



# From Pluralism to a Monochrome Society? How School Historical Education was Shaped in Putin's Russia

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The political shift in Russia in the early 2000s demanded a transformation in history teaching. This was a gradual process: from the efforts to restrict an «excessive pluralism» to an attempt to introduce a single textbook in history. A control of the textbook contents was introduced together with the Federal History Standard. A demand to foster the «healthy» patriotic outlook led to the appearance of chauvinist and revanchist textbooks prone to rehabilitate Stalin, which met a severe criticism of both democratic oriented teachers and human right activists. Although a patriotic view of history met the support of a few among historians and educationists, the idea of a single textbook proved to be fruitless. The new textbooks of the late 2010s were more moderate and demonstrated that their authors did not take into account some governmental requirements. Thus, despite a huge investment from the State aimed at fostering a patriotic upbringing and loyalty to the regime through historical education, the efforts of pro-Kremlin ideologists failed to produce the desired impact.

*Keywords:* Russia, Educational Policy, History Textbooks, Patriotism, Russian Culture.

The first post-Soviet decade was marked by a triumph of pluralism in Russian school education. Teachers' demand was met by a broad range of textbooks in history – from socialist to monarchic, from liberal to conservative, from federal inclusive to regional exclusive ethnocentric ones. All these textbooks suggested and permitted to analyze and to interpret history from various points of view – thus, developing creative imagination and critical thinking at students<sup>1</sup>. Yet, an arrival of the Millennium

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<sup>1</sup> S.L. Webber, *School, Reform and Society in the New Russia*, Palgrave MacMillan, New York 2000; C. Merridale, *Redesigning History in Contemporary Russia*, in "Journal of Contemporary History", 38, 1, 2003, pp. 13-28; J. Zajda - R. Zajda, *The Politics of*

and a transformation of power in Russia caused a twist in school education, which is a focus of this article<sup>2</sup>. My questions are: what ideas made up a basis for this twist and who in particular produced them? How did this twist affect school education in history? What were the steps made to put it into fruition? How were they implemented and to what extent were they effective? How were they discussed by historians and educators? Did the bureaucratic pressure meet any resistance?

### A shift from “politicisation” and “pluralism”

To meet the demands of the new government of the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) together with the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) and the Russian Academy of Education (RAE) held, on December 3, 2001, the All-Russian Conference devoted to discussing

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*Rewriting History: New History Textbooks and Curriculum Materials in Russia*, in “International Review of Education”, 49, 3-4, 2003, pp. 363-84; J. Zajda, *The New History School Textbooks in the Russian Federation: 1992-2004*, in “Compare: A journal of comparative education”, 37, 3, 2007, pp. 291-306; *Educational Reform in Post-Soviet Russia. Legacies and Prospects*, eds. B. Eklof, L.E. Holmes, V. Kaplan, Frank Cass, London 2005; T. Volodina, *Teaching History in Russia after the Collapse of the USSR*, in “The History Teacher”, 38, 2, 2005, pp. 179-88; V. Shnirelman, *Stigmatized by History or by Historians? Peoples of Russia in the School Textbooks in History*, in “History and Memory”, 21, 2, 2009, pp. 110-49; Id., *Russia*, in *The Palgrave Handbook of Conflict and History Education in the Post-Cold War*, eds. L. Cajani, S. Lässig, M. Repoussi, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, Switzerland 2019, pp. 501-26.

<sup>2</sup> Also see: Th. Sherlock, *Historical Narratives in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Russia: Destroying the Settled Past, Creating an Uncertain Future*, Palgrave MacMillan, New York 2007, pp. 150-1, 161-8; L.A. Katsva, *Sovietsky Soiuz v shkol'nykh uchebnikakh istorii XXI veka [The Soviet Union in the textbooks in history published in the 21st century]*, in *Proshly vek [The Former Century]*, ed. A.I. Miller, INION RAN, Moscow 2013, pp. 69-132; J. Zajda, *Russian history textbooks: An analysis of historical narratives depicting key events*, in “Curriculum and Teaching”, 38, 2, 2013, pp. 73-100; Id., *Globalisation, Ideology and History School Textbooks: The Russian Federation*, in *Nation-building and History Education in a Global Culture*, ed. J. Zajda, Springer, Dordrecht 2015, pp. 29-50; T.H. Nelson, *History as ideology: The portrayal of Stalinism and the Great Patriotic War in contemporary Russian high school textbooks*, in “Post-Soviet Affairs”, 31, 1, 2015, pp. 37-65; T. Tsyrlina-Spady - M. Lovorn, *Patriotism, History Teaching, and History Textbooks in Russia: What Was Old is New Again*, in *Globalisation, Ideology, and Politics of Education Reforms*, ed. J. Zajda, Springer, New York 2015, pp. 41-57; Id., *Nationalism and Ideology in Teaching Russian History: A New Federal Concept and a Survey of Teachers*, in “World Studies in Education”, 16, 1, 2015, pp. 31-52; T. Tsyrlina-Spady - A. Stoskopf, *Russian History Textbooks in the Putin Era: Heroic Leaders Demand Loyal Citizens*, in *Globalisation and Historiography of National Leaders. Symbolic Representations in School Textbooks*, ed. J. Zajda, T. Tsyrlina-Spady, M. Lovorn, Springer Nature, Dordrecht 2017, pp. 15-33.

«Problems on teaching modern national history». During the proceedings, it was suggested that, in order to overcome «ideologisation and politicisation» in the delivery of historical content, the line of «confirmation of national interests and state priorities» should be followed. Among the major goals of schooling, the following precepts were prioritised:

to induce in the students' minds sentiments of patriotism, civic responsibility, humanistic ideals, as well as respect for one's own and other peoples' culture and history.

Given this outset, the great diversity of history textbooks of the previous decade seemed unacceptable<sup>3</sup>. In January 2002 the MES launched a competition for writing a new textbook in history for secondary schools.<sup>4</sup>

Some historians reacted positively to a final document of the conference highlighting their belief in the ultimate goal of school education: to promote a «healthy», patriotic outlook, based on the identification of Russia as an «independent and inherently valuable civilization»<sup>5</sup>. Some others claimed that one had to reject the statist view of history and foster links with the past through «family, kinship and local homeland»<sup>6</sup>. A third category of scholars called for a denounce of the «patriotic» view of history in favour of a «cosmopolitan one»<sup>7</sup>. Certain historians pointed to a «weariness of pluralism»<sup>8</sup> and agreed that, unlike the university, it may be sufficient for a school to have only one or two standard textbooks in history of the Fatherland<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> *Kontseptsiiia prepodavaniia Otechestvennoi istorii xx veka (proekt)* [A concept of teaching history of the Fatherland of the 20th century (project)], in "Prepodavanie istorii v shkole", 1, 2002, pp. 2-8.

<sup>4</sup> *Istoriki chitaiut uchebniki istorii. Traditsionnye i novye kontseptsii uchebnoi literatury* [The historians read textbooks in history. The traditional and new concepts of the educational literature], eds. C. Eimermaher - G. Bordiugov, AIRO-XX, Moscow 2002, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> *Krugly stol: kakim byt' sovremennomu shkol'nomu uchebniku po Otechestvennoi istorii xx veka?* [Round table: what should be the contemporary textbook in history of the Motherland of the 20th century?], in "Otechestvennaia istoriia", 3, 2002, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Ivi, pp. 12-3.

<sup>7</sup> *Obsuzhdenie kontseptsii istoricheskogo obrazovaniia v obshcheobrazovatel'nykh uchrezhdeniiakh Rossiiskoi Federatsii* [A discussion of the concept of the historical education in the public schools of the Russian Federation], in "Prepodavanie istorii v shkole", 4, 2000, pp. 41-3; *Krugly stol* [Round table], cit., p. 20.

<sup>8</sup> *Istoriki chitaiut uchebniki istorii* [The historians read textbooks in history], cit., p. 15; *Krugly stol* [Round table], cit., pp. 25-8.

<sup>9</sup> *Krugly stol* [Round table], cit., pp. 22-4, 32-9.

These hot discussions resulted in the MES making all the efforts to restrict an «excessive pluralism» in school historical education. In particular, on January 15, 2004, the MES implemented the law (Order no. 111)<sup>10</sup> which contained the federal lists of textbooks and teaching manuals being recommended or approved for usage in the state-sponsored schools throughout the country for the next school year. Whereas initially the lists were presented as being just «recommended», since October 2004 (Order no. 03-410 issued on October 21, 2004)<sup>11</sup> schools were obliged to use only teaching materials included in these lists, which were thoroughly selected by the Department of State Policy in Education and approved by the MES.

A list of textbooks in the so-called History of the Fatherland for the 2004/2005 school year contained three to five titles for each grade of secondary school (Grades 6-9) and five to six titles for high school (Grades 10-11). These included a textbook on «Russian civilization» compiled by Igor' N. Ionov<sup>12</sup>. In the following years, lists were gradually increased with new titles: in 2005/2006 schools could make a choice among seven different sets of textbooks for Grades 6-9, and in 2006/2007 among eight to nine various textbooks for Grades 6-9 and seven to ten textbooks for Grades 10-11. The year 2013/2014 saw a remarkable increase in new titles as secondary schools could choose among eighty-three textbooks in history! In spite of such a broad offering, textbooks' content was strongly regulated by rather rigid Federal History Standards (FHS). This scheme was intended to provide a list of key events and processes, which had obligatorily to be covered and discussed in class. As a matter of fact, the list reflected the historical perspective that was imposed on the authors and, through them, transmitted to the teachers and their pupils. Even so, textbook authors were left free to provide their own interpretations of the admitted topics.

<sup>10</sup> [http://sputnik.mto.ru/Docs\\_05/Prikaz.doc](http://sputnik.mto.ru/Docs_05/Prikaz.doc), accessed on May 10, 2011.

<sup>11</sup> <http://gtra.ru/pom3.htm>, accessed on January 11, 2021.

<sup>12</sup> For this textbook see: V. Shnirelman, *In Search of the Prestige of Ancestors. Ethnonationalism and the School Textbooks*, in "Information Mitteilungen Communications", 20, 1, 1999; Id., *V poiskakh prestizhnykh predkov: etnonatsionalizm i shkol'nye uchebniki [In search of the prestige ancestors. Ethnonationalism and the school textbooks]*, in *Otvetvennost' istorika: prepodavanie istorii v globaliziruiushchetsia obshchestve [A historian's responsibility: a history education in the globalizing society]*, eds. K. Pellens et al., IVI RAN, Moscow 2000, p. 161.

## A patriotic upbringing

In summer 2001, the Russian authorities got interested in the content of the school textbooks in history of the Fatherland. Such an interest was caused by a critical evaluation of the President Putin's deeds in Igor' Dolutsky's textbook «Otechestvennaia istoriia, xx vek»<sup>13</sup>. The then Prime Minister Mikhail M. Kasianov had heavily criticized textbooks published by «Drofa» and the state-affiliated «Prosveshchenie» publishing houses<sup>14</sup>.

As a result, early in 2002, the Russian government launched a competition for the best school textbook in the history of the 20th century. The winner was a textbook compiled by a team led by the head of the Department of Inner-Political Processes of the RAS Institute of the World Economics and International Relationships Nikita V. Zagladin. He was a son of the well-known employee of the Department for International Affairs of the Central Committee of the CPSU, who was Brezhnev's speech-writer. It is this textbook, based on the ideas of patriotism,<sup>15</sup> that was strongly recommended by the MES for school education in the mid-2000s<sup>16</sup>. Such a forceful imposition of like-mindedness met a resistance of the publishing houses, specialized in publishing educational literature<sup>17</sup>.

In November 2003, in his talk at the Russian National Library, President Putin underlined that textbooks «had to foster pride for one's

<sup>13</sup> I. Dolutsky, *Otechestvennaia istoriia, xx vek. Uchebnik dlia 10-11 klassov obshcheobrazovatel'nykh uchrezhdenii* [History of the Fatherland in the 20th century. A textbook for secondary schools], Mnemozina, Moscow 2002. Part 1, 2002. Part 2. In my view, this was the most interesting and well-balanced textbook in history published in post-Soviet Russia.

<sup>14</sup> Sherlock, *Historical Narratives in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Russia*, cit., pp. 168-73; Nelson, *History as ideology*, cit., pp. 43-4; Lovorn - Tsyrlina-Spady, *Nationalism and Ideology in Teaching Russian History*, cit., pp. 35-6. Yet, Dolutsky was not fired. He is still teaching history in one of the Moscow private schools.

<sup>15</sup> N. V. Zagladin, *Istoriia Rossii i mira v xx veke. Uchebnik dlia 11 klassa obshcheobrazovatel'nykh uchrezhdenii* [History of Russia and the world in the 20th century. A textbook for the 11 grade of the public schools], Russkoe slovo, Moscow 2002 (a print run of 30,000 copies). Actually, this patriotism had an evident flavor of chauvinism and revanchism.

<sup>16</sup> S. Kirillova - S. Lebedev, *Istoricheskii peredel* [Historical redevision], in "Pervoe sentiabria", 6 December 2003, pp. 1-2. For a negative evaluation of Zagladin's academic achievements, see S. Ivanov, *Liubov' k rodnomu pepelishchu* [A love towards the beloved smouldering ruins], in "Vedomosti", 10 March 2004, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> N. Ivanova-Gladil'shchikova, *Ne dolzhno byt' "glavnogo" uchebnika* [It should not be any 'major' textbook], in "Izvestiia", 13 March 2004, p. 13; Sherlock, *Historical Narratives in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Russia*, cit., pp. 173-6.

own history, one's own country»<sup>18</sup>. As a result, the MES was obliged to monitor textbook contents on history from the 20th to the beginning of the 21st centuries. Since the beginning of 2004 on, textbook contents were checked and evaluated by the major Russian historians affiliated with the RAS<sup>19</sup>. Furthermore, since 2005 on, revision of textbooks was accomplished jointly by specialists from the RAS and RAE. The RAS commission was headed by the RAS member-correspondent Andrei N. Sakharov, the then-Director (up to the end of 2010) of the Institute of Russian History.

The years 2007-2008 marked a new period in the process of revision of history textbooks. The authorities once again became concerned with a problem of the patriotic education<sup>20</sup>. The All-Russian Conference of teachers of humanities and social studies devoted to «The urgent issues of teaching modern history and social science» was held in Moscow in June 2007. It was attended by about 300 teachers and educators from various regions. During the conference, Putin criticized mess and confusion in school history education and suggested to introduce common standards for lecture courses<sup>21</sup>. The then-Minister of Education and Science Andrei Fursenko and the then-First Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration Vladislav Surkov<sup>22</sup> took part in the conference. They introduced two teachers' manuals for the participants: *Noveyshaia istoriia Rossii: 1945-2006*<sup>23</sup> and *Obshchestvoznaniie. Global'nyi mir v XXI veke*, both issued by

<sup>18</sup> O. Zakharova, *Uchebnik istorii. Pravitel'stvo v kachestve tsenzora?* [A history textbook. A government as a censor?] in "Litseiskoe i gimnazicheskoe obrazovanie", 3, 2004.

<sup>19</sup> I. Sergeev, *Ia b istoriiu zakryl, slegka pochistil...* [I would ban history, somewhat clean it...] in "Komsomol'skaia Pravda", 13 January 2004, p. 3; M. Anikeeva, *Nakonets-to vspomnili ob uchenykh* [They finally recalled the textbooks], in "Komsomol'skaia Pravda", 13 January 2004, p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> At this period the second state programme in patriotic upbringing of the RF citizens in 2006-2010 was implemented. See: A.K. Bykov, *Patrioticheskoe vospitanie grazhdan Rossiiskoi Federatsii: na styke dvukh gosudarstvennykh program* [Patriotic education of the citizens of the Russian Federation: at the juncture of the two state programs], in "Pedagogika", 1, 2011, pp. 14-24.

<sup>21</sup> O. Figes, *Putin vs. the Truth*, in "The New York Review of Books", 46, 7, April 30, 2009, <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/22642>, accessed on January 11, 2021; Zajda, *Russian History Textbooks: An Analysis of Historical Narratives Depicting Key Events*, cit., p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> Being an assistant of the Russian president, Surkov was the author of the anti-Western concept of a sovereign democracy and its supporter in the political milieu. He was fired in February 2020 after the Novorossia project (aimed at the annexation of Eastern Ukraine) failed to come into fruition.

<sup>23</sup> A test run of the textbook *Istoriia Rossii, 1945-2007 gg.* [History of Russia, 1945-2007] for Grade 11 compiled by the same author came out in December.

«Prosveshchenie» Publishing House. The first book was compiled by the Deputy Director of the National Laboratory for Foreign Policy Alexander V. Filippov. Stalin was presented there as the «most effective leader of the USSR», who skillfully pursued an internal logic of the country's development. In addition, the need for political centralization and tough rule was justified by the «unfavorable conditions of the Russian state evolution», which were «harsh climate» and «large territory»<sup>24</sup>.

At this conference, a professor of the State University - Higher School of Economics, Leonid V. Poliakov, head of the team entrusted with the writing of the second previously mentioned textbook, «Obshchestvovedenie», pointed out that a «civic patriotic upbringing was replacing a military-patriotic one». He called to teach students «to look at the world with the Russian citizens' eyes, for whom the Russian interests were above anything else», and «to act in favour of Russia». He also underlined that, despite the fact that there were universal principles of democracy that had to be blended with the «Russian political culture», this nationalist paradigm left no room for any universal ethical norms and demanded for a «Russia-centrism» in consonance with the «Russian civilization»<sup>25</sup>. The RAE President Nikolai Nikandrov called against «revisionism» and any criticism of the Russian political system, against both an «anti-patriotism» and a «heroization of the “alien” way of life». There were also suggestions by professor Oksana Gaman-Golutvina to explain «toughness of certain Soviet leaders» with the need to urge modernization and reinforcement of a «territorial unity of the country» (one's own country rather than any other)<sup>26</sup>. Evidently, some participants at the conference viewed all this as an image of «positive history» that deserved a mass promotion.

<sup>24</sup> A.V. Filippov, *Noveishaia istoriia Rossii, 1945-2006: Kniga dlia uchitelia* [*The Modern History of Russia, 1945-2006: A Manual for History Teachers*], Prosveshchenie, Moscow 2007 (a print run of 10,000 copies), pp. 82, 485. For critical reviews of this textbook, see: E. Zubkova, *The Filippov Syndrom*, in «Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History», 10, 4, 2009, pp. 861-8; D. Brandenberger, *A New Short Course? A.V. Filippov and the Russian State's Search for a "Usable Past"*, in «Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History», 10, 4, 2009, pp. 825-33; T.H. Nelson, *History as ideology*, pp. 55-7.

<sup>25</sup> *Kak prepodavat' noveishuiu istoriiu i obshchestvovedenie s pozitsii interesov Rossii?* [*How should one teach the modern history and social science in the Russian interests?*], in «Vestnik obrazovaniia», 13, July, 2007, [http://history.standart.edu.ru/info.aspx?ob\\_no=11731](http://history.standart.edu.ru/info.aspx?ob_no=11731), accessed on August 8, 2007.

<sup>26</sup> As a result, any state violence was justified with a reference to modernization requirements. For this see N. Sokolov, *Opravdanie nasiliia v rossiiskikh uchebnikakh istorii* [*A justification of violence in the Russian history textbooks*], in «Memorial», March 8, 2010, <https://urokiistorii.ru/article/803>, accessed on May 10, 2010.



After the conference, some of the participants met Putin. During the meeting, the Russian leader denounced the alleged shortcomings of current textbooks and assured that new ones, with a clearer and more consistent conceptualisation of 20th century Russian history, would soon appear. He complained that certain history and social sciences textbooks stopped in the 1990s, and even if they covered a more recent period (i. e. one in which he had ruled) they provided a misleading narrative. To be fair, he had to admit and even encouraged, that «alternative views» of historical processes ought to be offered in the textbooks, but required that the narratives met high-quality standards. At the same time, he demanded that «national historical distinctions», as well as «the relationship between various religious and ethnic groups developed for more than a thousand years [and secured] virtually at the genetic level» be maintained. He did not fail to note that many textbooks were compiled by recipients of foreign grants, thus implying that they served foreign interests<sup>27</sup>. Evidently, Putin would have rather preferred to have them fulfill his orders, a predicament about which Mark Galeotti commented: «Putin is creating not history but scripture»<sup>28</sup>.

In 2008, the «Prosveshchenie» Publishing House released an anonymous memorandum entitled *On the concept of the lecture course in Russian history from 1900 to 1945*. The text referred to isolationism as one of the positive features of Russian history. Materials that elucidated this concept, were subsequently published; their authors replaced the notion of «totalitarianism», which was critical towards the Stalin's regime, with an emphasis on the motives and logic of the authorities' decision-making. Rejecting accusations of backwardness, they claimed that Russia was backward only in what had been borrowed from abroad and which had nothing to do with Russia's «civilisation core». These materials, in other words, employed a view of the authenticity of the «Russian civilisation» as a way of turning backwardness into cultural originality. In these materials, «opposition between Russians and non-Russians» was perceived as one of the perennial factors that made life in Russia difficult. The growth of revolutionary attitudes was explained as a «response to Europeanisation» and the «transmission of ideas to intellectuals» rather than related to an obsolete political arrangement. The authors approved political isolationism and justified Stalinist terror with a reference to the urgent interests of

<sup>27</sup> *Kak prepodavat' noveishuiu istoriiu i obshchestvoznaniye s pozitsii interesov Rossii?* [How should one teach modern history and social science in the Russian interests?], cit.

<sup>28</sup> M. Galeotti, *Education in Putin's Russia Isn't about History, but Scripture*, in «Open Democracy», 1 September 2016, accessed on January 11, 2021.



the country which called for forced modernisation; within the framework of this paradigm, Stalin acted as a «system protector» and it is noteworthy that the paragraph on Stalin was compiled by Alexander Barsenkov, well-known for his ultra-conservative (national-patriotic) views<sup>29</sup>.

The publication of this alternative rendering of recent Russian history was met with a gale of resentment. The opponents (certain journalists and historians) argued that it was aimed, firstly, at justifying the harsh policies of the Tsarist officials and the criminal actions of the Soviet rulers thereafter, and, secondly, at demonstrating the allegedly long-standing political intrigues carried out by the West (especially Great Britain). They also contended that, in so doing, such interpretations were aimed at advocating an isolationist political course<sup>30</sup>. American analyst Leon Aron has found evident contaminations of this Soviet conception and assumed this to have been imposed upon the authors by Putin, who adhered to the Soviet view of Russian history and was highly suspicious of the West<sup>31</sup>. In response, the editors tried to reduce its negative effect, and one of them, Alexander A. Danilov, defined it as raw materials for discussion purposes only<sup>32</sup>. In spite of the attempts to contain it, a scandal caused in 2010 by a publication of the University textbook compiled by Alexander

<sup>29</sup> A. Bernstein, *Ratsional'noe upravlenie ubiistvami. Novaia istoricheskaia kontseptsiia – stalinskii terror okazalsia "instrumentom razvitiia"* [A rational stewardship over the murders. A new historical concept – the Stalin's terror proved to be 'an instrument of a development'], in "Vremia novostei", 25 August 2008, pp. 1-2; L. Rybina, *Operativnaia razrabotka uchebnika istorii* [An immediate preparation of the history textbooks], in "Novaia gazeta", September 8-10, 2008, pp. 2-3.

<sup>30</sup> I. Sergeev, *Za Rossiin! Za Stalina! Dlia shkol'nikov snova peredelaiut istoriiu* [For Russia! For Stalin! History will be remade once again for the schoolchildren], in "Moskovsky komsomolet", 1 October 2007, p. 9; A. Bernstein, *Ratsional'noe upravlenie ubiistvami* [A rational stewardship over the murders]; A. Shubin, *Pravki patriotov* [Corrections made by the patriots], in "Novaia gazeta", 8-10 September 2008, p. 3; B. Khavkin, *Spory ob uchebnikakh istorii v postsovietskoj Rossii: «Tot, kto vladeet proshlym – vladeet budushchim»* [A discussion on the history textbooks in post-Soviet Russia: "Who owns the past – would own the future"], in "Forum noveishei vostochnoevropskoj istorii i kul'tury", 2, 2011, pp. 122-4.

<sup>31</sup> L. Aron, *To Understand Vladimir Putin, We Must Understand his View of Russian History*, in "The New Republic", September 24, 2008, <http://www.tnr.com/booksarts/story.html?id=27ab9fbc-6e71-4795-8608-5875a0ce6fb6&p=1>, accessed on April 20, 2012. At the same time, Putin's views on a political role of history were evidently shaped by his advisers, one of whom was Gleb Pavlovsky. For example, see: G. Pavlovsky, *Plokho s pamiatiu – plokho s politikoj. Politika pamiati* [Bad memory – bad politics. Politics of memory], in "Russky zhurnal", 9 December 2008, <http://www.russ.ru/pole/Ploho-s-pamyat-yu-ploho-s-politikoj>. Accessed on January 11, 2021.

<sup>32</sup> A.A. Danilov - A.V. Filippov, *Zdat' ostalos' nedolgo, poterpite* [You should not wait for long. A.A. Danilov - A.V. Filippov, "Vremia novostei"], 9 september 2008; L. Rybina, "Esl' by na meste Stalina byl ia..." ["If I were Stalin"] in "Novaia gazeta", September 18-21, 2008, p. 11.

S. Barsenkov and Alexander I. Vdovin, which contained an evident anti-Semitic and generally xenophobic approach<sup>33</sup>, demonstrated that the experts' suspicions were not unreasonable<sup>34</sup>.

Despite the support of the Filippov's textbook by the state agencies, it failed to compete with a popular Alexander A. Danilov and Liudmila G. Kosulina's textbook<sup>35</sup> that was positively received by many teachers<sup>36</sup>. Notably, this was the same Danilov who was skillfully adapting his views to a fluctuating political environment.

The elimination of the, so-called, «regional component» from school education in December 2007 is worth noting as well. As federal history textbooks were unable to cover regional (republican) history in detail, the curriculum was enriched with a «regional component» in the 1990s, which included a course in regional history. As a matter of fact, in the

<sup>33</sup> A.S. Barsenkov - A.I. Vdovin, *Istoriia Rossii. 1917-2009* [Russian history. 1917-2009]. Third ed. Aspect Press, Moscow 2010.

<sup>34</sup> For the experts' evaluation see: N. Sokolov - A. Golubovsky, *Chemu uchat uchitelei istorii* [What are the history teachers taught], in "Iskusstvo kino", substitute on 4 April 2010, <http://old.kinoart.ru/archive/2010/04/n4-article5>, accessed on January 11, 2021; *Istoriia po-chestnomu* [History in an honest way], in "Obshchestvennaia palata RF", 6 September 2010, [http://www.oprf.ru/newsblock/news/3325/chamber\\_news?returnto=0&n=1](http://www.oprf.ru/newsblock/news/3325/chamber_news?returnto=0&n=1), accessed on January 11, 2021; D. Babich, «V korystnykh evreiskikh interesakh» [In the selfish Jewish interests], in "RIA Novosti", 7 September 2010, <http://www.rian.ru/analytics/20100907/273174968.html>, accessed on January 11, 2021; N. Sokolov, *Kak shkol'niku drats'ia s otbornoi shpanoi? K diskussii vokrug uchebnogo posobiia Barsenkova-Vdovina* [How would a schoolboy fight with the high-end hooligans? Towards the discussions on the Barsenkov-Vdovin's teaching guide], in "Polit.ru", 13 September 2010, <http://www.polit.ru/analytics/2010/09/13/shpana.html>, accessed on January 11, 2021; *Uchebniki ne dolzhny seiati' nenavist'. Zaiavlenie v podderzhku Nikolaiia Svanidze* [The textbooks should not spread hatred. A statement in support of Nikolai Svanidze], in "Moskovskaia Khel'sinskaia grupa", 17 September 2010, <http://www.mhg.ru/news/F7B3061>, accessed on January 9, 2011; *V MGU reshili provesti ekspertizu knigi Vdovina i Barsenkova* [They decided to make an expertise of the Vdovin-Barsenkov's book in the Moscow State University], in "Obshchestvennaia palata RF", 17 September 2010, [http://www.oprf.ru/newsblock/news/3345/chamber\\_news/](http://www.oprf.ru/newsblock/news/3345/chamber_news/), accessed on January 9, 2011; *Pismo prezidenta FEOR rektoru MGU* [A letter of the president of the Federation of the Jewish Communities of Russia to the rector of the Moscow State University], in "Agentstvo evreiskikh novostei", 20 September 2010, [http://www.aen.ru/index.php?page=brief&article\\_id=58434](http://www.aen.ru/index.php?page=brief&article_id=58434), accessed on January 9, 2011; *Novye uchebnye posobiia dlia vuzov: falsifikatsiia istorii ili ne falsifikatsiia istorii?* [The new teaching guides for the higher educational institutions: a falsification of history or not a falsification of history], in "Ekho Moskvy", 21 September 2010, <http://www.echo.msk.ru/programs/klinch/711864-echo/>, accessed on January 11, 2021.

<sup>35</sup> A.A. Danilov - L.G. Kosulina, *Istoriia Rossii, XX vek. Uchebnik dlia starshikh klassov obshcheobrazovatel'nykh shkol* [History of Russia, the 20th century. A textbook for the high school], Iakhont, Moscow 1998.

<sup>36</sup> Zajda, *Russian History Textbooks: An Analysis of Historical Narratives Depicting Key Events*, cit., p. 7; Shnirelman, *Russia*, cit., p. 518.

national republics, this course was represented by history of the titled nation (ethnic history) which proved to be highly ethnocentric<sup>37</sup>. In December 2007 this course was eliminated by the State Duma [Russian parliament] decision<sup>38</sup>, and ever since, ethnically non-Russian students learn history of their own peoples only shortly and selectively in the geography and literature courses.

### Towards conservatism – A Russian way

In 2009 the major political party «United Russia» declared «Russian conservatism» to be its ideological platform and, accordingly, became concerned with the school's historical education. On October 15, 2009, the Center for Conservative Politics, an affiliation of the party, arranged a panel session focused on «Falsification of history and historical myths as an instrument of modern politics». There, a coordinator of the State-patriotic club, a Deputy Chair of the State Duma Committee on Constitutional Law and State Development, Irina Iarovaia, claimed that interpreting history was a «dangerous manipulative instrument», she therefore suggested to turn away from «promoting various, often opposite views of history in the school textbooks»<sup>39</sup>.

Quite simultaneously, a book entitled *School textbooks in history and state policy* edited by the then railway tycoon and Putin's friend, Vladimir I. Yakunin<sup>40</sup>, and compiled by the Center for Problem Analysis and State-Management Designing, headed by Stepan Sulakshin, came out<sup>41</sup>. The book was sponsored by the Russian Orthodox Andrei Pervozvannyi Foundation (Yakunin was a Chair of its Board of Trustees), closely connected with the Kremlin. Its authors presented a liberal view of history

<sup>37</sup> For this, see, for example, V. Shnirelman, *The myths of descent: the views of the remote past, and school textbooks in contemporary Russia*, in "Public Archaeology", 3, 1, 2003, pp. 33-51.

<sup>38</sup> V. Shnirelman, *Rossiiskaia shkola snova na perelome [The Russian school at the turning point once again]*, in *Etnicheskaia situatsiia v Rossii i sprovedel'nykh gosudarstvakh v 2009*, eds. V. A. Tishkov - V.V. Stepanov, IEA RAN, Moscow 2010, pp. 59-61.

<sup>39</sup> *Ot mifov k istoricheskoi pravde [From myths to historical truth]*, in *Tsentr sotsial'no-konservativnoi politiki. Vyp. 10. Sokhranim i priumnozhim*, Moscow 2009, pp. 39-42.

<sup>40</sup> For him see: M. Laruelle, *Russkie natsionalisty i kraine pravye i ikh zapadnye sviazi: ideologicheskie zaimstvovaniia i lichnoe vzaimodeistvie [The Russian nationalists and radical right and their Western contacts: ideological borrowings and a personal interaction]*, in *Rossiia – ne Ukraina*, ed. A.M. Verkhovskiy, Tsentr Sova, Moscow 2014, p. 111.

<sup>41</sup> V.E. Bagdasarian et al., *Shkol'ny uchebnik istorii i gosudarstvennaia politika [A school textbook in history and state politics]*, Nauchny ekspert, Moscow 2009.

and stood against «manipulations of historical memory». At the same time, while demonstrating an instrumental approach to historical education, the book authors aimed especially at the Kremlin authorities. They cynically viewed historical narrative as a way to «control the future» and taught historians how to write down the history of Russia with respect for the «state-patriotic ground». While addressing Putin's reprimands to «those who were paid in foreign grants», they complained that allegedly a «bank of educational literature» has been created in Russia, which harmed its interests<sup>42</sup>. To be precise, they viewed history textbooks (following Orwellian paradigm), as tools «of state regulation» and «state-management»<sup>43</sup> which had to serve the purposes of «shaping state ideology as well as national ideals»<sup>44</sup>. Surprisingly, while declaring a «protective goal» of school history courses and glorifying pre-revolutionary textbooks compiled by the well-known conservative historian, Dmitry Ilovaisky<sup>45</sup>, they referred to the French *École des Annales*<sup>46</sup>, whose ideas were in fact quite different from what they deemed.

In their view, there was a demand for an image of Russia as «Russian civilization» in the context of a «plurality of civilizations». Indeed, the authors believed that nowadays only a «civilizational approach»<sup>47</sup> could provide a holistic paradigm of historical process, and they wanted the highest state authorities to support this view<sup>48</sup>. Notably, they found no contradictions between presenting ethnic Russians as the «state shaping people» (with evidently chauvinist overtone) and their own demand to come back to the ideology of «internationalism»<sup>49</sup>.

Actually, the book aimed at providing an ideological support to the concept of history developed by Filippov's team. Therefore, the book authors

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<sup>42</sup> Ivi, pp. 6-7.

<sup>43</sup> Ivi, pp. 14, 329.

<sup>44</sup> Ivi, p. 179.

<sup>45</sup> Ivi, pp. 203-6.

<sup>46</sup> Ivi, pp. 184-5.

<sup>47</sup> For a critical discussion of a civilizational approach, including one in the textbooks, see: V.A. Shnirelman, *Tsivilizatsionnyi podkhod kak natsional'naiia ideia* [A civilizational approach as a national idea], in *Natsionalizm v mirovoi istorii* [Nationalism in the world history], eds. V.A. Tishkov - V.A. Shnirelman, Nauka, Moscow 2007, pp. 82-105; V. Shnirelman, *New Racism, "Clash of Civilizations" and Russia*, in *Russian Nationalism and the National Reassertion of Russia*, ed. M. Laruelle, Routledge, London 2009, pp. 125-44; Id., *Stigmatized by history or by historians?*, cit.; Id., *Russia*, cit., pp. 502-3, 505-6.

<sup>48</sup> V.E. Bagdasarian et al., *Shkol'ny uchebnik istorii i gosudarstvennaia politika* [A school textbook in history and state politics], pp. 149-50, 173-4.

<sup>49</sup> Ivi, p. 177.

harshly attacked post-Soviet textbooks in history and emphatically called against liberalism, justified aggressive wars of the Russian empire, accused the Decembrists of an attempt to transfer «foreign-born ideas» to the Russian soil, demanded to call the ethnic Russians a «state shaping nation/people». At the same time, they were dissatisfied with certain textbooks which ascribed a victory in the Great Patriotic War to the Soviet rather than the Russian people. They justified the Stalin's ethnic deportation and, finally, accused the American secret services of the destruction of the socialist system<sup>50</sup>. Notably, the authors rebuked Filippov's textbook for avoiding to openly provide readers with the names of the «enemies» of Russia. Indeed, in their view, «the essence of an ideology as such, inevitably demanded for a construction of an image of historical enemies and allies»<sup>51</sup>.

The authors took great care in explaining Stalin's politics in terms of «objective conditions»: «A historical process» – according to the textbook explanatory discourse – «is of an objective nature. Within this paradigm Stalin's authoritarianism was less connected with the personality of I. V. Stalin himself». Consequently, if historical processes are objective, Stalin's authoritarian turn was less dependent on Stalin's personality and his notions of power and leadership, than on actual historical circumstances<sup>52</sup>.

In addition, the authors added a positive note to the fact that Soviet foreign and internal politics was explained in the textbook as a response to a «threat from the West», and, in contrast to other textbooks, the USSR was presented as being only on defensive ground<sup>53</sup>. Yet, the authors could not accept the textbook's claim that «a new peak of political repressions arrived with the post-war period». They argued that this fact contradicted a moratorium for death penalty introduced in 1947<sup>54</sup>. The authors failed to mention that this «moratorium» did not stop the secret service from murdering the Head of the Jewish Antifascist Committee, the well-known actor Solomon Mikhoels in 1948. They also ignored the repressive political campaigns of

<sup>50</sup> Ivi, pp. 219-27, 311-22. For that see: L. Rybina, *Istoriia bez prava perepiski* [History without a right for a correspondence], in "Novaia gazeta", 6 July 2009.

<sup>51</sup> Bagdasarjan et al., *Skol'ny uczebnik istorii i gosudarstvennaia politika* [A school textbook in history and state politics], cit., p. 165. As the honored teacher Evgeny Yamburg pointed out, this trend reminded of Stalin's campaign against "rootless cosmopolitans" in 1949. See: E. Yamburg, *Vesnee obostrenie pseudopatriotizma: zaceh molodezh otravliaiut nenavistiu* [A spring rise of pseudo-patriotism: why do they empoison youngsters with hatred], in "Moskovsky komsomolets", 24 May 2019.

<sup>52</sup> Bagdasarjan et al., *Skol'ny uczebnik istorii i gosudarstvennaia politika* [A school textbook in history and state politics], cit., pp. 8-9, 67.

<sup>53</sup> Ivi, pp. 19, 52-8.

<sup>54</sup> Ivi, p. 68.

the late Stalin's period<sup>55</sup> – «Leningrad Affair», a campaign against «cosmopolitanism», «Mingrelian Affair», «Doctors' Affair» and many others. Instead, they emphatically supported a «rehabilitation of the Stalin's period»<sup>56</sup>.

The authors revealed that what distinguished Filippov's textbook from all the earlier textbooks in history consisted in what follows:

The earlier textbook narratives underlined a continuity between Putin's period of Russian history and Yeltsyn's liberal policy. Instead, an essential difference was made [in Filippov's textbook], which marked a partial breakaway of contemporary [i.e. Putin's] Russia from ideology and practices of neoliberalism. At the same time, a bridge was built up between the Russian Federation and the state control of the Soviet period covered by the so-called Fatherland history<sup>57</sup>.

Although they acknowledged the complexity of the historical process and the variability of its interpretation, the authors suggested not discussing this variability with the students, thereby dismissing the opportunity to stimulate their critical thinking, while they deliberately presented history only on the «state-patriotic ground». They especially denied the possibility of a religious choice. As a result, they suggested to replace critical analysis with a «model of value-shaping educational literature»<sup>58</sup>. They approved the textbook's metaphorical language that allowed to make parallels between some processes in the country during the last Soviet decades and the situation in contemporary Russia.

Having made a survey of other Russian current history textbooks, Bagdasarjan and his colleagues charged their authors with «liberalism» and came to the conclusion that these textbooks differed greatly from foreign textbooks as well as from those published previously in Russia and URSS for the secondary school because they deliberately promoted a «cosmopolitan outlook»<sup>59</sup>.

A patriotic view of history met an unconditional support of a group of historians and educationists' and in 2010 the employees of the RAE's Institute of Family and Education published a teaching manual aimed

<sup>55</sup> For those campaigns see: G. Kostyrchenko, *Tainaia politika Stalina. Vlast' i antisemitizm* [A secret politics of Stalin. Power and antisemitism], Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, Moscow 2001.

<sup>56</sup> Bagdasarjan et al., *Skol'ny ucbebnik istorii gosudarstvennaia politika* [A school textbook in history and state politics], cit., pp. 74-5.

<sup>57</sup> Ivi, p. 9.

<sup>58</sup> Ivi, p. 13.

<sup>59</sup> Ivi, pp. 326-7.

at the educational Institutes and Universities, which focused on patriotism as a national idea. Patriotism was presented as a mechanism, which consolidates a society, as well as a «spiritual backbone of the national security»<sup>60</sup>. Actually, the teaching manual was an ideological declaration and, as such, contained contradictions and applied more to emotions rather than to reason. It aimed mostly at the ethnic Russian people and presented patriotism as their inherent value from the early time on and an important part of the «Russian idea». Patriotism was understood both as a national sentiment and a state ideology. Such an idea of patriotism was closely connected with the Russian Orthodox Church and a nationalistic ideal cultivated by the Moscow Patriarchy<sup>61</sup>. The highest form of patriotism was viewed as a defense from the enemies, and, while declaring general tolerance as well as religious tolerance, the authors did their best to define the enemies of Russia and urged to rescue both the Russian people and their traditional values. The list of patriots encompassed commoners and nobility, the Decembrists and the tsar's bureaucrats, the Bolsheviks and the White *émigrés*. The authors made no difference between patriotism and nationalism, and their classification included even «ethnic patriotism». At the same time nationalism was presented as a value in some chapters and as an evil in some other (for example, nationalism was treated positively as a form of love for “people’s spirit” and negatively as a sign of disrespect towards other peoples, or as a form of separatism and religious extremism<sup>62</sup>). Moreover, while giving a detailed description of strength and achievements of patriotic upbringing, one of the leaders of the authors’ team completely debunked all this with complaints about the fact that society, especially the youth, seemed to be oriented towards a prevailing negative approach to life.

Nonetheless, a reviewer praised the teaching manual for having aptly presented a «patriotic oriented knowledge», while demonstrating the «spiritual-moral potential of patriotism». She also pointed out the importance of the «spiritual-religious component of patriotism». Actually, she

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<sup>60</sup> *Rossiiskiy patriotism: istoki, sodержanie, vospitanie v sovremennykh usloviyakh* [A Russian patriotism: the roots, content, an education in the contemporary environment], eds. A.K. Bykov - V.I. Lutovinov, Planeta, Moscow 2010 (a print run of 2,000 copies).

<sup>61</sup> Ivi, pp. 171-194. For a critical approach, see, for example: V. Shnirelman, *Russia between a Civilization and a Civic Nation: Secular and Religious Uses of Civilizational Discourse during Putin’s Third Term*, in *Russia as Civilization. Ideological Discourses in Politics, Media and Academia*, eds. K.J. Mjør - S. Turoma, Routledge, London 2020, pp. 59-86.

<sup>62</sup> For example, see: *Rossiiskiy patriotism*, pp. 98, 127, 160.



found there a «scholarly-based strategy of patriotic upbringing» capable of withstanding individualism and consumerism<sup>63</sup>.

At the same time, an opinion poll held in 2003, covering 200 teachers both in Moscow and in several other cities, revealed that, while considering the textbooks in history useful, many teachers were less satisfied with their content. The poll results revealed major differences among the cities. For example, whereas the great bulk of Moscow teachers (77.5%) in general positively viewed coverage of imperial Russia in the textbooks, only 47.5% of the teachers in Ekaterinburg shared the same view. The way in which the Soviet period was described met with even less positive responses: only 61% in Moscow and 33% in Ekaterinburg. Most differences had to do with the evaluation of the state leaders – 77.6% teachers agreed with the textbooks in Moscow and only 27.3% in Ekaterinburg. In addition, teachers were less satisfied with the coverage of ethnic minorities' history in the textbooks: only 42% of the teachers accepted the way ethnic minorities were dealt with without any criticism, while the larger disagreement was reckoned at 76% in Ekaterinburg and at 56.5% in Khabarovsk<sup>64</sup>. At the same time, 58% of Moscow teachers were less satisfied with a presentation of the Bolsheviks' achievements and failures in the 1920s. 53% of them also felt uncomfortable with the fact that the State imposed a useful view of history upon them<sup>65</sup>. To put it in another way, there was no consensus among the teachers about the textbooks' content, particularly with the presentation of certain subjects and themes. There were also big differences between teaching communities belonging to different urban areas, especially between Moscow and the regions.

Another survey, which encompassed 113 teachers, demonstrated that many of them declined to rely on the textbooks completely; instead, many of them got additional data from different sources of information<sup>66</sup>. Furthermore, for many teachers (56.6%) the historical issue that was most difficult to deal with was the revolution of 1917 (which was the founding myth in the Soviet period!), to be followed by the

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<sup>63</sup> N.A. Savotina, *Nauchnoe osmyslenie rossiiskogo patriotisma, review [A scholarly understanding of the Russian patriotism, a review]*, in *Rossiiskiy patriotizm: istoki, sodержanie, vospitanie v sovremennykh usloviyakh [A Russian patriotism: the roots, content, an education in the contemporary environment]*, eds. A.K. Bykov - V.I. Lutovinov, Planeta, Moscow 2010, in "Pedagogika", 1, 2011, pp. 114-8.

<sup>64</sup> For an ill coverage of ethnic communities in the textbooks, see: V. Shnirelman, *Stigmatized by History or Historians?*; Id., *Russia*, cit.

<sup>65</sup> Zajda, *Globalisation, ideology and history school textbooks*, cit., pp. 14-6.

<sup>66</sup> Lovorn - Tsyrlina-Spady, *Nationalism and Ideology in Teaching Russian History*, cit., pp. 42-3.

deeds of the political leaders of contemporary Russia. Indeed, they were considered very difficult to evaluate due to their ambivalence<sup>67</sup>.

### A single textbook

In spite of the events described in the previous paragraphs, a new law «On Education in the Russian Federation» was adopted in 2012<sup>68</sup>. This law demanded that school textbooks were reduced to a small group of recommended publications. While giving a talk as a candidate to the presidential elections early on 2012, Putin suggested the introduction of a single school textbook in history of the Fatherland<sup>69</sup>. A year later, at the Council for National Relationships in February 2013, he underlined the high importance of universal patriotic textbooks as a guarantee of interethnic peace and harmony. He made emphasis on crafting a uniform patriotic concept of history, avoiding «inner contradictions and double interpretations», which, in his view, had to promote consolidation of civic peace among peoples<sup>70</sup>. An elaboration of the concept of a single textbook was assigned to the Russian Historical Society established in 2012. The commission that had to work out the book concept was headed by the then speaker of the State Duma and a head of the Russian Historical Society, Sergei Naryshkin, the then Minister of Education and Science, Dmitry Livanov and the then Minister of Culture and a chair of the Russian Military-Historical Society, Vladimir Medinsky<sup>71</sup>. The Director of the RAS Institute of Universal History, Academician Alexander Chubarian has been appointed a coordinator of the project.

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<sup>67</sup> Ivi, p. 44.

<sup>68</sup> [http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons\\_doc\\_LAW\\_140174/](http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_140174/), accessed on January 11, 2021.

<sup>69</sup> Zajda, *Globalisation, Ideology and History School Textbooks*, cit., pp. 7-8.

<sup>70</sup> E. Vinokurova, *Udarim unifikatsiei po netolerantnosti [Let us strike intolerance with a unification]*, in “Gazeta.ru”, 19 February 2013, [http://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2013/02/19\\_a\\_4973157.shtml](http://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2013/02/19_a_4973157.shtml), accessed on January 11, 2021.

<sup>71</sup> A journalist by training, Medinsky was especially well known for the scandals initiated by his promotion of the fakes based on his patriotic view of World War II as well as his badly done thesis in history, that was highly criticized by the professionals. He was also involved in certain corruption affairs. His conflicts with the Russian theatres and his doubtful role in the Russia cinema production are also well-known. See, for example: V. Polovinko, *Medinsky na linii. Kluchevye sobytia kariery otvetstvennogo khranitelja kul'tury sovremennoi Rossii [Medinsky is on the line. The key events of the carrier of the responsible custodian of the contemporary Russian culture]*, in “Novaia gazeta”, 17 January 2018. In January 2020 Medinsky was removed from the office and was appointed an advisor to the Russian president. Since then, historical wars intensified.

An elaboration of a single concept of history had to be supervised by the then Prime Minister, Dmitry Medvedev. In addition, all the interested Russian citizens were invited to take part in a discussion on historical issues at the MES' web-site, and through the internet-resource «We are writing history together»<sup>72</sup>.

Meanwhile, a second (revised) edition of the Federal Education Standards (FES) was elaborated by the end of the first decade of the 21st century. The standard was approved for primary school (Grades 1-4) on October 6, 2009, for secondary school (Grades 5-9) on December 17, 2010, and for high school (Grades 10-11) on May 17, 2012. The FES imposed a form of education geared on patriotism, so much so that even world history had to be taught having primarily in mind the interests of Russia. The view of Russia as a distinct civilization was present in the FES for secondary school, but disappeared in the FES for high school<sup>73</sup>. The urge to shape Russian identity was closely connected with the obligation to have a well-established ethnic awareness.

Yet, soon after a preliminary version of the FES had been published, a round-table of history-experts was held in the State Duma, during which many shortages and contradictions of this document were discussed<sup>74</sup>. The analysts, who studied a new trend in the Russian historical education, underlined quite reasonably, that:

The general consensus among many Russian citizens, particularly teachers and scholars, was that FES overemphasized patriotism and love of the country while (seemingly purposefully) underemphasizing the conveyance of sophisticated understandings of politics and policy necessary to foster critical thinking and critique of governmental decisions<sup>75</sup>... To these scholars and educators, many

<sup>72</sup> Initially «Istoriia.rf» portal and later on: <https://histrf.ru/>

<sup>73</sup> *Federal'nyi gosudarstvennyi obrazovatel'nyi standart srednego (polnogo) obshchego obrazovaniia* [A Federal State Educational Standard of the Secondary-level (full) Education], <http://минобрнауки.рф/%D0%B4%D0%BE%D0%BA%D1%83%D0%BC%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%82%D1%8B/2365>, accessed on May 15, 2015.

<sup>74</sup> *Eksperty i uchitelia obrushili' na edinuiu kontseptsiiu dlia uchebnikov po istorii: "Otvratno sdelanaiia unylaia programma"* [The experts and the teachers ganged up on the uniform concept for the textbooks in history: "A badly done dull program"], in "Newsru", 9 July 2013, <http://newsru.com/russia/09jul2013/historystandard.html>, accessed on January 11, 2021; S. Sulakshin, *Ob istoriko-kul'turnov standarte* [On the history-cultural standard], in "Dnevnik Sulakshina", 10 July 2013, <http://sulakshin.ru/ob-istoriko-kulturnom-standarte-minobrnauki/>, accessed on January 11, 2021. For this, see: Lovorn - Tsyrlina-Spady, *Nationalism and Ideology in Teaching Russian History*, cit., p. 39.

<sup>75</sup> Tsyrlina-Spady - Lovorn, *Patriotism, History Teaching, and History Textbooks in Russia*, cit., p. 43.

of whom had become quite accustomed to the luxury of freedom of choice, the abrupt return to such limited (not to mention one-sided) options proved to be a clear departure from the principles of democracy<sup>76</sup>.

In spite of this premise, the democratic oriented scholars and teachers failed to effectively restrain a stubborn assault of the state machinery. Notably, whereas initially certain authors of the book concept suggested to finish the school history course with the Yeltsyn's period to avoid politicized evaluations of the further development up to the current period – a view that was largely supported by teachers<sup>77</sup> –, they finally agreed to prolong the course up to the recent years of the Putin's rule<sup>78</sup>. Thus, as it was expected, a textbook narrative of contemporary Russia ended with a glorification of the Putin's regime<sup>79</sup>.

A patriotic view of history and the crafting of a uniform concept of history met with the support of the Moscow Patriarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC). In particular, this trend was approved by Patriarch Kirill, who called against a «relativist attitude» towards history. He stood for a «cohesive perception of history – in such a way as that history is maintained in people's mind»<sup>80</sup>, as if «people's mind» were something uniform and uncontroversial. Actually, he viewed a plurality of approaches to interpreting history as a «sin and destruction of moral foundations». The idea of a single textbook in history was also appreciated by the archimandrite Tikhon (Georgy Shevkunov)<sup>81</sup>, who condemned «pluralism» as

<sup>76</sup> Ivi, p. 47.

<sup>77</sup> Ivi, p. 44. See also: E. Mukhametshina, “*Esli seichas napisat' sovremennuiu istoriiu, potom sam sebe pokazhes'bya idiotom*” [If one writes down a current history, one would feel idiot later on], in “Gazeta.ru”, September 30, 2013, <http://www.gazeta.ru/social/2013/09/30/5675193.shtml>, accessed 14 August 2019.

<sup>78</sup> *Skol'niki budut izuchat' pravlenie Putina* [The schoolchildren will study the Putin's reign], in “Moskovsky komsomolet”, 23 September 2013, <http://news.mail.ru/politics/14875871/?frommail=1>, accessed on May 15, 2015.

<sup>79</sup> Tsyrlina-Spady - Stoskopf, *Russian History Textbooks in the Putin Era*, cit., pp. 22-4, 27-8.

<sup>80</sup> *Vystuplenie Sviateishogo Patriarkha Kirilla na vstreche so studentami vysshikh uchebnykh zavedenii Smolenskoï oblasti* [A talk of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill at the meeting with the students of the Higher Educational Institutes of the Smolensk region], in “Russkaia pravoslavnaia tserkov”, 31 August 2013, <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/3198884.html>, accessed on January 11, 2021.

<sup>81</sup> In May 2018 Tikhon became a bishop and was appointed the head of the Pskov Metropolis. A former script writer and one of the most popular ROC hierarchs, nowadays Tikhon is known for his very conservative worldview, a promotion of patriotism, closeness to FSB (secret police) and to president Putin. By 2008 he had produced an anti-Western film on the fall of the Byzantium, and several years later has

criminal<sup>82</sup>. While insisting on imposing a rigid evaluation of historical facts upon students, certain ROC priests, in fact, prevented the upbringing of critically thinking citizens, who are able to independently evaluate political environment and information from outside.

The ROC priests did not restrict themselves to morally supporting a single textbook but also made an attempt to contribute to the elaboration of its concept. This goal was pursued by the XII religious-social exhibition-forum «Orthodox Rus'. My history. Romanovs» held in the Moscow Manezh Hall on November 4-24, 2013. It was supported by several major state agencies and advertised widely. The History of Russia was represented there, firstly, in a monarchic spirit, and secondly only in black and white without nuances, for the visitors to have no doubts about who were the friends and who were the enemies of Russia. This approach was followed by other exhibitions «Orthodox Rus'. My history. Rurikids» focused on the medieval Rus' (November 4-20, 2014), «Orthodox Rus'. My history. From the great shocks to the Great Victory, 1914-1945» (November 4-22, 2015) and «Russia – my history, 1945-2016» (November 4-22, 2016)<sup>83</sup>. Afterward, all these exhibitions were moved to the Exhibition ground entitled to the Achievements of the People's Economy with the purpose of creating a historical park, where teachers could bring their students for deeper understanding of Russian history as it was recommended by the MES.

At the same time, in practical terms, the idea of a single textbook, far from being a unifying factor, provoked much dissent. For example, it caused dissatisfaction in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, where the regional perception of history differed from the one prevailing in Moscow<sup>84</sup>.

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initiated a series of exhibitions in Moscow on Russian history (“Orthodox Rus’”) which also suffered from his evident monarchism and a belief in conspiracy.

<sup>82</sup> *Arkhimandrit Tikhon (Shevkunov): Edinyi uchebnik po istorii neobkhodim* [Archimandrite Tikhon (Shevkunov): a uniform textbook in history is in great demand], in “Blagodatnyi ogon”, 28 January 2013, <http://www.blagogon.ru/news/255/>, accessed on January 11, 2021.

<sup>83</sup> V.A. Shnirelman, *Manezh 2013-2016: publichnaia istoriia Rossii dlia naroda? Vystavki v Manezhe kak instrumental'nyi podkhod k istorii* [Manezh 2013-2016: a public history of Russia for the general public? The exhibitions in the Manezh as an instrumental approach to history], in “Istoricheskaia ekspertiza”, 3, 2018, pp. 92-116; Id., *Istoriia Rossii dlia naroda - 2: Vystavki v moskovskom Manezhe o sovietskom i postsovietskom vremeni* [History of Russia for the people – 2: The exhibitions in the Moscow Manezh on the Soviet and post-Soviet periods], in “Istoricheskaia ekspertiza”, 4, 2018, pp. 242-72.

<sup>84</sup> For the Kazan' historians' views of history see: V.A. Shnirelman, “*Obschchee proshloe': federal'nye i tatarstanskoe shkol'nye uchebniki istorii* [A “common past”: the Federal and the Tatarstani textbooks in history], in “Istoricheskaia ekspertiza”, IV, 2016, pp. 111-32. Also see: V. Shnirelman, *Who Gets the Past? Competition for Ancestors among non-Russian Intellectuals in Russia*, Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Johns Hopkins University

Therefore, Sergei Naryshkin had to go to Kazan' in July 2013 to stop a conflict in the making, while the opening of the Kazan' branch of the Russian Historical Society served as a formal motive for his visit. In Kazan' Naryshkin took part in workshops with local bureaucrats and leading historians and appeased them with an invitation to join in the process of planning and writing a new textbook<sup>85</sup>.

In particular, an opinion poll carried out by VTsIOM (All-Russian Center for Public Opinion Studies) in August 2013 revealed that most of the Russian citizens (58%) agreed with the idea of a single textbook. Sixty-five per cent of well-educated people and inhabitants of middle-size cities were prevalent among the interviewed subjects. One in four respondents supported a uniformed view of history, and only 4% stood for a pluralism of opinions<sup>86</sup>. Two years later a number of adherents to a single textbook had increased and, according to the Levada-Center, in May 2015, 52% of the respondents supported this option without any reserve, and 27% more – with some reserve. Gender and income differences as well as educational status had almost no impact on this result; yet, the idea of a single history textbook was less appreciated in Moscow (37%), and by contrast received a high support in rural areas (63%)<sup>87</sup>.

### An opposition and a resistance

Even if the unique textbook met with such a large consensus, the professional community of historians insisted that a certain pluralism of views had to be secured. In August 2014, Dmitry Livanov explained that what was meant was a uniform concept of history rather than a single textbook<sup>88</sup>. This was evidently supported by President Putin, who claimed that

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Press, Washington D.C. and Baltimore & London 1996; T. Volodina, *Teaching History in Russia after the Collapse of the USSR*, in "The History Teacher", 38, 2, 2005, pp. 185-7; M. Gibatdinov, *Tatarstan*, in *The Palgrave Handbook of Conflict and History Education in the Post-Cold War*, eds. L. Cajani, S. Lässig, M. Repoussi, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham (Switzerland) 2019, pp. 661-83.

<sup>85</sup> *Uchebnikovye manevery* [*The textbook maneuvers*], in "Kommersant", 17 July 2013, p. 1.

<sup>86</sup> V. Sal'nik, *Pishem istoriiu... Vmeste li?* [*Writing history... Is it together?*] in "Pravda.ru", 20 August 2013, <http://www.pravda.ru/society/family/pbringing/20-08-2013/1170652-ychebnik-0/>, accessed on January 11, 2021.

<sup>87</sup> *Otnoshenie k EGE i sozdaniyu edinogo uchebnika* [*An attitude to the Uniform State Exam and to a development of the uniform textbook*], in "Levada Tsentr", Press vypusk, 3 June 2015, <http://www.levada.ru/03-06-2015/otnoshenie-k-ege-i-sozdaniyu-edinogo-uchebnika>, accessed on January 11, 2021.

<sup>88</sup> D. Livanov, *Edinyi uchebnik istorii – eto tseliaia kontseptsiiia* [*A uniform textbook in history*

it did not mean that everybody had to think along the same line; yet, one should follow «the common logic of how to teach history and to be aware of the inseparable and interconnected nature of all the periods of our state history». Noteworthy, he associated history of the Fatherland not only with the notion of national identity, but also with some «culture-historical code», a concept that, in the 2010s, was popular among the adherents to Russian conservatism. Putin expressed confidence in the «objective evaluation» of historical facts and qualified many history textbooks as «ideological trash»<sup>89</sup>. Finally, a textbook competition was arranged and it was won by three sets of textbooks presented by «Prosveshchenie», «Drofa» and «Russkoe slovo» publishing houses<sup>90</sup>. All of them proved to be loyal to the Kremlin's conservative ideology<sup>91</sup> and, in so doing, they secured that the publication of textbooks approved by the MES was entrusted to them from 2015-2016 on.

This does not mean that historians and teachers surrendered and ceased to oppose new ideological trends. Particularly noteworthy is that the so called civilisational approach has been losing attractiveness over the recent ten to fifteen years and its usage in educational literature is now limited to formal contexts. For example, in the textbooks produced by the «Prosveshchenie» publishers, a civilizational approach was mentioned in the textbook for Grade 6 only in the Introduction, to mean that all the peoples of Russia contributed to shaping «Russian civilisation»<sup>92</sup>. However, in Grade 8 students learned that Russia was a «great European state»<sup>93</sup>, while, in Grade 10 «civilization» was presented from a

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*is a whole concept*], in «Izvestiia», 27 August 2014, <http://izvestia.ru/news/575874>, accessed on January 11, 2021.

<sup>89</sup> *Putin potreboval sformirovat' EGE na baze novoi kontseptsii uchebnika po istorii Rossii* [Putin demanded the Uniform State Exam to be developed at the basis of the new concept of the textbook in Russian history], in «ITAR-TASS», 16 January 2014, <http://itar-tass.com/obschestvo/891155>. Accessed on January 11, 2021. For that, see: Lovorn - Tsyrlina-Spady, *Nationalism and Ideology in Teaching Russian History*, cit., p. 38.

<sup>90</sup> I. Ivoilova, *V shkolkakh poiaviatsia novye uchebniki po istorii Rossii* [New textbooks in Russian history will come to schools], in «Rossiiskaia gazeta», 24 april 2015, (<http://www.rg.ru/2015/04/24/uchebniki-site.html>), accessed on January 11, 2021. In April 2020 all the three Publishing Houses merged within a single corporation.

<sup>91</sup> M. Galeotti, *Education in Putin's Russia isn't about History, but Scripture*, cit.

<sup>92</sup> *Istoriia Rossii. 6 klass. Uchebnik dlia obsheobrazovatel'nykh organizatsii* [History of Russia. 6th grade. A textbook for public education organizations], ed. A.V. Torkunov. Part 1, Prosveshchenie, Moscow 2016 (a print run of 35,000 copies), p. 8.

<sup>93</sup> *Istoriia Rossii. 8 klass. Uchebnik dlia obsheobrazovatel'nykh organizatsii* [History of Russia. 8th grade. A textbook for public education organizations], ed. A.V. Torkunov, Part 1, Prosveshchenie, Moscow 2016 (a print run of 50,000 copies), pp. 5, 78-9.



global perspective, resulting in the dissolution of colonial empires by the end of First World War<sup>94</sup>. A new reference to the civilizational approach was later on made with regard to the «Soviet civilization»<sup>95</sup>. At the same time, the first contacts between Russians and Bashkirs were depicted as a «meeting of sedentary and nomadic civilizations», which initially could not understand each other<sup>96</sup>. Nonetheless, the civilizational approach was not used in the narratives on the Russian contacts with the Kazakhs or Siberian peoples. In general, the meaning of the concept was not discussed, and its usage was obscure, selective and quite groundless.

As far as the «Drofa» Publishing Houses is concerned, the term «civilization» was absent in the textbook for Grade 6. Instead, one learned that the country «maintained its European core and was able to communicate with Asia»<sup>97</sup>. The textbook for Grade 7 contained the traditional idea that the conquest of Kazan' in 1552 laid the foundations of the «multi-ethnic Russian state»<sup>98</sup>, but the term «civilization» was used only once – with reference to Russia's search for its place in the «world civilization system»<sup>99</sup>. Yet, a discussion of the Siberian annexation included Alexander I. Herzen's definition of Russia as an «original world»<sup>100</sup>. At the same time this textbook persistently pointed out that the Moscow state was interested in extending its contacts with Europe. The textbook for Grade 8 represented Russia in the 18th century as a «multi-ethnic empire»<sup>101</sup>, in which «the Russian autarchy belonged to the European history»<sup>102</sup>. One could not find the term «civilization» there. The textbook

<sup>94</sup> *Istoriia Rossii. 10 klass. Uchebnik dlia obsheobrazovatel'nykh organizatsii [History of Russia. 10th grade. A textbook for public education organizations]*, ed. A.V. Torkunov, Part 1, Prosveshchenie, Moscow 2016 (a print run of 10,000 copies), p. 5.

<sup>95</sup> Ivi, Part 3. p. 108.

<sup>96</sup> *Istoriia Rossii. 8 klass [History of Russia. 8th grade]*, ed. Torkunov, cit., p. 106.

<sup>97</sup> I.L. Andreev - I.N. Fedorov, *Istoriia Rossii s drevneishikh vremion do XVI veka. 6 klass [History of Russia from the early period up to the 16th century. 6 grade]*, Drofa, Moscow 2016, (a print run of 10,000 copies), p. 226.

<sup>98</sup> I.L. Andreev, I.N. Fedorov, I.V. Amosova, *Istoriia Rossii: XVI – konets XVII v. 7 klass [Istoriia Rossii: 16-18 centuries. 7 grade]*, Drofa, Moscow 2016, (a print run of 5,000 copies), p. 44.

<sup>99</sup> Ivi, p. 238.

<sup>100</sup> Ivi, p. 201. Alexander I. Herzen was a well-known Russian revolutionary writer and journalist of the 19th century.

<sup>101</sup> I.L. Andreev, L.M. Liashenko, I.V. Amosova, I.A. Artasov, I.N. Fedorov, *Istoriia Rossii: konets XVII – XVIII v. [History of Russia: from the late 17th up to the 18th century]*, Drofa, Moscow 2016 (a print run of 5,000 copies), p. 196.

<sup>102</sup> Ivi, p. 205.

for Grade 9 depicted Russia as a «multi-national and multi-religious» country, which differed from the «classical empires» as it lacked overseas colonies<sup>103</sup>. There was only one reference to the civilizational approach: the differences between the «Russian civilisation center and ethnationally peripheries with their own civilizational peculiarities» were pointed out<sup>104</sup>. Without further comments this statement looked enigmatic and could not be properly understood by students. There was no room at all for any civilizational approach in the narrative of the Soviet period in the textbook for Grade 10<sup>105</sup>.

The issue concerning «civilization» was neglected in the well-known teacher Leonid Katsva's extended reviews of the contemporary school textbooks in history<sup>106</sup>. This means that the textbook authors ignored at least some MES requirements.

At the same time all this caused resentment on the part of the Russian «patriots», who wanted Russia to be imagined as a distinct civilization and accused the new textbooks of an underestimation of the Eurasian originality and pro-European orientation<sup>107</sup>.

In the mid-2021, Russian school is at the eve of a new turning point. A new textbook in history for the 10th grade edited by Vladimir Medinsky, and approved by the Ministry of Education, is to be introduced in school in the year 2021-2022. According to some experts, it is more or less balanced except for the last part, devoted to Putin's Russia, which, on the contrary, is idealized and glorified<sup>108</sup>.

<sup>103</sup> L.M. Liashenko, O.V. Volobuev, E.V. Simonova, *Istoriia Rossii. XIX - nachalo XX veka. 9 klass* [History of Russia: the 19th up to the early 20th century. 9 grade], Drofa, Moscow 2016, pp. 5, 10.

<sup>104</sup> Ivi, p. 269.

<sup>105</sup> O.V. Volobuev, P.N. Romanov, S.P. Karpachev, *Istoriia Rossii. Nachalo XX - nachalo XXI veka. 10 klass* [History of Russia: from the early 20th up to the early 21st century. 10 grade], Drofa, Moscow 2016.

<sup>106</sup> L.A. Katsva, *Sovietsky Soiuz v shkol'nykh uchebnikakh istorii XXI veka* [The Soviet Union in the textbooks in history published in the 21st century], in *Proshly vek* [The Former Century], ed. A.I. Miller, INION RAN, Moscow 2013, pp. 69-132; Id., *Drevniaia Rus' v sovremennykh shkol'nykh uchebnikakh* [Early Rus' in the contemporary textbooks], in "Istoricheskaia ekspertiza", 16, 1, 2016, pp. 50-81.

<sup>107</sup> For example, see: D. Semushin, *Plokhbaia «Evraziia» otdaliaet Rossiiu ot Evropy: chemu uchat na uroke istorii* [Bad "Eurasia" distances Russia from Europe: what they teach at the history lesson], in "EADaily", 16 February 2019, <https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2019/02/16/plohaya-evraziya-otdalyaet-rossiyu-ot-evropy-chemu-uchat-na-uroke-istorii>, accessed on January 11, 2021.

<sup>108</sup> D. Lebedev, *T'ma istorii ot Medinskogo. O chem rasskazyvaet novyi uchebnik pod redaktsiei*

## Conclusions

The decisions to implement the ideas, which rehabilitated Stalin and strengthened a heroization of the Soviet period, in general, were taken by no means by Putin alone, but were a result of the activity of certain Kremlin-affiliated think-tanks. Having been developed between 2005 and 2010, these ideas made up the basis for a conservative turn, which accompanied the third Putin presidency in 2012-2018<sup>109</sup>. It certainly had an impact on the school's historical education. The main steps in optimization of the school education were, firstly, a reduction of the number of textbooks, and secondly, a control over the content of the educational literature, which had to foster patriotism after Putin's order. Hence, there was a demand for a rehabilitation of the Soviet period of history including Stalin's deeds.

According to certain Western analysts, the Russian school of Putin's period, especially after the Crimea's annexation, turned to nationalism and extreme patriotism and occupied itself with an indoctrination and brainwashing of the Russian youth through discursive manipulations. Certain authors pointed to similar rhetoric and images provided for Stalin and Putin in the modern textbooks. This fits into the nation-building agenda and the search for a new identity, dwelt on the Great Narrative and a glorification of the «national leaders»<sup>110</sup> in order to promote a loyalty to the authorities among youngsters<sup>111</sup>. Indeed, a «single textbook» had to serve this goal.

Due to a tacit resistance on the part of the historians, textbooks proved to be less «statist-imperialistic» than one could expect. Even Katsva, who takes contemporary trends very critically, pointed out a «careful attitude» of textbook authors in treating the hottest period of Russian history – the

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*eks-ministra kultury* [Darkness of history. What is a new textbook edited by an ex-minister of culture], in "Fontanka", 31 July, 2021, accessed on August 16, 2021.

<sup>109</sup> A.P. Tsygankov, *Crafting the State-Civilization Vladimir Putin's Turn to Distinct Values*, in "Problems of Post-Communism", 63, 3, 2016, pp. 146-58; F. Linde, *The Civilizational Turn in Russian Political Discourse: from Pan-Europeanism to Civilizational Distinctiveness*, "Russian Review", 75, 4, 2016, pp. 604-25; M. Laruelle, *Russian Nationalism Imaginaries, Doctrines, and Political Battlefields*, Routledge, London 2019, p. 135.

<sup>110</sup> T.H. Nelson, *History as ideology*, cit.; Tsyrlina-Spady - Stoskopf, *Russian History Textbooks in the Putin Era*, cit.

<sup>111</sup> J. Zajda, *Russian History Textbooks*, pp. 73-100; Id., *Globalisation, Ideology and History School Textbooks*, cit., pp. 29-50; Tsyrlina-Spady - Lovorn, *Patriotism, History Teaching, and History Textbooks in Russia*, cit., pp. 41-57; Id., *Nationalism and Ideology in Teaching Russian History*, cit., pp. 31-52.

Soviet one<sup>112</sup>. Indeed, the authors did not so much justify the state politics, as did their best to avoid the most painful topics, practiced reductionism and simplification, or, while covering the ugliest patterns, used half-truthful representations of the facts. In addition, as acknowledged by some experts, they deliberately avoided deeper analysis of historical processes and «interpretive perspectives», offering no insight into critical thinking. However, the analysts revealed no complete return to the Soviet authoritative discourse either<sup>113</sup>. Moreover, a thoughtful analysis of narratives on Stalin reveals nuanced and well-balanced patterns, far from pure glorification.

Certain experts were alarmed that the school history teaching could guide youngsters to the «Putinist camp»<sup>114</sup>. Yet, even according to their own survey of the pro-Kremlin youth in summer 2008, family upbringing proved to be twice as more important a factor of political socialization than a school education<sup>115</sup>. And the aforementioned survey carried out among teachers, showed that about 40% students achieved most of their historical knowledge from other resources (Internet, TV, fictions, etc) rather than from textbooks<sup>116</sup>. Recently, this trend was confirmed by the Levada-Center opinion poll, which revealed that Internet-resources and social networks are the main information sources consumed by youngsters (under 25)<sup>117</sup>. In addition, teachers' lectures proved to be more important than the textbook<sup>118</sup>. According to

<sup>112</sup> I. Chevtava, *Novye uchebniki zamalchivaniia istorii* [New textbooks of the history suppression], in "Deutsche Welle", 26 November 2015, <https://www.dw.com/ru/новые-учебники-замалчивания-истории/a-18876266>, accessed on January 11, 2021.

<sup>113</sup> L.A. Katsva, *Sovietsky Soiuz v shkol'nykh uchebnikakh istorii XXI veka* [The Soviet Union in the textbooks in history published in the 21st century]; T. H. Nelson, *History as ideology*, cit.; Tsyrlina-Spady - Lovorn, *Patriotism, History Teaching, and History Textbooks in Russia*, cit., p. 53; Tsyrlina-Spady - Stoskopf, *Russian History Textbooks in the Putin Era*, cit.

<sup>114</sup> E. Levintova - J. Butterfield, *History Education and Historical Remembrance in Contemporary Russia: Sources of Political Attitudes of Pro-Kremlin Youth*, in "Communist and Post-Communist Studies", 43, 2, 2010, pp. 139-66.

<sup>115</sup> Ivi, p. 163.

<sup>116</sup> M. Lovorn - T. Tsyrlina-Spady, *Nationalism and Ideology in Teaching Russian History*, pp. 42-3. Also see, F. Chapkovsky, *Uchebnik istorii i ideologicheskii defitsit* [A history textbook and an ideological deficiency], in "Pro et Contra", 1-2, 2011, pp. 117-133.

<sup>117</sup> D. Volkov - S. Goncharov, *Rossiiskii media-landschaft, 2019* [Russian media-landscape], in "Levada Tsentr", 1 August 2019, <https://www.levada.ru/2019/08/01/21088/>, accessed on January 11, 2021.

<sup>118</sup> B. Sidikov, *Zwischen Bourdieu und postkolonialer Theorie: zur Analyse postsowjetischer Schulbücher für das Fach Geschichte (am Beispiel Aserbaidshans)*, in "Jahrbuch Aserbaidshanchenforschung. Beiträge aus Politik, Wirtschaft, Geschichte und Literatur," ed.

a French author, «patriotism is perceived and understood in multiple ways that often diverge significantly from the state's plans and instructions»<sup>119</sup>. An American expert also pointed out «the instabilities of Putin-era social engineering», which engenders «uncertain and unintended effects»<sup>120</sup>. Her conclusion was that «the one-size-fits-all model no longer worked»<sup>121</sup>.

To be fair, historical education of Putin's period affects the youngsters' views of history, but differently from what was expected by its initiators. Already ten years ago certain journalists noted that among the youngsters, there was very little awareness of Soviet history. In particular, students were better informed about the events of the 19th rather than about the 20th century, and even more so than about the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century<sup>122</sup>. This was partly caused by technical reasons: due to the time limit, teachers had no time to lecture on the dissolution of the USSR and the events that followed. An opinion poll carried out by VTsIOM in 2017 confirmed that Russians had a very poor knowledge of the Russian history of the 20th century<sup>123</sup>. A similar survey in 2018 provided even more shocking results: the majority of students from the best Russian Universities, such as Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MSIIR), Moscow State University (MSU) and Higher School of Economics (HSE), was unaware of the repressions occurred during the period under Stalin's rule<sup>124</sup>. Nonetheless, in 2019 the country witnessed a

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M. Aghayev - R. Suleymanova, Bd. 2. Dr. Köster, Berlin 2008, pp. 222-47; D. Umetbaeva, *Paradoxes of Hegemonic Discourse in Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan: History Textbooks' and History Teachers' Attitudes towards the Soviet Past*, in "Central Asian Affairs", 2, 2015, pp. 300-4.

<sup>119</sup> A. Le Huérou, *Where Does the Motherland Begin? Private and Public Dimensions of Contemporary Russian Patriotism in Schools and Youth Organisations: A View from the Field*, in "Europe-Asia Studies", 67, 1, 2015, p. 30.

<sup>120</sup> J. Hemment, *Youth Politics in Putin's Russia: Producing Patriots and Entrepreneurs*, Indiana Univ. Press, Bloomington 2015, pp. 13-4.

<sup>121</sup> Ivi, p. 217.

<sup>122</sup> D. Varlamova - P. Potapova, *Gagarin, ravenstvo, ocheredi, defitsit... Chto znaet i dumaet ob SSSR pokolenie "next"? [Gagarin, equality, lines, deficiency... What does the "next" generation know and think of the USSR]* in "Izvestia", 6 November 2009, <https://iz.ru/news/355049>, accessed on January 11, 2021.

<sup>123</sup> V. Khamraev, *Rossiiane putaiutsia v datakh i lichnostiakh. VTsIOM vyiasnil, chto i kak znaiut grazhdane iz istorii strany [The Russians confuse dates and persons. VTsIOM has revealed what and how the citizens know of the country's history]*, in "Kommersant", 14 September 2017, p. 4, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3409875>, accessed on January 11, 2021.

<sup>124</sup> «U mnogikh srazu posle smerti Stalina chudesnym obrazom poiavliaetsia Putin». *Chto znaet pokolenie Putina ob epokhe El'tsyina – itogi svezhikh issledovanii VShE* ["In many views,

wave of protests with a high participation of young people who evidently felt less loyal to the authorities.

Thus, despite high state investment in the promotion of patriotism and loyalty to the regime through historical education, the pro-Kremlin ideologists' activity failed to produce the desired impact. National narratives poorly operate to shape loyal citizens and civic identities. Moreover, an ideological paradigm oriented towards isolation of Russia from the outer world contradicts real life: many Kremlin bureaucrats and pro-Kremlin journalists have their property and investments in the West and their children or grand-children enroll in Western universities. The events that took place in summer 2019, and further on, show that nowadays the Kremlin relies much more on military and security forces rather than on the youngsters.

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*in a wonderful way Putin appears immediately after the Stalin's death.* "What the Putin's generation knows of the Yeltsin's period – the results of the recent VShE studies], in "Znak.com", 14 May 2018, [https://www.znak.com/2018-05-14/chto\\_znaet\\_pokolenie\\_putina\\_ob\\_epohe\\_elcina\\_itogi\\_svezhih\\_issledovaniy\\_vshe](https://www.znak.com/2018-05-14/chto_znaet_pokolenie_putina_ob_epohe_elcina_itogi_svezhih_issledovaniy_vshe), accessed on January 11, 2021. This is no accident with regard to a very short class time allotted to this issue. See: Nelson, *History as Ideology*, cit., p. 57.