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**ARTICLES – RUSSIAN AND EASTERN EUROPEAN LANGUAGE**

# Russia's Proud Past and Patriotic Identity: A Case Study of Historical Accounts in Contemporary Russian History Textbooks

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In December 2014, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed the *Osnovy gosudarstvennoi kul'turnoi politiki* (Fundamentals of State Cultural Policy), which emphasizes the preservation of and promotion of Russian culture as essential for a unified and powerful country. A key means for implementing the *Osnovy gosudarstvennoi kul'turnoi politiki* appears in the efforts to construct a new history curriculum designed to correct alleged historical distortions and to produce a unified historical narrative. Selected textbooks from the publisher *Prosveshchenie* (Enlightenment) serve as the sources used to investigate this construction of a standard historical account. In particular, this paper will stress that the use of specific words or phrases as well as the very similar recounting of historical events across different class levels (aged 15–17) reveals the development of a single historical narrative for major occurrences in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Among the events chosen are ones that have caused particular concern to Russian leaders, including Russia's actions in the First World War; the conclusion of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact; the initial days of the Great Patriotic War; the growth of communism in Eastern Europe; and the recent incorporation of the Crimean Peninsula into the Russian Federation. Ultimately, this paper will argue that an approved historical narrative aims to form patriotic students, the New Russian Citizens, who have immense pride in their heritage and who consequently will develop unwavering support for a strong Russia on the global stage.

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## Transliteration and Translation Notes

A simplified version of the Library of Congress Transliteration System has been used in this paper. All translated material, unless otherwise noted, is the author's work.

*Osnovy gosudarstvennoi kul'turnoi politiki* (Fundamentals of State Cultural Policy), though a plural title, is one document and thus referred to in the singular.

Since this paper analyses events from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the designations *Russia* and *Soviet Union* are used depending on the period in question.

Regarding Crimea, the terms *annexation* and *reunification* represent very different interpretations of the events surrounding Crimea's current political status. Thus, when

analysing Crimea, the author has opted to forgo using either *annexation* or *reunification*, and instead employs the term *incorporation*. The terms *annexation* and *reunification* appear when either quoting or paraphrasing material from Western or Russian sources respectively.

Distinctions between the terms *rossiiskii* and *russkii* are identified when cited in political speeches/texts. It should be noted that in the historical examples analysed, the Russian textbooks use the term *russkii*, denoting ethnicity, and not *rossiiskii*, denoting citizenship, to refer to the Russian people, army or victories. This trend may reflect an emerging theme of stressing that Russian identity is based on ethnicity.<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

On 24 December 2014, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed the *Osnovy gosudarstvennoi kul'turnoi politiki* (Fundamentals of State Cultural Policy). The policy emphasizes the preservation and promotion of Russian culture as essential for a unified and powerful country, and thus of primary importance for ensuring national security (Osnovy 1–22). This document describes culture as the 'sovokupnost' formal'nykh i neformal'nykh institutov, iavlenii i faktorov, vliiaushchikh na sokhranenie, proizvodstvo, transliatsiiu i rasprostranenie dukhovnykh tsennostei (eticheskikh, esteticheskikh, intellektual'nykh, grazhdanskikh i t.d)' (sum total of formal and informal institutes, phenomena and factors, which inform the preservation, production, transmission and dissemination of spiritual values (ethical, aesthetic, intellectual, civic and so on')) (Osnovy 7). Such an extensive definition prompts the Russian government to take an active role in promoting culture, and also outlines roles for other organizations, such as scientific, cultural and educational associations, to advance practices that fashion a stronger and more united Russia (Osnovy 7, 9, 12–13, 17).

In particular, the policy notes that in previous years the lack of a genuine focus on the use of culture to improve society has proven detrimental to Russia's future. A primary area of concern remains the historical distortions of specific periods (Osnovy 6). In order to bolster Russian (*rossiiskii*) unity and to offset this and other weaknesses,<sup>2</sup> the *Osnovy gosudarstvennoi kul'turnoi politiki* (hereafter *Osnovy*) defines six objectives: fostering civic identity; educating citizens; conserving the country's cultural legacy; transmitting the basis of Russian (*rossiiskii*) civilization in the forms of traditions, values, norms and customs to each successive generation; encouraging each citizen to maximize his/her creativity; and guaranteeing the availability of resources regarding culture's benefits and values (Osnovy 5, 6, 9, 10). The *Osnovy* concludes that among other factors, a thorough knowledge of Russian (*russkii*) history and an increase in young citizens' pride in their country are key to the policy's success (21, 22). The policy notes that results indicating its level of success should be available in five years; however, it does not discuss how these results will be collected or measured (21, 22). As of now, there do not seem to be any early opinion polls or other attempts to measure this policy's impact.

The *Osnovy* describes culture's strategic importance to the Russian (*rossiiskii*) state through its ability to bind people together (9). The preservation of Russia's (*Rossii*) heritage constitutes part of the country's cultural policy (8). The Russian state seeks to preserve

<sup>1</sup> See Edwin Bacon Putin's Crimea Speech, 18 March 2014: Russia's Changing Public Political Narrative. *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2015, pp. 13–36.

<sup>2</sup> Other areas of concern include: an incorrect analysis of Russia's underdevelopment in specific historical periods; the disregard for traditional values; the fragmentation of society; the growth of aggressiveness and intolerance; and a reduction in society's intellectual and cultural levels.

Russian heritage through ensuring that a specific version of history, favourable to Russia, becomes the standard for students. This paper will show that a standard history curriculum plays an important role in realizing the Osnovy's intentions. First, the Osnovy's objective of cultivating civil pride/identity is reinforced with a historical narrative that cultivates an appreciation for Russia's and its leaders' and peoples' past accomplishments. Second, a unified historical narrative would aid in fulfilling the Osnovy's objectives through educating citizens and preserving the country's cultural legacy, thereby conveying Russia's customs, traditions, norms and values to future generations.

Coupled with these two points, a standard history curriculum aligns with the Osnovy's objective of 'razvitoi lichnosti i ukreplenie edinstva rossiiskogo obshchestva posredstvom prioritetnogo kul'turnogo i gumanitarnogo razvitiia' ('[to develop] the individual and strengthen a united Russian society through the priorities of cultural and humanistic development') (Osnovy 9). Russia's current educational endeavours may be understood as a contemporary version of the former Soviet government's efforts to fashion a new type of citizen, the *new Soviet man*. Similar to Soviet education's role in creating loyal Soviet citizens, history education in twenty-first century Russia seeks to form loyal, patriotic students, who espouse pride in their heritage and who consequently will develop steadfast support for a strong Russia on the global stage. In this article, I refer to these students as the New Russian Citizens, a term I used previously in describing the Osnovy's role in seeking to mould Russians into patriotic citizens (McDaniel 221–2).

### **Ideological Role of History**

History textbooks have long been recognized as value-laden instruments. Numerous country-specific studies as well as more generalized ones have investigated history textbooks' vital role in constructing national identity (Grever and van der Vlies 286–301; Zhao 99–112; Zajda 291–306; Ismailov and Ganieva 366–92). Additionally, scholars have noted that textbooks' historical accounts can prove so influential that these interpretations influence governmental policies (Mujadžević 293–302). With regard to ideology's presence in textbook narratives, scholars specifically examining Russian history textbooks acknowledge that these textbooks aid in promoting specific ideological changes and viewpoints (Zajda 291–306), and that history is an 'ideological subject' (Dolutskii 70–92). From its inception, Soviet education aimed to instil communist values in society (Dolutskii 71). Soviet-era textbooks sought to explain events within a Marxist context, and focused on the Communist Party's prime role as the agent of historical change and progress. This narrative reinforced the Party's right to rule (Ferro 164–5).

The close connection between history education and ideology became further apparent with the Soviet Union's collapse. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, citizens from all levels of society actively debated the official historical narrative and openly discussed the need for revising history textbooks. These debates and the resulting uncertainty regarding the teaching of history prompted the cancellation of history examinations and classes in secondary schools (Volodina 180–1; Billington and Parthé 13–18, 41–4; Banerji 132; Isurin 17). After the fall of the Soviet Union, scholars continued to recognize that Russian history textbooks served as ideological tools. Alexander Shevyrev, discussing education in the 1990s, describes the textbook as an 'overtly value laden narrative' with a 'mythological nature' which reflects the situation in society at the time of publication (272–3). As Shevyrev notes, the 1990s were a period of rapid transition within Russia and, frequently, history was rewritten, with changes introduced almost every year (272–3). A variety of textbooks offered competing interpretations of history and specific historical reference points were discarded (Shevyrev 272–4).

Beginning in the early 1990s, history textbooks were revised, and by the mid-1990s they promoted an anti-communist message (Shevyrev 273–5; Volodina 182). These transformations of the historical narrative caused the Russian textbook author A. A. Danilov to express his growing concern that versions of history presented in the 1990s disparaged the actions of prior generations and caused contemporary young Russians to perceive their country's history as being 'abnormal' ('The New Educational Standards' 40). To counter this trend, Danilov called for the creation of history standards with a primary objective of fashioning citizens and patriots who will then forge Russia's current and future policies (44).

### Discussion of Sources Used

Danilov's viewpoint reflects the prevailing emphasis upon developing a unified historical narrative. Beginning in the early 2000s, the Putin government began and is continuing its efforts to develop a standard history narrative (Banerji 258–9; Tsyrlina-Spady 31–52). Concurrently, the Russian Ministry of Education and Science has undertaken reviews of history textbooks. In the early 2000s, ministry officials withdrew approval from a previously approved textbook deemed as being too harsh in the depiction of Stalin's Great Terror and Putin's government (Banerji 263–8).<sup>3</sup>

In late 2013 and early 2014, the Russian Ministry of Education and Science began a major review of the country's textbooks (Becker and Myers, NYTimes.com). Ministry officials did not limit their review only to history textbooks, but included subjects as varied as English and mathematics (Becker and Myers, NYTimes.com). Textbooks, including those previously approved, were subjected to an extensive review by independent experts and ministry-approved experts.<sup>4</sup> Remarks by Putin in early 2014 appeared to indicate his support for the ministry's work. He commented on the need to have standard history textbooks and stressed that these textbooks would not promote a specific ideology. Further, Putin emphasized that standardized textbooks are necessary in order to eliminate textbooks that are inappropriate or contain "ideological garbage" (Sukhov, TheMoscowTimes.com).

Though Putin does not elaborate on this comment, more insight may be gained into his view of history education through other public statements. As early as 2003, Putin met with members of the Russian Academy of Sciences to discuss the then-current senior-level history textbooks. Putin maintained that these textbooks should not serve as forums for contentious political matters. Instead, he held that history textbooks should 'provide historical truths and they must cultivate in young people a feeling of pride for one's history and one's country' (Banerji 259).<sup>5</sup> From Putin's statement, it can be inferred that history textbooks' narratives should focus on portraying Russia's past in a positive manner and that books which emphasize Russia's and the Soviet Union's past in starkly negative terms should be revised. As will be seen, the current historical narratives would seem to reflect Putin's statement that history accounts should instill patriotism among young people and have been revised to exclude earlier post-Soviet accounts that presented less flattering portrayals of Russia and the Soviet Union.

The Ministry of Education and Science's 2013–14 textbook review greatly reduced the number of officially approved textbooks. By the beginning of the 2014 Russian school year, the number of textbooks approved had fallen by at least half from the number available in 2013.

<sup>3</sup> The specific textbook withdrawn was Igor Dolutskii's *National History, 20<sup>th</sup> Century*.

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed discussion of this review process, see Jo Becker and Steven Lee Myers. 'Putin's Friend Profits in Purge of Schoolbooks'. *The New York Times*. 1 November 2014. NYTimes.com, [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/02/world/europe/putins-friend-profits-in-purge-of-schoolbooks.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/02/world/europe/putins-friend-profits-in-purge-of-schoolbooks.html?_r=0). Accessed 15 December 2015.

<sup>5</sup> The original source for this quote no longer seems to be available on *Ria Novosti*.

Approximately twenty-four small publishers faced the possibility of closure. Yet, the publisher Prosveshchenie (Enlightenment) only had 6 percent of its books rejected. This company served as the state publisher for textbooks during the Soviet era, and its textbooks' content reflected state-approved understandings of historical events (Becker and Myers, NYTimes.com). Prosveshchenie's low percentage of rejected books seems to indicate that currently it enjoys a privileged role in twenty-first century Russia – as it did in the Soviet period. The Ministry of Education and Science's textbook requirements and its review and approval process appear reminiscent of the Soviet era, during which the state sanctioned certain books for educational instruction. This new focus on a standard curriculum may preclude free and open debate, resulting in a single official historical record with no deviations allowed.

Given that Prosveshchenie's textbooks generally survived the Ministry's review, analyses and close readings of selected history textbooks for classes 9, 10 and 11 will provide an understanding of the currently approved interpretation of historical events. Class 9 corresponds to students aged 15, class 10 corresponds to students aged 16, and class 11 to those aged 17 (Kolesova and Nishino 8). This analysis includes an examination of specific words and phrases used to describe major historical events, as well as the use of repetitive phrases and descriptions that appear in each of the three textbooks. The three textbooks selected are examples of the most recent publications for classes 9, 10 and 11: A. A. Danilov, L. G. Kosulina, M. Iu. Brandt, *Istoriia Rossii: XX-Nachalo XXI Veka*, 9 klass (Prosveshchenie, 2014); M. M. Gorinov, A. A. Danilov, M. Iu. Morukov, I. S. Semenenko, A. Ia. Tokareva, V. N. Khaustov, O. V. Khlevniuk, V. A. Shestakov, *Istoriia Rossii, v trekh chastiakh*, 10 klass (Prosveshchenie, 2016); A. A. Levandovskii, Iu. A. Shchetinov, S. V. Mironenko, *Istoriia Rossii, Bazovyi uroven'*, 11 klass (Prosveshchenie, 2015).

All three books' title pages indicate that the Ministry of Education and Science recommends these works (Danilov et al. title page; Gorinov et al. title page; Levandovskii et al. title page). Furthermore, a review of Prosveshchenie's website indicates that these textbooks' copyright dates reflect the most recent year of publication for textbooks for classes 9, 10 and 11.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, it can be concluded that these authors' accounts of Russian history are deemed acceptable for students. It should be noted that all three textbooks focus on twentieth- and early twenty-first century Russian, Soviet and post-Soviet Russian history. The selection of a recently published and approved textbook from each level allows for an examination of the manner in which the same events are presented to students at different class levels, thereby granting insight into the construction of a single historical narrative for students.

Moreover, as a form of comparison, the narratives in current books for classes 9, 10 and 11 are analysed against Soviet-era and other post-Soviet history textbooks. The Soviet-era books used were both published by Prosveshchenie and are: I. B. Berkhin and I. A. Fedosov, *Istoriia SSSR* 9 klass (Prosveshchenie 1982) and P. I. Potemkin, V.M. Balev, I. B. Berkhin and M. P. Kim, *Istoriia SSSR (1938–1978 gg.)* 10 klass (Prosveshchenie 1982). In the Soviet educational system, classes 9 and 10 were the senior grade levels (Ross 539–40) with students' ages in the mid-teens. For the post-Soviet era, textbooks published by Prosveshchenie and intended for the senior grades were used for comparison: A. A. Danilov and L. G. Kosulina, *Istoriia Rossii XX Vek*, 9 klass (Prosveshchenie 2000) and V. P. Ostrovskii, V. I. Startsev, B. A. Starkov and G. M. Smirnov, *Istoriia Otechestva: 1939–1991*, 11 klass (Prosveshchenie 1992). It should be noted that no book for class 10 published by Prosveshchenie in the 1990s or early 2000s was

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<sup>6</sup> A review of Prosveshchenie's website, [prosv.ru](http://prosv.ru), indicates that no further books for classes 9, 10 and 11 have been published since the copyright year listed for these works. When the copyright year was not listed on Prosveshchenie's website, then the copyright year was verified by typing the ISBN into the book seller Ozon.ru. This review of books was conducted most recently on 13 August 2017.

available.<sup>7</sup> Since all the history textbooks used in this study have similar titles, some clarification is needed. All references to the textbooks will include the publication year, class level and a designation as either Soviet era (books published in 1982), early Soviet era (published in 1992 and 2000) or contemporary/current (published in 2014, 2015 or 2016).

This paper will investigate the construction of a unified historical narrative through a study of major events from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Among the events chosen are ones that have caused particular concern to Russian leaders. They include: Russia's actions in the First World War; the conclusion of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact; the initial days of the Great Patriotic War; the growth of communism in Eastern Europe; the recent incorporation of the Crimean Peninsula into the Russian Federation.

### Frameworks for Analysis

This paper's specific focus upon recent efforts to create a clear and concise narrative of Russian history acknowledges the importance of Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (2006). Of particular importance is Anderson's discussion of the educational system's and printed materials' roles in creating a nation or an 'imagined community'. As he explains, an 'imagined community' is 'imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign' (5–6, 37–46, 83–111, 170–8). Anderson elucidates this description by noting that in an 'imagined community', all the members of the community cannot possibly meet, but instead, in each individual's perception, all members are bound together. The 'imagined community' is limited because it is defined by specific borders (5–6).

Tying these peoples and lands together as an imagined community became possible through literary means and newspapers. Specifically, Anderson illustrates his idea of 'simultaneity in "homogeneous, empty time"' (24–5) through a discussion of the novel and newspapers. The notion of 'simultaneity in "homogeneous, empty time"' can be conceived as the transpiring of concurrent events marked by a calendar or clock. As Anderson explains, the literary novel shows concurrent actions through interconnected plots, and the newspaper connects seemingly unrelated events and distant regions through the inclusion of the date at the top of the issue. This date conveys the notion of the progression of simultaneous events (Anderson 24–6, 33). Through these printed materials, meaning is given to simultaneous events that are measured by a date or specific time and put in relation to each other (Anderson 24–33). Across Russia, a standard historical narrative plays a similar role by emphasizing that the Russian people concurrently participated in major events and thus developed shared historical experiences. Though a member of the Russian 'imagined community' will never meet all the other members, he or she can envision him/herself or his/her ancestors undergoing these shared experiences. A uniform historical narrative that reinforces these shared experiences across class levels aids in the construction of an 'imagined community' whose members hold a uniform conception of their country's history.

Members of the 'imagined community' live in a geographically defined region. Anderson explains that a country's borders on a map mark the limits of the imagined community, and the map of the specific nation, detached from its neighbours and devoid of specific geographical features, and longitude and latitude lines, becomes a symbol representing this imagined community. The 'map-as-logo' serves as an immediately recognizable symbol, denoting a specific country with citizens who have shared historical experiences. The map-as-logo is easily

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<sup>7</sup> Within the United States, Russian history textbooks from the 1990s and Soviet-era textbooks are not widely available. In addition, the major Russian online booksellers in the United States did not offer history textbooks published prior to the mid-2000s.



reproducible and permeates all aspects of society. The imagined community's borders set apart one community's experiences from another's, thereby aiding in defining who constitutes a member of a specific imagined community (Anderson 175–8).

Serhiy Bilenky builds upon Anderson's idea of the imagined community through an examination of individuals' mental maps of their nations. In *Romantic Nationalism in Eastern Europe: Russian, Polish, and Ukrainian Political Imaginations*, Bilenky examines the role of print materials, a common history and shared language in constructing individuals' mental representations of nineteenth-century Eastern European nations (1–14). He notes that in the nineteenth century individuals often conceived of their own nation as encompassing regions within another people's nation (1–14). Bilenky's study provides an important framework for analysing current historical interpretations, since these accounts seek to address and to account for Russia's changing borders in Eastern Europe and the Black Sea region. A uniform historical narrative would seek to create a standard mental map for young Russians that would reflect current state positions and possibly justify any territorial changes that would then be reflected in the official map-as-logo. Thus, historical narratives play an important role in creating a geographically defined homeland. As Vitaly Bezrogov concludes in his analysis of the idea of the homeland in Soviet and early post-Soviet textbooks, patriotic education creates an 'official Homeland' (113–15). This desire to create an official understanding of the Russian homeland appears as a highly prevalent theme within contemporary Russian history textbooks.

As noted by political analyst Dmitry Oreshkin, the revised Russian history textbooks seek to use history to build support for current policies (Sukhov, *TheMoscowTimes.com*). This is most apparent with the current construction of a historical narrative that addresses the Crimean Peninsula's longstanding ties to Russia and that aims to build support for current Russian policies. In analysing the textbooks' accounts of Crimea, important ideas are Anderson's notions of the imagined community and of simultaneity in homogeneous, empty time, as well as Bilenky's conceptions of mental maps. Approved texts seek to integrate Crimea fully into the overarching Russian historical narrative through illustrating that the people in Crimea and throughout Russia concurrently participated in major events and developed shared historical experiences. Crimea's inclusion in Russia's broader historical narrative aims to strengthen Russian citizens' identification of Crimea as a significant part of their homeland.

### **Significance of the Study**

The role of national or historical narratives' influence on contemporary perceptions has been noted by researchers. For example, Grever and van der Vlies state that national narratives encompass a nation's achievements and seek 'to make sense of past events and to create cohesion in the present with a view to the future' and contend that these national narratives are especially attractive to young people (287). Similarly, in a study on Russian historical narratives, Ismailov and Ganieva state that a historical narrative 'provides broad interpretations of the national past and links it to the present', through which people gain an understanding of their country's role in the international community (369). Additional studies concerning Russian historical narratives indicate that scholars have noted the important connection between politics, patriotism and historical education. For example, Tatyana Tsyrlina-Spady examines Russian teachers' thoughts on nationalism and ideology in history courses, and her work reveals that many teachers perceive of history as a means for moulding future citizens (31–52). Somewhat similarly, Liudmila Aleksashkina and Joseph Zajda analyse the development of new history education standards and conclude that ideology and politics continue to be major influential factors in the development of a history curriculum in Russia (Aleksashkina and Zajda 171–84). Other studies have focused on the language and discourse

used to examine specific events or persons in Soviet and Russian history. For example, Todd H. Nelson's work considers textbook narratives' depictions of Stalin and the Second World War (37–65), and F. M. Eliisa Vähä's research examines the portrayal of Soviet and Russian heroes (545–59).

While these studies have explored various cases of the interconnected natures of history education and politics, this study adds to the existing research through an analysis of specific aspects of history education within the context of the Osnovy. The focus on patriotic education reflects the Russian government's recent efforts to promote patriotism and support for the Putin administration in various arenas.

The Russian government has undertaken specific and concrete measures to promote unity and support for the Russian government among young Russians. In particular, these have focused on promoting the Putin brand on the internet via platforms such as YouTube (Fedor and Fredheim 161–81). There are various efforts underway to promote a positive image online, either through using trolls to harass and overwhelm opposition voices and/or via links and videos targeted at young people (Fedor and Fredheim 161–81). Specifically, the aim is to create a 'new positive youth agenda'; the appearance of youth organizations such as the Set' ('Net' or 'Network') movement seek to promote Putin and his policies online. Set' targets young people, aged 17 to 27, and appears to have close ties to the Russian government, but the exact nature of these connections remain unclear. Set' is a new, modern alternative to the previous pro-Putin youth organizations such as Nashi (Ours), which adopted belligerent tactics that harmed Putin's image. In contrast, Set' aims to attract members by using traditional propaganda, such as posters and speakers, as well as through a very modern website that frequently imparts a pro-government stance on current events (Carroll, 'Russia looks to'; Nemtsova, 'Putin Youth': Nemtsova, 'Vladimir Putin's biggest fan club' Set. <http://проектсеть.рф/>).

In other instances, various efforts to promote pride in Russia are intended to appeal to Russians of all age groups. Among the current efforts are the promotion of major sporting events such as the Sochi Winter Olympics and the 2018 FIFA World Cup as means to showcase Russia's status as an important international player and thus induce pride among citizens (Gorokhov 267–80; Orttung and Zhemukhov 1–3, 6–7, 11, 113–14, 124). Moreover, Russian cinema in recent years has become a vehicle for the dissemination of an approved and heroic version of history. For example, official approval has been afforded to *Panfilov's 28 Men*, which recounts a heroic myth of the Second World War; however, the Russian government has banned certain films, such as *The Death of Stalin*, which have been deemed detrimental to society (Bone 'Putin backs WW2 myth in new Russian film'; Roth 'Russia bans the darkly comic film "Death of Stalin"'). In addition to film, the Russian government has identified television as an area that is important for uniting Russians through building support for the current government. For instance, a recent adaptation of *The Master and Margarita* reduced Bulgakov's anti-authoritarian critiques, which might have prompted comparisons with the current government (Brassard 151–8). Regarding the visual arts, the recent unveiling of statues in Moscow and Kaliningrad dedicated to Russian actions in the First World War as well as the statue of Vladimir the Great outside the Kremlin ('Otkrytie pamiatnika'; 'Kaliningrad Unveils'; Walker 'From one Vladimir to another') aim to remind Russian citizens, as well as visitors, of Russia's wartime efforts and connections to the Black Sea/Crimean region.

Coupled with these wide-ranging measures designed to instil pride in Russian citizens, Russian history textbooks can play a particularly vital role in fulfilling two of the Osnovy's objectives: fostering civic pride/identity and transferring Russia's norms, traditions, values and customs to future generations. The language used in various texts can represent both reality and experience and can convey specific images, including the mental attitudes, of



historical periods (Klerides 32). Thus, the *Osnovy*, coupled with the call for new historical standards, provides an opportunity to examine the importance of language and narrative presentation in constructing students' civic/patriotic identity – an identity that shapes the manner in which these New Russian Citizens understand their country's history and role in the contemporary world.

### Emphasizing Success in the First World War

On 1 August 2014, Putin participated in a ceremony dedicating a monument to the Russian (*rossiiskii*) soldiers who fought in the First World War.<sup>8</sup> During his speech, Putin acknowledged that previously the First World War has not been recognized as a major event in Russia, but this new monument and ceremony corrects this error and integrates the First World War more fully into Russian history ('*Otkrytie pamiatnika*'; 'Unveiling of a monument'). In contrast to this new emphasis on the First World War, Soviet-era accounts of it tended to be overshadowed by the resounding victory in the Great Patriotic War (the Soviet, and now Russian, term for the Second World War). Compared to this victory, Russia's involvement in the First World War clearly did not result in a military victory; instead, Russian actions appeared as a series of failures (Socor, Jamestown.org).

Putin's recent focus on Russian heroism in the First World War stands in marked contrast to earlier accounts. In I. B. Berkhin and I. A. Fedosov's 1982 Soviet textbook for class 9, the authors briefly discuss the Battle of the Marne. A major point is that Russian armies drew German troops from the Western Front to the Eastern Front, thereby preventing a decisive German victory in France (Berkhin and Fedosov 108). While this narrative does highlight the Russian army's important role in the battle, the term 'victory' is used in a negative sense. The emphasis is on Russia preventing Germany from gaining a victory, not upon the Allies securing a victory at the Marne. In fact, in this textbook the word victory is not used to describe any Allied actions in connection with the Marne, and thus, Russia's actions in the East are not linked to an Allied victory at the Marne (108). Another key aspect of the Soviet narrative is that during the initial weeks of the war and into the autumn of 1914, Russia sustained heavy losses (108–9). The discussion of losses and the absence of clearly linking Russian actions on the Eastern Front to specific victories or successes on the Western Front at best presents Russian actions on the battlefield as a limited success.

Even less of an emphasis on Russian successes in the war appears in A. A. Danilov and L. G. Kosulina's post-Soviet textbook for class 9, published in 2000. The authors note that the transfer of German troops from the Western Front to the Eastern Front allowed the British and the French to win at the Battle of the Marne, but they do not really connect Russian actions on the Eastern Front with the Allied success at the Marne (Danilov and Kosulina 63). The authors further note the losses inflicted upon the Russian forces and, in particular, the entirety of 1914 is characterized as a year of 'missed opportunities' (62). The authors use this phrase to introduce and to conclude their discussion of events in 1914, thus casting all of Russia's actions in 1914 as failing to produce significant results.

Though A. A. Danilov is one of the textbook's authors, the wartime narrative presented would seem to contradict his earlier statements about the effects of negative historical accounts upon young people ('*The New Educational Standards*' 40, 44). However, as noted previously, only recently have Russian officials begun to focus on refashioning accounts of

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<sup>8</sup> In this speech, Putin uses the term *rossiiskii* when speaking generally of Russian soldiers and officers. However, he refers to *russkii* when mentioning the Russian army and with regard to Russian regiments on the Eastern Front.

the First World War. A comparison of Danilov and Kosulina's 2000 textbook with Danilov et al.'s 2014 textbook provides a clear example of the current revisions.

Contemporary textbook accounts are reflective of Putin's new approach of acknowledging Russian soldiers' heroism and commitment to their allies. The current textbooks for classes 9, 10 and 11 stress Russia's invaluable contributions to the Allied war effort. For example, the authors directly link early Russian successes on the Eastern Front to the victory at the Battle of the Marne. Russian advances on the Eastern Front prompted German commanders to move troops to this region, which alleviated some of the pressure on the Western Allied forces. While all three textbooks note that these engagements between Russian and German forces ended in major losses for the Russians, the primary emphasis is upon the Russians' ability to draw German troops away from the Western Front. Specifically, the textbooks for classes 9 and 10 argue that Russia played a role in victory at the Marne River, while that for class 11 depicts Russian actions as instrumental for allowing Western Allies to hold Paris (Danilov et al. 64–5; Gorinov et al. 1: 16–17; Levandovskii et al. 54–5). Though contemporary Russian history textbooks recount losses on the Eastern Front, as compared to the 1982 and 2000 textbooks these narratives elevate Russia's status from that of a beleaguered power struggling in vain on the Eastern Front to a valuable ally whose actions enabled a much-needed Allied victory in the war's early weeks.

Another key aspect of the war in 1914 is the Russian army's engagements on the Eastern Front. The 1982 Soviet textbook for class 9 only briefly mentions the Russian advances into Galicia (Berkhin and Fedosov 108). The 2000 textbook for class 9 acknowledges Russian advances and victory in Galicia and notes that Russian actions caused the Turks' retreat to Erzurum. However, the authors then assess the significance of 1914. They conclude that though Germany could no longer hope for a quick war, the Germans remained active on both fronts, and reiterate that for Russia, 'the war's first year was a year of missed opportunities' (Danilov and Kosulina 62, 64). Underscoring this characterization is an accompanying picture that shows dead soldiers in the trenches after an attack (64). The Soviet narrative's brief mention of Russian success and the post-Soviet narrative's continued emphasis on the Russian losses undercuts Russian efforts and depicts the entire Russian war effort in 1914 as of fleeting value at best.

In contrast, the accounts in contemporary textbooks, with their emphasis upon victory in the East, can be understood as rejections of the older narratives. These contemporary history textbooks' authors highlight Russian victory or successes on the Eastern Front, specifically in Galicia (Danilov et al. 65; Gorinov et al. 1: 17–18; Levandovskii et al. 55). The 2016 textbook for class 10 aims to underscore these successes in Galicia with the inclusion of a colour photograph of Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war within Russia. Additionally, this 2016 class 10 textbook and the 2014 class 9 textbook include a discussion of Russian actions in Transcaucasia, which forced the Turks' retreat to Erzurum (Gorinov et al. 1: 17–18; Danilov et al. 65).

Though Danilov and Kosulina's 2000 textbook mentioned the Turks' retreat, the current textbooks present a more positive account. Danilov et al. in the 2014 history textbook for class 9 and Gorinov et al. in the 2016 textbook for class 10 conclude their narratives of 1914 with Russia's enemies, the Austro-Hungarians and the Turks, retreating. Neither the contemporary textbook for class 9 nor for class 10 end their discussion of 1914 by referring to it as a year of 'missed opportunities'. Instead, the contemporary textbooks highlight Russian triumphs on the battlefield. Moreover, the account in the contemporary class 10 textbook seeks to demonstrate that Russian forces did not simply suffer a string of defeats in the East. Instead, the photograph of Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war serves as visual evidence of the Russian military's success. From these narratives, Russian students may develop feelings

of pride in their country's wartime performance since there emerges an image of Russia as a committed Allied power that aided its allies in the West and that was able to win its own victories in the East.

Russia's continued involvement in the war prompted the Soviet and early post-Soviet accounts to portray events in 1915 rather bleakly. In the 1982 textbook for class 9, the authors begin their general overview of the war's outbreak with a discussion of the lack of needed guns, ammunition and other wartime supplies. The narrative castigates the incompetence of the tsarist system that dragged Russia into an imperialistic war (Berkhin and Fedosov 108). The 1982 textbook and the 2000 textbook both state that Russia suffered from losses in 1915 and that the Allies did not assist Russia either with supplies or with a counterattack designed to draw the Central Powers from the Eastern Front. These accounts relate that the Russian army continued to fight and to tie down German troops on the Eastern Front (Berkhin and Fedosov 109; Danilov and Kosulina 65). The 2000 textbook, however, further notes that, amid heavy losses, the Russian army's morale declined. On the page facing this statement is the photograph of dead soldiers in the trenches (Danilov and Kosulina 64, 65).

Clearly, the 1982 and 2000 textbooks portray 1915 as a year of defeats. In keeping with the then-Soviet historical interpretation, the 1982 book blames the tsarist government for the army's poor performance. The 2000 textbook's mentioning of the Russian soldiers' declining morale, coupled with the photo of dead soldiers in the trenches, strongly reinforces the idea that Russian wartime endeavours were futile. Though these textbooks were written at two different periods of Russia history, both perpetuate the narrative that Russia's participation in the war consisted of a senseless series of failures.

While these older narratives focus on the negative aspects of 1915, the contemporary textbooks craft a version of history that shows that even amid defeats, the Russian soldiers exhibited great resolve. For example, all three contemporary textbooks state that the defeats in 1915, known as the 'Velikoe Oststuplenie' (Great Retreat), stemmed from a variety of factors, including a concentration of German forces in the East; problems within the Russian supply chain, especially with regard to weapons and ammunition; a dearth of effective commanders; and a lack of assistance from the other Allied powers. Amid these conditions, however, Russian actions on the Eastern Front continued to benefit the Allied powers on the Western Front, with the majority of the fighting occurring in the East and this therefore relieving pressure on the Western Front. None of these three textbooks mentions a decline in morale among Russian soldiers (Danilov et al. 65; Gorinov et al. 1: 18–19; Levandovskii et al. 55). The textbook for class 11 notes that the soldiers grew exasperated that officials could not ensure a major victory, but at the same time the soldiers are described as 'zealously fighting' (Levandovskii et al. 55). Even more pointedly, the current textbook for class 10 contends that the Russian soldiers and officers were not demoralized at all (Gorinov et al. 19). These accounts depict Russia as a resolute and honourable country that fulfilled its obligations to the Allies even when Allied forces did not offer assistance readily. The implication of these discussions is that Russian students can continue to discuss proudly their country's wartime efforts.

Russian actions of 1916 have also undergone revision. In the older narratives of the war, the losses of 1915 are followed by a discussion of military actions in 1916. The 1982 class 9 textbook notes that in 1916 the Russian army responded to the German attack on Verdun with the Brusilov Offensive. Though initially the Russian army advanced deep into Austro-Hungarian territory, ultimately the offensive ended in failure. There is a mention of Russian victories against the Turks, and the conclusion that Russian participation in the war halted Germany's plans for a quick victory. Yet, as with the earlier discussion of the Marne, there is no implicit link between Russian actions in the East and Western Allied victories, such as

Verdun (Berkhin 109–10). Instead, this account of the First World War portrays Russia's major contribution as diverting German troops from the Western Front.

In the 2000 class 9 textbook, 1916 is again characterized as a year of defeat. The discussion begins with a description of the year as a time of 'losing victory', and though the textbook discusses the German attack on Verdun and the Russian Brusilov Offensive which allowed Russia to advance well into Austro-Hungarian territory, there is no direct link between this and the Allied victory at Verdun (Danilov and Kosulina 65–6). All this continues the narrative's theme of the war as a disaster. Russian efforts are not portrayed as being of substantial importance to Allied victories.

Contemporary history textbooks offer a very different perspective on 1916. All three recent textbooks stress that throughout 1916 Russian actions on the battlefield served as a counter to the German assault on Verdun and aimed to reverse the earlier losses experienced during the Great Retreat. Russian efforts to recoup these losses took the form of the famous Brusilov Offensive. During this offensive, Russian troops initially pushed deep into enemy territory, which almost caused the Austro-Hungarian Empire's collapse. However, the Brusilov Offensive ultimately failed, as German and Austro-Hungarian commanders moved troops to counter the advancing Russian forces. Though the textbooks' authors acknowledge that the Brusilov Offensive failed, they stress that these Russian actions aided the Western Allies in stopping the German attack on Verdun (Danilov et al. 66; Gorinov et al. 1: 20–1; Levandovskii et al. 55–7). Moreover, the authors of the class 10 textbook follow their discussion of the 1915 retreats with a strong emphasis on subsequent Russian victories. These authors asseverate that in 1916, Russian actions in the East resulted in victories, which forced Turkish troops from Erzurum. These successes prompted the Western Allies to recognize Russia's triumphs and to agree that, at the end of the war, Russia would be granted control over parts of Turkish Armenia and the Black Sea Straits (Gorinov et al. 1: 18–19). These descriptions of victories against the Ottomans and the Western Allies' acknowledgment thereof strengthen the notion that Russia contributed to the Allies' ultimate triumph and provide additional reasons for students to exhibit pride in their country's wartime endeavours.

Again, as with the account of victory at the Marne, these contemporary narratives contend that Russia's ability to draw German forces to the Eastern Front proved instrumental for major Allied successes. The recognition that Russia contributed to the Allied efforts to stop the German advance highlights Russia's vital role in the First World War and serves as a major distinguishing factor between current history textbooks and the previously published accounts. These contemporary textbooks' repeated descriptions of Russian actions leading to victory or success crafts a narrative that fully inserts Russia into the Allied war effort and seeks to negate the historical perceptions of the Russian army's failures on the Eastern Front. These narratives intend to demonstrate that Russian military actions directly shaped the immediate outcome of specific battles and contributed to the long-term Allied victory. Thus, these textbooks' portrayals imbue students with the notion that Russia should be afforded an esteemed position among the Allied Powers as its forces strove bravely to defend their homeland against the Central Powers.

This feeling of pride in Russia's actions is enhanced by a discussion of specific war heroes. The authors of the 2016 class 10 textbook state that mass conscription allowed common people opportunities to perform heroically. Heroes include Iu. V. Gilsher, a renowned pilot; M. L. Bochkareva, who saved forty-eight soldiers and received the Hero Cross, 4th degree; N. Nechaev, who lost both eyes but remained on active duty in order to maintain his sanity; and V. Sokolov, a young student, who captured an enemy machine gun position and received the Order of St. George, 4th degree (Gorinov et al. 1: 21–2). In this account, heroes and heroines exhibit resolve and bravery and perform successful actions. As students learn of these

individuals, Russian heroism no longer remains an abstract concept but becomes a narrative which honours actual individuals. The First World War becomes more important to students when there is a list of identifiable heroes and heroines, whose individual efforts contributed to Russia's resolute actions as a committed Allied power and whose efforts were important in the defence of their homeland.

Putin's desire for a re-examination of the First World War may have directly influenced textbook publishers. At the 1 August 2014 dedication of the monument to Russian soldiers in the First World War, Putin focused on the soldiers' heroism. He remarked that a closer examination of the First World War reveals long-forgotten individual examples of bravery, which are key to understanding Russia's true role in the war. Moreover, Putin offered collective praise for the troops' 'traditsii boevogo tovarishchestva, bratstva, traditsii voinskoi chesti' ('traditions of military comradeship and brotherhood and the traditions of military honour'), which they subsequently transferred to the next generation of soldiers during the Great Patriotic War. This focus on wartime bravery reappears in the 2016 textbook for class 10. Since this textbook is the most recently published of the three contemporary textbooks examined, it is interesting that this book, unlike any of the others reviewed in this study, references wartime heroes' and heroines' deeds. Though the inclusion of these heroic accounts may be attributed to the authors' preferences, the inclusion of this material seems to indicate that Prosveshchenie strives to have textbook content conform closely to official views.

These contemporary historical accounts of the First World War can be understood as fulfilling several of the objectives of the Osnovy. First, the emphasis upon Russia's commitment to the Allied cause and soldiers' demonstrations of comradeship, bravery and honour ('Otkrytie pamiatnika') seeks to ensure that successive generations of students recognize the Russian military as an institution worthy of historical acclaim. In particular, students who later join the military could be seen as the guardians of these same values and then in turn might instil them in subsequent generations. Second, for all students, instances of individual heroism in the First World War aim to bolster civic identity by imparting the notion that citizens of Russia do not falter in their duty, but instead, the Russian nation, 'imagined community' consists of stalwart citizens. Taken together, the fulfilment of these objectives aims to create the New Russian Citizens, who express pride in their country's heritage and who seek to have Russia recognized globally for its past accomplishments.

### **Safeguarding the Soviet Union with the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact**

Efforts to instil pride about past actions are not confined to the battlefields of the First World War, but extend into the diplomatic realm with a discussion of the 1939 Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact. Current textbook accounts stress the pact's role in ensuring the Soviet Union's security and so justify its secret protocols. Though current textbooks portray the pact as defensive, shifts in its characterization have followed changes in the Soviet/Russian government. The Soviet government for years refused to acknowledge the pact's existence, and only during the period of reforms in the late 1980s did the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies condemn it. In an apparent reversal, some statements by current Russian officials are understood as attempts to defend the pact's conclusion (Coalson, RFERL.org).

Differing characterizations of the pact have also been a source of concern for non-governmental officials. Alexander Chubaryan, director of the Institute of Universal History of the Russian Academy of Sciences, states that the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact has been a source of contention, with some educational materials offering conflicting discussions regarding the pact's conclusion (Kuvaldin, RBTH.com). Chubaryan states that these conflicting accounts are evidence of the need for a standard history textbook and that he has worked unsuccessfully to have authors resolve disparities in their historical accounts (Kuvaldin, RBTH.com).



Historical narratives from the Soviet and early post-Soviet period grant insight into the changing understanding of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact. In the 1982 Soviet textbook for class 10, P. I. Potemkin et al. describe the pact as a defensive measure. The authors highlight the Soviet Union's prominent role in leading the struggle against Nazi Germany and explain that the Western powers – the United States, Great Britain and France – wanted to incite war between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany (Potemkin et al. 12–13). In particular, the British are described as treacherously dealing with the Nazis while the Soviets fought the Japanese in the Far East. The pact's secret protocols are not discussed. The main focus is upon justifying the pact either with Lenin's statement regarding the necessity to take advantage of divisions among the imperialist powers or with the continual emphasis upon the pact's ability to grant the Soviet Union time to bolster its defences. The textbook's authors further argue that the pact's merits are evident in its ability to preclude the Soviet Union from needing to fight a two-front war. In this narrative, the authors do not mention Stalin by name. They credit the Soviet Union for all the decisions and actions (Potemkin et al. 12–16). From this account, the pact appears as a measure needed to guarantee the Soviet Union's security.

This focus on security remains a theme in the 1992 history textbook for class 11. In this work, V. P. Ostrovskii et al. relate the importance of the Soviet Union's role in standing against Nazi Germany and in seeking an alliance with other states. Ideological differences precluded the formation of alliances and in particular, as in the 1982 textbook, the British are noted for their lack of cooperation with the Soviets (Potemkin 12–13, 16; Ostrovskii et al. 78). There are, however, some important differences between the 1982 and 1992 accounts. First, whereas in the Soviet-era textbook the words of Lenin are included as a partial justification for the pact (Potemkin et al. 16), the 1992 book includes the statement that Adolf Hitler eagerly sought a pact with the USSR (Ostrovskii et al. 8). Second, in the 1992 book the discussion of the Soviet Union signing the pact changes to an emphasis on Stalin's action. Stalin is portrayed in a negative manner. Specifically, the authors note that Stalin and his entourage overestimated this pact's potential as a foreign policy success. Stalin became overconfident, causing him to ignore the repeated warnings about a German invasion in 1941. The authors further describe Stalin as engaging in secret diplomacy and of conducting 'unprincipled transactions' that affected the future of three countries. These authors briefly describe the secret protocols with a mention of Poland, and note that the Soviet government did not publish these secret protocols (Ostrovskii et al. 7–8, 14).

In the post-Soviet era, justifications for the pact's conclusion remain of primary importance. The 1992 account continues the Soviet narrative of the pact as a defensive measure. The inclusion of Hitler's eagerness for a pact appears as an effort to shift partial blame for the pact upon Nazi Germany. At the same time, however, the authors emphasize Stalin's role in concluding the pact. The 1992 textbook's negative portrayal of Stalin casts doubts upon the pact's merits and reflects efforts in the 1990s to reassess the Soviet past and to highlight the communist system's failures. From this account, students form an impression of the pact as an effort to forestall a fascist invasion and as a flawed endeavour that formed the basis for Stalin's delay in preparing for war.

Danilov and Kosulina's textbook for class 9 published in 2000 provides a different perception of the pact. In this account, Stalin is presented with a difficult choice and opts to conclude the pact to safeguard his country and to prevent a two-front war (Danilov and Kosulina 196). Stalin is central to the narrative and his actions and concern are set amid an explanation of the British and French efforts to goad Hitler into a war with the Soviet Union. Nazi Germany is the aggressive power, and Stalin realized that should Nazi Germany defeat Poland then Nazi troops would be stationed near the Soviet border. Stalin's conclusion of the pact could allow for him to delay German troops' positioning on the Soviet Union's western border, buying



him time to strengthen the Soviet Union's defences and helping him to restore the tsarist empire's boundaries (196). The secret protocols are mentioned, and it is noted that the Soviets and Nazis divided Eastern Europe into spheres of influence. Specifically, the agreement called for a boundary between Soviet and Nazi forces in Poland, and accorded that Finland and Bessarabia constituted part of the Soviet Union's sphere of influence (196). The account in Danilov and Kosulina's 2000 book appears to have been satisfactory, since it shares many similarities with the contemporary textbooks. In particular, Danilov and Kosulina's positive portrayal of Stalin becomes a central factor in current textbook accounts. However, as will be noted below, there are some important differences regarding Eastern Europe's division in Danilov and Kosulina's 2000 work and Danilov et al.'s 2014 class 9 textbook.

The current Russian government's focus on the 1939 Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact's defensive nature (Coalson, RFERL.org) reappears in the three contemporary textbooks examined in this study. These books offer a consistent narrative of the events surrounding the pact and frame Stalin's decision within the context of defence and security amid the failure of other European powers' to ally with the Soviet Union. The authors note that Stalin attempted negotiations with the British and French, but these efforts failed because these Western leaders desired war between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. These accounts assign most of the blame to the British for pursuing secret plans to sign a non-aggression pact with Germany and for placating Germany by withdrawing from the original pledge to protect Poland (Danilov et al. 199–200; Gorinov et al. 1: 171–2; Levandovskii et al. 178–9). Moreover, the authors of the 2016 textbook for class 10 contend that Polish officials' refusal to allow the Red Army to traverse its territory aided the breakdown in discussions for a defence pact between the Soviet Union, France and Great Britain (Gorinov et al. 1: 171–2). The authors of the 2014 class 9 textbook further maintain that Stalin fully grasped the negative ramifications of forgoing an agreement with Germany. Stalin concluded that Germany would most probably defeat Poland in a war, and then German troops would be stationed on the Soviet Union's border (Danilov et al. 199). From these accounts, Stalin appears as a cautious individual who strove to forestall war; who selected the best choice for preserving his country; and who was not in league with Hitler. The discussion of the Soviets' failed negotiations with the British, French and Poles indicates to students that during times of crisis, Soviet, or now Russian, leaders may have limited options to choose from in order to safeguard the country.

The authors' explanation of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact's actual terms and the division of Eastern Europe continues the portrayal of Stalin as a leader intent upon securing his country's defence and interests. All three textbooks acknowledge the pact's secret protocols; and each book offers specific justifications for the agreement in general. In the 2014 textbook for class 9, Danilov et al. briefly mention the division of Eastern Europe into German and Soviet spheres of influence and note that the Eastern European countries were not consulted about this division (199–200). When describing the division, Danilov et al. use the phrase 'nov' ('once again') when stating that the Eastern Europeans had no choice in this matter (Danilov et al. 199–200). This phrase, absent from Danilov and Kosulina's earlier 2000 textbook (Danilov and Kosulina 195–196) implies that the 1939 division of Eastern Europe forms only one instance of reoccurring partitions. By inserting 'nov', it conveys the perception that the Great Powers divide Eastern Europe regularly and that this particular division in 1939 should not be a basis for unduly harsh international condemnation.

Quickly though, Danilov et al.'s discussion shifts to the pact's benefits to the Soviet Union. Of particular note, the pact prevented the West from pulling the Soviet Union into a war and provided the much-needed opportunity for the Soviet Union to strengthen its defences. Moreover, the authors note that the agreement precluded the Soviet Union from conducting a two-front war by permitting the concentration of troops in its eastern regions and their

deployment to defeat the Japanese. After the defeat of Japan in September 1939, the Soviet Union no longer worried about war on its eastern border (Danilov et al. 200). The current 2014 textbook's analysis of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact continues the 2000 textbooks' depiction of Stalin's actions within the context of security and defence.

Coupled with these security matters, Danilov et al. contend that the pact could allow Stalin to 'vosstanovit' gosudarstvo v granitsakh byvshei Rossiiskoi imperii' ('to restore the state boundaries of the former Russian Empire') (Danilov et al. 200). Stalin's desire to restore lands from the tsarist empire is present in the earlier 2000 textbook edition. However, the inclusion of this objective in the 2014 textbook, along with the insertion of *vnov'* when discussing Eastern Europe's partition, more strongly infers a Soviet claim to portions of Eastern Europe. The statement that the pact could result in the restoration of lost territory conveys the idea that Stalin did not annex lands to which there was no claim, but Stalin's actions resulted in regions of the former tsarist empire rejoining the then-Soviet state.

The Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact's ability to restore tsarist-era borders further appears in the 2016 textbook for class 10. The authors explicitly state that the Soviet Union regained lost territory as an outcome of the pact and that this territory had been "ottorgnut" ('forcibly separated') following the First World War (Gorinov et al. 1: 172). In the very next sentence, the authors state that the Germans devised the idea of dividing Eastern Europe. They further include an explanation that the agreement granted Stalin the time required to strengthen his country's defences (Gorinov et al. 1: 172).

As in the 2014 textbook for class 9, the 2016 textbook for class 10 aims to negate any notion that the Soviet Union acted in an expansionist manner. In particular, the use of the phrase *ottorgnut'* (Gorinov et al. 1: 172) implies that, prior to 1939, external factors tore these Eastern European lands from Russia. This phrasing and implication further give the impression that in 1939 these lands should rightfully have remained part of Russian territory and thus already been part of the Soviet Union. Ultimately, this narrative, as with the account found in the textbook for class 9, contends that Soviet actions in 1939 should not be viewed as completely illegitimate. Moreover, the authors note that Germany conceived of this division. Thus, the implication is that Germany is the power intent upon expansion, and the Soviet Union is only recovering lost territory.

In contrast to the narratives in the contemporary textbooks for classes 9 and 10, the account in the class 11 textbook only briefly mentions the division of Eastern Europe by including a list of the specific countries that fell into the Soviet sphere of influence. Instead of focusing on this territorial division, Levandovskii et al. underscore Stalin's efforts to prevent a German attack for as long as possible. This desire resulted in the Treaty of Friendship and Border, whereby the Soviet Union would enter into trade agreements with Nazi Germany (179, 182). This minor mention of the division of Eastern Europe shifts the attention and discussion away from the Soviet Union's actions in Eastern Europe and instead focuses on Stalin's efforts to maintain peace and on the importance of strong leadership.

These accounts of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact can be understood as furthering the objective of fostering civic pride outlined in the *Osnovy*. These narrative presentations intend to demonstrate that students should not consider the pact's conclusion and even its secret protocols as shameful episodes in their history, but instead, they may perceive Stalin as a pragmatic and cautious leader who negotiated an important defensive pact and whose actions permitted the recovery of lost regions of the homeland. These accounts reinforce the image of the nation or imagined community as governed by strong leaders and as rightfully extending beyond its present borders. Such narratives illustrate Bezrogov's notion that patriotic education works to create an official homeland. For Russian students – that is, the New Russian Citizens – these accounts shape their mental maps of the nation or imagined community as

historically extending into present-day Eastern Europe and may cultivate more acceptance for the Crimean Peninsula's recent incorporation into the Russian Federation. These students' views of a historically extended homeland that includes portions of Eastern Europe may ultimately translate into continued support for Russia to assert its influence beyond its current borders and possibly to reclaim other regions perceived as having been part of Russia's historical homeland.

### **Assessing the German Threat and Managing the Soviet Response to the Outbreak of the Great Patriotic War**

Similar to the contemporary accounts of Stalin's deliberative approach to the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, current interpretations of Stalin's actions in the weeks preceding the German attack and during the initial days of invasion appear to portray him as cautious and constantly in charge of managing the Soviet Union's war effort. This continued depiction of Stalin during moments of intense crisis may impart to students the notion that, during challenging periods, their country has best been served by a strong leader. Since the Soviets' ultimate victory in the Great Patriotic War is a major defining event in modern Russian history and a source of enormous pride for the Russian people, these textbooks' portrayals of Stalin may foster in students a connection between pride in their country's resolute determination in times of crisis and the need for a strong, even authoritarian leader, who aims to defend his country's interests.

With the Great Patriotic War constituting a key aspect of Russian heritage, the Kremlin is sensitive to historical analyses of the events related to the war. Putin has criticized textbooks that adopt a harsh view of the Soviet Union's wartime actions (Sukhov, *TheMoscowTimes.com*). In contrast to such accounts, Putin frequently emphasizes the Soviet Union's leading role in defeating Nazi Germany ('Protokol zasedaniia...').

Patriotism during the Great Patriotic War appears as a constant theme in past textbooks, yet the books vary in their depiction of Stalin's role. The authors of the 1982 textbook for class 10 craft a narrative that includes the communist interpretation of the war and which focuses on the Central Committee's and the Council of People's Commissars' general efforts to rally citizens. The account of the war's initial days does not mention Stalin specifically and does not discuss his reaction to the German invasion (Potemkin et al. 31–3). The first mention of Stalin occurs when he addresses the Soviet people via radio on 3 July. A further generalized discussion of Soviet mobilization occurs, followed then by the creation of the State Committee for Defence (GKO) on 30 June as well as the creation of the Supreme High Command. Stalin served as chair of both organizations (Potemkin et al. 34). This narrative's focus on the Soviet Union's collective leadership reflect the political interpretation of the war in the late Soviet period. While students develop a perception of a unified war effort, the structuring of events gives an impression of a chaotic situation. Specifically, the repeated insertion of paragraphs describing fighting on the frontlines between paragraphs describing Stalin's radio address and the creation of the GKO and the Supreme High Command portrays the Soviet leadership as failing to take immediate action. The mention of the date of 30 June for the GKO's creation and no date being given for the birth of the Supreme High Command implies that the Soviet leadership took eight days to respond to the German invasion.

In the post-Soviet period, the 1992 book for class 11 further downplays the role of Stalin and provides a narrative that the Soviet leadership reacted in stages to the war's development and not in a directed and well-planned manner. The narrative begins with a discussion of Germany's overwhelming advance. Stalin is described as being demoralized during the war's first days, and on 23 June, the Central Committee and the Council of People's Commissars created the High Command (Stavka) (Ostrovskii et al. 21–2). Stalin is listed as a member but

not as chair. Following this event, the authors include further discussion of the Red Army's losses and mention a decision on 10 July to change the High Command to the Supreme High Command headed by Stalin (22–3). Again, the authors describe the fighting on the various fronts for several pages and include Stalin's 16 August decree ordering soldiers to fight to the end (23–7). The authors outline the GKO's creation on 30 June, with Stalin as chair (27). This account provides a stark portrayal of the Soviet war effort: Stalin being absent from a leading role in the war's outbreak and the inclusion of his decree on 16 August infer the possibility of declining morale among Soviet soldiers. Moreover, Stavka's and the GKO's creations interpolated into the narrative of an ever-advancing German army give the impression of an unprepared Soviet leadership who are hastily attempting to manage the war.

Unlike Ostrovskii et al.'s 1992 account, Danilov and Kosulina's 2000 class 9 textbook conveys a more flattering portrayal of Stalin. According to this narrative, in 1941 Stalin did not believe that Hitler would invade the Soviet Union, since Great Britain remained undefeated. Should Hitler attack the Soviet Union, he would trigger a two-front war for Germany. Instead, Stalin contended that the Germans would invade in mid-1942. Stalin's apprehension about a war with Germany appeared in his decision not to prepare for such a war. He feared that any military preparations by the Soviets would be construed as a violation of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact and would give the Germans a pretext for invasion (202). There then follows an account of the war in abbreviated form. Following this description, the authors discuss the creation of the High Command (Stavka) on 23 June, later renamed the Supreme High Command, on 8 August, with Stalin as chair. This organization was created to direct the war on the Eastern Front. After the creation of Stavka, the GKO is set up with Stalin as chair (203–4). While this account has a more Stalin-centred focus and offers reasons for his actions, the description overall does not present the Soviet leadership as smoothly addressing the German invasion. The inclusion of an outline of the stages of the war, between the German invasion and Stavka's creation, breaks up the narrative and conveys the idea that Stavka and the GKO were only established well after the fighting had started.

In contrast to these earlier accounts, all three contemporary textbooks contain similar narratives that portray Stalin's and thus the Soviet response to the Germans as decisive. They all relate Stalin's apprehension concerning measures that would appear to violate the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact (Danilov et al. 207–8; Gorinov et al. 2: 12; Levandovskii 185). The authors of the textbooks for classes 9 and 10 acknowledge that Stalin obtained highly detailed intelligence reports from Soviet sources, including Richard Sorge, concerning Germany's planned invasion (Danilov et al. 207–8; Gorinov et al. 2: 12). Moreover, the authors of the class 10 textbook explain that British Prime Minister Winston Churchill informed Stalin of the impending German attack (Gorinov et al. 2: 12). However, the authors of the textbooks for classes 9 and 10 contend that various factors caused Stalin to proceed very cautiously and to undertake no actions that the Germans could infer as aggressive. Among the most important factors were Stalin's realization of his country's lack of preparedness for war and his belief that while England remained undefeated, Hitler would not launch an attack on the Soviet Union (Danilov et al. 208; Gorinov et al. 2: 12). As a result, Stalin proceeded very guardedly, refusing to grant the Germans reasons for arguing that the Soviets had violated the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact. In the 2014 textbook for class 9, the authors note that '[v] to zhe vremia nel'zia bylo dat' nemtsam povoda dlia obvineniia v narushenii Pakta o nenapadenii' ('[d]uring that time, [the Soviets] should not undertake actions that would provide the Germans with grounds for violating the non-aggression pact') (Danilov et al. 208). In the class 10 textbook, almost exactly the same wording occurs, with the authors stating that '[v] etikh usloviakh nel'zia bylo, po ego mneniuiu, davat' nemtsam povod dlia obvineniia v narushenii dogovora

o nenapadenii' ('[i]n these conditions one should not provide the Germans with grounds for violating the non-aggression treaty') (Gorinov et al. 2: 12).

This theme of Stalin's careful approach apropos the Germans receives additional explanation through the use of varied examples. In the 2014 textbook for class 9, the authors seek to explain Stalin's hesitancy in the early days of the German invasion. Stalin's constant fear that the Germans would undertake actions to provoke a war initially prompted him, even after the Germans had launched their attack on the Soviet Union, to forbid Soviet troops from crossing the German–Soviet border (Danilov et al. 208). The authors of the 2016 textbook for class 10 note that Stalin calculated that a war with Germany would follow the same pattern as had occurred in Western Europe, with a period of negotiations preceding its outbreak. This belief caused Stalin to delay issuing orders that would have better prepared the Soviet Army (Gorinov et al. 2: 12).

Levandovskii et al. in the class 11 textbook adopt a somewhat different emphasis. These authors state that Soviet ideology regarding the Communist Revolution and the belief that a future war would lead to conflict between the proletariat and bourgeoisie prompted the relocation of critical supplies to the Soviet Union's western regions. With the outbreak of war, German troops utilized many of these abandoned supplies, and the retreating Soviet forces destroyed the other stockpiles. The reasoning behind the relocation of these supplies stemmed from the observation that this area would be the first region invaded by the Germans and therefore a critical theatre for the resultant struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie (Levandovskii et al. 185).<sup>9</sup> Coupled with this ideology, Stalin firmly held that German troops would advance to the economically important Ukraine and then proceed to the oil fields in the Caucasus. At the same time, the authors reiterate the theme that the fear of a German attack caused Soviet leaders to forgo more military preparations, '[i]z-za opaseniia dat' povod Berlinu k razryvu pakta o nenapadenii Krasnaia armiiia ne byla vovremia privedena v boevuiu gotovnost' ('the Red Army was not prepared for war because of the fear that such action would give Berlin grounds for breaking the non-aggression pact') (Levandovskii et al. 185).

All three textbooks perpetuate the characterization of Stalin as a pragmatic and cautious individual, who attempted to preserve peace and to delay war with Germany. Furthermore, the authors' examinations of Soviet decisions in the context of previous patterns of German behaviour and Soviet ideological doctrine illustrate additional reasons for Stalin's approach. Even though the authors' specific accounts and use of examples may vary, their overall interpretation of Stalin aims to establish a clear conception of a leader determined to develop a resourceful course of action for his country amid the tumultuous events of the early 1940s.

As the textbooks' authors begin their discussion of the initial German attack, they continue their characterization of Stalin as a calm and resolute individual. Following the outbreak of war, all three textbooks posit that new military and governmental organizations formed to conduct and organize operations. Three textbooks offer very similar brief accounts of the formation of these new organizations. These accounts are quoted below with English translations.

The authors of the 2014 textbook for class 9 state:

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<sup>9</sup> In the 1930s, the Soviets held that fascism was the manifestation of the dying capitalist system. According to Soviet doctrine, the war between the Soviet Union (communism) and Nazi Germany (fascism) would be the final struggle in which the forces of fascism would be defeated. Since this would be the final struggle, the Soviets believed that the proletariat would rise up in the initial stages of a Nazi invasion. Therefore, the Soviets moved their supplies to the border region so that the proletariats would be able to use these supplies as soon as war commenced.

Dlia rukovodstva imi 23 iunია byla obrazovana Stavka Glavnogo komandovaniia (pozdnee Stavka Verkhovnogo glavnokomandovaniia), v sostav kotoroi voshli I. V. Stalin, V. M. Molotov, S. K. Timoshenko, S. M. Budennyi, K. E. Voroshilov, B. M. Shaposhnikov i G. K. Zhukov. Verkhovnym glavnokomanduiushchim stal I. V. Stalin.

Voina potrebovala otkaza ot riada demokraticeskikh form upravleniia stranoi, predusmotrennykh Konstitutsiei 1936 g. 30 iunია vsia polnota vlasti byla sosredotochena v rukakh Gosudarstvennogo Komiteta Oborony, predsedatelem kotorogo byl Stalin (Danilov et al. 209).

On 23 June the Headquarters of the Main Command (later the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command) was formed to direct actions on the warfronts. Its membership consisted of I. V. Stalin, V. M. Molotov, S. K. Timoshenko, S. M. Budennyi, K. E. Voroshilov, B. M. Shaposhnikov and G. K. Zhukov. The Supreme Commander in Chief was I. V. Stalin.

The war ended the democratic government as outlined in the 1936 Constitution. On 30 June complete power was concentrated in the hands of the State Defence Committee, and Stalin served as the committee Chairman.

The authors of the 2016 textbook for class 10 state:

Dlia rukovodstva imi 23 iunია byla obrazovana Stavka Glavnogo komandovaniia (pozdnee Stavka Verkhovnogo glavnokomandovaniia), v sostav kotoroi voshli I. V. Stalin, S. K. Timoshenko, G. K. Zhukov, V. M. Molotov, S. M. Budennyi, K. E. Voroshilov, N. G. Kuznetsov. Verkhovnym glavnokomanduiushchim stal I. V. Stalin.

30 iunია vsia polnota vlasti byla sosredotochena v rukakh Gosudarstvennogo Komiteta Oborony, predsedatelem kotorogo byl Stalin (Gorinov et al. 2: 12–13).

On 23 June the Headquarters of the Main Command (later the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command) was formed to direct actions on the warfronts. Its membership consisted of I. V. Stalin, S. K. Timoshenko, G. K. Zhukov, V. M. Molotov, S. M. Budennyi, K. E. Voroshilov, N. G. Kuznetsov. Supreme Commander in Chief was I. V. Stalin.

On 30 June all complete power was concentrated in the hands of the State Defence Committee, and Stalin served as the committee Chairman.

The authors of the 2015 textbook for class 11 state:

23 iunია uchrezhdaetsia Stavka Glavnogo Komandovaniia (s avgusta – Stavka Verkhovnogo glavnokomandovaniia), 30 iunია – Gosudarstvennyi Komitet Oborony (GKO), ofitsialno skontsentrirrovavshii vsiu polnotu gosudarstvennoi i voennoi vlasti. Predsedatelem GKO i Verkhovnym glavnokomanduiushchim byl naznachен I. V. Stalin (Levandovskii et al. 189–90).

On June 23 the Headquarters of the Main Command (from August Headquarters of the Supreme High Command), was established, and on 30 June, the State Committee for Defence (GKO) officially assumed complete control of the governmental and the war effort. I. V. Stalin served as the Chairman of the GKO and the Supreme Commander in chief.

Overall, these accounts relate the apparent seamless creation of new and powerful institutions to oversee the war effort, thereby creating the perception of the Soviet leadership, especially Stalin, steadily managing the response to the war. The textbooks' authors present



the creation of Stavka and the GKO as part of a list of events that occurred in the direct aftermath of German invasion. This methodology precludes the need to address the specific leaders' reactions to the German invasion, particularly those of Stalin. The image presented is of an effectively functioning government with Stalin at its head, which would seem to counter works by certain Western historians who question Stalin's precise role during the war's initial stages.<sup>10</sup>

As Grever and van der Vlies have stated, textbooks generally present historical events in a basic format accessible to students at a particular grade level, and these books do not in engage in detailed discussions or analysis of historical events (290). However, Grever and van der Vlies note that this textbook structure does not preclude scholars from critiquing content (290). All three textbooks' succinct mention of Stavka's and the GKO's creation indicates a formalized interpretation of events and can be understood as reflective of attempts to instill one understanding of historical events among students in different classes. Should the Russian history curriculum become more standardized, students may have less of an opportunity to discuss various interpretations of historical events and reduced access to competing materials. The history curriculum's standardization could reach beyond schools to historical monographs. All works would espouse generally the same understanding of past events and lessen students' and the public's ability to analyse critically historical personages and events.

Though these three narratives present a very similar overview of the creation of Stavka and the GKO, the accounts contain a discrepancy regarding the military and naval leaders listed, which may be evidence of the ongoing process of revising historical accounts to create a more patriotic narrative. The discrepancy concerns B. M. Shaposhnikov, whose name appears among the leaders listed in the class 9 textbook. But in the class 10 textbook, Shaposhnikov has been replaced by N. G. Kuznetsov. A possible explanation for this discrepancy relates to these commanders' reactions to the initial German attack. On 23 June, as Soviet forces fell to the German onslaught, the constant tension so overwhelmed Marshal B. M. Shaposhnikov that he became ill. Stalin later recalled Shaposhnikov, who was still unwell, and reinstated him as chief of staff. In contrast, it does not appear that Admiral N. G. Kuznetsov's health or nerves faltered during the war's initial days (Montefiore 363–70, 381). Since the textbooks for classes 9 and 10 have been approved by the Ministry of Education and Science, it would appear that both lists are acceptable, and the class 10 textbook's revision to the list of Stavka members may reflect more accurately Stavka's actual composition during the early days of the war. However, since the textbook for class 10 portrays Russia and the Soviet Union most positively among the three contemporary textbooks, this revised version may serve the additional purpose of providing a list of Soviet military and naval commanders who appeared consistently stalwart in the face of the German attack, and the revised list may aim to bolster the image of a strong, powerful and united leadership and thus country.

These accounts of Stalin and the Soviet leadership reinforce to students that during the period leading up to war and in its immediate outbreak, Stalin and other high-ranking officials acted to safeguard and then defend the Soviet Union. From the way the three textbooks' narratives discuss Stalin's assessment of the German threat and the Soviet leadership's response to the outbreak of war, students can take pride in a period in their history when the country's leaders resourcefully confronted grave threats. Thus, these narratives can be viewed as playing a role in achieving the goal of fostering civic pride as outlined in the *Osnovy* and as emphasizing the reoccurring theme of constructing Russia as an imagined community

<sup>10</sup> There is much debate in Western historiography about Stalin's response to the German invasion. For an acute analysis of Stalin's specific actions, see the work of historian Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar*, Vintage Books, 2005, specifically pages 372, 375–7, 759, 770, 772. Montefiore examines Stalin's desk log, which indicates an absence on 29–30 June.

guided by a resolute leadership. Moreover, these narratives can be understood as possibly inspiring students, as the New Russian Citizens, to acclaim their country's Soviet heritage as well as to recognize the importance of and possibly defend the need for strong leadership during periods of intense crisis.

### **Extending Soviet Influence in Eastern Europe**

The theme of taking pride in the actions of the Soviet Union is not confined to the period of the Great Patriotic War, but instead reappears readily in textbook accounts regarding the spread of Soviet influence in postwar Eastern Europe. In a discussion concerning the need for new history textbooks, Putin referenced the negative interpretation of Stalinist governments in Eastern Europe. He held that some textbooks contend that these governments introduced repression into Eastern Europe, which was similar to Nazi tactics. Putin countered by expressing his view that if fascism had won, these Eastern European countries would no longer have existed (Sukhov, *TheMoscowTimes.com*; 'Vstrecha s avtorami...'). Concerns regarding the portrayal of the Soviet Union's actions in Eastern Europe are not confined to government leaders, as accounts of the immediate postwar years apparently remain an important matter for textbook authors. Among the topics examined in this article, Soviet actions in Eastern Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War prompted the most variation among the textbooks' authors from all periods.

In the 1982 textbook for class 10, the authors briefly mention Eastern Europe immediately postwar. They stress that the Red Army freed the peoples of Eastern Europe from fascism, thereby allowing them to choose their own course of development. Once the fascists were defeated, the conditions for socialism developed, and the Red Army's continued presence in these Eastern European countries prevented counterrevolutionary or imperialist actions (Potemkin et al. 101–2). Thus, the Red Army assisted in the growth of people's democracies and other regimes. The authors briefly note that the Soviet Union aided these states through economic and cultural means (101–2; 127). Though a short account, the impression emerges of the Soviet Union aiding in socialism's development in Eastern Europe and not forcing it upon these nations.

Starkly contrasting with this account, the 1992 history textbook for class 11 casts Soviet actions as harsh. The authors note that before, on the eve of and after the war, Eastern Europe underwent major changes. In the Baltics, western Ukraine, western Belarus and Moldavia, collectivization and industrialization were implemented and cities were restored. These policies, carried out along the lines of the dictates of the 1930s, totally negated traditional ways of life (Ostrovskii et al. 117). As evidence, the authors present an undated account of an unnamed official reviewing a collective farm. The official recalled that a certain farm failed several times to meet its quota, which prompted an official to visit. Upon reaching the farm, the official realized that the farmers were an elderly woman and a seventeen-year-old boy; nevertheless, the official reported the farm's underperformance and had the elderly woman and the boy deported for being *kulaks*. The authors then end the section with a discussion of the active resistance movements throughout the region, especially in western Ukraine, and contend that the strife between anti-Soviet factions, including Western special forces, and Soviet forces resulted in the deaths of innocent individuals (117). The poignant, though brief, inclusion of the presumably Soviet official's actions towards the elderly woman and young boy, negates Soviet-era accounts that always speak of the Red Army's beneficial role in postwar Eastern Europe.

While the 1992 account offers insight into Soviet oppression in Eastern Europe, Danilov and Kosulina's 2000 history textbook for class 9 offers another perception. The authors state that the communists obtained power in various countries, from Yugoslavia to China, and that

Stalin exerted influence in these countries, directed their domestic and foreign policies, and provided them with aid. Moreover, the authors note that many second-generation communist leaders admired Stalin (Danilov and Kosulina 257–8). At the very end of their account, they remark that Eastern European leaders adopted the Stalinist model – including its use of repression. Yet, that is the only mention of repression in this section (257–8). This account provides a much more abbreviated and much less harsh appraisal of Soviet actions. The development of communism in Eastern Europe is presented as a list of countries ruled by communist governments. The authors do not specifically address the role of the Soviet Union in forcing communism upon Eastern Europe, but only note that Stalinist rule provided a model.

Current history textbooks continue Danilov and Kosulina's efforts at explaining Soviet actions in Eastern Europe. These narratives, as well as the 2000 textbook's version, have more in common with the Soviet-era 1982 account than the 1992 textbook. Since the three current textbooks used in this study have been approved by the Ministry of Education and Science, it can be concluded that their discussions of communism in Eastern Europe conform closely to the Russian government's preferred interpretation. In particular, a close examination of these accounts demonstrates that the authors are careful to include various rationales for the Soviet Union's actions and do not liken Soviet policies to Nazi rule. Therefore, narratives about the immediate aftermath of the war may continue to be understood as intending to instil civic pride in students by encouraging them to understand the varied reasons for Soviet activities in Eastern Europe.

Danilov and Kosulina's 2000 class 9 textbook version of events in Eastern Europe is largely reproduced in Danilov et al.'s 2014 class 9 textbook (Danilov et al. 267–8). However, there are some notable differences. For example, the 2014 account begins by referring to the communist parties not communist regimes (Danilov and Kosulina 257; Danilov et al. 267). Another difference is that in the 2014 narrative, Klement Gottwald, the communist leader of Czechoslovakia, is listed among the various Eastern European Communist leaders (Danilov et al. 267–8). In the previous, 2000 edition, Gottwald is not listed (Danilov and Kosulina 257–8). These two changes are notable for several reasons. First, beginning the narrative by referring to the communist parties rather than regimes employs a milder tone to introduce communism and Soviet influence in Eastern Europe. Second, the inclusion of the Czechoslovak Communist Party leader provides a uniform view that there were active and strong communist parties within all the Eastern European communist states which produced their own leaders.

The most favourable depiction of Soviet actions appears in the 2016 textbook for class 10. These authors note that though the Red Army occupied Eastern Europe, socialism was 'not forced' upon these states. Initially, the communists shared political power with other parties and formed coalition governments. This political situation occurred because the Soviet Union did not want to undertake actions that would increase tensions with the West. Yet, the development of the Cold War prompted the Eastern European communists to take power (Gorinov et al. 2: 103). Such a narrative argues that instead of Soviet actions, an external factor – the Cold War – prompted communists to take power and, significantly, the textbook authors identify these communists as from Eastern Europe, not the Soviet Union. These characterizations seek to explain that the Soviet Union did not induce the growth of communism in Eastern Europe, thereby possibly attempting to negate the image of the Soviet Union as a harsh dictatorial power.

The notion of direct Soviet rule in Eastern Europe becomes markedly apparent in the textbook for class 11. These authors contend that in Eastern Europe, the Kremlin's assistance '*ustanavlivaetsia kommunisticheskie i pro-sovetskie rezhimy*' (establishes Communist and pro-Soviet regimes'). These countries received material support and adopted the Stalinist

model, which prompted economic and social changes. This work also includes an excerpt from Nikita Khrushchev's *Vospominaniia (Memoirs)* detailing the role of ideology and the belief in the need to support Eastern Europe during the Cold War (Levandovskii et al. 229). The inclusion of Khrushchev's writings appears inserted in order to justify and explain Soviet actions in the region.

An investigation of the three textbooks seems to indicate a changing narrative with regard to Eastern Europe. The 2016 class 10 textbook presents the most flattering portrayal of Soviet actions. In contrast, the 2014 class 9 textbook alludes to and the 2015 class 11 textbook acknowledges the Soviet Union's influence or involvement in forging Eastern Europe's communist governments. At first, the textbooks for classes 9 and 11 may appear to offer negative interpretations of Russian history, especially compared to the historical description in the 2016 textbook for class 10. Yet, these textbooks for classes 9 and 11 do not liken Soviet actions to Nazi policies, which remains Putin's major concern (Sukhov, *TheMoscowTimes.com*). Specifically, the textbook for class 9 does not elaborate on the idea of Soviet repression, but only mentions it briefly, and the class 11 textbook explains the Soviet objectives as needing to be understood within the Soviet ideological framework.

Since the Ministry of Education and Science approved these textbooks for classes 9 and 11 as options, it can be determined that these postwar narratives continue to be acceptable. Putin's statement about fascism being the alternative to communism, coupled with these three textbooks' narratives, conveys the notion that Russians do not need to feel ashamed of their country's actions in Eastern Europe. Instead, the idea is that the growth of communism in Eastern Europe may be understood as the outcome of the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany. With this understanding of events, the textbooks for classes 9 and 11 remain viable options for students. They support the idea that Russians should be proud of their country's heritage and further reinforce Russian students' mental maps of an Eastern Europe consistently within their country's sphere of influence.

The textbooks' discussions of the events in the aftermath of the Great Patriotic War demonstrate that these historical interpretations intend to support the objectives of the *Osnovy*. First, these accounts promote a strong, civic identity through the reinforcement of the idea that Russian, or in this case Soviet, influence has extended historically into Eastern Europe. Second, the explanations for Soviet actions in Eastern Europe aim to allay any concerns or questions about that generation of Soviet citizens who may have been directly involved. With this obstacle removed, students should be able to respect past generations' actions. The notion of Russia as an imagined community with strong leaders and with interests in Eastern Europe is maintained via explanations that account for the extent of and need for Soviet involvement in various Eastern European countries. These accounts help further the development of the New Russian Citizens, who respect Russia's heritage and who, through repeated exposure to such historical accounts, become more and more accepting of Russian assertions of influence in Eastern Europe.

### **Incorporation of Crimea**

The importance of constructing a historical narrative that instills pride in students and that casts Russian actions in a positive manner emerges especially clearly in the treatment of events in Crimea. In early June 2014, Putin directed that history textbooks should include a section on Crimea ('Putin Injects State History Curriculum,' *TheMoscowTimes.com*). As Anderson notes, changes in a country's borders may influence that country's narrative (Anderson 172–3). Crimea's incorporation into Russia marked the first occasion where post-Soviet Russia has expanded its territory (Bacon 15). This change in Russia's borders resulted in current historical narratives that aim to provide explanations for Crimea's incorporation

into the Russian Federation. All three contemporary textbooks discuss Crimea's incorporation into Russia and primarily underscore the fact that Crimea's return to Russia relied on a popular vote. The authors contend that in March 2014, 96.77% of Crimea's population and 95.6% of individuals in Sevastopol voted to re-join Russia (Danilov et al. 395; Gorinov et al. 3: 104; Levandovskii et al. 364–5). All three books describe this referendum as a vote 'za vossoedinenie Kryma i Sevastopolia s Rossiei' ('on reunification of Crimea and Sevastopol with Russia') (Danilov et al. 395; Gorinov et al. 3: 104; Levandovskii et al. 364–5). Following this description, the textbooks describe the legal process by which Crimea and Sevastopol rejoined Russia. The referendum acted as the initial step, and its outcome demonstrated overwhelming popular approval for rejoining Russia. Then, both governments in Crimea and Sevastopol endorsed this result and opted to rejoin. After this endorsement, Russian lawmakers in the Duma and Federal Council granted approval for Crimea and Sevastopol to rejoin Russia. Finally, Putin signed the law allowing Crimea and Sevastopol into the Russian Federation (Danilov et al. 395; Gorinov et al. 3: 104–5; Levandovskii et al. 365).

These essentially identical textbook accounts impart to students that Russia did not forcibly seize Crimea and Sevastopol, but instead, Russian actions recognized the popular vote's outcome. Students learn that Crimea and Sevastopol freely chose to rejoin Russia, and the Russian officials respected this choice and followed legal procedures to incorporate the Crimean peninsula. This is a very important interpretation to attempt to convey since the vote's validity is not accepted widely outside the Russian Federation. Moreover, the use of the phrase 'za vossoedinenie Kryma i Sevastopolia s Rossiei' ('on reunification of Crimea and Sevastopol with Russia') in all three textbooks serves two important functions. First, it is the direct opposite of the phrase 'the annexation of Crimea', often heard in Western media reports and so serves as an immediate counterargument to Western descriptions of the events. Second, the use of the word 'vossoedinenie' ('reunification') strongly conveys the impression that Crimea and Sevastopol belong inherently to the Russian homeland and that after being unjustly separated from Russia, they have been rightfully returned. These two passages reinforce to students that Crimea is part of the nation or imagined community and therefore part of the official homeland. Furthermore, from these accounts, students may develop the impression that the local population's demands unquestionably initiated Crimea's and Sevastopol's incorporation into Russia, and thus, from the Russian viewpoint, Crimea's incorporation should not cause an international outcry as these lands form a historical part of the homeland.

The textbooks additionally include justifications for the people's desire to rejoin Russia. Reminiscent of Bilenky's examination of language's role in nineteenth-century discussions on national identity, the language debate reappears as a major concern for Russian speakers in Ukraine. The authors of the textbooks for classes 9 and 10 hold that the status of the Russian language acted as a catalyst for Crimea's and Sevastopol's reunification. After the overthrow of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, the opposition took power, and there began efforts to introduce measures that would effectively ban the use of the Russian language in Ukraine (Danilov et al. 394; Gorinov et al. 3: 104).<sup>11</sup> The textbook for class 9

<sup>11</sup> The Ukrainian and Russian presses offer differing interpretations of this highly controversial event. According to Ukrainian sources, language law in Ukraine conforms to the stipulations of the 2012 law, 'On the principles of the state language policy'. This law ensures that Ukrainian is the official language and recognizes Russian, among other languages, as a regional language. An unsuccessful legislative attempt to repeal this law in 2014 was vetoed by the interim Ukrainian president. This action, however, led to outcry in Russia. In contrast, Russian press reports focus on the Ukrainian parliament's support and approval of the law, but not the presidential veto. Ukrainian actions are depicted as an attack on the rights of minorities within Ukraine. For more information see 'Ukrainian vs. Russian: The Ban That Never Was', *Euromaidan Press: News and Views from Ukraine*, 25 May 2014. <http://euromaidanpress.com/2014/05/25/ukrainian-vs-russian-the-ban-thatn->



contends that the Crimean government's refusal to acknowledge these changes by the new government in Kiev led to the March 2014 referendum (Danilov et al. 394–5). Furthermore, the textbook for class 10 argues that opposition to changes in the language law prompted an outcry in eastern and southern Ukraine (Gorinov et al. 3: 104).

An emerging theme of Putin's rule is the emphasis on civilizational identity (Bacon 23). This theme may find expression in these textbooks' narratives, which present students with an instance of an apparent attack upon the Russian language and, by extension, Russian culture. This account emphasizes the need to preserve Russian culture, and language, in all regions of Eastern Europe and that this cultural or civilizational identity links these regions to Russia, thus partly acting as a justification for Russian action.

Moreover, the class 10 textbook's generalized statement of the opposition in eastern and southern Ukraine possibly provides justification for future Russian actions in these regions. Based on the textbook's narrative, the people of eastern Ukraine hoped to preserve the prominence of the Russian language; it may be possible for students to view the Russian presence in Ukraine as a response to popular appeal and not as an occupying force. Therefore, the question arises about the possibility of there being a future referendum in eastern Ukraine concerning incorporation into Russia. The textbook's assertion of the idea of pro-Russian support in eastern Ukraine may be laying a foundation for expanding students' mental maps of the Russian homeland to include areas of eastern Ukraine and thus readying them for the possibility of their country's further involvement in this portion of Ukraine.

Russia's need to intervene and extend its authority in Eastern Europe rests on other arguments as well, particularly the idea of a fascist threat. The authors of the textbook for class 11 contend that the emergence of this threat began with an opposition movement to Yanukovich's refusal to sign an agreement with the European Union. Opposition leaders, who hoped to create closer ties with the West and not Russia, established a protest base at Independence Square, which became commonly referred to as 'Maidan' (Levandovskii et al. 364). These protestors adopted the figure of Stepan Bandera,<sup>12</sup> described as a 'iaryi rusofob i otkrovennyi posobnik nemetskogo fashizma' ('zealous Russophobe and outspoken accomplice of German fascism') (Levandovskii et al. 364). Those opposed to the Maidan demonstrators formed their own protest, displaying the Russian flag. The class 11 textbook maintains that because some pro-Western forces adopted the image of Bandera, governmental leaders in Crimea and Sevastopol opted to hold a referendum on rejoining Russia (Levandovskii et al. 364).

The authors of the textbook for class 11 draw on patriotic sentiments surrounding the Great Patriotic War to explain Crimea's and Sevastopol's reunification with Russia. The information presented portrays a strong link between the Maidan protestors and fascist enemies, with the outcome being that the people of Crimea and Sevastopol recognized this threat and freely turned to Russia for protection. Thus, on a somewhat smaller scale, these historical narratives depict Russia continuing to play the same victorious role as the protector of Eastern Europe from fascist threats as did the triumphant Soviet Union. Once again, these historical narratives remind students of the Soviet Union's, and now Russia's, role as liberator of the peoples of Eastern Europe who might unwillingly fall under the domination of hostile forces.

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ever-was/#arvlbdata. Accessed 24 October 2014; 'Canceled language law in Ukraine Sparks Concern Among Russian and EU Diplomats', *RT: Question More*, 27 February 2014. RT.com, <https://www.rt.com/news/minority-language-law-ukraine-035/> Accessed 24 October 2016.

<sup>12</sup> Stepan Bandera is a controversial figure. Some Ukrainians view Bandera as a World War II guerrilla fighter whose actions deserve to be celebrated while other Ukrainians, many Russians, and many Western Europeans view Bandera's actions as evidence of collusion with the Nazis. See Hanna Kozłowska, "Torches Lit, Ukrainians Celebrate an Inconvenient Hero," *Foreign Policy*, 3 January 2014. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/01/03/torches-lit-ukrainian-nationalists-celebrate-an-inconvenient-hero/> Accessed 21 October 2018.



Overall, though these three textbooks offer varying examples to explain Crimea's and Sevastopol's incorporation into Russia, they consistently present Russian students with the notion of a threat to Russian interests – a threat so significant that the people of Crimea and Sevastopol sought to reject their identity as Ukrainians and instead opted to become Russian citizens. This narrative stresses the need to be vigilant about possible threats in regions historically considered as within Russia's sphere of influence, and such narratives may prompt students to support their country's active intervention within these regions.

Crimea's incorporation into Russia appears not only in the textual narrative, but also visually on the maps of the Russian Federation. In the textbook for class 9, the authors mark the Crimean Peninsula as part of the Russian Federation. The textbooks for classes 10 and 11 do not have contemporary political maps of Russia. However, the class 11 textbook includes an undated map of Russia's major religions and includes the Crimean Peninsula as part of Russia (Danilov et al. Rossiiskaia Federatsiia Map; Gorinov et al. Chasti 1, 2, 3; Levandovskii et al. Religii Map). This inclusion of Crimea reflects Anderson's discussion of the relationship between maps and national identity, and his conception of the map-as-logo, whereby the map became a standard visual representation of a country (Anderson 170–5). These physical maps bolster the mental maps of Russian students already constructed through a discussion of Crimea's incorporation into Russia. Since the map remains a key and vital form of state identification and legitimization, Russian students will have a different understanding of Russian statehood as opposed to their international counterparts. These differing conceptions of territorial claims and identification sparked conflict in Eastern Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and it is highly possible that these conflicting interpretations of national boundaries will serve as the basis for continued disagreements and conflicts in the region.

While these three contemporary textbooks offer students an understanding of events in Crimea, the incorporation of Crimea into Russia has prompted the publication of additional educational material that seeks to emphasize Crimea's invaluable role throughout Russian and Soviet history. In 2015, Prosveshchenie published *Krym: Stranitsy istorii (Crimea: Pages from History)* described as a 'posobie dlia uchitelei obshcheobrazovatelnykh organizatsiit' ('textbook for teachers of general educational organizations') and authored by the noted expert on Russian history, G. A. Sanin. This work explores Crimea's history from the ancient period through to the outcome of the 2014 referendum. For example, Sanin describes the actions of Vladimir the Great (9–11); relations with the Byzantine Empire and the Mongol Empire (11–26); various tsars' and tsaritsas' interests in the region (27–35); Catherine the Great's victory; the Crimean War (35–41); the First World War (42–3); the Revolution and Civil War (43–8); development in the 1920s and 1930s (50–63); the Great Patriotic War (63–7); Khrushchev's transfer of Crimea to Ukraine (67–71); the development of Crimea; and Ukraine and Crimea in the 1990s to the present (71–7).

In accordance with the focus upon specific historical narratives, Sanin's work is examined within the context of facilitating discussions regarding Crimea's 1954 transfer to Ukraine. Of the three current textbooks surveyed, none directly discuss this event (Danilov et al. 249–93; Gorinov et al. 2, 3, 75–142; Levandovskii et al. 249–73). Sanin's work recounts the instrumental role played by Khrushchev, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (64–5). Regarding the 1954 transfer, Sanin especially observes '[e]stestvenno, chto v usloviakh totalitarnogo gosudarstva u zhitelei Kryma i Sevastopolia ni o chem ne sprashivali' ('[n]aturally, under a totalitarian government the inhabitants of Crimea and Sevastopol were not asked about this [transfer]') (65). Instead, high-ranking governmental officials directed

the proceedings. For this information, Sanin cites Putin's address of 18 March 2014, which occurred two days after the March referendum and which highlighted Crimea's value to Russia (Sanin 65; 'Obrashchenie Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii'; 'Address by President of the Russian Federation'). Again relying on Putin's speech, Sanin clarifies that at the time of the 1954 transfer, the then-Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the then-Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic constituted part of the same country, the Soviet Union. Therefore, Crimea technically remained a part of the same country. Sanin states that when the 1954 transfer of Crimea to Ukraine occurred, there was no anticipation that the Soviet Union would dissolve (Sanin 64–5).

Consequently, Sanin's narrative serves several important functions. The work constructs an approved historical view, which explains the transfer of Crimea to Ukraine based upon Putin's speech as a main source. This tactic evokes Putin's call for a focus on specific heroes and heroines of the First World War and their subsequent inclusion in the 2016 textbook for class 10 (Gorinov et al. 1: 21–2). The narrative on Crimea reminds students that as long as the Soviet Union existed, Crimea remained part of their homeland. This connection reinforces the perception that Crimea's incorporation into modern-day Russia does not encompass a dramatic political change, but instead rightfully reunifies a severed region of the homeland. Furthermore, the narrative clearly highlights the lack of citizen involvement in the 1950s. As students would know from their textbooks, the 2014 decision rested upon the outcome of a popular referendum. Sanin's account calls into question the legitimacy of the 1954 transfer while simultaneously upholding the legitimacy of the 2014 decision.

This incorporation of Crimea's history into classroom lessons permits students to view Crimea as participating in Russia's historical development. Sanin's work intends to convey that the people of Crimea have the same historical experiences as their fellow Russian citizens and have actively participated in major historical events, such as the Great Patriotic War. This integration of Crimea into the Russian historical narrative exemplifies Anderson's notion of 'simultaneity in "homogeneous, empty time"' (24–5) because Crimea and Russia experienced the same stages of development as part of the same nation.

After the March 2014 referendum, Putin undertook measures to ensure that the Crimean Peninsula was situated firmly within Russian history. For example, two days after the March referendum, he appeared before the Duma and Federal Council to deliver his 18 March address on the importance of Crimea to Russia ('Obrashchenie Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii'). Putin began with a discussion of Crimea's historical significance and particularly stressed the region as the birthplace of Russian Orthodoxy, noted the 1783 victory of Catherine the Great,<sup>13</sup> and heralded the heroic actions of Russian (*russkii*) troops in the Crimean War. He subsequently discussed the various ethnic groups who live on the peninsula and stated that out of a population of 2.2 million, 1.5 million inhabitants are Russians, 350,000 are Ukrainians and between 290,000 and 300,000 are Crimean Tatars. Putin expressively remarked that Khrushchev's transfer of the peninsula disregarded the region's ethnic composition and concluded with a detailed focus on international precedent and declarations that serve as justifications for accepting the referendum's outcome ('Obrashchenie Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii').

Putin's speech was incorporated into various textbook accounts of Crimea. As previously noted, portions of it provided the basis for material in *Krym: Stranitsy istorii* (*Crimea: Pages from History*). Excerpts from this speech also reappeared in 2016 textbook for class 10. This textbook's passages describe the three major historical milestones: the birth of Christianity, the 1783 incorporation of Crimea into Russia and the heroism of troops during the Crimean

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<sup>13</sup> The 1783 victory is mentioned in the Russian text of the speech but is absent from the official English translation.

War (Gorinov et al. 3: 106). Furthermore, the included passages note the large number of voters who cast ballots in the referendum and assert that the people of Crimea, Russians, Ukrainians and Tatars, live peaceably together and strive to preserve their language, religion and unique heritage (Gorinov et al. 3: 106).

This close association between Putin's speech and textbook material reveals the extent to which some Russian textbooks' content mirrors official policies and reflects the objective of preventing historical mischaracterization, as outlined in the *Osnovy*. By having the sections on Crimea conform closely to the governmental view, there then develops a unified history to be learned by all Russian students. This narrative of Crimea in particular serves as the latest addition to a repeated narrative of reclaiming Russia's lost territories. Thus, students – as the New Russian Citizens – are prompted to recognize their heritage as extending into these territories, which may ultimately lead some of these citizens to defend their country's right to exert influence in or facilitate the recovery of these lands. This historical narrative seeks to ensure a more unified citizenry, and the Crimean example gives explicit evidence of the cultural policy's intention of using history to solidify the citizenry and to create a strong Russia.

## Conclusion

In the twenty-first century, Russian leaders aspire to create the New Russian Citizens through exposure to historical narratives glorifying Russia's past successes and anticipated future triumphs. Narratives that examine Russian actions from the early twentieth century through to the early twenty-first century create a perception of Russia as an imagined community filled with leaders and citizens who remain steadfast in times of war and crises, and which has extended borders and/or influence well into Eastern Europe. Such accounts seek to inspire all citizens to express pride in their country. Russian students, motivated by accounts of the Russian people's and leaders' steadfastness, recognize that their country will continue to be successful and influential as long as they defend Russia's interests too.

As envisioned by the *Osnovy*, education plays a key role in recreating a positive and united Russian identity. Yet, the success of the *Osnovy* faces a major test in the highly interconnected world of today. In contrast to the eras of Official Nationality and Soviet rule, many contemporary Russian citizens can more readily encounter conflicting ideas and narratives on their own terms. Though citizens' easy access to varying opinions challenges Russian leaders' plans, scholars should not simply dismiss the *Osnovy*. The goals of these policies, if fulfilled by a well-executed educational plan, have the potential to transform Russia. Students' perceptions of reality shaped by historical accounts that justify Russian influence and actions in Eastern Europe and Crimea expand these students' conceptions of their country's borders, thus causing them to perceive challenges in these regions as direct threats to their homeland.

These accounts of Russia's proud past and extended borders repeatedly reinforced to students become a lens through which they – and possibly future Russian leaders – perceive and react to current and future challenges. Therefore, filled with these New Russian Citizens, Russia would become an even more active regional power, which could further alter the political make-up of Eastern Europe. As history textbooks become printed monuments to Russia's past successes and reconcile the seemingly disparate periods of Russian history, historical narratives seek to provide students with the assurance that determination and patriotism brought past glories and thus will prove instrumental for ensuring their country's proud future.

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