidarity in the face of the ruthless enemy. Any other emotions or especially doubts transfer the visitor into the category of a traitor. Therefore, in the present day, the Quba events are as significant in representing the 1918 genocide as the deaths of the peaceful residents of Baku. They hold an important position in the discourse of sacrifice suffered by Azerbaijanis and are already included in the school programs of Azerbaijani history for the fifth grades.³⁶ When recounting the events of Quba, the textbook authors illustrate the visit to the memorial complex from the point of view of an old woman, accompanied by her granddaughter, who identifies the medallion of her lost sister among the remains.

Based on the reactions of some students, one can claim that such promotional texts can be used quite effectively to popularize the image of an enemy. The students admitted that reading these lines, they could not hold back the tears. The first emotions that gripped them were not anger, nor a sense of revenge, but regret, pain, and compassion. The school ritual also seeks to inspire such feelings. The students, reading the same texts and taking part in the very same rituals, gain the experience of collective suffering of the nationwide tragedy. It is possible to suggest that kids will be creating their own narratives as well, enriched with their own fantasies and imagination. They will tell each other about those events and in the process of communication will generate a steady cultural and social memory of “our genocide.” The entire educational system is aimed at the fact that each school student is likely to think that the hostile politics of Armenians lasted centuries, are happening in the present, and will continue in the future. This way, the official discourse is reflected in textbooks, mirroring the speeches of President Ilham Aliyev in which he discusses the 200-year-old genocide.³⁷

I will refer to some of the quotes from textbooks that illustrate this line of continuous opposition. The History of Azerbaijan textbook for the fifth grade under the subject “Division of Azerbaijan” contains the following passage: “On 21 March 1828—on the day of Nowruz Bayram,³⁸ by the decree of the Tsar, the fictional ‘Armenian Oblast’ was created on Nakhchivan and Yerevan territories. Thus, the Armenian treachery against our nation was rewarded.”³⁹ The treachery consisted of supporting the troops of the Russian Empire. In the same textbook, in the section devoted to the March genocide, we find the words inserted into the mouths of ordinary citizens: “The traitor Armenians, always ready to stab you in the back, once again revived and became more active.”⁴⁰ Here, the fifth graders are acquainted with how “enraged” Armenians “burnt men, women and the elderly alive. Children were stabbed with bayonets. Bewitched Armenian executioners, having collected the sacred books of Muslims—the Quran, kindled fires from them, and then, having tied up the Muslims, dumped them alive in the flames.”⁴¹

From the section dedicated to the 1937 Repressions, students learn that the majority of the repressed groups in Azerbaijan are also the responsibility of Armenians, who continued their treasonous genocide politics. The textbook for the 11th grade published in 2014 emphasizes that: “In the organization of mass repressions, a significant role was played by Sumbatov-Topuridze, Gregoryan, Markarian, Malian and other Armenians occupying leading positions in internal affairs bodies and as the genetic enemies of the Turks.”⁴² In the 2018 version, however, this passage is no longer included. Nevertheless, only Azerbaijanis are listed among victims, and the authors do not forget to emphasize that “the representatives of Armenian nationality, covered by the party and Soviet agencies, played a significant part in the mass nature and spreading of the repressions in Azerbaijan.”⁴³

Referring to the law “On education,” we see that among its numerous purposes is the upbringing of citizens who respect national traditions and democratic principles, human rights and freedoms, and are independent and creative thinkers. The number of provisions of the law can be explained by the still relatively short lifespan of independence. Education aims to foster citizens who shall realize their own

responsibility toward society, are loyal to the ideas of patriotism and Azerbaijanism, and simultaneously prepared to defend both national-spiritual and universal values. Teachers are obliged to participate in the realization of state policy within the educational field, as well as in the assimilation of educational programs, helping to form their students as active citizens, raising them in the spirit of patriotism and Azerbaijanism. If we remember the fact that in Azerbaijan only one version of the history textbook is allowed, then it becomes clear that the position of a citizen, the idea of national-spiritual values, as well as the whole Azerbaijanism ideology is constructed, among other things, on the image of an enemy.

School Education as a Recourse of Memory Politics

According to Allan Megill:

When history becomes simply what people remember or commemorate, this amounts to a reduction of history to the framework of present thought and action. Memory tells us as much about the present consciousness of the rememberer as it does about the past. Memory is an image of the past constructed by a subjectivity in a present. It is thus itself subjective; it may also be irrational, inconsistent, deceptive, and self-serving.⁴⁴

It seems that all the listed properties are intentionally exploited within the frameworks of the described genocide narrative. The educational narrative and commemoration politics of the genocide victims is imposed on the members of the Azerbaijani imagined society as an irrational, inconsistent, deceptive, and self-sufficient remembrance of noble ancestors, as well as victims, whom they are not allowed to forget.

Solidarity is built not only on myths about heroes and victims but also on discourses of confrontation with an eternal and ruthless enemy. The educational narrative, as well as official commemoration, regulates the balance between oblivion and memory, indicating what needs to be included in the collective memory and which memoirs should be discarded: remembering March 1918 and forgetting the no less tragic events of September of the same year, or reminiscing about the tragedy of January 20, 1990, and neglecting the Armenian riots preceding it. In the circumstances where alternative sources are practically inaccessible, and the conflict is constantly fueled by more and more victims, historical myths and images of an enemy transform into a rather effective resource for mobilizing the population. In particular, this concerns the younger generation, citizens of the Republic educated in schools and universities in the post-Soviet period, who spent all of their lives in the media-free environment of independent Azerbaijan.⁴⁵

However, this statement also concerns every resident of the republic. Any alternative point of view, which calls into question the key historical myths (especially that of the genocide) and the images of an enemy, is not allowed in the public field. Any attempt at alternative public expression is strictly controlled by both authorities from above and nationalist-activists from below and can cause considerable

problems for those uttering them.⁴⁶ In such a situation, doubters prefer to remain silent, whereas nationalists at all levels of society seek to acquire additional social resources, inventing new myths and filling them with “fresh” and even more bloody details of the image of an eternal enemy. In this specific context, the “lie” mentioned by Ginzburg, becomes a rather effective resource for control and mobilization. Among the resources of popularization of these discourses, narratives, and images of an enemy, school education holds an important place. In this field, the state can easily capture the future generation with its ideology. Besides, the parents of students in high schools, for their part in attending various school events of collective mourning or studying the texts taught in school alongside their children, also get acquainted with the new narrative.

School narratives are imbued with war and nationalistic victim rhetoric, and are penetrated with militaristic ideas of military-patriotic upbringing. Educational tasks were reduced to an ideological cleansing of the “true layer” of national history from the “alien impurity,” which led to the archaization of historical approaches. Within the educational narrative, a central place is given to heroes, victims, and enemies, which makes it possible to create a rather simplified image of the world, easily comprehensible for every person. The unwillingness to cultivate critical thinking in the frameworks of the school curriculum serves a wider acceptance of such a simplified worldview. Besides the presentation of the reduced model of interethnic relationships, a unified school textbook under the circumstances of authoritarianism helps to legitimize the ruling regime. Consequently, even the most obvious lie in textbooks acquires an impression of the only possible truth. When only one point of view is imposed on students for two decades, with potential alternatives banned from the public due to fear of censorship as well as charges of betraying the nation, there are simply no other options left. Without the nationalistic discourse, the regime runs the risk of losing its positions. This discourse defines the specifics of the domination, achieved by redirecting social dissatisfaction to the eternal “enemies of the nation.”

Conclusion

Antonio Gramsci defines *Intelligentsia* (the clerks of ruling elites), as the main instrument in establishing hegemony. The *intelligentsia* is not only responsible for reaching a simple agreement between society and political powers, but also for the active consent that defines the shift of the political course. For instance, the Azerbaijani *Intelligentsia* promotes the thesis that there is simply no one else to rule Azerbaijan besides the present authorities. The representatives of the Azerbaijani *Intelligentsia*—the public intellectuals—invested all of their energy and ability to create myths both about genocide and the eternal enemy. Alongside journalists, an army of high school teachers and representatives of the academic sciences play first fiddle. Historians, as well as social researchers always played a leading role in this process. Having easily subordinated the *Intelligentsia*, with most of its representatives habitually acting as partners of the authorities since Soviet times, the ruling elites established their own monopoly

on the representation of national culture, the construction of historical myths, and memory politics.

What can be done to oppose these trends? The ruling elites need to constantly reorganize and reclaim society’s agreement in order to maintain the status quo. Renan, for such cases, spoke of the necessity of a daily plebiscite. The representatives of Intelligentsia who are not connected to the authorities and nationalistic ideology are able to undertake the attempts to create alternative critical discourses and narratives. Gramsci considered that the democratization of the school would lead to the democratization of the entire culture. In this particular context, neither the authorities nor the overwhelming part of Intelligentsia set themselves such tasks. Therefore, there only remains the hope for the active position of individual public intellectuals who are not willing to live in a stifling atmosphere of fear and hatred.

On September 27, 2020, large-scale military hostilities unfolded in Karabakh, resulting in numerous casualties, accompanied by missile strikes on civilians located in other regions and beyond the front line of the cities of Ganja and Barda. These events contributed to an even deeper consolidation of Azerbaijani society around the ruling regime and President Ilham Aliyev. The hostilities ended with the return of the regions captured in 1992–1993, which are part of the so-called security belt, as well as the city of Shusha, which is an important site of memory for Azerbaijanis, back under the nation’s control. Large-scale celebrations took place in Azerbaijan. In the context of the pandemic and restrictive quarantine measures, school rituals proved to be impossible. However, online drawing contests and student performances were organized. The results of the war allowed Azerbaijan’s President Aliyev to say that the Karabakh conflict has been settled. In speeches for the outside world, he often talks about the possible peaceful coexistence of Azerbaijanis with Armenians. However, it is clear that these statements are far from reality. Even in a state of victory, the image of the enemy remains in demand.

Notes

- 1 For more on conflict events see: Thomas de Waal, *Black Garden: Azerbaijan and Armenia through Peace and War* (New York: New York University Press, 2003).
- 2 The moment to which Louis Althusser points is especially important: “School (as well as other state and church institutions or other agencies, such as the army) teaches ‘skills’ in such a way that it provides *submission to the dominating ideology* or ‘masters’ the practice of such submission.” Lui Al’tjusser, “Ideologija i Ideologičeskie Apparaty Gosudarstva (Zametki dlja Issledovanija),” *Neprikosnovennyj zapas* 3, no. 77 (2011), <https://magazines.gorky.media/nz/2011/3/ideologija-i-ideologičeskie-apparaty-gosudarstva.html>.
- 3 Myth, in this chapter, implies the “view on the historical events ‘through the prism of identity’; in this version, myth involves the affective assimilation of one’s own history. In this sense, myth serves as a historical base; this base cannot be refuted by scientific research because it is constantly enriched with interpretations, which in preserving the past in the present of the future, gives the society an orientation towards the future.” Aleida Assman, *Dlinnaja Ten Proshlogo: Memorialnaia Kultura i Istoricheskaia Politika* (Moscow: NLO, 2014), 39.

- 4 The relationship primarily, but not only, with Armenia can be characterized this way. The new official historical narrative contains certain claims practically to all neighboring states: Russia, Iran and Georgia (Sergey Rummyantsev, "Natsionalizm i Konstruirovaniye Kart 'Istoricheskikh Territorij': Obuchenie Natsionalnym Istoriyam v Stranah Juzhnogo Kavkaza," *Ab Imperio*, no. 4 (2010): 415–61. For more on "Memory wars" in the context of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict see: Victor Shnirelman, *Vojny Pamiaty. Mify, Identichnost i Politika v Zakavkaze* (Moscow: Akademkniga, 2003), 10–258.
- 5 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1998), 7.
- 6 Gejdar Aliyev, "Ukaz Prezidenta Azerbajdzhanskoj Respubliki o Genocide Azerbajdzhantsev," *1905.az*, March 29, 2014, <https://1905.az/ru/ukaz-prezidenta-azerbajdzhanskoj-res/>.
- 7 For more on the March 1918 opposition, see: Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905–1920: The Shaping of a National Identity in a Muslim Community* (Cambridge Russian, Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 135–39; Audrey Altstadt, *The Azerbaijani Turks: Power and Identity under Russian Rule* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1992), 45–49; Jörg Baberowski, *Der Feind ist Überall: Stalinismus im Kaukasus* (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2003), 133–50.
- 8 In the framework of this chapter, "historical politics" is one of the key concepts: the "phenomenon of a sharp intensification of the use of history for political purposes": Aleksej Miller, "Istoricheskaia Politika v Vostochnoj Evrope v Nachale XXI Veke," in *Istoricheskaja Politika v XXI Veke*, eds. Aleksej Miller and Marija Lipman (Moscow: NLO, 2012), 7.
- 9 See, for example: Ilham Abbasov and Sergey Rummyantsev, "Azerbaijan. Ways to Perpetuate the Past: Analyzing the Images of 'Others' in Azerbaijani History Textbooks," in *Contemporary History Textbooks in the South Caucasus*, ed. Lubos Vesely (Praha: Association for International Affairs, 2008), 33–56; Sergey Rummyantsev, "Pervye Issledovaniya i Pervye Specialisty: Situatsiya v Oblasti Socialnykh i Gumanitarnykh Nauk v Postsovetskom Azerbajdzhane," *Laboratorium: Zhurnal sotsialnykh issledovanij*, no. 1 (2010): 284–310; Sergey Rummyantsev, "Natsionalizm i Konstruirovaniye Kart 'Istoricheskikh Territorij': Obuchenie Natsionalnym Istoriyam v Stranakh Juzhnogo Kavkaza," *Ab Imperio*, no. 4 (2010): 415–61; Sergey Rummyantsev, "Geroicheskij Jepos i Konstruirovaniye Obraza Istoricheskogo Vraga," in *Izobretenie Imperii: Iazuki i Praktiki*, eds. Il'ja Gerasimov, Mogilner Marina, and Semenov Aleksandr (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2011), 328–56; Sevil Huseynova, "Baku in the First Half of the 20th Century: The Space of 'Friendship between Peoples' and Inter-ethnic Conflicts," in *Myths and Conflict in the South Caucasus*, eds. Oksana Karpenko and Jana Javakhishvili (International Alert, 2013), 31–54.
- 10 The 2017–2018 school year became the last year of teaching the subject "Human and Society." The course for this subject was developed for the last four years of education (8–11 grades). Since September 2018, this course has been integrated into the narrative of the subject "Understanding of the World."
- 11 In one of the interviews with Ginzburg, conducted by I. Venyakin, the historian notes: "Philology implies a series of techniques (for each individual case), that give the possibility to examine the historical significance of any evidence. It is a very difficult process, but many outstanding scholars of the 20th century taught us that a lie, even an intended lie, has a significant historical value, and these historical evidences need to be analyzed. The very act of forgery says a lot about the intentions of those who make this 'forgery'." Il'a Venjavkin, "Karlo Ginzburg: Nedostatochno Razoblachit 'Lozh', Vazhno Ponjat', Pochemu Ona Rabotaet," *Snob*, June 16, 2015, <https://snob.ru/selected/entry/93932>.
- 12 Thomas de Waal, "The Threat of a Karabakh Conflict in 2017," *Carnegie Europe*, January 24, 2017, <https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/67774>.
- 13 On a similar situation in Armenia see: Sona Dilanyan, Aia Beraia, and Hilal Yavuz. "Beyond NGOs: Decolonizing Peacebuilding and Human Rights," *Caucasus Edition* 3, no. 1 (2018): 163.

- 14 The author of the ideological concept of the “fifth column,” designed to marginalize critics and opponents of the ruling political regime in Azerbaijan, is considered to be one of its main ideologists, the academic Ramiz Mehdiyev, who headed the presidential administration for many years. In 2020, he was removed from office and appointed President of the National Academy of Sciences.
- 15 Ninth Paragraph: “Forming a Nation,” in *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana. Uchebnik po Predmetu “Istoriia Azerbajdzhana” dlia 9-go Klassa Obshheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*, ed. Jagub Mahmudlu et al. (Baku: Sharg-Garb, 2016).
- 16 16th Paragraph: “New Stage of the Liberation Movement,” in *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana. Uchebnik po Predmetu “Istoriia Azerbajdzhana” dlia 9-go Klassa Obshheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*, ed. Jagub Mahmudlu et al. (Baku: Sharg-Garb, 2016), 40–41; 64.
- 17 42nd Paragraph: “Social-economic Rise of 1970–1980 years,” *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana. Uchebnik po Predmetu “Istoriia Azerbajdzhana” dlia 9-go Klassa Obshheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*, ed. Jagub Mahmudlu et al. (Baku: Sharg-Garb, 2016), 151.
- 18 Research shows that in reality this policy had a much more difficult character. On the specifics of the Soviet nationalistic politics see: Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 2001).
- 19 Bishkek Protocol–Ceasefire Agreement (1994). The status quo has changed following the results of the “44-day war” in the autumn of 2020. Azerbaijan managed to take back by force the so-called security belt—seven regions held by the Armenian armed forces outside the Nagorno-Karabakh territory. This latest war has completely changed the geopolitical situation in the region.
- 20 See, for example: “Shahidy Bessmertny, Rodina Nedelima,” *Trend*, April 1, 2017, <https://www.trend.az/life/socium/2737180.html>; “Şəhidlər Ölməz, Vətən Bölməz (Birinci Söhbət),” *1905.az*, June 4, 2016, <https://1905.az/s/%c9%99hidl%c9%99r-oelm%c9%99z-v%c9%99t-%c9%99n-boeluenm%c9%99z-21/>.
- 21 See, for example: “The Tragedy of Genocide,” *Azerbaijans*, https://www.azerbaijans.com/content_321_en.html.
- 22 Ernest Renan, “What Is a Nation?”, in *Becoming National: A Reader*, ed. Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 41–55.
- 23 Solmaz Rüstəmovə-Tohidi, *Mart 1918 g. Baku. Azerbajdzhanskie Pogromy v Dokumentakh* (Baku, 2009).
- 24 See: Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905–1920: The Shaping of a National Identity in a Muslim Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 37–83; Audrey Altstadt, *The Azerbaijani Turks: Power and Identity under Russian Rule* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1992), 27–49; 89–107.
- 25 This tragedy was repeated in September 1918, when Ottoman troops entered Baku and maintained the Azerbaijani formations. This time, the Armenian population of the city fell as a victim. Textbooks fail to mention both the September slaughter and the riots.
- 26 “Institut istorii NANA: ‘V Azerbajdzhanə vo vremja martovskikh sobytij 1918 goda armiane ubili do 700 tysiach azerbajdzhantsev’,” *Day.Az*, 30 March 2020, <https://news.day.az/society/201594.html>.
- 27 In 1918, the whole population of Azerbaijan was less than two and a half million people.
- 28 See, for example: Ramiz Mehdiyev, “Ob Istokah Degradacii Evropejskih Struktur, ili Politika Dvojnyh Standartov v Otnoshenii Azerbajdzhana,” *Kavkaz PLUS*, October 23, 2015, https://kavkazplus.info/news.php?id=588#.XL4PLWNS_IU; Ali Gasanov, “Agressija Armenii Protiv Azerbajdzhana, Falshivij “Genocid Armjan” i Dvojnye Standarty Zapada,” *Sputnik*, April 28, 2015.
- 29 Michael Smith, “Pamiat ob Urtatakh i Azerbajdzhanskoe Obshhestvo,” in *Azerbajdzhan i Rusiia: Obshhestva i Gosudarstva*, ed. Dmitriy Furman (Moscow: Letnij Sad, 2001).
- 30 Michael Smith, “Pamiat ob Urtatakh i Azerbajdzhanskoe Obshhestvo,” in *Azerbajdzhan i Rusiia: Obshhestva i Gosudarstva*, ed. Dmitriy Furman (Moscow: Letnij Sad, 2001).

- 31 Ilgar Niftaliyev, “Bakinskij Evrej o Marte 1918: Armiane Sovershali Nasilie nad Musulmanskimi Zhenshshinami v Prisutstvii Rodnykh,” *1905.az*, March 29 2018, <https://1905.az/ru/бакинский-еврей-о-марте-1918-г-армяне-сове/>.
- 32 Ilgar Niftaliyev, “Bakinskij Evrej o Marte 1918: Armiane Sovershali Nasilie nad Musulmanskimi Zhenshshinami v Prisutstvii Rodnykh,” *1905.az*, March 29 2018, <https://1905.az/ru/бакинский-еврей-о-марте-1918-г-армяне-сове/>.
- 33 Emil Guliyev, “Mahmud Kerimov ‘Poka rano delat vyvody po vyjavlennomu massovomu zahoroneniiju v Gube’,” *Day.Az*, April 18, 2007, <https://news.day.az/politics/76866.html>.
- 34 The official conclusion of the General Prosecutor of Azerbaijan Republic about the mass burial in Quba, <https://www.myazerbaijan.org/index.php?p=history/37>
- 35 “The Guba Genocide Memorial Complex,” *The Heydar Aliyev Foundation*, <https://heydar-aliyev-foundation.org/en/content/view/93/2808/Губинский-мемориальный-комплекс-геноцида/>.
- 36 Yagub Makkhmuđlu, Hafiz Jabbarov, and Leyla Huseynova, *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana. Uchebnik po Predmetu “Istoriia Azerbajdzhana” dlia 5-go Klassa Obshheobrazovatelnykh Shkol* (Baku: Tahsil, 2016), 140–44.
- 37 The statement of the President of Azerbaijan Republic, İlham Aliyev, on the day of the Azerbaijani Genocide, https://azembassy.msk.ru/events/2007/obrash_310307.html.
- 38 The main national holiday in Azerbaijan.
- 39 Yagub Makkhmuđlu, Hafiz Jabbarov, and Leyla Huseynova, *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana. Uchebnik po Predmetu “Istoriia Azerbajdzhana” dlia 5-go Klassa Obshheobrazovatelnykh Shkol* (Baku: Tahsil, 2016), 140–44.
- 40 Yagub Makkhmuđlu, Hafiz Jabbarov, and Leyla Huseynova, *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana. Uchebnik po Predmetu “Istoriia Azerbajdzhana” dlia 5-go Klassa Obshheobrazovatelnykh Shkol* (Baku: Tahsil, 2016), 140–44.
- 41 Yagub Makkhmuđlu, Hafiz Jabbarov, and Leyla Huseynova, *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana. Uchebnik po Predmetu “Istoriia Azerbajdzhana” dlia 5-go Klassa Obshheobrazovatelnykh Shkol* (Baku: Tahsil, 2016), 140–44.
- 42 Yagub Makkhmuđlu, Hafiz Jabbarov, and Leyla Huseynova, *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana. Uchebnik po Predmetu “Istoriia Azerbajdzhana” dlia 5-go Klassa Obshheobrazovatelnykh Shkol* (Baku: Tahsil, 2016), 140–44.
- 43 “Paragraph 23: The establishment of the Totalitarian Socialistic Society. Mass Repressions,” in *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana. Uchebnik po Predmetu “Istoriia Azerbajdzhana” dlia 11-Go Klassa Obshheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*, ed. Perviz Agalarov et al. (Baku: Sharg-Garb, 2018), 128–30.
- 44 Allan Megill, *Historical Knowledge, Historical Error: A Contemporary Guide to Practice* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 35.
- 45 Here the chapter is talking about people aged 30–35.
- 46 It is enough to remember the story of the writer Akram Aylisli, who risked stating an alternative point of view. See: “Situatsiia Vokrug Romana Azerbajdzhanskogo Pisatelja Akrama Ajlisli ‘Kamennye sny’,” *Kavkazskij uzul*, February 22, 2013, <https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/220481/>.

Bibliography

- Abbasov, İlham, and Sergey Rumyansev. “Azerbaijan. Ways to Perpetuate the Past: Analyzing the Images of “Others” in Azerbaijani History Textbooks.” In *Contemporary History Textbooks in the South Caucasus*, edited by Lubos Veselý, 33–56. Praha: Association for International Affairs, 2008.
- Agalarov, Perviz, Nijameddin Guliev, Rovshan Hatamov, Faig Babaev, Jel’shan Gasymov, Jel’nur Gusejnov, Hafiz Dzhabbarov, Sevil Bahramova, and Asif Gusejnov, eds. *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana. Uchebnik po Predmetu ‘Istoriia Azerbajdzhana’ dlia 11-Go Klassa Obshheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*. Baku: Sharg-Garb, 2018.

- Althusser, Louis. “Ideologija i Ideologicheskie Apparaty Gosudarstva (Zametki dlja Issledovaniia).” *Neprikosnovennyj zapas* 3, no. 77 (2011). <https://magazines.gorky.media/nz/2011/3/ideologiya-i-ideologicheskie-apparatygosudarstva.html>.
- Altstadt, Audrey. *The Azerbaijani Turks: Power and Identity under Russian Rule*. Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1992.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London and New York: Verso, 1998.
- Assman, Aleida. *Dlinnaja Ten Proshlogo: Memorialnaja Kultura i Istoricheskaia Politika*. Moskva: NLO, 2014.
- Assmann, Aleida. *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit: Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik*. Munich: C. H. Beck, 2006.
- Azerbaijans.com. “The Tragedy of Genocide.” *Azerbaijans.com*. https://www.azerbaijans.com/content_321_en.html.
- Baberowski, Jörg. *Der Feind ist Überal: Stalinismus im Kaukasus*. Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2003.
- Dilanyan, Sona, Aia Beraia, and Hilal Yavuz. “Beyond NGOs: Decolonizing Peacebuilding and Human Rights.” *Caucasus Edition* 3, no. 1 (2018): 157–73.
- Gasanov, Ali. “Agressiia Armenii Protiv Azerbajdzhana, Falshivij “Genocid Armian” i Dvojnye Standarty Zapada.” *Sputnik*, April 28, 2015.
- Gejdar, Aliiev. “Ukaz Prezidenta Azerbajdzhanskoj Respubliki o Genotside Azerbajdzhantsev.” *1905.az*, March 29, 2014. <https://1905.az/ru/ukaz-prezidenta-azerbajdzhanskoj-res/>.
- Guliev, Jemil. “Mahmud Kerimov “Poka Rano Delat” Vyvody po Vyjavlennomu Massovomu Zahoroneniju v Gube.” *Day.Az*, April 18, 2007. <https://news.day.az/politics/76866.html>.
- Huseynova, Sevil. “Baku in the First Half of the 20th Century: The Space of ‘Friendship between Peoples’ and Inter-Ethnic Conflicts.” In *Myths and Conflict in the South Caucasus*, edited by Oksana Karpenko and Jana Javakhishvili, 31–54. London: International Alert, 2013.
- Institut istorii NANA. “V Azerbajdzhane vo Vremia Martovskikh Sobytij 1918 Goda Armiiane Ubili do 700 Tysjach Azerbajdzhantsev.” *Day.Az*, March 30, 2020. <https://news.day.az/society/201594.html>.
- Kavkazskij Uzel. “Situaciia Vokrug Romana Azerbajdzhanskogo Pisatelja Akrama Ajlisli “Kamennye sny.” *Kavkazskij uzel*, February 22, 2013.
- Mahmudlu, Jagub, Gabil Aliiev, Mehman Abdullaev, Lejla Gusejnova, and Hafiz Dzhabbarov, eds. *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana. Uchebnik po Predmetu ‘Istoriia Azerbajdzhana’ dlja 9-go Klassa Obshheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*. Baku: Sharg-Garb, 2016.
- Mahmudlu, Jagub, Hafiz Dzhabbarov, and Lejla Gusejnova, eds. *Istoriia Azerbajdzhana. Uchebnik po Predmetu ‘Istoriia Azerbajdzhana’ dlja 5-go Klassa Obshheobrazovatelnykh Shkol*. Baku: Tahsil, 2016.
- Martin, Terry. *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939*. Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2001.
- Megill, Allan. *Historical Knowledge, Historical Error: A Contemporary Guide to Practice*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Mehtiev, Ramiz. “Miroporjadok Dvojnykh Standartov i Sovremennyj Azerbajdzhan,” December 4, 2014.
- Mehtiev, Ramiz. “Ob Istokakh Degradatsii Evropejskikh Struktur, ili Politika Dvojnykh Standartov v Otnoshenii Azerbajdzhana.” *Kavkaz Plus*, October 23, 2015. https://kavkazplus.info/news.php?id=588#.XL4PLWNS_IU.
- Miller, Aleksej. “Istoricheskaia Politika v Vostochnoj Evrope v Nachale XXI Veka.” In *Istoricheskaia Politika v XXI Veke*, edited by Aleksej Miller and Marija Lipman, 7–32. Moskva: NLO, 2012.
- Nasibov, Gunduz. “Şəhidlər Ölməz, Vətən Bölməz (Birinci Söhbət).” *1905.az*, June 4, 2016. <https://1905.az/s%9c%99hidl%9c%99r-oelm%9c%99z-v%9c%99t%9c%99n-boeluenm%9c%99z-21/>.
- Niftaliev, Ilgar. “Bakinskij Evrej o Marte 1918: Armiiane Sovershali Nasilie nad Musulmanskimi Zhenshinami v Prisutstvii Rodnykh.” *1905.az*, March 29, 2018. <https://1905.az/ru/bakinskij-evrej-o-marte-1918-g-armjane-sove/>.

- Renan, Ernest. "What Is a Nation?" In *Becoming National: A Reader*, edited by Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, 41–55. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1996.
- Rumjancev, Sergej. "Pervye Issledovaniia i Pervye Spetsialisty: Situatsiia v Oblasti Socialnykh i Gumanitarnykh Nauk v Postsovetском Azerbajdzhanе." *Laboratorium: Zhurnal social'nyh issledovanij*, no. 1 (2010): 284–310.
- Rumjancev, Sergej. "Geroicheskiy Epos i Konstruirovaniie Obraza Istoricheskogo Vraga." In *Izobretenie Imperii: Jazyki i Praktiki*, edited by Ilja Gerasimov, Mogil'ner Marina, and Semenov Aleksandr, 328–56. Moskva: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2011.
- Rumyantsev, Sergey. "Natsionalizm i Konstruirovaniie Kart 'Istoricheskikh Territorij': Obuchenie Natsionalnym Istorijam v Stranakh Juzhnogo Kavkaza." *Ab Imperio*, no. 4 (2010): 415–61.
- Rustamova-Togidi, Solmaz. *Mart 1918 g. Baku. Azerbajdzhanskije Pogromy v Dokumentah*. Baku, 2009.
- Shnirelman, Viktor. *Vojny Pamjati. Mify, Identichnost i Politika v Zakavkaze*. Moskva: Akademkniga, 2003.
- Smit, Majkl. "Pamiat ob Utratakh i Azerbajdzhanskoe Obshhestvo." In *Azerbajdzhan i Rossiia Obshhestva i Gosudarstva*, edited by Dmitriy Furman. Moskva: Letnij Sad, 2001. https://old.sakharov-center.ru/publications/azrus/az_004.htm.
- Swietochowski, Tadeusz. *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905–1920: The Shaping of a National Identity in a Muslim Community*. *Cambridge Russian, Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- The Heydar Aliyev Foundation. "The Guba Genocide Memorial Complex." *The Heydar Aliyev Foundation*. <https://heydar-aliyev-foundation.org/en/content/view/93/2808/Губинский-мемориальный-комплекс-геноцида/>.
- Trend. "Shahidy Bessmertny, Rodina Nedelima." *Trend*, April 1, 2017. <https://www.trend.az/life/socium/2737180.html>.
- Venjavkin, Ilja. "Karlo Ginzburg: Nedostatochno Razoblachit Lozh', Vazhno Poniat', Pochemu Ona Rabotaet." *Snob*, June 16, 2015, <https://snob.ru/selected/entry/93932>.
- Waal, Thomas de. *Black Garden: Azerbaijan and Armenia through Peace and War*. New York: New York University Press, 2003.
- Waal, Thomas de. "The Threat of a Karabakh Conflict in 2017," *Carnegie Europe*, January 24, 2017. <https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/67774>.

7 Planted Flags? The Political Life of Trees and Arboreal Patriotism in Armenia

Tsypylma Darieva

The world has changed since 2020 in view of the increasing uncertainty in the region and multiple crises in Eastern Europe such as the war in Ukraine and fragile peace negotiations after the Second Karabakh War (October–November 2020).¹ This chapter is focused on the ways in which natural symbols such as fruit and other trees can be mobilized as “vital forces”² for the national identity across borders and in the context of crises. I argue that the politics of nature and acts of tree planting are important tools for the mobilization of (trans)national memories in Armenia and can be active participants in the production of national sentiments and patriotism.³

Like the pomegranate, the apricot (*prunus armeniaca*, *armeniaca vulgaris*), with its yellowish-pink skin, is traditionally seen as an unquestionably Armenian symbol associated with national prosperity, health, longevity and vitality. By referring to a story about the Armenian apricot’s mythical role in world history, Irina Petrosyan and David Underwood emphasized the centrality of fruit tree metaphors for Armenian self-identification: “According to an Armenian Encyclopaedia, it was Alexander the Great who took the apricot from Armenia, its birthplace, and introduced it to Greece, calling it *armeniaca*. Armenian sources support their claims by referring to a 6,000-year-old apricot pit found at an archaeological site near Yerevan.”⁴

Indeed, an important cultural component of Armenian national identity, with its representations branded and promoted during the Soviet period, is the orange in the Armenian tricolor flag, which served as a metaphor for national unity within the Soviet community. In line with Alexey Yurchak’s allegory of pink and purple as the true color of communism for Komsomol activists in the latter years of the USSR, Maïke Lehmann identified the apricot color as the true color of the Armenian Soviet hybrid identity. Her assumption is that the apricot color functioned as an allegory for the merging of the red communist and national Armenian elements during the Soviet period.⁵ After Armenia gained independence, these national colors obviously came to the fore, filling the daily reservoir of emotional attachments to the new nation-state. As the American historian Ronald Suny wrote after visiting post-Soviet Armenia: “*Haiutiun* (Armenianness) was everywhere in Armenia: in personal relations, in bargaining at the market, in bureaucratic inefficiency, in the tastiness of the fruit.”⁶

While the apricot remained a symbol of Armenian prosperity and rural stability, in the 1990s, the pomegranate was transformed into a ritualized symbol of an

uncertain post-Soviet Armenia; tied to a wide scope of emotional meanings, from ethnic loss, blood, flight, and loneliness to universal love and hope.⁷ For a long time the image of pomegranate was used as a decorative element in Armenian medieval Christian manuscripts. After the installation of the Soviet regime, however, it almost disappeared from Soviet Armenian narratives. The pomegranate reappeared in Armenia after Sergey Paradjanov, a Soviet non-conformist filmmaker, employed the fruit as a powerful aesthetic tool in his famous allegoric masterpiece, *The Color of Pomegranates* (1969). In particular, the image of a cut pomegranate and blood-red juice spilling onto a white cloth resembled the shape of the ancient Armenian kingdom and created a new symbol of Armenian culture and its survival in the twentieth century. The pomegranate owes its prominence to modern Armenian intellectuals and artists who helped to dramatize national folk sentiments.

During the traumatic and challenging years after the collapse of the USSR,⁸ Armenian souvenir makers, searching for their way in a market economy, turned the shape of the pomegranate into a variety of popular souvenirs and in this way invented a new commercial tradition in Armenia.⁹ However, it would be misleading to reduce the circulation of cultural meanings for both the apricot and the pomegranate only to Armenian narratives. Both fruits grow in Southern Europe, Asia Minor, Middle East, and China, and are widely used in local cultural representations as aesthetic symbols or as images of national revival. In particular, in the regions of the Caucasus, Turkey, Iran, and Central Asia, the image of pomegranate is shared by different ethnic groups, and is a common symbol associated with folk fertility, love, rebirth, vitality, and as protection against the evil eye.¹⁰

This chapter considers the relationship between nature and nationalism, focusing on the ways specific trees are vernacularized in Armenia, thus contributing towards emotional consolidation within a patriotic identity. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to consider the human nature-culture divide in detail, it is worth considering the role of trees and their connections to the social world, in other words the configuration of human and non-human forces. According to the literature, fruit trees in particular may act as a symbol of vitality, fertility, as an object of religious worship (sacred trees), as evidence of genealogical connections, as an instrument for maintaining social order,¹¹ or as a tool for territorial claims.¹² On the one hand, there is an extensive literature that theorizes trees as passive plants by emphasizing the value of human authority.¹³ On the other hand, there are those who advocate seeing trees as active agents.¹⁴ There is a body of work, particularly in the post-colonial and post-socialist fields, which identifies the function of trees in the authoritarian and post-modern contexts beyond the traditional view of trees as part of the natural environment and its spiritual, mythological and utilitarian dimensions. On the basis of such observations, social anthropologists have conceptualized relationships between nature, material culture, and ideology in modern societies. Trees and tree landscapes can be shaped from “above” and act as a powerful tool in the process of vernacularization and daily patriotic processes.

There are many different forms of daily patriotism that reflect the ways national ideals and norms are perpetuated and circulated. Michael Billig’s work on “banal nationalism” is useful for understanding the mechanisms behind the

appeal to national symbols in modern everyday life.¹⁵ With the term “daily,” Bilig is referring to the routine usage of ideological signs and symbols associated with a specific nation.¹⁶ The annual appeals for tree planting made by politicians are, however, only one part of the rich arsenal of symbols employed in banal nationalism. More examples can be found in TV programs and social media, such as the proliferation of national cuisine or drink industry advertisements. The notion of “banal nationalism” describes a daily reservoir of emotional attachment to the state that can be mobilized and manipulated “without lengthy campaigns of political preparation.”¹⁷ Similarly, Löfgren exemplified how the national aesthetic can be indicated and “flagged” in the life of citizens in Europe such as when cheese pieces are marked and decorated with the national colors.¹⁸ A recent volume edited by Mkhitar Gabrielyan and other Armenian scholars revealed practices of Armenian banal nationalism to be a “component of daily life.”¹⁹

Alongside the local practices of daily patriotism in Armenia, there is another dimension of maintaining cultural nationalism that is crafted by transnational actors, the members of Armenian diasporic communities. One can observe a recent rise of a new generation of diasporic Armenian organizations, particularly in the United States and Canada, that are increasingly interested in encouraging diasporic concepts of Armenianness on the territory of the Armenian Republic. Some of them are very much shaped by environmental discourses on saving the nation and its green spaces for future generations. I focus on one transnational “greening” campaign in Armenia, launched and funded by the Armenian Tree Project (ATP), an Armenian-American organization from the Boston area. Over the last two decades, this campaign has created a considerable network between the United States and Armenia, and created a memorial landscape of the past based on a set of natural elements that are promoted as part of a distinctive Armenian heritage, such as the forest. An emotional act of tree planting is included in the repertoire of diasporic ritualized activities on Armenian territory, which seem to successfully mobilize a number of diasporic people to give donations and make trips to the homeland. I attempt to demonstrate how symbols of native nature are re-inscribed in the rhetoric of diasporic organizations and in this way produce new frameworks in which long-distance patriotism is constructed and maintained. I argue that planting trees can mobilize individual and collective action, drive investments, transform landscapes and, thus, reinforce territorial disputes and conflicts in Transcaucasia. In other words, behind the appeal to nature may stand powerful instruments, which can be employed in constructing a new sense of territoriality and patriotic solidarity across borders. Before I move on to this issue, a brief overview of diasporic visions of the Armenian homeland is required.

Armenian Homelands and Armenian Diasporic Communities

The geography of Armenian communities is complex and includes multiple experiences and movements over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that led to the formation of numerous diasporic centers in the United States, Canada, Brazil, France, the United Kingdom, Australia, Russia and the Middle East. The notion of the Armenian diaspora is prominent due to the fact that more Armenians live

outside of its homeland then in the Republic of Armenia itself. Simon Payaslian has indicated that the diaspora (*spuirk*) and the homeland of the Republic of Armenia (*Hayastan*) are “two separate entities, each of its own, and often conflicting, interests and priorities.”²⁰

Referring to a high degree of social, economic, political, and cultural heterogeneity among Armenian communities, Susan Pattie emphasized that references to the homeland have been constantly revised and given different meanings.²¹ Acknowledging different levels of homeland imaginaries, shaped by personal, individual memories and by the political level of attachments, Pattie identifies at least three parallel constructions of Armenian homelands and their boundaries.²² The first construction of the Armenian diasporic homeland revolves around the term *heirenik and Ergir* (land). Armenian-Americans and Armenian-Canadians understand this term to refer to a grandparents’ birthplace in villages and towns of the “Western Armenian provinces” (Kharput, Mush, Kessab, Antep, and others), which were once part of the Ottoman Empire and are today located in Turkey. Thus, what is referred to in traditional diasporic terms as the “exodus land,” includes not only the Anatolian Plateau, but also other former Ottoman territories such as parts of Syria and Egypt.

The definition “Western” was invented by Armenian intellectuals at the beginning of the twentieth century in opposition to the notion of “Eastern Armenian lands,” which refers to the present-day Republic of Armenia and Iran. To clarify these different homeland constellations and the related semantics, it is worth referring to linguistic distinctions. The terms “eastern” and “western” are used by Armenians to differentiate two standardized forms of the modern Armenian language. Whereas Eastern Armenian has the status of the official Armenian language spoken in the Soviet Republic of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Iran, the Western Armenian or Turkish-Armenian language is found within Armenian communities in Turkey, the Middle East, the United States, Canada, Australia, and France.

The second and third visions of the homeland are both called *Hayastan*, yet the images and the embodiment of these homelands completely differ from each other. The second vision is an assemblage of mythical landscapes and narratives about the ancient kingdoms, past glory, and historical boundaries of *Mets Hayk* (Greater Armenia or Armenian Highlands), which dates back to 585–200 BC and a region that stretched from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea. Armenians say that the historical geography of the Armenian Highlands stretched between the Kura River, the Pontic Mountains, the Euphrates River, and the Taurus Mountain.²³

The third homeland concerns the modern Republic of Armenia with its capital city in Yerevan and, until 2023, included the region of Nagorno-Karabakh (*Art-sakh* in Armenian), which, although technically part of Azerbaijan, was an unrecognized quasi-independent state for almost thirty years. This variation of *Hayastan* has clear-cut geographical and political boundaries, and identifies the Republic of Armenia as a sovereign nation with a political government body, Eastern Armenian as the official state language, and a variety of administrative divisions in place. According to Pattie, for many Armenian-Americans this *Hayastan* was considered to be a “small corner” of the mythical homeland.²⁴ Two constructions of romantic diasporic homelands, the intimate *heirenik* associated with expulsion and violence and the mythical Greater Armenia, are both without clear-cut political borders and

can overlap with each other, especially in relation to artistic discourses and cultural memories. However, the territory of the Republic of Armenia, created in 1918 after the Russian Revolution on the territory of former Erivan Governorate, was always viewed as a separate entity that is ideologically distinct from the political statements of diasporic community elites in the United States, Canada, and Western Europe. These groups prefer to define themselves as being of “Western Armenian” descent. The territory of the Republic of Armenia was rarely presented as the lost homeland of the Armenian Highlands and was seen as the “backyard” of the global Armenian world.²⁵ By the beginning of the twenty-first century, however, Armenian diasporic members appear more committed on an emotional level to Hayastan and increasingly perceive the Armenian state as “the homeland.”

The 1988 earthquake in Armenia caused an emotional outpour and active responses among western diasporic communities to Soviet Armenia, leading to a rise in humanitarian aid activity.²⁶ In the 1990s, many second generation and later Armenian-Americans and Armenian-Canadians continued to donate sporadically to Armenia and its impoverished economy²⁷ and a few of them occasionally undertook tourist trips to Armenia on an individual level. Since 2001, it has been possible to observe the growing popularity of homeland trips to Armenia among second generation and later Armenian-Americans and Armenian-Canadians. Channeling new pathways of belonging for assimilated diasporic members, members of Armenian diasporic centers are engaged in promoting multilayered connectedness between Armenia and diasporic centers in Boston, Washington, and Montreal. There are numerous cross-border activities conceptualized as a diasporic bridge to the “lost” homeland. These range from NGOs supporting social and cultural projects to non-profit organizations facilitating a platform for future repatriation programs.²⁸

The Armenian Vernacularization of the Pine Tree

In spring 2005, the English language homepage of the ATP, a US-based non-profit organization, announced plans to its readers to plant 1.5 million trees on the territory of Armenia in memory of the 1.5 million victims of the Armenian genocide.²⁹ A flyer depicted a beautiful blue sky combined with the image of a plain green landscape. A large deciduous tree was growing in the middle of a crop field. Those who are familiar with the Armenian mountain and rocky landscape would not recognize the wondrous green landscapes shown on this flyer. The flyer also includes lines of poetry floating down from the blue sky to the earth.

For every tear of sorrow, plant a seed of Life;
For every fallen son and brother, grow a tree that stands for Truth;
For every widow’s wail mourning, play the dawn’s sweet symphony;
For stolen daughters torched to dust, give us beauty for their ashes
For every footprint swept beneath the desert sands, raise a tree of Hope.

Together with these poetic narrations, this advertising can be interpreted as an act of Armenian diasporic mourning and perceived as an artifact of the ethnic continuity. If we follow Simon Schama’s idea, these trees embody social and political

memory.³⁰ Conflated with the intimate sense of a lost family member (brother, son, daughter, and widow), the past is associated with violence and loss, whereby the tragic past is metaphorically expressed through the image of a void space represented by terms such as “dust,” “ashes,” and “desert sands.” By contrast, the vision of the tree body fills the entire flourishing landscape and can be understood as a powerful regenerative symbol with the capacity to heal Armenia’s wounded history and produce a “good” future for the ancestral homeland.

More precisely, this example provides us with an illustration as to how Armenia is becoming a potential source of the diasporic sense of desire and regeneration. The ancestral homeland is visualized in the form of a green tree, an “ancestral shrine” to which the deceased souls of lost sons and widows can return. Trees are projected as new repositories of human remembrance and in this poetic and spiritual language, the souls of the dead can find their “homes” in the bodies of future trees. Such a narrative provides a good example of how imaginations and collective beliefs in a particular knowledge of the past shape the daily lives and contemporary identifications of Armenian-Americans. By appealing to the public recognition of Armenian loss, especially during the ninetieth and centennial anniversaries of the Armenian genocide in 2005 and 2015, respectively, diasporic Armenians are actively engaged in bringing a kind of control over the lost homeland.

The Armenian Tree Project was founded in 1994 in Watertown, Massachusetts, as part of the Armenian Assembly of America by Carolyn Mugar, a wealthy second-generation Armenian-American. The Watertown ATP office brings a large number of investments and capital into Armenia to establish nurseries, plant trees in parks, fund reforestation programs and setup educational centers in the northern part of Armenia for school and university students. In 2009, the Ministry of Education adopted a new textbook elaborated by the ATP in Armenian schools.

The local office’s activities in Yerevan are divided into three main tree-planting strands: community sites in the city, developing nurseries, and supporting impoverished villages with a high percentage of refugees from Azerbaijan. The idea of planting trees was initially motivated by practical goals such as preventing topsoil erosion and supporting fruit production among villagers after the Karabakh war. Soon the ATP turned to renewing urban parks and community tree-planting and finally, the ATP expanded its activities to larger projects such as reforestation and environmental education programs in the Lori region, in the north of Armenia.

These tree-planting activities are financed by generous donations from a significant number of second and later generation Armenian-Americans. The main aim of the campaign was to reach those who explicitly, and implicitly, associate themselves with a “secure and independent Armenia” and with the need to revive ethnic belonging based on the memory of expulsion and the genocide of Armenians on the territory of the Ottoman Empire during World War I. Indeed, memory of Armenian loss and massacres has become a powerful symbol for successful fundraising campaigns within diasporic networks in the United States. Moreover, ATP receives some financial support not only from a cluster of American-Armenian family foundations that have donated over \$100,000, but also benefits from international organizations such as Conservation International and the World Wildlife Fund.

Transnational tree-planting activities in Armenia sponsored by American-Armenians in Massachusetts have had a particular impact on life circle rituals and event organizations within Armenian diasporic organizations. The composition of life circle events such as birthdays, anniversaries, and deaths are taking on a new transnational dimension. Increasingly, Armenian-Americans and Armenian-Canadians donate to the ATP to commemorate the death of a family member. From the very beginning, the project introduced a “Green Certificate” that can be presented to donors confirming the sponsorship of tree-planting in Armenia. These activities include the emerging practice of “pilgrimage” to the sites of sponsored trees and nurseries in Armenia. In this way, through the transfer of arboreal metaphors, fund-raising campaigns to plant trees have synthesized with the diasporic desire to experience a sort of “homecoming.” A characteristic homeland tour to Armenia includes a visit to tree nurseries and educational centers, where “rooted” evidence of the Armenian revitalization, based on tree symbolism, is usually demonstrated. For instance, one can find it in the office of the Karin ATP Nursery and Education Center. Fixed on the wall inside the center is a depiction of the Tree of Life. One can see a metal tree of an unrecognizable type with many leaves that are separate from each other. The leader of the nursery center identified this Tree of Life as a *tsiran* – an apricot tree used by Armenians to symbolize national prosperity and wellness. The leaves on the tree serve as small plaques on which numerous individual names of donors and volunteers are engraved in Latin script. On the left side of the wall, brass shafts of sunlight are fixed over the Tree of Life. The rays serve to represent the unity of those who donate to the development of tree nurseries.

In January 2015, the ATP elaborated on its environmental programs by claiming to have created a secure and green landscape in the Republic of Armenia by “planting fruit and shade trees in every community, reversing the loss of our forest cover, educating children about their environment, and advocating for the sustainable use of natural resources.”³¹ In his personal letter sent to thousands of donors in the United States and Canada, the managing director of the ATP, Tom Garabedian, emphasized:

We are grateful that you are a part of this story, and we hope that you will continue to sponsor trees with us today. A cluster of trees is \$100, a grove is \$200, and a single tree is just \$20. Please give generously so that we may continue to create a green future for Armenia.

Another evidence of this secure and green homeland landscape can be found in a colorful postcard showing “before” and “after” images of the Mkhitar Sebastatsi school yard in Yerevan. In a manner reminiscent to a census, pictograms of hard data provide illustration: 4,497,869 trees were planted over twenty years, ATP has donors in fifty US states, 3,741,864 pounds of fruit were harvested, fifty-two types of trees (all native) were cultivated in its nurseries, and ATP has planted in 322 cities or towns over forty-one seasons.

It seems a sustainable scenario for the future is obvious. The mobile “trees of hope” planted on the Armenian soil become not only the enduring guardians of

the historical event, but they are also part of a larger process, and what I call long-distance arboreal nationalism. One interesting aspect on this process is that it is a special tree, namely the pine tree (*sochi tsarr*), which takes a prominent place in the materialization of the diasporic desire. To illustrate how dead bodies of the past are symbolically turned into a living forest landscape for future generations, where the power of planting acts to maintain the Hayutuin (Armenianness), it is worth turning to some concrete examples.

The Pine Tree

The Hrant Dik Memorial Forest

In 2007, after the assassination of the Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink in Istanbul, a group of wealthy Armenian-American philanthropists, among them Nancy Krikorian from Los Angeles and the Mirak family foundation, suggested planting a memorial forest of 53,000 pine trees – 1,000 trees for each of Dink’s fifty-three years. In this sense, we have an evergreen forest planted as a commemorative ritual for a dead person. Isolated from the environment by a high metal fence, the Hrant Dink pine forest was planted by 2010 in Margahovit, northern Armenia.

The Sose and Allen Memorial Forest

In 2013, another memorial forest-shrine was planted in memory of Sose and Allen, a young Armenian-Canadian couple who, having repatriated to Armenia as volunteers with Birthright Armenia in 2009, died in a car accident. The ATP decided to create a “living memorial” to them by planting a pine forest in Stepanavan, northern Armenia.

The Living Century Initiative

In June 2015, a new initiative was launched by the Armenia Tree Project called the Living Century Initiative. The aim of this project was “to celebrate life and perseverance by remembering your roots and replanting them in our Motherland.” More precisely, the establishment of ten forests in northern Armenia was planned in memory of those places on the territory of the Ottoman Empire, which were left by Armenians at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The aim of this long-term campaign is to create and repopulate in a future green landscape new versions of cities such as Bitlis, Kharpet, Constantinople, or Kars on the modern Armenian territory of “hope.” In the newsletter, the ATP director explicitly invites donors to select their “ancestral region” and to make a generous donation to these planting sites. The main logic of these diasporic imaginaries is focused on the central metaphor of ethnic loss and its regeneration.

The lines of a new geography of “rooted” forests coincide with the border regions of the Armenian republic, such as the Lori region in Northern Armenia, and Shirak on the borderland between Turkey, Armenia, and Georgia. The most

striking point here is the pine tree, which serves as the new symbol and metaphor of pan-Armenian diasporic solidarity, ethnic continuity, and trans-generational organic power among Armenian-Americans. In fact, the pine tree is rarely defined as a typical “native” tree in the Armenian ethno-botanical classification of the vegetation landscape, and environmentalists and experts identify it as a “non-native” species introduced in the nineteenth century from Crimea and Russia. Moreover, the image of the forest is rarely visible as a background or motif in the Armenian cultural repertoire. For centuries, the vision of nature in traditional Armenian culture and folklore was shaped by four central objects: mountains, stones, water, and individual (sacred) trees.

The latter differentiates Armenia from German, American, and Canadian cultures, which tend to focus on the forest itself rather than particular sacred trees. A small green pine tree is depicted on numerous advertising flyers and Internet sites demonstrating the act of planting. According to my observations, the nature of this species is not questioned by those who are involved in this process, and is rather taken for granted by Armenian managers and donors. While coniferous, maple, and oak trees are also cultivated in ATP nurseries and community backyards, the pine tree is perceived as a neutral plant which can “save the planet” and generate Armenian self-reproduction.

However, the question remains as to why the pine tree, a “non-native” conifer, took up such a prominent position in the rhetoric and diasporic environmental interventions of these organizations. Why did they not choose another type of local tree, such as the plane tree typical of the region? According to the data collected during my fieldwork in Armenia and the Boston area, this decision was utilitarian in nature and referred to the pine’s symbolic status. In an interview in September 2013, the manager of the ATP nurseries in Margahovit (Northern Armenia) emphasized the pragmatic value of the pine tree. The most important reason for using pine trees rather than oak trees in the afforestation program in Armenia is the fact that the tree grows quickly in Armenia’s dry climate and, moreover, is easily recognizable in the landscape. The “evergreen” species reinforces the potency of the forest image:

You know, our donors already want to see the results of their investments after two years, and this demands a fast greening landscape. To plant and to grow the local plane tree or the Caucasian oak is a very time consuming and hard process. We need to demonstrate our temporal results and the pine tree is perfect for that.³²

Thus, the forest is conceptualized as a repository for diasporic investments in the future of a homeland. In other words, this example reveals modern ideas of ethnic solidarity on the “territory of hope” rooted in global trees metaphors. If we compare the Armenian experience with the Jewish Zionist movement, there are clear similarities in the reforestation programs and centrality of the pine tree. According to Braverman’s studies on Israel, the pine tree is easily planted and evokes a nostalgic image of a distinctly Eastern European landscape in Palestine, which is appreciated by exiled Jews from Eastern Europe and Germany.³³

At the same time, there is a certain tendency in the discourses around Armenian celebration of future forests; they are shaped by a narrow diasporic hope for the “homeland” and the ethnic fear associated with loss, conflict, and a hostile environment. Diasporic activists determine cultural images of endangered Armenianness by referring to the environmental catastrophe in Armenia. These stories are framed in explicitly ethno-botanical terms and are based on a sense of native purity and indigenoussness. The vitality of Armenia and its green landscape is to be restored through defending native plants and combating the danger coming from invasive non-native trees. Organized around a division between native and non-native species, the list of trees and shrubs foretells possible threats to the Armenian future:

There are many non-Armenian tree species (non-native species), which are invasive and can aggressively occupy an area by crowding out and eventually replacing native, indigenous species of trees. Unfortunately, in Armenia, after the massive tree-cutting period of the early 1990s the planting of invasive species became a common practice, mostly due to lack of awareness of the ecological detriment that planting of invasive species can cause.

[...]

We generally recommend planting only species that are labelled as “native.” Any species labelled “invasive” should never be planted and actually should be removed whenever possible. These invasive species have a particular ability to produce thousands and thousands of seeds that can germinate, grow and eventually shade out native species.³⁴

Among the eighty-four species of trees and shrubs registered on the list, only thirty-two were identified as “our native plants” for the territory of Armenia. The rest are classified as “non-native” organic bodies, among them Aleppo pine, Jerusalem pine, European pine, horse chestnut, mimosa, Judas tree, European dogwood, Pagoda Tree, Nanking Cherry. Three of them are identified by Armenian-Americans as “invasive” and “extremely invasive.” Originating from China, the Tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) appears to be classified as the most dangerous one; *Acer negundo* (boxelder) is imported from United States and Canada, and finally, the Korean honeysuckle tree are considered to be harmful for local horticulture. Such essentialist intertwining of biological metaphors, environmental discourses, and national security reflect the logic of diasporic interventions and the arboreal language of diasporic patriotism in Armenia.

The image of endangered Armenianness may receive an explicit political dimension. A arboreal patriotic emphasis on the centrality of native plants in the process of regeneration was easily transformed into a more radical non-environmental attitude, suggesting patriotic defense of the borderland in ethnic conflicts. For instance, in the summer newsletter from 2016, the ATP emphasized their moral linkages to the mission of defending the nation, in particular during the recent armed conflict with Azerbaijan in May 2016. The executive director, Jeanmarie Papelian, included a vivid story of Andranik Hovsepyan, an ATP driver in Yerevan, who

immediately volunteered to help defend Armenia and whose body was depicted in a military uniform standing alone in a field: “We are so grateful for his service. Andranik is a veteran of the Artsakh war in the 1990s. He began work with ATP as a driver in 2006 and he was never late for an appointment.”³⁵

Within this heroic story, the status of the driver hired at the local office in Yerevan was transformed into the image of a patriotic soldier. The newsletter explained that after returning home safe, Andranik was promoted as a monitor for the ATP forestry team. Although the explicit reference here is to a heroic deed of a local ATP employer, the image of a volunteer’s physical body, standing like a lonely tree in a field, can also be seen as another diasporic imaginary in the process of “planting flag” on a homeland territory. The emotional power of trees can treat the land as sacred and mark issues of specific affective geography, and in this way become responsible for the construction of a moral landscape feeding the diasporic longing for the homeland. Emotional attitudes to trees and treescapes seem to play an important role in reimagining, re-claiming, and relocating the “shrines” of the ancestors with future implications.

Thus, starting in the mid-1990s, Armenian-American tree-planting activism in Armenia has been inspired and shaped by two modern doctrines used in global national and Western environmentalist movements. One is the Zionist construction of the “Promised Land” and the other is “global environmentalism,” a recent green movement countering the destruction of tropical rainforests. Additionally, the Armenian-American concept of rootedness also plays a role. This latter tendency was very much influenced by the flourishing “roots industry” among middle class Americans since the 1980s.³⁶

Conclusion

In this chapter, I wanted to draw attention to the political life of trees and fruits in the daily construction of Armenian arboreal patriotism. Along with the central guardians of patriotic education such as textbooks, museum, exhibitions, and memorials, nature and fruit trees can be highlighted in the repertoire of ethnic representations and mobilize modern long-distance nationalism. Rather than looking at trees in the environmental terms of protection and preservation, this chapter focuses on their cultural and political dimensions, which produce aesthetic symbols of power and a new sense of national exclusiveness. This exclusiveness finds its expression through green contours, native roots metaphors and a physical body of the homeland borders.

I argued that, although contemporary fruits and tree metaphors may refer to local nature and environmental protection discourses, daily celebrations of the “apricot” language and tree-planting activities can support the mobilization of people for a variety of political purposes. Second, the mundane physical act of planting a tree may reproduce and create moments contributing to a phenomenon that Irus Braverman described as “planted flags.”³⁷ In her ethnographic research into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Braverman showed how natural landscape, specific tree species, and law can be used in the struggle between Israelis and Palestinians.

While the Armenian case of politics of nature and its aesthetic differ from the Israeli one in many respects, one can still identify some parallels in the strategies used for (re)claiming the national territory through an appeal to nature.

Yet the projection of the homeland as an evergreen landscape, which has been created by the ATP, is built on European and North American romanticized images of nature. In its aesthetic design and colors, the tree landscape differs from the traditional representations of the Armenian garden, which uses apricot and vineyard metaphors. However, the romantic ideals and cultural practices of tree-planting work well transnationally. Though “planted flags” may lead to reinforcing an ethnic monoculture in a globalized world, Armenians are not unique in instrumentalizing nature for politics; in doing so, they have been very much influenced by outside forces. Starting in the middle of the nineteenth century with the rise of nationalism and continuing in totalitarian ideologies at the beginning of the twentieth century,³⁸ the vernacularization of certain vegetative species became a global phenomenon.

If sacred nature is central to the construction of national identity, the same could be said of *long-distance nationalism*. I agree that the latter is more likely to produce a specific ideology, not just in terms of nostalgic songs and ethnic dance celebrations in immigrant communities, but also in cross border activity designed to influence the political situation and social order on the homeland territory. The emotional power of trees can treat the land as sacred and mark issues of specific geography and personal identification, and in this way become responsible for the construction of a moral landscape feeding long-distance “arboreal nationalism.” In this sense, I would suggest that symbols of fruit trees and forests should not be only conceived as elements of local nature and harmless greenery, but also as flexible means for political messages. Whereas a singular tree can be turned into a local “shrine,” forests may become the Promised Land as it occurs in Israel in the conflict between the Jewish pine tree and the Arabic olive tree. Botanic species can be turned into “natural monuments,” which can be ideologically claimed as being exclusively Armenian. Nature and forests may become “active” and “mobile” guardians of the national homeland and can serve as fences for disputed territories.

Notes

- 1 Tsypylma Darieva, *Making a Homeland: Roots and Routes of Transnational Armenian Engagement* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2023).
- 2 Jane Bennet, *Vibrant Matters: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).
- 3 This article is based on Chapter 5 of my monograph “Making a Homeland. Roots and Routes of Transnational Armenian Engagement” published in 2023 by Transcript: www.transcript-verlag.de/978-3-8376-6254-2/making-a-homeland/
- 4 Irina Petrosyan and David Underwood, *Armenian Food. Fact, Fiction and Folklore* (Yerevan: Armenia, 2005), 139. Furthermore, the authors admit a complexity of the Armenian apricot lineage: “Armenia is referenced in this (apricot) name not because it was its birthplace, but that it was introduced to Greece by Armenian merchants” (Yerevan: Armenia, 2005, 140). The mobility of Armenian merchants seems to be of great

- significance for the proliferation of *tsiran* in the language of Armenian national identity. According to Petrosyan and Underwood, the native term for the apricot fruit, *tsiran*, goes back to the medieval Armenian term *tsirani* used to define red, yellow, purple, rainbow and any pleasant color. The four-volume Armenian language dictionary of word roots, *Hayeren Armatakan Bararan* (Yerevan, 1971) by Hrachia Atcharian served as a source of interpretations for the authors.
- 5 Alexey Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Maïke Lehmann, "Apricot Socialism. The National Past, the Soviet Project and the Imagining of Community in Late Soviet Armenia," *Slavic Review* 74, no. 1 (2015): 11.
 - 6 Ronald Grigor Suny, "Constructing Primordialism: Old Histories for New Nations," *The Journal of Modern History* 73, no. 4 (2001): 890. See also: Mkhitar Gabrielyan et al., *Armenianness Every Day: From Above to Below* (Yerevan: Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, 2015).
 - 7 Compare with Levon Abrahamian, *Armenian Identity in a Changing World* (United States: Mazda Publishers, 2006); Petrosyan and Underwood, *Armenian Food. Fact, Fiction and Folklore*.
 - 8 Armenia's post-Soviet transformation coincided with traumatic experiences of radical economic decline, war with neighboring Azerbaijan, the energy crisis in the 1990s, and a mass emigration of young people. See in Nora Dudwick, "When the Lights Went Out: Poverty in Armenia," in *When Things Fall Apart. Qualitative Studies of Poverty in the Former Soviet Union*, ed. Nora Dudwick, Elizabeth Gomart, and Alexandre Marc (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2003), 117–54; Katy Pearce, "Poverty in the South Caucasus," *Caucasus Analytical Digest* 34 (2011): 2–19.
 - 9 Hamlet Melkumyan, "Vernissage of Yerevan: Flea Market and Souvenir Market," in *Arkheologiia, etnologiia, folkloristika Kavkaza*, ed. Gambashidze G (Meridiani: Tbilisi, 2010), 492–93.
 - 10 Pomegranate was employed by Azerbaijan in the promotion of its official mascots (Jeyran and Nar) during the first European Olympic Games in 2015 in Baku: "Inspired by Azerbaijani nature and heritage, Jeyran the Gazelle and Nar the Pomegranate reflected both the country's proud history and promising future." See: www.baku2015.com
 - 11 Caroline Humphrey, "Ideology in Infrastructure: Architecture and Soviet Imagination," *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute* 11 (2005): 39–58.
 - 12 Irus Braverman, *Planted Flags: Trees, Land, and Law in Israel/Palestine* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
 - 13 Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry, "Introduction: Death and the Regeneration of Life," in *Death and the Regeneration of Life*, ed. Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Laura Rival, *The Social Life of Trees. Anthropological Perspectives on Tree Symbolism* (Oxford: Berg, 1998).
 - 14 Jones Owain and Paul Cloke, *Tree Cultures. The Place of Trees and Trees in Their Place* (Oxford: Berg, 2002).
 - 15 Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995).
 - 16 Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995), 6–7.
 - 17 Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995).
 - 18 Orvar Löfgren, "Die Nationalisierung des Alltagslebens. Konstruktion einer nationalen Ästhetik," in *Kulturen-identitäten-Diskurse persoektiven Europäischer Ethnologie*, ed. Wolfgang Kaschuba (Berlin, 1995), 114–34.
 - 19 Gabrielyan et al., *Armenianness Every Day: From Above to Below*.
 - 20 Simon Payaslian, "Imagining Armenia," in *The Call of the Homeland: Diaspora Nationalism, Past and Present*, ed. Allon Gal, Athena S. Leoussi, and Anthony D. Smith (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 132.
 - 21 Susan Pattie, "New Homeland for an Old Diaspora," in *Homelands and Diasporas. Holy Lands and Other Places*, ed. André Levy and Alex Weingrod (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 49–67.

- 22 Susan Pattie, "New Homeland for an Old Diaspora," in *Homelands and Diasporas. Holy Lands and Other Places*, ed. André Levy and Alex Weingrod (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 55–56.
- 23 Razmik Panossian, *The Armenians: From Kings and Priests to Merchants and Commissars* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 34.
- 24 Pattie, "New Homeland for an Old Diaspora," 55.
- 25 Pattie, "New Homeland for an Old Diaspora," 55.
- 26 Ishkanian, Armine. *Democracy Building and Civil Society in Post-Soviet Armenia* (New York: Routledge, 2008).
- 27 Dudwick, "When the Lights Went Out."
- 28 Tsypylma Darieva, "Rethinking Homecoming. Diasporic Cosmopolitanism in Post-Socialist Armenia," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34, no. 3 (2011): 490–508; Tsypylma Darieva, "Between Long-Distance Nationalism and 'Rooted' Cosmopolitanism? Armenian-American Engagement with Their Homeland," in *East European Diasporas, Migration and Cosmopolitanism*, ed. Ulrike Ziemer and Sean P. Roberts (London: Routledge, 2012), 25–40.
- 29 See: <https://www.armeniatree.org/?lang=en>
- 30 Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1996), 18.
- 31 See the invitation card to a celebration of 20 years of greening Armenia's future: www.armeniatree.org
- 32 Interview with an ATP manager, Yerevan, 2013.
- 33 Braverman, *Planted Flags*, 89.
- 34 See: www.acopiancenter.am/data/docfiles/trees-and-shrubs-of-armenia.asp
- 35 See: www.armenaintree.org
- 36 Ann Reed, *Pilgrimage Tourism of Diaspora Africans to Ghana* (London: Routledge, 2015).
- 37 Irus Braverman, *Planted Flags: Trees, Land, and Law in Israel/Palestine*.
- 38 Cherry blossom badge with an anchor is still the symbol of the Japanese Navy. The state manipulated the Japanese symbol of the cherry blossom to convince people that it was their honor to "die like beautiful falling cherry petals" for the emperor. See Emiko Ohnukie-Tierney, *Kamikadze, Cherry Blossoms and Nationalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

Bibliography

- Abrahamian, Levon. *Armenian Identity in a Changing World*. United States: Mazda Publishers, 2006.
- Bennet, Jane. *Vibrant Matters: A Political Ecology of Things*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Billig, Michael. *Banal Nationalism*. London: Sage, 1995.
- Bloch, Maurice and Jonathan Parry. "Introduction: Death and the Regeneration of Life." In *Death and the Regeneration of Life*, edited by Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Braverman, Irus. *Planted Flags: Trees, Land, and Law in Israel/Palestine*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Darieva, Tsypylma. "Rethinking Homecoming. Diasporic Cosmopolitanism in Post-Socialist Armenia." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34, no. 3 (2011): 490–508.
- Darieva, Tsypylma. "Between Long-Distance Nationalism and "Rooted" Cosmopolitanism? Armenian-American Engagement with Their Homeland." In *East European Diasporas, Migration and Cosmopolitanism*, edited by Ulrike Ziemer and Sean P. Roberts, 25–40. London: Routledge, 2012.
- Darieva, Tsypylma. *Making a Homeland. Roots and Routes of Transnational Armenian Engagement*. Bielefeld: Transcript, 2023.

- Dudwick, Nora. "When the Lights Went Out: Poverty in Armenia." In *When Things Fall Apart: Qualitative Studies of Poverty in the Former Soviet Union*, edited by Nora Dudwick, Elizabeth Gomart, and Alexandre Marc, 117–54. Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2003.
- Gabrielyan, Mkhitar, Hamlet Melqumyan, Satenik Mkrtchyan, and Ruzanna Tsaturyan. *Armenianness Every Day: From ABOVE to Below*. Yerevan: Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, 2015.
- Humphrey, Caroline. "Ideology in Infrastructure: Architecture and Soviet Imagination." *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute* 11 (2005): 39–58.
- Ishkanian, Armine. *Democracy Building and Civil Society in Post-Soviet Armenia*. New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Lehmann, Maïke. "Apricot Socialism. The National Past, the Soviet Project and the Imagining of Community in Late Soviet Armenia." *Slavic Review* 74, no. 1 (2015): 9–31.
- Löfgren, Orvar. "Die Nationalisierung des Alltagslebens. Konstruktion einer nationalen Ästhetik." In *Kulturen, Identitäten, Diskurse: Perspektiven europäischer Ethnologie*, edited by Wolfgang Kaschuba, 114–34. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995.
- Melqumyan, Hamlet. "Vernissage of Yerevan: Flea Market and Souvenir Market." In *Arkheologiya, etnologiya, folkloristika Kavkaza*, edited by Gambashidze G, 492–93. Meridiani: Tbilisi, 2010.
- Ohnukie-Tierney, Emiko. *Kamikadze, Cherry Blossoms and Nationalism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.
- Owain, Jones and Paul Cloke. *Tree Cultures: The Place of Trees and Trees in Their Place*. Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002.
- Panossian, Razmik. *The Armenians: From Kings and Priests to Merchants and Commissars*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006.
- Pattie, Susan. "New Homeland for an Old Diaspora." In *Homelands and Diasporas. Holy Lands and Other Places*, edited by André Levy and Alex Weingrod, 49–67. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005.
- Payaslian, Simon. "Imagining Armenia." In *The Call of the Homeland: Diaspora Nationalism, Past and Present*, edited by Allon Gal, Athena S. Leoussi, and Anthony D. Smith, 105–38. Leiden: Brill, 2010.
- Pearce, Katy. "Poverty in the South Caucasus." *Caucasus Analytical Digest* 34 (2011): 2–19.
- Petrosyan, Irina and David Underwood. *Armenian Food. Fact, Fiction and Folklore*. Yerevan: Armenia, 2005.
- Reed, Ann. *Pilgrimage Tourism of Diaspora Africans to Ghana*. London: Routledge, 2015.
- Rival, Laura. *The Social Life of Trees: Anthropological Perspectives on Tree Symbolism*. Oxford: Berg, 1998.
- Schama, Simon. *Landscape and Memory*. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1996.
- Suny, Ronald Grigor. "Constructing Primordialism: Old Histories for New Nations." *The Journal of Modern History* 73, no. 4 (2001): 862–96.
- Yurchak, Alexey. *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.

8 National, European, or Multicultural?

Ukrainian History Textbooks Reimagine the Country's Past

Serhy Yekelchyk

Post-Soviet Hybridity

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991 Ukrainian school textbooks still celebrated the socialist “friendship of peoples.” Mikhail Gorbachev’s *glasnost* was late in arriving in the Ukrainian SSR, where the conservative party leader Volodymyr Shcherbytsky made few concessions to the democratic opposition before being forced into retirement in 1989. That year, academic historians started cautiously exploring the Western and pre-Soviet perspectives on Ukrainian history, but school textbooks followed this trend only after independence.¹

Their starting point was the late-Soviet concept of Ukrainian history, which fused the elements of a Marxist class approach with a peculiar version of ethnic history resting on the notions of the Russo-Ukrainian brotherhood and Russian guidance. The “friendship of peoples” paradigm served as the obligatory model for discussing the relations between the Ukrainian and Russian nations and, in general, the peoples of the Soviet Union, although it applied to the portrayal of their coexistence in the Russian Empire as well. In fact, the “friendship of peoples” was one way of talking about imperial hierarchies without using the word “empire.” Since Stalin’s time, a nation’s inclusion into the tsarist empire was decreed “progressive” mainly because it established a historical connection with the Russian people. In Ukraine, the alleged age-old striving to unite with “fraternal” Russia was enshrined during the 1940s and 1950s as the national idea of ethnic Ukrainians.²

In its fully developed form during the late-Soviet period, this concept of the Ukrainian past included several major components. Official historical narratives started with Kyivan Rus’ as the “common cradle” of the Russian, Ukrainian, and Belarusian peoples, then proceeded to the “reunification” of Ukraine with Russia in 1654. The master narrative continued to emphasize the Russian leadership during the Revolution, when the evil “Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists” attempted to undermine the historical unity with Russia. However, according to Soviet textbooks, it was not they but the Bolsheviks who established a Ukrainian polity in the form of the Ukrainian SSR and subsequently, in the course of the Great Patriotic War, gathered within it practically all the Ukrainian lands, which had long been divided among different states. The war

allegedly proved the Ukrainian people's commitment to their historical unity with Russia, as opposed to a capitalist nation-state that would be a puppet of foreign imperialists.

The undoing of this late-Soviet historical model did not become the drastic change that one would expect. First, the component of ethnic history was already present in the Soviet narrative, and only the national idea had to be changed from joining Russia to joining Europe. Second, the revision was neither wholesale nor immediate. The administrations of Presidents Leonid Kuchma (1994–2005) and Viktor Yanukovich (2010–2014), which are often characterized as “pro-Russian,” actually pursued a more ambiguous politics of memory. The historian Andrii Portnov has aptly called it hybrid or heterogeneous, because it allowed for the coexistence of seemingly incompatible interpretations in the context of diverse regional identities.³ To put it simply, history textbooks combined the elements of the old Soviet approach with those of the Ukrainian national narrative that had been preserved in the diaspora and transferred from there back to Ukraine.⁴ On the ground, teachers in Lviv could emphasize some aspects of these hybrid narratives and those in the Donbas, completely different ones. This ambivalence became gradually erased after the Orange Revolution (2004–2005) and more decisively, after the Revolution of Dignity (2013–2014) and the beginning of Russian aggression in 2014. This process unfolded most visibly, but not exclusively, in connection with the misleadingly called “decommunization” policies (starting in 2015) and the activities of the Institute of National Memory aimed at undoing the legacy of Russian and Soviet rule.⁵ The 2016 revisions to the school curricula were similar in spirit, introducing for the first time, for example, a notion already tested elsewhere in Eastern Europe—that of the “Soviet occupation” (initially, only in reference to the outcome of the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921).⁶

Chronologically, the important signposts on the road to a Ukrainian national narrative, no matter how hybrid, included the introduction of the concept of the Ukrainian “national revival” within the Habsburg and Romanov empires (in Vitaly Sarbei's textbook during the early 1990s) and Fedir Turchenko's rehabilitation of the nationalist side both during the Revolution and World War II in his popular textbooks that appeared in 1994 and 1996, respectively.⁷ However, it was the interpretation proposed by Stanislav Kulchytsky in the report of the working group of historians that he headed between 1997 and 2004, as well as in his textbooks, which came to prevail in the narratives of twentieth-century Ukrainian history.⁸ His interpretation allowed for the two presumably equal trends in the Ukrainian resistance movement during the war: the pro-Soviet and the nationalist.

This type of hybridity (in the sense of combining the elements of Soviet or Russian interpretations with those taken from the Ukrainian national paradigm) continues to survive in present-day textbooks, but there is also a deeper kind of hybridity marking the persistence of the Soviet-style understanding of social change and subjects of history.⁹

Writing Ukraine into Europe

In considering the development of the new, “European” narrative of the Ukrainian past, one can see its complex interaction with the “national paradigm” and the Soviet legacy of history writing. The initial stage of this process involved a largely declarative Europeanization of Ukrainian history, which was often accomplished by Soviet-style methods. The actual transformation of Ukrainian history textbooks according to European models is going to take a long time.

It is worth noting that the European idea acquired new meaning in Ukraine after the Orange Revolution and the Revolution of Dignity. Under President Kuchma the notion of Ukraine’s European policy orientation coexisted with the view of Russia as also potentially European, even with the idea that the two countries could join Europe together.¹⁰ In 2002, the historians of the two countries held a joint conference on “Russia and Ukraine in the European Cultural Space.”¹¹ However, Russia’s own “Eurasianist” choice under Putin, as well as the Russian’s leader’s condemnation of pro-Western Ukrainian revolutionaries, established in Ukraine the dichotomy between “Europe” and “Russia” as two opposing political choices. For many, this dualism rested on the long history of essentializing “Europe” and “Asia” as incompatible political and cultural entities—and assigning Russia to “Asia.” Disentangling the political choice and the historical stereotype will one day become a challenge for Ukrainian historians, but at present they are focusing on something else: the final purge of Soviet historical interpretations.

When looking at Ukrainian history textbooks, one notices immediately that the titles of chapters and sections often coincide, either word for word or in part. This is because it is the program, approved by the Ministry of Education, which determines the main issues to be covered in the History curriculum. The textbook authors then try to tailor the structure of their texts to coincide with the program as much as possible. What happens as a result is that, by determining the chapter and paragraph titles, the Ministry defines the overall narrative frame. For instance, if the section of the program and title of a chapter is about the “Ukrainian state,” then clearly the authors have to take a statist approach in this chapter and focus on a Ukrainian state as their central theme. Or, if a chapter’s title reads “Ukraine’s Participation in European Economic and Cultural Processes,” then clearly the textbooks’ argument is going to be about Ukraine having been a part of Europe during that particular historical period. What will be implicit in this argument is, of course, that Ukraine was not—or not really—part of the “Asiatic” Russian Empire.

What are the salient points marking the post-2014 textbook narratives? One marks the transition from calling the medieval state of the Eastern Slavs Kyivan Rus’—a term invented by modern historians—to referring to it as Rus’-Ukraine. (The chronicles called this polity simply the land of Rus’, thus leaving it to later historians to invent the name for the state.) The Ukrainian historian Mykhailo Hrushevsky (1866–1934) popularized the hyphenated name “Ukraine-Rus’” with the publication of his multivolume *History of Ukraine-Rus’* beginning in 1898. His

original intention was to bridge the different terminology used by Ukrainian patriots in the Habsburg and Romanov empires, but the term also undermined the identification of medieval Rus' with Russia, while claiming it for Ukrainian history.¹² Present-day textbooks are opaque about their very similar ideological agenda; one of them explains instead that historians have every right to use the term "Rus'-Ukraine" because most of this state's territory now belongs to Ukraine: "The territory of present-day Ukraine constituted the political, economic, and cultural center of this large medieval empire."¹³

Students find out from their textbooks that this medieval empire was both European and "multinational." But what exactly made the Kyivan state European—and thus implicitly different from that of Muscovy and the Russian Empire? A modern historian would look at the shared social and cultural processes. However, it would not make for a strong argument to claim, as one textbook does, that the similarity between primitive Paleolithic labor tools unearthed by Ukrainian archeologists and ones found in Germany, Poland, and Slovakia demonstrates that "from the very beginning of history the territory of Ukraine developed as part of Europe."¹⁴

Textbook authors also argue that the traditional periodization of the medieval period in Europe is fully applicable to Ukraine because the Kyivan state was "an organic component of medieval Europe."¹⁵ Yet, there are serious problems in trying to fit Ukrainian history into the usual chronological borders of the Early, Classical, and Late Middle Ages, not to mention the absence of Latin as the universal language of learning. Soviet scholars had experienced difficulties with the application of the concept of feudalism to Kyivan Rus', but had to use it because it was important for Marxist theory. Decades later, Ukrainian textbook authors kept it because it connected the Kyivan polity to Western Europe.¹⁶ When everything else fails, there is also a circular geographic argument: "The periodization of Ukrainian history coincides with the periodization of the medieval period in other European countries. This is not incidental. Ukraine is located in East-Central Europe, and pan-European historical processes did not bypass it. Therefore, it is natural that the history of Ukraine is a component of European history."¹⁷

However, one region of Ukraine is excluded occasionally from this essentialist Medieval Europeaness—the Southeast, where pro-Russian political parties predominated in recent decades, enabling the Russian annexation of the Crimea and parts of the Donbas. In ancient times, the Southeast "constituted the western section of the Great Steppe." The attacks of the nomads arriving through this corridor "undermined the economic and military might of our ancestors, and distracted them from the amelioration of their land."¹⁸ It is difficult not to notice here an implicit reference to present-day events, as well as the unproblematic "othering" of this crucial region.

Textbook authors experience similar difficulties with the notion of Ukraine as a multiethnic land. One textbook even defines the Kyivan state as an "empire" populated by over twenty peoples, while another calls it "an early Feudal multinational

empire similar to Charlemagne's empire."¹⁹ The term "empire" is probably intended to underscore Ukraine's past greatness, and it is used here in a positive sense; later, the same textbook speaks of Rus'-Ukraine as a "multiethnic state."²⁰ In contrast, it has an unequivocally negative connotation in textbooks dealing with the Modern period. Much more common in textbooks covering the Ukrainian history before the twentieth century is the positive affirmation of Ukraine as the motherland of all its nationalities—usually without any discussion of historical relations among them. One conceptual slippage in particular makes this omission possible: the failure to define the "Ukrainian people."

Thus, students are told that "the Ukrainian land became the Motherland not only of Ukrainians, but also Belarusians, Russians, Crimean Tatars, Jews, Greeks, Karaims, Hungarians, Romanians, Moldovans, Gagauz, Poles, and Armenians—of everyone who, by the will of fate, connected their lives with Ukraine. The history of Ukraine is the common history of the entire Ukrainian people."²¹ In this quote, the "Ukrainian people" clearly stands for the multiethnic population of the land that is now Ukraine.

However, the task of constructing a friendly, multinational Ukraine soon begins to interfere with the equally important ideological agenda of separating the Ukrainians from the Russians as early as possible. For that purpose, textbook authors need a different ethnic concept of the Ukrainian people. Thus, it is already during the Great Migration (fourth to seventh centuries) that the "foundations were laid for the formation of the three different East Slavic peoples: Belarusians, Russians, and Ukrainians."²² This statement also undermines the Soviet notion of the Old Rus' nationality as the common cradle of the three East Slavic nations. But when exactly did Ukrainians become a separate ethnic group? The authors claim that it was the adoption of Christianity in the late tenth century that helped establish the political and cultural unity of the East Slavic tribes: "The Ukrainian ethnos was formed as a result."²³

However, the multicultural aspect is not really discussed. The authors state that there were other ethnic groups living in this polity, but they never really engage the question of the relations between them and the East Slavic majority or whether one can telescope back the modern notion of multiculturalism, which is linked to the equally modern concept of citizenship.

Defining the Nation

The next salient point is that the concept of nation operates in many textbooks on two different levels. On the one hand, there is a notion, universally accepted in Ukraine, of the national revival that took place from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century, and which is understood as a "recovery" of national consciousness or "revival" of historical memory.²⁴ This notion is based on the sound research of Western scholars on the social composition and ideological evolution of the Ukrainian national movement, but interpreted through the lens of Romantic nationalism, which in this case is supposed to be the object of study, but becomes instead a methodology. The concept of the Ukrainian nation thus introduced is an

anthropomorphic one, typical of the primordialist school: A nation is like a fully-formed person, who is asleep but needs to be awakened by patriots. Once this happens, the nation proceeds naturally to fighting for its own state: “What results from the revival is the emergence and growth of the movement for restoring a native nation-state.”²⁵ Ernest Gellner famously defined this type of patriotic belief as “sleeping-beauty” nationalism.²⁶

Intriguingly, though, such a concept of the nation does not conform to the actual definition of nation that one finds in the same textbook: “A nation is a historical community of people that is formed based on the common territory they inhabit, [their] language, cultural features, character, [and] economic connections.”²⁷ This is the well-known definition that Stalin offered in his 1913 work on *Marxism and the National Question*, except that the textbook does not mention the author and, in any case, the authors probably did not take it directly from Stalin’s work but from a long tradition of Soviet textbooks and dictionaries that defined a nation precisely this way. This is a good example of a holdover from the Soviet dogmatic version of Marxism, and there are more similar instances in other textbooks.

But such dualism creates a problem for understanding the concept of nation. If a nation only wakes up at the time of the national revival, then who were the Ukrainians before that point? Some textbooks solve this difficulty by distinguishing between an ethnos and a nation—the latter is defined as an ethnos that “entered the sphere of political life and determines independently its political aim, tasks, and ways of achieving them.”²⁸ It may seem that the textbook author is stressing here the work of modern national imagination and perhaps even national mobilization, albeit through continued reliance on an anthropomorphic depiction of both nation and ethnos as united organisms. In reality, such a definition admits the possibility of bringing back primordialism through the back door: “The Ukrainian people remained in the condition of an ethnos for over a thousand years.”²⁹ Furthermore, nineteenth-century racial-anthropology notions of the Ukrainian national character can be introduced as fully valid, in particular the supposedly eternal democratic inclinations of freedom-loving Ukrainians, as well as their dreamy disposition, romantic emotionality, and fatalism.³⁰

Yet, in the end, this textbook’s actual description of Ukrainian nation building during the nineteenth century is also based on Stalin’s “objective” criteria. In addition to a common territory and historical past, these include economic ties, although the latter link back to ethnic features: “Fairs united the Ukrainian economy into a single Ukrainian national market” and, more generally, trade “assisted the formation of features common to the majority of the Ukrainian people.”³¹ Here one starts to wonder how to reconcile this nation-building role of capitalist trade with the predominance of Jews in trade and among the urban population in some regions, which this author also notes.³²

Prominent in Ukrainian history textbooks is the term “national liberation movement” (*natsionalno-vyzvolnyi rukh*). It is applied across the board, starting with the Bohdan Khmelnytsky rebellion of the mid-sixteenth century. At least one textbook also insists that Khmelnytsky had a clear plan—even a “program”

of Ukrainian state-building. The notion of “national liberation” is also applied to the discussion of the nineteenth century, even to its early decades, when patriotic intellectuals had only begun formulating the cultural foundations of their people’s identity.³³ If one is to believe that the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood (1845–1847) marked the emergence of an “all-national Ukrainian ideology shared by the Ukrainian aristocracy and peasantry alike,”³⁴ then, indeed, the only task of Ukrainian activists would appear to be liberating their land from Russian imperial control. In reality, before 1917 their main task was reaching out to the peasantry, which had to be recruited for membership in a modern nation and, during 1917 and 1918, transitioning from the notion of a socialist federation to that of independent Ukraine.

The Nation-State and its Elites

The concept of a national liberation movement is especially common in the discussion of the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1920 and the activities of the Ukrainian nationalist guerrillas during and immediately after World War II. This term is also used for the dissident movement in the postwar Soviet Union and the mass political mobilization in the years before the Soviet collapse. For example, the Ukrainian dissidents of the 1960s and 1970s “became a living representation of the indestructible nature of the Ukrainian national liberation movement, Ukraine’s striving for a better life and the creation of a sovereign independent state.”³⁵

The authors conveniently ignore the fact that the majority of Ukrainian dissidents used the works of Lenin to criticize the late-Soviet state, and few pushed for outright independence. In other words, the struggle for “national liberation” appears to be present constantly in Ukrainian history. This teleology of national liberation would look familiar to previous generations of Ukrainians, who studied from Soviet textbooks. The historical experience of the Ukrainian nation should be narrated as reflecting its principal aim, be it the reunification with Russia or the acquisition of a Ukrainian nation-state. If it is the latter, it introduces perfect logic into the attempts to establish the continuity of the state tradition, because it would make sense that the primordial nation was constantly attempting to establish its statehood.

It is easy to see that this statist understanding needs to be reconciled with the relatively more complex concept of a nation requiring a national revival in order to develop fully. This task is achieved through an emphasis on the national elites. Of course, scholars who have sought to explain the peculiarities of nation building in Eastern Europe have also relied on the concept of non-existent national elites (because the nobility had assimilated) and the development during the nineteenth century of a new type of national elite comprised intellectuals, who then start reaching out to the masses. But these followers of Miroslav Hroch proceed from the notion of a modern nation—as an imagined community and a horizontal brotherhood—only really coming into existence with the mobilization of the masses.³⁶ On the contrary, the textbooks imply that the “people” were

always Ukrainian, but the state existed only during periods when the elites were “true” to their nation.

Thus, one commonly encounters in textbooks the definition of Kyivan Rus’ as the “first Ukrainian princely state” and the Principality of Galicia-Volhynia as the “second Ukrainian princely state.”³⁷ After that, the Ukrainian lands belonged to other states, until the next attempt to resume the national state tradition, the Khmelnytsky Rebellion.

Another important narrative thread is the participation of the Ukrainian lands in “European cultural processes” and multiculturalism, which comes back at various points and often in interesting ways. One recent textbook, for example, makes an outlandish claim about the Ukrainian history and the history of the Crimean Tatars, namely, that the Ukrainians and the Crimean Tatars shared a “similar historical fate” and that they were “united by a single motherland.” Such an interpretive turn goes contrary to the main tenets of national history as the history of the nation, and can only be explained by the Russian annexation of the Crimea in 2014 and the subsequent emphasis in Ukraine on the Crimean Tatars as the peninsula’s true owners. The claim that Ukraine and the Crimea constituted a “single motherland” long before the Soviet Union came into existence is paradoxical. The Ukrainian national narrative continues to glorify the Zaporozhian Cossacks as the defenders of their country against the raids of those very same Crimean (and Nogay) Tatars. As we can see, the concept of motherland becomes very plastic here, which is generally a good thing because it defies any ethnic exclusivity.

The Nation-State and its Others

At least, this is how things look in theory. It is instructive to examine the representations of another ethnic group, whose presence in the Ukrainian lands has been significant throughout history—the Jews. The Jews first appear (without any explanations of where they came from), together with the Greeks, Bulgarians, and Armenians, as traders at Kyiv’s public markets during the tenth and eleventh centuries.³⁸ After that they disappear again for a long period. Students are told that by the late eighteenth century, Jews constituted 3.5 percent of the population in Right-Bank Ukraine and 10 percent in Galicia, which made them the second-largest national minority after the Poles.³⁹

Yet there is nothing about the relations between the Jewish and Ukrainian communities or major changes in Jewish cultural life, such as the Haskalah. Moreover, on the rare occasions when the Jews are mentioned, the authors include them on the list of aliens, who took certain social sectors away from the indigenous population. Thus, in the early nineteenth century in the Ukrainian lands of the Russian Empire, “Traders were predominantly Russians, Jews, and merchants of foreign origins (especially in the South), while tradesmen were Ukrainians.”⁴⁰ Students do not discover what place the Jews occupied in the division of labor in the Habsburg Empire, and why, but are told merely that some small towns in Galicia were “almost completely Jewish” and that Jews constituted approximately a third of the

population in larger urban centers, including Lviv: “Traditionally their life was based on the precepts of the Talmud.”⁴¹

In this framework, it is only natural that Ukrainians are going to reclaim their social and economic place. Indeed, this is what the authors see happening in Galicia as modern market relations develop and peasants start “squeezing out the intermediaries of other national backgrounds, primarily Jews.”⁴² Fortunately, this process did not involve “bloody excesses,” because the Ukrainian Catholic Church “did not foment xenophobia and hatred of the Jews, who were of a different creed, but, on the contrary, called for religious tolerance and reconciliation.”⁴³ This is, of course, an attempt to explain away the pogroms of 1881 in the Russian Empire, which are not mentioned in the textbook, even though many of them took place in what is now Ukraine. The authors imply that interethnic tensions resulted from economic competition, but the Ukrainian “national” church mitigated them, unlike the (implicitly xenophobic) Russian Orthodox Church.

The Holocaust is mentioned in Ukrainian textbooks, but exclusively as a Nazi crime committed in Ukraine. They shy away from any discussion of the role the largely Ukrainian auxiliary police played in the Holocaust or the Jewish question in the ideology of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists.⁴⁴ Similarly, textbooks discuss only in an evasive way the ethnic cleansing of Polish civilians in Volhynia in 1943.⁴⁵ This event is framed as the result of the Ukrainian nationalist insurgents’ failed attempt to “establish an understanding with the Polish national forces.”⁴⁶ In addition to sharing (implicitly) the blame for the ethnic cleansing with the Polish underground, such an interpretation also bypasses the larger historical context. The Volhynian tragedy needs to be contextualized as part of complex Ukrainian-Polish relations, which involved an escalation of violence during the war years. At the same time, coordinated mass attacks on Polish civilians initiated in a single night throughout Volhynia were without precedent. Nationalist ideology and the wartime experience of mass murder must be part of the explanation.⁴⁷

The methodology of constructing a history textbook in present-day Ukraine is also worth considering. An approach that is becoming increasingly popular in the upper grades is introducing longer excerpts from primary sources, seemingly a device for developing pupils’ ability to interpret historical evidence. But both the selection and the exact positioning of these texts in the textbook can be more telling than direct interpretive commentary by its authors.

For example, a textbook supplement for Grade 10—actually, several chapters printed in 2015 as a thin paperback to bring the textbook’s chronological coverage with the changed curriculum—opens with a very long quote from a book that an émigré Ukrainian author published shortly after the Revolution of 1917–1920. The quote is so long that one does not see immediately where it ends, because it continues for over two pages. It can be mistaken easily for a text written by the authors, and for all intents and purposes it does serve as an introduction to the book. It is this quote, rather than the authorial analysis, which introduces such important notions as the “inhumane rule of the Bolsheviks” and the “general terror against Ukrainians,” which they implemented.⁴⁸ This information is introduced through the voice of an émigré Ukrainian politician, but in

such a way that it can be mistaken for the voice of the textbook authors. Such a method of presenting major conceptual points is similar to the Soviet convention of quoting Marx or Lenin at length instead of formulating and substantiating their own conceptual vision. When one finds in the same publication small inserts of authorial voice, they simply continue the line that the Soviet power in Ukraine was a rule by “occupiers.”⁴⁹

Searching for Ukrainian Capitalism, War, and Revolution

In general, recent textbooks structure their narrative of World War II around the thesis of “two currents” in the resistance movement in Ukraine, the nationalist guerrillas and the Soviet partisans.⁵⁰ Such a take on the war diminishes the contribution of the millions of Ukrainians who fought in the ranks of the Red Army—numerically the largest group by far of ethnic Ukrainians (and Soviet Ukrainian residents of other ethnic backgrounds), who fought on the Allied side in the war. Conveniently enough, framing the Ukrainian war experience as a story of two, implicitly equal resistance movements also diminishes and, in many textbooks, erases completely the existence of the volunteer SS Galicia Division. Just like the experience of Ukrainians in the Red Army, the case of those who volunteered for the SS Galicia Division calls for careful historical contextualization—something that is difficult to achieve in a school textbook. Still, omitting such a discussion or cutting it short is not a productive solution. It is telling that such an approach to the war is not the result of the Russian attack on Ukraine in 2014. It can be found in textbooks published during President Yanukovich’s term of office.

Another salient point is the one-sided discussion of the Revolution of 1917–1920, with its social component given short shrift. Curiously enough, one can identify in textbooks a number of holdovers from the Soviet social sciences, but not necessarily any assessments of key events. The agrarian revolt of 1917–1918 and the upending of urban social relations are usually missing because the overall story is framed as part of Ukrainian state building, its principal milestones being the creation of the Ukrainian People’s Republic and the Hetman State. For textbook authors, the concept of a Ukrainian state is the central point of their narrative, whereas the notion of a social revolution is suspect; the latter is seen either as part of the Bolshevik plot to take over Ukraine or an unfortunate social phenomenon that contributed to the Bolshevik victory over the Ukrainian national governments. Hence the focus on the Ukrainian “state-building process” in 1917–1920.⁵¹

The combination of Soviet holdovers in methodology with the aim of privileging nation and state building produces paradoxical results. Two textbooks in this sample featured a discussion of monopolistic capitalism as the late stage of capitalism—an explanation of why the revolution was historically predetermined that is taken from Lenin via old Soviet textbooks. This concept leads nowhere because the Ukrainian Revolution in the new textbooks is not a social revolt, but a national one. The textbook by Reient and Malii develops this contradiction to the fullest. On the one hand, it uses recognizable Marxist language in discussing

the development of the “rural bourgeoisie” and “rural proletariat” in the Ukrainian countryside following the reform of 1861. The authors also reproduce Lenin’s definition of “monopolistic capitalism,” although they call it a “new” rather than “last” stage of capitalism.⁵² At the same time, they refrain from discussing the development of a revolutionary movement. Throughout the textbook, they emphasize the essential goodness of native Ukrainian capitalists, who allegedly cared well for their workers. The textbook authors finally attempt to suppress Marxist language in favor of a clerical nativism in a chapter with the bewildering title “Church and Religious Life in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century. Ukrainian Entrepreneurs–Benefactors.”⁵³ There, students learn that, because the Russian Orthodox Church was in crisis, many seminary students “joined the ranks of the godless revolutionaries.” Since these revolutionaries could become “even more dangerous enemies of everything Ukrainian than their Orthodox predecessors,” it was even more important that Ukrainian capitalists step in to support “Ukrainian spirituality and culture.”⁵⁴

Conclusion

To sum up, the representative selection of textbooks analyzed in this chapter demonstrates a rather slow transition to Western models. The European narrative remains largely declarative, because no Western-style historical methods are introduced. Social history, the history of everyday life, women’s history, and the history of various minorities remain on the margins of Ukrainian textbooks, whereas in the West they have long been seen as fundamental. The national paradigm and political history continue predominating in Ukrainian school textbooks.

However, the reality on the ground, at least before the start of the all-out Russian invasion in 2022, has been different, because teachers have had their own political or regionalist sympathies. The regional nature of Ukrainian politics created pockets of post-Soviet nostalgia and pro-Russian sentiment in many eastern and southeastern regions. For example, in 2016 a group of Ukrainian teachers in Zaporizhia, which included a school principal, was investigated by the Ukrainian security service for their membership in pro-Russian social networks and the anti-Ukrainian statements they made there.⁵⁵ The new language about a “Soviet occupation” has also caused unease among some teachers.⁵⁶ An independent association of Ukrainian schoolteachers of history and social science, *Nova doba* (New Age), has been working for two decades to assist teachers in the transition to new programs, but its visibility remains relatively low.⁵⁷

Given that national history and Ukraine’s European choice have emerged as an important ideological battleground in Russia’s war on Ukraine, it is crucial that Ukrainian historical narratives transition from a declarative Europeanness to writing the history of Ukraine in a modern European way. Teaching students to deconstruct colonial narrative frameworks and understand Ukraine as a multiethnic political community based on democratic choice would give Ukraine an advantage over the rigid and confrontational kind of imperialistic history taught in Putin’s Russia.

Notes

- 1 Fedir Turchenko, *Ukraina—povernennia istorii: Heneza suchasnoho pidruchnyka* (Kyiv: Heneza, 2016), 11–13.
- 2 See Serhy Yekelchyk, *Stalin's Empire of Memory: Russian-Ukrainian Relations in the Soviet Historical Imagination* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004). Several aspects of this chapter are explored in more depth in my book *Writing the Nation: The Ukrainian Historical Profession in Independent Ukraine and the Diaspora* (Stuttgart: ibidem, 2023).
- 3 Andrei Portnov, *Uprazhneniia s istoriei po-ukrainski* (Moscow: OGI-Polit.ru-Memorial, 2010), 101–3.
- 4 This is true of the transformation in Ukrainian historiography in general. See Serhy Yekelchyk, “Bridging the Past and the Future: Ukrainian History Writing Since Independence,” *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 53, nos. 2–4 (2011): 45–62.
- 5 See Oxana Shevel, “Decommunization in Post-Euromaidan Ukraine: Law and Practice,” *PONARS Eurasia*, January 2016, <https://www.ponarseurasia.org/memo/decommunization-post-euromaidan-ukraine-law-and-practice> (accessed June 2024).
- 6 “Prohrama dlia zahalnoosvitnikh navchalnykh zakladiv. Istoriiia Ukrainy. 10–11 klasy. Riven standartu,” 7, <https://mon.gov.ua/ua/osvita/zagalna-serednya-osvita/navchalni-programi/navchalni-programi-dlya-10-11-klasiv>.
- 7 Turchenko, *Ukraina—povernennia istorii*, 47–58.
- 8 See Oksana Myshlovska, “Establishing the ‘Irrefutable Facts’ about the OUN and UPA: The Role of the Working Group of Historians on OUN-UPA Activities in Mediating Memory-Based Conflict in Ukraine,” *Ab Imperio*, no. 1 (2018): 223–54.
- 9 On this, see Serhy Yekelchyk, “A Long Goodbye: The Legacy of Soviet Marxism in Post-Communist Ukrainian Historiography,” *Ab Imperio*, no. 4 (2012): 401–16.
- 10 Kataryna Wolczuk, “History, Europe, and the ‘National Idea’: The ‘Official’ Narrative of National Identity in Ukraine,” *Nationalities Papers* 28, no. 4 (2000): 671–94, here 685.
- 11 Georgiy Kassianov [Kasianov], “Common Past, Different Visions: The Ukrainian-Russian Encounters over School History Textbooks, 1990s–2010s,” *Bildung und Erziehung* 75, no. 2 (2022): 145–63, here 153.
- 12 See Serhii Plokhyy, *Unmaking Imperial Russia: Mykhailo Hrushevsky and the Writing of Ukrainian History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 167–71.
- 13 Iu. Iu. Svidersky, N. Iu. Romanyshyn, and T. V. Laduchenko, *Istoriiia Ukrainy: Pidruchnyk dlia 7 klasu zahalnoosvitnikh navchalnykh zakladiv* (Kyiv: Hramota, 2015), 33–34. The same term, but without any explanation, is used alternately with the “Kyivan State” in N. M. Hupan, I. I. Smahin, and O. I. Pometun, *Istoriiia Ukrainy: Pidruchnyk dlia 7 klasu zahalnoosvitnikh navchalnykh zakladiv* (Kyiv: Osvita, 2016).
- 14 Svidersky et al., *Istoriiia Ukrainy*, 5.
- 15 V. A. Smolii and V. S. Stepankov, *Istoriiia Ukrainy: Pidruchnyk dlia 7 klasu zahalnoosvitnikh navchalnykh zakladiv* (Kyiv: Heneza, 2007), 7.
- 16 Svidersky et al., *Istoriiia Ukrainy*, 82.
- 17 Svidersky et al., *Istoriiia Ukrainy*, 11.
- 18 Svidersky et al., *Istoriiia Ukrainy*.
- 19 Smolii and Stepankov, *Istoriiia Ukrainy*, 80.
- 20 Svidersky et al., *Istoriiia Ukrainy*, 179.
- 21 Svidersky et al., *Istoriiia Ukrainy*, 9.
- 22 Svidersky et al., *Istoriiia Ukrainy*, 18.
- 23 Svidersky et al., *Istoriiia Ukrainy*, 61.
- 24 O. Reient and O. Malii, *Istoriiia Ukrainy: Pidruchnyk dlia 9 klasu zahalnoosvitnikh navchalnykh zakladiv*, 2nd ed. (Kyiv: Heneza, 2011), 14–15.
- 25 O. Reient and O. Malii, *Istoriiia Ukrainy: Pidruchnyk dlia 9 klasu zahalnoosvitnikh navchalnykh zakladiv*, 2nd ed. (Kyiv: Heneza, 2011), 14.
- 26 See Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 48.

- 27 Reient and Malii, *Istoriia Ukrainy*, 8.
- 28 O. K. Strukevych, *Istoriia Ukrainy: Pidruchnyk dlia 9 klasu zahalnoosvitnikh navchalnykh zakladiv* (Kyiv: Hramota, 2009), 13.
- 29 O. K. Strukevych, *Istoriia Ukrainy: Pidruchnyk dlia 9 klasu zahalnoosvitnikh navchalnykh zakladiv* (Kyiv: Hramota, 2009).
- 30 O. K. Strukevych, *Istoriia Ukrainy: Pidruchnyk dlia 9 klasu zahalnoosvitnikh navchalnykh zakladiv* (Kyiv: Hramota, 2009), 20.
- 31 O. K. Strukevych, *Istoriia Ukrainy: Pidruchnyk dlia 9 klasu zahalnoosvitnikh navchalnykh zakladiv* (Kyiv: Hramota, 2009), 91.
- 32 O. K. Strukevych, *Istoriia Ukrainy: Pidruchnyk dlia 9 klasu zahalnoosvitnikh navchalnykh zakladiv* (Kyiv: Hramota, 2009), 30 and 210.
- 33 Reient and Malii, *Istoriia Ukrainy*, 5.
- 34 Reient and Malii, *Istoriia Ukrainy*, 89.
- 35 F. H. Turchenko, P. P. Panchenko, and S. M. Tymchenko, *Novitnia istoriia Ukrainy (1939–pochatok XXI st.): Pidruchnyk dlia 11 klasa zahalnoosvitnikh navchalnykh zakladiv*, 5th ed. (Kyiv: Heneza, 2006), 166.
- 36 See, e.g., Alexander Maxwell, “Twenty-Five Years of A-B-C: Miroslav Hroch’s Impact on Nationalism Studies,” *Nationalities Papers* 36, no. 6 (November 2010): 773–76.
- 37 Svidersky et al., *Istoriia Ukrainy*, 179.
- 38 Svidersky et al., *Istoriia Ukrainy*, 94.
- 39 Reient and Malii, *Istoriia Ukrainy*, 22.
- 40 Reient and Malii, *Istoriia Ukrainy*, 24.
- 41 Reient and Malii, *Istoriia Ukrainy*, 29.
- 42 Reient and Malii, *Istoriia Ukrainy*, 156.
- 43 Reient and Malii, *Istoriia Ukrainy*, 157.
- 44 This observation fits in with the findings of Johan Dietsch, “Textbooks and the Holocaust in Independent Ukraine: An Uneasy Past,” *European Education*, 44, no. 3 (October 2012): 67–94.
- 45 Other textbooks do not mention the Volhynian events at all. See, e.g., O. I. Pometun and N. M. Hupan, *Istoriia Ukrainy: Pidruchnyk dlia 11 klasu zahalnoosvitnikh navchalnykh zakladiv* (Kharkiv: Sytsyia, 2012).
- 46 Turchenko et al., *Novitnia istoriia Ukrainy*, 45.
- 47 See Timothy Snyder, “The Causes of the Polish-Ukrainian Ethnic Cleansing, 1943,” *Past & Present*, no. 179 (May 2003): 197–234; Andrii Portnov, *Poland and Ukraine: Entangled Histories, Asymmetric Memories*, Forum Transregionale Studien Essays, no. 7 (Berlin: Forum Transregionale Studien, 2020).
- 48 Vitalii Vlasov and Stanislav Kulchytsky, *Istoriia Ukrainy 1921–1938: Navchalnyi posibnyk dlia zahalnoosvitnikh navchalnykh zakladiv* (Kyiv: Litera, 2015), 4.
- 49 Vitalii Vlasov and Stanislav Kulchytsky, *Istoriia Ukrainy 1921–1938: Navchalnyi posibnyk dlia zahalnoosvitnikh navchalnykh zakladiv* (Kyiv: Litera, 2015), 21.
- 50 Turchenko et al., *Novitnia istoriia Ukrainy*, 23.
- 51 S. V. Kulchytsky and Iu. H. Lebedieva, *Istoriia Ukrainy: Pidruchnyk dlia 10 klasu zahalnoosvitnikh navchalnykh zakladiv* (Kyiv: Heneza, 2010), 175 and 285.
- 52 Reient and Malii, *Istoriia Ukrainy*, 145–46 and 154; see also Kulchytsky and Lebedieva, *Istoriia Ukrainy*, 23 and 67.
- 53 Reient and Malii, *Istoriia Ukrainy*, 217.
- 54 Reient and Malii, *Istoriia Ukrainy*, 218.
- 55 *KP v Ukraini*, 16 August 2016, 5.
- 56 *Vesti*, 12 August 2016, 4.
- 57 See its website: Vseukrainska asotsiatsiia vykladachiv istorii ta sotsialnykh nauk “Nova doba”: <https://www.novadoba.org.ua/>.

Bibliography

- Dietsch, Johan. "Textbooks and the Holocaust in Independent Ukraine: An Uneasy Past." *European Education* 44, no. 3 (2012): 67–94.
- Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983.
- Hupan, N. M., I. I. Smahin, and O. I. Pometun. *Istoriia Ukrainy: Pidruchnyk dlia 7 klasu zahalnoosvitnikh navchalnykh zakladiv*. Kyiv: Osvita, 2016.
- Kasianov, Georgiy. "Common Past, Different Visions: The Ukrainian-Russian Encounters over School History Textbooks, 1990s–2010s." *Bildung und Erziehung* 75, no. 2 (2022): 145–63.
- Maxwell, Alexander. "Twenty-Five Years of A-B-C: Miroslav Hroch's Impact on Nationalism Studies." *Nationalities Papers* 36, no. 6 (2010): 773–76.
- Myshlovska, Oksana. "Establishing the 'Irrefutable Facts' about the OUN and UPA: The Role of the Working Group of Historians on OUN-UPA Activities in Mediating Memory-Based Conflict in Ukraine." *Ab Imperio* 1 (2018): 223–54.
- Plokhy, Serhii. *Unmaking Imperial Russia: Mykhailo Hrushevsky and the Writing of Ukrainian History*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005.
- Pometun, O. I. and N. M. Hupan. *Istoriia Ukrainy: Pidruchnyk dlia 11 klasu zahalnoosvitnikh navchalnykh zakladiv*. Kharkiv: Sytsyia, 2012.
- Portnov, Andrei. *Uprazhneniia s istoriei po-ukrainski*. Moscow: OGI-Polit.ru-Memorial, 2010.
- Portnov, Andrii. "Poland and Ukraine: Entangled Histories, Asymmetric Memories." *Forum Transregionale Studien: Essays*. Berlin: Forum Transregionale Studien, 2020.
- Reient, O. and O. Malii. *Istoriia Ukrainy: Pidruchnyk dlia 9 klasu zahalnoosvitnikh navchalnykh zakladiv*. 2nd ed. Kyiv: Heneza, 2011.
- Shevel, Oxana. "Decommunization in Post-Euromaidan Ukraine: Law and Practice." *PONARS Eurasia*, January 2016, <https://www.ponarseurasia.org/memo/decommunization-post-euromaidan-ukraine-law-and-practice>.
- Smolii, V. A. and V. S. Stepankov. *Istoriia Ukrainy: Pidruchnyk dlia 7 klasu zahalnoosvitnikh navchalnykh zakladiv*. Kyiv: Heneza, 2007.
- Snyder, Timothy. "The Causes of the Polish-Ukrainian Ethnic Cleansing, 1943." *Past & Present* 179 (2003): 197–234.
- Strukevych, Olexiy. *Istoriia Ukrainy: Pidruchnyk dlia 9 klasu zahalnoosvitnikh navchalnykh zakladiv*. Kyiv: Hramota, 2009.
- Svidersky, Yuri, Nataliia Romanyshyn, and Tetiana Laduchenko. *Istoriia Ukrainy: Pidruchnyk dlia 7 klasu zahalnoosvitnikh navchalnykh zakladiv*. Kyiv: Hramota, 2015.
- Turchenko, Fedir. *Ukraina—povernennia istorii: Heneza suchasnoho pidruchnyka*. Kyiv: Heneza, 2016.
- Turchenko, F. H., P. P. Panchenko, and S. M. Tymchenko. *Novitnia istoriia Ukrainy (1939–pochatok XXI st.): Pidruchnyk dlia 11 klasu zahalnoosvitnikh navchalnykh zakladiv*, 5th ed. Kyiv: Heneza, 2006.
- Vlasov, Vitaliy and Stanislav Kulchytsky. *Istoriia Ukrainy 1921–1938: Navchalnyi posibnyk dlia zahalnoosvitnikh navchalnykh zakladiv*. Kyiv: Litera, 2015.
- Wolczuk, Kataryna. "History, Europe, and the 'National Idea': The 'Official' Narrative of National Identity in Ukraine." *Nationalities Papers* 28, no. 4 (2000): 671–94.
- Yekelchuk, Serhy. *Stalin's Empire of Memory: Russian-Ukrainian Relations in the Soviet Historical Imagination*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004.
- Yekelchuk, Serhy. "Bridging the Past and the Future: Ukrainian History Writing Since Independence." *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 53, nos. 2–4 (2011): 45–62.
- Yekelchuk, Serhy. "A Long Goodbye: The Legacy of Soviet Marxism in Post-Communist Ukrainian Historiography." *Ab Imperio* 4 (2012): 401–16.

9 Guarding Against the Future

Socio-Political Contexts of the “List of One Hundred Books” for Russian School Students in the 2010s

Ilya Kukulin

Author’s Note

This chapter was written in 2017 and edited in 2021. It was written on a very particular case and has largely become obsolete since the start of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. If before 2022 it was useful to analyze how the features of Soviet cultural policy are being revived in contemporary Russian schools, today researchers of Russian education have to talk and think about much scarier things: how humanities in Russia’s schools, especially history, are becoming direct tools of Kremlin propaganda; how the Russian army and special services are pursuing a policy in the occupied territories of Ukraine that has clear features of cultural genocide: destroying Ukrainian books, prohibiting teaching with Ukrainian textbooks and/or in the Ukrainian language, etc.¹ I have added some explanations in the chapter about what then happened to the people or campaigns I describe—but one wonders in what context the case I was studying now finds itself.

The list of “Putin’s hundred books” referred to in this chapter has long been absent from discussions of Russian school education. Its compilation and distribution can probably be considered simply a local propaganda campaign. Nevertheless, I think it makes sense to publish this chapter today. If we compare the case analyzed in this chapter with today’s “educational terror” in the occupied regions of Ukraine, it becomes clear that all these activities are based on the same idea: controlling the literature that adolescents and youngsters read allows political and/or cultural elites to determine their values and worldview. This notion probably exists not only in the minds of Vladimir Putin, Vladimir Medinsky, and other representatives of today’s regime, but also in the minds of some Russian educators. If we think now about what school education in Russia might look like after the collapse of the current regime (and I believe it is necessary to think about it now), it would be important to say that the dialogue between teachers and students should not be based on the idea of a “cultural code” that is allegedly obligatory for the whole society and does not change over time.

June 23, 2024

Introduction

The type of political regime that developed in Russia across the 2000s and 2010s is often referred to by political scientists as “electoral authoritarianism” (sometimes “competitive authoritarianism”), using the term coined by Andreas Schedler in 2006 to

DOI: [10.4324/9781003505822-11](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003505822-11)

This chapter has been made available under a CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0 license.

describe a new type of non-democratic regime.² Kirill Rogov defines electoral authoritarianism as a “regime using democratic procedures in order to preserve the monopoly over the authorities”; however, both Rogov and others explain that democratic procedures in the frames of such a regime drastically change the principles of functioning and turn it into a kind of recurrent plebiscite based on trust in the authorities.³ One of the main reasons for the popularity of the Russian regime in the 2010s was the mobilization of vast groups of the population based on foreign policy ventures and the corresponding alarmist and expansionist propaganda.⁴ In the second half of the 2010s, a particular group of researchers focused on not only mobilization but also the formation of the “New Redistributive Coalition,” by which the political elite sought to expand the number of the beneficiaries of the existing order.⁵

Political elites and the opposing “opinion leaders,” in terms of important issues, somehow appeared within frames of the same episteme (to use Michel Foucault’s term). They often seemed to use the same semantic “marking” political and social reality—even if they argued on the same issues in a diametrically opposed manner.

One of the most concealed pressures on Russian society of the 2010s was the fear of unpredictable changes in the near future and, particularly, of losing control over the younger generation.⁶ These concerns provoked extensive waves of “moral panic” concerning teenage activities on the internet, the most notable of which was the series of publications and legislative initiatives provoked by rumors about the “Groups of Death” on the social network “Vkontakte.” Initially, this chain of events started with an article by Galina Mourtzalievna published in the opposition newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*.⁷ “Systemic” political authors, also afraid of losing control over the younger generation, initiated a public speech by the video-blogger Sasha Spielberg in 2017, and later organized the “Gathering of Bloggers” in the State Duma (parliament).⁸ In the future, fear of the politicization of youth would lead to the mass securitization of politics in Russia, encompassing an understanding of youth politics as a crucial element of national security, among other, equally extreme, measures.⁹ In the following chapter, I attempt to demonstrate how this mutual “framework” of fear of the future worked and continues to work in one particular case: the compilation of the list of “Putin’s 100 Books,” its usage in education, and reactions to its publication from the intellectual community.

The Emergence of the List

The history of the list began on January 23, 2012, when *Nezavisimayia Gazeta* published the article “Russia: The Ethnicity Issue,” signed by Vladimir Putin.¹⁰ The publication was part of a series of pre-election articles that detailed Putin’s manifesto as a candidate for presidency (running de facto for a third term, having circumvented the stipulation of the constitution of the Russian Federation not to hold this post more for more than two consecutive terms). The article reads:

From the 1920s, a movement to examine the Western cultural canons developed in some of the leading American universities. Every self-respecting student had to read 100 books on a specially arranged list. In some of the

universities in the U.S., this tradition continues to the present day. [...] Let us conduct a survey about our cultural authorities and form the list of 100 books that each graduate student of Russian schools should read. Not to memorise for school but to read independently. In addition, let us formulate a final exam essay on the materials read.

The context of the article predicted that the future list would not reflect “world” or “Western” standards, since the Russian cultural canon, as well as Russia itself, according to the author, represents its *own* “state-civilization.” “The core that holds the threads of this unique civilization together is Russian society and culture,” Putin (or his speechwriters) added, almost quoting the first lines of the Soviet Anthem, written in 1943 by Sergey Mikhailov to the music of Aleksander Aleksandrov: “Unbreakable union of free republics/*Great Rus has united forever to stand.*”

When referring to the “movement to examine the western cultural canon,” the author(s) of the article clearly meant the movement among American university professors to introduce the “Great Books” project to the course.¹¹ American writer, musician, composer, and methodologist of higher education, John Erskine (1879–1951), was the initiator of this movement. He started teaching the course at Columbia University in 1920. In his essay “The Moral Obligation to Be Intelligent” (1915), Erskine explained that studying the legacy of other civilizations—“Roman, French, Italian, Greek”—would allow Americans to perfect “sympathy to other times, other places, other customs.”¹² An educated person who speaks English, he elaborated, is not only a descendent of the Anglo-Saxon culture but also of many others. On the contrary, the context of Putin’s article entails that its “canon” responds to the “cultural code” not of the West or Europe, but of a separate Russian civilization, “bound by the Russian cultural core”¹³ and attached to society—since it is a “state-civilization.” It was not university students who were invited to read these books within the new canon, but school students.

The “Great Books” courses took root and became the mainstream of the core curriculum in American universities. In 1990–2000, the so-called “culture wars” blazed around them: representatives of leftist circles among teachers and students critiqued the canon for being too Eurocentric and built on the works of “dead white men.”¹⁴ These debates, and their many overlaps, led to a reconsideration of ideas on the literary canon, involving greater heterogeneity and keeping the traces of long-gone tensions between different cultures and the voices of not only the winners but also the defeated.¹⁵

Putin’s article ignored these debates, claiming that the “state-backed” canon would define the structure of the next generation’s consciousness: “the state is obliged and holds the right to direct its power and resources [...] to the formation of a worldview to strengthen the nation.”¹⁶ The instrument of these kinds of accomplishments would have to be the “List of 100 Books.” The “literary accent” of cultural politics demonstrates another occasion where the ruling elites of modern Russia consider art as an instrument to instill “correct” values in society. Later, in 2014, such understanding of art was explicated directly in the anonymous annex to the official state program document (signed by Putin personally) “The

Fundamentals of Cultural Politics”—this near-official text with an unclear status is discussed in the following sections of this chapter.

Immediately after his inauguration for a third presidential term on May 7, 2012, Putin signed a decree “providing the security for interethnic harmony.” This decree demanded that the government of the Russian Federation create the “List of 100 Books.” In fact, decree “on the interethnic harmony” consisted of only two points: the first demanded the establishment of an exam for obtaining Russian citizenship,¹⁷ and the second the creation of the new Russian canon.

In summer 2012, the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia announced a competition to create the list, the institutional status of which was not very clear: whether the study of “100 Books” would be compulsory, to what extent these books would be included in the school curriculum, and so on. These questions have not been answered publicly. The University of Saint Petersburg, where Putin studied law, won the competition. A website, knig100.spbu.ru,¹⁸ documented all public discussions on how the list should be created, and a teachers’ conference dedicated to exploring how to incorporate the “List of 100 Books” into school curricula was held in Saint Petersburg. The reports of the conference were published in a special edition of the local magazine *On the Way to New School*.¹⁹

The list, created by a group of experts under the leadership of a Saint Petersburg University professor of pedagogy, Elena Kazakova, underwent direct editing by the presidential administration (it is impossible to find the names of who exactly edited it in the open reports) and was published in January 2013. Kazakova insisted that none of the works included in Russian school curricula would enter the list.²⁰ The list itself was presented in the media as a realization of the President’s will. As the literature education scholar Mikhail Pavlovets writes,

... this approach ignored the importance of school students’ independent choice of books for leisure reading – reading adopted an even greater normative character, and the volume of the list made it impossible to master, along with the [school canon], in full capacity.²¹

In the list itself, books for children aged eight to twelve (Nikolay Nosov’s *Dunno’s Adventures* Series, Kir Bulychev’s *Alisa Selezneva* series, Arkady Gaidar’s *Chuk and Gek*), appeared alongside Russophone classics of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (for instance, Fyodor Dostoevsky’s *Idiot* and Isaac Babel’s *Red Cavalry*), books of right-conservative Russian immigrant authors (Ivan Ilyin’s *Three Speeches* and *The Russian Turmoil Memoirs* by Anton Denikin²²) as well as works of contemporary right-wing and monarchist historians and journalists (Aleksandr Bokhanov’s *The Emperor Aleksandr III of Russia* and Aleksandr Goryanin’s *Russia: The History of Success*). Such ideologized works have been accompanied by much more historically correct popular works by Yuri Lotman and Natan Eidelman. The list contains no works by contemporary writers—not one novel or playwright from the period following Soviet collapse.

The most remarkable political gesture was the editing of the list by the presidential administration. The works of “sanctioned,” but innovative poets²³ from the

second half of the twentieth century were removed from the list (Andrei Voznesensky, Bulat Okudzhava, and Nikolai Zabolotsky—though they kept David Samoylov, more “classical” in his style), as well as the works of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and Andrei Bely. At the same time, some folklore epics were included: *Kalevala*, *Alpamysh* (variations of this epic occurred in various Turkish-speaking nations, but here the Uzbek version was chosen), *Epic of Koroğlu* (the Azeri version), *Epic of Manas* (Kyrgyzstan), *Olonkho* (the Yakut epic songs), and the Kalmyk *Epic of Jangar*. This set of epic tales resembles the composition of Volumes 13 and 14 (“Heroic Epos of the People of the USSR”) of the *Library of World Literature*—a 200-volume edition published in the USSR between 1967 and 1977. In other words, the presidential staff clearly intended to make the canon more multi-ethnic, but replaced modern works with archaic ones, and in addition based their choice on a Soviet-era edition published many years ago.

The “List of 100 Books” included no epic tales of foreign literatures, with the exceptions of those who gained independence from the USSR in 1991 (Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Azeris) and a few works of authors from former Soviet countries such as Georgia, with Medieval *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* (c. 1189–1212) by Shota Rustaveli and *Me, Grandma, Iliko and Illarion* (1960) by Nodar Dumbadze. The latter was apparently included because it is set during World War II, and politicized narratives about this war are very important—increasingly important over the years—to Putin’s regime. Similarly, of pieces written in the languages of ethnic minorities living in Russia, the list included only archaic epics. The list included only a few books by authors who were on the cusp of modern literatures of Russia’s ethnic minorities like Kosta Khetagurov (Khetægkaty Kosta) in Ossetian literature, and Ğabdulla Tuqay in Tatar literature. Chinghiz Aitmatov, a native Kyrgyz writing mostly in Russian, and Avar poet Rasul Gamzatov,²⁴ seem to tokenize the contributions of modern “ethnic minorities” to the list. The works *The Dead Feel No Pain* and *Sotnikov* by Vasil Bykaŭ are also included in the list. Bykaŭ wrote in Belorussian but is usually perceived in Russia as a Russian author.²⁵

As Putin admits in his article “Russia: The Ethnicity Issue,” his imaginary “Society-Civilization” exists in the limits of the former Soviet Union, and the new canon of “Great Books” having been created for exactly that “civilization”: “Our national and migration problems are linked directly to the fall of the Soviet Union, and in fact, historically, to Great Russia, which formed its basis in the eighteenth century”²⁶ (Putin did not answer then whether this “basis” included the part of Poland which was annexed to Russia in 1795 after three partitions; however, between 2023 and 2024, he repeatedly threatened Poland and claimed that part of the territory of present-day Poland had been “gifted” to it by the Soviet Union). The expansionist actions of Russia in 2008—the violent withdrawal of Abkhazia and South Ossetia from Georgia²⁷—were carried out under slogans “enforcement for peace” addressed against Georgia’s then-president Mikheil Saakashvili.

This rhetoric of protecting and strengthening the “Russian world” provided the ideology for the expansionist acts that were to follow: the annexation of Crimea, the military invasion of Western Ukraine in 2014, and the full-out war unleashed by Russia on Ukraine in February 2022. This sharply increased the importance of the

“Russocentric” component in foreign policy rhetoric and created an obvious contradiction: on the one hand, Russia is a multinational federation, and on the other hand, the leadership of the country is represented in its media as the only advocate and protector of the interests of the “Russian world,” which is much broader than the country’s own territory. Ethnonationalist justifications of external expansion logically require that the internal cultural spaces of Russia are presented as homogeneous, after the elements of federalism in Russia have already been minimized.²⁸

Let us now return to the series of the “100 books.” After interventions by editors of the presidential administration, the list adopted a clear political direction. The Russian authors on the list represented the cultural “older brothers,” while other nationalities in Russia and the former Soviet countries were, first and foremost, the carriers of timeless ancient cultures.

From Modernism to Folklore: Demodernization and Stalinist Cultural Politics

The list of the 100 books is reminiscent of the characteristics of Soviet national politics of the 1930s. In the 1910s–1920s, within the framework of “indigenisation” policy, the Soviet government entered into a strategic alliance with leftist-democrat intelligentsia, oriented toward solving educational problems, and with scholars of “national republics” in order to solve the challenges of mass cultural construction.²⁹ In “national” areas of the USSR, this construction has evoked an interest in Western literatures and was connected with the inclusion of modernist authors in the literary and political establishment of the new “union” and “autonomous” “Soviet socialist republics.”³⁰ Such “socialist modernists” might include Magzhan Zhumabai (Zhumabae) (1893–1938) of Kazakh literature, Abdullah Qodiriy (1894–1938) of Uzbek literature, Platon Oyunsky (1893–1939) of Yakutian literature, and others.

In the second half of the 1930s, the majority of these modernist writers were arrested and many executed. Among the imprisoned or sentenced to death were the poet Tima Ven (Veniamin Chistalev, 1900–1939), Udmurt prose writer Kedra Mitrei (Dmitrii Korepanov, 1892–1949), Udmurt poet Kuzebay Gerd (Kuzma Chainikov, 1898–1937), Mari writer Sergei Chavain (Grigoriev, 1888–1939), Mordovian poets Yakov Kuldurkaev (1894–1966, Erzia branch of Mordovians), and Vasily Viard (Ardeev, 1907–1972, Mokshan branch of Mordovians).³¹ An entire generation was thus eradicated from cultural life, and, in some cultures of the USSR, first generations of modern writers such as Sergei Chavain, author of the first ever poem published in the Mari language (“Grove,” 1905).

Instead, the main authors of “national” literature presented by the regime were either poets writing in the style of folklore, or folklore storytellers such as Lezgian poet-improviser Suleyman Stalsky (Suleyman Gasanbekov) (1869–1937) or Kazakh *akyn*, Jambul Jabayev (1846–1945).³² This paradigm shift was of huge cultural and political significance; the replacement of modernist Zhumabai with folklore-style Jabayev, for instance, implied a relegation of small cultures from “equals” to folklore, “national in forms and socialist in content.”³³ Thus, from

the first half of the 1930s, the policy of supporting national cultures in the USSR obtained clear characteristics of cultural imperialism. Soviet “subalterns” would speak as if on their own behalf, but these statements would be carefully dramatized, demodernized, and “reduced” to folklorist expression³⁴ located in the political context of “national Bolshevism”³⁵ and turned into a new cultural norm.

After the 1930s, national cultural politics in the USSR changed several times. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, cultural life was revived in “Soviet” and “autonomous” republics. New authors entered the cultural stage, including those who—albeit cautiously—admitted to engaging in aesthetic experiments. These experiments were presented in books written in both in languages of “national republics” and in Russian, with elements of ethnic “exoticism” (Fazil Iskander, Gennadiy Aygi, and others.). However, “archaising” and “folklorising” norms persisted from the 1960s to the 1980s as compulsory instruments in the cultural politics of the Soviet Union. When necessary, Soviet cultures were presented to other societies as timeless and exoticized.

With the “List of 100 Books” this norm yet again took center-stage, despite the inclusion of Fazil Iskander’s ironic and modernist novel *Sandro of Chegem* in this list: this work as well as a book by Nodar Dumbadze were rare exceptions. Even such long-developed and diverse literature as that of Armenia—with its rich twentieth-century literature by writers such as Yeghishe Charents, Paruyr Sevak, and Gurgen Mahari—was represented on the list only by the ancient epos *David of Sassoun*. As mentioned above, the only exceptions to the rule were the Romantic authors who died before the 1917 Revolution—Ġabdulla Tuqay (1886–1913) and Kosta Khetagurov (Xetægkaty Khosta, 1859–1906). Presumably these were included in the list because, first, their works were incorporated into the Soviet canon and, second, it was easier to ascribe these texts meaning of timeless “oriental exotics” than to those of early Soviet “national-modernist” authors.³⁶

The “List of 100 Books” was presented as “recommended” only verbally—in practice it was immediately incorporated into the school curriculum. Simultaneously coinciding with the list’s publication, on January 16, 2013, the then Deputy Minister of Education, Natalya Tretiak,³⁷ sent a memo to heads of education departments of all regions and republics of the Russian Federation demanding that they “inculcate a positive image of the 100 Books amongst the younger generation and actively work with it.” In 2013, the books from the list were released by the publishing house OLMA Media Group as a unified series of “100 Books on history, culture and literature of people of Russian Federation.” In 2013 and 2014, the books were sent to various school libraries throughout Russia.

In the OLMA publications, one can find a small, but very important difference from the originally published list. A poem by Ġabdulla Tuqay “Şüräle” was separately positioned in the list. However, “Şüräle” is a small work, approximately thirty pages of typographical text. In the OLMA series, this text was lengthened by a 400-page volume “Şüräle. Tatar Folk Tales,” which included folkloric works alongside Tuqay’s poem. The only Tatar (and essentially, the only Turkic) post-revolutionary writer, whose book entered the OLMA series, was Musa Cälil (1906–1944)—a poet, who was captured by Germans in 1942 and later joined the Nazi-organized

Idel-Ural Battalion of Tatars, where he joined the underground group of resistance and was sentenced to death in Berlin in 1944. Consequently, the list presents the non-Russian nationalities of Russia mostly as archaic or militant—for participation in World War II, known in USSR as the Great Patriotic War (a novella by Nodar Dumbadze addresses the same subject). While Soviet and post-Soviet propaganda praise these events as having united all peoples of the Soviet Union, the propaganda remains silent regarding those deported to Siberia between 1943 and 1944.

Alternatives to “Putin’s List”

On March 15, 2013, a conference was held in the Writer’s House of Saint Petersburg regarding another list, later referred to as “100+,” that only included foreign literature.³⁸ The presentation was arranged by the Russian Union of Writers and the Institute of Modern State Development (IMSD), non-governmental right-wing conservative organizations politically close to Vladimir Putin, but not particularly influential or participative in implementing state decisions. While the creators of this list are unknown, its composition is more balanced than that of “Putin’s list,” including works by authors from Europe, Asia, and Africa (Yasunari Kawabata, Lao She, Amos Tutuola, Ben Okri), as well as works published relatively recently, for instance *Crabwalk* by Günter Grass (2002).³⁹ However, this list did not receive any state support. The books were neither published as a separate series, nor were they distributed to school libraries.

After 2013, the state’s list of “desirable” works beyond the school curricula began to multiply. On November 16, 2015, the Ministry of Education signed an agreement with the Russian School Library Association to compile three more lists of books for leisure reading by school students, now structured in terms of age-group. These lists were developed by librarians from the Konstantin Ushinsky State Scientific Pedagogical Library in Moscow, and distributed by the MoE to the heads of education departments of the regions and republics that are part of Russia on April 14, 2016. These lists are intended for school students in the first to fourth grades (ages 7–10), fifth to ninth (ages 11–15), and tenth to eleventh (ages 16–17). They contain different numbers of books, with the first presenting 83, the second 160 (!), and the third 77. Russian authors occupy the majority of the lists, with only few western and almost no other authors of non-Russian literature (Fazil Iskander’s appearance on the list can only be explained by the fact that he wrote in Russian about Abkhazia, which is now part of independent Georgia, recognized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia as an independent state). With the inclusion of *Tales of the Russian Peoples* for first to fourth grades, the logic is very similar to that of “100 Books.” In the list for fifth to ninth grades, the Karelian-Finnish epic poem *Karevala* is also included. Meanwhile, the list for tenth and eleventh grades features the works of contemporary and living literary figures such as Sergéi Gandlevski, Timur Kibirov, Yevgeni Grishkovetz, and Lyudmila Petrushevskaya, although there are no works of literature by any authors from non-Russian nations at all.

The letter to the heads of all schools in the area and city education departments from the Ministry of General and Professional Education of Sverdlosk Oblast is

available on the Internet: the “List of 100 Books” and others listed above, made by Konstantin Ushinsky Library workers, were enclosed in this letter. According to this document, the lists were sent in order to “be used for working practices.”⁴⁰ It can be assumed that similar letters were also distributed to other regions of Russia.

Besides the state’s lists, private initiatives had emerged to supplement or compete with “Putin’s list” for schools. However, only a few challenged the idea of drawing up such a list for obligatory leisure reading or insisted that recommendations for leisure reading be individualized⁴¹ (one of the few exceptions being that of education theorist Elena Romanicheva, who made her own offers before the final version of a new canon appeared⁴²). Shortly after the publication of the “List of 100 Books,” Dmitry Bykov, a poet, novelist and journalist, presented his own variation of the “100 books everyone should read” for compulsory reading, declaring his opposition to Vladimir Putin’s regime,⁴³ in an appendix for the newspaper *Sobesednik*.⁴⁴ All components of this list were accompanied by Bykov’s notes and the portraits of the authors. “Here are the one hundred books that I admire more than anything. Besides, it seems to me that they are the best in helping a person grow – to a degree that reading can affect a human at all in the first place,” Bykov commented. However, he also supported the list of 100 Books, promulgated by the Ministry of Education and Sciences. “The point [...] is not that a young person will only read these 100 books and no others. It is that these 100 books are foundational for their development so they cannot be avoided in any way,” stated Bykov on February 5, 2013, at an online conference on “Putin’s list.”⁴⁵

Bykov’s approach to leisure reading as based on the “compulsory” list was close to the one of Marietta Chudakova (1937–2021), a famous journalist and cultural historian who up until her death was an even more radical opponent of the current regime in Russia than Bykov. Between 2009 and 2012, she released three volumes of the book *Not for Adults! Time to Read*, with comments on the list of books “every youngster” should read.⁴⁶

In May 2013, the editorial offices of popular political journals *The Expert* and *The Russian Reporter* prepared the list of 100 books under the name “The Genome of the Russian Soul.” The file went viral on the internet, bearing the title “100 books with which Russians differentiate themselves from others.”⁴⁷ Based on poll responses from newspaper readers, this list was presented as affirmative rather than prescriptive. The authors openly declared their disagreement with “Putin’s list”:

To put it mildly, the set [compiled by the Ministry of Education] turned out to be quite strange. However, we do not intend to compete with the Ministry. We are not talking about what books should be read, but about which books Russians have already read and remembered; the books that are the part of the cultural code of the nation.

The authors of the comments to this list (Olga Andreeva, Yulia Idlis, Konstantin Milchin, and others) explicitly declared that the “cultural code”—much like a genome—described the characteristics of cultural consciousness of *all Russian language* readers of Russia.

The very term “cultural code,” essentially understood as the general element of consciousness of all members of society, is a strong weapon in the demodernization of the intellectual discourse of contemporary Russia under the guise of introducing it to new academic terminology. Putin himself used the term in his article “Russia: The Ethnicity Issue,” as did the authors of “Fundamentals of the State Cultural Policy” (accepted by Putin’s decree on December 24, 2014).⁴⁸ It was also used by the authors of the controversial anonymous annex to the latter, titled “‘Fundamentals’ of ‘Fundamentals’: About meanings of the state cultural policy,”⁴⁹ published by the Russian Ministry of Culture in a brochure with the official text of the document.

Despite the conflict with experts from the Ministry of Education (and the presidential administration), the authors of *The Expert* and *The Russian Reporter* projects appeared aligned with Putin and his subordinates on a significant point: the list of “main” books is understood to be essential as the materialized expression of “cultural code,” allegedly common for all Russians, regardless of their cultural affiliation. But while Putin believes that this “code” needs to be shaped via concerted efforts in order to foster consciousness of an “imaginary community,” Olga Andreeva, Yulia Idlis, and their co-authors maintain that this “code” already exists independent from Putin, and is slowly changing by its own rules, just like any other biological system. Behind such essentialist understanding, perhaps, lies the non-reflected memory of the Soviet ideologeme of a unified “people” allegedly sharing similar values.⁵⁰

After 2013, national media barely mentioned the project, presumably due to the annexation of Crimea, Russia’s aggression in Eastern Ukraine, and the propaganda that led to the removal of previously popular subjects from the public arena. However, the idea of the list with *compulsory* books for *leisure* reading, as well as the “political halo” of the concept (reminiscent of the “semantic halo” of poetic meter), was kept alive. Putin’s article, “Russia: The Ethnicity Issue,” activated rhetorical appellation to “books crucial for the canon of civilization” (or, to be more precise, “state-civilization”). These books are considered in Russia not of educational, but of moral and political significance.

This rhetoric in theory of education was created as early as the 1910s by John Erskine (in his essay “The Moral Obligation to Be Intelligent”), but Putin’s speechwriters (apparently together with Putin himself) radically reinterpreted Erskine’s message: from universalist to isolationist and culturally imperialist. While Erskine endeavored to include the education of American society in an all-Western (or even global) cultural context in his writings, the preparation and distribution of “Putin’s list” was generally declared as aimed toward interethnic relations within Russia. Both Putin’s rhetoric and educational practice with the concept of a “school canon” in its late Soviet interpretation contradicts the concept of “Great Books” that Erskine had compiled for universities. In contemporary Russia’s educational policies:

the emergence [of a school canon] and especially its “kernels” was “naturalised” – in other words, his supporters began to interpret it as something that naturally, organically grows out of the thickness of the people’s soil, being determined by the very mechanisms of national culture.⁵¹

The new canon is thus proposed on the basis of crossing the habitual idea of “organically grown” and politically necessary reading. Today, Igor Sukhikh, a philologist from Saint Petersburg and author of the book *The Russian Canon*, is the main theorist on an “authentic” conceptualization of the canon. The name of his book is reminiscent of *The Western Canon* by Harold Bloom (a book to which Sukhikh directly refers). Here again, we see the implicit indication of a “special path.” However, Sukhikh’s conception is internally contradictory. He insists that the list of thirty books he has compiled is selected by “history,”⁵² but includes complex and/or expressive of traumatic experience works that are most often interpreted in criticism as subversive, that is, non-canonical or even anti-canonical in their poetics; such as Andrei Bely’s *Petersburg*, Georgy Vladimov’s *The General and His Army*, and Leonid Dobychin’s *The Town of N*.

Education as an Instrument of Political Management

Mikhail Pavlovets is right in highlighting that the “List of 100 Books” is a state attempt to regulate children’s leisure outside of school. Efforts to determine what children and teenagers read outside of school in order to “grow as a right person” or as an exemplary citizen of Russia, became infectious, presumably because representatives of the political establishment, education officials, and independent opinion-makers feared losing control over the vital world of the younger generation and forcedly sought to design their future value systems. The control of what young people read in their leisure time appears to be one of the instruments to this end.

However, it is unclear how productive this control is in reality. Right up until the start of the full-scale invasion, there was a growing intergenerational crisis in Russia.⁵³ After the invasion began, a significant proportion of young people appear to have been intimidated and/or conscripted into the army, and non-conformists were targeted by the police and FSB (the secret police): between 2022 and 2024, there were numerous trials in Russia in which very young people were accused of “spreading fakes about the army” for disseminating online reports by Western or Ukrainian news agencies about the crimes of the Russian army or talking about these crimes in videos.

For all the claims in Putin’s decree of a will to strengthen interethnic “concord,” the “List of 100 Books” presents non-Russian ethnicities of Russia and the former USSR mostly as archaic or warring. It seems that officials of the presidential administration were seeking to solve two contradictory issues at the same time, first, by metonymically pointing to the borders of the USSR (“the Great Russia”) as the right edges of the “state-civilization,” the canon of which is declared in the “List of 100 Books,” and second, by discrediting in advance the ideas of cultural autonomy of the non-Russian population of Russia. The list represents a striking contrast between diverse and relatively modernized Russian literature and humanities, and the patriarchal customs of other ethnic groups, preserved in epic legends. This creates an impression of Russian culture as dominant and the most modernized within the post-Soviet space. Indeed, one does not have to read all 100 books in order to gain this impression; a brief glance at the list is enough.

The education policies of Russia in the 2000s and 2010s were regularly used to combat not only ethnic separatism, but even the chances of its appearance. On December 1, 2007, the State Duma approved the Federal Law no. 309-FZ “On amending some legislative acts of the Russian Federation regarding changing the concept and structure of the state educational standard.” With this act, ethnic autonomies within Russia lost their right to insert their own sections into all-Russian school curricula—the so-called national and regional component of the state standard of universal education.

When the “List of 100 Books” was made public in 2013, the fight against separatism was becoming one of the state’s priorities. In Fall that year, after the “president’s list” had been compiled and before the annexation of Crimea, work on legislative registration of prosecutions for “separatism,” understood as broadly as possible, began. Later, on December 28 that year, Russia approved the Federal Law no. 433-FZ, which introduced a new Article 280.1 into the criminal code: “On responsibility for appeals to violations of territorial integrity” of the Russian Federation. According to sociologists, an insignificant minority of the Russian population was prepared to support separatist slogans.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, persecution of civil activists began immediately, in line with the new article of the criminal code.⁵⁵ On July 21, 2014 (at which point the battles in Western Ukraine were already underway), the new amendments increased the maximum term of imprisonment under Article 280.1, which allowed the court to detain those suspected of “appeals to separatism.” Since 2015, this article has been used repeatedly, and a number of sentences have been passed for actual or conditional prison terms. This increased punishment for “calls for separatism” has two purposes: to prohibit calling the Russian-occupied territories of Ukraine part of Ukraine and to block any autonomist (not even separatist!) movements of ethnic minorities. In modern Russia, even a map on which Crimea or the Donetsk region are marked as Ukrainian territories can become a formal basis for criminal prosecution. Thus, the fight against the specter of “separatism” has become part of the overall program of political terror unleashed by the Russian authorities.

Representations of Ethnicity and “Fight with Separatism” in Russia’s Media

During the period of drafting the law “on separatism,” on October 23, 2013, retired Lieutenant-General of the Foreign Intelligence Service, Leonid Reshetnikov, one of the “hawks” of Russian politics, commented in an interview with the *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* that “national separatism and confessional radicalism,” allegedly ruled by the “secret powers of the Anglo-Saxon world,” were the main challenges for modern Russia.⁵⁶ He also highlighted to readers the threat that

Russia is considered an alternative civilization. [...] But the Anglo-Saxon world does not desire a competing civilization. The Russian Empire was also not needed. It was destroyed on takeoff, using internal and foreign powers. The same is true for the Soviet Union. This situation will arise again if Russia gets on its feet.⁵⁷

On November 12, 2013, the TV channel NTV aired the propaganda “documentary” *Emergency. Investigation: Who wants to divide Russia?*, intimidating mass audiences with the dangers of separatism.⁵⁸ American political expert, Zbigniew Brzezinski, American historian of Russia, Richard Pipes, a human rights activist, Lev Ponomarev, and the writer Vladimir Sorokin (who published his dystopian novel *Telluryia* in the same year) were mentioned in the film among the anti-heroes.⁵⁹

The 2013 “war on separatism” took place in an atmosphere of artificially created moral panic. At the same time, it ignored the most important element in enhancing interethnic relations, which is used in the educational practices of other states: introducing new cultures in order to influence one’s self-perception.⁶⁰ From the 1990s to the 2010s, a number of pieces on the issues of ethnic minorities were published in Russia, although all were written in Russian—not translated from other languages; *The Mother of God in Bloody Snowfalls* by Eremey Aipin (2002), for instance, touched on a revolt by Finno-Ugric ethnic groups Khanty and Mansi living in the far Northeast of Europe against the Soviet repressive politics in 1933–1934.⁶¹ However, it is important to mention that widespread works of mass culture, even those most reflective of smaller ethnic groups and/or the representatives of national diasporas, usually describe them as “exotic” peoples with an archaic consciousness. The best example of such representation in all-Russian media of non-Russian peoples living in Russia is a series of animation movies, *Mountains of Gems*, made in 2014–2015 and initiated by the outstanding animation director, Aleksandr Tatarsky (1950–2007). These films are of an unusual style and based on stories of different nations of Russia (from Caucasian to Far Eastern), but also on Russian sub-ethnic groups (Urals, Pomors, etc.). Many of the sixty-seven episodes of this series represent significant works in both an aesthetic and visual sense. Painters and directors from different “nationalities” of autonomous oblasts and republics participated in making the series. In 2006, *Mountains of Gems* earned high ratings when aired on Russia’s TV Channel One. However, there are no similar works representing *contemporary* cultures of small nationalities or sub-ethnic groups in Russian media.

It seems that the only attempt to represent national minorities in their current state for all-Russian audiences was the TV series *Salam, Moscow!* by Pavel Bardin for Channel One. The series, was most likely made upon state orders to propagate the “improvement of interethnic relations” as part of the campaign to combat “separatism” in 2012–2013. *Salam, Moscow!* is a series about ethnic crime in Moscow, and tells the story of two police officers, a young Avar, Rustam from Dagestan,⁶² and Russian Sanya (Aleksandr). Together they investigate crimes committed within the national (Vietnamese, Chechen, Tajik, and other) diasporas in Moscow. Bardin made sure that the representatives of these diasporas in the film were presented as authentically as possible: Tajik actors played the Tajiks, the Vietnamese were voiced by real Vietnamese traders from Moscow bazaars; however, a Chechen actor Ali Aliev played the role of Rustam. In 2016, the series was uploaded to the Channel One website and only aired on television in late 2017.⁶³ The series generated enthusiastic commentaries from internet audiences, and was ultimately rated as “credible.” However, representatives of national diasporas found it one-sided. The founder of the Moscow Cultural Centre of Dagestan, Avar Magomed

Abdulkhabirov, stated that he had “no complaints” about Rustam’s character, but the scenes in the series—for instance, the young generation coming to Moscow to commit crime—are only elements of a larger picture. Abdulkhabirov said in an interview with the BBC:

Dagestan faces huge unemployment. Why did the head of the republic grant high positions to his two sons, while young Dagestanis are forced to find jobs in Moscow? Why did the teenagers go to forests [to Islamic fundamentalist militants]? Because the propaganda of Islamists seems more effective than that of the secular powers. Why does the Kremlin not check where the money is spent in Dagestan? If [Konstantin] Ernst [the executive producer of Channel One – I.K.] produces such films, then he should aim higher.⁶⁴

In other words, the representatives of national diasporas are shown in all-Russian media either as carriers of a timeless folklore culture, or as criminals. Despite all Pavel Bardin’s attempts at social and cultural credibility, such approaches minimize the impact of encountering “others,” necessary for a better multicultural and mutual understanding. And if Bardin was driven by the ideas of liberal multiculturalism, the appendix to “The Foundations of Cultural Politics,” appointed by Putin’s order in 2014, clearly stated that “the ideology of ‘multiculturalism,’ the ‘pernicious influences of which have already been experienced by Western Europe,’” were not legitimate for Russia.⁶⁵

Conclusion

Researchers in modern Russia write of “the syndrome of public dumbness”⁶⁶—the inability to comprehend points of view of others in public debates, not only in official media but also among the oppositionist informal movements, and to articulate one’s own point of view on complicated social and political issues.⁶⁷ Research on “Putin’s list” and its cultural-political contexts suggests that one of the main reasons negatively affecting public communication is the strategy conducted by Russian PR manipulators (in this case, the clerks of the presidential administration)—the *staging* of the public dialogue regarding painful issues for Russian society.⁶⁸ One example is the problem of multicultural education. The staging is happening simultaneously with the stigmatization of the internationally accepted terminology intended precisely for such dialogues, including, for instance, the word “multiculturalism” itself. Both the “100 book list” and the discussion around it made teaching such dramatization part of the school curriculum. However, this list is no longer used, and the place of “dramatization” in the Russian media has been taken by aggressive propaganda, or, on the contrary, by silencing of serious problems.

Research shows that the ability of humans to interact with other cultures depends not so much on the experience of such exchanges, but rather on their education level and successes in life.⁶⁹ Russian experience demonstrates that the educational system itself can contain “mines of slowed-down action,” which will complicate such interactions in the future—regardless of a successful career or the level of a diploma.

However, the “pledging” of these mines remains invisible to Russian society for the reason that political and cultural elites of Russia are united by a common fear of losing control over the younger generation. Those teachers and social activists who want to teach young Russians how to interact with other cultures are unlikely to be interested in the idea of compulsory lists for leisure reading. Those for whom such lists are important, focus less on the future and more on the past, and therefore reproduce in their projects features characteristic to Soviet and post-Soviet cultural policies.

Notes

- 1 Aleksandr Yankovskij, and Alena Badyuk. “‘Uchebniki nenavisti’ ot okkupantov dlia Ukrainy: russkuju literaturu zavozjat, ukrainskuju zapreshhajut.” *Krym.Realii*, April 24, 2024. <https://ru.krymr.com/a/russia-ukraine-uchebnik-psevdoistoriya-yazik/32917376.html>.
- 2 Andreas Schedler, “The Logic of Electoral Authoritarianism,” in *Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition*, ed. Andreas Schedler (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2006); Kirill Rogov, “Sverhbolshinstvo dlia Sverhprezidentstva,” *Pro et Contra* 17, no. 3–4 (August 2013): 102–25; Grigorii Golosov, *Sravnitel'naja politologija i rossijskaia politika, 2010–2015: sbornik statej*, trans. I.S. Grigoriev (SPb.: Izdatelstvo Evropejskogo universiteta v Sankt-Peterburge, 2016).
- 3 My gratitude to Elena Romanicheva and Mikhail Pavlovets for thought-provoking insights.
- 4 Kirill Rogov, “Politicheskaia reaktsiia v Rossii i ‘partijnye gruppy’ v rossijskom obshestve,” *Kontrapunkt*, no. 6 (December 2016).
- 5 Kirill Rogov, “Politicheskaia reaktsiia v Rossii i ‘partiinye gruppy’ v rossijskom obshestve,” *Kontrapunkt*, no. 6 (December 2016).
- 6 Stanislav Lvovski was one of the first writing about this subject in 2010. See: Stanislav Lvovski, “Pod znakom juvenalnoi justitsii,” *Pro et Contra* 14, no. 1–2 (2010): 20–41.
- 7 Alexandra Arkhipova, et al., “‘Gruppy smerti’: Ot igry k moralnoj panike” (M.: RANHiGS; ShAGI, 2017).
- 8 Taisiya Bekhbulatova, “‘My vam pomogaem, vy nam pomogaete.’ V Gosdume proshel sovet blogerov. Obsuzhdali, kak chasto nado delat selfi,” *Informacionnyj portal “Meduza,”* June 19, 2017, <https://meduza.io/feature/2017/06/19/my-vam-pomogaete-vy-nam-pomogaete>.
- 9 Ilya Kukulín, “The Culture of Ban: Pop Culture, Social Media and Securitization of Youth Politics in Today’s Russia,” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 27, no. 2 (2021): 177–90.
- 10 Vladimir Putin, “Rossiia: natsionalnyj vopros,” *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, January 23, 2012. http://www.ng.ru/politics/2012-01-23/1_national.html. Official English translation: <http://archive.premier.gov.ru/eng/events/news/17831/>.
- 11 Lee Scott, “Core Texts and Liberal Education,” in *Encyclopaedia of Educational Philosophy and Theory: In 3 vols.* Vol. 1., ed. Michael Peters (Singapore: Springer, 2017).
- 12 John Erskine, “The Moral Obligation to Be Intelligent,” in *The Moral Obligation to Be Intelligent and Other Essays*, ed. John Erskine, 3–34 (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1915).
- 13 Vladimir Putin, “Rossiia: natsionalnyj vopros.”
- 14 Andrew Hartman, *A War for the Soul of America: A History of the Culture Wars* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2015).
- 15 Eric Adler, *Classics, the Culture Wars, and Beyond* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2016).
- 16 Vladimir Putin, “Rossiia: natsionalnyj vopros.”

- 17 In 2018–2022, at least two million people took this exam annually; however, it was required not only to obtain Russian citizenship, but also to obtain a residence permit or work permit in Russia. Since October 26, 2023, Russia has had a new law on citizenship, which was necessary primarily to simplify the procedure of obtaining citizenship for residents of Ukraine living in the Russian-occupied territories. However, the same law made it more difficult to obtain Russian citizenship through an exam: according to the new law, applicants for citizenship were now required to pass an exam not only in Russian language, but also in history and the basics of Russian law. In 2024, after the terrorist attack in Moscow by members of the terrorist group “Islamic State—Wilayat Khorasan,” a propaganda campaign was launched in the Russian press: Russian media argued that passing exams to obtain a residence permit, work permit or Russian citizenship in private firms was based on corrupt practices and that only state organizations should take the exam.
- 18 Now it is no longer accessible, neither in Russia nor abroad.
- 19 *Na putikh k novoj shkole*, no. 2 (2012).
- 20 A well-known public figure and literature teacher, Sergey Volkov, expressed criticism toward one of the early versions of the list (after its publication) because it included works from school curricula.
- 21 Mihail Pavlovets, “Shkolnyj kanon kak pole bitvy: kupel bez rebenka,” *Neprikosnovennyj zapas* 5, no. 109 (2016).
- 22 In early October 2005, the remains of Anton Denikin and Ivan Ilyin and their wives were transferred to Russia on Putin’s orders, and solemnly buried in Donskoy Monastery in Moscow on October 3 (the grandson of one more commander of the White Army, Pyotr Wrangel, refused to move the body of his grandfather to Moscow alongside Denikin and Ilyin). The political character of this event (with the participation of ministers, two Orthodox metropolitans, and the deputies of the State Duma) indicated that those who passed away were very important for the authorities of today’s Russia. Putin frequently quotes Ivan Ilyin in his public appearances.
- 23 As any works to be published had to go through Soviet censorship, when writing, authors would undergo mechanisms of self-censorship. These writers can be called “sanctioned” (the Russian word “podsensurnye” is hardly translatable into English). Some Soviet “sanctioned” writers attempted to expand the limits of what was permissible in their works—sometimes successfully—and Voznesensky, Okudzhava and partially Zabolotsky (who survived in GULAG) could be counted among them.
- 24 Avars also known as Maharuls (“mountaineers”)—the ethnic group of Northeast Caucasus.
- 25 Apparently, the creators of the list either had in mind the censored editions of Bykaŭ or were unfamiliar with the author’s original version of *Dead Feel No Pain*: only in 2014 (after the publication of the list), the Belorussian—uncensored—version of the novel became available. See: “Praz 50 gadov apovjesc Bykava wpjershynju vyjdzje bjez cenzury” (<https://tinyurl.com/bd37zF3f>).
- 26 Vladimir Putin, “Rossiia: natsionalnyj vopros.”
- 27 Russia’s actions were not a classic annexation: formally, Putin supported Abkhazia’s and South Ossetia’s aspirations for independence. South Ossetia has since 2008 become a completely puppet state, but Abkhazia politically retains some elements of independence from Russia.
- 28 Andrej Zaharov, “Imperskij federalizm,” *Neprikosnovennyj zapas* 1, no. 57 (2008). <http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2008/1/za6.html>.; Andrej Zaharov, “Rossijskij federalizm kak “spjashhij” institut,” *Neprikosnovennyj zapas* 33, no. 71 (2010). <http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2010/3/za12.html>.
- 29 Terry Martin. *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).
- 30 Or, more precisely, they combined in their works the characteristics of modernist experiments with myths and history and romantic nation-building.

- 31 Sergej Zavjalov, “Skvoz moh bezzvuchiia: pojeziia vostochnofinskogo entofuturizma,” *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, no. 85 (2007). <https://magazines.gorky.media/nlo/2007/3/skvoz-moh-bezzvuchiya-poeziya-vostochnofinskogo-etnofuturizma.html>.
- 32 Evgenij Dobrenko, “Najdeno v perevode: rozhdenie sovetskoj mnogonacionalnoj literatury iz smerti avtora,” *Neprikosnovennyj zapas* 4, no. 78 (2011). <http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2011/4/do24.html>; Evgenij Dobrenko, “Gomer stalinizma: Sulejman Stalskij i sovetskaia mnogonatsionalnaia literatura,” *Ab Imperio*, no. 3 (2013a): 191–249. Evgenij Dobrenko, “Dzhambul. Ideologicheskie arabeski,” in *Dzhambul Dzhabaev: Prikljuchenija kazahskogo akyna v sovetskoj strane*, eds. Konstantin Bogdanov, Rikardo Nikolozzi, and Jurij Murashov (M.: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2013b); Elena Zemskova, “Soviet ‘Folklore’ as Translation Project: The Case of Tvorchestvo Narodov SSSR,” in *Translation in Russian Contexts: Culture, Politics, Identity*, eds. Brian James Baer and Susanna Witt, 174–87 (London and New York: Routledge, 2018).
- 33 John Tomlinson, *Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction* (London and New York: Continuum, 1991).
- 34 On the cultural context of this demodernization, see: Konstantin Bogdanov, “Nauka v epicheskiju epokhu: klassika folklor, klassicheskaia filologija i klassovaia solidarnost,” *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, no. 78 (2006). <http://magazines.russ.ru/nlo/2006/78/bog5.html>.
- 35 David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931–1956* (Harvard University Press, 2002).
- 36 On the term “national modernism” see: Aleksandr Dmitriev, and Galina Babak, *Atlantida sovetskogo apostmodernizma. Formalnyj metod v Ukraine (1920-e — nachalo 1930-h)*. (M.: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2021).
- 37 Retired in 2016.
- 38 Regnum, “V Peterburge byl predstavlen proekt spiska sta knig zarubezhnykh avtorov, rekomenduemykh dlja rossijskoj molodezhi,” *Regnum*, March 18, 2013. <https://regnum.ru/news/karel/1637245.html>; Aleksandr Bezzubcev, “100+,” *Literaturnaja gazeta*, January 23, 2013. <https://lgz.ru/article/100/>.
- 39 Perhaps the oddest item on the list is the book *Morals for the XXI Century* by the modern Chilean conservative philosopher, Dario Salas Sommer (1935–2018)—whose work apparently piqued the interest of Vladimir Putin, or, more precisely, of his speechwriters. Putin appeals to the views of the Chilean philosopher to publicly substantiate his conservative discourse, for audiences both in Russia and abroad. Sommer’s book *Cosmic Currency, the Greatest Wealth* has been used as a textbook by philosophical faculties in some Russian universities. His opus *Morals for the XXI Century* was translated into the languages of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), and copies of the book were given to all delegations on a BRICS summit held in Ufa (Bashkortostan, Russia) on July 9, 2015.
- 40 See: http://kchschoo7.narod.ru/doc/perech_100_knig.pdf.
- 41 Besides Mikhail Pavlovets, another example is the writer from Saint Petersburg, Nikolay Krishuk, who also expressed his doubts in an interview for the website *Psychologies*: <https://psychologies.livejournal.com/14332.html>.
- 42 Elena Romanicheva, “Ot chtenija ‘objazatel’nogo’ k chteniju ‘svobodnomu’? (shkolnaja programma po literature i spisok ‘100 knig dlja chtenija’: poiski vzaimnogo sootvetstvija),” *Na putiakh k novoj shkole*, no. 2 (2012): 50–54.
- 43 He was part of the Public Council at the Ministry of Education and Sciences of Russia—one of the few official organizations in Russia (in times of the former minister Dmitry Livanov), with a position relatively independent from the state ideology. Now D. Bykov works in emigration.
- 44 Dmitrij Bykov, “100 knig, kotorye dolzhen prochitat kazhdyj,” *Sobesednik*, no. 1 (2013).

- 45 MIA Russia Today, “Dmitrij Bykov: o 100 knigah dlia samostojatel’nogo chtenija,” *MIA “Rossija segodnja,”* February 5, 2013. <http://pressmia.ru/pressclub/20130205/601352043.html>. Bykov’s novel “Orthography” was included in one of the first versions of “Putin’s list” (and Bykov then said that he has nothing against that), but the book was excluded from the final version.
- 46 All three volumes in one publication: Marijetta Chudakova, *Ne dlia vzroslykh Vremia chitat!* (Moskva: Vremja 2012).
- 47 Pravmir, “The Genome of the Russian Soul. 100 Books by Which Russians Distinguish Their Own from Others,” *Pravmir*, February 7, 2013. <https://www.pravmir.ru/genom-russkoj-dushi-100-knig-po-kotorym-rossiyane-otlichayut-svoix-ot-chuzhix/>.
- 48 Vladimir Putin, “Rossiia: natsionalnyj vopros”; Ministerstvo kulturny RF, “Osnovy gosudarstvennoj kulturnoj politiki” (Moskva: Ministerstvo kulturny RF, 2014).
- 49 “D. S. Likhachev Research Institute of Cultural and Natural Heritage of Russia” is claimed as the author of the texts.
- 50 About the role of this ideology in the USSR see, for example: Ilja Kukulín, “Recenzija na knigu” *Pro et Contra* 17, no. 6 (2013): 126–27; Şener Aktürk, *Regimes of Ethnicity and Nationhood in Germany, Russia and Turkey*. Problems of International Politics (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 306.
- 51 Pavlovect, “Shkolnyj kanon kak pole bitvy: kupel bez rebenka,” 2016.
- 52 Igor Sukhikh, *Russkij kanon: knigi HH veka.pod red. T. Timakovej* (Moskva: Vremia, 2013).
- 53 Ilya Kukulín, “A Military Upbringing: The Politics of Childhood, Adolescent Social Activity, and Cultural Representations in Russia in the 2010s–2020s,” in *Historical and Cultural Transformations of Russian Childhood: Myths and Realities*, eds. Marina Balina, Larissa Rudova, and Anastasia Kostetskaya (New York and London: Routledge, 2022), 257–79.
- 54 Elena Savva and Mihail Savva, “Separatizm v sovremennoj Rossii: aktualnost i klassifikaciia,” *Teoriia i praktika obshhestvennogo razvitiia*, no. 17 (2014): 123–25. Currently Elena and Mikhail Savva live and work in Ukraine.
- 55 Meduza, “Kak v Rossii sudjat za separatizm. Advokaty Pavel Chikov i Ramil Ahmetgaliev — ob odnoj iz samykh neodnoznachnykh statej UK,” *Internet-portal “Meduza,”* 13 September 2016. <https://meduza.io/feature/2016/09/13/kak-v-rossii-sudyat-za-separatizm>.
- 56 Oleg Korjakin, “Natsionalnyj separatizm strashen dlia Rossii,” *Rossijskaja gazeta*, October 23, 2013. <https://rg.ru/2013/10/23/reg-pfo/reshetnikov.html>.
- 57 Oleg Korjakin, “Natsionalnyj separatizm strashen dlia Rossii,” *Rossijskaia gazeta*, October 23, 2013. <https://rg.ru/2013/10/23/reg-pfo/reshetnikov.html>.
- 58 The recording of the program can be found at: <http://www.ntv.ru/peredacha/proisschestvie/m4001/o197856/video/>.
- 59 In his book, Sorokin predicted the fall of Russia because of Vladimir Putin’s inadequate policies. Marija Portnjagina and Olga Filina, “Skrepy s peregibami: na podhode novaja programma patrioticheskogo vospitaniia,” *Ogonek*, November 18, 2013. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2343079>.
- 60 Richard Race, *Multiculturalism and Education* (London and New York: Continuum, 2011); Damian Spiteri, *Multiculturalism, Higher Education and Intercultural Communication: Developing Strengths-Based Narratives for Teaching and Learning* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).
- 61 Nevertheless, this novel was very conservative and monarchist in its political message—the author believed that the anti-colonial struggle was inevitable only because of the Bolsheviks’ policies, and that the Tsarist government treated the “natives” very well. After the beginning of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Yeremey Aipin supported the war.

- 62 The series emphasizes that Dagestan is a multicultural republic and that “Dagestanis” do not exist as a single ethnic group; this specification is also polemical with regard to the Russian media’s designation of the “Dagestani” ethnicity.
- 63 Possibly this decision was made because at the end of 2016, Channel One conceded its first place in ratings to the TV channel “Russia-1” and the management did everything to return Channel One to its leading position.
- 64 Olga Slobodchikova, “‘Salam, Maskva!’: Platnyj urok tolerantnosti na Pervom kanale,” *Sajt Russkoj sluzhby BBC*, July 2, 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/russian/features-36689095>.
- 65 “Osnovy gosudarstvennoj kulturnoj politiki,” 29.
- 66 Nikolaj Vahtin and Boris Firsov, “*Sindrom publichnoj nemoty*”: istoriia i sovremennye praktiki publichnykh debatov v Rossii (Moskva: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2017).
- 67 Boris Gladarev, “Opyty preodoleniia ‘publichnoj nemoty,’” in “*Sindrom publichnoj nemoty*”: istoriia i sovremennye praktiki publichnykh debatov v Rossii, ed. Nikolaj Vahtin and Boris Firsov (Moskva: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2017).
- 68 Such a staging, albeit in a different version, was one of the key elements of political life in the USSR, where the local functionaries of Communist Party or the translators of Jambul Jabayev spoke on behalf of national minorities. The translators, who suggested themes for the chants to the old Akyn, and then decisively changed the Kazakh originals (Evgenij Dobrenko, “Dzhambul. Ideologicheskie arabeski,” in *Dzhambul Dzhabaev: Prikljuчениia Kazahskogo Akyna v Sovetskoj Strane*, eds. Konstantin Bogdanov, Rikkardo Nikolozi, and Jurij Murashov (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2013b). It seems that the first to write about the motives for such a setup was Lev Trotski in his 1939 article “Independence of Ukraine and Sectarian Confusion”: “The Kremlin bureaucracy says to the Soviet woman – because of socialism, you have to consider yourself happy and refuse abortion (under the threat of punishment). The Kremlin says to Ukrainians: since socialist revolution resolved the national issue, you have to feel happy in USSR and refuse the thoughts of separation (under the threat of getting shot).” It is clear that in the Soviet public space there was the presentation of “happy women” or “happy Ukrainians”—as well as representatives of other nations—who acted out a unity with the authorities.
- 69 Wahideh Achbari, *The Paradox of Diversity: Why does Interethnic Contact in Voluntary Organizations not lead to Generalized Trust?* (IMISCOE Research Series, Springer, 2016).

Bibliography

- Achbari, Wahideh. *The Paradox of Diversity: Why Does Interethnic Contact in Voluntary Organizations Not Lead to Generalized Trust?*. Cham: IMISCOE Research Series, Springer, 2016.
- Adler, Eric. *Classics, the Culture Wars, and Beyond*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2016.
- Aktürk, Şener. *Regimes of Ethnicity and Nationhood in Germany, Russia and Turkey*. Problems of International Politics. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Arhipova, Aleksandra, Marija Volkova, Anna Kirzjuk, Elena Malaja, Darja Radchenko, and Elena Jugaj. “*Gruppy smerti*”: ot igry k moralnoj panike. M.: RANHiGS; ShAGI, 2017.
- Bekbulatova, Taisiia. “My vam pomogaem, vy nam pomogaete.” V Gosdume proshel sovet blogerov. Obsuzhdali, kak chasto nado delat selfi.” *Informacionnyj portal ‘Meduza’*, June 19, 2017. <https://meduza.io/feature/2017/06/19/my-vam-pomogaete-vy-nam-pomogaete>.
- Bezzubcev, Aleksandr. “100+.” *Literaturnaja gazeta*, January 23, 2013. <https://lgz.ru/article/2-3-6400-2013-01-23/100/>.
- Bogdanov, Konstantin. “Nauka v epicheskiju epokhu klassika folklor, klassicheskaja filologija i klassovaia solidarnost.” *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, no. 78 (2006). <http://magazines.russ.ru/nlo/2006/78/bog5.html>.

- Brandenberger, David. *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931-1956*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.
- Bykov, Dmitriy. "100 knig, kotorye dolzhen prochitat kazhdyj." *Sobesednik*, no. 1 (2013).
- Chudakova, Marijetta. *Ne dlia vzroslykh Vremia chitat!* Moskva: Vremja, 2012.
- Dobrenko, Evgenij. "Najdeno v perevode: rozhdenie sovetskoy mnogonacionalnoj literatury iz smerti avtora." *Neprikosnovennyj zapas* 4, no. 78 (2011). <http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2011/4/do24.html>.
- Dobrenko, Evgenij. "Gomer stalinizma: Sulejman Stalskiy i sovetskaia mnogonacionalnaia literatura." *Ab Imperio* no. 3 (2013a): 191–249.
- Dobrenko, Evgenij. "Dzhambul. Ideologicheskie arabeski." In *Dzhambul Dzhabaev: prikljuchenii kazahskogo akyna v Sovetskoy strane*, edited by Konstantin Bogdanov, Rikkardo Nikolozzi, and Jurij Murashov. Moskva: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2013b.
- Erskine, John. "The Moral Obligation to Be Intelligent." In *The Moral Obligation to Be Intelligent and Other Essays*, edited by John Erskine, 3–34. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1915.
- Euroradio. "Praz 50 gadoj apoves' Bykava ypershynju vyjzde bez cenzury, v Euroradio. FM, February 24, 2014. <https://tinyurl.com/bd37zf3f>.
- Gladarev, Boris. "Opyty preodoleniia "publichnoj nemoty."" In *'Sindrom publichnoj nemoty': istorija i sovremennye praktiki publichnykh debatov v Rossii*, edited by Nikolaj Vahtin and Boris Firsov. Moskva: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2017.
- Goloso, Grigorij. *Sravnitelnaia politologija i rossijskaia politika, 2010–2015: sbornik statej*, translated by I. S. Grigorev. SPb.: Izdatel'stvo Evropejskogo universiteta v Sankt-Peterburge, 2016.
- Hartman, Andrew. *A War for the Soul of America: A History of the Culture Wars*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2015.
- Korjakin, Oleg. "Natsionalnyj separatizm strashen dlia Rossii." *Rossijskaja gazeta*, October 23, 2013. <https://rg.ru/2013/10/23/reg-pfo/reshetnikov.html>.
- Kukulin, Ilya. "Recenziia na knigu." *Pro et Contra* 17, no. 6 (2013): 121–28.
- Kukulin, Ilya. "The Culture of Ban: Pop Culture, Social Media and Securitization of Youth Politics in Today's Russia." *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 27, no. 2 (2021): 177–90.
- Kukulin, Ilya. "A Military Upbringing: The Politics of Childhood, Adolescent Social Activity, and Cultural Representations in Russia in the 2010s–2020s." In *Historical and Cultural Transformations of Russian Childhood: Myths and Realities*, edited by Marina Balina, Larissa Rudova, and Anastasia Kostetskaya, 257–79. New York and London: Routledge, 2022.
- Lvovskij, Stanislav. "Pod znakom yuvenalnoj yustitsii." *Pro et Contra* 14, no. 1–2 (2010): 20–41.
- Martin, Terry. *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001.
- Meduza. "Kak v Rossii sudiat za separatizm. Advokaty Pavel Chikov i Ramil Ahmetgaliev — ob odnoj iz samykh neodnoznachnykh statej UK." *Internet-portal 'Meduza'*, September 13, 2016. <https://meduza.io/feature/2016/09/13/kak-v-rossii-sudyat-za-separatizm>.
- MIA Russia Today. "Dmitriy Bykov: o 100 knigakh dlia samostojatel'nogo chteniia." *MIA 'Rossiia segodnia'*, February 5, 2013.
- Ministerstvo kulturey RF. "Osnovy gosudarstvennoj kulturnoj politiki." Moskva: Ministerstvo kulturey RF, 2014.
- Pavlovec, Mihail. "Shkolnyj kanon kak pole bitvy: kupel bez rebenka." *Neprikosnovennyj zapas* 5, no. 109 (2016): 125–45. https://www.nlobooks.ru/magazines/neprikosnovennyj_zapas/109_nz_5_2016/article/12126/.

- Portnjagina, Marija, and Olga Filina. "Skrepy s peregibami: na podhode novaia programma patrioticheskogo vospitaniia." *Ogonek*, November 18, 2013. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2343079>.
- Putin, Vladimir. "Rossiia: natsionalnyj vopros." *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, January 23, 2012. http://www.ng.ru/politics/2012-01-23/1_national.html.
- Race, Richard. *Multiculturalism and Education*. London and New York: Continuum, 2011.
- Regnum. "V Peterburge byl predstavlen proekt spiska sta knig zarubezhnykh avtorov, rekomenduemykh dlia rossijskoj molodezhi." *Regnum*, March 18, 2013. <https://regnum.ru/news/karel/1637245.html>.
- Rogov, Kirill. "Sverhbolshinstvo dlia sverhprezidentstva." *Pro et Contra* 17, no. 3–4 (August 2013): 102–25.
- Rogov, Kirill. "Politicheskaia reaktsiia v Rossii i "partijnye gruppy" v rossijskom obshchestve," *Kontrapunkt*, no. 6 (December 2016). https://www.ponarseurasia.org/wp-content/uploads/attachments/rogov_counterpoint6.pdf.
- Romanicheva, Elena. "Ot chteniia "objazatel'nogo" k chteniju "svobodnomu"?" (Shkolnaja programma po literature i spisok "100 knig dlia chteniia": poiski vzaimnogo sootvetstvija)." *Na putiakh k novoj shkole*, no. 2 (2012).
- Savva, Elena, and Mihail Savva. "Separatizm v sovremennoj Rossii: aktualnost i klassifikaciia." *Teoriia i praktika obshhestvennogo razvitiia*, no. 17 (2014). <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/separatizm-v-sovremennoj-rossii-aktualnost-i-klassifikatsiya>.
- Schedler, Andreas. "The Logic of Electoral Authoritarianism." In *Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition*, edited by Andreas Schedler. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2006.
- Scott, Lee. "Core Texts and Liberal Education." In *Encyclopaedia of Educational Philosophy and Theory: In 3 vols.* Vol. 1., edited by Michael Peters. Singapore: Springer, 2017.
- Slobodchikova, Ol'ga. "'Salam, Maskva!': platnyj urok tolerantnosti na Pervom kanale'. Sajt Russkoj sluzhby BBC." *BBC Russian Service*, July 2, 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/russian/features-36689095>.
- Spiteri, Damian. *Multiculturalism, Higher Education and Intercultural Communication: Developing Strengths-Based Narratives for Teaching and Learning*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.
- Sukhikh, Igor. *Russkij kanon: knigi XX veka. pod red. T. Timakovoj*. Moskva: Vremia, 2013.
- Tomlinson, John. *Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction*. London and New York: Continuum, 1991.
- Vahtin, Nikolaj, and Boris Firsov. "*Sindrom publichnoj nemoty*": istoriia i sovremennye praktiki publichnykh debatov v Rossii. Moskva: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2017.
- Zaharov, Andrej. "Imperskij federalizm." *Neprikosnovennyj zapas* 1, no. 57 (2008). <http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2008/1/za6.html>.
- Zaharov, Andrej. "Rossijskij federalizm kak "spiashhij" institut." *Neprikosnovennyj zapas* 3, no. 71 (2010). <http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2010/3/za12.html>.
- Zemskova, Elena. "Soviet "Folklore" as Translation Project: The Case of Tvorchestvo Narodov SSSR." In *Translation in Russian Contexts: Culture, Politics, Identity*, edited by Brian James Baer and Susanna Witt, 174–87. London and New York: Routledge, 2018.

Part III

History Policy and Politics of Memory



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

10 History as a Political Language

Ivan Kurilla

In recent years, “history wars” over public and political interpretations of history have become more intense.¹ History has long ceased to be an issue reserved for history scholars or state schools, and has of late become one of the most powerful political tools, as well as a battlefield and a coveted trophy for various groups in a society. In this chapter, I suggest a prospective explanation for this phenomenon, based on the analysis of one of the roles of history in society: the role of language in communications regarding societal problems. The battle for history as the battle for the uniformity of this language facilitates understanding of some aspects of contemporary historical debates in the world, and in Russia especially.

History Rather than Politics

Only a month before the Russian attack on Ukraine in February 2022, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergey Lavrov, in Geneva for a last attempt to prevent the invasion. While many journalists expressed cautious optimism, *Al Jazeera*’s correspondent Kimberly Halkett reported that “the devil [wa]s in the details ... when it comes to the issue of history, they both [the US and Russia] see history very differently.”² This was not the first instance that political confrontation between the United States and Russia had been shaped by differences in their approach to history. Five years earlier, at a press conference following the official visit of the U.S. Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, in 2017, Lavrov had expressed disappointment that the latter refused to talk about history:

[T]oday we looked back at the history of the matter, and Rex Tillerson said that he is a new man and prefers not to delve into history, but to deal with today’s problems. However, the world is such a place that unless we draw lessons from the past we are unlikely to succeed in the present.³

Lavrov then launched into a discussion about “the situations when a group of states, above all the Western countries, NATO members were absolutely fixated on liquidating this or that dictator, an authoritarian or totalitarian leader.”⁴ “In order to remove the president of former Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic, NATO unleashed a war in the centre of Europe in 1999,” he continued, also addressing the precedents

DOI: [10.4324/9781003505822-13](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003505822-13)

This chapter has been made available under a CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0 license.

of the Iraq invasion as well as the destruction of the state of Libya and the division of Sudan.⁵ Toward the end of the press conference Lavrov returned to his earlier theme: “I hope that those who can draw lessons from history will prevail.”⁶ Five years later, when Russia itself unleashed a war in Europe, the world learned what kind of “history lessons” the Russian leaders had drawn.

Lavrov also delved deeply into history—this time much earlier history than that of recent decades—on another occasion, in an article of 2016 in which he attempted to explain the sudden changes in Russia’s foreign policy. Publishing in the journal *Russia in Global Affairs*, Lavrov “offer[ed] some thoughts on these issues, recalling facts from history and drawing historical parallels,”⁷ presenting readers with an excursion into the thousand-year history of Russia. Reminding readers of the First World War, the war with Napoleon, and the liberation of Moscow from Poland in 1612, Lavrov concluded that “a closer look at these landmark events clearly testifies to the special role Russia has played in European and world history.”⁸ President Vladimir Putin has also used such strategies. At the end of 2014, Putin invoked history in an attempt to justify the annexation of Crimea:

[F]or ethnic Russians (I mean that particular segment of our multi-ethnic peoples – ethnic, Orthodox Russians), Crimea has a kind of sacred significance. After all, it was in Crimea, in Hersonissos, that Prince Vladimir was baptised, subsequently baptising Rus.⁹

Referring to history in order to explain politics is a common practice not only utilized by prominent figures. On an everyday level, people use the past as a basis for political preferences. A society’s stance on Stalin or the collapse of the Soviet Union is still a clearer indicator of values than identifying between “liberals” and “conservatives.” Levada, the main sociological research center in Russia, continues to publish polls on attitudes to Stalin and other influential leaders from the past among Russians, and it is significant that, on the organization’s website, the name “Stalin” occurs twice as often as the term “democracy.”¹⁰

Instrumentalizing history to explain political processes is nothing new. The escalation of political contradictions in any society also affects assessments of figures and events of the past, as demonstrated, for example, by the campaign to demolish monuments to slave owners and slave traders in the United States and Europe in the summer of 2020. In Russia it has become commonplace to claim that history has decisively replaced the domain of politics.¹¹ In this chapter I seek to explore the reasons behind this development, leaning on the tradition of social constructivism, on the one hand, and on the other hand, on approaches to the analysis of the “modern past” phenomenon proposed by French scholars François Hartog and Henry Rousso.

Social Constructivism in the Era of Presentism?

Social constructivism postulated the decisive role of language in the formation and evolution of people’s perceptions of the world. The linguistic turn in the social sciences in the last third of the twentieth century revealed how language defines the “marking” of societies in which people live and operate. Peter Berger and Thomas

Luckmann, in their monograph *The Social Construction of Reality*, define symbolic processes as “processes of signification that refer to realities other than those of everyday experience.”¹²

It was the German scholar Reinhart Koselleck and British historian Quentin Skinner who first defined conceptual history, one of the most significant directions of historiography.¹³ This practice often cites (not always openly) the concepts with which people describe their different societies in order to define the characteristics of their social interactions. In this sense, such an approach takes into consideration the diversity of social constructivism.

In cases of international relations, this method has helped us to see that differences in how we “mark” the world form the basis of mutual misunderstandings, as, for instance, when important concepts in one culture do not correspond with those in the system of another, and encounter differently constructed hierarchies in different societies. A significant part of postcolonial studies is built on this approach, utilizing the term “Orientalism” introduced by Edward Said.¹⁴ The example of Lavrov’s press conference described at the beginning of this chapter demonstrates the very nature of such mutual misunderstandings. Lavrov insists on the importance of history in order to solve the problems of modern politics, whereas his American colleague sees no value in doing so.

The transfer of social practices from one society to another is accompanied by a transfer of terminologies and/or the adaptation of language to designate new phenomenon. This alteration only takes place once the terminology has been set in this or another language; a terminology used to describe new practices, and equally understood by all native speakers of that language. Sometimes, words and terminology change over the course of such processes.

One of the most important theoretical points is the idea of “presentism.” In the works of François Hartog, this is denoted as the modern “regime of historicity”—a condition formed by the end of the twentieth century—where the past and the future lost their independent meaning but appeared to be subordinated to the present.¹⁵ While the term emerged almost one hundred years ago, the meaning of the word radically changed through the works of Hartog. If in the first half of the twentieth century, presentism saw historians seeking the explanation of the present in the past, then the new approach to the same term overturned this picture: a new generation of historians began to study the past “inside” the present. The present thus becomes self-sufficient and consistently “creates” and constructs the past and future as it requires.

An important element to this understanding of presentism is the work of Henry Rousso, whose term “instant past” is applied to history that “is yet to have passed” and is thus part of the present.¹⁶ From his point of view, such a past starts with “the last catastrophe,” which, for the majority of European countries, appears to be the Second World War or the Holocaust (noting that Stalin’s repressions in the USSR carry similar importance for Russians).

The works of Rousso and Hartog are complementary. The immediate past is not subject to distance from the present, and therefore bridges the movement of time. Without the “difference of potentials,” the present ceases to generate the past, creating the cultural situation defined by Hartog as “presentism.” An important part of this process is the extensive use of historical language to designate modern trends;

it appears to be one of the ways of submitting the past to the present. The history of such representation is not only interesting on its own, but it also introduces material for examining the present in metaphors (taken from the past) convenient for modern political forces.

A substantial amount of contemporary scholarly research is dedicated to “examining memory.” The tools for its exploration are the traumas of the past: war, the Holocaust, and repression. In his book *Warped Mourning*, Alexander Etkind demonstrates how the memory of Stalin’s repressions shaped both the post-Stalin Soviet and modern Russian societies.¹⁷ One of the most influential historians of this trend, Pierre Nora, introduced the concept of *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory)—such as monuments, holidays, emblems, books, songs, or geographical places—that represent a large part of the present if they are “surrounded by symbolic aura.”¹⁸ Consequently, it is the past that becomes part of the present, and not only is it a memory but it also continues to “live” in and influence the present. The use of historical language for the examination of current political processes abolishes the distance that is crucial for the study of history in a classical sense. History becomes part of the present, consolidating the presentism of the modern regime of historicity.

“Social Glue” for Russian Society

Just over one hundred years ago, the sociologist Emile Durkheim proposed the metaphor of “social glue” in order to examine the forces (institutions) holding societies together. The term has often been used to describe the history of Russian society. Essentially, common histories such as tragedies and accomplishments have helped Russians to feel as one nation more than any other integrators such as notions of “common values,” or institutions such as the Church.

But what does this metaphor mean? How exactly does history function as “social glue”? From my point of view, the major mechanism is the permanent usage of history as a language to describe societies. Changes in linguistics also show the transformative nature of language and how it is used as a tool for discussing social narratives. Configurations of language are imposed on reality, suggesting a spectrum that makes it possible for us to act on and estimate social situations and phenomena. Thus, the claim that history in Russia acts as a “social glue” means, in other words, that it is used as a language to describe social reality and to communicate on sociopolitical subjects.

History has played this role for a long time. Before the appearance of political terminology and the emergence of the language of politics, history constituted the combination of examples and precedents that made a discussion of political influences possible. It was only in the nineteenth century that history and political science established disciplinary borders that made it possible to develop these two subjects independently. By the twentieth century, the language of political discussion had developed and was perceived similarly in different corners of the world. After 1971, however, the era of the dominance of Marxism-Leninism began, with its own ways of examining society and politics; any alternative methods were described as “bourgeois” and soon vanished from usage.

It was no accident that the main textbook for the social sciences in Soviet times was *A Short Course on the History of the VKP(b)*, edited by Joseph Stalin himself. The acronym VKP(b) stood for the All-Union Communist Party. Communist leaders of the country appreciated the meaning of history for political communication within society, and history was uniformly perceived across the country. At the same time, there was a tendency to lose the meanings of terms within the linguistics of political science. The science itself was absent due to its replacement in educational institutions by “scientific communism.”¹⁹ Political analysis in these institutions, if it took place at all, was obliged to use Marxist terminology only.

One result of the two decades of domination of Marxist-Leninist ideology in the Soviet Union was the loss of a common language with the rest of the world to analyze political phenomena. First, a “corruption of concepts” took place, the equivalent of which did not exist in the USSR reality. In the post-Soviet period, political debate was no longer censored and controlled within society, but the damage continued nevertheless. Understanding was perceived as a resource to be seized, and a “Liberal Democratic Party” was formed in Russia, which paradoxically upheld no liberal or democratic values whatsoever, adopting a negative “shading” of world politics and political science.

As a result, political language in Russia lost the ability to describe reality, which explains the withdrawal of this language into narrow professional circles of scholars and historians, as well as the functional loss of broadcasting political information and evaluations to society at large outside this circle. However, the necessity of such debate did not disappear, and historical narrative continued to perform the role of political language.

How Can History Serve as a Language to Describe the Modern World?

Using history as a language to describe the modern era raises immense contradictions. The language of description in the natural sciences is mathematics, presenting itself as logically constructed, compiling elements of unique importance that are supported by strict proof systems. Living languages are less strict and the meanings of words are more elastic. History was first used as a language to describe certain epochs of the modern world and of when the past—its sense and meaning—has seemed fixed. In addition, history had qualities necessary for such description through comparison and identification. However, in the present day, history looks completely different. Historians know that any historical event may be interpreted from different points of view. Modern history has no singular narrative and therefore the “reference points” of the past that seem indisputable to politicians do not represent definitive terms. This has planted the germ of conflict between historians and politicians.

As historical language places “markings” on social reality,²⁰ historical events should no longer be evaluated but perceived as fixed and subject to connotations that will be equally understood by all communicating participants. In other words, history-language has to appear as certain events that can be interpreted in only one possible way and which can therefore be used to describe (or justify) modern politics.

Only then will a reference to an event or figure of the past be self-sufficient and mean the same thing to everyone, making it possible for communication to take place.

In Soviet times, historical language necessitated the initial structuring of a narrative to collectively and cohesively understand chosen events and historical figures. The Battle of Stalingrad thus became a symbol of the heroism of Soviet troops and the strategic talent of commanders, whereas the Leningrad blockade symbolized the tragedy of the civilian population. As a result, the themes of the tragedy of civilians in Leningrad and the heroism of Soviet troops at Stalingrad remained insignificant and were even further marginalized throughout the existence of the Soviet Union. Decembrists symbolized self-sacrifice and liberation from monarchy, Ivan the Terrible, a despotic power, and Peter the Great, a reformist.

Not long after the disintegration of the Soviet narrative, common interpretations of historical symbols began to crumble. History textbooks, alongside canonical assessments, included, for example, the following remarks about the Decembrists: "If people such as P. Pestel came to power in Russia, our country would face harrowing misfortunes. Russian historian, M.A. Korf, called Decembrists a handful of mad men, alien to our Holy Russia."²¹

This describes well the absence of a consensus on events of the past in Russia, especially in regard to what happened with monuments, toponymy and holidays; that is, the most basic commemorations of history. Today, a vast number of monuments of Lenin and other revolutionaries have survived in Russia. However, it is hard to find them in the center of Moscow or in the vicinity of the Kremlin, where they have been replaced with monuments of Tsars and figures of Orthodox history. Parallel to these processes in different cities of the country, monuments of figures from the White Movement, such as A. Kolchak, were erected, as well as a monument of P. A. Krasnov on a private property in the Rostov region. In 2016, the governors of Oryol Oblast erected a monument to Ivan the Terrible in the county. Soviet streets cross with Uspensky streets, and the communist holidays on March 8 and May 1 are still celebrated alongside Easter and Christmas. In Volgograd, a decision was made a few years ago to use "Stalingrad" eight times a year (on memorial days or war celebrations) as an alternative name for the city.²² The disappearance of communal ideology after the Soviet collapse did not change the memorial landscape of history. Its current state acutely demonstrates the lack of a unified approach to the country's past and, consequently, it is impossible for Russians to use past events as a uniform, generally comprehensible, "linguistic code."

The impossibility of describing the 1917 Revolution as an unambiguous event explains why both society and politicians kept surprisingly silent for the most part about the centenary of the event. History, in their view, must be understood in a singular and unified way in order to describe the present. If this is not possible, then it is better not to refer to it at all.

A Unified Textbook as an Attempt to Consolidate a Unified Language

At the beginning of 2000, Vladimir Putin entered the Kremlin with a particular idea on the importance of historical symbols.²³ He began re-constructing Russian identity by officially approving the flag and the coat of arms from the times of "Tsarist"

Russia, and also resurrected the “Soviet” anthem. In February of the same year, as vice president, Putin visited Mamayev Kurgan in Volgograd and actively started using the rhetoric of the “glorious past.” But the main means of establishing the new “official” interpretation of history was by controlling television broadcasting, school textbooks and sites of memory.²⁴

This brings us to the so-called “Unified History Textbook.” In February 2003, President Putin expressed a concern about the different interpretations of history throughout the regions of Russia and suggested producing uniform textbooks of Russian history for secondary schools. Putin demanded such books be made “following a single logic of continuous Russian history, the relations between all its stages and respect towards all episodes of our past.”²⁵ To clarify his position, Putin expanded upon the metaphor of “social glue”:

[O]ur core objective is to enhance peace and harmony in the multiethnic Russian society, so that our people feel that they are citizens of a single country regardless of their ethnicity and religious beliefs.²⁶

The unified textbook of Russian history was obviously an attempt to create a common set of historical “memes,” on the basis of which the authorities and the population could engage in political debate. This initiative was rapidly followed by criticism from various historians.²⁷ Those in opposition saw it as a step toward forming a state ideology. However, the president directly expressed that it was taking into consideration the different perceptions of various important events in the history of the nation. Historical figures and events, observed differently in different regions of the country, cannot serve as referential points for conveying any (political) idea. Such history serves as the language for describing the issues of the modern era, and therefore does not provide the basic function attributed to it by the government.

Historians, however, appeared surprisingly unanimous in their resistance to this initiative. As the academic Valery Tishkov noted on his Facebook page, he only knew of two attempts to create a unified history book—one in 1934 and again in 1949—and as the academic secretary at the Russian Academy of Sciences, he was not willing to encourage a third attempt.²⁸ Another academic, Aleksandr Chubar’ian tried to redefine missions of historians in light of the presidential initiative of the “unified textbook.” Instead of planning the textbook, he emphasized that the whole process would take rather a long time, and that “it is necessary to utilize the current situation for questioning the issue of historical education in schools in general.”²⁹

The head of the RAS (Russian Academy of Sciences), Yuriy Petrov, noted that “unified does not necessarily mean singular.”³⁰ And the retired head of the RAS, Andrey Sakharov, also expressed his opinion against creating such a textbook:

I regard the idea of a unified textbook negatively because I believe that a teacher must have a choice, albeit small, over how to teach. With such controversial issues, variations in assessments and perspectives have to be reconsidered. All of this would be levelled in such a textbook and ultimately reduced to nothing. This cannot be allowed to happen.³¹

Most open about this issue was Yuri Pivovarov, director of scientific information in the social sciences department at RAS: “Overall, our historical science is not the worst thing in our society. There are people who understand their responsibility to the society they live in [...] although I do not like it all.”³²

Naturally, among the thousands of Russian historians, there were those who showed readiness to support the uniformity of historical narratives. However, the position of the leaders of the RAS is indicative.³³ The opposition from academics toward a common history textbook led to a lowering in historico-cultural standards in general, and while the diversity of textbooks decreased, it did not disappear altogether.

Problems of Historians

The use of history as a language of political debate has led to serious problems for historians, who continue to analyze the past in the framework of their own professional conventions, which for the surrounding world seems like a judgment on politics. Historians, after all, use the very same language as politicians, meaning that their essays or research can easily be read as a statement on any given political subject. At the same time, historians do not perceive their field as a form of language but rather as a dialogue on the past.

Discovering that history in the hands of contemporary historians casts doubt on the historical myths provided by politicians, the authorities sought to convince historians to avoid public appearances so that historical language would remain a political tool. Former President Dmitry Medvedev noted that:

Academic historians [can] sit in a quiet office, in a library and look at one note, a second note, a historical document from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. [...] let scholars write what they want, but textbooks, publicly available resources of mass media, must still adhere to the standard point of view on such events.³⁴

One of the leading representatives of historical politics in Russia, Minister of Culture Vladimir Medinsky, urges support of myths rather than history, claiming that people live in the mythological world:

Any historical event, once passed, becomes a myth – positive or negative. This can also be considered in relation to historical figures. The heads of our State Archives have to conduct their own research, but life is such that people operate not with archival references, but with myths. References can strengthen these myths, destroy them and turn them upside down. The collective mass consciousness always operates on myths, including in regard to history, which is why we have to approach this sensitively, carefully and considerately.³⁵

In other words, mythologizing history allows political debate to be understood in more simple terms. Myths, according to Medinsky, appear to be the main instrument in comprehending “historical language,” and are also used for political purposes (including the approach to “collective mass consciousnesses”). Around the same time, Medinsky’s incorrect handling of sources in his doctoral thesis on

historical scholarship became the basis for a petition to strip him of his degree, signed by scholar-activists.

Concerned about the fate of historical knowledge in the face of increasing pressure on their field from the state and politicians, a group of historians created the “Free Historical Society” in 2014, as an attempt to counteract the dangers of the authorities’ control over history.³⁶ The state responded by strengthening its control over particular events of history which are referenced by sources and are most significant to Russian society due to their emotional content, and are thus less “vulnerable” to critical rethinking.

The Great Patriotic War: History and Canon

Usage and Destruction

The consequences of historical events differ vastly for all Russians, and society seeks to uphold a single interpretation. Narratives of the Great Patriotic War, however, tend to generate relatively uniform sentiments. Between 2000 and 2005, the Kremlin was using the memory of the Great Patriotic War as a basic resource for “gluing” society and upholding its own legitimacy as the main keeper of this memory. The approach worked effectively: the war remained an important topos for socializing Russians and its crucial events and people were understood similarly by the overwhelming majority of the population. Heroes remained heroes, and the army of Vlasov remained traitors, the Battle of Stalingrad was still the symbol for the victory, and the Leningrad blockade continued to symbolize heroism and the tragedy faced by the civilian population.

The very attempt to hold on to the unchangeable narrative of the Second World War can be explained with the “wars of memory” unfolding between Russia and its neighbors in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Around the same time, the Baltics and Central Europe started re-evaluating old treatises. Such revisiting deprives the “strongest” part of historical allusions of their content.³⁷

For the state, understanding the Great Patriotic War creates the most convenient political language. The emotionality contained within the memories of the war paves the way for historical elements to become beneficial in propaganda by way of forming labels, and to describe modern reality with the help of the consciousness of the 1940s. A concept such as “Nazism,” for instance, holds strong negative connotations, and a message can be more directly conveyed by describing an opponent as a Nazi or Hitler.

Yet in practice, it appears that such use of history has its own consequences. In 2014, Russian propaganda decided on a radical usage of historical language in order to justify the politics of the Kremlin. The news from eastern Ukraine used words and terms dating back to the Great Patriotic War, such as “Chasteners,” “Nazis,” and “Rebels.” The most important symbolic resource of the language was thrown into the furnace of the Ukrainian conflict. The terminology of the Great Patriotic War, as well the understanding of it, resonated with the memory of the war for almost all Russians, and became the bargaining chip played by the propaganda machine. “Chasteners,” “Fascists,” and “Nazis” were used particularly in relation

to the Ukrainian army, with “Rebels” assigned to the parties who supported the Kremlin. Although such terminology was pushed back when the conflict began to freeze, it still remains in the arsenal of the propagandists.

In April 2017, a video clip of opposition politician Alexei Navalny being compared to Adolf Hitler was circulated on the internet. Anonymous sources from the television channel *Rain* linked the emergence of the video clip to an order by the president’s administration.³⁸ The claim that “they are fighting against us as if they are fighting against Hitler,” used by the interlocutors of the press, appeared to be literal and became another example of historical language being instrumentalized in a modern political battle.³⁹ However, the video clip was negatively received by the public. Such an obviously destructive image was hard to attach to an already well-known political figure.

It is important to note that not only Russian politicians use the language of the Second World War. In 1990, U.S. President George H.W. Bush compared Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein to Adolf Hitler,⁴⁰ and eleven years later, in the initial phases of the War on Terror after the September 11 terrorist attacks in 2001, his son, U.S. President George W. Bush said the terrorists “follow[ed] in the path of fascism.”⁴¹ The White House Press Secretary at the time, Sean Spicer (who also became White House Communications Director under President Donald Trump), compared the President of Syria, Bashar al-Assad, to Adolf Hitler. After a chemical attack at the beginning of April 2017, Spicer noted that “even Hitler did not use chemical weapons,” but was later compelled to apologize and retract the statement.⁴² As American historian Deville Nunes has noted,

the World War II analogy functions on behalf of the Bush administration not so much to describe and classify international threats such as al-Qaeda or Iraq, but more powerfully to enliven the public and to legitimate its leadership, to rearticulate familiar icons of national identity.⁴³

The Russian case differs from the latter because analogies to the Second World War and other historical events are used to classify the threats of the modern era.

The authorities have proceeded from persuasion to pressuring their own historians. Immediate threats are first directed at scholars studying the history of the Second World War. The state has clearly declared its right to control over the historical narrative. In May 2014, the State of Duma of the Russian Federation adopted an amendment to the criminal code (CC), resulting in Clause 354.1., “The Rehabilitation of Nazism.” In accordance with this clause the following amendments were made: “Disseminating false information about the activities of the USSR during the Second World War;” “Disseminating disrespectful information about society on days of military glory and memorable dates of Russia related to the defence of the Motherland”; and also “Publicly desecrating the symbols of military glory of Russia.”⁴⁴ It is noteworthy that even the work of historians can fall into the category of “Disseminating false information about the activities of the USSR during the Second World War” should their works question the officially established

narratives pertaining to the war. As no science exists without doubt, studies researching the history of the Second World War thus became complicated in today's Russia. And it was not long before this fear was confirmed.

In March 2016, Kirill Aleksandrov's doctoral dissertation was presented at the Saint Petersburg Institute of History. The study examined "Generals and official personnel of paramilitary groups of the Committee to Liberate the Russian People in the years 1943–1946."⁴⁵ Public activists who saw in this theme an "attempt to rehabilitate Vlasov"⁴⁶ and were hostile to Aleksandrov, decided to attend his PhD defence. This was a clear example of taking a historical text as political. Once the dissertation committee had voted to award the author the degree, political activists continued to pressure the university, and the dissertation was sent for a second approval to the Military Academy of the General Staff, where the committee voted against the thesis a year after the viva in Saint Petersburg. Comments in the press left no suspicions open regarding the politicized nature of PhD defense procedures.⁴⁷

It is also important to note that the most colossal campaign in the last few years, in which millions of people in Russia participated, were the demonstrations of the "Immortal Regiment" where Russians carried the portraits of their fathers and grandfathers who fought in the Great Patriotic War through city streets. For me, this is an attempt by society to express political subjectivities using the only language left to them by the authorities—in this case, reference to the Great Patriotic War.

Such an impetuous instrumentalization of history is dangerous both for the profession of the historian (which without being understood can be classified as propaganda), and for society in general. From a long-term perspective, this struggle compromises the importance and maintenance of political communication itself; it clearly lacks its own terminology as well as ideas and values capable of playing the role of reviewers without pointing at figures and events of the past.

Conclusion

In 2020, Article 67(1) was added to the Russian Constitution, stating that "The Russian Federation shall honour the memory of defenders of the Fatherland and ensure the protection of historical truth. Deterioration of the significance of the feat of the people in defence of the Fatherland is not allowed."⁴⁸ This was a symbolic step, equating statements about historical events to political action. The concept of "historical truth," of course, was not taken from the arsenal of historians, but refers to stated intentions at the political level to support a single narrative of the past, as well as the unambiguity of the language with which political communication in Russia is carried out.

The focus of Russian politicians in their public appearances and texts on historical examples does not point toward a reliance on history, but instead shows attempts to subordinate it for their own current political tasks. This situation often corresponds to the definition of "presentism" in the works of Hartog, and therefore includes the Russian situation in the wider context of "using history."

The peculiarity of Russia consists in neglecting the growth of political language by replacing it with history.

It is also important to note the destructive impacts of this modern politicization on Russian society. By constantly using analogies between the events of past and present, politicians not only alter representations of current processes to fit their own agendas; but they also compel people to transfer their doubts about the unambiguity of modern assessments to events of the past. This suggests that the thoughtless usage of memories of the Great Patriotic War in anti-Ukrainian propaganda has led to the memory of this war being distorted.

Without developing a language detached from history, the political situation is unlikely to change. If it does, however, it will not only change history but also reduce political conflict. The role of history education in this context lies in restoring the distance between “today” and “yesterday,” returning the past its autonomy, and affording historical science the right to its own language.

Notes

- 1 Macintyre, Stuart with Clark, Anna (2004). *The History Wars*; Taylor, Tony & Guyver, Robert (ed.) (2011). *History Wars and the Classroom – Global Perspectives*.
- 2 *Latest Ukraine updates: Russia, US voice hope for diplomacy*, Al Jazeera, January 21, 2022. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/21/blinken-lavrov-meet-on-soaring-ukraine-tensions-liveblog>, accessed February 2, 2023.
- 3 The speech and the answers to media questions of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Sergey Lavrov at the press conference following the meeting with Secretary of State Tillerson, Moscow, April 12, 2017. https://www.mid.ru/web/guest/meropriyatiya_s_uchastiem_ministra/-/asset_publisher/xK1BhB2bUjd3/content/id/2725629, accessed February 2, 2023.
- 4 The speech and the answers to media questions of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Sergey Lavrov at the press conference following the meeting with Secretary of State Tillerson, Moscow, April 12, 2017. https://www.mid.ru/web/guest/meropriyatiya_s_uchastiem_ministra/-/asset_publisher/xK1BhB2bUjd3/content/id/2725629, accessed February 2, 2023.
- 5 The speech and the answers to media questions of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Sergey Lavrov at the press conference following the meeting with Secretary of State Tillerson, Moscow, April 12, 2017. https://www.mid.ru/web/guest/meropriyatiya_s_uchastiem_ministra/-/asset_publisher/xK1BhB2bUjd3/content/id/2725629, accessed February 2, 2023.
- 6 The speech and the answers to media questions of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Sergey Lavrov at the press conference following the meeting with Secretary of State Tillerson, Moscow, April 12, 2017. https://www.mid.ru/web/guest/meropriyatiya_s_uchastiem_ministra/-/asset_publisher/xK1BhB2bUjd3/content/id/2725629, accessed February 2, 2023.
- 7 Sergey Lavrov, “Russia’s Foreign Policy in a Historical Perspective: Musings at a New Stage of International Development,” *Russia in Global Affairs*, no. 2 (2016). <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/russias-foreign-policy-in-a-historical-perspective/>, accessed February 2, 2023.
- 8 Sergey Lavrov, “Russia’s Foreign Policy in a Historical Perspective: Musings at a New Stage of International Development,” *Russia in Global Affairs*, no. 2 (2016). <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/russias-foreign-policy-in-a-historical-perspective/>, accessed February 2, 2023.

- 9 Vladimir Putin, “Meeting with Young Academics and History Teachers,” 5 November 2014. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46951>, accessed February 2, 2023.
- 10 See: www.levada.ru, accessed February 2, 2023.
- 11 As has often been noted by those attentively observing the political sphere in Russia. See for example: Maksim Trudoljubov, “Nasha Politika – Istoriia,” *Vedomosti*, September 30, 2016. <https://www.vedomosti.ru/opinion/columns/2016/09/30/659099-nasha-politika>, accessed February 2, 2023.
- 12 Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Penguin, 1966), 113.
- 13 See for example: Quentin Skinner, “Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas,” *History and Theory*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1969): 3–53; Rajnhárt Kozellek, ed. *Slovar Osnovnykh Istoricheskikh Ponjatij: Izbrannye Stati* (Moskva: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2014); John Greville Agard Pocock, *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Timur Atnashev and Mihail Velizhev, eds. *Kembridzhskaja Shkola: Teorija i Praktika Intellekturnoj Istorii* (Moskva: NLO, 2018).
- 14 Edward Wadie Said, *Orientalism* (Knopf Doubleday, 1979).
- 15 François Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and Experiences of Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).
- 16 Henry Rousso, *The Latest Catastrophe: History, the Present, the Contemporary*, translated by Jane Marie Todd, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016).
- 17 Alexander Etkind. *Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied* (Redwood, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013).
- 18 English translation: Pierre Nora. *Rethinking France: Les lieux de mémoire*. Vols. 1-4. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999–2010); Pierre Nora, *Frantsiia pamiat* (SPb, 1999).
- 19 Elena Oznobkina, “Scientific Communism (Nauchnyi kommunizm),” in *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Russian Culture*, eds. Tatiana Smorodinskaya, Karen Evans-Romaine, and Helena Gosciolo (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), 548.
- 20 That is, when historical events are perceived as a system of coordinates.
- 21 Aleksandr Bohanov, *Istoriia Rossii. XIX vek: ucheb. dlja 8 klassa* (Moskva: Russkoe slovo, 2009), 67.
- 22 See on the same subject: Ivan Kurilla, *Bitva za proshloe: Kak politika meniaet istoriju*. (Moskva: Alpina, 2022.C.) 103–16.
- 23 The president’s interest in history was noted by observers. See for example: Fiona Hill and Clifford Gaddy, *Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2013), 63–77.
- 24 The battle against “untruthful textbooks” began with regional government regulations that prohibited the teaching of new history with the A.A. Kreder textbook in 1997 (Olga Rachkova and Vladimir Danshin, “Uchebnik Novejshej Istorii Popal v Istoriju,” *Kommersant*, October 31, 1997. <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/186904>, accessed February 2, 2023. In 2001, the issue of the “untruthful textbook” was first raised by the PM of Russia, Mikhail Kasjanov (Igor Danilevskij, “Ot Gostomysla do Kasjanova,” *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, Ex-libris, September 6, 2001. http://www.ng.ru/ng_exlibris/2001-09-06/1_kasynov.html, accessed February 2, 2023. Since the second half of the 2000s, criticism of school history textbooks has occupied a permanent place in the speeches of V.V. Putin and D.A. Medvedev.
- 25 Vladimir Putin, “Meeting of Council for Interethnic Relations,” February 19, 2013. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/17536>, accessed 2 February 2023.
- 26 Vladimir Putin, “Meeting of Council for Interethnic Relations,” February 19, 2013. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/17536>, accessed 2 February 2023.
- 27 The author analyzed the reaction of historians to the attempt to create a “Unified Textbook” in his article: Ivan Kurilla, “Loskutnoe Odeialo Istorii, ili Istoricheskoe Soobshhestvo v Epokhu Politizacii Ego Akademicheskogo Polia,” *Ab Imperio* 2 (2013): 298–326.

- 28 Valerij Tishkov, Facebook, February 27, 2013. https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=344482752337752&id=100003280900276, accessed February 2, 2023.
- 29 TV Kultura, “Aleksandr Chubarian - o Edinom Uchebnike Istorii Rossii,” *TV Kultura*, March 4, 2013. http://tvkultura.ru/article/show/article_id/79561, accessed February 2, 2023.
- 30 Marina Lemutkina, “Edinyj Uchebnik Istorii Pridet v Shkoly Uzhe Cherez Paru Let,” *Moskovskij komsomolets*, 4 March 2013. <http://www.mk.ru/social/education/article/2013/03/04/821219-edinyiy-uchebnik-istorii-pridet-v-shkolyi-uzhe-cherez-paru-let.html>. It is interesting that Aleksandr Filippov also spoke negatively about a “unified textbook,” being an author of a school textbook that provoked criticism in its own time. See the audio-recording of the radio show “Svoia Pravda,” November 18, 2010. http://www.moskva.fm/stations/FM_107.0/programs/%D1%81%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%8F_%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%B4%D0%B0/2010-11-18_19:00, accessed February 2, 2023.
- 31 RBK, “Rossiia bez Putina: Edinyj Uchebnik Istorii “privedet stranu k Kitaju,” *RBK*, June 18, 2013. <https://web.archive.org/web/20130727010042/http://top.rbc.ru/viewpoint/18/06/2013/862242.shtml>, accessed February 2, 2023.
- 32 Pavel Lobkov, “Uchenye Hitree Ideologov. Istorik Pivovarov Schitaet, chto Edinyj Uchebnik Istorii Udivit Zakazchikov.” Broadcast of the interview on the TV channel *Dozhd*, June 17, 2013. http://tvrain.ru/articles/uchenye_hitree_ideologov_istorik_pivovarov_schitaet_chno_edinyj_uchebnik_istorii_udivit_zakazchikov-345914/, accessed February 2, 2023.
- 33 Undoubtedly, in history there are “informal authorities” who do not have an academic title. However, the criteria for their recognition (for instance, citation ratings) are disputed and, more importantly, the author has no reason to suppose that the opinion of “informal authorities” will be qualitatively different in regard to the coexistence of historical communities with the “history of politicians.”
- 34 Prezident Rossii, “Vstrecha s Pensionerami i Veteranami,” November 17, 2011. <http://kremlin.ru/news/13555>, trans. IK., accessed February 2, 2023.
- 35 Svetlana Naborshhikova, “Pamjatniki Kulturnogo Nasledii – Strategicheskij Prioritet Rossii,” *Izvestiia*, 22 November 2016, trans. IK., accessed February 2, 2023.
- 36 See the website of the “Free Historical Society”: <http://www.volistob.ru>, accessed February 2, 2023.
- 37 On the same subject see Ivan Kurilla, *Bitva za proshloe: Kak politika meniaet istoriju* (M.: Al’pina, 2022), 129–51.
- 38 Meduza, “Navalnogo na YouTube Nazvali Gitlerom. Teper Vse Pytajutsja Pridumat Dokazatelstva,” *Meduza*, April 19, 2017. <https://meduza.io/shapito/2017/04/19/navalnogo-na-yutube-nazvali-gitlerom-teper-vse-pytajutsya-pridumat-dokazatelstva>, accessed February 2, 2023.
- 39 “Kreml Reshil Nachat Kampaniju Protiv Navalnogo,” *Dozhd*, April 18, 2017. https://tvrain.ru/news/kreml_nachinaet_kampaniju_protiv_navalnogo-432692/, accessed February 2, 2023.
- 40 Tom Raum, “Bush Says Saddam Even Worse Than Hitler,” *AP News*, November 1, 1990. <https://apnews.com/article/c456d72625fba6c742d17f1699b18a16>, accessed February 2, 2023.
- 41 George W. Bush, “Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People,” September 20, 2001. <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>, accessed February 2, 2023.
- 42 David Smith, Ben Jacobs and Tom McCarthy, “Sean Spicer Apologizes for ‘even Hitler didn’t use chemical weapons’ Gaffe,” *The Guardian*, April 11, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/apr/11/sean-spicer-hitler-chemical-weapons-holocaust-assad>, accessed February 2, 2023.
- 43 David Hoogland Noon, “Operation Enduring Analogy: World War II, the War on Terror, and the Uses of Historical Memory,” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 7, no. 3 (2004): 355.
- 44 Federal law from May 5, 2014. N 128-FZ “O Vnesenii Izmenenij v Otdelnye Zakonodatelnye Akty Rossijskoj Federatsii,” *Rossijskaia gazeta*, May 7, 2014. <https://rg.ru/2014/05/07/reabilitacia-dok.html>, accessed February 2, 2023.

- 45 Discusses the committee convened by A. Vlasov to support Germany, which claimed to be the main anti-Bolshevik power within Russian emigration and exile policies. It held political control of the armed forces, consisting of former Soviet prisoners of war and emigrants fighting on the side of Germany. See Catherine Andreyev, *Vlasov and the Russian Liberation Movement: Soviet Reality and Emigré Theories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
- 46 Elena Kuznecova, “Zashhita s Generalom Vlasovym,” *Fontanka.ru*, March 2, 2016. <http://www.fontanka.ru/2016/03/01/173/>, accessed February 2, 2023.
- 47 Kirill Chulkov, “Spaset li VAK Rossiju ot Predatelej? Istorik-vlasovets Kirill Aleksandrov Mozhet ne Poluchit Stepeni Doktora,” *Versija na Neve*, March 27, 2017. <https://neva.versia.ru/istorik-vlasovec-kirill-aleksandrov-mozhet-ne-poluchit-stepen-doktora>, accessed February 2, 2023.
- 48 Konstitutsia Rossijskoj Federatsii 67.1. <http://duma.gov.ru/news/48953/>, accessed February 2, 2023.

Bibliography

- Andreyev, Catherine. *Vlasov and the Russian Liberation Movement: Soviet Reality and Emigré Theories*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Atnashev, Timur and Mihail Velizhev, eds. *Kembridzhskaja Shkola: Teoriia i Praktika Intellektualnoj Istorii*. Moskva: NLO, 2018.
- Berger, Peter L. and Thomas Luckmann. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Penguin Books, 1967.
- Bohanov, Aleksandr. *Istoriia Rossii. XIX vek: uceb. dlja 8 klassa*. Moskva: Russkoe slovo, 2009.
- Child, David and Mersiha Gadzo. “Latest Ukraine updates: Russia, US voice hope for diplomacy.” *Al Jazeera*, January 21, 2022. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/21/blinken-lavrov-meet-on-soaring-ukraine-tensions-liveblog>.
- Chulkov, Kirill. “Spaset li VAK Rossiju ot Predatelej? Istorik-vlasovets Kirill Aleksandrov Mozhet ne Poluchit Stepeni Doktora.” *Versija na Neve*, March 27, 2017. <https://neva.versia.ru/istorik-vlasovec-kirill-aleksandrov-mozhet-ne-poluchit-stepen-doktora>.
- Danilevskij, Igor. “Ot Gostomysla do Kasjanova.” *Nezavisimaja gazeta*, Ex-libris, September 6, 2001. http://www.ng.ru/ng_exlibris/2001-09-06/1_kasynov.html.
- Etkind, Alexander. *Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied*. Redwood, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013.
- Federal law from May 5, 2014. N 128-FZ O “Vnesenii Izmeneniiav Otdelnye Zakonodatelnye Akty Rossijskoj Federatsii.” *Rossijskaja gazeta*, May 7, 2014. <https://rg.ru/2014/05/07/reabilitacia-dok.html>.
- Hartog, François. *Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and Experiences of Time*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015.
- Hill, Fiona, and Clifford Gaddy. *Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2013.
- Kozellek, Rajnhárt, ed. *Slovar Osnovnykh Istoricheskikh Poniatej: Izbrannye Stati*. Moskva: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2014.
- Kurilla, Ivan. “Loskutnoe Odeialo Istorii, ili Istoricheskoe Soobshhestvo v Epokhu Politizatsii Ego Akademicheskogo Polia.” *Ab Imperio*, no. 2 (2013): 298–326.
- Kurilla, Ivan. *Bitva za proshloe: Kak politika menjaet istoriju*. Moskva: Al’pina, 2022.
- Kuznecova, Elena. “Zashhita s Generalom Vlasovym.” *Fontanka.ru*, March 2, 2016. <http://www.fontanka.ru/2016/03/01/173/>.
- Lavrov, Sergey. “Russia’s Foreign Policy in a Historical Perspective: Musings at a New Stage of International Development.” *Russia in Global Affairs*, no. 2, April 2016. <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/russias-foreign-policy-in-a-historical-perspective/>.
- Lemutkina, Marina. “Edinyj Uchebnik Istorii Pridet v Shkoly uzhe Cherez Paru Let. Moskovskij komsomolets.” *MKRU*, March 4, 2013. <http://www.mk.ru/social/education/>

- article/2013/03/04/821219-edinyiy-uchebnik-istorii-pridet-v-shkoloyi-uzhe-cherez-paru-let.html.
- Lobkov, Pavel. "Uchenye Hitree Ideologov. Istorik Pivovarov Schitaet, chto Edinyj Uchebnik Istorii Udivit Zakazchikov." Broadcast of the interview on the TV channel *Dozhd*, June 17, 2013. http://tvrain.ru/articles/uchenye_hitree_ideologov_istorik_pivovarov_schitaet_chto_edinyj_uchebnik_istorii_udivit_zakazchikov-345914/.
- Meduza. "Navalnogo na YouTube Nazvali Gitlerom. Teper Vse Pytajutsja Pridumat Dokazatelstva." *Meduza*, April 19, 2017. <https://meduza.io/shapito/2017/04/19/navalnogo-na-yutube-nazvali-gitlerom-teper-vse-pytayutsya-pridumat-dokazatelstva>.
- Naborshhikova, Svetlana. "Pamiatniki Kulturnogo Naslediiia — Strategicheskij Prioritet Rossii." *Izvestiia*, November 22, 2016.
- Noon, David Hoogland. "Operation Enduring Analogy: World War II, the War on Terror, and the Uses of Historical Memory." *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 7, no. 3 (2004): 339–65.
- Nora, Pierre. *Franciia-pamiat*. SPb, 1999.
- Nora, Pierre. *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de mémoire*. Vols. 1-4. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999–2010.
- Oznobkina, Elena. "Scientific Communism (Nauchnyi kommunizm)." In *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Russian Culture*, edited by Tatiana Smorodinskaya, Karen Evans-Romaine, and Helena Goscilo. Abingdon: Routledge, 2007.
- Pocock, John Greville Agard. *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Putin, Vladimir. "Vstrecha s Pensionerami i Veteranami." November 17, 2011. <http://kremlin.ru/news/13555>.
- Putin, Vladimir. "Meeting of Council for Interethnic Relations." February 19, 2013. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/17536>.
- Putin, Vladimir. "The Meeting with Young Academics and History Teachers." November 5, 2014. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46951>.
- Rachkova, Olga and Vladimir Danchin. "Uchebnik Novejshej Istorii Popal v Istoriju." *Kommersant*, October 31, 1997. <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/186904>.
- RBK. "Rossiia bez Putina: Edinyj Uchebnik Istorii "privedet stranu k Kitaju."" *RBK*, June 18, 2013. <https://web.archive.org/web/20130727010042/http://top.rbc.ru/viewpoint/18/06/2013/862242.shtml>.
- Rousso, Henry. *The Latest Catastrophe: History, the Present, the Contemporary*, Translated by Jane Marie Todd. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016.
- Rubin, Mihail. "KremlReshil Nachat Kampaniju Protiv Navalnogo." *Dozhd*, April 18, 2017. https://tvrain.ru/news/kreml_nachinaet_kampaniju_protiv_navalnogo-432692/.
- Said, Edward Wadie. *Orientalism*. New York: Knopf Doubleday, 1979.
- Skinner, Quentin. "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas." *History and Theory* 8, no. 1 (1969): 3–53.
- Smith, David, Ben Jacobs, and Tom McCarthy, "Sean Spicer Apologizes for 'even Hitler didn't use chemical weapons' Gaffe." *The Guardian*, 11 April 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/apr/11/sean-spicer-hitler-chemical-weapons-holocaust-assad>.
- Tishkov, Valerij. "Sobranie Rossijskogo istoricheskogo obshhestva segodna v Kreml v pomeshhenii Mirovarennoj palaty Patriarshikh palat ozhidalo Prezidenta, no prishel glava ego administracii..." Facebook post, February 27, 2013. https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=344482752337752&id=100003280900276.
- Trudoljubov, Maksim. "Nasha Politika – Istoriiia." *Vedomosti*, September 30, 2016. <https://www.vedomosti.ru/opinion/columns/2016/09/30/659099-nasha-politika>.
- TV Kultura. "Aleksandr Chubarian – O edinom uchebnike istorii Rossii." *TV Kultura*, March 4, 2013. https://web.archive.org/web/20130306130326/http://tvkultura.ru/article/show/article_id/79561.

11 Memorial Practices in Donetsk

From the Establishment of Soviet Power to a Full-Scale Russian Invasion of Ukraine from 2022

Oksana Mikheieva

Introduction

The fall of the Soviet Union was rapidly followed by emotional discussions about its past as well as a reconstruction of history earlier formulated within the frameworks of the Soviet historical narrative. In Ukraine, intense debates that started during the period of Perestroika and concerned relations to materialized symbols of Soviet heritage such as monuments, memorial signs, and the names of cities, regions, streets etc., continue to this day. Due to competing influences regarding monuments and commemorative practices, the actions initiated by the government and civil society to “de-communize” Ukrainian cities were and are contrarily perceived by various groups of Ukrainian society.

A certain revision of the public spaces in Ukrainian cities took place in the whole country, although with different levels of intensity. The indicator in this regard is the trajectory or mapping of “Leninopad” (Leninfall) in Ukraine since 2014, which, among other things, has illustrated the persistence of different attitudes toward the Soviet past among residents of different regions of Ukraine. This map allows us to see the low frequency of the demolition of Lenin monuments in the western regions of Ukraine (in most cases, these monuments were demolished in the 1990s). On the other hand, we can observe the infrequency of the deconstruction of such monuments in eastern Ukraine and Crimea,¹ but for a different reason—the processes of de-communization failed here to gain support from both the authorities and the majority of the population.

The absence of a well thought-out and consecutive historical politics, as well as a number of disputable issues related to the reconsideration of the past, critically affected the ongoing situation in Ukraine. The practices of ignoring problematic issues in the communication between various social groups who are the carriers of the defined model of the collective memory, caused the historical plots to become a comfortable weapon for provoking inner conflicts in the context of the hybrid and informational war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, where the continuation of the “memory wars” turned into an actual physical war in 2014 and full-scale Russian invasion in 2022.

In this respect, monument politics in Donetsk, which since 2014 has become a field of active information and real warfare, is of particular research importance.²

DOI: [10.4324/9781003505822-14](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003505822-14)

This chapter has been made available under a CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0 license.

A precise overview of memorial practices in the case of one city allows us to comprehend more deeply the role and influence of monument politics in the process of regional societal construction, and narrows down the question of the dilemmas of de-communization in Ukraine.

Theory and Methodology

The focus on monuments and related spatial practices references the key conclusions (outputs) formed in the new cultural geography framework.³ The given approach exposes the memorial politics as a difficult relation system between power and domination on the one hand, and, a field of daily practices of a number of ordinary residents of the city, on the other hand.

I utilized a documentary methodology to reconstruct the discourse of power using discourse analysis to study the texts of the Stalino/Donetsk guides published in the 1950s and the beginning of the 2000s.⁴ I also thoroughly analyzed texts touching on issues of the new memorial proceedings on the websites of periodical publishing houses of the unrecognized quasi-republic DPR.⁵ The arena of everyday practices related to the monuments of Donetsk was reconstructed via observations and a series of detailed interviews given in Donetsk and Donetsk Oblast in 2013 and 2017. The interviews with residents of the region included the issues of memory, monuments, and practices of renaming streets, squares, and so forth. Around 22 in-depth interviews were conducted in Donetsk in 2013.⁶ The main criteria for selecting the respondents were gender, age, and the type of settlement (the cities of the county or regional importance, rural areas). In a 2017 research project, the respondents represented both controlled and non-government-controlled parts of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts.⁷ In the territories controlled by Ukrainian government, I held six focus-group discussions with 54 participants. As it proved to be unsafe for both the interviewers and respondents to conduct the focus-group discussions in the non-government-controlled area, for this particular group of participants the interviews were conducted via secure online communication channels. Overall, 16 interviews took place, with the respondents selected based on the same criteria as those in the controlled territories.

Soviet Constructs of Memorializing the Past

Donetsk (previously known as Yuzivka from 1869 until 1924, and as Stalin and Stalino from 1924 until 1961) is a young (around 100 years old), industrial city. From its beginnings, the settlement was linked with mining and thus populated by those working in this industry.⁸ When examining the monuments of Donetsk, we can distinguish the following periods: (1) 1920s; (2) 1930s and the beginning of 1950s, or the “Stalin Period”; (3) second half of 1950s—the mid-1980s (an era when Nikita Khrushchev or Leonid Brezhnev were in power in the USSR); (4) the city in times of “Perestroika” (second half of the 1980s to the beginning of 1990s); (5) the end of the 1990s until 2014 (the period of an independent Ukraine); and (6) the city in the non-government-controlled Ukrainian territories—Donetsk and

Luhansk Oblasts (2014 until the full-scale Russian invasion in early 2022). The memorialization of memory in each of the listed stages was characterized by its own peculiarities. These stages differ depending on the level of authority's influence over them, as well as the level of importance of memorial objects and other signs of public representation of memory in different social groups hold for the "consumers."

Monuments that represent the imperial period in Donetsk have not survived. The memorial tradition of Donetsk essentially starts with the Soviet period. The Bolshevik Revolution led to drastic changes in sociopolitical lives. This severe transition was accompanied by the active rejection of the past as well as the physical destruction of its signs and symbols. However, in case of Yuzivka, the Soviet politics of "losing our memory" and "organized oblivion,"⁹ did not affect the memorial culture in a way of its practical absence. Establishing Soviet power in the region essentially opened up the history of installing the monuments in the city.

The "new page of history" declared by the Bolsheviks required corresponding signs and symbols, which would assign the new political and social context in people's minds. The Civil War, the need to restore destroyed Donbas, and the half-starved existence on the edge of survival were not a favorable environment for creating and installing new monuments. The necessity of sites of memory in the 1920s was implemented through the collective graves of those killed in the protests, as well as the "Fallen Communards" and workers of Soviet law-enforcement agencies. On such collective graves, a steel sign would be commonly installed, so the tombs would become a place of worshipping the victims of the Civil War.

The transition from the grave signs to the monuments took place in the 1930s. According to the descriptions of the guides, one of the oldest monuments in the city is "First Chekist" of F.E. Dzerzhinsky. The year of its installation, 1937, is well known today and perceived by the modern mass consciousness as the peak of political repressions. The history of this monument is rather interesting. It was installed in the very center of the city, on the Dzerzhinsky Square (formerly the Fire Square, so named due to respect for the first ever Yuzivka fire station nearby). Dzerzhinsky Avenue was the continuation of the square. At the beginning of the occupation the monument was hidden, and following the de-occupation in 1943 it was returned to its prior residence. The second time a threat hung over the monument was during the years of Perestroika. On a wave of declassification of archives, special attention was paid to the repressive politics of the Soviet power, the activities of the Soviet retaliatory system, and the persona of Dzerzhinsky himself. However, his monument in Donetsk resisted and remained in the same square, once again renamed as Fire Square.

In 1937 in Stalino, the monument to heroes-stratonauts appeared, including Peter Batenko, David Stolbun, Yakiv Ukrainsky, Serafim (Sergey) Kuchumov. Studying the influence of low blood pressure on a human body, the researchers started from Moscow in an enormous air balloon (high-altitude balloon), rose to an altitude of 10 km, lost consciousness, and flew away by hundreds of kilometers from the initial starting point.¹⁰ The balloon began to descend over Stalino, crashed into a high-voltage line and blew up. The monument was positioned on the place of

death of the stratonauts, which remained practically in an invariable shape until today: the human figure in the costume of a stratonaut.

One more grave of the same period has become a site of soviet construct of memory. In 1943, during the Donbas liberation from the Nazi occupation regime, the commander of the Red Army armored brigade guardian, Franz Hrynkevych, was killed. On his grave, the soldiers and officers installed a tall pedestal with the tank T-34. At first, there was a portrait of the colonel Hrynkevych on the pedestal, but with time and during the reconstruction of the central street named after Artem in the 1960s, the portrait disappeared. Since the 1970s, the monument was perceived by city residents as a “monument to the T-34 tank.” The pedestal’s new inscription “Eternal Glory to the Heroes Killed in the Battles for Freedom and Independence of our Homeland” (1941–1945) forced out the local character of the initial message. The personalized dedication to the late colonel remained on an inconspicuous side of the monument, and the regionally significant chronology of 1943 (the year of Donbas liberation) was replaced with the all-Soviet scheme of evaluating the events like the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945.

One more monument of this period illustrated in guidebooks and kept until the present day was the bust of Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, installed in 1953. The monument does not have a direct relation to the local history. Its semantics were directed to the realization of an educational function: each school was fighting for the honor to carry the names of Soviet heroes. In this case, one of the Donetsk schools received the right to bear the name of Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya. The memorial sign was installed in the school playground.

However, in total, due to the difficult financial environment in the country during the war years, metal alloy monuments were rarely installed between 1930 and the mid-1950s. In this period the “plaster greatness” started to blossom; in squares, parks, and in checkpoint factories, the plaster figures of “Soviet people,” as well as the busts and monuments of J. Stalin and V. Lenin were placed. Quite often the monuments had no creative value and were getting seriously damaged by the weather conditions or the passing time. The city’s main Stalin monument was installed in the center of the city on Artem street and demolished overnight in 1961. In the morning the inhabitants of the city instead saw a square and a fresh flower garden. The remaining memorial signs of the same period continued the post-Revolution traditions of collective graveyards. On the graves of those killed during the military operations, memorial plates, machine guns, mortars, and so on were installed.

The following period, the second half of the 1950s to the mid-1980s, became the time of an active ideological construction of the cultural memory.¹¹ Exactly in this period, the city adopted the accurate Soviet toponymal coordinates. Seven out of nine districts of the city received and kept to this day the names of Soviet party figures (Voroshilivskiy, Kalininskiy, Budenivskiy, Kirovskiy, Petrivskiy, Leninskiy, Kuibyshevskiy). The name of one of the remaining districts appeals to the key social identity (Proletarskiy), whereas the name of the last one reminds of the capital of the republic (Kyivskiy). In each “nominal” area the monument to the corresponding party figure was installed: to Semyon Budyonny (1951), to Sergey Kirov (1953), to Mikhail Kalinin (1963), to Grigory Petrovsky (1968), and to Valerian Kuibyshev (1969).

Kliment Voroshilov, after whom the central district of the city was named, had to concede to two key figures of the Soviet ideological construct. In 1967 in the central Lenin Square in Voroshilivskiy district, the main city monument “The Leader of the World Proletariat”¹² was installed, and in the same year the monument to the revolutionary Fyodor Sergeyev, whose actions were directly related to Donbas, was placed on the central street of Artem (the party pseudonym). Thus, in the public space of the city, the hierarchical line of Soviet heroes was presented, both of all-union and local importance.

Simultaneously, the processes of sacralization of the sites of memory also emerged. Everything resembling the “everyday” and “non-official” was expelled from city spaces. These processes were traced in the order of the retrieval of local monuments in the guidebooks. If in guidebooks from 1956, the descriptions of the monuments start with Taras Shevchenko, Vasily Bervi-Flerovsky,¹³ and the graves of the fallen communards and stratonauts, then in the guidebooks of 1970s, first names that come up while reviewing the monuments would be the names of V. Lenin, K. Marx, F. Dzherzhinsky, M. Kalinin, and other party figures with no direct relation to the local history.¹⁴

In the context of glorifying the political efforts, the monument to the miner appeared in Donetsk in 1967, later becoming the symbol of the city. A Soviet pantheon in the public space of the city was supplemented by a series of monuments dedicated to cultural figures, the instalment of which was also activated in 1960s. In this period in Donetsk, the monuments of Taras Shevchenko (1955), Ivan Franko (1961), Maxim Gorky, and three monuments of Alexander Pushkin (1957, 1963, 1969) appear. Neither of these litterateurs have a direct connection to the city’s history and therefore could not serve as the symbols of collective memory which is usually built on common experience. Shevchenko and Franko were not so much the embodiment of “Ukrainianity” as the “expressionists of the interest of the working class.” Gorky himself represented a proletarian writer, whereas Pushkin was the main icon and a classic of Russian poetry (the language of international usage of the USSR).

The detached niche in this scheme was made of the monuments and memorials of the revolutionary and war events. Poetization of the Bolshevik Revolution, the declaration of it as an event of world importance required the final legitimation in the form of fixing the collective memory. In 1950–1960 years in Donetsk, the monuments connected to the Revolution events of 1905–1907 and the Social Revolution of 1917 were being placed. These are the monuments of the “Mayovka” participants in 1905; the civilians killed in 1917–1919 years; the Red Army members and protesters. In the mid-1960s, the series of the monuments dedicated to the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945 appear. The monument to the “Victims of Fascism” and the “Eternal Flame” on the graves of those tortured in concentration camps “Mine No. 4-4-Bis of ‘Kalynivka’” where the bodies of the killed were dropped in the occupation, and others.

In the Soviet period, the masculine image of the past was being formed, which strengthened the patriarchy as an element of regional mentality. Patriarchy was tightly connected to the Soviet cult of the leader, who governed and established order in the family and society. This has promoted the masculinization of female images as well as the formation of the imageries of a woman co-worker, the comrade.

Among the diversity of the monuments in the city space, only two female image-ries were presented: the above-mentioned bust of Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya and the monument to Nadezhda Krupskaya. Significant is the location of the monuments in the limited spaces of the conditional “homes” and “yards.” The bust of Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya was placed in an internal yard of a school, whereas the Krupskaya monument was positioned in the Donetsk Oblast library of her name. One more symbol of the Soviet period, allocated with the feminine characteristics, is the monument to Medicine in the yard of the Medical Institute (now University). The disproportion of the male and female images of the past is evident also in the guidebook texts. If in the publications of the 1950s women were part of the Donetsk history among the participants of the underground groups of the Great Patriotic War period (according to the rhetoric of Soviet guidebooks) or among the Revolution heroes, then in the following publications they disappear completely from the texts of the monument descriptions.

Ultimately, the result of the monumental politics of the Soviet period became the creation of the cultural and political homogenous space, marked by memorial signs written in the frame of the concept of the Soviet model of heroic past. Gradual elimination of the local events and heroes, embedding of the local history in the all-Soviet narrative, entered the city space into universal USSR memorial sign system, forming a *general code of perceiving reality*.¹⁵ Building people’s representation of the past with this general code was happening at the expense of regulated and ritualized practices connected with the monuments (acceptance into pioneers, pronouncing the oath, official holidays, etc.). And the politics of the “organized oblivion” left the memory of separate social groups outside the official construct.

The Perestroika Period and the Initial Stage of Ukrainian Independence: Uncertainty vs. Polysemantics of Space

In the Perestroika period, the process of placing monuments in Donetsk stopped almost completely. Crisis of the Soviet system, criticism of heroes of the past, the rise of alternative narratives and scenarios of development all generated critical attitude to the Soviet canon. Previously, the monuments had fit into the accurate scheme of viewing the past and future within the logical and simple ideological construct of the officially endorsed Soviet memory. However, the new times required new monuments.

The series of monuments from the end of the 1990s demonstrated the variation in the perception of the past, the opportunity of representing the local and collective memories of different social groups. Here we see the phenomenon of the collective remembrance, where the images of the past, isolated in the frameworks of a certain community and deprived of the right to represent its memory, come back to the collective reminiscence. Thanks to the accessible archives and the efforts of activists,¹⁶ the local memory received access to the public space. Not without opposition and debates, monuments of local inhabitants appeared in the city—“The victims of the political repressions” (on the spot of Rutchenkovo field excavation), international warriors, those killed in Afghanistan, the liquidators of the Chernobyl

Nuclear Power Plant, bas-relief of the repressed poet Vasyl Stus throughout 1970–1980s, and so on.¹⁷

However, this new memorialization and return to the repressive elements of the past were not accompanied by public discussions and the formation of a new historical narrative. The conversation was rather about the necessary reaction of the local power to the activists' movements and general assents in seeing historical past officially articulated on the level of state power. Thus, for example, the installation of the monument to "Victims of Political Repression" was a formal concession of power to the initiators of the excavation and active citizens, and in no way has it become the logical completion of the processes of reconciliation with the past.¹⁸ The excavations were only carried out in small parts of the Rutchenkovo field. The victims of the repressions were only partially exhumed and re-buried and their names remained undeclared regardless of the opportunity to identify them by archive sources. Further, no considerable responses or initiatives were found among the society regarding the revision of the "Mine N 4-4 Bis 'Kalynivka'" monument, which was described as the place where Soviet people in times of the Great Patriotic War were executed, although it is in fact the place of the Jewish tragedy of the Second World War. This also was the case with the personality of Vasyl Stus, whose bas-relief, as a result of the activists' efforts as well as lively discussions, was installed on the wall of the philology faculty of the Donetsk National University. However, the attempts to name the University after him did not succeed due to both active oppositions of the local elites and the overall mood among the local population.¹⁹

The revision of history and the attempt to take it out of the frames of the Soviet narrative activated the references to the personas of the past connected to the local history on different levels. In 2001, the monument to John Hughes was installed, a Welsh businessman and founder of the steel factory that was influential for the city's formation. In the focus of attention on the periodic press appears the economist, sociologist, and public figure, Vasyl Bervi-Flerovksy, who spent the last years of his life in Yuzivka. His monument was placed in Soviet years but it never gained any particular attention as it did not fit into the Soviet system of commemoration and rituals.

The processes of the localization of memory appeared through a series of lifetime monuments of outstanding city figures. From the end of 1990s to the beginning of 2000s, the monuments of the Olympic champions Sergii Bubka and Joseph Kobzon (born in Chasiv Yar, Donetsk Oblast) were installed. In the same period, monuments were erected to the exceptional tenor of the twentieth century, Anatoliy Solovianenko, the entrepreneur N. Balin, and others.

Simultaneously, attempts to "lengthen" the past were also taking place, expanding it to the Scythian period. The Scythian stone images appear in the city, as well as the monument to the world-famous Scythian pectus, discovered by the archaeologist from Kyiv, Boris Mozolevsky, with the help of the archaeological group of the Donetsk State University. The reference to the "Scythian-Sarmatian heritage" emerged in authentic Scythian images outside of the museum expositions as elements of the decor of ethnic-restaurants and cafés, as well as the distribution of the "Scythian" trade brands which testified not only to the "lengthening" of history, but also its consumerization.

While many societies that undergo massive sociopolitical transformation often stumble over problems of intergenerational gaps, in Donetsk we also find an interesting example of compromise between different generations. In 2001, a monument was installed to the famous party figure Vladimir Degtyarev, first secretary of the Donetsk regional committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine (1968–1976) and socialist labor hero. The image of this regional figure remains part of the local memory. Even today, the older generation of Donetsk residents names him in polls among the historical figures who played a more or less positive role in the history of Ukraine.²⁰ The instalment of the monument in spite of its obvious Soviet character did not cause any opposition within the local population.

Because of the new memorialization and legalization of memories of various communities and groups more or less connected to Donbas, the dialogism of the memorial spaces in the city formed gradually. In addition to these processes, the peculiar “re-coding” of already existing monuments also took place. This way, for instance, in Donetsk the meetings by the Taras Shevchenko monument on the poet’s birthday and anniversary of his death constituted a pro-Ukraine demonstration both in Soviet times and in the Perestroika period. In the years 2013 and 2014, the Shevchenko monument and its adjoined territory became the same public space where the Donetsk Euromaidan was formed, uniting the small part of the pro-Ukrainian citizens.²¹

Certain activity was also observed around the memorial dedicated to the local Jewish community—the monument to the victims of the Holocaust, 4,000 Jewish people for whom the White Quarry, where the monument is located, became a territory of death and the last stop before they were murdered in the mine of Kalinivka 4-4 Bis. The Swastika image on the monument became the reflection of everyday anti-Semitism, which postponed the opening of the monument for a couple of days, until December 26, 2006.²² However, the attempt to use anti-Semitic sentiments in 2014 to foster conflict in society did not work, which suggests that such manifestations were isolated cases rather than a general trend.

The main granite monument in the city—the monument to Lenin—was also subject to tampering. By 9 May 2008 at night the shoes of the Soviet leader were painted white, which forced the community service workers to paint them black. As a result, the joke on Lenin’s preparation for Victory day, allegedly changing into ceremonial varnished shoes for the holiday, circulated widely.²³ As opposed to the Taras Shevchenko monument, which became and remains the symbol of pro-Ukrainian and pro-European choice of Donetsk residents, the Lenin monument became the symbol around which the activities of both pro-Soviet and pro-Russian activists are played out.

These practices of including monuments in the socially, culturally, and politically important activities of the citizens demonstrate the difficulty of the processes of “re-coding” the Soviet monumental heritage as well as their singular perception of returning the repressed memories of the local communities to the city space. In the spatial coordinates of the city, this led to a symbolic redistribution of the spheres and influences of different models of perceiving the past, which at the same time did not practically overlap with each other. This way, for instance, the Lenin monument

(and to a smaller extent the one to Artem) symbolized the preservation of the certain influence of the Soviet model of the past. For the pro-Ukrainian part of the city, the Shevchenko monument retained significant importance. The spaces of Jewish memory were being formed but they were partially moved to the peripheries (attached to the locations of tragic events). The locality and “Donetskism” were embodied in the park of the shod sculptures (conceptually tied to the local forge traditions) and a palm of Mertsalov.²⁴ In the local scheme of history, an emphasis on the “Welsh” past is seen in the very persona of John Hughes, the peculiarities of constructing the central part of Donetsk, and the inheritance of traditions of building the English industrial cities. The symbols and signs of the “Welsh” alongside the “Scythian” past took their places among the local trademarks. However, the monument to John Hughes itself did not meet any specific attention of the local residents, so there were no particular activities around the monument, despite its location in the very center of the city.

At that time, generally speaking, the monumental space of Donetsk was becoming alternative, containing the images that represent the collective memory of different communities. However, the city space remained segmented; the activity around the monuments almost never extended beyond specific groups and did not include the public dialogue regarding reconsideration of historical narrative. The Soviet model of memorialization and related commemorative practices remained dominant. The sustainability of the social agreement between different groups of city residents was based not on mutual understanding, but on demarcation: we don’t touch you and you don’t touch us.

From “Memory Wars” to Hostilities

At the beginning of the 2000s, the so-called “memory wars” of the 1990s were replaced by an acceptance of the possibility of different perspectives on the past, and the activity surrounding the monuments generally calmed down. The monuments themselves gradually turned into “invisible beings,” habitual parts of the city landscape, growing less and less interesting for the Donetsk population.²⁵ At the same time, their popularity among the inhabitants grew with the “neutral” loci of the city space occupied with essentially unhistorical figures of the city landscape rather than monuments.

The actions of the regional elites in the field of memory politics were generally in line with the demands of the local population. The focus on stability as a key value shaped conflict avoidance strategies. In relation to the monuments, this strategy reflected on the mass disagreement about the dismantlement of the monuments. The argument against demolishing the monuments was almost identically formulated by both the representatives of the local elites and the population of the city and Oblast. Operating on the mood of the local community, the city and Oblast authorities were able to actively resist the attempts of the central power of Ukraine to implement new scenarios of memory policy in the region.

For example, the local authorities in Donetsk, referring to the opinion of the majority of city residents, actually sabotaged the decree of President V. Yushchenko of 28 March 2007 pertaining to “measures in regard to the 75th anniversary of the

Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine.” One of the points of the presidential decree suggested renaming the city toponyms in case of their relation to the activities of people involved in organizing the implementation of Holodomor and political repressions. The sociological poll in Donetsk showed that 55.5% of the respondents were against the renaming and only 13.5% supported the initiative.²⁶ Among the Donetsk residents, the idea of dismantling the monuments of Soviet figures was also unpopular (only four respondents expressed their support to demolish the monument to Vladimir Lenin).²⁷ The arguments of the respondents almost completely reproduced the argument of the local political elites represented in the local mass media: the respondents “did not see the point in renaming or dismantling the monuments,” viewing it as a “spare expenditure.”²⁸ For many, this was “the memory of the past” or “a habit of being used to old names.”²⁹ Practically without any change, this argument remained also in 2013,³⁰ and in 2016–2017.³¹ This was characteristic for Donetsk as well as other cities of the Oblast:

Interviewer: What do you think, should the monuments be taken down or not?

Respondent: And the point? Yes, there is Lenin’s monument here, but it does not bother anyone. Lenin is Lenin, we all have our own opinions of him. Why go through the same all over? If you think about it, it involves money, budget, and all the rest. First of all, why excite people? Sure, we all have our own opinions, but the monument is not troubling anyone. There, you see the pigeons sitting there quietly? Let them sit. Am I wrong?

*(2013, Artemivsk - Bakhmut, Donetsk Oblast,
male, age 45)*

Interviewer: What do you think, are there such monuments that need to be taken down?

Respondent: No. That is stupid. This is the history of the country, of our lives.

Interviewer: So you think it’s appropriate to install more of the new monuments?

Respondent: Just put them next to it, why bother. Yes, that is Lenin, but whom does he concern? I think it looks just fine on this square. Let him stand here – this is the history of the country, there is no way one could erase it.

(2013, Donetsk, female, age 33)

In most cases, the respondents underline not the ideological meaning of the monuments, but their placement in their personal memories, the stages of growing up and family joys. Accordingly, the demolition of the given monuments for people becomes the partial loss of their own past.

Moderator: Tell us please, are there any monuments which you would say are estranged from your city?

RI (female): All monuments are our own.

- Moderator:* Even this new one?³²
- R1 (female):* The new one I don't accept at all. But the monuments of Lenin, Kalinin, Voroshilov...
- R2 (male):* We know these monuments from childhood. We would come here with our mother.
- R (female):* There was Lenin on the square.
- R (female):* Well, yes, a lot is connected with this.
- R:* Everyone was getting photographed.
- R2:* Some of us were accepted among the pioneers.
- R3:* Photographs remained.

(2017, FGD, Controlled Ukrainian territories, Sievierodonetsk, senior age group)

The Euromaidan events and the beginning of Russia's hybrid invasion of Ukraine renewed the city population's need to appeal to the historical past. Since spring 2014, there has been an active confrontation and competition for the right to control the symbolic space of the city of Donetsk, for the right to mark it with "own" signs. In this particular case, the segmentation of the memory spaces and the inability to negotiate about key issues in the discussions on the historical past was becoming more and more evident. A large part of the population chose a neutral position, while two roughly equal active groups (averaging 20% of respondents each)³³ were engaged in the symbolic battles for the city space. At the initial stage this was expressed in various symbols, to which the supporters of this or that idea of the past were giving their preference: St. George's ribbon, "Tricolor" (Russian National flag), "Trizub" (National Emblem of Ukraine), and Ukrainian State flag. However, further use of the symbolic, demonstrating the pro-Ukrainian position, has become dangerous for its carrier.

With the start of the Donetsk Euromaidan, the local authorities tried to take control of the public space, justifying it by the need for communal works. One of the "battles" for the city space in those times deserves distinct attention. The representatives of the Donetsk Euromaidan did not allow communal services to start washing the Taras Shevchenko monument (around which Donetsk Euromaidan was located) and cleaned the monument with their own hands. Such outcome of opposing became possible due to the compromise between the pro-Ukrainian city dwellers, on the one hand, and the representatives of the local government, on the other hand. In this case, this relates to the chief of the municipal government of improvement and public service of the Donetsk city executive committee, Konstantyn Savinov, who disposed to remove the equipment.³⁴

In spring 2014, the practices of peaceful distribution of space were replaced by a struggle against the symbols of opponents. This occurred, for instance, in the daily re-painting of trees and fences into Russian and Ukrainian flag colors, often with paintings one over another. The period of relatively peaceful competition over the placement of symbols lasted until a series of beatings of pro-Ukrainian residents of the city and the murder of Dmytro Cherniavsky,³⁵ who was killed at a demonstration for the unity of Ukraine held in Donetsk on March 13, 2014. The united prayer for

Ukraine³⁶ was yet possible, but the participants were under some serious pressure. One of the initiators and an active participant of the united prayer for Ukraine, the famous Donetsk scholar, theologian Ihor Kozlovsky,³⁷ was condemned by the authorities of the unrecognized Donetsk People's Republic (DPR), and served in prison for almost two years, from January 2016 until December 2017, in spite of all the attempts of the activists and the Ukrainian governments to reach his release and exchange.

“The Force of Power” in Donetsk after 2014

The active intervention in the symbolic spaces of the city which appeared in the non-government-controlled part of the Donetsk Oblast territory,³⁸ began in the spring of 2015, during the still active phase of the military operations. The figure of the dissident poet Vasyl Stus was obviously alien and irritating for the occupation administration. For a long period of time his name was at the center of the battle for the rights of pro-Ukrainian city dwellers who were willing to install their own symbols in the public spaces of the city.³⁹ The bas-relief of Vasyl Stus was one of the first to be dismantled by the occupation authorities.⁴⁰

A significant moment for the self-affirmation of the new power was the “Rus-sification” of street names in Donetsk in the summer of 2015. In Donetsk, the plates with Ukrainian and English street names were installed in 2012, on the eve of the European Football Cup. The occupation authorities demonstratively translated the street names on the signs into Russian on the eve of the birthday of the Russian imperial poet Alexander Pushkin.⁴¹ The very name of the city has also undergone the same symbolic translation into Russian⁴² (from which they removed the Cyrillic Soft sign).

This policy of the occupation authorities provoked resistance from various groups of the city's residents. Those who remained in non-controlled Ukrainian territories, but saw themselves outside of the official discourse, continued the symbolic battles for the city, essentially returning to the practices of the “third cultures” of 1970–1980s, to the culture of happening and performances, which crystallized its activity within the Soviet system.⁴³ Caricatures, the grotesque, theatre of the absurd, re-coding ideas, “battles” for the sense of the messages—all remained the general methods of opposing the new dominating attitude in the public space. Sergey Zakharov's activity became the form of an individual protest whose installations gained large popularity and was regarded as the criticism of the unrecognized regime.⁴⁴ However, gradually, with the consolidation of the occupying power, the period of symbolic battles for the public space of Donetsk has come to an end with the establishment of rigid control over the dissent, first at the expense of repression and forced displacement of those whose views do not fit the new ideology established in the non-controlled Ukrainian territories in both Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts.

The new memorial policy in the occupied territories was primarily aimed at restoring Soviet monuments, that had been destroyed in the course of hostilities.⁴⁵ Such approach found a response from the part of population, who actively supported the drift in the non-controlled territories of Kyiv in favor of Russia and distance themselves from Ukraine due to the de-Communization policy among other things. This tactic was also met with understanding among the population in

general, who might not consider the Soviet heritage important to them, but were still inclined to oppose the demolition of Soviet monuments.⁴⁶

The next step was to create the places of memory in the locations of military operations of 2014. In the majority of cases, such signs territorially and substantially were connected to the events/memorials of the “Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945 years.” The usage of the construct “Great Patriotic War” took out the non-government-controlled territories in both Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts of the common with Europe context of the Second World War and supported the discourse of a common destiny with Russia. This strategy also provided a connection between different generations and forms new social solidarity: the older generation as the witnesses/participants of the Great Patriotic War and the victims of German Nazism (Russian propaganda more often uses the term fascism), and the younger generation as the participants/witnesses of the battles for “freedom and independence of Donbas” and the victims of modern so-called “Ukrainian fascism” (“...*They are lying, blaming us, the living/Holding their hands even in death/A grey-haired woman and her grandchildren/She was born in war and so were they*”).⁴⁷

Children, as victims of the war, are also represented in new monuments. Their memory is embodied in the Lane of Angels, a site of memory with an arch and a memorial plate on which the 66 names of Donetsk children who died in the shelling of the city are engraved. This monument, due to its strong emotional charge, even without the additionally organized commemorative rituals by the government, causes the formation of spontaneous commemorative practices. Citizens bring toys to the deceased children and place them around the monument. This image will become one of the key points in reconciliation processes potentially possible in the long term. In the context of the current propaganda in the non-government-controlled Ukrainian territories, these child victims are considered exclusively as victims of the military operations of Ukrainian power.⁴⁸

The element of the last wave of memorialization in Donetsk has been the formation of images of “war heroes,” the installation of memorial signs and plaques in honor of fallen members of illegal armed groups and the inclusion of the story of their “heroism” in the educational curriculum. Schools were named after them, the “Timur movement” (known in Soviet times from Arkady Gaidar’s book *Timur and His Squad*) was revived to help relatives of the dead, and war attributes were often used in educational and public events.

The exchange of monuments, a well-known practice in Soviet times, was also re-established. Gifts, sculptures, and memorial signs from Russian cities, associations and public organizations were sent to Donetsk. In 2015, Donetsk received the “Victory Bell” (a gift from Moscow’s International Union “Successors of Victory”) and “Fascism will not pass!” (from the Kamchatka youth organization “Peninsula” (Poluostrov—rus.), and also the number of Russian Cossack organizations and Russian Union of the Veterans of Russia). In these sculptures, the classical clichés of the Soviet memorialization of the Great Patriotic War were used: bell, bayonet, garrison cap, the crushed Swastika, and so on.

The war monuments were supplemented by the monuments honoring the regional public and cultural figures, such as that to Grigory Bondar,⁴⁹ the world-famous

surgeon-oncologist who founded the antineoplastic center in Donetsk and established his very own scientific school of treatment of oncological diseases. Subsequently, in Makiivka, a monument was erected to an outstanding cinema figure, Aleksandr Khanzhonkov (born in 1877 in a family estate near this city). The issue of installing Khanzhonkov's monument had also been discussed in previous years, before being built in 2015, later to be used as an example blaming the Ukrainian government for inattention to outstanding local figures. Discursively, Khanzhonkov was represented as a founder of Russian cinema,⁵⁰ ensuring the region's inclusion in a context of all-Russian cultural development.

The informational accompaniment of the rituals of monument unveiling was combined with the constant building of logical links with the Soviet construct of the Great Patriotic War, the struggle against fascism, emphasis on the "Kyiv junta" and its guilt toward the "people of Donbas," the heroic defense of the "Russian world" and the Slavs, as well as declarations of one's own innocence and sacrifice. New monuments and memorial plaques become the new spaces for memory and performing rituals, such as oath-taking by cadets of the military-political school, holding demonstrations, days of remembrance, organizing of performances by creative collectives. The intensity of such events and their discursive accompaniment speaks of well-thought-out and organized attempts to mobilize the city's residents for supporting the unrecognized occupational regimes. The city once again experienced "organized oblivion": deprivation of the right to public spaces for social groups whose ideas did not coincide with the official attitudes propagated by the regime of pseudo-republics.

Conclusion

This brief overview of memorial politics in Donetsk shows the process of strengthening of the Soviet ideology in the construction of the public framework of the city. Soviet ideology and its monumental embodiment finally filled itself with the habitual vital space of the city residents by the end of the 1960s. Any representation of the marginalized social groups (ethnic, local, political, and others) was entirely forced out of the public space, remaining only in the memory of some individuals.⁵¹

In the case of Donetsk, reconsideration of the past, provoked by the processes of Perestroika, has not ended with a significant revision of the space. The city practically kept its Soviet toponymy. All Soviet monuments survived and remained in their places (except for numerous plaster figures of Lenin, which were demolished due to their natural obsolescence and destruction, as well as due to the easing of the official procedures of such eliminations). In this period, along with the Soviet monuments, new monuments and memorial signs appeared, which presented an alternative vision of the past and returned the memory of marginalized groups, though the vision in most cases was connected to local historical events. The result was a segmentation of the public space, in which the different versions of the historical past coexisted. New monuments were being placed, mainly with the initiative of the local governments, and were, to an extent, a response to the pressure of the central government of the country. Monument installation, in most cases, was

carried out in the presence of neutral (indifferent) reactions of the residents, which manifested in the future as an absence of any kind of activity around the majority of the monuments. From the beginning of the 1990s in Donetsk, there was no monument of nation-wide importance installed.

As a result of this memorial politics in the non-government-controlled Ukrainian parts of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts, their distance from the all-Ukrainian space and inclusion in the ideological construct of the “Russian world,” was enshrined. One of the key mythologemes was and remains the mythologeme of the Great Patriotic War. It allowed to exclude these territories from the all-European history and shift attention to the common historical fate with the current Russian Federation as the successor of the USSR. At the same time, the mythologeme of the Great Patriotic War contributed to the formation of new solidarity in the territories of Donetsk Oblast not controlled by Ukraine, linking the generations of witnesses and participants of the war—of both past and present.

As the Donetsk experience shows, the attempt to construct a public space in which the Soviet memorial heritage coexists with the modern one, forms not so much a polysemantic space, as consolidates a conflictual duality and is instrumentalized to intensify antagonism between the two narratives of the past. Russia’s explicit instrumentalization of the memorial heritage of the Soviet era in Ukraine, the use of Soviet-era monuments and their modern versions for the occupation of territories and their subsequent incorporation into Russia’s political body, makes the issue of the Soviet monumental heritage not so much a historical one as an issue of security and protection of Ukraine’s integrity and sovereignty.

Notes

- 1 See: “Activists launch interactive map of ‘Lenin’s fall.’” Accessed November 28, 2024. <https://ms.detector.media/onlain-media/post/1544/2014-02-24-aktyvisty-zapustyly-interaktyvnu-kartu-leninopadu/>.
- 2 Although this material is written as a stand-alone, it draws in part on earlier texts: Oksana Mikheieva, “Pamiatniki dlia Zabuttia,” *Kritika* 107 (2006); Oksana Mikheieva, “‘Different’ Donetsk Dwellers: Right for a Place in the Urban Space.” *Donbas. First Line*. Project “Donbas Studies” by IZOLYATSIA. Platform for Cultural Initiatives, Kyiv, 2016; Oksana Mikheieva and Volodymyr Nikolskij, “‘Storinky Istorii’ pro Stalynski Politychni Represiyi na Donbasi,” *Ukrayina Moderna* (April 4, 2015), <http://uamoderna.com/vid-eoteka/nikolsky-mikheeva-great-terror-donbass> which examined the memorial culture of Donetsk before and in the initial stages of the outbreak of military conflict in 2014.
- 3 Henri Lefebvre, *La Production de L’espace*, 4th ed. (Paris: Anthropos Ethnosociologie, 2000); Edward Soja, “Writing the City Spatially,” *City* 7, no. 3 (2003): 269–81; David Harvey, *Justice, Nature & The Geography of Difference* (New York, NY: Blackwell Publishing, 1996); Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1997); Lyn Lofland, *The Public Realm: Exploring the City’s Quintessential Social Territory* (Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter, 1998).
- 4 *Stalyno. Spravochnyk-putevodytel* (Stalyno: Stalynskoe oblastnoe izdatelstvo, 1956); Aleksej Bakhaiv, *Sehodnya i Zavtra* (Stalyno: Donbass, 1960); Serhej Bulkyn and Heorhij Tplyakov, *Pamyatnye Mesta Donbassa* (Donetsk: Donbass, 1966); Valeryj Shapyro, *Vechno Zhyvye: Pamiatniki Donetskoj Oblasty* (Donetsk: Donbass, 1972); *Pamiatniki Heroyam Revolyucyonnoho Dvyzheniia, Oktyabrskoj Revolyutsii y Hrazhdanskoj Vojny v*

- DonetskDonetskoj Oblasty* (Donetsk, 1977); Mark Vadymenko, *Pamyatnyky Revolyucyy y Hrazhdanskoj Vojny: Putevodytel* (Donetsk: Donbass, 1977); Mark Vadymenko, *Pamiatniki Ratnomu Podvyhu: Putevodytel* (Donetsk: Donbass, 1980); Leonyd Rubynshtej, *Knyha Rekordov Donbassa* (Donetsk: EAY-Press, 2002).
- 5 “Sredstva Massovoj Informatsii Donetskoj Narodnoj Respubliki.” Accessed March 24, 2021. <https://dnronline.su/sredstva-massovoi-informatsii-dnr/>.
 - 6 University of St. Gallen, *Region, Nation and Beyond: An Interdisciplinary and Transcultural Reconceptualization of Ukraine* (2013, 2017). <https://www.uaregio.org/en/about/stage-1/>.
 - 7 “Osobennosti Soznannya y Identichnosti Zhytelej Podkontrolnykh I Nepodkontrolnykh Ukraine Terrytorij Donetskoj Oblasti,” *IFAK Institut*, July 15, 2016. <http://ifak.com.ua/ru/news/?year=2016&month=7>.
 - 8 Instytut istoriyi, Kyiv, *Istoriia Mist i Sil Ukrayinskoyi RSR: V 26 t. Donetska Oblast* (Kyiv: AN URSSR, URE AN URSSR, 1970).
 - 9 Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 33.
 - 10 Anatolij Zharov, “Stratonavy v Donetske: Tragediia i Pamiat,” *Donetsk: istoriia, sobytia, fakty*, May 1, 2012. Accessed March 24, 2021. <http://infodon.org.ua/stalino/899>; Aleksej Fedko, “Pamiatnik Stratonavtam v Donetske,” *Donetsk: istoriia, sobytia, fakty*, April 9, 2008. Accessed March 24, 2021. <http://infodon.org.ua/pedia/227>; Aleksej Fedko, “Heroi-stratonavy. Vechnyj Ohon Pamiati” *Donetsk: istoriia, sobytia, fakty*, February 27, 2012. Accessed March 24, 2021. <http://infodon.org.ua/stalino/871>.
 - 11 Assman, Alejda. *Dlinnaia Ten Proshloho: Memorialnaia Kultura i Istoricheskaia Politika* (Moscow: Novoe lyteraturnoe obozrenye, 2014), 51–54.
 - 12 In Donetsk and the surrounding area, 160 monuments to Vladimir Lenin had been established by the beginning of the 1970s, mostly plaster sculptures without artistic value.
 - 13 Vasily Bervi-Flerovsky was a pre-revolutionary economist, sociologist, publicist, whose monument, according to the official version, was placed on his own grave. However, according to eyewitnesses, his ashes from the old cemetery, now a tram depot, were never transferred elsewhere. Only his gravestone was moved. Buried next to Bervi-Flerovsky is his wife, Hermione Ivanovna, who suffered torture and imprisonment alongside him. Her name is not indicated on the obelisk, however.
 - 14 Stalyno. Spravochnyk-putevodytel; Baxaev, Sehodnya y Zavtra; Bulkyn and Teplyakov, *Pamyatnye Mesta Donbassa*; Shapyro, Vechno Zhyvye: *Pamiatniki Donetskoj Oblasti; Donetskaia oblastnaia orhanyzatsiia ukraynskoho obshchestva okhrany pamiatnikov istorii i kultury*, “Pamyatnyky Heroyam Revolyucyonnoho Dvyzhenyya, Oktyabrskoj Revolutsii y Hrazhdanskoj Vojny v Donetskoj Oblasti”; Vadymenko, *Pamyatnyky Revolutsii y Hrazhdanskoj Vojny: Putevodytel*.
 - 15 Yuryj Lotman, *Semiotika Kino y Problemy Kinoestetiki* (Tallin: Esty Raamat, 1973).
 - 16 As, for instance, unauthorized excavation in Donetsk on the Rutchenkovo field made it possible to disprove the official version about the burial of the victims of Nazi occupation here and to prove that the remains of the residents repressed in the 1930s are buried.
 - 17 “Donetskyj Natsionalnyj Universytet Proponuyut Perejmenuvaty na Chest Vasylia Stusa,” *Ukrayinska Pravda*, January 6, 2016. Accessed March 24, 2021. <http://lifepravda.com.ua/society/2016/01/6/206071/>.
 - 18 Oksana Mikheieva and Volodymyr Nikolskyj, “Storinky Istorii” pro Stalinski Politychni Represiyi na Donbasi,” *Ukrayina Moderna*, April 4, 2015. <http://uamoderna.com/videoteka/nikolsky-mikheeva-great-terror-donbass>
 - 19 The citizens’ initiative to call the National University of Donbas by the name of Vasyl Stus already occurred in 2018. This process was only completed in 2016, after moving the National University of Donbas to Vynnytsia.

- 20 Institute of Social Research, Michigan, Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Ukrainian Catholic University, with the financial support of the Michigan University and Petro Yatsyk Programme of Research of the Contemporary History. Database of a comparative interregional research “Lviv-Donetsk: sociological analysis of group identities in the hierarchical public loyalties” (1994, 1999, 2004). Organizers—Question: *Name three historical figures who played a positive role in Ukrainian history.*
- 21 Darya Kurennaya, “Kakim byl Donetskyj Evromajdan,” Radio Svoboda, November 30, 2017. Accessed March 24, 2021. <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/donbass-realii/28889063.html>; “Evromajdan v Donetske: Khronika Sobytij Online,” *Novosti Donbassa*, January 19, 2014. Accessed March 24, 2021. <http://novosti.dn.ua/news/199759-evromaydan-v-donetske-khronyka-sobytyy-online>
- 22 “Pamyatnyk Zhertvam Golokosta (Donetsk).” Accessed March 24, 2021. <https://donetsk.wiki/places/pamyatnik-jertvam-holokosta-248/>.
- 23 “V Donetske Lenynu Pokrasyly Botynky v Belyj Tsvet.” *Korrespondent.net*, May 6, 2008. Accessed March 24, 2021. <http://korrespondent.net/ukraine/events/454177-v-donecke-leninu-pokrasili-botynki-v-belyj-cvet>
- 24 The sculptural image of a palm tree was made from a steel lathe by the smith of the Yuzovsky factory Oleksii Mertsalov and his assistant Pilip Shparin in 1895. It was awarded the Grand Prix of the International Industrial Exhibition in Paris in 1900. This image was actively used in creation of a new brand of the city in 2000s, and was placed on one of the official versions of a municipal Coat of Arms.
- 25 Project “City as Socio-cultural Space,” Sociological Laboratory, Donetsk State University of Management (principal investigator Oksana Mikheieva).
- 26 Survey “Relation of Permanent Residents of Donetsk to Renaming of Streets, Parks, Squares, Areas and Dismantling of Monuments and Memorable Signs” (28 January–15 February 2008), the Department of Sociology of Management of Donetsk State University of Management and the sociological agency Centre for Social Audit (n=400).
- 27 Sereda Viktoriya and Oleh Mazuryk, “Polityka Pamyati v Ukrayini: Mizh Zahalno-nacionalnym ta Rehionalnym Rivnyamy,” *Visnyk Xarkivskoho nacionalnoho universytetu imeni V. N. Karazina* 1045, no. 30 (2013).
- 28 Survey respondents (see note 27).
- 29 Survey respondents (see note 27).
- 30 University of St. Gallen, *Region, Nation and Beyond: An Interdisciplinary and Transcultural Reconceptualization of Ukraine*. Accessed May 26, 2024. <https://www.uaregio.org/en/about/stage-1/>.
- 31 Project “*Social Well-being and Prospects of the Future: Everyday life of the Residents of Donetsk and Luhansk Region in the Conditions of War*” (principal investigator: Oksana Mikheieva): 6 ФГД on the Luhansk region territories, controlled by Ukraine, 16 thorough interviews on the non-controlled territories. Factory of the Ideas of Donbas, 2017.
- 32 In this case, respondents mean the monument to the ATO participant Alexander Radiyevsky who died during fights for control over Severodonetsk with the illegal military formation of unrecognized LPR.
- 33 V. Kipen, “Travmovana svidomist yak naslidok i faktor nestabilnosti (doslidzhennya masovykh nastroyiv Donetska),” *Skhid traven* (2014): 5–9.
- 34 “Uchastnyky Evromajdana v Donetske ne Pozvolily Vlastyam Pomyt Pamyatnyk Shevchenko. Pomyli Sami,” *OstroV*, November 25, 2013. Accessed March 24, 2021. <http://www.ostro.org/donetsk/society/news/431791/>
- 35 “Persha Krov za Ukrayinskyj Donbas: Shist Rokiv Tomu u Donetsku Buv Vbytyj Dmytro Chernyavskij,” *Vchasno*, March 13, 2020. Accessed March 24, 2021. <https://vchasnoua.com/donbass/64411-fotovideo-persha-krov-za-ukrainskyi-donbas-shist-rokiv-tomu-u-donetsku-buv-vbytyi-dmytro-cherniavskiyi>.
- 36 “Donetska Mizhkonfesijna Aktsia ‘Za Myr v Ukrayini’: Osoblyvosti Rehionalnoy Molytvy,” *RISU*, April 9, 2014. Accessed March 24, 2021. <http://risu.org.ua/ua/index/exclusive/reportage/56029/>.

- 37 Mark Livin, “Vas Nikoly ne Katuvaly?” *Istoriia Ihorya Kozlovskoho pro 700 Dniv u Donetsky v Pidvalakh*, *The Village Ukraina*, October 31, 2019. Accessed March 24, 2021. <https://www.the-village.com.ua/village/city/city-experience/290723-vas-nikoli-ne-katuvali-istoriya-igorya-kozlovskogo-pro-700-dniv-u-donetskih-pidvalah>.
- 38 Since January 18, 2018, according to Ukrainian law “on features of state policy to ensure the state sovereignty of Ukraine in temporarily occupied territories in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions DPR and LPR are recognized as occupational administrations of the Russian Federation in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.” Accessed March 24, 2021. <http://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2268-19>.
- 39 “Donetskyj Natsionalnyj Universytet Proponuyut Perejmenuvaty na Chest Vasylya Stusa,” *Ukrayinska Pravda*, January 6, 2016. Accessed March 24, 2021. <http://lifepravda.com.ua/society/2016/01/6/206071/>; “Budet ly Donetskyj unyversytet nosyt imia Vasyliia Stusa. Accessed March 24, 2021. <http://misto.vn.ua/news/item/id/9164>.
- 40 “V Donetske Demontuvaly Barelyef Vasylya Stusa,” *Korrespondent.net*, 5 January 2015. Accessed March 24, 2021. <http://ua.korrespondent.net/ukraine/3511408-u-donetsku-demontuvaly-barelyef-vasyliia-stusa>.
- 41 “V Donetske Nachali Snimat Tablychky na Ukraynskomyazyke –Sotsseti,” *Hromadske Radio*, June 7, 2015. Accessed March 24, 2021. <https://hromadske.radio/ru/news/2015/06/07/v-Donetske-nachali-snimat-tablichki-na-ukrainskom-yazyke-socseti/>
- 42 “So Stely na Vezde v Donetsk Ubraly Myahkyj Znak,” *Telegraf*, May 2, 2015. Accessed March 24, 2021. <http://telegraf.com.ua/ukraina/obshchestvo/1869350-so-stelyi-na-vezde-v-donetsk-ubrali-myagkiy-znak.html>.
- 43 Padraic Kenney. *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe 1989* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).
- 44 Oksana Mamchenkova, “Benksy iz Donbassa: Avtor Skandalnykh Hraffyty na Ulitskh Okkupyrovannoho Donetska Brosaet Vyzov Svoej Maloj Rodyne,” *New Voice*, February 5, 2016. Accessed March 24, 2021. <http://nv.ua/publications/benksi-iz-donbassa-sergej-zaharov-avtor-skandalnyh-graffiti-na-ulitsah-okkupirovannogo-donetska-96392.html>.
- 45 “Chto nuzhno znat kazhdomu o Saur-Mohyle,” *Donetskoe ahenstvo novostej*, February 21, 2024. Accessed May 26, 2024. <http://dnr-news.com/dnr/37379-na-kurgane-saur-mogila-nachalis-raboty-po-stroitelstvu-chasovni.html>.
- 46 Project: “Social Well-being and Prospects of the Future: Everyday life of the Residents of Donetsk and Luhansk Region in the Conditions of War” on the Luhansk region territories controlled by Ukraine, 16 thorough interviews on the non-controlled territories. Factory of the Ideas of Donbas, 2017 (principal investigator: Oksana Mikheieva).
- 47 “Moj sosed byl ubit na rassvete,” *Voennaya poezia Iryny Bykovskoj (Vyazovoj)j*. Accessed May 25, 2024. <https://ru-so.ru/post/moj-sosed-by-l-ubit-na-rassvete%20voennaya-poeziya-iriny-bykovskoj-vyazovoj>.
- 48 “V Donetske s utra lyudi prynesli tsvety i ihrushki na Alleyu anhelov,” *Donetskoe ahenstvo novostej*, July 27, 2023. Accessed May 26, 2024. <https://dan-news.ru/foto/v--s-utra-ljudi-prinesli-cvety-i-igrushki-na-alleju-angelov-foto/>.
- 49 Aleksej Fedko, “V Donetske Otkryli Pamiatnik Onkolohu Hryhoryu Bondaryu,” *Donetsk: istoriia, ystoryya, sobytiia, fakty*, June 18, 2015. Accessed March 24, 2021. <https://infodn.org.ua/events/v-donecke-otkryli-pamyatnik-onkologu-bondaryu>.
- 50 “Pamiatnik Lehendarnomu Kynematohrafystu Aleksandru Khanzhonkovu Ustanovili na Eho Rodyne v Makeevke,” *Donetskoe Ahenstvo Novostej*, August 8, 2015. Accessed March 24, 2021. <https://dan-news.info/culture-ru/pamyatnik-legendarnomu-kinematografistu-aleksandru-xanzhonkovu-ustanovili-na-ego-rodine-v-makeevke.html>.
- 51 University of St. Gallen, *Region, Nation and Beyond: An Interdisciplinary and Transcultural Reconceptualization of Ukraine*. According to the thorough in-depth interviews conducted in 2013, most of inhabitants of the region practically do not speak about history, including in the family circle. “Historical memory” generally stretches to the mid-20th century and corresponds to the Soviet historical narrative, but there are plots of the family history, about famine, repressions, forced migrations, etc.

Bibliography

- Assman, Alejda. *Dlinnaia ten proshlogo: Memorialnaia Kultura i Istoricheskaia Politika*. Moscow: Novoe Ilyteraturnoe obozrenye, 2014.
- Baxaev, Aleksej. *Sehodnya i Zavtra*. Stalino: Donbass, 1960.
- Bulkyn, Serhej, and Heorhyj Teplyakov. *Pamiatnye Mesta Donbassa*. Donetsk: Donbass, 1966.
- “Chto nuzhno znat kazhdomu o Saur-Mohyle.” *Donetskoe ahenstvo novostej*, February 21, 2024. Accessed May 26, 2024. <http://dnr-news.com/dnr/37379-na-kurgane-saur-mogila-nachalis-raboty-po-stroitelstvu-chasovni.html>.
- Connerton, Paul. *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- “Donetskaya oblastnaia orhanyzatsia ukrainskoho obshhestva okhrany pamiantikov istorii i kultury.” *Pamiatniki Heroyam Revolyutsionnoho Dvizheniia, Oktiabrskoj Revolutsii i Hrazhdanskoj Vojny v Donetskoi Oblasti*. Donetsk, 1977.
- “Donetska Mizhkonfesijna Aktsiia ‘Za Myr v Ukrayini’: Osoblyvosti Rehionalnoy Molytvy.” *RISU*, April 9, 2014. Accessed March 24, 2021. <http://risu.org.ua/ua/index/exclusive/reportage/56029/>.
- “Donetskyj Natsionalnyj Universytet Proponuyut Perejmenuvaty na Chest Vasylia Stusa.” *Ukrayinska Pravda*, January 6, 2016. Accessed March 24, 2021. <http://life.pravda.com.ua/society/2016/01/6/206071/>.
- “Evromajdan v Donetske: Khronika Sobytij Online.” *Novosti Donbassa*, January 19, 2014. Accessed March 24, 2021. <http://novosti.dn.ua/news/199759-evromajdan-v-khronyka-sobytyy-online>.
- Fedko, Aleksej. “Pamiatnik Stratonavtam v Donetske.” *Donetsk:istoriia,sobytiia, fakty*. April 9, 2008. Accessed March 24, 2021. <http://infodon.org.ua/pedia/227>.
- Fedko, Aleksej. “Heroy-stratonavy. Vechnyj Ohon Pamyaty.” *Donetsk:istoriia, sobytiia, fakty*, February 27, 2012. Accessed March 24, 2021. <http://infodon.org.ua/stalino/871>.
- Fedko, Aleksej. “V Donetske Otkryli Pamiatnik Onkolohu Hryhoryyu Bondaryu.” *Donetsk: istoriia, sobytiia, fakty*. Donetsk, June 18, 2015. Accessed March 24, 2021. <https://infodon.org.ua/events/v-Donetske-otkryli-pamyatnik-onkologu-bondaryu>.
- “Activists launch interactive map of ‘Lenin’s fall’.” Accessed November 28, 2024. <https://ms.detector.media/onlain-media/post/1544/2014-02-24-aktyvisty-zapustily-interaktyvnu-kartu-leninopadu/>.
- Harvey, David. *Justice, Nature & The Geography of Difference*. New York, NY: Blackwell Publishing, 1996.
- Hayden, Dolores. *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1997.
- Instytut istorii, Kyiv. *Istoriia Mist i Sil Ukrayinskoyi RSR: V 26 t. Donetsk Oblast*. Kyiv: AN URSR, URE AN URSR, 1970.
- Kipen, V. Travmovana svidomist yak naslidok i faktor nestabilnosti (doslidzhennya masovykh nastroyiv Donetska). *Skhid traven* (2014): 5–9.
- Kurennaya, Darya. “Kakim byl Donetskij Evromajdan.” Radio Svoboda, November 30, 2017. Accessed March 24, 2021. <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/donbass-realii/28889063.html>.
- Lefebvre, Henri. *La Production de L’espace*. 4th ed. Paris: Anthropos Ethnosociologie, 2000.
- “Leninopadova Khronika (za Informacijeyu zi ZMI).” Accessed March 24, 2021. <https://www.thinglink.com/scene/477592549716918272?buttonSource=viewLimits>.
- Livin, Mark. “‘Vas Nikoly ne Katuvaly?’ Istoriia Ihorya Kozlovskoho pro 700 Dniv u Donetskikh Pidvalakh.” *The Village Ukrayina*, October 31, 2019. Accessed March 24, 2021. <https://www.the-village.com.ua/village/city/city-experience/290723-vas-nikoli-ne-katuvali-istoriya-igorya-kozlovskogo-pro-700-dniv-u-donetskih-pidvalah>.
- Lofland, Lyn. *The Public Realm: Exploring the City’s Quintessential Social Territory*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter, 1998.

- Lotman, Yuryj. *Semiotika Kino i Problemy Kinoestetiki*. Tallin: Esty Raamat, 1973.
- Mamchenkova, Oksana. "Benksi iz Donbassa: Avtor Skandalnykh Hraffiti na Ulitsakh Okkupirovannoho Donetska Brosaet Vysov Svoej Maloj Rodyne." *New Voice*, February 5, 2016. Accessed March 24, 2021. <http://nv.ua/publications/benksi-iz-donbassa-sergej-zaharov-avtor-skandalnyh-graffiti-na-ulitsah-okkupirovannogo-donetska-96392.html>.
- Mikheieva, Oksana. "Pamyatnyky dlia Zabuttia." *Krytyka* 107 (2006).
- Mikheieva, Oksana. "'Different' Donetsk Dwellers: Right for a Place in the Urban Space." *Donbas. First Line*. Project 'Donbas Studies' by IZOLYATSIA. Platform for Cultural Initiatives. Kyiv, 2016.
- Mikheieva, Oksana and Volodymyr Nikolskyj. "'Storinky Istoriii' pro Stalynski Politychni Represiyi na Donbasi." *Ukrayina Moderna*, April 4, 2015. <http://uamoderna.com/videoteka/nikolsky-mikheieva-great-terror-donbass>.
- "Moj sosed byl ubit na rassvete." *Voennaia poezia Iryny Bykovskoj (Vyazovoj)*. Accessed May 25, 2024. <https://ru-so.ru/post/moj-sosed-by-ubit-na-rassvete%20voennaya-poeziya-iryny-bykovskoj-vyazovoj>
- "Na Kurhane Saur-Mohyla Nachalys Roboty po Stroitelstvu Chasovni." *Novosti Donetskoy Respubliki*, November, 29 2016. Accessed March 24, 2021. <http://dnr-news.com/dnr/37379-na-kurgane-saur-mogila-nachalis-raboty-po-stroitelstvu-chasovni.html>.
- "Osobennosti Soznannya v Identychnosti Zhytelej Podkontrolnykh i Nepodkontrolnykh Ukraine Territorij Donetskoy Oblasti." *IFAK Institut*, July 15, 2016. <http://ifak.com.ua/ru/news/?year=2016&month=7>.
- Padraic Kenney. *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe 1989*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002.
- "Pamyatnyk Lehendarnomu Kynematohafystu Aleksandru Khanzhonkovu Ustanovyly na Ego Rodine v Makeevke." *DonetskDonetskoe Ahenstvo Novostej*, August 8, 2015. Accessed March 24, 2021. <https://dan-news.info/culture-ru/pamyatnik-legendarnomu-kine-matografistu-aleksandru-xanzhonkovu-ustanovili-na-ego-rodine-v-makeevke.html>
- "Pamiatnik Zhertvam Golokosta (Donetsk)." Accessed March 24, 2021. <https://donetsk.wiki/places/pamyatnik-jertvam-holokosta-248/>.
- "Persha Krov za Ukrayinskyj Donbas: Shist Rokiv Tomu u Donetsku Buv Vbytyj Dmytro Chernyavskyj." *Vchasno*, March 13, 2020. Accessed March 24, 2021. <https://vchasnoua.com/donbass/64411-fotovideo-persha-krov-za-ukrainskyi-donbas-shist-rokiv-tomu-u-donetsku-buv-vbytyi-dmytro-cherniavskyi>.
- Rayfield, Donald. *Stalin and his Hangmen*. London: Viking, 2004.
- Relation of Permanent Residents of Donetsk to Renaming of Streets, Parks, Squares, Areas and Dismantling of Monuments and Memorable Signs*. Donetsk State University, Sociological Laboratory (2008) [Data set].
- Rubynshtejn, Leonyd. *Knyha Rekordov Donbassa*. Donetsk: EAY-Press, 2002.
- Shapyro, Valeryj. *Vechno Zhyvye: Pamyatnyky Donetskoy Oblasty*. Donetsk: Donbass, 1972.
- "So Stely na Vezde v Donetsk Ubraly Myahkyj Znak." *Telegraf*, May 2, 2015. Accessed March 24, 2021. <http://telegraf.com.ua/ukraina/obshhestvo/1869350-so-stely-na-vezde-v-donetsk-ubrali-myagkiy-znak.html>.
- Sociological Analysis of Group Identities and Hierarchies of Social Loyalties*. Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Institute of Historical Research at Franko National University, Lviv; Petro Yatsik Research Program of Modern History, Lviv-Donetsk. 1994, 1999, 2004, 2010, 2015.
- Soja, Edward. "Writing the city Spatially." *City* 7, no. 3 (2003): 269–81.
- "Sredstva Massovoj Informatsii Donetskoy Narodnoj Respubliki." Accessed March 24, 2021. <https://dnronline.su/sredstva-massovoi-informatsii-dnr/>.
- Stalyno. Spravochnyk-putevodytel*. Stalyno: Stalynskoe oblastnoe yzdatelstvo, 1956.
- "Uchastnyky Evromajdana v Donetske ne Pozvolily Vlastyam Pomyt Pamiatnik Shevchenko. Pomyli Sami." *OstroV*, November 25, 2013. Accessed March 24, 2021. <http://www.ostro.org/donetsk/society/news/431791/>.

- University of St. Gallen. *Region, Nation and Beyond: An Interdisciplinary and Transcultural Reconceptualization of Ukraine*. 2013, 2017. <https://www.uaregio.org/en/about/stage-1/>.
- “V Donetske Demontuvaly Barelyef Vasylia Stusa.” *Korrespondent.net*, January 5, 2015. Accessed March 24, 2021. <http://ua.korrespondent.net/ukraine/3511408-u-donetsku-demontuvaly-barelief-vasylia-stusa>.
- “V Donetske Lenynu Pokrasili Botinki v Belyj Tsvet.” *Korrespondent.net*, May 6, 2008. Accessed March 24, 2021. <http://korrespondent.net/ukraine/events/454177-v-donecke-leninu-pokrasili-botinki-v-belyj-cvet>.
- “V Donetskek Nachali Snimat Tablichki na Ukraynskom Yazuke–Sotsseti. Hromadske Radio, June 7, 2015. Accessed March 24, 2021. <https://hromadske.radio.ru/news/2015/06/07/v-Donetske-nachali-snimat-tablichki-na-ukrainskom-yazyke-socseti/>.
- “V Donetske s utra lyudi prynesli tsvety i ihrushki na Alleyu anhelov,” *Donetskoe ahenstvo novostej*, July 27, 2023. Accessed May 26, 2024. <https://dan-news.ru/foto/v-donecke-s-utra-ljudi-prinesli-cvety-i-igrushki-na-alleju-angelov-foto/>.
- Vadymenko, Mark. *Pamiatniki Revolyutsii y Hrazhdanskoj Vojny: Putevodytel*. Donetsk: Donbass, 1977.
- Vadymenko, Mark. *Pamiatniki Ratnomu Podvyhu: Putevodytel*. Donetsk: Donbass, 1980.
- Viktoriya, Sereda, and Oleh Mazuryk. “Polityka Pamyati v Ukraini: Mizh Zahalnonacionalnym ta Rehionalnymy Rivnyamy.” *Visnyk Kharkivskoho natsionalnoho universytetu imeni V. N. Karazina* 1045, no. 30 (2013).
- Yakubova, Larysa, and Stanislav Kulchyckyj. *Donechchyna Luhanshhyna v XVII–XXI st.: Istorychni Faktory j Politychni Texnologiyi Formuvannya Osoblyvoho ta Zahalnoho i Rehionalnomu Prostoru*. Kyiv: Instytut istorii Ukrainy, 2015.
- Zharov, Anatolij. “Stratonavty v Donetske: Trahediiya y Pamyat.” *Donetsk:istoriia, sobyt- iia, fakty*, May 1, 2012. Accessed March 24, 2021. <http://infodon.org.ua/stalino/899>.

12 The Memory of the Great Patriotic War in the “Donetsk People’s Republic”

Commemoration, School, and Mass Media

Dmytro Tytarenko

Introduction

The commemoration of the Great Patriotic War (GPW),¹ which caused heated discussions until 2014, takes on new connotations under the circumstances of the military conflict in Donbass. All parties of the conflict have their own versions and interpretations of events during World War II, ranging from a struggle between two equivalent totalitarianisms, during which Ukrainians were forced to exclusively fight for the “imperial interests of others,” to the glorified and heroic interpretations of the war events, typifying Soviet historiography. This peculiar competition, or even “memory war,” is designed to legitimize the positions of the conflicting parties as well as to mobilize support of both versions on an exceptional level. A distinctly new specificity pertains to the territory of the self-proclaimed “Donetsk People’s Republic” (DPR)² to varying degrees.³

While characterizing the factors that caused the emergence of “national republics,” as well as the processes taking place on the DPR/LPR (Luhansk People’s Republic) territories, experts contrarily interpret the regional specifics and historical features of Donbass. The basis of such discussions are propagated myths, old or new, political interests, and sometimes even personal sympathies or antipathies. Analyzing these discussions would be beyond the scope of this chapter. However, in order to outline the sociopolitical context, I will note that the sociodemographic and ethnic landscape of this region, which formed during the industrialization of the 1920s–1930s as well as in the post-war restoration period, fully reflects the concept of Soviet modernization.⁴ Memory, revived in recent years, played an important part in tragic events in Ukraine, and particularly in Donbass.

In this chapter, I examine the peculiarities of the transformation of the official and non-official commemorative discourses of the GPW. The analysis is based on research material I collected during research projects conducted in 2014 and 2015 in the post-Soviet space, including Donbass.⁵ Observations and field research were conducted both in the Ukrainian government–controlled and non-Ukrainian–controlled Donbass territories from 2014 to 2022, also in the course of a different project.⁶ The analysis of interviews conducted with residents of the Donetsk Oblast in 2014–2022, is supplemented with a content analysis of media texts, with which

I was able, to a certain degree, to reconstruct how the subject of the GPW features in the public spaces of the DPR.

Celebration with a War Background, and War with a Celebration Background: May 9 from 2014 to 2016

The events in Kyiv of late 2013 and early 2014, besides being a political and military confrontation, were marked by a rapid growth of interest in the memory of World War II. The participants of the Euromaidan appealed to the traditions of the Ukrainian nationalist movement of the 1930s–1940s. Opponents referred to it as a reincarnation of Fascism. For propaganda purposes, both sides used the images of Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevych,⁷ regarded by citizens as either “national heroes” or “Nazi collaborators.” Captured by TV cameras, far-right symbols and slogans defined the image of the Maidan protests. Further provocative actions among some Maidan supporters included the dismantling of a monument to a Soviet soldier at Rynok Square in the city of Stryi in Lviv Oblast.⁸ From spring 2014 on, the memory of the GPW became an important factor in political processes in Donbass.⁹ The unstable sociopolitical situation, military operations in the northern districts of Sloviansk and Kramatorsk, seizures by pro-Russian activists of a number of official buildings in Donetsk and the surrounding area, extensive rumors about possible provocations on May 9, and the cancellation of festive activities, all intensified the rhetoric of “fighting against Fascism” over the course of the anti-Maidan protests.

Despite the considerable level of instability, the festivities nevertheless took place on May 9, 2014, albeit on a limited scale. A distinctive feature of the ritual was not only the complete absence of Ukrainian state symbols but also the dominance of St. George Ribbons. These ribbons, in Russia the most remarkable symbol of the “correct” memory of the war¹⁰ since 2005, became an identifier of a “them-versus-us” mindset in Donbass. The events that took place on the eve of and during May 9, 2014, had the character of political demonstrations, and soon after, in the referendum of May 11, 2014, had a noticeable mobilizing effect on the population. The referendum posed the question: “Do you support the act of state independence of the Donetsk People’s Republic?”

The theme of the fight against—and victory over—Nazism became an integral part of both historical and official political discourse on the territory of the DPR. Victory Day, related traditions and ceremonies became a key element of the official ideology in self-proclaimed republics in general. This was confirmed in particular by the celebration of the 70th anniversary of victory in the GPW, which in scale, atmosphere, and symbolic design corresponded to the celebratory events held in Russia and Belarus in 2015.

Preparation for the celebrations distinctly involved attempts to forge a sense of group unity among the population by sowing fear around a potential threat: the military forces of Ukraine and volunteer divisions. The sense of extreme celebration was largely promoted by the information published by the Donetsk Mayor, Igor Martynov, centered around the clearing of shell fragments from all key social zones, as well as the detention of a group of people by DPR law enforcement agencies

“on suspicion [of] planning provocations for the May celebrations.”¹¹ The events of 2014–2015 were discursively located in the unified symbolic context of the memory of the GPW. In this respect, the congratulations from the head of the DPR Alexander Zakharchenko to the war veterans, published in the local *Donetsk Republic*, were quite remarkable: “Today, as 70 years ago, the enemy has once again entered our land. Fascism has raised its head, and the invaders once again want to destroy us.”¹²

The key, and most substantial, element of the celebratory events widely announced in local mass media sources was the military parade, in which both the representatives of the military formations of the DPR and equipment were deployed. An idea was formed, if not about identity, at least about the direct relationship of the military parade, which was supposed to be held in Donetsk, to a similar event in Moscow. The parade was supposed to become a kind of symbol of resistance against the “Ukrainian aggression,” which generated a number of statements from the political leadership and military command of the DPR, such as Zakharchenko’s remark that while the “celebration of May 9 in Donetsk is like a bone in the throat for Ukraine, the parade in Donetsk, dedicated to the 70th anniversary of Victory, will be held under any circumstances, come hell or high water.”¹³ The memory model, which ignores the connection of the celebrations in the DPR territories and similar events in Ukraine, is reflected in the statement of the Commander of “Republic Gvardia,” Ivan Kondratov: “May 9 is a holy day for us, and we will conduct it as we should. Ukrainian neo-fascists cannot discredit the memory of our ancestors whose work we continue to this day.”¹⁴

A commemorative practice that first appeared in Russia,¹⁵ the movement of the “Immortal Regiment,” also took root in the DPR. In 2016, the “Immortal Regiment” brought together more participants than a year before, suggesting a growing popularity of this practice. The characterizing feature of the movement in 2016 was the presence of a large column to “Immortal Heroes of Donetsk People’s Republic,” a monument to the hundreds of relatives and comrades of members of the military forces of the DPR who were killed during the conflict in Eastern Ukraine.

The symbolic celebratory background was characterized in both 2015 and 2016 by peculiar eclecticism. Symbols of the DPR, as well as those of Soviet times and modern-day Russia, were carried out into the public space, at least in the central part of the city. However, the symbolism was also noticeable on the peripheries of celebratory events: flags and stickers in public transport; St. George Ribbons on private cars; drawings and congratulations in educational and cultural institutions, and on the doors of apartment building entrances, made by high school students. Visitors to the mass celebrations happily took photos with the participants of the theatrical events, dressed in Soviet military uniforms. The celebration of Victory Day in Donetsk was perceived as a legitimate and responsible representation of historical justice. The mobilized potential of this particular holiday was shown in the fact that all city residents participating in the celebratory events could see themselves as compatriots and like-minded people, united by common historical fortune and experiencing life under the circumstances of military operations.

Despite the fact that celebrating the 70th anniversary of Victory in 2015 became, perhaps, the most massive and vivid event in the life of the population

of non-Ukrainian government-controlled territories, it would be wrong to reduce the influence of the war commemoration to this day only. The impact of this date can be observed throughout 2015, which took place in the DPR under the auspices of the celebration of the 70th anniversary of Victory. The anniversary served as a convenient reason for conducting a wide variety of educational, as well as military-patriotic events, competitions, exhibitions, and concerts. The main purpose of the celebratory rituals, ceremonies, and events, held on the DPR territories in 2014–2016, was to strengthen social solidarity based on common values and symbols. The feeling of collective pride cultivated in the Victory celebrations also inspired optimism and hope for victory in the armed conflict that commenced in 2014.

The Memory of Two Wars: The Formation of a Group and New Identity

The events of 2014–2016 in Ukraine and, particularly, in Donbass, modified a number of stereotypes and ideas about one's "own" and the "stranger"¹⁶ and generated an image of the enemy for many residents of the region.¹⁷ It is possible to claim that, if not for the majority, then at least for the significant part of the residents of non-controlled territories, recent years have become the time of constructing a collective memory of the war as well as the specifics of life in unrecognized republics. This memory becomes an effective resource, which makes it possible to construct borders capable of separating the citizens of Ukraine who do not have similar experiences to the region's other inhabitants.¹⁸ The materials and interviews available support the claim that the specifics of evaluating the events and their emotional background are caused by personal and quite often rather dramatic experiences of life in a war situation. The popularity of establishing historical parallels with the events of the GPW, and the extrapolation of heroic myths and images to modern times, became a characteristic feature of life in the non-controlled territories.

If in the past, we learned about the war from films, literature, internet, or different stories, now in Donetsk, we have come to a realization of what it actually is. We have experienced bombing, seen our children during explosions... They hid behind the wall and lay down, not knowing if the bomb would fly close to us... So now for us, the idea of 9 May is sacred... Therefore, this year, our attitude to 9 May is bigger, more piercing and heartfelt.

(Male, born in 1965, Donetsk, May 8, 2015)¹⁹

What is now happening in the war in Ukraine, in Donetsk [...], is surely tightly connected to those events. It seems that you involuntarily go through the same emotions that those living in Donetsk did, occupied or fighting, experiencing bombing and shelling. You feel a certain connection of time.

(Male, born in 1978, Donetsk, May 9, 2015)²⁰

In the conditions of an armed confrontation, in the context of the enemy discourse, both at a media level and in everyday life, the following categories gained

wide popularity: “Ukrainian fascists,” “Ukronazis,” “National-fascists,” “fascist junta,” “Ukrop,” and so on. Some of these terms refer directly to the memory and discourse of the GPW. The open letter from the Dokuchaievsk residents, addressing the leader of the DPR, Zakharchenko, as well as its response, published in one of the central editions of the DPR, the newspaper *Donetsk Republic*, is a typical example of the adoption of these terms:

Is it true that our city will be handed to Ukrainian fascists, and we will be left with the Debaltseve Copper of the second kind? “Dokuchaievsk,” responded the leader of the unrecognized republic, “will never and under no circumstances [...] be surrendered to fascists! You should not worry. We have a strong army, and our forces will never allow the enemy to trample our land.”²¹

A characteristic feature of the socio-political discourse in the DPR was the inherent desire of the authorities to solidarize and mobilize society, including by referring to the heroic and tragic individual and collective symbols of the GPW. The popularity of the images of “hero-militias,” “hero-miners,” constructed by analogy with the soldiers of the 383rd, 393rd, and 395th rifle divisions, (formed in 1941 mostly from miners in Donbass) in turn reflected the tendency to borrow a selection of practices from the GPW discourse. Areas that experienced fierce military operations in 2014–2015 were marked by analogies with the places of the memory of the GPW (including regional), widely popularized in the frameworks of the Soviet historiographic traditions, education, and mass media. “Debaltseve as a Brest Fortress of Donbas,” “Savur-Mohyla is a place of military glory,” “the evidence of the heroism of Soviet soldiers-liberators in 1943, and the defence-militias in 2014,” “hero-city Ilovaisk,” and so on. The propaganda apparatus of the DPR, widely utilized heroic images and historical myths (Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, the members of the “Young Guard,” Panfilov’s 28 men, and so on), and has long been an object of critical reflection, including accounts from Russian historians.²² These sentiments found support among many activists of public organizations in Russia. A typical example is the congratulations text from the Nevsky regional office of a public organization “Inhabitants of Besieged Leningrad,” sent to the Donbass residents in relation to Victory Day:

We, the population of the besieged Leningrad, are familiar with blockades, hunger, cold, absence of electricity, of water, ruined houses, constant shelling, and bombings. At present time, the residents of Donbas are in a similar situation. We admire the courage, steadfastness, and uncompromising spirit of the Donbas population. We believe that victory is on your side!²³

The direct parallels between the events that took place in Odessa on May 2, 2014,²⁴ and the tragedy of the Belarusian village of Khatyn, destroyed by the Nazis in spring 1943,²⁵ are quite popular. The use of the categories of “Ukrainian fascists” and “Karateli” in the media discourse on the conflict reinforced this symbolic connection. Mourning events in Donetsk (a mourning meeting, a requiem concert,

organizing a travelling photo exhibition, calling on motorists to honor the memory of those killed on May 2 with car horns), were subsequently presented as a collective ritual, aimed at constructing group solidarity in the face of the “fascist threat.”

The practice of taking part in events, dedicated to Victory Day (May 9) and Donbass Liberation Day (September 8), not only among the veterans of the GPW but also the participants of the military operations of 2014–2016 became widespread. Thus, on May 5, 2015, in Donetsk, the *Eternal Memory* demonstration was planned, “dedicated to former prisoners of concentration camps and the captured militias of Donetsk People’s Republic.”²⁶ On September 8, 2015, in Donetsk, the National University of Economics and Trade announced a creative marathon: “There is only one moment between the past and the future.” The framework of the program provided for the performance of participants in the battles for Savur-Mohyla in 1943 and in 2014. A peculiar synthesis of traditional and new national holidays, “Victory Day” (May 9) and “Republic Day” (May 11) was represented by celebrations dedicated to the 70th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War and the first anniversary of DPR in the Kirov district of Donetsk. Over the course of the celebrations, the military personnel of the DPR were awarded the “Golden Star” medals of Heroes of DPR, as well as St. George Crosses and Jubilee medals of “70 Years of Victory in the Great Patriotic War.”²⁷

The attempt to underline a direct continuity between the veterans of the GPW and the combatants of armed formations of the DPR, the incessant tradition of “bat-tling for the Homeland against Fascism” became an inseparable part of the public discourse on the DPR territory. A number of factors defined its popularity. One of them was propaganda, successfully conducted by local and Russian media. In its frameworks, the situation in Ukraine is distorted and constantly discussed under the subject of “reviving fascism,” whereas the fact of the direct involvement of the Russian military and the role of the Russian Federation in the escalation of the Eastern Ukrainian conflict are ignored.

Ukraine’s adoption and implementation of a package of the so-called “decommunization laws” played a significant role in these processes. According to a number of Ukrainian and foreign lawyers, historians, and political scientists, compliance with the norms contained within the political and legal standards, historical facts, and requirements for the academic sciences in general, is very problematic, and demonstrates the obvious political involvement of the legislator.²⁸ The attempts to transform the commemorative rituals raised doubts among many. In particular, the inclusion in the calendar of the memorable date “Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation” (May 8) with an obvious emphasis is a way to draw attention to May 9 (Victory Day) on the part of the authorities. The majority of the population considers such actions attempts to deprive the generation of war veterans or war witnesses of the right to be gratefully remembered by their descendants.

The emotional background in many ways connects to the memory of the artillery and mortar shootings (always done by “Ukriy,” “Ukropyi,” “Naziki,” “Ukrofas-cists”²⁹), and personal losses experienced (wounded or killed relatives, destroyed houses, forced relocation; often in a sense of flight in the face of an unexpected and real threat to life). The service of close relatives in the armed formations of

the DPR is significant in understanding these events. The transport and economic blockade carried out by Ukrainian authorities in their turn played an important part in forming ideas about the essence and character of the conflict. The same applies to the admission system, which, in relation to a large number of displaced people, created a mass of artificial difficulties, first of all for the elderly, and became a source of numerous abuses. Often, the people who were armed and given power by the authorities were considered as a real threat, having nothing in common with providing safety and lawfulness.³⁰

The specific aspect of memory, connecting the GPW events to the present conflict, relates to the problem of the sites of mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO). On the Donbass territory, there are a few mine zones that are not indicated on maps and not delimited by corresponding warning signs. Access to weapons is also simplified. This situation reminds many residents of the region of the GPW³¹ events. In this context, it should be noted that the information on the results of the work of the groups working to remove UXO in the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the DPR contains many references to the GPW ammunition discovered by pyrotechnics.

It is obvious that the consequences of the experienced military trauma, the severity of which will be determined primarily by the duration of hostilities in Donbass, will be felt by the local population for a very long time after the end of the military confrontation. There is a high probability that it is the military events and tragic military experience that the population of the region has been experiencing since 2014 that will become the key factor and resource of memory necessary for the formation of a special “Donbass identity.” A nourishing ground for its conceptualization will certainly be the appeal to the image of war participants, “children of war,” in general, the elderly people who managed/failed to survive another war.

Pensioners: Witnesses of Two Wars

To a certain extent, the attitudes of the conflicting sides depended on the ability and readiness of the authorities (Ukrainian or in the self-proclaimed republics) to take responsibility for the maintenance of numerous pensioners, including the GPW veterans or “Children of War.” According to the instructions of the Ukrainian authorities, the payment of the pension ceased in summer 2014, and only resumed for the citizens who left the non-controlled territories, registered at a new place of residence and are now living in controlled territories. In this situation, a significant proportion of the pensioners who were unable to leave their homes and apartments, for instance, due to poor health,³² were forced to register with the social protection bodies of the self-proclaimed republics.

In spring 2015, at which point the pensioners in Donetsk had been deprived of their pensions for seven to eight months, the DPR authorities commenced the social payment, close to the amount of the previous Ukrainian pension. This situation served as one of the key factors in the legitimization of the governments of unrecognized republics, and, at the same time, as the de-legitimization of the Ukrainian authorities in the eyes of the pensioners. Considering the preservation of some economic relations (a circumstance not only suppressed but even refuted),

the existence of the well-functioning smuggling system, operating across the line of demarcation, the non-payment of pensions raised additional questions. On the part of the representatives of the Ukrainian authorities, the reasons and justification for not paying the pensions to the DPR residents sounded different and contradictory, even concerning those ready to leave the non-controlled territory. (It should be noted that the situation with non-payment of pensions has been a cause for criticism by the United Nations and a number of Ukrainian and international human rights organizations).³³ This atmosphere promoted the formation of confidence among many pensioners that the state no longer considers them as their citizens. The artificial difficulties created for pensioners, when crossing the line of demarcation³⁴ and the control over the mode of their stay in controlled territories,³⁵ resulted in the averse and partially hostile attitude to the state.

The DPR authorities used this situation to their benefit. The particular attention to the needs of GPW participants resulted in a number of orders concerning the social payments, other social help, and fuel provision. A characteristic feature of these policies was the creation of unified preferential categories, such as: "the participants of the military operations, including the defenders of DPR (militia) and participants of the war, as well as people equated to them"; "family members of the defenders of DPR (militia); the killed (or deceased) veterans during the Great Patriotic War, as well as people equated to them."³⁶ Standardization, clearly, was caused not only by the desire to unify the categories of beneficiaries, but also to construct a community out of the participants of the contemporary military operation, symbolically equal to the GPW veterans.

The DPR mass media frequently covers the official commemorative events, which are attended by the GPW veterans. Political activists of unrecognized republics organize unofficial meetings with veterans. The deputies of the People's Council of the DPR visit their houses. In turn, the meetings with veterans are intended to demonstrate the high level of support for the DPR leadership by those who are traditionally perceived as moral authorities and serve as an additional legitimization factor. Overall, the images of the war participants, "Children of War," the pensioners, who had to go through another war, are widely utilized for promotional purposes.

The extremely severe conditions among people of retirement age in Donetsk, due to the military operations, as well as the economic and transport blockade, urged the initiation of a number of humanitarian projects, the aim of which was to provide the citizens of these categories with food and medicine. The massive humanitarian project, whose target audience was pensioners aged 60 and over, as well as disabled people (including the GPW veterans), families with young children, etc. was realized by the Rinat Akhmetov Humanitarian Center.

Other initiatives directed to aid the GPW veterans also took place. Providing medical treatment and medicaments for the veterans and "Children of War" was a serious challenge. Only in a few instances was it possible to resolve this problem with the help of charity funds and donations. The situation of single pensioners, in need of treatment, including hospital treatment, was especially hard in the second half of 2014 and first months of 2015. This was, I reiterate, a moment when these individuals were already deprived of their pensions by the Ukrainian government

and were yet to get the social payment from the DPR. This situation left the people, experiencing war for the second time in their lives, with the most painful memories: “It’s a wonder I survived.”³⁷

The results of the interviews with veterans and the GPW witnesses revealed a tendency to place responsibility for the current situation (the term “civil war” is often used), on Kyiv officials in general. This was largely explained not only by the factors stated above but also by the propaganda of “enemy imagery”³⁸ in a situation where the elderly do not have access to alternative sources of information. It should be noted that the experience of personal relations with the Ukrainian army neutralized the influence of propaganda to a certain extent and promoted ideas of a civilian character to the conflict in Donbass among the respondents, as well as feelings of remorse for the death toll on both sides:

When a miner kills a westerner (inhabitant of Western Ukraine – *D.T.*) – I do not understand when a westerner kills a miner – for what? Soldiers already sit at the APC, all ready for a fight... Well, I say, guys, God help us, let the fighting never begin. They left everything and went to the famous Ilovaïsk. No one and nothing returned from there.³⁹

At the same time, some, especially those living in regions that had suffered from battles, held Russia responsible for the escalation of the Donbass conflict after observing Russian military personnel or volunteers present in the region, the movements of military equipment convoys, and artillery fire from residential areas. The latter conditions often provoked backlash from which, yet again, civilians suffered.⁴⁰

Donbass in the War Years: Scholarly Perspectives

In the archives of Donbass and Luhansk Oblasts, there is a collection of significant assets, documents, and different materials of the GPW period. The circle of specialists, engaged in the history of war,⁴¹ was developed in the region. The current political order ensures the continuation of these studies. We can say that the emphasis in these studies, considering the current political demand, will be made on the education of the military-political events of the GPW, leaving without due attention the social history of the region in the first half of the 1940s.

A large number of unique materials that are significant for research on the period 1920–1950 were kept in the archives of the Security Service of Ukraine in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts, with a significant portion of these materials dedicated to GPW events. Despite the fact that access to these materials is rather limited, over the course of the 1990s and 2000s, many archival documents were examined by Ukrainian and foreign historians.⁴² The spring 2014 seizure of the Departments of the Security Service of Ukraine in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts was catastrophically reflected in the condition of the document archives, most of which were either destroyed or removed.⁴³ It is obvious that the disappearance (most likely, irrevocable) of these materials will negatively impact studies of Donbass history during the GPW. In recent

years, the DPR has published several scientific, popular science and educational publications devoted to the events of the GPW. These works are characterized by a narrow source base, insufficient use of new methodological approaches, a desire to glorify the historical past, and a lack of attention to its complex and controversial aspects.

The Subject of the War in School Educational Programs

By the start of the 2015–2016 school year in the DPR territory, there were new general education programs established, providing the replacement of the “History of Ukraine” course with the “History of Homeland”⁴⁴—an integrated course consisting of the “History of Russia” and the “History of Donetsk region.” While describing the tasks assigned to the educational institutions, the Minister of Education of the DPR, Larisa Polyakova, noted during her press conference on July 8, 2016:

At the moment, we are prioritizing the following two areas: philological and military-patriotic education. Most of the scheduled activities and events at every educational level are aimed at developing a sense of citizenship, patriotism, as well as fidelity to duty and the “homeland.”⁴⁵

In the subject of “History of the Homeland” for the fifth grade, the war is told through the biographies of the natives of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts. Initially this includes the military leaders, such as Ivan Peresyphkin, Kirill Moskalenko, and Andrey Yeremenko. The students are supposed to answer the following question: “How do the testimonies of eyewitnesses help historians study the history of the Great Patriotic War?” The educational practices sustained in a militaristic and patriotic spirit as before the conflict, expected communication between students and veterans of the GPW, home front workers, and “Children of War.” As noted by Ukrainian journalist Stanislav Aseev, who lived in the territory of the DPR and recorded his observations, in educational establishments “parallels are drawn between the Wehrmacht and the Ukrainian Armed Forces.”⁴⁶

The “History of the Homeland” syllabus for eleventh grade students (52 hours) included the subject “The Soviet Union during the years of the Great Patriotic War,” which accounted for 9 hours of lessons. The study of the following subjects was also considered: “Soviet Union in 1939–1941,” “The Start of the Great Patriotic War. Military Operations of 1941,” “Military Operations of 1942,” “Life of the Population under the Occupation,” “Resistance Movement and its Currents,” “Turning point in the Great Patriotic War,” “The Course of Hostilities on the Soviet-German Front in the Second Half the 1943 – Beginning of 1944,” and “Completion of the Expulsion of Occupants from the Soviet Union Territory: Culture in the Years of the Great Patriotic War.”

A significant part of the narrative was dedicated to the plots connected to Donbass history during the war years. Regardless of the large-scale borrowing from the Soviet historical discourse, the course included such new subjects as: “The Holocaust, Ethnic and Political Cleansings in Donbass,” “Deportation of Ostarbeiters

to Nazi Germany,” “UIA Activities, Galicia Division,” and “Deportation of Tatars, Greeks, Armenians from Crimea to Eastern SSSR Regions.”⁴⁷

Military-Patriotic Upbringing in Extracurricular Education

It should be noted that the conditions of military confrontations in the region also actualized the practice of military-patriotic work outside of schools. At the same time, the obvious continuity in the fields of extracurricular education is also apparent. The majority of events appear as a logical continuation (though under the circumstances of a different political context) of events traditionally conducted up to 2014 both in the region and in the whole of Ukraine. For instance, in May 2015, “The Donetsk Republic Centre of Tourism and Local History of the Youth” with the support of the Ministry of Education and Sciences of the DPR, as well as the Council of the regional association “Memory,” held a republican meeting with the participation of the search groups of “The Heirs of Victory” as well as volunteers, working in museums. In 2016, the event “The Watch of Memory” was held, the aim of which was “the improvement of the system of patriotic education, the formation among young people of social activism, citizenry, patriotism, a sense of pride, and loyalty to the Homeland on the examples of courage and heroism of the soldiers of the Great Patriotic War.”⁴⁸

The main events included (i) the “Day of the Start of the War,” dedicated to the 75th anniversary of the beginning of the GPW. It included video-interviews with the eyewitnesses of the first day of the war, lasting from 3 to 5 minutes. The prepared material was supposed to replenish the museum assets of educational institutions; (ii) the competition of museum expositions: “War in the Fate of Students and Teachers of Donbass.” The main proposed themes were: “From a graduation party to the front,” “We are indebted to the memory of our ancestors”; (iii) a Republican solemn meeting of the search groups “Heirs of Victory,” dedicated to the 71st anniversary of the Victory in the GPW; (iv) creating corners of memory “They brought Victory as close as they could.” Here the aim was to update the expositions in educational institutions and to include the names of soldier-countrymen killed during the war; (v) the requiem lesson, dedicated to the 75th anniversary of the start of the GPW, which had to present the results of the research of “Military-patriotic club Vityaz” of the Amvrosiivka school No. 4 on studying the history of the evacuation hospital No. 34–46 in Amvrosiivka; (vi) the event “Veteran Lives Next Door”—it provided aid for the veterans, holding events with veteran invitations or using video materials; (vii) Operation “Obelisk,” in the frameworks of which the aim was to elevate the sites of memory of the soldiers killed during the GPW; and (viii) the republican final meeting of the search groups “Heirs of Victory,” on which they planned to present the results of the efforts made by the educational institutions during the “The Watch of Memory.”

A wider (dedicated not only to the GPW) form of involving school students in local historical research was the Republican local historical expedition “Donbass – my homeland.” The expedition was conducted alongside the “Concept of patriotic upbringing of children and students of the DPR,” established in summer 2015.

To carry out research activities, the students could work in many sections: "Cultural heritage of Donbass," "Ethnic Culture of Donbass," "Geological Tracks of Donbass," "Archaeological Past of Donbass," "Glorious Names of Countrymen," "From the Ashes of Oblivion," etc.

The last of the listed sections was aimed at studying "historical events during the Great Patriotic War, military conflicts of XX—early XXI centuries."⁴⁹ This area generated a high interest, which is not surprising considering the rich traditions of preparing student works dedicated to Donbass history in the years of the GPW, carried over to the military events of 2014–2015. Thirty-one works were submitted to this section, including those dedicated to the current conflict.⁵⁰ The educational institutions as a whole, as well as high schools and school institutions, extracurricular institutions, working with children and teenagers, play a significant part in the commemoration policies of GPW and the contemporary conflict.

The Great Patriotic War in the Mass Media

The local mass media made its own essential contribution to the realization of memory politics, represented by permanent publications such as the "Donetsk Republic," "Novorossiiia," "Golos Respubliki," "Mirnyi Donbass," "Donetskoe Vremia," "Donetsk Vechernii," regional publications of the all-Russian newspaper "Komsomolskaya Pravda. Gazeta Nashego Goroda. Donetsk. Luhansk," "Moskovskii Komsomolets," "Donbass," and others. TV stations, "Oplot-TV," "Novorossiiia" and "Republic Channel 1," as well as radio, also took part in this process.

The placement on the pages of editions of a significant part of publications dedicated to the GPW events (memories of veterans, edited articles, reprints from other newspapers), characterizes the editorial policies of these publications. As usual, the Soviet discourse of "great victory" was exposed. The difficult, debatable, and contradictory issues of the GPW history, such as unjustifiably high losses of soldiers on the Soviet side, scale of collaborationism, strategies of survival of the population on occupied territories, the longstanding existence in Soviet society of "figures of silence" (Ostarbeiters and prisoners of war), were given much less attention. The emphasis was set rather on showing direct historical parallels between the GPW events and the current "fight for the homeland."

Rituals and Memorials of the GPW

The central place of memory of the GPW in Donetsk Oblast since its installation in the mid-1960s, was a memorial complex built on Savur-Mohyla (Kurgan in the Shakhtyorsk district). In summer 1943, the strategically important Savur-Mohyla became an epicenter of fierce battles that cost the lives of tens of thousands of Soviet soldiers. The memorial was opened in 1967, in the presence of the tens of thousands of residents of not only Donetsk but also of the Voroshilovgrad (Luhansk) and Rostov Oblasts, joined by delegations from various regions of the Soviet Union. However, since 1984, after the end of the construction of the monument to the "Liberators of Donbass" in Donetsk, located in the park of Lenin Komsomol, Savur-Mohyla

yielded its positions. Since then, the center of the commemoration was the monument to the “Liberators of Donbass.” This choice had a rather pragmatic basis: Donetsk was an Oblast center, whereas Savur-Mohyla has been removed from the main traffic intersections. Little has changed since the fall of the USSR. The celebratory demonstrations in Savur-Mohyla were conducted regularly, but the memorial complex “Liberators of Donbass” remained the center of mass celebrations.

One of the traditional elements of the celebratory ritual in Donetsk, built around the two key dates of Victory Day (May 9) and Donbass Liberation Day (September 8), was the solemn laying of flowers on the memorials of the military commanders Kuzma Gurov, Franz Grinkevich, Fyodor Tolbukhin, and Nikolai Vatutin who all took part in the battles for Donbass. The places of remembrance included monuments dedicated to the participants of the anti-fascist underground-guerrilla movement, as well as the victims of Nazism. The choice of places of memory and the ritual side of this commemoration have remained largely unchanged, long after 2014. At the same time, in the context of the current conflict, a certain reconstruction of the memorial landscape took place. In 2015, next to the monument to the “Liberators of Donbass,” a monument opened to “Those killed in Donetsk People’s Republic,” as well as a memorial sign to “The Kids killed in Donbass” (later, this place was transformed into a memorial complex “Alley of Angels”). The question as to whether members of illegal armed groups of the self-proclaimed DPR might be buried close to this building was also under discussion.

The conflict affected the memorial complex Savur-Mohyla in the most dramatic way. In summer 2014, this territory turned into an arena of fierce battles between the Ukrainian army units and armed formations of the DPR. The control of Savur-Mohyla exchanged hands multiple times and memorial complex was subsequently almost totally ruined. The fact that the fighting took place in a “sacred” place, filled with the sacrificing spirit of the sites of memory and collective commemorations of the GPW, created a highly emotional background to the clashes. Considering this background, the historical continuity of the “war against fascism” was emphasized, with the last war directly connected to the war unleashed in 2014. Thus, a unified discursive field of memory with a highly mobilizing potential was constructed: “Many of our comrades fell here—those defending Savur-Mohyla while protecting the people.”⁵¹ The traces of the contemporary battles on the monuments of the GPW gave them additional symbolic capital. During the presentation of the reconstruction project of Savur-Mohyla memorial in May 2015, the leader of the DPR Zakharchenko claimed that “For us, this is not only a memory of our ancestors, but also of our brothers who defended the memorial in Summer 2014. This is already a cult construction. Unfortunately, history repeats itself – here we fought Nazis in 1943, and in 2014, we did the same.” The decision to restore the memorial intended “not only to restore the memorial, destroyed during the battles with Ukrainian nationalists as soon as possible, but also to immortalize in it the feat of the DPR militias.”⁵²

The restoration of the memorial in 2022, already in the midst of a full-scale war, was an event that was given great symbolic significance. In his video message to the participants of the opening ceremony of the memorial complex on September 8, the Day of Liberation of Donbass, Russian President Vladimir Putin emphasized the

place of Saur-Mogila as a “great shrine,” standing in the same row with Sapun Hill and Mamaev Kurgan. He drew direct historical parallels between the events, separated by a chronological distance of more than 70 years, justifying the need to immortalize them: “The militia of Donbass selflessly defended their native land and after fierce fighting repulsed the height, repeating the feat of their ancestors. In honor of the modern generation of heroes, new bas-reliefs appeared on the revived memorial.”⁵³

Events that started in 2014 were directly connected to the Savur-Mohyla memorial, as well as a number of other memorials of the GPW. Thus, during the traditional “memory lines,” conducted on May 5, 2015 and 2016 on the “Day of Mass information and polygraph employees” near a memorial of “They never returned to the publishing house” (located in Kyiv district in Donbass, which was especially damaged by the military operations), the participants of the demonstration drew attention to the damage of the monument due to shootings.⁵⁴

Since 2014 some new monuments dedicated to the GPW events were unveiled in DPR territory. On June 12, 2015, in Donetsk, a ceremonial opening of the monument “Victory Bells” was conducted in the Victory Park, donated by the international union “Heirs of Victory.”⁵⁵ On December 3, 2015, in a festive atmosphere at the initiative of a social movement “Donetsk Republic,” the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the DPR, Russian Military Historical Community (RMHC), and the Republican Research Association “Donbass,” the monument to an Unknown Soldier⁵⁶ was unveiled. The remains of 38 Soviet soldiers, killed in the battles to liberate Amrosiivka in 1943, were buried alongside the monument. On the same day, similar monuments were opened in Tver and Leningrad Oblasts in Russia. The construction of all of these monuments was conducted by the projects developed in Russia with financial support from the Russian side.⁵⁷ Public activists living in Donetsk are currently planning to create a monument to a native of the city, the photojournalist Yevgeny Khaldei, the author of a famous photograph: “Raising the Flag over the Reichstag.”⁵⁸ The monument was erected in 2021.⁵⁹

Calendar of Celebratory and Memorial Dates: Relics of the Past and Images of the Present

The calendar of dates of celebration and commemoration connected to events of the GPW remained traditional and similar to what it was in 2013. In this calendar, the following dates are marked: May 9 (Victory Day), June 22 (Day of Remembrance and Sorrow), September 22 (Day of Partisan Glory), and February 23 (Defender of the Fatherland Day). Regardless of the dominance of the heroic theme, the victims of the war were also given some attention. Thus, in July 2015, at the Centre of Slavic culture at the “Victims of Fascism” monument, a remembrance evening was held dedicated to the “day of mourning and sorrow for the Volyn events of 1943–1945.”⁶⁰ On January 27, 2016, the military history museum of the GPW held events dedicated to International Holocaust Remembrance Day.⁶¹

The MFA of the DPR, the foreign affairs department of the administration of the Head of the DPR, and the public movement “Donetsk Republic” were involved in the organization process of these events. The leaders of the

unrecognized republic used a new reason to draw direct parallels between Nazi Germany and the Ukrainian authorities. Alongside a new attempt to marginalize the political opponent, the DPR authorities tried to reach approval on an international level, addressing the participation of Ukrainian nationalists in the Volyn slaughter and in the Holocaust. The speeches from the leadership's representatives were aimed at both internal and external audiences. On the remembrance evening of the Volyn tragedy victims,⁶² the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the DPR, Aleksandr Kofman said: "I am truly happy that Europe is starting to wake up and many volunteers from Europe are arriving to fight alongside us. They also remember what Fascism is. Now we have to remind the leaders of European states who have forgotten about it."⁶³

The conflict in eastern Ukraine not only brought attention to the Volyn slaughter and the Holocaust, but it also promoted the appearance of the new remembrance dates. One of them, for instance, is the "Day of White Cranes"—"a celebration of poetry and memory of those killed in the battles of all wars," first celebrated on October 25, 2014. The "Day of St. George Ribbon" was also celebrated for the first time on December 6, 2014. According to the first deputy of the central executive committee of the "Donetsk Republic" movement, Andrey Kramar: "Today, St. George Ribbon is a holy symbol, which differentiates us from the Fascist Ukrainian Juntas."⁶⁴ In general, the places of memory and the calendar of commemorative and festive dates on the territory of the DPR/LPR, with a few exceptions, reflected a tendency to reactualize the symbols of the Soviet era and Soviet identity.

Museums and Exhibitions as a Form of Commemoration

A significant part in the popularization and visualization of memories of the GPW was played by the Donetsk Oblast Museum of Local Lore. In 2008, the museum opened its branch, the Museum of History of the GPW, in the Lenin Komsomol Park. Following the artillery attacks of August 2014, the building of the Donetsk Oblast Museum of Local Lore was partially destroyed.⁶⁵ In order to preserve them, the exhibits, were transferred to the museum storage.

During 2014–2016, large-scale work was carried out to restore this institution. It was renamed the Donetsk Republican Museum of local lore, with several new exhibition halls created. At the same time, however, the exhibits dedicated to the GPW stories were not restored. At the moment, the museum staff is planning to create new exhibitions. The name "Hall of Military Glory" assumes broader thematic and chronological coverage of various aspects of the military history of the region.⁶⁶

After the events of 2014, the main exhibition was located in the Military History Museum of the GPW. As a result, a number of thematic exhibitions were organized directly dedicated to the GPW history, as well as the events of the current war. A characteristic feature of the exhibitions held in the museum was the representation of the military-political events of the Donbass conflict, as a war for "freedom and independence" against the "fascistic threat." This view was reflected in the exhibitions of Donbass Military History Club, as well as the photo exhibition "The War in the Eyes of Photo Correspondents"⁶⁷ and the exhibition "I Serve the Homeland."⁶⁸ One of the key elements of the new tradition of

commemoration remains the collective image of miners. Thus, dedicated to the miners was the exhibition "Miners of Donbass in the Years of the Great Patriotic War,"⁶⁹ which opened in August 2015, on the eves of important Donbass holidays—Day of Miners and Day of the City (Donetsk). This institution has become an important factor in popularizing the memory of the GPW, as well as visualizing the military events of recent years on the territory of Donbass by means of museum art.

A number of other exhibition platforms, in turn, have become spaces representing the memory of the GPW, actualized in the context of the current conflict. In May 2015 in the Donetsk Painters House, an exhibition "When Guns Rattle, the Muses are not Silent" was opened on the 70th anniversary of Victory. It featured 77 works prepared by almost 50 authors. Among them were artworks dedicated to the events of the war that began in 2014. Examples are the canvasses "Let's Defend Native Donbass," or "Our Donbass on Fire," "Returned from War," whose author was a Donetsk painter, Yuri Danilov.⁷⁰ In May 2015, the exhibition "Echo of War Years" opened at the painting-exhibition complex "Art Donbass," dedicated to the 70th anniversary of Victory. The local historians at this exhibition presented some photos and documents, highlighting the life of the city in the GPW years.⁷¹

School museums also became prominent spaces as centers for conducting educational and commemorative events related to the GPW events. By spring 2016, there were 141 museums at educational institutions under the control of the Ministry of Education of the DPR, on DPR territory. Later, in the process of certification and the re-registration of museums, it became evident that their number was close to 200.⁷² The efficiency of their work depends not only on the official support from the part of the authorities but also on the activities of enthusiasts, popularizing the memory of the war. One such museum—"Memory of a Heart"—is located in Donetsk general education school No. 93 and named after a Hero of the Soviet Union, Nikolay Zherdev. It was founded, exists and has been developing for many years with the support of an employee of the school, an enthusiast Nina Korenyugina.⁷³ It is highly likely that with the retirement of the founders of such museums—activists, and with the deaths of the last war participants and witnesses of the events of 1941–1945—museum activities will adopt a more and more formal character.

Conclusion

The war in Ukraine and particularly in Donbass cannot end with the achievement of a formal agreement between the main political actors. Its consequences will be felt for many years, regardless of how new borderlines or boundaries are marked, or what the character of the Ukrainian or Russian political regime will be. The consequences of the conflict and the popularity of the image of an enemy will be preserved for a long time in pejorative categories, such as "separ," "rashist," "vatnik," "ukrop," "ukrofascist," "nazik," "karatel," "kyievskaya junta," and so on.

The discrimination against those who moved from Donbass to Ukraine, the marginalization of Donbass regional identity, the mutual mistrust between those who sided to Euromaidan or Antimaidan, will also have long-term consequences. Different levels of hostility will be defined by the experience of direct participation

in armed conflict, living in the conditions of military operations, deeply personal losses and tragedies, and also the usual political sympathies and antipathies. One of the most difficult challenges will be to decrease the tension of the relationship between those who served in the armed forces of the Donetsk and Lugansk “people’s republics” Russian army on the one hand, and the volunteer battalions and Ukrainian armies, on the other. The internally displaced persons and refugees are constructing the image of current events, for many of whom the experience of adapting to a new space was, and remains, a difficult task.

All of these problems are imposed and aggravated by the conflicting politics of memory. Since the outbreak of war in eastern Ukraine, the conflicting sides have made extensive use of allusions to World War II/GPW in various forms. The strategic goal of this on the territory of the “people’s republics” of Donbass was public mobilization to fight the “new fascist threat.” The most important elements in the formation of collective solidarity were the mass events timed to coincide with Victory Day. For a significant part of the population in the territory not controlled by the Ukrainian government, participation in commemorative actions and ceremonies was a means of expressing a personal political position. The memory of the past war, related rituals, and commemorative practices have become one of the basic elements of formation and preservation of the socio-cultural identity of the population of Donbass. This was confirmed, in particular, by the oral history interviews conducted with residents of the region, including witnesses of World War II.

The canonical version of the memory of the war, which was formed back in the Soviet times, is quite widely reproduced in the territory of the “people’s republics” of Donbass in the scientific discourse. The politicization of historical research, limited access to new sources, and outdated methodological approaches are key obstacles to a comprehensive analysis of the processes that took place both on the territory of the region and Ukraine as a whole during the GPW. The emphasis on the military-patriotic component, the creation of a glorified narrative of the war, and the peripherality of topics that do not correspond to this task have become one of the features of the model of historical education in the “people’s republics.” This specificity is also characteristic of the representation of the theme of the past war in the media space.

The monuments and memorials of the GPW became an integral element of the new model of war memory in the region. The integration of memorial sites associated with the combatants of the “people’s republics” of Donbass into the established memorial space was aimed at demonstrating the continuity of the traditions of the struggle against fascism, creating a new commemorative discourse that unites representatives of different generations—participants of the two wars. Museum art acted as an operational means of political socialization of the population in modern conditions. For this purpose, a number of exhibitions were created as of 2015, reflecting within the same or adjacent exposition space, along with the events of the GPW, modern military events in Donbass.

Since 2014 the level of politicization and the actuality of World War II/GPW history in Ukraine, in DPR/LPR, in Russland demonstrates the depth of the contradiction. It is obvious that the GPW discourse from World War II is in great demand

in the current conflict. Its usage allows a rapid construction of effective images of an enemy, with a potential of serious mobilization.

On this basis, the refusal to politically instrumentalize the memory of the war, to use old or newly created ideologems associated with the history of World War II/ World War II for mobilizing purposes, should become a mandatory professional and ethical imperative for the historical community and politicians. This is one of the most important conditions for ending the war that began in 2014, which has already taken tens of thousands of lives in the countries that 80 years ago paid the greatest price for not repeating, as it was then thought, the horrors of the world war.

Notes

- 1 The events of World War II, related to eastern Ukraine, are defined in the DPR as the Great Patriotic War. As I researched the commemoration of the GPW in the DPR, I will continue using these terms in the chapter.
- 2 Here and henceforth, I consider the “Donetsk People’s Republic” (DPR) and “Luhansk People’s Republic” (LPR) unrecognized and self-proclaimed.
- 3 The author expresses deep appreciation to Tanja Penter, Professor of Eastern European History at the University of Heidelberg, and Dr. Sergey Romyantsev, a researcher at the Center for Independent Social Research (Berlin), for critical remarks and encouragement for the text of this chapter.
- 4 On the Soviet modernization of the region, see: Petro Tronko, *Istroriia horodov i sel Ukraynskoj SSR. Donetskaya oblast* (Kyiv: Hlavnaya redakciia USE, 1976); Yuryj Kondufor (ed.), *Istroriia rabochykh Donbassa v 2 tomakh*, Part 2 Kyiv: Nauk. Dumka, 1981); Hiroaki Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in the Donbas: A Ukrainian-Russian Borderland, 1870s–1990s* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Mykola Alforov, *Mihracijni protsesy ta yikh vplyv na socialno-ekonomichnyj rozvytok Donbasu (1939–1959 rr.)* (Donetsk: Ukrayinskyj kulturolohichnyj centr, 2008); Artem Bobrovskyj and Volodymyr Nikolskyj, *Socialna polityka radyanskoyi derzhavy ta yiji realizaciya v Donbasi u 1943—seredyni 1960-kh rokiv* (Donetsk: Nord-Press, 2008); Tanja Penter, *Kohle für Stalin und Hitler. Arbeiten und Leben im Donbass 1929 bis 1953* (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2010); Stanislav Kulchyckyj and Larysa Yakubova, *Trysta rokiv samotnosti: Ukrayinskyj Donbas u poshukakh smysliv i Batkivshhyny* (Kyiv: TOV Vydavnytstvo Klio, 2016).
- 5 The research of commemorative practices related to the history of Victory Day celebrations, was conducted in the frameworks of the international projects “History and Dialogue in Ukraine” (2014), “Victory-liberation-occupation: war memorials and ceremonies dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in post-socialist Europe” (2015). The results of projects related to Donbass are reflected in the following publications: Jochen Hellbeck and Eric Gourlan, “Victory Day in Ukraine,” *Eutopia Magazine*, May 23, 2014; Jochen Hellbeck, “Commemorating the war in wartime: Victory Day in Ukraine 2015,” *Eutopia Magazine*, May 27, 2015; Tetiana Pastushenko, Dmytro Tytarenko, and Olena Cheban, “9 Travnia 2014–2015 rr. v Ukraini: stari tradytsyi – novi tseremoniyi vidznachennya.” *Ukrayinskyj istorychnyj zhurnal* 3 (2016): 106–24; Jochen Hellbeck and Dmytro Tytarenko, “‘My pobedy, kak pobedy 70 let nazad nashy dedy y pradedy’, Ukraina: prazdnovanye Dnia Pobedy v teni novej vojny,” *Neprykosovennyj zapas* 4, no. 108 (2016). <https://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2016/4/my-pobedim-kak-pobedili-70-let-nazad-nashi-dedy-i-pradedy.html>; Jochen Hellbeck, Tetiana Pastushenko, and Dmitrii Titarenko, “‘Wir werden siegen, wie schon vor 70 Jahren unsere Großväter gesiegt haben’. Weltkriegsgedenken in der Ukraine im Schatten des neuerlichen Kriegs,” in *Kriegsgedenken als Event. Der 9. Mai im*

postsozialistischen Europa, ed. Mischa Gabowitsch, Cordula Gdaniec, and Ekaterina Makhotina, 41–66 (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag, 2017).

- 6 The author expresses deep gratitude to the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies of Albert University (Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, CIUS) and Institute for Human Sciences (Vienna) for their support of field research in Donbas during 2015–2016 and 2022.
- 7 Stepan Bandera (1909–1959)—the head of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN Bandera fraction), which seeks to create an independent state. In the first months after Germany’s attack on the USSR, members of the OUN participated in arrests and massacres of Communists and Soviet officials, as well as in the Holocaust. When the allied relations with the fascists broke, party members were exposed to prosecutions from the Nazis. Shukhevich Roman (1907–1950) was a leader of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, the commander of Ukrainian insurgent army since 1943, and until the end of 1942, served in Wehrmacht. Despite the fact that the activity of UIA held an anti-Soviet, anti-Polish and anti-German character, a significant part of its members at a certain period of time served with German auxiliary police and share in responsibility for some Nazi crimes.
Adopted by the Ukrainian Parliament (Verkhovna Rada) in 2015, without the corresponding public discussions and academic expertise, the so-called “historical laws” to a certain extent glorify and mythologize the activities of Ukrainian nationalistic organizations and their leaders, limit the possibility of academic and public discussions about the complicity of the members of these organizations in Nazi crimes and ethnic cleansings in Western Ukraine territories during World War II. For more details, see: Frank Grelka, *Die Ukrainische Nationalbewegung unter deutscher Besatzungsherrschaft 1918 und 1941/42* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005); Kai Struve, *Deutsche Herrschaft, ukrainischer Nationalismus, antijüdische Gewalt. Der Sommer 1941 in der Westukraine* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2015); John-Paul Himka, *Ukrainian Nationalists and the Holocaust: OUN and UPA’s Participation in the Destruction of Ukrainian Jewry, 1941–1944* (Stuttgart: ibidem Verlag, 2021).
- 8 Oleh Onysko, “V Stryu demontuvaly pamiatnyk radyanskomu soldatu.” *Zakhid.net*, February 22, 2014. https://zaxid.net/v_striyu_demontuvali_pamyatnik_radyanskomu_soldatu_n1303179.
- 9 For more detail, see: Guido Hausmann and Tanja Penter, “Der Gebrauch der Geschichte. Ukraine 2014: Ideologie vs. Historiographie,” *Osteuropa*, no. 9–10 (2014): 35–50.
- 10 Vera Demmel, “Das Georgsband. Ruhmesorden, Erinnerungszeichen, Pro-Kreml-Symbol,” *Osteuropa*, no. 3 (2006): 23.
- 11 “V Donetske arestovana gruppa lits po podozrennyu v podhotovke provokacij na majskie prazdnyky,” *Donetskoe Ahentstvo Novostej*, May 1, 2015, <https://dan-news.info/gumanitary/v-donecke-arestovana-gruppa-lic-po-podozreniyu-v-podgotovke-provokacij-na-majskie-prazdniki.html>.
- 12 “Obrashhenye Hlavy DNR A. Zakharchenko k veteranam,” *Donetskaia respublika*, May 8, 2015, 1.
- 13 “9 Maia – prohramma meropryyatyj v Donetske,” accessed May 7, 2015, <https://novorossia.today/9-maya-programma-meropriyatij-v-donetske>.
- 14 “9 Maia – svyatoj dlia nas prazdnik i provedem eho kak polahaetsia – komanduyushhyj republikanskoj hvardiej,” *Arkhiv ofitsialnogo sajta DNR* May 2, 2015, <https://doc.dnronline.su/news/9-maya-svyatoj-dlya-nas-prazdnik-i-provedem-ego-kak-polagaetsya-komanduyushhij-respublikanskoj-gvardiej/>.
- 15 The first action of this kind was organized by journalists of the TV channel (Tomsk) in 2012.
- 16 For more details, see: Andrij Portnov, “Ausschluss aus dem eigenen Land. Der Donbass im Blick ukrainischer Intellektueller,” *Osteuropa*, no. 6–7 (2016): 172.
- 17 The official number of permanent residents of the region by the start of 2014 was 4,331,000 people in Donetsk Oblast, and 2,240,000 in Luhansk Oblast.

- 18 By January 1, 2017, the official number of permanent residents on the DPR territory was 2,306,000 people.
- 19 These comments came from the sound director of the concert dedicated to the 70th anniversary of Victory Day.
- 20 I spoke with someone laying flowers on the monument, a computer engineer by profession.
- 21 “Kiev sam roet sebe mohylu,” *Donetskaia respublika. Hazeta*, December 10, 2015, 2–3.
- 22 See, for example: Natalya Aralovets, Evhenyj Bykejkykyn, and Nykolaj Buhaj, eds. *Narod i vojna: ocherky istorii Velykoj Otechestvennoj vojny 1941 1945 hh* (Moscow: Hryf y K, 2010), 200–235.
- 23 “Blokadnyky Lenynhrada pozdravlyayut s Dnem Pobedy zhytelej Donbassa. Ofytsyalnyj sayt pravytelstva I Narodnoho soveta DNR,” accessed May 19, 2015, <https://dnr-online.ru/news/blokadniki-leningrada-pozdravlyayut-s-dnem-pobedy-zhytelej-donbassa>; “Obshhestvennaya orhanyzatsiya ‘Zhytely blokadnoho Lenynhrada: Pozdravlenye.’ *Novorossiya*, May 14, 2015, 8.
- 24 During clashes between Maidan and Antimaidan supporters on May 2, 2014, in Odessa, about 50 people were killed, the vast majority of them representatives of the Antimaidan camp. Most of the Antimaidan supporters (46 people) died in the building of the House of Trade Unions that was set on fire. This crime has not been fully investigated to date.
- 25 “2 Maya 2014,” *Novorossiya*, April 30, 2015, 6.
- 26 V Donetske projdet aktsia “Vechnaya pamiat,” Arkhiv ofitsialnogo sajta DNR, May 4, 2015, <https://doc.dnronline.su/news/v-donecke-projdet-akciya-vechnaya-pamyat/>.
- 27 “V Donetske chestvovaly heroev Donetskoj Narodnoj Respubliki,” *Pochta Donbassa*, April 12, 2017, <https://postdonbass.com/news/v-donecke-chestvovali-geroev-doneckoy-narodnoj-respubliki>.
- 28 David Marples, “Open Letter from Scholars and Experts on Ukraine Re. the So-Called “Anti-Communist Law.” Krytyka, March 2015, <https://krytyka.com/en/articles/open-letter-scholars-and-experts-ukraine-re-so-called-anti-communist-law>. Not to mention the widespread negative attitude to the practice of changing toponyms and dismantling monuments related to the events and participants of the GPW.
- 29 Despite the fact that the shelling, from which the civilian population suffers, is realized by all sides of the conflict, each of the sides places the responsibility on the other.
- 30 In December 2015, during the trip from Sloviansk to Donetsk on a minibus, the author witnessed the following situation. One of the passengers—a pensioner (male, around 80 years of age), returning from Kyiv to Yasynuvata, after visiting his daughter, on Ukrainian control-border point around Zaitseve urinated in his pants in the minibus salon. When the angry driver asked as to why the elderly passenger never asked to use the bathroom while the vehicle was at the passport control checkpoint, he responded that he was afraid to get out of the salon due to a possible negative reaction of the border police (it was then prohibited to leave the transport salons during customs and passport control).
- 31 The memories of the victims of unexploded ammunition during the GPW, as the studies conducted both individually and alongside Tanja Penter in 2001–2020 show, are widespread in the region. See: Dmitrii Titarenko and Tanya Penter, *Opyt natsyystskoj okkupatsii v Donbasse: svydetelstvuyut oscheviydsy*. (Donetsk: Svit knyhy, 2013);
- 32 The author is familiar with the many instances when the participants of the GPW, “children of war,” for many years have had a difficulty moving around their apartments and almost never leave their homes.
- 33 Kotlyar A. *Specdopovidach OON Chaloka Beyani: Minsocpolityky maye duzhe velyki povnovazhennya z pytan*” VPO. Data onovlennya: September 12, 2016. https://dt.ua/UKRAINE/specdopovidach-oon-minsocpolitiki-maye-duzhe-veliki-povnovazhennya-z-pitan-vpo-218600_.html (accessed September 25, 2019); Protection of Rights of Older Ukrainians in Donetsk and Luhansk, Juli 1, 2019. <https://www.hrw.org/supporting-resources/331913/human-rights-watch-letter-president-volodymyr-zelenskiy> (accessed September 25, 2019); January 2, 2018 URL: <https://dnews.dn.ua/>

- news/662032?fb_comment_id=1561903773890159_1561915837222286 (accessed October 10, 2019); Pensii nepodkontrol”nomu Donbassu: Ne hotite platiť” – vernite lyudyam ih otchyslenyya, <https://glavcom.ua/news/pravozahisnyciya-poyasnila-chomu-viplata-pensiy-meshkancyam-okupovanih-teritoriy-je-obovyazkom-ukrajini-503297.html> (accessed October 10, 2019).
- 34 The author witnessed the death of an elderly person in the line at the control checkpoint “Marynka” in January 2017, and heard of many similar stories.
- 35 In particular, the necessity of a frequent physical verification of pensioners, receiving Ukrainian pensions in the banking institutions, as well as in the organs of social security.
- 36 Maryna Vetrova, “Komu polozhenye kompensacyonnye vyplaty dlya l”hotnoho pryobretenyya uhlya,” *Novorossiiia*, December 17, 2015, 8.
- 37 Interview with the respondent P. Svetlana Nikilajevna, born 1933 (Donetsk, July 19, 2016).
- 38 I will emphasize that such propaganda is actively conducted by all sides of the conflict.
- 39 Interview with the respondent S.P., born 1930 (Amvrosiivka, July 21, 2016).
- 40 Interview with the respondent S.V., born 1935 (Donetsk, July 31, 2016). More on the peculiarities of the perception of the events of 2014–2021 in Donbass by witnesses of World War II: Tytarenko Dmytro. ““Detstvo pryshlos na vojnu – vidat, v vojnu prydet-sya y umeret...”: svidky Druhoyi svitovoyi/Velykoyi Vitchyznyanoi vijny v umovakh voyennogo konfliktu na Donbasi,” *Slukhaty, chuty, rozumity. Usna istoriia Ukrainy XX – XXI stolit* (Kyiv: Fond H. Bollya, 2021), 163–95.
- 41 Many of them left the uncontrolled territories and now live in different Oblasts of Ukraine or Russia.
- 42 Volodymyr Semystyaha, “New Documentary Information about Maksym Bernatskiy, a Leader of the Ukrainian Underground in Eastern Ukraine during World War II,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 18, no. 3/4 (1994): 305–27; Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in the Donbas: A Ukrainian-Russian Borderland, 1870s–1990s*; Volodymyr Nikolskiy, *Represyvna diyalnist orhaniv derzhavnoyi bezpeky SRSR v Ukraini (kinets 1920-kh-1950-ti rr.)*. Istoryko-statystychno doslidzhennya (Doneck: Vydavnytvo DonNU, 2003); Aleksandr Tretyak, ed., *Donetchyna v hody Velykoj Otechestvennoj vojny 1941–1945. Izvestnye i neyzvestnye stranitsy istorii* (Donetsk: AOZT Izdatelstvo “Donechchyna,” 2008); Penfer, *Kohle für Stalin und Hitler: Arbeiten und Leben im Donbass 1929 bis 1953*; Oleksandr Dobrovolskiy, “Ukrayinske vidrodzhennya na Donbasi v roky Druhoyi svitovoyi vijny,” in *Diyalnist pidpillya OUN na Skhodi Ukrainy*, ed. Pavlo Khobot, 50–68 (Dnipropetrovsk: Skhidnoukrayinskiy doslidnyckyj centr “Spadshhyna,” 2010); Dmytro Tytarenko, *Kulturni protsesy v Ukraini u roky natsytskoyi okupatsiyi (zona vijskovoyi administratsii) (Lviv,Donetsk”k, Instytut ukrayinoznavstva im. I. Krypyakevycha NAN Ukrainy, 2014)*.
- 43 This conclusion is made on the basis of discussions with historians, as well as the former employees of SSU (Security service of Ukraine) in Donetsk Oblast.
- 44 “V shkolkakh DNR vvedeny novye standarty obshheho obrazovanyya,” *Novorossii-Novorossiiia*, September 3, 2015, 5.
- 45 “V respublike ukrayniskij yazuk izuchaetsya naravne s russkim – mynystr obrazovaniia,” *Arkhiv ofitsialnogo sajta DNR*, July 8, 2015, <https://doc.dnronline.su/news/v-respublike-ukrayniskij-yazyk-izuchaetsya-naravne-s-russkim-ministr-obrazovaniya/>.
- 46 Stanislav Aseyev, *In Isolation. Dispatches from Occupied Donbas* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2022), 227.
- 47 “Kalendarno-tematycheskoe planirovanye na II semestr 2014–2015 uchebnogo hoda v shkolkakh DNR. Klass 11-j. Kopia,” personal archive of the author.
- 48 “Usloviia orhanizatsii y provedenyia Respublikanskoj istoriko-patryoticheskoj Aktsii “Vakhta pamiaty” v 2016 hodu. Kopyya,” personal archive of the author.
- 49 “Polozhenye o Respublikanskoj istoriko-kraevedcheskoj ekspeditsii uchashhejsya molodezhy ‘Donbass – moj rodnoj kraj’. Kopia,” personal archive of the author.

- 50 “Itohovaya informatsia o provedenyy Respublikanskoj istoriko-kraevedcheskoj ekspeditsii uchashhejsya molodezhy ‘Donbass- moj rodnoj kraj’. 2015 h. Kopiiia,” personal archive of the author.
- 51 Interview with respondent V., Male, born 1989, member of the armed formations of the DPR, Donetsk, May 9, 2015.
- 52 “Dve dorohy k pobede,” Donetskaia respublika, May 8, 2015, 3.
- 53 Video message of Russian President Vladimir Putin to the participants of the opening ceremony of the restored memorial complex “Saur-Mogila,” September 8, 2022, <https://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/69314>.
- 54 “V Den rabotnikov SMY y polyhrafyy sostoialas linejka pamiati [Elektronnij resurs], Arkhiv ofitsialnogo sajta DNR, May 5, 2015, <https://doc.dnronline.su/news/v-den-rabotnikov-smi-i-poligrafii-sostoyalas-linejka-pamyati/>. The name from the screen; field research of the author.
- 55 “Kolokol pobedy v Donetske,” *Novorossia*, July 18, 2015, 5.
- 56 “Imia tvoe neizvestno, podvih tvoj bessmertn,” Donetskaia respublika, December 10, 2015, 4.
- 57 “V Amvrosyevke otkroyut pamiatnik pohybshym voynam [Elektronnij resurs],” accessed November 22, 2011, <https://dnr-online.ru/v-amvrosievke-otkroyut-pamyatnik-pogibshim-voynam>. Title from the screen.
- 58 Telephone interview with the respondent V.F., born 1946, journalist, male (Donetsk, December 10, 2016).
- 59 Olga Yaroshenko, Na Studhorodke v Donetske ustanovyly pamyatnyk Evhenyyu Khaldeyu, <https://www.mk-donbass.ru/social/2021/04/30/na-studgorodke-v-donecke-ustanovili-pamyatnik-evgeniyu-khaldeyu.htm>.
- 60 “V Donetske pochtili pamiat zhertv Volynskoj trahedii,” accessed July 13, 2015, <https://dnr-online.ru/news/v-donecke-pochtili-pamyat-zhertv-volynskoj-tragedii>.
- 61 “V voenno-istorycheskom muzee VOV sostoytsya meropryyatye, posvyashhennoe pamiati zhertv Holokosta,” accessed January 25, 2016, <https://dnr-online.ru/v-voenno-istoricheskomo-muzee-vov-sostoytsya-meropriyatie-posvyashhennoe-pamyati-zhertv-xolokosta>.
- 62 The Volyn tragedy (Volyn slaughter) means the mass destruction by UIA subdivisions of the Polish population on the Volyn territory, in spring-summer 1943. The Polish side fired back, also causing many victims among the Ukrainian population. Overall, the number of victims of the Polish-Ukrainian battles, was approximately 50,000–100,000 on the Polish side and 20,000–30,000 Ukrainians. For more details, see: Ihor Ilyushyn, *Volynska Trahediya 1943–1944 rr* (Kyiv: Nacyonalnaya akademyia nauk Ukrain, Instytut istoriyi Ukrayiny, 2003); Grzegorz Motyka, *Od rzezi wołyńskiej do akcji Wisła* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2014).
- 63 “V Donetske pochtili pamiat zhertv Volynskoj trahedii.”
- 64 “V Donetske sozdali Heorhyevskuyu lentu dlynoyu bolee 200 metrov,” accessed December 7, 2016, <https://dnr-online.ru/v-donecke-sozdali-georgievskuyu-lentu-dlinoj-bolee-200-metrov>.
- 65 The author, who worked in the museum during student years, participated in the selection of blockages and preservation of exhibits with the volunteers and employees in August 2014. The participants voiced different versions of responsibility for the shelling. For instance, the museum suffered as a result of an accidental (separatist armored vehicles were based nearby) or deliberate shelling by Ukrainian artillery. The separatists damaged the museum in order to create a corresponding propaganda image. It suffered from the actions of Ukrainian artillery, but consequently, wanting to create a more impressive image of the destruction, the separatists also launched a grenade fire.
- 66 Interview with M., female, born in 1956, an employee of the Donetsk Republic history museum, conducted on November 5, 2016, by telephone.
- 67 “V Donetske otkrylas fotovystavka “Vojna hlazamy fotokorrespondentov,” Arkhiv ofitsialnogo sajta DNR, July 11, 2015, <https://doc.dnronline.su/news/v-donecke-otkrylas-fotovystavka-vojna-glazami-fotokorrespondentov/>.

- 68 “Novosti,” Novorossiiia, February 18, 2016, 2.
- 69 “Podvih donbasskikh shakhterov v hody Velykoj Otechestvennoj vojny,” *Novorossiiia*, September 10, 2015, 7.
- 70 “V Donetske, v Dome khudozhnikov, otkrylas novaia vystavka, posvyashhennaya 70-Letyu Pobedy,” Arkhiv ofitsialnogo sajta DNR, May 7, 2015, <https://doc.dnronline.su/news/v-donecke-v-dome-xudozhnikov-otkrylas-novaya-vystavka-posvyashhennaya-70-letiyu-pobedy/>.
- 71 “V Donetske nachala rabotu vystavka ‘Ekho voennykh let’,” Arkhiv ofitsialnogo sajta DNR, May 2, 2015, <https://doc.dnronline.su/news/v-donecke-nachala-rabotu-vystavka-exo-voennykh-let/>.
- 72 Telefonnoe intervyyu s sotrudnitsj Donetsoho respublikanskoho kravedcheskoho muzeya M. B., 1956 h.r. (Donetsk, 5 noiabria 2016 h.).
- 73 Interview with the respondent K., female, born in 1938, head of the museum in high school No. 93 in Donetsk (city of Donetsk, July 19, 2016).

Bibliography

- Alforov, Mykola. *Mihratsiini protsesy i yikh vplyv na sotsialno-ekonomichnyi rozvytok Donbasu v 1939-1959 rr.* Donetsk: Ukrayinskyj kulturolohichnyj centr, 2008.
- Aralovec, Nataliia, Evhenyj Bykejky, Nykolaj Buhaj, eds. *Narod i vojna: ocherki istorii Velykoj Otechestvennoj vojny 1941-1945 hh.* Moskva: Hryf y K, 2010.
- Aseyev, Stanislav. *In Isolation. Dispatches from occupied Donbas.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2022.
- ‘Blokadniki Leningrada pozdravlyayut s Dnem Pobedy zhytelej Donbassa. Ofitsyalnyj sajt pravytelstva i Narodnogo soveta DNR’. Accessed May 19, 2015. <https://dnr-online.ru/news/blokadniki-ningrada-pozdravlyayut-s-dnem-pobedy-zhitelej-donbassa>.
- Bobrovskij, Artem, and Volodymyr Nikolskij. *Sotsialna polityka radiaanskoyi derzhavy ta yii realizatsiia v Donbasi u 1943 - seredyni 1960-kh rokiv.* Donetsk: Nord-Pres, 2008.
- Buntovskij, Serhej. *Istoriia Donbassa.* Donetsk: «Donbasskaia Rus», 2015. S. 151–82;
- Demmel, Vera. “Das Georgsband. Ruhmesorden, Erinnerungszeichen, Pro-Kreml-Symbol.” *Osteuropa* 3 (2006): 19–31.
- “Dve dorohy k Pobede.” *Donetskaia respublika*, May 8, 2015.
- Dobrovolskij, Oleksandr. “Ukrayinske vidrozhennia na Donbasi v roky Druhoyi svitovoyi vijny.” In *Diialnist pidpillya OUN na Skhodi Ukrainy*, edited by Pavlo Khobot, 50–68. Dnipropetrovsk: Skhidnoukrayinskyj doslidnytskyj centr “Spadshhyna,” 2010.
- Donbasskaya stratezhicheskaya nastupatel'naya operatsiia. Donetsk: [b. i.], 2018.
- Grelka, Frank. *Die Ukrainische Nationalbewegung unter deutscher Besatzungsherrschaft 1918 und 1941/42.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005.
- Hausmann, Guido, and Tanja Penter. “Der Gebrauch der Geschichte. Ukraine 2014: Ideologie vs. Historiographie.” *Osteuropa* 9–10 (2014): 35–50.
- Hellbeck, Jochen. “Commemorating the War in Wartime: Victory Day in Ukraine 2015.” *Eutopia Magazine*, May 27, 2015.
- Hellbeck, Jochen, and Eric Gourlan. “Victory Day in Ukraine.” *Eutopia Magazine*, May 23, 2014.
- Hellbeck, Jochen, Pastushenko, Tetiana and Tytarenko, Dmytro. “‘Wir werden siegen, wie schon vor 70 Jahren unsere Großväter gesiegt haben.’ Weltkriegsgedenken in der Ukraine im Schatten des neuerlichen Kriegs’. In *Kriegsgedenken als Event. Der 9. Mai im post-sozialistischen Europa*, edited by Mischa Gabowitsch, Cordula Gdaniec, and Ekaterina Makhotina, 41–66. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag, 2017.
- Himka, John-Paul. *Ukrainian Nationalists and the Holocaust: OUN and UPA's Participation in the Destruction of Ukrainian Jewry, 1941–1944.* Stuttgart: ibidem Verlag, 2021.
- Ilyushyn, Ihor. *Volynska trahediia 1943–1944 rr.* Kyiv: Natsionalna akademiia nauk Ukrainy, Instytut istorii Ukrainy, 2003.

- ‘Kalendarno-tematicheskoe planirovanie na II semestr 2014–2015 uchebnogo hoda v shkolakh DNR. Klass 11-j. Kopiiia. Personal archive of the author.
- “Kiev sam roet sebe mohilu.” *Donetskaia respublika. Hazeta*, December 10, 2015.
- “Kolokol Pobedy v Donetske.” *Novorossia*, July 18, 2015.
- Kondufor, Yuryj (ed.) *Istoriia rabochykh Donbassa v 2 tomakh. T.2*. Kyiv Nauk. Dumka, 1981.
- Kulchyckyj, Stanislav, and Larysa Yakubova. *Trysta rokov samotnosti: Ukrayinskyj Donbass u poshukakh smysliv i Batkivshhyny*. Kyiv: TOV ‘Vydavnytstvo “Klio”’, 2016.
- Kuromiya, Hiroaki. *Freedom and Terror in the Donbas: A Ukrainian-Russian Borderland, 1870s–1990s*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Marples, David. “Open Letter from Scholars and Experts on Ukraine Re. The So-Called ‘Anti-Communist Law’.” *Krytyka*, March 2015. <https://krytyka.com/en/articles/open-letter-scholars-and-experts-ukraine-re-so-called-anti-communist-law>
- Motyka, Grzegorz. *Od rzezi wołyńskiej do akcji Wisła*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2014.
- Neprykosnovennyj zapas 4, no. 108 (2016). <https://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2016/4/my-pobe-dim-kak-pobedili-70-let-nazad-nashi-dedy-i-pradedy.html>.
- Nikolskyj, Volodymyr. *Represywna diyalnist orhaniv derzhavnoyi bezpeky SRSR v Ukraini (kinets 1920-kh–1950-ti rr.)*. Istoryko-statystychnye doslidzhennya. Donetsk: Vydavnytstvo DonNU, 2003.
- “Novosti Novorossii.” *Novorossia*, February 18, 2016.
- Oni osvobodzhdali Donbass*. Donetsk: Brend Ymydzh, 2017.
- “Obrashhenye Hlavy DNR A. Zakharchenko k veteranam.” *Donetskaya respublika*, May 8, 2015.
- “Obshhestvennaia orhanyzatsiia ‘Zhytely blokadnoho Leninhrada’. Pozdravlenye.” *Novorossia*, May 14, 2015.
- Onysko, Oleh. “V Stryyu demontuvaly pamyatnyk radyanskomu soldatu.” *Zaxid.net*, February 22, 2014. https://zaxid.net/v_striyu_demontuvali_pamyatnik_radyanskomu_soldatu_n1303179.
- Osvobodyteliam Donbassa posvyashaetsa*. Donetsk: Brend Imidzh, 2018.
- Pastushenko, Tetyana, Tytarenko, Dmytro, and Cheban, Olena. “9 Travnia 2014–2015 rr. v Ukraini: stari tradytsiia – novi tseremoniyi vidznachennya.” *Ukrayinskyj istorychnyj zhurnal* 3 (2016): 106–24.
- “Podvih donbasskykh shakhterov v gody Velikoj Otechestvennoj vojny.” *Novorossia*, September 10, 2015.
- “Polozhenie o Respublikanskoj istoriko-kraevedcheskoj ekspeditsii uchashejsia molo-dezhy ‘Donbass – moj rodnoj kraj.’ Kopiiia.” Personal archive of the author.
- Penter, Tanja. *Kohle für Stalin und Hitler. Arbeiten und Leben im Donbass 1929 bis 1953*. Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2010.
- Portnov, Andrij. “Ausschluss aus dem eigenen Land. Der Donbass im Blick ukrainischer Intellektueller”. *Osteuropa* 6–7 (2016): 171–84.
- Russkyj Donbass. istorycheskie, dukhovno-intellektualnye i ekonomycheskie osnovy: kollektyvnaia monohrafiia/[S.V. Bespalova, A.S. Bobrovskyj, A.V. Kolesnyk y dr.]; nauchnyj redaktor prof. S.V. Bespalova. Donetsk: DonNU, 2021.
- Semystyaha, Volodymyr. “New Documentary Information about Maksym Bernats’kyi, a Leader of the Ukrainian Underground in Eastern Ukraine during World War II.” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 18, no.3/4 (1994): 305–27.
- Struve, Kai. *Deutsche Herrschaft, ukrainischer Nationalismus, antijüdische Gewalt. Der Sommer 1941 in der Westukraine*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2015.
- Tretyak, Aleksandr., ed. *Donetchyna v hody Velykoj Otechestvennoj vojny 1941–1945. izvestnye i neizvestnye stranitsy istorii*. Donetsk: AOZT Izdatelstvo “Donechchyna,” 2008.
- Tronko, Petro. *Istoriia horodov i sel Ukraynskoj SSR*. Donetskaia oblast, Kyiv: Hlavnaia redaktsiia USE, 1976.

- Tytarenko, Dmytro. *Kulturni protsesy v Ukraini i roky natsyystskoyi okupatsiyi (zona vijskovoyi administratsiyi)*. Lviv, Donetsk, Instytut ukrayinoznavstva im. I. Krypyakevycha NAN Ukrainy, 2014.
- Titarenko, Dmitrii, and Penter, Tanya. *Opyt natsyystskoj okkupatsii v Donbasse: svidetelstvyyut oschevidtscy*. Donetsk: Svit knyhy, 2013.
- Tytarenko, Dmytro. "Detstvo prishlos na vojnu – vidat, v vojnu prydetisia i umeret...": svidky Druhoyi svitovoyi/Velykoyi Vitchyznyanoyi vijny v umovakh voyennogo konfliktu na Donbasi", in *Usna istoriia Ukrayiy XX – XXI stolit*. Kyiv: Heinrich Böll Foundation, 2021, 163–95.
- "Usloviia orhanyzatsii i provedeniia Respublikanskoj istoriko-patriotycheskoj aktsii 'Vakhta Pamiaty' v 2016 hodu. Kopia." Personal archive of the author.
- "2 Maya 2014." *Novorossia*, April 30, 2015.
- "9 Maia – prohramma meropriatij vDonetske." Accessed May 7, 2015. <https://novorossia.today/9-maya-programma-meropriatij-v-donetske>.
- "9 Maia – svyatoj dlia nas prazdnik i provedem eho kak polahaetsia – komanduyushhyj respublikanskoj hvardiej." *Arkhiv ofitsialnogo sajta DNR*, May 2, 2015. <https://doc.dnronline.ru/news/9-maya-svyatoj-dlya-nas-prazdnik-i-provedem-ego-kak-polagaetsya-komanduyushhij-respublikanskoj-gvardiej/>.
- "V Amvrosyevke otkroyut pamiatnyk pohibshym voynam [Elektronnyj resurs]." Accessed November 22, 2011. <https://dnr-online.ru/v-amvrosievke-otkroyut-pamyatnik-pogibshim-voynam>.
- "V Voенno-istorycheskom muzee VOV sostoytsia meropriyatye, posvyashhennoe pamiaty zhertv Holokosta." Accessed January 25, 2016. <https://dnr-online.ru/v-voенno-istorycheskom-muzee-vov-sostoitsya-meropriyatye-posvyashhennoe-pamyati-zhertv-xolokosta>.
- "V Den" rabotnikov SMY i polyhrafyy sostoyalas linejka pamiaty [Elektronnyj resurs]." *Arkhiv ofitsialnogo sajta DNR*, May 5, 2015. <https://doc.dnronline.ru/news/v-den-rabotnikov-smi-i-poligrafii-sostoyalas-linejka-pamyati/>. The name from the screen; field research of the author.
- "V Donetske arestovana gruppa lits po podozreniyu v podgotovke provokatsij na majske prazdniki." *Donetskoe Ahentstvo Novostej*, May 1, 2015. <https://dan-news.info/gumanitary/v-donecke-arestovana-gruppa-lic-po-podozreniyu-v-podgotovke-provokacij-na-majske-prazdniki.html>.
- "V Donetske, v Dome khudozhnikov,otkrylas "novaia vystavka, posvyashennaya 70-letiyu Pobedy." *Arkhiv ofitsialnogo sajta DNR*, May 7, 2015. <https://doc.dnronline.ru/news/v-donecke-v-dome-hudozhnikov-otkrylas-novaya-vystavka-posvyashennaya-70-letiyu-pobedy/>.
- "V Donetske nachala rabotu vystavka "Echo voennykh let." *Arkhiv ofitsialnogo sajta DNR*, May 2, 2015. <https://doc.dnronline.ru/news/v-donecke-nachala-rabotu-vystavka-exo-voennyx-let/>.
- "V Donetske otkrylas" fotovystavka "Vojna hlazamy fotokorrespondentov." *Arkhiv ofitsialnogo sajta DNR*, July 11, 2015. <https://doc.dnronline.ru/news/v-donecke-otkrylas-fotovystavka-vojna-glazami-fotokorrespondentov/>.
- "V Donetske pochtili pamiat zhertv Volynskoj trahedii." Accessed July 13, 2015. <https://dnr-online.ru/news/v-donecke-pochtili-pamyat-zhertv-volynskoj-tragedii>.
- "V Donetske projdet aktsia "Vechnaya pamiat." *Arkhiv ofitsialnogo sajta DNR*, May 4, 2015. <https://doc.dnronline.ru/news/v-donecke-projdet-aktsiya-vechnaya-pamyat/>.
- "V Donetske proshla prezentacya knihi "Triumf pobeditelej." *Arkhiv ofitsialnogo sajta DNR*, September 4, 2015. <https://doc.dnronline.ru/news/v-donecke-proshla-prezentaciya-knigi-triumf-pobeditelej/>.
- "V Donetske sozdali Heorhyevskuyu lentu dlynoyu bolee 200 metrov." Accessed December 7, 2016. <https://dnr-online.ru/v-donecke-sozdali-georgievskuyu-lentu-dlinoj-bolee-200-metrov>.

- “V Donetske chestvovali heroev Donetskoj Narodnoj Respubliki.” *Pochta Donbassa*, April 12, 2017. <https://postdonbass.com/news/v-donecke-chestvovali-geroev-doneckoy-narodnoy-respubliki>.
- Vetrova, Marina. “Komu polozheny kompensatsyonnye vyplaty dlia lhotnogo pryobreteniia uhliia.” *Novorossiiia*, December 17, 2015.
- “Vydeobrashhenye Prezydenta RF V.Putina k uchastnikam tseremonii otkrytia vosstanovlennoho memoryalnoho kompleksa.” *Saur-Mohyla*, 8 sentiabria 2022 hoda. <https://krem-lin.ru/events/president/news/69314>.
- “V Respublike ukrainskij yazuk izuchaetsia naravne s russkim – ministr obrazovaniia.” *Arkhiv ofitsialnogo sajta DNR*, July 8, 2015. <https://doc.dnronline.su/news/v-respublike-ukrainskij-yazyk-izuchaetsya-naravne-s-russkim-ministr-obrazovaniya/>.
- “V shkolakh DNR vvedeny novye standarty obshheho obrazovaniia.” *Novorossiiia*, September 3, 2015.
- Khellbek, Jochen, and Dmitrii Titarenko. *My pobedim, kak pobedili 70 let nazad nashy dedy i pradedy*. Ukraina: prazdnovanye Dnia Pobedy v teni novoj vojny’.
- Yaroshenko, Olha. Na Studhorodke v Donetske ustanovili pamiatnik Evheny Khaldeyu. <https://www.mk-donbass.ru/social/2021/04/30/na-studgorodke-v-donecke-ustanovili-pamyatnik-evgeniyu-khaldeyu.htm>.
- “Imia tvoe neizvestno, podvih tvoj bessmertn.” *Donetskaya respublika*, December 10, 2015.
- Istoriia (istoriia Donbassa: ot drevnosti do sovremennosti) uchebnoe posobie/pod obshh.red. L.H.Shepko, V.N. Nykolskoho. Donetsk: DonNU, 2018.
- “Itohovaya informatsia o provedenii Respublikanskoj istoriko-kraevedcheskoj ekspeditsii uchashhejsya molodezhy ‘Donbass- moj rodnoj kraj.’ 2015 h. Kopiiia.” Personal archive of the author.

13 Fluid Narratives, Evolving Discourses

Armenian-Turkish Dialogue in a Changing Political Context

Philip Gamaghelyan

Introduction

This chapter delves into the evolving political dynamics surrounding the remembrance of the Armenian Genocide in both Turkey and Armenia. It explores the changing discourses among ordinary Turks and Armenians involved in dialogue initiatives aimed at fostering understanding between the two societies. The analysis is centered around three dialogue initiatives that I co-facilitated between 2005 and 2016, contextualized within the backdrop of shifting political landscapes.

A pivotal moment during this period was the 2009 signing of protocols by the Turkish and Armenian foreign ministers, intended to establish diplomatic relations. One contentious clause in these protocols proposed the creation of a sub-commission to conduct an “impartial scientific examination of historical records and archives to define existing problems and formulate recommendations.”¹ This clause was seen by critics as an attempt by the Armenian and Turkish governments to influence future official commemorations of the Armenian massacres during World War I, each according to their respective narratives. These protocols were never ratified by either parliament, leading to the suspension of the normalization process at that time.

Efforts toward normalization resumed in 2021, following a change of leadership in Armenia resulting from the 2018 “Velvet Revolution” and Armenia’s subsequent defeat in the Second Karabakh War. This chapter investigates how governmental efforts to shape collective memory have influenced the narratives and discourses of ordinary Turks and Armenians.

The chapter explores Armenian-Turkish dialogue initiatives within evolving political contexts, highlighting the distinction between discourse analytic and narrative analytic approaches. It illustrates that narratives are stories that have a distinct plots, heroes, and anti-heroes, serve justify the violence in the present and in the future as they preserve and embellish the story of the origin of violence,² are directly influenced by politics and can change relatively easily.

In contrast, discourses are more stable structures that evolve slowly and can themselves influence politics. From a discourse analytic perspective, narratives derive meaning through their connections with other texts and the context in which they are constructed. This perspective sets discourse analysis apart from narrative

analysis, which may analyze texts in isolation. As Phillips and Hardy argue, "... it is only through their interconnection with other texts, the different discourses on which they draw, and the nature of their production, dissemination, and consumption that they are made meaningful."³

This study examines the transformation of discourses surrounding the Armenian Genocide against three distinct political contexts starting from 2002, the year when Erdogan's AKP party ascended to power fundamentally transforming the Turkish political discourse of the republican era:

- 1 2002–2006, from the rise of Erdogan's Justice and Development party known by its Turkish abbreviation of AKP through late 2006, a period when the discussion of the Armenian Genocide was a taboo in Turkey, and the Turkish and Armenian societies remained isolated despite low-key normalization talks;
- 2 2007–2012, characterized by intensified dialogue following the murder of Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink and an active phase of the official normalization process;
- 3 2012–2016, when the official normalization process broke down, mistrust deepened, and Armenia and Turkey followed divergent geopolitical trajectories.

The three initiatives discussed below took place during each of these three periods and showed a tremendous discursive variation, in line with political changes of that time. The first one, the Turkish-Armenian Dialogue Group of Boston (TADG), was held in 2005–2006; the second, the Capturing the Mountain project, in 2012; and the third, the School of Conflict Transformation, in 2015.

The concluding section discusses political developments post-2016 and reasons for the effective cessation of civil society-led dialogues.

Divergent Narratives, Divergent Discourses: The 2005–2006 Turkish-Armenian Dialogue Group of Boston amid Erdogan's Rise to Power

In the early 2000s, dialogue between Turkish and Armenian societies was rare. For decades, the societies had been isolated from each other by the Iron Curtain, followed by Turkey's closure of its Armenian border in solidarity with Azerbaijan during the First Nagorno-Karabakh war. The few unofficial efforts aimed at establishing dialogue in the early years of Armenia's independence were met with mistrust and hostility by many within the societies.⁴ The TADG, the first initiative discussed in this chapter, convened in 2005–2006, was organized against this backdrop and as a pioneering initiative. Subsequently, Turkey-Armenia dialogue initiatives became more common.

In 2008, as Serzh Sargsyan was elected president in Armenia, the Turkish and Armenian governments engaged in active negotiations over the establishment of diplomatic relations in a move initiated primarily by the United States, with Russian and the European Union also supporting the efforts. The political climate was hopeful, with the opening of the border seeming imminent. The current borders

between Armenia and Turkey were delineated in 1921 in the Treaty of Moscow between the then internationally unrecognized Grand National Assembly of Turkey led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and Bolshevik Russia led by Vladimir Lenin.⁵

The Treaty of Moscow effectively nullified the Treaty of Sèvres signed in 1920 by the First Armenian Republic and the Ottoman Turkish government, which would have given Armenia a considerably larger territory. This turn of events left the Armenian public dissatisfied and gave rise to the discourse of an occupied Western Armenia. Conversely, in Turkey, that early treaty gave rise to what is known as a Sèvres Syndrome, a reference to the perceived existential threat and conspiracies of Christian nations to dismember Turkey.⁶ The initially warm relations between Soviet and Turkish leadership did not last long and grew particularly hostile following Turkey's accession into NATO in 1952.⁷

Throughout the twentieth century, therefore, Soviet Armenia and the Republic of Turkey grew further apart. The populations of eastern Turkey and Armenia, divided by the impenetrable Iron Curtain, had grown accustomed to living in close proximity without noticing one another. The Armenians all but vanished from Anatolia following the genocide, with the small remaining community in Istanbul staying under the radar, and Turkish textbooks and media hardly ever mentioning Armenians.⁸ One exception to this media blackout was the period from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s when a terrorist organization called the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA)⁹ targeted Turkish diplomats around the world, killing dozens and injuring thousands of people, many of whom were bystanders or embassy guards, contributing to the further vilification of Armenians.

The end of the Cold War did not thaw Armenia-Turkey relations, despite a promising start. Turkey, one of the first countries to recognize Armenia's independence, served as the main transit route for international humanitarian aid to Armenia during its economic collapse following independence. By 1993, however, as during the First Karabakh War the Armenian forces started advancing beyond the territory of the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) into Azerbaijan proper, Turkey closed the border, demanding the withdrawal of Armenian troops.

The invisible wall separating the two countries stood as high and tall as ever. However, the political climate was evolving. The first president of independent Armenia, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, adopted an ideologically agnostic approach to foreign policy, leaving the question of genocide recognition to the Armenian diaspora and not pursuing it officially, while unsuccessfully trying to establish diplomatic relations with Turkey.¹⁰ Kocharyan, who was president of Armenia between 1998 and 2008, made the acknowledgement of the Armenian genocide a foreign policy priority. Behind the scenes, however, he also took steps toward establishing relations. One early unofficial effort aimed at normalization under his tenure, the Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission (TARC), involved a high-ranking Armenian diplomat, David Hovhannisyan, who, according to TARC facilitator David Phillips, was instructed to join the commission by Kocharyan and Foreign Minister Vardan Oskanyan. However, once the existence of the commission became public and criticized, Kocharyan and Oskanyan distanced themselves from the initiative, leading to Hovhannisyan's resignation.

The situation in Turkey was also evolving. In 2002, Erdogan's then moderate-Islamist Justice and Development Party, known as the AKP, won the elections. This marked a lasting break with decades of staunchly secular governance. In its early years, the AKP formed an alliance with liberals and pursued policies of EU accession, legal code reform, and peace processes with the Kurds.¹¹ These reforms contributed to freedom of speech, the institutionalization of free media and academia, and the development of an influential civil society.

By 2005, as TADG was launched, the topics of the Armenian genocide in Turkey was still effectively outlawed. A number of court cases for "denigrating Turkishness" were pending against those who had spoken of it, including against a well-known Turkish journalist of Armenian descent, Hrant Dink. At this same time, however, the AKP government signaled that these laws were the responsibility of the old guard, which retained strong positions within the state. In 2005, when a group of Turkish academics undertook a bold step that would break the silence surrounding Armenians and attempted to organize a twice-cancelled conference in Istanbul titled "Ottoman Armenians During the Decline of the Empire," then Prime Minister Erdogan intervened in favor of the conference, and it was held on the third attempt at Bilgi University.¹²

TADG involved over 30 graduate students from Brandeis University, Tufts University, Boston University, University of Massachusetts, and other Boston-area schools. Most were from Armenia and Turkey, with a few Armenian-Americans and two Americans not affiliated with any group but with a professional interest in the area. Nearly everyone studied a social science discipline at either the master's or PhD level. The group met once a week for two hours throughout the 2005–2006 academic year. Unaware of any existing methodology to constructively discuss history, we experimented with various options and eventually settled on analyzing the collective memories expressed through shared historical narratives. To codify the methodology and its development process, each week one participant would volunteer to write a reflection on the dialogue session, which was then shared with the group for feedback and incorporation. The following section of this paper is based primarily on insights from these reflections.

We endured many conflicts and frustrations before settling on a historical narrative approach to critically engage with our collective memories. We agreed that collective memory is a socially constructed phenomenon, formed and reproduced through daily interactions among social group members. Thus, it should be treated as a remembrance of how events are reflected in narratives, shared, interpreted, transformed, and passed on through generations, acquiring new meanings over time.¹³

Practically, we divided into national groups and created timelines of significant events (Table 13.1) shaping contemporary Armenian-Turkish relations. These timelines were built through sub-group consensus to ensure the events constituted common societal knowledge. They were intentionally constructed without consulting any sources, reflecting the "collective memory" of the participants rather than objective history. After creating the timelines, we reconvened in plenary sessions to discuss each event and its societal interpretations and meanings.

Table 13.1 Historical Timelines Created by Participants of the Turkish-Armenian Dialogue Group of Boston, November 2005

<i>Armenian timeline</i>	<i>Turkish timeline</i>
301: Adoption of Christianity	1071: Battle of Malazgirt
1555: Division of Armenia between the Persian and Ottoman Empires	1299: Foundation of Ottoman Empire
18th century: Russian takeover of Persian/Eastern Armenia	1839 to 1872: Reorganization of Laws on Minority Rights in the Ottoman Empire
Late 19th century: growing Turkish nationalism and discrimination of Armenians	
1896: killings of 300,000 Armenians – Sultan Abdul-Hamid (the Red Sultan) – Armenian emigration started, discrimination persisting.	
1914–1918: World War I	1914 to 1918: World War I
1915: Genocide of Armenians	1915: Deportation of Armenian people
1918: Russian-Turkish treaty (Sèvres and Brest Litovsk).	1923: Foundation of Republic of Turkey
1965: Soviet Armenian uprising. Importance of genocide recognition	1955: September events in Istanbul pogrom-like riots against the minorities
1977: ASALA	1975 to 80s: ASALA (Armenian terrorists killing Turkish diplomats)
1991: Armenia becomes independent.	
1992–1994: NK war; Turkish blockade of Armenia starts and continues today.	
1980s–1990s: many parliaments adopt resolutions recognizing the Genocide, while Turkey continues denial	2000s: EU Membership and Minority Rights

This was followed by analyzing the entire timeline as a narrative, where we noted the differing constructions of the past by Turks and Armenians and our unfamiliarity with each other's narratives, storylines, heroes, and anti-heroes. As theorists of collective memory suggest,¹⁴ it became clear that historical accounts of events are only part of collective memory and not necessarily the most important part. Our collective memories clearly projected present-day politics into the past to find justifications and explanations. We alternated analytical sessions with sharing personal stories to build trust and strengthen relationships. The Turkish participants' stories, most of whom had ethnically mixed ancestry, showcased the diversity of Turkish identity today. The Armenian participants' stories varied greatly depending on whether their families came from modern-day Turkey, Azerbaijan, Georgia, or Armenia.

As TADG was one of the first dialogues following decades of isolation and preceding the rise of social media, awareness of the competing narratives was minimal, and the discourses of the two groups diverged considerably. According to Teun Van Dijk, members of a social group tend to evaluate their in-group positively in contrast to the out-group. Our selective narratives formed an "ideological square," with each side emphasizing events that painted their group in a positive light or as victims, and de-emphasizing events that painted their group negatively

or “the other” positively.¹⁵ Discursively, the larger story told by the Armenian participants embedded in other texts was the image of a group as historically victimized by neighbors, with eight out of thirteen events on their timeline referencing occupation, massacre, unjust treatment, and unfulfilled international obligations, such as the Treaty of Sèvres. Few events portrayed Armenians as proactive rather than subjects of history, such as the early adoption of Christianity, Armenian independence, and the struggle for genocide recognition. The Armenian timeline had only one self-critical point: the assassination of Turkish diplomats by ASALA. Turks and Turkey (or the Ottoman Empire) were central in this timeline, always in a negative context related to conquest, discrimination, massacres, genocide, its denial, and economic blockade.

The discursive representation of their group by the Turkish participants was that of a power position in this relationship, centered in glory, magnanimity, and benevolence. The timeline emphasized the foundation of the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey, and a preoccupation with minority rights ahead of European nations. Only two events were self-critical: the 1915 deportations of Armenians and the 1955 pogroms against minorities. However, naming the World War I massacres of Armenians as “deportations” was not accepted by Armenian participants and was seen as in line with the official Turkish position that downplays and denies the genocide. Unlike the Armenian timeline, which referenced Turks or Ottomans almost in every line, the Turkish timeline had only two references to Armenians: one on the 1915 deportations and the other on 1970s Armenian terrorism. The Turkish participants knew very little about Armenians’ historical presence.

A revelation from comparing the two narratives was their minimal overlap despite addressing the same question: what were the key historical events influencing present-day Turkish-Armenian relations? Only two events coincided: World War I and ASALA terrorism. One more event had the same date, 1915, but was named and interpreted differently: for Armenian participants, it was a deliberate genocide by Turks, later denied; for Turkish participants, in the initial stages of the dialogue, it was deportations necessary to protect the nation.

Reflecting decades of mutual isolation, the remaining events in the narratives communicated two distinct stories: one of a victim nation; the other of a glorious regional power. As one participant noted, reading these narratives separately without knowing the countries’ names could make one think they were histories of states in different parts of the world, not neighbors with centuries of shared past. Discursively, the selectiveness of conflict narratives also contained a hint of the path forward for the TADG. The events on the timelines were not mutually contradictory but complementary, allowing for a more complex merged narrative.

The analysis of the timelines from 2005–2006 revealed that official rhetoric and state-sponsored nationalism in the absence of extensive civil society contacts strongly influenced the narratives of the Armenians and Turks. Participants knew very little about the other side’s story, evident from the near-absence of coinciding events on timelines listing key events in Turkish-Armenian relations. This was further highlighted by the heated, months-long discussions of these timelines, where participants struggled to understand and accept the validity of events important to

the other side. The lack of shared knowledge is particularly striking considering the group consisted of mid-career professionals, at the time pursuing graduate students in various social science disciplines at top US universities.

Converging Narratives, Divergent Discourses: Capturing the Mountain Dialogue against the Backdrop of Official Attempts at Armenia-Turkey Normalization, 2012

The second initiative, the Capturing the Mountain project, took place in 2012, toward the end of the 2007–2012 period characterized by active negotiations and official and unofficial attempts at normalization. By 2012, the hopes that the protocols will be ratified and the border open faded, the official process stalled, but the civil society collaboration that was encouraged by the official process still were common. The cultural exchanges and academic programs flourished, journalists regularly collaborated, as did think tanks, human rights organizations, and other NGOs, genocide commemorations were held publicly, first in Istanbul, later also in Ankara, Izmir, Diyarbakir, and other cities.

Allow me to return to the beginning of that period. In early 2006, I received a phone call, the importance of which I would not recognize until a year later. The call was from Hrant Dink, the editor-in-chief of the bilingual *Agos* newspaper in Istanbul and a Turkish citizen of Armenian ethnicity who grew up in the Gedikpaşa Armenian Orphanage. Dink requested an interview with the participants of the TADG. The group refused. Dink and *Agos* were prominent voices in Turkish civil society, advocating for reconciliation and criticizing both the Turkish state's denial of the Armenian genocide and the Armenian nationalism. As a result, Dink was controversial in both Armenia and Turkey, in the latter case he was under prosecution for discussing the Armenian genocide, and the participants did not want to associate the TADG name with him.

On January 19, 2007, Dink was assassinated by a young Turkish nationalist.¹⁶ His death instantly transformed Dink from a pariah into the darling of both Armenian and Turkish civil societies. Hundreds of thousands marched in Istanbul at his funeral, chanting “We are all Hrant,” “We are all Armenians.” In Armenia, he became another national hero who sacrificed his life confronting Turkish nationalism. Tragically, it was his death, not life, that catalyzed the most active period of efforts toward Turkish-Armenian reconciliation.

Suddenly, Armenians were no longer invisible in Turkey. Genocide was no longer a taboo. Within months, talking and writing about it became a fashionable subject, a rite of passage for liberal journalists and intellectuals. Literature on the genocide was translated into Turkish and openly distributed, commemorations held in Istanbul, Ankara, and other cities, and several prominent academic and literary works by Turkish writers were published.¹⁷ Soon, another taboo would fall and it would become acceptable to discuss one's Armenian ancestors.¹⁸ Civil society dialogues became commonplace and by late 2008, official normalization efforts came to the fore. In what became known as “football diplomacy,” Turkish President Gul accepted Armenian President Sargsyan's invitation to attend the Armenia-Turkey

World Cup qualifier match in Yerevan. The geopolitical landscape was relatively favorable. Newly elected US and Russian presidents, Obama and Medvedev, announced the “reset” and jointly supported Turkey-Armenia normalization efforts. By mid-2009, Turkish and Armenian officials announced they were close to signing protocols on diplomatic relations and border opening under Swiss mediation.

The process also had many opponents, including within Armenia and Turkey, but none as persistent as the government of Azerbaijan. As already mentioned, Turkey had closed its Armenian border during the First Nagorno-Karabakh war in support of Azerbaijan and in protest of Armenian forces capturing territories beyond the former NKAO. During the negotiations, the Turkish and Armenian officials adopted contradictory positions regarding the link between their bilateral normalization and Nagorno-Karabakh negotiations. Armenian officials insisted these processes were separate, with the Armenian president’s office stating, “Any Turkish attempt to interfere in the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem can only harm that process.”¹⁹ Meanwhile, Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan stated in Baku, “There is a relation of cause and effect here. The occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh is the cause, and the closure of the border is the effect. Without the occupation ending, the gates will not be opened.”²⁰

Despite these warning signs, the foreign ministers of Turkey and Armenia, Ahmet Davutoğlu and Eduard Nalbandyan, signed the protocols in Zurich on October 10, 2009. To emphasize the occasion’s importance, the heads of foreign missions of France, Russia, and the United States attended: Bernard Kouchner, Sergey Lavrov, and Hillary Clinton. No press conference was held after the ceremony.

Immediately after the protocols were signed, Erdogan announced that their ratification in parliament depended on progress in Nagorno-Karabakh negotiations. Sargsyan reciprocated by announcing the suspension of the ratification process.²¹ The normalization process slowly dwindled.

The Capturing the Mountain project was convened at the end of the period of active official negotiations. The dialogue took place in June 2012 in Gudauri, Georgia, and brought together six Armenian and six Turkish participants led by three co-facilitators from the United States, Turkey, and Armenia. The initial idea behind the Capturing the Mountain project was to conduct the dialogue while climbing the Ararat Mountain, film the process and produce a documentary. Thus, a number of objectives would be achieved. The 12 participants were envisioned to go through their own dialogue, overcome stereotypes, build understanding, friendships, and collaborative relation. They would conquer, together, the over-5000-meter-tall summit that for far too long has been the symbol of division, turning it into a symbol of reconciliation. They would film the entire process, self-producing a documentary that would be broadcasted in both countries, bringing the dialogue into the public domain.

The funds raised, however, were small and not sufficient to scale Ararat and we decided to divide the initiative into two phases: we would hold the initial dialogue in Georgian mountains, practice climbing, film the process. Following the dialogue, the entire group would engage in fundraising, and climb Ararat at a later date completing the documentary. The initial dialogue in the Georgian mountains did

take place. But difficulties with follow up fundraising and the deterioration of the conflict between the Erdogan government and the Kurds the east of Turkey made the hike of Ararat untenable. The dialogue itself, however, including the analysis of the shifting historical narratives offered an instructive comparison with the 2005 timeline of the TADG.

As the Capturing the Mountain was planned as a documentary project, the focus of the recruitment was on diversity. The aim was to show that the Turkish and the Armenian societies are far from homogenous and ensure that every member of the audience has someone to relate to. The Turkish participants involved a German citizen of Turkish descent, and Turkish citizens of Turkish, Kurdish, Armenian, and Cherkessian backgrounds. The Armenian group included Armenians with citizenships as diverse as: Armenian, Syrian, Georgian, American, and Lebanese. Each group had three women and three men. The group demographics, therefore, were different from TADG who mostly consisted of Turkish and Armenian citizens. Professionally, however, once again they were all social scientists or journalists.

Similar to TADG, the participants initially separated into Armenian and Turkish groups and created the two historical timelines (Table 13.2). The question asked was identical to that in 2005: the participants were asked to name the key historical events that influenced the present-day Turkish-Armenian relations. Yet the narratives that emerged were different. In 2005, very few of the events coincided and the timelines had almost no overlap. By 2012, more than half of the events in the timelines were identical and the narratives had started converging. The shared events included: the Young Turk Revolution, the Armenian Genocide, the Treaty

Table 13.2 Historical Timelines Created by Participants of the Capturing the Mountain Project. June 2012

<i>Armenian timeline</i>	<i>Turkish timeline</i>
1800s: Ottoman decline and attempts of reforms	1895–1915: Period of Armenian revolts and massacres of Armenians
1908/1914/1915: Young Turk Revolution	1908–1913: Young Turks and the shift in the meaning of national unity
1914–1918: World War I, Armenian Genocide	1915: Genocide, but...
1918–1923: Sèvres, Batumi, Kars, and Lausanne	1920: Sèvres treaty and Turkish paranoia about division of the country
1923: Establishment of the Turkish Republic	1920s–1950s: Transfer of wealth from non-Muslims
1965: 50th anniversary of the Genocide/ Mass demonstrations	
1970s–1980s: ASALA: Assassinations of Turkish diplomats	1970s–1980s: ASALA Terror
1980s: Genocide recognition bills in foreign countries	1980s onward: Genocide recognition around the world
1991: Collapse of USSR and independence of Armenia	1992–1994: Karabakh and the sealing of the border
1990s and onward: Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and closing of the Turkish border with Armenia	
2007: Assassination of Hrant Dink	19 Jan 2007: Hrant... his assassination
	2005–2010: Positive steps in Turkey

of Sèvres, ASALA terrorism, the genocide recognition campaigns and granting of such recognition by countries around the world, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the closing of the Turkish-Armenian border, the assassination of Hrant Dink. Some of the other events diverged in phrasing, but referenced similar developments. In an even starker contrast to the 2005 narrative, the discussion revealed that every single event in each narrative was well known by the participants from “the other side.”

The Turkish *narrative* had changed dramatically compared to 2005. 1915 was termed a genocide, yet came with an asterisk and was termed as “Genocide, but...” The massacre of Armenians in the 1880s in the Ottoman Empire appeared in the timeline, along with the heavy taxation of minorities in the middle of the 20th century. Armenians were now fully present in the Turkish narrative, appearing mainly as a victim. The change in the Armenian *narrative* was less dramatic and continued to portray Armenians mainly as victims of their neighbors. Turks and Turkey still occupied a central role, yet not every event about Turks was negative and some were neutral, such as the establishment of the Turkish Republic. The narrative was also more nuanced, with the treaty of Sèvres supplemented by the Treaties of Batumi, Kars, and Lausanne, amounting for an acknowledgement that the borders were in flux in the early 20th century.

The changes in social and political context had a clear impact on the narratives. The murder of the Hrant Dink and the public commemorations of and publications on the genocide raised awareness in Turkey. The official attempts at normalization and the encouragement of the civil society dialogues and cultural and educational exchanges by the governments resulted in the exposure of Armenians to Turks and Turkey and made the Armenian narrative much more nuanced. The development of social media led to the exposure of both societies to the others narrative. The changes in the Turkish narrative were more pronounced, as the Turkish civil society, media, and academia in these years actively engaged in soul searching and in reevaluation of the Turkish identity, its relations with the minorities and with the past. No parallel internal dialogue was taking place among Armenians.

Despite the convergence of the events and the *narratives*, however, the groups remained far apart *discursively*. When it came to the interpretation of each event, which from discursive perspective reveals the connection of that particular text with other texts that define each identity, the conflict remained intense. Unlike TADG in 2005, the Turkish group in 2012 acknowledged the occurrence of the Armenian genocide. But a number of Turkish participants insisted on the Armenians taking their share of responsibility for it, which they saw to be in part a result of rebellions by the Armenian minority and siding with the enemy at a time of war. They also insisted on the Armenians accepting not only neutral but also positive aspects of the Turkish past, as well as the suffering of Turks and others in the Ottoman empire, and not only of Armenians.

The Armenian *discourse*, in turn, remained one of a victim group whose sufferings stood apart from the sufferings of others and who deserved acknowledgement and restorative measures distinct from others. Moreover, as the dialogue revealed, the Turks and Turkey continued to be seen as an existential threat and a genocidal group by many among the Armenian participants.

The convergence of the narratives, therefore, did not result in parallel convergence of discourses. The events on the timelines were now mostly the same, but their interpretations, the other texts in which each event was embedded, and the image of self and other that they communicated were well in line with the discourse of 2005.

Converging Narratives, Converging Discourses: The 2015 Turkish-Armenian Dialogue and School of Conflict Transformation following the Failure of the Official Normalization Process

By the time the third dialogue was held in January 2015, the official normalization process had collapsed. The Armenian government was preparing for the commemoration of the centenary of the genocide, while the Turkish government re-engaged in an active denial campaign. Civil society in Turkey was under increasing attack, and people-to-people contacts once again became rare.

President Sargsyan, who had spent considerable political capital at home trying to push for normalization early in his tenure, adopted a hardliner position. The two AKP leaders at the forefront of the normalization effort, Abdullah Gul and Ahmet Davutoglu, lost influence and left the political arena. With democracy rapidly retreating in Turkey and President Erdogan assuming increasingly authoritarian powers, academia, media, and civil society were under assault. Internationally, the context also worsened, foreshadowing even more dramatic developments in the future. Vladimir Putin returned to the presidency, and relations between Russia and the West deteriorated. Taking opposing positions in the Syrian civil war, Moscow and Ankara came close to a military confrontation in 2015 but later normalized their relations. Unable to secure a border opening with Turkey and worried about war with Azerbaijan, the Armenian leadership doubled down on its alliance with Moscow, a trend that continued through 2022–2023. Instead of the long-awaited EU Association Agreement intended to support Armenia’s multi-vector foreign policy in tandem with normalization with Turkey, Sargsyan abruptly announced in 2013 that Armenia would join the Moscow-led Eurasian Union. Armenian-Azerbaijani relations also deteriorated after a failed push by Medvedev to broker a peace deal, with ceasefire violations escalating and culminating in the “Four-Day War” in April 2016, which in hindsight, seems like a precursor to the Second Karabakh War in 2020 when Azerbaijan took control of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Financial and political support for civil society dialogues also visibly diminished. Instead, the Armenian communities worldwide and the Armenian government invested in grandiose commemoration of the centenary of the Armenian Genocide. In turn, the Turkish state intensified its genocide denial lobbying efforts, organizing counter-events and demonstrations around the world.

For the first time since Armenia’s independence, top officials discussed reparations and territorial claims to Turkey. Armenia’s Prosecutor General Aghvan Hovsepyan announced during an official forum: “I strongly believe that the descendants of the genocide must receive material compensation, churches miraculously preserved in Turkey’s territory and church lands must be returned to the Armenian Church, and the Republic of Armenia must get back its lost lands.”

The statement prompted a strong reaction from Turkey, with the then Foreign Minister Davutoglu dismissing it as a “product of delirium.” This trend was later picked up and further escalated by Nikol Pashinyan, who came to power in 2018 following the “Velvet Revolution.” In 2019–2020, in parallel with escalating rhetoric vis-à-vis Azerbaijan, Pashinyan’s government made multiple territorial claims toward Turkey, pronouncing the revival of the Treaty of Sèvres as their foreign policy goal. Months later, Azerbaijan would launch the Second Karabakh War and deal Armenia a crushing defeat, thanks in part to full-scale military and diplomatic backing by Turkey.

The project “Turkish-Armenian Dialogue and School of Conflict Transformation” was initiated in late 2014 and held in January 2015. The methodology was similar to that employed during the 2005 and 2012 dialogues. If the 2005 TADG took place in the United States and the 2012 “Capturing the Mountain” was in Georgia, the 2015 school was split between Yerevan and Istanbul and involved additional activities including joint travel, visits to museums and exhibitions on memory and history, and meetings with academics in Turkey and Armenia.

The group was composed exclusively of citizens of Armenia and Turkey, affiliated with Yerevan State University in Armenia and Okan University in Turkey. In early January, a group of six students and two faculty members from Okan University traveled to Yerevan for the first half of the workshop, where they were joined by an equal number of peers from Armenia. A few days later, the Armenian and Turkish participants traveled together to Istanbul, where they continued the dialogue, complemented by meetings with Turkish intellectuals and visits to places of memory. The culmination of the workshop was participating in the commemoration of Hrant Dink’s murder. On the anniversary of the murder on January 19, the participants joined thousands of Turks who walked from Taksim Square to the offices of the *Agos* newspaper, chanting “We are all Hrant” and “We are all Armenians.” According to the project evaluation documents, the participants saw their involvement in the commemoration as key to building trust and strong bonds.

At the start, however, the impression was that the breakdown in the official process had negatively affected civil society spaces. The participants, particularly those from Armenia, showed much stronger resistance toward engaging in dialogue or listening to Turkish narratives—something that had not happened in 2012 or 2005. Once the dialogue started, however, trust was built much quicker than in the previous two cases. Not only did the narratives remain convergent, but the discourses had also been converging, creating a deeper basis for understanding and trust.

Once again, the participants were asked to separate into two groups and list the key events that influenced present-day Turkish-Armenian relations. Despite the change in official rhetoric, the narratives, similar to 2012 and different from 2005, remained very similar to each other (Table 13.3). As in 2012, the majority of the events coincided, narrating a story that started with the massacre of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in the late 19th century, continued through the Armenian Genocide, the establishment of the Turkish Republic, the treaties that determined present-day borders, Hrant Dink’s murder, and ended with the attempts at official normalization and their failure.

Table 13.3 Historical Timelines Created by Participants of the Turkish-Armenian Dialogue and School of Conflict Transformation. January 2015

<i>Armenian timeline</i>	<i>Turkish timeline</i>
1894–1996: Hamidian Massacres (Red Sultan)	1894–1896: Hamidian Massacres
1915: Armenian Genocide	1900s: Downfall of Ottoman Empire and rise of nationalism
1920: Armenian-Turkish war	1915: Genocide (Tehir)
1920: Treaty of Sèvres	
1921–1923: Kars and Lausanne Treaties	1923: Lausanne Treaty and Minority Rights
1923: Establishment of the Turkish Republic, denial of the Armenian genocide	1923 and on: Foundation of Turkish Republic (1950s: Transfer/confiscations of wealth from non-Muslims and pogroms against minorities)
	1949: Nurnberg case and genocide convention
	1973–1985: ASALA (attacks)
	1988–on: Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and closing of the Armenian border
	1990s–on: Migration of Armenians from Armenian to Turkey
2007: Hrant Dink murder	2007: Hrant Dink assassination
2008–2009: Normalization process	2008–2010: Normalization attempts and diplomatic protocols.
2009: Preconditions to protocols and reproduction of enemy image	

Differences were present but, as in 2012, were conditioned more by the limited number of events each side could present in writing rather than the absence of awareness. The Turkish participants included in their narrative the downfall of the Ottoman Empire, ASALA terrorism, the closing of the Armenian border by Turkey, and the recent migration of Armenians to Turkey—events that the Armenians did not list, yet were well aware of and agreed with. Similarly, the Armenian participants listed additional events that were well known and accepted as important by the Turkish colleagues, such as the Sèvres Treaty, the denial of the Armenian genocide, and the preconditions raised by the Turkish government during the normalization process.

Different from 2005 and 2012, the discursive interpretation of major events, including the Armenian Genocide and ASALA terrorism, had grown much closer. The divergence in interpretations was present but applied to events of lesser importance. Further, this divergence, since it did not carry any existential threat to either identity, was treated with curiosity and an open desire to learn and understand rather than counter. For example, the Armenian timeline contained an event titled “Armenian-Turkish War of 1920,” which raised eyebrows among the Turkish group seemingly unaware of this war. The dialogue revealed that the Turkish equivalent would be the “Eastern front of War of Independence.” This discovery led to a lengthy discussion of varying lenses through which the two societies view historical events without raising any conflict in the room.

The deterioration of official relationships, augmented by the upcoming centenary and intensified efforts at genocide denial, did not lead to a parallel process of historical narratives growing divergent.

Interestingly, not only did the narratives continue to converge, but this time the discourses did as well. The Turkish group's discourse became expressly self-critical compared to 2012, and less assured of the benevolent politics of the Ottoman Empire or the Turkish Republic. The date 1915 was followed by the word "genocide" and its Turkish equivalent, without a "but" or any other qualifier. Moreover, this was the first dialogue where not a single participant in the Turkish group objected to the characterization of the Armenian massacres as genocide, and all unequivocally condemned it. Instead, the Turkish participants expressed interest in learning more about the genocide and insisted on visiting museums and memorials on the subject, which took the Armenian participants by surprise.

The Armenian narrative did not change as considerably from 2012 or even 2005, telling a story of a victim nation and signaling that the critical reassessment of the past that took place in Turkish society did not have a parallel process in Armenia. However, the discourse of the Armenian group showed a significant shift, demonstrating greater openness toward the Turkish story, contextualizing the narrative of the Armenian genocide as part of World War I and other developments in the early 20th century, differentiating between the Ottoman government in 1915 and present-day Turks, many of whom stood with them at Hrant Dink's commemoration, and advancing genocide recognition. The suspicion toward the official discourses and the criticism that participants from both countries had regarding repressive regimes was also shared.

Conclusions

Historical narratives are fluid. The study of the narratives of three Armenian-Turkish dialogues, which involved similar demographics against the backdrop of rapidly changing political contexts, showed significant variation. Changing policies and socio-cultural contexts were accompanied by substantial shifts in these narratives, while the corresponding discourse transformed slowly and showed no direct connection to the policies of the day.

This analysis suggests that the enemy image and mutually contradicting historical narratives built through decades of violence, denial, and isolation were broken in a short time during the second half of the 2000s. This shift occurred once the two societies engaged in dialogue and gained greater awareness of each other's narratives. The discourse changed more slowly, but once it did, the return to hostile rhetoric by the governments and the absence of regular civil society dialogues did not revert the historical discourses back to divergence. The first dialogue effort studied in this chapter followed decades of mutual isolation and hostile official rhetoric. Despite the widespread interest in dialogue and mutual understanding among the participants and the absence of officially promoted hostile narratives, this and other dialogues held in 2005–2006, which I participated in but did not document as extensively as TADG, showed that the narratives and discourses of Turks and Armenians in the room were vastly divergent. The Turkish and Armenian narratives presented stories of self-righteousness and victimization, showing near-total ignorance of the

other's perspective. The discourses were immersed in self-praise, victimhood, and enmity toward the other.

The de-isolation and a few years of active dialogue on official and unofficial levels that followed resulted in the immediate transformation of narratives, which grew surprisingly close to one another by 2012. However, the discourses of self-righteousness and victimhood persisted. The timelines listed an almost identical set of events. Yet, despite containing certain self-critical elements that could create cracks in Van Dijk's "ideological square," they were still embedded in hostile discourses, leading the participants to interpret each event very differently, justifying their own group's actions and blaming the other.

While the sudden thaw in official relationships and the proliferation of civil society dialogue resulted in an immediate transformation of narratives, the return to official hostility and isolation did not prompt a parallel U-turn of narratives. Once transformed, these narratives continued to remain similar through at least 2015, a trend corroborated by further dialogues held in 2016 and 2017 that have not been studied here in detail.

Moreover, despite the breakdown of the official normalization process, the slowing and later near cessation of civil society dialogue by 2020, and even the expressed loss of enthusiasm and belief in dialogue by young social scientists, the narratives remained similar, and the discourses showed signs of transformation. The Turkish discourse, in particular, took a sharp turn away from self-righteousness and glory toward self-criticism. The Armenian discourse retained the image of a victim-nation but showed signs of opening toward contextualizing their past and present and separating present-day Turks from the Ottoman government of the World War I era.

The findings in this paper speak in favor of the long-term discursive benefits of civil society engagement. The brief period of suspending official hostilities, combined with active civil society dialogue, succeeded in transforming formerly hostile and disconnected narratives. This process introduced self-critical and contextual elements into previously separate and antagonistic storylines. Over time, these changes created fissures in the "ideological squares," gradually challenging the Turkish and Armenian discourses of unblemished glory and absolute victimhood.

Since the three dialogues examined in this paper were held, the Velvet Revolution in Armenia in 2018, Turkey's participation in the Second Karabakh War in 2020 on Azerbaijan's side, the COVID-19 pandemic, the cessation of civil society dialogues, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and resulting geopolitical realignments created an entirely new political context that likely, once again, shifted the narratives, if not the discourses, of Turkish and Armenian young social scientists. To the best of the author's knowledge, no new Armenian-Turkish dialogues that analyzed historical narratives have been held since the onset of the Second Karabakh War in 2020. However, parallel studies of Azerbaijani-Armenian dialogues held from 2020 to 2024²² showed that the historical discourses of participants from these two societies have remained remarkably aligned, despite the high-level hostility and recent trauma of war. This trend suggests that Turkish and Armenian discourses are similarly likely to remain aligned for the foreseeable future, even as narratives slowly diverge.

Notes

- 1 Thomas de Waal, *Great Catastrophe: Armenians and Turks in the Shadow of Genocide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 219.
- 2 Sara Cobb, "Fostering Coexistence in Identity-Based Conflicts: Towards a Narrative Approach," in *Imagine Coexistence*, edited by Antonia Chayes and Martha L. Minow, 294–310 (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2004), 294–95.
- 3 Nelson Phillips and Cynthia Hardy, *Discourse Analysis: Investigating Processes of Social Construction* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2002).
- 4 David L. Phillips, *Unsilencing the Past: Track Two Diplomacy and Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005).
- 5 Charles King, *The Ghost of Freedom: A History of the Caucasus* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Loren Goldner, *Revolution, Defeat and Theoretical Underdevelopment: Russia, Turkey, Spain, Bolivia* (Leiden: BRILL, 2016), 52–116.
- 6 Fatma Müge Göçek, *The Transformation of Turkey: Redefining State and Society from the Ottoman Empire to the Modern Era* (London and New York: Tauris, 2011), 105.
- 7 Vefa Kurban, *Russian-Turkish Relations from the First World War to the Present* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishers, 2017), 122–44.
- 8 Taner Akçam, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide* (London and New York: Zed Books; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).
- 9 Seyhan Bayraktar, "The Grammar of Denial: State, Society, and Turkish-Armenian Relations." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 47, no. 4 (2015): 801–6. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743815001014>.
- 10 Lévon Ter-Pétrossian, *Armenia's Future, Relations with Turkey, and the Karabagh Conflict* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).
- 11 Stephen F. Larrabee, "Turkey's New Kurdish Opening." *Survival* 55, no. 5 (2013): 133–46. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2013.841816>.
- 12 de Waal, *Great Catastrophe*, 178.
- 13 Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*. 1st ed. Translated by Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); James V. Wertsch, *Voices of Collective Remembering* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Jeffrey K. Olick, *States of Memory: Continuities, Conflicts, and Transformations in National Retrospection* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).
- 14 Paul Connerton, *How Modernity Forgets* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Leslie Dwyer, "A Politics of Silences: Violence, Memory and Treacherous Speech in Post-1965 Bali," in *Genocide, Truth, Memory and Representation: Anthropological Approaches*, edited by Alex Hinton and Kevin O'Neill, 113–46 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).
- 15 Teun Adrianus Van Dijk, *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach* (London and Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1998), 267.
- 16 Human Rights Watch, "Turkey: Outspoken Turkish-Armenian Journalist Murdered," January 20, 2007, <https://www.hrw.org/legacy/english/docs/2007/01/20/turkey15135.htm> (accessed June 2024).
- 17 Fatma Müge Göçek, *Denial of Violence: Ottoman Past, Turkish Present, and Collective Violence against the Armenians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).
- 18 Fethiye Çetin and Maureen Freely, *My Grandmother: A Memoir* (London and New York: Verso, 2008).
- 19 Armenia Chides Turkey's Erdogan Over Karabakh Linkage, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/1731879.html> (accessed October 17, 2018).
- 20 "Prime Minister Erdogan puts Baku's Armenia concerns to rest." <https://www.turkish-press.com/news/343005/> (accessed October 17, 2018).
- 21 "President Sarkisian Announces Suspension of Protocols," *Armenian Weekly*. <https://armenianweekly.com/2010/04/22/president-sarkisian-announces-suspension-of-protocols/> (accessed October 17, 2018).

- 22 Philip Gamaghelyan and Sevil Huseynova, “Challenges to Building a Viable Alternative to Ethnonationalism in the Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict Setting.” *Caucasus Survey* 1 (2024): 1–29.

Bibliography

- Akçam, Taner. *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide*. London and New York: Zed Books; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Bayraktar, Seyhan. “The Grammar of Denial: State, Society, and Turkish–Armenian Relations.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 47, no. 4 (2015): 801–6. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743815001014>.
- Çetin, Fethiye, and Maureen Freely. *My Grandmother: A Memoir*. London and New York: Verso, 2008.
- Cobb, Sara. “Fostering Coexistence in Identity-Based Conflicts: Towards a Narrative Approach.” In *Imagine Coexistence*, edited by Antonia Chayes and Martha L. Minow, 294–310. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2004.
- Connerton, Paul. *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Connerton, Paul. *How Modernity Forgets*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Dwyer, Leslie. “A Politics of Silences: Violence, Memory and Treacherous Speech in Post-1965 Bali.” In *Genocide, Truth, Memory and Representation: Anthropological Approaches*, edited by Alex Hinton and Kevin O’Neill, 113–46. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009.
- Gamaghelyan, Philip, and Sevil Huseynova. “Challenges to Building a Viable Alternative to Ethnonationalism in the Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict Setting.” *Caucasus Survey* 1 (2024): 1–29.
- Gocek, Fatma Muge. *Denial of Violence: Ottoman Past, Turkish Present, and Collective Violence against the Armenians*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Göçek, Fatma Müge. *The Transformation of Turkey: Redefining State and Society from the Ottoman Empire to the Modern Era*. London and New York: Tauris, 2011.
- Goldner, Loren. *Revolution, Defeat and Theoretical Underdevelopment: Russia, Turkey, Spain, Bolivia*. Leiden: BRILL, 2016.
- Halbwachs, Maurice. *On Collective Memory*. 1st ed. Translated by Lewis A. Coser. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Human Rights Watch. “Turkey: Outspoken Turkish-Armenian Journalist Murdered.” January 20, 2007. <https://www.hrw.org/legacy/english/docs/2007/01/20/turkey15135.htm>.
- King, Charles. *The Ghost of Freedom: A History of the Caucasus*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Kurban, Vefa. *Russian-Turkish Relations from the First World War to the Present*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishers, 2017.
- Olick, Jeffrey K. *States of Memory: Continuities, Conflicts, and Transformations in National Retrospection*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.
- Phillips, David L. *Unsilencing the Past: Track Two Diplomacy and Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2005.
- Phillips, Nelson, and Cynthia Hardy. *Discourse Analysis: Investigating Processes of Social Construction*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2002.
- Ter-Pétrossian, Lévon. *Armenia’s Future, Relations with Turkey, and the Karabagh Conflict*. Edited by Arman Grigoryan. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.
- Van Dijk, Teun Adrianus. *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach*. London and Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1998.
- Waal, Thomas de. *Great Catastrophe: Armenians and Turks in the Shadow of Genocide*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Wertsch, James V. *Voices of Collective Remembering*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

14 Patriotic Education Outside and After School

Concluding Thoughts

Sergey Rumyantsev

The selection of countries for this volume was no coincidence. All four, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, and Ukraine, are involved in protracted armed conflicts (Nagorno-Karabakh and eastern Ukraine). These primarily territorial conflicts endorse the rapid increase of influence enjoyed by army institutions, which invest in the same educational processes. Various youth clubs, (para)military organizations, political parties, and nationalist groups, very often enthusiastically right-wing, proclaim their connections to the military institutions, discourses, practices, and rituals that are becoming increasingly visible in public spaces.¹

In all four countries, like many others, armies in general are built via a routine callout to military service. Most of the young people conscripted, the vast majority of whom are men, thus find themselves under the power of the institution for a long time, “where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut-off from a wider society for an appreciable period, together lead an enclosed, formally administrated round of life.”² In Soviet times, the army was one of the most important institutions, with the ambition to reproduce and maintain patriotic attitudes, and so it remains in the present day, with secondary schools instrumentalized for rebroadcasting military practices, patriotic discourses, and memory rituals.³ Unlike the army, however, which usually entails a relatively short term of service, the mission of the school is to shape ideas around concepts of nation, national culture, and history. As an important—usually the first—institution of socialization for all future citizens of any given country, in many ways the school becomes an institution of preparation for militaristic and revanchist patriots, future soldiers and officers, ready to sacrifice their lives for an abstract future for their state. This is especially true in a situation of ongoing conflict. The chapters of this book have demonstrated that the observation of Seth Kershner and Scott Harding quoted in the introduction holds true for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, and Ukraine: in all four countries, albeit in different contexts, Soviet state-approved lessons of initial military preparation⁴ are returning to secondary schools, with new strategies for the education of “future patriots.”

“The Very Best”: The Diversity of Educational Institutions and Rituals

This is also the case for out-of-school activities (war-patriotic camps and games, after-school clubs, and so on). The educational repertoire designed for children and

DOI: [10.4324/9781003505822-17](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003505822-17)

This chapter has been made available under a CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0 license.

teenagers is much broader than the school curriculum. Vladimir Putin once called his “army of teachers” to “take the very best from what had been there in the former [Soviet] castles of pioneers, the circles of young technicians, and so forth.”⁵ We can understand his “and so forth” to mean participation not only in the activities of various *kruzhkov* (clubs), but also in maintaining and developing the practices of collective visits to memorials and museums, celebrations and mourning ceremonies, rituals, Olympic games, and contests.

Nonetheless, despite such diverse resources, “the very best” and most effective state institutions and methods when it comes to educating patriots are not limited to the secondary school and extracurricular activities alone. The larger institutions of education with the longest history of teaching the humanities, shaping citizens and patriots,⁶ instilling “correct” ideas about the national culture, “native language,” ancestral stories, and past glories or traumas for any given “imaginary community.”⁷ The same purpose is served by very different and numerous states and (semi-) independent institutes and organizations,⁸ mobilizing technologies and discourses, newspapers and magazines, literature and poetry, celebrations and funerals, various mass events (school Olympic games in history and literature, “All-Ukrainian radio-dictation of the national entity,” Russian “Total Dictation” or “All-Russian test in the history of the Homeland,” patriotic flash mobs,⁹ radio, television and cinema). “It is here, in television and cinema,” notes Mariëlle Wijermars, “that state efforts to control public opinion are most pronounced; they have been much less stringent, for instance, concerning literature.”¹⁰

Wijermars is referring here to the situation in modern-day Russia. I would add that control over the content of literature can take a more aggressive form in a number of post-Soviet countries. In the autumn and winter of 2013, the Azerbaijani political regime set out to punish the writer, Akram Ajlisli, following the publication of his novel *Stone Dreams* (*Kamennye sny*). This so-called “requiem novel” reflects his personal views on the events and consequences of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which differ notably from “official” versions of the narrative. The writer was stripped of all honorary titles and awards shortly after publication of the novel, and all of his books were publicly burned. The charge: Ajlisli was accused of betraying his nation.

This instance shows that a pressure campaign can be initiated on any writer, and the political regime is capable of quickly mobilizing the population, invoking not only the image of the enemy and collective trauma but also oblivion as a targeted strategy:¹¹ in this particular case, “forgetting” the history of the ethnic Armenians living in modern-day Azerbaijan¹² as well as the Armenian riots (pogroms) in Baku of January 1990. Alone Ajlisli’s attempts to reflect these events in his novel were perceived as legitimate grounds to prosecute him.¹³ This case also demonstrates that the system of mobilization practices carries a more sophisticated and comprehensive character and is not exclusively “a product of unscrupulous and manipulative elites, who are seen as cynically stirring up nationalist passions at will.”¹⁴

The Ajlisli prosecution campaign included not only numerous official faces and the absolute majority of the Azerbaijani mass media but also some representatives of a wide variety of social milieus. The voices of some critics,

responding to the pressure on the writer, were muted by the numerous and loud choirs of his accusers. This example of the public punishment of a writer, unprecedented for the post-Soviet era, demonstrates that control from both authorities and society itself can grow into a situation of armed conflict. For, in the spring and summer of 2022, a similar situation developed in Russia. After February 24, literary figures and journalists left Russia in their masses, openly declaring their opposition to the war on Ukraine. Writer Dmitry Glukhovsky was put on the federal wanted list for an Instagram post that was considered to discredit the Russian army.

In a situation of conflict, public debate is dominated by revanchist patriotic discourses and populist images of the “enemy,” which successfully marginalize opponents as “indifferent” citizens as well as critiquing their roles as state politicians and bureaucrats, for example.¹⁵ At some point, the right to the (re)production and popularization of such discourses and images no longer represents an exclusive monopoly by officials; rather, every “correctly” brought-up citizen is now entitled to join in the publicly approved nationalist-patriotic chorus.

The Patriotic Rollercoaster of War

In recent years, a “second coming” of museums and memorial parks can be observed in the politics of patriotic upbringing in several successor states to the Soviet Union. In 2015, Podmoskovye (Moscow Oblast) opened a “War-patriotic Park of Culture and Recreation of the Military Powers of the Russian Federation,” referred to more briefly as *Patriot*. One of the declared purposes of the founders was to “let young people not only view the exhibits but also to travel and fly on military hardware, shoot combat weapons and experience a parachute jump.”¹⁶ The first military experience for students visiting the park would thus be connected to memories of fun and amusement: a modern approach to romanticizing war.

Indeed, creating historical parks became a large-scale project in Russia. According to its creators, *Historical Park Russia—My History* is one of the largest exhibition complexes in the country. Its geography expands through all of Russia and encompasses 23 cities. The museum exhibits reflect the official history narrative. However, in this case, not only the content is important but also the way that information is provided using modern multimedia technologies. “The founders of the park—and these are historians, painters, cinematographers, designers, computer graphics specialists—designed everything so that Russian history would transform from a black-and-white textbook to a bright, fascinating, and objective narration, and every visitor feels a sense of involvement in the events of the 2000-year history of their Fatherland. The history park represents all the latest forms of information media.”¹⁷ Organized visits to such parks, in particular by groups of secondary-school students, have already become a compulsory tradition.

In Ukraine, the Holodomor Genocide project of the National Museum¹⁸ became one such notable undertaking. Construction began in 2008 and is only now, at the time of writing in 2024, nearing completion. The memorial section was opened in Kyiv in the summer of 2010.¹⁹ On a much smaller scale but ubiquitous is the

commemoration of “Anti-Terrorist Operations” (ATO) in Donbas. Since 2014, practically all Ukrainian museums have created similar exhibits dedicated to the events and heroes of the armed conflicts in the eastern part of the country. Some incidents emphasize the lack of an overall consensus about the modern politics of memory and historical policy. For instance, in one of the cities of eastern Ukraine, local enthusiasts kept the statue of Lenin and the bust of Voroshilov, which were at risk of destruction by decommunization activists, in the basement of a museum. One floor above the salvaged statues, an exhibition was created to commemorate the ATO, with which the policy of decommunization had come to the city.

After February 24, 2022, museums briefly entered the fray. The energetic museumification of the war began in the spring, amid the tensions of an active armed conflict. Museums commemorating World War II were among the first to respond. Already in April 2022, the “Museum of Victory” in Moscow presented a new exhibition, “Conventional Nazism.” In the words of the curator, this was “dedicated to the history of the emergence and development of the Ukrainian version of Nazism, from its inception to the present day.”²⁰ On the symbolic date of May 8, the National Museum of the History of World War II in Ukraine opened its exhibition “Ukraine—Crucifixion.” Visitors to the museum were greeted by “a red star with the dirty boots of Russian occupiers, stepping on Ukrainian soil and never leaving.”²¹

Similar museum projects were installed in Azerbaijan. In 2013, in a small city in the north of the country, the “Quba Genocide Memorial Complex of Azerbaijanis” was established as a replica of the Armenian Genocide Museum Institute in Yerevan.²² Opening this museum was a response to the mass graves discovered in the suburbs of Quba, where the remains were identified as those of the victims of the 1918 Azerbaijani genocide. In September 2013 at the opening ceremony, Ilham Aliiev claimed that “more than 50,000 of our fellow citizens became victims of Armenian fascism in a matter of five months.”²³ The exhibition is designed in a style reminiscent of some Holocaust museums (such as that in Washington, DC).

A few months after the conclusion of the Second Karabakh War, on April 12, 2021, the War Trophies Park was opened in Baku by President Aliiev, conceived as “certification” of Azerbaijani victory in the war.²⁴ Heated discussions unfolded in the media around the exhibition of the helmets of dead Armenian soldiers, before which the president was posing for a photograph. The mannequins of Armenian soldiers simulating the deaths of the army personnel also displayed stereotypical ethnic features.²⁵ In the first days of the opening, hundreds of people stood in long queues, waiting for their turn to visit the park. The president also voiced his wish to create a grand museum of victory in the near future.

It is still too early to suggest when and how the trauma and victimization that followed the defeat in the First Karabakh War (1992–1994) might abate in Azerbaijan. After the Second Karabakh War, all initiatives, both by the general public and the powerful elite, were directed toward creating a triumphant image of the winning nation. The specifics of the memorialization of the “Patriotic War” (as the Second Karabakh War is referred to in Azerbaijan) and commemorative discourses of war triumphs suggest that, even after 30 years since the fall of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijani authorities are still taking advantage of the resources they then

inherited. Nevertheless, numerous borrowings from the Great Patriotic War discourse and the battle with fascism as the “universal evil” were widely popular in all 30 years of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and were particularly in demand as the “battle” unfolded, according to Azerbaijani writer, Natig Rasulzadeh, with “fascist Armenian occupiers.”²⁶

A similar tendency is apparent between Russia and Ukraine. Heroic and victimized analogies around images of the enemy, borrowed from the discourse about the Great Patriotic War, have been created in both countries since 2014. In 2022, at the very beginning of the armed conflict, President Zelenskyy awarded several settlements the title of “hero cities,” echoing the award officially established in the Soviet years for the 20th anniversary of the victory in 1965. One of the goals of this new war, according to Putin, was the so-called “denazification” of Ukraine. Indeed, both sides energetically accuse each other of fascism, coining new vocabulary such as “ukrofascism,” “ukrowehrmacht,” or “rashism.”²⁷

Prospects for Peaceful Conflict Transformation

And yet, hopes for peaceful conflict transformation always remain. The situations in the post-Soviet countries explored in this collection are complex and often differ significantly. Let us take the example of the escalation of September 2022 when Azerbaijani troops invaded Armenian territory. Azerbaijani society’s fatigue regarding the conflict became apparent in the fact that many citizens of Azerbaijan who had celebrated victory in the fall of 2020 reacted negatively to this new invasion. Since the Second Karabakh War, a new generation of anti-war activists and peacebuilders has emerged in both Azerbaijan and Armenia. While their ranks are still very small, some of them show much more solidarity and consistency in criticizing militarist actions and nationalist ideologies than their predecessors did.

Controlling schools in a huge country like Russia is much more difficult than in Azerbaijan or Armenia. The secondary education system is extremely inert, bureaucratized, and difficult to interfere with. Many teachers consciously refuse to engage in war propaganda or the propagation of enemy imagery, and very effectively—if quietly—sabotage orders from the Ministry of Education.²⁸ Relatively effective control over educational processes in schools is possible only if the “army” of teachers consists of citizens loyal to the regime, ready to fulfill their prescribed mission. Close surveillance of everyone is impossible. Behind the closed doors of the classroom, the teacher has a large degree of freedom and opportunities for passive resistance. While discussions about the need to develop critical thinking in schools have been largely theoretical, for decades there have been opportunities to experiment with formats (especially in the Soviet years); ambitious educators can implement innovative approaches not only in the numerous private schools but also in state institutions.

A high degree of control over schools and the emotional tempering of new generations of citizens requires an important condition: clear and influential ideological doctrines that were not developed in the post-Soviet years. All political regimes mentioned in this collection use—with varying degrees of intensity—a mixture of ideas of nationalism, a “great” past, national exceptionalism, a militaristic type of

patriotism, and enemy imagery. This concoction is often seasoned with a poorly cooked sauce of religious traditions and images. But in each of the post-Soviet societies studied here, scholars, politicians, journalists, human rights activists, and public intellectuals offer a cogent critique of such perceptions. The regimes' capacities to limit access to alternative information, critical voices, and publications are limited. It is to be hoped that information providing multiple perspectives on past, present, and future will become increasingly accessible.

Notes

- 1 Erving Goffman, "On the Characteristics of Total Institutions." In *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*, edited by Erving Goffman, 1–124 (New York: Anchor Books, 1990).
- 2 Erving Goffman, "On the Characteristics of Total Institutions." In *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*, edited by Erving Goffman, 1–124 (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), XIII.
- 3 On the militarization of high-school education and out-of-school activities, see: Jafar Akhundov, *Conflicts and Militarization of Education. Part I. Azerbaijan. Military-political discourse and state youth policy in Azerbaijan* (Berlin: CISR, 2020). <https://p-s-urban.cisr-berlin.org/en/conflicts-and-militarization-of-education-part-i/>; Katya Myachina, *Conflicts and Militarization of Education. Part III. Ukraine. Conflict and militarization of non-formal education in Ukraine* (Berlin: CISR, 2020). <https://p-s-urban.cisr-berlin.org/en/conflicts-and-militarization-of-education-part-iii-ukraine/>; Ksenia Babich, *Conflicts and Militarization of Education. Part IV. Russia. Totalitarian institutions in secondary schools and in the system of extracurricular education. Military-patriotic education in Russia: Cadets and Young Army Cadets* (Berlin: CISR, 2020). <https://p-s-urban.cisr-berlin.org/en/conflicts-and-militarization-of-education-part-iv-russia/>; and Eviya Hovhannisyanyan, *Conflicts and Militarization of Education. Part II. Armenia. "Nation-Army" ideology in the Armenian educational system* (Berlin: CISR, 2020). <https://p-s-urban.cisr-berlin.org/en/conflicts-and-militarization-of-education-part-ii/> (all accessed June 2024).
- 4 In Ukraine, the subject with the eloquent title "Protection of the Fatherland" was implemented for high schools only in the years of Poroshenko's presidency (2014–2019). Of all four countries, it is only in Russia that there is no compulsory course of primary military training, but a network of so-called cadet classes is spreading considerably.
- 5 Message from the president of the Russian Federation of December 3, 2015, on the situation in the country and the main directions of domestic and foreign state policy. <https://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/40542/page/1> (accessed June 2024).
- 6 Throughout all school years, it is a must to learn the "mother" language and national literature. As a rule, from the fifth grade, there is a separate course in national history. The more or less popular plots of the past and historical characters, however, are already mentioned in the first years of education. If taking into consideration the fact of adopting the law about compulsory high-school education, one can argue, that in all four countries, these years are the longest period of teaching these subjects. The absolute majority of students will most likely never return to the additional consecutive education of national history, literature and "mother" language during adult life unless connected through their professional careers to corresponding specialties.
- 7 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, New York: Verso, 1998).
- 8 In Armenia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, and Russia, the authorities put huge efforts into strengthening the control over the perception of the past and the processes of producing historical narratives, designed for high schools, high educational institutes and mass media. In its endeavors, the authority, just like in the Soviet years, relies on the Ministry

of Education, the research institutes of history, archaeology, ethnography, and literature of the National Academy of Sciences, state universities, censorship and self-censorship; also, on popular nationalistic ideologies and patriotist attitudes, or, in other words, on the initiatives from below. In the 2000s, in Ukraine and Russia, the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory (UINM) and the Russian Military Historical Society (RMHS) both gained in popularity. In “scientific activities” of these institutes are the functions of, in the words of the first UINM director, Igor Yukhnovskiy, “the retrieval and conservation of the national memory,” and as claimed by the founders of RMHS, “the confrontation of the distortion to the detriment of Russian interests.” These two modern and quite influential institutes, affiliated with the political regimes. See Igor Yukhnovskiy, *Ob ideologii i politike Ukrainskogo instituta natsionalnoy pamyati*,” https://zn.ua/SOCIETY/ob_ideologii_i_politike_ukrainskogo_instituta_natsionalnoy_pamyati.html; RMHS, “Scientific Activities,” <https://rvio.histrf.ru/activities/nauk> (accessed June 2024); Georgiy Kasyanov, *Ukraina i sosedi: istoricheskaia politika. 1987–2018* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2019), 200–224; Lapin V. “Rossijskoe istoricheskoe obshchestvo (RIO) i Rossijskoe voenno-istoricheskoe obshchestvo (RVIO) kak instrumenty istoricheskoy politiki pervoj chetverti XXI veka.” In *Politika pamyati v sovremennoj Rossii i stranakh vostochnoj Evropy. Aktory, instituty, narrativy*, edited by A. Millera and D. Efremenko, 74–95. Saint Petersburg: European University Press, 2020.

In the meantime, regardless of the years-long efforts of political regimes, it is still possible to observe the constant attempts on both the individual and collective levels to prevent ideological influence. Rather bright examples of such initiatives are the organization “International Memorial,” registered in 1992, and “Free Historical Society,” founded in Russia in 2014. On February 28, 2022, Memorial was liquidated by a Russian court, but its activists continue their work even in the face of increasing political repression.

- 9 Such manifestations of mass enthusiasm are quite popular in Ukraine and are often represented through flash mobs (“The Day of the National Coat of Arms,” dictation of national unity, “Crimea is part of Ukraine,” “#Говори́наукраїнськом” (#speakinukrainian), and so on). “Vyshyvanka Day” traditionally is accompanied by patriotist flash mobs, carried out with mottos such as “Vyshyvanka unites Ukrainians” (2017) or “The code of unity” (2020). Patriotic flash mobs are also popular in Russia. In this format of mass activity, one can observe the mobilization of private businesses of their employees in support of patriotic ideologies, and manifestation of loyalty towards the authorities. For example, Andrey Simanovskiy, the owner of the Yekaterinburg-based company “Sima-Land” has already organized a few “patriotic flash mobs” in support of Vladimir Putin and the war in Ukraine (the so-called “special operation”); honor of World War II “Victory Day.” The attempts to monopolize victory of World War II contributed to the emergence of different formats that go beyond the borders of Russia (international poetry flash mob “Path of Victory” or international campaign “Test on the history of the Great Patriotic War”).
- 10 Mariëlle Wijermars, *Memory Politics in Contemporary Russia: Television, Cinema and the State* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 3. On post-Soviet cinema and the flourishing of film production, by an accurate definition of Stephen Norris “the business of patriotism,” see also: Stephen M. Norris, *Blockbuster History in the New Russia: Movies, Memory, and Patriotism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 251–70.
- 11 Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit: Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2006), 104–7.
- 12 In the novel, the main character reminisces about childhood, spent in Ashaghy Ajlis (the hometown of the author), located on the territory of the modern-day Nakhichevan Oblast in Azerbaijan.
- 13 Among the reasons are the images created by the author of the former President Heydar Aliyev, different from that of the official image of the “all-nation leader.”
- 14 Rogers Brubaker, “Myths and Misconceptions in the Study of Nationalism.” In *The State of the Nation*, edited by John Hall, 272–306 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 273.

- 15 The majority of the public protests found it necessary to underline their patriotic positions, all the while criticizing not only the author and his novel but also the methods of the pressures on Ajlisli.
- 16 For more on the so-called Patriot Park, see <https://patriotp.ru/o-parke/informatsiya>
- 17 On the historical park project “Russia—My History,” see <https://myhistorypark.ru/about/>. See also: V. Kaz'mina, “Istoricheskie parki “Rossiia — moy a istoriia” kak otrazhenie transformatsij institutsionalnogo izmereniya rossijskoj politiki pamiati.” In *Politika pamiati v sovremennoj Rossii i stranakh vostochnoj Evropy. Aktory, instituty, narrativy*, edited by A. Millera and D. Efremenko, 172–87 (Saint Petersburg: European University Press, 2020).
- 18 On the peripeteia of the commemoration of Holodomor in Ukraine see: Andrii Portnov, *Uprazhneniia s istoriej po-ukrainski* (Moscow: OGI, 2010), 192–208; Kasyanov, *Ukraina i sosedj*, 413–28.
- 19 The History of Holodomor Genocide Museum. <https://holodomormuseum.org.ua/ru/ystoryia-natsyonalnoho-muzeia-holodomora-henotsyda/>
- 20 Conventional Nazism. <https://victorymuseum.ru/playbill/exhibitions/vystavka-obyknovennyj-natsizm/>
- 21 Boris Tkachuk, “In Kyiv the first exhibition about the recent stage of the Russia-Ukraine War opened,” <https://hromadske.ua/ru/posts/v-kieve-otkryli-pervuyu-vystavku-o-novometape-rossijsko-ukrainskoj-vojny> (accessed June 2024). See also: “Ukraine—Crucifixion,” https://warmuseum.kiev.ua/index_eng.php
- 22 The Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, <https://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/>; The Guba Genocide Memorial Complex, <https://heydar-aliyev-foundation.org/en/content/view/93/2808/The-Guba-Genocide-Memorial-Complex>.
- 23 Aliyev I. (2013), Ilham Aliyev attended the opening of the Guba Genocide Memorial established with the support of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, <https://en.president.az/articles/9346>
- 24 See: President Ilham Aliyev took part in the opening of the Baku Park of War Trophies: https://azertag.az/ru/xeber/Prezident_Ilham_Aliyev_prinyal_uchastie_v_otkrytii_v_Baku_Parka_voennyh_trofeev_OBNOVLENO_2_VIDEO-1753183
- 25 After some time, as a result of mass criticism, the helmets and mannequins were removed from the exhibition.
- 26 A war novel: Natig Rasulzadeh writes a book about the colonel and is ready for the battlefield, <https://zerkalo.az/voennyj-roman-natig-rasulzade-pishet-knigu-o-polkovnike-i-gotov-idi-na-front/>
- 27 Since 2014, after the annexation of Crimea, the analogies with events of World War II, as well as discussions about whether the modern Russian regime is fascist, have been very popular in the media, both on a political and academic level. I share the critical view of Marlene Laruelle, who does not consider Putin’s regime fascist: Marlene Laruelle, *Is Russia fascist? Unraveling Propaganda East and West* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021).
- 28 I draw here on material from ten problem-oriented interviews with Russian secondary-school teachers that I conducted during a research trip to Russia from April to June 2024.

Bibliography

- Akhundov, Jafar. *Conflicts and Militarization of Education. Part I. Azerbaijan. Military-Political Discourse and State Youth Policy in Azerbaijan*. Berlin: CISR, 2020. <https://p-s-urban.cisr-berlin.org/en/conflicts-and-militarization-of-education-part-i/>
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London, New York: Verso, 1998.
- Assmann, Aleida. *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit: Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik*. München: C. H. Beck, 2006

- Babich, Ksenia. *Conflicts and Militarization of Education. Part IV. Russia. Totalitarian Institutions in Secondary Schools and in the System of Extracurricular Education. Military-Patriotic Education in Russia: Cadets and Young Army Cadets*. Berlin: CISR, 2020. <https://p-s-urban.cisr-berlin.org/en/conflicts-and-militarization-of-education-part-iv-russia/>
- Brubaker, Rogers. "Myths and Misconceptions in the Study of Nationalism." In *The State of the Nation*, edited by John Hall, 272–306. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Goffman, Erving. "On the Characteristics of Total Institutions." In *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*, edited by Erving Goffman, 1–124. New York: Anchor Books, 1990.
- Hovhannisyán, Eviya. *Conflicts and Militarization of Education. Part II. Armenia. "Nation-Army" Ideology in the Armenian Educational System*. Berlin: CISR, 2020. <https://p-s-urban.cisr-berlin.org/en/conflicts-and-militarization-of-education-part-ii/>
- Kasyanov, Georgiy. *Ukraina i sosedi: istoricheskaya politika. 1987–2018*. Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2019.
- Kaz'mina, V. "Istoricheskie parki 'Rossiia — moia istoriia' kak otrazhenie transformatsij institutsionalnogo izmereniya rossijskoj politiki pamiati." In *Politika pamiati v sovremennoj Rossii i stranakh vostochnoj Evropy. Aktory, instituty, narrativy*, edited by A. Millera and D. Efremenko, 172–87. Saint Petersburg: European University Press, 2020.
- Lapin V. "Rossijskoe istoricheskoe obshchestvo (RIO) i Rossijskoe voenno-istoricheskoe obshchestvo (RVIO) kak instrumenty istoricheskoy politiki pervoj chetverti XXI veka." In *Politika pamiati v sovremennoj Rossii i stranakh vostochnoj Evropy. Aktory, instituty, narrativy*, edited by A. Millera and D. Efremenko, 74–95. Saint Petersburg: European University Press, 2020.
- Laruelle, Marlene. *Is Russia Fascist? Unraveling Propaganda East and West*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021.
- Myachina, Katya. *Conflicts and Militarization of Education. Part III. Ukraine. Conflict and Militarization of Non-Formal Education in Ukraine*. Berlin: CISR, 2020. <https://p-s-urban.cisr-berlin.org/en/conflicts-and-militarization-of-education-part-iii-ukraine/>
- Norris, Stephen M. *Blockbuster History in the New Russia: Movies, Memory, and Patriotism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012.
- Portnov, Andrii. *Uprazhnenia s istoriej po-ukrainski*. Moscow: OGI, 2010.
- Wijermars, Mariëlle. *Memory Politics in Contemporary Russia: Television, Cinema and the State*. New York: Routledge, 2019.
- Yukhnovskyi, Igor. *Ob ideologii i politike Ukrainskogo instituta natsionalnoj pamiati*," https://zn.ua/SOCIETY/ob_ideologii_i_politike_ukrainskogo_instituta_natsionalnoj_pamyati.html

Index

Note: Page references in **bold** denote tables.

- Abdulkhabirov, Avar Magomed 198–199
- Abkhazian 27–28, 30; hate speech toward 30; population 28; principality 28; relationships with Georgia 27; separatists 31; struggle for independence 28; textbook 28
- Abovyan, Khachatur 99
- affirmative action empire 23
- Ahmadly, Jamil 115
- Aipin, Eremey 198
- Ajlisli, Akram 290
- al-Assad, Bashar 218
- Aleksandrov, Aleksander 188
- Aleksandrov, Kirill 219
- alien impurity 150
- Aliev, Ali 198
- Aliev, Ilham 292
- Aliyev, Bakhtiar 119
- Aliyev, Heydar 7, 29, 53, 57, 65, 120, 124, 137, 144
- Aliyev, Ilham 1, 30, 50, 57, 120, 124–125, 147–148, 151
- Al Jazeera* 209
- All-Union Communist Party 213
- Alpamysh* 190
- alternative interpretations 99–100
- Anderson, Benedict 90, 100
- anti-colonial discourse 6, 22
- antiquity of Azerbaijan 24
- anti-Semitism 232
- Apple, Michael W. 90
- April War 138–139
- Arevik* 91
- armed conflict 2, 54, 60–61, 74–75, 120, 166, 249, 262, 291–293; on former USSR territories 54; long-term 2, 54, 63; peaceful transformation of 5; post-Soviet 51; protracted 289
- Armenia 48–75, 137, 141, 145; Christian 130; diasporic communities 159–161; earthquake in 161; educational environment in 89; historification in literature education in 89–101; homelands 159–161; military operations in 50; arboreal patriotism 157–168; State Standard for General Education 91–92; Velvet Revolution 283, 286
- armeniaca* 157
- Armenian aggression 29–30
- Armenian-Americans 159–161, 162–164, 166–167
- Armenian-Canadians 160–161, 163–164
- Armenian Genocide 142–145, 161–162, 272–273, 280, 284
- Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) 274, 277, 281, 284
- Armenian terrorism 277
- Armenian textbooks 24
- Armenian Tree Project (ATP) 159, 161–167, *see also* Armenia, arboreal patriotism
- Armenian-Turkish dialogue 272–286
- “Armenian-Turkish War of 1920” event 284
- Arshak II, King of Armenia 96
- Aseev, Stanislav 255
- Assmann, Aleida 51
- Atatürk, Mustafa Kemal 274
- Azerbaijan 25; language and literature 68; military operations in 50; national enemies 29; political regime 112–113; secular neutrality 112–113; secular political regime 112; state independence of 65

- Azerbaijani Genocide 7, 137–151; April War 138–139; formation of a new identity 143–146; History of Azerbaijan 138; memory politics 149–150; nation-victim 142–143; overview 137–138; places of memory 146–149; rise of militaristic sentiments 138–139; school ritual 146
- Azerbaijani schools: chosen narratives 113–115; “Humans and Society” 113–115; “Knowledge of the World” 113–115; religion taught in 111–130
- Azerbaijanism 144, 149
- Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (ANAS) 145, 147
- Azeri lands 25, 29–30
- Azizbekov, Meshadi 29
- backwardness 20, 21
- Bairamov, Jabi 145
- Baku 119–120, 123–124, 139, 145–147; process 124; tragedy of 1918 144
- banal nationalism 158–159
- Bandera, Stepan 53, 60, 247
- Bardin, Pavel 198
- Bartov, Omer 145
- Battle of Didgori 70
- Battle of Stalingrad 214, 217
- Beaumarchais, Pierre 119
- Bely, Andrei 190, 196
- Benhabib, Seyla 114
- Berger, Peter 210
- Bervi-Flerovksy, Vasyl 231
- Billig, Michael 49, 158–159
- biographical interviews 6, 56
- Blinken, Antony 209
- Bloom, Harold 196
- Bolshevik-Dashnaksutyun formations 143
- Bolshevik Revolution 227, 229; *see also* Russian Revolution
- Bondar, Grigory 237
- Book of Dede Korkut* 121
- Book of Lamentations* (Narekatsi) 98
- bourgeois 26, 212
- Bradley, Alan 8
- Braverman, Irus 167–168
- Brezhnev, Leonid 226
- Brubaker, Rogers 75
- Bruno, Giordano 115
- Brzezinski, Zbigniew 198
- Bubka, Sergii 231
- Buddhism 118, 123, 127
- Budyonny, Semyon 228
- Bush, George H.W. 218
- Bush, George W. 218
- Buzand, Pavstos 96
- Bykaū, Vasil 190
- Bykov, Dmitry 194
- Cälil, Musa 192
- calls for separatism 197
- Capturing the Mountain Project 273, 278–282, 280
- Carlson, Tucker 8
- Casanova, José 6, 112–113
- Caucasian Albania 25
- Caucasian republics 1, 18, 58
- “Center for the Defence of Freedom of Conscience and Religion” (DEVAMM) 120
- Charents, Yeghishe 192
- chauvinist policy (Iran) 26
- Chavain, Sergei 191
- Cherniavsky, Dmytro 235
- Chernivtsi National University 52
- “Children of War” 252–253, 255
- Christian Armenians 25
- Christianity 5, 116, 118, 123, 126, 130
- Chubarian, Aleksandr 215
- Chudakova, Marietta 194
- civilization: clash of 21, 26, 29; Eurasian 28; historical code of 19; nomadic 21; Russian 20, 188; single 21; state-civilization 20, 188, 195
- civilizational approach 6, 19–21
- clash of civilizations 21, 26, 29
- Clinton, Hillary 279
- Coexistence of Religion in a Secular State: Positive Experience of Azerbaijan* (seminar of 2001) 127
- “collective mass consciousnesses” 216
- colonialism 23, 62
- The Color of Pomegranates* (Paradjanov) 158
- commemoration 7, 130, 145–146, 149; of Great Patriotic War (GPW) 246–263; museums and exhibitions as form of 260–261
- communism 3, 22, 61, 65, 157, 213
- Communist Party of the SSR Azerbaijan 120
- Communist Party of Ukraine 232
- conflict-induced emergency 50
- conflicts: Abkhazian 4; armed 2, 54; Karabakh 23, 141, 151; Nagorno-Karabakh 1–2, 4, 70; nationalism-fueled 75; patriotic upbringing 54; Russo-Georgian 4; Russo-Ukrainian 2, 4; South Ossetian 4

- Confucianism 127
 converging narratives: converging discourses 282–285; divergent discourses 278–282
 COVID-19 pandemic 286
Crabwalk (Grass) 193
 Crimea 165, 175–176, 195, 197; annexation of 5, 50, 53, 72, 179, 190, 195, 197, 210
 cross-reference 98–99
 cultural code 32, 186, 188, 194–195
 culture wars 188
 Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood 178
- Danilevsky, Igor 5, 20
 Danilov, Yuri 261
David of Sassoun 192
 Davutoğlu, Ahmet 279, 282–283
 “Day of White Cranes” 260
The Dead Feel No Pain (Bykaŭ) 190
 Decembrists 214
 de-communization 54, 225–226, 236
 decommunization laws/policies 173, 251
 Degtyarev, Vladimir 232
 delayed modernization 20
 Demirchyan, Derenik 6, 95–96, 100
 de-privatization of religion 7, 111
 Descartes, Rene 119
 Dink, Hrant 164, 273, 275, 278, 281, 283, 285
 diplomatic language 29
 discourses: anticolonial 6; anti-colonial 22; divergent 273–282; evolving 272–286
 divergent discourses 273–282
 divergent narratives 273–278
 diversity of educational institutions and rituals 289–291
 Dobychin, Leonid 196
 Donbass: scholarly perspectives 254–255; in the war years 254–255
 Donetsk: memorial practices in 225–239; memory wars 233–238; military operations 233–238; *Perestroika* period 230–233; “the force of power” after 2014 236–238; and Ukrainian independence 230–233
 Donetsk Euromaidan 232, 235
 Donetsk National University 231
 Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR): calendar of celebratory/memorial dates 259–260; Donbass in war years 254–255; Great Patriotic War in mass media 257; memory of Great Patriotic War in 246–263; memory of two wars 249–254; museums/exhibitions as commemoration 260–261; rituals/memorials of the GPW 257–259; subject of war in school curricula 255–257
Donetsk Republic 248, 250
 Dumbadze, Nodar 190
 Durkheim, Emile 212
 Dzherzhinsky, F. 229
- education: extracurricular 256–257; institutions and rituals 289–291; military-patriotic upbringing in 256–257
 Education Improvement Project 92
 Eghishe 94–95, 99
 Eidelman, Natan 189
 Elchibey, Abulfaz 58
 electoral authoritarianism 186–187
 Emergency Investigation Commission 145
Emergency. Investigation: Who wants to divide Russia? 198
Epic of Koroghlu 190
Epic of Manas 190
Episodes from the History of Armenian Liberation Thought (Hovhannisyanyan) 97
 Erdogan, Recep Tayyip 273, 275, 279–280, 282; authoritarian powers 282; rise to power 273–278
Ergir 160
 Erskine, John 188, 195
 essentialized nation 93
 ethnic minorities 17–18, 26–28, 32, 190, 197–198
 ethnocentrism 17–19, 30, 32
 ethnonationalism ideologies 68
 Etkind, Alexander 212
 Eurasian civilization 28
 Eurasian Union 282
 Euromaidan 53, 235, 247, 261
 exhibitions as a form of commemoration 260–261
The Expert 194
 extracurricular education: military-patriotic upbringing in 256–257
- Fairclough, Norman 90, 100
 falsifications of history 29
 Ferro, Marc 55
 First Karabakh War 274, 292
 First Nagorno-Karabakh war 273, 279
 First World War 210, 272, 277, 285, 286
 fluid narratives 272–286
 Foucault, Michel 3
 Franko, Ivan 229

- Free Historical Society 217
 “friendship of peoples” paradigm 172
 “Fundamentals of Russian Statehood” 2
- Gabrielyan, Mkhitar 159
 Gaidar, Arkady 237
 Gamsakhurdia, Zviad 27, 31, 58
 Ganjavi, Nizami 119
 Garabedian, Tom 163
 Garibaldi, Giuseppe 99
 Gellner, Ernest 114, 177
The General and His Army (Vladimov) 196
 genocide recognition campaigns 281
 Georgia 27; discursive space in 70; hospitality and tolerance 31; ideas of social-democracy 27; -Ossetian relationships 31; relationships with Abkhazians 27
 Gerd, Kuzebay 191
 German Nazism *see* Nazism
 German Romanticism 96
Gevorg Marzpetuni (Muratsan) 6, 95–96, 99
 Ginzburg, Carlo 138–139, 150
 Glukhovsky, Dmitry 291
 Gorbachev, Mikhail 172
 Gorky, Maxim 229
 Gramsci, Antonio 150–151
 Grass, Günter 193
 “Great Books” courses 188, 190, 195
 Great Migration 176
 Great Patriotic War (GPW) 172, 246–247; celebration with a war background 247–249; commemoration of 246–263; formation of group/new identity 249–252; history and canon 217–219; in mass media 257; memory in Donetsk People’s Republic 246–263; memory of two wars 249–252; museums/exhibitions as commemoration 260–261; pensioners as witnesses of two wars 252–254; rituals and memorials of 257–259; in school educational programs 255–257; usage and destruction 217–219; veterans 252–254; war with a celebration background 247–249
 Grinkevich, Franz 258
 Gritsak, Vasily 58
 group and new identity 249–252
 Groups of Death 187
 Gul, Abdullah 278, 282
 Gurov, Kuzma 258
 Halkett, Kimberly 209
Hamre (Raffi) 98
 Harding, Scott 2, 289
 Hartog, François 210
Hayastan 160–161
 Heinrich Böll Foundation 5
heirenik 160
 historians 62–64; problems of 216–217
 historical code of civilization 19
 historical knowledge 217
 historical language 211–214, 216–218
 historical policy 50–54
 historical politics 5, 55, 137, 139, 146, 216, 225
 historical symbols 214
 historical truth 21, 52, 56, 95, 97, 100, 144, 219
 historicification in Armenian literature
 education 89–101; analysis of state documents 90–91; analysis of textbooks 93; conflated past and present 96–98; cross-reference 98–99; historiography 93–96; history writing 93–96; literature 93–96; overview 89–90; retrospective prophecies 96–98; sealing off alternative interpretations 99–100; self-reference 98–99; state’s vision for literature education 91–92; theoretical framework and methodology 90
 historiography 93–96, 211
 history: as political language 209–220; rather than politics 209–210; serving as language to describe modern world 213–214; writing 93–96
 History of Azerbaijan 138, 140, 148
History of Ukraine-Rus (Hrushevsky) 174–175
 “History of Victory” 3
 Hitler, Adolf 217–218
 Holocaust 127, 180, 211, 260
 Holodomor Genocide project 291–292
 homogenization 67
 Hovhannisyán, Ashot 97
 Hovhannisyán, David 274
 Hovsepyán, Aghvan 282
 Hrant Dik Memorial Forest 164
 Hroch, Miroslav 178
 Hrushevsky, Mykhailo 174
 Hrynevych, Liliya 63
 Hrynevych, Franz 228
 “Humans and Society” 113–115; first edition 115–119; second edition 119–124

- Hussein, Saddam 218
 Huxley, Aldous 100
- Ibrahimoglu, Haji Ilgar 120
 ideological truth 95, 97
 ideologies: ethnonationalism 68; nationalist 9
 Ilyich, Vladimir 53
 imagined community 3, 54, 67, 72–73, 90, 129, 141, 178, 195, 290
 Immortal Regiment 52, 219, 248
 imperialist policy 23
 imperial sentiments 28
 incompetent citizens 67–74
 independent nationalist society 63, 65
 indigenous population 30, 179
 innovative approach 27, 293
 “instant past” 211
 Institute of Modern State Development (IMSD) 193
 intelligentsia 122, 140, 150–151, 191
 Interdepartmental Commission for Historical Education 55
 International Holocaust Remembrance Day 259
 International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) 92
 Iranianization 26
 Iron Curtain 273, 274
 Iskander, Fazil 192
 Islam 111–129; in Azerbaijan 6–7, 25; national 7, 111–112, 128; in post-Soviet Azerbaijan 114
 Islamic radicalism 18
 Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP) 273, 275
 Ivan the Terrible 214
- Jabayev, Jambul 191
 Judaism 118, 123, 126
 Juma Mosque community 120
- Kadiri, Abdullah 191
Kalevala 190
 Kalinin, M. 228, 229
 Kalmyk *Epic of Jangar* 190
 Karabakh conflict 23, 141, 151
 Karabakhization 29
Karevala 193
 Kasyanov, Georgiy 52
 Kazakhstan 18–19, 21–23, 28–29, 57, 69, 71
 Kazakova, Elena 189
 Kerimov, Mahmud 147
- Kershner, Seth 2, 289
 Khaldei, Yevgeny 259
 Khanzhonkov, Aleksandr 238
 Khetagurov, Kosta 192
 Khmelnytsky Rebellion 177, 179
 Khojaly Massacre 146
 Khorenatsi, Movses 94–95, 96, 97, 98, 99
 Khrushchev, Nikita 226
 Kirov, Sergey 228
Kitabi Dede-Gorgud 116–117
The Knight in the Panther’s Skin (Rustaveli) 190
 knowledge 6, 22, 56, 59, 68; historical 217; legitimate 90; of native history 70, 73; objective 114; “official knowledge” 90, 100; scientific 97; shared 278; superficial/non-critical 72
 “Knowledge of the World” 113–115, 124–129
- Kobzon, Joseph 231
 Kofman, Aleksandr 260
 Kolchak, A. 214
 Kondratov, Ivan 248
 Korenyugina, Nina 261
 Korf, M.A. 214
 Koselleck, Reinhart 211
 Kouchner, Bernard 279
 Kozlovsky, Ihor 236
 Kramar, Andrey 260
 Kuchma, Leonid 173–174
 Kuibyshev, Valerian 228
 Kulchytsky, Stanislav 173
 Kuldurkaev, Yakov 191
 Kvasnik, Anatoly Naumovich 145
 Kyivan Rus 4–5, 172, 174–175, 179
- landmarks of life 55–57
 language: diplomatic 29; historical 211–214, 216–218; native 50, 59, 140, 290; political 209–220; Turkic 24
 Lavrov, Sergey 209, 279
 legitimate knowledge 90
 Lehmann, Maïke 157
 Lenin, Vladimir 229, 232, 274
Library of World Literature 190
lieux de mémoire (sites of memory) 212
 List of 100 Books 188–190, 192, 194, 196–197
 literature education 91–92
 Lithuanian textbooks 24
 Living Century Initiative 164–167
 long-distance nationalism 167–168
 Loseva, Natalia 52
 Lotman, Yuri 189

- lubok print 23
 Luckmann, Thomas 210–211
 Luhansk Oblast 226, 227, 236
 Lukashenko, Alexander 57
- Mach, Elzbieta 2
 Mahari, Gurgun 192
 Mahmudov, Yaqub 63
 Mamedoba, Nushaba 126
 March Clashes 137
 March Genocide 137
 March Slaughter 137
 Martynov, Igor 247
 Marx, K. 181, 229
 Marxism 49, 63, 177
Marxism and the National Question
 (Stalin) 177
 Marxist-Leninist ideology 213
 Marxist theory 3, 175
 Mashtots, Mesrop 96
 mass media 257
Me, Grandma, Iliko and Illarion
 (Dumbadze) 190
 Medinsky, Vladimir 56, 58, 186,
 216
 Medvedev, Dmitry 216, 279
 McGill, Allan 149
 Melnikov, Ilya Semenovich 48
 memorial practices in Donetsk 225–239;
 memory wars 233–238; military
 operations 233–238; *Perestroika*
 period 230–233; Soviet constructs
 of memorializing the past 226–230;
 “the force of power” 236–238; theory
 and methodology 226; uncertainty vs.
 polysemantics of space 230–233
 memory politics 50–54, 149–150
 memory wars 137, 233–238
Mets Hayk 160
 Michalski, Sergiusz 53
 Mikhailov, Sergey 188
 Mikhailovna, Svetlana 48
 military operations 233–238
 military-patriotic upbringing in
 extracurricular education 256–257
 Miller, Alexei 51, 54
 Milosevic, Slobodan 209
 Mirzoyan, Ararat 58
 Mitrei, Kedra 191
 modern Azerbaijani nationalism
 121
 modern nation 178
 modern world 213–214
 monopolistic capitalism 181–182
- “The Moral Obligation to Be Intelligent”
 (Erskine, essay) 188
 Moskalenko, Kirill 255
 Mosse, George 21
The Mother of God in Bloody Snowfalls
 (Aipin) 198
Mountains of Gems 198
 Mourtazaliev, Galina 187
 Mozolevsky, Boris 231
 Mugar, Carolyn 162
 multiculturalism 124–129
 multinational Azerbaijani people 125
 Munich Security Conference 1
 Musavat (Azerbaijan Nationalistic Party)
 120, 137, 144
 museums: as a form of commemoration
 260–261; school 261
- Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast
 (NKAO) 274, 279
 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict 1–2, 4, 17, 70,
 130, 137, 143, 160
 Nalbandyan, Eduard 279
 Nalbandyan, Mikael 98
 Nardaran population 119
 Narekatsi, Grigor 98
 Naryshkin, Sergei 57
 national-colonial oppression 26
 national culture 3, 24, 49–50, 151, 192,
 195, 289–290
 nationalising nationalism 114
 national Islam 7, 111–112, 128
 nationalism 158–159; banal 158–159;
 -fueled conflict 75; long-distance
 167–168; modern Azerbaijani 121;
 nationalising 114
 nationalist historical projects 22–29
 nationalist ideologies 9, 23, 74, 180, 293
 nationalization of mass consciousness 21
 national liberation movement 177–178
 national security 50–54
 national-spiritual consciousness 146
 nation-state 178–181
 nation-victim 142–143
 native history 68–71, 73, 74
 native language 50, 59, 140, 290
 NATO 209, 274
 Navalny, Alexei 218
 Nazarbaev, Nursultan 29
 Nazism 217, 237, 247, 258
 Nevsky, Alexander 72
 New Redistributive Coalition 187
 Nicholas I, Emperor of Russia 5
 Niftaliyev, Ilgar 145

- Niyazov, Saparmurat 53
 nomadic civilization 21
 Nora, Pierre 5, 212
Not for Adults! Time to Read 194
Novaya Gazeta 187
 Nunes, Deville 218
- Obama, Barack 279
 objective knowledge 114
Olonkho 190
 Omelchenko, Elena 52
On the Way to New School 189
 Orange Revolution 173–174
 Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists 180
 Orientalism 211
 Oskanyan, Vardan 274
 “Ottoman Armenians During the Decline of the Empire” conference 275
 Ottoman Empire 277, 281, 284, 285
 “our genocide” 142, 145, 146–149
 Olyunsky, Platon 191
- pantheon of writers 98–99
 Pap, King of Armenia 96
 Papelian, Jeanmarie 166–167
 Papikyan, Suren 58
 Paradjanov, Sergey 158
 Parpetsi, Ghazar 94, 95, 99
 Partev, Sahak 95
 Pashinyan, Nikol 58, 283
 patriotic education 2–3, 6, 167, 255–256;
 curricula 3; educational institutions/
 rituals 289–291; outside and after
 school 289–294; patriotic rollercoaster
 of war 291–293; peaceful conflict
 transformation 293–294; Polonocentric
 2
 patriotic rollercoaster of war 291–293
 patriotic science 58
 patriotic upbringing: conflicts 54;
 militarization of 54
 Pattie, Susan 160
 Pavlovets, Mikhail 189, 196
 Payaslian, Simon 160
 peaceful conflict transformation 293–294
 pensioners as witnesses of two wars
 252–254
Perestroika 230–233
 Peresypkin, Ivan 255
Petersburg (Bely) 196
 Peter the Great 214
 Petrosyan, Irina 157
 Petrov, Yuriy 215
 Petrovsky, Grigory 228
- Phillips, David 274
 Pilkington, Hilary 52
 pine tree (*sochi tsarr*): Armenian
 vernacularization of 161–164; Hrant Dik
 Memorial Forest 164; Living Century
 Initiative 164–167; Sose and Allen
 Memorial Forest 164
 Pipes, Richard 198
 Pivovarov, Yuri 216
 planted flags 167–168
 Platt, Kevin 28
 political language, history as 209–220
 political neutrality 114
 politics: history rather than 209–210; of
 multiculturalism 124–129; of tolerance
 124–129
 Polonocentric patriotic education 2
 Polyakova, Larisa 255
 polytheistic religions 117
 popularization of Islam 7
 Poroshenko, Petro 54, 58
 Portnov, Andrii 173
 post-revolutionary powers 53
 post-Soviet ethnonationalism 29
 post-Soviet historical imagination
 17–32; civilizational approach 19–21;
 ethnocentrism 17–19; historical
 narratives and education literature in
 21–22; nationalist historical projects
 22–29; overview 17; regional textbook
 17–19; textbooks and interethnic
 relationships 29–32
 post-Soviet historiography 22–23
 post-Soviet ideology 64
 post-Soviet republics 58, 61
 power: Erdogan’s rise to 273–278; post-
 revolutionary 53; Soviet 225–239
 presentism 210–212
 primordialized literature 93
 Prophet Mohammed 121, 123–124
 public political monuments 53
 public spaces 289
 Pushkin, Alexander 229, 236
 Putin, Vladimir 4, 7, 8, 50–51, 55, 186, 187,
 189, 193–196, 199, 210, 214, 258, 282,
 290; Putin’s List *see* List of 100 Books
- Quba Memorial Complex 147
 Quran 115–117, 120–123, 126, 148
- Rabelais, Francois 119
 Raffi 6, 95, 97
 Rasulzadeh, Natig 293
 Red Army 30, 59, 181, 228–229

- “regime of historicity” 211
 regional textbook 17–19
 religion 117–119; de-privatization of 111, 130n1; freedom of 144; polytheistic 117; taught in Azerbaijani schools 111–130
 religious beliefs 19, 117, 215
 religious extremism 125, 129
 Reshetnikov, Leonid 197
 retrospective prophecies 96–98
 Revolution of 1917–1920 181
 Revolution of Dignity 53, 173–174
 rituals/memorials of the GPW 257–259
 Rogov, Kirill 187
Rossiyskaya Gazeta 197
 Rousso, Henry 210, 211
 Russia 2; civilizational approach in 19; cultural dominance 20; demodernization 191–193; education as instrument of political management 196–197; ethnic minorities 190; image of 23; invasion of Ukraine 225–239; language and literature 48; military occupation 26; Ministry of Culture 56, 195; Ministry of Education and Science 189; moral panic regarding younger generations 187; multi-ethnic 20; raw-material appendage 26; “Russia: The Ethnicity Issue” 187–191, 195; society 212–213; *see also* Putin, Vladimir; Soviet Union; USSR
Russia in Global Affairs 210
The Russian Canon (Sukhih) 196
 Russian civilization 20, 188
 Russian Constitution 219
 Russian Orthodox Church 20, 113, 125, 180, 182
 Russian Orthodox civilization 20
 Russian Orthodox religion 20
The Russian Reporter 194
 Russian Revolution 161, 214; *see also* Bolshevik Revolution
 “Russia: The Ethnicity Issue” 187–191, 195
 Russo-Georgian conflict 4
 Russo-Ukrainian War 2, 4, 8, 20
 Rustaveli, Shota 190

 Saakashvili, Mikheil 27, 66, 190
 Said, Edward 211
 Saint Petersburg Institute of History 219
 Sakharov, Andrey 215
Salam, Moscow! 198
 Samedov, Movsum 119–120
Samvel (Raffi) 6, 95–97

Sandro of Chegem (Iskander) 192
 Sargsyan, Serzh 58, 273, 282
 savage tribes 27
 Schama, Simon 161–162
 Schedler, Andreas 186–187
 Schlesinger, Arthur 32
 school museums 261
 “School N°6” 50
 School of Conflict Transformation 273; historical timelines created by participants of 284; and official normalization process 282–285
 schools/high schools: education as a recourse of memory politics 149–150; General History 138; History of Azerbaijan 138, 140; rituals 146; *see also* Azerbaijani schools
 scientific communism 22, 213
 scientific knowledge 97
 scientist historian 94
 “Scythian-Sarmatian heritage” 231
 Sebastatsi, Mkhitar 163
 secondary schools 49–50
 Second Karabakh War 1, 4, 50, 75, 130, 157, 272, 283, 286, 292
 Second Nagorno-Karabakh War 72
 Second World War 8, 28, 31, 51, 52–53, 66, 96, 211, 217, 246, 247, 262–263
 secular neutrality 112–113
 secular political regime 112
 self-reference 98–99
 September 11 terrorist attacks 218
 Sergeyev, Fyodor 229
 serious people 57–62
 Sevak, Paruyr 192
 Sèvres Syndrome 274
 Shahids of the Karabakh War 146–147
 shame 67–74
 shared knowledge 278
 Shcherbytsky, Volodymyr 172
 Shevardnadze, Eduard 57
 Shevchenko, Taras 229
 Shia Muslims 25, 112–113, 120
 Shiite Islamic party 119
 Shinto 127
 Shirvanzadeh 96, 98
 Shukhevych, Roman 247
 single civilization 21
 Skinner, Quentin 211
 Smith, Michael 145
Sobesednik 194
The Social Construction of Reality (Berger and Luckmann) 211
 social constructivism 210–212

- “social glue” for Russian society 212–213
 social reality 114, 187, 212–213
 Socrates 119
 Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr 190
 Sose and Allen Memorial Forest 164
 South Caucasian republics 1, 58
 South Ossetian 4
 Soviet atheism 25, 117
 Soviet ideology 57, 58, 61, 64, 238
 Soviet power 225–239
 Soviet Union 3, 193; collapse of 172, 190; constructs of memorializing the past 226–230; cultural politics of 192; dissident movement in postwar 178; fall of 225; national politics 141
 space: public 289; uncertainty vs. polysemantics of 230–233
 spiritual lives 19
 SS Galicia Division 181
 Stalin, Joseph 212, 213
 Stalinist cultural politics 191–193
 Stalsky, Suleyman 191
 state-civilization 20, 188, 195
 state documents, analysis of 90–91
 state ideology 49–50
 State Standard for General Education 91–92
 St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre 126–127
Stone Dreams (Kamennye sny) (Ajlisli) 290
 Stus, Vasyl 231, 236
 Sukhikh, Igor 196
 Sunni Muslims 25
 Sunni Salafists 120
 Sunnites 112–113
 Suny, Ronald 157
 superiority of national culture 24
 “Şüräle”(Tuqay) 192
 Svyatoslavich, Vladimir 5
 Swietochowski, Tadeusz 111
 systemic political authors 187
- Taghiyev, Haji Zeynalabdin 123
Tales of the Russian Peoples 193
 Ter-Petrosyan, Levon 58, 274
 terrorism: Armenian 277; ASALA 281, 284
 textbooks 5–7, 64–67; Abkhazian 28; analysis of 93; Armenian 24; of Armenian literature 89; and interethnic relationships in Caucasus 29–32; Lithuanian 24; for nationalist history 64; regional 17–19
 Tigranes II, King of Armenia 4
 Tillerson, Rex 209
- Timur and His Squad* (Gaidar) 237
 Tishkov, Valery 215
 titular nation 18, 23, 28, 29
 Tolbukhin, Fyodor 258
 tolerance 124–129
 tolerant textbook 31
 Totemism 117
The Town of N (Dobychin) 196
 Toynbee, Arnold 19
 Treaty of Moscow 274
 Treaty of Sèvres 274, 280–281, 283–284
 Tretiak, Natalya 192
 Trump, Donald 218
 Tuqay, Ğabdulla 192
 Turchenko, Fedir 173
 Turkic language 24
 Turkic-speaking Muslims 24
 Turkification policy 26
 Turkish-Armenian Dialogue Group of Boston (TADG) 273–278; historical timelines created by participants of 276, 284; and official normalization process 282–285
 Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission (TARC) 274
- Ukraine: and Crimea 179; and Europe 174–176; nation-state 178–181; “reunification” of 172; Russian invasion of 157, 186, 225–239; state-building process 181
Ukrofascism 237, 293
 Ukrainian history: Europeanization of 174; late-Soviet concept of 172; periodization of 175
 Ukrainian history textbooks 174–182; defining the nation 176–178; European models 174; national liberation movement 177–178; nation-state 178–181; Ukrainian capitalism, war, and revolution 181–182
 Ukrainian independence: *Perestroika* period and initial stage of 230–233; and polysemantics of space 230–233
 Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1920 178
 Underwood, David 157
 “Unified History Textbook” 214–216
 unified language 214–216
 uniform Turkic-Persian culture 18
 USSR 3–5, 18, 24, 27–28, 48–49, 54, 56, 62, 66, 68, 70, 111–112, 114–115, 137, 140–141, 157–158, 190–193, 196; *see also* Russia; Soviet Union

- Uzbekistan 21–22, 28
 Uzbek-Kirgiz clashes 28
- van Dijk, Teun 90, 100
Vardananq (Demirchyan) 6, 95–96, 100
 Vasilyeva, Olga 58
 Vatutin, Nikolai 258
 Velvet Revolution 272, 283, 286
 Ven, Tima 191
Verq Hayastani (Abovyan) 99
 “Veteran Lives Next Door” event 256
 Viard, Vasily 191
 “Victims of Fascism” monument 259
 Vkontakte 187
 Vladimir, Prince of Kyiv 5
 Vladimov, Georgy 196
 voluntary entry 24
 Voroshilov, Kliment 229
 Vyshyvanka Day 52
- Wain, Kenneth 114
The Wall 56
 War on Terror 218
- Warped Mourning* (Etkind) 212
 “The Watch of Memory” event 256
We’ll Live Till Monday 48, 50
 Western Armenian descent 161
The Western Canon (Bloom) 196
 White Movement 214
 World of Islam 111–130
- Yanukovych, Viktor 173
 “Yeni Azerbaijan” (“New Azerbaijan,”
 YAP) 145
 Yeremenko, Andrey 255
 Young Turk Revolution 280
 Yurchak, Alexei 61, 157
 Yushchenko, V. 233
- Zakharchenko, Alexander 248
 Zakharov, Sergey 236
 Zelensky, Volodymyr 4, 50, 72, 293
 Zherdev, Nikolay 261
 Zhumabai, Magzhan 191
 Zoroastrianism 100, 127
 Zoryan, Stepan 96